

Local Artist Launches Custom Jewelry Line

Ella Fine Jewelry pieces are creative, precious, delicate, strong and uniquely beautiful. However, this description not only fits the jewelry collection **Ellen Epperson** has created, it also fits the creator.

Ellen has been around jewelry all of her life. Her parents, **Larry** and **Armen**, have owned Epperson's Jewelry in Cleveland, Tenn. since 1976. Epperson's is a full service jewelry store but there is also no denying that Ellen's father, Larry, is an artist, designer and craftsman above all else. His talent naturally led the business toward custom work on which Epperson's Jewelry focuses today. Ellen says her father can "make, build and do anything!" Growing up in the business, Ellen watched her father come alive during the creative process and that led her to later pursue a BFA with a concentration in painting.

After graduation, Ellen opened a small art shop on Frazier Avenue. Six months after opening, she was robbed at knifepoint and stabbed three times in the back. Ellen was left for dead, but was fortunately discovered by a friend. Today Ellen refers to the anniversary of that day as her "alive day." She closed shortly after the attack. Today she says "I do not care to dwell on all of that except to say that this was when I sort of strayed from the creative process." As a result, Ellen entered the real estate business in 2001 and although she continued to paint, it was not her focus. As luck would have it, the market began to slow and Ellen began painting more and more. The creative force took over. **Missy Periano** at Hanover Gallery took an interest in Ellen's work, as did many patrons. Her timing was perfect, and now the joy in her pieces is spreading to the homes where they



hang. Ellen paints beloved pets: goats wearing earrings and birds wearing crowns, among others. Simultaneously regal, elegant and whimsical, the crown-becked avian friends served as inspiration for Ellen's entire jewelry line.

Considering Ellen's heritage, it seems like it was only a matter of time until she translated her work into a collection of fine jewelry. As the real estate market continued to slump, Ellen's creativity continued to soar. She sketched her designs for the collection and took them to her parents to see if they would be willing to manufacture them and they decided to go for it! "I can't say enough about my wonderful parents. They have done so much for me and been so encouraging!" says Ellen. Ella Fine Jewelry was born!

The pieces are mostly in sterling silver, which makes them accessible to almost anyone. Ellen says, "I was inspired by the idea that a girl should not have to wait for jewelry to be a gift; she should be able to buy it for herself!" Of course, Ellen manufactures the pieces with her parents, so they do produce some pieces in 14kt gold. Her charms dangle from delicate necklaces, bracelets and earrings, and stand strong on thick-banded rings. She adds new styles on a regular basis, and they can be seen



on her website.

Each charm that is a part of the collection is a bit like Ellen. A petite and beautiful girl with curly hair that literally glows with her aura, she is both delicate and strong. The inspiration and signature piece of her line, a bird wearing a crown, is delicate in detail and size, but there is no mistaking even the small bird has power and strength. In much the same way, Ellen exudes outward grace and delicacy coupled with inner strength and resilience. There are several other animals and even a heart all adorned with the crown. There is also a beautiful Armenian cross, another

testament to Ellen's heritage.

The road was not always easy, but when you see Ellen with her jewelry, so sure of what she has created and proud of the greater connection it has forged with her mother and father, it is evident; she gave these little animals crowns so that they might feel as blessed as she has been.

For more information on Ellen Epperson and Ella Fine Jewelry or if you are interested in hosting a home show, go to www.ellafinejewelry.com

by *Amanda Thompson Jackson*



Will Callaway Selected to Serve as SouthWings Executive Director

The Board of Directors of SouthWings is pleased to announce that **Will Callaway** has been selected as the new executive director. Callaway began working in the Asheville based offices of SouthWings on July 1.

SouthWings provides flights in 11 Southeastern states to give a unique view of environmental threats and damage as well as conservation opportunities. The organization utilizes a network of 36 volunteer pilots to fly partner organizations, elected and appointed officials and members of the media to view areas that need to be conserved. The flight region ranges from the top of the Appalachian Mountains to the shorelines of the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. **Elisabeth Donnovin**, president of the SouthWings Board of Directors, noted, "We are very happy to have someone with Will's extensive experience in conservation and government take the lead as SouthWings continues to grow and offer more flights in more areas. The board is confident that he will help support ef-



forts across the Southeast to protect the natural systems that we all cherish."

Callaway's experience includes work to protect the Everglades and the Great Smoky Mountains, conservation efforts for Civil War battlefields located in Mid-Atlantic States and advocacy for clean air and water regulations. His work on forestry, water quality and energy issues will be of particular value for SouthWings partners.

A congressional candidate in 2000, Will is the grandson of longtime Signal Mountain resident **Mary Ware Sanders** and the late **A. Jackson Sanders**.

In recent years SouthWings has focused on mountaintop removal coal mining, cypress ecosystems and coastal wetland protection. Pilots are located and fly in: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

For more information please contact Will Callaway at (828) 225-5949 or will@southwings.org.

Yessick's

30 Years in Business - 4 Locations:
Nashville - Chattanooga - Knoxville - Atlanta



Yessick's provides you with a beautiful, creative and functional design atmosphere, superb customer service and quality at a competitive price. A unique shopping experience with a presentation that exceeds all others.

THE MOST CREATIVE INTERIORS OCCUR WHEN YOU VENTURE OUTSIDE THE DESIGN RULES.

MARSHA YESSICK, ASID



Visit our fully decorated Chattanooga showroom.

Residential - Banks - Hospitality
Funeral Homes - Medical Offices
Law Firms

1926 GUNBARREL ROAD • CHATTANOOGA • 423.892.1785
WWW.YESSICKS.COM

Better Business Bureau Awards Luncheon

The Better Business Bureau held its annual luncheon meeting at The Chattanooga to give its Torch Awards for Marketplace Ethics and Students of Integrity awards. The featured speaker was Congressman **Zach Wamp** who spoke about the Better Business Bureau's focus on trust and ethics. The Better Business Bureau serves as a watchdog group to set standards high in the community and guard against lapses in moral integrity and ethical standards in the business community. He stressed the word "Better" in their name, meaning that they are constantly striving to do better. Wamp said that the Better Business Bureau stands for ethics and trust.

President and CEO of the BBB, **Jim Winsett**, and Chairman of the Board **Mike Webb** welcomed the guests, and

WRCB's **David Carroll** served as emcee of the program.

Winners of the 2009 Torch Awards for Marketplace Ethics were Hullco Exterious, Marling Financial & Leasing Corp, Sharp Development and Southern Champion Tray. A new category was created this year for a non-profit award which was won by Memorial Health Care System.

Student Integrity Award Winners were **Michael Butler II**, **Tara Clance**, **Marteki Codjoe**, **Megan Cromer**, **Calah Hanson**, **Daniel Kennedy**, **Sara Lynch**, **Patrick Vande Lune**, **Fredrick Walker** and **John Weldon**. Winners were awarded \$1000 scholarships and were selected from 86 student entries from 22 counties.

by *Sonia Young*