

City Guide 2014: Who's Who in Memphis

Movers and shakers: the Memphis 100.

In 2014, Memphians savored home-made brews (perhaps for the last time) in the neglected Tennessee Brewery, pondered ways to cross the Mississippi using the old Harahan Bridge, and enjoyed plays in the brand-new Hattiloo Theatre, just one of the gems in the revamped and renewed Overton Square / Cooper-Young theatre and arts district. Meanwhile, schoolkids managed to figure out the newly merged city/county school system, Memphis International Airport struggled to fill its space (and new garage), and a disturbing number of police officers came down with the “Blue Flu.”

Every year, events like these make it a challenge for our staff to narrow the list of “movers, shakers, and other news-makers” down to 100 or so, but we think we’ve compiled a good selection of the “best and brightest” on these pages — politicians, entrepreneurs, business leaders, athletes, musicians, and more.

If some of these names or faces seem familiar to our longtime subscribers, there’s a good reason. Eight of the Memphians profiled on the following pages have been named to every “Who’s Who” list since we began compiling this section back in 1984: Jack Belz, Al Green, J.R. “Pitt” Hyde, Jerry Lee Lewis, Ira Lipman, Jackie Nichols, Fred Smith, and Pat Kerr Tigrett.

MARK NORRIS

Majority leader of the Republican-dominated state Senate. Was the primary author in 2011 of the controversial Norris-Todd bill (co-sponsored with state Rep. Curry Todd), which established guidelines for merger of Memphis City Schools with Shelby County Schools in August 2013, including the lifting at that time of a ban on new special school districts. Crafted add-on legislation in 2012 to enable immediate referenda for such districts in Shelby County suburbs and repeated process with amended bill in 2013 when 2012 measure was found unconstitutional. Seemingly content to work in the shadows of Senate Speaker/Lt. Governor Ron Ramsey, Norris, re-elected in 2013 to a third term as chair of Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, is known to have gubernatorial ambitions of his own. A lawyer and farmer living in Collierville, Norris became chairman of the National Council of State Governments in 2014 and was named “Legislator of the Year” by the Tennessee Parent Teacher Association (PTA).