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THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST YOUNG GEORGIANS

Edited By Shannon Wilder

Once again it's time to recognize the cream of one of Georgia's most valuable crops: bright young people. Our eighth 40 Under 40 — a listing of the state's rising superstars — includes a mix of entrepreneurs, traditional businesspeople, civic leaders, public servants, academics and nonprofit workers from every corner of the state. Indeed, the number of nominations this year was far and above that of previous years, making the task of narrowing the list down to just 40 tougher than ever.

But with Georgians like these to choose from, most of our picks were no-brainers. In these pages you'll meet, among others, a non-profit director whose work with urban kids has drawn presidential approval, the state's first black solicitor general, a lawyer who works to keep cases

from going to trial and the restaurateur responsible for the phrase "Welcome to Moe's!"

Georgia Trend's editors made these selections, aided by nominations from readers. Individual profiles were contributed by writers Matt Bolch, Carol Carter, Mary Anne Dunkin, Jerry Grillo, Jennifer Hafer, Karen Kennedy, Melanie A. Levs, Ed Lightsey, Bobby Nesbitt, Patty Rasmussen and Michele Taylor.

Appearing on the opposite page are (clockwise from top): Francisco Palacios, publisher *La Voz*; Brooke Jackson Edmond, senior vice president/principal, Jackmont Hospitality; Benjamin S. Richardson, solicitor general, Muscogee County; and Allen Nance, founder, Mansell Group.

Brooke Jackson Edmond

**Senior Vice President/Principal
Jackmont Hospitality**

Atlanta

Age: 36

Brooke Jackson Edmond started Jackmont Hospitality in 1994 with two partners, Daniel Halpern, a friend from Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, and her father, Maynard Jackson, the late former mayor of Atlanta.

"My father was adamant about integrity," Edmond recalls. "It was a character issue that translated into the way we did business." Edmond says she's amazed at the way some businesses cut corners for the sake of quicker, bigger profits but adds, "That's not what we're about."

Jackmont is about conservatively growing the food service business on two fronts, the casual dining and the contract services sides. After owning and operating the T.G.I.Friday's restaurant at Hartsfield Jackson International Airport for eight years, Jackmont acquired four Friday's locations in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and two Philadelphia sites: all markets traditionally serving urban populations. "We waited for the right locations to come along, holding off on some underperforming locations," Edmond says. "We wanted to be set up for success. We're in this for the long haul."

In the contract services business, Jackmont currently partners with Sydexo to manage on-site food services at Atlanta Public Schools and area colleges including Morehouse, Spelman and Emory in Atlanta. While pursuing joint ventures in contract services, Edmond says Jackmont will continue to grow its own contract food services and is committed to building four to five more Friday's restaurants in the next five years.

Edmond graduated from Spelman College and "took a detour into construction" before returning to the hospitality industry. "I worked in hospitality when I was younger and I studied it in school," Edmond says. But her construction experience isn't wasted. As manager of new construction for Jackmont, Edmond says, "I don't run into any problems once [workers] realize I can read blueprints and I sign the checks!" The company has an exemplary reputation among its workers. Jackmont was recognized recently for "outstanding employee retention," a direct result of its commitment to sacrificing profits to give proper health and retirement benefits.

Edmond is also passionate about maintaining balance between work, home and community. A busy mother of five, Edmond mentors young women through The Links, Inc. and maintains close ties with her church. It's her father's lessons, still resonating. "If we were given a so-



Strong legacy: Brooke Jackson Edmond employs lessons learned from her late father, former Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson