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Anderson sees potential for progress

BY DAVE HODGES
 DEMOCRAT BUSINESS EDITOR
 - MARCH 19, 2009

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Helping bring about positive change on important community issues inspires and motivates Beth Shankle Anderson.



Beth Shankle Anderson is a Tallahassee attorney and the reigning Mrs. Tallahassee. She will compete in the Mrs. Florida Pageant on May 3. (Special to the Democrat)

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"When I get up in the morning, I want to now that I am going to be doing something significant," said Anderson, a Tallahassee attorney and the reigning Mrs. Tallahassee. She is one of the 25 Women You Need to Know, the annual celebration of women and their achievements sponsored by the Tallahassee Democrat.

She earned her law school's pro bono award before she graduated and was in the top 5 percent of her class. As a member of the Tallahassee Women Lawyers, Anderson served as director of the 2008 Judicial Reception held at the historic capitol last October.

She has devoted more than 150 pro bono hours to the Chicago-based Autism Legislative Project, whose goal is to compile statutory research from each state and propose national legislation that will help educate such professionals as paramedics, police and other first responders, as well as educators and employers, about autism.

"It's about having professionals out there that can work with families who have a child with autism," she said. The project led to a legislative proposal first made by then-Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, but colleague Sen. Dick Durbin intends to introduce it soon.

As Mrs. Tallahassee, Anderson has a unique opportunity to raise the profile of other causes, including the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Having lost her father to non-Hodgkins lymphoma when she was 13, Anderson has volunteered as an advocate for the society and would like to help establish a field office in Tallahassee.

"She hopes to use her title as Mrs. Tallahassee to draw more attention to blood cancers and is committed to helping the society both advocate and raise money toward this cause," said husband Ian Anderson, who nominated her as one of the 25 honorees this year.

"I love seeing progress, and I like being part of something that changes lives," she said of her work.

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