

by Jackie Perrone

Todd Carnes

It would be hard to find anyone with a more eclectic background than Todd Carnes. His journey has taken surprising directions at various times; he calls it “a restless spirit” and find himself taking on new challenges every five to seven years. The latest: launching his campaign for a seat in the South Carolina Legislature.

“I think of it as opportunity and community,” he says. “Our family has been so blessed in this place and public service is one way to give back. Influence and impact: that’s what I hope for in this venture.”

This Gadsden, AL native earned a degree in Civil Engineering from University of Alabama, the first college graduate ever in his family. After several years working in that field, he turned to the spiritual, earning a Master’s degree in Biblical Languages from Southeastern Baptist Seminary in Wake Forest, NC.

Again the path diverged. Carnes found himself in Siberia working with a group of Baptist missionaries for several years until a crackdown by the Russian government cancelled their visas and exiled them in 2000.

After living in eight homes in four countries in six years, he answered the call of

Lexington Baptist Church to serve as Minister of Missions, arriving here with his wife, Kerri, and their two daughters. For seven years he focused on international service through the church.

Then another gateway led him to partner with Pastor John Reeves to lead a newly established local church named Radius Church, which at that time was meeting in the lunchroom of Midway Elementary school. During the following eight-year period, membership grew from fewer than 100 to more than 1,000 as the church bought property and moved to Main Street. Now, campuses have been established in White Knoll, Saluda, and west Lexington. He has served as Chaplain for the Lexington High football team and also for the Lexington Police Department.

In 2014, he entered local politics, winning a seat on Lexington Town Council, and re-election to that post three years later in 2016.

Three years ago, he made a decision to return to the business world and is now the General Manager of SouthernMED Pediatrics. Once more, “opportunity and community” emerged when Todd Atwater vacated his seat in the South Carolina Legislature to run for Attorney General. Carnes kicked off his campaign in April to run for election to the State House representing his Lexington neighbors. With this new opportunity, the civil engineer hopes to continue to build.

The Carnes family now includes three daughters, 21, 18 and 16. ■

