

# Governor appoints SPEDA president to KCTCS Board of Regents

Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin has appointed Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority (SPEDA) President and CEO Chris Girdler to the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) Board of Regents. His term will expire July 21, 2025.

The KCTCS Board of Regents oversees the state’s community and technical college system, which includes 16 colleges across the state serving 875,000 Kentuckians. Somerset Community College in Pulaski County is part of this system. The board of regents consists of eight members appointed by the governor and six additional members, including two members each of the teaching faculty, non-teacher personnel and student body, representing the respective KCTCS community and technical colleges.

“I appreciate Governor Bevin’s trust to appoint me to the KCTCS Board of Regents. I’m honored to serve in this capacity and will work to help continue to improve our educational opportunities for our citizens and ensuring we are being good stewards of taxpayer money,” Girdler said.

Girdler has particular interest in KCTCS’s workforce development opportunities, as this has been a primary area of focus for SPEDA.

“The workforce development opportunities that KCTCS presents are phenomenal

and through SPEDA and serving on the organization’s board, I believe we will be able to bring about further improvements and raise awareness of these great training and educational opportunities for everyone,” Girdler said.

Girdler earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Eastern Kentucky University. He has vast experience in public and private sectors — including serving as former state senator for the 15th District of Kentucky and working as a CEO in the houseboat manufacturing industry.

Girdler serves or has served boards for many organizations, including The Center for Rural Development, Somerset-Pulaski Chamber of Commerce, Somerset Community College Foundation Inc., the Mill Springs Battlefield Association, the Pulaski County Educational Consortium and various bank advisory boards.

In addition to his service on the Somerset-Pulaski Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, he was elected president of the organization in 2014. Prior to his service in Frankfort, Girdler was honored by his alma mater as EKU’s Alumni of the Year.

Girdler and his wife, Courtney live in Somerset with their two daughters Charleston (10) and Channing (4).



CHRIS GIRDLER

# It’s Your Health: Mental Status Examination

BY ROBERT DRAKE M.D.

“Dr. Drake why are you asking me those questions, I’m not crazy,” from one of my elderly patients.

It is important for physicians to ascertain the competence of patients, especially the elderly. This is important so that patients may make advance directives, be competent to complete their wills, make decisions about their care and guide providers in treatment plans.

The mental status exam (MSE) includes general observations made during exams as well as specific testing based on the needs of the patient and physician. Multiple cognitive functions may be tested including attention, language, executive function, thought content, memory, visuospatial proficiency and orientation.

The MSE is helpful in differentiating between a variety of neurologic and psychiatric disorders ranging from delirium and dementia to bipolar and schizophrenia. It may include the administration of relatively standardized tools such as the Mini-Mental

status exam (MMSE) and Mini-Cog.

General observations of the patient are important. What is the appearance of the patient, are they neatly dressed, have smell of urine which may indicate incontinence, do they maintain good eye contact? Do they move slowly or have minimal facial expressions that might suggest Parkinson disease. What is their mood and affect?

It is important for patients to understand the standardized questions that are asked and communicate their responses. The questions involve a cognitive portion;

- \* Memory the patient may be asked to remember three items repeat them then asked again in a few minutes to see if they remember them for example apple, table, penny.

- \* Orientation often asked what city, state and location are you at. What is the date, month, year.

- \* Executive function like spell world backwards.

- \* Attention spell a word

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## BRADLEY: States that she has an amazing support system around her

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She stumbled upon her passion for the visual arts quite serendipitously – but it’s become more than a hobby for her. It’s become a calling.

“I have always been creative minded,” said Bradley, now of Somerset. “However, I never viewed myself as ‘artistic.’ I have always had bright ideas when projects have been handed to me, and I approach them with an all or nothing attitude. I have been told in the past that I ‘have too many ideas,’ ‘You always outdo yourself,’ ‘You can’t function without chaos.’ All of these are true. But I have never seen it as a negative characteristic. I want to be more than the person I was yesterday, everyday.”

A Pine Knot native, Bradley graduated from McCreary Central High School in 2004 and attended SCC McCreary Center for two years taking General Education classes before choosing to pursue a career as a cosmetologist, a journey she began in May 2008.

Bradley says that she’s grateful for the simple life she enjoyed as a youth in a rural area, surrounded by relatives playing music on strings and drums, and general playful chaos.

“I come from a place where everyone knows one another and being surrounded by family was an everyday occurrence,” she said. “I grew up never having to feel what being alone truly felt like. There were always women chatting and cooking in the kitchen, kids running through the yard chasing one another and laughing, teens huddled up watching a movie or listening to tunes.”

Bradley rose to the rank of Master Cosmetologist with a “natural

gift” for making others more beautiful – the human form as a canvas for aesthetics – and thought had thought that this life path was the journey that would define her. She also married her “best friend,” Kevin Bradley, and had two girls, Kyn-dall Renee and later, Karmin Reese.

However, “life happened and inner conflict began to force itself out,” she said. Depression became a factor in her life. Things changed. She and Kevin divorced in 2017 (though she is quick to observe that they are still supportive of one another and co-parent “in a positive way”).

“I had poured so much of myself into others and veiled my true identity for so long that I had come to a place in life where I was unable to recognize myself unless I was caring for someone or something else,” said Bradley.

Then, in the spring of 2017, Bradley and her daughters visited local arts venue the Shine House for a birthday party.

“It was a paint-and-play party,” she said. “The kids had all created their masterpieces and were running around outside enjoying each others company. I felt the nudge and ask Tara (Sellers of the Shine House) if she would mind that I tried some painting. She grabbed me a canvas, I sat down and began. Nature took hold of me and I began blending colors.

“The energy behind the paint brush that day was undeniable,” she added. “I did not stop until it was time to leave. I actually left it there unfinished. When I left the party I drove straight to the store and got supplies. I needed more of that feeling. The feeling of freedom.”

Bradley kept on, but

found the next couple of painting sessions to be different emotionally from the first – “deeper, personal, unchained,” she said. She found feelings flooding her consciousness that she had “buried in the locked closet of (her) soul” and realized art could be a way for her to effectively work through her own identity crisis and figure out who she was, instead of being the person she felt she was told to be.

However, she kept her art private, in a journal – few people knew that it was something she was doing. However, her vocation in hair allowed the truth to come to the surface.

“I decided to show my friend Loretta what I had been playing with one day at her hair appointment,” said Bradley. “We had always had a close connection, and she understood my journey of life and what it truly means to love. She was overwhelmed by what I had handed her. She told me that day, ‘This needs to be on walls, I need to be able to have this.’ She could immediately feel the depths of what was poured into those pages. This is another moment of growth and change for me.

“I took her advice,” added Bradley. “The next week I hung my first piece of artwork on the wall in my salon.”

Bradley said the response from those who saw her work blew her away and made her realize she had more than one gift. Since then, she’s made well over 200 pieces, all “organically manifested with their own identity,” she said.

“Some inspirations are created from

dreams, some from quotes, poetry or conversations,” she said. “(The) majority ... come from no thought at all, they are derived from my spirit, my soul, my heart.”

The first time she publicly displayed her work outside of social media was at the 2018 Art on the Plaza event, by Watershed Arts Alliance. Watershed’s director Wynona Padgett had been in for a hair appointment, saw Bradley’s artwork, and urged her to let the public take a look. That happened on the judicial center plaza that day.

“This was an overwhelming yet super exciting moment. Once again, life changer for me,” she said. “That was the day I put three pieces of myself into the hands of other human beings to cherish.”

Following that experience, Bradley has attended multiple community based events, sold works at the Fayette County Fair in Lexington, established a gallery in her home-based salon, and turned her living room has turned into an art studio. She has displayed and sold pieces at Serendipity at the Orange Door in downtown Somerset, and recently saw a piece that she had submitted accepted into The Create Disability Exhibit at the Pam Miller Arts Center in Lexington from September 7 through October 26 (a reception during the LexArts Gallery Hop on Friday September 20 is forthcoming).

“This exhibit was the first that I had been accepted into and I’m grateful that the timing was appropriate for it,” she said – appropriate since she’s

exploring the idea of workshops for using art to promote mindfulness and inner release. She stops short of the term “art therapy,” but expressed plans to hold private and small group settings to let others witness that painting does not require a firm foundation or skills.

“Art does not have to be for everyone, but the outlets of it are a wonderful way to cope with various kinds of feelings,” she said. “It is not something that has to be exposed to the world. It can be a private experience that can be kept private.”

She also has the “Mego’s Wonderland” exhibit currently on display in the Corner Gallery at the Flash-back Theater Co. headquarters at the intersection of College and East Mt. Vernon Streets in Somerset. The dazzling array of colors and dream-like figures is free and open to the public and will run through October 12. Those who visit Flashback the next couple of weekends to see the new production of “American Hero” can spend some time browsing the gallery and seeing Bradley’s talent up close. Additionally, the Corner Gallery is open for viewing during the week Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Bradley says she has an “amazing support system,” specifically pointing toward her girlfriend Tammy, who has witnessed the development of every piece Bradley has made and has seen her grow

as a person along with the paintings.

“That has not been an easy road for me to travel and I know for her at times it is hard to see and hard to deal with. But she is always there, without question,” said Bradley. “My big ideas are always accepted, and I never have to question the thought that my goals or bright ideas are too big or too far to reach. I have someone who believes in me and pushes me to reach goals that I think are out of reach. She picks up the slack and mess I leave behind so that I can continue the load that I choose to carry.”

There are many facets to Mego’s Wonderland. She describes herself as having been at various points a mother, business owner, girlfriend, ex-wife, friend, and (said with an implied wink) occasional therapist. But unquestionably, she is an artist – and that’s the part of herself that, now more than ever, she’s ready to show the world.

“We all are birthed with some sort of gift. What is your gift?” she asked. “If you are unsure, try things. Don’t let fear and worry keep you from the opportunity of learning more about yourself and what you have to offer to the world and to yourself. The words that I always tell myself is, ‘Don’t think. Just do.’ More can be accomplished when overthinking is dismissed.”

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