

# BEN HARRIS

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Decatur, GA 30032

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## Summary

Results-driven, with 20+ years' experience in communications, engagement, and management.

- Proven track record in external relations, advocacy, and strategic stakeholder engagement.
- Adept at building and nurturing relationships with diverse stakeholders to drive mission-critical initiatives.
- Passionate about leveraging strategic thinking and collaborative approaches to identify problems, create solutions, achieve business objectives, and amplify impact.
- Recognized for high standards, empathy, integrity, and a servant-leadership approach.

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## Experience

### Co-founder

Jan 2025 – Present

### Sibling Strong Retreats

Decatur, GA

[\(A peer-support retreat program for bereaved siblings built on 3 pillars of adventure activity, grief work, and rest.\)](#)

- 1 of 2 cofounders; defined mission, strategy, governance, and operating model.
- Planned the inaugural 4-day Sibling Strong Retreat in Franklin, NH (Oct 16-19, 2025), overseeing venue selection, budgeting, risk management, staffing, and participant experience.
- Built application pipeline and launched outreach campaign, including website content, a streamlined application form, targeted email and social campaigns, and partner referrals.
- Led early-stage fundraising (raised \$2k+) via GoFundMe and individual donors; engaged an advisory council and created donor communications.
- Developed brand and marketing collateral (postcards, announcement emails, social content) and managed media/community presence to increase visibility and applications.

### Co-founder / Chief Operating Officer

Oct 2020 – Dec 2024

### Everly

Decatur, GA

[\(A digital platform supporting grievors and end-of-life pre-planners.\)](#)

- 1 of 2 co-founders; led development of 4 innovative products:
  - a. a digital storage chest to save messages for loved ones to receive after you pass,
  - b. a pre-purchasable grief care video library & resources for loved ones to access when you pass,
  - c. NFC chips to be placed on headstones, photo frames, etc., that other grievors can “tap” to view a customisable personal memorial website,
  - d. pre-purchasable Celebration of Life arrangements to take the planning burden off one's family.
- Created corporate structure; led a cross-functional team of 4 direct reports to support product development, sales and customer success, and communication and marketing strategies.
- Successfully raised \$395,000 in angel investment from 3 Friends & Family investors.
- Gained prominent feature articles in 6 industry publications; built and maintained countless strategic relationships within new industries for us; gained industry partners, investor prospects, and customers.

### Engagement Director / Strategic Consultant

Jan 2020 – Apr 2021

### Friends of Mimosa Hall & Gardens

Roswell, GA

[\(A 501 \(c\)-3 stewarding the oldest net-zero home in America, the former home of famed architect J. Neel Reid.\)](#)

- Built and nurtured relationships with 12+ board members and various city officials and community leaders.
- Delivered a 5-year business plan incorporating a 3-phased response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Created internally-facing strategic and productivity-enhancing tools, including a Seasonal Activity Plan, a Fundraising Plan, task management software, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions, and a Master Index of Online Documents and Resources.
- Supported communications by writing, reviewing, and editing newsletters, press releases, and agendas.

### Director of Communications & Constituent

Engagement/ Lead Field Organizer

Oct 2018 – Dec 2019

### Office of GA House Rep. Mary Robichaux

Atlanta & Roswell, GA

[\(The Office of GA House of Rep. Mary Robichaux \(HD-48\) and her election campaign. Elect Mary Robichaux.\)](#)

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- Increased volunteer participation by 250–300% through strategic social media and email campaigns.
- Managed constituent engagement and communication, including social media postings and newsletters.
- Coordinated public forums, panels, and legislative attendance to further political and community goals.
- Built and maintained relationships with government officials, advocacy groups, and industry associations.
- Developed statements on legislative issues and published 26 online newsletters during Georgia's 2019 legislative session, resulting in increased engagement and an 80%+ subscriber list increase.

Career Counselor & Adjunct Professor  
of Business Communications  
Oct 2015 – May 2018

Career Advancement Center,  
Robinson College of Business  
Atlanta, GA

[\(The career center within GA's largest business college at Georgia State University.\)](#)

- Developed and led a Business Communication Lab, reaching 1500+ students annually.
- Created a student ambassador program, empowering students to promote workshops and programming.
- Coordinated ~15 events per semester, with ~10 events attracting 110+ students and 7+ employers each.
- Taught 1500+ students annually in 200-person lectures with guest speakers and giveaways.

Founder & Operator  
Nov 2006 – Nov 2012

Hobnob, LLC  
Atlanta, GA

[\(A career-based startup licensing a peer-based curriculum to college career centers.\)](#)

- 1 of 2 cofounders who launched Hobnob to help students identify high-potential career paths through peer-supportive discussion groups, led by a structured curriculum and trained facilitators
- Established partnerships with universities, for-profits, and non-profits, licensing our curriculum to 2 major colleges, Emory University and the University of California-Irvine.
- Developed 6 iterations of curricular and supporting materials, delivered public presentations, and facilitated career-oriented discussions.

District Manager  
May 2002 – Aug 2004

Cold Stone Creamery  
Greater Atlanta Area

- Managed 4 franchise locations, supervising a team of 16 managers and 85+ staff.
  - Opened 2 new locations, coordinating logistics, hiring, training, and marketing efforts.
  - Increased off-season sales by 15-20% with catering jobs, fundraising partnerships, and special events.
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## Volunteering

Facilitator / Peer Mentor / Advocate  
Jun 2012 – Present

Military Surviving Siblings and the Tragedy  
Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)  
Greater Atlanta Area

[\(A startup grief community & a national 501\(c\)-3 supporting survivors of military-related loss.\)](#)

- Founder of a ~300-member group for Military Surviving Siblings, hosting ~4 years of regular video chats.
- Addressed 5,000 attendees at the 2012 Department of Defense / Veterans Affairs Joint Conference on Suicide Prevention as 1 of 6 selected to serve on the TAPS Family Panel.
- Advocated for Gold Star Families through podcasts, video interviews, and print media.

Entrepreneur-in-Residence / Mentor  
Apr 2013 – May 2013

Inkomoko  
Kigali, Rwanda, Africa

[\(Financial Times ranked #8 fastest-growing company in Africa. 2025: mission of serving entrepreneurs.\)](#)

- 1 of 2 mentors in the inaugural mentorship cohort; lived and worked for 7 weeks mentoring business owners, including a shoe company, a hydro-electric plant, and an alliance of ~30 private high schools.
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## Education

Bachelor of Arts, English / Creative Writing, Emory University

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## Testimonial Excerpts from Ben Harris' LinkedIn Recommendations

Mike Harris (No Relation), President, Board of Directors, Friends of Mimosa Hall & Gardens

*"Ben Harris is without equal when it comes to resourcefulness. He listens intently to understand needs, questions, and requirements and seems to always pull together the appropriate team, application, or tool to accomplish the mission. As Engagement Director at the Friends of Mimosa Hall & Gardens, he has enabled our Board to be more efficient and effective. His ability to effectively manage staff and volunteers is exceptional. We are a better organization because of his engagement!"*

Steve Gibson, Founding President, Board of Directors, Friends of Mimosa Hall & Gardens

*"Ben Harris is a 'get things done' individual. His spirited work style and constant positive demeanor make it a pleasure to work with him. [...] Ben points to where he's about to hit the ball, then he delivers home run after home run. He's doing a great job creating organizational structure for our young non-profit and we're lucky to have him!"*

State Representative Mary Robichaux, Georgia House of Representatives, District 48

*"[Ben] was responsible for community engagement and did a fantastic job keeping everything organized and on track. [...] Ben grew our volunteer base by 150% in under one month and then managed all volunteers to produce excellent results. Once elected, Ben became my Director of Communications and Constituent Outreach and continued in assisting me in reaching out to our constituents with practical solutions to a variety of issues."*

Preston Thompson, Campaign Manager/ Chief of Staff, Georgia House of Representatives, District 48

*"[...] Ben helped coordinate our volunteers into a well-oiled machine. After bringing him on the team, our engagement with the community went up significantly. In difficult situations he was not flustered, and he was always willing to step outside of his job description to lend a hand. In such a tight contest, I can say with confidence that he helped take us from a loss to a win. [...]"*

Sharry Conroy, Associate Director, Career Advancement Center (CAC), Robinson College of Business

*"Ben Harris is a dynamic and knowledgeable coach, speaker, and counselor with a giant heart, strong intellect, and core values. He is exceptional in identifying strengths and providing encouraging insight into managing challenges. [...] As a colleague, he is positive, volunteers to help the team, and takes initiative to see things through. With clients, he is charismatic and easy to work with. People not only enjoy doing business with him, but his work ethic and genuine spirit engender trust and successful outcomes. Finally, I'd like to comment on Ben's character and innate skills. He is honest, trustworthy, genuine, accountable, and reliable. He is not one to brag about accomplishments; rather, he is joyful in the present knowing that he is of service [...]"*

Phillip Chen, Co-founder, Hobnob, LLC

*"I worked with Ben during our times at both Sapien and Hobnob - during this time, I witnessed firsthand his drive, passion, and integrity in everything he did. [...] More importantly, he always does what is right - even if it is inconvenient to him, he will always make sure that things are done with integrity. His focus on integrity is what helps him build trust with those he comes in contact with, and that trust in turn helps him create strong relationships across the board, whether it's with his own team or with potential clients, stakeholders, or audiences. If you're looking for someone to connect with people and help align them towards a common vision, goal, etc. - I wouldn't hesitate in recommending Ben."*

Theresa Stowe, Store Manager, Cold Stone Creamery

*"Having Ben as a manager was the best part of working at Cold Stone, which says a lot since there was also excellent ice cream. Ben communicated the needs of the stores in his district effectively and clearly. [...] He truly believes that people work harder when they have a love for what they are doing and feel that they have a stake in it. [...] By showing compassion to employees when needed and recognizing achievements and talents, Ben promotes a healthy work environment and bolsters his crew. [...]"*