

# Highsmith Family Accomplishments

(Living Document)



We are incredibly proud of the many accomplishments within the Highsmith family — we truly have a family full of rock stars! From ministry, active military, veterans, police officers, medical professionals, corporate executives, academic achievements and professional athletes, milestones to community leadership and creative talents, business owners, authors etc.... Our family continues to shine in so many ways! We love to acknowledge and celebrate each of these successes. This list is a living document that captures the highlights shared so far, and we look forward to adding more as we continue to uplift and honor one another.

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**Samuel Alexander Highsmith**  
**Son of Samuel J Highsmith**  
**Grandson of Samuel and Ernestine Highsmith**



**Alex was born in Wilmington, North Carolina on August 7, 1997**

He was a 3-sport athlete at Ashley High School. He was a unanimous 1st team all-conference linebacker as a senior and was given the opportunity to walk on to the football team at UNC -Charlotte in 2015. Alex was a 2-year starter, being named 1st Team All-Conference in 2018 & 2019 and 3rd Team All American in 2019, becoming the school's first AP All American.

He was drafted in the 3rd Round of the 2020 NFL Draft by the Pittsburgh Steelers. He was named to several NFL All Rookie Teams. 2022 was Alex's 3rd season in the NFL and it proved to be a breakout season. He finished with 60 total tackles and led the team with 14.5 sacks and led the NFL with 5 forced fumbles. Alex was named to the 2022 Pro Football Writers of America All-AFC Defensive Team. In that same year, the Steelers also nominated Alex for the NFL Art Rooney Award for sportsmanship. In 2023 he earned his 2nd AFC Defensive Player of the Week. Alex earned recognition in the Pro Football Focus Top 101 players from the 2024 season, landing at No. 65. Alex was named the 37th winner of "The Chief" Award, which is presented annually to a member of the Steelers organization who best exemplifies the spirit of cooperation with the media. After 5 seasons in Pittsburgh, Alex has 35.5 career sacks which ranks him 11th all-time in Steelers history!

Alex graduated from UNC-Charlotte in 2020 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Exercise Science. He is a devout Christian. Alex participated in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at UNCC and was a member of Elevation Church University City in Charlotte. He has founded the Alex Highsmith Family Foundation which will work to improve the lives of young people in Wilmington and Pittsburgh. Alex is married to Alyssa Ungrady Highsmith, of Ohio.



Honoring Michelle B Newman!!! Thank You for your service! SGM Newman has served in numerous assignments including Fort Bragg, Fort Sam Houston, Fort Stewart, Seoul Korea, Fort Eisenhower, US Embassies in Haiti and Guatemala, Fort Eustis, and the Defense Health Agency (DHA) in Falls Church, Virginia. She currently serves as the Medical Readiness Battalion SGM for MEDDAC-Fort Benning.

Her leadership roles include Unit Prevention Leader, SARC Representative, Master Resilience Trainer, Equal Opportunity Representative, Dental Clinic NCOIC, Operations NCO, Operations Coordinator, First Sergeant, DHA Joint Operations SGM, and Executive Officer to the DHA SEL.

Her awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal (6), Army Achievement Medal (4), Army Good Conduct Medal (7), National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon (5), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Ribbon (3), the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, and the Order of Military Medical Merit.

SGM Newman has completed extensive military training including the Sergeants Major Course, Equal Opportunity Leaders Course, SHARP, Dental Management Development, Unit Prevention Leader, Attaché Staff Operations, P3T Program Leader, and Lean Six Sigma Green Belt.

She holds an Associate's Degree from Central Texas College, a Bachelor's in Sociology (Cum Laude) from Ashford University, and a Master's in Human Counseling with a specialization in Crisis Response and Trauma from Liberty University.



We are so excited to celebrate Kenny!!  
Kenny Hairston Jr., Former Basketball Player for Pro-Skills in China, now director for Pro-Skills Basketball Son of Carolyn Hairston and Grandson of Carl Davis

Kenneth "Kenny" Hairston Jr., a Charlotte, NC native, has deep roots in basketball both as a player and a coach. A standout at Davidson Day School, Kenny also played two years with PSB Elite before continuing his career at Limestone University. At Limestone, he earned First-Team All-Conference honors, led NCAA Division II in three-pointers made per game, and surpassed the prestigious 1,000-point milestone. Kenny graduated with a bachelor's degree in Psychology and a minor in Coaching, combining his academic knowledge with his on-court experience. His journey with PSB began in 2019 as a coach, quickly rising to Manager, then General Manager. During this time, he collaborated with USA Youth Basketball and the NBPA, training kids virtually worldwide. In 2023, Kenny became the Director of PSB Charlotte, bringing his leadership and vision to the role.

In addition to his work with PSB, Kenny is the Head JV and Assistant Varsity Coach at Charlotte Country Day School. Known for his dedication and passion, Kenny continues to impact young athletes, helping them excel both on and off the court.

**Ministry:**

**Kathleen Graves**

Daughter of Shirley Leak and Granddaughter of Geneva "Tit" Highsmith Graves

**Sandy Drawhorn**

Daughter of Samuel and Ernestine Highsmith

**Shawn Highsmith**

Son of Carlos Highsmith and Grandson of Joseph Highsmith Sr

**Active Duty:**

**Michelle Brown Newman**

Medical Readiness Battalion SGM , US Army

Daughter of Leatha Mae Washington Brown and Granddaughter of Leatha Mae Highsmith Washington

**Veterans:**

**Fran Coleman**

Daughter of Maddie Davis and Granddaughter of Mattie "Sister Mattie" Highsmith Davis Davis

**Vance Robertson**

Son of Claudia and Paul Robertson and Grandson of Joseph Highsmith Sr

**Carlos Highsmith**

Son of Claudia and Joseph Highsmith Sr

**Paul Coleman Jr**

Son of Fran Coleman, Grandson of Maddie Davis, and Great Grandson of Mattie "Sister  
Mattie" Highsmith Davis Davis

**Medical:**

**Naomi Burks, Nurse**

Daughter of William Burks and Granddaughter of Shirley Leak, Great Grand Daughter of  
Geneva "Tit" Highsmith Graves

**Dr. Tasha Timberlake Hinton, Dentist**

Daughter of Julia Timberlake and Granddaughter Ernestine and Samuel Highsmith

**Dr. Greta Watts,**

Prior Gynecologist and Midwife, Current Hospice Care Professional

Daughter of Joseph H. Highsmith Sr.

**Pamela Sledge**

Creative Solution Therapy Care

Occupational Therapist

Daughter of Ronnie Highsmith and Granddaughter of Joseph H Highsmith Jr, Great  
Granddaughter of Joseph H. Highsmith Sr

**Jordan Gaines**

Occupational Therapist

Son of Jennifer Highsmith, Grandson of Iris and Milton Highsmith, Great Grandson of  
James "Buddy" Edward Highsmith Jr.

**Sports:**

**Kenny Hairston Jr.,**

Former Basketball Player for Pro-Skills in China, now director for Pro-Skills Basketball

Son of Carolyn Hairston and Grandson of Carl Davis, Great Grandson of Mattie "Sister  
Mattie" Highsmith Davis Davis

**Police:**

**Symone Brown**

Little Rock Arkansas

Daughter of Charles (Eddie) Brown and Granddaughter of Leatha Mae Washington Brown,  
Great Granddaughter of Leatha Mae Highsmith Washington

**Real Estate:**

**Joseph "Joey" K. Highsmith Jr**

Orlando Florida Realtor

Son of Joseph "Kelvin" Highsmith Sr, Grandson of Joseph H. Highsmith Jr, Great  
Grandson of Joseph H. Highsmith Sr

**Business Owners:**

**Jennifer Highsmith**

TallFit Clothing Line

Daughter of Iris and Milton Highsmith and Granddaughter of James "Buddy" Edward  
Highsmith Jr

**Ron Highsmith**

Highsmith Branding Group

Barbara Highsmith Reading Academy

Son of Barbara and Joseph H. Highsmith Jr and Grandson of Joseph H. Highsmith Sr

**Vance Robertson**

Zuri Investments

Son of Paul and Claudia Robertson and Grandson of Joseph H. Highsmith Sr

**Daniel Highsmith**

Published Author - King to King

Ace High Solutions

Son of Michael Highsmith and Grandson of Joseph H. Highsmith Jr, Great Grandson of Joseph H. Highsmith Sr.

**CDL Drivers who have driven to all US States:**

**Eric Joyner**

Son of Carlos Highsmith, and Grandson of Joseph Highsmith Sr

**Michael Highsmith**

Son of Joseph Highsmith Jr. and Grandson of Joseph Highsmith Jr

**PLEASE REACH OUT TO DIEDRA OR FRAN TO ADD ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

DOCUMENT CURRENTLY EDITED BY FRAN COLEMAN AND DIEDRA HOLLINS