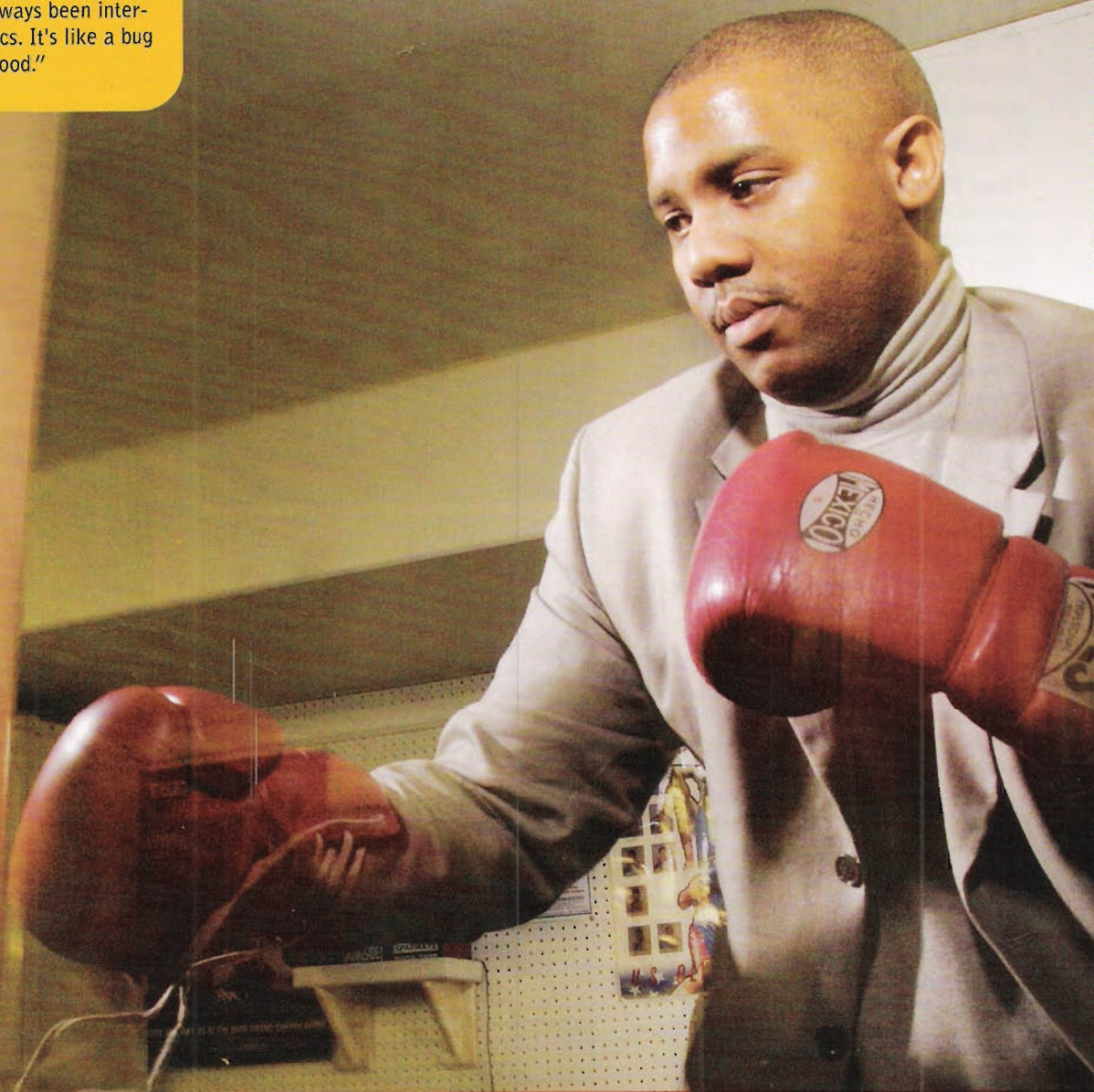


HENRY SANDERS

AGE: 32 **TITLE:** Vice President, Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce

QUOTABLE: "My mother has always been a community activist. My father helped with the South Side community center. I've always been interested in politics. It's like a bug – it's in my blood."



The Next Heavyweight

Amateur boxer Henry Sanders, Jr., is in the business community's corner and the people are better for it By Kathryn Kingsbury

LIFE JUST KEEPS GETTING MORE INTERESTING FOR MADISON native Henry Sanders, Jr. At 31, he's already built an impressive résumé: field representative for U.S. Representative Tammy Baldwin, community relations officer at the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development

Authority, and now vice president of economic development and public policy at the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce. And then there are his extracurriculars: he's an open-class amateur boxer who lettered in football and basketball during his days at East High. And while juggling all this, he co-founded and became executive director of the Madison Area Growth Network (MAGNET), which seeks to recruit and retain young talent to the community through professional development, civic involvement and social networking.

Sanders quickly saw the need for such an organization when he returned to Madison from his studies at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in 2001. "When I came back, I found out that most of my friends were gone. There

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was nothing to do socially. I wondered, 'Could I find someone to mentor me for professional development?' There was really nothing there." So in summer of 2003, he brought his concerns to Mayor Dave Cieslewicz. Mayor Dave introduced Sanders to fellow Gen-Xer Ward Lyles, transportation director for 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin, and the idea grew.

MAGNET's formal inception was April Fool's Day of 2004 – coincidence? – and in less than a year it has already attracted 125 members. "A lot of people are aware of Madison's difficulty retaining young talent, but we've gone and done something about that," Sanders says.

Knowing how persistent and goal-oriented Sanders can be, one might fancy that he spent his days as a Mendota Elementary student plotting his rise as a Madison mover and shaker. Sanders eschews any such imaginings. He figures his career path has grown organically out of his interest in how politics and public policy affect people's daily lives. "My mother [Theresa Sanders, a manager at Dane County Human Services] has always been a com-

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- Henry Sanders, Jr.

munity activist. My father [attorney Henry Sanders, Sr.] helped with the South Side community center. I've always been interested in politics. It's like a bug – it's in my blood."

The Chamber of Commerce job marries all Sanders' varied interests and talents – except, perhaps, boxing, which he admits has fallen to the side in recent months due to 12-hour work days. "I get to know all sides of Madison," he says. "Government, community and also the private sector." Every day, Sanders sees what a critical role businesses play in nurturing community cohesiveness through public outreach and charitable endeavors: "One of the things I want to do is let people know ... that business is good for the community."

Kathryn Kingsbury is a contributing writer to *Madison Magazine*.