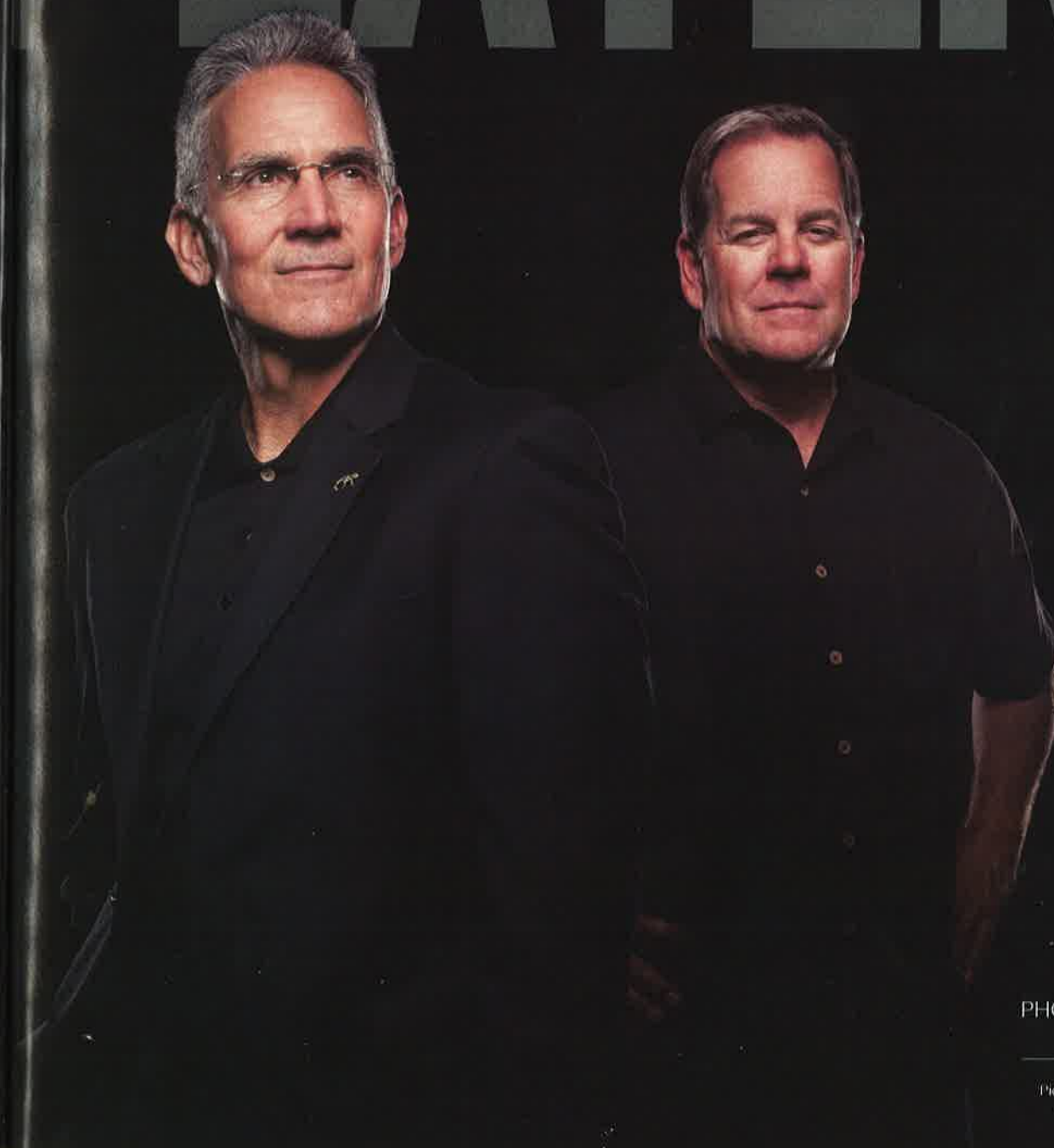


POWER PLAYERS

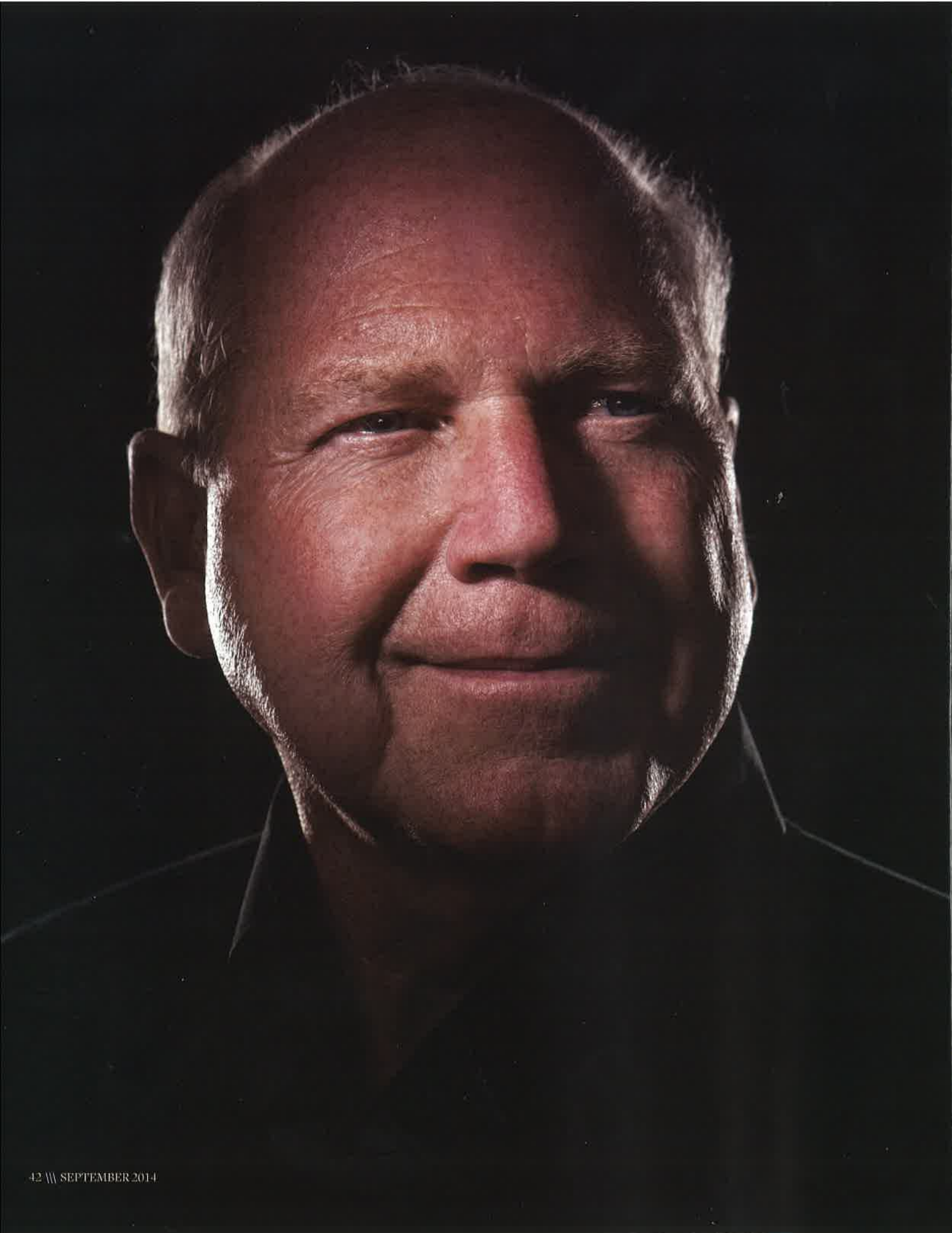


Check out our
impact players' full
responses online at
[www.columbia
businesstimes.com](http://www.columbia
businesstimes.com)

THEY GIVE TEAMMATES
CONFIDENCE TO WIN. COACHES
CAN RELY ON THEM FOR
EXPLOSIVE PERFORMANCES.
THEY'RE KEY TO THEIR TEAMS'
ACCOMPLISHMENTS. IMPACT
PLAYERS ARE FEW AND FAR
BETWEEN, BUT HERE OUR
FIVE OF THE CBT'S FAVORITE
TOURS DE FORCE ON THE LOCAL
SPORTS AND FITNESS SCENE.

BY SARAH REDOHL
PHOTOS BY ANTHONY JINSON

Pictured, from left: Mike Griggs, Chris Gervino,
Ken Ash, Mike Alden and Terry Wilson.



MIKE GRIGGS

Director of the Columbia Parks and Recreation Department

→ **PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND:** Sports programming supervisor, Columbia Parks and Recreation, 1984-1990; director, Sedalia Parks and Recreation, 1990-1993; park services manager, Columbia Parks and Recreation 1993-2012; assistant director, Columbia Parks and Recreation, 2012-2013; director, Columbia Parks and Recreation, 2013-present.

→ **WHAT DO YOU WISH PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION?** When the economy takes a downturn, parks and recreation departments across the nation become targets for budget cuts because some decision-makers mistakenly categorize the services that parks and recreation provide as “nonessential.” When decision-makers consider the value of the services their parks and recreation departments provide for their citizens, I would like to see these nine community benefits come to mind. Parks and recreation: strengthens community image and sense of place, supports economic development, strengthens safety and security, promotes health and wellness, fosters human development, increases cultural unity, protects environmental resources, facilitates community problem-solving and provides recreational experiences.

→ **HOW AGGRESSIVE WILL THE CITY BE IN DEVELOPING YOUTH SPORTS EVENTS HERE?** That is one of the top things I’d like to accomplish before I retire as director: to develop Columbia as a destination venue for amateur sports.

→ **OF WHAT RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU THE MOST PROUD?** Having a part in the planning, design and development of the baseball complex at Atkins Park. It’s rewarding to see local youth have the opportunity to play on a state-of-the-art, tournament-level facility and equally rewarding to know that this complex can draw in much-needed tourism dollars for our community.

→ **WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ASPECT OF YOUR JOB?** Observing firsthand Columbia citizens enjoying the programs and facilities that Columbia Parks and Recreation offers. When I see members of our community engaged in their favorite outdoor sports, I am reminded of the part our department plays in combating some of the nationwide problems, such as obesity, nature-deficit syndrome and health problems related to inactivity.

» Griggs has been a part of Columbia’s Parks and Recreation Department for 27 collective years. As the director for a little more than a year now, Griggs has big plans on the horizon. His scope of oversight includes more than 3,100 acres of park land and 83 parks and recreation facilities.