



“When I was in high school, one of the things that I always said was I want to have my own business.

At the time, I didn’t know what kind of business I wanted, but I loved taking any kind of classes that dealt with business.

During my senior year, I remember getting to school early one day and I overheard one of my teachers talking about me to another teacher. She said, ‘Oh I don’t know about her, she’s probably not going to make anything of herself.’

I know the only reason she said that was because I was pregnant at the time with my daughter, Terrell. But I had two wonderful and supportive parents who talked to me and said, ‘You’re going to finish school and you’re going to go to college’ and with that kind of support you have to excel.

And I did.

I finished high school and went to a junior college at home in Dade City, Florida for two years, then I completed my last two years at Florida A&M University where I graduated with my business management degree.

I moved to Florence in 1984 after I married my husband, Terry Alexander, and I was blessed to have my own State Farm agency not long after. I’ve been an agent for 36 years now.

I knew I wanted to eventually have a second business and one day I was at work at State Farm when Charlene Lowery stopped by. I told her that Doris Lockhart and I had been interested in investing in Downtown Florence and after she met with me, she went downtown to look at properties. She called me later and said ‘Guess what, there’s a building down here that looks just right. Let’s get together and talk about how to bring a business downtown.’

We all decided together that we wanted to do a boutique and that was how MiLadies 182 was started. We have been in business together for seven years now.

Becoming a business owner didn’t intimidate me because I knew what I could do and what I was capable of. I didn’t run from challenges then and that’s still true now.

I did go back to visit that teacher after I got my own State Farm agency though and let her know that I had my own business and was doing really well.

She never knew that I heard her say that years ago, but I just wanted her to see that I did make something of myself.”

- **Starlee Alexander, partner and co-owner of MiLadies 182 and State Farm Agent/Owner**