

## Nicholson Named to Worcester Business Journal's Power 50

*This is the Second Honor for the Mayor in as many Years*

When Gardner readers of the Worcester Business Journal opened their latest issue this past week, they may have spotted a familiar face. Mayor Nicholson has been named to the publication's Central MA Power 50 list, meant to honor the fifty most influential people in the Central Massachusetts's Economy over the last twelve months. This is the second time in as many years Nicholson has been honored by the publication, having been named to its "40 under 40" list last summer.

"Mike is a true champion for Gardner," said **City Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas**. "He works hard to improve the city for the present moment and for the future, and he genuinely cares about people's well-being here in Gardner. We're fortunate to have a Mayor who recognizes how important a collaborative relationship is in our city government, and understands the direct impact that has on Gardner's success. I'm thankful for the appreciation and respect he has for the work that we do."

Contemporaries of the Mayor in this edition include Roy Nascimento, President and CEO of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce, Eric Batista, City Manager of the City of Worcester, and Stephen Kerrigan, President and CEO of the Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center.

**Patti Bergstrom, owner of the Velvet Goose and President of Gardner Square Two, Inc.** - the City's Downtown Business Association - congratulated Mayor Nicholson by stating "It's a well-deserved award for an amazing young Mayor! Michael leads our City with intelligence, positivity and a love for his hometown. He has a skill set that is wide and deep and that is a rarity—not just for a 28 year old but rare for any professional. We are thrilled with all that Mayor Nicholson has already accomplished and are excited for his vision of the future. Nicholson is definitely rocking it in The Chair City!"

The Worcester Business Journal states that the Power 50 is their annual list of the most influential professionals in the Central Massachusetts economy, whereas those who work for the publication note that the list is designed to tell the story of how power is shared and used in the region, as evidenced by the people wielding that power most effectively. Through the list's production, they note, they hope to provide a roadmap to the region's residents about where the avenues of power and progress in Central Massachusetts lie.

Representatives of the publication indicated the choice to include Nicholson in this year's list was reflective of the diverse and rapid economic development taking place in the city, particularly in its downtown, which has seen a resurgence of interest after years of stagnation. As the publication had previously noted, the city saw 33 businesses open or expand in 2022, with an additional 7 thus far in 2023. Positive sentiments were echoed by several active and prospective developers working on projects within Gardner.

"Mayor Nicholson has always been an advocate for his City which is one of the reasons we love working in Gardner," said **Jonathan Bombaci, owner of Candor Realty and Millenium Holding Group**. "Mike is a very impressive individual. He has a clear vision and knows how to recruit people to help him make that vision a reality. I've only known Mayor Nicholson a short time, about 18 months, but I can adamantly say this is a well deserved recognition. He has a great plan for the city he represents and I am happy that we came upon Gardner when we did. I always say it's better to be lucky than good, and we were certainly lucky to find Gardner when we did. I'm excited to see what the city looks like in the next year and five years from now."

The notion was also shared by **Matthew Permian, also of Candor's team** who stated, "Mike is an ambitious guy who is revitalizing a city and breathing some new life into it. Thanks to his work, Gardner's becoming a place that is increasingly competitive among larger and more established cities in Massachusetts."

Several developers credited Nicholson's work in Gardner and the city's willingness to invest in its economic development and infrastructure as the reason Gardner stood out among other communities as an attractive investment option.

"My business operates in 15 different municipalities across Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and Mayor Nicholson is bar none the best city government official with whom I've worked," said **Michael Marchetti, owner of the Door Fund, Inc.** which now owns the Central Park Building located at 280 - 320 Central Street. "He cares deeply about his city and his constituents, and he truly wants the best possible outcomes for both. He's gone above and beyond in trying to help us here in the private sector; everyone from the individual shop owners who he personally helps with grants and rental placement all the way up to larger businesses like mine which need assistance with longer term projects."

Continued **Marchetti**, "He's a real rarity in the field of politics, and I'm grateful that I get to work in Gardner with him at the helm. He has tenacity and a determination to make the city a better place, and a real sense of integrity. That's what puts him above the rest for me."

Beyond relationships with local developers, Nicholson's work has opened the door to prospective partnerships at a wider level. **Joseph Rinaldi, of the Rinaldi - Pease Companies**, extended his congratulations to Mayor Nicholson, and added the following.

“For as long as I’ve known Mike, he’s been an excellent role model for the next generation of leadership in the Bay State and beyond. His focus on driving growth and rejuvenation for Gardner both economically and at-large is inspiring. The results he has been able to obtain for the people of his city speak for themselves really, and I’m glad that he’s being recognized for it”.

**Noah J. Pease, also of Rinaldi - Pease Companies,** echoed his colleague’s sentiments. “I’ve seen first hand the growth progress in Gardner’s downtown that Mike has championed. Our company’s looking at potential investments in this region thanks to the positive changes he’s put in motion, and we hope to join this upward economic wave soon.”

Mayor Nicholson was first sworn into office in July of 2020 following a special election. Prior to this, he served as the Town Administrator of the Town of Rutland, Massachusetts and the Executive Aide to Mayor Mark Hawke in Gardner before that. He is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts Amherst where he received Bachelors Degrees in History and Political Science and a Master of Public Policy degree. He later graduated from Suffolk University Law School.

Nicholson was the only elected official included in this year’s edition.

Mayor Nicholson’s profile for the Worcester Business Journal Power 50 can be found here:

<https://www.wbjournal.com/article/2023-power-50-michael-nicholson>