

# Meet Remarkable Women nominee Margaret Morton

## REMARKABLE WOMEN

by: [CBS 42 Digital Team](#)

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (WIAT) — Margaret Morton grew up in the small town of Sylacauga, where she says she had all the support and resources she needed as a small child.

“I was fortunate that I grew up in a neighborhood where everybody knew your name,” Morton said. “I had three or four mommas and daddies who were watching out for me and supporting me and encouraging me.”

After high school, she attended the University of Alabama, where she met her husband and came to terms with idea she would never return to her hometown. However, in the mid-70s, that’s exactly what happened. Her husband was recruited for a job in Sylacauga, and Morton became the guidance counselor at Indian Valley Elementary. In 1997, she joined a group of fellow citizens to address problems in the community.

“Being an elementary guidance counselor, and having been in the schools, I met every day children who had challenges, children who were food insecure, families who were unemployed, families who lived in poverty,” Morton recalled. “And so, I knew the challenges and the barriers to success. We set about looking across this nation for examples of communities that have come together. We called it “Dinner on the Grounds.” And if you’re my age and you’re involved in church activities, you know a little bit about “Dinner on the Grounds,” because that’s where everybody brings what they are good at, and they bring it to the table.”

From that meeting the [Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement](#) (SAFE) was born.

“SAFE actually is a one-stop shop of opportunities for children and families,” Morton explained. “And we have resources and systems and support and opportunities...literally across the age span.”

Morton became the Executive Director of SAFE and for nearly 25 years has been helping families get the resources they need to succeed. One story she shares is of a young teen mother.

“Through the support she received at SAFE, she graduated from Sylacauga High School. This young lady went on to Central Alabama Community College, which is right there in Childersburg, and she got her CNA,” Morton said.

She continued on, eventually becoming a registered nurse. Working two jobs, she and her daughter were still supported by SAFE with transportation, in-school and after-school resources, and other programs.

“This young lady came into my office and she had her hands folded and she said, ‘I’ve got something I want to share,’” Morton recalled. “She opened her hands and there were some keys in her hands and she said, ‘I just purchased my car.’”

Morton says stories like this are why SAFE was created—to give opportunities to succeed to those in need.

When asked about being named a “Remarkable Women” finalist, Morton said, “I don’t consider myself to be a remarkable woman, but I have been remarkably blessed in my life’s journey.”

Check in with CBS 42 every Tuesday in March, as we unveil a new [Remarkable Women finalist](#). The winner will be named “Central Alabama’s Woman of the Year” in a special ceremony on April 5 at 6:30 p.m., only on CBS 42.