

# Sanibel Captiva Community Bank gets new executive as a cofounder retires

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David Hall and Craig Albert began thinking about starting a bank from scratch more than 20 years ago. Since 2003, they have grown it from about \$6.5 million to \$700 million in bank assets.

Their original vision will continue to evolve.

[Sanibel Captiva Community Bank](#) will, for the first time since its inception, have a new executive vice president, chief operating officer and chief financial officer at the start of April.

Albert will remain as president.

Hall, who held all three of those roles from Day One, is retiring, effective March 31.

"Fortunately, he is going to stay on the board of directors of the bank," Albert said.

"He'll be missed. Luckily, he's not moving or anything like that. If we have any questions or issues arise, we've got his cell phone number.

"Even though David's retiring, it doesn't mean that he's not going to stay involved in the charities that he likes."



The Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, founded 20 years ago by David Hall, right and Craig Albert, (not pictured) is changing leadership. Hall is joining Albert in retirement, leaving the bank in the hands of John Wright, left. (Photo: Andrew West/The News-Press Part of the USA Today Network, The News-Press)

Newcomer John Wright, who for the previous decade considered Fort Myers a vacation destination, instead has made it his home. He will take on Hall's responsibilities having learned the lay of the land with Hall's guidance over the past year.

Hall, 66, is retiring so he can spend more time with his wife of 45 years. Gail Hall is a cancer survivor.

"She put up so much with me working long hours," David Hall said. "I want to be remembered as someone who had some good, quality time with her. I never thought I would retire. I got into my early 60s, and my thinking changed. She's regaining her strength now. I just want to spend more time with her. We'd like to be able to travel again and just do things together. I feel blessed that I do get to spend more time with her."

Sanibel Captiva Community Bank has its roots in another community bank.

"In 1998, Chip Black and myself, we formed First Community Bank of Southwest Florida," Hall said. "Craig and Chip started talking in 2001. Craig was not happy with where he was at. He left and came to work at First Community Bank in 2001."

In early 2002, a branch opened on Sanibel.

In 2003, Albert and Hall left and formed their own bank, building from scratch what now has eight branches, including the new, 16,000-square-foot "Bridge Branch" at 9311 College Parkway.

The bank has grown from three employees to 104. It has grown while the number of community banks in the area have shrunk. There were 26 locally owned community banks in the area when Hall arrived in 1991. Now, there are three. Finemark National Bank & Trust and Edison National Bank are the other two.

The SunTrusts, Wells Fargos and Bank of Americas serve their purpose, but they can't connect with a community like their smaller counterparts, Hall said.

"A community bank is much more in touch with the small businesses in the community they're involved with. I think of it in terms of a billion dollars or less in assets," Hall said. "They have branch managers, but they don't really have any local executives. The community involvement is just not there. And that's what I truly enjoy about community banking, is being involved in the community."

In Sanibel Captiva Community Banks early days, a holding company owned half the bank and outside investors held the other half, Hall said.

"The partnership part of it was Craig would go out and get the business in the door," Hall said. "I would take care of the business once it got in. My expertise was taking care of all their accounts. Loan operations, where we do the loan documents and keep track of all the loan payments. It's worked out really well."

It worked out well, except Hall needed an exit strategy.

Enter Wright.



**The Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, founded 20 years ago by David Hall, left, and Craig Albert,(not pictured) is changing leadership. Hall is joining Albert in retirement, leaving the bank in the hands of John Wright, right. (Photo: Andrew West/The News-Press Part of the USA Today Network, The News-Press)**

Just before the coronavirus pandemic began, Wright reached out to Hall and Albert, inquiring about working for Sanibel Captiva Community Bank. Wright, 54, wanted to relocate to Fort Myers from his native Maryland full-time.

Wright had run a handful of banks in Maryland but left his last bank despite not having a job in place for the move to Fort Myers.

"I had no more email," Wright said. "And I had no job. I didn't have anything to worry about. It was the weirdest, not-great feeling. I got bored. When David told me about the credit job, I said, 'That would be great. It will make my wife happy because I've been driving her crazy.'"

Hall and Wright circled back with one another about a year ago.

"In April, we had an opening in our credit department," Hall said. "He came on board as a credit analyst. We wanted to make sure that he liked us, and we wanted to make sure that we liked him. After about six months, we reached the conclusion that we really liked him, and he really liked us."

Hall said Wright was overqualified for the job. That's how Hall finally had an exit strategy. He had a successor in Wright.

"He picked it up right away," Hall said of Wright. "He really knows his stuff. We pretty much have the same mindset."

Wright has big shoes to fill, Albert said, but he can do it.

"One good thing about John, is he really does want to get involved in the community," Albert said. "John is really a nice guy. He and David agree on a lot of financial issues and accounting issues. They feel the same way. They're both CPAs. They're both really smart."

Wright began by tackling the Payroll Protection Program loans that came about as a direct result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Sanibel Captiva Community Bank granted 766 loans totaling \$69.6 million, saving about 9,000 jobs during the first round of lending, according to statistics provided by bank communications director Amy McQuagge.

There were 308 more loans totaling \$33 million during the second round of lending.

"In the beginning, it was hard for me on a personal level, because there's a lot of people who deserve it and need it," Wright said of those loans. "But there's also people applying because it was a technicality. The reward is knowing that you're helping a ton of people. As we have continued through this, it's gotten easier. Part of it is that I've gotten to know the bank.

"Now, it's a lot easier for me to reconcile the overwhelming help that we are giving to people, versus the few that are getting PPP because of technicalities."

It was easy, Wright said, signing off on loans to small businesses with five employees asking for \$15,000 to save their jobs than to somebody earning \$300,000 to \$400,000 per year, Wright said.

Wright also hopes to carry on the philosophy of philanthropy he shares with Hall.

"We helped a lot of food shelters and other non-profits with donations," Wright said. "It gives you a very good feeling. I only asked David and Craig for one thing. I didn't need their help in knowing how to run an accounting department or finances or anything like that. What I needed help with was getting to know the community. The job of CFO and COO does not concern me at all. I know I can do it. What I want is to get more involved with the community. That's because in my prior life, I always worked for community banks."

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