

WOMEN OF THE YEAR

AN ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL
SPECIAL REPORT AND CUSTOM CONTENT

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Avionics Vet Found Own Way in Men-Led Field

Meets Worker Shortfall Challenge as Work Builds

By CHRIS CASACCHIA

Kathryn Brewer is charting the next leg of growth for **Leading Edge Avionics**.

The company, which shares a 10,000-square-foot hangar at John Wayne Airport with **Martin Aviation**, is expanding operations in June to Chino Airport in San Bernardino County to meet rising demand in an industry plagued with workforce shortages.

“We can still accommodate [new and existing customers] and provide an opportunity for the company to grow,” said Brewer, who recently acquired **Leading Edge** from aviation entrepreneur **Mike Manclark** for an undisclosed price.

Leading Edge specializes in general aviation retrofits for avionics, such as navigation, Wi-Fi, flight management, GPS and transponder systems.

Call it a comeback for Brewer, who returns to the aviation sector after a nearly five-year run leading a marketing firm with her son, Jeff.

She’s flourished in the male-dominated industry, but it took time to navigate the terrain. She said she avoided comparing herself to colleagues, especially men, asked a lot questions, and wasn’t intimidated if her technical expertise didn’t match that of her co-workers.

“I focused on creating a collaborative culture, one in which the team learned or came to understand their importance to the overall vision and mission,” she said.

During her career, she’s been invited to **Lockheed Martin** to see F-22s roll off the assembly line, spent years at a manufacturer that produced 80% of the aerostructure of the Tomahawk Cruise Missile, and oversaw operations



Navigating niche: Brewer said she avoided comparing herself to colleagues over the years, especially male co-workers

that produced hundreds of discrete parts for nearly every model of U.S. military and commercial aircraft.

“I find this industry very exciting, and very

interesting,” she said. “It challenges me in a way no other industry has challenged me in terms of technical expertise, variety of disciplines.”

Business Boost

Business has been fueled by a looming deadline to meet federal aviation guidelines for a technological upgrade that improves aircraft tracking.

Most planes are required to install an automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast system by 2020.

The technology essentially improves ground-based radar systems with precise tracking using satellite signals. The Federal Aviation Administration adopted the regulation in 2010.

The upgrade allows pilots to see the same type of displays that flight controllers monitor, such as aircraft in the sky, hazardous weather and terrain, and other important flight information, such as temporary restrictions. The FAA says the technology reduces the risk of runway incursions, provides wider geographic coverage, and improves overall performance by saving time and money due to increased efficiency, while reducing fuel burn and emissions.

Meeting the deadline has prompted many plane owners and management companies to upgrade other systems so they can have them done all at once, particularly Wi-Fi, which is coveted by business charter passengers and leisure travelers alike. The improvements have also benefited **Leading Edge**’s bottom line.

“We cover the general aviation spectrum,” said Brewer, who’s spent more than 25 years in the aerospace sector, including nearly a decade on the manufacturing side. “If you can fly it, we can do your plane.”

She serendipitously landed in the industry after graduating college and ended up falling

for the field, holding various operating and finance roles over the years, including chief operating officer and chief financial officer.

The industry is growing at an annual double-digit clip, and **Leading Edge** is forecasting a revenue spike this year of 10% to 15% to \$6 million.

The company competes against **Affordable Avionics**, **Advantage Avionics** and **Howards**, among others.

Keeping Up

It added seven technicians in the past year, but like competitors is struggling to fill open jobs.

The global aviation industry is facing critical shortfalls of maintenance technicians, pilots and cabin crews as travel continues to rise due to decreased passenger prices.

Aircraft maker **Boeing Co.** presented some sobering statistics in its 2017 to 2036 outlook: North America alone will require an additional 117,000 pilots, 118,000 technicians and 154,000 cabin crew members in that period.

“This is going to be a problem that is only going to get worse,” Brewer said.

The shortfalls come during a boom in complex aviation equipment and products, an aging workforce, and a diminishing pipeline of former military personnel, some of whom have transitioned to the aerospace sector after service.

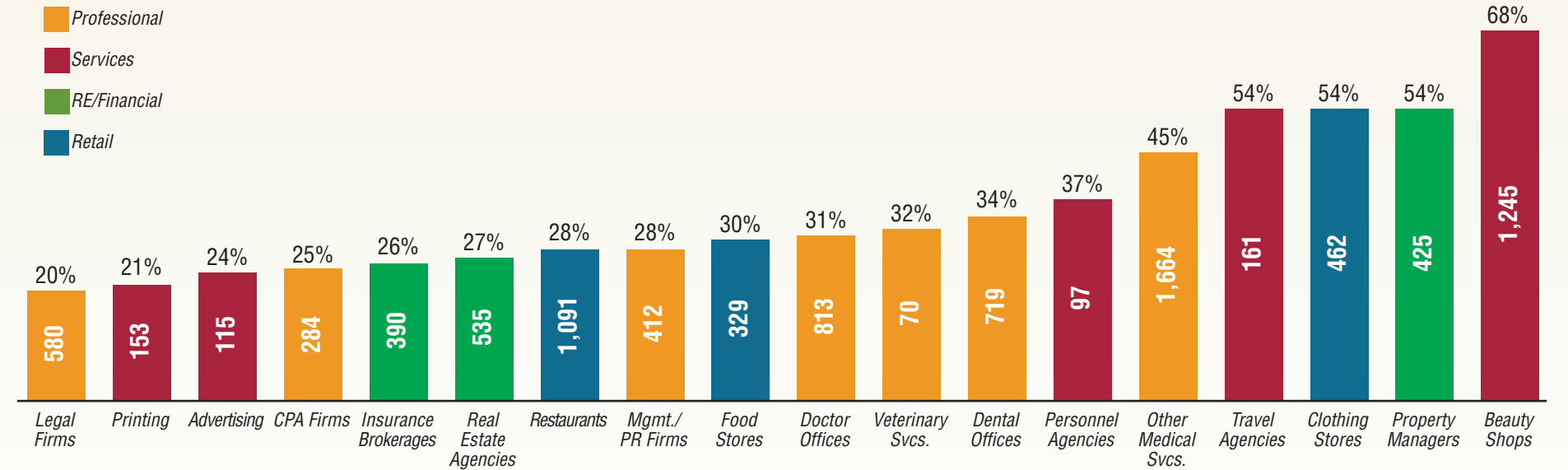
The need has become so glaring that Congress is trying to close the gap. Senators **Jim Inhofe**, R-Okla., **Richard Blumenthal**, D-Conn., **Jerry Moran**, R-Kan., and **Maria Cantwell**, D-Wash., sponsored the Aviation Maintenance Workforce Development Pilot Program introduced on March 7.

The program is focused on recruiting the na- ➔ **Brewer 28**

Women-Owned Industry

OC SECTORS' STRENGTH

Chart shows business segments in four categories where 20% or more of the independent enterprises—no branch offices or companies based outside OC—are owned by women, and the total number of local firms owned in those industries.



Source: Inside Prospects Inc.
Note: Some numbers rounded

Research by Paul Hughes
Graphic by Brette Miller



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She Adapted to Fit In and Now Stands Out in a Crowd

Fuel Distributor Owner Encourages Other Women

By MEDIHA DIMARTINO

Two out of four images on **Koch Industries Inc.**'s website feature a woman. One appears to be building something, while another, decked out in protective gear, is standing in front of a wall of oil barrels, her picture a link to "rewarding careers."

The petroleum industry was very different when **Liz McKinley**, founder of Huntington Beach-based fuel distributor **Pinnacle Petroleum Inc.**, went for a job interview at Wichita, Kan.-based Koch in 1981. The company, executives said, would provide on-the-job training—she'd start out as a scheduler and work toward becoming a commodity trader.



McKinley: was first woman at her first employer in industry

"It sounded so glamorous for a girl from Stillwater, Oklahoma," she said. "So I took the job, and it was not until I got there that I realized I was the only woman."

She said she doesn't know why Koch chose to take the gender plunge but that afterward it hired another woman and has had a healthy mix ever since. The situation wasn't new only for McKinley but also for her co-workers. She said she made sure they were comfortable around her, and felt "like they could play their frat games, joke around and give each other trouble like they would without me there."

She recalled, "It wasn't just a new job and a

new city, it was a whole new cultural immersion." Being one of the guys also meant ample opportunity to advance. "The Kochs treated me very well ... I had amazing responsibilities at a very young age. I think that set me off on a pathway to feeling confident that I could do pretty much whatever I set my mind to."

And she has.

Firmer Footing

After opening an office for Koch in Birmingham, Ala., McKinley moved on to work as a commodities trader at other fuel companies. The job was rewarding but stressful—you were only as good as your last trade.

She instead pivoted to wholesale distribution and established and ran what she says was a successful division for her last employer.

"I felt I had a real knack because it's a relationship-based sale, and it's a long-term sale," McKinley said.

Shortly afterward, the owner sold the company, and in the process failed to honor its promise of an annual bonus to its workforce.

"They say, 'hell hath no fury like a woman scorned,'" McKinley said. "I had made a ton of money for the company, and I just thought, 'That's crazy, I'm out of here.' I quit and took some of my customers with me."

She launched Pinnacle Petroleum in 1985, running it with three employees from her home in Huntington Beach for about six years.

"I had the copy machine in the bathtub, and we were all jammed in this little room, but I didn't really want us to get an office because I enjoyed being home where the kids were after school," she said. "We finally got to the point where we couldn't all sit together anymore, and I had to get an outside office."

McKinley had few peers in the field at the time and plenty of skeptics.



Giving back: Pinnacle Petroleum employees work to supply fuel to first responders at natural disaster site

"Most of our competitors started out three generations ago," she said. "And, of course, most of them are men—there's only a couple of female distributorships in the United States. I had calls from people saying they just didn't think I could do it. And ... they weren't saying it to be mean; they were just matter-of-fact telling me that this isn't going to work."

"At that point, I wasn't going to fail," she said, meaning the detractors motivated her.

Big Break

McKinley grew Pinnacle Petroleum's revenue, which today is just under \$200 million, supported by a staff of 22. The firm operates as a wholesaler-distributor—it buys fuel from refiners and sells to end-user accounts, such as government agencies and commercial fleets; several customers are Fortune 100 companies. Its revenue is tied to the price of fuel, while its sales volume has increased steadily over the past 24 years, she said.

Pinnacle also provides a fuel hedging service. A big break came in the late 1990s, when McKinley secured a contract with construction companies building three dams for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MET). The project required excavation of tens of millions of cubic yards of soil, performed using more than 100 bulldozers, loaders and dump trucks.

"We hedged their fuel costs, saving them a ton of money," she said. "That wasn't something that they had done at a wholesale level before. And I could do that because of my trading background ... Those were huge deals for us, and that was basically how we catapulted the business to the next level."

Diversification

Pinnacle formed a partnership this year with **U.S. Bank** to provide a company-branded fuel and service-station credit card for commercial and government fleets. It's a new source of revenue that McKinley hopes to grow.

Her daughter **Maddie**, a graduate of the **University of Southern California**, joined the business last year after a stint at **Fox International** as marketing manager.

"We're hoping to be a generational business enterprise," McKinley said.

Her advice to Maddie and other women considering a career in the petroleum industry?

"I think the very most important thing for success is grit and stick-to-itiveness," she said. "I tell my kids and my employees all the time that hard work always pays off. It may not be a linear process, but if you just keep plugging away at it, you're eventually going to be successful. To get knocked down and get back up again requires grit."

That's true, in my mind, for anything in life." ■

Brewer

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tion's next generation of aviation experts and providing them with necessary skill sets to succeed in a key industry with a deep legacy throughout Southern California.

Many of Leading Edge's 15 employees have been in the industry for more than a decade, some for more than three.

"We're not alone," Brewer said. "It's a technical industry and requires a lot of experience to understand the wording and the configurations, especially in smaller position planes."

Leading Edge offers several benefits to employees, including training with manufacturers, and help with gaining various flight certifications. Employees can also earn a pilot license completely funded by the company.

"It's one of the benefits that we offer to entice people and motivate them," said Brewer, who's in the midst of acquiring a pilot license herself.

Later this year the company will offer staffers an employee stock ownership plan, a rarely implemented program in the U.S. that essentially provides an ownership stake.

Brewer contributed to an ESOP earlier in her career and said she wanted to grant her employees more equal footing on business decisions, whether it be overtime pay or taking on a new project.

"In the past they've always hoped there was an equity play, but it didn't really materialize," Brewer said. "There was tremendous enthusiasm for it."

The National Center for Employee Ownership estimates there were only about 7,000 ESOPs in the U.S. last year covering 14 million workers, or less than 9% of a workforce of 161.9 million through February, according to the latest figures released by the U.S. Depart-



Technician: along with fellow company owners in industry, Brewer must meet growing challenge of finding employees trained for the work

ment of Labor.

Leading Edge is nearing certification by the **Women's Business Enterprise National Council**, a lengthy process that ensures a company is woman-owned and provides new business opportunities, such as the ability to bid on government contracts.

Company History

The company, which was renamed last year, has a deep history in Southern California.

Western Avionics was established in 1970 as a repair and maintenance outfit by **Stan Erick-**

son and Scott Gregory.

Erickson sold his interest last year to Manclark, who also acquired a partial stake from Gregory.

Manclark sold his entire stake to Brewer in January.

Manclark previously owned Costa Mesa-based Leading Edge Aviation Services Inc., which painted military and commercial aircraft and had more than \$100 million in annual sales.

He sold a majority interest in 2012 to Los Angeles-based **Vance Street Capital LLC**. After two follow-on acquisitions, the private

equity firm formed **International Aerospace Coatings Holdings LP**, registered in Shannon, Ireland, with U.S. headquarters in Irvine.

After the Leading Edge Aviation sale, Manclark left the company and pursued philanthropy and a lifelong dream of owning and restoring OV-10 aircraft—war birds originally designed for U.S. military operations in Vietnam.

He established the nonprofit **Mangic**, which fuses restoration of a small squadron of OV-10 Broncos for general aviation with philanthropic endeavors, including providing support to the Children's Emergency Hostel in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, and injured Marines; meals, education and clothing for homeless people and orphanages; and child adoption services.

Manclark was sentenced in 2016 to five months in jail and five months of home confinement after pleading guilty to one felony count of aiding and abetting others in making false material statements in a record or report to gain regulatory compliance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

At the time of the offense, he served as chief executive of Leading Edge, which had pleaded guilty to one felony count of treating, storing or disposing hazardous waste without a permit at the company's painting facility at the Greenville Mid-Delta Regional Airport.

The company was ordered to pay a \$1 million penalty, according to the Department of Justice.

Brewer and Manclark, who worked together for years at Leading Edge Aviation Services, hammered out the deal in six months. He was happy to embark on a new journey, and she was ready to get back into the field after a nearly five-year stint as chief executive at **Digital Eye Media**, a marketing firm in Newport Beach.

"I wanted to break out and get back into aviation," she said. "You want to do what you really love." ■



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5 Tips to Help Women Become More Confident Investors

In more than 90 percent of families, women are either solely responsible for financial decisions, or make those decisions in conjunction with their partner.¹ And by 2022, women are expected to control more than 60 percent of the wealth in the United States—giving women immense power over the financial health of not only their own situation, but the country as a whole.²

Since the vast majority of women—80 to 90 percent³—will be solely responsible for their finances at some point in their life, preparation is imperative, especially in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Here are 5 tips that women can follow to better prepare themselves in advance of a life-changing event:

1 Don't undervalue yourself

It's so important to understand that while being a woman means thinking about investing differently, it should not be looked at as a setback or an obstacle to overcome. Women are just as capable at investing as men when it comes to math and finances.⁴ In fact, women actually tend to be more decisive than men when it comes to figuring out their retirement expenses, how much health care coverage they will need once they retire, and other critical financial decisions.⁵

Start by familiarizing yourself with your or your family's financial situation, from income to expenses, investments to IRAs. Get all that information in one place, so that it's easily accessible if you need to refer to it. Schedule a meeting with your financial advisor to talk about "what-if" scenarios like death or divorce, and talk through how you or you and your partner/spouse might want to tweak your portfolio to account for unexpected life changes. Also take advantage of any "financial wellness" programs that might be offered through the workplace—these are easy, low-stress ways to become familiar with the ins-and-outs of investing and financial planning, and you don't have to take time away from the office to make it happen.

2 Surround yourself with a strong team of experts

You don't have to navigate the entire process of planning for the future alone. Financial planning—especially for uncertain events—can often seem overwhelming at first. If you decided that you wanted to learn how to swim, would you simply jump in the water without any advice? Or would you seek out an expert who knows how to safely navigate the water? The same goes for getting started with financial planning: start by finding an expert—or a team of experts—who can help you navigate the process from the beginning. You need to make sure that you have a team of decision-makers, so start by identifying who you need to talk to in order to make decisions. At a simple level, it's probably an accountant and somebody in the financial services industry. But your team can also involve people outside of the industry. Do you have a family member you trust, for instance? Identify who's on your team.

3 Plan for an uncertain future by thinking about the short-term

One of the most important tips for ensuring financial success in the midst of an unexpected event—like illness, divorce, or death—is to keep some cash reserves accessible in stable investments or bank accounts, which can be easily accessed should you need to make an unplanned withdrawal. Work with your financial advisor to make sure you and your family members have the right kind of life insurance or disability insurance to supplement your finances immediately in the event of a tragedy.



4 Don't be afraid to take some risks

It has become generally accepted based on the results of numerous studies that women tend to be more risk-averse and that's one factor that hurts them from the get-go. Since women tend to be more risk-averse than men, they are less likely to take chances with their investments. And while that's not necessarily a negative, it can leave women further behind than their male counterparts when it comes to saving for the future.

To avoid missing out on potential investments because of a fear of risk, work with your financial advisor to understand how much risk your portfolio can take while still achieving your baseline goals. Talking with a professional can help overcome some fear associated with investing, while helping you find a balance between too much risk and not enough. They can also help you break down the decision-making into what you need to know to overcome that fear.

5 Start planning for the future early

It's crucial that women begin planning for long-term financial success early, not only because women tend to live longer, but also because they tend to make less than men. Saving for retirement as a woman, for instance, means needing to save an average of 26 percent more than men to make up for wage gaps and differences in life expectancy.⁶ The retirement gap between men and women is a real thing, but it's not insurmountable with a little advanced planning. Make a list of long-term financial goals, and visualize the kind of life you want to lead in your retirement years. Then, make a plan for getting there.

Everybody thinks that saving for retirement is buying the hot stock. That's not how life works. The key is understanding what asset allocation is, which helps you design your blend of investments. And you need to also understand diversification, which is about buying various kinds of investment forms under different conditions.

The Bottom Line

Whatever unexpected events life might throw at you, it's important you're surrounded by a team of experts to help you protect the wealth that you've worked so hard to attain. The right team will help you create a plan so that you can enjoy the present knowing that whatever comes your way, your financial future will be protected.

Whether you're the steward of family assets or want to protect the wealth you've worked so hard to build, The Private Bank can help. For more information contact Laura Dang at 949-553-4307 or email laura.dang@unionbank.com.

¹ Ameriprise Financial, "Women and Financial PowerSM study" June 2014.

² The Wall Street Journal, "Clients from Venus" April 2012.

³ ICMC "Why we need to bridge the financial literacy gap between women and men" September 2016.

⁴ NCBI, "Gender differences in mathematics performance: a meta-analysis." March 1990.

⁵ Personal Money Service, "Men vs. Women in Questions of Personal Finance"

⁶ <https://www.financialfinesse.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2015-gender-gap-report.pdf>

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College Savings Ideas

by Daniel Fan, Director of Wealth Planning, First Foundation Advisors

It's spring break season, and if you recently had your child home from college or have a high school senior planning to attend college next year, tuition costs are likely on your mind. Hopefully you were able to plan and save when your child was young, but, regardless, below are some additional pointers to help plan for and minimize costs...and avoid costly mistakes.

Paying for School

Student aid

If your child is applying for federal loans or grants, a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed each year of college. Even if you don't think you'd qualify for federal aid, it's worth it for college students and their parents to complete the FAFSA, because schools often use the information for other aid. So, if your child has not done so yet, work together to renew the FAFSA before the following deadlines:

For attendance from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, forms can be submitted from Oct. 1, 2017, to June 30, 2019. But the amount of aid available is limited and it's given out on a first-come, first-served basis, so it's best to apply as early as possible.

Scholarships

Explore grant and scholarship opportunities through the college or affiliation sites (e.g., veteran, firefighter, church organizations).

Don't assume you won't qualify for aid or low-cost loans. Many assets, like homes and retirement accounts, are not counted in the aid/loan calculation. If you have other children in college, that might also lower your expected contribution. It's worth applying to find out. Make sure to document qualified education expenses if utilizing college saving plans (e.g., 529) plans or Education Savings Accounts) or IRAs to pay for college.

IRAs and savings accounts

Remember that withdrawals from qualified education accounts and IRAs used to pay for qualified expenses must be made in the year the expense is incurred. Withdrawals made in a different year are considered non-qualified withdrawals subject to taxes and penalties.

Staying Out of Debt

Build a budget

Work with your child to set a budget and strongly encourage her to stick with it. Don't forget to include travel expenses between school and home.

Credit cards

Instruct your child to avoid on-campus credit card sign-up booths and discuss the negative impact of high-interest debt.

Control spending

If your child already has credit cards, discuss the importance of controlling usage. When your child uses a credit card for a discretionary expense, have her save the same amount in a savings account.

Managing Expenses

Used versus new

Purchase used books and classroom materials. Most campuses have online sites for sale/exchange of used books and materials.

Go off-campus

Buy school and household supplies off-campus. Such products are usually cheaper at off-campus budget stores or chains.

Go car-free

Leave the car at home. This will save on parking fees, gas, maintenance and possibly insurance costs. Uber, Lyft or a bike can be more affordable ways to travel.

Be smart about gifts

Have your child request money or campus bookstore gift cards from family/friends for holidays and birthdays.

Meal planning

Research school meal plans to save on food. If your child does not know how to cook, help her learn a few quick and healthy recipes.

Part-time job

Have your student consider applying for an on-campus job. Certain jobs, such as note taking for disabled students for classes your child is already enrolled in, can allow your child to earn extra money without affecting her studies.

Medical Costs

Explore nearby options

If your child is covered under your medical plan, make sure to go over the plan to identify in-network doctors and facilities near campus.

Flexible spending accounts

Have dependent children save receipts for any medical expenses that may be reimbursable through a health Flexible Spending Account (FSA) or deductible on your tax return.

Hopefully these pointers will help you get your college student off on the right financial footing and teach them money-management skills that will extend well beyond their college years.

Daniel Fan

Daniel Fan serves as the Director of Wealth Planning for First Foundation Advisors. In this role, he oversees the firm's Wealth Planning department and advises clients on sophisticated wealth strategies. Mr. Fan has over 15 years of experience as a Wealth Planner and specializes in evaluating and optimizing all clients' wealth plans to meet their financial needs. He works closely with all teams across First Foundation and ensures he delivers a personalized experience to support all clients. Mr. Fan is a Certified Financial Planner™ and holds his Juris Doctorate and Master's in taxation from Pepperdine University School of Law and Golden Gate University respectively. He earned his Bachelor's degree from the University of California, Los Angeles. Contact him at 949-535-5351 or dfan@ff-inc.com.



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Developing the Pipeline of Women Executives

Find out how sponsorship plays a key role in growing the number of women in the C-Suite

by Susan Pound, Executive Vice President, Regional Sales Manager, Wells Fargo & Company

Though the number of women in the C-suite continues to steadily increase, the rate at which those numbers climb is significantly lower than many would like to see. One of the most effective ways to increase representation is for female executives to sponsor the next generation of promising women who can enact change in future boardrooms.

Today women in many fields are advancing the executive ranks faster and further than their predecessors, but what exactly are they doing to develop the female executive pipeline? To ensure the number of women in the C-suite continues to grow, it would behoove those with the ability and means to sponsor promising up-and-coming female employees.

Despite modest gains in recent years, women are still severely under-represented in corporate suites and boardrooms. In 2016, only 24% of international C-suite positions were occupied by women — a slight improvement from 16% in 2010. Though difficult to say whether women's advances in corporate leadership result directly from other women's help, women who receive mentorship or sponsorship are paying it forward. 32% of women say they have a mentor at work and 65% of those mentored go on to become mentors themselves, thus perpetuating the developmental cycle.

A prime example of paying forward lessons learned and offering expertise to promising women is Betsy Duke, chairman of the Wells Fargo Board of Directors and first female chairperson of a top U.S. bank. "Mentors," Duke says, "help to develop the next generation. It's important to embrace being a role model because people look at you [and they see that] and they say, 'I can do that.'"

While mentorship programs have been around for a long time, and most of us are familiar with them, what exactly is sponsorship? How does a sponsor help others advance? And do women need sponsors more than men do?

“ The impetus is on us. If we want to develop the next generation of women, we need to step up and act as sponsors to help them. ”

Not your typical sponsor

A corporate sponsor isn't the person to confide in about personal issues, but in many ways, a corporate sponsor can make all the difference between stalemate and growth.

Research has shown that women who speak up and promote themselves heavily in the workplace can be penalized. Men are used to highlighting their accomplishments and speaking up when they want more responsibility, visibility, or a promotion. This double standard has plagued women for decades.

Mentors help others, informally or formally, navigate their careers by providing guidance for career choices and decisions. But sponsors go further. A sponsor who uses strong influence to help a woman obtain high-visibility assignments or jobs can make a real difference in that woman's career. By promoting another woman, you help her bypass the double standard we have all learned to live with for so long.

Which should you be?

Are corporate sponsorship programs common? Not really. In 2017, about half of US companies run women-oriented mentorship programs, but less than a third run sponsorship programs. If you are looking for ways to help other women advance, a formal sponsorship program may not be a ready option in your company. But that need not stop you from inquiring or putting in place a sponsorship.

As a sponsor you can:

- Connect protégés to career opportunities

- Advocate for a protégé's advancement
- Publicly endorse protégés
- Expect high performance in return
- Help protégés confront and interrupt bias
- Prepare your protégé for the challenges in her executive roles

Keep this in mind: mentors advise; sponsors act. A sponsorship requires more time on behalf of both the sponsor and the protégé — but it can also be far more rewarding and increase the pipeline of female executives in your company.

Why be a sponsor?

Sponsoring can make you a more engaged, effective employee. This may sound counter-intuitive, until you consider the tightly knit sponsor-protégé relationship. Your protégé will keep you in touch with what's happening at different levels in the organization; this, in turn, can lead to growth in your own career. A protégé can help you look at your environment and own role through a different set of eyes; your protégé's approach to handling issues may in fact help improve your own.

But there is another good reason that tips the scales in favor of sponsorship: the personal pride and satisfaction that comes from helping another woman grow. Being a sponsor may prove one of the most rewarding aspects of your job and by helping develop the pipeline of the future female C-suite occupants, you have a chance to pay it forward and impact history.

Susan Pound

Susan Pound is an executive vice president and region sales manager for the Middle Market Banking South region, where she is responsible for new business development across twelve states. As a region sales manager, Susan provides sales leadership in collaboration with senior leaders, division sales managers, and partners to develop growth strategies for the Florida, Georgia, Mid-South, South Texas, and Southern divisions. She also leads the business development team for the region.

Susan's middle-market banking and corporate finance experience includes 28 years with Wells Fargo and its predecessor banks. Her prior roles include division sales manager, Commercial Strategies group manager for the West and Mountain regions, regional vice president of the Atlanta Middle Market Banking office, director in the Consumer & Retail Group Investment Bank, and senior underwriter for the Georgia division of Middle Market Banking. Before joining Wells Fargo, she worked for the Bank of Boston in corporate finance.

Susan received a B.B.A. in management information systems from the University of Georgia in Athens. She earned her M.B.A. from Northeastern University in Boston and graduated with honors. Susan also completed the Executive Leadership Program at Wachovia, a Wells Fargo predecessor.

Susan co-chairs Wells Fargo's Women's Market Growth Initiative for Middle Market Banking and is the executive sponsor for the Women's Business Development Officer Network. She is a past board member of the Middle Market Banking Diversity & Inclusion Council and a past president of the Atlanta chapter of Wells Fargo Volunteers. Susan is also a passionate supporter of The Trust for Public Land, a national non-profit organization that helps conserve land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places.

Contact Susan at 408-877-6659 or Susan.Pound@wellsfargo.com.





Cracking the CPA Ceiling: The Advancement of Women in Accounting

The accounting industry, like many industries, has long been populated primarily by men at the upper rungs of corporate leadership ladders. As the business world continues to evolve into a more inclusive and diverse workforce, women are advancing to higher management levels across numerous sectors.

In the 1970s and 1980s, female CPAs were expected to wear skirt suits or dresses, and women's pant suits were rarely seen. It was clear that the accounting industry was obviously a male dominated profession. Nevertheless, this did not discourage women who were serious about their careers. As the 1980s progressed, two out of five women began to further their education by attending college and graduate school.

In the United States women have reached a tipping point in the accounting industry, now comprising more than 61% of all accountants in the United States. In 2011, approximately 38% of CPA firm senior managers were women. By 2017, that number soared to 47%. At the partner level, however, women make up just 24% of partners within a firm, according to Catalyst Workplaces that Work for Women. And while the pay gap between men and women in senior accounting roles is closing, the gap is still significant and persistent.

Susan Levinstein, CPA and Partner with HMWC CPAs & Business Advisors in Tustin, heads the firm's Women-Owned Business practice. As one of six female partners (out of twelve) at HMWC, Levinstein says the ascension of women into corporate leadership roles begins to close the overall economic opportunity gap.

Levinstein points to several female trailblazers who continue to inspire in the accounting industry. The *Journal of Accountancy* prominently showcases women such as: Christine Ross, who on December 21, 1899, became the first woman CPA in the United States. She earned certificate no. 143 in New York City. Mary E. Lewis received her CPA certification no. 1404 in 1939. By 1947, Lewis had her own firm in Los Angeles. Another notable pioneer, Beth M. Thompson passed her CPA exam in 1951. In 1955, Thompson was the only female president of a state association in Dade County's chapter of Florida's Institute of CPAs.

Levinstein also acknowledges contemporary women for rising to the top of the accounting world and opening new doors for others to follow. At the top of that list is Cathy Engelbert, CEO of Deloitte, one of the largest professional services organizations in the United States. Cathy is the first woman to become CEO of a "Big Four" accounting firm. She recently told CBS News, "I talk about how we need to move these elevations of women into key roles from novelty to norm."

"HMWC has always been focused on fostering diverse viewpoints across cultures, backgrounds and certainly genders. It is important for companies to embrace diversity, not only for the sake of equality between the sexes, but in order to thrive in a marketplace with increasingly diverse viewpoints." Levinstein stresses that while equal gender representation in the workplace is important, the ultimate qualities that make someone a good employee, at any level, has nothing to do with gender.

"Integrity, a positive outlook, accountability, a performance-focus, enjoyment in the work process, adaptability to change, collaborative decision-making, and openness to innovation. Those are the traits that matter," says Levinstein. "Your vision and culture should directly impact the qualities that you look for in selecting management personnel."

Susan Levinstein

Susan Levinstein, CPA, is a partner with HMWC CPAs & Business Advisors (www.hmwccpa.com) in Tustin. She heads the firm's Women-Owned Business practice and the Complete Financial Office Solutions department. Susan can be contacted at 714-505-9000.



Women in leadership is
our practice, too!



Our Women-Owned Business practice is led by partner Susan Levinstein, who along with fellow partners Sheila Ashrafi, Pam Chamberlain, Barbara Kelley, Rachel Rico and Jodi Ristrom provide key leadership roles within our firm and the OC business community.

As your trusted business advisors, HMWC offers the services that you need to help improve productivity and profitability. Talk to us about how we can make a difference for your business.

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The Evolution of Technology

The insatiable demand for wireless services has driven a corresponding evolution in wireless technology platforms to meet that demand and provide wireless solutions that deliver higher throughput, lower latency, and improved reliability and security. As those technologies evolve, so too do the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and the enterprises they serve. As a premier provider of in-building wireless solutions, Mobilitie has also had to anticipate and adapt to a changing technology and business landscape, staying in front of the evolving plans and preferences of the MNO partners that we serve and their customers.

Mobilitie has long been a leading provider of traditional neutral host Distributed Antenna System (DAS) solutions for large venues such as stadiums, arenas, casinos, and transportation hubs. The emergence of low-power, fiber-to-the-edge DAS platforms have allowed Mobilitie to take advantage of fiber and power backbone synergies to deploy converged wireless solutions with Wi-Fi and other unlicensed spectrum platforms. These traditional platforms provide the robust, scalable capacity, and coverage that MNOs have demanded. However, the cost of these systems, along with the emergence of new technology, have driven the demand for alternative solutions, particularly in venues that aren't necessarily the highest trafficked venues in a particular market, but still have wireless coverage or capacity issues.

One of the alternative solutions that has gained much traction with the MNOs has been Distributed Radio Access Networks (DRAN), in which the MNO's Radio Heads, as the RF source, are distributed throughout a venue. Mobilitie provides fiber and power aggregation points that the MNOs can use to plug small cells or other Remote Radio Heads into a passive RF distribution network. A variation on this solution is Centralized RAN (CRAN). CRAN is similar to DRAN with the exception being the baseband units that control the Radio Heads are located in an off-site, centralized location that can serve multiple venues. In addition to lower costs, DRAN solutions also provide increased simplicity, control, and visibility to the MNOs, making it their preferred solution in many cases.

As LTE continues along its evolutionary path towards 5G, new wireless supplements such as Licensed Assisted Access (LAA) and LTE-LWAN Aggregation (LWA) are being utilized. LAA and LWA both augment a MNO's licensed spectrum by utilizing unlicensed 5GHz spectrum in the Wi-Fi band to provide additional capacity and higher data throughput. As with DRAN solutions, LAA and LWA provide promising options for the MNOs but venues may be less receptive due to the potential impact on their own Wi-Fi networks. Mobilitie must perform a careful evaluation of these various options for each venue and manage the sometimes delicate balance between meeting the MNO's technology preferences and the venues' desire for unobtrusive installations that do not adversely impact any of their existing wireless systems.



The industry continues to evolve and the next big step in that evolution is the emergence of Citizen's Broadband Radio Service (CBRS). The FCC has allocated 150 MHz of spectrum, previously used by the U.S. Navy, in the 3.5 GHz band. CBRS offers a host of new opportunities for Mobilitee and provides a path towards business and technical models that feature shared RAN and shared spectrum, reducing the cost and level of complexity to deploy in-building wireless services. CBRS also opens new opportunities for wireless solutions in venues that have historically been difficult to deploy in-building systems in due to high costs or lack of MNO prioritization.

Mobilitie is perpetually evaluating the impact of these emerging technologies and anticipating how they will change the needs of our clients, namely the venues we serve, and our MNO partners. For the venues, Internet of Things (IOT) and industrial automation services are rapidly gaining traction and enhancing the need for robust Wi-Fi and LTE services. Venues also continue to demand solutions that will attract the MNOs to underserved verticals such as hospitals, factories, and commercial real estate. The MNOs are in the midst of their own migration to 5G services in pursuit of 1 Gbps data speeds, and Mobilitie must be in a position to facilitate that migration by providing the MNO's with the ability to easily deploy new technologies and spectrum bands. That will include expanded antenna beam capabilities, virtualizing the RAN and the adoption of unlicensed spectrum platforms such as CBRS to reduce the costs and resources need to deploy in-building wireless services. Mobilitie has a long history of evaluating industry trends and anticipating their impact. The rapidly changing technology landscape of today only reinforces our commitment to evolving to meet our clients' needs.

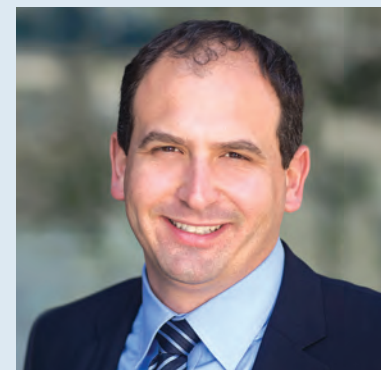
For more information, visit www.mobilitie.com. Contact Mobilitie at 877-999-7070 or solutions@mobilitie.com.



Mobilitie has been a leader in deploying and operating wireless infrastructure that uses both licensed and unlicensed spectrum. The firm designs and deploys some of the most robust and technically advanced wireless solutions, including DRAN, CRAN, and LAA/LWA. It was the first infrastructure firm to deploy both outdoor and indoor small cell networks in the United States. Christos and the Mobilitie team recently set the record for carrying the most mobile data traffic on a DAS network during any event in history at the 2017 Kentucky Derby on Mobilitie's Churchill Downs DAS network. Christos also oversaw the design and deployment of the world's largest Wi-Fi network in Las Vegas.

Christos Karmis

Christos serves as President & CEO of Mobilitie where he oversees all aspects of the company's business. He is responsible for leading the company's growth across its tower, small cell, DAS, fiber, and Wi-Fi solutions. Christos has led the Mobilitie team for the development of tens of thousands of cell towers, DAS networks, and small cell nodes across the US and international markets. In addition, he has led the company's public venue strategy which has resulted in the deployment of some of the largest Wi-Fi networks in the country, and installed networks across all major professional sporting leagues.



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*Based on interviews conducted by Greenwich Associates in 2016 with more than 15,000 executives at mid-size businesses across the country with sales of \$10-500 million. CNB results are compared to leading competitors on the following question: How likely are you to recommend (bank) to a friend or colleague?

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Business Leaders and Girl Scouts Invest in Girls

Imagine a future where every girl grows up with the confidence and skills to try new things, take on tough challenges, and embrace a lifetime of leadership.

Girl Scouts is making this bright future possible. From taking a nighttime hike under the stars to accepting a mission on the International Space Station; from lobbying the city council with her troop to holding a seat in Congress; from running her own cookie business today to tackling cybersecurity tomorrow – Girl Scouts unleashes the G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™ in every girl.

Orange County's business community understands the importance of investing in the next generation of female leaders– and Girl Scouts is leading the charge. Only Girl Scouts provides girls of all ages and abilities with a safe, inclusive, girl-led environment for them to build vital skills, explore their potential, and feel they can fail and get right back up and try again.



Girl Scouts Works!*

- ▶ 50% of female business leaders were Girl Scouts
- ▶ 76% of female U.S. Senators were Girl Scouts
- ▶ 80% of female tech leaders were Girl Scouts
- ▶ Girl Scout alum enjoy **higher incomes**, more **rewarding careers**, and are more **active in their communities** than non-Girl Scouts.

*Source: Girl Scout Research Institute

Securing a Strong Future for OC Girls

Now open in Newport Beach's Marina Park, the Argyros Girl Scout Leadership Center is Orange County's hub for Girl Scout STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs. Named after philanthropist and community leader, Julia Argyros, this state-of-the-art facility provides 20,000 OC Girl Scouts from all cultures and backgrounds with unique opportunities to explore diverse 21st century careers and learn how they can take action to make the world a better place – all while creating lifelong memories and enjoying the peninsula's waterfront surroundings and activities.

At the heart of the Leadership Center is INSPIRE, Girl Scouts of Orange County's signature multimedia program, through which girls virtually meet extraordinary women spanning diverse careers and learn the vital role STEM plays in what they do. Girls also hear from trailblazing Gold Award Girl Scouts from across the nation, who have taken action using STEM skills to change the world – **and learn to do it themselves**.



2017 Celebrate Leadership Honorees (from left): Julie Ann Ulcickas, Cynthia Stamper Graff, Dr. Jane L. Kakkis, Robin Follman-Otta, Kerri Sonenshine, and Susan B. Parks with their Girl Scout Partners

Girl Scouts of Orange County is looking to raise the remaining \$1.8 million of a \$5 million comprehensive campaign to support the newly opened Argyros Girl Scout Leadership Center in Newport Beach. For more information, contact Monica McDade at mmcdade@girlscoutsOC.org.

Celebrating Champions of Girls and Women

Girl Scouts of Orange County's ninth annual Celebrate Leadership event on the evening of Friday, October 12 will recognize outstanding Girl Scout alumnae and champions of girls and women and raise funds for Girl Scouts' transformational leadership programs. Honorees are paired with outstanding Girl Scouts, linking tomorrow's leaders with the leaders of today.

Your business can empower, educate, and prepare girls for a lifetime of leadership. Learn more about sponsoring or attending Celebrate Leadership at girlscoutsoc.org/celebrateleadership.

For more information about Girls Scouts of Orange County's upcoming events, or to volunteer or make a donation, visit GirlScoutsOC.org.



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A sobering message from AAA

Distracted driving **kills an average of 9 people**
and **injures over 1,000** every day in America.
Put down your phone. Lives depend on it.

AAA.com/DontDriveDistracted
Tell us why you **#DontDriveIntexticated**





No Text Is Worth a Life

The truth about distracted driving and how it changed one family forever

By Kathy Sieck

I understand that the temptation to read a text or email, search for directions, or shuffle through smartphone apps while driving is enormous. But when I think of the heartbreaking stories of families who have lost loved ones due to distracted drivers, I find it easy to resist that temptation.

One such tragic story will be featured in the May issue of *Westways*, the Auto Club's member publication. Dawn and Howard Mauer of Fountain Valley lost their daughter, Deanna, to a distracted driver in 2011. The woman who plowed into Deanna's car had sent or received 14 text messages and two calls just before the crash.

"People would never believe you can cry every day for six years, but you can," says Dawn. The Mauers now live with a grief most of us can't imagine. But they are not alone.

Every day in the U.S. an average of nine people are killed and more than 1,000 people are injured due to distracted driving, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Those grim statistics alone should make people put down their phone. Lives depend on it.

Changing Behavior

We've worked hard on finding a way to convince drivers to change their behavior, especially because AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety research shows it's getting worse. In 2017, 45 percent of drivers surveyed admitted to recently reading at least one text or email behind the wheel, and 35

percent admitted to typing one – up from 40 percent and 31 percent, respectively, in 2016.

Drawing upon decades of research into the efforts that have helped to cut alcohol-impaired crash fatalities in half since the 1980s, the Auto Club focused on what may be the key component to reducing distracted driving: making it socially unacceptable.

"People would never believe you can cry every day for six years, but you can"

Our new public service initiative targets drivers who would never consider drinking alcohol behind the wheel, yet regularly engage with smartphones that dangerously take their eyes, hands and minds off the road.

"Don't Drive Intoxicated – Don't Drive Intexticated" is the Auto Club's sobering new message to make it clear that the consequences of both alcohol-impaired driving and texting while driving are the same: deaths and injuries. We hope the multi-year campaign to fight this deadly behavior along with increasing penalties and enforcement will help to save lives.

What Can You Do?

We urge everyone to actively prevent distracted driving. Speak out if you're a passenger, and don't call or text someone if you know they are driving.

Finally, remember that when you're behind the wheel, nothing in that phone is more important than focusing on the road. No text is worth a life.

Kathy Sieck is the Senior Vice President for Public Affairs at The Automobile Club of Southern California.



**Don't drive intoxicated.
Don't drive intexticated.**

A sobering message from AAA

AAA.com/DontDriveDistracted



Talent Analytics – Your Foundation to Talent Management!

As the labor market becomes tighter, Talent Analytics becomes a crucial initiative for HR departments nationwide. According to Forbes, 69% of companies are integrating Talent Analytics data as part of regular HR transactions—a 54% increase compared to prior years. This shift is due to higher quality data, real time collection abilities and urgent needs to report on specific factors.

What is Talent Analytics?

Talent Analytics is a platform that produces insights into a company's workforce including strengths/weaknesses of current and potential members. Employers utilize this data to reduce turnover, build HR programs, and increase engagement.

Talent Analytics can be broken down into three categories:

- 1. Hiring Analytics** provides bias-free insight into future hires by analyzing skills and guiding companies into making impartial decisions based on data. Interview satisfaction and brand awareness are essential metrics tracked during the hiring process. The cost and time it takes to hire is also measured to ensure optimal productivity.
- 2. Ongoing Feedback Analytics** focuses on the existing workforce. Are people happy and performing well? Are they placed in the right positions? Employee surveys, although simplistic, can provide great insight into employee performance, engagement and retention.
- 3. Optimization Analytics** marries the data from hiring and feedback analytics to ensure the organization builds a robust internal process. These processes include Succession Planning, Benefit/Wellness Programs and Performance Evaluations.

What are the challenges involved?

To develop a Strategic Talent Analytics Program, HR needs to address key challenges:

- Where to initially focus Talent Analytics - Start small to showcase to senior shareholders the importance of data.
- How to build a strong analytics team - Hire HR that will understand company data needs.

► How to build credibility including gaining C-level executives' approval - Analytics needs to be credible; collaborate with key members to ensure the program creates strategic results.

As technology continues to evolve, so will the impact of data within the workplace. HR Analytics will continue to disrupt the industry as more organizations begin utilizing these advances to strategically enhance their departments.

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Emily Salanio

Emily joined the Marquee team in 1995, after her time in the US Coast Guard where she held various roles with a focus on Computer Systems Management. With her expertise in IT, Emily has transitioned to CEO of Marquee Workforce Solutions where she focuses on collaborating with her team to recruit the best in technical talent. Emily gives back by providing veterans the opportunity to participate in mock interviews with recruiters at Camp Pendleton. Emily also works with Working Wardrobes to help veterans find positions upon returning home. By assisting veterans to easily join the workforce, Marquee is able to provide the best talent to our most valued IT and Engineering clients.



Congratulations!

Congratulations to the 2018 Women in Business honorees and nominees.

Orange County's 20,000 Girl Scouts thank you for demonstrating courage, confidence, and character and for inspiring them to become the next generation of female leaders!

Invest in Girls.
Change the World.
girlscoutsoc.org



girl scouts
of orange county



6 Ways to Increase Gender Diversity

We've all heard discouraging statistics about the lack of progress for women in the workplace. In fact, women hold only 4.2 percent of CEO positions in America's 500 biggest companies.

The good news is that there are concrete steps business owners and leaders can take to improve gender diversity in their organizations, including:

- ▶ Increasing personal recognition of female leaders
- ▶ Understanding the power of stereotypes
- ▶ Fostering an inclusive culture

The suggestions are part of six recommended steps included in a new gender diversity study among Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. The study, *Transforming the C-Suite: Developing and Advancing Women Leaders*, was produced by Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) in collaboration with the Fortune Knowledge Group.

"This study shows that organizations with high proportions of senior female leaders also tend to have stronger financial performances," said Sharon Solomon, managing director and U.S. head of Client and Marketing Strategy at RBC Capital Markets. "While other studies have also come to this conclusion, gender diversity at the most senior levels continues to be a challenge for businesses. It's an issue we must draw attention to and one the business community must address."

City National Bank's Karen A. Clark, senior vice president and multicultural strategies manager, points out that the Nielsen Company reported in 2013 that women in the U.S. had roughly \$5 trillion in purchasing power. And according to a 2010 report from The American College Today, 45 percent of the millionaires in the U.S. were women.

Key steps to take right now

- 1** Take a hard look at your firm's financial performance. There is a positive correlation between a firm's profitability and revenue growth and the number of women in senior leadership roles.
- 2** Understand the power of stereotypes and bias. Pay attention to hidden bias and the challenges women face throughout their careers.
- 3** Be prepared to make a significant cultural shift. Foster an inclusive culture that encourages diversity.
- 4** Change your personal mindset. Learn to think differently about work-life balance, leadership traits, and performance tracking.
- 5** Consider the impact of individual lifestyle choices. Understand that personal circumstances and choices may determine career advancement.
- 6** Figure out what works - and what doesn't. Just having a women's talent strategy isn't enough - explore the nuances.

Additionally, because women typically live longer than men, it's estimated that nine out of 10 women will eventually take charge of their families' wealth.

"Business managers, owners and shareholders should care about these statistics, because attitudes about women and engagement with women in the workplace can determine a company's share of the female purse. Without women firmly ensconced in the decision-making process about products and services designed for and offered to women, companies stand to leave money on the table," Clark said.

Additional key findings from the RBC study include:

- ▶ Only 21 companies in the 2016 Fortune 500 list include women at the helm, down from 24 in 2015.
- ▶ Gender diversity in management, and specifically women in leadership roles, enhances corporate financial performance.

For more information, contact:

Karen A. Clark

Senior Vice President

Multicultural Strategies Manager

City National Bank

213-673-9124

Karen.A.Clark@cnb.com



Karen A. Clark

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A vision in pink at the 2017 Women's Philanthropy Fund Breakfast. From left to right: Trina Fleming, Chief Operating Officer of WHW; Scharrell Jackson, Partner, Chief Operations & Financial Officer of Squar Milner LLP; Loreen Gilbert, President of WealthWise Financial Services and Artyn Gardner, Community Volunteer.



Lucy Dunn, President and CEO of Orange County Business Council; Diane Dixon, Councilmember and Former Mayor of City of Newport Beach; Susan Parks, President and CEO of Orange County United Way; and Sandra Bensworth, Chief Financial Officer of Orange County United Way share insights at the new Local, Global and Me Women's Empowerment Series.

Women Are Changing Our Communities and Our World – the United Way

For more than 90 years, Orange County United Way has brought together leaders in philanthropy, volunteerism and advocacy to combine their strengths and resources to make real and lasting change in our community.

Through affinity groups and programs that promote corporate social responsibility, Orange County United Way has paid particular attention to leveraging women's skills and strengths to lift up our neighbors.

What we have learned in working with women at the upper echelons of their industries and communities is that there are no challenges so intractable that natural leaders won't rise to solve them.

As we celebrate women in business in Orange County, we applaud the women among us who have taken up the causes of literacy, poverty, hunger and other societal determinants to health and well-being. Through their determination and perseverance, these leaders are moving the needle toward a better Orange County.

At United Way, we are proud to support these women as they work toward a collective vision of a healthier, brighter tomorrow.

Women United

Worldwide, Women United is a vibrant community of 70,000 women who combine their time, talent and resources toward identifying and solving vexing societal problems. In Orange County, Women United is a force of nearly 400 diverse, energized women whose support helps to improve the lives of children and families in our community.

The impact of this group is nothing short of phenomenal. Each of the Orange County members of Women United gives an annual gift of \$1,000 to \$9,999. Their financial contributions target the most critical, interconnected challenges we face as a community in a bold and united way:

- ▶ Cutting the high school dropout rate in half
- ▶ Increasing the number of healthy youth by one-third
- ▶ Cutting the percentage of homeless and housing-insecure children in half
- ▶ Reducing the percentage of financially unstable families by 25%

Through philanthropy, service and advocacy, Women United is supporting United Way's effort to tackle Orange County's most pressing societal needs by 2024.

"You always hear it said that no one person can save the world. But what I see time and again with Women United is that committed individuals, working together, can make a world-altering impact on their community," said Susan B. Parks, President and CEO of Orange County United Way.

"When you join Women United, you give a voice to transformative change in our community," said Shirin Forootan, Attorney, Call & Jensen.

Women's Philanthropy Fund

Cultivating a culture of meaningful philanthropy, the Women's Philanthropy Fund is a group of influential leaders who work together to move mountains and create long-lasting social and economic change in Orange County.



Part of the Tocqueville Society, a collection of United Way's largest donors, Women's Philanthropy Fund members not only give generously but inspire others to do the same.

For example, more than 800 community leaders gather at the annual Women's Philanthropy Fund Breakfast to raise money for local programs and services that empower women and their children. Now in its 15th year, this professional event is recognized as one of the most successful breakfast fundraisers in the county. This year's breakfast in May, featuring keynote speaker Earvin "Magic" Johnson, is already sold out.

Since 2004, the Women's Philanthropy Fund has raised more than \$35 million for local programs and services. These gifts support education and self-sufficiency for at-risk women and children with early-grade reading programs, after-school activities, innovative career assistance and initiatives to help families find permanent housing. Sometimes all a woman needs is that "extra helping hand" to make all the difference in her life.

Networking Events

By gathering together to improve the lives of others, women leaders in United Way often find their own lives enriched, as well.

Few other charitable organizations gather as many powerful women under a united cause, allowing for networking that builds strong relationships and partnerships among like-minded individuals. Last year, Bank of America partnered with Orange County United Way's Women United to host a clever and dynamic three-part Women's Empowerment Series, "Local, Global & Me."

Each of the three evening events is centered around three different ways women can make a difference – locally, globally and personally.

The informative, lively events drew nearly 300 women to hear experts ranging in topics of global engagement to personal health awareness.

Back by popular demand, the "Local, Global & Me" series will kick off again this year in August with influential keynote speakers.

"Being philanthropic can support the world and support your own business at the same time," said Shirley Quackenbush, Managing Director, Private Wealth Advisor, Merrill Lynch Investments. "It's one of the reasons I tell people to stop thinking of philanthropy as raising funds and start thinking about it creating an impact."

Get Involved

By giving their time, their skills and their resources, women leaders of Orange County United Way have worked together to solve problems, empower the disadvantaged and set children on a course toward success. It is work that is incredibly gratifying, but it is far from complete.

If you'd like to join this community of philanthropic leaders, please contact Sandy Morales at 949-263-6163 or SandyM@UnitedWayOC.org.

WOMEN'S ²⁰¹⁸ PHILANTHROPY

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To join the community of philanthropic leaders contact
Sandy Morales at 949.263.6163 or SandyM@UnitedWayOC.org



The Gender Gap in Retirement Planning

By Jeffrey M. Verdon
Managing Partner,
Jeffrey M. Verdon Law Group, LLP

Despite all of the advances women have made in recent years when it comes to saving for retirement, women still lag behind men. Financial planners report that women often have a lower risk tolerance than men so they earn less on their investments. Women have a longer life expectancy and need more income to last through retirement. And generally speaking, women shoulder a disproportionate amount of responsibility caring for significant others, care-taking of children and aging parents, working and volunteering. This increased burden means it is extremely important for a women to take ahold of her retirement planning. We know that only 72% of women are saving for retirement while 80% of men are doing so. On average, men's retirement accounts are 50% higher than women's accounts. This leads us to the fact that fewer women have comprehensive estate plans and even fewer incorporate structures to protect their assets from lawsuits into their estate planning. Living in an overly litigious society, in the U.S., 15 million lawsuits are filed annually. Women need to consider how to protect their assets, retirement

and their legacies should a bad actor sue.

Fly first class or your kids will. Estate planning is not about sacrificing your lifestyle so your kids will have a more comfortable life. Enjoy your life and if you have more wealth than you can spend plan to maximize what you pass on free of administrative costs, death taxes and risk of loss due to lawsuits. Estate planning should never be about making your children and grandchildren richer. Working strictly within the Tax Code, a comprehensive estate plan can optimize income and estate tax deferral opportunities — all approved by the IRS.

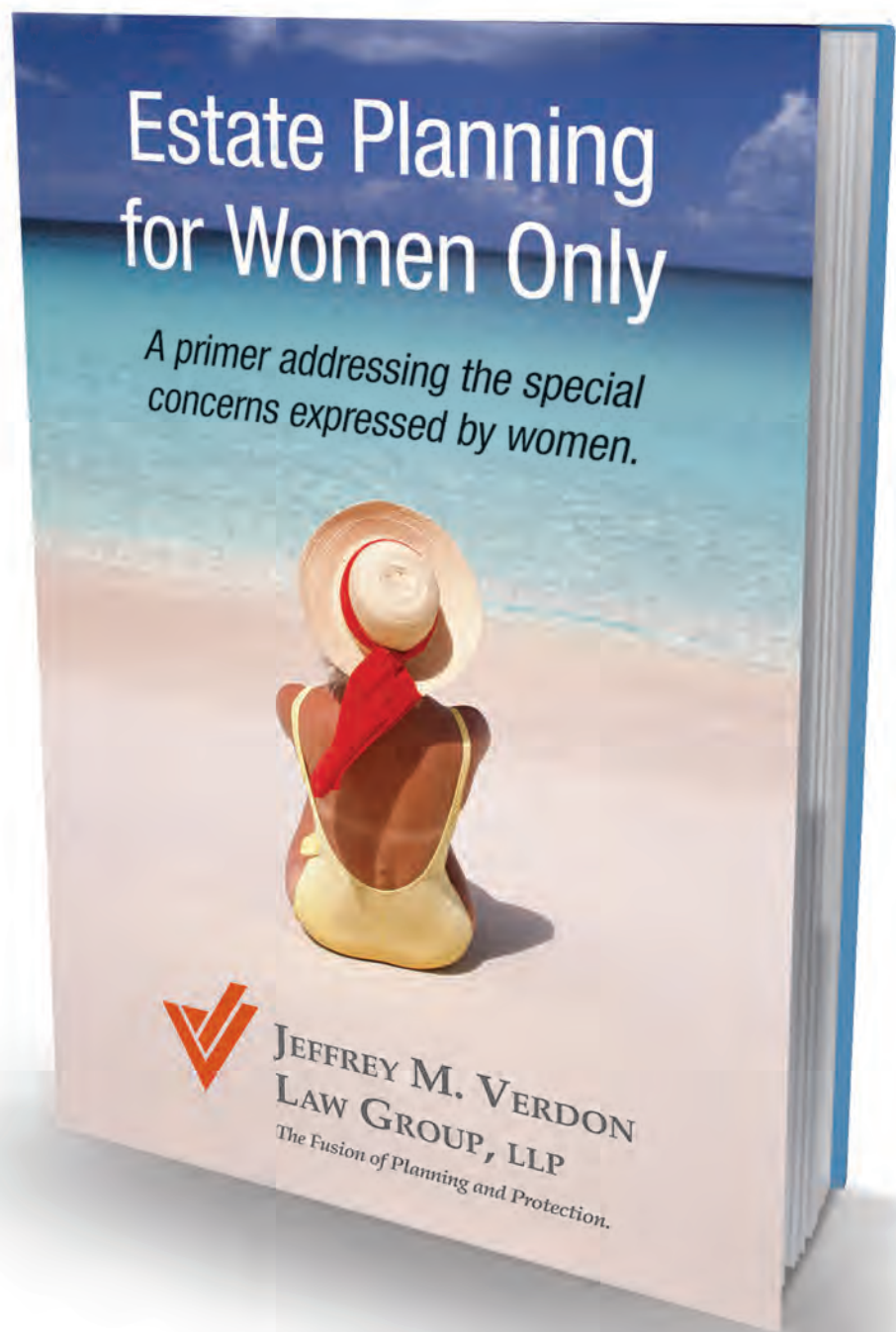
Perhaps you remember George Carlin's hilarious routine about our "stuff." We all have stuff and we are pretty particular about it. During our lifetime we collect a lot of assets, some of it valuable, some of it not. But because it's your stuff it means something to you. Asset protection should be incorporated into a well-designed estate plan which can place your assets into a living trust, which will not have to go through the long and expensive probate process that would be required if you only had a will.

And once your estate plan is in

force, place effective "firewall" protection around your assets to promote the early and cost efficient settlement of potential lawsuits by eliminating the economic incentive of a "payday" from an unexpected and irresponsible lawsuit. Asset protection attorneys can offer you a variety of tax free or tax deferred trust options which protect your assets and can minimize your taxes.

Finally, don't ignore life insurance. Today, millions of successful

Americans are putting significant sums into tax efficient life insurance products. These products are the most tax efficient asset classes in the tax code: cash values grow income tax free, the owner may withdraw savings from policies income tax free, and death benefits are income tax free. When you couple this with premium financing, life insurance may be the singular more important planning strategy for women.



Copies of this book can be ordered at: jmvlaw.com



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Jeffrey M. Verdon, Esq. is the Managing Partner of the Jeffrey M. Verdon Law Group, LLP, a Trusts & Estates boutique law firm located in Newport Beach, Calif. With more than 30 years of experience in designing and implementing comprehensive estate planning and asset protection structures, the law firm serves affluent families and successful business owners in solving their most complex and vexing estate tax, income tax, and asset protection goals and objectives. Please call us for a complimentary consultation.

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An Orange County Institution

Building on more than 30 years of culinary excellence on the Orange County dining landscape, Prego Mediterranean has settled into its new home at The District at Tustin Legacy. Long-time supporters and new guests have been enjoying the lively bar area and grand dining room at the new location, where Chef Ugo Allesina continues to lead the culinary team. With two decades of experience at Prego, Chef Ugo has brought back signature items and has added new Mediterranean-focused dishes to the menu. The kitchen continues to focus on utilizing seasonal ingredients, the best meat and seafood, and freshly made pastas.



Prego owners Ruth and Tony Bedi

New Mediterranean-focused dishes include Seasonal Hummus of mushroom and truffle, sundried tomato and roasted garlic basil, served with house-made rustic flatbread; Golden Beet Salad with mixed baby greens, yellow beets, goat cheese and caramelized onions tossed in a balsamic reduction; and Lobster and Shrimp Stuffed Sole in a white wine, garlic, lemon and caper sauce.

Adding a splash of Mediterranean color to California, Prego Mediterranean features a lively exhibition kitchen, allowing diners to view the artful chefs creating their delicious dishes. With a capacity to seat more than 250 guests, Prego features al fresco dining, full bar, private dining and catering services.

For more information, visit www.pregoOC.com.



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ALUMNI NOMINEES

AMBER BONASORO '06 (MBA '14)

Director of Marketing, Berkshire Hathaway
HomeServices California Property

ANTOINETTE BALTA '03 (JD '06, LL.M. '11)

President and Co-Founder,
Veterans Legal Institute

ADRIENNE BRANDES (M.A. '84)

Real Estate Agent, Surterre Properties

REBECCA HALL '96

President and CEO, Idea Hall

CHRISTY LEWIS (JD '11, LL.M. '15)

Attorney, Lewis Business & Estate Planning, APC

SAMANTHA MEYERS '06

Owner/Baker, Sugared and Iced

MICHELLE WULFESTIEG (M.A. '08)

Executive Director, Southern California
Hospice Foundation

CAMPUS COMMUNITY NOMINEES

LINDA PADILLA-SMYTH

Director of Property Management and
Real Estate, Chapman University

LISA SPARKS, PH.D.

Dean, School of Communication,
Chapman University



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ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

Presents 24th Annual



Kellie Aamodt - UPS
Olivia Duane Adams - Alteryx Inc.
Brateil Aghasi-Hamilton - Forever Footprints
Esther Ahn - American Heart Assoc. & American Stroke Assoc.
Melissa Bovberg Aiello - The Queen Bee Networks
Amy Amirani - NV5 Inc.
Paula Ansara-Wilhelm - Surterre Properties
Patty Arvielo - New American Funding
Antoinette Balta - Veterans Legal Institute
Margaret Bayston - Laura's House
Jacqueline Beaumont - Call & Jensen, APC
Shirin Behzadi - Home Franchise Concepts
Janie Best - WHW
Clare Bielecki - Kitchell
Amber Bonasoro - Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties
Adrienne Brandes - Surterre Properties
Lynnette Brown - KKW Trucking Inc.
Michelle Brown - Surterre Properties
Leslie Calhoun - Optivest Wealth Management
Victoria Carr-Brendel - JenaValve Technology Inc.
Leslie Carter - United Healthcare
Antonella Castro - KAP7 International Inc.
Geri Cerkovnik - Dale Carnegie of Orange County
Zara Cerni - Physicians Center For Renewal
Bernadette Chala - Arbonne International LLC
Brittney Champieux - Villa Real Estate
Julie Chassagne - Alteryx Inc.
Dr. Seema Choudhary - Montessori Funtime Preschool
Shelby Coffman - The Hood Kitchen
Lorie Collins - Lil 'O' Blossom Inc.
Dr. Amy Osmond Cook - Osmond Marketing
Lili Daftarian - Lili Daftarian
Kristin Daher - Powerhouse Communications
Deborah Dickson - Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corp.
Diane Dillon - Hotel Irvine
Rhonda Ducote - Apriem Advisors
Christa Duggan - Portola Coffee Lab
Jodi Duva - Cox Business
Neda Eaton - Irvine Public Schools Foundation
Barbara Eidson - Fashion Island Hotel
Lauren Ellermeyer - Beyond Fifteen Communications Inc.
Roula Fawaz - Surterre Properties
Rehema Feleke - FunBand Inc.
Janelle File - Surterre Properties
Shirin Forootan - Call & Jensen
Christie Frazier - The Hood Kitchen
Jennifer Friend - Project Hope Alliance
Marlis Fyke - Helio Productions Inc.

Eulynn Gargano - FutureWise Consulting
Kimberly Gerber - Excelerate Inc.
Loreen Gilbert - WealthWise Financial Services
Cindy Goss - Propel Business Solutions Inc.
Devin Graciano - Use Me Hair
Sue Grant - The Literacy Project
Anne Grey - Alzheimer's Association Orange County Chapter
Jill Griffin - Advantage Solutions
Heather Hall - FreeConferenceCall.com
Kaaren Hall - uDirect IRA Services
Rebecca Hall - Idea Hall
Kate Hancock - OC Facial Care Center
Marla Brower Hemmel - BHE Management Corp.
Heidi Hendy - H. Hendy Associates
Stephanie Herrera-Alvarez - Dimond & Shannon Mortuary
Allison Hillgren - Beacon Pointe Advisors
Amanda Horton - Surterre Properties
Shelley Hoss - Orange County Community Foundation
Jo-E Immel - Snyder Langston
Bronwyn Ison - Bronwyn Ison Yoga, Wellness, Balanced Living
Susan Jennrich - Outlets at San Clemente
Michele Johnson - Latham & Watkins
Monica Johnson - Ventura Foods LLC
Manna Kadar - Manna Kadar Beauty Inc.
Alice Kao - Sender One Climbing
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Hilary Kaye - HKA Marketing Communications
Jackie Kelley - Ernst & Young LLP
Pamela Kellogg - Designers Resource Collection
Shannon Kennedy - BNY Mellon Wealth Management
Lisa Kim - City of Garden Grove
Robin King - American Heart Assoc. & American Stroke Assoc.
Stacie Kitts - Haskell & White LLP
Dawn Knepper - Buchalter
Julie Leffler - Big Hype Marketing
Susan Levinstein - HMWC CPAs & Business Advisors
Christy Lewis - Lewis Business & Estate Planning, APC
Leslie Licano - Beyond Fifteen Communications Inc.
Jenna Lobos - Jenna Lobos
Summer Lynne Perry - Surterre Properties
Mina Maghami - Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties
Paula Mattson - Edison Energy
Nicole McMackin - Irvine Technology Corp.
Meghan Medlin - Orange County Re-Entry Partnership (OCREP)
Samantha Meyers - Sugared and Iced
Celin Miller - GGG Demolition Inc.
Kendra Miller - BJ's Restaurants Inc.
Natasha Minasian - The Studio at Designers Resource Collection

Luncheon & Awards Program

May 3, 2018
12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Hotel Irvine

*Tickets: \$175 / Table of Ten: \$1,650

Tickets are non-refundable. Ticket price includes self-parking and a six-month subscription to the Orange County Business Journal (\$15 allocated to the subscription). New subscribers only.

Reservation Information

Visit www.ocbj.com/bizevents or contact Jayne Kennedy at 949.664.5065 or kennedy@ocbj.com.

Congratulations 2018 Nominees!

Shruti Miyashiro - Orange County's Credit Union
Renita Mollman - Burns & McDonnell
Susan Morehead - Optima Asset Management Services
Darlynn Morgan - Morgan Law Group
Debby Morris - Apria Healthcare
Jennifer Morris - Ajenda Public Relations
Jody Moses - York Risk Services
Danielle Murcia - Crepes Bonaparte
Kirti Mutatkar - UnitedAg
Shana Neuberger - American Heart Assoc. & American Stroke Assoc.
Karen Nguyen - Inspired Art Wine
Wendy Nugent - Auto Club of Southern CA
Heather O'Connell - GreenLink Financial
Annette Oltmans - The MEND Project
Natalia Ostensen - Olen Properties Corp./Andrei's Restaurant Corp.
Linda Padilla-Smyth - Chapman University
Sara Palmer - StaffRehab
Summer Lynne Perry - Surterre Properties
Lauren Peterson - Whittier Trust
Sandra Pham - West Coast University & American Career College
Meesh Pierce - AutoGravity
Jennifer Povlitz - UBS Financial Services Inc.
Sandy Powers - Villa Real Estate
Robbin Narike Preciado - Union Bank
Shirley Quackenbush - Merrill Lynch, a Bank of America Corp.,
 Private Banking & Investment Group
Sunny Rajab - Business Communications Solutions
Song Richardson - University of California, Irvine School of Law
Maricela Rios-Faust - Human Options
Laura Roche - Villa Real Estate
Joni Rogers-Kante - SeneGence International Inc.
Angela Rowe - Global Genes
Ellen Roy - Mary's Path
Talia Samuels - Outshine Public Relations
Danielle Sapia - American Heart Assoc. & American Stroke Assoc.
Tina Schackman - Prudential Retirement
Sherri Scheck-Merrill - Amenity Services Inc.
Betha Schnelle - Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties
Kylie Schuyler - Global G.L.O.W. & Le Nid Inc./California Bliss
Sunny Seegmiller - Law Media Inc.
Chahira Solh - Crowell & Moring LLP
Lisa Sparks, Ph.D. - Chapman University
Jessica Spaulding - Spaulding Thompson & Associates
Shana Spitzer - Villa Real Estate
Brenda Springer - Reveille Inc.
Paula Steurer - Sterling Public Relations
Susie Storey - DealerSocket
Eliisa Stowell - Surterre Properties

Autumn Strier - Miracles for Kids
Victoria Strombom - Surterre Properties
Mary-Christine "M.C." Sungaila - Haynes and Boone LLP
Nicole Suydam - Second Harvest Food Bank of OC
Krista Talley - Dolly's Cotton Candy
Kacey Taormina - Compass
Kimberly Tavares - PacWest Accounting Inc.
Sharon Taylor - St. Mary's World School
Lori Torres - Parcel Pending Inc.
Dr. Betty Uribe - California Bank & Trust
Marklem Valdovinos - American Heart Assoc. & American Stroke Assoc.
Nancy Vengoechea - Vengo Design International
Gina Waggener - OC Marketing Solutions
Margie Wakeham - Families Forward
Annette Walker - Providence St. Joseph Health
Kim Walker - Surterre Properties
Jenny Wang - MerchSource
Sheng Wang - AutoGravity
Lei Lei Wang Ekvall - Smiley Wang-Ekvall LLP
Carolina Weidler - H. Hendy Associates
Marcy Weinstein - MCKOWN | WEINSTEIN | ASSOCIATES
Brenda West - RAJ Swim/SwimSpot
Genine Wilson - Kelly Services Inc.
Keri Wilson - Goldsheep
Rachelle Wilson - Dance Discovery Foundation
Diane Wittenberg - Haskell & White LLP
Dr. Tammy Wong - Fostering Executive Leadership Inc.
Karen Wood - Irvine Barclay Theatre
Michelle Wulfestieg - Southern California Hospice Foundation
Christina Zabat-Fran - St. John Knits Inc.
Dr. Julie Zimmerer - 24/7 Family Homecare and Veterans Services



Keynote Speaker

Julie Hill

Anthem



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2018 Women of the Year Award Nominees

Kellie Aamodt, Vice President U.S. Inside Sales UPS, Anaheim

Kellie Aamodt started with UPS as an international account executive in 1991. She was recruited from a competitor to represent UPS as it expanded internationally. Aamodt took on many assignments and rose through the supervisor, middle manager ranks and was promoted to her first director assignment in Houston, Texas. After five years, she was transferred as director of sales to Ontario, CA. She was then transferred to the corporate office in Atlanta, GA to handle the growth activities throughout the U.S. In three years, she returned to California as the managing director of sales for UPS in the Southern California district. In 2011, she was promoted to vice president of retail sales. In 2012, she was then transferred to the vice president of the Central Region in Chicago. In 2013, she was transferred back to Anaheim, CA as VP of the West Region, where she is responsible for all sales activities within the western 22 states. Aamodt lives in Orange County, and has four offices in San Antonio, Phoenix, Greenville and Atlanta, and handles the entire country. UPS is a multinational package delivery company and a provider of supply chain management solutions.



Olivia Duane Adams, Chief Customer Officer Alteryx Inc., Irvine

Olivia Duane Adams is the chief customer officer and a founding partner of Alteryx. Along with co-founders Dean Stoecker (CEO) and Ned Harding (CTO), Adams acted on a vision to build a company that enables data scientists and analysts alike to feel the thrill of finding business-changing answers faster than ever. The founders view data as one of the greatest (and often underutilized) assets any company owns, and through their leadership and passion, have revolutionized data science and analytics for many of the world's best-known companies. In her role, Adams manages Alteryx's overall customer experience strategies and has interacted with nearly every customer, giving her a holistic perspective of the overall experience from implementation to adoption success. These conversations and relationships have helped shape Alteryx into the platform it is today, built for exuberant users around the globe. Adams's leadership and drive, as with the other co-founders, feed into mentorship workshops, career development, and community outreach programs that help employees succeed in and out of the office.



Brateil Aghasi-Hamilton, Executive Director Forever Footprints, Orange

In Brateil Aghasi-Hamilton's first year as the executive director of Forever Footprints, a nonprofit formerly named Orange County A Walk To Remember, she was able to continue the legacy that the founders and board of directors envisioned – that no parent would be alone and no baby would be forgotten. Aghasi-Hamilton brought her proven 13-year track record as a nonprofit executive to Forever Footprints, and grew family services that are focused on a mental wellness by more than 25% in just six months, reaching thousands of families in Orange County, Los Angeles County and the Inland Empire. Aghasi-Hamilton is also expanding education programs to include training courses for hospitals, increasing collaboration and training to the healthcare industry. She also serves as the chair of philanthropy for The Elite OC Young Professionals Society, as well as the VP for CSUF Alumni Board of Directors.



Esther Ahn, Business Development Director American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine

Esther Ahn joined American Heart Association & American Stroke Association in October 2016 from Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach. Leaving a career of more than 18 years in hospitality management, sales and marketing management, as well as event planning and operations, to make a difference in Orange County. Previously with Marriott, Ahn worked in Los Angeles; Orange County; Hawaii; Florida; and Asia Pacific – Singapore, Thailand and Philippines. Ahn was born and raised in Irvine, and went to Cal State University, Fullerton. At American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Ahn successfully secured John Wayne Airport as a host venue to the first CPR Kiosks on the West Coast. The American Heart Association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke.



Melissa Bovberg Aiello, Owner/Executive Director The Queen Bee Networks, Irvine

Melissa Bovberg Aiello is self-starter who took a failing women's networking group and turned it into a vibrant, "buzzing" collection of "hives" throughout Orange County called The Queen Bee Networks. Under the business-savvy tutelage of Aiello, there are now nine locations with 125 members. This category-based group of businesswomen meet weekly to exchange referrals, network and promote each other's businesses with the intention of growing their businesses. Leads, closed sales and referrals are all tracked per hive/location. The Queen Bee Networks' mission is to help each other grow in a fun, uplifting and positive environment.



Amy Amirani, Vice President/Principal-in-Charge NV5 Inc., Irvine

Amy Amirani founded CivilSource in 2006 to serve the public works agencies of Orange County and deliver civil engineering design and construction management services for capital improvement projects. She sold the firm in December 2016 to NV5 Inc., an emerging international engineering firm, and now serves as vice president and principal-in-charge of the Irvine office. Amirani came to the U.S. at the age of 18 and enrolled at California State University, Fullerton. Upon graduation, she worked at Lowry and Associates, where she specialized in the structural design of water treatment plants. She then transitioned to the public sector, working for the cities of Irvine, Hermosa Beach and San Juan Capistrano. She became the first woman engineer to serve as a public works director in both Los Angeles County and Orange County, as well as the first woman to serve as the president of the Southern California Chapter of the American Public Works Association.



Paula Ansara-Wilhelm, Co-Founder Surterre Properties, Newport Beach

Paula Ansara-Wilhelm is a self-made entrepreneur with the distinction of being one of the few women in the world to have co-founded a company the magnitude of Surterre Properties, a \$2.7 billion residential real estate brokerage based in Orange County and with clients from all over the world. And, she is the only female co-founder/co-owner of a top real estate brokerage in the region. On top of that, Ansara-Wilhelm also co-founded Blue Water Escrow, a top escrow company in OC, and Surterre Property Management. She is a leader who had the foresight and ingenuity to co-found not just one, but three companies – all of which work together to create a synergistic vertical of real estate services. Earlier in Ansara-Wilhelm's career, she launched Strada Properties, which she sold shortly after to Coldwell Banker – a pivotal achievement and significant M&A transaction for OC. Few women have had such an impact on the OC real estate industry and OC economy as Paula Ansara-Wilhelm.



Patty Arvielo, President New American Funding, Tustin

Patty Arvielo co-founded New American Funding in 2003. In the past 15 years as president, Arvielo has worked diligently to transform the mortgage bank into a national mortgage lender and servicer that funds more than \$900 million in home loans each month, and maintains a servicing portfolio of \$23 billion. Under her guidance, the company has brought the entire loan process in house – origination, processing, underwriting, funding and servicing. In addition to her role as president, she continues to originate loans while managing operations and sales for New American Funding's headquarters, more than 145 branches nationwide and about 2,700 employees.



Antoinette Balta, President/Co-Founder Veterans Legal Institute, Santa Ana

Veterans Legal Institute (VLI) is one of the few military-specific public interest law firms in the nation dedicated to current and former service members. As a 501(c)(3) organization, VLI provides pro bono legal assistance to homeless, at-risk, disabled and low-income current and former service members to eradicate barriers to housing, healthcare, education and employment, and foster self-sufficiency. VLI also advocates on behalf of its clients by providing community education and policy advocacy in an effort to increase awareness, resources and overall protections to current and former members of the U.S. military. Antoinette Balta oversees business development, outreach, public relations, marketing and strategic planning. Her relationship building across business sectors has fostered the building of a pro bono network of 80+ attorneys, serving more than 3,800 clients and restoring over \$1.5 million dollars in veterans benefits. On average, a client may require up to 15 hours of attorney care. At a conservative estimate of \$250 per hour, VLI provides a value of more than \$3,700 per client.



Margaret Bayston, CEO/Executive Director Laura's House, Ladera Ranch

Under Margaret Bayston's leadership, Laura's House has become a prominent domestic violence shelter in Orange County, and has helped more than 55,000 victims throughout Southern California and beyond escape domestic abuse. This year, Bayston marks her 20th year with the organization, where she has been instrumental in the success of the nonprofit by expanding its services, emergency shelter and transitional programming, start-to-finish legal services, expert resources, and counseling and prevention and educational programs. Bayston has become the face of Laura's House and has spearheaded partnerships for the nonprofit with major local businesses and foundations, including Barney & Barney, Verizon, Girls Scouts of Orange County, Urban Decay, Tilly's Life Center, Tevora, Wet Seal and When Georgia Smiled: the Robin McGraw Revelation Foundation.



Jacqueline Beaumont, Shareholder Call & Jensen, APC, Newport Beach

Jacqueline Beaumont is an experienced employment counsel who has been

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recognized for her work representing corporate clients in all aspects of employment law and advising. She is a shareholder at law firm Call & Jensen, where she has built a practice defending employers in high stakes employment lawsuits, handling a range of matters including state and federal anti-discrimination, wage and hour, and employee class actions. Beaumont is a leader in women's issues outside of the office as well. She serves on the board of directors for the Orange County Women Lawyers Association; is a past co-chair of the Orange County Bar Association's Mommy Esquire Committee; and serves the community through involvement with Girls Inc., WHW, Public Law Center and other organizations. She frequently speaks and writes on issues of gender fair pay and obstacles and opportunities for advancement of women in the legal profession. She has been listed as one of Southern California's "Up-And-Coming 50 Women," and one of Orange County's "Top 25 Up-And-Coming Attorneys" by Super Lawyers, and has been awarded for her pro bono accomplishments.



Shirin Behzadi, CEO

Home Franchise Concepts, Orange

Shirin Behzadi is a CPA by trade and an alumna of EY. Behzadi embarked upon entrepreneurship in 1999 when she joined Budget Blinds, a company in its infancy, and quickly became its principal. During the same journey, Behzadi has fought and successfully beat life-threatening illnesses and painful recoveries. Behzadi set out to create franchise systems that offer entrepreneurial individuals the chance to own their own home-related business. For Behzadi, home improvement made sense as the focus for Home Franchise Concepts (HFC) because of the emotional attachment people have to their homes. Unlike most franchise systems, she created HFC's brands to operate on a flat royalty plan; owners would thereby see their net franchisor cost drop as they became more successful. HFC is the top-selling family of direct-to-consumer brands in the home-related goods and services space, one of the world's largest franchise businesses and a recognized leader in franchisee-franchisor relationships. HFC's three home-related brands – Budget Blinds, Tailored Living and Concrete Craft – are now well-respected and recognized top-industry forces, with more than 1,400 franchises covering 10,000 cities in North America.



Janie Best, CEO

WHW, Irvine

WHW is a nonprofit with a mission to provide the unemployed and underemployed the

skills and resources they need to get and keep a good job. WHW believes that a good job is essential to creating a stable, safe and educated community, and that employment is a solution to many of the pressing issues in the community. Since Janie Best joined WHW in 2011, she has led a critical shift in organizational funding, decreasing dependence on government funding from 80% of WHW's budget to 0%, and increasing individual contributions and grants 100%, placing WHW in a strong position to direct its own course and ensure impact without the burden, and often ineffectiveness, of government oversight. Best has been instrumental in growing the WHW Board of Directors, establishing an atmosphere that promotes collaboration; and in promoting the professional development of the staff.



Clare Bielecki, Business Development Manager *Kitchell, Tustin*

Clare Bielecki identifies and develops new project opportunities for Kitchell throughout Southern California. As the business development manager overseeing the entire region, she has helped to increase revenue from \$9 million to \$14 million in the last four years. She has also helped the company to gain additional recognition in the public works industry and the private sector. As a young professional, Bielecki has built strong relationships via her excellent networking skills, client advocacy, organization participation and panel presentations. Kitchell began as a commercial contracting business and over the years, developed new talents and enterprises, acquiring complementary businesses and expertise to remain a competitive, privately owned company. Today, Kitchell Corp. is the holding entity of several companies that are part of Kitchell's core business, as well as those that operate independently.



Amber Bonasoro, Director of Marketing

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties, Newport Beach

Amber Bonasoro oversees the strategic marketing, branding and creative direction of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties. In 2017, the brokerage assisted more than 12,000 clients in selling or buying a home with a total closed sales volume of more than \$12.6 billion, earning the national Berkshire Elite Award. Bonasoro applies more than 12 years of experience in the luxury real estate market to



Congratulations!

We join Orange County Business Journal in recognizing **Leslie Carter** for her 2018 Women in Business nomination. Her hard work and commitment are an inspiration to everyone.



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help Realtors® secure and sell properties up to \$30 million. Bonasoro earned an MBA from Chapman University's George Argyros School of Business and Economics with an emphasis in entrepreneurship. She serves on the Alumni Association Board of Directors to address next generation alumni issues. A founding member of OCYPN, she has held leadership positions and published a Playbook used by chapters nationwide. She is also a Big Sister with Big Brothers Big Sisters Orange County. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties' dedicated real estate experts guide clients through the home buying or selling experience.

Adrienne Brandes, Real Estate Agent

Surterre Properties, Newport Beach

For 25 years, Adrienne Brandes has assisted her clientele in buying and selling luxury properties in the Orange County market. Armed with her master's degree in counseling psychology and her experience of running a cosmetics business and public relations firm, her contributions to the industry include her comprehensive expertise in all facets of the enterprise, negotiating skills, and her tireless work ethic to ensure every client is satisfied. She has closed some of the most significant real estate deals in Orange County, including more than \$194 million in sales in the last four years.

Brandes is incredibly hands-on with each client, providing her undivided attention and personal touch to every encounter with passion from start to finish. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.



Lynnette Brown, CFO

KKW Trucking Inc., Pomona

After graduating college, Lynnette Brown started working for KKW Trucking Inc. in an entry-level position as a programmer. Through years of hard work, she climbed her way through the organization, spent time in every department of the company, and eventually was promoted to CFO. She has held her current CFO position for the past 20 years and provides strategic direction for the company. Brown is also the current president of the California Trucking Association, an organization that promotes leadership in the California motor carrier industry; advocates sound transportation policies to all levels of government; and works to maintain a safe, environmentally responsible and efficient California transportation goods movement system. The organization has an 84-year history and is comprised of 12 regional units.



Michelle Brown, Real Estate Agent

Surterre Properties, Newport Beach

Michelle Brown is a highly acclaimed coastal real estate professional with 15 years in the industry and nearly \$400 million in sales. Brown is an active investor and a 25-year resident of Corona del Mar. She is well-known for her market expertise and passion for garnering the maximum for her clients from their real estate investments. She formed her real estate group 15 years ago and proudly works alongside her partners, Dana Christensen and Cara Farley. She has enjoyed a variety of rewarding careers, including director of marketing for The Irvine Company's Fashion Island, while also serving as an integral part of the development team of the Irvine Spectrum Center. Her past business experience includes consulting for high-profile retailers and an international pharmaceutical company. Early in her career, Brown served as investor relations manager and spokesperson for a 130-store publicly traded women's apparel chain. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.



Leslie Calhoun, Senior Partner/Chief Compliance Officer

Optivest Wealth Management, Dana Point

In her 11 years at Optivest Wealth Management, Leslie Calhoun implements tactical investment strategies and monitors investment performances. With more than 25 years of investment industry experience, she works to provide the utmost care in serving her clients' financial needs and facilitating success. Calhoun's passion lies in fostering financial growth for successful women leaders. She takes great pride in her ability to do more than just manage client portfolios; she works to instruct, guide, and deliver customized financial and investment insight for her clients amidst their fast-paced lives. Calhoun also coaches individuals going through difficult transitions, working to build confidence, knowledge, independence and self-esteem. Optivest began in 1987 with the goal of providing holistic wealth management services to a select group of successful individuals and families in Southern California.



Victoria Carr-Brendel, CEO

JenaValve Technology Inc., Irvine

Victoria Carr-Brendel has more than 25 years of medical device experience, including the development and commercialization of medical device products across disease states. She began her career with Baxter Healthcare in research and development of an artificial pancreas. She held increasingly higher leadership roles within R&D, including women's healthcare (Adiana) and in glucose sensor technology (Dexcom). JenaValve Technology Inc. is a private, venture-capital-backed company headquartered in



Irvine with operations in Munich, Germany. The organization develops, manufactures and markets transcatheter aortic valve repair systems to treat patients suffering from aortic valve disease.

Leslie Carter, Chief Operating Officer

UnitedHealthcare, Cypress

Leslie Carter has worked hard and accomplished a great deal in her 30-year tenure in the healthcare industry, most of which has been with UnitedHealthcare and its predecessor companies. She spent the majority of her career in network management, negotiating and managing relationships with key hospital and medical groups in California. She was instrumental in building the PPO network that now serves almost one million UnitedHealthcare members. Her achievements in her current role are focused on driving improved operational performance and employee teamwork by aligning goals and improving accountability. In addition to a wonderful combination of professionalism and enthusiasm, she has often been commended for her achievements in helping fellow executives and rank-and-file employees understand the complex world of health insurance.



Antonella Castro, Business Owner/Founder/Real Estate & Business Attorney

KAP7 International Inc., Newport Beach

Antonella Castro is a strategic leader making impactful strides in Orange County. She represents Mobilitie LLC as the special outside counsel and is the acting general counsel for KAP7 International Inc. She has been recognized numerous times for her accolades in law and business and through her community and charitable efforts. In 2005, Castro and her husband founded KAP7 International Inc., the official water polo ball of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, USA Water Polo, CIF, League of European Nations and is played with throughout the world. Recently, KAP7 International Inc. opened in the New Zealand market. As the special outside counsel for Mobilitie LLC, she drafts and negotiates agreements related to construction, installation and operation of distributed antennae systems and small cell wireless networks including, but not limited to, venue lease agreements, design, construction, installation and maintenance agreements.



Geri Cerkovnik, CEO

Dale Carnegie of Orange County, Santa Ana

Founded in 1912, Dale Carnegie has evolved from one man's belief in the power of self-improvement to a performance-based training company with offices worldwide. The company focuses on giving people in business the opportunity to sharpen their skills and improve their performance in order to build positive, steady and profitable results. Dale Carnegie emphasizes practical principles and processes by designing programs that offer people the knowledge, skills and practices they need to add value to the business. Geri Cerkovnik serves as CEO of the company's Orange County office. Under her leadership, the office received Dale Carnegie's Award for Top Franchise Quality Training in Orange County.



Zara Cerni, Health Coach/Patient Liaison

Physicians Center For Renewal, Newport Beach

Zara Cerni is currently aesthetic director and patient liaison at Physicians Center For Renewal, which she co-founded 10 years ago, with her husband, Dr. Michael Cerni. As a certified aesthetic consultant, it was Cerni's vision to provide wellness through nutrition and lifestyle modifications, along with cutting-edge aesthetic procedures to optimize health and appearance. Physicians Center For Renewal currently has locations in Newport Beach and Laguna Niguel. In addition to aesthetics, Cerni holds certification from the Inflammation Foundation in Anti-Inflammatory Nutrition founded by Dr. Barry Sears, author of *The Zone*. A significant part of Cerni's outreach includes giving lectures with her husband, providing the latest breakthrough trends in healthy lifestyle and fitness.



Bernadette Chala, SVP/General Counsel

Arbonne International LLC, Irvine

Bernadette Chala joined the Arbonne team in 2012, first serving as the corporate counsel and now as senior vice president, general counsel. Chala serves as a key business advisor, advocate and liaison between the business units and Legal Team to maximize value to the company's ownership. She successfully navigates emerging legal trends to serve the business needs of the company to ensure the highest rate of return to business stakeholders. Since her tenure, the company has nearly doubled in size, yet Chala continues to steer the entire organization through various legal, regulatory and compliance challenges. From her start as a member of the Legal Team, to now leading three teams including Legal, Regulatory & Scientific Affairs, as well as Compliance or the Business Ethics Standards Team (B.E.S.T.), Chala serves proudly as a someone who is not afraid to be a "working leader" and believes the best form of leadership is the one that is set by the example of one's own actions. Arbonne International LLC creates personal skincare and wellness products.



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Brittney Champieux, Director of Marketing

Villa Real Estate, Newport Beach

In the approximately two years that Brittney Champieux has been with the Villa team, she has transformed the marketing department. She has accomplished this by boosting team morale, enhancing tools and technology, and increasing the overall efficiency of the department and company as a whole by putting the needs of staff and agents first. Champieux, along with her team, developed and released a new website, new marketing tools, an app and are working on the rollout of new internal systems. Champieux is involved in the local community by donating food and resources to families in need. She manages Villa's involvement, donations and sponsorships of Susan G. Komen, Families Forward and support of local high schools in the Newport Beach. Villa Real Estate is a leading luxury residential real estate firm in coastal Orange County.



her dedication towards the field of education. Being an educator and a mother, she was inspired by the local Montessori preschools which her children were attending, but at the same time, saw room for improvement in what could be taught to children at the preschool age. Her pursuit of excellence in education led her to further training in early childhood education and the Montessori methodology of teaching. Montessori Funtime Preschool was founded out of her desire to create a better learning environment for kids at an age when they are at the apex of their ability to learn.

Shelby Coffman, Owner

The Hood Kitchen, Costa Mesa

The Hood Kitchen and Event Space was founded in 2012 by Shelby Coffman and Christie Frazier as an all-inclusive hub that provides commercial kitchen, prep and flex space for food artisans at every level and any specialty. From startup concepts to professional chefs, The Hood provides turn-key solutions for cooking, educating, training and entertaining. Recently expanding their one-of-a-kind facility, the addition provides solutions for food artisans who need packaging room, office space and large-scale storage. Also, the event space is home to a variety of corporate team-building workshops, cooking classes and private events. An incubator hub for small brands, a destination for catering companies and food trucks, while also being a preferred choice for new or existing restaurant concepts in need of menu testing, creating and development, The Hood has evolved into the go-to space for today's food artisans.



Julie Chassagne, Corporate Controller

Alteryx Inc., Irvine

Julie Chassagne started her professional career in the audit practice at KPMG. In 2016, after 17 years, she left the public accounting industry and joined Alteryx Inc. as the corporate controller. Her first major project was assisting with the company's initial public offering, which was completed in March 2017. She was instrumental in the transition of the company from privately held to public, and in creating and enforcing Alteryx's policies, processes and practices to comply with regulatory requirements. Chassagne works to support the company's strategic initiatives, including two successful acquisitions that closed in the first half of 2017. She is active in the company's international expansion initiative, and is responsible for setting up and managing the accounting and transactional activities for newly created entities in Europe and Asia. Alteryx offers an end-to-end self-service data analytics software that empowers data analysts and scientists.



Lorie Collins, Founder/CEO

Lil 'O' Blossom Inc., Newport Beach

One of Lorie Collins's greatest achievements has been to translate a real-world personal need as a young mother into a trusted solution for other mothers and babies. With no industry experience, but a passion to work hard and give back, Collins sought out professionals to create gentle, yet effective, formulations to treat her own babies' sensitive skincare challenges. She was then inspired to carry her experience one entrepreneurial step further to found Lil 'O' Blossom. This year-old pampering brand of luxury baby bath and body care products offers moms trusted quality skincare for their newborns and babies. Collins interacted with R&D/manufacturing and managed all aspects company development. Her countless early visits to high-end baby boutiques, pediatricians' offices and hospitals have resulted in national awards, media/celebrity attention, critical approval from Orange County's leading pediatricians, and the opportunity to provide Hoag Hospital's Mother/Baby Unit with "luxury baby personal care" for all newborns.



Dr. Seema Choudhary, Founder

Montessori Funtime Preschool, Irvine

Dr. Seema Choudhary is a former UCI chemistry professor and current executive director of Montessori Funtime Preschools in Irvine and Lake Forest. Choudhary developed a passion for teaching and her endeavors are a testament to



Congratulations to **Kaaren Hall**,
CEO/Founder of uDirect IRA
Services, on this year's Women In
Business nomination

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Dr. Amy Osmond Cook, CEO

Osmond Marketing, San Clemente

Dr. Amy Osmond Cook is the CEO of Osmond Marketing and a health/wellness columnist for the Orange County Register, Daily Herald, Family Share and Cupid's Pulse. She is a regular contributor to Entrepreneur, Huffington Post and KSL, among other publications. Osmond Marketing is a woman-owned, full-service content marketing organization specifically designed to meet the needs of scaling businesses. Osmond Marketing's innovative model allows companies to expand services seamlessly as they grow. With unsurpassed quality and customer service, Osmond Marketing experienced 148% growth in 2015, and is on track to experience the same levels of growth this year. Osmond Marketing was ranked the 28th fastest-growing company at the MountainWest Capital Awards. Osmond Marketing was recently featured in Forbes and Huffington Post.



Lili Daftarian, Realtor/Business Owner

Daftarian Group - Luxe Real Estate, Newport Coast

Lili Daftarian, co-founder and principal of Daftarian Group - Luxe Real Estate, was born and bred in the real estate industry, counting many highly successful real estate professionals as family members and mentors. Daftarian launched her own real estate sales and marketing career in 2007, and is known for skillfully representing a wide range of clients throughout Southern California, with a special focus on luxury communities within coastal Orange County. Proven effective in recording seamless transactions in any economic climate, Daftarian has a keen grasp of the region's changeable market conditions and the nuances of its submarkets – which proves to be a key competitive advantage for her clients.



Kristin Daher, President/Chief Storyteller

Powerhouse Communications, Santa Ana

Powerhouse Communications is a creative PR agency offering a wide scope of media relations, social media and strategic branding services. In December 2015, Kristin Daher purchased Morgan Marketing, a successful 25-year agency where she served as VP, and rebranded the company as Powerhouse, transitioning all employees and clients in the process. With a specialty in the restaurant and franchise segments, Powerhouse has represented fast-growing national clients such as Del Taco, Panda Express, Wienerschnitzel, Pieology Pizzeria and Juice It Up! to name a few. With 13 years of PR experience, Daher has kept her clients at the forefront of both traditional and new media, while helping to shape brand reputations, position emerging brands as ones to watch, and reinvigorate struggling companies. Between running the agency; overseeing strategic planning; and creating a healthy, high-energy environment for her employees, she loves to pitch her heart out on behalf of agency clients.



Deborah Dickson, President

Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corp., Irvine

From her beginnings as one of the few women working at the "Big 8" CPA firms, Deborah Dickson, CPA, CFF, MAFF progressed to form Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corp. in 1982. Dickson remains the only woman to found and manage a "Top Accounting Firm" in Orange County, as ranked by the Orange County Business Journal. In the process, Dickson has carved out a niche specialty, a Forensic CPA Litigation Support practice, in a very tough and competitive field. She has shaped this into one of the most well-known and highly respected forensic CPA and expert witness accounting teams in California. The firm works with leading national and boutique law firms, attesting to Smith Dickson's expertise and success in this field. Dickson has earned Certified in Financial Forensics and Master Analyst in Financial Forensics designations, which are important qualifications for leaders in the forensic CPA field and are only achieved by a small minority of CPAs throughout the USA.



Diane Dillon, Senior Catering Manager

Hotel Irvine, Irvine

If you have planned an event in Orange County, there's a pretty good chance you know – and love – Diane Dillon. During her career, Dillon has planned hundreds of events at Hotel Irvine and has been responsible for serving thousands of guests. She has spent numerous hours watching events come to life, and hundreds of more hours behind the scenes planning and making sure that guests walk away with an exceptional experience. Through it all, the one thing that never changes is her infectious personality and constant desire to create an atmosphere of excellence. 2018 wasn't the only year of success for Dillon. She has been an integral member of the catering team at Hotel Irvine for more than 19 years. She has an undeniable enthusiasm for her job, a consummate focus and attention to detail when it comes to event planning, and her commitment to her guests is unwavering. Her clients return year after year knowing they can wholeheartedly depend on Dillon to take charge and make their event a success.



Rhonda Ducote, President

Apriem Advisors, Irvine

As a dedicated wealth manager for Apriem Advisors with more than two decades of experience, Rhonda Ducote's leadership has helped propel the investment advisory firm to more than \$650 million in assets under management at the fastest growth rate for a firm its size in Orange County, according to Financial Advisor magazine's 2017 RIA rankings. In the past year, Apriem was named one of the Financial Times' Top Financial Advisors, earning a spot on the industry's coveted FT 300 list. Ducote graduated from the elite Charles Schwab Executive Leadership Program this year. A featured columnist for Financial Poise, she offers national thought leadership about female investment trends and issues facing Baby Boomer women. Ducote also leads Apriem's Women of Wisdom program, an initiative dedicated to increasing female client engagement and serving the needs of female investors.



Christa Duggan, Owner/CEO

Portola Coffee Lab, Costa Mesa

Christa Duggan, along with her husband Jeff, own the award-winning Portola Coffee Lab. Portola was created in 2011 with the goal to create a quality-centric coffeehouse that re-focused on the most important ingredient – coffee. Within a year of bringing a never-before-seen concept and style of coffee to Orange County, Portola Coffee Lab began creating a distinct brand that revolves around producing an artisanal culinary product, craft coffee. Portola Coffee Lab prides itself on having access to some of the highest-quality coffee beans in the world. While it usually takes a coffee company several years to establish direct trade relationships to start sourcing coffee at origin, Portola was able to do it within two years.



Jodi Duva, Vice President, Cox Business Orange Coast

Cox Business, Foothill Ranch

Jodi Duva learned during her years playing competitive sports that success requires dedicated training, grit and strong team ethics. As vice president of Cox Business Orange Coast, Duva infuses these characteristics while leading her team in one of the nation's most competitive telecommunications markets, and as a result has consistently increased market share and revenue. Her Orange Coast team normally encompasses Orange County, Palos Verdes and Santa Barbara, but for more than six months during 2017, she was entrusted to also serve as interim vice president for the San Diego Cox Business region. Her ability to maintain high levels of performance for all regions was noticed – revenue increased in Orange Coast by 5%, and San Diego 7% in 2017, helping Cox Business nationally reach \$2.2 billion revenue. She simultaneously grew her OC sales team by 15% with the goal of delivering more customized communications solutions to local business communities.



Neda Eaton, President/CEO

Irvine Public Schools Foundation, Irvine

Irvine Public Schools Foundation (IPSF) is one of the leading educational foundations in the nation. Neda Eaton's all-in commitment and uncompromised integrity is evidenced by her unparalleled success. She is purposeful and passionate, and her leadership empowers and energizes the people she works with and for. Under Eaton's guidance and leadership, IPSF has achieved tremendous success by strategically uniting the business, parent and resident constituencies to earn the reputation of the premier educational foundation in California. Eaton's impact speaks for itself; since she joined the foundation, IPSF's total annual revenues have increased by approximately 185%.



Barbara Eidson, Community Relations Manager

Fashion Island Hotel, Newport Beach

Barbara Eidson has been a pillar in the Newport Beach community for more than 20 years. She is currently the community relations manager for Fashion Island Hotel, where she directs all community outreach for the luxury property, monitoring community activities and maintaining crucial relationships with the local nonprofit, social and civic leaders. Outside of her professional duties, philanthropy is an important part of Eidson's life. Over the years, Eidson has been associated with countless organizations, including Women of Chapman President, Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation Board of Directors and Advisory Board, Irvine Chamber Board of Directors, Children's Bureau OC Board of Directors and Girls Inc. Guild Board.



Lauren Ellermeyer, President/Co-Founder

Beyond Fifteen Communications Inc., Irvine

Beyond Fifteen Communications has a penchant for going beyond the norms of traditional PR to bring the highest level of media and market attention to its clients' brand propositions. By skillfully tying entrepreneurial ideas to results-driven strategies, the agency is setting new standards of PR execution, while redefining the agency/client



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relationship. Since 2009, co-founder Lauren Ellermeyer, has leveraged her progressive business style, keen eye for new talent, and rock-solid public relations and social media expertise, to grow a home-based startup, into a flourishing, nationally acclaimed communications powerhouse that has doubled in size year over year since 2010; with 23% increase in revenue in 2017 with year-over-year growth. Apart from cultivating Beyond Fifteen's collaborative, "client-first" business approach, Ellermeyer pours generous support into a variety of community organizations. She is a long-time partner of TedXOrange Coast and currently serves as a board member and philanthropy chair for American Family Housing.

Roula Fawaz, Real Estate Agent

Surterre Properties, Irvine

For more than two decades, Roula Fawaz has been a top performer in the real estate industry, beginning with the number one Rookie of the Year award in her first year of business. She continues to be one of the top REALTORS® in Orange County by selling more than 1,100 homes. She started her career in real estate shortly after moving to the U.S. with the dream of providing a better future for her family. Building her business from the ground up, her entrepreneurial spirit flourished, and paired with her integrity, Fawaz is now one of the most trusted agents in the area. Being with Surterre for the past six years, she runs the mastermind program within the company and is an elite producer in the Irvine market. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.



Rehema Feleke, Co-Founder/CEO

FunBand Inc., Irvine

Dr. Rehema Feleke received her medical degree from Loma Linda School of Medicine, and currently practices emergency medicine at UCLA. She earned her Healthcare Executive MBA in 2016 at the Paul Merage School of Business. Her company, FunBand Inc., was conceived during her MBA program after a near-abduction experience of a friend's daughter. FunBand's mission is to help keep kids safe so families can focus on fun. FunBand has developed a system to keep track of young children that is convenient and gives families peace of mind. Feleke recruited a team, developed a business plan, entered the New Venture Competition and went on to win first place in May 2016. FunBand Inc. also won Best Presentation at the Orange County Tech Coast Angels Fast Pitch Competition in March 2017.



Janelle File, Real Estate Agent

Surterre Properties, Newport Beach

Janelle File is an expert in Orange County's competitive luxury real estate industry. After founding her own successful real estate appraisal company in 2002, File further expanded her reach into the real estate market by getting her realtor license and joining Surterre Properties in spring 2014. Since then, she has worked tirelessly for her clients, relying on her years of appraisal expertise to earn the trust and respect of local investors and builders alike. Building on this initial success, File launched The File Group, a luxury real estate group that has quickly dominated sales in the OC luxury real estate market with a specific niche in her hometown of Corona del Mar. With more than \$80 million in listings already on the books, File and her team are set to continue to dominate the luxury real estate market in Orange County. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.



Shirin Forootan, Attorney at Law

Call & Jensen, Newport Beach

Shirin Forootan's legal practice focuses exclusively on employment litigation defense and counseling. Her dedicated commitment to her clients has yielded excellent results both inside and outside of court. She has had class actions dismissed, individual actions dismissed and class certification denied. Outside of court, she has negotiated favorable settlements for employers and has convinced the Labor Commissioner to dismiss wage claims. Forootan routinely speaks and is a published author on a variety of labor and employment topics. Because she has demonstrated an excellence in the practice of law, Forootan has been selected to Super Lawyers' Southern California "Rising Stars" List multiple times, a distinction reserved for just 2.5% of attorneys in California. Call & Jensen has become the law firm of choice for many companies in high stakes litigation.



Christie Frazier, Owner

The Hood Kitchen, Costa Mesa

The Hood Kitchen and Event Space was founded in 2012 by Shelby Coffman and Christie Frazier as an all-inclusive hub that provides commercial kitchen, prep and flex space for food artisans at every level and any specialty. From startup concepts to professional chefs, The Hood provides turn-key



KKW Trucking, Inc. congratulates

Lynnette Brown

**on her appointment as President of
the California Trucking Association!**

This is a well deserved honor and we are thrilled to see her commended for her work. We look forward to all that she will accomplish to help the trucking industry. Her platform is "The Heart of Trucking" to showcase the great men and women that make up the transportation industry.

**Congratulations, Lynnette! You are
an inspiration to the entire KKW
team.**



2018 Women of the Year Award Nominees

solutions for cooking, educating, training and entertaining. Recently expanding their one-of-a-kind facility, the addition provides solutions for food artisans who need packaging room, office space and large-scale storage. Also, the event space is home to a variety of corporate team-building workshops, cooking classes and private events. An incubator hub for small brands, a destination for catering companies and food trucks, while also being a preferred choice for new or existing restaurant concepts in need of menu testing, creating and development, The Hood has evolved into the go-to space for today's food artisans.

Jennifer Friend, CEO

Project Hope Alliance, Costa Mesa

Project Hope Alliance (PHA), a Costa Mesa-based nonprofit organization, is committed to ending the cycle of homelessness, one child at a time. Jennifer Friend first joined PHA as the president and secretary of its board of directors while she continued her successful career as a partner at a large law firm. Friend's past as a former Orange County "motel kid" and extraordinary passion for helping families experiencing these same hardships motivated her to turn her avocation into her vocation. Under Friend's leadership since 2012, PHA has moved more than 800 children and parents out of homelessness. In 2016 alone, PHA ended homelessness for 18 families – which included 47 children and 34 adults. 88% of families achieved financial stability within 12 months of ending homelessness – a number that continues to increase every year. PHA also launched two new education programs in 2016, serving youth from kindergarten through age 24.



Marlis Fyke, Co-Founder

Helio Productions Inc., Costa Mesa

In April 2014, Marlis Fyke and her husband came up with the idea to help their son, Porter, with his kindergarten sight words by reverse engineering a dream light's top and replacing the stars and moons with his sight words and illuminating them on his ceiling at night. After much success, the couple realized their idea could benefit all children. Since then, they have created an educational system that uses interchangeable discs that coincide with lesson plans for all grades and age groups. As of November 1, 2015, the company is in production on 5,000 helio base units, with five different color options for boys and girls. In addition to the base units, 40,000 discs with different learning curriculum for each age and grade groups are also in production. Helio has won numerous awards, including the Mom's Choice Awards, and is STEM certified.

Eulynn Gargano, Business Owner

FutureWise Consulting, Irvine

Eulynn Gargano leads the test prep and tutoring branch of FutureWise Consulting. She has seen incredible success with her students and understands the importance of college readiness as a lifestyle. She is firmly committed to treating the test preparation process as a partnership among the student, parent, tutor and college counselor – working toward the same goals of empowerment and success. Gargano began her tutoring career in 2006 and is an expert at identifying how a student can improve, ensuring that they fulfill their college dreams. In addition to her successful business, she volunteers with organizations in Orange County focused on lifting up the underserved, including the Orangewood Foundation, Junior League and State Public Affairs Committee. This year, she has the additional role of championing her platform, Living With Purpose, as the reigning Ms. Southern California. FutureWise Consulting is Orange County's premier source for college counseling, test prep and tutoring services.



Kimberly Gerber, President

Excelerate Inc., Irvine

Kimberly Gerber is an innovative and results-driven communication strategist and executive coach. Gerber is responsible for designing and leading coaching and skills training programs consisting of intensive hands-on workshops, presentations and practical exercises to help executives master the art of communication and achieve organizational productivity. For the past three decades, her focused approach to public and interpersonal communication strategies and highly specialized training has successfully led Fortune 500 companies and industry-leading organizations such as UCLA, Lexus, Blizzard Entertainment, Verizon Wireless, Allergan, Whirlpool, USC and Southern California Edison toward real results. Excelerate is a corporate training company for communication training and coaching. Gerber's past roles include serving as the marketing director of Starbucks Coffee's largest business unit and marketing director for Fleetwood Enterprises.



Loreen Gilbert, President

WealthWise Financial Services, Irvine

Loreen Gilbert is an experienced wealth manager who has spent more than 25 years creating comprehensive wealth strategies for her clients. Upon graduating from the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in Business Administration, she launched her career at Fidelity Investments, where she assisted clients with investment management services. Gilbert then worked for a private company selling retirement plans to municipalities and their employees. She has been in private practice as a wealth manager since 1997, and is the founder and president of WealthWise Financial Services,



which offers securities and investment advisory services to individuals, business owners and corporations through her affiliation as a registered principal with LPL Financial.

Cindy Goss, President

Propel Business Solutions Inc., Mission Viejo

Cindy Goss is president of Propel Business Solutions Inc., which she founded in 2009. After a successful, executive-level career in the technology, staffing and nonprofit sectors, Goss's vision was to form a leading-edge, for-profit firm, with the "heart" of a nonprofit organization. In just over nine years, the firm now serves Fortune 500 companies and operates throughout California, and specializes in branding and marketing for both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Goss considers her greatest achievement to be her ability to influence others in the Orange County business community to embrace social responsibility and share their profits, time and talents to help those in need. Today, Propel Business Solutions is regarded as a leading-edge, branding and marketing firm that creates national presence and increased market share for clients.



Devin Graciano, CEO/Founder

Use Me Hair, Irvine

Devin Graciano, former trend development executive for Toni & Guy, created Use Me Hair to deliver a necessary change in the hair care industry. Graciano achieved this through an innovative developmental process, from packaging to product consistency and performance, not to mention exceptional customer connection. Each product in the Use Me line is meant to be universal and celebrate different generations' lifestyles. Each product is handcrafted by experts in the first USDA-certified lab in the U.S. Created with the highest quality ingredients, responsibly sourced from around the world and designed to be user-friendly, Use Me is the luxury hair care line that is safe, effective and affordable.



Sue Grant, Founder/Executive Volunteer

The Literacy Project, Newport Beach

Sue Grant is a visionary whose passion to give the gift of literacy to young, struggling readers has fueled the formation and success of The Literacy Project, a nonprofit dedicated to serving at-risk children threatened to become illiterate adults. After collaborating on a literacy pilot program at the University of California, Grant developed a desire to provide disadvantaged youth with the tools to succeed in life; which inspired her to create The Literacy Project in 2009, thus beginning her lifelong journey to help "bridge the literacy gap." Grant has made it her life's mission to be a leading force in the fight against illiteracy. Today, her vision and leadership has brought the reading program to more than 7,200 children in school districts throughout Southern California and has raised more than \$3.2 million for the cause. This year, the organization will cross state lines and begin service in Utah, Texas and Illinois.



Anne Grey, Executive Director

Alzheimer's Association Orange County Chapter, Orange

Anne Grey was appointed as the executive director of the of the Alzheimer's Association's Orange County Chapter in July 2016. Grey's passion for the mission is personal, her grandfather died of the disease. It is her goal that everyone in Orange County impacted by dementia knows that the Alzheimer's Association is here to help them 24/7. In her tenure at the nonprofit, she has built a high-performing staff, recruited a strong board of directors, and created an environment of collaboration with other organizations in Orange County serving the health and wellbeing of people with dementia. Grey is a champion for educating the community, and especially women, on the importance of brain health. In addition, she is a strong advocate for early detection of Alzheimer's so that people can lead a rich life as long as possible and enable their loved ones to learn ways to cope in the progression of the disease.



Jill Griffin, President, Advantage Marketing Partners

Advantage Solutions, Irvine

Jill Griffin joined Advantage Solutions in 2008 to lead a then \$30 million division within the emerging marketing services group. Since that time, she has evolved with the enterprise to build and lead Advantage Marketing Partners, a \$1.2 billion agency with a suite of services in brand development, consumer and shopper marketing, digital marketing and media, experiential marketing, multicultural marketing and culinary marketing. With national reach, the company is honored to be agency of record for many of today's most-recognized brands across retail, packaged goods, technology, apparel, automotive, travel, adult beverage, entertainment and healthcare. Griffin has also led the development of new products and services which have been transformational to shopper engagement in the retail sector. In addition, she has led the M&A efforts to diversify the agency's capabilities as well as the industries it serves.



2018 Women of the Year Award Nominees

Heather Hall, Vice President of Finance & Operations*FreeConferenceCall.com, Long Beach*

Heather Hall joined FreeConferenceCall.com as director of finance, and has helped to lead the organization to the most successful annual sales in company history. In her role, Hall has mainstreamed analytical data and helped create comprehensive reports. She also assists with marketing and compliance. For her efforts, Hall was recently promoted to vice president of finance. FreeConferenceCall.com is the most recognized conferencing brand in the world with users in more than 800,000 businesses, including nearly all Fortune 500 companies. Service offerings around the globe with unlimited use include: high-quality HD audio conferencing, screen sharing, video conferencing, audio and visual recordings, customized greetings, security features, calendar integrations and mobile applications.

**Kaaren Hall, CEO/President***uDirect IRA Services, Irvine*

After 20+ years of experience at Bank of America, Indymac Bank and her own mortgage brokerage experience, Kaaren Hall saw the recession take hold and the mortgage market collapse. Rather than folding up her tent, Hall took her real estate and finance knowledge in a promising new direction – self-directed IRAs. Hall has helped thousands of Americans invest their IRA into real estate, notes and other assets outside of the stock market to improve their financial future. Now, Hall is a passionate educator and facilitator for better retirement through highly diversified and individually controlled IRAs. She has taught tens of thousands of people through live events, podcasts and webinars. Presently, she is working on her first book to be released next year. She is recognized as an expert in her field and serves on the board of directors for the Retirement Industry Trust Association.

**Rebecca Hall, President/CEO***Idea Hall, Costa Mesa*

Rebecca Hall's brainchild, Idea Hall, turns 15 this year. Formed at a time when few public relations firms offered in-house design services, branding and marketing, it has proved the test of time. The unique model, combined with Hall's ability to cultivate a team that shares her entrepreneurial drive and love for big ideas, has catapulted the agency to become the PR and marketing firm of choice for many of



Orange County's top businesses. Many of the county's leaders personally turn to Hall for strategic counsel. Recently, she led her team in successfully helping the Irvine Company coordinate and garner media coverage around its Amazon HQ2 response. Today, Idea Hall is one of the most sought-after agencies in Orange County, ranked in the top 10 of the Orange County Business Journal's "Best PR Firms" List for the past seven years. Idea Hall's client roster includes Visit Anaheim, Swinerton, Bixby Land, R.D. Olson and more.

Kate Hancock, CEO*OC Facial Care Center, Lake Forest*

Kate Hancock started OC Facial Care Center with one treatment room and grew the company into a seven-figure, revenue-generating company with two locations and celebrity clientele. She has a passion to effect positive change in people's lives through spa treatments. She has donated footwear to kids in the Philippines and to people with medical conditions who can't afford hospital treatments. This year, her business was named to the *INC. 5000's* "Fastest-Growing Private Businesses" List, being one of the only spas to do so.

**Marla Brower Hemmel, Founder/President***BHE Management Corp., Laguna Niguel*

Marla Brower Hemmel is the founder and president of BHE Management Corp., a 25-year-strong premier Homeowners Association management firm representing many major homebuilders in Orange County. Hemmel leads her firm in a manner that pleases both the developers, who hire her firm consistently to create the initial association rules and budgets, as well as the homeowners themselves. This creates relationships that continue for more than a decade in nearly every case. Hemmel is a licensed broker in the State of California and holds her Certified Community Association Manager designation with specialty certificates in High-Rise, and Portfolio Management. Hemmel is a leader in her industry, serving as past treasurer of California Association of Community Managers, past chair of the California Association Institute's Programs Committee, and is an active member and sponsor of the Building Industry of America, Orange County Chapter.

**Heidi Hendy, Managing Principal***H. Hendy Associates, Newport Beach*

Heidi Hendy launched H. Hendy Associates in 1979 to drive innovation in the field of interior architecture and planning. Nearly four decades later, the company has

CONGRATULATIONS TO JODY MOSES

on your nomination for the 2018 Women of the Year Awards

You have had a tremendous impact on our organization over the last 25 years, and we're grateful for your continued leadership on the York team and your commitment to quality for our clients.


www.yorkrsg.com


2018 Women of the Year Award Nominees

established itself as a leading force in the industry as one of Interior Design Magazine's Top 200 Architecture Firms for 32 consecutive years. Hendy and her team help clients seamlessly relocate or remodel, with interior architecture services spanning strategic facilities programming, employee satisfaction analysis, change management and space planning. While each project astounds visually, efficiency and functionality are driving forces behind every design. The company's impressive roster of new workplace solutions includes TRI Pointe Group, Monster Energy, Squar Milner, Mark IV, Yokohama Tires Corp., Kawasaki and OluKai. In addition to the many LEED-certified professionals at the firm, the WELL accreditation sets H. Hendy Associates apart. Its ability to incorporate wellness concepts into every design not only wins over clients and their employees, it reduces absenteeism and increases productivity.

Stephanie Herrera-Alvarez, Manager

Dimond & Shannon Mortuary, Garden Grove

Stephanie Herrera-Alvarez is manager at Dimond & Shannon Mortuary in Garden Grove. Since starting her career in the mortuary industry in 2009, she has touched on all parts of the business before assuming her current position, taking on roles such as service director, death certificate clerk, apprentice embalmer and funeral director. In addition to her current general operations and financial responsibilities at the mortuary, Herrera-Alvarez is dedicated to ensuring that all services provided exceed the expectations of the families that the mortuary serves. She is deeply rooted in the community, having grown up in a family established in Garden Grove for many generations. She is an active member of the community, the Garden Grove Chamber of Commerce and at her home parish, Saint Columban Catholic Church.

Allison Hillgren, Director, Head of Marketing & Communications

Beacon Pointe Advisors, Newport Beach

Allison Hillgren originally began her work with Beacon Pointe as an intern, and now holds the position of director of marketing and communications. The company didn't have a marketing department when she began, so through the internship and then as a full-time employee, she developed the firm's entire online presence through its website and social media platforms. She oversaw and implemented an entire rebrand of Beacon Pointe and expanded it into a nationally recognized company. Hillgren also oversees the firm's public relations department and created its proprietary advisor social media brand management program.

Amanda Horton, Real Estate Agent

Surterre Properties, Laguna Beach

In 2002, Amanda Horton obtained her broker's license and partnered with her mother, Pamela, to sell residential real estate along the south Orange County coast. Since the inception of the Laguna Beach office in 2005, Horton has been a top-producing asset to the company, receiving the prestigious Surterre Properties Award of Excellence in 2017. Dedicated to providing the highest level of service to her clients, Horton continues her education, stays up-to-date on the latest market trends, and has forged her way as a pioneer in the Southern Orange County Market. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.

Shelley Hoss, President

Orange County Community Foundation, Newport Beach

Over the past 18 years under the leadership of president Shelley Hoss, Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF) grew 740%, leapfrogging from \$43 million to \$378 million in assets. This places OCCF in the top 10% in assets among more than 780 community foundations in the United States. Hoss has shepherded OCCF into granting a quarter of a billion dollars over the past five years. Hoss's strategic vision has enabled OCCF to architect and drive several progressive community leadership initiatives serving the needs of at-risk youth in Anaheim, veterans and immigrant communities in Orange County. In addition, Hoss developed the county's annual Giving Day, raising more than \$5 million for Orange County nonprofits during two, 30-hour charitable giving campaigns. Hoss is widely credited with raising the profile of philanthropy in Orange County and evolving OCCF as the epicenter of philanthropy.

Jo-E Immel, Vice President

Snyder Langston, Irvine

Snyder Langston is a Southern California master builder that provides a client-centric approach to the building process. Jo-E Immel was selected by the firm's leadership to participate in its succession plan to become one of the organization's next owners. This makes her the first woman outside of field operations to hold that role. Immel was chosen based on her years of service, industry expertise and forward-looking skill sets that will best serve the firm, its employees and clients. Over the course of her 10 years at Snyder Langston, Immel's



greatest impact has been in elevating the firm's approach to servicing its clients. Her focus to be a true partner in achieving client goals has moved well beyond a traditional business relationship to identify additional areas where Snyder Langston can add value.

Bronwyn Ison, Founder

Bronwyn Ison, Yoga, Wellness, Balanced Living, Newport Beach

Former journalist, Valley Fever survivor and entrepreneur Bronwyn Ison is the industry innovator behind her namesake brand of yoga, wellness and balanced living. The virtual platform was developed with the busy consumer of today in mind, so men and women have access to an on-demand program to maintain health, build confidence and transform stress whenever, wherever. Community-focused with a philanthropic heart, Ison is a sought-after TV and live event host, professional speaker, media contributor, Women's Health Magazine Action Hero and lululemon brand ambassador.



Susan Jennrich, General Manager

Outlets at San Clemente, San Clemente

A Craig Realty Group success story, Susan Jennrich was appointed general manager of Outlets at San Clemente in March 2015 and given the honor of opening the first and only ocean-facing outdoor outlet shopping and dining destination in Orange County in November 2015. Before taking the helm at Outlets at San Clemente, Jennrich served as the general manager of Citadel Outlets in Commerce for nine years, a 700,000-square-foot mixed-use commercial property, featuring a hotel, three office buildings and the only retail outlet center in Los Angeles. Jennrich assists numerous local nonprofit organizations and charitable causes through her leadership of Outlets at San Clemente, including Boys and Girls Club of the South Coast Area, San Clemente Business Council, San Clemente Wellness and Prevention Center and San Clemente Downtown Business Association. She serves on the executive committee of the San Clemente Chamber of Commerce and is slated to assume presidency of the board in 2019.



Michele Johnson, Partner

Latham & Watkins, Costa Mesa

Latham & Watkins employs more than 5,000 lawyers and personnel, with 31 offices around the world. Michele Johnson is one of nine members of Latham & Watkin's executive committee – the highest decision-making body of the law firm. She previously served as the Orange County office's managing partner and was amongst the youngest partners to hold that title. Johnson is an accomplished securities and trial lawyer and has received prolific recognition for her successes in and out of the courtroom. Notably, Johnson represented then-Orange County-based Allergan in its successful defense against the \$54.6 billion unsolicited hostile takeover attempt by Valeant Pharmaceuticals. She was recently acknowledged by Law360 as one of "The 25 Most Influential Women in Securities Law" and Profiles in Diversity Journal named her to its 14th annual "Women Worth Watching" List. This list recognizes women in leadership from law firms, corporations, nonprofits and government agencies in Europe and North America who are blazing a trail for others to follow.



Monica Johnson, Assistant General Counsel/Assistant Corporate Secretary

Ventura Foods LLC, Brea

In her position as assistant general counsel at Ventura Foods, Monica Johnson has made a measurable impact on every facet of the company's business, including sales and marketing, research and development, procurement, supply chain/logistics, regulatory compliance, quality assurance and vendor/customer relations. Johnson worked tirelessly with the food safety teams to develop company-wide food safety plans and response protocols as part of the Food Safety Modernization Act preparations. She also oversees all FDA plant inspections and is the team lead for all regulatory compliance and food recall matters. Most recently, Johnson led several months of negotiations resulting in a new multi-year customer agreement for Ventura Foods manufacturers dressing cups/pouches for their salad kits. Ventura Foods is a leading manufacturer of custom and branded dressings, sauces, mayos, oils, shortenings, margarines, bases and pan coatings.



Manna Kadar, Founder/CEO

Manna Kadar Beauty Inc., Irvine

A noted industry expert, beauty editor and makeup artist to an impressive roster of celebrity clients, Manna Kadar has made a mark as an industry expert and a true trendsetter in the world of beauty. Kadar has been recognized by countless professional organizations for her business acumen and received the USC Remarkable Women's Award in 2014. Manna Kadar Beauty Inc. has also been recognized as one of the fastest-growing businesses by the Orange County Business Journal. Kadar is active in various philanthropic organizations, including board of directors for Goodwill, board of directors USC – chairwomen for Women in Business, Desperate Paws for Orange County, and Glamour Gals.



2018 Women of the Year Award Nominees

Alice Kao, Co-Founder/Partner

Sender One Climbing, Santa Ana

In 2012, Alice Kao co-founded Sender One Climbing – the largest indoor rock climbing gym company in the Los Angeles and Orange County metro areas – with her business partners, Wes Chu and her husband, Wes Shih. Sender One's mission is to create wondrous spaces where people can discover themselves and connect with others through climbing. Prior to joining the climbing industry, Kao had a successful career as an international sales and marketing executive for four different toy companies and, prior to that, as an investment banker. She discovered climbing in 2008 while living and selling toys in London. Climbing guided her through tough personal times and sparked her closest friendships. Kao and her partners opened Sender One's Santa Ana location in June 2013. In 2017, Sender One opened its second location in Los Angeles. Building on the continuing growth and success of its original facility, in March 2018, Sender One launched a fitness and yoga-focused expansion space next door to its Santa Ana location.



Dee Cohen Katz, Partner

Walsworth, Orange

Dee Cohen Katz joined Walsworth in 1995 as an associate in its Orange, CA headquarters. In the 23 years since, Katz is now a partner and an integral part of the firm's core structure serving on various management committees, including the Steering, Finance, Partnership and Marketing Committees, and as a mentor to many associates and partners, alike. As a partner, Katz has also been a key part of leading the firm's growth and shaping its future in a way that is unique to law firms and underscores its longstanding commitment to diversity. In 2016, Walsworth was recognized as a certified Women's Business Enterprise by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council and by the California Public Utilities Commission. Walsworth is also a National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms member, the largest in California and third largest nationwide.



Hilary Kaye, CEO

HKA Marketing Communications, Tustin

Hilary Kaye is founder and CEO of HKA Marketing Communications, an award-winning agency established in 1986. Kaye spearheads business development and works with HKA team members to elevate visibility, strengthen credibility and promote business growth for clients. She is a known connector, often fostering mutually beneficial business partnerships and uniting for-profit and nonprofit organizations. A former author and reporter, she maintains a passion for business ethics and community service, and takes pride in providing highly accountable service to clients and media. In 2015, HKA proudly received the National Philanthropy Day Award in the Small Business category and a Silver Stevie Award in the Community Involvement category. Kaye currently serves on the board of Laura's House and previously has served the board of Crystal Cove Conservancy. She is an Alzheimer's Visionary Woman, founding member of NAWBO's Women's Business Institute and member of Women Presidents' Organization and Zonta Club of Newport Harbor.



Jackie Kelley, Partner, Americas IPO Markets Leader

Ernst & Young LLP, Irvine

Jackie Kelley is responsible for advising Ernst & Young's extensive capital markets client base on the IPO and Exit readiness process. She has advised and assisted 200+ companies across all industries on the IPO readiness process. She has served venture capital and private equity backed companies, foreign filers, public company spins and others, ranging in size from early stage to more than \$50 billion in revenue. She's led a variety of projects and advised C-suite executives and investors on enterprise-wide IPO/Exit readiness assessments and roadmaps, IPO program management, finance readiness, financial reporting acceleration, operational and governance process improvements, financial audits, internal audits, internal controls and compliance. Ernst & Young is a multinational professional services firm.



Pamela Kellogg, Principal

Designers Resource Collection, Costa Mesa

Celebrating more than 30 years of excellence, Designers Resource Collection is the premier destination for interior designers. Open exclusively to the trade, Designers Resource Collection and partner showrooms, The Studio at DRC and Kenneth McDonald Designs, are now under one roof in the Stonemill Design Center, featuring more than 50,000 square feet of combined showroom floor. The adjoining showrooms offer an all-new fabric display, semi-private client/designer collaboration spaces and a comprehensive selection of indoor and outdoor furniture, accessories, bedding, fabric, wall coverings and lighting. Proud to be family-owned and operated, the collective brands provide an elevated experience to the design community and their clientele including famous faces such as Bravo TV's Jeff Lewis and HGTV's Christina El Moussa. Dedicated to supporting the local community, the team at Designers Resource Collection has supported



philanthropic organizations such as National Charity League, Human Options, The Hebrew Academy, Toys for Tots, South County Outreach and Ronald McDonald House.

Shannon Kennedy, President, U.S. Markets – Southwest

BNY Mellon Wealth Management, Newport Beach

After a 26-year career in financial services in Chicago, Shannon Kennedy was named regional president of BNY Mellon Wealth Management Southern California and relocated in June 2013. She was promoted to president, U.S. Markets: Southwest in 2016 where she stands as one of two female presidents at BNY Mellon Wealth Management, a leading wealth manager. Kennedy oversees \$10 billion in assets under management and \$218 million in assets under custody as of December 31, 2017, as well as a staff of 110 in six locations. Kennedy's community involvement includes serving on the executive committee of Girl Scouts of Orange County, Women's Philanthropy Fund, South Coast Repertory, UCI-CEO Roundtable, UCI Women's Forum, the Belizean Grove, and for the second year, will serve as the title sponsor for Voice for Girls.



Lisa Kim, Community & Economic Director

City of Garden Grove, Garden Grove

Lisa Kim is the community and economic director for the city of Garden Grove. She is a pro-business advocate and is one of the driving forces behind Mayor Steve Jones's current success in revitalizing Garden Grove. Upcoming developments in the city include SteelCraft Garden Grove, a Nickelodeon-themed Water Park Hotel and \$400 million in resort development on four acres of land. Prior to Garden Grove, Kim was with the city of Orange, where she was responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Economic Development Division, including business development and outreach; overseeing wind down activities of the former Orange Redevelopment Agency, including Successor Agency and Oversight Board responsibilities.



Robin King, Director, Go Red for Women

American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine

Robin King comes to the American Heart Association & American Stroke Association with more than 20 years of account management, sales and marketing experience. As a seasoned executive, she brings a fresh perspective to fundraising and a passion for raising awareness for heart disease, the number one killer in women. King jumped into her position and was able to provide leadership to the Go Red for Women movement.

Congratulations to
Dawn Knepper
nominated as Orange County Business Journal
2018 Women of the Year



Dawn Knepper

Labor & Employment Law

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2018 Women of the Year Award Nominees

She spent several years supporting the American Heart Association as a member of the Women's Leadership Committee and is now taking the Go Red for Women event by storm. Under King's direction, the Go Red for Women Luncheon was a huge success, and her vision is to continue to raise awareness and lifesaving funds to eradicate heart disease for future generations to come. The American Heart Association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke.

Stacie Kitts, Tax Partner *Haskell & White LLP, Irvine*

Stacie Kitts is a strategic tax professional with more than 25 years of experience working in both industry and public accounting. Prior to joining Haskell & White, one of the largest independently owned accounting, auditing and tax consulting firms in Southern California, Kitts was a founding member and the managing partner of Katherman Kitts & Co. Her clients include high-net-worth individuals and their closely held businesses, spanning a variety of industries such as construction, distribution, entertainment/media, manufacturing, professional services, oil and gas, retail, technology, healthcare, real estate, restaurant and transportation. In her free time, Kitts authors the acclaimed tax and business blog, Stacie's More Tax Tips; enjoys spending time with her family; and co-authoring educational materials used by CPAs.



Dawn Knepper, Shareholder/Employment Law Attorney *Buchalter, Irvine*

Dawn Knepper joined Buchalter's Orange County office in February 2018, after having spent nearly 13 years at her prior law firm, Ogletree Deakins. Prior to joining Ogletree, she was an attorney at the law firm of Richie & Gueringer for approximately four years, and served as a staff attorney for the Civil Division of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit for a year. At Buchalter, Knepper serves as a leader in building a well-informed, yet economic, approach to legal advice on labor and employment issues. Buchalter is a full-service business law firm that has been teaming with clients for eight decades, providing legal counsel at all stages of their growth and evolution, and helping them meet the many legal challenges and decisions they face.



Julie Leffler, President/Creative Director *Big Hype Marketing, Costa Mesa*

As the owner, visionary leader and creative director of Big Hype Marketing & PR, Julie Leffler has built a powerhouse agency. With her creative and discerning eye, articulate content writing skills, well-nurtured media relationships and her ability to multi-task, Leffler provides a next-level dedication to clients, and creates strategic marketing campaigns that make an impact. Leffler is involved in every project that comes through the Big Hype doors, making sure that every product and service is top-notch, up to her high standards, and ensuring that each service the agency provides will be impactful and will lead to achieving the financial and brand goals of each client. Big Hype Marketing and PR is a full-service marketing and PR agency that specializes in traditional and digital marketing initiatives, including branding, website design, graphic design, SEO, SEM, social media marketing and advertising, print marketing, email marketing, public relations and more.



Susan Levinstein, Partner

HMWC CPAs & Business Advisors, Tustin

After being in a leadership position in her university's accounting honor fraternity, Beta Alpha Psi, Susan Levinstein was persuaded to join the Tax Department at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in Los Angeles. After meeting her husband, she relocated to South Florida and continued to work for PwC. In 1993, Levinstein moved back to California and joined the Orange County firm, HMWC CPAs & Business Advisors, as the department manager of Accounting & Audit. In 2010, she formed the Complete Financial Office Solutions Department, which has grown to 10 employees. In 2011, Levinstein was promoted to partner at the firm. She has helped grow HMWC from a company with only 12 employees to the 80+ employee firm it is today. HMWC CPAs & Business Advisors specializes in serving the financial and tax needs of privately held businesses and their owners.



Christy Lewis, Attorney at Law

Lewis Business & Estate Planning, APC, Costa Mesa

Christy L. Lewis founded Lewis Business & Estate Planning, APC (LBEP) in 2015. LBEP focuses on developing and implementing advanced estate and tax planning techniques for clients with estates ranging in value from \$20 million to \$300 million, and providing business and tax planning representation to closely held businesses. After two and a half years as a partner at Law & Lewis LLP, Lewis decided to start her own firm and was able to grow her revenue in two years by more than 65%. Her business continues to grow and currently employs three full-time staff, including two attorneys.



Leslie Licano, President/Co-Founder

Beyond Fifteen Communications Inc., Irvine

Leslie Licano co-founded Beyond Fifteen Communications in September 2009 alongside her partner, Lauren Ellermeier. They shared a desire to push the boundaries of traditional PR methodologies and new social media platforms in order to propel clients past the expected "fifteen minutes of fame" and onto a long-term trajectory of media and market visibility. Beyond Fifteen continues to bring innovative ideas, keen focus and tangible results to both national and international clients. Approximately 70% of the agency's new clients are referred by existing clients – causing a domino effect of new client partnerships. In addition, many of those included on Beyond Fifteen's original client roster still retain the agency today. The agency is on track to see another year of double-digit growth in 2018 after 2017's 23% year over year growth. The firm added clients across healthcare, technology and consumer product and services categories.



Jenna Lobos, Founder

Jenna Lobos, Corona del Mar

In 2007, Jenna Lobos took a leap of faith and left a successful career as a mortgage representative in order to pursue her entrepreneurial dreams. Lobos's new path began when she re-signed with a modeling agency at the age of 35. This sparked a newfound feeling of empowerment, motivating her to share this feeling with other women and start an organic tanning business. Simultaneously, Lobos earned her nutritionist license under the umbrella of holistic health. This inspired her to create a tangible product combining her two passions of beauty and health, BeautyMark Organics. BeautyMark is a skincare line that is 100% all-natural, paraben-free and vegan. To date, Lobos has returned to her real estate roots, working specifically in luxury real estate, and will be working with a team of professionals featured at this year's Art-A-Fair in Laguna Beach.



Mina Maghami, Real Estate Consultant

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties, Newport Beach

Mina Maghami has 26 years of real estate experience, with four and a half years with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Realty. Maghami has been involved in many different types of transactions, such as foreclosures, short sale, cash and procuring creative financing clients. Maghami earned a BA in interior design, which has been tremendous asset in creating value for investment and primary properties, giving her an extra edge in real estate and helps her clients see the potential of any properties that interest them. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties' dedicated real estate experts guide clients through the home buying or selling experience.



Paula Mattson Vice President, Business Operations

Edison Energy, Irvine

Paula Mattson joined Edison Energy in 2015. However, she began her career at Southern California Edison (SCE) in 1990 and held a variety of executive roles at Edison International and SCE, providing leadership on strategic initiatives designed to prepare for the future while improving the customer experience, growing the business and increasing shareholder value. Currently, she is vice president of business operations for Edison Energy, a subsidiary of Edison International that operates competitive businesses in emerging sectors of the electric industry. Edison Energy acquired three companies across the United States when it formed, and Mattson led the integration of these acquisitions. She is currently responsible for assisting business performance through systems, operating controls, reporting and communication oversight. She is an active mentor for employees and executive advisor for SCE's Employee Resource Group for Latinos for Engagement, Advancement & Development.



Nicole McMackin, President

Irvine Technology Corp., Irvine

Nicole McMackin is president of Irvine Technology Corp. (ITC), a national technology solutions and staffing firm with two local Orange County offices. McMackin is a partner in ITC and has led the company for the past 14 years. McMackin is attributed to making ITC one of the most successful firms, not only in Orange County, but in the country. When McMackin took over ITC, the company had 15 employees locally, and now under her leadership, the organization has grown to 200+ employees in Orange County alone. ITC is proud to service accounts such as AT&T, Molina Healthcare, USC, Trader Joe's, CHOC, Xerox, Konica Minolta, Nike and many others throughout the country. McMackin oversees all internal operations, brand development, strategic planning and implementation. She also currently holds total P&L responsibility in the United States.



Meghan Medlin, Project Director

Orange County Re-Entry Partnership, Santa Ana

Meghan Medlin has been on the Orange County Re-Entry Partnership (OCREP)

2018 Women of the Year Award Nominees

Advisory Committee since 2012. She became chair in 2014 and successfully led the organization to fiscal sponsorship in December 2016, becoming the organization's project director. OCREP is a collaboration of organizations that unite to effectively reduce county recidivism. Medlin's work with OCREP is 100% volunteer, she concurrently works for Hope Builders as the director of career services. Medlin represents the county's community-based organizations on several committees, including Prop 47, AB109 and Stepping Up. She has led efforts to bring several large-scale events to the community, including the Reentry Resource Fair held at the Honda Center, Opioid Awareness event at the Grove of Anaheim, workshops, trainings and monthly meetings. Recently, she was named to the county's Continuum of Care Governing Board to represent reentry challenges with the homeless population.



Samantha Meyers, Owner/Baker

Sugared and Iced, Coto de Caza

In just a short time, Samantha Meyers has taken Sugared and Iced from a hobby to a full-fledged business. Starting out making cookies for friends and family, Meyers now makes her custom cookies for many of Orange County's charity organizations and local businesses, including Festival of Children, The Adoption Guild and Women of Chapman, Hyundai, Neiman Marcus and Blizzard Entertainment. Most importantly, she creates her custom delights for many families across Orange County, helping them to celebrate special occasions in a unique and delicious way. With its grand opening in 2017, Sugared and Iced quickly grew from small orders to serving the community with thousands of cookies. Not only was Sugared and Iced part of many Orange County events, large and small, but Meyers was featured on the nationally televised talk show, Pickler and Ben, where she competed in and won a holiday bake-off judged by Food Network stars, Duff Goldman and Nancy Fuller.



Celin Miller, President

GGG Demolition Inc., Orange

Celin Miller is president of GGG Demolition Inc., a woman-owned business she created from ground up. GGG Demolition specializes in full-service demolition and hazardous waste remediation. Miller started in the construction industry 18 years ago, working in demolition and



mechanical contracting. She has established a seasoned team of construction professionals that generate positive results in the demolition and remediation industries. She manages day-to-day activities such as business development, bid schedules, sales, strategic planning, insurance and bonding. GGG Demolition is now doing \$15 million a year in business with 200 employees and offices in Orange County and San Diego.

Kendra Miller, SVP/General Counsel

BJ's Restaurants Inc., Huntington Beach

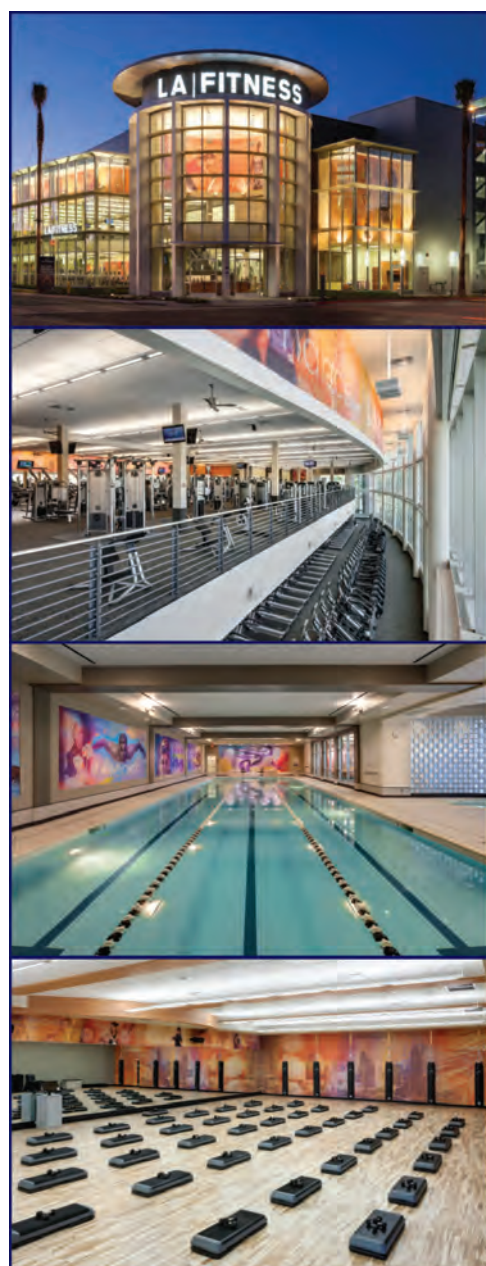
Kendra Miller joined BJ's Restaurants Inc. six and a half years ago. Today, she oversees the Legal, Licensing, Team Member Relations, and Benefits Departments. She also assumed responsibility for the Loss Prevention Department last year. During her tenure, BJ's has grown from approximately 13,000 team members at 103 restaurants in 13 states to approximately 23,000 team members at 194 restaurants in 24 states. She is a director of one of BJ's nonprofit organizations, Give A Slice, which provides grants to team members in their time of need. In 2011, she founded BJ's Women's Career Advancement Network (WeCAN), an organization focused on empowering and developing women leaders with the knowledge, skills and network they need to expand their leadership potential and advance their careers at BJ's. Prior to joining BJ's, Miller was a partner in the Employment Departments at Crowell & Moring LLP and Carothers DiSante & Freudenberger LLP.



Natasha Minasian, Principal

The Studio at Designers Resource Collection, Costa Mesa

Celebrating more than 30 years of excellence, Designers Resource Collection is the premier destination for interior designers. Open exclusively to the trade, Designers Resource Collection and partner showrooms, The Studio at DRC and Kenneth McDonald Designs, are now under one roof in the Stonemill Design Center, featuring more than 50,000 square feet of combined showroom floor. The adjoining showrooms offer an all-new fabric display, semi-private client/designer collaboration spaces and a comprehensive selection of indoor and outdoor furniture, accessories, bedding, fabric, wall coverings and lighting. Proud to be family-owned and operated, the collective brands provide an elevated experience to the design community and their clientele including famous faces such as Bravo TV's Jeff Lewis and HGTV's Christina El Moussa. Dedicated to supporting the local community, the team at Designers Resource



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Photos depict a typical facility; amenities and classes vary by club. Certain amenities may be available for an additional fee. ©2018 Fitness International, LLC. All rights reserved.

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Collection has supported philanthropic organizations such as National Charity League, Human Options, The Hebrew Academy, Toys for Tots, South County Outreach and Ronald McDonald House.

Shruti Miyashiro, President/CEO

Orange County's Credit Union, Santa Ana

In 2007, just prior to the great recession, Shruti Miyashiro assumed the role of president and CEO of Orange County's Credit Union. During this time, she guided the credit union through the historically difficult economic period with no layoffs. Through her tenure, Miyashiro has broken down silos and led the creation and execution of Orange County's Credit Union's mission and vision. She is a leader who has aligned the team with clear strategic direction, providing significant value to members, associates and communities. To members, she offers simple banking solutions designed for people, not profit. To associates, she fosters growth of confident leaders. To communities, she gives back through financial education programs and fundraising efforts.



Renita Mollman, Vice President, General Manager of Regional Offices

Burns & McDonnell, Brea

If you've flown in the U.S., you've probably landed in an airport Renita Mollman has helped improve. Mollman has spent most of her career in aviation engineering, managing civilian and military projects, while mentoring countless engineers along the way. Today, she leads nearly 180 employees in Burns & McDonnell offices across California, supporting clients in a variety of markets. Mollman joined Burns & McDonnell in 1988 as an assistant civil engineer. She was promoted in 1997 to oversee the firm's Aviation and Federal Civil Department, which she grew from 15 to 35 employees in just 11 years. She was appointed general manager for California operations in 2009, and named vice president in 2011. In California, she's led innovative projects at Los Angeles International Airport, Los Alamitos Sunburst Youth Academy and Sharpe Army Depot. She was recently named Woman of the Year by WTS-San Diego and the Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.



Susan Morehead, President/Co-Founder

Optima Asset Management Services, Newport Beach

As president and co-founder of Optima Asset Management Services Inc., one of Susan Morehead's greatest accomplishments at the company has been creating a tight-knit team and feeling of family. The majority of Optima's employees have been with the company 15-30 years. Optima believes in full-service property management, and recognizes the power behind synergistic teamwork. The organization has nurtured a group of forward-thinking leaders who represent the Optima brand. With more than 30 years of diverse experience, Morehead works closely with her team to ensure that efficient, quality and attentive care always exceeds expectations. Optima's commitment to its clientele is second to none, placing the company on the Orange County Business Journal's "Commercial Property Managers" List for the past several years.



Darlynn Morgan, Founding Partner

Morgan Law Group, Newport Beach

Attorney Darlynn Morgan has been practicing law in Orange County since 1996. She founded the law firm of Morgan Law Group in 2005 with the dream of making a difference in her clients' lives, which meant changing the traditional model of estate planning into something that serves families by helping them make the best legal decisions possible throughout their lifetime and guides them to leave the world a better place. Morgan graduated in the top 15% of her class from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, where she was also a member of the Loyola Law Review and was awarded an American Jurisprudence Award. After graduation, Morgan served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable John E. Ryan, a Ninth Circuit Federal Judge. She subsequently practiced at a premier business litigation firm in Orange County.



Debby Morris, Executive VP/CFO

Apria Healthcare, Lake Forest

Debby Morris leverages her broad industry experience from the healthcare, professional service, automotive, real estate and business process outsourcing industries to lead Apria Healthcare through a period of significant challenge and price compression. While expert financial acumen and stewardship are part of Morris's foundational mastery, she goes beyond the typical role of chief financial officer to drive cross-functional achievement through collaboration and influence spanning all levels of the organization. During a period of significant price compression directly and materially impacting Apria, she has worked with the company's chief executive officer to drive change in the organization, resulting in a 14% EBITDA CAGR from 2014-2017 despite price compression totaling more than \$200 million over that same time period. Apria has transitioned from a company facing unimaginable reimbursement rate impact to a high-growth, cost-efficient company serving 1.8 million patients across the U.S. Apria Healthcare is one of the nation's leading providers of home respiratory services.



Jennifer Morris, Founder/CEO

Ajenda Public Relations, Orange

Ajenda Public Relations started as a one-woman business, approximately eight years ago. Today, it has grown into one of the leading restaurant and hospitality public relations and marketing agencies in Southern California, and now employees ten other hardworking and passionate women. While local and independent concepts like Old Vine Cafe, Cha Cha's Latin Kitchen and Greenbar Distillery still remain a focal point for Ajenda Public Relations, Founder and CEO Jennifer Morris has also grown the client roster to include national and international clients, including Farmer Boys, The Halal Guys and Papa John's. The success of the company can be attributed to the positive reputation the company upholds and the Morris's knack for hiring talented PR and marketing professionals who are likeminded about the success of Ajenda PR and its clients. Morris is also an active member of Les Dames d'Escoffier, a by-invitation membership and philanthropic organization of female leaders in the food, fine beverage and hospitality industries.



Jody Moses, President - Risk Services

York Risk Services, Orange

Jody Moses brings more than two decades of experience in public entity claims administration to designing, implementing and managing customized claims management solutions for public entities. Moses is a certified workers' compensation claims adjuster with recognized expertise in the complex California workers' compensation system. She is a licensed General Adjuster and has earned an Associate in Risk Management designation. Moses is a frequent speaker and workshop leader at regional and national public entity risk management conferences. She actively works with public entities to analyze and influence legislative and regulatory changes that directly affect public entity risk management programs. York Risk Services Group is the third largest multi-line TPA and has been a leading national provider of specialty claims and risk management services to the markets it has served for more than 60 years.



Danielle Murcia, Chief Operations Officer

Crepes Bonaparte, Fullerton

Established more than 10 years ago by husband and wife team, Christian and Danielle Murcia, Crepes Bonaparte is Southern California's original crepe caterer. Crepes Bonaparte recreates the experience of enjoying French crepes on the streets of Paris, France with made-to-order savory and dessert style crepes. Under Danielle's direction, Crepes Bonaparte has been featured on Food Network's The Great Food Truck Race and Giada at Home, Cooking Channel's Eat Street, was named as one of the Top 20 Food Trucks by QSR Magazine, highlighted on Food Truck Fanatics, and more. Danielle oversees all operational and marketing aspects of the business, and has helped develop it from a catering-only offering to two food trucks and a brick and mortar storefront in Downtown Fullerton.



Kirti Mutatkar, President/CEO

UnitedAg, Irvine

Kirti Mutatkar assumed the role of president/CEO of UnitedAg in May 2014. UnitedAg is a multi-commodity member-owned agricultural trade association dedicated to providing innovative solutions for a strong and healthy agricultural industry. She joined the company in 2001, and served as the CFO for 10 years. As CFO, Mutatkar directed all operations of the organization and developed a deep understanding of each functional area of the company. Under her leadership, UnitedAg has grown from an \$80 million company to a \$155+ million company. This growth is attributed to her unique approach of leading innovation through empathy and enabling UnitedAg to create products that delight members and create a sense of awe. She does this by not only listening to members' concerns and issues, but also by getting a deeper understanding of how taxing our current healthcare system can be. Her passion has positioned UnitedAg as one of the foremost association health plans for the agricultural industry.



Shana Neuberger, VP of Business Development

American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine

Shana Neuberger helps to oversee the American Heart Association & American Stroke Association staff who run the nonprofit's three major campaigns in Orange County: The Orange County Go Red For Women Luncheon, The Orange County Heart & Stroke Walk and the Orange County Heart Ball. Neuberger has a long history in the nonprofit field and enjoys working to help make a difference for future generations. Her focus is to engage with OC companies that are interested in taking the next step with employees' health and engaging them with the American Heart Association & American Stroke Association in a way that can help them fulfill their interest in executive leadership, employee engagement, community health partnerships and/or reduced bottom lines.



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Karen Nguyen, Founder/CEO

Inspired Art Wine, Costa Mesa

Since opening Inspired Art Wine (IAW) on February 18, 2016, Karen Nguyen has established a loyal client base with first timers turning into regulars and now friends. Today, IAW has become a leading arts and entertainment company for corporate team building. In addition to art classes, Nguyen curates unique wines from across different regions and hosts monthly wine tasting events for enthusiasts. IAW also offers off-site trips to museums for VIPs (Very Inspired Painters). Customers who are frequent visitors can join the IAW membership program, where they can hone their technical painting skills at a fraction of the cost of attending a traditional art school.



Wendy Nugent, Senior Communications Specialist

Auto Club of Southern CA, Costa Mesa

Wendy Nugent is a senior communications specialist with 12 years of experience at the Auto Club of Southern California. Nugent oversees the internal website for 14,000 employees across 21 states, and is the executive producer of a monthly video news show for Auto Club employees. In 2014, Nugent was a recipient of the Auto Club President's Award. Despite her busy schedule, she has volunteered to lead the Auto Club of Southern California's United Way Employee Giving Campaign for nearly 12 years. As the leader of the annual campaign, she manages more than 160 Auto Club Ambassadors across five states and has increased employee donations over 60% in the last six years. As an employee engagement tool, Nugent has developed, managed and promoted quarterly community involvement events for Auto Club employees to support United Way's initiatives in education, health, housing and financial stability.



Heather O'Connell, Senior Processor

GreenLink Financial, Irvine

Heather O'Connell started with GreenLink Financial in June 2016, and with only six months to end the year, she enrolled \$10,593,439 worth of accounts. She won the coveted Rookie of the Year award with almost 575 enrollments in six months. For 2017, O'Connell finished the year strong with \$22,604,693 and six awards. Besides her proven track record, O'Connell's consistency from month to month makes her accomplishments that much greater. In 2018, as of March, her current enrollments stand at \$4,618,078. Since the inception of GreenLink in 2014, no one has ever completed this many enrollments, which is especially impressive in a male-dominated sales floor. GreenLink Financial is a leader in the consumer finance industry. With more than 20 years of combined financial advisory experience, the company has helped thousands of people resolve their financial struggles and get back on the path towards financial freedom.



Annette Oltmans, Founder

The MEND Project, Laguna Beach

Annette Oltmans is the founder of The MEND Project, a 501(c)(3) organization created in 2016 to educate, equip and restore all those impacted by primary and "Double Abuse." When victims finally find the courage to speak about their abuse or reach out for help, rather than being believed, they are often judged, silenced and even ostracized by their families, church or professional communities. Oltmans's research interviewing hundreds of victims revealed that this secondary layer of abuse often exacerbates trauma, harming victims on a cellular level. Oltmans interviewed more than 100 pastors and professional counselors. She observed that most were untrained on matters of abuse and trauma. Oltmans trains professional clinicians, pastors and victim survivors on matters of abuse. She is passionate about naming covert emotionally abusive behaviors that are present in nearly every form of primary and Double Abuse. She also created a glossary of defining terms to provide clarity to victims and responders.



Natalia Ostensen

Executive Vice President, Olen Properties Corp., Newport Beach

President, Andrei's Restaurant Corp., Irvine

Serving as executive vice president at Olen Properties, Natalia Ostensen oversees the company's real estate operations, including 6 million square feet of commercial space (mostly in Orange County) and more than 13,000 multi-family apartments in five states. In the past year, Olen has acquired three new multifamily properties in the Atlanta area (totaling roughly 1,000 apartments) and 4100 Newport Place, a nine-story office tower in Newport Beach. Ostensen also built and opened Andrei's Conscious Cuisine & Cocktails in 2009 after losing her brother, Andrei, in a car accident. He was very committed to nutrition as healing and prevention, so Andrei's Conscious Cuisine & Cocktails' menu focuses on organic, local ingredients. In addition, the restaurant operates as a nonprofit, donating all net proceeds to the Andrei Foundation. In 2014, Andrei's won the Nature Conservancy's Nature's Plate award for LA/OC's favorite green restaurant, which was voted on by all Nature Conservancy members.



Linda Padilla-Smyth, Director of Real Estate and Property Management

Chapman University, Orange

Linda Padilla-Smyth is the director of real estate and property management for Chapman University. In her role, she provides leadership in the complex management and operation of university residential homes and commercial tenant-leased properties in and out of state. She also oversees the real estate portfolio consisting of office buildings, apartments, condominiums, duplexes, bare lots, ground leases, educational use and easement agreements (locally and outside California). In total, real estate and property management oversees 170 properties. Padilla-Smyth works closely with University Advancement to analyze, provide opinions, evaluate, conduct due diligence, and liquidate real estate asset gifts donated to Chapman University.



Sara Palmer, Founder/CEO

StaffRehab, Newport Beach

Sara Palmer is the founder and CEO of StaffRehab, an educational outsourcing company staffing more than 200 service providers in school districts across the U.S. From its inception in 2009, Palmer has grown her team to 16 employees while providing exceptional customer service to schools. StaffRehab's mission is to align candidates' and clients' values as the company's own. Today, StaffRehab provides special education services to more than 5,000 students.



Summer Lynne Perry, Real Estate Agent

Surterre Properties, Newport Beach

Summer Lynne Perry became a licensed broker in November 2011, and in May 2012, started work at Surterre Properties. After a few years at Surterre, she seized the opportunity to start her own team. With a baby on the way and a team being put together, Perry sold more real estate that year and managed more transactions than she ever had before. From short sales to first-time homebuyers, The Summer Perry Group quickly made its mark on the Orange County market. Perry's dedication to the industry is proven through her tireless work ethic, including closing deals from the maternity ward. Today, The Summer Perry Group represents one of the top teams in Southern California, and is among the top four producing teams at Surterre Properties. The Summer Perry Group has sold approximately \$150 million in the last three years and has another \$55 million in current listings and buyers. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.



Lauren Peterson Vice President, Client Advisor

Whittier Trust, Costa Mesa

Lauren Peterson has more than three decades of experience in various leadership positions in the legal and financial industry. As a former practicing attorney focusing on estate, tax and business planning, her experience and education enable Peterson to assist many affluent families with complex estate plans. Peterson orchestrates the client's team of advisors, including attorney, accountant and investment manager, all working toward the same goal of perpetuating wealth and intergenerational transfers. Whittier Trust Company is the largest multi-family office headquartered on the West Coast. Since the founding of the family office by the Whittier family in 1935, Whittier has been helping highly affluent individuals and families accomplish what is most important to them – enriching and enhancing clients' lives by providing expert guidance, superior investment performance and exceptionally tailored experience.



Sandra Pham, CFO/President of Shared Services

West Coast University & American Career College, Irvine

Sandra Pham brought innovation and financial diligence to West Coast University and American Career College. Her ability to restructure the entire financial function has improved overall performance in all verticals of the business. She holds others accountable with compassion, caring and support, while setting the example every day for those who work directly and indirectly with her. Pham is known by her peers as a "game changer," developing business analytics to support organizational growth and effectiveness. Her growth mindset has allowed her to successfully partner with operation leaders to improve efficiency, student outcomes and an exceptional student experience. Her results are phenomenal, with 23% revenue growth over the past three years. West Coast University is one of Southern California's leading health care educators, offering programs in nursing, health care management and dental hygiene at campuses in Los Angeles, Orange County and Ontario. American Career College is a health care educator with three campuses located in Southern California.



Meesh Pierce, VP Product Management

AutoGravity, Irvine

A seasoned leader with deep expertise in building industry-changing products, Meesh Pierce serves AutoGravity with her deep understanding of emerging technologies and agile development. With her track record of driving innovation across industries, Pierce

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leads the company's product team, helping evolve its innovative technology platform and connect AutoGravity with more car buyers across the nation. Since its first pilot in the summer of 2016, the organization has attracted more than a million and half car shoppers through the AutoGravity iOS and Android apps. AutoGravity expanded its geographic reach in 2017, and is now live nationwide. AutoGravity partners with the world's leading banks and financial services companies. The platform has attracted 2,000+ franchise car dealerships, including four of the five largest dealer groups in the United States. Through these partnerships, AutoGravity technology has simplified the auto financing experience, delivering personalized finance offers to prospective car buyers within minutes.

Jennifer Povlitz, Orange County Market Head

UBS Financial Services Inc., Newport Beach

Jennifer Povlitz leads the wealth management business for UBS Financial Services Inc. in Orange County. Since her arrival in late 2015, Povlitz has established the mission of "Aligning Clients' Wealth With Their Purpose," grown the business, and upheld the core values and principles. Povlitz also launched 17 new chapters of All Bar None, UBS's network to promote, develop and advance women. UBS is the largest global wealth manager in the world, helping affluent families plan, preserve and express their values through wealth decisions.

Sandy Powers, Agent & Leader of the Powers Team/Villa Real Estate

Villa Real Estate, Newport Beach

Sandy Powers brings 40 years of experience and results to the real estate market. Powers has a BS in physical therapy, and worked with head injury and spinal cord patients. She brings this same level of commitment and compassion to her real estate business. Powers has always demonstrated a personal, concierge approach with her clients with a hands-on attitude. Clients interact directly with her on each transaction. Powers has sold more than a billion dollars over her 40 years in real estate. Villa Real Estate is a leading luxury residential real estate firm in coastal Orange County.

Robbin Narike Preciado, Regional President-Southern California Retail Division

Union Bank, Orange

Robbin Narike Preciado has had an extraordinary 27-year career in banking. She has risen in the banking world, and is now the regional president of Union Bank with her geographic area covering Orange County, San Diego, Inland Empire, Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley. In that position, Preciado oversees more than 900 employees, 125 branches and more than 351,000 retail households. With her deep understanding of the banking industry and its evolution, and its importance to people in fulfilling dreams of home ownership, college savings and retirement, Preciado was selected to be the lead for Union Bank in reengineering the customer experience approach.

Shirley Quackenbush, Private Wealth Manager/SVP-Wealth Management

Merrill Lynch, a Bank of America Corp., Private Banking & Investment Group, Newport Beach

Shirley Quackenbush works with affluent individuals, families and institutions to design and implement sophisticated wealth strategies. She leads a multi-disciplinary approach that is firmly grounded in client goals and priorities. Quackenbush recognizes that significant wealth can entail both complexity and opportunity. She and her team offer sophisticated strategies to streamline the preservation and transfer of wealth. Driven to exceed expectations, Quackenbush serves clients with an intensity that mirrors her interest in their wellbeing. She integrates strategies across a spectrum of needs: investment management, executive services, trust and estate planning services, credit and lending through Bank of America, N.A., lifestyle services and philanthropy. The Private Banking and Investment Group offers a broad array of personalized wealth management products and services.

Sunny Rajab, CEO

Business Communications Solutions, Irvine

Sunny Rajab started working in the telecommunications industry for a startup at 18 years old. In 2001, she founded her own telecommunications and structured cabling company, Business Communications Solutions (BCS), in a male-dominated industry. Rajab keeps at the forefront of emerging business technology as it evolves, which is evident with BCS's expansion into the audiovisual industry. BCS started out as a telecommunications company servicing small to medium-size businesses, and with Rajab's strategic direction and through her long-standing customer relationships, she has been able to grow the business to also include Fortune 500 clients across the country.



Song Richardson, Dean & Professor of Law

University of California, Irvine School of Law, Irvine

Song Richardson is a shining example of someone who has shattered the glass ceiling, both as a woman and a person of color. She is the second dean in University of California, Irvine School of Law's history, and the only woman of color to currently serve as dean of a top-25 law school, as ranked by U.S. News & World Report. An award-winning teacher and scholar, Richardson has been a professor at UCI Law since 2014, and from 2016-17, served as the school's senior associate dean for Academic Affairs. Her expertise and scholarship is in criminal procedure, criminal law, law and social science. In the first year since Richardson assumed the deanship, UCI Law skyrocketed to its highest U.S. News & World Report ranking of all-time; the school now ranks No. 21 in the nation, up seven spots from last year. This past fall, Richardson's first as dean, UCI Law welcomed its largest first-year class of all time – 159 students.



Maricela Rios-Faust, CEO

Human Options, Irvine

Maricela Rios-Faust's leadership has been a key driver in Human Options becoming the most comprehensive domestic violence service agency in Orange County. Her commitment comes from a desire to raise her daughter in a world where domestic violence isn't tolerated. Since 2006, she has capitalized on her 20 years of experience working with vulnerable populations. Recognized as a leader in the field, Rios-Faust is the past president of the board of directors for the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence. She also co-chairs the Orange County Domestic Violence Death Review Team, serves on the Orange County Women's Health Project Advisory Board and the WeCan Coalition Steering Committee. Rios-Faust was named one of Orange County's Most Influential of 2014 by the Orange County Register for her leadership on increasing awareness of health impacts of domestic violence.



Laura Roche, Luxury Real Estate Professional

Villa Real Estate, Newport Beach

With more than 16 years of residential real estate experience, Laura Roche has earned a reputation for excellence in her field. Joining forces with Shana Spitzer in 2013, they have sold more than \$150 million in luxury real estate and are associated with the high-end firm Villa Real Estate. Roche is recognized for her strategic marketing that has both a local and international reach, strong negotiating skills and a commitment to 24/7 concierge services for her clients. She is the recipient of numerous accolades, but the long list of repeat clients and positive testimonials are what drives her to work relentlessly in the competitive real estate market. Villa Real Estate is a leading luxury residential real estate firm in coastal Orange County.



Joni Rogers-Kante, Founder/CEO/Chairwoman

SeneGence International Inc., Foothill Ranch

Joni Rogers-Kante founded SeneGence® in 1999 and the company has since become a recognized, international leader in the cosmetics industry. To Rogers-Kante, just as important as a flourishing business, is the commitment to high-quality products that not only work, but give value to consumers and the communities in which the company's distributors live, while not depleting the earth of natural resources or creating unnecessary waste. Rogers-Kante traveled to the other side of the world with a team of scientists and botanists to find different ingredients than those available in the U.S. for the unique formulas in SeneGence products. After she learned that cosmetic companies continuously use the same ingredients in one product to the next – just in varying amounts, she knew SeneGence had to be different. Today, these unique ingredients are used to help produce amazing results in SeneDerm® anti-aging SkinCare and long-lasting SenseCosmetics™ products.



Angela Rowe, CFO

Global Genes, Aliso Viejo

For the last three years, Angela Rowe has served as chief operating officer and chief financial officer for Global Genes, a leading rare disease advocacy organization. Overseeing a staff of seven and a \$4 million budget, she acts as effective executive officer, handling all board meetings; committee work and program implementation; as well as governance, finance, legal, risk and employee matters. During her tenure, Global Genes has realized a 60% increase in net assets over two fiscal years and has established the company's first reserve and investment accounts. Rowe has written, implemented and oversees adherence to the company's first Governing Policies and Procedures, first Accounting Policies and Procedures, first Employee Manual and first Employee Performance Review process. Rowe resolved several inherited audit management letters with 18 audit findings in less than 18 months and achieved a clean management letter for FY2016 by addressing all key governance deficiencies. She also implemented the first corporate health and retirement plans for the company in 2017.





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Ellen Roy, Executive Director

Mary's Path, Santa Ana

As executive director, Ellen Roy drives the mission and vision of Mary's Path, a safe haven for Orange County's pregnant teens and young mothers under the age of 18. Before embarking on her current role, Roy enjoyed a successful corporate career of more than 20 years. She brings a keen sense of business and finance to her organization, as well as a sincere passion to help the teen girls staying at Mary's Path, many of whom have been victims of homelessness, abandonment, poverty, neglect and sexual exploitation. Roy joined Mary's Path in 2016 with a determination to power and equip the vulnerable, teen girls and their babies for lives with hope, dignity and self-sufficiency.



business acumen, she was key in reducing wait times from 60 to 15 minutes, increasing visit volume 60% in the last eight years, developing a primary care arm with 10,000+ empaneled lives in three years, and helping to develop a smartphone app to purchase birth control pills – all while maintaining a 4.3 star average on Yelp and a 95% patient satisfaction score. Schnelle's forward-thinking style continues to enhance the Planned Parenthood organization and the Orange County community.



Talia Samuels, President

Outshine Public Relations, Newport Beach

At 23 years old, Talia Samuels founded Outshine Public Relations in 2015 with the desire to shine awareness on Orange County's top culinary talent. Recognized for her poise, tenacity and integrity, Samuels works on behalf of a top-tier list of award-winning chefs and restaurateurs that entrust her to help their businesses succeed by increasing exposure through earned print, digital, television and radio opportunities complemented with expertly executed social media and digital content strategies. Samuels has earned her clients national coverage in outlets including USA Today, Vogue, and Food & Wine, while generating local buzz through outlets including the Orange County Business Journal, KTLA, ABC7, CBS, the Los Angeles Times, Orange County Register and many more.



Kylie Schuyler, Founder/CEO

Global G.L.O.W. & Le Nid Inc./California Bliss, Santa Ana

In 2011, Kylie Schuyler founded nonprofit Global G.L.O.W. and social enterprise, California Bliss, a frozen yogurt chain in Europe established to provide funds for the nonprofit. Global G.L.O.W. helps transform the lives of strong girls, in grades 5-12 from vulnerable communities around the world, by empowering them to realize their full potential. Both organizations have achieved tremendous success in eight years. Global G.L.O.W. has grown from a small afterschool program for girls that initially started at one school in Santa Ana to operating programs in 27 countries with four program sites in Southern California. California Bliss, which started with one store in AIX-EN-PROVENCE is now in the process of expanding to other locations in France and in the U.S.



Sunny Seegmiller, CEO

Law Media Inc., Irvine

Sunny Seegmiller has worked with her father in the personal injury legal field since she was 16. She officially began working in his PI practice as the front desk receptionist upon graduating from UCLA, and began working as a case manager at age 24 while going to graduate school at night. After completing her master's degree at USC in technical writing and screenplay, Seegmiller began working as a demand writer at the firm for 12 years where she wore many hats and learned all aspects of the business of personal injury law. Seegmiller began to see the business opportunities in the world of legal marketing. After finishing a second master's degree in education and psychology, Seegmiller returned to her dad's law firm and started legal marketing firm, Law Media Inc. in 2017. Law Media Inc. has already supplied its partner law firm with 35 viable cases within the first month of opening its doors.



Danielle Sapia, Executive Director

American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine

Danielle Sapia is the executive director at the American Heart Association & American Stroke Association (AHA). She first joined the AHA as the senior business development director, bringing with her the experience and leadership potential to advance the organization. She has and continues to work with staff, Orange County corporate partnerships, volunteer leadership and the executive board to achieve maximum impact in equitable health and wellbeing through education, advocacy and research. Sapia's background includes extensive experience in nonprofit management and proven capabilities in volunteer engagement, donor cultivation, marketing and sponsorship. She made an immediate and significant impact in Orange County, spreading AHA's mission of reducing cardiovascular disease and stroke, bringing innovation to the organization, and being an advocate for health issues. Through strong engagement, focused collaboration and disciplined planning and execution, the team has been able to accomplish their goals and has set their sights even higher for continued growth.



Chahira Solh, Partner

Crowell & Moring LLP, Irvine

Chahira Solh is a partner in the law firm of Crowell & Moring and has become one of the most sought-after antitrust lawyers in California. Leading corporations such as General Motors, Yamaha and Motorola/Lenovo turn to Solh when they face high-stakes antitrust actions in California and across the United States. Her work has resulted in saved businesses and the recovery of tens of millions of dollars for clients. As a leader in the antitrust bar, Solh raises the bar in the highly specialized area of antitrust law involving large-scale, bet-the-company litigations. Solh also has an active pro bono practice and has made an indelible mark on the underserved and less fortunate.



Tina Schackman, VP, Strategic Relationships

Prudential Retirement, Irvine

Tina Schackman has been with Prudential Retirement for six years, starting as a key account manager for Prudential's largest corporate retirement plans in the Western region. She was promoted to vice president, strategic relationships in 2013, where her primary responsibilities are to oversee Prudential's largest intermediary distribution channels located in the Western region and develop strategy to align business growth. Schackman has spoken at several industry events on topics ranging from retirement industry trends to financial wellness. More recently, she has begun speaking about the retirement income gender gap and how women should think differently about how to plan for their financial security. Prudential Financial has provided clients with financial solutions since 1875.



Lisa Sparks, Ph.D., Dean, School of Communications

Chapman University, Orange

Dr. Lisa Sparks is the inaugural dean of the School of Communication and Endowed Professor at Chapman University. She previously served as chair of the Department of Communication Studies and founding head/director of the Master of Science graduate program in Health and Strategic Communication. Sparks is a highly regarded teacher-scholar whose published work spans more than 150 research articles and scholarly book chapters, and is the author and editor of 12 books in the areas of communication, health and aging with a focus on intersections of provider-patient interaction and family decision-making as related to cancer communication. Her innovative research has been featured in the Los Angeles Times, Orange County Register and TED.



Sherri Scheck-Merrill, VP Business Business, Product & Licensing Development

Amenity Services Inc., Tustin

A 25-year executive in the niche field of global hotel amenity product design and development, and a fixture at North American Hotel Headquarters, Sherri Scheck-Merrill's exclusive licensing portfolio and custom-designed products and programs occupy space in more than one million North American hotel guest rooms. Scheck-Merrill is also the CEO and founder of an award-winning 501(c) Career-Exploring Internship program accredited at 27 campuses. Scheck-Merrill is often featured as a trend columnist for Hotels Magazine, Refinery 29 and Vogue. Amenity Services Inc. celebrates a 30-year focus to the field of hotel amenities, embracing a spectrum of diverse roles including collaborator, licensor, partner, producer, developer and distributor.



Jessica Spaulding, President

Spaulding Thompson & Associates, Aliso Viejo

Jessica Spaulding founded Spaulding Thompson & Associates to offer a nimble, senior-level approach to providing public relations and marketing to the commercial real estate industry and public sector. The firm has built a solid reputation for delivering quality communications strategies. To underscore its success, Spaulding Thompson continues to grow its business having achieved longstanding tenures of more than 10 years with many of its clients.



Betha Schnelle, COO

Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties, Orange

Betha Schnelle's belief that all women deserve quality healthcare, no matter their income or background, has guided Planned Parenthood locally, changing an organization sometimes seen as a last resort into a preferred provider, serving more than 200,000 annually. With Schnelle's people-centric leadership and outstanding

Shana Spitzer, Real Estate Agent

Villa Real Estate, Newport Beach

Shana Spitzer expanded her career as a successful interior designer to being a top-producing luxury real estate agent over the last eight years. In 2012, she partnered with colleague, Laura Roche, and together they have become a leading, top-producing team for Villa Real Estate. The key to much of her success has been dedication to providing

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24/7 personalized service to clients, buyers and sellers alike. Going above and beyond with an intensive marketing strategy to reach specific buyers has led to her achieving top dollar for her listings. An intimate knowledge of each neighborhood from her 25 years of living in the Newport area has also allowed her the ability to bring buyers the homes that they have dreamed of. Villa Real Estate is a leading luxury residential real estate firm in coastal Orange County.

Brenda Springer, Founder/CEO

Reveille Inc., Costa Mesa

When others were still reeling from the Great Recession, Brenda Springer eyed an opportunity; create a different kind of marketing and public relations agency. Eight years later, Springer's vision, Reveille Inc., operates at the epicenter of culture, commerce and conversation in Orange County. She helps the full-service agency, 15-person team that is on the forefront on some of the county's most significant initiatives, helping consumer brands, nonprofit agencies and public agencies to make an impact. From opening the much-anticipated FivePoint Amphitheatre and Orange County Great Park Sports Park, to taking Deirdre and Albert Pujols' Strike Out Slavery campaign national, to launching etnies "Buy a Shoe, Plant a Tree" initiative, Springer has her finger on the pulse of Orange County – and beyond. She also is a champion of trailblazing nonprofit initiatives to give veterans the homecoming they deserve, put a stop to human trafficking and more.

Paula Steurer, President

Sterling Public Relations, Corona del Mar

Celebrating its 10-year anniversary milestone, Sterling Public Relations is a full-service public relations, marketing and branding firm in Orange County, California and Dallas, Texas. Offering custom-tailored services including brand identity development, talent representation, public relations, advertising, email marketing, social media and graphic design, all services are handled in-house by Sterling PR's award-winning team. The firm has extensive experience in industries such as automotive, aviation, entertainment, fitness, fashion, health and wellness, interior design, philanthropy, professional services, real estate – both residential and commercial, and wealth management. Specializing in strategic solutions for clients across the USA, led by media strategist and marketing innovator Paula Steurer, the brand has earned a reputation for excellence.

Susie Storey, Vice President of Sales

DealerSocket, San Clemente

Susie Storey began her career at DealerSocket in 2009 as an executive sales manager, selling the company's integrated dealership technology. Although she works in a male-dominated industry, Storey's hard work and audacious personality led her to quickly outpace expectations, becoming the company's top sales representative and increasing DealerSocket sales in the Pacific Northwest by more than 40%. She was awarded DealerSocket's premier sales award, Winner's Circle, in 2010. Her strategic contributions led to a promotion to sales director of the Central Region, where she continued to thrive. She soon advanced to managing the coveted East Coast Region, where she earned a second Winner's Circle award for reaching 100% of DealerSocket's sales goals. Today, Storey is DealerSocket's vice president of sales, where she leads a Customer Success Department to help DealerSocket's customers better leverage technology solutions. The department she leads has grown by 87 people in 2017 with the addition of the Customer Success Management Team. DealerSocket provides dealerships with a single automotive platform containing marketing, sales, service, customer experience and data mining solutions.

Eliisa Stowell, Realtor

Surterre Properties, Newport Beach

Eliisa Stowell has been with Surterre Properties since the company's inception. She is and has been one of the Surterre's top producing Corona del Mar agents for more than a decade. Stowell is not only a longtime resident of Corona del Mar, but a property investor, landlord and one of the seaside community's most trusted real estate professionals. She is always giving back by mentoring new agents and participating in a mastermind panel. Stowell is recognized by many in the organization as a team player and an advocate of Surterre Properties' unique business philosophy. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.

Autumn Strier, Co-Founder/CEO

Miracles for Kids, Tustin

Autumn Strier is the co-founder & CEO of Miracles for Kids, as well as the president of the Miracles for Kids Board of Directors. Under her leadership, Miracles for Kids



has become a significant resource for families in crisis throughout Southern California and beyond, with financial aid and other basic needs programs providing long-term aid to more than 1,000 families with children battling 100+ different life-threatening illnesses. As the chief architect of all programs and services offered by the nonprofit organization, as well as its lead fundraiser for more than a decade, Strier has an unwavering commitment to serving those in great need.

Victoria Strombom, Real Estate Agent

Surterre Properties, Laguna Beach

Victoria Strombom has been one of the coastal community's top real estate agents throughout her career. As a valued agent at Surterre, Strombom stays involved with the company beyond her role as an agent by mentoring and recruiting new Surterre partners and agents, and by participating in Surterre's Charity Matching program. Strombom has also been awarded the National Association of REALTOR®'s Green Designation – the only NAR conferred real estate designation for agents looking to learn about issues of energy efficiency and sustainability in the various facets of real estate. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.

Mary-Christine "M.C." Sungaila, Partner

Haynes and Boone LLP, Costa Mesa

Since joining Haynes and Boone in 2015, M.C. Sungaila's track record as an outstanding appellate lawyer has raised the law firm's profile in California. Sungaila, a partner in Haynes and Boone's Orange County office and anchor of the firm's California appellate practice, has briefed and argued appeals raising cutting-edge and core business issues, and helped secure important rights for women and girls nationally and internationally. Sungaila has repeatedly been named one of California's Top 100 Women Lawyers by the Daily Journal and twice named a California Lawyer Attorney of the Year for victories before the California Supreme Court and Ninth Circuit U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Last year alone, two of the year's five biggest appellate reversals cited by the Daily Journal involved Sungaila. In 2017, she was awarded both the Orange County Women Lawyers' Association's Attorney of the Year and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

Nicole Suydam, CEO

Second Harvest Food Bank of OC, Irvine

One conversation with Nicole Suydam, CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank, will change everything you think you know about food banks and hunger. Suydam is leading Second Harvest's Bold Goal Strategic Plan to close the meal gap in Orange County by 2025 by sourcing and distributing more fresh, nutritious food and ensuring that the 315,000 people at risk of hunger – mostly children and seniors – can access high-quality food at a convenient and dignified location to see them through their time of need. Under her leadership, Second Harvest provided a record 21.6 million meals in 2017 – up from 14.9 million in 2012, when she started – and increased total organizational revenue during this same time, including the value of donated food, from \$35 million to \$53.9 million. Last year, Suydam and her team launched two, first-of-its-kind Permanent School Pantry programs in high-need neighborhoods, making significant progress toward her Bold Goal vision.

Krista Talley, Owner

Dolly's Cotton Candy, Seal Beach

Dolly's Cotton Candy is an on-site catering service started in 2011 by former advertising design executive, Krista Talley, that provides a unique food entertainment experience for all ages. Talley's background in design and marketing has given her a unique approach to creating a successful business that masters visual branding. Dolly's Cotton Candy has been featured on Keeping Up with the Kardashians, OC Housewives, Discovery Channel and WeTV. Dolly's unique style has also caught the attention of A-list celebrities, international event planners and Fortune 500 companies.

Kacey Taormina, Commercial & Residential Real Estate Broker

Compass, Newport Beach

Kacey Taormina has been instrumental in the development of Orange County. Through her commercial real estate work, she is continuously identifying ways to improve and reuse local properties to make the community better. As a residential real estate broker, she works with individuals and families on making Orange County home. Taormina is also deeply involved in finding a permanent solution to Orange County's homelessness epidemic. She was recently



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featured on Bravo TV's Real Estate Wars, and is using her newfound popularity and publicity as a platform to increase awareness and support for the homeless population. Since its launch in 2012, Compass has aimed to simplify the real estate process, one market at a time. With agents and teams serving vibrant communities coast to coast, Compass is now among the country's largest owned luxury brokerages.

Kimberly Tavares, CEO

PacWest Accounting Inc., Newport Beach

Kimberly Tavares, CVA, founded PacWest Accounting in 2008. With more than 15 years of accounting and business valuation experience, Tavares is a trusted advisor to entrepreneurs and established businesses in the health and nutrition, construction, automotive, law and medical industries. She works side-by-side with her clients to strengthen their financial position by reducing costs and better managing their working capital. She leads a team that executes finance function operations, including outsourced CFO and advisory services.



Sharon Taylor, Head of School

St. Mary's World School, Aliso Viejo

Sharon Taylor began her career in Seattle, Washington and in the Los Angeles Unified School District as a classroom teacher. It was there that her passion for excellence in teaching began. She was recruited by Father Ernest D. Sillers to St. Mary's School in 1994. She held various leadership roles at St. Mary's, including classroom teacher, International Baccalaureate coordinator, dean of academics, head of Lower School and even board member. In 2014, when the headship became available, the board was confident that the logical person to lead the school as a world-class institution was Taylor, and that same year, she was named head of school.



Lori Torres, CEO

Parcel Pending Inc., Irvine

Lori Torres is the founder and CEO of Parcel Pending, the nation's leading provider of innovative package management solutions with 100% Always-On Customer Service®. She has been recognized on multiple occasions for her leadership, including being named as a 2017 Innovator of the Year by the Orange County Business Journal and elected one of 13 entrepreneurs admitted into the EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women™ 2017 North America class. Torres founded Parcel Pending in 2013 to provide effective package management solutions to property managers, residents and couriers. Today, Parcel Pending is the global package management industry leader in the multi-family, commercial, retail and universities space with 120 employees and thousands of customers across North America. Some of her key accomplishments include helping Parcel Pending launch the industry-first refrigerated and outdoor smart lockers in 2017, expanding the company's presence from 36 to 44 states and boosting the company's growth 70% year over year.



Dr. Betty Uribe, Executive Vice President

California Bank & Trust, Irvine

When Betty Uribe was recruited to California Bank & Trust in 2011 for the purpose of conducting a massive turnaround, not even she could imagine that just five years later, she would be presenting to 30 banking executives from around the world detailing how she led a "best-in-class" turnaround. In 2016, the best year in the history of the bank, they had a 40% year over year, pre-tax profit increase, while every major financial metric – ROE, ROA, Efficiency Ratio and Revenue Growth – all saw significant improvements. Those metrics continued at amazing levels in 2017. In 2017, Uribe also published #Values: The Secret to Top Level Performance in Business and Life, a book based on her dissertation study on values. The book instantly became an international best seller and has been presented to world leaders, while continuing Uribe's goal of raising funds to provide scholarships for 100 underserved high school kids to go to college on each continent.



Marklem Valdovinos, Senior Director of Community Impact

American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine

In her 10 years with the American Heart Association & American Stroke Association (AHA), Marklem Valdovinos has developed and implemented culturally appropriate initiatives to reach the Spanish-speaking community of Orange County to improve cardiovascular health. She also created the Legacy Leader Internship program, engaging college students in supporting the AHA mission of prevention and health and stroke disease awareness. Valdovinos has worked with government, nonprofit, corporate, neighborhood and community leaders to build and implement plans driving toward opportunities to improve health equity for all. Her focus on addressing social determinants of health, building and implementing a cross-functional hypertension and cholesterol control strategy, and usage of AHA's Workplace Health Achievement Index has allowed Valdovinos to build a culture of health in Orange County with a collective impact approach.



Nancy Vengoechea, Owner/Lead Interior Designer

Vengo Design International, San Clemente

Nancy Vengoechea's interest in interior design began while watching her father, a residential contractor, create 3D mock-ups of his projects. On occasion, Vengoechea would go with her father during summer break to showrooms and help him select tiles and color schemes, as he was color blind. Vengoechea went on to attend the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. Being a creative entrepreneur, it seemed obvious for Vengoechea to start her own interior design company. Once her three kids were in school full-time, Vengoechea established Vengo Design. Starting with calls from friends who wanted their kids' rooms redone, soon after by word of mouth, Vengo Design expanded from new build to complete residential home renovations and eventually, a few commercial projects.



Gina Waggner, Executive Director/Owner

OC Marketing Solutions, Laguna Niguel

Gina Waggner is best known for increasing public appeal through alignment of nonprofits and other causes with commercial enterprises to create strategic partnerships. She helps clients to create dynamic marketing and event strategies that amplify the brand and attract media attention. Waggner and her team provide tailored solutions that are cost-effective, and in doing so, have become trusted advisors. Acting as more than just marketing people, her team helps clients build their businesses. Waggner has successfully grown and launched many startup businesses, products and entrepreneurs. The OC Marketing Solutions team empowers business owners by implementing effective marketing strategies that help them to grow their customer base.



Margie Wakeham, CEO

Families Forward, Irvine

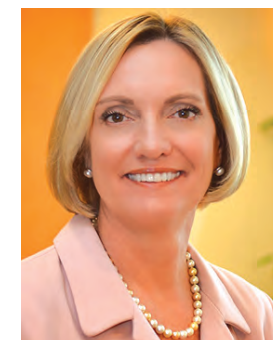
Margie Wakeham has been the CEO of the nonprofit, Families Forward, since 1992. Her leadership has advanced the organization from a two-person operation in a small, donated office space to the present staff of 40, based out of an 18,500-square-foot, agency-owned Family Program Center. Families Forward initially served only a few families in Irvine with transitional housing and case management. Now, the agency assists more than 11,500 individuals each year throughout Orange County with a broad spectrum of services such as clinical counseling, life skills education, career counseling, rent and utilities assistance, advocated referrals, food pantry access, and housing and case management. Wakeham has been on the forefront of new and innovative housing services and spearheaded Families Forward's move to a Rapid Re-Housing model, a first in the county. The organization houses families through a variety of housing resources, including agency-owned units, affordable housing providers and private housing partners county-wide.



Annette Walker, President of Strategy

Providence St. Joseph Health, Irvine

A visionary strategist, author and public speaker, Annette M. Walker, MHA, is a healthcare executive who is transforming the industry. As the president of strategy for the nation's third-largest health system, she guides the organization in developing a roadmap for improving the accessibility, affordability and quality of healthcare across seven states. She has developed new healthcare concepts and technologies, all with the intent of making quality healthcare more accessible. In Orange County, she is the architect of an innovative wellness concept that makes health and wellness more convenient for the modern consumer. The Wellness Corners she created focus on "everyday health" for maintaining active lifestyles and preventing chronic disease, achieving successful outcomes for community members and helping employers manage health costs. She has done it all while mentoring other women and, along with her husband Chuck, raising a family that now includes six children and 10 grandchildren.



Kim Walker, Real Estate Agent

Surterre Properties, Newport Beach

Kim Walker moved to the United States from New Zealand at the age of 18 with only \$70 to her name. It was here she met her husband and helped launch his construction company, which propelled her into obtaining her real estate license so she and her husband could buy and sell their own properties. Over the course of 15 years, Walker gained a fantastic roster of clients, nourishing every relationship and creating lasting friendships. Walker's tenacity and integrity has made her a leading agent in the industry. In 2017 alone, she made the highest residential sale in Orange County history at \$55 million, which contributed to her total sales of over \$75 million for the year. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.



Jenny Wang, General Counsel

MerchSource, Irvine

Jenny Wang has been a critical member of MerchSource's Acquisition Team for two marquee brand purchases within four months of joining the business. MerchSource acquired both FAO Schwarz and Sharper Image Brands in December 2016. Recently,

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MerchSource closed on another acquisition – Randa Novelty Gifts – with Wang serving as a primary player in the acquisition. Additionally, Wang manages a growing Legal Department and oversees all litigation, IP, corporate and employment matters. While managing the day-to-day operations, major acquisitions and building a high-performing team, Wang routinely works to build partnerships throughout the organization. MerchSource ideates, designs, sources and distributes consumer products to retailers in the United States.

Sheng Wang, Chief Technology Officer

AutoGravity, Irvine

With more than 15 years of experience in the tech industry, plus 10 as a project manager, Sheng Wang is dedicated to the customer experience, building dynamic teams and launching high-impact products that people love. As the CTO at AutoGravity, Wang continues to elevate the company's platform by applying her expertise for advertising, optimization, technology, program management, project planning and workflow analysis. Since its first pilot in the summer of 2016, the organization has attracted more than a million and half car shoppers through the AutoGravity iOS and Android apps. AutoGravity expanded its geographic reach in 2017, and is now live nationwide. AutoGravity partners with the world's leading banks and financial services companies. The platform has attracted 2,000+ franchise car dealerships, including four of the five largest dealer groups in the United States. Through these partnerships, AutoGravity technology has simplified the auto financing experience, delivering personalized finance offers to prospective car buyers within minutes.



companies in the United States. RAJ Swim designs, manufactures and sells swimwear under internationally recognized brand names, including ATHENA, NEXT, LUXE by Lisa Vogel, Basta Surf, Reef Swimwear, VYB Swim, Ella Moss and Splendid. West's appointment is part of RAJ Swim's long-term organizational strategy to align the business and continue to drive growth. West will lead the company as the first person outside the swimwear maker's founding family to hold the position as president. West's big initiative is retiring older brands and going after new business initiatives. She brings new perspectives to the business and years of industry experience to execute RAJ Swim's ever-changing progressive strategies.



Genine Wilson, Territory VP, Southern California

Kelly Services Inc., Orange

An experienced business leader and staffing executive, Genine Wilson oversees the staffing and business solutions operations for Kelly Services throughout Southern California, with a focus on engineering, information technology, science, and finance and accounting staffing. She also manages Kelly's administrative and light industrial recruiting businesses, as well as on-site client staffing and contact center solutions in the region. With more than 20 years in workforce management, talent procurement and results-driven leadership, Wilson's expertise is focused on helping customers attract and retain skilled candidates; supporting workers and employers with career development resources; and acting as a consultant assisting clients with identifying and resolving their workforce challenges by helping to develop strategy, solutions and efficiencies. Wilson joined Kelly Services in 1999, and has held increasingly responsible leadership positions in sales and operations before being named to her current position in 2008. Prior to joining Kelly Services, Wilson spent more than 10 years in sales and management leadership positions.



Lei Lei Wang Ekvall, Partner

Smiley Wang-Ekvall LLP, Costa Mesa

Lei Lei Wang Ekvall rose from her work in judicial clerkships with reputable judges to various leadership roles in Southern California's legal community. She serves on multiple associations throughout Southern California and holds titles within the associations as a board member, chair and president. Wang Ekvall has received prestigious awards across the board, including Martindale-Hubbell and Southern California Super Lawyer. She is a frequent speaker on bankruptcy law and receiverships. She also co-authored Bankruptcy for Businesses in April 2007, published by Entrepreneur Media Inc. In her practice, she focuses on insolvency and bankruptcy-related matters. Smiley Wang-Ekvall LLP achieves unparalleled results for its clients in the areas of business litigation, real estate transactions, and bankruptcy and insolvency matters, combining the hands-on attention and cost-effectiveness of a small firm with the depth and breadth of experience of a large firm.



Keri Wilson, CEO

Goldsheep, Costa Mesa

Goldsheep is a vibrant, one-of-a-kind legging brand that is dedicated to bringing light to favorable images and putting them on legs for the rest of the world to wear. What began as a simple concept on a New York studio floor soon became the core of every Goldsheep legging. Founder and head designer, Keri Wilson, has always loved the idea of transferring art onto leggings and wanted to create a movement blending both art and fashion where others could join in on her journey. Wilson started hand-making the leggings in her bedroom, one legging at a time with zero investor dollars. Today, Wilson has an office and warehouse in Costa Mesa where she makes on-demand and custom items for many different companies, with a huge following of online customers.



Carolina Weidler, Project Director, Science & Technology

H. Hendy Associates, Newport Beach

Carolina Weidler is one of a few female architects in the nation with a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt. As project director for science and technology at national interior architecture and planning firm H. Hendy Associates, Weidler delivers an unmet need for businesses looking for ways to maximize output and profitability. With more than 15 years of experience, she supports the county's – and the state's – increased technology and aerospace activity, filling a void for corporate and integrated process-driven facilities. At Hendy, she oversees the design creation of efficient, dynamic and holistic environments and provides architectural solutions for process-based industries spanning manufacturing facilities, laboratories, secure facilities, aerospace, research and development, and hazardous environments. Clients have included General Dynamics, Gulfstream Aerospace, Toyota Racing Development, Zodiac Aerospace, Meggitt Defense and Airborne Systems, among others. Her architectural knowledge and unrivaled understanding of building codes, material availability and other technical factors work to ensure project results exceed expectations.



Rachelle Wilson, CFO/Director of Operations

Dance Discovery Foundation, Laguna Niguel

Rachelle Wilson has served in the nonprofit industry since 2010 with Dance Discovery Foundation (DDF). Having a passion for creating positive change and a love for the performing arts, Wilson's involvement grew in 2013 when she took the position of treasurer for DDF's board. In 2013, DDF was at a critical point, Wilson's involvement pulled together all segments of the organization, defined it and focused it on producing effective programming while positioning DDF for growth and sustainability. In 2014, she officially joined the nonprofit's staff as chief financial officer/director of operations. With Wilson in her new role, the organization has increased its annual revenue by 75% and has had a continual growth pattern of 25% each year. One of Wilson's most significant accomplishments is DDF's scholarship program; launched in 2014, the program gave \$2,000 in performing arts scholarships that year. By 2015, the program budget enabled DDF to grant \$30,000+ in scholarships, and more than \$40,000 in 2017.



Marcy Weinstein, Real Estate Agent

MCKOWN | WEINSTEIN | ASSOCIATES, Newport Beach

Partnering with her brother, Rex McKown, in 1992, Marcy Weinstein forged what is now one of coastal Orange County's most respected real estate practices, MCKOWN | WEINSTEIN | ASSOCIATES (M | W | A). As part of Surterre Properties, the M | W | A team has grown from 5 to 12 accomplished experts, all of whom share Weinstein and McKown's commitment to setting the gold standard for client service, treating each other and their valued clients as family. Under the leadership of the brother and sister team, M | W | A achieves \$500 million a year in sales, much of it in Newport Coast, while also specializing in other exclusive enclaves, including the Newport Bayfront, Corona del Mar and Shady Canyon. The team now represents more than 50% of the sales in the custom home market in Newport Coast every year.



Diane Wittenberg, Audit Partner

Haskell & White LLP, Irvine

Diane Wittenberg has more than 30 years of experience in attest services, including 17 at a "Big 5 firm." As a partner at Haskell & White, one of the largest independently owned accounting, auditing and tax consulting firms in Southern California, she directs many key initiatives at the firm while serving clients. She leads teams to conduct audits for public and private companies, as well as nonprofit organizations. Ensuring the audit process runs smoothly for each client and provides value beyond meeting compliance requirements is a key focus. This past year, Haskell & White was named the state's "Best Accounting Firm for Women" by Accounting Today magazine based in part on the policies Wittenberg implemented. As a member of the Association for Corporate Growth Board of Directors, she chairs the group's Women in Leadership Committee. She also serves on the Octane Life Sciences Advisory Committee and chairs the Finance Committee for Mariposa Women and Family Center.



Dr. Tammy Wong, CEO

Fostering Executive Leadership Inc., Irvine

Dr. Tammy Wong is the CEO of Fostering Executive Leadership Inc., an international

Brenda West, President

RAJ Swim/SwimSpot, Tustin

Brenda West serves as president of RAJ Swim, one of the largest women's swimwear

2018 Women of the Year Award Nominees

business results executive coaching firm. The firm consists of more than 400 leadership coaches worldwide. The coaches work with leaders by improving leadership capability, capacity and have established a proven record with a ROI through coaching engagements. The Fostering Executive Leadership team works with leaders at all management levels and are skilled in helping them understand the benefit in building leadership competencies within the organization, understanding team integration, and the creation of solid succession planning methodology to create strategic leaders within their companies. Organizations the company serves benefit from a focus on building leadership, team performance, communication, accountability and strategy through a proven track record of experience, certification and research.



Karen Wood, General Manager/UCI Liaison

Irvine Barclay Theatre, Irvine

The role of general manager for the Irvine Barclay Theatre was re-imagined by President Jerry Mandel as Karen Wood was invited to join the organization's professional team. The typical managerial scope of responsibilities was expanded to also include pro-active relationship building with the Orange County business community, the city of Irvine and the UCI community. Wood is developing opportunities for new and deepening partnerships, and has also designed a path for corporate meetings, special events, lecture series and potential artistic co-productions with these diverse constituencies. As one of the newer members of the Irvine Barclay Theatre team, she is providing key leadership with these external constituents and stake holders, strengthening community access and participation, plus adding to the awareness of the nonprofit by presenting the organization as an important cultural resource throughout Orange County.



Michelle Wulfestieg, Executive Director

Southern California Hospice Foundation, Costa Mesa

Since 2010, Michelle Wulfestieg has served as the executive director of the Southern California Hospice Foundation (SCHF), a nonprofit organization committed to enhancing the lives of terminally ill patients and their families. Since the organization's inception, SCHF has served more than 2,500 patients, families and community members with its main programs providing community education and direct patient assistance. Wulfestieg is a two-time stroke survivor who



understands just how precious life is and believes that everyone has a purpose. Now recovered, but still physically disabled, she has dedicated her life's work to hospice care, as she recounts in her award-winning autobiography, *All We Have Is Today: A Story of Discovering Purpose*. Named one of Orange County Register's "Most Influential 2017," Wulfestieg strives to be an inspiration to those who are struggling.

Christina Zabat-Fran, VP/General Counsel/Corporate Secretary

St. John Knits Inc., Irvine

Christina Zabat-Fran is vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary for St. John Knits, the American luxury house with global headquarters in Orange County. As a fast-rising executive for the brand known for its signature innovative knits and more than 50-year legacy dressing confident women, she leads legal affairs during a crucial era of the brand's evolution and global expansion. Zabat-Fran has been extremely committed to serving the community, having served as the Orange County Bar Association's Corporate Counsel Section chair and currently serving on the Bar's board of directors. She dedicates her entrepreneurial drive to champion the advancement of women and minorities within the legal profession in order to better serve the increasingly diverse business community. Beyond her pro bono service, charitable work and mentorship, she most recently founded the county's Filipino-American bar. She was named as the Orange County Business Journal's Rising Star at the General Counsel Awards in 2016.



Dr. Julie Zimmerer, CEO/Founder

24/7 Family Homecare and Veterans Services, Canyon Lake

Julie Zimmerer retired from her chiropractic practice after 20 years and created 24/7 Family Homecare and Veterans Services from personal heartache, when a caregiver took advantage of her Korean War veteran paraplegic father following his last stroke before he passed away. She founded 24/7 Family Homecare and Veterans Services on specific family values. The company has been recognized with numerous awards. Since 2007, the organization has grown from one small area in Canyon Lake, Calif. to serving people in Los Angeles to the tip of San Diego and everywhere in between. In addition, there are now two offices (one in Canyon Lake and another in Dana Point) with 100+ employees working at all times in each location and a caregiver list that exceeds 400 people combined. 24/7 Family Homecare and Veterans Services also earned the Veterans Homecare Contract of Loma Linda Hospitals, providing veterans deemed disabled during time of war with homecare services.



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