

An Orange County Business Journal Special Report

# INNOVATOR



of the YEAR AWARDS



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INNOVATOR OF  
THE YEAR NOMINEES

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# Business Journal's 2020 Innovators Keep Winning

## Ink New Deals; Become Better Known Nationally

■ By PETER J. BRENNAN

Being named an **Innovator of the Year** by the **Business Journal** was just the start of the awards circuit for 2020's batch of IOTY winners.

The five people recognized during our event last September kept getting additional accolades, from **CNBC's** Disrupter 50 to "Best Investment Opportunity" to "Best Product of the Year."

In between, those winners kept up a heavy work load as well.

Below are some of the activities of our winners from the past year; this year's presentations will be made at the **Irvine Marriott** on Sept. 9.

## Reza Rofougaran: A Hint of an IPO

**Reza Rofougaran**, the co-founder of Irvine-based wireless technology firm **Movandi Corp.** along with sister **Maryam Rofougaran**, provided a big hint of the future when the siblings reached back to their days working at **Broadcom** by hiring its former chief financial officer, **Bill Ruehle**.

"I was first introduced to Maryam and Reza when I acquired their company Innovent while at Broadcom in 2000 and watched them grow Broadcom's wireless business to over a billion dollars and shipping billions of radios per year," Ruehle said at the time of his hiring in March. "Can I help Movandi get to be a large public company? I'd love to do that. That's what keeps me going."

**Scott Burri**, also a Movandi co-founder, gave his CFO role to Ruehle and assumed the newly created position of chief administrative officer of the company.

Movandi expanded internationally when in July, it announced a deal to provide super-fast telecommunications in Ban Chang, billed as the first "smart city" in Thailand.



**Reza Rofougaran**  
Co-Founder,  
Co-CEO, CTO  
Movandi Corp.

Big data will be used in Ban Chang to improve people's quality of life, including a 3D system to boost people's incomes, a closed-circuit TV system to ensure public security, and various other innovations to enhance local life, in addition to the state-of-the-art 5G system.

In May, Movandi was named to the 2021 **CNBC Disrupter 50**, which identifies fast-growing startups. IOTY winner Reza Rofougaran, who is the chief technical officer in addition to being co-CEO, holds at least 850 patents and is reported to be one of the top 30 patent holders in the world. Maryam, who is chief operating officer as well as co-CEO, holds more than 250 issued patents.

OC "is as good of any other place for chipmakers due to its location in Southern California with very well-known and established public semiconductor companies and rising startups," Reza told the Business Journal earlier this year.

"There is so much talent, knowledge and experience, as well as fresh young talented and motivated students with new and fresh ideas."

## Michael Dennin: Surviving the Apocalypse

UCI Physics Professor **Michael Dennin** kept up his role as "the Superhero Scientist" on a YouTube show, "Fascinating Gadgets Gizmos & Gear Based Technologies," where last month he reviewed the movie, "The Mitchells vs. The Machines."

"I absolutely loved the movie," he said while wearing a cowboy hat. "I'm a fan of zombie apocalypses. I've thought long and hard about the physics of surviving the apocalypse."

In the past year, Dennin also kept busy with his full time jobs as vice provost for Teaching and Learning and as dean of Undergraduate Education at the **University of California, Irvine**.

"The biggest thing for the past year was keeping the teaching going during the pandemic and teaching remotely," he told the Business Journal. "That was a huge deal."

He published 17 blogs that discussed in depth the coming fall semester, touching on details such as grades to integrity to prerequisites. He's also an



**Michael Dennin**  
Dean of Undergraduate Education  
Vice Provost for  
Teaching and Learning  
UCI

active user of Twitter, such as a recent day when he made six tweets to discuss his blogs.

Dennin also managed to find time for five new episodes of his podcast, "Conversations with the Vice Provost" where he interviewed UCI experts in their fields, such as how a library works in today's world.

Dennin, who has a bachelor's degree in physics from Princeton University and a doctorate from the University of California, Santa Barbara, began discussing the "Science of Superman" after arriving at UCI in 1997. Soon, local newspapers took notice and Dennin was asked to appear on *Ancient Aliens*, *Star Wars Tech* and several other television shows. He even designed an online course for AMC's "The Walking Dead."

"I've always been very skeptical of the AI-takes-over-the-world-and-kills us movies," he said on the show reviewing the Mitchells movie.

"This one was way more believable like 'Oh yeah, that is a mistake we would make as humans.'"

## Martha Montoya: An Agricultural Tech Star

**Martha Montoya**, who has been in the data industry for farmers and food buyers for more than 25 years, kept hitting home runs after winning a Business Journal Innovator of the Year award last year.

The CEO of Irvine-based **AgTools Inc.** was named the Rising Star Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the **Women's Venture Summit**, "Best Investment Opportunity" in **Next Wave Impact's** Founders of Color Showcase and one of 20 winners from a pool of more than 4,500 companies in **Pepperdine University's** Most Fundable Companies competition.

In May, her company won the Judges and Audience award of the Quick-Pitch of the **San Diego Venture Group**.

"It has been humbling and rewarding—yes, the cash helped us bring a full-time sales person too!" the company wrote on its blog site.

In 2017, Montoya launched AgTools with her two younger brothers,



**Martha Montoya**  
Co-Founder, CEO  
AgTools Inc.

both engineers, **Gustavo** and **Oscar**. AgTools' platform uses artificial intelligence to provide real-time data to help farmers increase profits and reduce waste. At the same time, it assists buyers and shippers with data on product availability, pricing and routing.

AgTools was a member of the **UCI Beall Applied Innovation Wayfinder** incubator and last year closed a \$1.4 million seed round of financing, with participation from the **Tech Coast Angels**.

This year, it was one of nine companies selected to join **Techstars Farm to Fork Accelerator** in partnership with **Cargill** and **Ecolab**. Montoya met 120 possible mentors in the industry.

"We then had the tough decision to select 7-10 mentors to help us ... almost impossible!" the company's website said. "It was like going to Disneyland, not knowing which ride to take, with all of them being so great!"

## Kurt Busch: 1M to 15M in a Year

A year ago when **Syntiant Corp.** announced it shipped more than 1 million processors to customers, Chief Executive **Kurt Busch** promised the Irvine-based chipmaker would ramp up production.

Did it ever. A year later, the Irvine-based company has shipped more than 15 million of its processors that are for always-on applications in battery-powered devices, such as smartphones, smart speakers, earbuds, hearing aids and laptops.

“We believe there isn’t another chip company dedicated to machine learning that has been able to achieve what we have accomplished in a little over three years,” Busch said earlier this year.

Among other highlights of the past year, Syntiant:

- Was one of the companies featured during **Alexa Startups Showcase** as part of the annual conference for app developers on **Amazon’s** voice assistant



**Kurt Busch**  
CEO  
Syntiant Corp.

platform.

- Was called “one of the coolest chips” by the **CRN** industry website.
- Was named “Best Product of the Year” by the **tinyML Foundation**.
- Made it onto **Fast Company’s** prestigious list of the World’s Most Innovative Companies for 2020.
- Was a **CES 2021** Innovation Awards Honoree.
- Announced a joint development of a voice-controlled solution for security cameras and smart appliances with **Renesas Electronics Corp.**

To top it off, Syntiant was named in July to the Business Journal’s **Best Places to Work**. “This is the second year in a row our company was named as one of the best places to work in Orange County and we couldn’t be prouder,” Busch said. “While the company has grown considerably since 2017, our culture of innovation and exceptionalism remain at the heart of Syntiant’s success, which is a direct result of the talented, hardworking and dedicated employees we’re so grateful to have on board.”

## Bob Wolpert: GSF on Top of Food, Tech Trends

Irvine-based **Golden State Foods**, long one of OC’s largest privately held businesses with an estimated \$5 billion in annual sales by manufacturing and distributing food for many fast-food restaurants, is right in the middle of shipping problems currently plaguing world trade, whether it’s trying to import seasonings from China or seeing demand for boxes go sky high.

“It’s a big challenge to keep everything in stock,” **Bob Wolpert** told the Business Journal. “It’s like whack-a-mole. Something’s always coming up.”

Wolpert, the company’s chief strategy and innovation officer, has been busy implementing a digital supply chain at some of its biggest customers who he’s not allowed to identify.

It’s also made **Volvo’s** largest order to date of its electric trucks by agreeing to use 15 Volvo Electric Class 8 trucks, the first zero-emission, battery-electric trucks to be deployed in GSF’s fleet. The first truck, which arrived last March, is running last-mile delivery routes to **Starbucks** locations throughout Southern California. The leased electric trucks are assisted with funding by a \$3.9 million grant awarded to Volvo Financial Services from the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee’s (MSRC) Inland Port Program.

“The drivers just love these trucks,” Wolpert said.



**GSF executives in front of the company’s newest electric truck from Volvo**

He’s also proud that Food Processing Magazine recognized GSF with a R&D Teams of the Year Awards, including GSF’s Liquid Products North America. In 2020 alone, the 25-person product development team serviced over 700 projects, created more than 1,200 product prototypes, and launched 135 new products.

In the past year, GSF introduced a next-gen packaging and sauce dispensing product for an environmentally friendly, cost-effective, and waste-reducing solution, while improving food safety. He also pointed out that GSF’s Zaxby’s Caribbean Jerk Sauce earned top honors in 2020 as Sauce of the Year, awarded by the **Association for Dressings and Sauces**.

A year ago, farmers were dumping excess milk due to unexpected changes in supply chain caused by the pandemic.

GSF’s dairy products subsidiary, **KanPak U.S.**, launched a surplus milk bottling initiative. In the past year, GSF has sold at cost more than 4.6 million bottles of shelf-stable premium milk to food banks and donated 137,280 bottles through the company’s nonprofit GSF Foundation.

“Many food banks in Orange County received these bottles,” he said. “We’re really proud of this program.”

## AONDevices, Inc



**Congratulations,**  
**Mouna EL KHATIB**  
**and**  
**AONDevices, Inc**



AONDevices (AON) is a provider of ultra-low power high accuracy AI processors that enable unprecedented sensing capabilities in battery powered “always on” devices while maintaining extended battery life. The company has developed a proprietary neural network architecture that delivers unparalleled accuracy in processing of sensory data at ultra-low power.

Processors based on AON’s architecture enable natural human-machine interface at the device level without sending any data to the cloud, thus improving user experience and privacy. When featured in devices, such as phones, headsets, wearables, game controllers and toys, or in vehicles, or in smart home appliances, AON’s technology enables constant sensing to detect multiple concurrent events. For example, AONVoice™ and AONSens™ cores can simultaneously recognize multiple voice commands and sound events, such as, a baby crying or gunshots, while also detecting specific motion patterns, such as walking or falling.

AONDevices is a privately held company headquartered in Irvine, CA, founded in 2018 by a group of industry veterans with deep expertise in audio processing and AI. Since inception, AON’s superior technology and solutions are already licensed and in use by a number of marquee tier-1 customers. The company continues to offer customers IP solutions through licensing as well as accelerating production of its processor products based on its proprietary technology.

[www.aondevices.com](http://www.aondevices.com)  
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## How Has COVID-19 Permanently Changed the World of Work?

By Jodi Duva, Cox Business

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically altered the way we all work, and many companies were forced to pivot their business model to stay afloat. Now that workplaces are beginning to re-open, many employers might be wondering: are any of these changes permanent? How different will the world of work be going forward?

Here are the new workplace technology changes we think are here to stay:

- **More hybrid and remote work.** According to KPMG, 69% of CEOs plan to embrace a virtual workforce. Some of these companies will embrace some form of hybrid work, with fewer employees in the office on a regular basis, but still maintaining office space as a centralized location for in-person meetings and team building.

- **Increased use of digital communication and collaboration tools.** To manage this shift to a hybrid workplace, 77% of the KPMG respondents will increase their use of tools like video conferencing, web chat programs and virtual project management.

- **More focus on disaster planning.** The businesses that were able to successfully shift to a remote workplace and quickly implement coronavirus safety protocols were those that already had robust business continuity plans in case of disaster. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) provides assistance to business owners in creating a business continuity plan at Ready.gov.

- **Increased attention to cybersecurity.** With more employees working remotely, that means businesses are more vulnerable to cybersecurity threats if they don't implement good cybersecurity business practices. A recent BullGuard survey of small- and medium-sized business owners reports that five percent of companies nationwide have suffered from a cyberattack or data breach within the past year. Of those, half said it took 24 hours or longer to recover, and a quarter stated they had to spend \$10,000 or more to resolve the attack. Twenty-five percent reported they lost business as a result, and nearly 40% stated they lost crucial data.

### Future-Proof Your Business

Now that some of these changes are likely to be permanent, it's important for

small- and medium-sized business owners to think about future-proofing their business with an effective "technology stack." A technology stack – also called a solutions stack, technology infrastructure or a data ecosystem – refers to all the technology services used to build and run a business.

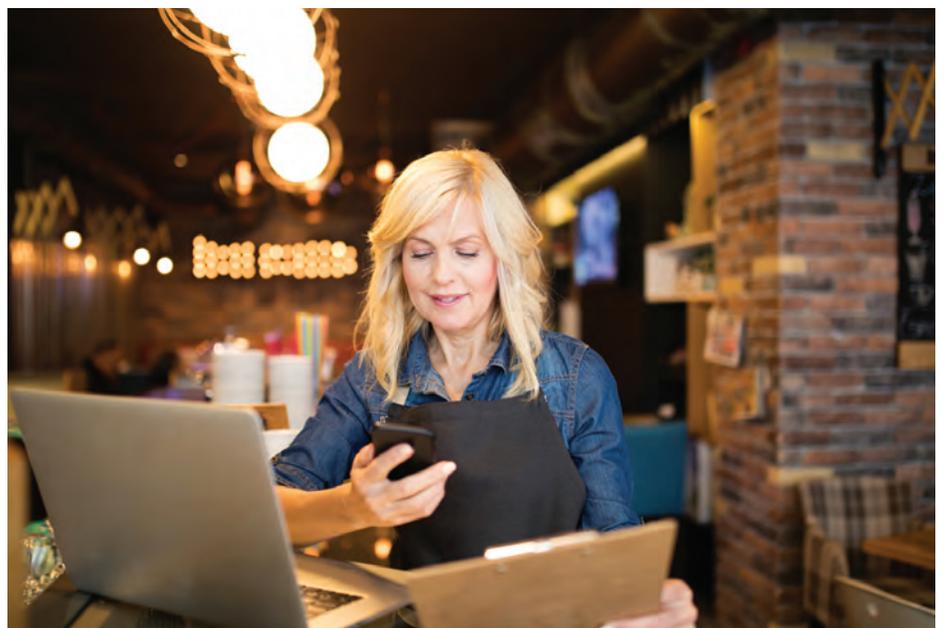
Some of the solutions that should be part of your company's technology stack include:

- **Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)** services, which give teams a way to make, answer, and forward calls regardless of location;
- **Cloud storage and backup solutions**, which provide different security levels to keep your information safe, depending on your data, industry, and business requirements;
- **Unified communications platforms**, which help your workforce collaborate and manage data from anywhere and at any time, instead of cobbling together various remote project management platforms. These desktop-as-a-service (DaaS) offerings allow employees to remotely access their work desktop and files.

Cost-effective remote managed IT services can help you install and properly monitor all these systems, alerting you to any potential issues. They can also help you determine when it's time to upgrade from residential grade internet to commercial services so that your video call connections are always clear, and you have plenty of bandwidth to run all the programs you need.

As many of us learned during the pandemic, significant change can often bring immense opportunity. Cloud-based technology makes it possible to successfully pivot to an all-virtual or hybrid work environment, protect your business and customer data and thrive in the years to come.

*As Vice President Cox Business for the Orange Coast market, encompassing Orange County, Palos Verdes, and Santa Barbara, Jodi Duva is responsible for leading a world-class team delivering customized communications solutions to local business communities. Duva oversees sales and service delivery across all sales channels. In her role as Vice President, Duva is focused on maintaining and enhancing a strong track record of success and collaboration. She is very involved in the community and serves on the boards for Orange County Business Council and Girl Scouts of Orange County.*





## Nonprofit Orange County Rescue Mission Continues to Thrive with Jim Palmer at the Helm

Congratulations to Jim Palmer, President of Orange County Rescue Mission for being selected as a nominee of *Orange County Business Journal's* Innovator of the Year Award. A well-deserved honor for the man who continues to lead a team of 89 employees and thousands of volunteers in furthering the nonprofit's mission of providing homeless individuals and families with the tools and pathways out of homelessness. Through its transitional living facilities and outreach programs, the Rescue Mission provides shelter, food, healthcare, education, job training, and a variety of other tools to support individuals in getting back on their feet.

Between 1992 and today, Dr. James "Jim" Palmer has taken Orange County Rescue Mission from a single rundown facility housing of just nine homeless men in Santa Ana to a nine-facility, two county operation serving thousands of homeless and formerly homeless individuals each year.

Palmer is motivated by compassion. But it is his faith and courage to approach the myriad of complex problems resulting in homelessness that drive his innovative approaches to serve those in need.

Palmer established the transitional housing and comprehensive services facility, Village of Hope, the Rescue Mission's flagship program. It serves as a model to other organizations throughout the country. The lack of quality and accessible health care for the needy led Palmer to launch Hurtt Family Health Clinics, now with three multi-service clinics in Orange County. When he learned of the plight of women trapped in sex trafficking, he created Strong Beginnings to serve that population. Palmer gained tremendous insight about veterans when his son entered the military, which led him to establish the veteran-specific services for



homeless veterans at Tustin Veterans Outpost.

Beyond his work at Orange County Rescue Mission, Palmer is involved locally and in various parts of government. He was the only person to have ever served on three levels of government at once, as a Tustin City Councilman, a County Housing Commissioner, and a Senate Confirmed Presidential Appointee. He oversaw a staff of 125,000 and an annual federal budget of \$1.4 billion.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, community leaders throughout Southern California sought out Palmer for his expertise to provide solutions for the homeless population. In addition, Palmer led the entire Rescue Mission team to ensure it remained 100% operational throughout the pandemic. In fact, 60 men, women, and children graduated from the Rescue Mission's two-year program amid the pandemic. Additionally, in 2020 the organization created a distance learning program for the children living at its facilities

to ensure quality education for its school-aged children.

Palmer is also the driving force behind the newly renovated boys home, Hope Harbor Rip Tide, which doubled the program's beds from six to twelve during the pandemic. Furthermore, the organization expanded Tustin Veterans Outpost, an existing transitional housing facility for homeless veterans and their families.

These accomplishments could not have been possible without Palmer's dedication and leadership over the past 30 years.

For more information, please contact Anna Song at (714) 247-4377 or [anna.song@rescuemission.org](mailto:anna.song@rescuemission.org).

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— Wendy Figueroa, Internal Audit/Controller, Geo-Logic Associates



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## Your Guide to (Re)Hiring in 2021

*Keith Kobata, Orange County Region Bank President*

When COVID-19 hit, nearly half of small businesses had to furlough or lay off staff members. But as the economy reopens and businesses rebuild, you may be ready to hire or rehire. Deciding how to staff your business may be heavily influenced by the ongoing crisis, even as you rebuild for the future. These four steps can guide you through the hiring process.

### 1. Determine your current needs

First, examine whether your business model shifted due to COVID-19. If so, your staffing needs may be different. For example, if you are now offering remote services or doing more of your business online, you may need a more robust tech team. This could mean rethinking the roles in your business and coming up with new job descriptions.

### 2. Consider the pros and cons of rehiring any laid-off workers

Since small businesses can feel like family, you may be tempted to rehire anyone you let go. However, whether you rehire workers may depend on whether your current needs have changed (step one). If you still need your former employees' skills, rehiring them can offer big benefits, like a shorter learning curve and loyalty to your business.

However, if you're hoping to rehire former employees to reduce paperwork, be aware that you may need to file the same tax forms and other paperwork that you would with a new hire.

Plus, some furloughed workers may not want to come back — whether over safety concerns (especially for in-person work) or because they found work elsewhere. They may also be less willing to adapt or pivot their roles to reflect any changes you've made to your business while they were let go.

### 3. Plan your hiring process

When it comes to searching for talent, you may want to think outside the box. If, after the first two steps, you're still not sure exactly what

type of role or employee is best suited to help you rebuild, you might want to hire a worker for a contracted period of time. Or you might hire two part-time roles instead of one full-time employee. Just be sure to check the guidelines around hiring contract workers versus full-time employees in your area.

Once you've come up with a clear role and job description, your search for talent begins. This recruitment process may look quite different than it did pre-COVID-19.

Even if your business operates in-person, you may have more success finding job candidates if you offer a virtual interview option. Consider what remote interviewing looks like for your company. You might offer remote and in-person options, for instance.

If you're a remote team or want to be extra cautious, create a strategy for remote onboarding as well. Creating a robust digital onboarding process could go a long way in helping new staff feel welcome.

### 4. Prepare to answer COVID-related questions

In addition to standard questions around compensation and benefits, potential hires may ask you about your response to COVID-19. Think about how you'll answer questions around safety precautions, sick-day policies, health insurance, and remote work.

Candidates may also ask whether a role has room for growth or if it's temporary and rooted in COVID-19-specific changes to your business. They may also be curious to know how you would handle their role if COVID-19 upticks again or if your business faces any new forms of uncertainty.

While the COVID-19 crisis has presented clear and unprecedented challenges, a growing number of small businesses are optimistic about the future and ready to bring on new staff members. Making smart choices about staffing can help you navigate this crisis, fortify any changes you've made to your business strategy, and be prepared for a changing small business landscape.





## Medtech Leader Edwards Drives Meaningful Innovation for Patients

*Edwards Lifesciences has continuously developed the world's leading technologies for structural heart disease and critical care medicine*

More than 500,000 heart valve procedures are performed worldwide each year, many utilizing sophisticated medical technologies like those made by Edwards that enable either the repair or replacement of diseased heart valves.

Edwards Lifesciences' roots date to 1958, when Miles "Lowell" Edwards set out to build the first artificial heart. Edwards was a 60-year-old, recently retired engineer with an entrepreneurial spirit and a dream of helping patients with heart disease. With a background in hydraulics and fuel pump operations, Edwards believed the human heart could be mechanized. He presented the concept to Dr. Albert Starr, a young surgeon at the University of Oregon Medical School, who thought the idea was too complex. Instead, Starr encouraged Edwards to focus first on developing an artificial heart valve, for which there was an immediate need.

After just two years, the first Starr-Edwards mitral valve was designed, developed, tested, and successfully placed in a patient. This innovation spawned a company, Edwards Laboratories, which set up shop in Santa Ana, California – not far from where Edwards Lifesciences' corporate headquarters is located today. The spirit of innovation remains central to Edwards today. Since introducing the

first commercially available heart valve in 1960, Edwards Lifesciences has continued to meaningfully advance heart valve therapy.



Today, Edwards continues to lead the field of tissue replacement heart valves and repair products and advanced hemodynamic monitoring. Edwards' major product lines are focused on transcatheter aortic valve replacement, surgical heart valve replacement and repair and critical care monitoring.

The company invests approximately 17 to 18 percent of sales in R&D, and recent years' product growth is directly related to the outputs of Edwards' R&D. Over the last several years, Edwards has been proud to introduce several innovative products that help maintain strong global leadership positions and enabled more patients to benefit from the company's life-saving technologies than ever before.

Edwards continues to be focused on solving unmet needs and promoting transformative solutions with the power to make meaningful differences across the spectrum of healthcare – for patients, clinicians and the overall healthcare system.



By creating a community unified around a single passion: To help patients live longer, healthier and more productive lives. By working with clinicians to solve unmet needs and make meaningful differences across the healthcare system. By evolving a portfolio of breakthrough technologies with a patients-first mindset.

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## Innovators Experience a “New Normal” for M&A Transactions in the Summer of 2021

The first half of 2021 has seen the highest level of business acquisition activity in years. Owners of businesses have explored merger, acquisition and disposition transactions through the pandemic. Larger companies are looking forward by consolidating assets and operations strategically while cross-border acquisitions are also beginning to pick up in pace. The level of activity is driven by low interest rates, a rebound in economic growth and anticipation of changes in federal tax rates.

At this time last year, companies were scrambling to make sense of pandemic shutdowns, expressly focused on transitioning staff to working from home and analyzing balance sheets and liquidity, while halting an array of transactions previously green-lighted to go. This year, however, is a very different story. Many businesses of all sizes are seeking to grow their scale, re-think operational imperatives, and streamline to remain competitive. Moreover, private equity firms and Special Purpose Acquisition Companies (SPACs) are actively investing capital.

### The “New Normal”

We appear to be approaching a return to normal processes in deal terms and diligence, albeit with asset values following the stock market to new highs. The “new normal,” however, does not necessarily mean a return to pre-pandemic business as usual. Over the last year and into the immediate future, most diligence has been and will be conducted online, while deals have taken on a more protracted negotiating period. Closing timelines have been extended by secretary of state administrative delays, slower processing of antitrust and foreign investment approvals, and the requirements of transferring PPP loans and other artifacts of government involvement in the US economy during the pandemic.

Carve out and asset acquisitions have gained popularity, as the structure can isolate unknown and unwanted liabilities in the seller’s organization, justifying, at least in theory, higher prices. In addition to COVID related concerns, employment law compliance diligence has become a key area of focus.

### SPACs as a Buyer Category

The creation of a SPAC, sometimes referred to as a “blank check” company, remains an important mechanism for realizing M&A objectives this year. SPACs can be an interesting alternative for business owners who want to retain future upside in the company (in the form of shares of a newly public company), see a generous infusion of cash to the company’s balance sheet through a private placement of stock at the time of the acquisition, and also receive cash proceeds.

However, these mandatory M&A transactions for a SPAC, commonly called a “de-SPAC”, can be difficult to execute. The process is similar to a public company merger, because the SPAC buyer is required to obtain shareholder approval in accordance with SEC proxy rules. It can be difficult to engage and convince the retail investors who acquired SPAC shares to affirmatively vote and approve a transaction at the level required to approve the deal, creating timing issues. Moreover, sellers (and their lenders) find SPACs to offer both pros and cons, so understanding the underlying business strategy is critical to realizing the right result. In addition, it is not appropriate to sell a public company to a SPAC in its mandatory acquisition, but a division can be a good fit as a carve-out sale instead.

### COVID-related Issues

This year’s M&A activity is permeated by an array of COVID-related issues. Transfers of PPP Loan balances, if not already forgiven, can be time consuming and challenging. Other COVID-related issues involved in M&A transactions range from EIDL Loans and tax deferrals, to an understanding of industry specific government relief components. As expected, travel and entertainment industry transactions will remain particularly challenging. In

transaction documents, sellers are looking to exclude COVID challenges from conduct of business covenants and disclosure against representations and warranties, shifting the risk to buyers. Buyers in the meantime fear exposure to past failures in response to COVID, whether related to compliance with local and state laws/regulations, or implementation of policies regarding return to work or vaccination of employees.

### R&W Insurance

Representations and Warranties (R&W) insurance has, in the last 7-8 years, evolved from a niche product to an essential part of the M&A process. The insurance covers unknown, pre-acquisition risks in the acquired business. Traditionally, for a period of time after closing, the seller would cover those risks, on the theory that if the seller still owned the business, the valuation would be impacted by the newly discovered faults. Now sellers can set the risk of unknown claims at only a portion of the insurance deductible or in some cases at zero. However, since the start of the pandemic, we are seeing far more exclusions in coverage, ranging from COVID-related liability, to California-specific employment law and pension issues, to cyber-attacks. Either seller or buyer needs to bear the risk of these excluded claims (and also negotiate through known issues that insurance will not cover). So R&W insurance is more prevalent than ever, meaning most deals effectively have three interested parties in the negotiation, and each policy covers less.

### Conclusion

There are additional new currents in M&A transactions, such as a renewed focus on environmental, social and governance factors, the prospect of tax law changes and more robust antitrust enforcement, and the continued erosion of non-compete agreements as an effective means of protecting acquired goodwill.

The formalities and process of M&A can seem static, on the surface not changing much from decade to decade. But there is always innovation in transactions as well, whether dramatic ones such as R&W insurance or SPACs, or more subtle changes in emphasis in addressing risks as businesses come together. Every year, thousands of innovators in their own fields benefit from M&A, and are part of the growth of new developments in transactions.

Shoshana Zimmerman, USC law school, and Tom Waldman, UCLA law school, set aside their rivalry to jointly author this article. Zimmerman and Waldman, together with 35 other corporate lawyers at Newport Beach headquartered Stradling, Yocca, Carlson and Rauth, complete dozens of transactions for Southern California companies and investors every year.



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# Building on Excellence

One in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime, and one in 41 will die of the disease, making it the second-leading cause of U.S. cancer deaths in men, just after lung cancer, according to the American Cancer Society.

Yet as advances in diagnosis and treatment have improved in recent years, so too have survival rates, especially at academic medical systems, including UCI Health, says David I. Lee, MD, one of the nation's foremost prostate cancer surgeons. He recently left Penn Presbyterian Medical Center and the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine in Philadelphia to direct the new UCI Health Comprehensive Prostate Cancer Program.

Lee, a top specialist in robot-assisted prostatectomies, is eager to build on the UCI Health Center for Urological Care's legacy as a powerhouse of leading-edge prostate cancer care and innovative research.

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**"Prostate cancer is a disease that requires teamwork," says Lee. "At UCI Health, we have one of the most talented prostate teams in the country. Our multidisciplinary group of highly skilled urologists, radiation oncologists, medical oncologists and other experienced professionals work together like a fine-tuned machine. That's not something a lot of other places have."**

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## Emphasis on discovery

Lee plans to ramp up the prostate team's already considerable research efforts with more clinical trials and novel approaches to advance treatments for patients at UCI Health and across the nation.

"For men with high-risk prostate cancer that can recur after surgery, I'm interested in exploring new combinations of therapies to improve survival outcomes," he says.

"We're also looking at genomic markers and using that data to better stratify patients by low, medium and high risk. This will help us refine treatment regimens even further for each patient."

## Improved diagnosis and treatment

Imaging and biopsy techniques have improved significantly in recent years, Lee said. UCI Health was among the first to use Artemis, a revolutionary technology that combines 3D imaging, a robot arm and a needle-guidance system to precisely locate and biopsy prostate cancer cells.

UCI Health prostate experts also have used cryotherapy to kill tumor cells by freezing affected tissue with ultracold gas. And they were the first in the nation to employ high-intensity, focused ultrasound to destroy only cancerous tissue, sparing the rest of the prostate gland.

Radiation therapy improvements now more accurately target prostate tumors. And new cancer medications attack cancer cells in different ways, offering still more options for patients with advanced prostate disease.

"We've also gotten better at determining who needs definitive therapy and when it's appropriate to step back from overtreating this condition," Lee says. "Instead, we are now able to safely monitor many men with active surveillance for a number of years."

## Advantages of robot-assisted surgery

Open prostatectomy involves reattaching the bladder and urethra, which requires a longer recovery time and the use of a catheter for up to three weeks. Minimally invasive robot-assisted prostate surgery, which UCI Health pioneered, offers precision, less blood loss and less pain, and catheter removal within six days after the procedure.

"In experienced hands, it can also lessen side effects such as loss of urinary control and sexual function," says Lee, who now performs the surgery on an outpatient basis for many patients, when appropriate.

Most important, Lee says, is the prostate team's commitment to help men understand all their options. "We want our patients to know that we will give them the best possible care designed to meet their individual needs, and that we will see them through each and every step."

[Learn more at ucihealth.org/prostate](https://ucihealth.org/prostate)

# PIONEERING TREATMENTS

## UNMATCHED CARE

That is what you can expect from the UCI Health Comprehensive Prostate Cancer Program. Above all, our experts are innovators. Our team includes the nation's leaders in successful robot-assisted prostatectomies and pioneers in using high-intensity ultrasound to destroy tumors while sparing the rest of the prostate gland.

As part of Orange County's only academic health system — with research and innovation powered by the University of California, Irvine — we also give our prostate cancer patients access to individualized therapies, technologies and clinical trials not found elsewhere.

We **STOP AT NOTHING** to revolutionize the detection, diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer.

Learn more at [ucihealth.org/prostate](https://ucihealth.org/prostate)

**David I. Lee, MD, one of the nation's foremost prostate cancer surgeons,** recently joined UCI Health to direct our new Comprehensive Prostate Cancer Program. He developed a novel pain-control method that makes it possible to send most prostatectomy patients home the same day.

**UCI Health**





# WelcomeHomeOC: An Innovative Housing Solution

## Collaboratively Working to End Homelessness in Orange County

One of the biggest challenges families and individuals experiencing homelessness face in Orange County is that they simply cannot find a place to live. Even with housing vouchers, many people are unable to secure housing. United to End Homelessness, an Orange County United Way key initiative, is advocating to develop more affordable housing options as the long-term solution while simultaneously working to **help our vulnerable neighbors who need to find a place to call home now.**

That is why we created WelcomeHomeOC: A housing navigation and landlord incentive program that provides financial assurances to landlords who rent units in Orange County to individuals, Veterans, and families with a housing voucher and ensures supportive services are provided to help newly housed people stay in their homes for the long-term. The program aims to engage our community members and work with them to reduce the housing search time by increasing the availability of rental units.

### A Win-Win Solution

We pair property owners looking for tenants with housing voucher holders who need a place to call home.



**491\* people have been housed**



**74\* property owners in the network**

\*as of 08/03/21

### How Does it Work?

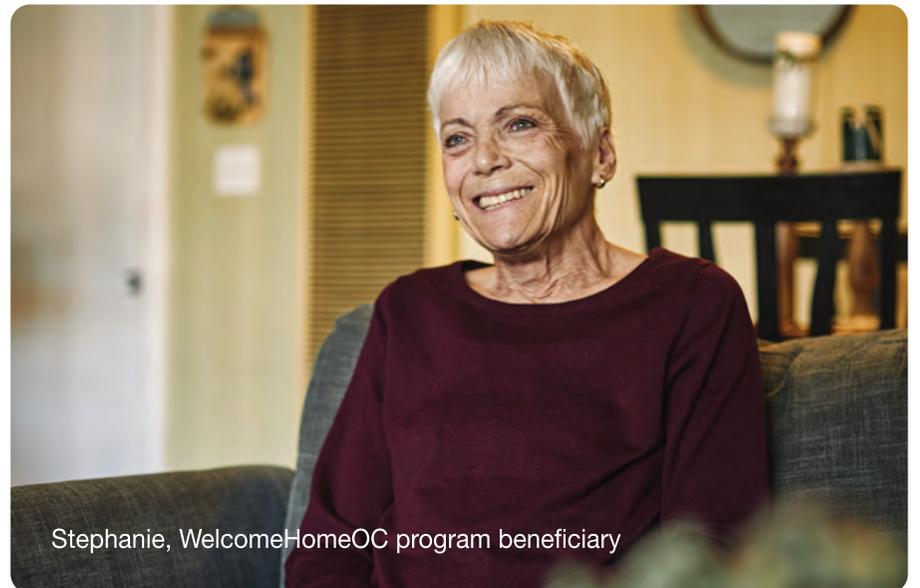
- 01 Property owners submit unit availability to WelcomeHomeOC. 
- 02 WelcomeHomeOC matches voucher holder with a unit and submits application to property owner for review and approval. 
- 03 WelcomeHomeOC provides holding fee, application fee, and a double security deposit to property owner. Simultaneously, supportive services and new furniture are provided to the program resident. 
- 04 Property owner receives rent directly from Public Housing Authority and a portion of the rent from program resident. 

### What is the Success Rate?

- ZERO evictions since start of the program in 2018
- 100% of rent has been collected for participating units
- 95% retention rate for program residents

### Why We Need This Program Now

- If people do not find housing in a timely manner, they may lose their housing voucher, which means they return to square one.
- As a community, if we do not use the vouchers allocated to us, we might lose the financial assistance attached to them in the future.



Stephanie, WelcomeHomeOC program beneficiary

### Welcome Home Stephanie

In 2014, Stephanie's husband lost his job, they lost their home, and then they separated. The 67-year-old grandmother was battling chronic health conditions and hospital stays alone, and ended up in a homeless shelter. The WelcomeHomeOC program helped Stephanie find a stable and safe apartment in Tustin where she still happily resides. "It was like an answer to a prayer when I got the call," said Stephanie. "[My apartment] gives me security and safety—it has allowed me to tell my kids not to worry. When I come up the walk, I get a smile on my face."

### What Property Owners are Saying

**"WelcomeHomeOC is the best conceived and most landlord-friendly social assistance program I have seen in three decades of property management. I wish it was everywhere."** – James Wohrman, President, FDC Management, Inc.

### A Proven Program

WelcomeHomeOC is nationally recognized by HUD as a "best-practice program" and is endorsed by both the California Apartment Association (CAA) and the Apartment Association of Orange County (AAOC).



Endorsed by California Apartment Association (CAA)



Endorsed by Apartment Association of Orange County (AAOC)

WelcomeHomeOC is a manifestation of our belief that, if we all work together, we can create long-term, supportive housing solutions that do more for those most in need while progressing our efforts to permanently end homelessness in Orange County.

To learn more about WelcomeHomeOC or to join the Property Owner Network, visit [WelcomeHomeOC.org](http://WelcomeHomeOC.org) or contact Amanda Grill: [AmandaGrill@UnitedWayOC.org](mailto:AmandaGrill@UnitedWayOC.org) or 949.263.6114

Orange County United Way is striving to remove barriers, close gaps, and level the playing field to ensure our students succeed, our families find financial security, and our homeless neighbors find a place to call home. We put these goals into action through our three key initiatives: United for Student Success, United for Financial Security, and United to End Homelessness. To learn more, visit: [UnitedWayOC.org](http://UnitedWayOC.org)



- ☑ Guaranteed Rent
- ☑ Double Deposits, Incentives, and Assurances
- ☑ Help Orange County Veterans and Families



## Join the WelcomeHomeOC Property Owner Network

WelcomeHomeOC is a landlord incentive program that provides financial incentives such as double security deposits, sign-on bonus, holding fees, and other assurances for landlords who rent units in Orange County to individuals, Veterans, and families with a housing voucher.

The program is a joint effort between the United to End Homelessness initiative, Orange County United Way, Public Housing Authorities, and rental property owners to reduce the time involved in the search for housing by increasing the availability of rental units.



**A Proven Program**



Already has 70+ property owners in the network



Endorsed by Apartment Association of Orange County (AAOC)



Endorsed by California Apartment Association (CAA)



**“WelcomeHomeOC is the best conceived and most landlord-friendly social assistance program I have seen in three decades of property management. I wish it was everywhere.”** –James Wahrman, President, FDC Management, Inc.

For more information, contact Amanda Grill, WelcomeHomeOC Property Owner Engagement Specialist, at [AmandaGrill@UnitedWayOC.org](mailto:AmandaGrill@UnitedWayOC.org) or (949) 263-6114

[WelcomeHomeOC.org](http://WelcomeHomeOC.org)



**UNITED TO END HOMELESSNESS**

from here you can step anywhere  
**the wooden floor**®

## Social Innovation Empathy – The First Step in Design-Thinking

By Dawn S. Reese, Chief Executive Officer, The Wooden Floor

As a contributor for Forbes Council, I was asked, “What is your best tip for how nonprofit leaders can strike the right balance between accountability and empathy?” I believe empathy and accountability must have a healthy balance. We have seen businesses, including nonprofit organizations, which have thrived with high accountability within their teams via design-thinking by adapting their business models and service delivery to meet the needs of who they serve.

Interestingly, in further contemplation, empathy is the key starting point for design-thinking to listen, learn, and then adapt to meet the changing needs of those you serve throughout your entire organization and those who serve within it as well. While it is regular practice in the technology sector, nonprofits can implement the same design-thinking approach in order to develop high impact solutions to solve some of the greatest issues related to poverty such as homelessness, food insecurity, and the college access gap.

At The Wooden Floor, we regularly follow a design-thinking process which includes three steps:

1. Empathy - providing opportunities to listen and learn from the students and families we serve in order to create results-driven programs.
2. Ideation - providing an affordable way for us to generate new thoughts on programs and/or process improvements, which we can implement either incrementally, or at a larger scale.
3. Experimentation - what we like to call “piloting” of new projects. This provides our team with an opportunity to try something new, without the high investment of organizational resources, and at the same time creates an opportunity for learning.

By implementing design-thinking throughout an organization, it can help to reinforce and codify the empathy practices throughout the organization which have other additional benefits to leadership and management practices, staff retention, team engagement, and culture sustainability.



Can empathy be learned? Yes - and it is worth it. Empathy is one of the five areas of emotional intelligence as Daniel Goldman writes in *What Makes a Leader?* (Harvard Business Review, 1998): **Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation, Social Skills** and **Empathy**. While the article was written many years ago, it still stands the test of time, especially today, as we emerge from the pandemic. Empathy is no longer a nice to have soft-skill as a leader. It's a key strategic leadership skill to hone in order to be agile, ideate on new solutions or perspectives, and to meet the evolving needs of your employees, teams, customers, and communities.

During the pandemic, at The Wooden Floor, it is of high importance to listen and learn from our students and families by remaining connected to them. The Wooden Floor is an after-school, creative youth development organization and we make a 10-year commitment to our 475 students from 3rd-12th grade. We

offer them a rigorous dance education approach that is strategically integrated with academic services, college and career readiness, and family services. Since 2005, 100% of our graduates have enrolled in higher education. In April 2020, the early forecasts showed the impact of distance learning could have a dramatic effect on low-income young people, and it was important for us mitigate that impact for our students at The Wooden Floor.

In the early days of the pandemic, we began making phone calls home to all 475 of our students on a regular basis, then once we were in a virtual service delivery for 2020-2021, we systemized a data process and feedback mechanism to ensure we heard from our students and families on a regular basis about their evolving needs through a combination of programmatic alignment, student mentoring check-in points, and formal surveys conducted over the spring 2021 to students, parents, and alumni of The Wooden Floor. Due to their feedback, we:

- Purchased 225 laptop computers for our students who would not have had digital access during the summer when they needed remedial support – thanks to the generosity of our corporate and foundation partners
- Increased mentors to connect with our students beginning as early as 3rd and 4th grade, previously beginning in 6th grade, to provide the social and emotional support that they needed due to distance learning and social isolation at home
- Offered our families emotional support during the pandemic in fall 2020, and we launched Parent Mental Health Group and Saturday Morning Coffees to share about themselves, as well as community news regarding school district updates, food distribution sites, and vaccine information
- Increased our requested tutoring hours for any students, and maintained our All-Campus GPA of 3.0 through spring 2020
- Engaged with our alumni from all over the country to participate on Career Day Panels and as virtual college tour guides as a way for them to give back during the pandemic to the students who are following in their footsteps

Additionally, the insights our students, parents, and alumni provided were integral in helping us affirm key priorities, and launch our next **10-Year Strategic Vision 2021-2031 to: Drive Social Innovation, Deepen Impact and Uplift Our Community** with a correlated Strategic Plan 2021-2023. We are laser-focused to ensure our students are well-positioned both during and post-pandemic with the social, emotional, and academic well-being to reach for their dreams for college and beyond.

We believe when dance is used as a means of social change, innovation flourishes into courageous life-changing outcomes for the children we serve, and moves The Wooden Floor's exciting mission forward, which helps move our community forward.



Dawn S. Reese is the Chief Executive Officer of The Wooden Floor, a nonprofit organization which has received numerous awards including the 2021 and 2018 New York Life Foundation AIM High Afterschool Award for Middle School Programming, as well as a feature in the Stanford Social Innovation Review. During Reese's tenure, The Wooden Floor opened its second location in Santa Ana, and licensed its model in Washington, DC. Reese received the 2020 *Women of Distinction Award* from 34<sup>th</sup> CA Senate District, 2019 *Women Breaking Barriers Award* from **Connected Women of Influence**, the 2018 *Founders Award* from the **Institute for Community Impact**, the 2016 *Center for Leadership Award* for Innovation from **California State University Fullerton**. Reese serves on the Board of Directors for **OneOC** as Treasurer, **Orange County Music and Dance**, **Passkeys Foundation** as Board Chair and the **Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce**. She is on the Board of Advisors for the **Center for Leadership - College of Business and Economics at California State University, Fullerton**, and a mentor at **CSU Long Beach Student Center for Professional Development**. Dawn founded the **OC Nonprofit CEO Forum**, co-Chairs the **Youth Mental Health Committee for the Santa Ana Task Force** and is a leading voice for improving nonprofit board governance and board diversity practices.

TheWoodenFloor.org

 DawnSReese



# WE ARE CREATING **GENERATIONAL CHANGE THROUGH THE POWER OF DANCE**

Founded in 1983, The Wooden Floor is one of the foremost creative youth development nonprofit organizations in the country. We transform the lives of young people in low-income communities through the power of dance and access to higher education.

We give young people the tools and guidance to follow a path out of poverty by serving students in grades 3-12 after-school for up to 10 years with a comprehensive approach that is grounded in exploratory dance education which is strategically integrated with long-term mentoring relationships, academic services, college and career readiness, and family support services.

In Orange County and through national licensed partners, our long-term approach fosters the confidence and gifts within each child to innovate, communicate, and collaborate - skills necessary for success in school and in life.

**100 percent of students who graduate from The Wooden Floor immediately enroll in colleges and universities across the nation.**

Students at The Wooden Floor consistently exceed their peers nationally. Our students become change agents and beacons of hope within their own families, their neighborhoods, our community, and our world.

**JOIN US TO MOVE MORE YOUNG PEOPLE FORWARD.**

Find out more at **TheWoodenFloor.org**



## What is the COVID-19 Vaccine IP Waiver?

I have seen several articles in the news relating to the patent waivers for the COVID-19 vaccines. For example, one recent headline states “3 Million People Have Died of COVID Since Rich Nations Began Obstructing Vaccine Patent Waiver.” CNN stated that “US President Joe Biden’s administration said Wednesday it would support the easing of patent rules on COVID-19 vaccines, potentially expanding global supplies.” Apparently, these waivers were initially proposed by South Africa and India in May.

But is a patent waiver really what is being sought by South Africa and India? Potentially, but it is unlikely that patent protection is really what is keeping South Africa and India from getting the vaccine. It is more likely that the trade secrets required to manufacture the vaccines is what is keeping South Africa and India from getting the vaccine. Accordingly, some of the media coverage regarding vaccine waiver fails to recognize the most important IP rights involved in the COVID-19 vaccines.

Why is it unlikely that patent rights are keeping South Africa and India from getting the vaccine? It is because South Africa and India are sovereign nations that grant patent rights themselves. It is the South African government, not the United States Government, that decides whether to grant or enforce patent rights in South Africa. If they chose to, South Africa and India could deny any party patent rights for the COVID-19 vaccine in their countries. It is true that this could get South Africa and India into trouble with respect to some of their trade treaties, but the fallout from that seems insignificant compared to the ability to get the vaccine quickly. Additionally, the vaccine has only been recently developed, and it is unlikely that there is a patent covering any of the vaccines in South Africa or India. Normally, it takes at least 3-4 years, or potentially much longer, between the filing of a patent application in the US and the grant of a patent application in India or South Africa. I personally did a patent search in the United States Patent and Trademark Office’s database and did not find an issued US patent covering any of the COVID-19 vaccines (although it is possible that I missed it). Thus, it is my belief that a patent waiver is not really what South Africa and India were seeking.

So what do these countries really want? The term “intellectual property right” really encompasses patents, trademarks, copyright, and trade secrets. Trademarks cover brands, but they provide no protection against copying a vaccine. Copyright protects creative works, but not vaccines. The only remaining IP right is trade secret, and I believe that it is trade secrets that India and South Africa are really after.

A trade secret is valuable information that is kept secret by the party owning the information. The value in the trade secret is in the fact that it is not known by others. The classic example is the formula for Coca Cola®. Since none of Coca Cola’s® competitors know its formula, they cannot copy the beverage. The vaccine has two potential “types” of trade secrets: those that are included in the patent application and those that were not.

A patent application is required to disclose how to make and use the

claimed invention. For a COVID-19 vaccine, this means that a person skilled in the art would need to be able to make and use the claimed invention without undue experimentation. The information in a patent application is kept secret for 18 months, or until the application issues as a patent, whichever occurs first. Eighteen months ago, in February 2020, and COVID-19 was just becoming a pandemic. Thus, the patent application for the vaccine had not yet been filed. Indeed, the vaccine had not yet been invented. More likely, the first patent applications were likely filed about a year or so ago. Thus, it may be another four to six months before the vaccine patent applications are publicly available. It may be that South Africa and India are seeking to obtain copies of the patent applications before they become publicly available.

Additionally, the COVID-19 vaccines are “biologics,” meaning drugs that are a protein, an amino acid, or some other large biomolecule. Biologics are notoriously difficult to copy, even with the information in a patent application. The little details around making the vaccines, what the patent law would not require in a patent application because it is “routine experimentation,” can take months or years to work out. Thus, these little details, also called “know how,” will be valuable trade secrets for some time after the patent applications or patents are publicly disclosed. It is likely that the “intellectual property rights” sought by South Africa and India include this know how.

As a patent attorney, I find headlines like “3 Million People Have Died of COVID Since Rich Nations Began Obstructing Vaccine Patent Waiver” troubling because they cast patent protection in a bad light. In reality, it is highly unlikely that patent rights have anything to do with access to the vaccine in South Africa or India at this point in time. To be more accurate, the media should be saying that South Africa and India are lobbying the WTO to compel Pfizer, Moderna, and other vaccine makers to disclose how to make the vaccine, and potentially provide technical support in the effort. Whether that is better or worse is a matter of personal opinion, but there is no denying that what is being sought is very different from what is being reported by most media sources. I hope those making the policy have a better understanding of these questions than what is being provided by the media.

Brent Johnson, Ph.D. is a shareholder in Maschoff Brennan’s Orange County office. He is focused on patent prosecution, BPAI post grant proceedings, IP due diligence, and client counseling – particularly in the areas of pharmaceutical and other chemistry-related technologies.



# INNOVATOR

of the YEAR AWARDS

## Congratulations 2021 Nominees

**1105 Media** - Rajeev Kapur  
**AIVITA Biomedical Inc.** - Dr. Hans Keirstead  
**Alteryx Inc.** - Olivia Duane Adams  
**Ambry Genetics** - Tom Schoenherr  
**AnesthesiaGo** - Michael Bronson, MD  
**AONDEVICES INC.** - Mouna El Khatib  
**Apriem Advisors** - Rhonda Ducote  
**ATOM** - Richard Sawicky  
**Axis Research & Technologies Inc.** - Nick Moran  
**Before the Butcher** - Danny O'Malley  
**Billion Dollar Beauty** - Natalie Plain  
**BioPhotos Inc.** - Patrick Johnson  
**Birtcher Anderson & Davis** - Bob Anderson  
**Bitcentral Inc.** - Fred Fourcher  
**Blue-White** - Rob Gledhill  
**BOMANI Cold Buzz** - Sam Madani  
**CathWorks** - Ramin Mousavi  
**Codebreaker Technologies** - Cheri Tree  
**CoverCrow Inc.** - Cassandra Caldarella  
**David Meltzer Enterprises** - David Meltzer  
**Digital Motors** - Andreas Hinrichs  
**Director of the UCI Vaccine Research and Development Center** - Phillip Felgner  
**Edwards Lifesciences** - Katie Szyman  
**Edwards Lifesciences** - Larry Wood  
**e-PlanSoft** - Michael Chegini  
**Eyedaptic Inc.** - Jay Cormier  
**FundingShield LLC** - Ike Suri  
**GameChanger Charity** - Jim Carol  
**Harvest Landscape Enterprises Inc.** - Max Moreno  
**Hyperdisk Marketing Inc / Hooray Agency** - Nicholas Singer  
**iBASEt** - Sung Kim  
**InBrace** - Dr. John Pham  
**Lantern & Scroll** - Karen Good  
**Learning Ovations Inc.** - Jay Connor  
**LeggUP** - Tom Finn  
**Loadstop** - Omer Cheema  
**Loan Administration Network Inc.** - Charlene Nichols  
**Matregenix Inc.** - Sherif Soliman  
**MeridianLink** - Tim Nguyen  
**Mezmo Corporation** - Joseph Lee

**Mobix Labs** - Fabian Battaglia  
**Naturade** - Claude Tellis  
**Nextworks Strategy-ENP** - Scott Hamilton  
**Nguyen Tarbet LLC** - Quan Nguyen  
**Obsidian Security** - Ben Johnson  
**Orange County Rescue Mission** - Jim Palmer  
**Overair** - Ben Tigner  
**PreludeDx** - Troy Bremer  
**Restaurant365** - Tony Smith  
**Revive Concierge** - Dalip Jaggi  
**Robotic Assistance Devices** - Steve Reinharz  
**Scanwell Health Inc.** - Stephen Chen  
**SCGWest Development** - Kyle Gorman  
**SCGWest Development** - Brandon Lehman  
**SetSchedule** - Roy Dekel  
**Seven Gables Real Estate** - Mike Hickman  
**ShopGoodwill.com** - Ryan Smith  
**Smart Cups** - Chris Kanik  
**Smart Energy Water (SEW)** - Deepak Garg  
**Smart Health Clubs** - Praveen Kashyap  
**Sonic+** - Jay Zhao  
**Specright Inc.** - Matthew Wright  
**Stretto** - Jonathan Carson & Eric Kurtzman  
**Sunwest Bank** - Carson Lappetito  
**Tarsus Pharmaceuticals** - Leo Greenstein  
**TaxRise** - Essam Abdullah  
**Teradek LLC** - Nicolaas Verheem  
**The Wooden Floor** - Dawn S. Reese  
**ThinkIQ** - Doug Lawson  
**Titan Health & Security Technologies Inc.** - Vic Merjanian, Esq.  
**TMC Hospitality** - Philip Bates  
**TRACE3** - Sandy Salty  
**Travel, Entertainment, and Marketing** - Mike Olivas  
**TurnKey Beauty Inc., Vincenzo Skincare LLC** - Vince Spinnato  
**UCI Health Digestive Health Institute, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, UCI School of Medicine** - Kenneth J. Chang, MD  
**Vantis Institute** - Jess Oslo  
**VoteApp** - Daniel Stanton  
**Westcliff University** - Dr. Anthony Lee  
**WhiskerCloud** - Adam Greenbaum

### Reservation Information

Visit [www.ocbj.com/bizevents](http://www.ocbj.com/bizevents) or contact  
 Melanie Collins,  
 Signature Events Manager,  
 at 949.664.5065 or  
[collins@ocbj.com](mailto:collins@ocbj.com).

### Event Date

September 9, 2021  
 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
 Tickets\*: \$175 / Table of 10: \$1,650



### Keynote Speaker

**Neel Grover**  
 Founder and  
 Exec Chair



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### PLATINUM SPONSORS



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\*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. Current subscribers may gift the subscription to a colleague.

# How to Choose a ~~Spouse~~ Divorce Attorney?

By Paul Nelson, Esq.

Here's irony for you: To escape one's relationship—your marriage—you must create another relationship—with your divorce attorney.

And just like a marriage, your attorney-client relationship will require commitment, demand honesty, and often hinge on compromise. The difference? Unlike a marriage, your relationship with a divorce attorney is designed to be short-lived.

Even so, you should look for a lawyer much like you would a spouse. Accordingly, here are some tips when divorce attorney seeking:

## 1. Ask for References

Matchmakers have been around for centuries. Many cultures still use them to pair compatible mates from the pool of local singles. Even in our more "liberal Western culture, it's still common for friends to set each other up with dates, and for people to seek the approval of family and loved ones before getting "serious" with a potential husband or wife.

Likewise, when looking for an attorney, it makes sense to ask the advice and seek references from others in your professional circle, such as your CPA/financial advisor, business lawyer, or business coach.

## 2. Locate a State Bar-Certified Specialist in Family Law

One of the best sources to find an

attorney is the State Bar website. The State Bar of California maintains a list of members who are Certified Specialists in their area of law. Each attorney has met substantial law practice and educational requirements in addition to receiving favorable evaluations by other attorneys and judges familiar with their work in a particular legal specialty.

## 3. Assess Chemistry

Relationships that work on paper don't always do so in real life. That's why, no matter how well a divorce attorney may be rated, you need a sit-down to see if you "click." As with a personal relationship, make sure your values and expectations are in sync. If not, you may be dealing with a professional divorce—along with your marital one.

## 4. Discuss Money

Before committing to marriage, it's common for couples to talk about how they will handle finances. This can be uncomfortable, but it's an issue that must be faced head-

on to avoid long-term problems. Likewise, when talking with an attorney, fees and expenses must be addressed up front. Also, don't be fooled by what appears to be a low hourly rate. An inexperienced attorney may charge less by the hour but require more time to accomplish what a more skilled and expensive lawyer could do in far less time.

## 5. Exchange Vows

Once you and your selected attorney are ready to commit, it's time to exchange vows. Although these don't yet have the traditional caché of "to love, honor and cherish," they nonetheless express the ideal behaviors to which both parties should aspire:

### • Lawyer's Vows:

- ✓ I vow to advocate for your position zealously and effectively.
- ✓ I vow to maintain confidentiality 'til death do us part.
- ✓ I vow to interact with

opposing counsel in a dignified, yet assertive manner.

✓ I vow to provide direct and unambiguous advice.

✓ I vow to take reasonable legal positions based on the law as it is or should be.

### • Client Vows:

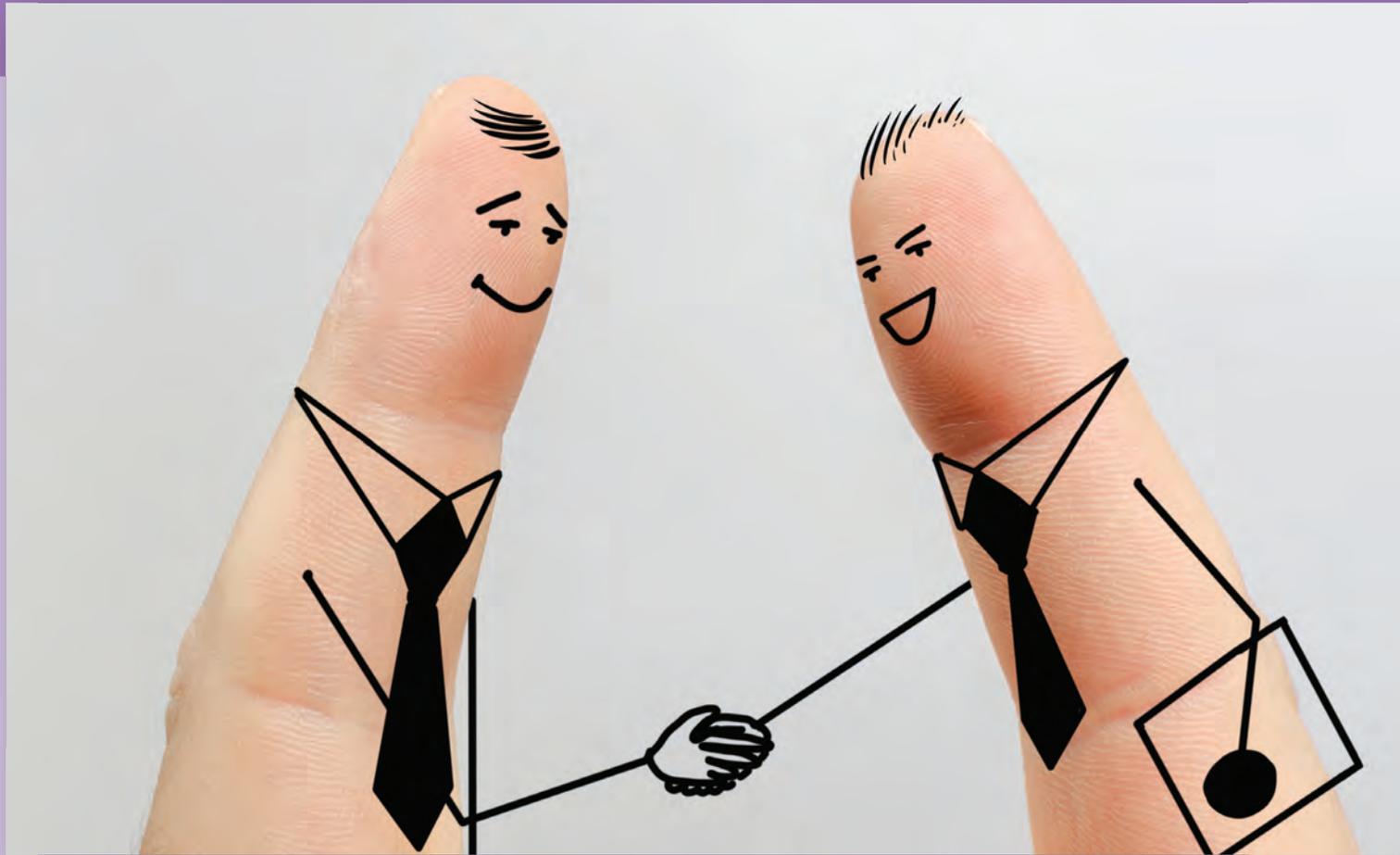
✓ I vow to be honest with my attorney.

✓ I vow to collect and share information with my attorney.

✓ I vow to adhere to instructions on behavior in and out of court.

✓ I vow to be responsive to my attorney's requests.

A divorce is a painful and demanding process that can trigger extreme emotions. Yet if you have an attorney whom you trust, you can minimize the discomfort and emerge in a better position to start the next phase of your life.



PAUL NELSON

NELSON  KIRKMAN

FAMILY LAW ATTORNEYS  ADVISORS

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Newport Beach, California 92660

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*High Stakes Divorce Lawyers*

## 2021 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

**1105 Media, Irvine***Rajeev Kapur, CEO*

With business experience in over 20 countries and a proven history of turning stagnating companies into multimillion-dollar money makers, Rajeev Kapur leads with an innovative approach that uses positive business culture as the driving source of sustainable success. Kapur has had myriad business success stories over the years, including taking a struggling company and growing revenue by 1.5 times for two years in a row, growing EBITDA over 20 percent three years in a row, and increasing free cash flow by more than 30 percent. In another executive role, he kicked off a small business sector and grew it to \$1.6 billion in just five years. Under Kapur's leadership, 1105 Media has thrived as one of the top publishers and go-to provider of events and training in the technology industry. With more than 30 well-read, branded publications, Kapur has also launched several successful digital ventures, including a cutting-edge AI lead generation engine, webcasts, webinars and much more.

**AIVITA Biomedical Inc., Irvine***Hans Keirstead, Ph.D., CEO*

Dr. Hans Keirstead is chairman and CEO of AIVITA Biomedical, Inc., an Irvine-based biotechnology company developing personalized vaccines for the treatment of cancer and prevention of COVID-19. AIVITA's innovative therapies are made possible through proprietary techniques and know-how Dr. Keirstead, and his team have developed over two decades as pioneers in the field of regenerative medicine. AIVITA's personalized cancer immunotherapy uniquely targets the seed of all cancers, tumor-initiating cells. In 2021, AIVITA reported a remarkable 50 % improvement in progression free survival in brain cancer using this approach. In 2021, Dr. Keirstead also led the rapid development of a novel personalized vaccine for COVID-19. The treatment has undergone clinical testing in Indonesia at the invitation of the county's former ministry of health. The vaccine aims to prime the subject's immune system with a cellular immune response to the viral antigen and has generated promising early data.

**Alteryx Inc., Irvine***Olivia Duane Adams, Co-Founder & Chief Advocacy Officer*

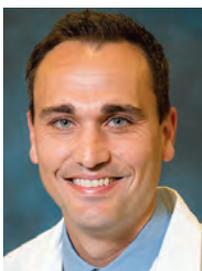
Olivia Duane Adams (Libby) is the chief advocacy officer (CAO) and co-founder of Alteryx, and one of only a handful of female founders to take a technology company public. Adams' vision for diversity and leadership in the creation of the world's leading data science and analytics community is a key factor in the company's 24+ year success. Under Adams' leadership, the Alteryx Community has grown both on- and offline, serving as an incubator for the workforce of the future and empowering all workers to become data workers. As the former chief customer officer, Adams' passion for customers holds strong as she works closely with Alteryx users and the larger analytics community on key initiatives to diversify their workforces, upskill their people and deliver meaningful outcomes. Adams also conceptualized and executed SparkED, Alteryx's education program that provides students and educators free access to its technology, training resources and community.

**Ambry Genetics, Aliso Viejo***Tom Schoenherr, CEO*

Tom Schoenherr joined Ambry in 2017 as chief commercial officer (CCO) and was responsible for the execution of Ambry's go-to-market strategy and oversight of all commercial functions including service, support, sales, marketing, business development, managed care, and genetic specialists. Under his leadership, Schoenherr increased active ordering for Ambry's genetic test, +RNAInsight®, which enabled clinicians—for the first time ever—to conduct both DNA and RNA genetic testing. In addition, during his time as CCO, Schoenherr grew Ambry's footprint into new specialties including somatic testing and population health data. Prior to his time at Ambry, Schoenherr spent more than 20 years in leadership positions in the molecular diagnostics space, most recently as the CCO of Omada Health where he was responsible for driving business growth and increasing market share. He also served in similar roles at Counsyl, Quest Diagnostics, Siemens Healthcare, and Abbott Diagnostics. The most recent accomplishment is the innovation of the LATTICE™ platform at Amby Genetics. LATTICE is a groundbreaking integrated diagnostic data platform combining genomics, pathology, radiology data, and other critical information to uncover new, clinically relevant biomarkers and create the next generation of diagnostic tests. LATTICE leverages machine learning services by combining KMPM's cutting-edge science with the added power of AWS to accelerate drug discovery and precision medicine.

**AnesthesiaGo, Ladera Ranch***Michael Bronson, CEO*

Dr. Michael Bronson is a practicing Anesthesiologist in Orange County, CA. As a leader within his anesthesia group, he was tasked on a nightly basis with determining which anesthesiologists were assigned to which cases the next day. This was traditionally done with a pencil/pen, took about 60 minutes to complete and often riddled with human errors such as double bookings. Without a solution existing in the marketplace, Dr. Bronson put a team together to create an AI enabled scheduling solution that could integrate the available providers with the cases for the next day and produce the most efficient and optimized schedule for the next day. Using this cutting edge technology the time it takes to create assignments is reduced on average by 44 minutes each night and the human error component is removed.

**AONdevices Inc., Irvine***Mouna El Khatib, CEO and Board Member of AONdevices Inc.*

Mouna El Khatib is the co-founder and CEO of Southern California based AONdevices, Inc. The company developed an application specific edge AI processor that can reliably

recognize human speech and audio commands in very noisy environments. The technology can be implemented in a small footprint SoC for always-on battery powered applications such as smartphones and wireless headsets. AONDevices is expanding its family of application specific edge AI processors to sensor fusion applications such as motion sensors. El Khatib founded the company and managed all the formation and company architecture. Under her guidance the company has achieved \$1,000,000+ revenue; grown as a team from 2 to 19 including engineering, management and advisors; hired overseas contractors in different countries including India and Morocco; and raised seed round funding. As CEO and CTO, El Khatib architected AONDevices product line and succeeded in winning two agreements with tier 1 semiconductor companies. In addition, AONDevices built their own chip AON1100™ which is a High-Performance, Ultra-Low Power Edge AI device with integrated application-specific inference algorithms.

**Apriem Advisors, Irvine***Rhonda Ducote, President & Principal*

Rhonda Ducote has climbed the ranks in the financial industry over a 25-year period from a client service representative to Apriem's president. Her leadership has helped propel the firm's growth in assets under management, earning Apriem a spot on the coveted Financial Times Top Financial Advisors in the nation three years in a row. Women will inherit two-thirds of the world's wealth yet many aren't confident in their financial decisions. To build this community, Ducote launched Apriem's 'Women of Wisdom' (WOW) to educate, empower and encourage women to get involved in their finances. WOW, voted most innovative by her cohort at the elite Charles Schwab Executive Leadership Program (2017), has served as an inspiration for other RIA firms' initiatives serving women. Her industry experience with her passion for people has set her apart as a respected leader, advisor, mentor, and coach. Ducote's leadership focused on growth by retention and internal referral, targeting significant but underserved demographics of women and blue-collar workers. She is a founding member of Women Serving Women (2018), an intimate group of female executives in the RIA space across the country where she advocates best practices for attracting/retaining female clients and employees, enhancing client experience and employee engagement, and promoting diversity/inclusion. Ducote also offers national thought leadership about female investment trends, often makes speaking appearances for industry professionals like CFAOC and WISE, and have been published in various publications.

**ATTOM, Irvine***Richard Sawicky, Chief Data Officer*

With a demonstrated history of successful innovation in the real estate industry, Richard Sawicky serves as chief data officer for ATTOM, where he is responsible for all data engineering, data quality, data science and analytic efforts. Among Sawicky's most recent innovative designs and developments for ATTOM, is ATTOM Cloud, a cloud-based solution that offers secure and direct access to ATTOM's vast data warehouse, which alleviates the burdens associated with loading, managing and integrating large datasets. Sawicky also fosters strategic partnerships with Microsoft and other industry partners to engineer the next generation of data platforms for ATTOM's customers. Prior to designing the foundational architecture of the ATTOM data warehouse, Sawicky spent over 10 years developing enterprise data products encompassing CRM, document management, data capture, transaction processing and analytic solutions for numerous Fortune 500 companies, including Weyerhaeuser and Fluor Corporation. Additionally, he spent several years in the mortgage industry building loan origination systems and performing custom CRM and doc imaging integrations for mortgage industry customers.

**Axis Research & Technologies Inc., Irvine***Nick Moran, CEO & President*

AXIS Research & Technologies, Inc. was an idea that originally started from a non-profit created by Founder and CEO Nick Moran to educate youth about the negative effects of diabetes and being overweight. That nonprofit morphed into a broader opportunity to create a Bio Skills Company to provide facilities, medical equipment and tele-training services for surgeons, medical professionals and medical device companies to practice surgical techniques, develop and perfect medical devices and provide education to audiences worldwide. Starting from a single facility located in Irvine, CA, the client base of leading names in medical community grew as the AXIS team developed a reputation for providing world class facilities, services and support. In 2017, AXIS expanded its operations to new facility in Columbia, MD, which fostered a chance meeting with leadership at Johns Hopkins- Applied Physics Lab, prompting a collaboration to advance AXIS's vision to use advanced technology (computer vision, sensors, AI, machine learning, AR and cloud computing) to evaluate, interact with and improve outcomes. Through collaboration with Johns Hopkins/ Applied Physics Lab and BDO Digital, AXIS is rapidly creating and deploying new technology and IP that is advancing how medical device companies, hospital systems and researchers develop, evaluate and improve medical procedures, devices and outcomes that are reducing risks, and savings lives.

**Before the Butcher, Irvine***Danny O'Malley, Founder & President*

Plant-based protein expert Danny O'Malley is founder and president of Before the Butcher, a leading provider of plant-based burgers and other meat alternatives. His company was among the first to bring meat look-alike and taste-alike products to the growing number of consumers concerned about the negative effects of meat production and consumption on animal welfare, climate change and human health. He is also an international speaker on plant-based proteins, one of the fastest-growing categories in the food space. O'Malley's food industry experience spans 25+ years, including three years in a sales manager position at Beyond Meat that helped launch the plant-based meat movement. He previously held various executive positions at several Fortune 50 food companies.



## 2021 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

**Billion Dollar Beauty, Irvine***Natalie Plain, Founder & CEO*

Natalie Plain, founder & CEO of Billion Dollar Beauty, launched Billion Dollar Brows out of her Los Angeles apartment in 2004 strictly as a passion project. She had always been obsessed with her eyebrows but felt uninspired by the products that were on the market. So she went to a cosmetic lab and told them her idea for a brow brand. Plain, a former White House intern, has been awarded two patents for her inventions—the Brow Buddy Tool, a do-it-yourself eyebrow shaping tool, and the Billion Dollar Box, a sustainable, a magnetic makeup organizer that allows users to mix and match their favorite makeup products. Billion Dollar Brows has sold millions of their hero product, the Universal Brow Pencil, and currently retails their new Billion Dollar Beauty Box at over 700 Target stores nationwide. In addition, BDB's products are sold globally in Australia, Japan, and Norway. BDB's revenue more than doubled year over year from 2019 to 2020 while also delivering their most profitable year on record.

**BioPhotas Inc., Anaheim***Patrick Johnson, President & CEO*

Patrick Johnson is the CEO & president of BioPhotas Inc., and the inventor of the award-winning Celluma Series of Light Therapy devices. With an extensive background in the medical device industry, Johnson saw the potential for bringing the significant therapeutic benefits of Low Level Light Therapy affordably to the masses, leading to the founding of BioPhotas. Prior to BioPhotas, his leadership experience includes 10 years with Pro-Dex, Inc., a publicly held medical device manufacturer, serving the roles of chief business development officer, CEO and president, and board member. Johnson left Pro-Dex in early 2010 to startup a humanitarian relief organization, The World Bed Project. The charter of this organization was top build strategic alliances with government, HGOs, corporations and individuals to bring badly needed relief to Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake. Johnson now speaks internationally and writes extensively on the benefits of Low Level Light Therapy.

**Birtcher Anderson & Davis, San Juan Capistrano***Bob Anderson, Co-Chairman*

Birtcher Anderson & Davis Partners joined in 2020 to form Birtcher Anderson & Davis. The two firms joined forces bringing strong track records of two well established commercial real estate firms in Orange County. Birtcher Anderson & Davis is focused on investment and management of multi-tenant industrial and office facilities, leveraging its operational expertise. Since its inception in 1939, the Birtcher organization has grown from a local home building contractor to national prominence as a leading real estate firm in the Western United States. The company has managed over 22 million square feet of commercial property for both their own investment and for various private and public investment entities over the past 40 years, in the United States and in Asia. Additionally, the Birtcher organization has engaged in asset management and repositioning assignments for major financial institutions, including the U.S. Government, as well as constructed or developed over 100 million square feet of commercial property nationally.

**Bitcentral Inc., Newport Beach***Fred Fourcher, Founder, CEO Board Chair & New Adventure Lead Advisor*

Fred Fourcher founded Bitcentral, Inc. in 2000, building a nationwide news distribution network for CBS Newspath and another one for NBC News Channel in 2003. In 2005, Bitcentral entered the news production system business and pioneered the first large-scale, internet-based news aggregation and sharing platform called Oasis™. Oasis is now used by more than 1,200 news organizations worldwide and distributes more than 40,000 stories per day. A recognized thought leader in the industry, Fourcher received an Emmy in 2017 for Bitcentral's innovation in Television news systems. Bitcentral now has more news production systems in TV stations than any competitors in the U.S. It is also one of the dominant providers of master control systems in Latin America. Fourcher's vision of always designing and delivering efficient media workflows for customers has resulted in him being an innovator in digital streaming with FUEL™. FUEL, a production, streaming, and monetization solution, transforms the broadcast industry from appointment viewing to a highly engaging viewing experience on any platform.

**Blue-White, Huntington Beach***Rob Gledhill, CEO & President*

Blue-White was founded in the 1950's by Rob Gledhill's grandfather. He worked in the pool construction business at the time and noticed that many pool owners struggled to keep their pools clean and safe for swimmers. He had the idea to design a chemical pump to add a small amount of chemicals to the pool daily for disinfection. He also developed a flow meter to measure the amount of water flowing through the pool filter daily. Adding chemicals and proper water filtration ensures a safe, clean pool for swimmers. Blue-White began making chemical pumps and flow meters for the aquatics industry. Eventually, they expanded into other markets like; water and wastewater treatment, processing plants, food and beverage, and more. The company recently launched a new type of diaphragm pump that provides smooth, reliable chemical feed that requires zero maintenance for municipal water treatment plants. They also developed a new peristaltic pump that can accurately pump disinfectants into community water distribution systems.

**BOMANI Cold Buzz, Villa Park***Sam Madani, Co-Founder & CEO*

Sam Madani is the co-founder and CEO of BOMANI Cold Buzz, an alcohol-infused cold brew brand disrupting the canned cocktail space. Madani began researching the idea of

marrying cold brew coffee and alcohol from sugar cane, two of the fastest growing categories in the beverage industry. Launching BOMANI in March 2020 with business partners Amin Anjedani and Kai Drewry, Madani and the BOMANI team are quickly redefining the RTD beverage space through the creation of an entirely new product category, defined by BOMANI's top-quality ingredients, best-in-class flavor, and innovative branding.

**CathWorks, Aliso Viejo***Ramin Mousavi, CEO*

Ramin Mousavi has executive leadership and operational experience in general management, marketing, strategy, product development, and commercialization across multiple market segments. He is currently the chief executive officer and a board member at CathWorks. Mousavi was responsible for developing the clinical and commercial strategy for CathWorks - a non-invasive, digital, AI-based medical device solution for identifying coronary artery disease - and is now leading the company's globally. He helped with the regulatory clearance of the product in Europe, United States and Japan. He also led the company's Global Health Economic & Reimbursement strategy where the company was successful in receiving reimbursements in the US and Japan. He is leading the way in building an innovative and community-based organization with a mission to provide clinicians with objective data, so they can make the best decisions for their patients.

**Codebreaker Technologies, Santa Ana***Cheri Tree, CEO*

Cheri Tree is a best-selling author, professional keynote speaker, and world-renowned entrepreneur. She is the founder, chairman, and CEO of Codebreaker Technologies, LLC., with clients in more than 100 countries worldwide. She is the creator of the revolutionary B.A.N.K. methodology and Codebreaker's Personality Coding Technology, designed to help business owners close more sales in less time and improve their communication skills and personal relationships. Tree has spoken to hundreds of thousands of entrepreneurs and professionals globally at some of the top business conferences in the world. She has also been invited to speak at Harvard University, the University of California, Google, and the United Nations.

**CoverCrow Inc., Huntington Beach***Cassandra Caldarella, CEO & Founder*

Cassandra Caldarella is the founder and CEO of CoverCrow, Inc., a company that's devoted to helping fortify the stenography profession by helping to meet the demand for steno services. She developed and launched CoverCrow, Inc. which is a SaaS platform for court reporters to connect with agencies and attorneys that is transforming engagement and commerce through the proven power of sharing user-generated content. It's a game changer for the court reporting industry, which dynamically helps attorneys and agencies hire court reporters for their depositions instantly. It is designed to leverage the impact of word-of-mouth networking for job coverage as the richest path to authenticity, new users, and ROI. It's still a start-up in Beta phase, but is revolutionizing the industry, even in its infancy.

**David Meltzer Enterprises, Lake Forest***David Meltzer, Founder*

In addition to his role as founder of David Meltzer Enterprises and Co-founder of S1M, David Meltzer serves as an executive producer and host of 2 Minute Drill, which premiered its second season in June on Bloomberg and Amazon Prime. He also serves as executive producer of Entrepreneur's show, Elevator Pitch, which recently finished its sixth season and has been extended for at least two more seasons. Elevator Pitch not only empowers entrepreneurs around the world with tools and advice to improve their businesses (and gain investment), but it ranks as the #1 digital business show and garnered more than 50 million views. In addition to The Playbook, Meltzer also launched daily Instagram Live and Office Hours sessions during the pandemic, providing additional value by interviewing a wide array of entrepreneurs, business leaders, athletes, experts, and academics, to name a few. A television version of the "Office Hours" show will be coming later in 2021, also featured on Bloomberg and Amazon Prime.

**Digital Motors, Irvine***Andreas Hinrichs, CEO*

Andreas "Andy" Hinrichs is the chief executive officer of Digital Motors and a member of its board of directors. An accomplished entrepreneur and seasoned executive, Hinrichs was the visionary behind AutoGravity, where he built a diverse team of innovators to reinvent car financing for millions of car buyers, and then went on to put together another diverse team of innovators to reinvent the automotive-retail process as Digital Motors. He and his team launched Digital Motors, a platform which allows auto dealers to offer their customers a complete beginning-to-end online purchasing capability, at the onset of the pandemic, thus providing the perfect tool to meet the restrictions of a stay-at-home economy. Throughout his 25-year financial services career in the U.S., Europe and Asia, Hinrichs has started businesses and led digital initiatives on a global scale.

**Edwards Lifesciences, Irvine***Katie Szyman, Corporate Vice President, Critical Care*

Katie Szyman is Edwards Lifesciences' corporate vice president of Critical Care, a position she has held since joining the organization in 2015. Szyman has brought a number of products to market during her time at Edwards, including the recently FDA-cleared Acumen Hypotension Prediction Index (HPI) software for use with the Acumen IQ finger cuff. Using



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## 2021 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

machine learning, the Acumen HPI software alerts clinicians of the likelihood a patient is trending toward hypotension, or low blood pressure. Until now, the software has only been available for patients using an invasive arterial line. In her highly successful career as a medical device leader, Szyman has a long track record of accomplishments. Her most significant business achievement, however, is leading Edwards critical care's shift to products that support the company's innovative Smart Recovery strategy—a high-growth area that's on its way to becoming the largest part of its critical care portfolio. Smart Recovery combines three critical components for hemodynamic monitoring: leading sensor technology, artificial intelligence software, and the HemoSphere advanced monitoring platform. Together, this comprehensive suite of products helps clinicians make better decisions for their patients to reduce complications and help patients get home to their families faster.

**Edwards Lifesciences, Irvine**

*Larry Wood, Corporate Vice President, Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement*

Larry L. Wood has served as corporate vice president, Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR) of Edwards Lifesciences since 2007. He has been responsible for key company R&D, operations, marketing, and commercial, clinical and regulatory initiatives in transcatheter valve replacement around the globe, guiding the program from developmental stages, through global launch and on to tremendous commercial success. Wood has more than 30 years of experience in the medical technology industry at both Edwards and Baxter Healthcare Corporation in positions including manufacturing management, regulatory affairs, and strategic and clinical marketing primarily for the surgical heart valve therapy business. He is a frequently invited faculty member at key interventional cardiology and cardiothoracic surgery scientific congresses. Wood previously held key positions in manufacturing management, regulatory affairs, and strategic and clinical marketing, primarily in the company's leading surgical heart valve franchise.

**e-PlanSoft, Irvine**

*Michael Chegini, CEO*

Michael Chegini is a visionary whose drive to innovate and commitment to improving how public agencies and the AEC industry perform plan reviews led to the foundation of e-PlanSoft. His vision drives the company to lead the way in technology and leading-edge advancements in the company's offerings. Dr. Chegini has over 40 years of practical experience in civil and structural engineering design, design management, program and project management, and construction of buildings and supporting facilities for public transportation, educational, and municipal agencies, public works agencies and the private sector. His experience in the compliance management includes plan review, code analysis, seismic and facility condition assessments and ADA evaluation and design of new and renovation, expansion, improvement, and upgrade designs of all types of building systems. He has diversified experience in all project delivery methods. Under his leadership and vision, the company has been awarded a total of 12 patents, with more under consideration, each representing uncharted territory for electronic plan reviews and improving the jobs of reviewers and applicants alike.

**Eyedaptic Inc., Laguna Hills**

*Jay Cormier, CEO*

Jay Cormier is CEO of Eyedaptic, founded in 2016 with the mission of revitalizing the quality of life for people with AMD (Age related Macular Degeneration). This is one of the biggest unmet needs in eye care today with over 150 million people worldwide affected and no existing cure or therapy. AMD leads to a loss of central vision which makes many simple everyday tasks like reading a bill or locating an item in the grocery store difficult and at times impossible. Together with the cofounders, bringing deep technology backgrounds along with ophthalmology retina specialists, the team set forth to use augmented reality (AR) with embedded natural vision software to accomplish this goal. After three years, working with nearly 100 patients, a successful clinical study and hundreds of hours of beta usage, Eyedaptic's first product debuted on the market at the end of 2019. Since that time a strategic partnership was formed with the world leader in low vision aids, which was announced in March 2020, and the newest product was launched in June 2021 to scale the business.

**FundingShield LLC, Newport Beach**

*Ike Suri, Chairman & CEO*

Ike Suri is the CEO and chairman of FundingShield, a market leading Fin-tech company providing innovative solutions to prevent wire-fraud, title fraud and mitigate risk in the mortgage industry. He is currently the CEO of Pelican Point Investment Group and Pelican Point Media. He is co-founder of and has been the president of Options Group, chairman of the finance committee, co chair of the operations Committee. Suri has served as a CEO, chairman, board member, investor and advisor to private and public companies and continues to invest-in and advise companies as an advisor or a principal. Suri is a "serial entrepreneur" and founding Charter Member of the IndUS Entrepreneurs (TiE -South Coast, CA). He serves as an advisory board member to other media-tech, media, consumer-centric organic-wellness based companies. He has served as a board member of Trilenna Group, a mid-market merchant banking firm and currently is a member of the Turnaround Management Association (TMA). Suri is a member of the MBA Risk and Fraud Committee and Member of the Forbes Business Council.

**GameChanger Charity, Rancho Mission Viejo**

*Jim Carol, Chairman & CEO*

Tech entrepreneur Jim Carol of Dana Point, Calif., was co-founder of PacketVideo, whose technology enabled video capability on over 1 billion smartphones. When Jim's son, Taylor, was diagnosed with leukemia in 2006, he relied on video games for comfort during his

isolation in the hospital. Jim and Taylor were inspired to create a safe, private gaming and content network for hospitals to help other seriously ill children. The nonprofit GameChanger Charity was founded in 2007, focused on donating the technology to pediatric hospitals. GameChanger offers a unique entertainment, learning and social experience for hospitalized kids. Accessible on any device, anywhere in the hospital, GameChanger provides premium movies, games, videos, live streaming and educational content, all carefully curated for patients and their families. The platform saves hospitals millions and transforms the patient experience. GameChanger was awarded almost \$1 million by Amazon Web Services, and other tech leaders have joined AWS VP of healthcare Dave Levy on the GameChanger board, including Twitch founder and CEO Emmett Shear, Reddit founder and CEO Steve Huffman, and Microsoft Xbox CFO Tim Stuart.

**Harvest Landscape Enterprises Inc., Anaheim**

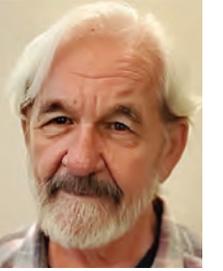
*Max Moreno, Director of Water Management*

As director of Water Management, Max Moreno's core initiative is to take water management to the next level setting a new standard for the landscape industry. He incorporates the latest and best available technology while implementing best quality irrigation practices. At Harvest, the Water Management Division is a place to learn, grow, and apply what they enjoy doing. Moreno is responsible for overseeing the Water Management Division and various water conservation initiatives throughout Harvest Landscape, ensuring we maximize water efficiency to the fullest extent. Additionally, Moreno oversees all irrigators' supervision and training to strengthen the team and deliver maximum sustainability and reduce water usage wherever possible. Moreno has been professionally managing high-level projects in Southern California for over 15 years. He is a certified Water Manager Expert through the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA) and holds additional certifications as a Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor and Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper. Moreno is proficient in smart watering systems and horticulture practices and has led the management, training, and implementation of various water efficiency programs for Southern California residents.

**Hyperdisk Marketing Inc./ Hooray Agency, Irvine**

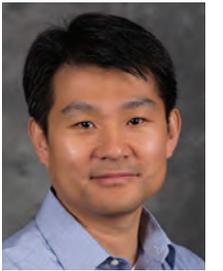
*Nicholas Singer, Chairman of the Board*

Nicholas Singer has been a business visionary, innovator and entrepreneur for over 45 years. Singer is currently the chairman of Hooray Agency. Singer founded HyperDisk Marketing/Hooray Agency in 1994, after recognizing that the digital revolution would change communications forever. He helped pioneer the early digital marketing revolution from SEO, video streaming, advanced interactive displays, to the fully integrated content development and digital distribution. Since 1974, Singer has been developing complex engineering solutions for businesses. Singer was an engineer on multiple classified projects at Summa Corporation. Singer has received over 50 patents some that cover multiple categories from edible packaging to dissolvable packaging for food product and automotive.

**iBASEt, Foothill Ranch**

*Sung Kim, CTO*

Sung Kim has both a strong academic and private industry background. His academic background includes being an Adjunct Professor of Computer Science at Chapman University as well as being an Assistant Professor at North Dakota State University. During his nearly 14 years at iBASEt, he has worked his way from being a senior software engineer to CTO and head of product and R&D. At iBASEt, Kim is responsible for providing strategic direction of the company's technology and product roadmap. iBASEt is a software company that simplifies how complex products are built and maintained. Founded in Southern California in 1986, iBASEt solutions ensure digital continuity across manufacturing, quality, and maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) operations on a global scale. iBASEt's iSeries, powered by Solumina, is a cloud-native platform that establishes a digital ecosystem to drive innovation and improve operational performance. iBASEt customers include Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Rolls Royce, Pratt & Whitney, and Textron.

**InBrace, Irvine**

*John Pham, CEO & Co-Founder*

John Pham DDS, MS is a researcher, three-time entrepreneur, team builder, former aerospace engineer and practicing orthodontist. His research is featured in numerous cover articles in the American Journal of Orthodontics and the Journal of Clinical Orthodontics, and he frequently speaks on cutting edge technology topics at industry association meetings, orthodontic conferences and residency programs. As CEO and co-founder of INBRACE, Dr. Pham is leveraging his years of research and orthodontic practice experience to transform the industry with an invisible, healthy, patient-friendly solution for a great smile. With his mentor, research partner and INBRACE inventor Dr. Hongsheng Tong, the two founded INBRACE in 2012 and incorporated in 2014. By 2018, the company had secured \$26 million in venture funding, moved to a new office location in Irvine, tripled manufacturing capacity and grew to more than 80 employees. Today, Dr. Pham and InBrace are focused on product refinement and infrastructure buildout in preparation for sustainable, long-term growth. Employee headcount has surpassed 90 as INBRACE expands customer acquisition, training, customer support and marketing resources.

**Lantern & Scroll, Dana Point**

*Karen Good, President*

Dr. Karen H. Good, Esq. has managed to grow a business organically from a small startup in NC to a multimillion-dollar manufacturer, designer, and retailer of lighting, with locations in CA, NV, TX and NC. Good started from nothing, armed only with an education, a passion for



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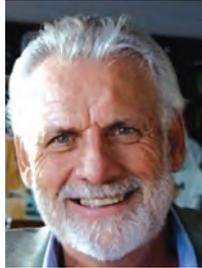
## 2021 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

hard work, and a drive to make the best, most environmentally friendly lights in America. Good has grown her business from coast to coast, and even exports to Australia, New Zealand, The Netherlands and Kuwait. The unique feature of her company's product is that they use a specially designed US manufactured gas burner which provides the most efficient and clean burn of any US gas lantern. The lights are approved for sale all over, including in the tight regulatory states of Mass, Cali and in the EU.

**Learning Ovations Inc., Irvine**

*Jay Connor, Founder & CEO*

Joseph Connor is the founder/CEO of Learning Ovations. Their featured product, A2i - Assessment to Instruction, supports teachers and administrators in achieving reading outcomes for all children. It has a consistent outcome in numerous clinical trials of children reading at 5th grade level at the end of 3rd grade. Learning Ovations has the commercialization/technology transfer role, in partnership with the US Department of Education, National Institutes of Health, Florida Center for Reading Research, and the University of California - Irvine, in expanding the use of A2i, an ESSA "strong evidence" research-based technology to districts across North America. This recognition of the need to develop tools to achieve transformative outcomes in community systems was a driving consideration in his founding of The Collaboratory for Community Solutions. The research findings from over 75 communities are found in his book, published spring 2003 (second edition 2005) by Wilder Press - Community Visions, Community Solutions: Grantmaking for Comprehensive Impact. It is the most extensive discussion available on the art of linking sectors, initiatives, technologies and systems in achieving community solutions.



in the financial services industry, allowing credit unions and banks the ability to offer products and services to compete with larger financial institutions. Nguyen's leadership and vision have helped established MeridianLink as the leading loan origination software provider for mid-market financial institutions and also consumer reporting agencies who provide credit data to help consumers looking to get a mortgage, find employment or find an apartment. He co-founded MeridianLink to transform the financial industry and has experienced a track record of continual growth and expansion. He combines an entrepreneurial spirit with a keen focus on execution; blending his experience in building high-performing teams, operational efficiency, and bringing new products and services to market.

**Mezmo Corporation DBA InnoCaption, Buena Park**

*Joseph Lee, Founder & CEO*

Joseph Lee is the founder and co-CEO of InnoCaption, a mobile app development company that provides real-time captioning of phone calls for the deaf and hard of hearing community. InnoCaption was founded in 2007 and officially launched public service in 2016 after a lengthy R&D and stringent FCC certification process. InnoCaption is at the forefront of modernizing telecommunications accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing community through its mobile app, which empowers users to choose between captions generated by best-in-class automated speech recognition technology or live stenographers. InnoCaption currently serves over ten thousand users and is seeing rapid growth with the adoption of smartphones across all age groups and demographics.

**LeggUP, Newport Beach**

*Tom Finn, Co-Founder & CEO*

Tom Finn, co-founder and CEO of LeggUP®, a professional coaching and employee wellbeing platform created for enterprises of all sizes, possesses a wealth of experience in employee benefits, insurance market trends, business development and revenue strategies, central to the company's unique positioning as the first professional development platform packaged as an employee benefit. Driven by Finn's vision of making career development and mental wellbeing programs easy and scalable, LeggUP seamlessly integrates world-class coaches and therapists, proprietary science-backed assessments, and ROI dashboards into one easy-to-use platform. Finn is the thought leader/brain trust behind Talent Insurance™ providing professional coaching for a fraction of the price to small group employers across the US. Since launching in late 2017, LeggUP has helped organizations unlock employee potential and supported the expanded role of HR leaders turning their attention back towards people and culture development.

**Mobix Labs, Irvine**

*Fabian Battaglia, CEO*

Fabian Battaglia is 35-year tech veteran that is quickly building Orange County's next great tech company that is accelerating the deployment and adoption of True5G mmWave wireless networks. Mobix Labs has had rapid growth throughout the last year, recently closing \$12.5 million in new funding during a pandemic, a testament to the company's current and future value proposition. In just a short time since the company was founded, Battaglia has established an impressive board of directors that include James J. Peterson, former CEO and chairman of Microsemi Corporation as chairman; David J. Aldrich, former chairman of the board of Skyworks Solutions, Inc.; Kurt Busch, CEO of Syntiant; Bill Carpou, CEO of Octane; and Rick Goerner, former EVP marketing and sales at Microsemi Corporation. In addition to these achievements, Mobix Labs has announced a growing list of global distributors including a Richardson RFPD, Acromax and the Wutong Group that will help bring their True5G wireless solution to customers worldwide.

**Loadstop, Irvine**

*Omer Cheema, Co-Founder & COO*

Omer Cheema is a serial entrepreneur with emerging technologies experience in logistics, healthcare, government, education and technology domains. Cheema has led various technology and product departments for fortune 500 organizations, including Kaiser Permanente, UCI, One Call, Harbor Health Systems, LoadStop Technologies. He is also sits as chief strategy advisor to Adloads Technologies and Board member of WCM Ventures. Currently Cheema is a COO and co-founder of Loadstop.com. LoadStop is a SaaS based TMS (Transportation Management System) Technology start up for Logistic industry that went into production in 2020. This is the time when COVID 19 has hit the globe. Yet, this did not stop him from utilizing his entrepreneur skills and valuable network with his co-founder team to acquire success and get the traction going. They achieve \$1 million ARR in the first year. This was by far a huge and significant accomplishment to achieve.

**Naturade, Irvine**

*Claude Tellis, CEO*

Claude Tellis currently serves as CEO of Naturade, a lower middle market nutraceutical company, that he owns through his family office, Towerview. Tellis led Naturade to expansion into all 59 Costco Wholesale Clubs in Southern California as of July 2021. Naturade is the first Black-owned company in this plant-based nutrition category sold at Costco. In addition, he co-founded, operated and sold Healthy Body Products, a healthy beverages company. Tellis originated, structured and closed a \$25 million deal with Pepsi before selling the company.

**Loan Administration Network Inc., Irvine**

*Charlene Nichols, CEO*

LANI (Loan Administration Network, Inc.) is a specialty staffing company formed in 1992 and provides staffing services to Banks, mortgage companies, credit unions, title and escrow companies, healthcare, IT, and insurance industries. LANI's CEO has 29 years of service in the financial industry.

**Nextworks Strategy- Division of ENP Institute, Irvine**

*Scott Hamilton, CEO*

Scott Hamilton is a well-known thought leader, advisor & keynote speaker in the field of strategy & innovation for Global 5000 through mid-market companies. In his prior role as a corporate leader, he led key strategy, operations, human resources and organization effectiveness roles for such companies as Nestle, Bergen Brunswig, Honeywell, ARAMARK, Golden State Foods & DirecTV. Today Hamilton and his team of Nextworks Strategy advisors provide powerful leadership and organizational programs focused on strategic planning & execution, ideation & innovation methods, DEI programs, ROI/performance management improvement and the pioneering use of "collective intelligence" for aligned results. Hamilton is also CEO of the Executive Next Practices Institute, one of the regions largest enterprise level research, innovation & investor organizations that is based at UCI Beall Applied Innovation.

**Matregenix, Irvine**

*Sherif Soliman, CEO*

Matregenix, Inc. utilizes a proprietary platform technology to design, develop, and manufacture highly tunable nanofiber materials applicable to a diverse set of industries that includes biomedical, filtration, and energy. The company is integrated with a strong IP portfolio and a team of experts in material science. Matregenix relocated its operations from Boston in 2019 to settle in Irvine. The company has been focusing since then on developing innovative products based on its nanofiber platform technology and expanding its manufacturing capacity to deliver these next generation materials at scale. The company is fully bootstrapped and self-sustained through the revenue generated from the material sales. To date, Matregenix has leveraged its nanofiber platform technology to develop various products for multiple applications that includes: surgical masks, cosmetic masks, wound healing patches, tissue engineering scaffolds, air filters, water filters, dental barrier membranes, and membranes for lithium ion batteries.

**Nguyen Tabet LLC, Irvine**

*Quan Nguyen, Patent Attorney*

Quan Nguyen is a seasoned Patent Attorney and a Founding Partner at Nguyen Tabet Intellectual Property LLC (NTIP). NTIP protects innovation through securing patents and helping to commercialize products for publicly traded companies, major corporations, universities, investors, and entrepreneurs. NTIP also has a special Division dedicated to the success of Startup companies in Orange County. For many years, NTIP Startup Division has worked closely with UCI Beall Applied Innovation, and a number of community industry leaders in the Startup space, to provide the most comprehensive support for Startups. This support includes guiding emerging companies to effectively demonstrate and communicate the value of their innovations. Further, NTIP Startup Division has directly facilitated investments of millions of dollars in Angel and Venture Capital for Startups in Orange County. Notably, NTIP Startup Division was instrumental in the formation of the Orange County MedTech Investment Group within the Tech Coast Angels. Through empowering the Startups for success, NTIP has helped strengthen the entrepreneurial culture in Southern California and has contributed to making Orange County a destination for entrepreneurship.

**MeridianLink, Costa Mesa**

*Tim Nguyen, Co-Founder & Chief Strategy Officer*

Tim Nguyen co-founded MeridianLink to provide technology solutions that level the playing field across the financial sector. These solutions have successfully disrupted the status quo

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## 2021 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

**Obsidian Security, Newport Beach***Ben Johnson, CTO & Co-Founder*

Ben Johnson is CTO and co-founder of Obsidian Security, a venture-backed cybersecurity company based in Newport Beach. Obsidian protects business applications like Microsoft 365, Salesforce, and Workday from cyberattacks and insider threats. Prior to Obsidian, Ben co-founded and was CTO at Carbon Black, a next-generation anti-virus company that pioneered powerful capabilities to shift enterprise defense. Carbon Black went public in 2018 and was acquired by VMware in 2019 for \$2.1 billion. Johnson began his career as a NSA computer scientist and was a cyber engineer in an advanced intrusion operations division for the intelligence community. Johnson remains active in the cybersecurity community. He currently serves as a technical advisor to the US FISA Court, advises multiple security startups as a board member, and sits on the cybersecurity advisory board of a global non-profit focused on vaccine research.

**Orange County Rescue Mission, Tustin***Jim Palmer, President & CEO*

Since its inception, Orange County Rescue Mission has strived to aid the homeless population through means of shelter, food, health care, education, job training and independent living communities to provide support in getting these individuals back on their feet. In its nearly 60 years, OC Rescue Mission has established 12 programs catering to different needs of those staying in its transitional living facilities. The organization has provided nutritious meals, clothing, medical care, mental health counseling, vocational training, career placement and much more for the formerly homeless men, women, and children who want a better life for themselves. Between 1992 and today, Dr. James "Jim" Palmer has taken the organization from a single rundown facility housing just nine homeless men in Santa Ana to a nine-facility, two county operation serving tens of thousands of homeless and formerly homeless individuals each year through numerous programs. Dating back to 2003, the organization has provided 1,830,207 nights of shelter, and more than 16,526,022 meals to those in need. As president, Palmer also established the transitional living facility, The Village of Hope, and served as developer for the project. Since then, Palmer has developed five other clinics and transitional facilities in Orange County.

**Overair, Santa Ana***Ben Tigner, CEO*

Ben Tigner has an established record as an engineer and an executive. Having spent the majority of this career working with pioneering aerospace icon Abe Karem (co-founder of Overair, founder of Karem Aircraft, Leading Systems and Frontier Systems and creator of the Predator drone (sold to General Atomics)), Tigner is continuing Karem's legacy of aerospace innovation. At Overair, Tigner is leading the development and commercialization of the company's all-electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, Butterfly. Thanks to the proprietary propulsion technology Tigner and Karem have developed over the past 20 years, Butterfly will introduce a sea change in aircraft economics, featuring uncompromising safety, ultra quiet electric motors and robust capability in a broad range of weather conditions. Tigner's warm demeanor and encouraging leadership style inspire his team of engineers and manufacturing and commercial employees to bring Butterfly to market by 2026.

**PreludeDx, Laguna Hills***Troy Bremer, Chief Scientific Officer*

Dr. Troy Bremer is the co-founder and chief scientific officer at PreludeDx and has been an integral part of the company since its inception. Originally an aerospace engineer, he received his Doctorate in Biomedical Engineering from UCSD and applied his experience working with missile defense towards his passion for improving healthcare through innovation. His research background involves the application of machine learning, statistical pattern recognition, modeling and biostatistics to molecular biology. The culmination of this research is the innovation and development of the DCiSionRT test, the first assay to combine molecular biology with artificial intelligence in a biological risk assessment to predict radiation therapy benefit in DCIS breast cancer. Dr. Bremer has extensive experience in diagnostic development and has identified and validated several biomarker panels for disease prognosis and treatment response in oncology, leading to a number of publications and various patents.

**Restaurant365, Irvine***Tony Smith, Co-Founder & CEO*

Tony Smith has led Restaurant365 as a product focused company since inception, investing heavily in R&D to deliver the restaurant industry new, unique tools to help them succeed today. He refuses to ever let things get stagnant and the company has consistently achieved extreme growth in product advancements and revenue annually. Smith believes in putting customer first by providing world class support and a next generation product to advance their business, helping their restaurants grow. Back by three world-class investors (Bessemer, Iconiq, and Tiger) they've raised multiple rounds of funding and recently completed a major acquisition of Compeat Software, a complimentary/competitive product. They currently serve around 30,000 restaurants, providing profitability and visibility that is extremely important for restaurants to thrive post-pandemic.

**Revive Concierge, Irvine***Dalip Jaggi, Co-Founder*

Dalip Jaggi's career kicked off by building a brand-focused, engineering studio, Devise Interactive. Jaggi a team that concentrates on helping entrepreneurs & companies with early-stage concepts & innovations. The agency was acquired in 2018 by an international



public-traded company, Vincit. Jaggi is co-founder of Forge54, a nonprofit organization and president at OC Tech Happy Hour. Revive Concierge, a fast-growing startup that is rapidly innovating in the real estate industry for the homeowner. They offer a suite of products to assist homeowners with more convenience, more flexibility, and not leave any money on the table.

**Robotic Assistance Devices, San Juan Capistrano***Steve Reinharz, President*

RAD was founded by Steve Reinharz in July of 2016. Since its founding, RAD solutions have provided workflow automation, for businesses of all sizes, delivered through a system of hardware, software, and cloud services. Reinharz became CEO of RAD's parent company AITX and took over all officer positions on March 2, 2021. Reinharz continues to oversee all aspects of AITX, RAD and the other subsidiaries. As president of RAD, Reinharz leverages his extensive knowledge and interest in robotics and artificial intelligence to design and develop robotic solutions that increase business efficiency and deliver immediate and impressive cost savings. Under Reinharz' leadership, RAD has grown from less than 20 employees in 2020 to over 50 as of July 1, 2021 with over 30 open positions, most in software and hardware engineering.

**Scanwell Health Inc., San Juan Capistrano***Stephen Chen, CEO & Founder*

Stephen Chen is founder and CEO of Scanwell Health, a digital health company that's turned the smartphone into a clinical lab. Scanwell's approach pairs proven diagnostics with patented computer vision technology, so there's no need to send samples back to the lab. Patients receive results in minutes. In 2017, Chen and his team received the first and only FDA clearance for an over-the-counter diagnostic smartphone app. The company's chronic kidney disease test helps researchers at Kaiser Permanente, John Hopkins, and other health systems remotely screen for and monitor people with the disease. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Chen and his team have partnered with leading medical technology company Becton Dickinson on a COVID-19 antigen test; a type of test that will play a significant role in reopening the economy, schools, and travel.

**SCGWest Development, Irvine***Kyle Gorman, Co-Founder & Partner*

In 2012 Kyle Gorman took his background in finance and love for real estate and construction and co-founded SCGWest Development. Gorman and his partner have developed a proven formula by synchronizing all aspects of a project into a single point of contact while coupling proprietary technology; facilitating the continued growth of SCGWest. Because of this, SCGWest is now one of the leaders in the development and design-build of retail, restaurants, and medical clinic offices across the southwestern United States. Gorman's early years as a financial analyst for investment sales, construction management of ground up builds, and large scale interior renovations have been a huge asset to SCGWest. Through the years SCGWest has been recognized as a top tenant improvement contractor for its work in the renovation of build outs of hundreds of restaurants throughout the county. As well as one of the fastest growing companies of 2020. Lastly, Gorman was awarded with a 50 under 40 by Globe Street. Gorman's leadership, hard work, and dedication to his clients have made it possible for SCGWest to have continued success.

**SCGWest Development, Irvine***Brandon Lehman, Co-Founder & Partner*

Brandon Lehman is an industry award-winning entrepreneur and the co-founder of SCGWest. His background in engineering and management has proven essential in the development of the internal streamlined systems and processes of the company. As this is his 2nd successful startup, Lehman leverages more than 14 years of experience in the development industry to lead the company's project development and operational efforts. After retiring from professional BMX Racing in 2004, Lehman earned a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from Arizona State University. Since then, his career has involved numerous facets of the development business throughout a variety of different submarkets. His diverse career has made him a top expert to oversee and manage entire multiple location roll out programs from design conception to completion for national brands. He holds a General Contractor's License in multiple states and is generally involved during the design and construction phases SCG's projects and developments, all with the goal of Building a Better World.

**SetSchedule, Irvine***Roy Dekel, CEO*

Roy Dekel is an Israeli immigrant that moved to the US after serving as a Navy seal. He is an entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and co-founder of SetSchedule. Dekel's claim to fame is SetSchedule's feature on the INC 5000 fastest growing companies in America list in 2019 and 2020. As the pandemic grew Dekel found ways to increase connectivity for the professional community, with new product developments. He increased headcount at SetSchedule and even acquired new offices here in Irvine, CA, and in South Africa. Dekel is tracking to accomplish a 30% revenue increase from 2020 to 2021 and has raised approximately 10 million dollars to date in funding for SetSchedule.

**Seven Gables Real Estate, Tustin***Mike Hickman, CEO & President*

In 1976, the founders of Seven Gables Real Estate recognized that the community needed real estate professionals who prioritized creativity, knowledge, and experience. With that in mind, Seven Gables developed a brand driven by creative spirit that would create

CONGRATULATIONS TO

# RAMIN MOUSAVI

ON HIS NOMINATION  
FOR THE *OC BUSINESS  
JOURNAL INNOVATOR OF  
THE YEAR AWARD.*



CEO of  
**CATHWORKS**

"I am honored to lead CathWorks, a company with a transformational product portfolio, exceptionally talented people, and committed investors and strategic partners." —Ramin Mousavi

Under Ramin's leadership, CathWorks is well-positioned for the next phase of technological innovation, market adoption and global growth.

CathWorks' revolutionary non-invasive FFRangio system has the potential to become standard of care, optimizing treatment decisions and improving outcomes for patients with coronary artery disease around the world.



2021 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

excellence at every opportunity for the benefit of their clients. They aligned themselves with top notch, like-minded individuals who strived to be innovative and create distinction. Seven Gables defined themselves by creating a culture that ultimately became the standard bearer of the business. Through Mike Hickman's innovative direction and leadership, Seven Gables' creative spirit is as alive and vibrant as it was when they first opened their doors. In 2020, Seven Gables created an exclusive, game-changing service for the industry of real estate. The exclusive program, SG Certified, was designed to benefit both home buyers and sellers. For everyone involved, the SG Certified program allows for a stress-free process through transparency. It lays out all of the facts up front which in turn eliminates surprises and paves the way for a smooth transaction.



**ShopGoodwill.com, Santa Ana**

*Ryan Smith, Senior Director of Operations*

Shopgoodwill.com is the first ecommerce auction platform created, owned and operated by a nonprofit organization. The site was designed here in Orange County by Goodwill of Orange County in 1999 to provide an engaging online shopping destination that would further the Goodwill mission of putting people to work. Today, more than 125 Goodwill organizations from across the country list and auction unique items on the site, including art, antiques, collectibles, apparel, jewelry, electronics, and more. All revenue from these auction sales fund Goodwill's life-changing programs and services for people with disabilities and other barriers. More than \$1 billion in online sales have been generated on shopgoodwill.com since its launch – and half of that, \$500 million, came in just the last three years. shopgoodwill.com is receiving more than 21 million unique page views each week, and currently has more than 2.4 million registered customers. Last year, the site saw nearly 22 percent growth in sales over the previous year with \$171.3 million in sales.



**Smart Cups, Mission Viejo**

*Chris Kanik, Founder & CEO*

Smart Cups launched on December 11, 2017. In 2018, The Additive Advantage, the mother company that held the patents, was acquired by International Flavors and Fragrances. Smart Cups remains a licensee and manufacturing arm. Chris Kanik obtained a TTB Distillery Permit in 2020, as well as has a patent pending on novel manufacturing. In 2020, Smart Cups licensed their intellectual property to The Ranch Companies, founded by Mike Tyson, allowing them to print ingestible THC and CBD with a high degree of accuracy, solving dosage issues that plague the industry. The waterless nature of Smart Cups Technology significantly reduces the resources needed to transport products from the manufacturer to the consumer, and can solve sustainability issues across manufacturing



verticals. An upgraded machine will arrive this fall, allowing Smart Cups to print on the sidewalls of plant-based bioplastic cups, increasing production tenfold by printing on 16 cups per second. The new machine will allow the expanded use of Smart Cups Technology, with broad implications for a myriad of industries, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, cleaning supplies, and more. For example, consumers could buy eco-friendly cups with printed mouthwash, where they would just have to add water to activate the ingredients and be ready for use. The technology allows companies to print and ship at a liquid volume of over 600% when compared to traditional aluminum cans, making it possible for more products to be shipped at a time and minimizing the weight of each unit.

**Smart Energy Water (SEW), Irvine**

*Deepak Garg, Founder & CEO*

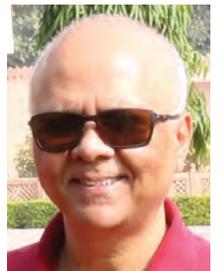
Deepak Garg is the Founder and CEO of Smart Energy Water (SEW). A thought leader and industry stalwart, Garg is leading product and technology development, innovation, vision, strategy, and leadership at SEW. Over the years, he has brought together like-minded people, developing high-powered business and technology teams, and started a SEW family (now 1000+ strong) that aims to connect billions of people with their energy and water providers. These teams have successfully created the #1 Digital Customer Experience, Digital Workforce Experience, Smart AI/ML Analytics Platforms that address key business challenges and power the sustainability movement. All the SEW platforms leverage next-gen technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, IoT to power customer and workforce experiences. Backing on scalability, modularity, flexibility, and security, SEW clients deliver award-winning experiences and set new benchmarks for the industry. Driven by Garg's stellar vision, SEW has navigated 22+ geographies to serve energy and utility companies, connecting 700+ Mn people and serving 22000 Smart Cities/communities. Garg is also noted Member and Contributor of the Forbes Technology Council.



**Smart Health Clubs, Irvine**

*Praveen Kashyap, CEO*

Praveen Kashyap is an inventor, engineer and an entrepreneur in a relentless pursuit of simplicity. He is a global software and App development leader talented at maturing innovation from concept to high quality products and services that generate remarkable customer experiences. He has a master's in mechanical engineering and PhD in Computer Science. As a global innovator, Kashyap is a holder of over 20 US and International patents and has led projects resulting in 70+ US and international patents. In 2018, Kashyap founded Smart Health Clubs in association with Mike Alpert CEO The Claremont Club to build the Integrated Wellness Platform for Health Clubs. Our vision is to merge Healthcare with Fitness to enable Health Clubs to provide holistic wellness solutions to all of their members, but especially "at risk" and chronically ill populations. By 2021, this



**WAY TO GO, LEO!**

All of us at Tarsus would like to congratulate you on your *Innovator of the Year* nomination! Thank you for your leadership and dedication, and for empowering us daily to revolutionize treatment for patients in need.

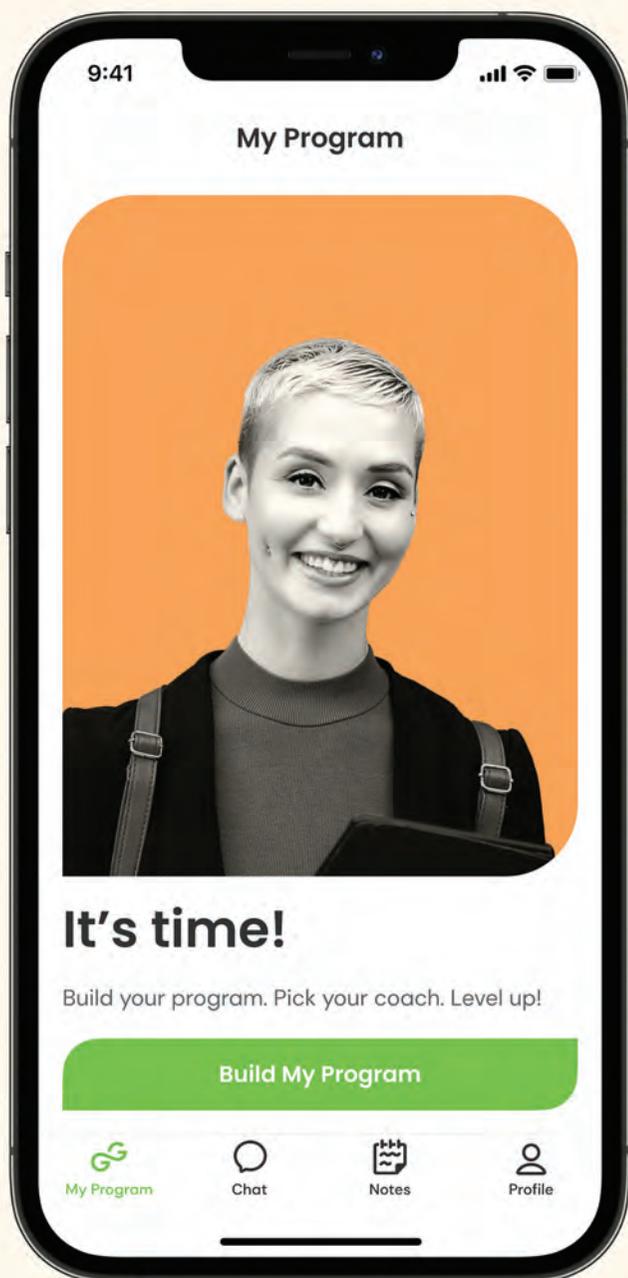
Scan here to learn more about Leo Greenstein and the Tarsus leadership team.





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## 2021 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

platform was deployed in over 100 Health Club locations, nine of them are in the top 85 Clubs in the US, with over 100k active users per month.

**Sonic+, Irvine**

*Jay Shao, Founder & CEO*

Jay Zhao is the founder and CEO of Sonic+, an on-demand grocery delivery APP that provides a one-stop mobile shopping experience and direct door-to-door delivery of fresh foods, supplies, and services. Launched in April 2020, Sonic+ is an efficient, cost-saving mobile marketplace built on a proprietary platform, that is reshaping the connections between the wholesalers and the consumers by minimizing the cost of products and maximizing the functionality of the existing facility of our suppliers. Working closely with local farmers and nationwide distributors, Sonic+ has eliminated the middle parties, allowing customers to receive groceries that are more fresh and less expensive in a more convenient way. Modeled on the popular Chinese universal app platforms Meituan, Ele.me, and Alibaba, Sonic+ is a service platform capable of meeting a multitude of shoppers' needs from the comfort of their Smartphone. Door-to-door grocery deliveries, services, customized solutions, and provisions are currently available to consumers living in Orange County and Los Angeles County. Plans to expand the Sonic+ one-stop mobile shopping experience across California are in play for 2021, and long-term plans are to grow the platform nationally, and then internationally.

**Specright Inc., Tustin**

*Matthew Wright, Founder & CEO*

Matthew Wright is not just a CEO, but a true innovator. After working in the packaging industry for over 20 years, he decided to solve the problems he experienced firsthand by starting Specright. In doing so, he's raised tens of millions of dollars and created a new category of enterprise software - all without a background in technology. In a few short years, he has transformed the way companies like Johnson & Johnson, Thermo Fisher, Albertsons and Procter & Gamble manage their critical product and packaging data. His innovation and vision is enabling these companies to report on sustainability, bring products to market faster, ensure the quality and safety of things we touch or consume every day. Wright is a leading operator and executive in the packaging and software industries. Under his leadership and with his vision, Specright has been recognized as a Gartner Cool Vendor, a distinction reserved for the world's most innovative companies. Salesforce, arguably one of the most successful software companies of all time, named Specright the winner of its inaugural Platform Innovation award. He has held leadership positions at International Paper, Temple Inland, and rightPAQ—a packaging company he co-founded.

**Stretto, Irvine**

*Jonathan Carson & Eric Kurtzman, Co-CEOs*

Recognized as industry innovators, Carson and Kurtzman built and expanded Stretto based on their expertise and shared vision to become the ultimate financial-technology platform

that sits at the center of the bankruptcy ecosystem. As companies and individuals increasingly turn to bankruptcy as a strategic alternative in the wake of the COVID-19 economic crisis, Stretto has risen to the challenge to serve as a "one-stop" service provider to fiduciaries, professionals, debtors and other stakeholders engaged in bankruptcy matters. Under Carson's and Kurtzman's leadership, Stretto has grown significantly in size, market share, and geographic location, both organically and through strategic acquisitions of companies in the bankruptcy technology space, including CINGroup, Acumen Recovery Services, the 525 Group and Default Mitigation Management. They have scaled their team of subject-matter experts and technology specialists from 65 employees in two offices in 2017 to more than 400 employees across eight offices in 2020. Stretto's offices span across the country in California, Colorado, Illinois, New York, and Ohio, and overseas in Poland. They have built the largest team of bankruptcy-process and financial-services experts overseeing the only bankruptcy-focused print-production facilities owned and operated by an administrative-service provider. Stretto also has created the restructuring industry's only cloud-native, claims-processing platform offered to turnaround professionals. The company is uniquely positioned to create a better, more efficient experience by streamlining case-management, providing clients with valuable time and cost efficiencies.

**Sunwest Bank, Irvine**

*Carson Lappetito, President*

Carson Lappetito serves as president and director of Sunwest Bank, an entrepreneurial regional business bank headquartered in Irvine, CA with operations across the Western US. He also serves as president and director of its parent company, H Bancorp. Prior to the formation of H Bancorp, he served as vice president of Hovde Private Equity Advisors where he was responsible for analyzing and valuing investment opportunities as well as assisting portfolio companies with M&A, operational strategy, investment management and ALCO. Prior to H Bancorp, Mr. Lappetito was also assistant portfolio manager for Hovde Capital Advisors, a long/short hedge fund focused on investing in the financial services sector. Mr. Lappetito continues to be an active investor numerous companies at various stages of their growth and currently serves on the board of the financial technology company, Neocova. Mr. Lappetito graduated from Bates College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Political Science with a minor in Mandarin Chinese.

**Tarsus Pharmaceuticals, Irvine**

*Leo Greenstein, CFO*

Leo Greenstein has more than 20 years of business and finance experience with life science companies. Since joining Tarsus in April 2020, he has been instrumental in leading the company through its successful IPO, its rapid corporate and operational build-out, and the completion of a strategic commercialization partnership for its lead product candidate in Greater China. Mr. Greenstein thoughtfully guided Tarsus in completing its October 2020

## Congratulations, Ryan Smith and ShopGoodwill.com 2021 Innovator of the Year Award Nominee

ShopGoodwill.com is the first ecommerce auction platform created, owned and operated by a nonprofit organization. The site was designed by Goodwill of Orange County in 1999 to provide an engaging online shopping destination that would further the Goodwill mission of putting people to work.

Today, more than 125 Goodwill organizations from across the country list and auction unique items on the site and more than \$1 billion in online sales have been generated since its launch.

**ShopGoodwill.com would not be the industry leader it is today without the visionary thinking and innovation of Ryan Smith, Senior Director of Operations.**



## CONGRATULATIONS! VIC MERJANIAN

Founder & CEO of Titan HST, nominated for  
OCBJ's 2021 Innovator of the Year Award!

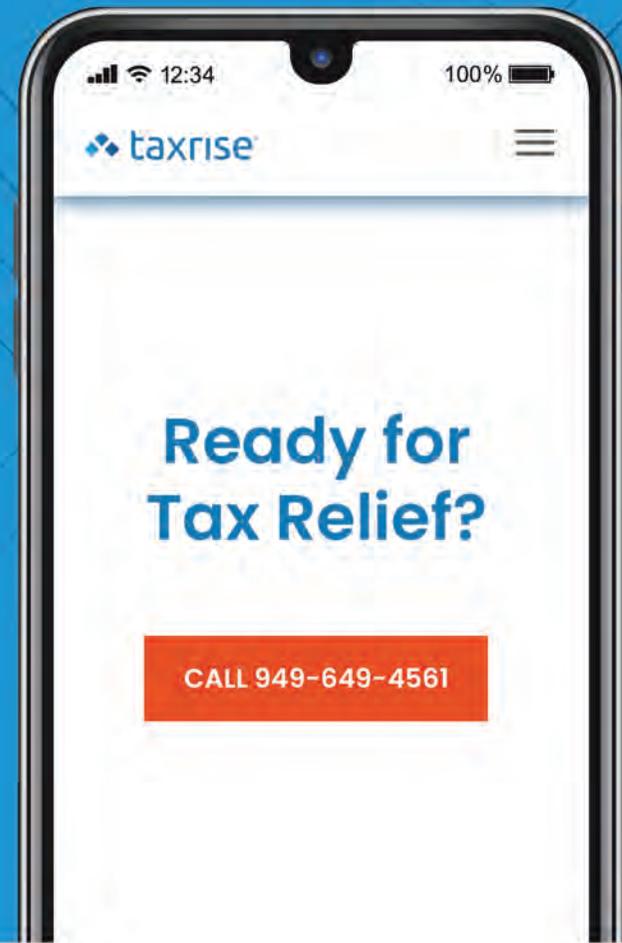
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## 2021 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

IPO. Mr. Greenstein overcame unique challenges associated with undertaking a “traditional” IPO (i.e., not a SPAC or merger) within a non-traditional, fully-remote environment amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. His forward thinking and decisive actions allowed for a uniquely compressed timeline of four months from the time of the IPO organizational meeting to its first day trading on the NASDAQ as “TARS”. The IPO proceeds of \$100 million provided Tarsus with the necessary resources to advance its product development pipeline and to hire top local OC talent for critical R&D, marketing, and administrative roles.

**TaxRise, Irvine**

*Essam Abdullah, CEO & Founder*

TaxRise Inc was founded in 2017 by CEO Essam Abdullah with the mission to make tax relief simple, transparent, and more accessible. Abdullah spent almost a decade in the tax relief space prior to founding TaxRise and recognized that the tax relief processes were complex and redundant and the reputation of the “tax relief” was tarnished by a number of bad actors. Abdullah believed that both of these issues that plagued the industry could be solved by bringing technology to tax relief. TaxRise uses state-of-the-art proprietary technology to simplify the tax relief process, bring more transparency to a taxpayer’s actual qualification, and make tax relief accessible to those who need it most. TaxRise quickly rose above its competition and became the fastest-growing tax relief company in the country. With a growth rate of almost 400%, TaxRise secured its place as a leader in the tax relief industry within its first two years in business.

**Teradek LLC, Irvine**

*Nicolaas Verheem, CEO*

Nicol Verheem is the founder and CEO of Teradek, now part of The Vitec Group. From rocket science at Denel Dynamics, to video processing at GE Security, Verheem’s tech background is extensive. But he always had a passion for arts, specifically in photography. So in 2008, Verheem left the corporate ladder and founded Teradek and Creative Solutions. Both businesses grew into award-winning global suppliers of tools for visual storytellers. Verheem lives in Orange County, California, with his wife and two teenagers. In 2018, Creative Solutions acquired Amimon Inc., the largest wireless video chip manufacturer in the world. Together, they created award-winning technology with Teradek Bolt’s wireless video transmission for on-set monitoring and Amimon’s wireless chipset – resulting in several awards, most notably two Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awards. In 2021, Creative Solutions also acquired Lightstream, a US-based tech company that builds a cloud-native live video platform, broadcast software, and creator tools with specialization in the video game live streaming industry.

**The Wooden Floor, Santa Ana**

*Dawn S. Reese, CEO*

Dawn S. Reese, CEO of The Wooden Floor, is a social innovator who leverages her unique blend of experience in business, technology, and the arts to propel young people forward. During Reese’s 12-year tenure, the organization’s budget has grown from \$2.1 million to \$3.45 million and has expanded its model both locally, and nationally to Washington, DC. Two campus locations in Santa Ana serve nearly 500 children afterschool over a 10 year journey, and 100% of its graduates enroll in higher education. In response to Covid-19, Reese formed the OC Nonprofit CEO Forum to gather leaders to discuss business issues facing their organizations. Reese received the 2020 Woman of Distinction – 34th California Senate District; 2019 Women Breaking Barriers Award/Connected Women of Influence, 2018 Founders Award/Institute for Community Impact; and the 2016 Award for Executive Leadership for Innovation/CSUF Center for Leadership. Reese is the Board Chair of the Passkeys Foundation, Board Treasurer of OneOC, and on the Board of OC Music and Dance, and the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce.

**ThinkIQ, Aliso Viejo**

*Doug Lawson, CEO*

Doug Lawson has founded, built and sold multiple software startups in the Industrial Sector. His understanding of customer challenges and his leadership creating innovative products to meet those challenges is widely respected in the industry. The products from his startups are used in nearly a million plants globally. On a personal level ThinkIQ is the logical culmination of his career and, as CEO, he is intentionally creating a company that will have global impact, delivering enormous value to its customers, creating safer, better and trustable products with less environmental impact. ThinkIQ, a pioneer of Digital Manufacturing Transformation SaaS, works with some of the biggest food manufacturers in the world – including Mars Inc, McCain Foods, General Mills, Tyson and Mars Inc. – to deliver unprecedented material traceability and insight into ways to improve yield, quality, safety, compliance and brand confidence. Their transformational intelligence platform delivers fact-based granular and data-centric contextualized view of material flows and related provenance attribute data that integrates into existing IoT infrastructures and crosses supply chains to Smart Manufacturing processes and beyond. Their customers have saved \$10’s of millions by identifying waste and underperforming assets, as well as reducing warranty reserves for quality and safety issues.

**Titan Health & Security Technologies Inc., Newport Beach**

*Vic Merjanian, Founder & CEO*

Vic Merjanian is founder and CEO of Titan Health & Security Technologies, Inc., a tech company dedicated to making the world a safer place. Titan HST provides integrated software and hardware solutions to all sectors ranging from sports & entertainment, to hospitality, education, and more. Designed to provide immediately accessible, reliable and comprehensive 2-way mass communication,



Titan HST’s patented technology reduces response times by an average of 50%+ and allows for continued communication even when networks are down. Empowering clients with Titan HST’s next-gen technology allows sites to minimize damage to property, injury and most importantly loss of life during emergencies. Amid the widespread COVID-19 pandemic, Merjanian has continued to innovate. The launch of Titan HST’s COVID-19 safety features is helping organizations reopen and stay open safely while reducing the spread of infection through a customizable health pre-screen, 2-level contract tracing, population density monitoring, sanitation confirmation, and asset tracking.

**TMC Hospitality, Irvine**

*Philip Bates, CEO & Co-Founder*

Philip Bates is the co-founder and CEO of TMC Hospitality. Under his leadership, TMC Hospitality is a forward-thinking hotel development and management company focused on elevating hospitality from a service to an experience through strategic development, investment, and brand creation. The company is a leader in social group travel with two hotel brands, Bode and DRIFT, and has invested in and/or managed over \$200 million of hospitality projects. Bode, with two locations in Nashville and Chattanooga and plans for a third location in Palm Springs, redefines traditional travel by creating flexible spaces that expertly blend the style of vacation rental homes with the comforts and conveniences of a boutique hotel, while DRIFT, with openings in San Jose Del Cabo, Santa Barbara and Nashville on the horizon, is a modern and minimalist hotel concept for independent travelers that values adventure and culture with spare, but intentional details and amenities. Both brands emphasize social group travel and innovative technology, such as mobile check-in and digital concierge to make the guest experience seamless.

**Trace3, Irvine**

*Sandy Salty, Chief Marketing Officer*

Sandy Salty, chief marketing officer for Trace3, a premier technology solutions provider, started building the company’s successes almost immediately after she first entered the doors in 2006 as employee 30. With her mindset centered at growth, Salty’s fulfilled many roles at Trace3 on her journey to becoming CMO. Beginning with managing the inside sales team, Salty’s focus morphed into strengthening the company’s relationships. She pursued a new position for the team as VP of strategic initiatives & partnerships. Salty’s keen eye for what’s next led her to SVP of marketing & partner relations before taking on CMO in 2019. Known for creating and pursuing “moonshot” ideas, Salty’s audacity is what’s founded many of Trace3’s divisions. She has an innovator air to her, and it follows with big revenue building opportunities for the company.

**Travel, Entertainment, and Marketing, Newport Beach**

*Mike Olivas, CEO*

TEAM has carved a niche in the national Group Travel industry, three years after its Inception team what Nationwide offering Group Travel for services for college groups across North America. Since 2017 team has been working on a Next Level Innovative and now patent pending approach to Group Travel, for the first time group travel/tours for the company will be fully automated, with an amazing crowdfunding and social platform. Beta to release in July of 2021. The words “Group & travel” were the most negative words since the world came to a halt in March of 2019. TEAM had to give refunds, travel credits and unfortunately downsize it’s Company by over 85%. TEAM had over \$3million booked in travel for the spring of 2019, but out of resilience CEO and founder Mike Olivas negotiated each agreement with clients, hotels, and venues and was able to stay very profitable during a non-travel year and in the spring of 2020 creatively found a way for only a 40% drop on revenues by researching and targeting those states and destinations who were able to travel.

**TurnKey Beauty Inc., and Vincenzo Skincare LLC, Capistrano Beach**

*Vince Spinnato, President & CEO*

Cosmetic chemist and “certified nose,” Vince Spinnato is the go-to expert in beauty product development, with a career spanning over 25 years in the personal care, cosmetic and fine fragrance industries. As president & CEO of TurnKey Beauty, VS Vincenzo Ltd., and Vincenzo Skincare, Spinnato has formulated and developed hundreds of products for skin and hair care, color cosmetics, bath & body and fine fragrances as well as baby and pet products. His newest luxury product under the Vincenzo Skincare brand, is Caviar & Diamond. A cosmetics and beauty industry expert, Spinnato has been at the helm refining and developing cutting-edge technology, as well as FDA-approved ingredients for over 300 brands for the private sector and retail companies, including Chanel, Estee Lauder, MAC, Victoria Secret, Bath & Body Works, Gap/Banana Republic and more. He’s developed fragrances and beauty products for celebrities including Jennifer Lopez, Gwen Stefani, Carrie Underwood, Victoria Beckham, Seth MacFarlane, Jessica Simpson, Michael Jordon, and Lindsay Lohan, among others.

**UCI Health Digestive Health Institute, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, UCI School of Medicine, Orange**

*Kenneth J. Chang, MD, Executive Director*

Dr. Kenneth Chang is a board-certified UC Irvine Health internist and gastroenterologist who specializes in interventional endoscopy for esophageal and gastrointestinal disorders. Chang’s clinical research focuses on development of endoscopic modalities for cancer and pre-cancer diagnosis, staging and therapy. He has pioneered the development of endoscopic ultrasound guided fine-needle aspiration and EUS-guided fine-needle injection. He is the author of more than 470 publications and book chapters regarding the technique’s use in gastrointestinal malignancies. He has conducted numerous clinical trials on the development of new biologic agents against esophageal and pancreatic cancers. Most recently his clinical and research focus has been on endoscopic management of GERD, and obesity and fatty liver. Chang completed his medical degree and residency at



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Brown University. He then completed a fellowship in gastroenterology at UCI Medical Center and the UCI School of Medicine, where he has been a faculty member for more than 25 years. He is director of the Chao Family Comprehensive Digestive Disease Center and the School of Medicine's chief of Gastroenterology and Hepatology.

**UCI Vaccine Research and Development Center and the Protein Microarray Laboratory and Training Facility, Irvine**

*Phillip Felgner, Director of the UCI Vaccine Research Development Center, the Protein Microarray Laboratory and Training Facility*

Dr. Phillip Felgner is director of the UCI Vaccine Research and Development Center, the Protein Microarray Laboratory and Training Facility. His research program measures immunity induced by infection, and identifies vaccine antigens. His lab has been active in understanding the progression of the COVID-19 outbreak in Orange County and the efficacy of the mRNA vaccines. Dr. Felgner joined the UC Irvine faculty in 2002 after two decades in the biotechnology industry, including founding Vical Inc. in San Diego based on his discovery of DNA vaccines where he served as chief scientific officer. He discovered and developed 'Lipofection' DNA and RNA transfection technology in 1985, the most widely used approach for introducing nucleic acid into cultured cells. This work preceded the development of lipid nanoparticles (LNP) in the first mRNA vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. Based on this and related efforts, his work has been recognized worldwide. Dr. Felgner was most recently awarded Spain's prestigious Princess of Asturias Award for Technical and Scientific Research to acknowledge his contributions to designing COVID-19 vaccines.



**Vantis Institute, Newport Beach**

*Jess Oslo, Co-Founder & Clinical Director*

Jessica Oslo, MA is the clinical director and founder partner of Vantis Institute. She is highly regarded within the medical community for her artistry and aesthetic expertise expressed through her Vantis Follicle Replication™ or VFR™. VFR™ is a patent-pending and proprietary hair density treatment that aesthetically replicates each patient's biological hair follicles. The treatment is a permanent solution that gives patience the appearance of a thicker, fuller head of hair without surgery or downtime. Oslo also has extensive experience camouflaging severe scarring and stretch marks.



**VoteApp, Orange**

*Daniel Stanton, CEO*

Daniel Stanton is a 22-year technology industry veteran and the founder and CEO of Level 2 Designs Inc., a technology solutions firm providing IT, development, and security services to companies in SoCal and the world. VoteApp is revolutionizing voting with the most secure, convenient, and trustworthy system in history. By harnessing the power of Blockchain,

patent-pending Vote App gives anyone who has a stake in the election the power to verify votes and election results while ensuring privacy and security. Stanton is a graduate of Cal State Fullerton with a degree in Business Information Systems. He was also involved in the college's entrepreneurship program where he successfully launched one of the early offsite backup solutions. Stanton has a broad range of technology knowledge, from data center infrastructure and cyber security to application development.



**Westcliff University, Irvine**

*Dr. Anthony Lee, President & CEO*

Dr. Anthony Lee is the president of Westcliff University in Irvine, Calif., one of the fastest growing universities in the U.S., going from less than 100 students in 2015 to over 3,300 students in 2021. Dr. Lee has served leadership positions across numerous universities and schools in the U.S. and internationally. In these roles, he has successfully led schools through the accreditation process at the university and K-12 levels. With expertise in innovative online and hybrid programs, Dr. Lee has launched new programs infusing and integrating technology with traditional campus-based classes for an enhanced learning experience. He is a proven leader in many critical areas within higher education including marketing, finance, operations, compliance and accreditation. Dr. Lee has been a globally recognized innovator in higher education. In 2009, while most online schools were approaching education as an asynchronous experience, he pioneered live online teaching, both nationally and globally, to combine the convenience of studying remotely with the value of live interactions between students and faculty. This approach provided students and faculty from around the world the opportunity to learn from and with one another in real-time in the classroom. Students representing 97 different countries now study and learn together at Westcliff University.



**WhiskerCloud, Newport Beach**

*Adam Greenbaum, CEO*

Adam Greenbaum launched WhiskerCloud in 2016 with a dream of modernizing the veterinary industry. Today, thousands of veterinary professionals worldwide trust WhiskerCloud to make their lives easier. With secure cloud hosting and custom designs, WhiskerCloud makes it easier for pet parents to find quality veterinarians, book appointments, and complete forms quickly and easily. In 2016, WhiskerCloud was named a Top 50 Company to Watch in Denver, CO, and named one of the hottest startup launches of the year. Since then, WhiskerCloud has added multiple products and product offerings to its lineup to bring more technology to veterinary hospitals. In 2021, WhiskerCloud was named a top 21 website design company in the United States and the only company on the list solely dedicated to veterinary medicine.



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**LEO GREENSTEIN**  
CFO - Tarsus Pharmaceuticals



Leo,  
Congratulations on your Innovator of the Year Awards nomination. Your passion in delivering revolutionary treatments to patients is unmatched. We are excited for the future of Tarsus!

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