

# Women Business Awards

An Orange County Business Journal Special Report & Custom Content

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# UCI Startups Build, Plow Distinctly California Fields

## Earthquakes, Agriculture, Women in Business Opps

■ By JASMINE SPEARING-BOWEN

In addition to entertainment and beaches, California is known for earthquakes and agriculture.

Farming contributed \$50 billion to the state's economy in 2017, despite growing obstacles including drought, labor shortages and rising land prices.

Southern California has 10,000 earthquakes a year, according to **United States Geological Service** data and "the big one" would bring \$200 billion in damages.



Montoya: 'everything starts with the farmer'

These fields have shaped California's past and advancements will influence its future. Two women-led **University of California-Irvine** Applied Innovation Wayfinder startups are tapping technology to increase productivity in the agriculture industry, and mitigate the damage and destruction of the next big earthquake.

### Consigned

**Martha Montoya** for years bought produce for New Zealand-based food supplier **Directus** from its Orange County office. She began to notice farmers often operated with little real data besides prior years' performance of their own crops and that of their neighbors.

People don't realize farming is a consignment business, Montoya told the Business Journal.

Farmers can't know how much they'll be paid for their crops until they arrive—not just at harvest but ready to be sold, and following inspection.

In a wide-ranging discourse on foodstuff trends Montoya, president of Irvine-based **AgTools**, said she'd found 67 variables that can affect produce shipments—and noted that farmers must pay truckers and other middlemen first, and regardless of other issues.

It's easy for farmers to lose money.

Montoya began sending out a weekly report to clients, detailing things like storms, wars, droughts, and updates from other markets to help them make better decision about what to plant and where and when to sell crops.

"Everything starts with the farmer," she said. "If we don't take care of the farmer, it doesn't matter what else we do."

### Vision

Demand for her farming-related information grew and she realized it could be a business, but she struggled with how to make that happen. After taking classes at Stanford and UC Davis,



Bloomberg-like system aggregates agriculture info

she began working with her brother **Gustavo Montoya**, a data sciences student at UCI, to build an algorithm that would aggregate, integrate and make greater sense of the mass of material she was collecting—data from government agencies, industry associations, universities, retail markets, banks, and other sources—and, not incidentally, streamline the labor-intensive work.

She launched **AgTools** in 2017 with an initial investment of \$700,000—from two female investors in the technology and banking industries, fellow members of NorCal women's business groups—and joined the Wayfinder program in 2018. The company now has a dozen employees and 350 clients in seven countries.

Montoya likens **AgTools** to the Bloomberg system used in financial circles because it provides data for decision making. If a farmer is sending tomatoes to Chicago but knows a storm is coming that might affect demand or hinder the shipment, it can be diverted to a destination with higher demand and fewer obstacles.

There was a steep learning curve but Montoya's excited to be part of an emerging indus-

try.

"For a woman, technology is a great place to be," she said, noting the ability to multitask while retaining a sense of the big picture—not a little like what her services offer clients.

"We're a little afraid of thinking big because ... we might feel overwhelmed," she mused. "But if we do, we can ... use technology to be ahead of what's coming."

### Seismic

**Noemi Bonessio**'s vision helped invent a new material to limit death and damage caused by earthquakes.

The Italy native pursued an education in seismic engineering—eventually earning a Ph.D. in the field, where about 2% of practitioners are women—after a 2009 quake hit Central Italy. The trembler reached her hometown of Rome, some 75 miles away, and killed more than 300.

Poorly prepared officials and substandard buildings were called out in the quake's aftermath.

Bonessio was also spurred to a public safety focus by her father, a firefighter often at the forefront of responses to natural disasters.

Ten years of study and research, including post-doc work at **University of California-San Diego**—with its massive, outdoor "shake table" that simulates big earthquakes—helped lay the foundation for an idea: a material as flexible as rubber and as strong as steel, to mitigate damage from quakes.

It didn't exist, so she invented it.

### Disruptive

Bonessio launched **MetaSeismic**, based at UCI's The Cove, in 2017.

She said the material can absorb up to 90% of the energy from an earthquake's impact and can

► *California 26*

# Women's Angel Investor Group Growing

## Osea Provides Inspiration, Education, Founder Says

■ By JASMINE SPEARING-BOWEN

**Xandra Laskowski** has been an angel investor since 2013. She's a member of **Tech Coast Angels** and **Titan Angel Fund**, and an investor in **The Cove Fund II**.

TCA is a stalwart SoCal investment network; Titan Angel Fund is owned by **Titan Angels LLC**, affiliated with **California State University-Fullerton**; Cove Fund II is based out of Applied Innovation's The Cove at **University of California-Irvine**.



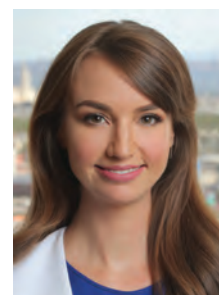
Laskowski: 'what you know'

It wasn't enough. Laskowski had friends interested in angel investing but who felt uncomfortable in some of the meetings, saying they didn't connect with the pitching companies and didn't see themselves reflected in the memberships. Angel investing can be daunting to newcomers, amid emerging industries and investment risks.

Laskowski sought a women-only angel group, couldn't find one and—in classic entrepreneurial fashion—launched **Osea Angel Investors** in 2017.

### Criteria

Osea—the name is a play on "OC"—meets monthly at The Cove, hearing 15-minute pitches



Angels: Ritoch, Kovacs, Hamlin, Chambliss

from two to three companies and from speakers on various industries and economic trends.

The group will hear pitches from companies with revenue, a disruptive technology with a high barrier to entry and an identified exit strategy of two to three years.

Leadership background, money in the bank, a known lead investor and a negotiated term sheet are vital.

Osea hits at some of the daunting elements with no minimums to participate and a hardline on who gets in the door: the group sees pitches from all different industries but a company has to be personally interesting to members.

"You invest in what you know," Laskowski said.

She launched with eight investors and now has 25.

Members include President **Kristi Ritoch** and board members **Kim Kovacs**, **Janice Hamlin** and **Sarah Chambliss**.

Kovacs is chief executive of Fullerton-based cannabis company **MyJane Inc.** and president of Los Angeles Venture Association. Members' backgrounds overall include two chief executives, founder of an international staffing firm

and a law firm partner.

Laskowski worked for **Ingram Micro Inc.** Husband **Joseph Laskowski** was an early employee at **Broadcom Corp.** and she's been managing the family portfolio for 20 years.

### 20%

Members have invested in six of the 38 startups that've pitched the group, roughly a 20% investment rate—also notable for angel invest-

ing but partly flowing from the group's personal-interest entry requirement.

Companies invested in include OC-based real estate lead platform **Digsy**; San Diego-based digital security firm **Smart Armor**; and baby gear service **Tot Squad** and hotel guest messaging provider **Whistle**, both in Los Angeles.

Osea members have injected about \$250,000 into startups so far.

Some 20% of U.S. angel investors are women, a 2017 report by trade group **Angel Capital Association** said and the number is growing: women make up 30% of angels that started investing in the two years prior to the report.

Laskowski enjoys mentoring new investors and wants them to learn from her experience.

They "always want to go with their gut: they hear a pitch and want to write a check, but everything can change very quickly," she said. "I've lost money, so now when I coach and advise [others] they are benefiting from my failures." ■



Tot Squad founder Jennifer Beall Saxton: received Osea investment





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Together we'll go far





Resorts

from page 3

dollar makeover at the Montage, where room nights average around \$700. New spa elements range from sustainable to superfluous—a diamond facial, for example.

As hotel guests become more savvy and shy away from experiences they’ve already had, Fischer and Houston have their work cut out for them in terms of amping up the originality and wow factor.

High Rise

Waterfront Hilton was among the first hotels in Huntington Beach, one element of local hospitality visionary **Robert Mayer Sr.**’s decades-long contributions to re-making the city’s beachfront.



Fischer: began at front desk

Fischer checked the first guest in nearly 30 years ago.

“It was my first job right out of high school.”

She grew up around hotels here and in Hawaii—her mom was in the industry in Maui—and Fischer considered it “dynamic, interesting ... work [that] became my biggest passion.”

She worked her way up through every department and was named GM in 2014.

Her favorite part of the job has always been the front desk interaction with customers that she experienced in her first position at the hotel; she said she tries to remain involved at the front desk, and has frequent contact with many of the resort’s repeat customers.

Her job now regularly requires focusing on the bigger picture—and a view from two towers—at a resort with 441 rooms and suites and averaging 75% occupancy.

Challenges can be expansive—“not being able to accomplish as much as I would like”—to the down-and-dirty: keeping the hotel open and profitable over 36 months of major upheaval.

The biggest component was the new nine-story, 151-room tower that opened in 2018, a \$140 million project that accounted for a third of the 445 new hotel rooms added in OC last year.

“It was a huge undertaking to operate the hotel as if there wasn’t construction going on,” she said. “Our employees had to get very creative.”



Pool at Montage: ‘open to creativity’ says Houston

This included window graphics and rolling hedges as barriers to obscure views of the ongoing work.

Two Towers

Plans are already underway for another renovation—a revamp of the older, 290-room first tower that runs 12 floors—and two new restaurants are opening at the resort in the next two months.

The property also has 36,000 square feet of meeting space.

Fischer is hiring—staffing is at about 600 now—and “gearing up for our busiest season.”

It’s a hands-on style that resonates with those workers and leads to higher retention than hospitality is known for, said **Gen Waiton**, the resort’s director of human resources. She joined the hotel after graduating from **California State University-Fullerton** with “no intention of staying there.”

That changed “under Paulette’s leadership and mentorship,” she said.

“Paulette was director of rooms ... we would work the Saturday morning front desk shift together,” Waiton said. “I have so much respect for her ... her joy for her work is contagious.”



Lobby at Waterfront Hilton: ‘dynamic, interesting ... passion’ says Fischer

Chocolate Spin

Houston also leads close to 600 employees at Irvine based **Montage International**’s flagship property, in Laguna Beach.

She joined as resort manager in 2017 and was named GM of the 248-room resort in May, after a career at high-end resort locales on four continents, including stops at properties in Thailand and Dubai.

Since going local she’s developed a few OC habits: a workday starts with hot chocolate at the Montage, made from the produce of a cacao plantation in the Dominican Republic.

As befits the hot chocolate habit, she favors the food and beverage department’s “creativity and passion.”

Weekends take a different pace.

“I start the day with a triple set of spin classes at Soul Cycle,” Houston said—another touchpoint with Fischer, also a spinning devotee.

Details

As Houston shows off Montage’s multimillion dollar renovation that wrapped last month, her attention to detail is clear: she spends as much time explaining the new bathrobes as the new lobby.

“Attention is critical to our collective success,” she said. This attention reaches outside the hotel: she’s been known to personally respond to customers on Yelp.

Her employment of the “sustainability” mantra goes resortwide—sugar cane cardboard, bamboo toothbrushes, less single-use plastic—and extends to employees: nurturing new leaders for Montage.

The parent company’s luxe Montage brand and lifestyle **Pendry Hotels** unit are growing, with a dozen open or in development from Hawaii to New York and Montana to Mexico.

Luxe Lucre

Montage and Waterfront resort both made spa investments a critical part of their revamps.

The latter has never had a spa; next-door neighbors **Hyatt Regency** and **Pasea** both do.

“We felt it was incredibly important,” she said, “and it has been extremely popular since it opened in October.”

Montage’s 20,000-square-foot spa has been a fixture for the resort. New additions include partnerships—the new diamond facial is from skincare brand **Tata Harper**, for instance.

Spas do more than give resorts bragging rights: **CBRE Hotels** forecasts revenue per available room decelerating from about 3% last year to roughly flat by 2021; bolstering luxe spa options—a massage can run \$400—bolsters bottom lines. ■

SOME FEMALE HOTEL GMS IN OC

<b>Dianne Markis</b> Marriott Irvine Spectrum	<b>Rhanda Richardson</b> Newport Beach Marriott Bayview	<b>Debbie Snavely</b> Newport Beach Marriott Hotel & Spa	<b>Bonnie Gardner</b> Hyatt Place at Anaheim Resort Convention Center	<b>Rosa Cook</b> Hyatt House at Anaheim Resort/Convention Center	<b>Joanna Bear</b> Surf & Sand Resort	<b>Pam Ryan</b> Renaissance Long Beach Hotel
<b>Laurie Chenoweth</b> Candlewood Suites Irvine Spectrum	<b>Karlynn Bretz</b> Courtyard Irvine John Wayne Airport/OC	<b>Denise Pflum</b> DoubleTree by Hilton Anaheim-Orange County	<b>Kandee Anderson</b> Irvine Marriott	<b>Kim Painter</b> Anaheim Majestic Garden Hotel	<b>Susan O’Brien-Moore</b> Ayres Hotel & Suites Costa Mesa/Newport Beach	<b>Nermin Khalil</b> Crowne Plaza Costa Mesa Orange County
<b>Diane Blake</b> Wyndham Irvine-Orange County Airport	<b>Naomi Bennett</b> Clarion Hotel Anaheim Resort	<b>Carla Fernandez</b> Extended Stay America - Irvine Spectrum	<b>Maureen Elias</b> La Quinta Inn & Suites, Irvine	<b>Carolyn Stoops</b> Staybridge Suites, Anaheim	<b>Erin Beadle</b> Laguna Brisas Hotel	<b>Beckley Van Cleave</b> Clementine Hotel & Suites Anaheim
<b>Karen Lorton</b> Anaheim Fairfield Inn By Marriott	<b>Sue Cooke</b> Residence Inn by Marriott, Costa Mesa	<b>Sunni Dupree</b> Pacific Edge Hotel	<b>Katie Green</b> La Casa del Camino	<b>Marina Dutton</b> Marriott Costa Mesa	<b>Nooshin Gholizadeh</b> Holiday Inn Laguna Beach	<b>Nancy Soto</b> Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Costa Mesa

California

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be used in building retrofits to improve their stability.

The company has won several awards, including, ironically enough, “Most Disruptive” from angel investor network **Tech Coast Angels**, as well as a \$225,000 grant from the National Science Foundation.

Her firm is in its final R&D phase and demand for the product looks promising—and possibly an upgrade on current retrofitting tech-

niques which include base isolation, in which part of a building’s foundation is replaced by layers of steel and rubber to help lend strength and flexibility to a building during earthquake motion.

Dr. **Monica Kohler**, a research professor in Civil Engineering at **California Institute of Technology** in Pasadena, said these techniques have been tested during small to moderate quakes but she doesn’t know how they’ll perform during a very large one.

According to the **California Earthquake Authority** in Sacramento, there’s a 99% chance of a 6.7 or higher magnitude earthquake striking

the state within 30 years. The 1994, 6.7-magnitude Northridge quake killed 57 people and caused \$20 billion in damages.

Kohler said excluding schools and hospitals in some counties, there are no legal requirements to retrofit buildings and Southern California isn’t ready for the next big quake.

L.A. Mayor **Eric Garcetti** contributed a letter of support for Bonessio’s NSF grant application, noting the potential: “My office is intrigued and excited by this developing work.”

Artful

Bonessio is currently working with a data

center company to help protect its expensive hardware and she envisions expansion to other industries, including medical devices, semiconductor makers—and museums with expensive art to protect.

Kohler sees demand in “a strong, inexpensive way to isolate units within a building [and protect] anything that has the potential of collapsing,” protecting life and property, “that’s going to be attractive.”

Bonessio’s goal is to help where seismic activity is heavy including California, Japan—and Italy.

“There is where you save lives,” she said. ■





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# 5 Tips to Help Women Become More Confident Investors

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

Since the vast majority of women—80 to 90 percent<sup>3</sup>—will be solely responsible for their finances at some point in their life, preparation is imperative, especially in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Here are 5 tips that women can follow to better prepare themselves in advance of a life-changing event:

## 1 Don't undervalue yourself

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

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

## 2 Surround yourself with a strong team of experts

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

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

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



## 4 Don't be afraid to take some risks

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

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

## 5 Start planning for the future early

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

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

## The Bottom Line

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Ameriprise Financial, "Women and Financial PowerSM study" June 2014.

<sup>2</sup> The Wall Street Journal, "Clients from Venus" April 2012.

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

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

<sup>5</sup> Personal Money Service, "Men vs. Women in Questions of Personal Finance"

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





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## Women Minorities: Charting their Own Course

Find out why they're the fastest-growing group of entrepreneurs and ways to help continue the rise

### Areas of success, challenge and opportunity

Women of color are the fastest-growing group of entrepreneurs. Their success is essential to U.S. economic growth from GDP to job creation. Why are minority women-owned businesses rising so fast, what constraints do they face, and what can this diverse group of women entrepreneurs do to strengthen their business and personal financial success?

### High growth

Minority women own more than 71 percent of the 6.2 million female-owned new businesses opened in the U.S. over the last two decades. Their ownership in firms has increased by 467 percent in that same period, more than quadruple the growth rate for non-minority women-owned enterprises. These numbers are even more astonishing considering an extraordinary 114 percent growth rate in women-owned firms compared to a 44 percent rate of growth for all businesses.<sup>1</sup>

### Why the rise

Several factors are contributing to the rise of minority women entrepreneurs. Women are outpacing men in completing college degrees, and within racial categories are between 5 and 7 percent more likely to complete college than male counterparts.<sup>2</sup>

Yet despite entering the workforce more prepared than ever, women face a persistent pay gap and slower workplace advancement. As of January 2018, only 27 of Fortune 500 leaders, or 5.4 percent, are women, and only three, or 0.6 percent, are black (all males).<sup>3</sup> In light of these challenges many are looking to entrepreneurship to forge their own leadership paths.

### Success amid challenge

As a result, women of color are making strides in all areas from politics to social advocacy to business. As business owners they are amplifying their voices. A greater voice means more influence, including new women-based networks of support.

These networks are important for combatting structural issues that slow the success of minority women-owned enterprises. For example, less access to financing remains an obstacle to business growth. Minority women-owned businesses generate less revenue on average than other firms. If revenues matched that of women-owned firms (who also are disadvantaged in obtaining financing) it would translate into an additional \$1.1 trillion in revenues and 3.8 million new jobs for the U.S. economy.<sup>4</sup> Market awareness around access to

capital is leading to increased focus on remedying inequities.

### Areas of opportunity

Amid challenges three areas stand out for evaluation:

► **Scaling the business.** What's the best way to scale a business and obtain liquidity? A large majority of minority segments, including African American, Hispanic and Asian, use personal money or savings to start their businesses.<sup>5</sup> The trade-offs of seeking more traditional financing versus tying up personal liquidity should be a strong consideration.

► **Managing wealth.** As minority entrepreneurs come into more wealth than ever before, it's important to have a roadmap for building personal wealth. Investment planning; family trusts; and succession, retirement and legacy planning should be on the radar.

► **Building a strong network.** Minority entrepreneurs should seek out opportunities to build and expand their professional network. This investment can lead to making connections that can help grow their business. Taking advantage of continuous learning opportunities targeted towards specific needs is also important. Beyond business content considerations should also been given to intersecting areas such as health and work/life balance.

### Good for business, good for the economy

Through persistence and hard work, women of color are becoming entrepreneurs in greater numbers than ever before. Their success is vital to GDP, employment growth and U.S. economic well-being. That makes entrepreneurship not only a path to personal leadership, but to a leading role for women of color in sustaining and expanding American economic leadership. As minority women-owned businesses serve the U.S. economy, it's important to address the business needs of these emerging leaders.

1 "The 2017 State of Women-Owned Businesses Report", Commissioned by American Express, 2017, pages 3 and 6.

2 "Black women are earning more college degrees, but that alone won't close race gaps," by Richard V. Reeves and Katherine Guyot, December 4, 2017, brookings.edu.

3 "When a woman or person of color becomes CEO, white men have a strange reaction" by Jillian Berma, March 3, 2017, marketwatch.com.

4 "The 2017 State of Women-Owned Businesses Report", Commissioned by American Express, 2017, page 6.

5 "2017 SMB Insights, "Minority-Owned Businesses: The Force Driving Small Business Growth," The Business Journals, page 12.

Patty Juarez has spent over 24 years in Commercial Banking where she has held various leadership roles. Currently Patty serves as the National Diverse Segments Director creating, developing and executing our strategy within several lines of business in Wholesale Banking. Patty earned her bachelor's degree in business with an emphasis in accounting from the University of California, Berkeley, and her MBA from St. Mary's College of California in Moraga.

Patty joined Wells Fargo in 1995 as a financial analyst in the San Diego commercial office. After completing the Credit Management Training Program in 1998, she joined the Santa Clara office as a relationship manager and was promoted to loan team manager and held this position until she transitioned to Regional Vice President of the Anaheim office in 2010.

Active in a variety of professional and community organizations, Patty was chairwoman for the Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, which



**Patty Juarez**  
National Diverse Segments Director,  
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represents the interests of Orange County's 30,000 Hispanic-owned businesses. She also sits on the board of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Orange County where she serves as Audit Chair. CASA trains community volunteers to serve as powerful mentors and advocates for the community's abused, abandoned, and neglected children. Lastly, Patty sits on the Dean's Board of Counselors for Chapman University's school of business and economics.

Externally, Patty often speaks about topics such as Diversity and Inclusion, diverse segments, multi-cultural marketing and financial literacy. Internally, Patty mentors team members throughout Wells Fargo, assists with the company's diverse candidate recruitment, and is co-chair of key committees in the Women in Leadership Council and Diversity Councils for Wholesale and Commercial Banking.

Patty lives in South Orange County, Calif., with her husband Manny and her children Isabella and Max.





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## ***SOME REACH FOR THE MOON. TITANS AIM 130 MILLION LIGHT YEARS BEYOND.***

### **Cal State Fullerton astrophysicist Jocelyn Read**

has her head in the stars. She led an international collaboration of scientists to decipher gravitational waves caused when binary neutron stars collide, revealing nuclear physics on an astronomical scale. Read's one small step made a giant impact — redefining our known universe. The work of this Titan of discovery illuminates just one reason why CSUF has earned a stellar reputation. At CSUF, we're proud of our reputation as Titans of discovery.

## ***TITANS REACH HIGHER***





## Women on the Move in Orange County

*JPMorgan Chase global initiative supports female small business owners, consumers and employees*

JPMorgan Chase's initiative *Women on the Move* provides guidance and support to women inside and outside of the firm, including those running their own businesses and transforming communities. Head of Women on the Move Samantha Saperstein responded to questions about this program and the future of women-owned businesses in Orange County and beyond.

### **What is Women on the Move and what are its goals?**

Women on the Move started in 2013 as an internal, firm-wide initiative to empower female employees to take charge of their careers through training, development, events and networking. We realized last year that we had the opportunity to expand upon our mission and address the needs of female clients, customers and our communities.

The program is centered around three strategic pillars: expanding women-run businesses, improving women's financial health and empowering women's career growth. Our overall goal is to propel women forward and provide women across and outside the firm with the opportunities to succeed.

### **How does this program help female entrepreneurs and small business owners?**

We help women to grow their businesses, from startups to global enterprises, by providing greater access to capital, networking, expertise and other resources. In 2019, one of our key areas of focus is on women entrepreneurs. We know that women who own and manage businesses have a unique set of challenges, including getting access to capital and building networks.

Because of our scale, we can have a major impact by lending to women-owned businesses. By the end of 2021, our firm expects to extend \$10 billion in credit to women-owned businesses. We also plan to support female entrepreneurs through events where we will offer educational workshops, thought leadership and networking opportunities.

### **Do female entrepreneurs and small business owners face a different set of challenges compared to their male colleagues?**

Unfortunately, yes. According to data from PitchBook and All Raise, in 2017, only 2 percent of venture capital funding went to women-led companies. Not only do they receive a very small percentage of overall funding, but when women do get capital, they get less than men. Data also suggests that women are less likely to have networks, relationships and access to venture capital firms, which are largely run by men.

Making things even harder, investors tend to evaluate women on actual performance, and men on potential. In other words, women have to get the business started on their own and prove success, while men just have to have a good business plan. Now, that's a strong statement, but it's an area that's been deeply studied; the facts are clear that standards are different for women.

### **How do you see female entrepreneurs impacting the future of business?**

Investing in female entrepreneurs isn't just the right thing to do; it makes good business sense. According to the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), women are more likely to launch businesses within healthcare and education than men, and they employ the most people in healthcare and social assistance, accommodations and food services, and administrative support. Across the board, women are bringing new ideas and challenging the status quo in business while contributing to the economy and local communities.

They're also creating new businesses at a fast pace. WBENC also found that women of color in particular are launching more businesses than any

other group and the number of their businesses grew by 163 percent in the past decade.

### **How does the mission of Women on The Move impact Orange County?**

JPMorgan Chase has a variety of offerings in Orange County, including business, retail, commercial and private banking, allowing us to serve local female clients across the spectrum of retail and wholesale businesses. Reaching female consumers and business clients through our branches throughout Orange County is at the heart of what we do.

We also recently announced a collaboration with Girls Inc., a nonprofit supporting 20,000 girls across the country with educational programs on how to manage money, create a budget and save for the future. With a strong presence in Southern California, the program aims to help the next generation of women leaders learn and get exposure to different jobs and career options.

Our Small Business Forward initiative also helps strengthen communities where we do business. Last year, we contributed more than \$642.9K to local nonprofits in Orange County, including \$24.5K to nonprofits in support of business development and \$105.5K to nonprofits supporting financial health in the county.

### **How does Women on the Move impact women who aren't business owners or entrepreneurs?**

We are educating and training women of all ages on the need to save and invest more. We're also working internally to recruit and retain more women, and to educate all managers on the best ways to create a diverse and inclusive environment. We are doing this through several efforts, including anti-bias training. We've also created a program called Men as Allies, which brings men to the table to talk about the current state of women in the workforce, the benefits of a more diverse workplace, and what men can do to champion their female coworkers.

### **What's one tip you'd share with a female entrepreneur or young women interested in becoming a small business owner one day?**

Many entrepreneurs start out because of an individual passion or desire to be their own boss, which are great motivations. Remember that you don't have to do it alone! There are more resources than ever to help you incubate an idea, launch and grow a business. Find the people who can help you, such as your own network, Chase bankers, and local women's business associations. There are more people who are investing in women's ideas, so don't be discouraged if you hear "no" from the first investors you speak to. You may hear multiple "no's" before you hear "yes." Take inspiration from other women who have persevered through challenges, and remain confident in your ideas and talents.

### **About the Author**

**Samantha (Sam) Saperstein** leads the firm-wide Women on the Move initiative at JPMorgan Chase. In this role, Sam works on programs that are designed to make JPMorgan Chase the best bank for women-run businesses and women consumers, the best company for women to work at, and a strong partner for women in communities around the world.

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## ASTON MARTIN NEWPORT BEACH



## THANK YOU LAURA SCHWAB

Aston Martin Newport Beach salutes Laura Schwab for her tireless leadership of Aston Martin The Americas, which has led to incredible success for the brand.

As President of Aston Martin The Americas, Laura played a vital role in a 30% sales increase in the Americas in 2018. As part of the Second Century Plan, Aston Martin launched the DB11 family, the new Vantage, and the DBS Superleggera. It's first SUV, the DBX, will launch later this year.

Laura is an incredible role model for women of all ages. On behalf of all of us at Aston Martin Newport Beach, thank you for your incredible leadership.



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## For OC Women, It's Time to Stop Cancer

### *Speeding research discoveries straight to Orange County*

There is no place in the world quite like Orange County, California. From its stunning beaches to world-famous attractions and cultural activities to magnificent weather and award-winning schools, it is a great place to call home.

With more than 3.2 million residents, Orange County is America's sixth most populous county, and it is growing. The center of business and technological innovation, its residents tend to be highly educated and affluent. In fact, the OC claims five of the nation's top 20 cities for highest household income. In the city of Irvine, 70 percent of residents have college degrees<sup>[1]</sup>.

Yet, with all these amazing attributes, Orange County also has a health care crisis. Nationally, more than one in three women will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime and the cancer with the highest incidence rate for women is breast cancer<sup>[2]</sup>. In this region we call home, five women are diagnosed with breast cancer every day. Furthermore, Orange County has a 20 percent higher incident rate than the nation overall<sup>[3]</sup>.

It's time for change. We need to beat cancer once and for all in this region, which is why City of Hope is developing a regional cancer network in Orange County centered around a state-of-the-art cancer center in Irvine. As part of this effort, City of Hope is making a promise to the people of Orange County: to bring tomorrow's discoveries to the people who need them today, and one area where these efforts are evident is breast cancer.

Annette Walker, president of City of Hope, Orange County and a long-time resident of the county says, "We know that Orange County's population is not immune to the physical, emotional, and financial devastation of a cancer diagnosis, and unfortunately, with our high rate of breast and other cancers, this has very much become a woman's concern. For our families, our friends, and our neighbors, the time has come to act," says Walker. "This is the fight of our lives. Together, the power of science and compassion can finally put an end to cancer."

In addition to being a leader in the field of blood cancers and the first to offer chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy, we continue to innovate by conducting a first of its kind phase 1 trial for evaluating CAR T for HER2+ breast cancer brain metastases.

A few examples of City of Hope's breakthrough and revolutionary therapies and treatments include:



► Groundbreaking research that led to the development of synthetic human insulin and three of the top-life-saving cancer drugs: Avastin, Rituxan and Herceptin.

► A pioneer in bone marrow and stem cell transplants, we are the largest transplant provider in California, with more than 14,000 bone marrow and stem cell transplants performed, and the only cancer center with bone marrow

outcomes that exceed expectations for the 12 years of data that have been reported.

► Clinical teams that hold more than 300 patents and submit nearly 30 applications per year to the FDA for investigational new therapies.

► Breakthrough work in the commercialization of robotic surgery, with more than 11,000 robotic procedures

performed for cancer treatment.

► Immunotherapy trials that are on the leading edge in helping the patient's immune system work better at destroying cancer cells. One approach strikes a double blow — shutting off a gene that promotes cancer while stimulating the immune system to act — in an effort to fight lymphoma and melanoma, as well as brain, ovarian and prostate cancers. Other studies are focused on engaging every stage of the immune response to defeat breast cancer.

As City of Hope comes to Orange County, it will join many cancer champions in the "battle for lives." The goal is to partner with physicians and others who are also focused on eradicating cancer in our lifetime and establish a network of cancer care experts throughout the area, working together to provide the best discoveries and treatments for local residents.

"City of Hope's respectful approach to caregiving, wealth of experience in diagnosis and treatment, high-impact biomedical research enterprise, and ability to deliver the most advanced therapies have made us a frequent choice for patients with the most complex needs," says Walker. "Now, our friends and neighbors will benefit from having this level of expertise much closer to home."

City of Hope's multi-phase expansion in Orange County starts with building a 12,500-square foot facility in Newport Beach's Fashion Island with an expected opening in late 2019. This medical office will offer both breakthrough therapies and much-demanded wellness programs. Services will include medical oncology treatment planning and infusion services, early detection and prevention risk assessments, consultations and high-risk monitoring.

To learn more about the latest developments for City of Hope Orange County, or to make a donation, go to [CityofHope.org/oc](http://CityofHope.org/oc).

<sup>[1]</sup> United States Census Bureau

<sup>[2]</sup> Susan G. Komen Orange County Annual Report, 2015 – 2016.

<sup>[3]</sup> Cancer.org Facts and Figures, 2019



Walker



**Kris Campoli**

- Manages over 100 relationships
- Administers over \$187M in assets

**Debbie Carpenter**

- Funded 40 new loans in Commercial Real Estate in 2018
- \$170M in commitments

**Daphna Cirt**

- A member of the 2018 top performing California Commercial Banking team
- \$14M in loan production in 2018

**Debra Wanbaugh**

- 167 volunteer hours in 2018
- Branch Manager - #1 First Bank branch in 2018
- President - Costa Mesa High School Foundation

**Susan Wang**

- Board of Directors/Orange County Chinese-American Chamber
- \$9M in new loans in 2018
- 100 volunteer hours in 2018

**Jan Palmquist**

- #1 Treasury Officer for First Bank
- Sold 141 new treasury products in 2018

**Therese DeGroot**

- Top financial services provider to churches, schools, and nonprofits
- Member of The Church Network and Mariners Church

**5,954**  
Total volunteer hours by First Bank employees in 2018

**\$149 million**  
in Community Development loans and charitable programs to more than 370 organizations

firstbanks.com

# Women of First Bank

## Making a Difference in the Community



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## Girl Scouts - Fueling the Female Leadership Pipeline

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

Girl Scouts is making this bright future possible for nearly 20,000 Girl Scouts from every zip code in Orange County. We are the world's largest leadership development organization designed with, by, and exclusively for girls. We offer every girl a safe, exciting, no-limits place where she can be inspired, take risks, build community, and motivate others.

Everything a Girl Scout does—whether it's exploring a new hiking trail, speaking her mind, or dreaming up new technology—has been developed especially for, and tested by, girls. Girl Scouts is a world where girls can do and be whatever they dream.

In Girl Scouts, "Can I?" quickly turns into "I will!" as girls unleash their inner G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-Taker, Leader)<sup>™</sup> to transform their ideas into action, turn their questions into adventure, and grow their confidence through practice. And with more than 50 million Girl Scouts and alum to cheer them every step of the way, including plenty right here in Orange County, there's no limit to what a Girl Scout can accomplish.

### Girl Scouts Works!\*

- ▶ Girl Scouts are **twice as likely** to consider themselves leaders, compared to non-Girl Scouts.
- ▶ Girl Scouts are **twice as likely** to be civically engaged, compared to non-Girl Scouts.
- ▶ Girl Scouts **earn better grades, are more likely to expect to graduate college, and have greater expectations** for their futures than non-Girl Scouts.

\* Girl Scout Research Institute, 2017 Girl Scout Impact Study

Girl Scouts is for girls who want to run a business, speak up for others, explore the outdoors, pursue their STEM education, and change the world. Together, with Orange County's business community, we can ensure that every girl has the opportunities only Girl Scouts provides to empower themselves for a lifetime of leadership, success, and adventure.



2018 Celebrate Leadership Honorees Abigail Lovell (Experian), Zeena Dhalla (VerticAlign Posture Coaching), Christine Mueller (Capital Group), Melinda Masson (Scripsense), Gold Award Girl Scout Lucy Vu, Gold Award Girl Scout Corinne Padar

### Be a Voice for Girls

Join community and business leaders to rally around girls and their leadership potential at Voice for Girls on the morning of Friday, May 10, 2019 at the Newport Beach Country Club. This year's forum focuses on advancing diversity and gender equality in the workplace with keynote L. Song Richardson, Dean and Chancellor's Professor of Law at the UCI School of Law. Sponsorships and tickets available. Learn more at [girlscoutsoc.org/voiceforgirls](http://girlscoutsoc.org/voiceforgirls).

### Celebrate Leadership- Celebrating Champions of Girls and Women

Join us for a very special 10th year of honoring leaders in Orange County's business and philanthropic community who are champions of girls and women at Celebrate Leadership on the evening of Friday, November 8, 2019. Honorees are paired with outstanding Girl Scouts, linking tomorrow's leaders with leaders of today. Exciting 10th anniversary surprises to be announced soon. Learn more at [girlscoutsoc.org/celebrateleadership](http://girlscoutsoc.org/celebrateleadership).

For more information about Girl Scouts of Orange County's upcoming events, or to volunteer or make a donation, visit [girlscoutsoc.org](http://girlscoutsoc.org).

# Congratulations!

Congratulations to the 2019 Women in Business honorees and nominees!

Orange County's nearly 20,000 Girl Scouts thank you for showing us there's no challenge girls cannot overcome, no goal we cannot reach. You inspire us to become the happy, healthy, problem-solving, barrier-breaking change-makers our world needs.

Invest in Girls.  
Change the World.  
[girlscoutsoc.org](http://girlscoutsoc.org)



girl scouts  
of orange county



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- Women on Boards
- Women Supporting Women: How We Can Empower One Another
- Leadership, Emotional Intelligence and Gender

## ***SPECIAL GUEST and SCREENING***

Madeline Di Nonno, CEO of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, will keynote the first day and host a special screening of "This Changes Everything," a documentary on underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women in the film industry.

Join us on June 26-28, 2019 at the UCI Paul Merage School of Business for this unique and powerful program for women in leadership.

For more information and to register, visit:  
[merage.uci.edu/womensleadership](http://merage.uci.edu/womensleadership)



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“Since I did survive, I can use my voice to advocate and maybe hopefully keep this from happening to someone else...”

# FOREVER CHANGED

By Marie Montgomery

She was a motorcyclist, a runner, a girlfriend, a dog owner. And now she's also a distracted driving crash survivor.

DeeDee Gonzalez was like so many of us, enjoying the good life in Southern California by taking a motorcycle ride with her boyfriend in March 2017. When they were just over a mile from home, a driver on the other side of the street looked down at something on his phone, crossed over two double yellow lines and hit her head on.

After nearly four months of hospitalization and therapy, she was able to sit up in a wheelchair. She has accomplished a lot more since then – she got married and now can take a walk with her husband and dogs, but she still hurts. “Recovery is painful and it's constant,” she said. “You have to make a choice – do I want to get back as much of my old life as I can?”

We invite you to read more about DeeDee's life and recovery in the May issue of Westways magazine. We thought her story is an important one to tell because she is far from alone – she is one of nearly 400,000 people each year who are killed or injured by a distracted driver.

She and so many others like her are why the Auto Club of Southern California has launched its campaign to end distracted driving. We all know that it's dangerous to take our eyes off the road for even a short time,

but too many of us still look at our phones while driving, falsely believing that we can handle this dangerous activity without endangering ourselves or others.

“Don't Drive Intoxicated. Don't Drive Intoxicated.” That's the message we are spreading to get people thinking about texting while driving in a new way. Most of us would never dream of driving down the road with a glass of wine or beer in hand, yet 45 percent of drivers admitted to AAA researchers in 2017 that they read or even sent an email or text message while behind the wheel in the last month.

Alcohol-impaired driving is still a huge problem in this country, but attitude and behavior changes since the 1980s have helped to cut fatalities from drunk driving crashes in half. We need to do the same with intoxicated driving, because the consequences can be equally devastating – deaths and debilitating injuries like those DeeDee suffered.

“I have to live with the fact that this person's phone was more important than my life and it's a lousy feeling that whatever he was doing on his phone was more important than my safety,” DeeDee said.

Please join us in this effort to stop intoxicated driving and whenever you are tempted to steal a glance after your phone buzzes or beeps while you're driving, remember all those like DeeDee.

For more information please visit [AAA.com/DontDriveDistracted](http://AAA.com/DontDriveDistracted)





# INTOXICATED OR INTEXTICATED?



This car was in a crash caused by a distracted driver on January 30, 2018. An outcome that could have been avoided. Distracted driving **kills an average of 9 people** and **injures over 1,000** every day in America. Put down your phone. Lives depend on it.

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



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

A sobering message from AAA

Average daily claims from annual 2015 data collected by NHTSA. Copyright © 2019 Automobile Club of Southern California. All Rights Reserved.





# Preparing to Transition the Family Business to the Next Generation

By City National Bank

When you run a family business, you should start thinking early in the company's life cycle about how you're going to pass it on when you retire.

"The day you start your business is the day you should develop your exit plan," said Natasha Davis, a senior wealth planner with City National Bank in Irvine, Ca. "Although this rarely happens, ideally, you start planning at least 5-10 years before you pass on your business to family members."

Less than 30 percent of family businesses survive into the second generation and even fewer make it into the third generation of a family, said Ramez Baassiri, author of "Interrupted Entrepreneurship: Embracing Change in the Family Business," and a board member of a multi-generational family business.

Even in families with a plan, transitions can take time. Baassiri's parents had a succession plan in place for their business, but his father died unexpectedly. He said it took six to eight years for the business to fully adjust to the ownership transition.

## COMMUNICATE EARLY AND OFTEN

"Three possible scenarios are available to family business leaders," said Baassiri, "including remaining in a leadership role, stepping back into an advisory role or bowing out completely and turning the business over to other family members or outsiders. Communication is key to success in each scenario."

"The person who's considering stepping aside has to feel they've accomplished something and that they matter," he said. "The person stepping in needs to feel they're joining a sustainable platform and that their skills will be valued."

Family-owned businesses considering future transitions must establish trust and communication between family members and other participants in the business, said Amy Castoro, president and CEO of The Williams Group, a consultancy in San Clemente, Ca., and the author of, "Bridging Generations: Transitioning Family Wealth and Values for a Sustainable Legacy."

"You need to take the pulse of all the stakeholders and find out if they're on the same page," said Castoro. What is their goal? Sell or transfer to family?

## TAKE A TEAM APPROACH TO TRANSITION PLANNING

A third party can facilitate these discussions to reduce potential family tension. "One of the main reasons family businesses fail is because the owners are not developing a process early enough for management and ownership transitions," said Davis. "One role of a wealth advisor is to talk about these processes and to bring in the missing advisors such as attorneys, tax experts and estate planners."

"It's important to have both the family's estate plan and business plans in alignment," said Davis.

"You don't want to have an estate plan, that states your business goes to your kids but the shareholder agreement gives the first right-of-refusal to the business, and is funded with key-man insurance," she said. Additionally, there are ways to structure a succession plan that will address equalizing distributions for children who are not coming into the business.

Some of these plans may require legal assistance. "We work with families to streamline the questions they need to discuss with an attorney so they will use their advisors effectively," said Davis.

## OBTAIN THIRD-PARTY BUSINESS VALUATIONS

"A business valuation is an essential part of transition planning regardless of the actual plan," said Davis. Davis said she often gets initial calls for advice from business owners who say they have a letter of intent to sell their business in hand. "That's too late to do any longer-term planning like tax mitigation, so it's best to prepare for business transition several years in advance," she said.

"If you plan to sell the entire business or even just parts of your business, you need a baseline understanding of the value," said Davis. "This is especially crucial if you plan to gift the business to your family, a 'need-to-know' for estate and tax planning."

"Valuations are particularly important for families in which not all members of the second or third generation are involved in the business," said Castoro, "because the value will likely become part of their inheritance."

"A preemptive valuation is essential for stakeholders to redefine their expectations and to make sure they know where the company stands," said Baassiri. "It should encompass both the current financial state of the main business and any extra ventures being explored by family members," he said.



## PREPARE THE NEXT GENERATION FOR BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

A succession plan is only as good as the people involved, so an important step is to identify members of the next generation who want to run the business and determine how to prepare them for leadership roles.

"It's essential for family members who intend to run the business to get explicit education, such as a university degree, as well as implicit education both inside and outside the family business," said Baassiri. "It's best for family members to get some experience outside the business and then have a number of years within the business before assuming a leadership role."

Baassiri recommends two-way mentoring for family business leaders, with the founder passing on wisdom earned while building the business and younger members sharing their external experience and ideas.

"A family-owned business is like a Swiss watch which needs all of its intricate parts functioning together for success," said Baassiri. "That takes pre-planning about who's getting educated and how they are getting educated in the business and communication to make sure every team member has the right attitude toward change."

Given the complexity and the number of options available, it's important to consult with professionals to evaluate your situation before a sale. City National Bank's wealth planners can help you weigh your options. To learn more, contact us.

### Natasha M. Davis

Natasha M. Davis, JD, MBA, LL.M. (Taxation) Sr. Wealth Planner came from a decade of private law practice as a business litigation attorney and corporate tax planning expert. She brings a wealth of knowledge to CNB through her experience with restructuring small to medium sized businesses for tax mitigation, asset protection, estate and succession planning for successful generational transfers.

She graduated from Thomas Jefferson School of Law, Summa Cum Laude; has taught Corporate and Income Tax law in their graduate program, and now serves on the TJSL's alumni association board of directors. Her passion and experience for educating business owners with exit planning has led her to help facilitate the creation of a stronger and more robust Business Exit Strategy planning Team (BEST) at CNB.

For more information contact Davis at (949) 223-4575 or [Natasha.Davis@cnb.com](mailto:Natasha.Davis@cnb.com).



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## Four Tips to Ensure a Successful Transition in Leadership

It can be hard to let go. Whether it's your own business, or you've been entrusted with the responsibility of leading a business, you invest time, energy and so much more to ensure its success. When it's time to move on, you want to not only make sure the impact of all your hard work carries on after you leave, but also that the transition in leadership is as seamless as possible for all stakeholders involved.

At First Bank, succession planning is one of our areas of expertise. With four generations of independent, single-family ownership, we uniquely understand the importance of a smooth transition to ensure the continued viability of any business.

We are in the process of rolling out our own leadership transition. In September 2018, we announced CEO Tim Lathe would step down and Shelley Seifert, President, FB Corporation, would take the helm in May of 2019. Since then, we've leaned on our 100-plus years of experience to help ensure this important transition in our leadership is a success.

Below are four key considerations to help businesses ensure a seamless transition of their own.

### 1. Transparency

Leadership must demonstrate there is an openness and willingness to communicate with employees. A transition brings with it a lot of questions, and employees need to be given the opportunity to understand what changes they can expect from new leadership.

In order to make its transition as transparent as possible, First Bank conducted a series of intimate town halls with both Seifert and Lathe in which they met with individual employees face-to-face and took time to address their concerns. Sessions were designed with small groups to encourage employees to actively participate and to ensure everyone had a chance to make their voice heard.

During these sessions, First Bank made a point to outline the philosophical and strategic positions of both the outgoing and incoming CEO, and explain what, if any, changes employees can expect. Having an open, honest dialogue with employees helped them feel better prepared

to transition along with leadership. This same level of transparency should apply to clients. Make time to meet with clients independently to allay their concerns and address their questions as well.

### 2. Chemistry

A strong partnership between the new and outgoing leader is critical to an effective transition. The relationship between the two sets the foundation for new management. The incoming leader must be prepared to take control of the company and understand the corporate culture, organizational politics and internal decision-making process. The outgoing leader is best equipped to provide this support as well as gain organizational buy in for his or her successor.

The absence of a symbiotic relationship between leaders can create fear of change and lead to a hostile view of new leadership within the organization.

Prior to the announcement of the CEO transition, First Bank had experienced a period of change, rolling out a renewed strategic plan in 2014, which was again refreshed in 2017. It was important to demonstrate to employees that the company would remain stable under new leadership. The positive relationship and mutual respect between the current CEO and his successor instilled that confidence across the organization.

Although there won't always be a well-established relationship between the incoming and outgoing CEO like in First Bank's case, the outgoing CEO must be invested in the transition and set an example for employees by supporting the internal or external candidate throughout the process.

### 3. Opportunity

With change also comes opportunity. A leadership transition offers the chance to address issues within the organization that may have been overlooked and an opportunity to demonstrate commitment to employees' interests and concerns. It's also another way to make employees feel that they are a part of the transition.

First Bank leveraged change communication to solicit feedback from their employees on ways to improve the business. The town halls were conducted

in a roundtable format to create a more open setting and encourage employees to be honest and forthcoming. First Bank executives, including both the incoming and outgoing CEOs, asked how management can address their concerns, not just about the transition, but also about day-to-day operations. Following these meetings, the First Bank management team compiled a list of issues and assigned them out to responsible internal parties. In the coming weeks, these groups will present their plans to address the issues, and employees will receive timely follow up communications on progress.

First Bank executed two key components to feedback—creating a comfortable, open environment and

demonstrating a commitment to action. If employees feel intimidated or fear retaliation, they are less likely to come forward with issues. In addition, if they doubt management's ability to act, they lack incentive to participate. In First Bank's case, management designed an open forum and developed a set of action items to hold themselves accountable.

### 4. Solidarity

A transition presents the perfect opportunity for an incoming leader to establish their own unique identity and management style.

But it's equally important for a new leader to establish that identity while ensuring they are not detracting from what the company has worked so hard to establish in the lead-up to this moment. When applicable, a smooth transition requires solidarity in staying true to the company's already established vision.

Although this doesn't apply to all businesses, for First Bank's transition, Seifert and Lathe share the same commitment and approach to First Bank's strategic plan, its employees, and its clients. For both, the plan for First Bank's continued growth lies in adhering to a strategic vision focused on becoming THE bank for family-owned and privately-held businesses that they, along with First Bank's employees, created and have been successfully enacting over the past few years.

Whether incoming leadership is in complete lockstep with outgoing leadership or not, in most instances businesses should consider implementing changes in gradual shifts rather than making any sudden, sweeping departures from the norm. What's going to change is equally as important as what will remain the same.



Incoming CEO, Shelley Seifert with Michael Dierberg, Chairman of the Board, FB Corporation

*At First Bank, succession planning is one of our areas of expertise. With four generations of independent, single-family ownership, we uniquely understand the importance of a smooth transition.*



Tim Lathe, retiring CEO from First Bank



firstbanks.com

For more information on developing a solid succession plan for your business, please contact Bill Dolan, Senior Vice President, Portfolio Manager with First Bank Wealth Management at (949) 475-6304.





# MOVING IN ON CANCER

**SPEEDING RESEARCH  
AND DISCOVERIES  
STRAIGHT TO  
ORANGE COUNTY**

City of Hope has made astonishing strides toward eradicating cancer. But our latest breakthrough is yet to come: a home in Orange County. We're bringing compassionate care — backed by some of the world's most innovative discoveries and most effective cancer therapies — **closer to home.**

Tanya Siddiqi, MD  
Hematology/HCT



City of Hope

**Tanya Siddiqi, M.D.**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Hematology and  
Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation



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LUGANO DIAMONDS CELEBRATES

# ACHIEVEMENT WITH IMPECCABLE PIECES

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Lugano Diamonds was founded with the vision of creating exquisite wearable works of art from the world's rarest and most precious gems. *"We believe jewelry should be worn. And worn often,"* said Moti Ferder, Lugano CEO and design director. *"Our beautiful diamond and sapphire pieces are extremely versatile complementing every occasion from casual to elegant."*



## Transformative Diamonds

Everyone woman needs a diamond necklace, but not a simple, expected piece. Specifically, a necklace that transforms you from the inside out. Lugano has crafted a wearable work of art that will forever be your go-to piece. Versatile yet glamorous, the Diamonds by the Yard Necklace laces 28 wondrous carats of round brilliant collection VS diamonds along 18k white gold.

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## Strength in Beauty

Come alive when you wear Lugano's lavish Rose Cut Drop Earrings. Each drop reveals an extravagant three-and-a-half carat rose cut diamond. These sublime diamonds are surrounded and suspended by more than two carats of round brilliant collection VS diamonds.



LUGANO®  
DIAMONDS

*An experience as remarkable as our collection*

We welcome you to view our stunning collection at the Lugano Diamonds Grand Salon located at 620 Newport Center Drive, Suite 100, Newport Beach, and our additional locations in Aspen and Palm Beach. Please call 866.584.2666 or email [info@luginodiamonds.com](mailto:info@luginodiamonds.com) for more information.



## Bring the Sea to You

Is the sea on your mind? Strike a work play balance in and out of the office with Lugano's bold Sapphire and Diamond Pendant. Distinct and intriguing, the focal point of the piece is a pear shape, fancy blue sapphire pendant. Enveloping the sapphire are collection VS diamonds on a stunning 18k white gold chain. Find that beautiful balance.



## She Has Everything. But, Not These.

Lugano's Sapphire and Rose Cut Diamond Earrings showcase nearly eight and a half carats of rose cut collection VS diamonds. These sparkling diamond petals surround five carats of cushion cut fancy blue sapphires. Celebrate and congratulate all you are with sensational sapphires and decadent diamonds.



## Lead with Grace

Always the perpetual leader, you will continue to blaze trails in style with 14 carats of oval cut fancy blue sapphires. Lugano's effortlessly beautiful eternity band exudes meticulous detail with nearly two carats of round brilliant collection VS diamonds lining the 18k white gold band. Lead the way...







# Orange County Women are Doing More™ with United Way

## Visionaries Who Care Create Lasting Change for our Community

Local women who share United Way's vision are Doing More to create lasting social and economic change throughout Orange County.

### A Powerful Voice

Women United is an energetic organization of over 400 caring individuals, focused on helping other women and transforming local lives through their philanthropic leadership and generosity. At the next level of engagement, the passionate influencers of the Orange County United Way Women's Philanthropy Fund are also part of the prestigious United Way Tocqueville Society. In 2018, through their annual Women's Philanthropy Fund Breakfast, they raised more than half a million dollars and targeted their efforts to solve challenges in education, health, housing and financial stability facing women and children in our community.

Together, these dedicated Orange County women figure prominently in United Way's global network of over 700,000 female leaders. They're vibrant, diverse and bound together by a deep commitment—to each other, to philanthropy and service, and to this place they call home. They have an innate ability to mentor, to communicate and to ignite change. It's in their nature to work for the causes they believe in.

### Making a Difference with Notable Events

As visionaries, they empower one another and build relationships while their collective generosity and energy fuels life-changing services, innovative programs and highly anticipated events.

For instance, last year nearly 1,000 business and community professionals gathered at the 2018 Women's Philanthropy Fund Breakfast. Attendees showed their tremendous support for improving the lives of local women and children in need, and gathered inspiration from keynote speaker Earvin "Magic" Johnson. On May 16, 2019, the WPF will host the 2019 Women's Philanthropy Fund Breakfast, featuring sports broadcaster and TV personality Erin Andrews, where they expect another record turnout.



2018 Women's Philanthropy Fund Breakfast co-chairs Shirley Quackenbush of Merrill Lynch Private Banking & Investment Group (left) and Paula Mattson of Southern California Edison (right) with keynote speaker Earvin "Magic" Johnson (center).

And their impact goes even further. The women of Orange County United Way also advance our mission through new, innovative models that will create a brighter future for the next generation.

### Tackling the Pressures Faced by Local Families

A prime example is the first Orange County United Way Impact Hub at Paul Revere Elementary School in Anaheim. Supported by the Women's Philanthropy Fund, this Impact Hub offers holistic services for multiple generations, delivered at schools which are at the center of the community. It is addressing the interconnected challenges faced by many families: low-wage jobs and a high cost of living that can create housing instability and negatively impact academics and health.

The United Way Impact Hub is succeeding by providing student reading and academic programs, helping students and families with nutritious foods and healthier lifestyles, reducing student mobility by moving families into permanent housing, and building financial empowerment skills to break the cycle of poverty.

With measurable positive results at Paul Revere Elementary School, the Women's Philanthropy Fund hopes that this first Impact Hub will serve as the model for many more to come.



Jennifer Swan-Altieri teaches at Anaheim's Paul Revere Elementary School, Orange County United Way's first Impact Hub, a project supported by the Women's Philanthropy Fund. The third-graders in Swan-Altieri's class are reading at the fourth-grade level, and their families are thriving too, thanks to this initiative.

### Investing in Women for a Stronger OC

Women United and Bank of America launched a successful partnership in 2017 to create *Local, Global & Me*, a three-part series fostering women's empowerment to impact their communities. The events brought together powerhouse panelists plus networking opportunities for local women in business and philanthropy. The series proved so popular and worthwhile, it's back for 2019.

*Local, Global & Me-Part 1* will connect Orange County women for an introduction to mindfulness. Practicing this personal skill not only improves health and resilience, it is an essential leadership tool that can enhance women's abilities to be a force multiplier for good in our community and beyond. More than 100 women are expected to attend on April 24, 2019 at 5:30pm at the Lincoln Experience Center at Fashion Island.



Women United and corporate partner Bank of America hosted three popular *Local, Global & Me* events in 2017 and 2018. The 2019 series will again provide Orange County women with strategies and inspiration to take action locally and globally to improve their communities.

### Choosing to Do More

In Orange County, where so many have the capacity to do more for others, the women who invest their skills, energy and philanthropy with United Way are visionaries. They're working together, Doing More to transform lives and create a brighter future for local women, children and families.

For more information on becoming a member of Women United or the Women's Philanthropy Fund, or to learn how you can join us at an upcoming event, contact Brigitte De Kruyf at [BrigitteD@UnitedWayOC.org](mailto:BrigitteD@UnitedWayOC.org) or call 949.263.6160.



# WOMEN'S <sup>2019</sup> PHILANTHROPY FUND MEMBERS



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UPS



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COLGLAZIER

DELIA  
DELGADO

ALICE  
FLYNN

NANCY  
HANDEL

TERI  
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DEBE  
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To join this community of philanthropic leaders contact  
Brigitte De Kruf at 949.263.6160 or [BrigitteD@UnitedWayOC.org](mailto:BrigitteD@UnitedWayOC.org)



# Chopard

THE ARTISAN OF EMOTIONS – SINCE 1860

Chopard is one of the last family-owned watchmaking and jewelry company. Since the 1980s, Karl and Karin's children Caroline and Karl-Friedrich have played an active part in the company. Caroline and Karl-Friedrich are Chopard's current co-presidents. They each showed their independence: Caroline Scheufele, who is responsible of the ladies' collections, developed the jewelry section and later the high-end jewelry department while her brother Karl-Friedrich, who managed the men's collections, developed sports watches during the 1980s and the Chopard Manufacture in Fleurier, which produces the L.U.C movements, in the 1990s.



## AUDACITY & EXTRAORDINARY CREATIONS

Every year since 2007, Chopard Co-President and Creative Director Caroline Scheufele has been imagining a High Jewellery collection taking up the extraordinary challenge of releasing a number of jewelry models equivalent to the edition number of the Festival. Stemming from her boundless imagination and from the peerless mastery of diverse skills within the Chopard workshops, a complete collection of 71 creations will be designed and revealed this year, dedicated to the world's greatest actresses for their red carpet appearances.

## THE ARTISAN OF EMOTIONS

In the Chopard workshops, everything begins with a story of hands: those of the expert, patient, and inventive artisans within the Manufacture who successively apply their skills to these exceptional creations. Chopard is keenly aware that the most precious heritage is above all, those responsible for crafting these exceptional pieces, and also that Chopard creations are an integral part of the proud High Jewelry tradition. The creativity of Chopard Co-President and Artistic Director Caroline Scheufele and artistic crafts are exercised at the highest level.



We are pleased to invite you to discover the Chopard collections at our South Coast Plaza Boutique located 3333 Bristol Street, Suite 2409, Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
Please contact Anne Lee to arrange a private viewing: +1 (305) 927 1090 or [Anne.Lee@Chopard.com](mailto:Anne.Lee@Chopard.com)





## STATE-OF-THE-ART MANUFACTURING

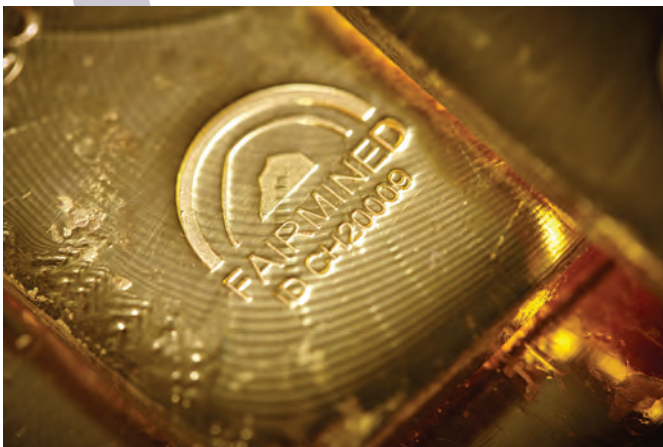
The Chopard Group has been active in the Swiss Jura since 1996, when Chopard Manufacture was founded in the town of Fleurier.

Beautifully crafted, assembled and decorated by hand, the L.U.C. timepieces are an ode to watchmaking elegance.



## CHOPARD LOVES CINEMA

Chopard forms a glittering duo with the Cannes Film Festival, which it has been partnering with since 1998. In addition to crafting the legendary Palme d'Or in its workshops along with all the trophies to be handed over at the closing award ceremony on May 19, and to adorning the stars for the traditional "Montée des Marches" ritual thanks to the magnificent Red Carpet Collection, the Maison also awards up-and-coming film-making talents with the Trophée Chopard as well as organizing unforgettable annual parties. This year once again, Chopard is set to dazzle and to bring its own inimitable sparkle to the Festival.



## THE JOURNEY TO SUSTAINABLE LUXURY

Chopard leads the watch and jewelry industry with a major and unique announcement: since July 2018, Chopard will use 100% Ethical Gold in its jewelry and watch creations.

As a family run business, sustainability has always been a core value, and today sees the culmination of a vision started more than 30 years ago.

"We have been able to achieve this because for more than 30 years Chopard watches and jewelry have been beautifully crafted in-house, which means the Maison is in the unique position to be able to guarantee control of all processes; from manufacturing to final product, therefore controlling the gold used in its products."

"True luxury comes only when you know the handprint of your supply chain and I am very proud of our gold sourcing program. As Creative Director of the brand, I am so proud to share the stories behind each beautiful piece with our customers and know they will wear these stories with pride". Caroline Scheufele







## American Heart Association Launches STEM Goes Red in Orange County

The American Heart Association, the world's leading voluntary organization dedicated to building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke, is proud to celebrate **women by** announcing Orange County's first **STEM Goes Red** event **this fall**.

As cardiovascular disease continues to be the number one killer of women, ensuring more women are at the forefront of developing science, technology, education and math (STEM) solutions has never been more imperative. STEM is our future and as a science-based health non-profit, STEM is at the heart of who we are and what we do.

America's STEM workforce is at the forefront for ideation, patent creation, science and research, and innovation that is vital to today's economy and tomorrow's future. From the chemistry of cosmetics to the technology of e-commerce; from the way we communicate to the way we consume information and so much more – our daily lives are built on a STEM foundation. Unfortunately, a troubling gender gap exists in STEM, from the lack of women pursuing STEM-related degrees to the number of women in STEM careers. Opportunities are lacking for too many bright young women of diverse backgrounds. The AHA is working to close these opportunity gaps through STEM Goes Red.

STEM Goes Red is designed to provide young girls insights into the possibilities and potential they possess to make a real impact on the world around them. Our goals are to:

- ▶ Engage young women and mentors in STEM Goes Red
- ▶ Increase the number of women pursuing STEM degrees in higher education
- ▶ Close the gender gap in STEM jobs
- ▶ Arm students with tools and resources to experience good health and well-being

STEM Goes Red features an extraordinary group of local elementary to high school girls from throughout Orange County to explore STEM outside the classroom while also learning how to take charge of their health and well-being through Go Red. Students, mentors and professional attendees have the opportunity to hear insightful talks from leading innovators on industry trends, network and make memorable connections with others, glean invaluable insights into women's health, and fight the #1 killer of women – heart disease.

"Through our STEM Goes Red event we hope to empower high school-aged



**American  
Heart  
Association**

girls to improve the heart and brain health of all Americans through careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)," said Danielle Sapia-Fragalla, American Heart Association Executive Director, Orange County Division.

Millions of STEM jobs are becoming available in the United States, but most U.S. students are unprepared to fill these careers. Moreover, only 3 out of 100 female bachelor students continue to work in STEM fields after graduating.

"To defeat heart disease, we need innovation and big thinking from young, emerging students committed to making change happen," says Sapia-Fragalla. "By encouraging young women to pursue exciting careers in the STEM fields, we are building a brighter future, stopping heart disease before it starts, and paving the way to healthier communities."

STEM Goes Red will take place **this fall**, and will bring together local high school girls to explore STEM outside the classroom. The young women will gain first-hand experience, connect with inspiring leaders, and will walk away knowing they can make an impact through a promising career in an exciting field.

By encouraging young women to pursue careers in the STEM fields, the American Heart Association aims to help spur the next generation of scientists and researchers to save millions of women from heart disease and stroke.

Go Red for Women is nationally sponsored by CVS Health. STEM Goes Red Orange County event will be chaired by Katie Szyman, Edwards Lifesciences and the American Heart Association Orange County Board of Director.

For more information on STEM Goes Red Orange County, contact Guinevere Endter at (949) 885-1514 or at [guinevere.endter@heart.org](mailto:guinevere.endter@heart.org).

### STEM GOES RED

**Join us in powering the next medical break-through or media mogul by empowering young women to take a seat at the table and dedicate their minds to advancing the fields of STEM!**

#### Why support STEM Goes Red?

- In 2018, 71% of jobs require STEM skills
- ♥ Women are 50% of the workforce
- ♥ Women are 24% of the STEM workforce
- ♥ But 50% drop out in the first 10 years





American Heart Association®



# SAVE THE DATE



## STEM Goes Red Orange County

FALL 2019



## Orange County Go Red for Women Luncheon

February 14, 2020

### 2020 Go Red for Women Executive Leadership Team

Katie Syzman, Event Chair  
Hamida Amiri  
Jen Bastian  
Jim Bastian

Janelle Brunette  
Angela Grinstead  
Ursula Guzman  
Sandra Iocona

Melinda Masson  
Jeanne McNerney  
Ramin Mousavi  
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Stacey Pugh  
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## Thank you to our 2019 Go Red for Women Sponsors

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What is Everyone Purring About?

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## Catmosphere Laguna: A Purr-fect Laguna Beach Cafe

Gail Allyn Landau is honored as one of the Orange County Business Journal's nominees in the 25th Annual Women in Business Awards.

Gail Allyn Landau has made a name for herself in the feline rescue community with the opening of Catmosphere Laguna and the Catmosphere Laguna Foundation. The first of its kind in Orange County, Catmosphere Laguna is an alternative rescue and foster home for adoptable cats and kittens as well as a community café serving a menu of sweet and savory toasts and salads as well as coffee, tea, local beer, wine, and their signature "meowmosas."

Catmosphere Laguna embraces the "adopt-don't-shop" ethos and has improved the health and futures of feline residents as they await their "furr-ever" homes.

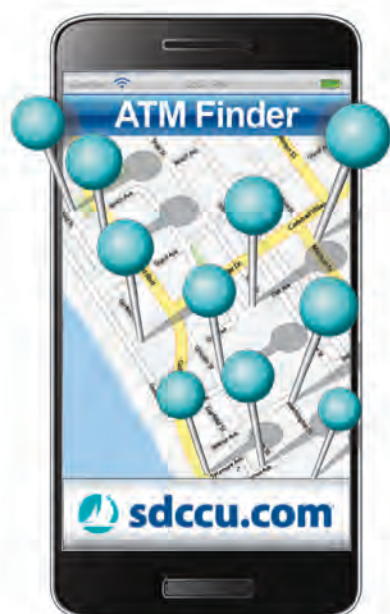
Landau is an attorney and mediator with over thirty years of litigation experience. She graduated from Loyola University of Chicago School of Law in 1980 and completed her mediation training in 2012 at Pepperdine University School of Law. She was one of the founders and managing partners of Landau, Omahana & Kopka, LLC in Chicago, Illinois and headed the lawfirm's Medical Malpractice Litigation Division for 18 years.

Today, she lends her professional experience and leadership expertise to saving the lives of homeless felines through the Catmosphere Laguna Foundation, her 501 (c)(3) non-profit. Catmosphere Laguna has attracted locals and visitors alike, drawing in animal-loving SoCal residents and curious tourists from around the world. Her foundation has facilitated more than an adoption each week since its formation in 2018. Her affiliations with animal advocacy groups and partnerships in the pet industry serve to ensure Catmosphere Laguna's leading role in the community.

Catmosphere Laguna is located at 381 Forest Ave, Laguna Beach, CA 92651 and is open 7 days a week from 10:30 am to 7 pm. For more information, please visit: [www.catmospherelaguna.com](http://www.catmospherelaguna.com) or connect with Catmosphere Laguna on Facebook or Instagram at @catmosphere\_laguna. (949)619.MEOW(6369)



Landau



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## ALUMNI NOMINEES

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

President and Co-Founder,  
Veterans Legal Institute

### JAMI EIDSVOLD '02

CEO, Smarty Social Media

### REBECCA HALL '96

President and CEO, Idea Hall

### NICOLE LUCAS (JD/MBA '18)

Corporate Counsel, St. John Knits, Inc.

### KIMBERLY WOOD '96

General Manager and COO,  
El Niguel Country Club

## CAMPUS COMMUNITY NOMINEE

### DEIRDRE KELLY

Director of Career Services, Fowler School of Law  
President, Orange County Bar Association



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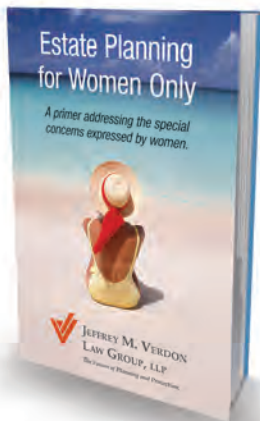
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## Liz Slater Continues to Lead Slater Builders Inc. with Revenues Over \$50 Million a Year

Slater Builders Inc. is a full service, woman-owned, general construction firm, and since its inception in 1993, Liz Slater has been sitting at its helm as CEO. Liz, along with Executive Team Mike Kearon, Chief Operating Officer, and Ed Slater, have positioned Slater Builders as a top quality builder in over 9 market sectors including Healthcare, Hospitality, Living Environments, and Office/Industrial markets and have grown the company revenues to over \$50+ million annually. For over 26 years, Slater Builders has been a preferred builder throughout Southern California working from Los Angeles, Orange County, to the Inland Empire, and San Diego.



Liz Slater, CEO

Slater Builders Inc. is an officially certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) by the National Women's Business Owners Corp. (NWBOC), however, Liz Slater believes that the gender of a firm's ownership and leadership is not the deciding factor of business success, but acknowledges that public perception remains a factor. "Ideally," she says, "we wouldn't need to categorize any business as 'women-owned,' and clients would simply consider the strength of a company's reputation, its track-record of performance, and the quality of its work." She's aware, however, that ownership by women is still a rarity in construction companies and she embraces the opportunity to provide awareness and leadership in her industry.



Liz is a graduate of the University of Southern California with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration (Finance & Marketing). Liz is also the co-founder and CEO of non-profit, 501(c)(3), Mae House ([www.mae-house.org](http://www.mae-house.org)). Inspired by the family's youngest daughter, the vision of Mae House is to provide a residential community and home for adults with developmental disabilities to live active engaging lives.

In addition to Mae House, Liz is also the co-founder and CEO of Slater Print Management ([www.slaterprint.com](http://www.slaterprint.com)) which offers a full suite of print solutions for business and commercial needs, and is extremely active in her golf club at Santa Ana Country Club.

For further information on Slater Builders, please visit [www.slaterbuilders.com](http://www.slaterbuilders.com).

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**Konica Minolta congratulates 2019 Women in Business nominee Kay Fernandez, Senior Vice President, Marketing.**

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# 25<sup>th</sup> Annual

**Absolute Exhibits** - Jan Koren  
**Advantage Solutions** - Jill Griffin  
**The Agency** - Michelle Brown  
**The Agency** - Dana Christensen  
**The Agency** - Cara Farley  
**Ajenda Public Relations** - Jennifer Morris  
**Alteryx Inc.** - Olivia Duane Adams  
**Alzheimer's Association Orange County Chapter** - Anne Grey  
**American Heart Assoc. & American Stroke Assoc** - Esther Ahn  
**American Heart Assoc. & American Stroke Assoc.** - Danielle Sapia-Fragalla  
**Apriem Advisors** - Rhonda Ducote  
**Apriem Advisors** - Jennifer Olson  
**Arbonne International LLC** - Bernadette Chala  
**Avanath Capital Management** - Ada Arevalo  
**Avanath Capital Management** - Camille Longino  
**Avatar Partners Inc.** - Marlo Brooke  
**AVIAA** - Gillian Hayes  
**The Bahnsen Group, Hightower Advisors** - Kimberlee Davis  
**B. toffee LLC** - Betsy Thagard  
**Beacon Pointe Advisors** - Commie Stevens  
**Benefit Financial Services Group (BFSG)** - Tina Schackman  
**Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Prop.** - Amber Bonasoro  
**Better Business Bureau** - Gwen Earle  
**Beyond Fifteen Communications** - Lauren Ellermeyer  
**Big Brothers Big Sisters of OC & the Inland Empire** - Sloane Keane  
**Big Hype Marketing** - Julie Leffler  
**Bioniz Therapeutics Inc.** - Nazli Azimi  
**BKM Capital Management Company** - Caroline Kase  
**BKM Capital Management Company** - Kathie Sittion  
**BKM Capital Partners** - Kelly Blair  
**BKM Capital Partners** - Barbara Rea  
**Branded Group** - Kiira (Esposito) Belonzi  
**Brower Group** - Jenn Quader  
**Bruni Media** - Jen Bruni  
**Burns & McDonnell** - Renita Mollman  
**Business Communications Solutions** - Sunny Rajab  
**C3 Technology Services** - Tricia Sanchez  
**Campo Beauty** - Jessica Frandson  
**Capital One** - Kristen Croxton  
**Capstone Partners** - Victoria Joy Avedesian  
**Carothers DiSante & Freudenberg LLP** - Marie DiSante  
**Catmosphere Laguna** - Gail Allyn Landau, Esq.  
**CB Technologies Inc.** - Kelly Ireland  
**CIBC Private Wealth Management** - Kimberly Dwan Bernatz  
**City National Bank** - Natasha Davis  
**City National Bank** - Marie-Lou Godinez  
**City of Hope** - Annette Walker  
**City of Irvine** - Janet Colclaser  
**Code Breaker Technologies** - Cheri Tree  
**Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage** - Jamie Duran  
**CORE Realty Holdings Management Inc.** - Tania Jernigan  
**CoreLogic** - Melanie Graper  
**County of Orange** - Shari Freidenrich  
**Cox Business** - Jodi Duva

**Coxswain Consulting** - Julia Erdkamp  
**The CPR Lady** - Helen McCracken  
**Crawford Custom Homes** - Kimberly Smith  
**Cuddly** - Natalise Kalea  
**DAUM Commercial** - Danielle Knudson  
**Directive Consulting** - Hannah Mans  
**Directive Consulting** - Olivia Ross  
**Dr. J's Natural and Ensohara.com** - Jacqueline Nguyen  
**Dr. Tracy/Mrs. Globe** - Dr. Tracy Kemble  
**DYG Cosmetics** - Dianne York  
**E Factor** - Kari Willis  
**EDFIN College Planning Experts** - Shelly Rufin, MSHS  
**Edwards Lifesciences** - Diane Biagianti  
**El Niguel Country Club** - Kimberly Wood  
**Excelerate Inc.** - Kimberly Gerber  
**EXOIO** - Shawn Dougherty  
**Experian** - Alpa Lally  
**First Bank** - Therese DeGroot  
**FivePoint** - Lynn Jochim  
**Form I9 Compliance** - Linda Donahue  
**Fostering Executive Leadership Inc.** - Dr. Tammy Wong  
**FUSION OF IDEAS** - Debbie Taylor  
**FutureWise Consulting** - Eulynn Gargano  
**Gengirl Media Inc.** - Gina Heitkamp  
**Gensler** - Kirstie Acevedo  
**Gensler** - Anne Bretana  
**Gensler** - Alyssa Scholz  
**Global Capital Markets Inc.** - Kimberly Valentine-Poska  
**H. Hendy Associates** - Felicia Hyde  
**Haskell & White LLP** - Stacie Kitts  
**Haskell & White LLP** - Diane Wittenberg  
**Haynes and Boone LLP** - Mary-Christine "M.C." Sungaila  
**HB Staffing** - Cathy Volpe  
**HKA Marketing Communications** - Hilary Kaye  
**Hotel Irvine** - Diane Dillon  
**Idea Hall** - Rebecca Hall  
**Illuminate Education** - Christine Willig  
**Infinite Electronics Inc** - Penny Cotner  
**Inspired Art Wine** - Karen Nguyen  
**Institutional Wealth Consultants** - Dina Delp  
**International Home Realty** - Claudia Chyang  
**International Sanctuary** - Wendy Dailey  
**Irvine Company Office Properties** - Stacy Nishioka  
**Irvine Public Schools Foundation** - Neda Eaton  
**Irvine Technology Corp.** - Nicole McMackin  
**Julie LaCroix Career Exploration and Planning** - Julie LaCroix  
**KBS** - Mimi Nguyen  
**Kelly Services Inc.** - Genine Wilson  
**Kerrigan Advisors** - Erin Kerrigan  
**Konica Minolta Business Solutions - West Region** - Kay Du Fernandez  
**Latham & Watkins** - Michele Johnson  
**Laura DuPriest Inc.** - Laura DuPriest  
**Lavender Salon/ Be(you)tiful** - Heather Hart  
**The Legal Shop** - Jaclyn Lusk

## Luncheon & Awards Program

May 8, 2019  
 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
**HOTEL IRVINE**

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

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

## Reservation Information

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 or contact Melanie Collins at  
 949.664.5065 or [collins@ocbj.com](mailto:collins@ocbj.com)



# Congratulations 2019 Nominees

**The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society** - Jessica Reiter-Flax  
**LinkedIn Corporation** - Lisa Nguyen  
**The Literacy Project** - Sue Grant  
**The Literacy Project** - Kimberly Vig  
**Loan Administration Network Inc.** - Charlene Nichols  
**Los Angeles Chargers** - Jeanne Bonk  
**M360 Advisors** - Laura Catalino  
**Make-A-Wish Orange County & the Inland Empire** - Stephanie McCormick  
**Manna Kadar Beauty Inc.** - Manna Kadar  
**Margaux Agency** - Monica Garrett  
**McCarthy Building Companies** - Ileana Holguin  
**MemorialCare** - Tammie Brailsford  
**Merhab Robinson, Jackson & Clarkson** - Marla Merhab Robinson  
**METaseismic Inc.** - Dr. Noemi Bonessio  
**Mind Brain Parenting** - Jenny Woo  
**Miracles for Kids** - Autumn Strier  
**Morgan Law Group** - Darlynn Morgan  
**Mountain Mike's Pizza** - Carol DeNembo  
**MUFG Union Bank, N.A.** - Laura Dang  
**My Jane** - Kimberly Kovacs  
**Nano Banc** - Sandra Lease  
**Newport Hair Loss Center** - Nazy Curtis  
**OC Facial Care Center** - Kate Hancock  
**OC Fair & Event Center** - Meghan Medlin  
**ON ITS AXIS** - Shelley Iocona  
**Optivest Inc.** - Leslie Calhoun  
**Orange County Bar Association** - Deirdre Kelly  
**Orange County Rescue Mission** - Anna Song  
**Osmond Marketing** - Amy Osmond Cook  
**Outshine Public Relations** - Talia Samuels  
**Pacific Sotheby's International Realty** - Mina Maghami  
**Paciolan** - Kim Damron  
**Pan-Pacific Mechanical** - Cindy McMackin  
**Parcon** - Sara Van Dusen  
**Parrish Partners LLC** - Michele Parrish  
**Pink Plastic Surgery** - Windy Olaya  
**Pinnacle Petroleum** - Liz McKinley  
**The Pointe Shop** - Josephine Lee  
**Powerhouse Communications** - Kristin Daher  
**Powerstone Property Management** - Kendrah Kay  
**Precept Group** - Erin Hoefer  
**Propel Business Solutions Inc.** - Cindy Goss  
**Robert Half** - Cyndi Karapogorian  
**RSM US LLP** - Gretchen Valentine  
**Rutan & Tucker LLP** - Maria Stearns  
**The Shea Center** - Dana Butler-Moburg  
**Ship & Shore Environmental Inc.** - Anoosheh Oskouian  
**Slater Builders Inc.** - Liz Slater  
**SmartStart Evaluation and Research Inc.** - Traci Shirachi  
**Smarty Social Media** - Jami Eidsvold  
**Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corp.** - Deborah Dickson  
**Snyder Langston** - Jo-E Lopez  
**South Coast Repertory** - Paula Tomei  
**SCAPE | Southern California Art Project + Exhibitions** - Jeannie Denholm

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON** - Becky Mandich  
**The Spaulding Agency** - Jessica Spaulding  
**Spinnaker Investment Group** - Jaril Tudio  
**Sports 1 Marketing** - Colleen Malloy  
**St. John Knits Inc.** - Nicole Lucas  
**St. John Knits Inc.** - Christina Zabat-Fran  
**StaffRehab** - Sara Palmer  
**Stage 1 Financial** - Katy Triefenbach  
**Sterling Public Relations** - Paula Steurer  
**Strategic Creations LLC** - Sarah Weaver  
**Studio88 / Design Tec** - Christine Johnson  
**Sullivan Solar Power** - Selene Lawrence  
**Sunday Brunch Agency** - Rachel Svoboda  
**Surf City Still Works** - Elena Kornoff  
**Systems Source Inc.** - Rosemarie Smith  
**Tangram Studio** - Charlotte Wiederholt  
**Terra Tech Corp.** - Amy Oppedisano  
**Think Together** - Tia Dwyer  
**Toshiba America Business Solutions** - Maegan Lujan  
**UC Irvine Institute for Memory Impairments and Neurological Disorders (UCI MIND)** - Chelsea Cox, MPH, MSW  
**UCI Applied Innovation** - Kate Klimow  
**uDirect IRA Services** - Kaaren Hall  
**Union Bank** - Robbin Narike Preciado  
**United Capital Financial Advisors LLC** - Kris Beck  
**Veterans Legal Institute** - Antoinette Balta  
**Veterinary Surgical Specialists of Orange County** - Diane Craig  
**VF Developments** - Victoria Vu  
**Villa Real Estate** - Kim Bibb  
**Vincit** - Rachel Valentine  
**Ware Malcomb** - Ruth Brajevich  
**Ware Malcomb** - Jinger Tapia  
**Ware Malcomb** - Mila Volkova  
**Ways & Means Oyster House** - Jennifer Delcham  
**WHW** - Janie Best  
**Windes Inc.** - Therese Cheevers  
**WISEPlace** - Brateil Aghasi  
**Wood Gutmann & Bogart Insurance Brokers** - Lisa Doherty  
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## Keynote Speaker

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## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

### Kirstie Acevedo, Senior Associate & Lifestyle Studio Director

*Gensler, Newport Beach*

Kirstie Acevedo started at Gensler in June 2011 and immediately demonstrated natural leadership skills as a large scale client account leader and then subsequently the lifestyle studio director. In addition to this, she currently leads the Retail Practice Area for the Gensler Southwest Region, which encompasses retail strategy and initiatives across six Gensler offices. Acevedo brings the client point of view to all phases of design management while acting as the primary representative for the project or account team. Her attention to detail and follow through frequently exceeds client expectations. Her diverse portfolio includes retail, hospitality, mixed-use, workplace interiors, corporate and industrial projects. She graduated with a Bachelors in Architecture from Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, is a registered Architect in California and an active member of AIA, NCARB and USGBC.



### Olivia Duane Adams, Chief Customer Officer

*Alteryx Inc., Irvine*

Olivia Duane Adams is the chief customer officer and co-founder of Alteryx, and one of only a handful of female founders to take a technology company public. Adams's 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 20-plus year success. Under Adams's leadership, the Alteryx Community has grown both on- and offline, serving as an incubator for empowering women in business via the Alteryx Women of Analytics initiative and inspiring citizen data scientists to understand the thrill of solving via self-service analytics. In a tech world where only 21 percent of executives are female, taking the company public in March 2017 was an incredible business feat, and what's more impressive is that Alteryx has had the top performing tech IPO of the last two years, according to recent Bloomberg data.



### Brateil Aghasi, Executive Director

*WISEPlace, Santa Ana*

Brateil Aghasi is a visionary leader with a passion for serving women and children. As the executive director of WISEPlace, she is leading the path towards a "Housing First" mentality with a \$5 million capital campaign to build at least 30 units of permanent supportive housing. This is the first housing development in WISEPlace's 32-year history. She is entrusted with building and growing a trauma-informed care approach to case management, mental health and therapeutic support, along with financial empowerment services to provide housing, hope and stability for homeless women. In her role, she is responsible for guiding the strategic vision and direction of the organization, increasing program efficiencies and effectiveness, day-to-day operations and implementation of various fundraising campaigns and initiatives. In 2018, WISEPlace annual budget increased by 140 percent. The number of homeless women served increased by 150 percent. Aghasi started her career as chief operating officer of WHW, after spending eight years there she was recruited by Big Brothers Big Sisters OC/IE as director of programs. Prior to joining WISEPlace, she served as executive director of Forever Footprints.



### Esther Ahn, Business Development Director

*American Heart Association, Irvine*

Esther Ahn is the Heart Ball Development Director for the Orange County American Heart Association, American Stroke Association division. With her dedication, enthusiasm and passion she rebuilt the Heart Ball campaign and volunteer executive leadership to make the Heart Ball the best ever under her direction. She plays a vital role to ensure funds are secured to implement initiatives to help Orange County residents learn about their heart and brain health to live a life free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. Ahn's most significant business accomplishments are securing the host site for the first CPR kiosks in the West Coast. She secured the funding for one of the three kiosks placed at the John Wayne Airport and more than 30,000 people have learned the life-saving skills to save a life with Hands-Only CPR. She was also the first to bring the F.A.S.T Room to Southern California where people learned the signs and symptoms of a stroke.



### Ada Arevalo, Vice President, Fund Management

*Avanath Capital Management, Irvine*

Ada Arevalo is the vice president of Fund Management. In this capacity, she oversees all aspects of Investor Reporting and Fund Performance Accounting. Arevalo also assists in Investor Relations and Investor Due Diligence. Arevalo began at Avanath as an accounting consultant in October of 2011. Because of the quality of her work, she caught the eye of the CEO who asked if she wanted to pivot full time into capital raising and investor relations. Since then she has been instrumental in capital raising,



investor relations and Chairing the Impact Investment Committee. Arevalo has played a tremendous role in the growth of the firm over the last few years. She has been instrumental in capital raising for the firm's several funds and has been directly responsible for bringing in more than 20 new investors totaling more than \$400 million.

### Victoria Joy Avedesian, Senior Managing Director

*Capstone Partners, Newport Beach*

Victoria Joy Avedesian is the senior managing director of Capstone Partners, Southern California/ Nevada Agency. Avedesian is in the top two percent of financial professionals as a consistent qualifier of the Million Dollar Round Table society, along with a multi-year member of the prestigious Management Council and Gold Bowl Winner. Avedesian identifies top talent in Orange County and develops successful leaders in the insurance and investment space. Avedesian leads the growth and development of the Newport Beach and Las Vegas offices for Capstone Partners and is a graduate from UC Irvine. She serves on the Board of Directors of the UCI Alumni Association and the Career Services Committee. Capstone Partners Financial and Insurance Services, LLC is a full-service financial services firm committed to helping their clients pursue their financial goals. They are a general agency of Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company.



### Nazli Azimi, Founder/President/CEO

*Bioniz Therapeutics, Inc., Irvine*

Dr. Nazli Azimi is the founder and CEO of Bioniz Therapeutics, as well as the co-inventor of its core-technology. Bioniz Therapeutics is a biopharmaceutical company leading the discovery and development of first-in-class therapeutics to address autoimmune diseases and cancer. Bioniz leverages world-class expertise in immunology, originating in research conducted at the National Institutes of Health, to create an entirely new class of medications that will be potentially safer, more effective, and less expensive than current standards of care. The Company's technology has the opportunity to transform the therapeutic landscape with the market opportunity of over \$100 billion. Bioniz Therapeutics' management has raised about \$30 million of capital. The company is conducting a phase two trial with its lead drug, BNZ-1, in some form of blood malignancies. The company has partnered with Takeda Pharmaceuticals, Japan's largest and world's 7th largest pharmaceutical company, to develop first-in-class therapies for a variety of diseases with high unmet medical needs.



### Antoinette Balta, President/Co-Founder

*Veterans Legal Institute, Santa Ana*

Antoinette Balta is president and co-founder of Veterans Legal Institute (VLI), one of the very few military-specific public interest law firms in the nation dedicated to current and former service members. As a 501 (c) (3) organization, VLI provides pro bono legal assistance to homeless, at risk, disabled and low-income current and former service members to eradicate barriers to housing, healthcare, education, and employment and foster self-sufficiency. VLI also advocates on behalf of its clients by providing community education and policy advocacy in an effort to increase awareness, resources, and overall protections to current and former members of the US military. Balta oversees business development, outreach, public relations, marketing, and strategic planning. Her relationship building across business sectors has fostered the building of a pro bono network of over 80 attorneys, serving over 3,800 clients, and restoring over \$1.5 million dollars in veterans benefits.



### Kris Beck, Chief Legal Officer/Corporate Secretary

*United Capital Financial Advisors LLC, Newport Beach*

Kris Beck is a member of the Executive Committee and serves as United Capital's chief legal officer and corporate secretary. She is responsible for leading the company's strategic and tactical legal initiatives and risk management. As the chief legal officer, Beck advises United Capital's senior team on legal strategies to drive business results in diverse areas, ranging from intellectual property business platform development to corporate acquisitions. Beck manages the company's overall legal function and chairs the Enterprise Risk Management Committee. Beck started her career with O'Melveny & Myers as a member of the firm's Transactions Department where she represented institutional clients on complex transactions ranging from infrastructure financing and public securities offerings to advising promising start-up enterprises. Beck is a double Bruin who earned her BA in English literature and JD from the University of California, Los Angeles. During law school, she was a recipient of the Joseph Drown Fellowship and the Affiliates Scholarship.



### Kiira (Esposito) Belonzi, Vice President of Business Development/Co-Founder

*Branded Group Inc., Anaheim*

Kiira (Esposito) Belonzi is the VP of Business Development and co-founder of Branded Group, Inc. She is responsible for the development and delivery of all





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## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

internal training programs, including onboarding for new hires, skills-based technology training, and management training. Belonzi's expertise in business development, facilities management, construction, and business operations contributed to Branded Group's exponential growth. She was a key contributor to the development of the #BeBetter experience, Branded Group's cultural transformation initiative. Belonzi collaborated on the creation of their award-winning social impact program, One-for-One. She is actively involved in the company's various non-profit organization initiatives, including Habitat for Humanity. Previously, as VP of Operations, Belonzi facilitated the rapid growth of the company from its infancy. Her responsibilities included recruiting, training, and building programs to attract and retain key talent. Belonzi was also responsible for service call management, capital projects, and customer implementations.



**Kimberly Dwan Bernatz, Managing Director**  
*CIBC Private Wealth Management, Newport Beach*  
Kimberly Bernatz joined CIBC Private Wealth Management in August of 2018 as managing director and head of the Newport Beach office. She brings a wealth of industry experience to her role and since she grew up in Orange County, is instrumental in continuing to expand the firm's presence in Southern California and Arizona. For more than 20 years, Bernatz has worked with high net worth individuals, families and non-profit organizations to provide tailored investment management, wealth planning and trust services, always striving to build trusting and enduring relationships by putting the client at the center of everything she does. Prior to joining CIBC Private Wealth Management, Bernatz was a senior vice president and director of wealth management advisory services for First American Trust, FSB and a vice president and business development officer at Northern Trust.



### Janie Best, CEO

*WHW, Irvine*

Janie Best is the chief executive officer of WHW located in Irvine. Originally founded as Women Helping Women, WHW's mission is to provide unemployed and underemployed individuals with the skills and resources they need to get and keep a good job. WHW believes that a good job is essential to creating a stable, safe and educated community and that employment is a solution to many of the pressing issues in our community. Since joining WHW in 2011, Best has strategically set WHW on a course that has included a shift in organizational funding, a business model that has enabled WHW to drastically increase the number of job seekers served each year and the development of programs that prepare job seekers for the sophistication of today's digital job search, ensuring that WHW's ability to help job seekers get and keep good jobs remains strong. Best has also been instrumental in growing the WHW Board of Directors, establishing an atmosphere that promotes collaboration; and in promoting the professional development of the staff.



### Diane Biagianti, Vice President/Chief Responsibility Officer

*Edwards Lifesciences Corporation, Irvine*

Diane Biagianti joined Edwards Lifesciences ("Edwards"), an S&P 500 developer and manufacturer of medical devices with operations on six continents, as vice president and chief responsibility officer in May 2011. She is responsible for the development and implementation of Edwards' global ethics and compliance programs, the company's information security protocols, and its legal regulatory compliance regimes. At Edwards, she has spearheaded a number of initiatives that have resulted in the company being recognized as a leader for its ethical and global compliance practices. Prior to joining Edwards, Biagianti was senior vice president, general counsel and assistant secretary at Advanced Medical Optics, Inc. ("AMO") from 2002 to 2009. As general counsel, she was head of the company's legal department, responsible for the company's compliance and regulatory, litigation, commercial, corporate governance, and intellectual property matters.



### Kim Bibb, Real Estate Agent

*Villa Real Estate, Costa Mesa*

Kim Bibb, Villa Real Estates co-founder and top agent, has been the icon of luxury real estate in Newport Beach for over twenty years. Bibb has dominated the Newport Beach market, selling hundreds of fine coastal homes while setting new high-water marks for exceptional properties on the Oceanfront and Bayfront. Bibb is the unparalleled expert in the sought-after Peninsula Point submarket, where she resides and has transacted more than \$875 million in sales; over \$111 million since January 1, 2018, alone. In addition to achieving many sales records, selling numerous one of a kind estates & making multigenerational family properties her



expertise. Bibb is known for setting the gold standards for market intelligence, innovative marketing, and client service in coastal Orange County.

### Kelly Blair, Managing Director, Finance & Accounting

*BKM Capital Partners, Newport Beach*

Serving as the managing director of Finance and Accounting, Kelly Blair is responsible for the oversight of all finance and accounting efforts for the Firm including fund administration and investor reporting, valuation analysis, compliance, financial reporting, budgets and forecasting, debt capital markets, treasury, cash management and financial analytics for all BKM's real estate holdings. She also serves as a member of the Investment Committee and holds an essential vote over all major investment decisions. This past year with the firm reaching \$1 billion in assets and 6.9 million in square feet under management, she has been key in exponentially scaling her department over 200 percent to 15 employees. Blair brings 18 years of experience across a breadth of capital markets, corporate finance and accounting roles, specifically in private equity and real estate, that will provide BKM with strong leadership and oversight of the Firm's financial activities.



### Amber Bonasoro, Director of Marketing

*Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties, Newport Beach*

Amber Bonasoro oversees the marketing, development, and creative direction of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties. Ranked the No. 2 Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices brokerage nationwide and abroad with annual sales of \$12 billion and 10,000 closed residential units; the company is part of the Berkshire Elite. Bonasoro has held her California real estate salesperson license since 2006 selling luxury and coastal properties throughout SoCal. Amber previously worked as the Director of Marketing and Advertising for the Canaday Group and RE/MAX Fine Homes. During her seven years at the company, she helped launch the franchise RE/MAX Fine Homes in Laguna Beach, Newport Beach, and Huntington Harbour. Amber attended national conventions and completed Broker/Owner training at RE/MAX's corporate headquarters in Denver, CO. She is a founding member of OCYPN (Orange County Young Professionals Network), she has held leadership positions and created a Playbook, used nationwide, to launch local YPNs.



### Noemi Bonessio, Founder/CEO

*METaseismic Inc., Irvine*

Dr. Noemi Bonessio founded and created an award-winning company called METaseismic which is the first startup aimed at integrating metamaterial technology into seismic protection systems. METaseismic is a University of California Irvine Applied Innovation startup developing cost-effective mechanical metamaterials to protect buildings and valuable objects from earthquakes. Dr. Bonessio is the inventor of the metamaterials that are the core technology of METaseismic. Narrow layers of these metamaterials can be placed underneath any equipment to absorb up to 90 percent of the vibration energy from a ground shaking, thus leaving the equipment unaffected. The impact of METaseismic technology goes well beyond the Southern California community. METaseismic products can impact 30 percent of the world population, which is exposed to seismic risk every day. Recent awards include the 2018 "Most Disruptive Award" from Tech Coast Angels, the nomination for "2018 Woman Breaking Barriers" from Connected Women of Influence, CA and the 2018 "Visionary of the Year" award from the University of California Irvine, ANTreprenuer Center.



### Jeanne Bonk, Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer

*Los Angeles Chargers, Costa Mesa*

Jeanne Bonk joined the Chargers organization in 1991 as chief financial officer. Now, one of the Chargers' longest-tenured executives and one of the highest-ranking female executives in the National Football League, Jeanne Bonk was named executive vice president-chief operating officer in May 2016. Bonk has successfully overseen the team's day-to-day financial operations for over 25 years. Her expertise and leadership have been critical to the ongoing success of the organization in many areas. Currently, she manages the team's involvement with the Inglewood Stadium project. She has also been a presenter at the NFL Women's Career Development Symposium, Thriving in Business Seminar at the University of San Diego, and the UC-Irvine Chief Executive Round Table Women's Forum, among others. She was nominated and a finalist for San Diego's Chief Financial Officer of the Year in 2009.



### Tammie Brailsford, Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer

*MemorialCare, Fountain Valley*

Tammie Brailsford, a masters-prepared and seasoned executive, joined MemorialCare as senior vice president in 2003. By 2005, she had led the



## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

implementation of Orange County's first system-wide electronic medical records system, which significantly elevated patient care. She became known as a strong leader driven by core values of integrity, accountability, clarity, well-being and service, which permeate MemorialCare to this day. In 2006, Brailsford was promoted to chief operating officer. She oversaw MemorialCare's cultural transformation into an organization focused on wellbeing and population health. She directed MemorialCare's growth from five hospitals, 6,300 full-time employees and \$1 billion in revenue to an integrated system with more than 200 sites of care, including hospitals, 14,000 employees and \$2.2 billion in revenue. A gifted mentor, Brailsford has been dean of MemorialCare's Leadership Academy since 2005. She founded MemorialCare's Nurse Leadership Academy and Physician Academy, both nationally recognized as best practice leadership training programs.



### **Ruth Brajevich, Vice President, Strategic Initiatives** *Ware Malcomb, Irvine*

Ruth Brajevich is vice president, Strategic Initiatives for international design firm Ware Malcomb. Brajevich is an excellent strategist, innovator and inspiring leader. A member of the executive team for 15-plus years, she provides guidance to company leaders throughout the firm's 22 offices. Since 1998, Brajevich has played a key role in Ware Malcomb's transformation from a regional firm to an international, Inc 5000 Fastest Growing Company. Brajevich oversees strategy for the WM brand, marketing, communications and culture for Ware Malcomb. She leads organizational development and strategic initiatives, including strategic planning. In 2017, Brajevich was recognized as a Top 50 Most Influential CMO's and Marketing Leaders by Science of Digital Marketing. In 2016, she was also honored by the Internet Marketing Association (IMA) with a Women Leaders Award and in 2015, was recognized as a Women of Influence by Real Estate Forum Magazine.



### **Anne Bretaña, Principal** *Gensler, Newport Beach*

Anne Bretaña is a principal at Gensler Newport Beach who is a trusted partner to her clients as she works with them to create high-performance workplaces that boost performance and innovation. She joined Gensler in 2007 and has over 24

years of experience in the design and architecture industry. As a respected workplace leader, she led the Gensler design teams on the PIMCO Headquarters and Broadcom projects and continues to provide the highest level of service to many high-profile clients in Orange County and around the country. Within Gensler, she is a people-focused Studio Leader who is driven to help team members follow their personal passions in their careers while providing the highest level of service to their clients. Bretaña's forte is her ability to engage with her clients as their partner on projects while gaining their trust to become their advocate and understand their business from a global standpoint.



### **Marlo Brooke, CEO/Founder**

*Avatar Partners Inc., Huntington Beach*

Marlo Brooke founded AVATAR Partners in 2003 with the mission of protecting the democratic rights that are embodied in the vision of America and its Allied Countries, and those the world over who urgently seek and need such rights. As president of AVATAR Partners for the past 15 years, Brooke is a recognized thought leader in warfighter readiness and innovative, advanced training systems, job aids and software systems. Brooke provides vision, leadership and oversight of all programs and customer relationships that support the Department of Defense and Commercial Industry. Under her leadership, API has developed over 50 unique products that have been successfully used in the marketplace by over 10,000 organizations. Brooke is highly motivated to translate needs of operators, first responders and the warfighter, into improved, simplified applications and processes that improve efficiency, effectiveness and safety, quickly and affordably.



### **Michelle Brown, Real Estate Agent**

*The Agency, Corona del Mar*

Michelle Brown recently joined The Agency in Corona del Mar following 16 years with two other area brokerages. She thrives on the ultra-competitive market selling residential real estate in many desirable coastal and inland communities. As a 25-year resident of Corona del Mar and active investor in the community, Brown offers her clients a unique insider's perspective related to market knowledge, property values, sales trends and exemplary quality of life. With nearly \$400 million in sales,

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## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

Brown and her partners, Dana Christensen and Cara Farley are recognized as a trusted and talented real estate group. Brown's past experience includes many years working for The Irvine Company as director of marketing for Fashion Island and a lead member of the development team for the Irvine Spectrum Center. Brown also created a consulting firm and implemented marketing strategies for many well-known retailers and a Forbes 50 pharmaceutical company.

### Jen Bruni, Co-Founder

*Bruni Media, Aliso Viejo*

Jen Bruni is the co-founder of Bruni Media is a modern-day full-service digital agency. They specialize in both digital and traditional marketing/Advertising, tying both the offline and online worlds together with intelligent data. The company was founded in 2016 by Jen Bruni and her husband, Sam Bruni, a 20 year veteran in the technology and e-commerce space. Since establishing the company, Jen Bruni has very quickly evolved her involvement and expertise into media planning, media buying, finances, and training.

### Dana Butler-Moburg, Executive Director

*The Shea Center, San Juan Capistrano*

For 21 years, Dana Butler-Moburg has been the executive director for the J.F. Shea Therapeutic Riding Center in San Juan Capistrano. The Shea Center is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs. During her tenure, the organization has grown from a \$335,000 to a \$4.7 million annual operating budget. Program services have increased to over 14,000 hours annually, serving more than 1,200 clients. The Center is one of the largest therapeutic equestrian centers in the world. Butler-Moburg brings an extensive background in nonprofit management and administration to The Shea Center with an emphasis in community organization, development, communications, and board management. She spent seven years with the American Heart Association in Los Angeles during which time she received two national awards for her work in communications and marketing. Her work in the therapeutic equestrian field has been nationally recognized numerous times.

### Leslie Calhoun, President/CEO

*Optivest Inc., Dana Point*

Early in her 12-year career history with Optivest, Leslie Calhoun eagerly took increasing responsibility until she was independently operating the company. She spent the remaining years being mentored by the founder learning the nuances of business development, vetting investments, providing solid financial advice and offering diversified and durable investment portfolios to high net-worth families nationwide. On December 31, 2018, Calhoun bought the firm from the retiring founder and is now sole owner of Optivest, Inc. which manages over \$450 million of client assets. Calhoun represents a double minority, being both a female financial advisor and a female financial industry CEO. A priority for Calhoun was to preserve the firm's culture of caring deeply for the staff of the company who make it possible for the firm to serve its clients. She also wanted to preserve the values on which the firm was established; that Optivest exists to serve others and thereby donates the first 10 percent of gross revenues to the Optivest Foundation, a 501(c)3 which supports charitable initiatives worldwide.

### Laura Catalino, Senior Vice President, Investor Relations

*M360 Advisors, Ladera Ranch*

Laura Catalino's career began with traditional financial services companies, however, in 2015 she joined M360 Advisors, an alternative asset advisor whose core strategy invests in a niche commercial real estate segment of private credit, an opportunity that married her expertise in financial services with her personal passion for real estate. Shortly after Catalino joined as senior vice president of Investor Relations, the strategy launched. Since then, she has been responsible for introducing the strategy to family offices, wealth managers and other accredited investors. In less than three years since the launch, the firm has grown to more than \$650 million in gross assets under management. The strength of Catalino's achievements is borne in the relationships she's built. Some wealth managers who started with six clients investing in the strategy now have as many as 28 clients invested with M360, a testament to the work Catalino has done to educate the market.

### Bernadette Chala, Chief Legal Officer/General Counsel

*Arbonne International LLC, Irvine*

Bernadette Chala joined Arbonne in 2012, supporting their Legal and Compliance teams, first as corporate counsel and now as chief legal officer and general



counsel. Chala's responsibilities include overseeing Arbonne's day-to-day legal affairs and direct sales compliance, managing Arbonne's intellectual property estate, overseeing marketing compliance, and supporting Arbonne's Regulatory team and global product distribution and expansion. Before joining Arbonne, Chala served as the General Counsel of American Sporting Goods/AVIA, a leading manufacturer and supplier of footwear and apparel, where she oversaw that company's entire legal affairs and compliance efforts. She earned her Juris Doctor from UCLA School of Law and is an active member of the State Bar of California.

### Therese Cheevers, Senior Manager

*Windes Inc., Irvine*

Therese Cheevers joined Windes in 2007 and has since moved up quickly to a senior manager position in the firm's Employee Benefit Services department. Cheevers has served the retirement plan needs of small-to middle-market corporations and unincorporated entities since 1984. Her practice focus includes pension and cash balance plans, 401(k) plans and cross-tested profit sharing plans, along with plan compliance, correction, and IRS reporting. Prior to joining Windes, Cheevers held a number of key positions at administration firms, including building her own business, serving as president of Benefit Associates, Inc. of Orange, CA. Cheevers' expertise is maximizing efficiency within her practice, saving clients money and driving brand loyalty.

### Chelsea Cox, MPH, MSW, Associate Director of Education

*UC Irvine Institute for Memory Impairments and Neurological Disorders, Irvine*

Having lost her father to Alzheimer's disease, Chelsea Cox's personal mission is to serve individuals impacted by dementia and to help move researchers closer to improved treatments and prevention for this devastating disease. She joined UC Irvine Institute for Memory Impairments and Neurological Disorders (UCI MIND) in 2015 after serving in the national education corps, Teach For America, and earning masters degrees in Public Health and Social Work from the University of Southern California. In her role, Cox oversees educational programming and communications to increase public awareness of brain health and Alzheimer's disease research. She has organized over 150 in-person educational seminars, reaching more than 6,000 Orange County community members annually. Additionally, Cox serves as editor for UCI MIND's quarterly newsletter, website, and social media platforms, reaching over 8,000 subscribers. And as a researcher, she has published six peer-reviewed papers on topics related to the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and clinical trial participation.

### Dana Christensen, Real Estate Agent

*The Agency, Corona del Mar*

Dana Christensen, a founding partner of the BROWN and CHRISTENSEN group with nearly \$400 million in sales, is an area resident and highly trusted residential real estate professional representing buyer and seller clients along the gorgeous coastal communities. Christensen recently joined The Agency following a long tenure at another local brokerage. Christensen and her real estate partners Michelle Brown and Cara Farley conduct business with a strategic formula to generate the greatest return on their clients' investments. Prior to transitioning to the residential real estate business, Christensen held high-level director positions in the areas of general management, marketing, tourism and public relations with premier Arizona-based shopping center developers and owners.

### Claudia Chyang, Realtor

*International Home Realty, Irvine*

Claudia Chyang has been recognized as top salesperson in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 for International Home Realty. She specializes in helping oversee investors invest in the US real estate market. Chyang is fluent in Mandarin and has become a well known and respected realtor in the Orange County market with over \$200 million in sales. She was awarded Presidents club for top sales with Toll Brothers for New homes. Chyang has been a featured international speaker with ICBC bank, Private investor events and HSBC featured partner. In addition, she has mentored and trained many new agents to success.

### Janet Colclaser, Senior Aide to Irvine Council Member Anthony Kuo

*City of Irvine, Irvine*

Janet Colclaser's employment history includes years as a marketing coordinator for several civil engineering firms and as a City Council Aide in the City of Irvine. Currently, she is employed by the City of Irvine as the senior aide to Irvine Council





## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

Member Anthony Kuo. Colclaser was appointed to the City of Irvine's Planning Commission, where she served terms as chair and vice chair. As a planning commissioner, Colclaser was appointed to numerous committees, including one that rewrote the City's zoning ordinance. Colclaser was a founding Board member of the Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF) and served on the Board of Directors for 12 years, during which time the Foundation grew from its inception to over \$72 million in permanent assets. She was also a founding Board member of the Irvine Public Schools Foundation, which brought together parents and the business community to support public schools in the Irvine Unified School District.



### **Penny Cotner, President/Chief Executive Officer** *Infinite Electronics Inc., Irvine*

As Infinite Electronics' president and chief executive officer, Penny Cotner leads the executive management team to drive growth and shareholder value. Cotner has 25 years of experience in the electronics industry, from engineering positions at Hughes Aircraft Company and with Rockwell's Space Station Program, to leadership roles in marketing and sales operations with Fortune 500 global electronics distributor, Arrow Electronics. When Cotner joined Infinite Electronics in 2013, she brought with her a deep knowledge of the technical, engineering customer base, industrial electronic components, and strategic direction. Before becoming president and CEO, she held the positions within the company as VP of Sales and Service and chief revenue officer. With her extensive experience in technology and leadership, the transition to CEO of a rapidly growing, tech-focused business is both a natural next step and an amazing accomplishment.



### **Diane Craig, Surgeon/CFO**

*Veterinary Surgical Specialists of Orange County, Tustin*  
Dr. Diane Craig was the driving force behind the founding and construction of the Advanced Veterinary Specialty Group in the Jamboree Plaza in Tustin in 1999. Since then the Plaza has become the home of 10 independent veterinary specialty practices involving all of the major disciplines of veterinary medicine and a resource for both



pet owners and general veterinary practitioners. Dr. Craig is a 1983 graduate of the University of California, Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, and completed a surgical internship and residency at Cornell University. She has been a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons since 1991 and holds dual certification in both small and large animal surgery. Craig is also a co-owner of AVSG After Hours, a 24-hour emergency service. She is an associate professor and clinical instructor of Surgery with the Western University School of Veterinary Medicine. She is the past president of the Southern California Veterinary Medical Association and is the current president of the California Veterinary Medical Association.

### **Kristen Croxton, Senior Vice President, Originations** *Capital One, Newport Beach*

Kristen Croxton is a senior vice president, Originations on Capital One's Multifamily Finance team and a leader in the Orange County commercial real estate market. With over 20 years of experience in commercial real estate, Croxton took the lead in expanding Capital One's commercial real estate business on the West Coast, opening the first office in Newport Beach. Since 2011, Croxton has performed as one of Capital One's top producers for agency volume, closing over \$4.8 billion dollars in transactions. A recipient of numerous company and industry awards, Croxton is a top producer with an unyielding focus on growing her portfolio and developing her team's performance. During her years at Capital One, she has expanded her role as a leader, developing and mentoring talent in her office. Croxton has a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from James Madison University. An active member of the commercial real estate community, she has held numerous leadership positions from the Orange County chapter of Commercial Real Estate Women.



### **Nazy Curtis, President**

*Newport Hair Loss Center, Newport Beach*  
Nazy Curtis is an award-winning, European-trained hairstylist and salon owner with years of experience in the hair industry. A top stylist in Newport Beach, California, she is an educator and speaker, who presents on topics that relate to hair loss, hair replacement systems, surviving breast cancer, and more. An accomplished individual, Curtis speaks four languages and works with oncologists and plastic surgeons as relates to their



## CONGRATULATIONS TO CITY NATIONAL COLLEAGUES Natasha Davis & Marie-Lou Godinez for being recognized in the 2019 Women in Business Awards



**Natasha Davis**  
*Vice President and Senior Wealth Planner  
of Wealth Planning Group, Orange County*



**Marie-Lou Godinez**  
*Senior Vice President and Senior Relationship Manager  
for Commercial Banking, Orange County*



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patients who are suffering the devastating effects of hair loss due to disease and other physical conditions. Beyond addressing hair loss due to medical issues, she has developed an extensive line of human hair products to meet the needs of anyone looking to add volume, length or achieve a new look that is comfortable, attractive and affordable.

### Kristin Daher, President/Chief Storyteller

*Powerhouse Communications, Santa Ana*

Kristin Daher is the president and chief storyteller of Powerhouse Communications, an agency offering an imaginative approach to PR, influencer relations and social media. Specializing in the franchise, foodservice and CPG industries, Powerhouse has represented a wide range of national restaurant chains and consumer brands. Current clients include It's A Grind, Mountain Mike's Pizza, Gloria Jean's, Juice It Up!, Philly's Best, House of Blues, Togo's, Hawaiian Host and Mauna Loa. After spending over a decade in leadership positions at various PR agencies, Daher was presented with the opportunity to purchase the firm where she was serving as VP. In December 2015, Powerhouse Communications was born with Daher's vision of building an agency that fostered employee development and a creative approach to traditional PR. Over the past three years, Powerhouse has been honored with six awards by the Orange County chapter of the Public Relations Society of America.



### Wendy Dailey, President

*International Sanctuary, Irvine*

In 2007, Wendy Dailey co-founded a 501(c)(3) social enterprise dedicated to fighting human trafficking by empowering women escaping human trafficking to embrace their true identity and worth. Human trafficking is the 2nd largest crime in the world (2nd to drugs) and the fastest growing as humans can be resold. International Sanctuary provides survivors employment handcrafting jewelry so that they are financially self-supporting and have a safe and loving workplace community where they can heal from trauma and be equipped with essential education and job skills. Initially, Dailey led US operations - focusing on sales and marketing - creating fashion-forward positioning, messaging, branding and distribution to drive demand and generate the financial resources to fund the social program. In 2016, Dailey assumed the role as president of the organization and, through her strategic, courageous, and loving leadership, has more than doubled the impact of the organization as measured by revenue, countries operating, workplace sanctuaries, and participants served.



### Kim Damron, President/CEO

*Paciolan, Irvine*

Kim Damron is president and CEO of Irvine-based Paciolan, a Learfield IMG College company and leader in live events ticketing, fundraising, marketing and CRM. In her tenure as president and CEO, she has grown Paciolan's engineering organization by 30 percent. Under Damron's leadership, Paciolan serves 500 live entertainment organizations and enables the sale of more than 120 million tickets per year. Paciolan powers over 125 college athletic programs, more than 100 professional sports and arenas organizations, 75 performing arts venues and several regional ticketing partners who serve hundreds of venues. In recent years, Damron forged a game-changing alliance with the ticket marketplace, StubHub, and built Paciolan's now-thriving marketing services division from the ground up. She led Paciolan through its 2018 acquisition by Learfield and subsequent merger with IMG College as well as Paciolan's acquisition of TicketsWest and West Coast Entertainment.



### Laura Dang, Director/Private Wealth Advisor

*MUFG Union Bank, N.A., Irvine*

Laura Dang is a leader in wealth management in Orange County. She is based in Irvine and serves as a director and private wealth advisor for The Private Bank of MUFG Union Bank, N.A. Dang has deep knowledge and experience in all areas of private banking, including wealth planning, investments, risk management, trust and estate services, and business banking. She and her team build consultative client relationships by providing wealth management advice centered on the client's unique financial goals. Dang began her career in financial services in 1986, working with middle market companies and affluent individuals. She joined The Private Bank in 2009. In 2018, she and other senior women within The Private Bank formed the Women's Advisory Council, which was created in support of Women and Wealth, one of The Private Bank's key areas of focus and differentiation. The council delivers thought leadership, tools and insights, educational client events, and professional development to better serve the unique financial needs of women.



### Kimberlee Davis, Managing Director/Partner

*The Bahnsen Group, Hightower Advisors, Newport Beach*

Kimberlee Davis is an integral part of the senior leadership team of The Bahnsen

Group, and as both a partner and private wealth advisor has contributed significantly to the company's 2.5 times growth of assets under management since 2015 when they transitioned from Morgan Stanley to The Bahnsen Group as an independent Registered Investment Advisor. In addition to specializing in personal wealth advising, Davis oversees the Financial and Retirement Planning for the company, and her proficiency also includes helping individuals to transition to financial independence after life-altering events such as death or divorce, inheritance, or liquidity events from the sale of private businesses. Davis is also a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst, and analyzes and consults on the financial impact of divorce settlements. Davis has also created The Fiscal Feminist platform, where she authors a series of blogs, podcasts, and videos, with a focus of advisory guidance and education in a mission to help women secure their financial futures.



### Natasha Davis, Senior Wealth Planner

*City National Bank, Irvine*

Natasha M. Davis, JD, MBA, LL.M. (Taxation) Sr. wealth planner came from a decade of private law practice as a business litigation attorney and corporate tax planning expert. She brings a wealth of knowledge to CNB through her experience with restructuring small to medium sized businesses for tax mitigation, asset protection, estate and succession planning for successful generational transfers. She graduated from Thomas Jefferson School of Law with an LL.M. in taxation, Summa Cum Laude and subsequently taught in the graduate program, Corporate Tax law and Income Tax law. She now serves on the board of directors at TJSL's alumni association. Her passion and experience for educating business owners with exit planning have led her to help facilitate the creation of a stronger and more robust Business Exit Strategy planning Team (BEST) at CNB.



### Therese DeGroot, Managing Director

*First Bank, Lake Forest*

Therese DeGroot has a unique professional background that includes experience leading both for-profit and nonprofit teams. After several years in commercial banking, she was a pioneer in developing the risk management profile for banks to understand how to effectively brand and build out teams to profitably provide and service financial services to church, school, and nonprofit niches nationwide. After 25 years of consistently serving these markets, she is considered one of the top financial service providers of choice in the industry. DeGroot expanded First Bank's commercial banking focus by structuring new business lines to provide strategic solutions to church, school, and nonprofit markets with concrete, profitable results. She is a key member of the management team directing sales management, marketing, administration, and business process improvement in a timely and cost-effective manner. DeGroot also took a sabbatical from banking several years ago and joined a large social service nonprofit, Share Our Selves, as the chief operating officer.



### Jennifer Delcham, Co-Founder

*Ways & Means Oyster House, Huntington Beach*

As a co-founder of WM Development, Jennifer Delcham contributes her extensive experience in legal and operational counseling to the back office operations of all WM Development locations. She oversees food and beverage menu development and curates the wine list for each of Ways & Means locations. Throughout her work with the company, Delcham is instrumental in negotiating new leases across the United States and internationally. Some of her accomplishments include opening the flagship location of Ways & Means Oyster House at Pacific City in 2016 and in 2017 she helped with the expansion to Portland. In 2019, under Delcham's leadership, Ways & means will be opening locations in La Jolla and Del Mar, Austin TX and Los Angeles. In 2020 Ways & Means will also be opening two locations in Hawaii. Delcham has also founded and managed several start-up companies of her own, in areas ranging from marketing to financial technology. Delcham served as an adjunct professor at the University of California Irvine and Hope International University teaching legal studies and public speaking.




### Dina Delp, CPA, CFO

*Institutional Wealth Consultants, Santa Ana*

Mark and Dina Delp started their personal financial planning firm in 2009 and ended that year with three employees and under \$500k of sales. This year they have 21 employees and expected sales of over \$7 million. Dina Delps' accounting and budgeting expertise was essential in financing this growth. Additionally, she can proudly say because of her ability to plan ahead, they have never had to lay off a worker or cut someone's pay or hours due to economic slowdowns. Her firm now advises on over \$1 billion in client assets. This puts them in the top 10







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**Jennifer Saurat, MBA '15**  
Regional Operations Director  
DaVita, Inc.



**UCI** Paul Merage  
School of Business

Leadership for a Digitally Driven World™

## **Congratulations UCI Merage School Women In Business nominees:**

**Gina Heitkamp, FEMBA '14**, CEO Gengirl Media Inc.

**Karen Nguyen, FEMBA '11**, Founder/CEO, Inspired Art Wine

**Penny Cotner, EMBA '12**, President/CEO, Infinite Electronics, Inc.



## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

percent of all firms nationwide. Delp is proud of how she has helped build a company culture that allows all employees to be part of their community. This might explain why over 80 percent of the employees are involved in at least one community organization. It also might explain why the firm has also zero employee turnover and has above average client and employee satisfaction.

### **Carol DeNembo, Vice President of Marketing**

*Mountain Mike's Pizza, LLC, Newport Beach*

In 2018, Carol DeNembo joined Mountain Mike's Pizza, LLC, a leading family-style pizza chain in California and the Western U.S. known for serving "Pizza the way it oughta be®" after the company was acquired by the family offices of Britt Private Capital and Jupiter Holdings in 2017. DeNembo currently serves as the vice president of marketing and is responsible for the management of all systemwide brand and marketing initiatives, budget to achieve or exceed annual sales goals, as well as providing overall marketing leadership, vision, and direction to expand and grow the Mountain Mike's Pizza brand. Since coming on board, she has played an integral role in securing strategic partnerships, developing new brand promotions, establishing and driving the company's social media presence as well as updating internal programs and marketing new store openings.



### **Jeannie Denholm, President**

*SCAPE- Southern California Art Project + Exhibitions, Corona del Mar*

Jeannie Denholm launched Southern California Arts Projects and Exhibitions (SCAPE) in 2003 with a business colleague, Diane Nelson. Denholm became sole owner of SCAPE in 2016. SCAPE is a highly respected business that collaborates with galleries and artists to bring noteworthy exhibitions to Orange County's art community. The business's mission is to provide a fundamental link in Orange County to established art collectors, beginning art enthusiasts, regional art institutions, artists and art students through innovative programming, scheduled art exhibitions, educational seminars, co-sponsored events and curatorial services. Significant art exhibitions and salon style cultural evenings are scheduled throughout each year. Additionally, Denholm provides full-service art collection management for private and corporate multi-million dollar collections. Denholm has 30 years of experience conducting intricate research, establishing connections with the art market in the US and abroad, and developing personal connoisseurship.



### **Deborah Dickson, CPA, CFF, MAFF, President/CEO**

*Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corp., Irvine*

From her beginnings as one of the few women working at the "Big 8" CPA firms, Deborah Dickson, CPA, CFF, MAFF progressed to form Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corporation in 1982. Dickson remains the only woman to found and manage a "Top Accounting Firm" in Orange County, as ranked by the Business Journal. As the founder, CEO, and president of Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corporation, Dickson has grown the firm from a one-person practice with no formal office to a thriving company with sophisticated CPAs on staff. She has carved out a niche specialty, a Forensic CPA Litigation Support practice, in a very tough and competitive field. She has shaped this into one of the most well-known forensic CPA and expert witness accounting teams in California. Clients include leading national and boutique law firms such as Sheppard Mullin, Allen Matkins, and Buchalter, attesting to Smith Dickson's expertise and success in this field.



### **Diane Dillon, Director of Social Catering**

*Hotel Irvine, Irvine*

If you have planned an event in Orange County, there's a pretty good chance you know – and love – Diane Dillon. During her career, Dillon has planned hundreds of events at Hotel Irvine and has been responsible for serving thousands of guests. She has spent numerous hours watching events come to life, and hundreds of more hours behind the scenes planning and making sure that guests walk away with an exceptional experience. Through it all, the one thing that never changes is her infectious personality and constant desire to create an atmosphere of excellence. 2019 wasn't the only year of success for Dillon. She has been an integral member of the catering team at Hotel Irvine for more than 20 years. She has an undeniable enthusiasm for her job, a consummate focus and attention to detail when it comes to event planning, and her commitment to her guests is unwavering. Her clients return year after year knowing they can wholeheartedly depend on Dillon to take charge and make their event a success.



### **Marie DiSante, Founder/Firm Managing Partner**

*Carothers DiSante & Freudenberger LLP, Irvine*

Marie DiSante has been successfully defending companies in labor and employment law matters for over 30 years. In addition, she has been at the helm of her firm since its inception in 1994 as the firm managing partner where she focused on her ingrained value of inclusion that resulted in women and minority

attorneys making up 60 percent of the firm. Not only does she have a successful law practice and manage a firm of over 45 attorneys with five offices spanning California, she has a solidified reputation for aggressively defending her clients, for advocating for women in law and leadership positions, for advocating for animals and for being an irreplaceable asset to the Orange County business community. Recently, SuperLawyers® included her in the Top 50 Attorneys in Orange County for 2019. She has also been listed as a Southern California Super Lawyers® from 2014 to 2019.



### **Lisa Doherty, Executive Vice President**

*Wood Gutmann & Bogart Insurance Brokers, Tustin*

Lisa Doherty has 20 years of experience in the insurance industry and has been with WGB since 1998. She founded the Private Client Services Department in 1998, which now boasts nearly 2,500 customers and 7,000 policies under management. The department represents roughly 20 percent of total agency P&C revenue. Doherty earned the Certified Advisor of Personal Insurance (CAPI) professional designation, which qualifies her to advise highly successful clients with complex risk management needs. The Private Client Services Department has earned a Chubb Cornerstone Agency designation consistently since 2008. Only three percent of Chubb's agents qualify for this designation every year. The Private Client Services Department is a Paragon Agency with PURE Insurance. The first agency in Orange County to receive such a designation within an elite group of top performers in the nation. Top 10 percent of brokers in Southern California Region and one of the top performing brokers in the state since PURE launched in CA in 2014.



### **Linda Donahue, Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer**

*Form I-9 Compliance, Newport Beach*

Linda Donahue joined Form I-9 Compliance (Fi9) in 2006 and became a senior member of the management team building the company from its very first invoice to the stable and financially strong organization it is today. Form I-9 Compliance now employs 17 employees and supports more than 3,500 clients in all 50 states. She has been instrumental in helping the company achieve its overall goals but also each and every member of the team at Fi9. In addition to managing the financial vibrancy of the company, she also instituted a Giving Back program for Fi9 including championing the attendance of the team in fundraising efforts and attendance of the CHOC Follies, and partnering with Share Our Selves (SOS) homeless outreach for Thanksgiving and Christmas giving including the Adopt a Family program. Donahue has a proven record of long-tenured executive roles as CFO/COO for four different organizations over the last 30 years. She has operational experience in major publicly traded and private corporations.



### **Shawn Dougherty, Founder/CEO**

*EXOIO, Newport Beach*

Founded by Shawn Dougherty in 2017, EXOIO is a hands-on venture studio that provides early-stage consumer brands with expertise, resources and access to a curated network of investors and retail connections. EXOIO assists with product design, direct to consumer / ecommerce strategy, supply chain / logistics, talent acquisition and preparation for raising capital. In addition, Dougherty is the co-founder of mophie, an award-winning designer and manufacturer of premium portable power and storage solutions for the rapidly growing mobile device market. She co-founded the business in 2005 and by 2016, it had grown to be a \$250 million dollar company, selling products in 30,000 global retailers in 130 countries. In 2018 Dougherty joined Titan HST as a strategic advisor. Titan HST allows people, including security personnel, maintenance staff, and guests to communicate via app, text, email, web, and phone during an emergency.



### **Rhonda Ducote, President**

*Apriem Advisors, Irvine*

As a dedicated wealth manager for Apriem Advisors with more than two decades of experience, Rhonda Ducote's leadership has helped propel the investment advisory firm to about \$700 million in assets under management at the fastest growth rate of a firm its size in Orange County. It has appeared on the Financial Times' coveted FT300 list for the nation's top financial advisors the past two years. A graduate of the elite Charles Schwab Executive Leadership Program, she often makes speaking appearances for industry professionals and Southern California's growing class of female investors. Apriem's Women of Wisdom program, which Ducote has championed, targets another significant demographic – women who are taking the reins of their family's finances for the first time. In addition to her impressive business repertoire, Ducote is also on the advisory board for SoCal Hospice Foundation and the UCI Center for Investment & Wealth Management.





## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

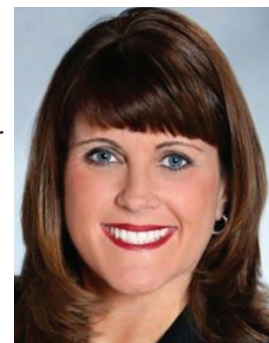
### Laura DuPriest, Entrepreneur/Author

*Laura DuPriest Inc., Huntington Beach*

Laura DuPriest is an accomplished cosmetologist, esthetician, manicurist, spa therapist and industry entrepreneur with 39 years of experience. She is currently the founder and president of Laura DuPriest Inc. that produces beauty products and provides consulting and expert witness services for the salon and day/med spa industry. Her keen interest in natural products with a focus on alpha hydroxy acids and their effect on skin lead to the development of a full line of botanical based skin care products used in her salons for 32 years. In 2003 her show, *Natural Beauty - Pamper Yourself* with *Salon Secrets at Home*, debuted on PBS and was nominated for an Emmy Award. Random House Publishing commissioned DuPriest to author a comprehensive how-to book using the same natural ingredients. *Natural Beauty®* became the most popular beauty book on Amazon in December of 2003. DuPriest has been recognized for her accomplishments with editorial features in numerous beauty publications and she has served as a Beauty Ambassador and Media Spokesperson for Maybelline, Covergirl, Waterpik, Venus and Appearix.



success led to a rapid promotion to director of sales—a role overseeing all sales teams in San Diego and one she held for more than 10 years. In this time, the San Diego business grew to over \$150 million/year in sales. In 2014, Duva moved into her current position. As vice president of Cox Business for the Orange Coast market, encompassing Orange County, Palos Verdes, and Santa Barbara, Duva is responsible for leading a team of 100 employees that delivers telecommunications services to local businesses of all sizes, including hotels, medical centers, school districts, nonprofit organizations and government agencies. Under Duva's leadership, Cox Business has expanded its broadband network in Orange County, enabling the company to bring next-generation telecommunications services to even more businesses and organizations, including those in new commercial and community developments like The Orange County Great Park.



### Jamie Duran, President

*Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, Irvine*

Jamie Duran serves as president of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage overseeing the company's Southern California operations with a combined sales volume of \$24.4 billion and 22,621 transaction sides in 2017. She manages approximately 4,480 agents and 78 offices in southern California, including the Greater Los Angeles, Orange County, Riverside County, and San Diego markets. Duran, who was named in Swanepoel T3 Group's "Top 200 Most Powerful People in Residential Real Estate 2017/18" list, began her real estate career with Coldwell Banker in the Greater Los Angeles market, spending 10 years in Studio City as an agent, assistant manager and regional education director. She then served 12 years as branch manager in Ventura and Studio City before becoming the district manager and later the regional vice president in the Inland region. She was then promoted to president of the Orange County/San Diego company in 2014.



### Tia Dwyer, Chief Operating Officer

*Think Together, Santa Ana*

After spending the first decade of her career teaching and administering the after-school programs in Lawndale School District, Tia Dwyer joined Think Together in 2009 as the director of summer learning. She quickly became the Orange County general manager, at the time Think's largest regional operation. Subsequently, she became chief of program & operations where she oversaw six regions across California; and had responsibilities for all program content as well as data & evaluation. Two years ago, Dwyer became Think's first chief operating officer which included oversight of human resources which is a large issue at Think Together given their 2,700 employee base. In addition, she oversees all business development efforts across the state. More than 90 percent of the organization reports to Dwyer. Think Together, a nonprofit organization is what is known as a social enterprise. Think is organized as a nonprofit, operates for a public purpose, to improve the educational outcomes for low-income students and students of color – 60 percent of CA, and run like a business.



### Jodi Duva, Vice President, Cox Business, Orange Coast

*Cox Business, Foothill Ranch*

Jodi Duva joined Cox Business 15 years ago as a sales manager in San Diego. She took her team of outside sales reps to market and company leading performance. This

### Gwen Earle, Orange County Regional Director

*Better Business Bureau, Newport Beach*

A renowned, award-winning business and marketing authority known for her leadership in corporate telecommunications, Gwen Earle provides a range of unique and executive-level expertise in all aspects of marketing, research, and



Congratulations to  
**Lisa & Lupe**  
on your nominations as two of the top  
businesswomen in Orange County!



### Lisa Doherty

**Certified Advisor of Personal Insurance (CAPI)**

Executive Vice President

Executive Director of Private Client Services

Lisa@wgbib.com

714.824.8338

### Lupe Erwin

**Certified Advisor of Personal Insurance (CAPI)**

Executive Vice President

Private Client Services

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## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

analytics from both private and non-profit sector organizations. Currently, as Orange County regional director for the Better Business Bureau (BBB), serving the Pacific Southwest, Earle works diligently to build trust, create better consumer awareness, and cultivate long-standing relationships. In her early years which began in 2013 as an arbitration and mediation specialist for BBB, Earle facilitated dispute resolution for consumers and business owners. She led the predominantly male pool of arbitrators through the alternative dispute resolution program. From managing media relations and outreach to acting as a spokesperson for the organization, to providing safe spaces for challenges between consumers and local companies, Earle has become a trusted partner for her Orange County community.



### Neda Eaton, President/CEO

*Irvine Public Schools Foundation, Irvine*

Neda Eaton is a visionary leader with a passion for serving the community. For ten years, Eaton has served as president and chief executive officer of the Irvine Public Schools Foundation (IPSF), one of the leading educational foundations in the nation. She is entrusted with ensuring that high-quality enrichment programs in critical areas such as the arts, music, science, math, and mental health and wellness are sustained in public schools. In her role, she is responsible for guiding the strategic visioning and direction of the foundation, program and social enterprise development, day-to-day operations, and implementation of various fundraising campaigns and initiatives. Under Eaton's leadership, IPSF has achieved tremendous success by strategically uniting the business, parent, and community to earn the reputation of the premier educational foundation in California. Since she joined the foundation, IPSF's total annual amount raised has increased by 183 percent, raising over \$6.5 million annually with an operating budget of over \$8 million.



### Jami Eidsvold, Founder/CEO

*Smarty Social Media, Inc., Santa Ana*

Started as a one-woman shop, Jami Eidsvold has grown Smarty Social Media to a highly-creative, results-driven team of 25. She has over 15 years of experience in digital public relations, influencer programs, as well as brand and business strategy, working with major names like Invisalign, Coolsculpting, and Whole Foods. Smarty was honored in 2018 as a Bronze Stevie Award Winner for Women in Business and was a finalist for the Social Media Agency of the Year Award from PR News. Additionally, Smarty has been honored with numerous awards alongside partner agencies including a 2017 award for Best Facebook Marketing Campaign from PR News Social Media Awards. Smarty celebrated its five year anniversary in 2018 by being recognized as one of the top Women-Owned Businesses by the Orange County Business Journal. This recognition came as the result of an impressive 71 percent revenue growth from 2016-2017 -a level sustained in 2018 as Smarty continued to nurture long term relationships and expand its client roster.



### Lauren Ellermeyer, Co-Founder

*Beyond Fifteen Communications, Newport Beach*

As a premium PR agency, Beyond Fifteen Communications has built a reputation for going above and beyond typical industry standards to deliver an unprecedented level of media and market attention to its clientele. With its implementation of entrepreneurial ideas linked with results-driven strategies, Beyond Fifteen has redefined the typical agency/client relationship. Co-founder Lauren Ellermeyer has utilized her innovative business style, instinctive eye for new talent, and her public relations and social media expertise to grow Beyond Fifteen from startup to nationally-acclaimed powerhouse, all in under ten years. In addition to cultivating Beyond Fifteen's collaborative, "client first" business approach, Ellermeyer also finds the time to put the community first. As a long-time partner of TedXOrange Coast and a board member and Philanthropy Chair for American Family Housing, Ellermeyer pours her energy into giving back. Moreover, her favorite activity is developing creative ways to inspire students and industry leaders on the successful execution of entrepreneurial goals.



### Julia Erdkamp, Founder/CEO

*Coxswain Consulting, Anaheim*

Stepping out on her own in 2017, Julia Erdkamp hit the ground running as CEO of Coxswain Consulting. With her proven track record as a trusted advisor leading major strategic initiatives, she has become a key thought leader in the high performance space. In 2018 she gained the attention of several corporations providing training, consultation, and support on efforts to strategically improve and expand operations. Her success and implementation of high performance strategies gained her



recognition and a feature in the California Business Journal. Today, Erdkamp sits on the Advisory Board and serves as the chief strategic advisor, for one of the most groundbreaking technology companies in California, Anami Technologies. She also continues to be a highly sought after speaker on many business strategy topics. Prior to joining the leadership of Coxswain, Erdkamp worked as a local government consultant managing a client portfolio of approximately \$5 billion in general revenues, helping local officials, business owners, and residents enrich their communities through economic development and revenue enhancement. Erdkamp also worked for 14 years in the public sector managing various information technology, finance/budgetary, and marketing departments.

### Lupe Erwin, Executive Vice President

*Wood Gutmann & Bogart Insurance Brokers, Tustin*

Lupe Erwin has been with Wood Gutmann & Bogart for over 17 years. Along with Lisa Doherty, Erwin founded the Private Client Practice of WBG, a national thought leader in high net worth insurance risk solutions and risk management. Erwin is responsible for bringing key COI relationships to the firm and is the first woman in the company's history to break the million dollar revenue stream. Erwin successfully completed the Certified Advisor of Personal Insurance (CAPI) and challenging designation through the Wharton School of Business. For two years she wrote a series of insurance and risk mitigation related articles published in Worth Magazine, A National publication that caters to the most successful families in the United States and their advisors. She has chaired and co-chaired several Women's Wealth retreats for The Paul Merage School of Business at UCI and for over 11 years served on the Advisory board of the Center for Investment and Wealth Management at The Merage School, UCI.



### Cara Farley, Real Estate Broker/Agent

*The Agency, Corona del Mar*

Cara Farley recently joined The Agency as an accomplished coastal Broker/Real Estate Agent. Farley's innate knack for business practices, marketing and attention to detail quickly earned her a top spot in the coastal market real estate rankings. She seamlessly creates an environment where her clients thrive and enjoy the process of buying or selling real estate in a highly competitive market. Farley implements the distinct advantage of many years of sales, marketing, social media and advertising experience. Upon graduation from Arizona State University, Farley dove into the world of sales and marketing, securing a position in the highly competitive and fast-paced skincare beauty industry at L'Oreal International – a top player in the world-wide cosmetic industry. During her tenure at the cosmetic giant, she rapidly climbed the ranks leaving the organization as West Coast Sales from the dermatology division to pursue another passion - Making real estate dreams come true for home sellers and buyers.



### Kay Du Fernandez, Senior Vice President, Marketing

*Konica Minolta Business Solutions-West Region, Anaheim*

Kay Fernandez joined Konica Minolta in 2012, as director, Sales Planning for Konica Minolta's Western Region in the Direct Sales Channel. Within months she was appointed to vice president, Strategic Business Development, and in 2016 was promoted to senior vice president, Marketing. Fernandez leads the creation of innovative marketing strategies throughout the entire customer journey, building awareness of the Konica Minolta brand to ultimately enhance the customer relationship. Through digital disruption, a focus on customer experience, marketing communications, and channel management, she works to improve the value Konica Minolta delivers to customers, partners and employees. Her responsibilities also encompass strategic business development and pricing to support sales efforts for Konica Minolta's U.S. operations. In 2015, Fernandez established the Step Forward Program at Konica Minolta to inspire women in professional excellence. Most recently, Fernandez was also appointed to serve in the global digital transformation branding division for Konica Minolta Worldwide.



### Jessica Frandson, CEO

*Campo Beauty, Newport Beach*

Childhood best friends Jessica Frandson and Jill King transformed their love of essential oils, luxury beauty oils and perfume into a modern aromatherapy brand. Together they are Campo. Frandson is a serial entrepreneur with a gift for spotting needs not being met, creating products and services that simplify life and make it better. Most recently, she built and sold a hip hair tie company, Twistband, creating a movement and new category with hair ties that did not damage or leave dents in hair (no dents or damage to hair that you could wear as a bracelet, mixing fashion and function). She has over 20 years of marketing and branding experience with the non-toxic cleaning company Simple Green, where she worked closely with R&D to develop natural scent stories for their products and brought them to market. Frandson studied with a top perfume maker to learn the art of making perfume, and then applied those principles to blending essential oils that had top, middle and base notes with amazing results.





## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

### Shari Freidenrich, OC Treasurer-Tax Collector County of Orange, Santa Ana

Shari Freidenrich is the first woman ever to be elected as the Orange County treasurer. She is responsible for overseeing a \$9 billion investment portfolio as a fiduciary and banker for both the County and School and Community District funds. She is responsible for collecting all property taxes in Orange County. Freidenrich is an ex-officio member of the nine-member Orange County Pension Board that manages the \$13 billion Orange County employee's pension plan as well as a member of the Audit Oversight, Deferred Compensation and Public Financing Advisory Committees. Freidenrich currently has four other state and national certifications designating her expertise in the field of public finance and funds management. Because of her expertise and focus Freidenrich has saved the taxpayers of Orange County over \$831 million. She has also increased transparency so that taxpayers understand where their dollars are going, including Mello-Roos payments. But most importantly to OCTax, Freidenrich actually refunded millions of dollars to investment pool participants that have been overcharged prior to her taking office.



### Eulynn Gargano, Head of Test Prep and Tutoring FutureWise Consulting, Irvine

Eulynn Gargano is an entrepreneur who works with high school students across the country to achieve their dreams. Gargano firmly believes that all students have a path of purpose waiting to be discovered. Her expertise on the college admissions process has helped hundreds of students find their path to college and her advice has been showcased in many publications throughout the country, including Teen Vogue and the US News and World Report. Gargano began her tutoring career in 2006 and is an expert at identifying a student's areas for improvement and enabling them to look at the test with a knowledge that allows them to bring their scores to the level of the most competitive colleges to which they are applying. She has helped high scorers achieve perfect scores and has helped average scorers raise their scores to the elite level. Gargano believes that test preparation is a necessary tool in today's admissions process in order for students to leverage their scores to gain access to the best fit schools.



### Monica Garrett, Founder/CEO Margaux Agency, Long Beach

Founded by Monica Garrett with the mission to create modern websites and strategic visual brand identity for companies, the Margaux Agency is a top social media agency. Passionately, she believes branding is at the forefront of everyone's minds. Companies, businesses, and even entrepreneurs are making use of branding in some way or another. The need for a branded identity must occupy the key position in the strategy for success. With Garrett at the wheel, the Margaux Agency offers that and much more. You can expect quick, streamlined, and simplified solutions that also showcase the uniqueness of your brand. She uncovers and captures the distinctive quality that sets her clients apart from others. That is why Garrett insists on an initial Discovery Session before taking on any project. In these meetings, questions are posed, interviews carried out, and research is done for a complete idea of the client's current identity and online presence.



### Kimberly Gerber, President Excelerate Inc., Irvine

Kimberly Gerber, president/CEO of Excelerate, is more than passionate about business success, and she understands that strong communication skills play a significant role in achieving that success. It's no wonder that for the past two decades, Gerber's focused approach with marketing and communication strategies has successfully led Fortune 500 companies such as Starbucks and Fleetwood Enterprises toward real results. Her innovative ideas, breakthrough programs and proven techniques have served as a catalyst, helping countless C-level executives, entrepreneurs, millennials and high-potential employees reach their goals. It's why even more organizations, including Allergan, Verizon Wireless and ACCO Brands, rely on Gerber for her highly specialized communications guidance and training to help them succeed. Working with talented and high potentials; 94 percent of her clients are promoted to senior roles as a result of their work with her.



### Marie-Lou Godinez, Senior Vice President/Senior Relationship Manager City National Bank, Irvine

Marie-Lou Godinez is a senior vice president and senior relationship manager in City National Bank's Commercial Banking Services group in Orange County.



## A Leader Guided by Core Values

In her career and personal life, Tammie Brailsford has always been guided by her core values of integrity, accountability, clarity, wellbeing and service. Striving to do the right thing, taking accountability, and being other-focused, rather than self-focused, has enabled her to create a strong culture and help position MemorialCare as a leader in the industry.

**Congratulations, Tammie, on your  
2019 Women in Business nomination!**





## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

Godinez's responsibilities include underwriting and packaging commercial loan requests. Prior to joining City National, Godinez served as senior vice president and senior client manager for Bank of America's Commercial Banking Group in Costa Mesa. Godinez is very active in the community, serving as a board member or volunteer for a number of nonprofit organizations, including HomeAid, Second Harvest Food Bank and Corazon. Godinez graduated with honors from the University of San Carlos in Cebu City, Philippines, where she earned a bachelor's degree in business administration.



### Cindy Goss, President

*Propel Business Solutions, Inc., Mission Viejo*

Cindy Goss is president of Propel Business Solutions, Inc., a full-service branding and marketing firm she founded in 2010. After a successful, executive-level career in technology, staffing and non-profit sectors, Goss's vision was to form a leading-edge for-profit firm, with the "heart" of a non-profit organization. In just over nine years, the firm now serves Fortune 500 companies and operates throughout California, and specializes in branding and marketing for both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Goss considers her greatest achievement to be her ability to influence others in the Orange County business community to embrace social responsibility and share their profits, time, talents to help those in need. Propel Business Solutions today is regarded as a leading-edge, branding and marketing firm that creates national presence and increased market share for their clients. Propel Business Solutions, Inc. has achieved major milestones in 2018, as the company tripled its revenue and increased staffing to support an expansion of a new marketing automation division.



### Sue Grant, Founder/Executive Volunteer

*The Literacy Project, Newport Beach*

Sue Grant is a 30-year veteran of the nonprofit sector, having served as a founding member of seven nonprofit organizations and on 31 executive boards. She has dedicated her life to fighting illiteracy and serving struggling school-aged children. This year marks her 10th anniversary as Founder of The Literacy Project (TLP), a nonprofit organization that has served over 8,500 struggling readers across Southern California, raised more than \$3.4 million for the cause and last year crossed state lines with the opening of a new Utah chapter. Her long list of entrepreneurial achievements also includes founding OC Public Relations in 1996 and a 17-year journalism career in which she founded a first-of-its-kind charity calendar. Her passionate career earned her the California Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students Service Award, a founding director position with the Coalition for Reading Excellence in Washington, D.C., a panelist chair at the annual EUREad Summit involving 22 countries, and countless editorial features.



### Melanie Graper, Chief Human Resource Officer

*CoreLogic, Irvine*

Melanie Graper is the chief human resources officer for CoreLogic, a leading global property information, analytics and data-enabled solutions provider. She is a member of the Executive Committee and is responsible for leading the global Human Resources, Internal Communications, and Corporate Social Responsibility functions. With over 20 years of HR leadership experience, including extensive work on a global scale in Europe, Asia and Latin America, Graper's passion is driving cultural and organizational transformation through impactful, outcome-based strategies. Graper joined CoreLogic in December 2009, several months prior to the spinoff of CoreLogic from First American Title Company. Prior to joining CoreLogic, she served as VP of Human Resources at the Irvine Company, and prior to that she served in senior HR leadership roles at Mattel, Inc., J Walter Thompson, and SmithKline Beecham. Graper holds a B.S. degree in Public Administration from the University of Southern California.



### Anne Grey, Executive Director

*Alzheimer's Association Orange County Chapter, Orange*

Since joining the Alzheimer's Association's Orange County Chapter in July 2016 as executive director, Anne Grey has translated her personal passion into mission-driven action. Grey knows the challenges families face; her own grandfather died of the disease. Grey is a champion for educating the community on the importance of brain health and early detection. Among her achievements, Grey spearheaded the creation of the annual Women #ENDALZ Luncheon, which is honoring The LAB's Linda Sadeghi in May. In addition, she has scaled the nonprofit community to both reach and exceed each organization's financial goals, doubling the Alzheimer's Association's revenue each year. Grey's footprint in Orange County is evident through the innovative, scalable programs she has created, multimillion-dollar entities she has built from scratch and her ability to ensure organizations can serve causes in their totalities – from research to care,



education and more. She is relentless in her work so that Orange County families receive help when they need assistance most, and she fosters collaborations to create networks of individuals skilled in building a strong Orange County community.

### Jill Griffin, President, Advantage Marketing Partners

*Advantage Solutions, Irvine*

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



### Kaaren Hall, CEO

*uDirect IRA Services LLC, Irvine*

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



### Rebecca Hall, President/CEO

*Idea Hall, Costa Mesa*

In 2003, Rebecca Hall decided to take a chance to realize one of her greatest dreams – creating an agency that responds to the need for integrated marketing, branding, PR and advertising services where corporate culture is valued. She set her sights on Orange County and forged a niche within its commercial real estate sector. Hall's relationship-first approach to business development proved invaluable in 2008 as the agency faced CRE's most severe downturn since 1945 and weathered the storm that caused many businesses to fold. Today, Idea Hall enjoys the position as OC's agency of choice. Hall remains one of the first female heads of an agency and most successful female marketing and PR entrepreneurs in Orange County. Idea Hall was ranked as the third-largest public relations firm in OC in 2018 and was recognized as a "Best Place to Work" by the Orange County Business Journal. It also ranked on Entrepreneur's 360 list – for two consecutive years – and as one of the "8 Hidden Gems to Work for in Southern California" by Medium.



### Kate Hancock, CEO

*OC Facial Care Center, Lake Forest*

Kate Hancock started OC Facial Care Center with one treatment room and grew the company into a seven-figure, revenue-generating company with two locations and celebrity clientele. She has a passion to effect positive change in people's lives through spa treatments. She has donated footwear to kids in the Philippines and to people with medical conditions who can't afford hospital treatments. Her business was named to the INC. 5000's "Fastest-Growing Private Businesses" List, for the past two years. Hancock and her company have been featured in Forbes, Inc, Modern Luxury and more.



### Heather Hart, Owner/CEO

*Lavender Salon/ Be(you)tiful, Newport Beach*

Heather Hart has transformed the landscape of Orange Counties Beauty Scene with her creation of Lavender Salon and Boutique. What started as an idea while in Paris quickly morphed into a full-fledged thriving business. Lavender Salon and Boutique in Newport Beach brings Left Bank Parisian style and beauty to the West Coast. Lavender treats clients to a luxurious and indulgent Parisian hair and beauty experience, encompassing all five senses: from the stunning visual ambiance created by Parisian decor, to the aroma of lavender, the taste of French champagne, and the curated touch of exclusive gift





## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

items hand-selected by Hart during her travels. As a startup in 2016, the business has thrived, boasting more than 18,000 clients and a five star yelp rating. In 2017 Hart launched her own cosmetic line called Lavender. In 2018 the business expanded to include Be(you)tiful, a luxury boutique and spa offering exclusive cosmetic lines and carefully curated retail.

### **Gillian Hayes, Chief Executive Officer** *AVIAA, Irvine*

Gillian Hayes was appointed CEO of AVIAA, an international group purchasing organization for business aviation in 2018 after serving as its director of Innovation for 18 months. AVIAA was a tenant at the Cove @ UCI Applied Innovation during this time, before the organization grew out of the space. Hayes is responsible for the overall strategic direction of the organization and leadership of everyday activities. She led the growth of the company from pre-revenue to \$7 million annual operating budget. She secured Seed and Series A rounds of funding and developed key organizational culture and strategic planning initiatives. Hayes uses her background as a UC Irvine professor of informatics in developing data strategy for AVIAA. As Hayes continues to expand AVIAA's reach into the U.S. and European markets, she is also focused on encouraging women in STEM fields and women entrepreneurs to pursue their passions.



### **Gina Heitkamp, CEO**

*Gengirl Media, Inc., Long Beach*

Gina Heitkamp is the CEO of Gengirl Media, Inc., and has a passion for entrepreneurship and product commercialization. During her time at UC Irvine (UCI), while working closely with UCI Applied Innovation, Heitkamp and her sister, Jenae, co-founded Gengirl Media, and its cornerstone brand, Middle School Moguls. The brand's purpose is to make entrepreneurship and technology careers accessible to young girls through mass market toys and media. Nickelodeon recently approved the Middle School Moguls brand to premiere as an animated series on the network. The show's characters are based off of Gengirl Media's Middle School Mogul dolls, which were originally created to inspire the next generation of female business leaders and entrepreneurs. Titled "Middle School Moguls," the specials chronicle the ambitions of four new friends striving to create their own companies while attending Mogul Academy, an entrepreneurial school where kid-business dreams come true.



### **Erin Hoefer, SVP Consulting Services**

*Precept Group, Irvine*

Erin Hoefer has been a lead consultant and sales professional at Precept for nine years. As a member of the Senior Leadership Team and while managing Precept's largest book of business, Hoefer focuses on building industry leaders and influencing business growth; She shares best practices bringing value to her clients and team members. Hoefer accentuates the importance of making employee benefits an integral and understood part of a corporation's business plan. Employee benefit programs don't have to be a cost center for an organization. With creativity and innovation, companies can offer scalable solutions that align with multiple generations, positively affect their bottom line, and are large contributors to talent acquisition, employee productivity and retention. Hoefer is responsible for cultivating new business and boosting client retention. As a result of being one of the highest producing salespeople in California, she has been a member of Precept Group's Golden State Club for the last six years.



### **Ileana Holguin, Project Director**

*McCarthy Building Companies, Newport Beach*

Ileana Holguin is a project director with McCarthy Building Companies, Inc. with a Bachelor's Degree in Architectural Engineering and Construction Management Minor from Cal Poly San

Luis Obispo. Holguin has earned a LEED AP BD + C accreditation from the U.S. Green Building Council furthering her expertise in the construction industry. During her 19 years with McCarthy and over two decades in the industry, Holguin has worked on a variety of successful Healthcare, Education and Parking Structure projects in Southern California. She began her career as a project engineer and was promoted through the years to her current position as a Project Director. Holguin's successful client and subcontractor relationships, operational discipline, team building talents and self-performed work focus have enabled her to help deliver successful projects while strengthening relationships with partners both in the field and office.



### **Felicia Hyde, Principal/Lifestyle Studio Director**

*H. Hendy Associates, Newport Beach*

As principal and Lifestyle studio director at H. Hendy Associates, Felicia Hyde brings 33 years of in-depth interior architecture experience to her client



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## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

engagements to create memorable spaces for multifamily properties across Southern California that deliver on clients' business objectives. Hyde's success can be attributed to the way she seamlessly bridges her knowledge of interior design and commercial real estate with outside-the-box thinking. Her fierce passion for design, fashion and traveling enable her to bring a new, fresh perspective to the industry in which interior design is at the forefront of architectural projects. Hyde disrupted the industry with her unconventional approach to design – one that pushed for collaboration between owner, developer, architect, landscape architect and interior designer at project inception. Her unique approach creates award-winning multifamily environments that engage the senses and deliver one-of-a-kind experiences that result in successful market appeal and ROI for clients.



of Newhall Ranch, one of California's largest master-planned communities and most sustainable of its size in the nation. Construction is underway on what will become 21,500 homes, 11 million square feet of commercial space, and a cohesive collection of schools, parks, trails and protected open space.

### Christine Johnson, Founder

*Studio 88/Design Tec, Newport Beach*

With over 36 years of Interior Design experience, Christine Johnson has devoted her energy and expertise in perfecting the skills and talent of the firm. Experience and consistency are demonstrated by her and the Design Tec team by their exceptional ability to create unique spaces that illustrate the livability and functions of the architecture and create memorable environments that touch the buyer's emotions. 2018 marked the 40th year in business for Design Tec and the launch of the new co-working space for interior designers, Studio88.



### Michele Johnson, Partner

*Latham & Watkins, Costa Mesa*

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



### Shelley Iocona, Founder/Principal

*ON ITS AXIS, Costa Mesa*

Shelley Iocona is the founder of ON ITS AXIS, a product and people consultancy helping startups, scaleups and social good companies innovate. After spending 10+ years working as a product manager for high tech companies, Iocona launched ON ITS AXIS to help founders, startups and social good companies achieve their goals. Her team empowers its clients to bring their ideas to market and helps them to more efficiently operate. Whether she is working with executive leaders from Fortune 500 companies to develop "intreprenurship" programs that support an ecosystem of product innovation or she is mentoring a founder on market entry and product strategy for an idea stage concept, Iocona is committed to helping others strategically and efficiently reach milestones. As the owner of a Certified Woman-owned business and a Women in STEAM & venture advocate Iocona has also committed to her own continued professional development through certification through a wide body of Industry Professional Affiliations.



### Kelly Ireland, Founder/CEO

*CB Technologies, Inc., Orange*

Kelly Ireland opened CB Technologies in 2001 and has spent the last 18 years guiding the company from its start as a one client, transactional VAR to a technical powerhouse System Integrator delivering highly engineered solutions to global and commercial clients. Due to her excellence throughout this transition, Ireland was named one of CloudNOW's Top Women Entrepreneurs in Cloud Innovation 2018. In 2014, Ireland decided to completely redirect the efforts of CB Technologies and start transforming it to become a System Integrator. The last four years have been volatile as CB Technologies was ahead of the curve and largely misunderstood in their efforts. Ireland took a calculated risk, securing senior debt funding in order to continue with the transformation. In 2018 the bet paid off with the largest growth ever in CB Technologies' history, 46 percent YOY, and highest revenue ever at \$141 million.



### Tania Jernigan, Senior Vice President Investor Relations

*CORE Realty Holdings Management, Inc., Newport Beach*

Tania Jernigan is primarily responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive communication plan for CORE Realty Holdings Management, Inc.'s, ("CRHMI"), a full service real estate investment and advisory firm, 2,000 investors and owners located across the United States. Following the Great Recession of 2008, she rebuilt credibility by substantially improving transparency through meaningful financial reporting and superior customer service. Over the last 10 years, Jernigan has worked closely with CRHMIs executive management team to successfully navigate the real estate crisis and lead investor groups through loan modifications refinances and/or sale of 25 multi-family and commercial assets, representing 4.5 million square feet and nearly \$1.0 billion in value. Her reputation has led to the development of a third-party investor relations consulting business, which provides real estate investment companies with industry leading investor communication services.



### Natalise Kalea, CEO

*Cuddly, Seal Beach*

Natalise Kalea started with Cuddly in 2017 as COO and was recently appointed to CEO. Cuddly is a pet product gift registry and fundraising platform that serves pet parents and rescues. It's like a baby registry... but for animals. Cuddly serves over 1,200 rescues and over 200,000 animal supporters and pet parents. Users create gift registries and fundraisers and share them with their respective communities for support and/or to celebrate an animal's adoption, birthday, holiday, or... just because. Five percent of all purchases go back to the rescue of the user's choice. Cuddly launched their MVP late last year with five registries which sold out in 24 hours. In the last 10 months, they have created over 2,000 registries and in this quarter alone (Q4 2018), they are on track to create 2,000 more registries. They are also on track to grow in transaction volume by 40 percent this quarter, which is in line with our growth QoQ for the last six quarters. Their run rate for this year is \$2.3 million.



### Lynn Jochim, Co-Chief Operating Officer

*FivePoint, Irvine*

Lynn Jochim continues to innovate and strengthen the quality of life in housing-constrained California as Co-COO of FivePoint Holdings, LLC. Alongside Chairman and CEO Emile Haddad, Jochim plans and builds mixed-use communities within Orange and Los Angeles counties that seamlessly integrate homes, offices, retail, entertainment, schools, sports fields, trails and open space within close proximity to one other. Jochim has been a driving force in transforming the former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro in the heart of Irvine into a dynamic, 2,100-acre community called Great Park Neighborhoods. Jochim also oversees the day-to-day operations



### Cyndi Karapogolian, District President

*Robert Half, Irvine*

Cyndi Karapogolian is the district president for Robert Half, the world's first and largest specialized staffing firm. Karapogolian is based in Orange County and oversees operations for the Southern California region as well as Arizona, Nevada and Utah. She joined the company in 2008 as a Sr. regional vice president and has held progressive leadership roles within the company. As an executive team member, Karapogolian is a key contributor to local market strategies and company initiatives. With more than 20 years of experience in the





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staffing industry, Karapogosian has proven herself to be a successful woman leader within an international company. She has a true passion for helping local businesses find skilled talent, local professionals find rewarding job opportunities, and ensuring her team members have successful careers at Robert Half. Karapogosian consistently ranks in the top 20 percent of growth within the company making her a standout among the company's 19,000 employees.

### Caroline Kase, Associate Director of Property Management

*BKM Capital Management Company, Newport Beach*

In her role as the associate director of Property Management, Caroline Kase is responsible for assessing the growing needs of our rapidly expanding property management company, and how it can best serve the needs of executing business plans for BKM Capital Partners' owned assets. Kase brings more than 25 years of experience, with specific experience to industrial assets and managing satellite operations, which will be essential in managing BKM's growing portfolio. She has a long history of leading teams and establishing processes and procedures that are essential to the growth of BKM's Management Company. Her experience is influential in managing BKM's growing portfolio, which currently has 6.9 million square feet of multi-tenant light industrial assets with over 1,500 tenants across five states. Kase is responsible for updating existing and creating new policies and procedures and implementing change to create efficiencies in leasing, operations, capital maintenance, and financial reporting.



### Kendrah Kay, Vice President of Management Services

*Powerstone Property Management, Irvine*

Kendrah Kay joined Powerstone eight years ago and has been vice president for four years. Kay has spent a decade in redefining what it means to serve. She is responsible for providing superior customer service that PowerStone is famous for, and is an integral part of the leadership team. Kay manages and mentors with a passion and love for what she does. She never compromises on quality and strives to find new ways to meet and exceed client expectations. She has played an instrumental role in the company's growth and retention, taking into account that Powerstone has partnered with more than 300 communities since 2011 and has a 100 percent retention. In addition, Kay has served as the chair for Powerstone's philanthropy, raising more than \$500,000 for the Pediatric Research Foundation.



### Hilary Kaye, CEO

*HKA Marketing Communications, Tustin*

Hilary Kaye is founder and CEO of HKA Marketing Communications, an award-winning agency established in 1984. Kaye spearheads business development and works with HKA team members to elevate visibility, strengthen credibility and promote business growth for clients. She is a known connector, often fostering mutually beneficial business partnerships and uniting for-profit and nonprofit organizations. A former author and reporter, she maintains a passion for business ethics and community service and takes pride in providing highly accountable service to clients and media. Kaye recently revitalized the agency's emerging technology practice. In 2015, HKA proudly received the National Philanthropy Day Award in the Small Business category and a Silver Stevie Award in the Community Involvement category. Kaye previously served on the boards of Laura's House, Crystal Cove Conservancy and NAWBO-OC. She is a founding member of NAWBO's Women's Business Institute and a member of the Women Presidents' Organization and Zonta Club of Newport Harbor.



### Sloane Keane, Chief Executive Officer

*Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Orange County and the Inland Empire, Santa Ana*

Big Brothers Big Sisters chief executive officer Sloane Keane has dedicated the last five years to improving the lives of others in her community. She is an advocate for social change through youth mentorship and has impacted all facets of the organization, from creating new funding strategies that have tripled annual revenue to nearly double the number of matches supported through the program. In less than one year as CEO, Keane has continued the growth trajectory for the number of children enrolled in the program by roughly 10 percent since the start of 2018, hosted a record-breaking Gourmet Dinner fundraiser that brought in \$2.9 million gross revenue and was recently voted co-chair of the California state alliance of Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliates. For 100 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters has provided children across the country with one-to-one mentoring relationships to help them achieve their full potential. Keane measures the difference she is making in the community by the enormous success of youth she serves in the program.



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to Cyndi and all  
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Cyndi Karapogosian  
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### Deirdre Kelly, Director of Career Services

*Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law, Orange*

#### President

*Orange County Bar Association, Newport Beach*

Deirdre Kelly is focused on expanding the reach of the OCBA to serve the needs of Orange County's lawyers and, ultimately, the Orange County community in general. For example, she has been instrumental in expanding membership to cover all law students from all of the law schools based in Orange County, bringing into the membership all of OC's district attorneys and public defenders, and reaching out to develop a leadership pipeline reflective of the OCBA's diverse membership. She is also working with our courts to advocate for appropriate funding from Sacramento to maintain access to justice for all Orange County residents, maintaining strong ties with OC community service organizations, and improving programs for integrating new lawyers into the profession. Notably, Kelly's "day job" is as director of Career Services at Chapman University's Dale E. Fowler School of Law in Orange.



### Dr. Tracy Kemble, PhD

*Dr. Tracy/Mrs. Globe, Newport Beach*

For the past 22 years, Dr. Tracy Kemble created and developed Mrs. Globe, the largest international pageant in the world. Last year the show went live in China to a TV audience of over 120 million. A writer, speaker, personal and executive coach, human potentialist & an uncompromising optimist who has one primary passion in life, which is to teach women the Journey to Self-Love. Kemble is proud to have created an internationally recognized educational empowerment program, that for twenty years has been creating shift and healing around the world. Through her "Reclaiming Me" program, my world-class online training, her Transformation Travel TV, 5 books, and an audience in 60 countries globally, Kemble helps empower people to take the most important journey of their life, which is the journey to Self-Love.



### Erin Kerrigan, Founder/ Managing Director

*Kerrigan Advisors, Irvine*

Erin Kerrigan built nationally-renowned Kerrigan Advisors from the ground up, launching it in Irvine in March 2014. Since then, she has mentored and led her team to become the leading, and the most recognized, firm representing automobile dealers who are selling their businesses in the US' largest retail industry. With 2014-2017 CAGR of nearly 200 percent, Kerrigan Advisors has advised on the sale of 79 auto dealerships across the US, representing over \$2 billion in client proceeds. The company's powerful combination of expertise from legal to financial to generational succession has enabled Kerrigan to create value for clients across every step of the auto retail life-cycle. Through Kerrigan Advisors' quarterly Blue Sky Report (over 9,000 subscribers in 35+countries), which Kerrigan created and authored, and her incisive commentary in media such as WSJ, CNBC and Automotive News, Kerrigan has led her company to become the go-to thought leader in auto dealership valuations and transactions.



### Stacie Kitts, Strategic Tax Partner

*Haskell & White, Irvine*

Stacie Kitts is a strategic tax professional with over 25 years of experience working in both industry and public accounting. Kitts is a partner at Haskell & White, one of the largest independently owned accounting, auditing and tax consulting firms in Southern California. In addition to providing tax consulting and compliance services, she also provides leadership in regards to new technology that the firm utilizes. Known as much for superb financial problem-solving skills as well as mentoring new staff entering the profession, before joining Haskell & White, Kitts was a founding member and the managing partner of Katherman Kitts & Co. Her clients include high-net-worth individuals and their closely held businesses, spanning a variety of industries such as construction, distribution, entertainment/media, manufacturing, professional services, oil and gas, retail, technology, healthcare, real estate, restaurant and transportation. With 25 years of experience in accounting, Kitts has proven to be an exceptional tax professional as well as an eager and active mentor to young women entering the industry.



### Kate Klimow, Chief Administrative Officer/Director of External Relations

*UCI Applied Innovation, Irvine*

Kate Klimow began her career with UCI as assistant vice chancellor for Community and Government Relations, building the department to meet the demands of a rising influential university. She later became chief of staff over a combined Strategic Communications and Public Affairs team and now serves as chief administrative officer for a critical campus initiative, UCI Applied Innovation. While successfully leading the Public Affairs team, she actively managed multiple priorities balancing sometimes competing policy initiatives at the local, state and federal levels. She secured legislative success while also managing controversial

events on campus. As the CAO for UCI Applied Innovation, she manages multiple priorities to drive forward the mission to move UCI research from the lab to real world in an effort to create industries, jobs and economic advancement for the region. With nearly 30 years of experience in public affairs and advocacy in industries as varied as engineering to entertainment, Klimow has developed the skills necessary to provide technical and strategic guidance on legislative, political, philanthropic and regulatory issues to manage crises, support the advocacy agenda and meet relevant objectives.



### Danielle Knudson, Executive Vice President

*DAUM Commercial, Newport Beach*

DAUM EVP and Principal Danielle Knudson is responsible for leading the firm's national Tenant Representation division. She began her career at DAUM in 2003 in an administrative support role for the Corporate Services team, where her talents and determination were immediately recognized. She quickly became an associate and eventually an equal partner on the team. In Knudson's role practicing solely tenant representation, she spearheads the forging and building of corporate client relationships. Her deep expertise and ability to truly understand her clients' business needs has achieved new connections and repeat work with major national firms. As a result of her exceptional transaction volume, she has qualified for DAUM's top-producer President's Club several times throughout her tenure. Currently, DAUM's only woman EVP/Principal and one of ten women brokers at the firm, Knudson champions more women in brokerage and is excited to see the gender balance in her company and industry evolve.



### Jan Koren, Owner/President

*Absolute Exhibits, Tustin*

Jan Koren is president and director of Sales at Absolute Exhibits. Her career began as a freelance contractor for marketing services and as a technical writer. She now heads the Absolute Exhibits sales team with twenty plus account executives and account managers and assistants, in the southern California office and offices across the United States and Europe. Her experience, knowledge, and personal attention has helped people to grow exponentially in their career. Koren has been a leader for change and growth within the company, uniting a geographically dispersed team to exceed every financial goal and projection for the year. She has mentored even the most senior of staff to produce a culture that embraces change, is forward thinking, and embraces a culture of giving back to others. In addition, Koren created and has grown the company's Corporate Responsibility Program where they give to others in need every quarter.



### Elena Kornoff, Founding Partner

*Surf City Still Works, Huntington Beach*

Elena Kornoff co-founded Surf City Still Works with her husband Josh Kornoff, Huntington Beach's first-ever distillery. Elena was integral in fast-tracking Surf City Still Works' operations to go from signing a warehouse lease to distilling their first batch in six months (usually a year-long process). Within six months of its grand opening, Surf City Still Works' spirits were picked up by major resorts including Balboa Bay Resort, Marriott Irvine Spectrum and Pasea, sold at Hi-Time Wine Cellar and the team signed a distribution partnership with Southern Glaziers Wine & Spirits. Less than a year after the grand opening, Surf City Still Works launched a canned cocktail line modeled after their own craft cocktail lineup. Elena and Josh distill vodka, gin, rum and bourbon and are dedicated to supporting local artists. Each bottle features the artwork from a local surf-lifestyle artists to harness and share the spirit of California.



### Kimberly Kovacs, Founder/CEO

*MyJane, Fullerton*

Kimberly Kovacs entered the cannabis space as an investor and entrepreneur to raise awareness and usage of cannabis to fight America's opioid epidemic and give women greater decision-making in their health and wellness decisions. As the founder and CEO of MyJane Inc., launching fall 2018, Kovacs aims to normalize cannabis usage for wellness and give women the confidence to make informed health and wellness choices while creating personalized, data-backed routines just right for them. MyJane is the first premium cannabis subscription service for women — tailored to meet their individual needs. Kovacs has had a distinguished career in executive leadership and finance. She is currently the managing director for Arroyo Ventures and is an active angel investor, advisor and executive consultant for emerging companies. She is passionate about the entrepreneurial ecosystem and provides mentorship to students and startups in LA and Orange County.





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### Julie LaCroix, Owner

*Julie LaCroix Career Exploration and Planning, Newport Beach*

Julie LaCroix, M.A. Ed. is a career counselor in private practice in Southern California serving adults of all ages with launching, establishing and advancing their careers. She services adults throughout the country via individual counseling sessions, workshops, and online services. With a decade long business background in sales and trading for Merrill Lynch and Bloomberg, LaCroix launched a boutique recruiting firm to expand the emerging niche of electronic trading. After several years of success, she discovered that her own sense of purpose was firmly grounded in helping people find the type of work they were really meant to do. LaCroix is a subject matter expert for the USC Institute for Creative Technologies to further the development of their virtual reality interview training experience. She is a national speaker to the NCDA on a variety of career topics, is published in a global academic career journal, presents to professional associations and Boards of Education on career development topics, and provides specialized corporate consulting services focused on onboarding and training Millennial workers.



### Alpa Lally, Vice President, Strategic Projects, Experian Information Technology Services

*Experian, Costa Mesa*

Alpa Lally joined Experian in 2012 as an MBA program participant, during her time in this position she gained well-rounded expertise in key business functions such as product marketing, sales, and customer assistance. After completing her rotation program, she joined the Experian North America Consumer Information Services (CIS) business as a Director of Prospecting. In 2015, Lally joined the Global team as a vice president of Strategy and in 2016, Lally joined the EITS organization to lead the Application Programming Interface (API) Centre of Excellence team. Over the past seven years, Lally has driven new product innovation by bridging technology and business strategy, driven double-digit revenue growth in Experian Consumer Information Services (CIS), completing Experian's enterprise-wide assessment of its cyber-security posture and launching the global Security First program. Recently, Lally successfully launched the Application Programming Interface (API) Hub with over a 1 billion transactions which allows for frictionless interaction between clients and Experian while driving speed to market and faster revenue recognition by providing optimal customer/client experiences.



### Gail Allyn Landau, Esq., Founder/Owner

*Catmosphere Laguna, Laguna Beach*

In August 2018, Gail Allyn Landau, Esq., opened Catmosphere Laguna, Orange County's first cat café amidst an outpouring of community support. Located in the heart of Laguna Beach's art district, Catmosphere is a licensed animal rescue dedicated to finding forever homes for homeless, relinquished, and special-needs cats and kittens. Its mission is to prevent cruelty to animals by rescuing, fostering, and assisting in public adoption and awareness. 100 percent of the adoption proceeds benefit medical care, treatment, and wellness of its rescues.

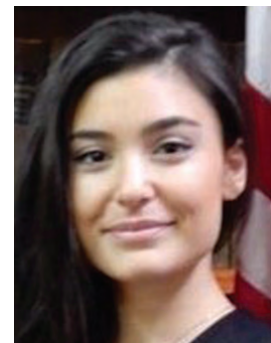
Catmosphere enhances the already vibrant art community, drawing visitors from around the world. This fun and affordable beachside café is a lively place for birthday parties, social gatherings, and of course, the best place around to adopt your next fur baby. Since opening just seven months ago, Catmosphere has taken in 58 rescues and is on its 41st adoption. Donations to the Foundation are in excess of \$3000.



### Selene Lawrence, Director of Government Affairs

*Sullivan Solar Power, Irvine*

Selene Lawrence joined the Sullivan Solar Power and its Community Development team in 2016 as the community development manager for Orange County. In helping grow the customer base 80 percent in three years since then, she was promoted to deputy director of community development, where she established key partnerships within the Orange County community. In early 2019, she was promoted again, to director of government affairs after demonstrating a strong interest in renewable energy policy. In this current role, Lawrence is continuing Sullivan Solar Power's 15-year history of progressing fair policy for renewable energy and climate change, that has allowed California to be a model for the nation and world. Her approach to solar has always been education first, and she has planned and executed over 50 solar workshops throughout the region, teaming up with local nonprofits to educate the public on solar technology, policy and incentives.



### Sandra Lease, Chief Operating Officer

*Nano Banc, Irvine*

In May of 2018, Sandra Lease took on the role of SVP of Operations at Nano Banc, playing an integral part in



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*jeanne bonk*

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## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

developing the operations team and products that supported safe and sound asset growth from \$77 million to over \$500 million within a year. Lease began her banking career in 2005 as the Branch Supervisor for Susquehanna Bank in Pennsylvania, where she was born and raised. Since then, she has quickly become a leader in Central Operations, Cash and Product Management. She received her AAP Certification in 2015. Lease has been one of the driving forces at Nano Banc.

### Josephine Lee, President

*The Pointe Shop Inc., Santa Ana*

Josephine Lee started a ballet mobile retail store in January of 2014 after recognizing a need for more accessible and knowledgeable shoe fittings. The Pointe Shop is still the only dance retail stores in the United States that solely focuses on pointe shoes. In 2016, she rose above 35,000 contestants from 142 countries to win 3rd place in the World Championship of Public Speaking. Since then, she has traveled all over the world to keynote conferences in places such as Russia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mainland China, UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Sri Lanka and India. She is regularly featured across every major dance media as the leading expert in pointe shoes.



### Julie Leffler, President/Creative Director

*Big Hype Marketing, Newport Beach*

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



### Camille Longino, Chief Operating Officer

*Avanath Capital Management, Irvine*

With a career that spans nearly three decades, Camille Longino has overseen the accounting, and financial reporting for multi-million-dollar real estate investment firms, including Avanath. Previously serving as the firm's chief financial officer, Longino has successfully built out Avanath's Accounting/Finance team and was recently promoted to chief operating officer. As COO, the Property Management, Asset Management, Capital Improvements, Compliance and Corporate Services teams all report to her. She also is a member of the Avanath Investment Committee. Longino is an excellent mentor and role model to all Avanath's younger team members, particularly its professional women. As one of five Executive Committee members, Longino has been a strong voice in maintaining Avanath's corporate commitment to diversity, gender pay equality, and building organizational succession.



### Jo-E Lopez, Vice President

*Snyder Langston, Irvine*

Jo-E Lopez is an architecture and construction industry expert who joined the Snyder Langston team in 2006 and worked her way to become vice president of Business Development. In her current role, Lopez is responsible for marketing, public relations, relationship management, and business development and is the visionary for branding and marketing strategy for the company. Lopez is committed to Snyder Langston's values of respect, integrity and fostering relationships. Her dedication has helped grow revenue and bolster the firm's 60-year legacy as Trusted Advisors and Master Builders, working with Southern California's most prominent architects, developers, investors and corporations to bring their clients' visions to life. As vice president, Lopez has worked with the operations team to maintain a revenue of \$400-\$450 million per year, sustaining the organization and establishing it as a top commercial and multi-family builder.



### Nicole Lucas, Corporate Counsel

*St. John Knits Inc., Irvine*

As corporate counsel of St. John Knits, a global luxury brand, Nicole Lucas has demonstrated her ability to handle both legal and business issues facing the company, and to work with various business teams to enable them to achieve their goals from the initial planning stage of their projects. Lucas began as an intern in her last year in Chapman University's JD/MBA program, and is the second person to transition from an intern to an attorney in the company's recent history. Since

starting, Lucas has implemented performance tracking metrics to demonstrate the department's productivity and value to the company. This has had a ripple effect of improving internal tracking of projects, contract management, and litigation preparation. Lucas has also become a business partner to various departments, including the marketing and HR teams. This has enabled these teams to streamline legal review of their work product, stay up to date in legal news, and produce their best work possible.



### Maegan Lujan, Director, Solutions & Services

*Toshiba America Business Solutions, Lake Forest*

Maegan Lujan has more than 13 years of sales and business development experience within the office equipment industry while offering extensive expertise in the areas of digital signage, imaging, print, document and content management. Throughout her career, she has helped solve the document-centric challenges from organizations as diverse as small to medium-sized businesses to multinational corporations across a range of industries. Passionate about solving business problems for customers, partners and employers with a focus on strategic partnerships; she employs a consultative sales approach in developing and maintaining client loyalty in competitive markets. Since joining Toshiba America Business Solutions (TABS) in early 2013, Lujan currently serves as director of solutions and professional services within the company's product marketing team.



### Jaclyn Lusk, Owner

*The Legal Shop, Chino Hills*

Started in 2009, owner Jaclyn A. Lusk began You Got Served / YGS Legal as an attorney service firm, specifically managing service of process for several Southern California law firms. For the past decade, Lusk has worked closely with lawyers and law firms to gain the skills and knowledge to assist the general public with their legal document preparation needs. Given the knowledge and skills developed, she determined in order to cover all the aspects and services the business offered, re-branding the business was in her best interest. In 2018, she created The Legal Shop. This allowed YGS Legal to go through a rebranding/transition that incorporates all of the services currently provided by the company.



### Mina Maghami, Real Estate Consultant

*Pacific Sotheby's International, Newport Beach*

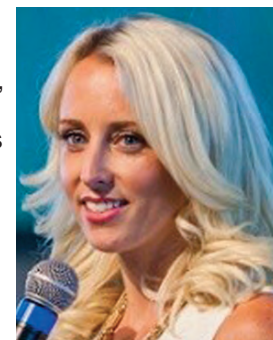
With 27 years of real estate experience Mina Maghami is pleased to share her affiliation with Pacific Sotheby's International Realty which is truly the only global real estate brand. Maghami has been involved in many different types of transactions, such as foreclosures, short sale, cash and procuring creative financing clients. Graduating with a bachelor of art degree, majoring interior design, has been a tremendous asset in creating value for investment and primary properties, giving Maghami an extra edge in real estate and helps her clients see the potential of any properties that interest them. Through the brand's exclusive media relationships, robust exposure platform and proprietary network, Maghami will be able to appropriately present her clients' properties through the most relevant and high-trafficked media in the world. Mina has been the recipient of numerous awards including the top one percent of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Luxury Agents Nationwide.



### Colleen Malloy, Director of Human Resources

*Sports 1 Marketing, Irvine*

As the director of human resources for Sports 1 Marketing, Colleen Malloy oversees the company's internship program, operates as the event coordinator, and serves as executive assistant to the company's CEO, among other roles. Malloy's remarkable leadership earned her two silver 2018 Stevie Awards for Women in Business, in the Female Executive of the Year category and Employee of the Year in Advertising, Marketing, and Public Relations category, respectively. The St. John's University graduate has also focused on philanthropy, helping to raise millions of dollars for the Unstoppable Foundation. Colleen is one of the longest-tenured employees at S1M and her support of the CEO, David Meltzer, has aided in his award-winning efforts as a speaker, author, and business coach. Malloy won Sports 1 Marketing's Employee of the Year award in 2018 and has won Employee of the Month five different times.



### Becky Mandich, Principal Advisor, Regulatory Affairs-Environmental Affairs and Sustainability

*Southern California Edison, Irvine*

Becky Mandich started at Southern California Edison in 2010 as a senior project manager and has since worked her way to principal advisor, regulatory affairs-



## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

environmental affairs and sustainability in 2016. In her position, Mandich develops and implements positions on policy issues; serves as a liaison with leadership at state and federal agencies; and cultivates relationships with regulators, non-government organizations, and other key stakeholders to manage risk and effectuate balanced policies impacting California's 2nd largest investor-owned utility. Mandich is a principal with extensive construction, compliance, and project management experience combined with an engineering background. She possesses a proactive approach to lead and inspire diverse teams in challenging settings, create and implement plans, make high-impact decisions, and work collaboratively at all levels to ensure effective operations, successful implementations, and excellence in safety. Mandich is PMP and LEED AP certified and licensed real estate broker.



### Hannah Mans, Director of Marketing

*Directive Consulting, Irvine*

Hannah Mans joined Directive as an account manager in the summer of 2018. Within five months, she was promoted to director of marketing, where her passion for growth could truly be utilized. In this role, Mans has built out the internal marketing department at Directive, helping launch an entire company rebrand, being featured on podcasts, and contributing to Directive's 300 percent year-over-year growth rate. Mans began her career with the United Nations where she functioned as a communications consultant for the World Food Programme. Her passion for people and travel led her to pursue a Bachelors of Science in International Affairs from Florida State University in 2012. She continued her academic career obtaining a Masters of Business Administration from Florida International University in 2015 where she graduated with honors, in between and shortly after crossing 12 countries off her bucket list of the world.



### Stephanie McCormick, President/CEO

*Make-A-Wish Orange County and the Inland Empire, Irvine*

Stephanie currently holds the position of president & CEO for Make-A-Wish Orange County and the Inland Empire. She assumed her role in September 2011. Her focus is on revenue sustainability and wish growth for the \$6 million chapter. During the past seven years, she has taken the organization to the next level by increasing revenue, strengthened and grew the board by launching a strategic and comprehensive board development plan and granted a record number of wishes during her tenure. The 36-year-old chapter was recently recognized by the national office by receiving both the 2018 Fundraising Achievement Award as well as the Gold Standard Board of Directors Award. The goal for 2019 is to grant 348 wishes and the chapter is on track to meet that goal. The vision is simple: to grant the wish of every eligible child in Orange County and the Inland Empire.



### Helen McCracken, Founder

*The CPR Lady, Irvine*

Helen McCracken is the founder and owner of The CPR Lady Training Center and has been involved with the American Heart Association for over 30+ years at all levels - local, state, and national. Helen has been an AHA volunteer, Instructor, Training Center Coordinator, Regional Faculty and BLS National Faculty. Helen completed a four (4) year appointment on the AHA National First Aid Committee. She was involved in writing the 2010 Guidelines for First Aid and development of the First Aid materials, video, and mobile app. Helen served as a member-at-large on the ECC Greater San Diego Regional Committee for Southern California. In June 2013, she was appointed as an American Heart Association National Volunteer. July 2015 to June 2018, Helen was a member of the California ECC Committee and served as Chair of the Quality Assurance & Quality Improvement committee.



### Liz McKinley, President/CEO

*Pinnacle Petroleum Inc., Huntington Beach*

Liz McKinley founded Pinnacle Petroleum, Inc., a national wholesale marketing and distribution company in 1995. Pinnacle Petroleum, Inc. is a best-in-class provider of fuel and fuel management services to commercial, retail, and government Clients through-out the United States. Since founding the company McKinley has been the sole owner and key component to Pinnacle's growth and success. Operating initially out of her home, the company steadily grew to be over \$175,000,000 in revenue. McKinley began her career in the petroleum industry at Koch Industries, a large integrated privately owned company, in Wichita, Kansas. She was the first woman hired at a commercial level as a Petroleum Commodities Trader. In 1995 she decided to leverage her experience and start her own business. Aside from starting the business, her greatest achievement was winning the Ernst and Young



Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2010 and served on the judging committee in 2014, 2015 and 2017.

### Cindy McMackin, President

*Pan-Pacific Mechanical, Fountain Valley*

Cindy McMackin has worked for Pan-Pacific Mechanical since 1996 in many different areas and became President in 2011. Since joining Pan-Pacific in 1996, the company has grown from 17 million in revenue to over \$300 million in 2018. Under her direction, the company also transitioned from a plumbing-only contractor to a total mechanical contractor and has expanded geographically from Southern California to Northern California and Hawaii. McMackin has worked well with a talented group of loyal executives to push the business to be the very best it can be in all areas. She personally holds a B General Contracting license, a C-36 Plumbing license and C-20 HVAC license. Pan-Pacific is known as a premier, full mechanical design-build subcontractor specializing in hospitals, high-rises, entertainment complexes, schools, universities and more. The company has worked on many impressive buildings including the two tallest buildings west of the Mississippi and the new Los Angeles Stadium which will be home to the Rams and Chargers, and many more.



### Nicole McMackin, President

*Irvine Technology Corporation, Irvine*

Nicole McMackin is president of Irvine Technology Corporation, a national technology solutions and staffing firm based in Orange County. McMackin is a partner in ITC and has led the company for the past fifteen years. McMackin is attributed to making Irvine Technology Corporation one of the most successful firms, not only in Orange County but in the country. When McMackin took over ITC, the company had 15 employees locally and now boasts over 200. ITC is proud to service accounts such as MGM, Molina Healthcare, USC, Trader Joe's, CHOC, Atos, AT&T and many others throughout the country. She oversees all internal operations, brand development, strategic planning and implementation. McMackin currently holds total P&L responsibility in the United States. McMackin is a champion of women's rights and equal treatment in the workplace. Under her direction, ITC has won Best Places to work in Orange County for the past five years.



## TOSHIBA

# CONGRATULATIONS TO MAEGAN LUJAN FOR BEING RECOGNIZED AS AN OUTSTANDING BUSINESSWOMAN



2019 Women in Business Awards Nominee

Maegan Lujan

Director of Solutions and Services  
Toshiba America Business Solutions

[business.toshiba.com](http://business.toshiba.com)



## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

### Meghan Medlin, Director of Community Engagement OC Fair & Event Center, Costa Mesa

While Meghan Medlin is new to the OC Fair & Event Center, she has been able to quickly make an impact in a new role overseeing the organization's community give-back programs and Heroes Hall veterans museum. In addition to her role, she is a strong advocate in the community for reentry, homelessness and mental health and has served on and led several committees and organizations including the Orange County Re-Entry Partnership (OCREP) of which she stepped down from her role last November. Medlin has been instrumental over the years in the county obtaining funding and programs for formerly incarcerated individuals which in turn creates less recidivism and better opportunities for these individuals, their families and communities. Medlin oversees the fair's donation program, community giveback operatives - including Hatch Culinary, a culinary training program in partnership with AIME for under-served youth, and other projects still in development such as a mentorship opportunity with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County.



### Renita Mollman, Vice President/General Manager Burns & McDonnell, Brea

Since 2009, Renita Mollman has nearly quadrupled local revenue for Burns & McDonnell, growing the team from a few employees to more than 200. She has led two office expansions in Brea, doubling the space in two years with staff expected to number 400 by 2020 across California. Renita also led expansions in Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco. Mollman began her career in a male-dominated engineering field more than three decades ago, working as a civil engineer for Burns & McDonnell. She quickly showcased innate leadership skills and was promoted to a department manager of 30 civil engineers and designers. From designing and constructing new airport facilities to providing services in transportation electrification, to building facilities for the U.S. Navy, and to designing resilient energy systems, Mollman's team is playing an integral role in developing critical infrastructure systems for Burns & McDonnell clients and the communities they serve.



### Darlynn Morgan, Trust Attorney

*Morgan Law Group, Newport Beach*

Attorney Darlynn Morgan has been practicing law in Orange County, California since 1996. She founded the law firm of Morgan Law Group in 2005 with the dream of truly making a difference in her clients' lives, which meant changing the traditional model of estate planning into something that serves families by helping them make the best legal decisions possible throughout their lifetime and guides them to leave the world a better place. Morgan graduated in the top 15 percent of her class from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, where she was also a member of the Loyola Law Review and was awarded an American Jurisprudence Award. After graduation, Morgan served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable John E. Ryan, a Ninth Circuit Federal Judge. She subsequently practiced at a premier business litigation firm in Orange County. Morgan was named a Top OC Estate Planning Attorney in 2016 by Coast Magazine and a Super Lawyer every year since 2006.



### Jennifer Morris, President

*Ajenda Public Relations, Orange*

What started with a female entrepreneur, passionate about PR, has transformed over the last nine years into one of the leading restaurant & hospitality public relations and marketing agencies in Southern California, and now employees ten other hardworking and passionate women. While local and independent concepts like Old Vine Cafe, Cha Cha's Latin Kitchen, and Greenbar Distillery still remain a focal point for the company, Jennifer Morris has also grown their client roster to include franchised fast-casual concepts from all over the country including Bay Area's Curry Up Now and Dallas-based MUTTS Canine Cantina, in addition to national restaurant chains like Farmer Boys. The success of the company can be attributed to the positive reputation the company upholds and the founder's knack for hiring talented PR and marketing professionals who are likeminded about the success of Ajenda PR and their clients. Morris is also an active member of Les Dames d'Escoffier, a by-invitation membership and philanthropic organization of female leaders in the food, fine beverage and hospitality industries.



### Jacqueline Nguyen, Founder/CEO

*Dr. Js Natural and Ensohara.com, Huntington Beach*

Dr. Jacqueline Nguyen "Dr. J" is an instrumental woman in leading a great supplements company where she created and formulated her amazing supplements formula line. She provides all her supplements for her staff to take for free while at work because her philosophy is if it is good



enough for her to take then she also wants her staff to be healthy as well. Her brand took off so fast when she launched her own health and wellness TV shows. Dr. J is also the first clinical pharmacist that embarked on the CBD hemp path to educate the general public about how medical marijuana is very beneficial for your overall health. She is able to secure many TV interviews for her bravery and passionate efforts for science-based ingredients. The company has branched into making CBD edibles such as cookies and brownies. Dr. J cookies and brownies taste so great that she is able to sell in all the military bases throughout the US and in 700 supermarkets throughout the US.

### Karen Nguyen, Founder/Owner

*Inspired Art Wine, Costa Mesa*

Since founding Inspired Art Wine in 2016, Karen Nguyen started the company started with zero customers and built a brand from scratch. Armed with heavy marketing chops, global experience and MBA, she grew the company to 11,000+ guests, 90+ corporate clients and delivered 900+ unique events at her art studio wine bar in Costa Mesa. The vision of IAW is to connect people across different cultural backgrounds with little to no experience in the arts, which includes painting, singing, music and wine tasting. IAW contributes their success to consistency, customer service and communication has been the key drivers to earn and gain the trust of the public and earned IAW raved reviews among corporate and individual clients with 95 percent retention rate in repeat business.



### Lisa Nguyen, Enterprise Relationship Manager

*LinkedIn Corporation, Irvine*

Lisa Nguyen has worked at LinkedIn for six years, starting as a recruiter and since been promoted six times. Nguyen is enterprising, proactive, and always looking to find unique breakout opportunities that create value, accelerate growth, and change the world. Her personal vision statement is to be strong in heart, generous in spirit, daring & unafraid to create bold work that leads to positive social change. The network at LinkedIn has grown three times since she started. Nguyen has worked with over 300 different companies during her time at LinkedIn and has helped hire over 1,500 people in the last year.



### Mimi Nguyen, Executive VP, Underwriting

*KBS, Newport Beach*

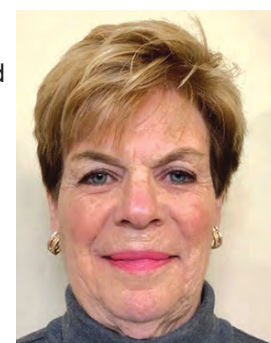
Mimi Nguyen joined KBS in 2000 and has managed and closed approximately \$7.7 billion in commercial real estate transactions and sits on the investment committee which evaluates and authorizes potential real estate investments for the firm. As executive vice president of underwriting, Nguyen oversees a team responsible for the underwriting, due diligence and closing of acquisitions across the nation on behalf of KBS REIT, pension fund and sovereign wealth fund clients. Nguyen is a member of the Investment Committee which evaluates and authorizes all new investment opportunities. Nguyen plays a lead role in managing and building relationships with third-party consultants utilized during and after the due diligence process. Additionally, she is involved in the training of analysts and the development of operational and analytical tools used throughout the company.



### Charlene Nichols, President

*Loan Administration Network, Inc., Irvine*

In 2011 Charlene Nichols succeeded against the odds and propelled LANI (Loan Administration Network, Inc.) back to profitability, stability, and growth after an uncertain future. The results of these efforts helped hundreds of individuals find employment in Orange County, and LANI was recognized as one of the largest Women-Owned Businesses in Orange County in 2013. LANI is a specialty company formed in 1992 and provides services to banks, mortgage companies, credit unions, title and escrow companies, law firms, consumer finance companies, real estate developers, insurance. LANI is committed to leading the market by offering innovative technology and solutions to our customers. LANI's distinctive competence lies within their expertise in their field and their focus on processes as a means of optimizing value. LANI's executives each have over 25 years of service in the financial industry.



### Stacy Nishioka, Sr. Director, Portfolio Operations

*Irvine Company, Irvine*

Stacy Nishioka has devoted her career to the operation and management of Commercial Real Estate for more than two decades. During her career, she has been responsible for overseeing some of the most prestigious properties in Orange County, including Newport Center and Jamboree Center. Since 2008, Nishioka has served as sr. director of Operations for the Irvine Company Office Properties, the largest privately-owned commercial landlord in California with over 43M RSF in directly owned





# CONGRATULATIONS

WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS | 2019 NOMINEES

IRVINE COMPANY IS PROUD TO RECOGNIZE EXTRAORDINARY OC LEADERS,  
INCLUDING OUR OWN STACY NISHIOKA.



## STACY NISHIOKA Senior Director, Portfolio Operations

Stacy is an inspirational role model in the commercial real estate industry who exemplifies professionalism and teamwork. Her focus on delivering memorable workplace experiences is key to Stacy's successful support of 400 business customers and over 12,000 professionals in Orange County's Airport Area.

We congratulate Stacy on receiving this prestigious nomination.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NOMINEES IN OUR CUSTOMER COMMUNITY

**Alyssa Scholz**  
Gensler

**Amber Bonasoro**  
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California

**Anne Bretana**  
Gensler

**Bernadette Chala**  
Arbonne International, LLC

**Christine Willig**  
Illuminate Education

**Commie Stevens**  
Beacon Pointe Advisors

**Cyndi Karapogolian**  
Robert Half

**Deborah Dickson**  
Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corp.

**Diane Biagianti**  
Edwards Lifesciences

**Diane Dillon**  
Hotel Irvine

**Diane Wittenberg**  
H. Haskell & White, LLP

**Felicia Hyde**  
H. Hendy Associates

**Hannah Mans**  
Directive Consulting

**Jamie Duran**  
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

**Kate Klimow**  
UCI Applied Innovation

**Kim Bibb**  
Villa Real Estate

**Kim Damron**  
Paciolan

**Kimberlee Davis**  
The Bahnsen Group

**Kimberly Dwan Bernatz**  
CIBC Private Wealth Management

**Kirstie Acevedo**  
Gensler

**Kris Beck**  
United Capital Financial Partners, LLC

**Kristen Croxton**  
Capital One

**Laura Dang**  
MUFG Union Bank

**Manna Kadar**  
Manna Kadar Beauty, Inc.

**Maria Stearns**  
Rutan & Tucker, LLP

**Marie DiSante**  
Carothers DiSante & Freudenberger LLP

**Marie-Lou Godinez**  
City National Bank

**Mary-Christine Sungalla**  
Haynes and Boone, LLP

**Maeagan Lujan**  
Toshiba America Business Solutions

**Melanie Graper**  
CoreLogic

**Mimi Nguyen**  
KBS

**Mina Maghami**  
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California

**Natasha Davis**  
City National Bank

**Nicole Lucas**  
St. John Knits Inc.

**Olivia Ross**  
Directive Consulting

**Rachel Valentine**  
Vincit

**Rebecca Hall**  
Idea Hall

**Robbin Narike Preciado**  
MUFG Union Bank

**Rosemarie Smith**  
Systems Source, Inc.

**Selene Lawrence**  
Sullivan Solar Power

**Stacie Kitts**  
H. Haskell & White, LLP

**Stephanie McCormick**  
Make-A-Wish Foundation of Orange County  
and the Inland Empire, Inc.

**Tammie Brailsford**  
MemorialCare



## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

and managed commercial office assets in the state. Stacy joined the Company in 2003. In Nishioka's role as sr. director, she is responsible for the financial and operational performance of over 3.6 million RSF of Class A high-rise office space in the John Wayne Airport area, the growth and development of 45 real estate and engineering professionals, and for establishing a culture of best-in-class customer service and maintaining and promoting the Irvine Company brand.

### Windy Olaya, M.D.

*Pink Plastic Surgery, Orange*

Pink Plastic Surgery and Dr. Windy Olaya serve patients in the Orange County, California area. The staff of the facility offers a full line of services including breast augmentation, tummy tuck procedures, wrinkle reduction, breast lifts, and body contouring procedures. Olaya specializes in all aspects of breast cancer care and is dedicated to helping her patients regain their physical beauty as well as their health. A variety of breast augmentation, reduction, reconstruction, and restoration procedures are offered at the facility so each patient can make an informed choice.

At Pink Plastic Surgery, Dr. Olaya offers reconstructive procedures that are designed to help with the recovery of skin cancer, deep or traumatic wounds, and disfiguring injuries that require plastic or corrective surgery. Procedures are offered for the face, abdomen, breasts, and body using state of the art technology to help correct structural abnormalities, scars, or other imperfections. The doctor uses her years of experience and knowledge of the body to help her patients create the type of body they are proud of. Dr. Olaya is double Board Certified in plastic surgery and general surgery.



### Jennifer Olson, Vice President

*Apriem Advisors, Irvine*

Jennifer Olson is an expert in corporate finance, portfolio management and trading equities. She has appeared in numerous national business publications discussing stock market fluctuations, including Forbes, The Street and U.S. News & World Report, and she has been an integral part in the success of Apriem Advisors, one of the fastest-growing wealth management firms in Orange County since joining 12 years ago. While impressive in the business world, Olson's leadership is equally apparent in the county's philanthropic scene. She volunteers and contributes to a number of causes with her firm's Apriem Cares initiative, including Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County and the Inland Empire. When it comes to mentoring, Olson takes it to the highest degree - she is a former "Big of the Year" and represents one of the nonprofit's greatest success stories. Olson's expertise in corporate finance, portfolio management and trading equities has positioned her as a vital part in Apriem's growth.



### Amy Oppedisano, Creative Marketing/Branding Manager

*Terra Tech Corp., Irvine*

Amy Oppedisano is one of the initial founders of Terra Tech Corp, the very first plant-touching publicly traded Cannabis company in the United States. This makes her the very first female founder of a publicly traded Cannabis company as well. Seeing a gap in the Cannabis space for female-friendly retail locations, stylish packaging, and mainstream marketing initiatives, Amy knew her skill sets as a creative professional had a valuable place here. Early on, Oppedisano's role encompassed everything from drawing schematics for grow rooms and managing construction to keeping the business running with day-to-day administrative duties. Oppedisano rejoined Terra Tech in 2018, after having two children, as the head of their Marketing Department. Recreational cannabis legalization brought about the shift in the industry Oppedisano had predicted all along. Seeing opportunity with a whole new cannabis consumer, she has used her position to completely rebrand Terra Tech's retail division, Blüm. Oppedisano has overhauled everything at Blüm including its marketing initiatives, web and social media presence, as well as creating a brand new retail concept that will launch in 2019.



### Anoosheh Oskouian, President/CEO

*Ship & Shore Environmental Inc., Signal Hill*

As the pollution abatement industry's only female CEO, Anoosheh Oskouian is unique within the environmental sector. She has nearly two decades of experience in industrial and commercial project construction of a wide range of air design and fabricating combustion equipment including thermal oxidizers, catalytic oxidizers, boilers, burners, carbon and zeolite absorption mechanisms. During her career, Oskouian has mastered air pollution abatement, waste heat recovery, energy consumption reduction and fabrication of integrated green solutions. Most recently, she received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor from the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations-NECO in New York (May 2015) and was named Sustainability Committee Chair by the FTA (Flexographic Technical Association). Oskouian's in-depth process knowledge and expertise provide the foundation for designing superior, innovative and efficient equipment, along with reliable technologies that help clients collect and reduce and/or eliminate air pollution



emissions within environmentally acceptable guidelines. Under her leadership, Ship & Shore Environmental has grown 57 percent over the last six years.

### Amy Osmond Cook, CEO/Founder

*Osmond Marketing, San Clemente*

Dr. Amy Osmond Cook received her Ph.D. from the University of Utah in Communication. She is the CEO of Osmond Marketing, founder of the Divorce Support Center, and a health/wellness columnist for the Orange County Register, Daily Herald, Family Share, and Cupid's Pulse. Cook has worked as an instructor at Arizona State University, Brigham Young University, and the University of Utah intermittently for the past 15 years. Osmond Marketing is a woman-owned, full-service content marketing organization specifically designed to meet the needs of small businesses and healthcare companies. Their innovative model allows companies to operate on retainer but with the oversight to have all contracted hours available for their perusal at all times. With our unsurpassed quality and customer service, Osmond Marketing experienced 148 percent growth in 2015 and is on track to experience the same levels of growth this year. She has been featured in publications such as People and USA Today and on television shows such as Good Morning America.



### Sara Palmer, Founder/CEO

*StaffRehab, Newport Beach*

Sara Palmer is the founder and CEO of StaffRehab, an educational outsourcing company staffing over 300 service providers in school districts across the US. From its inception in 2009, Palmer has grown her team to 22 employees while still providing exceptional customer service to schools. Their mission is to align our candidates and clients values as our own. Together their values create better futures for our students and clients. StaffRehab was able to provide Special Education Services to over 10000 students in 2018.



### Michele Parrish, Managing Partner

*Parrish Partners LLC, San Clemente*

Michele Parrish is co-founder and managing partner for Parrish Partners, LLC, a leadership and management consulting company founded in 2004. Prior to building Parrish Partners, Michele was a key leader at Intel as it ramped from \$4 billion to \$36 billion during the "internet boom." Michele led large (1500+) organizations that generated millions of dollars per day in company profits. She also led and coached many multinational teams to achieve outstanding results. Michele graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a Master of Science in Business Administration and a Master of Science in Materials Science. She graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor Degree in Industrial & Operations Engineering. Michele is certified by the International Coaching Federation and maintains certifications in a number of leading psychometric assessments.



### Robbin Narike Preciado, Regional President-Orange County and Inland Empire Retail Division

*Union Bank, Orange*

Robbin Narike Preciado's career in banking spans nearly three decades. In that time, she has risen to the role of regional president of Union Bank. Her Division oversees Orange County, the South Bay of L.A., the Inland Empire, Coachella Valley, and the Imperial Valley where she is responsible for more than 500 employees and 85 branches. By always placing the clients' financial needs first, Narike Preciado personifies the characteristics of a true leader and a trusted financial advisor. Narike Preciado is a champion of workforce development inside and outside the bank. She mentors talent and is always willing to give back to her community. At Union Bank, she encourages her employees to participate in charitable causes that help uplift local communities in Orange County. Under her leadership, the bank has helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars on behalf of the American Heart Association and other organizations.



### Jenn Quader, President

*Brower Group, Newport Beach*

Jenn Quader leads one of Orange County's most prestigious PR, content, and marketing agencies - Brower Group - which has been named one of the Orange County Business Journal's Top 10 Public Relations Firms for more than a decade. In partnership with the firm's founder, Judy Brower Fancher, Quader spearheads the agency's innovative and industry-leading PR, content, and marketing campaigns, delivering bottom-line results to many of the most significant commercial real estate, finance, and healthcare companies throughout the U.S. Quader has been instrumental in the agency's recent growth, including an expansion into a new office on Newport Center Drive, as well





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as ongoing national recognition that has earned the firm distinctive awards from the Public Relations Society of America, the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), and several Hermes Creative Awards.

### Sunny Rajab, CEO

*Business Communications Solutions, Irvine*

As the CEO of Business Communications Solutions (BCS), Sunny Rajab is responsible for running all facets of the business. In addition to founding BCS at the age of 20, Rajab has a proven executive management track record and over 15 years of experience driving sales growth in the industry. BCS started out as a single source telecommunications and structured cabling provider. Today, BCS' market share has grown to include audiovisual design and integration, national rollout deployment, networking and wireless solutions, CCTV surveillance, paging and sound masking. The founding principle behind Rajab's vision for BCS was to provide businesses with a singular place to fulfill all of their technology and communication needs. This single-source solution is one of the many accomplishments that have propelled Sunny to the top of her field. In addition, she has built BCS to remedy the commonly broken, uncommunicative processes that are considered standard for a large number of businesses – the implementation of communication and technology.



### Barbara Rea, Managing Director/ Chief Operating Officer

*BKM Capital Partners, Newport Beach*

Barbara Rea has served the real estate investment and development industry for the past 20 years spearheading efforts Marketing, Operations, and Investor Relations throughout Southern California and the Western United States. Joining BKM Capital Partners 2015, Barbara Rea serves Chief Operations Officer for the firm, an institutional fund manager and vertically-integrated operator of light industrial real estate. This past year with the firm reaching \$1 billion in assets and 6.9 million in square feet under management, Barbara Rea has been key in exponentially scaling the company to over 70 employees across 11 offices. In her role, Barbara leads fundraising, marketing, operations, and human resources. Rea's career in real estate has been centered in marketing and operations having previously held positions for Voit Real Estate Services, The Irvine Company, and Centex/Pulte.



### Jessica Reiter-Flax, Senior Manager

*The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Santa Ana*

Jessica Reiter-Flax advanced quickly from a manager to executive director with a non-profit federation (Community Health Charities), in just four short years, growing their revenue by nearly 30 percent, and increasing a major account by 310 percent year over year. She has also attained gemology certifications (passion and hobby of hers) and developed the Community Relations program for a jewelry retailer with 8 locations in the Midwest. She began her career in nonprofit at the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Iowa Chapter, where she exceeded goals and won several business development awards for her accomplishments. She then secured a position with a non-profit federation as a development manager, quickly working her way up to area director, and then advancing into the role of executive director, all in just over four years.



### Marla Merhab Robinson, Attorney at Law

*Merhab Robinson, Jackson & Clarkson, Santa Ana*

Marla Merhab Robinson is the managing and founding partner of Merhab Robinson, Jackson & Clarkson and head of its transactional department, practicing mainly in the areas of corporate, mergers and acquisitions, real estate, finance and employment law. She has counseled and negotiated on behalf of California businesses and business persons for over 30 years. Her practice encompasses the formation of business entities such as corporations, LLC's, and partnerships, mergers and acquisitions, finance, drafting of leases, real estate sales agreements, finance documents and employment documents. Robinson has also been designated by other attorneys as an expert witness in the areas of corporate and partnership law. Robinson, as a fourth-generation Orange County resident, has assisted businesses and individuals in legal matters, but she is known as a resource for these businesses and provides both legally sound and practically competent legal advice.



### Olivia Ross, Director of CRO

*Directive Consulting, Irvine*

Olivia Ross came to Directive as a designer and was promoted to director of CRO within six weeks. She implemented several operational systems and structures, not only in the design department but company-wide. Ross has performed this at each company she has worked for as she has a knack for spotting areas that aren't operating



at the fullest. Additionally, the design team has doubled in size since she's taken over the role of director, as she brings design to the forefront of digital marketing. Directive's pages are converting at much higher conversion rates ever since she trained her team on how to do CRO to the best of their abilities. Currently, her goal is to provide Directive with a third source of revenue by molding CRO into its own deliverable. The company has started getting several CRO clients and looks to get more in the near future.

### Shelly Rufin, MSHS, College Planning Expert

*EDFIN College Planning Experts, Laguna Hills*

Shelly Rufin is the founder, owner and financial aid consultant for EDFIN Cash for College. EDFIN's programs are designed to help high school students (9th through 12th grades), current & returning college students & parents with the entire process of college and financial aid planning. Rufin appreciates, and shares with listeners, educating the public how being an expert college planner and helping families and their kids pursue their dreams of higher education is a passion of hers; may it be vocational, certificate, community college or attending an Ivy League university. She's an advocate, service to her community by volunteering, educating families and the community on the importance of early college planning at local high schools, special events, and speaking engagements. She received the Life Time Achievement Award for her community service from President Barack Obama for her lifelong commitment to building a stronger nation through volunteer service.



### Talia Samuels, President

*Outshine Public Relations, Newport Beach*

Talia Samuels began her career in restaurant public relations at age 19. By the time she turned 23 years old in 2015, she had founded Outshine Public Relations with the desire to shine awareness on Orange County's top culinary talent. Today, her company is recognized as one of Orange County's leading restaurant public relations firms. Outshine Public Relations proudly represents the industry's top chefs, restaurants, and culinary brands. Samuel's worth ethic and integrity have attracted an all-star client roster which includes James Beard Award-winning and Michelin-starred chefs. President & founder, Samuels is a poised and passionate Public Relations and Marketing Communications



Drive, passion and dedication —  
Renita Mollman leads the way.

Committed to mentoring STEM professionals,  
Renita is producing successful projects and  
capable leaders. With Renita at the helm,  
the future looks bright for California.

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professional offering years of experience and proven expertise in developing and executing communications strategies aimed at increasing brand awareness, exposure, and recognition through creative public relations campaigns, social media strategies, email marketing initiatives, and special events. Samuels sits on the Board of Directors for the California Restaurant Association's Orange County Chapter and the Newport Beach Restaurant Association.

### Tricia Sanchez, CEO

*C3 Technology Service, Santa Ana*

Tricia Sanchez is co-founder of C3 Technology Services formerly Copier Products Group. She has been in Orange County for over 25 years and currently is CEO of the company. She oversees all major relations, helps planning and budgeting, and most importantly is the pulse of the business. Prior to founding C3 Technology Services with her husband Tony, Tricia and Tony founded Copier Products Group in 1994. Together, they built the company to more than \$10 million in annual sales, servicing hundreds of clients across the country. Prior to founding her own businesses, Tricia worked for Xerox Corporation in numerous leadership positions. While there, she consistently exceeded sales expectations, achieving the company's highest sales year on record and winning numerous awards.



### Danielle Sapia-Fragalla, Executive Director

*American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine*

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



### Tina Schackman, Partner

*Benefit Financial Services Group (BFSG), Irvine*

Tina Schackman, CFA is a partner at Benefit Financial Services Group (BFSG). Schackman originally joined BFSG in 2004 until leaving in 2011 to join Prudential Retirement where she served as the VP, Strategic Relations for the Western U.S. She returned to BFSG in 2019 as a partner in charge of growing the business and streamlining operations. During her first seven-year tenure, she worked her way up from a Research Analyst to a senior plan consultant. She was also instrumental in helping BFSG manage the firm's operations, compliance and finances. Schackman has been a speaker at many retirement industry events discussing topics such as retirement industry trends, financial wellness and the retirement income gender gap. BFSG has been helping retirement plan sponsors mitigate their liability and optimize their retirement benefits since 1990.



### Alyssa Scholz, Regional Director of Health & Wellness

*Gensler, Newport Beach*

Alyssa Scholz brings more than two decades of diversified design experience focused on healthcare facilities. She started at Gensler in 1999 and rejoined in 2017 as the Regional Health + Wellness Practice area leader for Gensler's Southwest Region that includes Newport Beach, Los Angeles, San Diego, Denver, Phoenix and Las Vegas. Scholz was recently appointed to senior associate in 2018 and has helped grow the Health + Wellness practice area for Gensler Newport Beach. Scholz's professional achievements include specializing in cancer care, pediatric surgery research and designing around the experience and how the surrounding environment can support our medical needs. Her main clients are Hoag Hospital, University of California, Davis, University of California, Irvine, City of Hope and Cedars Sinai Medical Center. Her responsibilities include supporting the Southwest regional offices with their healthcare goals by cultivating client relationships, business development and leading winning project pursuits.



### Traci Shirachi, CEO

*SmartStart Evaluation and Research Inc., Irvine*

Traci Shirachi purchased SmartStart Evaluation and Research ("SmartStart") in 2017 and since then has expanded the company's focus on business in philanthropy. Shirachi and the company's employees passion is to help organizations manage resources more effectively and to help establish greater

accountability and transparency between a donor (individual or institution) and the organizations receiving the funds. SmartStart is an evaluation and research company that uses rigorous data collection and analysis methods to measure the outcomes and impact of programs for different non-profit organizations, including educational institutions, charitable non-profit organizations/foundations, and government and non-governmental organizations. This work is critical to obtain sustainable funding for any organization's successful expansion and growth, including being used for strategic decision-making and to achieve fundraising goals. SmartStart also helps determine where improvements can be made to such program/service to improve its effectiveness and use of resources, which is quite significant because it provides transparent, objective information to all stakeholders of a program/service/organization.



### Kathie Sitton, Associate Director, Property Accounting

*BKM Capital Management Company, Newport Beach*

Kathie Sitton serves as associate director of property accounting for BKM Management Company, the property management arm of BKM Capital Partners. She is responsible for the oversight of all the accounting of BKM Capital Partner's 38 active properties, totaling \$1 billion in assets under management. Her team manages the accounting and reporting for all assets across five western states and works closely with our property and leasing managers onsite. Sitton brings over 25 years of experience in real estate finance and accounting, her deep expertise and leadership will be influential as her team continues to scale with the rapid growth of the firm. Sitton has been essential in building out the back of the house, implementing processes and procedures, internal controls, and creating efficiencies as BKM continues to acquire new assets.



### Lizbeth (Liz) Slater, Co-Founder/CEO

*Slater Builders, Inc., Costa Mesa*

Liz Slater co-founded Slater Builders Inc in 1993 and has been the CEO since its inception. Liz has led the upper management team to grow Slater to a \$50+ million dollar a year business, working in over nine market sectors, throughout Los Angeles, Orange County, the Inland Empire, and San Diego. Liz is also an integral part in the financial development and operations of the company, handling all the firm's financial risk management and daily financial duties including all client and sub-partner accounts, contracts, insurance, human resources, 401K plans, healthcare benefits, bonding and accounting procedures. The company focus since its inception has been to keep an honest, supportive, familial environment for its employees, sub-contractors, and clients. This has allowed Slater to maintain long-lasting relationships and keep its annual voluntary turnover significantly lower than the average construction firm to around 3-5 percent compared to 26.2 percent for the industry overall in Orange County.



### Kimberly Smith, Vice President of Operations

*Crawford Custom Homes, Costa Mesa*

As vice president of operations, Kimberly Smith has played a vital role over the last 30 years in establishing Crawford Custom Homes as one of, if not thee, Master Builder of Luxury Custom Homes in Orange County. She is responsible for the administration and management of the company from finances and cash flow to policy and procedures in the office and field, human resources, risk management, technology, marketing and advertising, training, safety, and customer service. Smith's dedication to establishing and sustaining a strong awareness of "team" within the Crawford community creates a supportive and collaborative environment in which the employees have a greater sense of "family" and commitment to excellence. Smith has also served as project manager for Crawford's entry into Home Aid's Project Playhouse, Home Aid's annual fundraiser to help build shelters for the homeless. Crawford's playhouse entry won both the Grand award and the Craftsmanship award. Kimberly has supported the company's commitment to Second Harvest Food Bank and to SPIN, and has served as Chair of SPIN's annual dinner.



### Rosemarie Smith, Founder/President/Chief Executive Officer

*Systems Source Inc., Newport Beach*

Rosemarie Smith started her career as a successful furniture manufacturer's representative before launching Systems Source, Inc. (SSI) out of a rented cubicle space. With a passion for both furnishings and people, she saw great opportunity to make a name for herself in Orange County's burgeoning design and commercial real estate industries. Driven by her personal mantra "to do the best and highest good, for all concerned," Smith has created long-lasting, honest relationships by providing thoughtful,





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tailored workplace solutions. Over twenty years later SSI is 200+ people strong with offices in Newport Beach, Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle and Spokane, and boasting a diverse range of clientele like Allergan, Microsoft, Netflix, Mazda, and Hoag. Smith's mantra is not only ingrained within each of her offices but serves as the guiding principle for every operational and cultural decision made throughout the firm.

### Anna Song, Director of development

*Orange County Rescue Mission, Tustin*

Anna Song joined Orange County Rescue Mission as a development manager for the teen shelter program, Laurel House, in 2014. Within two years, she was promoted to director of Development for the Rescue Mission. Since that time, she has effectively re-built a robust development department with a commitment to high performance and healthy, cohesive team dynamics. Within her first six months as director, she secured a six-figure gift from a new donor. Sing has successfully launched a new major gifts program, two collaborative golf tournaments, and a now completed two-year capital campaign for a teen boys shelter. Her greatest joy and accomplishment, though, is being able to be a small part of how lives are being restored and transformed from brokenness and homelessness to wholeness and self-sufficiency through the work of Orange County Rescue Mission.



### Jessica Spaulding, President

*The Spaulding Agency, Aliso Viejo*

Jessica Spaulding launched The Spaulding Agency in 2009 to provide a nimble high level of public relations and marketing services for the commercial real estate industry and public sector. This year marks 10 years in business. Over that time, she is proud to have represented many of her clients for almost 10 years. Those longstanding relationships have been the result of quality service and strategic planning that impacts business success. Her work has included the development of the San Bernardino County State of the County that achieved a record attendance along with thought leadership on behalf of leading OC cities, serving as an agency of record for NAIOP SoCal and providing pr work with national commercial real estate firms across numerous disciplines. Spaulding continues to grow the firm and has continued to provide multi-layered communications strategies that include media relations, website development and social media.



### Maria Stearns, Partner

*Rutan & Tucker LLP, Costa Mesa*

As an equity partner at OC's largest firm, Maria Stearns is a leader in everything she does. She is sought after for her unique approach to representing employers in all areas of employment, including wage and hour class actions and traditional employment litigation, and her creative risk management strategies. Within the firm, Stearns is the only female member of the partner compensation committee, is chair of her department and is an active mentor and advocate for associates. Stearns is a graduate of Harvard Law School and was a full-scholarship varsity tennis player at the University of Kansas where she was named NCAA Woman of the Year. Stearns has received several notable honors for her unorthodox yet highly effective and efficient approach to representing employers, including selection to the Daily Journal's exclusive list of Top Women Lawyers for the last five years and its list of Top Employment Lawyers.



### Paula Steurer, President

*Sterling Public Relations, Corona del Mar*

Sterling Public Relations, Inc. was founded in 2008 as a Publicity, Branding and Marketing hybrid by entrepreneur Paula Steurer. Committed to her clientele and their diverse brands, Steurer's innovative vision, strategic approach, and tenured industry relationships have played a vital role in propelling each company to the forefront of their respective industries. With a passion for building brand identities and her innate ability to connect, engage and drive brands to the next level, Steurer has become a trusted authority among entrepreneurs and executives. She has been selected as a keynote speaker and workshop leader by nationally recognized brands such as Mindbody Inc, Vizio and Oracle to educate a variety of generations on how to design, implement and execute top-notch PR and marketing initiatives that drive results. Through her leadership, Sterling Public Relations has become the in-demand firm for brands throughout California and North Texas who desire a competitive edge.



### Commie Stevens, Partner/Managing Director of Strategic & Financial Planning

*Beacon Pointe Advisors, Newport Beach*

Commie Stevens designed and oversees the firm's approach to financial and estate planning. She works closely with individuals and their families to best utilize



their wealth to meet their lifetime and legacy goals. Prior to joining Beacon Pointe Advisors, Stevens practiced as an estate planning attorney at Albrecht and Barney and served as the Director of Estate Planning for Pacific Life Insurance Company. She earned her Juris Doctor from Pepperdine University School of Law, her BA in Economics from the University of California at Irvine, is a member of the State Bar of California and an Investment Advisor Representative (Series 65). She has been featured in The Wall Street Journal, US News & World Report, The Street, Financial Advisor IQ, The National Financial Educators Council, The Journal of Practical Estate Planning and The University of California, Irvine's Wealth Management Frontier Journal.

### Autumn Strier, Co-Founder/CEO/President – Board of Directors

*Miracles for Kids, Tustin*

Autumn Strier is the co-founder & CEO of Miracles for Kids and the president of its Board of Directors. For the last 15+ years, Strier has dedicated her life to serving the needs of over 1,000 low-income families with children battling over 100 life-threatening illnesses throughout Southern California and beyond. As the chief architect of all programs and events, Strier oversees the execution of critically-needed multi-year support constructed to keep families stable in times of crises - monthly financial aid, subsidized housing, therapy, wellness, food and basic needs delivery. She works tirelessly to raise funds and build meaningful partnerships, focused on reducing costs and maximizing mission delivery. Under Strier's leadership and as its chief fundraiser, Miracles has raised over \$20 million to date. Her tireless work ethic has resulted in Miracles' ability to serve those in need with great success, with a laser focus on growing to do more.



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

*Haynes and Boone LLP, Costa Mesa*

Since joining Haynes and Boone in 2015, M.C. Sungaila's track record as an outstanding appellate lawyer has raised the law firm's profile in California. Sungaila, a partner in Haynes and Boone's Orange County office and anchor of the firm's California appellate practice, has briefed and argued appeals raising cutting-edge and core business issues, and helped secure important rights for women and girls nationally and internationally. Sungaila has repeatedly been named one of California's Top 100



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Women Lawyers by the Daily Journal and twice named a California Lawyer Attorney of the Year for victories before the California Supreme Court and Ninth Circuit U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Last year alone, two of the year's five biggest appellate reversals cited by the Daily Journal involved Sungaila. In 2017, she was awarded both the Orange County Women Lawyers' Association's Attorney of the Year and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

### **Rachel Svoboda, Chief Executive Officer** *Sunday Brunch Agency, Huntington Beach*

Throughout her 25-year career in advertising, Rachel Svoboda has led prestigious advertising teams spanning across Southern California with the mission of creating an environment in which others can thrive. In 2016, Svoboda utilized her industry experience and proven successes to establish Sunday Brunch Agency, an innovative firm that is designed to capitalize on a network of top branding, advertising, public relations, and video and digital professionals nationwide. She has worked alongside major brands such as Toyota, Panasonic, The Irvine Company, Néktar, City of Hope, LAX and others to develop original content and business strategies that have been recognized by the EFFIES and the ONE SHOW AWARDS. In 2015, The National Association of Professional Women named Svoboda Woman of the Year for her outstanding leadership, professional achievements, and impact within the community.



### **Jinger Tapia, Principal, Design** *Ware Malcomb, Irvine*

Jinger Tapia started her career with Ware Malcomb in 1994 as a designer, becoming part of the senior leadership team upon promotion to director, design in 2006. Her responsibilities were elevated further when promoted to Principal, Design in 2013. A California Licensed Architect, Tapia has been instrumental in the growth and transformation of Ware Malcomb's Design team into an award-winning international studio. As a nationally recognized thought leader for design, she infuses the latest industry innovations and technologies into her design approach. Tapia is one of five women on Ware Malcomb's senior leadership team and her vision has helped define the firm's design standards of high quality and strong character. She is commended by her peers and colleagues for her ability to effectively bring resolution to any design challenge through the use of monthly design charrettes to provide her 22 years of design expertise.



### **Debbie Taylor, COO** *FUSION OF IDEAS, Lake Forest*

As COO, Debbie Taylor oversees the daily operations at Fusion of Ideas, a company that helps businesses create immersive brand experiences through custom app development, full-color printing on mobile devices and integration of the devices into the organizations. For more than a decade, Fusion of Ideas has worked with some of the most significant brands in the world, including Capital One, Audi, Major League Baseball, and Hilton. Taylor has played a key role in the company's success with consistent year-over-year growth for the past decade, and in 2018, the company recorded its highest year-end revenue to date. Taylor's wide range of responsibilities includes overseeing organizational policies, day-to-day operations and the company financials. Additionally, her people-centric leadership has made Fusion of Ideas a fun and positive place to work, as reflected by the company's employee low turnover, which is 62 percent lower than the industry average.



### **Betsy Thagard, Founder** *B. toffee LLC, Irvine*

An award-winning handcrafted toffee, B. toffee's "crunchy perfection of sweetness" offers the ultimate indulgence. Combining the finest, freshest, and most natural ingredients, Betsy Thagard spent years of passionate experimenting to create the perfect toffee. Her provocative manipulation of savory butters, fine domestic sugars, premium Guittard and Callebaut chocolates, topped with deluxe pecans are unlike any other toffee in the world. Since B. toffee's inception in 2009, the sweet treat has caused a stir in the candy confection world. With a dedicated following and ever-growing customer base, Thagard has turned her passion into a profitable business. B. toffee received top gold honors for "Top Toffee" and "Best Packaging" by the Taste Awards in San Francisco and has also been awarded the "Official Toffee" at the Golden Foodie Awards – the highest culinary food honor in Orange County. B. toffee can be found in many high-end specialty markets both locally and nationwide, including Dean & DeLuca, Whole Foods, Bristol Farms, and at several luxury resorts, like Bacara Resort & Spa in Santa Barbara.



### **Paula Tomei, Managing Director** *South Coast Repertory, Costa Mesa*

During Paula Tomei's tenure as managing director, she implemented a succession plan with the founders after their 47 years of leading the theatre and successfully transitioned them into Founding Artistic Director roles while bringing on new leadership; balanced artistic initiatives and risks with responsible fiscal management, including commissioning and developing new plays to support the artistic mission; worked with Board of Trustees and staff to meet fiscal objectives and balance the budget; completed the Legacy Campaign (\$50 million goal), as well as creating within the campaign a Founders Endowment that exceeded its \$2 million goal; continued to attract and recruit the highest level of community leadership to the Board of Trustees; led strategic planning processes with the Board, artistic leadership and staff to plan for the future; and facilitated the international tour of David Henry Hwang's play Chinglish to the Hong Kong Arts Festival, SCR's first production to tour internationally.



### **Cheri Tree, Founder/CEO**

*Coke Breaker Technologies, Laguna Beach*

Cheri Tree is a best-selling author, professional keynote speaker, executive business coach, world-renowned personality science trainer, and entrepreneur. She is the founder and CEO of BANKCODE and Codebreaker Technologies, Inc., with clients in more than 40 countries worldwide. Tree has spoken to hundreds of thousands of entrepreneurs and professionals globally. Tree has lectured at Harvard University and several of the University of California campuses and is passionate about making a difference in the world. Her B.A.N.K. methodology is being taught not only to the business community, but also to school systems to reduce bullying, marriage ministries to strengthen families, and non-profit organizations to help with their fundraising and social impact initiatives. Tree has been featured in numerous international publications, including Forbes.com and Entrepreneur.com, and has been nominated as innovator of the year and entrepreneur of the year for her work and social impact.



### **Katy Triefenbach, CEO** *Stage 1 Financial, Anaheim*

Katy Triefenbach is the co-founder and CEO for the leading provider of outsourced accounting and finance to fast growing investor backed consumer startups. Recently launched a venture capital fund of which Triefenbach is one of three partners. Being the only non-financial founder, Triefenbach has been able to build a robust organization that is the firm of choice for both great brands and great investors include strategically such as Unilever and Kellogg. This also lead to building a venture capital fund to invest into our client a long side our investment partners.



### **Jaril Tudio, Insurance Consultant**

*Spinnaker Investment Group, Newport Beach*

Jaril Tudio is an insurance professional specializing in life insurance and long term care. She is well versed in utilizing insurance in succession planning having worked over 16 years in banking focusing on business owners as a Small Business Banker/Relationship Development Officer. Tudio was most recently employed with New York Life Insurance, where she worked for 5 years achieving the Million Dollar Round Table. Tudio believes in working as a team and has strategic business partnerships with various professionals. These professional help to create comprehensive plans for asset protection, estate planning and business exit strategies. Tudio focuses on adding value to her clients' lives by assisting them to create wealth while also planning on the eventual transfer and distribute to their loved ones. Tudio works with her clients to ensures that as they plan their legacy they do so while continuing to live their lives with security and dignity.



### **Gretchen Valentine, Partner, Tax Services and West Region Tax Consulting Leader** *RSM US LLP, Irvine*

Gretchen Valentine has over 25 years of experience addressing the business needs of a variety of clients, including public and privately owned businesses and their owners. Valentine entered professional services to share her expertise, develop young talent, and operate a business. She has been a partner with RSM US LLP since 2004 and was previously a partner with a Big 4 firm. Valentine has held numerous leadership roles including industry groups, corporate tax, national





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practice development committees, Irvine Office managing partner, and is currently the West Region Tax Consulting leader. Her energy brings teams together to identify objectives, create implementation plans, and execute to achieve strong results. As Tax Consulting leader, Valentine's focus is developing a tax advisor mindset, working with the national team to deploy valuable solutions that assist clients with the new tax laws and planning opportunities. In only one year in this role, the region's advisory services have grown 14 percent.

### Rachel Valentine, Head of People

*Vincit, Irvine*

Rachel Valentine has played an invaluable role in Vincit's expansion in Orange County. During her time with the company, she doubled the employee headcount, and contributed to the successful focus on company culture and employee happiness which resulted in Vincit being recognized as a Best Place to work by the Orange County Business Journal, TopWorkplace by the OC Register and nod at Best Tech Work Culture by Tech in Motion. She also spearheaded the company move into its new headquarters location in Irvine Spectrum and is supporting their office expansion plans for the next five years. Heading up Vincit's People Operations, she continues to support hiring, on-boarding and on-going support of all team members. Plus she is the driving force behind many of Vincit's community initiatives including partnerships with local schools, nonprofits and runs Vincit Dev Talks, a quarterly event hosting speakers from local OC Tech firms discussing the latest trends of the industry.



### Kimberly Valentine-Poska, Managing Director

*Global Capital Markets Inc., Irvine*

Early in her career, Kimberly Valentine-Poska became a partner at Deloitte & Touche, an international professional services firm. At Deloitte, during that time, she was the only woman partner in the Investment Banking Group in Orange County where she assisted domestic and international companies with Mergers and Acquisitions, Initial Public Offerings (IPO) and debt and equity capital funding. Valentine-Poska focused in the areas of Technology (software), Healthcare and Real Estate. Currently, she is a managing director at Global Capital Markets, Inc.; Valentine-Poska founded and built her division of the firm which focuses on Global Sports, Sports Technology and Healthcare Technology. Her clients represent sports technology and healthcare companies from around the world. Valentine-Poska and the Global Capital Markets, co-founder, Mark Wilser, served on the Board of Directors for the Harvard Business School Association of Orange County for many years in the 1990s. Two years ago, Valentine-Poska joined Wilser's firm to start and build this successful division of Global Capital Markets.



### Sara Van Dusen, Partner

*Parcon, Santa Ana*

Sara Van Dusen started her own marketing and business development consulting firm, SaraSource, in 2013. In 2018, she merged with Parcon Media to become Parcon with the purpose of providing clients with full-service Virtual Chief Marketing Officer strategies and services. Van Dusen has nearly 20 years of experience and an exceptionally keen ability to utilize her expertise and fanatical belief in strategy to drive client business forward. Now with a specialized team of 11 people, she leads strategic marketing initiatives for clients in a wide variety of industries, including professional services, CPG brands, apparel and more. Her ability to leverage all opportunities to ensure cohesiveness gives her an expert advantage when approaching client objectives. Van Dusen leverages her experience in brand and marketing strategies, full spectrum media management and conversion rate optimization to drive business success across all communications platforms for her clients. Van Dusen has coached and mentored hundreds of professionals during her career.



### Kimberly Vig, Executive Director

*The Literacy Project, Newport Beach*

Named The Literacy Project's (TLP) Executive Director at last year's 9th annual "What Dreams are Made Of" gala, Kimberly Vig has been an integral part of the nonprofit's success a decade. She has spent the past 10 years bettering her knowledge of the nonprofit sector and is committed to her career in nonprofit management through TLP. A non-profit organization dedicated to enabling disadvantaged youth to increase their reading skill levels, TLP has served over 8,500 struggling readers across Southern California, raised more than \$3.4 million for the cause and last year crossed state lines with the opening of a new Utah chapter. Since starting as an intern at TLP, Vig has worked her way up the ranks and now coordinates volunteer teams, sponsorships, marketing



collateral, accounting practices, social media campaigns, as well as serves as the liaison with TLP's PR firm, Powerhouse Communications.

### Mila Volkova, Director, Healthcare Design

*Ware Malcomb, Irvine*

Mila Volkova leads the Healthcare Design Studio in the Ware Malcomb Irvine office. Since 2013, she has played a critical role in the growth and diversification of the healthcare practice, expanding into a medical office, outpatient clinics, hospital/acute care projects, skilled nursing, behavioral health, and OSHPD one through three specialties. Volkova consistently goes above and beyond for her clients and team. She is fiercely dedicated to surpassing challenging goals and expectations and cares deeply about the personal and professional development of her team. As a result, Volkova is well respected within the Architectural design community and is creating a positive impact on the next generation of women leaders. In her role as Director, Healthcare Design, her responsibilities include business development and strategic growth initiatives, recruiting, team development through individual and group training initiatives, group operations, and client management.



### Cathy Volpe, President

*HB Staffing, Huntington Beach*

Cathy Volpe, president of HB Staffing, a small boutique employment firm based in Huntington Beach and San Diego, has been involved in the staffing industry since 1976, the year that the floppy disk was invented. She founded her first staffing firm in 1977, at a time when only five percent of businesses in the U.S. were owned by women. Over the years, she has built several successful firms while mentoring many people - both women and men - to help build their careers in an industry that she remains passionate about. While many of her peers have retired, Volpe remains actively involved in leading and growing HB Staffing. Her goal is for HB Staffing to "turn 50" (\$50 million in revenues) when she "turns 50" (50th anniversary in the industry) by continuing to lead a Team that is as passionate as she is about providing service to people - candidates, clients and community involvement.



**Ileana Holguin**

LEED AP BD + C

Project Director

## CONGRATULATIONS

on your nomination for Orange County Business Journal's 2019 Women in Business Award for Woman of the Year! We thank you for the continuous leadership and inspiration you provide women in the construction industry and our community!

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## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

### Victoria Vu, Managing Partner

*VF Developments, LLC, Costa Mesa*

Victoria V. Vu is the founder and managing partner of VF Developments, LLC (VF). VF is a trendsetting company specializing in the acquisition and re-development of poorly managed and distressed value added multifamily properties. VF targets these multifamily properties that are located in the newly gentrifying urban walkable areas of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Founded in 2015, VF has acquired more than 20 multifamily properties with a market value exceeding \$40 million. VF Developments is an entrepreneurial company specializing in acquiring, renovating, and managing multifamily properties in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. The company targets under-performing and mismanaged multifamily properties in gentrifying areas of these counties. VF also completes significant renovations that modernize and transform dated properties into cutting edge, high quality, best in class living environments - ultimately creating substantial value enhancement for its investors.



### Annette Walker, President

*City of Hope, Irvine*

After serving for decades as a nationally recognized senior executive in U.S. health care, Annette Walker is giving back to the communities where she has lived for 40 years, having made her "health care homecoming" to become president of City of Hope Orange County. She heads a massive program to develop a world-class cancer network in Orange County, with the main health campus in Irvine's Great Park. City of Hope will extend its personalized, compassionate, humanistic, and technologically advanced care throughout the county, where 20 percent of those diagnosed with cancer currently leave the area for treatment. Walker's approach is to work with local cancer champions to ensure the highest level of care for OC individuals and families. A brave leader who takes bold steps to advance American health care, Walker is also a tireless mentor for the next generation of leaders and advocate for women in her profession.



### Sarah Weaver, President

*Strategic Creations, Irvine*

Sarah Weaver is president and owner of Strategic Creations. After working for a construction contractor and helping it win more than \$500 million in work and more than \$3 billion in long-term contracts, Weaver knew she wanted to propel other companies to similar success. In 2011, Weaver started Strategic Creations and has been using the company's unique, holistic approach to proposal and grant development to help clients achieve sustainable success. Using expertise amassed over the course of 15 years, Weaver has assisted more than 70 long-term clients with business development, strategic planning, marketing, and proposal management and development for federal, state, municipal, and private sectors. Under Weaver's leadership, the company has secured funding capacities in excess of \$4 billion for clients within the last five years. Clients include small, mid-size, and large companies in the architecture, engineering, construction, environmental, and non-profit organizations nationwide.



### Charlotte Wiederholt, President

*Tangram Studio, Newport Beach*

Charlotte Wiederholt has been with Tangram for over 20 years, beginning as a designer in a team of three people that brought in \$1-2 million annually in sales. Today, Wiederholt is the president of Tangram Studio, leading an over 20-person team that has achieved over \$20 million a year in sales. As president, she oversees a team of industrial designers, engineers, and a customer service group. Her team works closely with each client to reflect and reinforce the company's distinctive culture through innovative custom furniture solutions achieved through a process of collaborative input and planning, conceptualization, prototyping, engineering, fabrication and installation. Once a division of Tangram Interiors, Tangram Studio is now an independent company working with large scale organizations across the nation, including Saatchi & Saatchi Dallas, Boston Consulting Group, JustFab, Procore, Fuse Media, Imagine Entertainment, Too Faced, and many more. Within the last 10 years, Wiederholt has grown Tangram Studio over 400 percent and has achieved national expansion.



### Christine Willig, CEO

*Illuminate Education, Irvine*

As CEO of Illuminate Education, Christine Willig is leading the charge in an industry that has a reputation of being male-dominated; Educational Technology. Only 10 percent of roles in tech are held by women at the

executive level. Illuminate is a Google for Education Premier Technology Partner and the leading provider of k-12 software and services. Willig is at the forefront of a 5-in-one mega-merger that brings solutions to the barriers that many educators face. An educator perspective drives Illuminate's solutions, which are designed to maximize instructional time, streamline educator tasks and support data-driven decision-making. With over 600 employees and 14 locations worldwide, Illuminate promises to deliver what educators and students need. The suite combines formative assessment and data platforms from Illuminate Education, IO Education, SchoolCity and Alpine Achievement with a formative item bank provider in Key Data System. Illuminate Education's product suite includes data, analytics, assessments, and reporting. Illuminate serves more than 1,600 school districts and over 12 million students.



### Kari Willis, President/Co-Founder

*E Factor, Tustin*

As a young professional, Kari Willis pursued highly-competitive marketing roles in male-dominant industries; first at Fox Sports, and then within the wireless infrastructure industry. An energetic self-starter to her core, Willis took it upon herself to carve out improved marketing teams within these companies, creating change and progress while earning the respect of her peers. Willis's tireless efforts made waves within the wireless infrastructure industry, and in the process, she realized the importance of creating experiences using the personal touch and innovative thinking. Seven years ago, Willis & her husband Chris decided to take a leap of faith and form their own firm. E Factor was born out of the mission to make an impact in creating "experiences" for brands and events. Six years later, the company has grown exponentially, providing sales, marketing, & event expertise across fields such as non-profits/charities, food & beverage, advertising, and wireless.



### Genine Wilson, Vice President, Pacific Region

*Kelly Services Inc., Orange*

An experienced business leader and staffing executive, Genine Wilson oversees the staffing and business solutions operations for Kelly throughout the Pacific region, in the states of California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii and Alaska, with a focus on engineering, information technology, science, and finance and accounting staffing. She also manages Kelly's administrative, light industrial and office/clerical recruiting, as well as on-site client staffing and contact center solutions. Wilson joined Kelly in 1999 and has held increasingly responsible leadership positions in sales and operations before being named to her current position in 2008. Prior to joining Kelly Services, Wilson spent more than 10 years in sales and management leadership positions. Prior to her recent promotion as vice president of the Pacific Region, Wilson oversaw the Southern California region for Kelly, with more than 108 full-time employees and more than 3,000 temporary employees working across a wide range of industries.



### Diane Wittenberg, Audit Partner

*Haskell & White, Irvine*

Diane Wittenberg has proven to be an invaluable leader at Haskell & White, one of the largest independently owned public accounting firms in Southern California by contributing to the Firm's continued business success and status as the state's best destination for female accountants. With over 30 years of experience, Wittenberg leads teams to provide a variety of audit and business advisory services for public and private companies, as well as nonprofit organizations. Providing value beyond meeting compliance requirements is a key focus. She also contributes her leadership to many vital initiatives for the Firm such as mentoring and training programs for young professionals pursuing a Certified Public Accountant license. As a member of the Association for Corporate Growth Board of Directors, she chairs the group's Women in Leadership Committee. She also chairs the Audit Committee of Discovery Cube Orange County and the Finance Committee for Mariposa Women and Family Center.



### Dr. Tammy Wong, CEO

*Fostering Executive Leadership Inc., Irvine*

Dr. Tammy Wong is the CEO of Fostering Executive Leadership, Inc. an international business results executive coaching firm. The firm consists of hundreds of leadership coaches worldwide. The coaches work with leaders by improving leadership capability, capacity, and have established a proven record with an ROI through our coaching engagements. The team works







## Congratulations to Melanie Graper on being nominated for the Orange County Business Journal's Women in Business Awards

Our team includes the best and brightest experts in consumer, financial and property information who provide value to clients by identifying growth opportunities, improving performance, and mitigating risk.

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## 2019 Women in Business Award Nominees

with individual leaders at all management levels and are skilled in helping leaders understand the benefit in building leadership competencies within the organization, understanding team integration, and the creation of solid succession planning methodology to create strategic leaders within your company. Organizations we serve will benefit from our focus on building leadership, team performance, communication, accountability, and strategy through a proven track record of experience, certification, and research.

**Jenny Woo, Founder/CEO***Mind Brain Parenting, Irvine*

A Harvard-trained educator, educational neuroscience researcher, podcaster, wife, and mom of three, Jenny Woo's entire career has been dedicated to developing big and small human beings. She has worked as a Human Capital consultant at Deloitte for Fortune 500 companies, HR Manager in Talent Strategy, Executive Coach in the Silicon Valley, UC Berkeley MBA career coach, Montessori school administrator, and certified fitness trainer. Her mission for children and adults alike: to empower people to become self-motivated, inspired, and compassionate citizens of the world. She noticed a lack of affordable, accessible, and evidence-based resources available to support the social and emotional needs of children and adults. Woo founded Mind Brain Parenting and developed 52 Essential Conversations, an "anytime and anywhere" game that builds real-life skills. It won 2018 Parents' Choice Awards and was featured by Harvard, UCI, and American Express OPEN. She is an avid speaker at schools and conferences.

**Kimberly Wood, General Manager/COO***El Niguel Country Club, Laguna Niguel*

As general manager and COO of El Niguel Country Club, Kimberly Wood is responsible for full management of an 18-hole golf course on 150-acre property with an annual budget of \$8.6 million. She has restructured the club organization and built a new executive team including golf course superintendent, executive chef and clubhouse manager. In addition, she creates an annual business plan and operating and capital budgets manages 100+ staff and created qualitative and quantitative performance plans for all department heads. Wood is also responsible for all employment and legal activity, and health and liability insurance coverage.

**Dianne York, President/CEO***DYG Cosmetics, Newport Beach*

Dianne York is the CEO of DYG Mineral Makeup. York brings her aesthetic sense of beauty to DYG as an accomplished model and actress with over 20 years of experience. York is the Founder of You Glow Girl, a teenage skin care company, Cool Clenz, an acne therapy system for teenagers, and Vitaphenol, an ultra uber skin care line for adults. York was also the founder of La Jolla Spa MD, a world-renowned medical spa founded in 2002. York has co-authored the popular series "YOU Glow Girl! The Ultimate Health & Skincare Guide for Teens. York won the Golden Triangle Award from the American Academy of Dermatology for her illustrated children's book, "Fun In The Sun Safely". She has also lectured around the country about healthy skin care and beauty and has served on numerous boards and panels. York has been featured as a leading beauty expert on The Beauty & Fashion Network, Boomers Show, iVillage.com, MSN.com and has helped secure media plans for La Jolla Spa MD on The Today Show, E! Television, The Swan and in leading publication magazines such as InStyle, Elle, Marie Claire, Harper's Bazaar, Good Housekeeping and others.

**Christina Zabat-Fran, VP/General Counsel/Corporate Secretary***St. John Knits Inc., Irvine*

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



## CONGRATULATIONS MICHELE PARRISH

2019 WOMEN IN BUSINESS NOMINEE

**PARRISH PARTNERS, L.L.C.**

**MICHELE PARRISH**  
CO-FOUNDER & MANAGING PARTNER

Michele Parrish heads an inspirational team of leadership and management consultants. As Co-Founder and Managing Partner, Michele drives unprecedented client results through the power of leveraging three dimensions of intelligence: Intellectual Quotient (IQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ) and Cultural Quotient (CQ).

Parrish uniquely unleashes the mostly untapped potential in organizations through applied neuroscience and the integration of multiple fields. She has over 25 years as a change agent, leading and coaching organizations across numerous industries. Through her customized executive coaching programs, compelling B.M.O.R.E.® Leadership model, and breakthrough performance disciplines of Building Cultures of Commitment®, Parrish demonstrates novelty in the highly traditional field of management consulting. Michele was also recently nominated for the LA Business Journal Women's Council Awards.



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## CONGRATULATIONS KIM DAMRON

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