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# TOP TECH AWARDS 2019

## Letter from COX Business



After 12 years the Top Tech Awards continues to provide us a forum to recognize, applaud and praise all the I.T. leaders in San Diego County. It is always an honor to recognize their continued dedication in bringing technology innovation into the workplace.

It's incredible this event continues to be the largest technology awards program on the West Coast and that is due to our community's commitment to always push the needle.

Congratulations to each nominee and honoree on your accomplishments, we look forward to celebrating your successes next year when we celebrate the 13th Annual Top Tech Awards in 2020.

Congratulations once again,

Duane Cameron  
Vice President  
Cox Business

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## Letter from the Publisher



The San Diego Business Journal is proud to be the media sponsor for the 2019 Top Tech Awards presented by Cox Business.

To define tech these days is just about to define everything. In genetics, tech traces our family trees to ancestors who are no longer lost to us. Tech soars above us in satellites and opens the doors to beach house rentals in our communities. It brings jobs, prosperity and new economic lifeblood to our region. Tech saves lives of our loved ones

at hospitals, and it continues to promise even more miracles.

Well-deserved congratulations to all the winners and the nominees – your work is so important to the well-being of San Diego's Community of Business and the community as a whole.

Thank you to Vice President Duane Cameron and his talented team, who are continuing the effort started by Larry Coval, for hosting this special event that showcases the region's most innovative technology leaders.

We hope you enjoy this special section that tells the winners' stories as well as the first-class event.

Barb Chodos  
President & Publisher  
San Diego Business Journal

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# SAN DIEGO'S TECH SCENE POSITIONS ITSELF FOR GREAT THINGS

## WORKFORCE: Talent Pool Attracts Cos. – and More Talent

■ By BRAD GRAVES

The next premier destination for technologists and software developers could easily be San Diego.

Most of the country, and the world, just don't know it yet.

"We're kind of under-cover a little bit," said Joe Gursky, IT director with the USS Midway Museum on San Diego Bay. "People don't realize how much knowledge, how much talent we have here."



Joe Gursky

"We've become a real hub for startups in technology," said IT executive Steve Romeo, noting that ideas come out of the University of California, San Diego and the EvoNexus incubator. Software developers and hardware engineers are making San Diego their home, said Romeo, who works for medical device maker Breg Inc.



Steve Romeo

There is a reason Apple Inc. is coming to San Diego, said tech executive Casey Cotton, who ticked off a list of preeminent companies in the region: Motorola, Novartis, Pfizer and Vital Therapies. "I think San Diego truly is the next hotbed for technology talent and innovation," he said. Cotton is chief technology officer with Asset Marketing Systems and Madison Avenue Securities LLC. Gursky, Romeo and Cotton all sit on



Casey Cotton

the advisory council of the annual Top Tech Awards, presented by Cox Business.

"I think our ability to get products to market has elevated the region," added Kevin Carroll, executive director of Tech San Diego, an industry organization.

While Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area are world-recognized tech centers, they also have problems associated with their success. Perhaps the No. 1 problem is they are very expensive places to live and grow a business.

In a move to cut expenses, auto software startup Comma.ai moved from downtown San Francisco to San Diego's Little Italy neighborhood in the spring, bringing its 12 employees. A \$100,000 salary in San Diego spends like \$170,000 in the Bay Area, Comma.ai CEO Riccardo Biasini said on his company blog.

There are other quality of life challenges in the Bay Area, notably traffic.

### GAINING A CRITICAL MASS

San Diego's talent pool is attracting businesses such as Apple, which plans to establish a new, 1,200 employee campus in the University Towne Center neighborhood. The new office will include hardware and software engineers. The tech giant is reportedly pushing to make its own mobile phone parts in-house, rather than buy outside vendors' parts.

Apple isn't alone. Google increased its local employment in 2016. Amazon.com Inc. announced last fall that it planned to add 300 jobs in San Diego. Also in the fall, Walmart Labs said it planned to expand its Carlsbad office from 70 to 120 employees. The latter business is the software develop-

ment arm of the big retailer, which wants to throw its weight around in the e-commerce space.

Amazon and Apple are looking to expand where the next generation of talent is, Cotton said.

Established tech companies give the community its heft. Wireless communications chipmaker and technology innovator Qualcomm Inc. has a local workforce of slightly less than 12,000, with many of them engineers. General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. and Northrop Grumman Corp. employ battalions of software writers that make its autonomous or remotely piloted military aircraft operate. Carlsbad-based Viasat Inc. has a large number of engineers who link up satellites with their users on the ground or in flight.

### FROM THE OCEAN TO THE CIRCUIT

Two older institutions helped San Diego blossom into a tech center: the U.S. Navy and the local University of California campus. The Navy's World War II-era radio lab on the ridge of Point Loma has grown into a large, multifaceted R&D facility for adapting communications for intelligence and warfare. Nearby, in the Midway District, is Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) headquarters, where the Navy runs cyber, satellite and information technology programs. Together the facilities employ thousands.

UC San Diego traces its roots to its 1903-vintage oceanographic lab in La Jolla. Since its founding on a nearby U.S. Army base in the 1960s, the university has been

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## Executive Q+A



**DUANE CAMERON**  
VICE PRESIDENT  
COX BUSINESS

**Q:** Why does Cox host this awards program? Why does the company go to the effort?

**A:** In the IT Professional space the demands on leaders have never been greater. As a service provider that is heavily invested in the San Diego community, we wanted to recognize those leaders that have led the way in early adoption and innovation. Top Tech is the largest IT awards platform on the West Coast and we are proud to have the opportunity to host such an event.

**Q:** How do you think the 2019 event went?

**A:** For 12 years and counting this event has grown both in size and awareness. The 2019 event was one of the largest collection of leaders across San Diego with many past honorees traveling from as far away as Seattle just to participate. We had 13 winners that spanned multiple industries and business segments, many of which had been nominated but never won in past years.


**Q:** How has information technology changed over the course of your career?

**A:** IT Professionals have had to evolve so fast over the last decade, securing and maintaining network assets is just a piece of their jobs today. Application development, security threats, and ultimately leveraging the Cloud has layered complexity and confusion across many IT organizations. Tonight, we recognized the leaders in this space and together as a community, we celebrate their success.

**Q:** How is San Diego now positioned as a technology city, as a destination for technologists and developers?

**A:** Over the last 10 years, the transformation in technology here in San Diego has been incredible. On many ranking reports, San Diego stands out as one of the fastest growing technology hubs in the U.S. We expect to see this trend continue with some of the broader initiatives by local municipalities and service providers.





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## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

# RETIRED MILITARY OFFICER FOUND A STORIED CAREER IN COMPUTING

**TECHNOLOGY:** *For Dr. Mark Zecca, Tech Was a New Frontier*

■ By BRAD GRAVES

**H**e has been the CIO of a cloud software company that recently became a San Diego “unicorn.” He is also in his element commanding U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard personnel as they protect naval assets.

The winner of the Top Tech Lifetime Achievement Award can look back on a career that has taken him on extended stays in France, and put him squarely in the aerospace, transportation, legal and public education arenas.

The Lifetime Achievement Award winner is Dr. Mark Zecca.

Zecca, who holds a Ph.D. in information technology management, is currently executive director of educational business systems for the San Diego County Office of Education. Among its many roles, the office provides business services — including information technology — to more than 50 public school districts serving more than half a million students.

He accepted his award before a crowd of more than 1,000 people at the Top Tech Awards May 16 at the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

In his acceptance speech, Zecca noted that technology is significant when it is leveraged to support people’s lives. “It’s really all about the people,” he said.

He thanked his wife Barbara and his mentors, including the storied former CEO of American Airlines, Robert Crandall, former NuVasive CEO Alex Lukianov and Kyriba CEO Jean Luc Robert.

Zecca received Top Tech awards in 2010 and 2012. He was named a Technology Laureate by ComputerWorld magazine in 2013, for his work in enterprise resource planning (ERP) and mobility technology.

## A VARIED CAREER

As a student, Zecca was on the track to become a physician when military service intervened. The Vietnam War was on. He stayed in the military — active duty and reserve — for 34 years. And it was the military that steered him toward technology. The legendary Navy computer scientist, Adm. Grace Hopper, was one of his instructors in the emerging tech field. He built the first Coast Guard data center in the early 1980s.

In the commercial world, he went to work for American Airlines’ Crandall. He anticipated the days of frequent flyer miles by developing the first computerized loyalty management system. Zecca has a story about American’s Crandall setting him up to work with the company’s archrival, Southwest Airlines, implementing Southwest’s first digital reservation system. (He was specifically instructed not to make Southwest’s IT system better than the one at American.)

Other earlier work included positions with AT&T-Bell Atlantic, PeopleSoft and Goodrich. Zecca was senior director of IT and CIO for Mitchell 1 and Snap-on Diagnostics Co., and the co-founder of the AutoAnalytix business intelligence product line for Snap-On Tools. He also served as CIO and vice president for information technology at NuVasive, a global spinal surgical company.

In later years, he was CIO and senior vice president of cloud services and engineering for Kyriba, an international treasury management services company that recently became San Diego’s latest unicorn — or startup surpassing \$1 billion in valuation. Jobs at Kyriba and Schneider Electric had him working in Paris.

Prior to joining the county office of education, Zecca was a contract chief information officer and part of the CIO advisory practice for Independent Consulting LLC.

“When it comes right down to it, the fun part of a career in technology is seeing the horizon ahead of you, but not yet reaching it. And enjoying the travel along the way,” he said.

## ALL OVER THE MAP

In addition to Vietnam, Zecca’s military career took him to Kuwait, Kenya, South Korea (and the waters off North Korea) and the waters near Australia. He also responded to domestic flood emergencies in the 1990s, recalling how he had to chase a retired paddleboat that had broken loose of its moorings in a swollen river. The surreal thing about the chase was that the



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography

*“When it comes right down to it, the fun part of a career in technology is seeing the horizon ahead of you, but not yet reaching it. And enjoying the travel along the way.”*



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography

Flanking Dr. Mark Zecca are, from left, William Hiatt, CTO of RapidScale; Chris Orlando, CEO and co-founder of ScaleMatrix; Barb Chodos, president and publisher of the San Diego Business Journal; and Duane Cameron, vice president of Cox Business.

boat had been converted into a McDonald’s restaurant.

He retired from the Coast Guard with the rank of captain, and also held the rank of Naval Commodore. He received the Bronze Star and Meritorious Service Medals in combat actions during Operation Desert Storm (1990-1991) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (which began in 2003).

He received his bachelor’s degree in communications engineering from the University of San Diego, an M.B.A. from LeTourneau University of Texas, a master’s degree in information systems from the Virginia Institute of Technology and a master’s degree in strategy and planning from the Naval War College. His doctorate in IT management came from Capella University.

Zecca teaches at several postsecondary

schools, including the Forbes School of Business and Technology at Ashford University in San Diego. He is a visiting professor of operational sciences at the University of Montpellier, France.

“I love to teach,” he said.

During his career, Zecca said he has frequently seen telecommunications and computer systems grow more advanced, but the people running them hesitant to change.

Organizational change management is hard, the executive said. An organization may spend all sorts of money on an ERP system, but use it just like the legacy system, “making the present look like the past.”

The challenge, Zecca said, is “not replicating the past in the present, when building for the future.”





# COX BUSINESS EXEMPLARY HONOREE BUILDS UP BUSINESS, ONE LINE OF CODE AT A TIME

**TECH:** *Petersen Maximizes Growth, Keeps Churn Low*

■ By JESSICA KING

As chief technology officer and co-founder of **Scientist.com**, **Christopher Petersen** is part of a small start-up with an undeniably large goal — making it possible to cure all human diseases by 2050. His efforts with Solana Beach-based Scientist.com have garnered him the 2019 Top Tech honor as the Cox Business Exemplary Honoree.

Petersen co-founded the business in 2007. Today the company is a 70-person global operation that has created a research marketplace for 16 of the world's top 25 pharmaceutical companies, 20 large cap biotechnology companies, the U.S. National Institutes of Health, as well as two of the life science industry's largest U.S. and European group purchasing organizations.

"As co-founder and CTO, Chris has worked tirelessly for the past decade to foster a vibrant, close-knit and hard-working company culture that is the secret behind Scientist.com's success," said Scientist.com communication director **Sean Preci**, who nominated Petersen for the award. "He leads by example and works side-by-side with the entire software development team

he heads."

Petersen has personally written the software code underlying much of the Scientist.com marketplace.

In the past year, he oversaw a number of large-scale technology-driven projects that directly affect the entire company's daily operations. To satisfy new European data privacy requirements, Petersen moved the company's data centers to Frankfurt, Germany. He also invented and patented a blockchain technology that helps ensure data integrity, and designed and built a Scientist.com mobile app that was launched in February.

Scientist.com ranked second on the San Diego Business Journal's latest annual list of fastest-growing private companies by achieving revenue growth of 737 percent between 2015 and 2017. Petersen helped grow the company's sales to \$110 million in 2018. Scientist.com anticipates sales in excess of \$200 million in 2019. Since its founding in 2007, Scientist.com has raised \$32 million in funding from top-tier venture capitalists.

Petersen has helped create an award-win-

ning company culture that is the special sauce behind the company's rapid growth. The company was named as One of America's Best Places to Work, 2018 by Inc. magazine. From 2015-2018, the company had extremely low turnover, losing just four employees.

Despite having the furthest commute to Scientist.com's Solana Beach office, Petersen is consistently the first San Diego-based employee to arrive on any given day and one of the last to leave. During the summer, he rides his bike 6 miles to a ferry, takes the ferry to downtown San Diego and then takes a train to work, making for a two-hour commute each way.

Petersen also won the Top Tech Award in 2014 and has been active on the judging panel from 2015 to 2018.



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography

## NONPROFIT SMALL MATTHEW MOWER

*Chief Information Officer  
Point Loma Credit Union*

As Chief Information Officer at **Point Loma Credit Union**, **Matthew Mower** is part of a community-chartered credit union serving nearly 30,000 residents of San Diego and Riverside counties at six branches.

In the past year, he has completed and enhanced core networking technology for the credit union, paving the way for enhanced services and a decrease in capital costs by more than 30 percent.

Mower's work with Point Loma Credit Union has garnered him the 2019 Top Tech Award in the small nonprofit category.

In 2018, Mower also started a telecommunications project that will replace telecom services at all Point Loma Credit Union locations, enhancing services on a fully meshed secure infrastructure. The conversion will decrease telecom costs by more than 40 percent. Services include enhanced videoconferencing services, Internet portal for members and team members to schedule meetings, applications to enhance information access and search capabilities.

He also created Wi-Fi and mobile access for members and the employee team to use and educate members on uses of remote services provided by the credit union, and enhanced mobile banking capabilities, as well as starting the conversion to a new online banking application.



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography

## NONPROFIT LARGE NARAYANADAS VAKAMUDI

*Chief Technology Officer  
Family Health Centers of San Diego*

Passion, dedication and love are all words that have been used to describe Narayanadas "Das" Vakamudi's attitude toward his work.

Vakamudi is chief technology officer at **Family Health Centers of San Diego**, a four-decade-old nonprofit that services more than 190,000 low-income patients annually. He is also the recipient of the 2019 Top Tech award in the large nonprofit category.

Under his leadership, Family Health Centers was able to achieve multiple certifications in 2018 for its products, including ones pertaining to ambulatory services and electronic prescriptions for controlled substances. The center, with Vakamudi's help, has also developed meaningful stage 2 certified electronic health records, and a patient portal used by 60,000 registered patients. Billing and purchasing systems have been improved, too.

"With his help and motivation to our development team, he has created a great team environment where everyone enjoys working and completing any projects on time," said **Anish Mangina**, a software engineer at the center who nominated Vakamudi for the honor. "Besides being an exceptional team player, he shares very valuable knowledge with the team. He coaches and motivates them to become a better IT team every day."



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography





## PRIVATE MICRO MARK SULZEN

*Vice President of Technology  
SmartDraw Software LLC*

SmartDraw offers software that makes graphics easy for its clients — who include more than 250,000 organizations, and more than half the companies on the Fortune 500. Behind the scenes at its Scripps Ranch office, **Mark Sulzen** makes it easy to work at SmartDraw.

Sulzen won the 2019 Top Tech award for privately held micro sized companies.

The longtime employee has provided technology leadership that allowed fellow employees to focus on growth strategies. He has improved the infrastructure from the desktop to the storage fabric with 99.99 percent uptime.

Among his recent accomplishments, Sulzen has upgraded all company workstations to solid state drives for improved office performance. He installed an all-flash storage array with more than 100 virtual machines with no down time and vastly increased server performance across the infrastructure. He also installed a new hybrid storage array in a disaster recovery site to maintain 24-by-7 uptime and provide business continuity options in case of an emergency. Sulzen configured external apps to use a single sign-on through a third party service to maintain easy to use security for corporate applications. He upgraded the company's main conference room with three 82-inch 4K televisions with Wi-Fi remote access control for laptops and other devices. On top of that, he passed an annual SOC 2 Type II audit and completed monthly PCI scans throughout the year.

With solid IT in place, SmartDraw's employees have had room to develop, sell and deliver their product, and to grow the business.



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography

## PRIVATE SMALL ALEXANDRA GERRITSEN

*Vice President of Customer Experience & Transformation  
Cali Bamboo*

The recipient of the 2019 Top Tech award in the small, private company category is no stranger to leading local IT teams.

Honoree **Alexandra Gerritsen** is vice president of customer experience and transformation for **Cali Bamboo**, a San Diego-based flooring and decking home improvement company. Prior to joining Cali Bamboo, she served as director of technology and then senior director of operations at Carlsbad-based **Buzztime**.

Gerritsen's major 2018 projects fall under three distinct categories: business systems, infrastructure and customer experience. She oversaw each task, and in most cases did the initial vendor research, troubleshooting and team member training for each implementation, according to Cali Bamboo's vice president of human resources, **Misty Madrid**, who nominated Gerritsen for the award.

With business systems, Gerritsen integrated systems for better demand planning and forecasting. With infrastructure, she switched the company to a new phone platform allowing for customers to be routed to their rep quicker. She also mapped out opportunities for technology and artificial intelligence to improve the customer experience.

"Ali is focused on utilizing artificial intelligence whenever possible to automate manual processes and increase the revenue per employee," Madrid said. "Through the use of technology and AI she was successfully able to decrease the number of heads needed to support Cali's back end operations as well as increase the efficiency of the sales team by 25 percent."



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography

## PRIVATE MEDIUM GEOFF HOWARD

*Chief Technology Officer  
National Funding*

On the heels of several impressive years of building out an in-house engineering team from scratch, San Diego tech leader **Geoff Howard** had an even more exceptional year in 2018.

Howard is chief technology officer of **National Funding**. He is also the recipient of the 2019 Top Tech award in the medium-sized private company category.

Founded in 1999 and headquartered in San Diego, National Funding and its 230 employees provide more than \$2.5 billion in working capital for more than 20,000 small- and medium-sized businesses.

For his part, Howard is tasked with moving National Funding's technology capabilities forward in order to ensure customers get the capital they need quicker, easier and in more customized ways. He also has improved internal capabilities resulting in a more streamlined, efficient workday for his fellow National Funding employees.

In the past year, he delivered projects that the company, only a few years prior, never imagined, and was rewarded in January with a promotion to his current position. Some of his 2018 achievements include delivering customer experience and digital channel innovations supporting a 300 percent increase in traffic; transforming the digital sales experience for customers with the creation of an E2E digital loan process that increased digital data capture by 400 percent and enabled customer checkout experience to go from hours to minutes; and implementing a modern omni-channel customer experience with the implementation of cloud-based telephony and texting solutions, reducing call transfers by 85 percent and adding a new communication channel critical to conversion.



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography

## PRIVATE LARGE BRIAN NORDMANN

*Chief Information Officer  
Dudek*

Nearly four decades after its founding, one Encinitas-based business is keeping up with the times with the help of one **Brian Nordmann**.

Nordmann is chief information officer of **Dudek**, a well-established planning company founded in 1980. He is also this year's recipient of the Top Tech Award in the private large company category.

At Dudek, Nordmann works alongside environmental planners, scientists, engineers and contractors who help clients plan, design, permit, construct and manage projects that improve communities' infrastructure and natural resources.

Since joining Dudek in late 2017, Nordmann has led a number of IT initiatives aimed at transitioning IT from a reactive support function to a proactive and strategic partner in driving business opportunities while providing frictionless IT services to staff.

Among those successful initiatives spearheaded by Nordmann in 2018 was a complete refresh and standardization of all legacy wired and wireless networking at all 15 Dudek offices — including a migration from traditional MPLS to SD-WAN. He also implemented a new innovation platform which explores potentially disruptive technology that may impact Dudek and its clients. Nordmann also established an executive briefing series to educate Dudek's leadership and board on emerging, disruptive technologies, such as artificial intelligence. He also established a new approach to identifying cybersecurity risks and prioritizing security-related initiatives, rolling out new phishing training and security awareness programs to Dudek's staff.



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography





## PUBLIC SMALL FREDERICK DEL ROSARIO

*Director of Information Technology  
Xeris Pharmaceuticals Inc.*

When Frederick F. del Rosario joined Xeris Pharmaceuticals Inc. less than a year ago, the company had no IT department, no system and network infrastructure, and limited applications. All it did have was corporate email.

Now as Xeris' director of information technology, del Rosario is receiving the 2019 Top Tech award in the small public company category.

The Sorrento Valley-based company — currently focused on developing and commercializing diabetes/hypoglycemia injectables — has tripled in size since del Rosario joined it in mid-2018. During his short tenure, del Rosario has contributed to the design and buildout of a new San Diego office with laboratory benchtop workspace; implemented a robust infrastructure to accommodate both the San Diego and Chicago locations; and provided for a video conferencing system to streamline communication between sites and save on travel costs. He has also developed and launched a corporate intranet as a corporate communication tool and onboarding resource, and implemented a security suite of tools to harden the company's new infrastructure.

To support the company's exponential growth, del Rosario and his team used technology and process to simplify employee onboarding. The IT department partnered with human resources and developed tools such as the corporate intranet, and automated workflows help expedite the hiring and onboarding of all these new employees.



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography

## PUBLIC LARGE MARK KOHLHEIM

*Vice President  
CACI International Inc.*

Technology expert or fortune teller? Mark Kohlheim can be looked at as both.

As vice president of CACI, Kohlheim is part of a company that provides information solutions and services in support of national security missions and government transformation for intelligence, defense and federal civilian customers.

It is his job to strategically assess the future needs and requirements that U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps clients will need in three to five years. Kohlheim advises CACI on the technical direction, skill sets required, and investments required to make sure CACI stays ahead of its competitors while satisfying customer needs.

For his efforts, Kohlheim was selected for the 2019 Top Tech award in the large, public company category.

"Mark's multifaceted efforts across the company, from business systems technologies to tactical edge war fighting technologies, have had a dramatic impact on the operations and war fighting capability of the Navy and Marine Corps," said CACI Executive Vice President Val Lyons, who nominated Kohlheim for the award.

During the past year, Kohlheim delivered 8 percent year-over-year growth — twice the corporate growth target.

Kohlheim was also the lead architect of CACI's \$960 million win of a cyber mission engineering multiple award contract and a past Top Tech Award recipient.



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography

## TECH SCENE:

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the cradle of research that included advanced radio communications (leading to Linkabit, Qualcomm and Viasat), advanced semiconductor design (leading to the local office of ASML) and biotechnology.

The biopharmaceutical field is one of San Diego's strongest information technology assets, and one that really doesn't call attention to itself, said Harold Tuck, retired CIO for the County of San Diego and a Top Tech Advisory Council member. Such work requires precision calculation, he said. "Life science companies look increasingly like technology companies ... What's enabling their growth is data science," said Carroll of Tech San Diego.

But bioscience has an image problem. It isn't "sexy," said Tuck. Companies such as Google, Facebook, Uber and Lyft create alluring places to work in the Bay Area. "That's what's sexy for a young person,"



Harold Tuck

even though he may pay an exorbitant amount for a small apartment.

UC San Diego and Tech San Diego are working to keep engineering talent turned out by the community in the community, said Carroll.

"Silicon Valley is a false idol," Carroll added, noting that millennial workers want job satisfaction and quality of life. A young engineer might have visions of the South of Market lifestyle. The reality, however, is he will have to live 20 miles away from work on an undistinguished stretch of highway with four roommates.

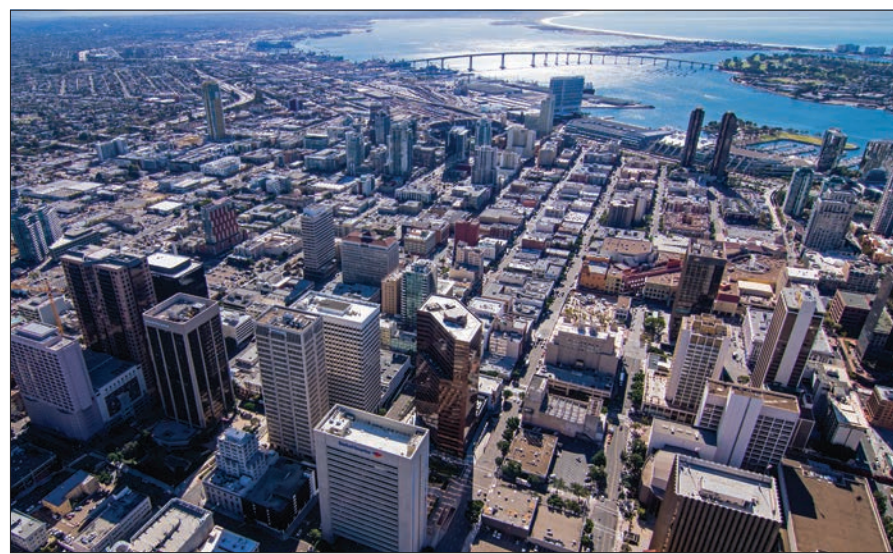
### A COMMUNITY FOCUS

There are other things that distinguish San Diego's technology scene.

Carroll said the community's mid-sized and small companies offer engineers a wide range of tasks, and therefore a more interesting work environment. In large corporations, he said, tech workers tend to be highly specialized and focused.

Compared to Silicon Valley, San Diego's tech scene is "more community focused rather than purely profit-driven," said Gursky of the USS Midway Museum.

Heather Moshier, another member of the Top Tech Advisory Council, said she



is seeing more collaboration than ever in San Diego's Tech scene. "A lot of cross-pollination, too," she said.

Why work together? "Everything is moving so fast," Moshier said, adding that executives don't want to reinvent solutions. Moshier is director of technology for CU Engage, a firm that consults with credit unions.

The Bay Area beats San Diego on one element that is essential for startups, said Rory Moore, CEO and co-founder of the EvoNexus incubator. That is venture capital, including seed stage and early stage

capital.

In Silicon Valley, entrepreneurs who leave a startup with hundreds of millions of dollars plow their funds back into new startups, Moore observed. San Diego entrepreneurs may be more inclined to put their profits into other investments, such as real estate.

"I don't want to seem like a curmudgeon, but we can't replicate Silicon Valley," said Moore. "But we're getting better and better at the end of the day. We will continue to rank easily in the top 10 regions in the country for creating new companies."



Heather Moshier





## EDUCATION

## NATHAN SHORT

*Director of Information Technology  
Encinitas Union School District*

Nathan Short, winner of the 2019 Top Tech award in Education, has shown the potential of information technology in the public school setting.

As director of IT at the Encinitas Union School District, he has “gently pushed the envelope” of adopting new technologies which improve working and teaching conditions. He introduced wireless document cameras and presentation equipment, for example, and upgraded the district’s server infrastructure.

He has also improved technology in special education, which serves students with disabilities.

Short has successfully stretched dollars and resources. He saved \$1 million through commonsense shuffling of the district’s iPad inventory between all schools to accommodate specific grade levels, extending device utility by several years. He cut budget by \$250,000 in 2018 — a cumulative \$750,000 over the past two and a half years — by extensively training existing staff as an alternative to outsourcing and adapting job roles to accommodate district needs. And he has improved customer service by putting all staff in the field and leaving call centers unmanned with voice-mail and help desk ticketing systems.

Short has provided seminars to help colleagues at other school districts, addressing topics such as operational security, data breach strategies, disability access law compliance, cost cutting techniques and team-building.

In 2018, Short was named school district employee of the year.

The Encinitas Union School District serves 5,400 students in preschool through 6th grade.



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography

## GOVERNMENT

## KEITH FERNANDEZ

*Manager of Technology  
San Diego County Sheriff’s Department*

Behind the uniformed law enforcement tasked with protecting county residents, is a slew of support staff protecting them, including ones in IT.

Keith Fernandez is manager of technology for the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department, and the 2019 Top Tech award-winner in the government category. The department and its 4,000 employees provide general law enforcement, detention and court services to a service area that’s approximately 4,200 square miles. For his part, Fernandez works tirelessly to future-proof the network infrastructure and provide cyber security.

Fernandez is a creative thinker leveraging technology to deliver sensible business solutions and his responsibilities range from design, development and implementation for the network and security of the agency’s infrastructure. Among his accomplishments in the past year were Fernandez’s support of key information systems that service all law enforcement and justice agencies in the region; continued business continuity and disaster recovery planning and designs to ensure 99.9 percent in the event of network failure; and the achievement of 100 percent IT project performance to budget and schedule by outsourcing the provider. Keith strives to challenge his team to think more innovatively by leveraging new technologies and his focus for his team is to do more with less.



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography

## STARTUP

## TRAVIS FAWCETT

*Director of Software Engineering  
AristaMD*

As a 2019 Top Tech honoree in the startup category, Travis Fawcett is a leader in building things from the ground up. Fawcett is the director of software engineering at AristaMD. The La Jolla-based company’s eConsult Platform provides solutions to primary care providers with regard to clinical workup checklists and the ability to conduct electronic consults. “Travis Fawcett is a strong company leader, team player and great personality who significantly adds to the product offering and wellbeing of AristaMD,” said Aidan Casey, a brand and content strategist for AristaMD who nominated Fawcett for the award. Fawcett launched many new initiatives for AristaMD in 2018. First, he broke down the political barriers of two teams, product team and engineering, who had previously worked in a more siloed approach, according to Casey.

Second, he implemented an entire data warehouse for the company from the ground up over the course of three months. Third, he proposed a new direction for engineering in splitting the application into “micro” services. “He convinced leadership this was a much-needed change for scalability and integrity and began breaking the application into smaller pieces,” Casey said. The first portion of this was released in January 2019 and has energized the engineering team, who can now quickly and collaboratively develop with the product team and release code to production in under five minutes.



Photo courtesy of Brant Bender Photography





# ADVISORY COUNCIL



**Rich Coppa**

## **RICH COPPA**

*Vice President of Infrastructure & Chief Information Officer, The Arc of San Diego*

Rich Coppa, this year's judging chair, has spent more than 20 years at The Arc of San Diego, where he is CIO and vice president of infrastructure and facilities. Engineering is part of his makeup. He recalled growing up in a family that designed, built and tested electronics and mechanical instruments. Prior to joining The Arc, Coppa served in the U.S. Air Force as a noncommissioned officer stationed in Europe. He is a master project manager and a licensed general contractor. For him, San Diego's technology sector is defined by innovation, which he sees at all levels, from small startups to large corporations. He is a two-time Top Tech honoree, was co-chair in 2018 and served as a judge between 2013 and 2017.



**Joe Gursky**

## **JOE GURSKY**

*Director of Information Technology, USS Midway Museum*

Joe Gursky, this year's judging co-chair, has been in information management for over 15 years. He has worked in diverse environments such as health care, hospitality, government, security, criminal justice, satellite/cable broadcast, wireless, IT consulting and managed service providers. His is now IT director with the USS Midway Museum. Experience in multiple industries lets him evaluate the best strategies for information management across a wide spectrum. Work in San Diego has shown him the large amount of hidden talent in the region, while previous work at a data center gave him a glimpse of where the tech space is going — into the cloud. (He added, however, that the pendulum still swings between cloud and on-premises technology.) Gursky is the 2015 Small Nonprofit nominee.



**Casey Cotton**

## **CASEY COTTEN**

*Chief Technology Officer, Asset Marketing Systems & Madison Avenue Securities LLC*

Casey Cotton is the chief technology officer with Asset Marketing Systems and Madison Avenue Securities LLC. Top Tech judges honored him in 2013 with an award in the Private Medium category and in 2018 with the Top Tech Lifetime Achievement Award. A U.S. Marine Corps veteran, Cotton earned his bachelor's degree from Concordia University of Wisconsin. He holds various technology certificates as well as a Series 7 license, which lets him sell securities. Cotton's story also includes a battle with cancer. "The only thing in life you can control is attitude," he said, adding that a person can choose to be positive. At work, he finds an innovative mindset is essential. "To be successful in IT," he said, "you have to say 'what if,' not 'can't.'"



**Heather Moshier**

## **HEATHER MOSHIER**

*Director of Technology, CU Engage*

Heather Moshier is director of technology for CU Engage. She works with credit unions to assess their current technology environment and helps to prioritize and develop strategic technology plans. Previously she spent 22 years as executive vice president of IT at San Diego County Credit Union, an organization with \$8.3 billion in assets and 400,000 members. Outside of work, Moshier speaks publicly on topics such as data analytics and digital transformation (the process of adapting paper processes to the digital age). Nonprofit work includes tech consulting with the YMCA. Moshier sees San Diego's technology scene as increasingly collaborative, with dissimilar areas cross-pollinating each other. She is a 2012 Top Tech Executive honoree and has worked in its leadership since then.



**John Merritt**

## **JOHN MERRITT**

*Senior Vice President & CIO, YMCA of San Diego County*

John Merritt is senior vice president and CIO for the YMCA of San Diego County. He is responsible for tactical and strategic technology operations that drive business value in support of the YMCA's mission. Merritt served in the U.S. Marine Corps, traveling extensively in Asia and the Middle East while managing and supporting satellite communications systems. In 2011, he was named a Top Tech honoree in the Charitable Organizations category. In 2012 and 2013, Merritt served as a judge in the awards program. In 2014 and 2015, he served as judging chair before joining the Top Tech Awards advisory council where he has supported the event for the last four years.



**Steve Romeo**

## **STEVE ROMEO**

*Executive Technologist, Breg Inc.*

Steve Romeo is executive technologist with Breg Inc., a maker of knee braces and related medical devices — and increasingly, tech-oriented solutions. His experience with the Carlsbad company ranges from information technology to commercializing innovative systems. After 10 years in IT leadership, he made the jump to product development. His projects have included Breg Flex, an at-home product with a Bluetooth low-energy motion sensor, designed to help patients get over injuries. Breg Flex guides patients through a physical therapy program and reports data to the user's doctor. A second project was an inventory management tool. Romeo is also a successful author and keynote speaker. He served as the judging chair for the Top Tech Awards from 2009 to 2012, and joined the advisory council in 2013.



**Harold Tuck**

## **HAROLD TUCK**

*Retired CIO, County of San Diego*

Harold Tuck retired from a 27-year career with the County of San Diego in 2012. His final job was CIO, providing services to 17,000 employees at over 200 facilities. In 2014 he received the Top Tech Lifetime Achievement Award. He previously won in the Government category. Tuck established what is believed to be the first innovation council in local government. Made up of executives from Fortune 50 tech companies and front-line county tech employees, the group pushed for improvement and adapted tools used by the private sector. "The innovation council is a team concept, not an individual concept," Tuck recalled. Today Tuck works through Avasant, the global management consulting firm. He sees the biopharmaceutical computing sector as one of San Diego's lesser-known strengths.

# JUDGES



**CHAIR**

## **RICH COPPA**

*Vice President of Infrastructure & Chief Information Officer  
The Arc of San Diego*



## **HUDSON AIROM**

*Senior Director, Global Cloud Operations  
Mitek Systems Inc.*



## **TAL ALMOG**

*Director, Data Operations  
Cisco Systems*



## **JONATHAN BEHNKE**

*Chief Information Officer  
City of San Diego*



## **BRIAN CASAZZA**

*Chief Information Officer  
Vistage International*



## **ABE ESGUERRA**

*Chief Information Officer  
Redwitz*



## **JEROME FODOR**

*Chief Technology Officer  
AbacusNext*



## **PETER HISSONG**

*Vice President of Technology  
Founder Sport Group*



## **TERRY LOFTUS**

*Assistant Superintendent & Chief Technology Officer  
San Diego County Office of Education*



## **ANGELA MORAN**

*Chief Information Officer  
California Coast Credit Union*



## **MARC ROMANO**

*Chief Technology Officer  
Seismic*



## **TROY SEELYE**

*Chief Information Officer  
Teradata Corporation*



## **ROBERT SWISHER**

*Chief Technology Officer  
biproxi*



**CO-CHAIR**

## **JOE GURSKY**

*Director of Information Technology  
USS Midway Museum*



## **BRIAN ALEXANDER**

*Vice President of IT  
ARS National Services Inc.*



## **BRIAN ANDREWS**

*Chief Information Officer  
Baker Electric*



## **ANDREW BLOCKSIDGE**

*Vice President of Information Technology  
MagnaFlow*



## **DOUG CYPHERS**

*Director of IT Strategy and Leadership  
WD-40*



## **RYAN FAY**

*Executive Vice President of Strategy & Global CIO  
ACI Enterprises Inc.*



## **MICHAEL HAWMAN**

*Chief Information Officer  
General Atomics*



## **DEBRA JENSEN**

*SVP of Global IT  
Sound United*



## **PHILIPPE MARCHAND**

*Chief Operating Officer  
Samumed, LLC*



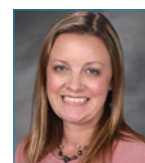
## **FRANK PAREDES**

*Director of Information Technology  
Father Joe's Villages*



## **SAL SALDIVAR**

*Chief Information Officer  
La Maestra Community Health Centers*



## **LAURA SPENCER**

*Executive Director of Innovation and Design  
Del Mar Union School District*



## **BRAD WILLIAMS**

*Director of Operations  
Petco Animal Supplies*





# 2019 TOP TECH NOMINEES

## A

**Mark Albright**  
Tri-City Medical Center

**Kim Alexander**  
Acadia Pharmaceuticals

**Omid Arjomand**  
Rancho Valencia

**Asokan Ashok**  
UnfoldLabs, Inc.

## B

**Natasha Balac**  
Qualcomm Institute

**Nelson Bamundaga**  
Premier BH

**Michael Bannen**  
HD Supply

**Bradley Baquial**  
Albert Einstein Academies

**Eric Bartlett**  
Casa de Amparo

**Rick Belliotti**  
San Diego County Regional  
Airport Authority

**Amy Benton**  
Retrophin

**Johannes Boerhout**  
Intellecty, Inc.

**Philip Bohrer**  
ASM Affiliates Inc.

**Rebecca Booth**  
Center for Creative Leadership

**Mike Bourgoyne**  
General Dynamics NASSCO

**Michael Bousquet**  
Gap Intelligence

**Chris Boyer**  
Academy of Our Lady of Peace

**Polina Braunstein**  
Quake Global

**Hayley Brooks**  
Whooo's Reading

**Nick Bulcao**  
Airspace Technologies

**Lorelei Bunjes**  
IDW Media Holdings

**Jim Bunnell**  
Verisk 3E

**Joe Burleson**  
Summit Pizza West, LLC

## C

**Armando Camacho**  
Camacho Brokers

**Sergio Campos**  
Four Points Sheraton

**Dave Carlin**  
Soltek Pacific

**John Carrieri**  
Energy Cloud

**Stephanie Casperson**  
San Marcos Unified  
School District

**Ed Chew**  
City of Chula Vista

**Christopher Cilley**  
Specialty Produce

**Jason Clement**  
Sony Electronics, Inc.

**Fernanda Coelho**  
Match Your Need

**Schuyler Cook**  
Freedom Branding

**Meynard Corpuz**  
Park Hyatt Resort Aviara

**DeWayne Cossey**  
Vista Unified School District

**Win Cramer**  
JLab Audio

**Timothy Crowley**  
Biocom

**Josh Culver**  
San Diego Natural History Museum

**Scott Cupit**  
eMolecules

**Zane Curtis**  
MRC Smart Technology Solutions

## D

**Vinh Dang**  
Child Development Associates

**Nguyen Dang**  
Manchester Grand Hyatt

**Adam Deich**  
Helix Environmental Planning

**Frederick del Rosario**  
Xeris Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

**David Delacalzada**  
Sweetwater Union  
High School District

**Raymund Delos Santos**  
AP Wireless

**Gigi Deweese**  
Red Flash

**Sara Diaz** City of El Cajon

**Frankie Duenas**  
Cabrillo Credit Union

**Dustin Dunbar**  
Serving Seniors

## E

**Shiem Edelbrock**  
The Control Group

**Moudy Elbayadi**  
ID Analytics

## F

**Travis Fawcett**  
AristaMD

**Shona Fenner**  
PetDesk

**Keith Fernandez**  
San Diego County  
Sheriff's Department

**Mario Fernandez**  
Oceanside Glass & Tile

**Jake Fields**  
Platform Science

## G

**Usama Georges**  
San Diego District Attorney

**Alexandra Gerritsen**  
Cali Bamboo

**Ray Ghanbari**  
SmartDrive Systems

**Daniel Ginn**  
Digital Operative

**Michael Glowgowski**  
Wheelhouse Credit Union

**Brett Goldsmith**  
Cardea Bio, Inc.

**Alvie Good**  
SmartDrive Systems

**Tim Grace**  
PointPredictive, Inc.

**David Graham**  
City of Carlsbad

**Travis Graham**  
Evergreen Research

**Gustavo Guadalupe**  
Quaitas Insurance Company

**Jonathan Guertin**  
Cajon Valley Union  
School District

## H

**Mikel Haas**  
County of San Diego

**Jake Hansen**  
Ztelco

**Cole Hanson**  
US Marine Corps (USMC)

**Dusty Harkleroad**  
Environmental Lights

**Peter Harnish**  
Mention My Biz

**Robert Harper**  
SeaSpace

**Simon Harrison**  
dominionRED d.b.d Hopfoot LLC

**Rick Hattenburg**  
Axos Bank

**Carlos Hernandez**  
Industrial Polishing

**Sam Hessenauer**  
Nanome Inc

**Brian Holley**  
vScenario

**Hansol Hong**  
Robolink

**Geoff Howard**  
National Funding

## J

**Patrick Jabbour**  
ElectronicER

**Kevin Jackson**  
Fall Brewing Co.

**Jason Jaqua**  
Igoe Administrative Services

**David Jessop**  
Erickson-Hall Construction Co.

**Philip Johnson**  
LoadExpress Services, Inc.

**Mario Juarez**  
Altium

**David Julian**  
Netradyne

## K

**Kristin Kahle**  
navigateHCR

**Dawn Kale**  
Poway Unified School District

**Ashok Kamal**  
Tech Coast Angels – San Diego

**Miles Kaplan**  
Hooters

**Homa Karimabadi**  
Analytics Ventures

**Chelsea Kauffman**  
LEARN Academy

**Scott Kennedy**  
San Diego Family Care

**Ahmed Khattab**  
Rainbow Municipal Water District

**Samer Khouli**  
TargetCW

**Bridget Kimball**  
Intuit

**Brett Kline**  
Mobile Computer Wizard

**Mark Kohlheim**  
CACI

**Sailendra Koorapati**  
Callaway Golf

## L

**Eric Larkin**  
Organifi

**Jeffrey Lee**  
MEI Pharma

**Brian Levine**  
Retention Rocket

**Leonard LeVine**  
Escondido Union  
School District

**Adriana Linares**  
San Diego County  
Bar Association

**Matt Locke**  
BKM Officeworks

**Jim Lohmann**  
ResCare

**Christopher Longhurst, MD**  
UC San Diego Health

## M

**Eric Macwan**  
Reliant Funding

**Seth Mader**  
San Diego Regional Center

**Erick Magnuson**  
Del Mar Recovery Services

**Paul Makowski**  
PolySwarm





# 2019 TOP TECH NOMINEES

- Keola Malone**  
UE.co
- Charles Margiotta**  
Pacific Services Inc.
- Kevin Marino**  
PCL Construction
- Jan Marshall**  
Cubic Corporation
- Scott Maxwell**  
San Diego County Credit Union
- Elizabeth McDonald**  
PrimeCo
- Octavio Mejia Lopez**  
JV International
- Armando Mercado**  
Grand Pacific Resorts
- Igor Mezc**  
Mix Mode
- Greg Moninger**  
Abalta Technologies
- Bryan Monzon**  
Fifty & Fifty
- Robert Moore**  
Republic Moving & Storage
- Jared Morante**  
Wrapify
- Daniel Moreno** Chosen Foods
- Ben Mortensen**  
Social Advocates for Youth  
(SAY San Diego)
- Doug Morton**  
San Diego Blood Bank
- Thomas Morton**  
Epic Sciences
- Bill Mount**  
San Diego Association  
of Governments (SANDAG)
- Matthew Mower**  
Point Loma Credit Union
- Greg Muir**  
Teradata
- Cuauhtemoc Muniz**  
The Taco Stand
- Faisal Mushtaq**  
GlobalLogic
- N**
- Chris Nguyen**  
US Navy
- Erez Nir**  
Mitchell International
- Brian Nordmann**  
Dudek
- O**
- Sergio Oliveros**  
South Bay Primary Medical Group
- Luis Ordenez**  
Select Supplements
- Terry Orletsky**  
The Ken Blanchard Companies
- P**
- JP Palacio**  
Kromeon

- Jacob Parker**  
GigaAir
- Bryan Partipilo**  
Toyota of El Cajon /  
Honda of El Cajon
- Ram Patrachari**  
Viejas
- Scott Petersen**  
Tri Phos Therapeutics
- Christopher Petersen**  
Scientist.com
- Reema Poddar**  
Teradata
- Chris Pond**  
Burwood Group /  
XiMed Medical Group
- Kevin Popovic**  
Market Ready Index, Inc.
- Sanjiv Prabhakaran**  
Bytes, Inc.
- Felton Pray**  
AKA Head Start
- David Priest**  
St. Madeleine Sophie's Center
- Bradley Pruitt**  
PRA Health Sciences
- Matt Putman**  
H.G. Fenton Company
- R**
- Jamal Rabbani**  
Proficio, Inc.
- Phil Rasori**  
MortgageCapital  
Trading, Inc. (MCT)
- Jeff Rauch**  
ICW Group
- Chris Rivera**  
Erasca
- Clifford Robbins**  
Waxie
- Rick Roberts**  
Grossmont Union  
High School District
- Kurling Robinson**  
Fokcus
- Chris Rogers**  
Annexus IT
- Joe Rohner**  
Booz Allen Hamilton
- Lisa Rosenfelt**  
Diamond and Branch
- Rajni Roshan**  
UCSD Jacobs School of  
Engineering Center for Wireless  
Communication
- Dave Roth**  
Chef Works
- S**
- Andrew Sabat**  
Idea Tutors, LLC
- Carlos Salazar**  
King-Chavez Neighborhood  
of Schools

- Zach Saltzman**  
FMT Consultants
- Jonathan Santiago**  
Casas International Brokerage
- Alo Sarv**  
SOCi
- John Saunders**  
Power Digital Marketing
- Shaun Savage**  
GoShare
- Gregor Schaller**  
Cobra Puma Golf
- Jim Schneider**  
College Area Business District
- Adham Shaaban**  
Forward Slope, Inc.
- Stephen Sherrill**  
Parker Hannifin, CSS Division
- Nathan Short**  
Encinitas Union School District
- Michael Singer**  
Veyo
- Jonathan Smith**  
North County Health Services
- Brendan Smith**  
Motive Interactive
- Robert Smith**  
Eye Care of San Diego
- Naresh Soni**  
Tsunami ARVR, Inc.
- Scott Sorensen**  
Human Longevity, Inc.
- Chris Spannos**  
MRC Smart Technology Solutions
- Erik Stevens**  
Luth Research
- Kevin Stuecklen**  
WestAir Gases & Equipment
- Mark Sulzen**  
SmartDraw Software, LLC
- Sergey Sundukovskiy**  
Raken
- Sudipto Sur**  
Reflexion Health
- T**
- Brent Takemiya**  
Hard Rock Hotel
- John Taylor**  
Youngevity
- Albert Thongkham**  
Hoban Management
- Patrick Tinklenberg**  
Sycuan Resort and Casino
- Stuart Toelander**  
News Quantified
- Arie Trouw**  
XY- The Persistent Company
- Steve Tullgren**  
DJ Orthopedics
- Darryl Turner**  
Woodstocks Pizza

- U**
- Marc Upchurch**  
Mental Health Systems, Inc.
- V**
- Saulius Vabalas**  
Great Lakes Data Systems (GLDS)
- Narayanadas Vakamudi**  
Family Health Centers of San Diego
- Juana Valadez**  
Point Mortgage Corporation
- Jonathan Valamehr**  
Tortuga Logic
- Jamie Valdez**  
Buffini and Company
- Mark Valldolid**  
St Paul Senior Homes & Services
- A.J. Van de Ven**  
CalSense
- Eric Van Johnson**  
DiegoDev LLC
- Corey VanWormer**  
San Diego Blood Bank
- Gaston Vejar**  
Nap San Diego LLC
- Brian Vinciguerra**  
Parity Network Solutions
- Ajit Viswanathan**  
Doctible
- Stephen Vocal**  
Credit Solutions Corp
- W**
- Norman Waelchli**  
Vision InfoSoft
- Tim White**  
San Diego Symphony
- Joshua Whittle**  
Carpet Club
- Nathan Wilder**  
Ethertronics, an AVX  
Group Company
- Shane Willis**  
T.B. Penick and Sons, Inc.
- Jared Wohlgemuth**  
San Diego Yatch Club
- Jon Wolberg**  
Interpreters Unlimited, Inc.
- Y**
- Husam Yaqoob**  
Public Consulting Group
- Kevin Yip**  
Blueboard, Inc.
- Jeremy Young**  
Kyowa Kirin Pharmaceutical  
Research, Inc.
- Z**
- Mark Zecca, Ph D.**  
San Diego County  
Office of Education
- Mick Zentic**  
Pacific Sun Properties
- Todd Zulauf**  
Alvarado Parkway Institute, BHS





More than 1,000 people gathered May 16 at the Del Mar Fairgrounds to honor the Top Tech Awards winners for 2019. Cox Business was the title sponsor, as it has been for the 12-year history of the event. The platinum sponsor was RapidScale and the gold sponsor was ScaleMatrix. Bronze sponsors were Green Rope, T-Mobile for Business and VIA Technical. Supporting sponsors were CompTIA AITP San Diego (the Association of Information Technology Professionals), Girls in Tech San Diego, the San Diego County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, San Diego Tech Hub, SIM San Diego (a local division of the Society for Information Management), Startup San Diego and Tech San Diego. Event vendors were Payne-Mason Cigars and The Vendi Bean Machine.



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1. More than 1,000 people packed the hall at the Del Mar Fairgrounds.
2. The virtual reality roller coaster ride was a crowd pleaser.
3. Gonzology provided the soundtrack for the evening.
4. Cox Business team members Sam Attisha, Larry Coval, emcee Heather Myers, Jared Ruth, Ken Kraft and Duane Cameron, with emcee Nick Hardwick.
5. Bjorn De Boer, Matt Stewart and Lars Helgeson of Green Rope.
6. Supporting Sponsor Startup San Diego, with Fresh Brewed Tech guru Neal Bloom.
7. Bronze Sponsor VIA Technical staff with CEO Natalie Viani.
8. Top Tech nominee Dr. Brad Pruitt of PRA Health Sciences with Lisa Yun, also of PRA Health Sciences.
9. Large Nonprofit honoree Das Vakamudi, chief technology officer at Family Health Centers, flanked by the emcees.
10. Barb Chodos, president and publisher of the San Diego Business Journal, and Duane Cameron, vice president of Cox Business.
11. Mark Zecca, Ph.D., executive director of educational business systems at the San Diego County Office of Education, receives the Lifetime Achievement Award. Flanking him are emcee Nick Hardwick, 2018 Lifetime Achievement honoree Casey Cotton and emcee Heather Myers.
12. Attendees watch a craftsman from event sponsor Payne-Mason Cigars make custom hand-rolled cigars.
13. Judge and past honoree Robert Swisher with Cox marketing director Jared Ruth and Cox Communications Vice President Sam Attisha.
14. Macey Brooks of 5C Telecom.
15. Private Small Category honoree Alexandra Gerritsen, vice president of customer experience and transformation at Cali Bamboo, flanked by the emcees.
16. Erica Burke, director of customer fulfillment with Cox Business, presents the first ever Startup category honor to Travis Fawcett of AristaMD.
17. Top Tech nominee Carlos Salazar of King-Chavez Neighborhood of Schools.
18. The Girls in Tech organization was a supporting sponsor.
19. Y'vonne Ormond, CEO of 5P Consulting; Emilie Weber, lead graphic designer with gold sponsor ScaleMatrix; Stephanie Mansolino, vice president of marketing with ScaleMatrix; and Donna Hale, principal consultant and vCIO with 5P Consulting.
20. 2018 Lifetime Achievement honoree Casey Cotton presenting the 2019 Lifetime Achievement Honor to Mark Zecca, Ph.D.
21. Emcee Nick Hardwick, Cox Business enterprise sales director Daniel Martinez, Cox Business Exemplary Winner and past honoree Chris Petersen and emcee Heather Myers. Petersen is co-founder of Scientist.com and the company's chief technology officer.
22. Private Large category honoree Brian Nordmann, CIO of Dudek, with the emcees.
23. Cox Business Vice President Duane Cameron welcomes Top Tech guests.
24. Public Small category honoree Frederick del Rosario, director of information technology for Xerox Pharmaceuticals Inc., with the emcees.
25. Travis Fawcett, director of software engineering with AristaMD, does a handstand while on his way up to the podium to accept the Startup award.
26. Todd Backus, manager of field marketing for California at Cox Business, with Macie Rookus, regional marketing specialist with Cox Business.

Photos courtesy of Brant Bender Photography