

# SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Women of Influence IN CONSTRUCTION COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN

Welcome to the third edition of our annual section honoring San Diego’s most influential women in construction, commercial real estate and design. The San Diego Business Journal is proud to highlight the women building, selling and designing properties in America’s Finest City. Listed alphabetically in the pages that follow are female industry professionals in the region, along with highlights about their careers and achievements.

Congratulations to these extraordinary, talented professionals who made the list and thank you for your contributions to San Diego’s economy!

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## WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN

**ADONIA AKERS**

Project Executive  
DPR Construction

**A**donia Akers is a project executive at one of San Diego's leading self-performing general contractors, DPR Construction. She focuses on preconstruction and construction services primarily within the higher education, healthcare and life sciences markets. Akers currently serves approximately 65+ projects annually and a team of over 50 employees.

Bringing more than 22 years of experience, Akers has been instrumental in successfully delivering more than \$100 million in healthcare projects and nearly \$200 million in higher education projects. She is a subject matter expert on preconstruction, collaborative design-build and traditional delivery methods on highly technical projects with complicated logistics and expedited schedules in occupied spaces.

Akers currently serves as a professional mentor to members of CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women), guiding young talent on managing the nuances and challenges unique to women in construction. She volunteers in the local design and construction community as well as in the community at large. She can be reached at AdoniaA@dpr.com.

**STEPHANIE ANTL**

Associate Principal, Education Studio Leader  
SGPA Architecture and Planning

**S**tephanie Antl joined SGPA in 2011. As the firm's Education Studio leader and associate principal, her dedication and perseverance have been instrumental in the recent successes within her studio, growing the volume by 600% over a few years. She leads new construction and renovation projects for SDSU, USD, UC San Diego, MiraCosta College and San Diego Unified School District, ranging from \$2 million to \$65 million.

Antl's passion for collaboration has guided the growth of her career as an effective partner who inspires the team to achieve excellence. She guides clients, students and user groups through the planning and design process of creating sustainable and innovative facilities. Her technical expertise makes her a leader. As a Registered Architect, an Associate Design-Build Institute of America member, and an active participant in organizations including Coalition for Adequate School Housing, Antl stays ahead of current trends. Her strategic ideas contribute much to SGPA's operations and business development. She can be reached at santl@sgpa.com.

**NOEMI AQUINO**

Project Manager, Engineering/Construction Department  
Port of San Diego

**N**oemi Aquino is a project manager in the Engineering-Construction Department at the Port of San Diego with over 16 years of experience in public works. She is a registered Civil Engineer in California. Aquino is a detail oriented and performance focused professional with extensive civil engineering, program management, design and construction management experience. Her accomplishments include managing structural, geotechnical, civil, electrical and sustainable design and construction of major public works projects on piers, seawalls, pavements, building structures, bikeways, public roadways, facility lighting and utility infrastructures associated with new hotel, recreational and marina development.

Aquino maintains a great sense of responsibility and accountability, is very receptive to all ideas and suggestions and likes to analyze situations to provide immediate, proactive solutions. She is a proponent for continual process improvement. Being a good team player with a high work ethic, Aquino purposefully aims to always build great working relationships with stakeholders, peers and contractors. She can be reached at [naquino@portofsandiego.org](mailto:naquino@portofsandiego.org).

**MELANIE BAMBA MILINKEVICH**

Partner and VP of Marketing & Sales  
RSI Roofing

**M**elanie Bamba Milinkevich, partner at RSI Roofing, is a talented individual and a true leader. She joined RSI Roofing in 2016. In 2019, she and two co-workers purchased the company. She is now vice president and manages the sales, marketing and admin departments.

Bamba Milinkevich has been involved for many years with industry associations that serve company clients. She presently is treasurer of the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA). She also serves as the treasurer for the San Diego Building Engineers Association (SDBEA) and is a chair at the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM).

Over the years she has received many awards. In 2018, she received the SDBEA Executive Board Member of the Year, BOMA San Diego Ray Magnussen Associate Member of the Year as well as the You're the Greatest Award, and IREM San Diego Key Award Winner. In 2019 she received the SDBEA Executive Board Member of the Year. She can be reached at [melanie@thinkrsi.com](mailto:melanie@thinkrsi.com).



**Britani Harris**  
Project Manager

**Balfour Beatty**

[balfourbeattyus.com](http://balfourbeattyus.com)



CONGRATULATIONS ON  
BEING NAMED ONE OF  
**SAN DIEGO'S TOP WOMEN  
OF INFLUENCE IN  
CONSTRUCTION**

OUR INSPIRATION TO GO BEYOND  
COMES FROM YOU

**April Medlin**

Division Project Accountant Manager



WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN



**ALMA BAÑUELOS**

*Small Business Coordinator*  
San Diego Unified School District,  
Facilities Planning & Construction

**A**lma Bañuelos is a communications and small business outreach professional with nearly 20 years of experience working on public works programs in San Diego. As small business coordinator for San Diego Unified School District's Facilities Planning & Construction Department, Bañuelos is an advocate for local, small, diverse construction contractors, suppliers, and A/E companies. She engages with these businesses to ensure they know about and have access to the district's Propositions S/Z and Measure YY Capital Improvement Bond construction projects.

Her fluency in Spanish and experience engaging Latino and minority contractors has helped to broaden MBE participation in the school district's program. In fact, her work as a small business champion resulted in an increase in small business participation by over 18% and 11% for minority businesses in the program's first decade.

She sits on the board of the U.S. Disabled Veteran Business Alliance and is active in many diverse business organizations. She is the chair of San Diego's Public Agency Consortium (PAC), a position she has held for over 10 years. She can be reached at [abanuelos@sandi.net](mailto:abanuelos@sandi.net).



**TAMEELA BARNHART REESE**

*President*  
Barnhart-Reese Construction

**T**ameela Reese co-founded Barnhart-Reese Construction Inc. with her father and husband after the sale of Douglas Barnhart's flagship company, Douglas E. Barnhart Inc. As president of Barnhart-Reese, she has expanded her duties and manages much of the daily business operations of the burgeoning organization. Department oversight includes marketing, accounting, legal, insurance, human resources and safety. She is hands-on and instrumental in the development of new programs, policies and procedures as needed for the organization.

Notable Barnhart-Reese Construction projects she has overseen include: Sharp Chula Vista Cancer Center, Bayside Fire Station No. 2 for the city of San Diego; Hawthorne Cat Dynamometer Test Center; UC San Diego Spanos Athletic Performance Center; Olivenhain Municipal Water District Operations Maintenance Facility; Donovan Correctional Facility Health Care Administration Building and Skyline Hills Branch Library.

Prior to her career in construction, Reese focused on public relations and event planning for two local public relations firms. She can be reached at [treese@debconstruct.com](mailto:treese@debconstruct.com).



**ELIZABETH A. BARRIE**

*Founding Principal*  
The Barrie + CO

**E**lizabeth A. Barrie, AIA, launched her career in the construction industry 26 years ago after graduating from Cal Poly with a double major in architecture and construction management. While working in the construction field, she completed her MBA with an emphasis in finance and became a registered architect, learning skillsets that helped her form the Barrie + CO, a design and construction project management firm specializing in healthcare, higher education and life science projects.

Now entering its sixth year, the Barrie + CO has become a significant presence in the local market, winning several industry awards. SDBJ recognized the firm for its fast growth and status as one of San Diego's largest woman-owned businesses. Barrie recently was named the SDBJ's 2020 Business Woman of the Year for Small Business.

Barrie works to mentor young professionals about the built environment, teaching industry-related curricula at the New-School of Architecture, UC San Diego and other institutions. She can be reached at [elizabeth@thebarriecompany.com](mailto:elizabeth@thebarriecompany.com).



**ANNE BENGE**

*CEO*  
Cultura

**A**nne Bengé is a dynamic leader who empowers the Cultura team to be bold in its creativity, fostering a culture of innovation. She challenges the status quo in search of ingenious solutions, always curious about emerging business trends and how these relate to clients. Her background in cultural anthropology and economics from the University of Michigan informs her approach. With over 30 years in the commercial real estate industry, she is a visionary who adds value by applying a "what if" mentality to drive a team forward and open new opportunities.

Bengé was honored by CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) as a nominee for the National Impact Award for Career Advancement for Women and a finalist for SDBJ's CEO of the Year Award. She is a past president and board member of CREW San Diego, past board member of HomeAid San Diego and USGBC and is involved in numerous other organizations. She can be reached at [abenge@wearecultura.com](mailto:abenge@wearecultura.com).

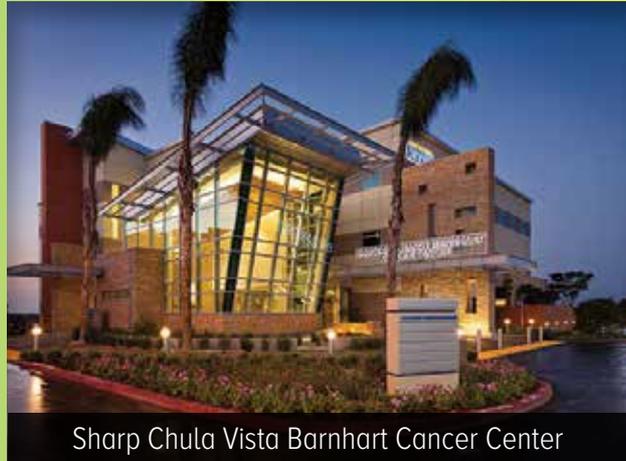


The teams at Barnhart-Reese Construction and Makena Medical Buildings send their congratulations to Tami Barnhart Reese on her accomplishment of being named one of San Diego Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Construction. Tami has spent a lifetime in the construction industry, following Barnhart family tradition.

Congratulations!





## WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN

**VIVECA BISSONNETTE**

*Co-Founder & Design Principal  
Hollander Design Group*

With more than 30 years of professional experience in the fields of cultural anthropology and interior design, Viveca Bissonnette brings a breadth of experience and knowledge to her professional pursuits. As co-founder and design principal at Hollander Design Group, she leads the firm's workplace strategy practice employing ethnography to inform design.

Outside of Hollander Design Group, she is actively involved in the design and art community, holding positions with the New School of Architecture and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, among other organizations. In 2011, she was inducted into the International Interior Design Association's College of Fellows — the highest honor IIDA bestows. In 2019 she received its Circle of Excellence Award.

Bissonnette's long-sighted vision, her ability to network and market her firm on the international stage, and her leadership in hiring a team of dedicated and talented designers have brought success and recognition to her firm. She can be reached at [viveca@hollanderdg.com](mailto:viveca@hollanderdg.com).

**LISA BITTNER**

*Senior Vice President, Business Development  
NOVA Services*

Lisa Bittner leads business development for NOVA Services, a geotechnical engineering, materials testing and special inspection firm. Hired just three months before the pandemic hit, Bittner put her networking skills into overdrive and secured \$1.2 million worth of proposals as lead consultant plus approximately 20 new subcontractant opportunities.

Her 20+ years in business development and marketing includes work with multiple construction companies listed in ENR Magazine's top U.S. contractors list as well as engineering and cost estimating firms.

Bittner serves as 2021 San Diego chapter president for CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women). After boosting membership from 150 to more than 200, she is planning the chapter's future and has started her third year as a mentor, working with a USD sophomore. Bittner has also been involved with the Society for Marketing Professional Services, the International Facility Management Association, NAIOP San Diego, the Urban Land Institute San Diego-Tijuana and the Downtown San Diego Partnership. She can be reached at [lbittner@usa-nova.com](mailto:lbittner@usa-nova.com).

**KIRSTEN BLAKEMAN**

*Licensed Architect, Project Manager – Architecture/Engineering  
Studio E Architects*

Kirsten Blakeman is a licensed Architect and Project Manager with Studio E Architects, where she focuses on education and affordable housing projects. She recently managed the rebuild of Cardiff Elementary School and is currently working on an affordable housing project scattered over four sites in City Heights. In addition to strong design skills, she brings project management and team leadership capabilities to all of her projects.

A natural extension of her professional work in education design, Blakeman has a strong passion for mentorship. She started the Architecture Construction and Engineering (ACE) Mentoring program at e3 Civic High and now serves on the Board of Directors as Chair of the Education Committee. Blakeman also previously served as a Professional Studio Coordinator for Cal Poly, Internship Coordinator in partnership with the Monarch School and is a regular volunteer with the San Diego Architectural Foundation's Open House San Diego program. She can be reached at [kblakeman@studioearchitects.com](mailto:kblakeman@studioearchitects.com).

**BETH BOOTH**

*Chief Design Officer/Owner  
Spaces Renewed*

Beth Booth has owned and operated Spaces Renewed in North San Diego since its inception in 2008. Holding design certifications through the National Kitchen and Bath Association and the American Society of Interior Designers, Booth has grown Spaces Renewed into a high end boutique design/build firm, specializing in personal, custom-tailored design and remodel solutions for each client.

So many others are able to provide great design or a great build experience, but Booth's passion is to ensure Spaces Renewed offers each client the best of both worlds: cutting edge design along with a seamless transition into the build and production phase. Booth leads the design team, sales, marketing and business development at Spaces Renewed. She is fortunate to have her husband serve as president and general contractor.

This past year, she was asked to join the leadership council and PAC board for the California office of the National Federation of Independent Business. She can be reached at [bbooth@spacesrenewed.com](mailto:bbooth@spacesrenewed.com).



**B | N | B**  
**BNBuilders**

BNBuilders is proud of Amber, Alessandra, and Carmen for their contributions to advancing the construction industry and we are honored to have them as part of our team. They exemplify the best qualities we seek to promote: empowerment, diversity, inclusion, and teamwork.

**CONGRATULATIONS AMBER,  
ALESSANDRA, & CARMEN!**

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN



**COLLEEN BORETTO**  
Principal  
Boretto+Merrill Consulting, LLC

**B**oretto has over 40 years of experience in the commercial real estate & construction industry working in estimating, preconstruction and construction management positions. Prior to founding Boretto + Merrill (a woman owned DBE Certified ), she held key positions with several prominent developers and contractors including, Lennar Urban (Vice President), Webcor Builders (Vice President), Swinerton Builders (Director), Pacific Coast Steel (Vice President), & Walter Shorenstein (Project Manager). She has Type I, Type II & Type V direct design and construction knowledge, including commercial office, hospitality, multi-family, entertainment, and government projects.

Her vast experience includes creating and developing systems for comparing budgets, proformas and programming to assist with acquisition underwriting or day-to-day management of projects. She has well established procedures for Architecture, Engineering and General Contractor selection. She possesses veteran skills and understanding of all aspects of construction, cost management, value engineering, constructability/engineering review, scheduling, oversight of the pre-construction and construction process. She can be reached at [colleen@boretto+merrill.com](mailto:colleen@boretto+merrill.com).



**CADIE BROWNE LEE**  
CEO  
Parisi Portfolio

**C**adie Browne Lee is a dynamic woman, business leader and role model. Her contributions to her firm, industry and community could be summed up as building bridges.

Browne Lee performs above and beyond her role as CEO of a successful interior design firm. A devoted lobbyist, she has served and spoken on behalf of the multi-family housing industry at local, state and national levels, and has engaged with local political and civic leaders.

She and her team have won several hundred local and national awards within the building industry. She participates in fund-raising events to elevate her firm's visibility and has sponsored several award programs.

She is passionate about giving back to the community, raising well over \$100,000 for various events. After Sept. 11, 2001, Browne Lee founded The Spring Nights and Fresh Thoughts Patriotic Fundraiser as a vehicle to honor, support and raise funds for local military families. She can be reached at [cadie@parisiporfolio.com](mailto:cadie@parisiporfolio.com).



**IRMA BUMPAS**  
President  
T&B High Performance Painting

**I**rma Bumpas recalled that in 1988, when she began her painting business, it was much harder to be a woman in construction than it is today. She had been working at a tuna cannery when her plant closed its doors. She started knocking on doors and soon landed cleaning and maintenance jobs. That led her to a real estate agent who became her mentor. After a job cleaning a condominium, the agent told Bumpas she needed the place painted. Bumpas hesitated. "You can do it," the agent said. "Never say no. Always say yes." Bumpas still remembers those words.

Today she has big-name clients. One industry peer calls Bumpas "one of the most hard working women I know," adding that her decision to adopt three girls shows her character.

"I love construction," Bumpas said. T&B High Performance Painting also does dry-wall repairs and wall coverings. Bumpas' daughters, now grown, help with the business. She can be reached at [irma@tbhpcn.com](mailto:irma@tbhpcn.com).



**PAMELA CAMACK**  
Senior Living/Wellness Studios Leader – Architecture/  
Engineering  
SGPA Architecture and Planning

**P**amela Camack is the Senior Living/Wellness Studios Leader at SGPA Architecture and Planning. As a Registered Architect and LEED Accredited Professional, Camack believes in incorporating sustainable concepts into her projects. Additionally, she is an active board member of Leading Age, a national association for not-for-profit senior communities. She blends strong management skills with 3D modeling expertise to help her clients visualize and complete successful projects.

Camack has served as the Lead Architect on the expansion of Seacrest Village's senior living campus located in Encinitas since around 2004. During that time, Camack has been instrumental in the design and development of the facility's Katzin Residence, a memory care facility which opened in 2007, the Vitality Center and an additional state-of-the-art Independent Living Residence. In 2019, she led a major renovation of the facility's 30-year-old CORE services which included the main kitchen and dining room, lobby outside the dining room, laundry facilities and health care center, the dining room, kitchen and pantry. She can be reached at [pcamack@sgpa.com](mailto:pcamack@sgpa.com).

# Celebrating Women in Construction



**Boretto + Merrill Consulting, LLC**  
Partners in your Project Success  
DBE certified business

## Project Management Construction Management Owner's Representation

With over 60 years combined experience in construction, Angela and Colleen can assist any project with Acquisition, Construction Cost Estimating, Value Engineering, budgeting, Entitlement, Design, Permit Project Management, Contractor Selection, Construction Management, Project Management, Owner's Representation and Project Close Out.

NTC Foundation is proud to partner with Boretto+ Merrill on our rehabilitation projects in ARTS DISTRICT Liberty Station.



[Boretto+merrill.com](http://Boretto+merrill.com)

## WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN

**ELIZABETH CARMICHAEL**

Principal Architect – Architecture  
ECOhouse architecture

Elizabeth Carmichael is a Principal Architect at ECOlogical Habitats of Urban Sustainable Experiences (ECOhouse architecture) where she promotes responsible development to achieve positive benefits for occupants, community, developers and ecology.

Carmichael moved to California after studying engineering and architecture, and gaining experience in commercial and residential design. She founded ECOhouse architecture as a source for ecologically responsible architecture and development. Elizabeth has ensured that ECOhouse is an architecture and development firm whose concern for a building's impact on its inhabitants, local environment and provides a resource for people to experience building green.

She conducts ecoL.A.B.s as a hands-on approach to educating clients, project occupants and the public on implementing sustainable practices. Carmichael serves on the Board of Directors for the San Diego Green Building Council and is on the path to an MBA in Sustainable Business. Additionally, she volunteers with San Diego Coastkeeper and the San Diego Green New Deal Alliance. She can be reached at [liz@ecohousegreen.com](mailto:liz@ecohousegreen.com).

**DANIELA CARO**

Project Manager  
Cushman & Wakefield

Daniela Caro is a project manager for Cushman & Wakefield and has over 20 years of devoted work representing owners, managers and occupiers in the construction industry. Since joining Cushman and Wakefield just a few years ago, her steady hand has already guided over 33 projects (726,000 square feet) with a total value of close to \$100 million. Recently Caro has taken a focused interest in the highly sophisticated and specialized life sciences space — a major part of the San Diego economy. The ability to play a small role in the creation of lifesaving therapies and medical devices brings a unique fulfilling quality to the work Caro does.

Caro is a driven professional who goes above and beyond in developing and maintaining positive and strong relationships with her clients. She holds a bachelor's degree in architecture from Virginia Tech and a master of science degree in construction management from Colorado State University. She can be reached at [daniela.caro@cushwake.com](mailto:daniela.caro@cushwake.com).

**AMBER CHIMITS**

Senior Estimator – Construction  
BNBuilders

As Senior Estimator with BNBuilders, Amber Chimits brings a broad spectrum of construction experience — gained over a decade in the industry — and team leadership to her position.

Upon joining BNBuilders in 2016, she spent several years in the field learning the building process, initially as a Field Office Coordinator and eventually transitioning into her recent leadership role as Senior Estimator. In her current position, she leverages her field knowledge to determine the most cost-effective way to achieve design and construction goals. She also helps procure subcontractors for each project. Key projects in her portfolio include Vertex Pharmaceuticals' San Diego Research Center and the 200,000-square-foot Fate Therapeutics San Diego Expansion.

Chimits earned her bachelor's in Communication from San Diego City College and her master's in Industrial Organizational Psychology at Alliant International University. She is OSHA 30-Hour certified and Fall Protection certified. She played competitive soccer for most of her life and brings team leadership skills to her current position. She can be reached at [Amber.chimits@bnbuilders.com](mailto:Amber.chimits@bnbuilders.com).

**NANCIE CONSTANDSE**

Project Architect  
HKS

Nancie Constandse is an architect and Governmental Life Science Studio Lead at HKS. She collaborates across sectors and the firm, connects people and ideas, and develops solutions to complex laboratory opportunities.

Constandse is passionate about healthier buildings and healthier materials. She is part of the mindfulMaterials A & D working group and Sustainability Champion in the San Diego office. Her LEED AP BD + C and WELL AP accreditations allow her to share this knowledge with others and apply principles to projects.

A graduate of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo's architecture program, Constandse became interested in Design Build upon graduation. She has worked for both design and construction firms, giving her a unique perspective and background with which to navigate challenging projects; balance beauty, performance and budget; and contribute ideas for more successful outcomes. Constandse is currently working on several projects including FDA Laboratory Lenexa, FDA Atlanta and Pfizer San Diego. She can be reached at [nconstandse@hksinc.com](mailto:nconstandse@hksinc.com).



“ In construction, it is not about what I get to build, but the relationships and the people that I get to serve.

Supporting the development of each team member is essential for a project's success. ”

- Adonia Akers,  
Project Executive,  
DPR Construction



At DPR, we celebrate women who build by sharing stories of empowered women. These female leaders are successfully executing complex, technical projects for some of the world's most progressive and admired companies. The goal is simple:

Connect, inspire, develop and advance women.



[www.dpr.com](http://www.dpr.com)

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN



**LUCY CONTRERAS**

Program Manager – Real Estate  
Port of San Diego

Lucy Contreras is a high-performing program manager in the Port of San Diego's Real Estate Department. She is a well-regarded team leader with expertise in navigating complicated, high-profile projects. With an extensive background in commercial development including previous experience at Civic San Diego, Contreras leads the redevelopment of the 70-acre Central Embarcadero for the Port while working closely with the selected developer, IHWY1.

Contreras and her team have also expertly revitalized Seaport Village since the Port assumed ownership of the specialty retail center in 2018. Her efforts have attracted locals to Seaport Village together with tenants including Mr. Moto Pizza, Spill the Beans Coffee and Bagels, Mike Hess Brewing, Sam the Cooking Guy and Malibu Farm. Since the onset of COVID-19, Contreras has spearheaded efforts to work with more than 50 tenants to ensure that Seaport Village remains viable and that the many small businesses there can continue to operate. She can be reached at [lcontreras@portofsandiego.org](mailto:lcontreras@portofsandiego.org).



**DOMINICA CORREIA**

Vice President and Market Lead Project Development Services  
JLL

Dominica Correia has a storied blend of successes throughout her professional, philanthropic and personal life in San Diego since her graduation from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in 2004. Her path begins with her early recognition as one of the youngest women to be a shareholder at Swinerton Builders Corp. This was largely due to the fact she was the project lead of over 36 various construction projects including the well-known and award recipient concepts like Tower 23, Sapphire Tower Building in downtown San Diego, the Rady School of Management and Charles David Keeling buildings both at UCSan Diego to name a few.

Her achievements continued to follow her where most recently she has become the vice president and market lead for JLL's Project and Development Services in San Diego, where she manages both a talented team of project managers and her own variety of development projects. She has more than 16 years of experience working in the commercial real estate and construction industry in the San Diego market. She can be reached at [dominica.correia@am.jll.com](mailto:dominica.correia@am.jll.com).



**SUZY CRUDEN**

Vice President Business Development  
McCarthy Building Companies

Suzy Cruden supports the overall business development strategy for McCarthy's pursuits throughout the Southern California region.

Cruden is a graduate of UCSD and is a DBIA Certified Professional. Her immense knowledge of the general contractor world, from both an owner and builder perspective, has made her an important figure in the San Diego construction community.

She began her career with McCarthy as a design manager. Through key pursuits for clients like Rady Children's Hospital, UCSD, SDSU, and Sharp Healthcare, she was able to take very technical elements of design and construction and identify important attributes that would connect with potential clients.

She was elevated to the director of business development and then vice president, business development strategy all within 18 months.

Cruden is looked to as a mentor within McCarthy and is a key decision-maker in San Diego. She is actively involved in several McCarthy initiatives including McCarthy's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, along with McCarthy's Partnership for Women. She can be reached at [scruden@Mccarthy.com](mailto:scruden@Mccarthy.com).



**PAOLA CRUZ**

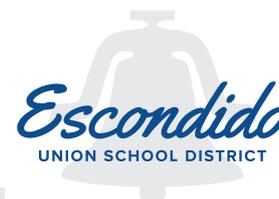
Founder and Lead Designer  
Aline Design + Drafting

Born and raised in San Diego, Paola Cruz is a daughter of immigrants. She is the first generation to attain a higher education, graduating from San Diego State University with a bachelor's in interior design. She then gained valuable residential experience working at Martinez + Cutri Architects and ECOhouse Architecture.

A hidden hero, Cruz strives to help homeowners and residential developers using her creativity and passion for three-dimensional design to develop single family homes and accessory dwelling units. She makes it possible for owners to afford modern environments through custom architectural design, and guides clients through the permitting process.

Established in 2019, Aline Design + Drafting began as a way to help a small-scale residential developer design two two-story single-family homes in Imperial Beach. Since then, Aline Design is honored to be a part of San Diego's development in low-income communities such as Linda Vista, Escondido and Imperial Beach. She can be reached at [paola@alinedesignsd.com](mailto:paola@alinedesignsd.com).

**Congratulations to Escondido Union School District's Jessica Kimbrell on being selected as one of San Diego's Women of Influence in Construction, Commercial Real Estate & Design!**



EUSD proudly recognizes Jessica Kimbrell for her instrumental role in managing our \$182.1 million bond program, and the accompanying modernization and construction of educational facilities across the district.

Escondido Union School District serves nearly 15,000 children at 23 schools, and the majority of these campuses were built decades ago. The community supported our call to action to repair and replace outdated facilities, improve student safety and campus security, and to upgrade technology infrastructure and equipment, to ensure that all students have access to the highest-quality educational environment.

Jessica has directed expansive renovation and new construction at Mission Middle School, including a two-story building that significantly improved the STEM learning environment. At Orange Glen Elementary School, she directed the construction of two classroom facilities for kindergarten and special education. Jessica's efforts also resulted in the beautification of the Orange Glen campus and a new playground for students. At Del Dios Academy of Arts and Sciences, she directed the construction of a two-story classroom building that provides a state-of-the-art learning facility and eliminated the need for temporary classroom spaces. Jessica has led many other projects that improved school site safety and security as well as information technology infrastructure.

We are fortunate to have Jessica's leadership, strength, patience, and creativity in our district. Her work has resulted in positive, long-lasting outcomes for our students and the greater community.



## WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN

**DEBBE DAMRON**

Vice President/Project Manager  
White Construction

**D**ebbe Damron has been a vice president and project manager at White Construction, since 1999. She works closely with owners, owner representatives, architects, and tenants in project development and execution including, preliminary pricing, contract negotiations, value engineering, subcontractor selection, project schedules, weekly meetings and close out packages.

She has completed more than 600 projects ranging from a few hundred dollars to \$2.2 million. Projects range from typical office tenant improvements to retail, specializing in medical/dental projects.

She holds a construction management certificate from San Diego State University Extended Studies and an associate's degree in accounting from Central Arizona College. She is originally from Tucson, Arizona.

Damron's interests include sports and athletics. She loves to kick box, run, lift weights, swim and practice yoga. Her favorite time of year is September because it is the start of football season. She can be reached at [ddamron@whiteconstructioninc.com](mailto:ddamron@whiteconstructioninc.com).

**JERI DENEEN**

President  
Deneen Powell Atelier Inc.

**J**eri Deneen's mastery of the visual and graphic arts is evident in her distinctive, award-winning designs and in the success of Deneen Powell Atelier Inc. Her multifaceted approach has resulted in a select client list and an unusually diverse range of projects. Her artistic methods capture, engage and educate a full range of audiences, from adults to toddlers.

Deneen is an expert in educational immersion design — design that incorporates the layout of space, subtle messages and visual clues, sculptural reinforcements and architectural enhancements — developing curiosity, then understanding and education through art and site design. This is accomplished by incorporating architectural and landscape architectural components, interpretation, environmental graphic design, sculpture, advertising and marketing techniques. Deneen's credits encompass a multitude of design projects at the San Diego Zoo, its Safari Park as well as botanical gardens in Atlanta, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Cleveland, Washington D.C., Los Angeles and San Diego. She can be reached at [jeri@dpadesign.com](mailto:jeri@dpadesign.com).

**MELINDA DICHARRY**

CEO and President  
Paradigm Mechanical Corp.

**M**elinda Dicharry, the CEO and president of Paradigm Mechanical Corp., founded her company in 2010 on strong business principles and a desire to bring a certain standard of customer service to the construction industry. Today, Dicharry continues to invest in the success of Paradigm through reliable partnerships with clients, engineers, designers, subcontractors and vendors. Paradigm is a wholly woman-owned business.

Outside of the office, Dicharry is very involved in her community. She served as president of the San Diego Chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) and as the vice president of the Future Construction Leaders Foundation for two years. She also served on the board of the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) for a couple of years. Currently, she is the president of the board of directors for the Boys and Girls Clubs of East County and is always looking to serve a higher purpose in her neighborhood. She can be reached at [melinda@pmcontracting.com](mailto:melinda@pmcontracting.com).

**CHARITY DUNPHY**

Licensed Architect, Project Manager, Associate –  
Architecture/Engineering  
Studio E Architects

**C**harity Dunphy, a licensed Architect, Project Manager, and Associate at Studio E Architects, has led the firm's efforts on charter schools, affordable housing projects and the expansion of a religious campus. She has a substantial background in the technical issues related to architecture and construction, and regularly leads projects with expedited schedules to successful completion.

Notably, she completed projects in the San Diego area including High Tech Elementary at Liberty Station, Celsius multi-family housing in Lemon Grove and the expansion of Congregation Beth Am in Carmel Valley. Currently, she is working on ShoreLINE, a 155-unit affordable housing and mixed-use project in the Grantville neighborhood and a 49-unit multifamily and mixed-use project in La Mesa.

In addition, she is a highly regarded mentor for colleagues and creates time in her busy schedule to assist, educate others and create guidelines and best practice documents for the firm. She can be reached at [cdunphy@studioeartists.com](mailto:cdunphy@studioeartists.com).



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Congratulations to our very own Kelly Nicholls, for being recognized as a Woman of Influence in Construction, Commercial Real Estate & Design by the San Diego Business Journal.

We are extremely proud of how you represent our organization and lead within the commercial real estate industry.

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN



**LESLIE EVANS**

Senior Contract Administrator  
CBRE HEERY

Leslie Evans began her construction career in 2004 when she was hired as a receptionist with Heery. Her dedication, attention to detail, determination, and willingness to learn led to several opportunities for development.

Throughout her tenure with CBRE Heery she has progressed through several positions including marketing coordinator, project administrator, office engineer, financial coordinator, small business liaison, and document controller. In 2019, she was promoted to senior contract administrator. Over the last 13 years has been assisting government clients with program development studies and construction management of several southern border land port of entries including the San Ysidro Phase 2 and Calexico West Phase 2A Land Port of Entries.

Her experience also includes several schools and fire stations and various delivery methods such as design-bid-build, design-build, CM At-Risk, and Multiple Award Task Order Contracting. She can be reached at [leslie.evans@cbre.com](mailto:leslie.evans@cbre.com).



**DANETTE FERRETTI**

Vice President of Interior Construction  
DIV13

Danette Ferretti is the vice president of interior construction at DIV13, a DIRT partner. DIV13's mission is to create custom prefabricated interior spaces that go beyond customers' expectations.

Ferretti has been with DIV13 for three years and came to the company with 27 years of architectural interior design experience. She has led projects ranging from 1,000 to 465,000 square feet, in areas of commercial, higher education, multifamily, healthcare, biotech and retail design.

She has also co-taught and lectured at local interior design schools and served on the board of directors for IIDA SoCal, the area chapter of the International Interior Design Association.

Ferretti holds a bachelor of science in interior design from Colorado State University and is NCIDQ certified. The Council for Interior Design Qualification develops the NCIDQ exam.

Beyond her professional and educational experience, Ferretti positively impacts everyone around her. She can be reached at [pferretti@div13.com](mailto:pferretti@div13.com).



**TAYLOR GIFFORD**

Vice President  
Cultura

Taylor Gifford is vice president at Cultura, a commercial furniture dealership and Haworth partner that provides a full range of furniture-based services. As part of a team, she helps to optimize San Diego businesses by consulting with clients to create dynamic spaces. Her primary focus is life science and biotech workplace and development projects. These have ranged from small incubation companies to large, tenant improvement and redevelopment headquarters. She and her team have executed over 2 million square feet of commercial office space through strategy, design and furniture procurement.

Gifford's leadership extends beyond the office and she is involved in several industry associations, including NAIOP San Diego, the commercial real estate development association. While serving on NAIOP's Developing Leaders Council for the last three years, Gifford was selected as co-chair for 2021. The program is specifically geared toward helping forward the careers of commercial real estate professionals under age 35. She can be reached at [tgifford@wearecultura.com](mailto:tgifford@wearecultura.com).



**GINA GRAHOVAC FRANKLIN**

President  
Grahovac Construction Company

In 1985, Gina Grahovac Franklin, co-founder of Grahovac Construction Company, Inc., was just 20 years old, managing the business including attending to the company's accounting, insurance, and bonding needs. Several years later in 1995, she acquired her contractor's license and became the president, RMO, and majority shareholder. She then strove to get the company certified as a Women-Owned, Small, and Diversified Business Enterprise. She is a proud member of the Associated General Contractors of San Diego, Women President's Organization, and United States Green Building Council. After 35 years, she is still integral in the day-to-day business operations including: client relations, bids, and project management.

She prides herself in creating long-term relationships with her clients, including SDG&E, San Diego International Airport, Wells Fargo Bank and US Bank.

In 2020, despite COVID-19 and the economic climate, she was not only able to maintain but exceed projected revenue and was able to expand the company's employee base by over 40%. Her continuous search for opportunity and professional growth in a continually changing industry has ensured the longevity of Grahovac Construction for years to come. She can be reached at [ginaf@grahovacconst.com](mailto:ginaf@grahovacconst.com).

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*You are the cornerstone of our foundation at Parisi Portfolio. As a woman-owned business, we are proud of your leadership, dedication, expertise, and talent in the interior design industry.*

*Your tenacity to keep raising the bar benefits our team and clients. With over 20 years of experience, we look forward to the future and creating more communities with our partners.*

*Thank you for everything you do and being an exemplary role model for our organization!*



## WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN

**KELLY HAGARTY**

*Sr. Director of Sustainability – Commercial Real Estate  
Verdani Partners*

**K**elly Hagarty is a Sr. Director of Sustainability at Verdani Partners, an ESG consulting firm specializing in sustainable real estate. Hagarty functions as the in-house Sr. Director of Sustainability for one of Verdani's largest diversified clients, managing the ESG efforts for nearly 300 million square feet across over 1,250 office, retail, residential, hospitality and industrial properties.

She is responsible for driving Clarion Partners' ESG initiatives and under her leadership, the firm certified 12 Fitwel projects since 2018, with 10 additional projects planned in 2021, receiving several awards from the Center of Active Design. She also acts as the Strategic Advisor for other real estate portfolios, training and guiding junior managers and employees, as well as the Head of Verdani's Corporate Sustainability Department.

Hagarty is actively involved in the local green building community and is a member of the San Diego Green Building Council Speakers' Bureau, ULI Greenprint Center for Building Performance and ULI Young Leaders Forum to name a few. She can be reached at [khagarty@verdani.com](mailto:khagarty@verdani.com).

**BRITANI HARRIS**

*Project Manager  
Balfour Beatty*

**B**ritani Harris has a presence when she enters a room, or a construction jobsite. Working with Balfour Beatty for a decade, she is a project manager with a passion that goes beyond her daily responsibilities of managing a \$117 million educational campus in Logan Heights.

Harris has purpose and passion: she is deliberate, with impactful roles in Balfour Beatty's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives. She is board member of Connecting Women, an employee resource group promoting advancement of women in the construction industry. She participates in the employee resource group Building PRIDE and is an active national and local leader in NOBLE, the Network of Black Leaders and Executives.

Harris has a way of making things interesting: she is a member of Balfour Beatty's Spirit Committee, a team promoting employee appreciation, recognition and event planning (which includes community service events).

Leadership, interpersonal skills and admiration — Britani Harris is truly influential. She can be reached at [BriHarris@Balfourbeatty.com](mailto:BriHarris@Balfourbeatty.com).

**MICHELLE HARRISON-MCALLISTER**

*Designer  
Michelle Harrison Design*

**P**rior to founding Michelle Harrison Design in 2000, Michelle Harrison-McAllister worked in marketing and design development for model homes, multifamily development, restaurants and remodels. Her love, passion and previous property management background led her to the world of multifamily design. What matters most to Harrison-McAllister is executing the client's design vision. She has a flexible attitude and believes in partnership. The communities she creates are places she could see herself living in and she keeps this mindset when creating the personality for the community.

Harrison-McAllister's community involvement includes working with troubled teens for The Bridge Home in San Diego and serving on the board of Canyon Crest Academy and the San Diego Architectural Foundation. Her favorite projects are fixing up older properties and rebranding them. When she isn't busy reimagining communities throughout San Diego, she enjoys travelling as much as she can and uses this as inspiration for her designs. She can be reached at [michelle@mhdesign-sd.com](mailto:michelle@mhdesign-sd.com).

**KERRIE HARWIG**

*Project Engineer  
Scripps Health*

**A**s a Navy spouse, Kerrie Harwig went from job to job as her spouse was transferred from duty station to duty station. She started at Scripps Health in 2007 as a temp admin and worked her way up from that to a full-time support position. She then learned all the ins and outs of the construction process for the healthcare setting, gaining extensive experience with OSHPD requirements. The abbreviation stands for Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. Harwig has worked and supported projects at every Scripps facility in San Diego County, sometimes supporting three or more project managers at one time. She is now working as a project engineer and looking at becoming a project manager. She loves her job. If it were not for her job at Scripps, husband Michael Harwig said, the couple would have moved back to Illinois. As it is, they bought a house and he bought a small restaurant called Not Your Momma's in National City. She can be reached at [Harwig.Kerrie@scrippshealth.org](mailto:Harwig.Kerrie@scrippshealth.org).

# RORE



**Gita Murthy, Ph.D.**  
Founder & CEO

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Cheers to Strong Leadership. Tenacity. Style.**

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WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN



**LIZ HAWKINS**

Operations Manager – Construction  
Swinerton

Liz Hawkins progressed quickly in her career, beginning in 2004 as an estimator before moving into Operations as Project Manager, Project Executive, and subsequently Operations Manager. Currently serving as Operations Manager, Hawkins manages the Special Projects Group in San Diego and has played a key role in Swinerton's entry into the Life Science/Technology market and has been a driving force in growing Swinerton Special Projects Group into annual revenues exceeding \$100 million.

Hawkins is responsible for procuring new work and overseeing the operations and profit/loss of the group. Her responsibilities include project planning and staffing and oversight of the project team to ensure compliance with project team commitments, including safety and quality standards.

She stays connected in the industry by actively participating in industry organizations including NAIOP, AGC, ISPE, Biocom, and DBIA. Hawkins is certified as a Designated Design-Build Professional by the Design-Build Institute of America and a LEED Accredited Professional. She can be reached at ehawkins@swinerton.com.



**CHELSEA HOLMES**

Superintendent  
Turner Construction Company

Chelsea Holmes started her career with Turner Construction in 2014. She began as a field engineer and worked in estimating, business development, and became a superintendent in 2018.

In 2019, Holmes took an assignment at the Denver International Airport as the Interiors Superintendent for Concourse B West Expansion, and was based there for one year.

Currently Holmes serves as a superintendent for the Campus at Horton Redevelopment project in downtown San Diego. The project reimagines the former Horton Plaza mall as a mixed-use office and retail development that will cater to technology and creative companies.

Holmes is actively involved in industry organizations including DBIA, CREW and ULI. Within Turner, she is a founding member of the Future Leaders Group. Holmes is also involved in Turner's mentorship program and is a member of Turner's Professional Women's Group.

Holmes holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Central Florida. She can be reached at cholmes@tcco.com



**KRISTIN HOWELL**

Vice President & Head of Business Development – Commercial Property Management and Accounting  
Meissner Jacquet Commercial Real Estate

Kristin Howell has been in the commercial real estate industry for over 30 years. She has spent a majority of her career, 20 years, with Meissner Jacquet where she started as a Real Estate Manager and worked her way up to Vice President. She has served as a mentor to many in the industry and holds her RPA and FMA from BOMI International. Howell has also been recognized with local awards for her leadership skills.

Howell is a member of IREM San Diego, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, East County Chamber of Commerce and BOMA San Diego. Additionally, she serves on the Real Estate Committee of the Burnham Moores Center for Real Estate at USD. Howell served on the Board of BOMA San Diego for several years, including two as the chapter's President and she co-chaired the committee for the BOMA International Convention when San Diego hosted in 2013. She can be reached at kristinh@mjcres.com.



**MONIKA IANNONE**

Project Manager  
Swinerton

Monika Iannone is a project manager with Swinerton. She has experience in general contracting, mechanical contracting, and heavy civil construction. Iannone has specific expertise in data centers, tenant improvements, museums, theaters, schools, and parking structures.

She also has experience with mass grading, bridges, and environmental compliance.

Iannone also holds a Master's degree in Dispute Resolution from Pepperdine Law School. She received her Bachelor's degree in Civil (Environmental) Engineering from the University of Southern California.

Swinerton provides construction services throughout the United States, delivering innovative solutions to clients across every sector, in every industry. Established in 1888, Swinerton formally incorporated in the State of California in 1908 and holds California Contractor License No. 92.

Monika Iannone joined Swinerton in 2014. She can be reached at miannone@swinerton.com.

# LEADERSHIP AT SGPA

Congratulations on being selected as two of San Diego's Women of Influence in Construction, Commercial Real Estate, and Design. Thank you for setting lead examples for women in the industry!



**STEPHANIE ANTL**

Architect, Associate DBIA  
Education Studio Leader,  
Associate Principal



**PAMELA CAMACK**

Architect, LEED AP  
Senior Living | Wellness Studio Leader,  
Director of Operations – San Diego,  
Associate Principal

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN



**MARLENE IMIRZIAN**  
*President – Architecture/Engineering*  
 Marlene Imirzian & Associates Architects

Marlene Imirzian is the founding principal of Marlene Imirzian & Associates Architects and she is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (FAIA). The firm is known for its design excellence, project performance and as a leader in the integration of sustainable design practices for building. Her work has been published internationally and featured in the books such as, "Desert Architecture" and "1000x Architecture of the Americas." Imirzian's work has been awarded numerous design awards, including local and regional design awards from the American Institute of Architects.

She serves as a guest lecturer, a visiting critic at architectural schools, and is active in community improvement. Recently Imirzian developed a prototype for a net zero entry-level single-family home for a small lot type. She recently completed the Southwestern College Math & Science building in Chula Vista, one of the past largest construction projects for the South Bay area. She can be reached at [mimirzian@imirzian-architects.com](mailto:mimirzian@imirzian-architects.com).



**SUZANNE IVES**  
*Project Executive*  
 Clark Construction Group

Suzanne Ives played a critical role in the delivery of San Diego State University's (SDSU) world-class Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences Building in 2018. Today, Ives is back at SDSU, leading construction efforts at the KPBS facility to broaden and enhance its broadcasting capabilities. "Suzanne stands out as a professional and knowledgeable project executive whose leadership skills ensure a cohesive project team," attests Forrest Shaffer, vice president at Raymond San Diego, a trade partner at the KPBS project.

Ives is committed to building the next generation of women leaders in construction. A member of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) since 2003, she previously served as a board member and helped establish Camp NAWIC in San Diego. This free, hands-on camp teaches high school girls construction basics while fostering leadership skills. Suzanne also serves as a board director for ACE Mentor San Diego and is an active Little League parent and PTA volunteer.

Ives holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Vanderbilt University. She can be reached at [suzanne.ives@clarkconstruction.com](mailto:suzanne.ives@clarkconstruction.com).



**NANCY JOHNSTON**  
*President – Commercial Real Estate*  
 Enduring Real Estate

Nancy Johnston has been one of the premier retail real estate brokers in San Diego for over 40 years, though her business name is relatively new. In 2019, her company took on the name Enduring Real Estate. Her office has represented a who's who of clients, notably gourmet ice cream company Salt & Straw, Barnes & Noble, Top Golf, Superstar Car Wash, Lifetime, Chocolate Bash and Calibre.

Johnston's work can be seen in every neighborhood in San Diego, having led the representation team for Starbucks on every San Diego location. She recalled that Starbucks originally wanted only six stores in the market. That number grew to more than 200. Johnston has seen retail evolve and expects it to evolve further.

She currently serves on the board of directors of the North American Retail Brokers Network and is co-chairman of the Tenant Council. Johnston holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from SDSU, and has completed several postgraduate courses in real estate and finance at SDSU and USD. She can be reached at [atjohnston@enduring-realestate.com](mailto:atjohnston@enduring-realestate.com).



**PELIN KARAKAS**  
*Vice President*  
 Conan Construction

As vice president of Conan Construction, Pelin Karakas oversees all public and private construction projects.

Originally from Turkey, Karakas graduated with a bachelor in architecture from Gazi University. She then traveled to the United States to pursue her master's degree in construction management and MBA from the University of Nevada, Reno.

Karakas' great strength is her ability to collaborate with designers. Her work as an architect allows her to understand and maintain design intent. In her career as estimator and project manager, she has helped teams align budget and scope on more than \$300 million in work. Karakas uses her insight to lead teams through difficult design and construction projects. Since 1995 she has been leading and helping her teams deliver award-winning projects on time and on budget.

The company's public projects include but are not limited to Mira Costa College, Grossmont Union High School District, Cajon Valley Union School District and Palomar College. She can be reached at [pkarakas@conan-construction.com](mailto:pkarakas@conan-construction.com).



**Charity Dunphy,**  
 Architect & Associate



**Kirsten Blakeman,**  
 Architect & LEED AP

Congratulations to **Charity Dunphy & Kirsten Blakeman** on being named two of the San Diego Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Construction & Design!

We at **Studio E Architects** celebrate their contributions to our office and the design community. Their passion for **mentorship, education** and **inspiring others** shines through in their work creating **innovative learning and living spaces.**

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# Women of Influence in Construction

## *Pamela Leonard*



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## WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN

**JESSICA KIMBRELL**

Director, Facilities and Construction  
Escondido Union School District

Jessica Kimbrell has been instrumental in the modernization and construction of several educational facilities within the Escondido Union School District. She directed the construction of a two-story building at Mission Middle School that significantly improved the learning environment for science, technology, engineering, and math subjects.

At Orange Glen Elementary School, she directed the construction of two classroom facilities for kindergarten and special education students. Her efforts also resulted in beautification of the campus and a new playground for students. At Del Dios Academy of Arts and Sciences, she directed the construction of a two-story classroom facility that provided a state-of-the-art learning facility and enabled the relocation of students from temporary classroom spaces.

Under a community bond program, Kimbrell also led many other projects that improved school site safety and security and information technology infrastructure. Her leadership has been influential and has resulted in a long-lasting and positive outcome for the students of Escondido Union School District and the community as a whole. She can be reached at [jkimbrell@eusd.org](mailto:jkimbrell@eusd.org).

**TIFFANY LABRUNO**

Director of Professional Services  
Gafcon Inc.

Tiffany LaBruno, director of professional services at Gafcon Inc., has more than 20 years of facilities and construction technology experience. The construction industry trails behind all others in the use of technology, but Tiffany leads the charge to stay ahead. She ensures these technologies transform the building lifecycle to make construction cheaper and faster, while improving quality through a focus on processes and technologies. They also make projects safer, so clients can save on insurance premiums.

Last year, LaBruno proposed the use of mobile technologies for the San Diego Regional Airport - Terminal 1 project. In 2019, LaBruno was the keynote speaker at the Engineering News-Record's (ENR) FutureTech Conference.

Recent statistics show that only 26% of leadership roles in technology are held by women and that women represent only 9.1% of people employed in construction. Thus, Tiffany refers to herself as a unicorn, as she is female in both tech and construction — which is incredibly rare. She can be reached at [tlabruno@gafcon.com](mailto:tlabruno@gafcon.com).

**ALEXANDRA LAPADULA**

Senior Project Manager  
BNBuilders

Alessandra Lapadula, LEED AP is currently one of San Diego's highest profile construction leaders, helping to lead the construction efforts for UC San Diego's Design & Innovation Building, which will serve as UC San Diego's new "front door" when two new Light Rail Transit stations come to the La Jolla campus.

Lapadula joined the BNBuilders' team in San Diego in 2016 as a Senior Project Manager, and immediately became a crucial leader for the construction of Vertex Pharmaceuticals' San Diego Research Center. Lapadula also spent numerous years handling complex projects at Stanford University.

Lapadula has 23 years of industry experience. In her senior project management role, she oversees developments from pre-construction to close-out, manages the entire project team, and serves as a key liaison between the owner and other stakeholders. She is also responsible for mapping out schedules, budgets, and subcontractors for new pursuits. Lapadula earned her bachelor's in Civil Engineering from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, and her master's in Civil Engineering/Construction Management from San Jose State University. She can be reached at [Alessandra.Lapadula@bnbuilders.com](mailto:Alessandra.Lapadula@bnbuilders.com).

**PAMELA LEONARD**

Project Executive – Site Utilities  
ACCO Engineered Systems

Pamela Leonard oversees ACCO Engineered Systems Site Utility department. She came to ACCO with 25 years of site utility experience and extensive knowledge in developing and growing the business.

Construction has always been a part of Leonard's life. Growing up, her father ran a Plumbing/Mechanical company, which is where her career began. There, with mentorship from her father and peers, she learned all aspects of the business from operations to project management to estimating and beyond. She managed and grew the site utility division, expanded the company's fleet of earth-moving equipment, allowing the company to take on large projects and developed a highly respected industry reputation. The company experienced a substantial impact from effects caused by the 2009 recession and had to close its doors. Two and a half years ago, she made the move to ACCO, leading the site utility department and fostering an atmosphere of true teamwork, support and ambition. She can be reached at [pleonard@accoes.com](mailto:pleonard@accoes.com).



## EMPOWERING WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

Congratulations to Swinerton's very own **Liz Hawkins** and **Monika Iannone** on being named two of *San Diego Business Journal's Influential Women in Construction, Commercial Real Estate & Design!* We are extremely proud of their contributions not only to our firm, but as two of the most passionate and innovative individuals in the construction industry as a whole. As women comprise only 10% of the industry workforce, Swinerton wholeheartedly supports Liz and Monika's goal to inspire women to bridge the gap and empower them to join the industry.

**SWINERTON**   
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WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN



**PAMELA MACIAS**  
Co-Owner, Managing Partner  
Girls With Power Tools, LLC

Pamela Macias is unique in her industry as she has learned to juggle all "hats" and does not give up until she has mastered them all. She handles her projects from inception to completion by hunting for the property, finds and purchases all products, manages the crew, by even joining the crew, doing all the tiling, flooring, custom woodwork and staging herself. She completes the project by managing the complete sale to ensure all aspects of the project go smoothly.

Macias looks at every project as a blank canvas, ready to create beautiful art. Where others see distressed and decrepit, she sees a raw diamond, ready to be revealed to the world.

Macias' true love for construction began when she joined Amor Ministries on weekend mission trips to build houses in Mexico. Her favorite part was framing and building the roof. She is fearless and always pushes herself through any hesitations so she can come out stronger on the other end. She can be reached at [pammy.macias@gmail.com](mailto:pammy.macias@gmail.com).



**MARIA MARTINICO**  
Principal and Workplace Practice Leader  
SmithGroup

Maria Martinico, CID, IIDA, LEED AP, has over three decades embedded in the design and delivery of global and national commercial and workplace projects. She is the principal and Workplace Practice Leader for the Southern California offices of SmithGroup, a nationally prominent architectural, engineering and design firm, overseeing projects across Central and Southern California.

Martinico received a bachelor's degree in interior design from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and an M.B.A. from Chapman University. Her ability to find solutions that align and enhance business objectives for diverse clients is evidenced by her career serving notable organizations such as Disney, Toyota, Sharp Hospital, AT&T Stadium, Sprint, Experian, Nationstar, Broadcom, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, San Diego Airport and John Wayne Airport, among others.

Martinico honors her industry well by serving on committees of the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), U.S. Green Building Council and on the board of directors for CoreNet Global. She can be reached at [maria.martinico@smithgroup.com](mailto:maria.martinico@smithgroup.com).



**VIRY MARTINO**  
Design Liaison  
Turner Construction Company

Viry Martino has more than 13 years of construction industry experience and currently serves as a design liaison for Turner Construction. She has worked in a variety of roles in construction management, from conceptual estimating, bidding and contract negotiation, to field work as an engineer and superintendent.

In 2019, Martino worked on the pursuit team for the San Diego International Airport Terminal 1 Replacement project, a joint-venture with sister company Flatiron Corp., for more than one year. With Turner's win of this project in 2020, Martino now serves as design liaison.

Martino continuously finds ways to expose others — particularly younger generations — to both the construction and STEM fields. She is an advocate for diversity in the workplace and supports organizations that align with this mission. Martino holds a bachelor of science in civil engineering and a master of science in construction engineering, both from University of Southern California. She can be reached at [atvmartino@tcco.com](mailto:atvmartino@tcco.com).



**APRIL MEDLIN**  
Division Project Accountant Manager  
Balfour Beatty

Over April Medlin's 15 years in construction, her purpose has been clear: she is devoted to empowering women and construction professionals to create a positive, lasting impact in the community.

As project accountant manager, Medlin is an encouraging leader, hiring, developing, training and mentoring each of the 20+ project accountants in her team. She has fiercely taken on the implementation of new technology nationally in the rollout and pilot program for payment management software as well as within the division for financial, reporting and labor compliance software. Her expertise has led her to speak at multiple technology conferences.

As the mother of two girls, building up women is a personal, driving element. She serves on the board of the San Diego Women's Construction Coalition (WCC). Additionally, as the Julia Morgan Society Chair, she has led partnerships with several San Diego high schools to help nearly 100 students pursue careers in construction. She can be reached at [amedlin@balfourbeatty.com](mailto:amedlin@balfourbeatty.com).

On behalf of the entire team at Turner Construction Company,

Congratulations  
Martine, Viry and  
Chelsea!



**Martine Zettle**  
Vice President & General Manager



**Viry Martino**  
Design Liaison



**Chelsea Holmes**  
Superintendent

Congratulations to all of the Women of Influence in Construction, Commercial Real Estate and Design! Your leadership, commitment and vision inspire and elevate all women in the industry.

## WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN

**RASHMI MENON**

Vice President and General Manager  
Burns & McDonnell

**R**ashmi Menon is vice president and general manager for Burns & McDonnell in California. Burns & McDonnell is a 100% employee-owned engineering, architecture and construction firm.

Menon has more than 20 years of experience in leading diverse teams to deliver innovative solutions for clients in the transportation, aviation, transit, energy, industrial and municipal markets. She has a track record for success in delivering large capital improvement airport programs.

She has a passion for fostering collaborative teams and celebrating diverse perspectives. Menon leads the team in providing innovative and resilient infrastructure solutions.

Her extensive community involvement includes the Women's Transportation Seminar and Conference of Minority Transportation Officials. She is deeply passionate about giving back to the community and supporting the next generation of women leaders.

She earned her master's degree in construction management from Texas A&M University and her bachelor's degree in architecture from the College of Engineering, Trivandrum, in India. She can be reached at (657) 205-0601.

**ANGELA MERRILL YON**

Principal  
Boretto+Merrill Consulting, LLC

**M**errill Yon has been a leader in the Southern California real estate market for more than 20 years. A civil engineering graduate of The University of Michigan, she has designed custom homes, golf courses, and entitled, designed, permitted and built several high density developments throughout San Diego and Southern California.

As director of acquisitions and area vice president for K. Hovnanian Homes, she oversaw acquisition of single-family residential communities, high-rise developments and mixed-use properties throughout Southern California as well as all aspects of design development, entitlement and permitting, construction, sales, and customer service. She led the traditional suburban homebuilder into the national urban market by developing its first three urban projects, all located in downtown San Diego and totaling over 600 units. After K. Hovnanian Homes, Merrill Yon became a principal at Boretto + Merrill, a woman owned DBE Certified business, focused on assisting clients with acquisition of assets, proforma budgeting and cost estimating, entitlements, construction management and project close out. She can be reached at [angela@boretto+merrill.com](mailto:angela@boretto+merrill.com).

**KATERINA MILOVANOSKA**

Director, BIM/VDC  
Gafcon, Inc.

**K**aterina Milovanoska is an influential proponent of shifting the mindset of the AEC industry to use datacentric Building information Modeling (BIM) and Virtual Design and Construction (VDC). Her perspective assists clients in turning digital architectural design models into three-dimensional reference models, containing the information and details the construction team needs to build structures while mitigating risk. Milovanoska comes from Macedonia and holds a Master of Architecture degree from the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering, and Geodesy in Sofia, Bulgaria. She speaks four languages: Bulgarian, English, Macedonian, and Serbian/Croatian.

Milovanoska is a member of the Education and Programs Committee with the San Diego Chapter of Commercial Real-Estate Women (CREW), a member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) including their Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI), a member of Design Build Institute of America (DBIA), as well as a member of the Downtown San Diego Partnership (DSDP) as part of their Downtown Planning & Public Policy Committee. She can be reached at [kmilovanoska@gafcon.com](mailto:kmilovanoska@gafcon.com).

**ROUNAK MOFTY**

Operations Director – Commercial Real Estate  
Intersection

**R**ounak Mofty is Operations Director at Intersection with responsibilities including marketing, human resources and office management. Mofty is integral to ensuring the transparency and responsiveness for which Intersection is renowned. As Director of Operations, she has helped grow the company from six people to a full-service commercial real estate firm with four offices throughout the Western United States with 32 people.

With over 10 years of experience in commercial and residential real estate, she also provides indispensable assistance to the firm's managing partners. She was previously honored by the San Diego Daily Transcript as one of San Diego's Most Influential Leaders. Mofty received her master's degree in public administration, with an emphasis on administration of justice, from San Diego State University. Her bachelor's degree, also in administration of justice, came from San Jose State University. Mofty speaks both Kurdish and Farsi. When she's not hard at work, she enjoys cooking, traveling abroad and painting. She can be reached at [rmofly@intersectioncre.com](mailto:rmofly@intersectioncre.com).

**LISA BITTNER**

Senior Vice President  
Business Development

944 Calle Amanecer, Suite F, San Clemente, CA 92673  
949.388.7710

4373 Viewridge Avenue, Suite B, San Diego, CA 92123  
858.292.7575



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# CONGRATULATIONS

## LISA BITTNER

San Diego Business Journal  
Women of Influence  
in Construction,  
Commercial Real Estate, and Design

NOVA Services, Inc.  
applauds your accomplishments!  
Thank you for your hard work and your contributions  
to our clients and our company.  
We are honored to have you on our team.

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN



**AMBER MOLINA**

Senior Property Manager – Commercial Real Estate  
CommonWealth Partners

Amber Molina is a Senior Property Manager for CommonWealth Partners, managing a half-million SF office high rise portfolio in Mission Valley. She began her career as a commercial property management intern for Burnham Real Estate Services and she previously worked for Colliers International. Her management experience includes overseeing all aspects of property operations, financial preparation and reporting, construction management related to capital and tenant improvement projects, parking operations, lease negotiation, and working with intergovernmental agencies.

Throughout her career, Molina has earned many honors for her work, including the Green Property Champion Award at CommonWealth Partners in 2019. Molina has been a member of BOMA San Diego since 2011 and currently sits on the BOMA Board of Directors as President. She holds a BA in Business Administration from USD, a CA Real Estate License and a Real Property Administrator designation from BOMI International. She also volunteers as an active member of the Junior League of San Diego. She can be reached at amolina@cwpm.com.



**JENNIFER MONTGOMERY**

Associate  
Schmidt Design Group

Jennifer Montgomery, PLA, SITES AP, is a landscape architect in one of San Diego's leading landscape architecture firms. She leads Schmidt Design's sustainable design initiatives. Montgomery has over 15 years of experience and focuses on public parks and open spaces. She has managed some of the firm's most complex and impactful projects including Civita Park Phases two and three, PHR Community Park and Bonita Cove playground. As a SITES professional, she is an expert in sustainable design and has a keen awareness of the dynamics of the site and its relationship to the project.

Montgomery is an active member and volunteer with the San Diego Green Building Council and a founding member of Women+ in Green whose mission is to empower women and advance gender equity. What really stands out about Montgomery is the genuine enthusiasm and constructive nature she brings to all she does, and how she inspires this in others. She can be reached at JMontgomery@schmidt-design.com.



**GITA MURTHY, PHD**

CEO/Founder  
RORE, Inc.

As CEO, Gita Murthy has led the RORE, Inc. from infancy to a \$50 million firm. During her tenure, she has managed over 40 contracts as a prime contractor for the Army Corps of Engineers, Navy, Air Force, and other public sector clients. She has led and managed projects that have ranged in diversity from a small parking lot to complex design-build school construction in various locations from the Continental United States to Hawaii, Alaska, and Okinawa, Japan.

Dr. Murthy is an active board member of professional organizations, including the Associated General Contractors of America, Associated Builders and Contractors, and the Society of American Military Engineers. She has served on the board of trustees for the San Diego Fleet Science Center and the Scripps Institute of Oceanography. Dr. Murthy began her career in the academic arena and continues to fuel her intellect through hands-on design and construction. As a woman-owned business, she employs several women professionals, and mentors young professionals to develop professionally into strong and confident contributors to society. She can be reached at gmurthy@roreinc.com.



**ALEJANDRA NADAL**

Associate | Senior Project Manager – Architecture/Interior Design  
Taylor Design

Alejandra Nadal, RA, EDAC, is an Associate and Senior Project Manager for Taylor Design, a strategy-based design firm with five offices in California. Nadal joined the firm in 2016 after working as a project manager and architect at Mascari Warner Architects as well as other firms in the San Diego region. She is a licensed architect with Evidence-Based Design Accreditation and Certification (EDAC) and received her Master of Architecture from the Instituto Tecnológico de Tijuana.

Nadal's architectural experience spans over 21 years in the cities of Tijuana, B.C, Mexico and San Diego including healthcare projects ranging from equipment replacement to a 60,000 square-foot rehabilitation hospital.

Her extensive project management experience encompasses space planning, preparing Construction Documents in AutoCAD and Revit, consultant coordination, code research and obtaining required permits, construction administration and active participation in project team and client-architect collaboration. She can be reached at anadal@wearetaylor.com.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO RSI ROOFING'S VERY OWN MELANIE BAMBA MILINKEVICH FOR BEING RECOGNIZED TO SDBJ'S INFLUENTIAL WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE & DESIGN. EVERY DAY, MELANIE INSPIRES AND MOTIVATES ALL THOSE AROUND HER AS A TRUE LEADER IN THE INDUSTRY. WE ARE EXTREMELY PROUD OF YOU!

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WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN



**KELLY NICHOLLS**  
Senior Vice President  
Lee & Associates – NSDC

**K**elly Nicholls is a senior vice president at Lee & Associates – NSDC. She began her career in the Silicon Valley where she was consistently a top performer. In 2002, Nicholls and her family moved to San Diego where she continues to excel. Her tenacious nature and drive led her to become a shareholder within three years of joining Lee & Associates. In 2020, Nicholls completed over 790,000 square feet of transactions in five states.

Over her 30-year career, she has become an expert at her craft. Nicholls' passion is tenant representation where she assists in corporate expansion plans into new markets or repositioning her clients' existing locations to better suit their needs. She focuses on warehouse distribution sales and leasing, portfolio management, investment sales, and build to suits. With her strong work ethic, creative problem solving and energy, Nicholls is recognized by her customers and peers as a top-level broker who exceeds expectations. She can be reached at knicholls@lee-associates.com.



**KARRI NOVAK**  
Vice President of Project Development  
Suffolk

**C**ity officials believe real estate construction will play a critical role in San Diego's transformation into the "city of the future," and San Diegans rely on our institutions of higher learning to prepare our leaders of tomorrow. Suffolk Vice President Karri Novak, a female leader in the male-dominated construction industry, is at the intersection of both sectors. As a 25-year construction veteran, Novak is leading Suffolk's expansion into the rapidly growing higher education sector in San Diego.

Novak led the teams that constructed UC San Diego's North Torrey Pines Living and Learning Neighborhood, the Naval Hospital at Camp Pendleton, San Diego State University's Huaxyacac residence hall and SDSU's complex and sophisticated Engineering & Interdisciplinary Sciences building.

Novak continues to push the boundaries of innovation and technology. She is passionate about leveraging cutting-edge technologies and processes to improve productivity and safety on the projects she'll be involved in including higher education and affordable housing. She can be reached at KNovak@suffolk.com.



**TERESA OQUENDO**  
Project Manager  
AVIVV

**F**rom the early stages of her career, Teresa Oquendo has enjoyed working in the construction and energy world. With a bachelor of science in civil engineering from Cornell and MBA from USC, she obtained the knowledge needed to excel in roles such as business analyst with Intel and manufacturing production planner at Trimble. After nine years in Puerto Rico, Oquendo returned home to San Diego and spent five years with Enel Green Power. This unique background allowed for a smooth transition to her role as project manager at AVIVV.

Since joining AVIVV in 2020, Oquendo has managed multiple projects including strategic underground, electrical distribution planning, and the cable pole maintenance program with budgets totaling over \$7 million. She is responsible for the delivery of the designs used to build projects, and once construction begins, she provides construction support in situations such as order changes, permit verifications, environmental releases and community outreach when needed. She can be reached at toquendo@avivv.com.



**DIANE OZAKCAY**  
Studio Director, Senior Associate – Architecture and Design  
Gensler

**A**s a licensed Architect and Senior Associate at Gensler's San Diego office, Diane Ozakcay's experience ranges from developer-led, ground-up office buildings to amenity rich repositioning projects. She has also led the design for numerous master planning, mixed-use, programming, as well as large and small tenant improvement projects for clients in the biotech, science, technology, food and beverage, hospitality and professional services industries.

Taking on the role of Studio Director in 2019, Ozakcay currently co-leads 27 team members in her studio. She stays involved throughout the design process, ensuring successful project delivery, and her ability to connect the dots makes her a trusted advisor to her clients.

Ozakcay received her Masters in Architecture and Bachelors in Environmental Design at North Dakota State University. Her extensive architecture and design background allows her to fulfill her role as both designer and strategist to transform each client's ideas into masterful, innovative and impactful designs. She can be reached at Diane\_Ozakcay@gensler.com.

CONGRATULATIONS

to Elizabeth Carmichael  
and all the Women honored in  
San Diego Business Journal's  
Influential Women in  
Construction, Commercial  
Real Estate & Design  
For their outstanding  
achievements and wish each of  
you continued success.



Elizabeth Carmichael  
Principal Architect  
Founding ECOhouse in 2012



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Vice President,  
Business  
Development  
Strategy



congratulations

To Suzy, and all of San Diego's  
Women of Influence, congratulations  
on being selected as one of

**San Diego's Women of Influence  
in Construction, Commercial  
Real Estate & Design.**



WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN



**KATIE POPOLOW**

Managing Principal – Architecture/Engineering  
The Miller Hull Partnership

**K**atie Popolow joined The Miller Hull Partnership in 2000 and serves as managing principal of the firm's San Diego studio. With 30 years of experience in the architecture industry, she manages a variety of project types including administration facilities, cultural spaces, higher education, K-12 schools, public safety and sustainable infrastructure.

Popolow also leads the firm's Process and Delivery Committee, working to improve office deliverables and staff educational opportunities. She makes a priority of meeting with all project managers bi-weekly to discuss the status of project efficiency and current and potential resources.

Currently Popolow serves as president of the DBIA Northwest Region and advisor to the DBIA San Diego Board of Directors. Additionally, she is an active member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the San Diego Architecture Foundation and the San Diego Green Building Council, as well as the Downtown San Diego Partnership and the Urban Land Institute of San Diego-Tijuana. She can be reached at [kpopolow@millerhull.com](mailto:kpopolow@millerhull.com).



**JESSICA PRIETTO MAHON**

Vice President of Administration  
Level 3 Construction Inc.

**A** perfect match for a diverse range of responsibilities, Jessica Prietto Mahon is the engine that keeps Level 3 Construction moving ahead in the back office. As an experienced hospitality manager, she runs the company's human resources and staffing demand, supervises its accounting group, assists with bid and proposal, coordinates with subcontractors and suppliers, and stays abreast of governmental construction regulations from the local to federal levels.

As a native San Diegan, she always seems to have the knowledge of unlimited resources and suppliers.

Since launching the business in 2006 with her husband, she managed to not only keep multiple tasks ongoing, but to raise three children at the same time.

Level 3 Construction is a well-established, multimillion-dollar commercial construction firm due to her day to day oversight. Founded in 2006 by President and CEO Ian Mahon, the company is located in Vista and privately owned. She can be reached at [jprietto@level3construction.com](mailto:jprietto@level3construction.com).



**LIZETTE RODRIGUEZ**

Labor Relations Manager  
Gafcon Inc.

**L**izette Rodriguez is the labor relations manager and labor relations business line leader at Gafcon Inc. She has extensive experience in all areas of contract compliance monitoring, auditing and the enforcement of rules for state and federally funded projects. She has been with Gafcon for more than 10 years working with contractors, subcontractors and organized labor representatives in resolving challenging compliance issues.

Rodriguez has participated in and facilitated various public works and labor compliance training classes sponsored by the Department of Industrial Relations, the Department of Labor, the Division of Apprenticeship Standards, San Diego County and other organizations. She is on the Barrio Logan "Building a Community Vision" team and was a part of the C&C Mentor Protégé program focused on enhancing growth and opportunities for small local businesses. She is involved in several building industry organizations. Rodriguez received her degree in paralegal studies at Maric College and is a licensed paralegal. She can be reached at [lrodriguez@gafcon.com](mailto:lrodriguez@gafcon.com).



**JILL RUSSELL-LAYMAN**

Associate-Principal  
ID Studios Inc.

**J**ill Russell-Layman received her BFA in Interior Design from the Design Institute of San Diego in 2003 and joined ID Studios in 2006. She has continuously exhibited her commitment to the success of the firm and the happiness of its staff. She has been involved in the community since the beginning of her design career, developing ID Studios' internship program and mentoring dozens of interns. She's participated in numerous charity events and has been a member of many organizations such as the IIDA, CREW, NAIOP, Biocom and the SDHR Forum.

In January 2020, she joined ID Studios' ownership team as Associate Principal. "In addition to directing some of ID Studios' most significant projects such as the recently completed Fish & Richardson offices located in Del Mar, Jill participates in the day-to-day business operations of the firm. We are thrilled that Jill has expanded her leadership role at ID Studios," said Founding-Principal Amy Morway. She can be reached at [layman@idstudiosinc.com](mailto:layman@idstudiosinc.com).

**PORT of SAN DIEGO**  
Waterfront of Opportunity

Congratulations to our very own

**Joan Siao**  
**Lucy Contreras**  
**Noemi Aquino**

on being named  
**Women of Influence in Construction, Commercial Real Estate & Design**

We're all proud of you!

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

CONGRATULATIONS TO

**JENNIFER MONTGOMERY**

San Diego Business Journal's  
Outstanding Woman in  
Construction and Design

We at Schmidt Design Group celebrate Jennifer's leadership within our office and in the regional design community. Her continued accomplishments bring about Positive Change in the spaces where we live, work and play. Thank you for being such an integral and influential part of our team.

Congratulations to all the incredible women making a difference in our communities!

**SCHMIDT DESIGN GROUP**

## WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN

**CAMILLE SHAVER**

Electrical Field Construction Advisor  
AVIVV

Camille Shaver began her career in 1983 in Pocatello, Idaho with Idaho Power Co. At the time, she was studying business administration at Idaho State University. During her incredible 27-year career at Idaho Power, Shaver held various positions from lineman to construction manager. In fact, Shaver became the first, and only, female lineman for the Idaho Power at the time, a noteworthy accomplishment. She later worked for several other utility companies, as well as Bonneville Power Administration, in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Oregon, Washington and finally California.

She joined AVIVV in 2020. Shaver's lineman training, extensive work experience, strong technical expertise and communication skills made her a perfect fit for AVIVV. In her current role as electrical field construction advisor, she facilitates and manages the safe and efficient construction and maintenance of overhead and underground electrical systems and facilities. She brings with her a true passion and love for construction. She can be reached at [cshaver@avivv.com](mailto:cshaver@avivv.com).

**JOAN SIAO**

Capital Project Manager I  
Port of San Diego

In her 20 years working for the Port of San Diego, Joan Siao, a capital project manager with the Engineering-Construction Department, has managed and designed over 60 capital and maintenance projects all around San Diego Bay.

Among her collection of projects, Siao designed and managed the Tuna Boat Basin Seawall and Revetment Repairs project, replacing aged and severely eroded revetment slope with a new sound stone revetment slope to protect landside properties. Siao also successfully managed the Emergency Wharf Repair at North Embarcadero, which repaired the damaged wharf and restored walkway usage in less than 50 days. This emergency design-build project was awarded the American Public Works Association Project of the Year, along with four additional awards in 2017.

Prior to joining the Port, she was a senior structural engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designing multiple flood control projects. She holds a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of California, Los Angeles and is a licensed California Civil Engineer. She can be reached at [jsiao@portofsan-diego.org](mailto:jsiao@portofsan-diego.org).

**MEGAN SKAALEN**

Workplace Studio Lead  
SmithGroup

Megan Skaalen, CID, serves as Workplace Studio Leader at SmithGroup San Diego, one of the nation's leading integrated architectural, engineering and design firms. Skaalen has dedicated her career to creating solutions that equally serve her respected owner, developer and end user clients. Her imaginative and unique design solutions create community and adapt real estate assets into the most forward-thinking built environments possible. She is currently leading the design for local developer RPG for Ora@Pacific Station, a conversion of a former grocery store into retail and office spaces in Encinitas. Recently completed projects include the Encinitas Wellness Center, a reimagined 1970s-era racquetball center which has become a wellness destination.

Skaalen graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Arts from the University of Arizona and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design from the Design Institute of San Diego. She is a Certified Interior Designer in California. She can be reached at [megan.skaalen@smithgroup.com](mailto:megan.skaalen@smithgroup.com).

**AMY TOBIA**

Senior Project Manager  
FS Design Group

Amy Tobia, NCIDQ, CCIDC, has more than 20 years of commercial interior design experience and helps lead FS Design Group. Together with owner Bre'an Fox, Tobia has been instrumental in growing the six-person, 29-year-old firm whose clients include American Assets Trust, Emmes, Vistage, Daybreak Game Co. and more.

For more than three years, Tobia has co-chaired CREW San Diego's education committee, helping determine and engage topical speakers for luncheons and networking events, all of which support women advancing their careers in commercial real estate. She has spent more than four years volunteering with RepresentUs, a group focused on reforming elections to ensure they are free, fair and reflect the voice of the voters.

"I'm an advocate for good design because it benefits everyone," Tobia said. "My role is to help my clients define their ideal workplace. ... Then, I dig in to manage every detail of the process to make it happen." She can be reached at [amy@fsdesigngrp.com](mailto:amy@fsdesigngrp.com).

# WBES



## Seeking Women Contractors

San Diego Unified School District is looking to increase participation of women-owned businesses (WBEs) in its construction program!

San Diego Unified has over \$8 billion in funding to repair, renovate and revitalize neighborhood schools as part of its capital improvement program. Construction projects include new/renovated facilities, safety and security upgrades, athletic fields, classroom technology, charter schools, air conditioning and other capital improvements throughout the district.

The school district has a robust business outreach program with participation goals for small and women-, disabled veteran- and minority-owned business enterprises.

Don't miss out on opportunities. If you are a woman with 51% ownership of a construction contracting company, contact Alma D. Bañuelos for more information.



For additional information about San Diego Unified's business outreach program and WBE participation goals, contact the following:

**Alma D. Bañuelos**  
Email: [abanuelos@sandi.net](mailto:abanuelos@sandi.net)  
[www.sandiegounified.org/business-outreach](http://www.sandiegounified.org/business-outreach)

Register your company on the district's PlanetBids vendor portal:  
[tinyurl.com/SDUSD-PlanetBids](http://tinyurl.com/SDUSD-PlanetBids)

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALEJANDRA NADAL ON BEING NAMED TO SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL'S WOMEN OF INFLUENCE LIST!



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Voted "Best Firm to Work For" 3 years in a row, Taylor Design attracts curious-minded, authentic people with an entrepreneurial spirit. As a 100% employee-owned firm with five offices across California, every employee is positioned to think like an owner. #LoveWhereYouWork

**TAYLOR** design

## WOMEN OF INFLUENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND DESIGN

**CIARA TRUJILLO**

Senior Vice President, Land Advisory Services –  
Commercial Real Estate  
Colliers

Ciara Trujillo is a part of Colliers' San Diego Land Team where she is the only female in the San Diego region who specializes in the brokerage of land for both single-family and attached residential developments and mobile home and RV park properties. Trujillo has helped complete the sale of more than 63,800 residential lots and 35,594 acres of land, valued at more than \$3.4 billion. A 15-year and record-breaking industry leader, she is the first female broker to earn the title of the number one, highest producing broker for Colliers in the San Diego region.

Trujillo provides clients with the benefit of extensive market research and with extensive homebuilder experience, she understands the difficulties homebuilders face while balancing internal hurdles with land acquisition. Over the past two years, Trujillo closed the challenging sale of the former Oceanside drive-in theatre and she has closed back-to-back deals in the last year that will provide desperately needed new housing in the region. She can be reached at [Ciara.trujillo@colliers.com](mailto:Ciara.trujillo@colliers.com).

**CARMEN VANN**

Regional Project Executive  
BNBuilders

Carmen Vann, LEED AP BD+C, regional project executive for BNBuilders, is one of the region's most accomplished women in construction and one of the industry's top trailblazers. A 24-year industry veteran, Vann has an expertise in complex, multi-family, affordable housing, K-12, and urban high-rise projects. Previous projects under her executive leadership include the San Diego Central Library, Sempra Energy Headquarters, Fifty B, and Stella & Bluewater.

Current and upcoming projects under her leadership include Mount Miguel and Healthpeak's Callan Campus. She earned her B.S. in Construction Management from North Carolina A&T State University.

Vann is committed to giving back to her community in a number of ways. She has used her construction expertise as part of Rebuilding Together San Diego for four years. She has also served as an ACE (Architecture, Construction & Engineering) mentor for three years, as chair of the AGC's (Associated General Contractors) Education Committee and Foundations for Success Committee. She can be reached at [carmen.vann@bnbuilders.com](mailto:carmen.vann@bnbuilders.com).

**TANYA VILLALPANDO**

Assistant Project Manager, Design & Construction  
Intersect Management

Tanya Villalpando is Assistant Project Manager of Design & Construction at Intersect Management. Previously, she held positions at Alexandria Real Estate as Assistant Design Project Manager serving on the national Brand & Design team and Gensler San Diego as Interior Designer. Villalpando has extensive experience in brand development, the essential project differentiator that communicates her clients' values in the built environment.

As a young Latina and single mother, working in a demanding male dominated industry, she has found encouragement in being an assertive strong voice, confidently sharing her opinions and abilities. Being a creative in a financial world, she is always seeking new strategies that link the two. With 10 years of interior design experience, she believes real estate is the means to create better environments that build community which ultimately helps people thrive and enjoy happier, healthier lives. She can be reached at [tvillalpando@intersectmanagement.com](mailto:tvillalpando@intersectmanagement.com).

**TRACY WANKNER**

Property Manager – Commercial Real Estate property  
management  
Worth Property Management

Tracy Wankner has been in the commercial real estate management field for 5 years and is a Property Manager at Worth Property Management. She graduated in 2007 from California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo where she studied Landscape Architecture. While this was not an easy time to be a recent graduate, Wankner proceeded on a path of working multiple jobs including landscape architecture, nurseries, consultant/inspector for State highway landscape construction and her own design.

Her unique expertise provides, owners and commercial boards alike, a detailed eye to their property's aesthetic through advised plant selections, pest control management, tree trimming, water management and irrigation problem-solving. These skills complement and enhance relationships with landscape vendors while improving upon the property's largest asset and liability. In her free time, Tracy enjoys being outdoors and spending time with her husband, John and daughter, Jordie. She has a love for gardening, surfing, playing beach volleyball and traveling anywhere. She can be reached at [tracy@worthpm.com](mailto:tracy@worthpm.com).

**NICOLLE WILKINSON**

Project Management Director  
CBRE HEERY

Nicolle Wilkinson is known within the industry as "somebody who gets things done." She has 27 years of experience as a construction manager and licensed architect throughout southern California and Arizona. A dynamic leader, she is also known for building long-lasting client relationships by providing high quality customer service. She has planned, designed, and managed construction of over \$2 billion for a variety of complex projects including border ports of entry, federal courthouses, hospitals, fire stations, jails, libraries, and airports.

An industry expert in "alternate delivery methods", Nicolle has managed projects using progressive design-build, JOC and CM At-Risk. She has managed all phases of project delivery including procurement, negotiations, programming, budget and schedule management, consultant and vendor coordination, and construction management. Wilkinson is a member of NAWIC San Diego Chapter and is currently the Senior Project Manager supporting GSA with the construction of the Calexico West Land Port of Entry Phase 2A. She can be reached at [nicolle.wilkinson@cbre.com](mailto:nicolle.wilkinson@cbre.com).

**SUSAN WILLIAMS**

Owner/Vice President – Commercial Furniture  
Office Concepts Installations & Relocations

Susan Williams is the owner and Vice President of Office Concepts Installations & Relocations (OCIR). Since 1983, OCIR has been San Diego's trusted office furniture installation and relocation company for businesses across the United States. OCIR deals exclusively with commercial furniture. It is one of only a few companies in San Diego certified to handle, deliver and install high density filing and storage systems. Williams has been building her family-run/owned business for over 12 years and in that time has grown the company in the San Diego region. Williams is also a dedicated business woman and mother of three.

In the early days, the company was a home-based business with just a few clients. Williams has built the company into a successful business that employs 14 people at its headquarters in San Diego. Today, OCIR operates out of a 20,000 square foot warehouse that serves multiple companies not only in San Diego but Arizona, Alaska, Hawaii, Japan, Korea and Guam. She can be reached at [susan@ocirwest.com](mailto:susan@ocirwest.com).

**SARAH WOOD**

Owner, CEO  
Alliance Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc.

Sarah Wood understands some people out there - men and women - may feel vulnerable or confused when they need to call for heating and air-conditioning service. Each of her team members, from those in the field to those in the office, understands that the customers' comfort level and trust are their top priorities. They feel a deep responsibility to serve customers to the best of their ability, offering timely, professional, and cost-effective services.

Her father, James Rotter, founded the HVAC company in 1988 and paved the way for Wood to become the success she is. Native to San Diego, Wood has owned Alliance since her father's passing in 2009. She is passionate about growing her business and using her expertise to make a positive impact on her community. Besides her two daughters, her most prized accomplishment is the collaboration with the PHCC of San Diego HVAC Academy Trade School that led to a successful source of curriculum and education that is desperately needed in the trades. She can be reached at [sarah@alliancehvacs.com](mailto:sarah@alliancehvacs.com).

**MARTINE ZETTL**

Vice President and General Manager  
Turner Construction Company

Martine Zettle is vice president and general manager of the San Diego office of Turner Construction. Working with Turner for more than 17 years and on the owner/developer side for four years, Zettle is known for her operational excellence, leadership, ability to nurture strong internal and external relationships, and her expertise within the construction industry.

Relocating from Seattle to San Diego in early 2020 just as the pandemic emerged, Zettle successfully navigated a year of transition while exceeding the San Diego business unit's 2020 sales goals. In leading her new team through a challenging year, Zettle exemplified resilience, caring and tenacity.

Zettle is passionate about mentoring, coaching and elevating others. She serves on the board of directors of the Downtown San Diego Partnership and on UCSD's Athletic board. Zettle holds a bachelor of science in construction management and a bachelor of arts in architecture from the University of Washington. She can be reached at [mzettle@tcco.com](mailto:mzettle@tcco.com).