

# SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL CEO OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2021

## June 24, 2021

**Free Virtual Event • 2:00-3:30 pm**

The San Diego Business Journal is proud to honor the accomplishments of San Diego County's most impressive Chief Executive Officers. 2021 CEO of the Year Award categories are: Public Company - Large - Public - Medium - Private Company – Small Private Company - Medium - Private Company – Large Business Nonprofit - Nonprofit and Rising Star. We will unveil the winners and recognize all the finalists.

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD HONOREE



### JOE PANETTA

**PRESIDENT AND CEO,  
BIOCOM CALIFORNIA**

Since 1999, Joe Panetta has served as president and CEO of Biocom California, an association for life science companies and service providers. Panetta expanded Biocom's footprint beyond San Diego to include offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Tokyo, and Washington, D.C., and he established partnerships with AusBio in Australia and the city of Kobe, Japan. In 2018, Biocom California passed a milestone of 1,100 members in California. Panetta is a board member of the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corp.

### SPONSORS



**BERG HILL  
GREENLEAF RUSCITTI, LLC**



**CYMBIOTIKA**

**FCI FLUID COMPONENTS  
INTERNATIONAL LLC**

**FEEDING  
SAN DIEGO**

**HUB**

**motiv**  
Powered by eturi

**PRIDE  
INDUSTRIES**

**PNC BANK**

**RSM**

**ACG San Diego**  
Association for Corporate Growth

**NORTH SAN DIEGO  
BUSINESS CHAMBER**  
Chamber of Commerce

**CARLSBAD  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Corporate  
Directors Forum**

**SAN DIEGO  
REGIONAL  
EDC**

# SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

## CEO OF THE YEAR JUDGES

### — 2021 —



**MARK CAFFERTY**

President and CEO  
San Diego Regional Economic  
Development Corporation

As president and chief executive officer at San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, Mark Cafferty sits at the center of a unique collaboration of business, trade, community, and education leaders who have redefined the region's economic development strategy, cementing the region as a key stakeholder in the global economy. A Boston native, he earned his bachelor's in marketing and communications from Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts, and his advanced certification in Performance Measurement and Non-Profit Management from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He resides in San Diego's Point Loma neighborhood.



**DAVID H. CREAN**

President, ACG San Diego  
Managing Partner, Cardiff Advisory

David H. Crean is President of ACG San Diego and Managing Partner at Cardiff Advisory where he leads the firm's Mergers and acquisitions (M&A), corporate development, and valuation transactions with life science and healthcare companies. Dr. Crean holds FINRA Series 79 and Series 63 licenses and is a Registered Investment Banking Representative of BA Securities LLC, Member FINRA SIPC. Dr. Crean also serves on the Boards of Directors for Histogen, Inc. (Nasdaq: HSTO), California Life Sciences Association (CLSA), Association for Corporate Growth (ACG) San Diego, the Alzheimer's Association and Student Success Programs of the Charter School of San Diego.



**CHRISTINA de VACA**

Chief Executive Officer  
Corporate Directors Forum

Ms. de Vaca currently serves as CEO of the Corporate Directors Forum (CDF), an organization whose mission is "to help directors, and those who support them, build more effective boards through continuous education and peer-networking". Prior to this role, she was a CDF board member serving on the Executive Committee and chairing the organization's Programs Committee. Before joining CDF, she served as the Director of Corporate Relations and Business Development for the Graduate School of Business at the University of San Diego (USD), where she strengthened USD's School of Business relationships with the business community.



**ALAN PROHASKA**

Regional President and Head  
of Corporate Banking,  
PNC Bank, Greater San Diego

Alan Prohaska is regional president and head of Corporate Banking for PNC Bank in Greater San Diego. He is responsible for leading the overall growth of PNC in San Diego county, with a specific focus on Corporate Banking. Prohaska, who joined PNC in February 2021, brings nearly 20 years of banking experience to PNC, including his most recent role as San Diego middle market region manager at Wells Fargo. Prohaska has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California at Santa Barbara, and an M.B.A. in finance and organizational behavior from the Anderson School of Business at UCLA.



**BRET SCHANZENBACH**

President and CEO  
Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce

Bret Schanzenbach has served as the President and CEO of the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce since January, 2019. Schanzenbach, a native Californian and resident of San Diego's North County since 1971, came to the Carlsbad position from the Vista Chamber of Commerce where he served as CEO for 9 years. His corporate background before the Chamber was in residential real estate and the software industry. In 1992 he helped start Technical Difference, Inc., a human resources software company. Before venturing into the corporate world, Schanzenbach spent seven years as a youth minister. He earned his Master's in Theological Studies from the University of Dallas.



**DEBRA ROSEN**

President and  
Chief Executive Officer,  
North San Diego  
Business Chamber

Since assuming her position in 2009, Rosen has built the Chamber into a respected regional business organization, diversifying its programs, membership and Board of Directors. Rosen has aggressively advanced a competitive agenda that includes building strong chamber membership and advocacy for business, strengthening political relationships, developing a sustainable military program, and protecting business interests on a local and state level. She is credited with the turnaround of two underperforming nonprofit organizations, Rosen took the chamber out of debt and into being recognized as one of seven, 5-star US Chamber organizations in California.



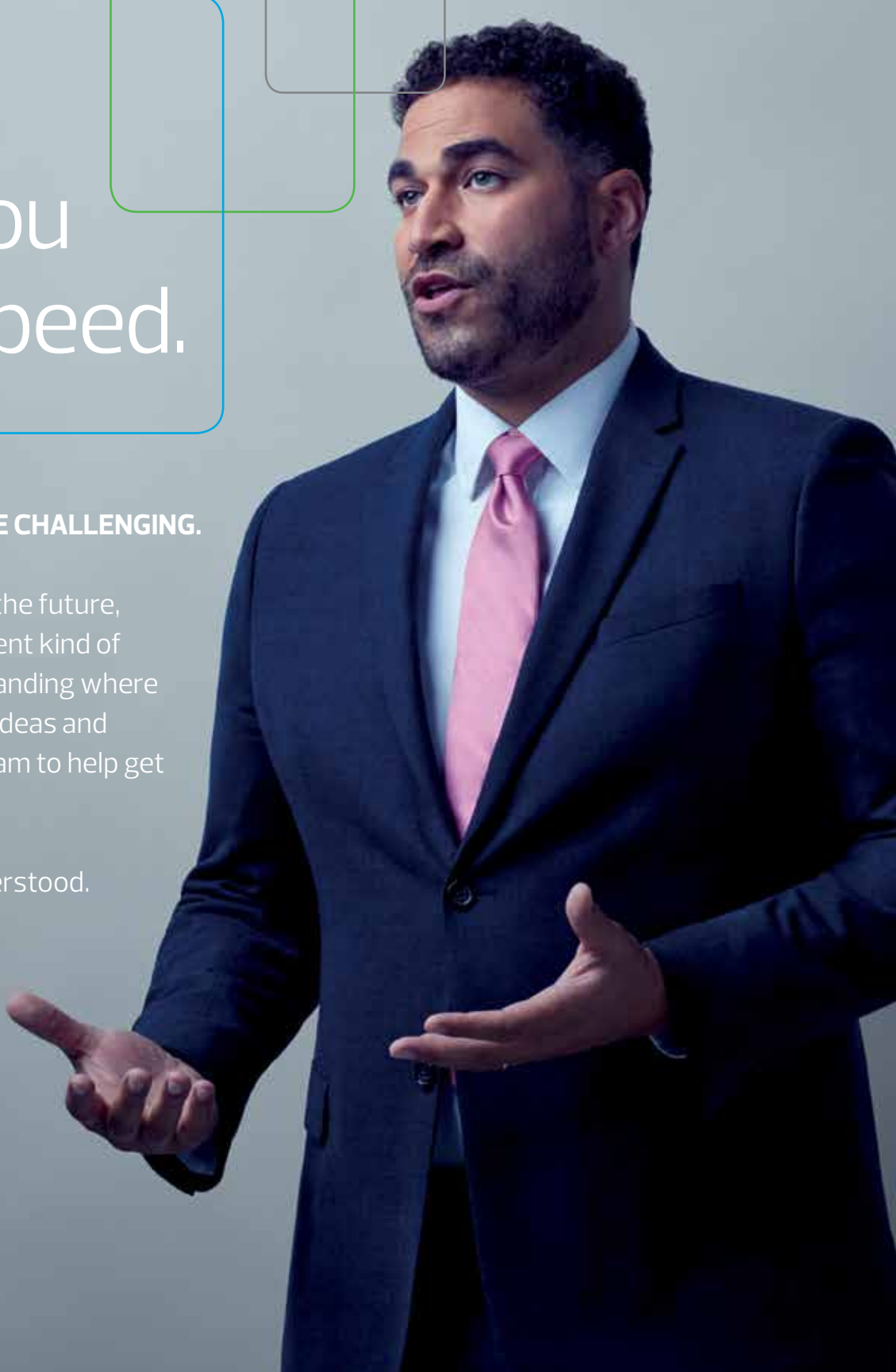
**JERRY VARGA**

Office Leader  
RSM US LLP

Jerry Varga is the Office Leader of RSM's San Diego office as well as the Assurance Practice Leader. He has over 25 years of experience providing audit and management advisory services to middle-market companies in the consumer products, technology and life sciences industries. In addition, Jerry works extensively with portfolio companies of private equity groups and early stage companies backed by venture capital firms. As the Office Leader, he is responsible for developing and executing strategy, driving growth and maintaining the office's dynamic culture.







# We're up to speed, so you can go full speed.

## SEE CHALLENGES BEFORE THEY'RE CHALLENGING.

To make confident decisions about the future, middle market leaders need a different kind of advisor. One who starts by understanding where you want to go and then brings the ideas and insights of an experienced global team to help get you there.

Experience the power of being understood.  
Experience RSM.

[rsmus.com](https://rsmus.com)

**THE POWER OF BEING UNDERSTOOD**  
AUDIT | TAX | CONSULTING



# CEO OF THE YEAR FINALISTS 2021



**Sayed Ali**  
Interpreters Unlimited, Inc.



**Stacey Anfuso**  
La Jolla Logic



**Lorens Attisha**  
Soapy Joe's Car Wash



**Elizabeth Banker**  
Shore Solutions, Inc.



**Cody Barbo**  
Trust & Will



**Ken Barnes**  
Options For All



**Jennifer Barnes**  
Optima Office



**Chris Barry**  
NuVasive



**Kimberly Becker**  
San Diego County  
Regional Airport Authority



**Christopher Bittner**  
obrARCHITECTURE Inc.



**Karie Boyd**  
Boyd Law APC



**Anahid Brakke**  
San Diego Hunger  
Coalition



## FINALIST CEO of the Year

### Congratulations Cheryl Wilson

Thank you for 31 years of leadership as President and Chief Executive Officer of St. Paul's Senior Services. We, the Board and employees of St. Paul's, are proud to serve with you.

StPaulsSeniors.org

1(833) STPAULS

St. Paul's Senior Services is a faith based San Diego non-profit. Founded in 1960.

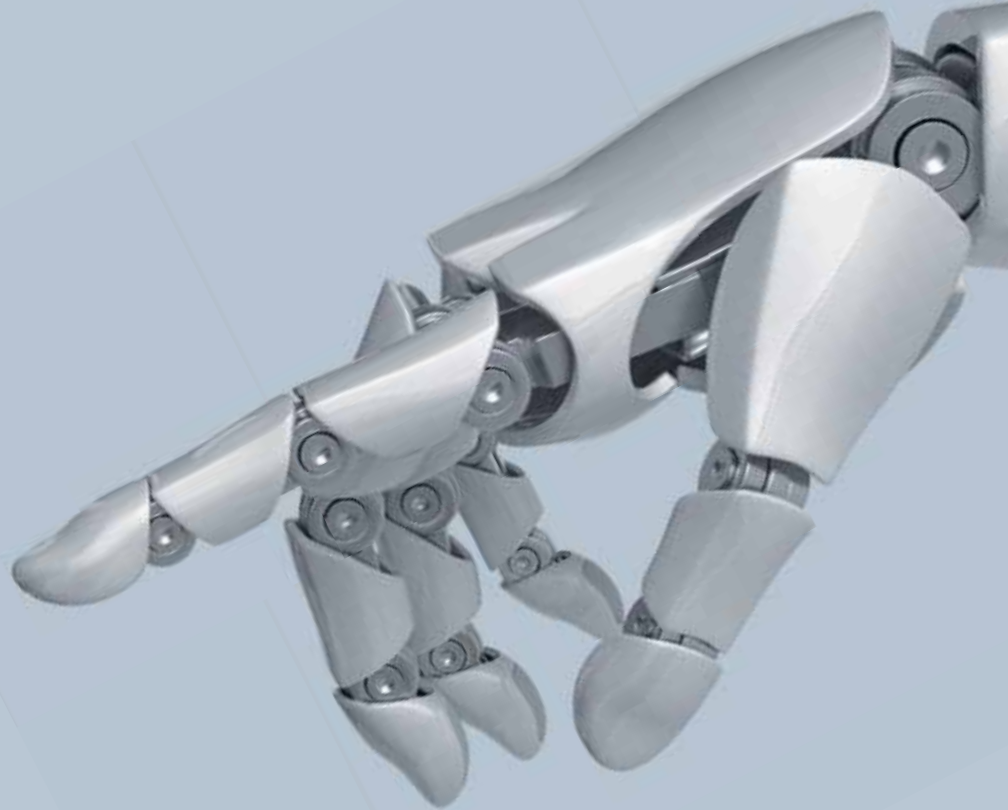
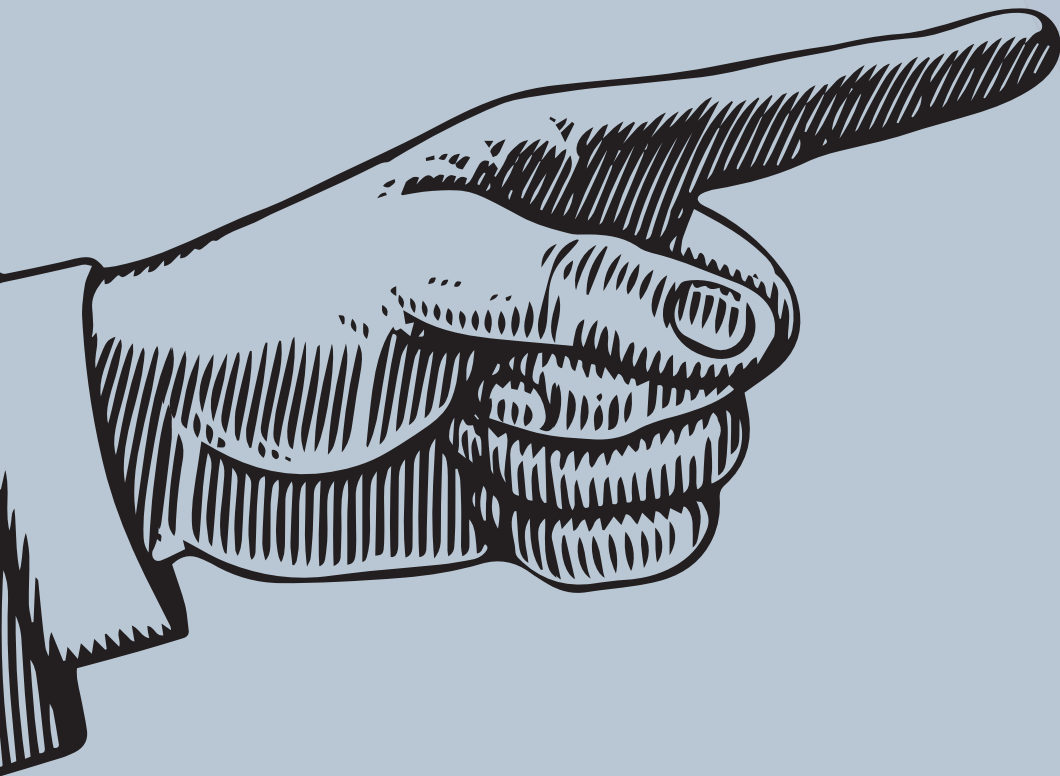




# Looking back

+

# Looking ahead



## = Innovative insights

At PNC, we understand the importance of looking at your business holistically. Our local, entrepreneurial teams put in the work to fully understand your industry sector in San Diego and beyond, and to understand your plans for your company's future. When we bring it all together, you get innovative insights and future-forward solutions that can help you implement your vision.

**For more information,** contact Alan Prohaska, Regional President, at [alan.prohaska@pnc.com](mailto:alan.prohaska@pnc.com).



**PNC BANK** | **CORPORATE & INSTITUTIONAL BANKING**

PNC and PNC Bank are registered marks of The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. ("PNC"). Bank deposit, lending and treasury management products and services, and investment and wealth management services are offered by PNC Bank, National Association, a wholly owned subsidiary of PNC and **Member FDIC**. Products and services may also be offered by or conducted through other subsidiaries of PNC.

**Investments: Not FDIC Insured. May Lose Value. No Bank Guarantee.**

©2021 The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. All rights reserved.  
CIB ENT PDF 0621-027-1848505

# CEO OF THE YEAR FINALISTS 2021



**Innesa Burrola**  
Boutique Recruiting



**Talisin Burton**  
Burton Restaurants, LLC



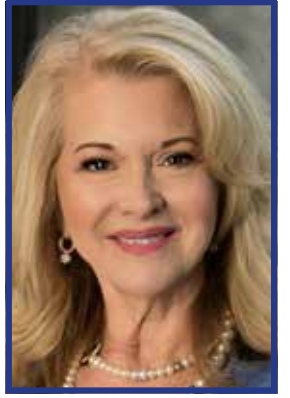
**Peter Callstrom**  
San Diego  
Workforce Partnership



**Teresa Campbell**  
San Diego County  
Credit Union



**Kelly Capen  
Douglas**  
Voices for Children



**Kimberlee  
Centera**  
TerraPro Solutions



**Jaye Connolly-  
LaBelle**  
RippleNami, Inc.



**Lou Cooperhouse**  
BlueNalu



**Juliet Correnti**  
Radeus Labs, Inc.



**Athena  
Countouriotis**  
Turning Point Therapeutics



**Win Cramer**  
JLab



**Tamara Craver**  
Reality Changers

*Congratulations*  
to

**LENNY  
LESZCZYNSKI**

CEO of the San Diego  
Automotive Museum  
for being named  
a finalist in the  
**San Diego Business Journal  
CEO Awards 2021**

**SAN DIEGO  
AUTOMOTIVE  
MUSEUM**

**SDAutoMuseum.org**

2080 Pan American Plaza | San Diego, CA 92101 | 619-231-2886







Motiv is the world's first mobile dashboard designed for business leaders of remote and hybrid teams. Motiv delivers key performance metrics and insights into the activity of teams and team leaders.

Learn more at [motivapp.com](https://motivapp.com) or download from App Store or Google Play Store



**2021  
CEO  
of The  
Year  
Finalist**

## OUR INNOVATIVE IDEAS COME FROM THE TOP



**CONGRATULATIONS  
AMIR MOUSSAVIAN  
ON BEING NAMED  
2021 CEO OF  
THE YEAR FINALIST**

# CEO OF THE YEAR FINALISTS 2021



**Anna Crowe**  
Crowe PR



**Michael Dallo**  
Dallo Law Group



**Robert Dean**  
Vista Hill Foundation



**Nickolas Del Pego**  
Deckard Technologies



**Maritza Diaz**  
ITJuana



**Steve Dietlin**  
Tri-City Medical Center



**Darrah DiGiorgio Johnson**  
Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest



**Steven Dinkin**  
National Conflict Resolution Center



**John Dobak**  
DermTech



**Shawnda Dorantes**  
Beauty Lounge Medical Spa



**Kelly DuFord Williams**  
Slate Law Group



**Shahab Elmi**  
Cymbiotika, LLC

*Congratulations to Just in Time for Foster Youth's  
Chief Empowerment Officer, Don Wells*

**Finalist in the San Diego Business Journal's  
2021 CEO of the Year Awards**



Because of Don's innovative leadership and belief in the extraordinary potential of every young person, thousands of transition age foster youth in San Diego have been empowered to become Confident, Capable, and Connected adults! He is a dedicated leader who fosters excellence in his employees, youth participants, and the community at large.



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







**MARSH & McLENNAN**  
**AGENCY**

## **Thank you** to our **CEO, Chris Williams.**

From leading us through a pandemic with a bright guiding light, to prioritizing continued flexibility and putting the needs of our colleagues first, we appreciate and celebrate you.

Congratulations on your nomination for CEO of the Year!

SCAN TO SEE HIS  
PASSION IN ACTION:



**MarshMMA.com**

BUSINESS INSURANCE  
EMPLOYEE HEALTH & BENEFITS  
EXECUTIVE BENEFITS  
PRIVATE CLIENT SERVICES  
RETIREMENT SERVICES  
RISK MANAGEMENT  
SURETY

It's our business  
to be there for you in the

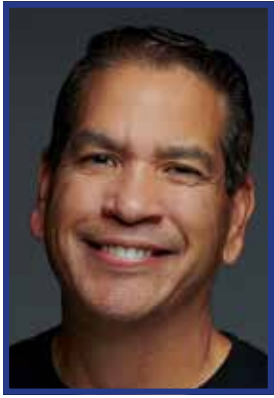
**MOMENTS  
THAT  
MATTER.**

CA Insurance Lic. 0H18131

SAN DIEGO | ORANGE COUNTY | LOS ANGELES | SAN FRANCISCO | WALNUT CREEK | MARSHMMA.COM



# CEO OF THE YEAR FINALISTS 2021



**Cesar Enciso**  
EVOTEK, Inc.



**Johan Engman**  
Rise & Shine  
Hospitality Group



**Mick Farrell**  
ResMed



**Bradley Feldmann**  
Cubic Corporation



**Sean Ferrel**  
Managed Solution



**Jonathan Gallagher**  
Coastal Payroll



**Nancy Gannon  
Hornberger**  
SAY San Diego



**Greg Garrabrants**  
Axos Financial, Inc. and  
Axos Bank



**Leslee Gaul**  
Visit Oceanside



**Tom Gilman**  
Biosero, Inc.



**Michelle D. Gonzalez**  
TrueCare



**Patrick Gough**  
PKL Services, Inc.



***Congratulations SBCS CEO Kathie Lembo,  
Finalist for San Diego Business Journal's  
2021 CEO of the Year***

This year, with Kathie Lembo at the helm, SBCS (formerly South Bay Community Services) stepped up to be the main contractor providing services to unaccompanied minors at the San Diego Convention Center, managed distribution of rental and utility assistance alongside the City of Chula Vista, and continued to respond to the community's evolving needs during the COVID-19 pandemic while maintaining their myriad of long-term programs. SBCS is celebrating its 50th year of service and is recognized locally and state-wide for its innovative, strengths-based approach to supporting the well-being and prosperity of children, youth and families. Learn more about SBCS' work to strengthen communities by visiting [SBCSsandiego.org](https://SBCSsandiego.org).



*C2K Congratulates*

**CHÉRI  
PIERRE**



**FINALIST**  
2021 SAN DIEGO  
BUSINESS JOURNAL

**CEO  
OF THE YEAR**



Since the start of the pandemic, C2K has distributed over 40,000 computers to kids in need and their families.

There are still thousands of children that will benefit from your donation of a computer, electronics or financial support.

**Computer 2 Kids is bridging the digital divide.**

**Please consider joining us in this endeavor and donate today!**



**[www.c2k.org](http://www.c2k.org)**





**Sandra Gramley**  
 Platt/Whitelaw  
 Architects, Inc.



**Neil Hattangadi**  
 Cortica, Inc.



**Jeff Hawkins**  
 Truvian Sciences



**Ben Hemminger**  
 Fashionphile



**Kimberly Herrell**  
 Schubach Aviation



**Spencer Hutchins**  
 Concert Health



**Michelle Jacko**  
 Jacko Law Group, PC



**Myron Jucha**  
 BJA Partners



**Bryan Knox**  
 Catalent Pharma Solutions



**Grayson Lafrenz**  
 Power Digital Marketing



**Kent Lee**  
 Pacific Arts Movement



**Kathryn Lembo**  
 SBCS

**Father Joe's Villages**   
 Congratulations to all the  
 Winners and Finalists!

“There is no greater blessing than  
 serving the San Diego community  
 and helping our neighbors in need  
 improve their lives.”

**Deacon Jim Vargas**  
 President & CEO  
 San Diego Business Journal  
 2021 CEO of the Year Finalist





# SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

 CYMBIOTIKA



Shahab Elmi  
*CEO of Cymbiotika*

## CONGRATULATIONS

*2021 CEO OF THE YEAR FINALIST*

## — SHAHAB ELMI —



# CEO OF THE YEAR FINALISTS 2021



**Bob Leone**  
MRC Smart  
Technology Solutions



**Lenny Leszczynski**  
San Diego Automotive  
Museum



**Brooke LeVasseur**  
AristaMD



**Scott Lewis**  
Voice of San Diego



**John Lincoln**  
Ignite Visibility



**Nancy Maldonado**  
The Chicano Federation



**Neal McFarlane**  
McFarlane Architects



**Dan McQueen**  
Fluid Components  
International LLC



**Chris Megison**  
Solutions for Change



**Ric Militi**  
InnoVision Marketing  
Group



**Joe Monaco**  
Dudek



**Jeremy Moore**  
Jon Renau



*Kevin Thornal, President  
Diagnostic Solutions Division*



## Congratulations to Kevin Thornal,

President of our Diagnostic Solutions Division,  
for nomination as a finalist in the 2021 San  
Diego Business Journal CEO of the Year Award.

Kevin led Hologic to the forefront of the global  
COVID-19 response, developing and supplying  
more than 100 million molecular diagnostic tests.

“It is a great honor to be nominated for  
the CEO of the Year Award, and I am so proud  
of our teams at Hologic for all of the hard work  
that they do and especially their tremendous  
efforts this past year to get us beyond  
the pandemic.”





# Congratulations Nancy Maldonado Chicano Federation



“ On behalf of the entire Chicano Federation team, we'd like to congratulate our CEO on being a finalist for the SDBJ's CEO if the Year! Nancy is a motivational and inspiring leader who has fearlessly led us through a challenging year and has never waived when it comes to advocating for our community and always putting #CommunityFirst. Felicitades Jefa! ”



The Chicano  
Federation

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

CEO OF THE YEAR  
AWARDS  
— 2021 —  
FINALISTS



# CEO OF THE YEAR FINALISTS 2021



**Brian Morales**  
Pro-Cal Lighting, Inc.



**Amir Moussavian**  
Eturi Corp



**Molly Nocon**  
Noah Homes



**Keith Olmo**  
Jan Pro of San Diego



**Trevor Outman**  
Shipware LLC



**Jason Paguio**  
Asian Business  
Association San Diego



**Chip Parker**  
LabX Ventures



**Lisa Paul-Hill**  
Wheelhouse Credit Union



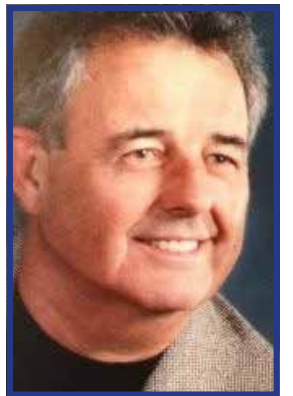
**Walter Philips**  
San Diego Youth Services



**Cheri Pierre**  
Computers 2 Kids



**Victor Ramsauer**  
Levitzacks, Certified  
Public Accountants



**John Reynolds**  
Jon Renau

**Congrats to our passionate leader  
STEPHEN RUSSELL!**



*"I want to live in a community that is free of fear, where families and individuals can be their best selves. I can't solve it all, but having housing is the most basic foundation in life for folks to thrive. ... I feel in my heart that it is my duty to do what I can with my position and skills to make the situation better."* –

*Stephen Russell, President and CEO*



**Congratulations to  
Kim Becker**



President & CEO, San Diego County Regional Airport Authority







# Congratulates



**The Asian Business Association's  
President & CEO**

**Jason  
Paguio**

for  
being a finalist in the  
**San Diego Business  
Journal's 2021 CEO  
of the Year Awards!**



**Asian Business Association San Diego**

7675 Dagget St #340  
San Diego, CA 92111  
**[www.abasd.org](http://www.abasd.org)**

# CEO OF THE YEAR FINALISTS 2021



**Nathan Rogge**

Bank of Southern  
California



**Tina Rose**

Big Brothers Big Sisters  
of San Diego County



**Mia Roseberry**

Wounded Warrior  
Homes



**Stephen Russell**

San Diego Housing  
Federation



**Scott Sabin**

Plant With Purpose



**Nancy Sasaki**

United Way of San  
Diego County



**Elizabeth Schott**

Accessity, formerly  
Accion San Diego



**Mark Schulze**

Crystal Pyramid Inc.



**Ronson Shamoun**

RJS LAW



**Juergen Stark**

Turtle Beach  
Corporation



**Seth Stein**

Eastridge Workforce  
Solutions



**Laura  
Tancredi-Baesee**

Home Start, Inc.

## Congrats to SAY San Diego's CEO Nancy Gannon Hornberger!



Everyday Nancy champions SAY San Diego's vision of opportunity, equity and well-being for all. Honoring Nancy this year is particularly special as SAY San Diego celebrates 50 years of partnership and service in 2021! Cheers to Nancy and many more years of SAY San Diego partnering with youth, adults, families and communities to reach their full potential.



To connect or learn more about Social Advocates for Youth, San Diego Inc. please visit [www.saysandiego.org](http://www.saysandiego.org).

## VISTA HILL Congratulates



SDBJ CEO  
of the Year Finalist  
**Robert Dean**  
President and CEO

WITH  
50+ Years  
of Service  
to Vista Hill!

"It has been a privilege to work alongside such a dedicated group of employees who share my passion for delivering the highest level of behavioral health services to the San Diego Community. Together we are creating stronger families and brighter futures. I am honored to be recognized among such a stellar cohort of nonprofit CEOs."

*Rob Dean*

[www.vistahill.org](http://www.vistahill.org)





Accessity, formerly Accion San Diego, congratulates all the finalists for their contributions to San Diego's community and our CEO, Elizabeth Schott is honored to be among this amazing group.



For 27 years, Accessity has served San Diego small businesses with access to loans from \$300 to \$100,000 and a community of support and education.

Visit our new website at  
**accessity.org**  
and support local businesses!





# CEO OF THE YEAR FINALISTS 2021



**Stuart Tanz**  
ROIC



**Kevin Thornal**  
Hologic, Inc.



**Tonya Torosian**  
Promises2Kids



**Deacon Jim Vargas**  
Father Joe's Villages



**Chris Wahl**  
Southwest Strategies



**David Wellis**  
San Diego Blood Bank



**Don Wells**  
Just in Time for Foster Youth



**Chris Williams**  
Marsh & McLennan Agency



**Cheryl Wilson**  
St. Paul's Senior Services



**Doug Winter**  
Seismic



**Oren Zaslansky**  
Flock Freight



**Peter Zien**  
AleSmith Brewing Company



**SOLUTIONS FOR CHANGE**

Thank you Solutions for Change CEO and Co-Founder, Chris Megison for believing in us, fighting for us, and showing us we are WORTH IT. When the least of us become the best of us, #WeAreOneUs!



Love,  
The Families of  
Solutions for Change



**Join the Fight!**

722 W CALIFORNIA AVE, VISTA, CA 92083  
760-941-6545 • SOLUTIONSFORCHANGE.ORG



## CONGRATULATIONS TO PROMISES2KIDS CEO TONYA TOROSIAN!

Tonya has been selected as a finalist for CEO of the Year 2021! She is committed to *creating a brighter future for foster children®* and is a leader who inspires community members to join Promises2Kids' efforts in providing hope, support and opportunities to San Diego foster children.

"I am a Promise Maker because every child deserves to be safe, feel wanted and loved."

Tonya Torosian  
Chief Executive Officer



PROMISES2KIDS

40th Anniversary

www.promises2kids.org | (858) 278-4400 | info@promises2kids.org







# Congratulations

to Dan McQueen and all of  
the winners and finalists!

Based in San Marcos in north coastal San Diego County, FCI's history of technological innovation, commitment to global customers, community, and the support of exceptionally skilled and dedicated employees have allowed the company to thrive for the past 55 years.

We congratulate our CEO/President Dan McQueen as a finalist for the *San Diego Business Journal's* 2021 CEO of the Year Award.

**FCI** FLUID COMPONENTS  
INTERNATIONAL LLC



*Fluid Components International (FCI) designs and manufactures thermal mass flow meters, flow switches and level switches for industrial process measurement applications.*

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

## CEO OF THE YEAR FINALIST



KELLY DUFORD  
WILLIAMS

Slate Law Group congratulates founder and managing partner Kelly DuFord Williams for being one of the finalist for CEO of the year. You truly are the most hard working woman with the biggest heart. We appreciate and celebrate you!





# Convention

➔ from page 1

through 5 with an estimated attendance of 3,000 and AKC Meet the Breeds, August 14 through 15 with an estimated attendance of 7,000 to 10,000," he said. "The San Diego Convention Center serves as an economic driver for our region. We help drive business to local retailers, attractions, special event venues, hotels, bars, restaurants and more. The employees that work at our neighboring businesses are able to take their income and reinvest it throughout the County of San Diego, further benefiting the community."

Other notable upcoming events include, but are not limited to: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (August 31-September 3); The American Society of Anesthesiologists (October 8-October 12); American Society of Nephrology (November 4-November 7); National Association of Realtors (November 12-November 15); and Comic-Con (Special Edition Event, November 26-November 28).

## Short-Term Housing

During the fiscal year July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, the San Diego Convention Center Corporation couldn't host any events due to the coronavirus crisis and subsequent state restrictions. As a result, it estimated a lost regional economic impact of \$1.58 billion.

So, the San Diego Convention Center shifted its focus, said Rippetoe.

"Before the start of the pandemic, we predicted we would have a record-setting economic impact in our region in 2020. Then the pandemic began, conventions began cancelling and a ban on gatherings went into effect," he said. "In less than a month, we prepared our facility to support Operation Shelter to Home, a city-led effort to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 among individuals experiencing homelessness in San Diego. Between April 2020 and March 2021, the operation served over 4,000 individuals and helped over 1,300 individuals and 43 families find permanent or longer-term housing."



**Clifford "Rip" Rippetoe**  
President/CEO  
San Diego Convention  
Center Corporation

## Immigrant Children

As the last of the homeless residents moved into longer-term housing and as events continued to get canceled through July due to ongoing restrictions in California, public officials called on the Convention Center to meet yet another emergency need, said Rippetoe.

This time, it was to house immigrant children as they waited to be reunited with family or sponsors in the United States. Since then, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement has been using space within the Convention Center building for this effort, he said. Plans are to close the operation by July 15, said Rippetoe, giving the Convention Center staff enough time to clean and transition the building before events resume Aug. 1.

## Vaccinated Onsite

To prepare for reopening, The San Diego Convention Center has been working

closely with city, county and federal public health officials to enhance cleaning, disinfection and infectious disease prevention as well as conduct extensive employee training.

To encourage employees and partners to get vaccinated, the San Diego Convention Center held a series of educational "virtual town hall" meetings with county public health leaders about the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, said Rippetoe. The venue also offered multiple opportunities for staff members to be vaccinated onsite, he added.

Also in anticipation, the San Diego Convention Center recently hired a new executive chef for **Centerplate**, its food and beverage partner. **Sufi Karaen** previously served as its senior executive sous chef and will begin in his new role this month.

"I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to step into this leadership position and continue to develop new and creative approaches to catered experiences" upon reopening, said Karaen.



**Sufi Karaen**  
Executive Chef  
CenterPlate

## Steady Increase in 2022

Rippetoe and his team are motivated to welcome guests back into the building and hopeful the San Diego Convention Center will continue to significantly impact the local economy.

"When comparing our projected operating revenue for FY22 to pre-pandemic years, averaging the revenue from fiscal years 2017 to 2019, we expect it to

“

**"The San Diego Convention Center serves as an economic driver for our region. We help drive business to local retailers, attractions, special event venues, hotels, bars, restaurants and more. The employees that work at our neighboring businesses are able to take their income and reinvest it throughout the County of San Diego, further benefiting the community."**

CLIFFORD "RIP" RIPPETOE

be down approximately 44%," said Rippetoe. "Our operating revenue primarily includes building rent, food and beverage, and ancillary services for events such as A/V. We project this revenue to steadily increase in 2022 and future years as international travel returns and attendee confidence builds." ■

## San Diego Convention Center Corporation



**FOUNDED:** Center opened in 1989  
**PRESIDENT/CEO:** Clifford "Rip" Rippetoe  
**HEADQUARTERS:** Downtown San Diego  
**BUSINESS:** Meetings and convention center  
**REVENUE:** FY20 \$31.4M  
**EMPLOYEES:** 312  
**WEBSITE:** [www.visitsandiego.com](http://www.visitsandiego.com)  
**NOTABLE:** Economic impact of \$977.4M in FY20  
**CONTACT:** [Maren.Dougherty@VisitSanDiego.com](mailto:Maren.Dougherty@VisitSanDiego.com)

# CONGRATULATIONS!



## LISA PAUL-HILL

President & CEO  
Wheelhouse Credit Union

**Finalist**  
**2021 CEO of the Year**

**Lisa Paul-Hill** grew up in Encinitas and graduated from the University of San Diego. As a native, she has always sought to positively impact our community. Lisa exemplifies the credit union principle of *people helping people*, and through the 2020 pandemic, played an integral role in helping hundreds of San Diego small businesses prevail.

**Founded in 1934**, Wheelhouse has been serving those who live and work in our community with a full suite of financial services. Best known for being **San Diego's #1 Solar Loan Financer**.



Wheelhouse Credit Union is formerly known as San Diego Metropolitan Credit Union and is open to all San Diegans.

# Congratulations!

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

**2021**

**CEO OF THE  
YEAR  
FINALIST**

**STUART TANZ**



[WWW.ROIREIT.NET](http://WWW.ROIREIT.NET)

Retail Opportunity Investments Corp. (NASDAQ: ROIC), is a fully-integrated, self-managed real estate investment trust (REIT) that specializes in the acquisition, ownership and management of grocery-anchored shopping centers located in densely-populated, metropolitan markets across the West Coast.