

# SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

# BUSINESS WOMEN

of the year awards **2021**

# FINALISTS

## THANK YOU TO OUR JUDGES AND SPONSORS



**KIMBERLY BECKER**  
President & CEO  
San Diego County  
Regional Airport Authority



**BETSY BRENNAN**  
President & CEO  
Downtown San Diego  
Partnership



**CHRIS BRYANT**  
Former President & CEO  
San Diego Employers Association  
(Retired)



**THERESA CLEMENTS**  
Treasury Solutions Sales Group  
Executive - Executive Director  
J.P. Morgan



**DONNA DEBERRY**  
CEO  
Central San Diego Black  
Chamber of Commerce



**LISA EASTERLY**  
President & CEO  
Cyber Center of Excellence



**LIDIA S. MARTINEZ**  
Partner  
¡Adelante! Strategies



**NANCY ROHLAND-HEINRICH**  
Vice Chancellor, Communications  
and Community Engagement  
National University System

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Women on the Move is JPMorgan Chase's commitment to fuel female ambition and advance financial equality.

Today, with women making up half of our global workforce and represented at every level of our organization, we are building on our success and reaching externally to expand our commitment to empower all women.

JPMorgan Chase proudly stands with the San Diego Business Journal as we celebrate a group of extraordinary businesswomen and leaders.

Learn more: [jpmorganchase.com/WOTM](https://jpmorganchase.com/WOTM)



JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

**Women on the Move**



# BUSINESS WOMEN

of the year awards 2021

## FINALISTS



**ALISON  
ALPERT**

Partner  
Best Best & Krieger LLP



**STACEY  
ANFUSO**

CEO/ President  
La Jolla Logic



**JENNIFER  
ARNOLD**

Senior Associate  
Wilson Turner Kosmo



**ASHLYNN  
BALL**

Partner  
RBTK, LLP



**ELIZABETH  
BANKER**

President/CEO  
Shore Solutions Inc.



**JENNIFER  
BARNES**

CEO  
Optima Office



**TAMELA  
BARNHART-REESE**

President  
Barnhart-Reese Construction



**DEVON  
BARRACK**

Small Business Banking  
Group Manager  
Union Bank



**ANNALISA  
BARRETT**

Senior Advisor  
KPMG Board  
Leadership Center



**VALERY  
BELLOSO**

Director of Strategic  
Initiatives  
Accessity

The C2K Board of Directors and staff congratulates

# Chéri Pierre

COMPUTERS 2 KIDS CEO

For being selected as a finalist for the  
**San Diego Business Journal**  
**Business Women of the Year Award 2021**

Congratulations to all the finalists and a big thank you  
to Chéri for the amazing work she has done, leading  
Computers 2 Kids towards its pledge:  
**Ending the disparity of access to technology.**





CONGRATULATIONS TO FINALIST

# Selina Scott

Director of Outside Plant Construction

You have long been a powerful role model for women interested in pursuing a career in STEM. You are the epitome of a strong, dynamic woman in business. We are inspired by your leadership, commitment to connecting our communities, and paving the way for others.

**Congratulations to you and all of the 2021 finalists for Business Women of the Year!**



## Dynamic Business Woman

### Giving birth to new San Diego birthing center

It might seem counterintuitive to open a customer-facing business during a pandemic, but for midwife Nikki Helms, January 2021 was as good a time as any. After all, no catastrophe can stop the miracle of babies being born. And with Cox Business's phone and internet solutions in place, Helms was able to realize her dream of opening the San Diego Community Birth Center.

In the late 2000s, Helms began researching the disparities and outcomes for women of color, particularly those for Black women, in hospitals and birthing centers. Helms, a Black woman herself, had firsthand experience.

"I wanted to change those statistics. I wanted to have a greater impact," Helms said.

She spent seven years as a practicing doula—an emotional and physical support person for pregnant women—before deciding she wanted to be a clinical practitioner. In 2010, she enrolled in the Nizhoni Institute of Midwifery. She completed the rigorous three-year program and concurrent five-year apprenticeship while raising her girls and working full time.

Today, Helms is one of only a handful of Black midwives in San Diego County.

It wasn't an easy journey to get the keys to

her new Bankers Hill clinic—and the pandemic changed her timeline—but Helms was determined to create an option for any woman seeking an alternative to the hospital birthing experience.

Thanks to a GoFundMe campaign, Helms raised nearly \$150,000, which she used to lease and revamp her space. She hired a Black woman contractor to install flooring, and with the help of friends, Helms painted the walls and made upgrades, creating a modern Zen environment for expectant women and their partners. On Jan. 5, 2021, she opened the doors to the only Black-owned birth center in San Diego.

Of course, part of getting her business up and running meant utilizing the right technology to best meet the needs of her customers and community, so she had Cox install internet and phone services.

Thanks to her Cox Business internet connection and a few tutorials from Cox technicians, Helms has been able to meet with patients via video-conferencing when needed, which has been critical to her business during the pandemic. She also regularly lectures and teaches monthly classes via live video to the community.

With the technology support from Cox Business,



the San Diego Community Birth Center is serving a broad community of new and soon-to-be parents—and all the babies now being born at the facility. Along with her former mentor, certified midwife Darynée Blount—as well as an acupuncturist, several employees and three students—Helms is gearing up for a baby boom.

While the entire team is comprised of women of color, Helms stresses that the San Diego Community Birth Center is open to all.

"We serve anyone who walks through the door, and we make our services accessible to everyone who needs them," Helms said.



# BUSINESS WOMEN

of the year awards 2021

## FINALISTS



**GINNY BENEKE**

Chairmen and President

Chairmen's Roundtable



**VANESSA BENITEZ**

Regional Vice President

Word & Brown



**CARRIE BOBB**

CEO

Carrie Bobb & Co., hellojenny & Carrie Bobb Foundation



**BROOKE BOONE KELLY**

Wealth Management Advisor

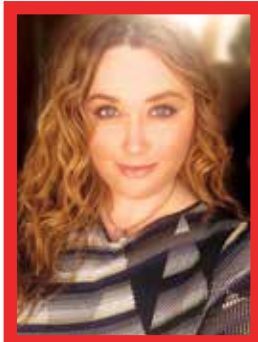
Weatherly Asset Management, LP



**KAILYNN BOWLING**

CEO/Co-Founder

ChicExecs PR & Retail Strategy Firm



**KARIE BOYD**

Owner, CEO, Lead Trial Attorney

Boyd Law APC



**JANICE BROWN**

Principal (Partner)

Meyers Nave



**JULIE BROWN**

President

SDI Staffing



**KRISTIE BRUCE-LANE**

President / Founder

The Thumbprint Project Foundation



**AMY BULGATZ**

President & Chief Financial Officer

Sammy's Woodfired Pizza



*congratulations*  
**Haneen Khater**  
Principal Architect at DBRDS







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# BUSINESS WOMEN

of the year awards 2021

## FINALISTS



**KAREN BURGES**

Chief Operating Officer  
& Executive Director  
NAIOP San Diego



**INNESSA BURROLA**

President  
Boutique Recruiting



**BARBRA CALANTAS**

Vice President/Biology Director/  
San Diego Office Lead  
Environmental Science Associates



**TERESA CAMPBELL**

President & CEO  
San Diego County  
Credit Union



**KELLY CAPEN DOUGLAS**

President and CEO  
Voices for Children



**NIKKI CARLSON**

CEO/Co-Founder  
ChicExecs PR & Retail  
Strategy Firm



**MARY CHEEKS**

President & General  
Manager  
Jamul Casino



**JENNIFER CRAWFORD**

Associate Partner |  
Business Development  
Syska Hennessy Group



**ANNA CROWE**

CEO and Founder  
Crowe PR



**LISA DAIGLE**

CFO  
Neighborhood  
Healthcare

## Congratulations, MARGIE NEWMAN!

Thank you for your  
encouragement, thoughtful  
leadership and infectious spirit.  
Every day you inspire us to  
communicate with confidence.



**Margie Newman**

Intesa Communications Group  
Founding Partner  
San Diego Business Journal  
Business Women of the Year  
Finalist 2021

Public Relations  
Government Affairs  
[intesacom.com](https://www.intesacom.com)

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**intesa**



# SAN DIEGO <sup>HAS THE</sup> SECOND LOWEST

## FEMALE PARTICIPATION

In the Labor Force Among  
Major American Cities,<sup>+</sup>  
Disproportionately  
Affecting Moms

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\*TOOTRIS provides Child Care as a Benefit Solutions based on a monthly subscription fee agreement per participating employee, not including, employer-subsidized contribution(s) which TOOTRIS shall manage turn-key. | +Workforce Partnership analysis of Census' 2017 5-year ACS data, [childcare.workforce.org](https://childcare.workforce.org) | 2021 TOOTRIS, San Diego, CA.





# BUSINESS WOMEN

of the year awards 2021

## FINALISTS



**SARAH DAVIS**

Founder, President and Chief Creative Officer  
**FASHIONPHILE**



**CHANDARA DIEP**

Of Counsel  
**RJS LAW**



**ERIN DIMRY**

Chief Marketing and Business Development Officer  
**DLA Piper**



**SHAWNDA DORANTES**

FNP-C, MSN and Founder  
**Beauty Lounge Medical Spa**



**DEBORAH ELLIOTT**

Founding Principal  
**ID Studios, Inc.**



**DURANA ELMİ**

COO  
**Cymbiotika, LLC**



**DEBBIE ESCOBEDO**

President and CEO  
**Balboa Thrift and Loan**



**LAURIE FISHER**

Founder and CEO  
**LMA Marketing and Advertising**



**MYRA CHACK FLEISCHER**

Lead Counsel & Founder  
**Fleischer & Ravreby**



**MICHELLE FLORES-GONZALES**

Chief Operating Officer / VP  
**Flores**



Options For All (OFA) proudly celebrates Melissa Malone-Montgomery's selection as a finalist for Business Woman of the Year.



This dynamic member of OFA's executive leadership team is also a successful entrepreneur, a working mother, and a generous community volunteer. Melissa's driving philosophy as a business leader places people at the center of operations – and empowers them to do their best. Under her steady guidance, every OFA employee knows their role is critical to our mission of better serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout California.



## Celebrating leaders in the community

In every community, there are leaders who set the course for positive change through their vision and guidance. Their work not only supports local needs, but inspires others to do the same .

**SDBJ Business Women of the Year nominees, we celebrate your achievements.**

**wellsfargo.com**



**BUSINESS  
WOMEN**  
of the year awards **2021**  
**FINALISTS**



**PAMELA  
GARDNER**  
President and CEO  
Biotech Vendor  
Services, Inc.



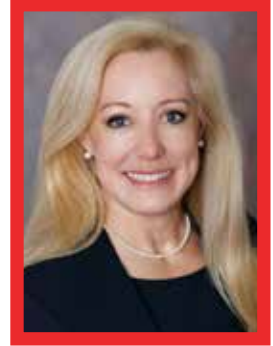
**STEFFI  
GASCÓN HAFÉN**  
Partner  
Snell & Wilmer



**MICHELLE  
GONZALEZ**  
President and CEO  
TrueCare



**JODIE  
GRENIER**  
CEO  
Foundation for Women  
Warriors



**DIANE  
HANSEN**  
CEO  
Palomar Health



**ELIZABETH  
HAWKINS**  
Operations Manager  
Swinerton



**MOLLY  
HE**  
CEO  
Element Biosciences



**LISA  
HELLMANN**  
Senior Vice President, Human  
Resources and Corporate  
Communications  
Hologic



**HEATHER  
HERNANDEZ**  
Director  
CBIZ & MHM



**KIMBERLY  
HERRELL**  
Owner and CEO  
Schubach Aviation

# BUSINESS WOMEN OF THE YEAR FINALIST

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

**BUSINESS  
WOMEN**  
of the year awards **2021**  
**FINALIST**

## KELLY DUFORD WILLIAMS

Slate Law Group congratulates our founder and managing partner Kelly DuFord Williams on being a SDBJ Business Women of the Year finalist! Thank you for your leadership and we are so proud of all you have accomplished!





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**Kathleen Medina, CFTA**

Vice President, Sr. Trust Officer  
[kathleen.medina@unionbank.com](mailto:kathleen.medina@unionbank.com)

**Christiane Tsuda**

Vice President, Sr. Portfolio Manager  
[christiane.tsuda@unionbank.com](mailto:christiane.tsuda@unionbank.com)

**Negin Banaei**

Vice President, Private Wealth Advisor II  
[negin.banaei@unionbank.com](mailto:negin.banaei@unionbank.com)  
NMLS ID #755484



Wills, trusts, foundations, and wealth planning strategies have legal, tax, accounting, and other implications. Clients should consult a legal or tax advisor.

Union Bank does not create estate plans. Estate plans should be reviewed by an attorney who specializes in estate planning and is licensed to practice law in a client's state.



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# BUSINESS WOMEN

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## FINALISTS



**TINA  
HOWE**

Vice President  
Bill Howe Family  
of Companies



**SARA  
HOWLAND**

President  
BJA Partners



**SHARON  
HUERTA**

Shareholder  
Sullivan Hill Rez &  
Engel



**ANGELA  
HUSKEY**

SVP & Chief Clinical Officer  
Millennium Health



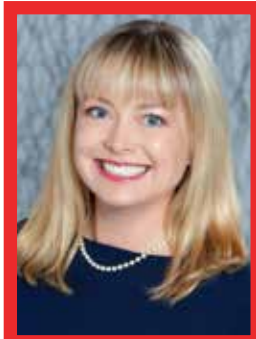
**ZEYNEP  
ILGAZ**

Co-Founder and Chief  
Advisor  
Confirm Biosciences



**MICHELLE  
L. JACKO**

Founder and Managing  
Partner  
Jacko Law Group, PC



**LAURA  
JOSH**

Area President  
Gallagher Benefits  
Services



**HANEEN  
KHATER**

Partner + Principal  
Architect  
DBRDS



**COURTNEY  
KING**

Co-Founder  
Orchyd



**BARBARA A.  
KROL, PHR**

Chief Human Resources Officer  
California Coast Credit Union

## Congratulations Michelle D. Gonzalez, MPA

President & CEO of TrueCare

2021 Business Women of the Year  
Award Finalist

We applaud Michelle for her visionary and heartfelt leadership at TrueCare. Thank you for your dedication, passion and extraordinary contributions to our organization, patients and community.



**BILL HOWE**

FAMILY OF COMPANIES

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## Congratulations **TINA HOWE**

V.P. Bill Howe Family of Companies  
2021 Business Woman of the Year Finalist

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL



**Congratulations Tina Howe for being selected as a  
2021 Business Women of the Year Finalist!  
We are so proud and inspired by your leadership  
and contributions to the company  
and San Diego community.**

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# BUSINESS WOMEN

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## FINALISTS



**LINDA KUROKAWA**

Executive Director, Community Education & Workforce Development  
MiraCosta College



**VICTORIA LAKERS**

Partner  
Calibre One



**MONIQUE LASHBROOK**

Partner  
Snell & Wilmer



**ANGELA LEAVITT**

Founder & CEO  
Mojenta



**BROOKE LEVASSEUR**

CEO  
AristaMD



**KRISTEN LINEHAN**

Vice President, Global Professional Services  
Seismic



**JENNA LYNCH**

VP of People and Culture  
Artemis Institute for Clinical Research



**FELICIA LYON**

Partner  
KPMG LLP



**MELISSA MALONE-MONTGOMERY**

Vice President of Human Resources  
Options For All



**KRISTIN MARTIN**

Chief People & Administration Officer  
Poseida Therapeutics



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“

“I founded WithHealth, Inc. in 2017 to make healthcare affordable, proactive, and accessible. We deliver on the promise of precision care and are focused on improving employee health and employer outcomes. Congratulations to all the finalists, it is an honor to be recognized alongside these amazing women. I want to thank all of the WithHealth employees and the WithHealth Medical Group for making this vision a reality, and *San Diego Business Journal* for this recognition.”

- **Cindy Salas Murphy**  
Founder & CEO, WithHealth



# Congratulations

## Mary Cheeks

PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER, JAMUL CASINO

**2021 BUSINESS WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD FINALIST  
SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL**

The Jamul Indian Village of California is proud to Congratulate the President and General Manager of Jamul Casino for yet another honor. We applaud her bold and steady leadership during her tenure and are pleased to see her work appreciated by the wider business community with this prestigious nomination. Thank you Mary!



jamulindianvillage.com  
14191 Highway 94, Jamul, CA 91935





# BUSINESS WOMEN

of the year awards 2021

## FINALISTS



**KARA MATHIS**

Director, Investments  
Longfellow Real Estate Partners



**TRICIA MERCER**

SVP Employee Relations  
Sentek Global



**MICHELLE METTER**

Partner & Co-Founder  
Fast Forward Events & PR



**SHARI MILLER**

Registered Principal/Financial Advisor  
Symbio Financial Partners/  
LPL Financial



**AMY MORWAY**

Founding Principal  
ID Studios, Inc.



**TRACY MURPHY**

President  
IQHQ



**DANIELLE MYERS**

Partner  
Robbins Geller  
Rudman & Dowd LLP



**VATSALA NAAGESHWARAN, M.A., M.S.**

Vice President Operations  
and Business Development  
Absorption Systems



**SARA NEVA**

Real Estate Attorney  
Procopio



**MARGIE NEWMAN**

Founding Partner  
Intesa Communications  
Group

## Congratulations Devon Barrack

Union Bank® celebrates Devon Barrack for being selected as a 2021 Business Women of the Year finalist. She is an exceptional leader and an inspiration to all of us at Union Bank.

Congratulations and thank you to Devon and all the extraordinary honorees for their outstanding commitment and contributions to the San Diego community.



**Devon Barrack**

Small Business Banking Group Manager





# Congratulations

to our President and CEO Diane Hansen! Your leadership is inspiring and we are honored to support you in your nomination as Business Woman of the Year.

*- Your Team*





# BUSINESS WOMEN

of the year awards 2021

## FINALISTS



**KRISTIN NORBY**

Senior Vice President -  
Financial Advisor, Portfolio  
Management Director

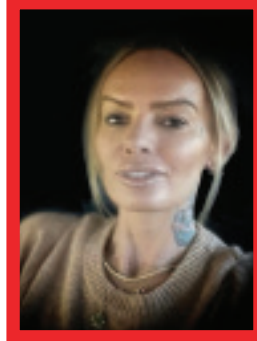
Morgan Stanley Wealth Management



**HARRIET  
OBERMAN**

VP of Finance

Artemis Institute for  
Clinical Research



**KALINA  
O'CONNOR**

President and CEO

Campbell  
Neurosciences



**MARIE  
OLESEN**

CEO

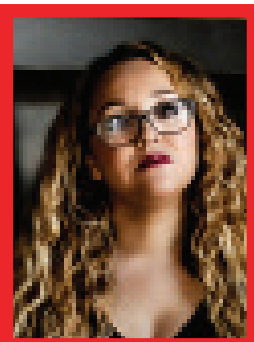
La Jolla Cosmetic



**RAVEN  
O'NEAL**

Executive Director

Stella Labs



**M. VIVIANA  
OROPEZA**

Small Business Attorney

Oropeza Law, PC d/b/  
Attorney in Heels™



**CHÉRI  
PIERRE**

Chief Executive Officer

Computers 2 Kids



**WENDY PURVEY**

President and Chief  
Operating Officer

Pacific Sotheby's  
International Realty



**MIA  
ROSEBERRY**

Executive Director

Wounded Warrior  
Homes



**MELISSA  
ROSENTHAL**

Chief Creative Officer

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BAR ASSOCIATION**

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# BUSINESS WOMEN

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## FINALISTS



**JILL  
RUSSELL-LAYMAN**  
Associate Principal  
ID Studios, Inc.



**CINDY  
SALAS MURPHY**  
Founder & CEO  
WithHealth



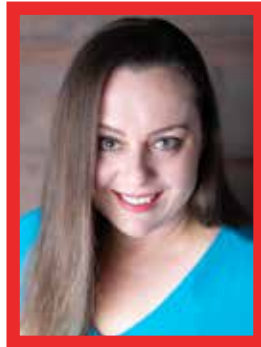
**JUSTINA  
SANCHEZ**  
Quality Engineer II  
TÜV SÜD America



**SELINA  
SCOTT**  
Director of Outside  
Plant Construction  
Cox Communications



**DINA  
SEGAL**  
Assistant General  
Counsel  
Intuit Inc.



**JESSICA  
SHRADER**  
Government Affairs and  
Community Engagement  
Manager  
Tri-City Medical Center



**KRISTEN  
SIEFFERT**  
President  
Finance of America  
Reverse (FAR)



**JEAN  
STADWISER**  
Partner  
KPMG LLP



**MONICA  
SZAKOS**  
President & Senior  
Financial Adviser  
Asset Preservation Strategies



**CAROLYN  
TAYLOR**  
President, Founding Partner  
Weatherly Asset  
Management, LP



**RUTH-ANN  
THORN**  
REDCO Chairwoman  
REDCO



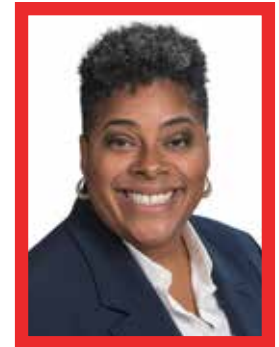
**ELIZABETH  
TRESP**  
Principal  
Tresp Law, APC



**JENNIFER  
TROWBRIDGE**  
Junior Partner  
Jack Law Group, PC



**RITA  
VANDERGAW**  
Acting Executive Director  
Comic-Con Museum



**CARMEN  
VANN**  
Project Executive  
BNBuilders



**DR. INA  
VON BER**  
President & CEO  
Ambassadorial  
Roundtable



**TARA  
WEISINGER**  
Principal, Director of  
Tax Services  
Rowling & Associates  
LLC



**KELLY  
DUFORD WILLIAMS**  
Founder and Managing Partner  
Slate Law Group



**CHELSEA  
WILSON**  
Founder & CEO  
3CS



**JENN  
ZEIS**  
Vice President of  
Clinical Research  
Toolbox Medical Innovations