



GEMMA BLAIN

Lead, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Virgin Galactic



RICK BREGMAN

Market President San Diego and
National Co-Head Healthcare
Commercial Banking
Bank of America



JENI BURGESS

Manager of Business
Banking
First Citizens Bank



DR. ALLEN CHAN

Owner
Jasmine Seafood Restaurant



DR. LILLY CHENG

Director, Chinese Cultural
Center
San Diego State University



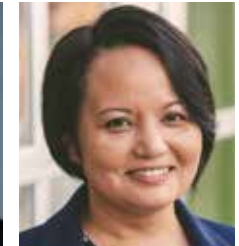
STEPHEN CHIN

Manager, Account
Management & Community
Relations
Sharp HealthCare



AUDIE DE CASTRO

Honorary Consul General
Republic of the Philippines



**CLARISSA
FALCON**

Owner
Falcon Strategies



LOIS FONG-SAKAI

Chief Financial Officer
Jade Coast Software, Inc.



FRITZ FRIEDMAN

President and CEO
The Fritz Friedman
Company



PAMELA GABRIEL

Senior Vice President, San
Diego Market
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LAUREN GARCÉS

CEO
Social Artistry



DR. ALAN GIN

Associate Professor of
Economics
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SUSAN GUINN

President and CEO
San Diego Regional Policy &
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JOE HORIYE

Western Region Program
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Local Initiatives Support
Corporation



LANI LUTAR

President
Responsible Solutions LLC



ROBERT ITO

Principal
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**MARGARET
IWANAGA PENROSE**

President and CEO
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH



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TED MIYAHARA

President and CEO
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Housing Corporation



CHRISTINE MOORE

Executive Director, External
Affairs
AT&T



KIM NGUYEN

Director of Leadership
Programs
San Diego Regional
Chamber of Commerce



LOUIE NGUYEN

Chief Investment Officer
Mission Driven Finance



TONY OLAES

Chairman of the Board
Global Electric Transport



SUMEET PAREKH

Managing Partner
HP Investors



**DR. DARSHANA
PATEL**

Board of Education Trustee
Poway Unified School District



BENNETT PEJI

Chief Innovation Officer
ODM/Tzila



WESLEY QUACH

Director
ABASD Small Business
Development Center



PARIS QUION

General Manager and Co-
Owner
InsideOUT



JAYRELL RINGPIS

Owner
Snoice



STACY SAKAMOTO

Director of Development
ACLU of San Diego and
Imperial Counties



NANCY SASAKI

President and CEO
United Way of San Diego



TERESA STIVERS

CEO
Walden Family Services



DR. WILLIAM TSENG

President of the Professional
Staff, KP San Diego
Kaiser Permanente



**WENDY
URUSHIMA-CONN**

President and CEO
Epilepsy Foundation SD



ALEX VILLAFUERTE

Co-Chair
San Diego Asian Pacific
Islander Coalition



DR. PING WANG

Chair
Convoy District Partnership



CAROLINE WINN

CEO
SDG&E



ALAN WONG

Managing Partner
Stanley Wong Insurance



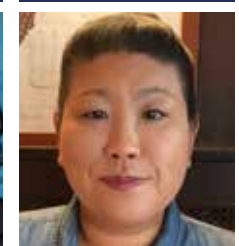
NATASHA WONG

Vice President
Avery-Tsui Foundation



**SALLY
WONGAVERY**

Chair and CEO
Avery-Tsui Foundation



CANDICE WOO

Founding Editor
Eater San Diego

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

In Association With

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER LEADERS OF THE YEAR AWARDS

ASIAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION SAN DIEGO



Mayor Todd Gloria with Jason Paguio and Barbara Chodos.



Banners highlighted partnerships between the Asian Business Association and the Convoy District.



Asian Pacific Islander Leaders of the Year Awards.



Naruwan Taiko.



Attendees with Councilmember Joe LaCava.



SBDC Business Advisor Danielle Stephen with guests.



Councilmember Chris Cate with Jason Paguio, Stephen Chin, and Ricardo Villa.



Corporate Partner of the Year - AT&T.



Non-Profit Partner of the Year - City Heights Community Development Corporation.



Best Restaurant - Cross Street Chicken and Beer.



Business of Year - Most Innovative - Robolink.



SBDC Business Advisors Jessica Javier and Yvonne Gao with Lauren Garces



Corporate Partner of the Year - Wells Fargo.



Bridge Builder of the Year - Aidan Lin.



ERG of the Year - County of San Diego Filipino American Employees Association.



Community Leader - Nancy Sasaki, CEO, United Way of San Diego County.



Asian Pacific Islander Leaders of the Year Awardees.



Volunteer of the Year - Susan Delos Santos, The Filipino Press.



GEMMA BLAIN
Lead, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Virgin Galactic

Gemma Blain is a diversity, equity and inclusion leader with well-rounded knowledge in human resources coupled with business acumen that enables long-term cultural change within large global organizations. Blain has more than nine years experience in the DEI space with increased technical knowledge and competencies in strategy planning, talent management, learning and development, recruiting, employee resource groups and inclusive program design.

Blain currently sits on the board of directors for the Asian Business Association San Diego and serves as a mayor-appointed commissioner on the City of San Diego's Citizen's Equal Opportunity Commission. Born in San Diego, she graduated with dual degrees in art history and cultural anthropology from University of California Berkeley. She received a master's degree at National University in public administration.



RICK BREGMAN
Market President San Diego and National
Co-Head Healthcare Commercial Banking
Bank of America

Rick Bregman is a global commercial banking market executive with Bank of America's Global Banking and Markets group. He is the co-head of the firm's national Healthcare Commercial Banking practice. In this role, he leads teams of financial professionals across the country, responsible for delivering comprehensive debt, treasury management and capital raising solutions globally to healthcare companies. He is dual employed by Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith as a Series 7/24/63 licensed investment professional and principal.

Bregman stays very active in the San Diego community, where he and his family have lived for over 40 years. He is past chairman of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce and currently serves on the board of directors of BIOCUM, the Campanile Foundation at San Diego State University and the National Conflict Resolution Center.



JENI BURGESS
Manager of Business Banking
First Citizens Bank

Jeni Burgess is a manager of business banking for First Citizens Bank. She leads a team of commercial bankers and associates who acquire and manage over \$170 million of outstanding business and commercial loans and over \$80 million in deposits. Burgess has held various positions throughout her financial career. In 2001, she joined Wells Fargo as a commercial loan officer and was promoted in 2006 and 2009, transitioning into the senior relationship manager role with business banking. Her abilities in consistently building and maintaining meaningful relationships with high value clients led to her promotion to principal relationship manager and earned her a senior vice president title. Burgess has a bachelor's degree in business administration and finance from San Diego State University. She is the current board chair of the Asian Business Association San Diego where she was instrumental in garnering the seed capital from Wells Fargo Bank for the Business Resource Center of ABASD.



DR. ALLEN CHAN
Owner
Jasmine Seafood Restaurant

Dr. Allen W. Chan is a retired chiropractor and the owner of Jasmine Seafood Restaurant. He has a B.S. degree in pharmacy and a Doctor of Chiropractic. Dr. Chan and his wife, Janet, have two daughters. For 34 years, Dr. Chan's community and charity work have empowered the various Asian ethnic communities in San Diego and the less fortunate people around the globe. He is the co-founder of the Asian Pacific American Coalition (APAC), responsible for establishing the first Asian City Council district in San Diego. Dr. Chan is the charter president of the San Diego United Lions Club. He also serves on the boards of CCBA, APAC, Convoy District Partnership and the US-China Cultural and Economic Collaboratives and served on San Diego's Kearny Mesa Community Plan Update Subcommittee. He is grateful for the opportunities and the wonderful life that America has given him and his family. He wishes the same for other immigrants.



DR. LILLY CHENG
Director, Chinese Cultural Center
San Diego State University

Dr. Li-Rong Lilly Cheng is the director of the Chinese Cultural Center at San Diego State University. She served as professor in the School of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences and executive director of the Chinese Studies Institute at SDSU. Cheng served as a member of the board of trustees of the Campanile Foundation of SDSU. She is the past chair of the Multicultural Issues Board for the American Speech, Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) and the chair of the Education Committee for the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics (IALP). She is a fellow of ASHA and received the honors of ASHA. She is past president of IALP. Her passion is researching, teaching and learning. In 2020, she returned to the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum and is now serving as the chair of the board of directors.



STEPHEN CHIN
Manager, Account Management &
Community Relations
Sharp HealthCare

Stephen Chin's professional experience includes more than 20 years with major healthcare organizations, including Blue Cross Blue Shield, Kaiser Permanente, Aetna and currently, Sharp Health Plan. At Sharp, his team oversees significant client relationships within the Sharp portfolio, including those with the city of San Diego and CalPERS. Prior to joining Sharp, Chin managed strategic sales initiatives and community programs, and he also supported progressive physician projects which address healthcare disparities. He believes in the integration of business and community, and he proudly supports diverse community partners. His board and committee service has included: Access to Independence; EPIP; Kyoto Prize; North San Diego Business Chamber; Pacific Arts Movement; San Diego Community College District; Second Chance; Sharp Women's Health Conference; Urban League; and most recently, the Advisory Board for USD's Nonprofit Institute. Stephen studied communications and film, and when time allows, he enjoys watching the latest in films of all genres.



AUDIE DE CASTRO
Honorary Consul General
Republic of the Philippines

Audie de Castro is the Honorary Consul of the Philippines, the first ever in San Diego County. Since 2014, he has represented the Philippine government for San Diego County, where over 200,000 Filipino-Americans reside. In addition to promoting diplomacy, trade and tourism, he provides consular services and protections to Filipino citizens. Audie is a corporate lawyer and founded de Castro, PC, a law firm in downtown San Diego. He was recognized as a Super Lawyer in Business Litigation for the years 2021 and 2022. He represents companies and entrepreneurs in major lawsuits and transactions. In November 2021, he represented plaintiffs in demanding that the city of National City adopt district voting elections to help empower the large Filipino/API community there. The city created district voting earlier this year, including an Asian empowerment district. He has served on various boards and commissions, including those for San Diego Foundation and the Asian Business Association.



CLARISSA FALCON
Owner
Falcon Strategies

Clarissa Reyes Falcon is a government and public relations professional with more than 27 years of unique experience in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. In November 2010, she founded Falcon Strategies, a firm that specializes in strategic communications, project and issue advocacy, coalition building, and public policy analysis. It guides clients through complicated government processes while deploying holistic approaches to engaging community partners. Falcon represents a broad spectrum of private, nonprofit and public sector clients. During the 14 years of public policy and community outreach working for the California State Assembly and State Senate, Falcon proved to be a consensus builder. She is proud of her work in helping to secure funding for major infrastructure projects such as SR 905, SR 125 and SR 11 and pushing for the creation of the East Otay Mesa Port of Entry. Her extensive community service includes work on the board of the Asian Business Association San Diego.



LOIS FONG-SAKAI
Chief Financial Officer
Jade Coast Software, Inc.

Inspired by her parents' involvement in the community, Lois Fong-Sakai has worked to positively affect lives. She has been working with foster children via the Polinsky Children's Center and Promises2Kids for over 25 years. In 2020, she was named San Diego County's Volunteer of the Year. Fong-Sakai has been actively involved with the Asian Business Association of San Diego. She serves on its advisory board and is chairman of the ABASD Foundation. She serves on the boards of the San Diego County Water Authority and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Fong-Sakai has also been involved with the Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce; City of Poway Housing and Redevelopment Committee; Society of Women Engineers; and numerous other organizations. She is a Registered Civil Engineer and holds a California Real Estate Brokers license. She is the CFO of Jade Coast Software, Inc., which she co-owns with her husband Willie Sakai.



FRITZ FRIEDMAN
President and CEO
The Fritz Friedman Company

A Boston native and graduate of Vassar College with a master's degree from The Annenberg School of The University of Pennsylvania, the exuberant and bubbly Filipino-American, whose first job was as an usher in Carnegie Hall, has had a nearly four decade career of triumphs and firsts in the entertainment industry.

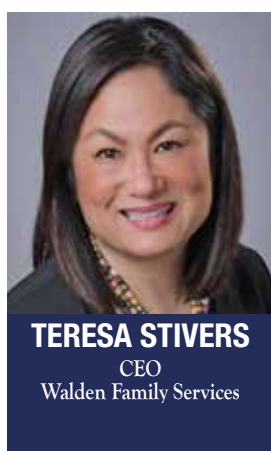
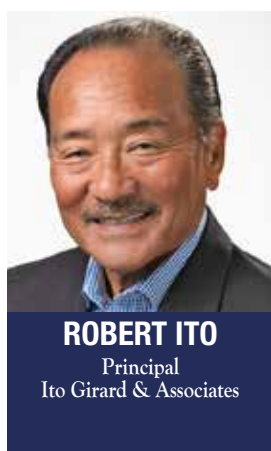
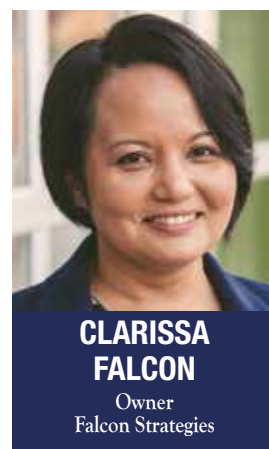
Honored as one of the most influential Filipino-Americans in 2020, Friedman, until he stepped away in 2014, was senior vice president of worldwide publicity and corporate communication for two divisions of Sony Pictures Entertainment: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment and Sony Pictures Worldwide Entertainment. Friedman established his own San Diego-based production/marketing company, The Fritz Friedman Co. His civic and community activities include being a co-founder and president emeritus of the Coalition of Asian Pacifics in Entertainment (CAPE), acting as a commissioner of the San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture and sitting on the Board of Cal Humanities.





Ocean Park Inn

*Congratulates the Asian Business Association Board Members
& Staff on being named to San Diego Business Journal's
Top 50 Asian Pacific Islander Leaders of Influence*



**PAMELA GABRIEL**

Senior Vice President, San Diego Market
Bank of America

Pamela Gabriel is the senior vice president, San Diego market executive for Bank of America.

In that role, she delivers on the bank's environmental, social and governance commitments for the San Diego market by identifying, building and growing community partnerships. She creates and executes the local strategy for Bank of America which includes foundation support to nonprofits addressing economic mobility in communities of need in San Diego.

Gabriel brings with her 22 years of career expertise in finance with experience in consumer, global commercial banking, enterprise client coverage and credit lending. From being in the top 2% of managers in consumer to receiving top performer awards in global commercial banking, she continues to go above and beyond for her team. She currently serves on the board of the San Diego Museum of Art, Reality Changers, Downtown San Diego Partnership and the San Diego City-County Reinvestment Task Force.

**LAUREN GARCES**

CEO
Social Artistry

Lauren Balcita Garces is an event producer and artist based in San Diego focusing on diverse community empowerment and sustainable, inclusive economic development with her company Social Artistry. Currently, she directs the marketing, outreach, and events with the Asian Business Association San Diego representing over 30,000 Asian Pacific Islander owned businesses. Her work is bridged as the Special Events Director of the Convoy District, one of Southern California's largest pan-Asian economic hubs. A leader and advocate for the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, she serves as president of the National Association of Asian American Professionals - San Diego and co-chair of the San Diego Asian Pacific Islander Coalition. Her event engagements provide platforms for diverse communities and include Linda Vista Multi-cultural Fair, San Diego Night Market and Balboa Park December Nights.

**DR. ALAN GIN**

Associate Professor of Economics
University of San Diego Knauss School of Business

Professor Alan Gin has been a faculty member at the University of San Diego since 1988 and has taught at the undergraduate and MBA levels. He has taught principles of economics, statistics, urban economics, environmental and natural resource economics, the Economic Environment of Asia, and Doing Business with China. He has been voted Professor of the Year by the graduate business students at USD and has received the USD Parents' Association Award of Excellence. Professor Gin's research has focused on the economy of San Diego. He is best known for developing and publishing the University of San Diego's Index of Leading Economic Indicators for San Diego County, a monthly report on the outlook for the local economy. He has given thousands of interviews to local and national media, both print and broadcast. He has been honored by both the city and county of San Diego, the Asian Business Association, and the Union of Pan Asian Communities.

**SUSAN GUINN**

President and CEO
San Diego Regional Policy & Innovation Center

Susan Guinn defines herself as a non-profit executive and community advocate. She has raised over \$64 million in COVID response funding, drafted the county's Human Relations Commission policy, and has more than 30 years of legal experience spanning tobacco litigation, consumer rights, workers' rights, climate protection and human rights. She is the president and CEO of the San Diego Regional Policy & Innovation Center and the vice president and chief innovation officer of San Diego Foundation. Guinn creates and executes strategies to address the needs of historically disinvested communities. The San Diego Regional Policy and Innovation Center's mission is to unlock the region's potential by cultivating and building partnerships to tackle intractable issues that require cross-sector, multi-jurisdictional collaborations. Guinn also served as a Special Advisor to Nathan Fletcher, chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, advising on complex policy and budget issues around the \$7 billion-plus annual budget and public-private partnerships.

**DAN HOM**

President and CEO
Focuscom, Inc.

Dan Hom, president and CEO of Focuscom Inc., has more than 30 years of community involvement and business experience. He has raised money and sponsored many community and nonprofit organizations such as the Red Cross, San Diego Hospice, Boy Scouts of America, and the Asian Business Association. (ABA). Hom serves on several local boards. He is the first Asian-American chairman of the University Club Atop Symphony Towers, the advisory chair for the ABA, and the past chair of the San Diego's Mayor's Asian Advisory Council. Hom has been the recipient of many awards including: PRSA Award of Excellence, ABA's San Diego Small Business Award, Asian Heritage Award for Excellence in Entrepreneurship, San Diego Asian Film Festival's Community Legacy Award, and ABA's Member of the Year (limited list). Dan is a fourth-generation native San Diegan with family roots as far back as 1848. He studied at San Diego State and the University of San Diego.

**JOE HORIYE**

Western Region Program Vice President
Local Initiatives Support Corporation

Joe Horiye is a community and economic development professional with more than 25 years of nonprofit and leadership experience. He currently serves as vice president - West Region for LISC, one of the country's largest community development organizations, helping forge vibrant, resilient communities across America. His responsibilities include oversight for the urban offices in Arizona, California, Hawaii, Texas and Washington, as well as work in the Twin Cities and Guam. Horiye has also served as an independent consultant focusing on impact of people and place in traditionally less served neighborhoods and markets; as vice president of community development at the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation (JCNI); and as executive director of both San Diego and Los Angeles LISC. Additionally, Horiye's background includes university fund development; roles of auxiliary corporation president and nonprofit affordable housing development company founder and president; and congressional aide.

**LANI LUTAR**

President
Responsible Solutions LLC

Lani Lutar is president of Responsible Solutions, LLC, a public affairs firm specializing in advocacy, coalition building and government relations. She has over 20 years of experience in public policy research and analysis, strategic marketing and business development. Her clients include Fortune 250 companies, grassroots nonprofit organizations and public agencies. Prior to establishing Responsible Solutions, Lutar led three respected local nonprofit organizations as CEO over a period of 10 years: San Diego County Taxpayers Association, Equinox Center and the Asian Business Association of San Diego. Under her leadership, the San Diego County Taxpayers Association effectively influenced a wide range of local and state legislation and dozens of ballot propositions. Lutar firmly established the organization's position as one of the most respected and influential public policy institutions in the San Diego region, consistently at the top of polls measuring voter trust.

**ROBERT ITO**

Principal
Ito Girard & Associates

Robert P. Ito, CEO of Ito Girard & Associates, has over 48 years of experience in workforce and community development and real estate development in the region. A San Diego native raised in Encanto, he received his bachelor's degree in sociology from USIU and his master's in social work from San Diego State University. He is the founding CEO of Occupational Training Services (OTS) and the San Diego Community Housing Corporation. Career highlights include: 30,000 jobs for low income San Diegans; administered \$30 million in federal, state, and local funds; developed 1,200 affordable rental units providing housing for 3,650 people and developed and sold 160 homes to low- and moderate income first-time homebuyers with 180 homes in the pipeline for first-time homebuyers. Current community involvement includes board member of Jackie Robinson YMCA, Asian Business Association Foundation, Second Chance, Access Youth Academy Support Corporation and Pac-Arts Movement.

**MARGARET IWANAGA PENROSE**

President and CEO
Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC)

Margaret Iwanaga Penrose has over 40 years' experience including public and private administration of service delivery systems, training, consultation and education, public-private partnerships, and policy development and advocacy. Her extensive governmental, nonprofit and corporate community involvement has included local, regional, state and national boards, commissions, committees and task forces.

Community involvement has included the SDSU Enrollment Advisory Committee (since seventh President Dr. Stephen Weber through ninth President Dr. Adele de la Torre), Kyoto Symposium Organization, California API Budget Partnership Steering Committee, Asian Business Association of San Diego, San Diego Association of Nonprofits, Japan Society of San Diego and Tijuana, Asian American Advancing Justice Demographic Reports on Asian Americans/Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in San Diego region, and County of San Diego Behavioral Health System of Care Council.

**SARA KAMIAB**

Partner
Pacific Public Affairs

Sara Sugawara Kamiab is a first generation Asian American with parents who immigrated from Japan and Iran. As a partner at Pacific Public Affairs, she brings over a decade of experience leading successful public outreach and political campaigns. Throughout her career, Kamiab has provided strategic counsel and developed winning strategies for local ballot initiatives, political action committees and candidates. Her diverse background includes political and nonprofit fundraising, influencing public policy, and coalition building. Prior to starting her own businesses, Kamiab worked at the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce where she managed a leadership program for business leaders interested in public service, and oversaw PAC endorsements and expenditures. Fluent in Japanese and Farsi, Kamiab worked as a global operations specialist both locally and in Japan prior to working in politics. She is a graduate of California State University San Marcos and an ambassador for San Diego Pride.



**LEE ANN KIM**

Commissioner
City of San Diego Arts and Culture
Commission

Recognized in 2022 by the City of San Diego as one of seven Women of Distinction, Lee Ann Kim is a former television journalist who runs her own video production company, and has served as a longtime community advocate in San Diego for cultural diversity and the arts. She is founding executive director of Pacific Arts Movement, a nonprofit media arts organization best known for its annual San Diego Asian Film Festival, which has grown to one of the largest festivals of its kind in North America. During her 16-year tenure as Pacific Arts Movement's executive director, she helped raise more than \$10 million to grow the organization and produced more than 100 youth documentaries. She also worked for nearly 12 years as a news anchor/reporter for KGTV-10. Currently, Kim is serving as one of the newest members of the San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture.

**CAROL KIM**

Business Manager
San Diego County Building and
Construction Trades Council

Kim is business manager for the San Diego County Building & Construction Trades Council and the CEO of the San Diego County Building Trades Council Family Housing Corporation.

She began her career as a classroom teacher in an inner city school in Los Angeles. Her years as a teacher were followed by several more working in HIV prevention, where she served high-risk groups including active and recovering substance users, adolescents in the foster care and judicial systems, LGBTQ communities as well as communities of color. Following a move to San Diego, she carried her experience as a practitioner in the fields of education and public health to work as a research associate in the Health & Human Development program for an education research nonprofit, working with schools, school districts and community colleges in San Diego County and throughout the state of California. She has been an advocate for working families and underserved communities ever since.

**ELVIN LAI**

CEO and President
Ocean Park Inn

San Diego native Elvin Lai is a fourth-generation owner-operator of Ocean Park Inn hotel in Pacific Beach since 2003. Lai is an active member of the lodging associations serving as immediate past chair of the San Diego Convention Center Corporation and chairman of the San Diego County Lodging Association. He sits on the board of governors of San Diego Foundation.

Previously, Lai has served as chairman of the California Hotel and Lodging Association, board member of the San Diego Tourism Marketing District, and executive board member of the San Diego Tourism Authority. Additionally, he serves his community as past president, twice over, of the Pacific Beach Business Improvement District (also called Discover PB), board member of the Asian Business Association, a San Diego County Alcohol Policy Panel Sector Leader, and a member of Mayor Todd Gloria's AAPI Advisory Board. Lai also created, co-founded, and co-chaired the Pacific Beach Clean and Safe pilot program.

**KEVIN LEE**

Environmental Impact and
Compliance Specialist
Dr. Bronner's

Kevin Lee (he/him) is the current environmental impact and compliance specialist at Dr. Bronner's, a top-selling organic and fair trade body care and food company based in Vista. At Dr. Bronner's, he advocates for greener initiatives and policies, tracks the company's environmental footprint, oversees environmental compliance, and co-chairs the cross-departmental Green Team. He also helps create sustainability programming, such as establishing the company's first-ever Earth Week. Lee is also the chair and a founding member of the San Diego Queer Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern and Desi American (QAPIMEDA) Coalition. He works with the organization's leadership team to build out programming and a sense of belonging for the LGBTQ+ API community in San Diego. Lee previously served on the Green Business team with City and County of San Francisco's Department of the Environment. He holds an A.B. in Biology from Vassar College and a Master of Environmental Management from Yale University.

**CRISTIAN LIANG**

Owner
Common Theory Public House, Realm
of the 52 Remedies and Woomiok

Cristian Liang is one of the co-owners of Common Theory Public House which opened in 2014. Cristian is of Chinese descent and was born in Rosarito, Baja California, Mexico and moved to the United States in 1995 where he attended Bonita Vista High School in 2001 and then graduated from University of California San Diego with a bachelor of science in engineering in 2006. He started working in an engineering firm but left to pursue a career in the hospitality industry with Common Theory Public House along with his business partner Joon Lee. Since then Cristian has helped spearhead more concepts in the Convo District including Realm of the 52 Remedies in 2018 and Woomiok in 2019. In his spare time Cristian enjoys spending time with his wife and two boys as well as playing basketball.

**Sally WongAvery**

President
Chinese School of San Diego
Chinese Bilingual Preschool

**Natasha Wong**

Vice President
Avery Tsui Foundation
Chinese Bilingual Preschool

**Congratulations to
Sally WongAvery and Natasha Wong
on being recognized as two
of San Diego's Top 50 Asian Leaders
of Influence.**

**Chinese Bilingual Preschool is so proud
of your leadership, integrity,
and contributions to our
local and global community.**

**As San Diego's first fully licensed Chinese
preschool, we believe in fostering each
child's intellectual, mental, and
physical growth.**



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Chinese Bilingual Preschool

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www.cbpsd.com





MYMY LU

Director, Diversity and Inclusion
Thermo Fisher Scientific

As part of Thermo Fisher's corporate diversity and inclusion team, MyMy Lu manages a global network of Business Resource Groups and works with stakeholders to advance the company's D&I efforts. Previously, Lu drove programs, policies and practices to support a diverse, inclusive and equitable workplace for Semptra Energy. She also spent 10 years at Cox Communications where she launched a nationwide broadband adoption program to close the digital divide and improve educational equity for underserved communities. Lu serves on several nonprofit boards. Under her tenure as vice president for the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, the organization revamped its scholarship program, renovated a senior housing project and led a community partnership to unveil Tom Hom Avenue, a significant symbol of API representation. Lu recently assumed the role of vice chair for the Pacific Arts Movement and also serves on the board of Computers 2 Kids, which enables access to technology for low-income families.



KIRIN MACAPUGAY

Commissioner
California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs

A community organizer at heart, Kirin Macapugay is vice chair for the California Commission on Asian Pacific Islander (API) Affairs Higher Education Committee. A tenured professor at San Diego City College, she leads PEER, preparing students to work in organizations addressing homelessness in partnership with the San Diego Housing Commission and City of San Diego. She is vice president of the Southwestern College governing board and serves on the API advisory committee for San Diego Mayor Gloria. She founded Asian Pacific Islander Community Actions (APICA) and co-founded Indigenous Knowledge, Art and Truth (IKAT). Macapugay is a founding board member of the San Diego API Coalition; chair of Made in Paradise Hills; and a core member of the FIERCE Policy Forum. She holds a master's degree in social work from San Diego State University and a certificate in Indigenous People's Rights from Columbia University. She is a doctorate of social work candidate at the University of Southern California.



Commission on
Asian & Pacific Islander
American Affairs



TED MIYAHARA

President and CEO
San Diego Community Housing Corporation

Ted Miyahara is president and CEO of the San Diego Community Housing Corporation (SDCHC), a nonprofit public benefit corporation that develops affordable housing throughout the county. He oversees business operations and development activities for SDCHC. He has been involved in the development and preservation of thousands of units of housing throughout California in various development and real estate finance roles. Prior to joining SDCHC, Miyahara was vice president of multifamily housing finance at the San Diego Housing Commission, a public agency, where he managed all multifamily lending and multifamily housing revenue bond issuance. Before moving to San Diego in 2012, Miyahara worked for nonprofit affordable housing developers in Orange County and the San Francisco Bay Area. Ted Miyahara is a board member of the Asian Business Association of San Diego and is chair of its Policy Committee. He is vice chair of the San Diego Housing Federation and sits on the San Diego Planning Commission.



San Diego Community
Housing Corporation



CHRISTINE MOORE

Executive Director, External
Affairs
AT&T

Christine Moore is the executive director of external affairs for AT&T California in San Diego and Imperial Counties and is responsible for managing relationships with local and regional governments, advocating on public policy issues, building community partnerships, and managing AT&T community contributions. Prior to joining AT&T, Moore served as a representative for County Supervisor Ron Roberts and San Diego City Council President Scott Peters. She also served as deputy district director for California State Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny. Moore has served on the boards of several nonprofit organizations throughout the state and has chaired fundraising efforts to improve the quality of life for San Diego's at-risk and underserved communities. Currently, she serves as chair of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce's Public Policy Committee. In addition, she serves on the chamber's Management Council. She also serves on the board of the San Diego Asian Business Association.



AT&T



KIM VAN NGUYEN

Director of Leadership Programs
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce

Kim Van Nguyen is director of programs for LEAD San Diego, an affiliate of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce. In this role, she is responsible for planning, organizing and executing LEAD's civic and community leadership programs. As part of the team which led the successful merger with the chamber in 2017, Nguyen has worked hard to ensure each program is developed through a diversity, equity and inclusion lens. Her goal is to make certain San Diego's leadership is reflective of the dynamic and diverse communities that make up the binational region. In her time with LEAD San Diego, Nguyen has been part of the leadership journeys of nearly 1,000 San Diegans, many of whom have gone on to lead their communities and organizations. Prior to joining LEAD San Diego, Nguyen worked for former San Diego City Councilmembers Toni Atkins and Marti Emerald, serving residents of the then-3rd and 7th City Council Districts.



San Diego
Regional
Chamber of
Commerce

Walden Family Services congratulates our CEO, Teresa Stivers, for being selected as one of San Diego's Top 50 Asian Pacific Islander Leaders of Influence. Walden is proud to promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in our organization and the community we serve.



**Walden
Family
Services**

Foster. Adopt. Support.



Congratulations to our President & CEO, Nancy L. Sasaki! We are so proud of you and grateful for everything you do for us at United Way of San Diego County!

With 35+ years of experience in the nonprofit sector, Nancy leads our team to align partners and leverage resources so that every child, young adult, and family in San Diego has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.



United Way
of San Diego County

**LOUIE NGUYEN**

Chief Investment Officer
Mission Driven Finance

Louie Nguyen, CFA, chief investment officer of Mission Driven Finance, leverages his 25 years of investing experience to mobilize financial capital and community expertise to solve social pain points. Nguyen and the 25-strong MDF team provide financing to companies and nonprofits striving to do good for San Diego but unable to access reasonable capital. Nguyen works closely with Asian Business Association to get capital to AAPI founded startups and community developers. In addition, he played a key role in assembling the financing for the \$12 million Access Youth Academy's squash facility and for Hilltop Encanto, an innovative 47-unit middle market housing project. Nguyen serves on several civic and regional boards. In addition, he is an adjunct faculty member at USD, introducing graduate students to impact investing. Nguyen came to the U.S. as a refugee and grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He attended Washington University in St. Louis and was a research scholar at Waseda University in Tokyo.

**TONY OLAES**

Chairman of the Board
Global Electric Transport

San Diego native Tony Olaes is a second generation Filipino American. A graphic designer and entrepreneur, he founded Olaes Enterprises, Inc., a business that supplies to national retailers such as Walmart and Target. Olaes started his reconnection with his Motherland, the Philippines, in 2007 when he joined Gawad Kalinga (GK) and saw the warmth and hospitality of Filipinos despite their hardships. Believing in the value of Bayanihan, Olaes helped build homes and lives through GK. He continues to uplift Filipino communities all over the globe through The Filipino School and its programs. Through its work, mission and vision, the school continues to provide answers to the question: "What does it mean to be Filipino?" In recent years, Olaes has been providing transportation in the Philippines through Del Mar-based Global Electric Transit. GET designed and operates 30-passenger minibuses that run on electric power. Passengers pay for their rides using a smartphone app.

**SUMEET PAREKH**

Managing Partner
HP Investors

Sumeet Parekh brings over 15 years of diverse real estate experience to HP Investors, including institutional private equity, real estate investment banking, and as a direct investor. He manages the day to day operations of the firm, as well as deal sourcing, asset management and fundraising. Prior to founding HP Investors, Parekh acquired, structured, and managed over \$3 billion in real estate investments in New York City for The Carlyle Group, one of the largest private equity real estate investors in the world. His projects at Carlyle included helping acquire and manage the successful development of multiple large-scale residential condominium projects as well as other office and retail investments. Parekh has also held positions as a real estate investment banking associate at Merrill Lynch and as a corporate strategy consultant at Deloitte. He holds an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, and a B.S. from the Marshall School at the University of Southern California.

**DR. DARSHANA PATEL**

Board of Education Trustee
Poway Unified School District

Darshana R. Patel, Ph.D. is a scientist, elected official, and community leader with professional experience in board governance, education policy and project management working towards raising the level of local civic engagement. Through her combined formal educational experience from earning a B.A. in biochemistry at Occidental College, a Ph.D. in biophysics from UC Irvine, and working in biotech research at Genentech in the Bay Area, she has developed and continually applies a collaborative approach to problem-solving. Patel is in her second term as an elected trustee of the Poway Unified School District Board of Education (since 2016). She is the President of the San Diego County School Boards Association. In addition, she sits on the California Commission on Asian Pacific Islander American Affairs, is a member of the San Diego API Coalition, an advisor on the Hindu Americans of San Diego board, and a member of the SDPD Northeastern Division Captain's Advisory Board.

**BENNETT PEJI**

Chief Innovation Officer
ODM/Tzilla

Bennett Peji is an entrepreneur and social impact executive with a passion for sustainable community development, corporate social responsibility, impact investing and public/private partnerships. He is chief innovation officer of ODM/Tzilla, designer-in-residence at the UCSD Design Lab and immediate past chairman of California Humanities. Prior to that, Peji served as vice president of the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation, directing the community affairs work as well as the business accelerator, branding, marketing and public relations. He is an international brand consultant, designer and frequent speaker on inclusive, community-centered design. He served as a commissioner of Arts & Culture for the City of San Diego from 2003-2012. He has also served as president of the Filipino-American Chamber of Commerce and chairman of the Asian Business Association. For the design industry, Peji has been President of AIGA San Diego, co-founder of the AIGA Center for Cross-cultural Design and served on the national board of AIGA in New York.



聖地牙哥中文學校 Chinese School of San Diego

The Chinese School of San Diego congratulates these two remarkable women for their dedication to excellence in education, and their long-standing contributions in the Chinese community. Established over 100 years ago, Chinese School of San Diego embraces diversity and is proud to be the first Chinese school in San Diego, teaching Cantonese, Mandarin, and Chinese culture.

**Sally Wong Avery**

President
Chinese School of San Diego
Chinese Bilingual Preschool

**Natasha Wong**

Vice President
Avery Tsui Foundation
Chinese Bilingual Preschool

Chinese School of San Diego • www.chineseschoolsd.org

**WESLEY QUACH**

Director
ABASD Small Business
Development Center

Wesley Quach serves as the Asian Business Association San Diego Small Business Development Center (SBDC) director and full-time business advisor and programs manager. As part of the SBDC Network, Quach provides no-cost consultation to small business owners and entrepreneurs, helping them start, grow and expand. Prior to joining Asian Business Association, he served as the manager of the Convoy District Partnership, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that aims to revitalize and transform the pan-Asian Convoy Street area of San Diego. Working with small businesses, community organizations and local government, Quach was instrumental in establishing the Convoy Street Micro-Business Improvement District. He has successfully advocated on behalf of the community regarding land use issues, public safety, parking and transportation, and the current Kearny Mesa Community Plan update process. He was previously a founding board member of the nonprofit who stepped into the role of manager in 2016.

**PARIS QUION**

General Manager and Co-Owner
InsideOUT

Paris Quion is a California-based drag entertainer, nightlife personality, community activist and business owner. A San Diego native, Quion is always proud of the impact the Hillcrest community has had on who she is. Her parents used Center Services during her coming out as well as throughout her transition which inspired her to help further their outreach now as an adult. She is a woman who wears many hats in the different aspects of her professional life but all those tend to focus back into one important thing, her love for her community.

As a drag entertainer she is able to combine her talents as a trained dancer with her passion and formal education in fashion design. When off the stage, Quion can be found operating the newest venture of the Mos Universe Group called InsideOUT San Diego. She focuses on creating an inclusive space for the Hillcrest community.

**JAYRELL RINGPIS**

Owner
Snoice

Jayrell Ringpis is the co-owner and CEO of Snoice, an award-winning cold dessert chain started in 2015, specializing in Asian-American treats including halo halo and boba drinks. With locations in Spring Valley and Kearny Mesa, Snoice has been recognized as serving the best desserts in San Diego by City Beat, the San Diego Union-Tribune and San Diego Magazine. It was also recognized as a California Small Business of the Year.

Ringpis is also the co-founder and executive director of Made in Paradise Hills, a collective movement that was started to help highlight the talent and positive stories of a relatively overlooked community. The volunteer organization has planned several community events such as night markets and mixers. Ringpis also serves as a board member of the Pacific Arts Movement which presents Pan Asian media arts to San Diego residents and visitors in order to inspire, entertain and support a more compassionate society.

**STACY SAKAMOTO**

Director of Development
ACLU of San Diego and Imperial
Counties

Stacy Sakamoto is Acting Director of Development for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of San Diego and Imperial Counties.

She joined the ACLU in 2019 after serving as a courtroom deputy and litigation paralegal. In addition to working at the ACLU, Stacy serves as the chair of She Fest, a volunteer group centering the diverse experiences of LGBTQ+ women and people who feel at home with "she."

Sakamoto sits on the San Diego board of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) as the IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access) vice president. She is a proud founding member of the Queer Asian Pacific Islander Middle Eastern Desi American Coalition (QAPIMEDA) and a former volunteer manager of the San Diego Pride Festival.

Sakamoto has served as a panelist and speaker on topics ranging from volunteer recruitment and empowerment, creating trans-inclusionary women's spaces and diversifying philanthropy.

**NANCY SASAKI**

President and CEO
United Way of San Diego

Nancy L. Sasaki is President and CEO of United Way of San Diego County.

She has a strong track record of working with diverse communities and building sustainable solutions through collaboration and strategic partnerships. In her 35-year career, she has worked with and helped lead several organizations, including Alliance Healthcare Foundation, Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest and ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties.

Today, Sasaki continues to demonstrate her passion for community improvement and helping those in need through her work at United Way. She works to spark breakthrough community action that elevates every child and family toward a brighter future.

Through her work and commitment to the organization, Sasaki strives to help advance the lives of the underserved. She is a proven changemaker focused on the immense and complex social challenges within the San Diego region and works to build a positive future for children, young adults, and families experiencing inequities.

**TERESA STIVERS**

CEO
Walden Family Services

Teresa Stivers has worked in the child welfare space for nearly two decades and has served as CEO for Walden Family Services for more than 12 years. During her tenure with the organization, Stivers has led Walden through successful accreditations from CARF, the independent agency whose evaluations of health and human services organizations is internationally recognized as the gold standard of care. The organization twice earned Human Rights Campaign's highest innovator seal of recognition "All Children-All Families" for providing culturally competent services for LGBTQ children and families. She also expanded transitional housing services, making Walden the second largest provider in Southern California. Stivers currently serves on the executive committee for the UC San Diego Chancellor's Community Advisory board. She also sits on the Philanthropy and Scholarship Committees for UCSD's Asian Pacific Islander Alumni Council. Stivers is a board member of the Asian Business Association Foundation.

**DR. WILLIAM TSENG**

President of the Professional Staff,
KP San Diego
Kaiser Permanente

Dr. William Tseng, M.D., M.P.H. is President of the Professional Staff at Southern California Permanente Medical Group (SCPMG).

He joined SCPMG at Kaiser Permanente San Diego in 2000. He currently serves as Assistant Chief of Staff to KP San Diego Hospital, COVID Vaccine Physician Lead and Physician Ambassador to the corporate community.

Dr. Tseng is a member of the American Board of Internal Medicine, American College of Physicians and the American Medical Association and serves as a Trustee for the California Medical Association and on the executive board of the San Diego County Medical Society (SDCMS).

He enjoys balancing his time between patient care, hospital accreditation and patient safety, while continuing to oversee physician education and Kaiser Permanente's Diversity Council and stays actively involved in the community with the Mayor's APPI advisory board, UPAC and Doctors of the World. He is also an appointed volunteer faculty member at UCSD School of Medicine.

**WENDY URUSHIMA-CONN**

President and CEO
Epilepsy Foundation SD

Wendy Urushima-Conn is President and CEO of the Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County – a role she is personally invested in because her daughter Reiko suffers from this neurological disorder, but is doing well.

Urushima-Conn has more than 25 years of experience in community outreach, fundraising and marketing. She previously served as president and CEO of the Asian Business Association and associate executive director of the Center for Community Solutions where she was the chief fundraising and marketing officer focusing on sexual assault/domestic violence intervention and prevention.

Urushima-Conn's core belief is to improve our community. She serves as chair of the Southern California Diversity Council and chair of the Board of Library Commissioners. She has served as a respite care provider for foster youth, and for more than a decade underwrote the Harvey Simmons Memorial Scholarship, named in honor of her late husband, to assist high school student athletes heading to college.

**ALEX VILLAFUERTE**

Co-Chair
San Diego Asian Pacific Islander
Coalition

Alex Villafuerte is the Director of Communications and Membership of the Asian Business Association San Diego (ABASD).

Villafuerte comes to ABASD with 11 years of experience in eCommerce and marketing strategy as well as five years in event and community organizing for San Diego's largest civic event, the San Diego Pride parade, and generating over \$3 million in ticket sales for the San Diego Pride Festival.

In 2018, Villafuerte co-founded the San Diego Queer APIMEDA Coalition and in 2021 co-founded the San Diego API Coalition. Villafuerte also serves as a member of the County of San Diego Leon L. Williams Human Relations Commission; as co-chair of the San Diego API Coalition; and as a board member of the ABC 10News Community Advisory Board.

In his free time, Villafuerte enjoys exploring San Diego's food and beer scene as well as staying active with yoga, rock climbing, hiking and snowboarding.

**DR. PING WANG**

Chair
Convoy District Partnership

Dr. H. Ping Wang is an entrepreneur who has worked to create or help various incubators and accelerators, as well as co-working centers throughout the world. He is currently a LIFT (Leader in Future Trends) fellow of the Ministry of Science and Technology, and was EIR (Entrepreneur-In-Residence) at the Techstars IoT Accelerator, and director of the Qualcomm Robotics Accelerator, Powered By Techstars. The latter is a coaching and mentorship program for startups in the robotics and AI space. He cofounded several companies and brands in consumer electronics and created the first startup co-working space in San Diego, and has worked in business development and strategic roles in robotics, manufacturing, cleantech and medtech, spanning the U.S. (San Diego and San Francisco), Asia and Mexico. He is also an investor and advisor to dozens of startups companies and entrepreneurial organizations throughout the world. In addition, Ping Wang is the co-founder of the Convoy District Partnership.





CAROLINE WINN
CEO
SDG&E

Caroline Winn is the chief operating officer for San Diego Gas & Electric, one of Sempra Energy's regulated California utilities. Winn became COO of SDG&E in January 2017. Previously, she served as chief energy delivery officer, overseeing all energy delivery activities for SDG&E, including electric distribution operations and gas services, customer services, and external and state legislative affairs. Since joining the company in 1986 as an associate engineer, Winn has held a number of leadership positions with SDG&E and Southern California Gas Co. (SoCalGas). Winn has a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from California State University Sacramento and is a registered professional engineer in the state of California. She serves on the management council and board of directors of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce. She also serves on the board of directors of the Western Energy Institute and the board of advisors for the UC Davis Energy Efficiency Center.



ALAN WONG
Managing Partner
Stanley Wong Insurance

Alan Wong is Managing Partner of the Stanley Wong Insurance Agency. The San Diego native attended Georgetown University, graduating magna cum laude with a finance degree, before earning his MBA from Harvard Business School.

Wong began his career as an investment banker for Goldman Sachs, advising companies on capital raising and mergers and acquisitions. He then joined Calera Capital, a private equity firm, investing in business services and industrial companies. He worked for Liberty Mutual as a senior director in charge of managing insurance products and pricing for specialty lines internationally.

Wong is the second-generation insurance agency owner of The Stanley Wong Insurance Agency (established in 1980), which he runs alongside his father. Under his leadership, the agency has experienced double-digit growth annually with significant improvements to profitability.

In 2020, Wong was named Travelers Insurance California Region's Agent of the Year.



NATASHA WONG
Vice President
Avery-Tsui Foundation

Natasha Wong is Vice President of the Avery-Tsui Foundation.

She is an international law attorney and English solicitor who began her career in San Diego as the executive director of the Chinese Service Center. She also served as principal of the Chinese School of San Diego. While leading school operations, Wong was responsible for overseeing countywide accreditation with Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Inspired by her parents Sally Wong Avery and Dennis Avery, who were both community leaders, she continues their work. She is president of Balboa Park's House of China and serves on Mayor Todd Gloria's Asian and Pacific Islanders Advisory Board and the board of the Asian Pacific American Coalition. She also serves on the Board of Advisors at UC Berkeley and a trustee at Cambridge University in England.

As current vice president of the Avery-Tsui Foundation, Wong's focus remains on education and philanthropy.



SALLY WONGAVERY
Chair and CEO
Avery-Tsui Foundation

Sally WongAvery decided to study law as a result of her dedication to community and desire to serve others. After law school, she served as the executive director of the Chinese Service Center of San Diego. In this role, WongAvery spent countless hours helping thousands of newly arrived immigrants and monolingual seniors settle into San Diego and find jobs. She also served as an advisor to numerous Chinese and Asian community organizations. In addition, WongAvery was the first elected woman president of the Chinese Benevolent organizations, one of San Diego's oldest Chinese community organizations dedicated to educating the public about Chinese history and culture. To help preserve San Diego's Chinese heritage, she co-founded the Chinese Historical Society with Dorothy Hom in 1985. Serving the Chinese community and preserving the culture and history is of paramount importance in WongAvery's life.



CANDICE WOO
Founding Editor
Eater San Diego

Candice Woo is a San Diego-based food writer and restaurant reviewer who has contributed to national magazines and regional publications including San Diego CityBeat, the San Diego Union-Tribune, Edible San Diego, San Diego Magazine and Westways Magazine. Woo is also the founding editor of Eater San Diego which is part of the Vox Media Network.

At Eater San Diego, Woo helps shine a light on the region's amazing food scene, documenting the ever evolving restaurant landscape in all corners of the county. Recent posts on Eater San Diego include an updated list of the 38 Essential Restaurants in San Diego.

Woo is an active member of Slow Food San Diego. She knows about cooking, and she knows about the raw ingredients used in cooking as well.



Biocom

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Motta has more than 20 years of experience in the life sciences industry, serving in executive positions at companies like **Bayer Crop Sciences**, and has been chairman, president, chief executive officer, chief financial officer or chief operating officer of growth-stage, venture capital-backed companies. Most recently, he served as president and CEO of IRP Health.

Motta has extensive experience in launching novel products in developed and emerging markets, mergers and acquisitions and capital formation and brings a global perspective having led global organizations in Switzerland, Spain, The Netherlands, France, Japan, Mexico and the U.S.

"Miguel's strong history of leadership in life science companies will be important as we develop and execute on the strategic growth of Biocom California, both statewide and in San Diego," said **Joe Panetta**, president and CEO of Biocom California.

"Miguel will be responsible for customizing our member benefits to our San Diego members and helping us engage even more closely on San Diego policy issues," Panetta added. "Statewide, he will support the operational requirements and sophisticated implementation of our strategic plans in the short- and long-term. We are delighted to welcome him to the team."

Prior to Motta's appointment, the San Diego office, headquarters for the

statewide organization, operated without a permanent regional head and those duties fell on interim directors or were handled by Panetta who lives in San Diego.

"Biocom California has been a mainstay of the San Diego life science ecosystem for nearly 30 years, and I'm excited to leverage my experience and contribute to an organization that will continue to support the industry for years to come," Motta said. "I also appreciate the opportunity to participate in building statewide initiatives that will keep our industry strong."

'Customizing' for San Diego

Motta said his focus as head of the San Diego office will be to assess the needs of the region's life science industry and see where Biocom can add value.

"For example, many of our local companies could benefit from increased access to capital. San Diego is home to some of the most innovative companies in our industry, but the presence of venture capital is not as robust as in the Bay Area," he said. "By understanding the needs of our members, we believe we can create a San Diego customized offering to prepare members to successfully raise capital, then connect them with potential investors and partners and facilitate fund raising initiatives."

Motta added that he will also focus on policy issues in San Diego in key areas such as access to utilities, workforce housing, land use and zoning, transit/

transportation and the region's "complex permitting process."

"Throughout the pandemic, we've seen an increased area of need for our members surrounding assistance with building permits, and we'll continue to boost engagement in this area," he said. "The life science industry in San Diego continues to experience rapid growth, and we want to make sure our members and local government have the resources to accommodate the building and expansion of facilities."

Statewide Initiatives

Beyond advocating for San Diego, Motta said also intends to focus on statewide initiatives that align with the needs of Biocom members.

"Our industry is, for the right reasons, highly regulated thereby making public policy extremely important. Without freedom to operate and the right policies, the industry cannot flourish," he said, adding that the challenge will be to match the changing priorities of Biocom members with state's changing economic environment and policy cycles.

"Considering current market conditions, there's likely to be an increased focus on strategic partnerships, access to capital, and reducing burn rate," he said.

Motta said he is also committed to Biocom California's DEI initiative and to deepening its efforts in San Diego to attract and retain diverse talent, which he described as "a critical challenge."

"We must attract more talent to our



Joe Panetta
President & CEO
Biocom California

industry – more researchers, business professionals, entrepreneurs, and future executives," he added.

Global Goals

Motta said his overall goal for his new position is to accelerate our Biocom members' success by removing barriers to doing business in the life sciences industry.

"My plan is to create a world-class range of services to support our members through advocacy, access to capital, workforce development, access to savings, and professional high-value networking opportunities," he said.

He also said he wants to highlight San Diego as an attractive city for foreign business.

"I hope to bring my international experience to bear, developing even more global awareness to San Diego's dominance in life sciences," he said. "It's a fantastic opportunity to support thousands of life science companies to do what they do best, improve human health around the world." ■



FOUNDED: 1995
CEO: Joe Panetta
HEADQUARTERS: San Diego
BUSINESS: Member organization advocating for the life science industry
REVENUE: \$9,400,000 (2020)
MEMBERS: Over 1,600
NOTABLE: In addition to in-state offices in San Diego, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sacramento, Biocom California has satellite offices in Washington D.C. and Tokyo.