



CELEBRATING BLACK BUSINESS



Carol Dobbs Expands Boutique Offerings, Community Dialogue	Page 1
Avanath, COR Community Development Invest in OC	Page 1
Accolades Abound for IMRI's Martha Daniel	Page 28
Pacific Rim Capital Builds Leasing Giant Based on Meritocracy	Page 31
Community Action Partnership OC Leads Local Change	Page A-33
OC Black Chamber of Commerce Embraces Diversity	Page A-34
Fuel Shack Family Helps Fight Against COVID	Page A-35

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CELEBRATING BLACK BUSINESS

Tech Talk: Martha Daniel on Her Pioneering Career

Award-Winning Executive Draws Inspiration From Mother

By KEVIN COSTELLOE

Orange County tech entrepreneur **Martha Daniel** acknowledges she faced challenges being a woman and Black in the male-dominated world of technology.

Of course, there was plenty of opportunity to set things straight.

"It was always fun running rings around my male counterparts on projects," Daniel said.

She is the founder, CEO and president of Aliso Viejo-based **IMRI** and its cybersecurity division **Cytellix**.

In addition to cybersecurity, the two firms provide a variety of technology, program management, and engineering services.

Her firms have been mainstays on the Business Journal's annual list of largest women-owned businesses over the years.

She founded IMRI in 1992 after successful stints in the U.S. Navy and in the corporate world.

"Being a Black female, coupled with the doubts when I walked into the room, I was challenged many times," Daniel told the Business Journal on Jan. 23.

"But I was never intimidated because my military background prepared me for that level, because women were always in the minority there."

As the country celebrates Black History Month, she reflected on the long road since founding her company almost three decades ago.

OC Success

"I was told that I would not be able to be successful in Orange County as an African-American business, a Black-owned business," she said. "Obviously that was not a true statement."

In 2018, Daniel was inducted into the **Black Business Leader Hall of Fame**, while her business success and philanthropic work are long and varied.

Where did her success come from?

"My role model was my mother, who encouraged me to climb any mountain. She encouraged me even in situations in the South where I was restricted due to segregation," Daniel said.

She cites President **Joe Biden's** selection of **Kamala Harris** as his running mate and a wide array of backgrounds in his Cabinet choices as signs of diversity.

"I had the opportunity to meet with him some years ago to discuss small business initiatives," Daniel said. "He is genuinely a believer of America for everyone and not just a few."

Optimistic on Future

Looking ahead, she is optimistic as she sees more Black-owned businesses opening up lo-



IMRI corporate offices in Aliso Viejo

cally.

"We will see the next generation of Blacks and African Americans venturing more into entrepreneurship. I would anticipate that we will see a lot more African American and Black businesses," she said, pointing out the positive effects of greater educational opportunities.

The outlook includes the willingness to take the risk of owning a business rather than moving into the corporate world.

"I even hear some of my grandkids saying 'I want to have my own business,'" the CEO said.

"To me even just hearing that being said is nice."

Growth Plans

She said last year's combined revenue for IMRI and Cytellix dipped by about \$6 million to about \$10 million, but she is projecting a rebound to \$18.5 million in 2021 thanks in part to a recently awarded contract.

In addition, she is raising capital for the Cytellix division, where business has been growing due to increased threats to computer networks.

"Right now, we are excited about the growth of Cytellix," she said.

Cytellix handles the managed cybersecurity services for commercial and federal customers, while IMRI focuses more on consulting services and operations support for federal government and military contracts.

Daniel and her firms have been honored by the Business Journal several times over the years; she won a **Woman in Business** award from the paper more than two decades ago.

The technology the company provides its customers has changed plenty since then, but Daniel's success hasn't waned.

Last Oct. 7, she was one of five honored during the Business Journal's 2020 **Family-Owned Business Awards**.

Long Career

Daniel's tech career started in 1970 with computer science studies in junior college, followed by a Bachelor of Science degree in computer information systems from **California State Polytechnic University, Pomona**, and an MBA from the **University of La Verne**.

She also served as a cryptologist in the U.S. Navy, and later counted a successful corporate career, including roles as chief information officer at **FDIC/Resolution**



Martha Daniel
Founder, CEO, President
IMRI and Cytellix

2020 Family-Owned Business Award Winner

Trust Corp. and senior systems engineer at **IBM**.

She likes to say she has chosen the right people to build the company, including her daughter **Maronya Moultrie**, the chief operating officer and general counsel of IMRI.

Difficult 2020

Clients include the Navy, Army, and Air Force, as well as small and midsize businesses and Fortune 500 companies such as **Wells Fargo**, **Lockheed Martin**, and **IBM**, according to the IMRI website.



OC entrepreneur Daniel shown with Joe Biden in Washington in 2018

She notes that 2020 was a difficult year with the effects from the coronavirus.

"We've had our challenges because the majority of our work has been with the federal government," she said of parent company IMRI. "We anticipate that in 2021, where we are now, things will get back in order and we should be able to begin to increase our revenue to get more contracts."

She said that IMRI, with help from the Payroll Protection Program loans, has not had any pandemic-caused layoffs, but it did move a 24-hour security operations center to Arizona because of labor restrictions in California. ■

Voices from the Mentor: Martha Daniel's Tips for Black Would-Be Business Owners

Martha Daniel calls Orange County "receptive" and "very open" to fledgling entrepreneurs.

She offers these practical tips for would-be Black entrepreneurs and plenty of others looking to get a business foothold here:

■ "Your business plan has to be irrespective of your ethnicity.

■ "I would advise them to network and make sure they get the proper relationships built, and just open the door just as they would any place else.

■ "Once they know you and they understand what you're doing, the support of the community is just wonderful. That has been one of the foundations for my success

here in Orange County."

■ And in a piece of advice applicable to everyone: "Make sure that what you're selling is what they're buying."

Daniel says her mother provided her the inspiration to be a success when she was growing up in the segregated South:

"Mother always encouraged me by saying things will change and all you have to do is be ready with your education so when the door swings open you will be qualified to walk in. She was my role model—deprived of her education but gifted with so much wisdom."

— Kevin Costelloe

IMRI



- **FOUNDED:** 1992
- **HEADQUARTERS:** Aliso Viejo
- **FOUNDER/PRESIDENT/CEO:** Martha Daniel
- **BUSINESS:** cybersecurity, technology, program management, engineering services
- **REVENUE:** about \$10M in 2020; \$18.5M projected in 2021 for IMRI and Cytellix combined
- **EMPLOYEES:** 86 (IMRI and Cytellix)
- **NOTABLE:** raising capital for IMRI division Cytellix



“We may all have come on different ships, but we’re in the same boat now.”

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

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CELEBRATING BLACK BUSINESS

C Dobbs

► from page 1

“When COVID hit and we had to close almost three months, I was pondering what do I do? I have this background of creativity and I’d always wanted to get into my own [apparel] line but I’ve always been so busy. Being at home, eating everything out of the refrigerator, I thought, ‘Do something constructive’ and I started buying fabric and changing things up.”

Reinvigoration

That was the start of Dobbs’ namesake apparel line she sells in her store. Today, the C Dobbs line includes plenty of tie-dye and work-from-home separates, such as jogger sets and embellished tops she hand sews at home or in-between helping customers at the store.

The moves are part of a reinvigoration she has in the business as she steers it through the next phase of change in retail.

When Dobbs left her native Trinidad and Tobago to come Stateside in the early ’80s, retail looked a lot different.

She worked at Nordstrom for more than a decade, starting off as a stock associate and working her way up to managing a store, learning skills from what was once considered to be one of the standards for retail customer service and quality product.

When Dobbs tired of retail, she took a turn into medical sales, doing that for about a decade before eight years ago taking the leap to go into business for herself with a friend.

Together, the pair opened the boutique **Carol Rachelle** and they ran that store until 2016, when Dobbs decided to strike out on her own with C Dobbs.

The specialty boutique, with price points ranging from \$60 to \$1,000 and the sweet spot right around \$200, has a focus on European and local designers across men’s and women’s apparel, jewelry, accessories and footwear.

It’s a unique merchandise assortment within **Irvine Co.’s** Corona del Mar Plaza, a retail center just down the street from Fashion Island. The plaza is home to national retail names such as White House Black Market, Tommy Bahama and Chico’s, as well as Gulfstream restaurant.

“I’ve always wanted to have my own business since I was a little girl, so I opened a boutique in a challenging time,” Dobbs said.

“I’ve had lots of challenges in retail. Retail has taken a nosedive when it comes to competing with the internet, but I feel that things are going to change.”

Bankruptcies spurred by the internet’s rise and other shifts in consumer tastes have been the death knell for a lot of large chains, but Dobbs sees specialty as having a unique edge.

“There’s room for small boutiques now with stories and good customer service,” she said. “People want something unique and different and I think we still have a clientele that wants that and that we need to tap into.”

Specialty’s Advantage

C Dobbs seems an anomaly within the larger retail landscape, with the physical store generating most of the revenue and online very little.

Dobbs has a modest presence on social media, noting it’s a full-time job and she’ll eventually find the right person to build the store’s following there.

Instead, much of her efforts are focused on fueling what to do in real life as opposed to digital.

She’s continuing to expand the C Dobbs apparel line; last week showing off a nautical-inspired button detailing she added (by



hand; she doesn’t own a sewing machine) on the shoulders of white T-shirts, in addition to a custom design she created for a customer coming into the store that day.

She said this year she’ll add a seamstress in the store, an on-demand customization component for her clientele.

It’s a move many brands had taken pre-COVID. **Louis Vuitton’s** **South Coast Plaza** boutique being an example locally of the trend, with its on-site atelier, its first in the U.S., as brands look to go deeper into the personalization trend.

“There’s customers who come in and say ‘Can you make this for me? Can you make that for me?’ So I thought, ‘I’ll start working with my customers and customizing their design with them,’” Dobbs said. “That’s where I want to go with this business, where people have a personal touch of their own.”

She also said quality will continue to be a focus, an edge she said most specialty stores will have over department stores and chains that, in more recent years, have competed more on price than anything else.

“I’ve seen quality over the years in fashion decline. You can still get your designer-made clothing, but I’ve seen the big stores that had status, their merchandise has declined, and it stems from the competition,” Dobbs said. “They had to compete, so they lowered their standards and that’s sad. They need to get back to quality again.”

Dobbs, overall, said she is optimistic about business. She points to the Biden administration and the push for **Made in America**, which she said, for the retail industry, could prove to be a boon for small businesses such as her own.

Community and Dialogue

Dobbs also holds a positive outlook on another front.

She’s part of a founding group that started an organization called **Bleed the Same**, following the death of George Floyd.

The group is focused on ensuring the conversations around racial injustice and systemic racism continue and also help lead to real solutions.

“Before COVID got so crazy, we would have meetings at people’s homes and share about racial issues and share about systemic

racism to try and get Orange County, Newport Beach people aware that this exists,” she said of the group’s goal.

“We meet and we talk about what can we do to make change? How can we help kids, minorities, in school? How can we help with police reform? So, we’ve been brainstorming.”

Others from the community that are part of what Dobbs called Bleed the Same’s core team include **Christian Mungai**, community development pastor at **Mariners Church** in Irvine; **Keith Hill**, pastor at Mariners Church in Santa Ana; **Muriu Makumi**, pastor and life groups director at Mariners Church; author, speaker and teacher **Jean Hastings Ardell**; retired pro baseball player **Dan Ardell**; **Jean Snowden**; and **Aimee Wing**.

Dobbs said the responses from the community have been mixed.

“We have had people who were saddened and never knew it existed that Black people go through so much pain,” she said. “We’ve had people a little resistant saying ‘Oh, the Black Lives movement. There’s violence. I don’t want to get involved.’ We’ve had people say ‘yes, sign me up.’”

The group’s already made strides, with about a dozen meetings so far that have reached nearly 80 people through these conversations. Dobbs said there’s consideration of registering the group now as an official nonprofit.

“We’re not religious. We’re not political. We’re just humanitarians,” she said. “How can we heal the hearts of people and since what happened in the Capitol, I think that has made people more motivated like, ‘We’ve got to something. This place is going crazy.’”



Teaching Opportunity

A couple weeks ago, Dobbs had a young woman visit her store, eager to know more about Dobbs’ designs and inquiring why she didn’t teach others her skills. The question got the wheels turning in Dobbs’ head and, in the vein of Bleed the Same’s mission, she said once the pandemic is under control, she wants to bring inner-city kids or others into the store to teach them design skills, create their own pieces and then sell them in the store.

“I’m very optimistic. As a Black woman, I have Black nephews and Black nieces and when I look at the new administration, they can see their faces. They can see that there’s hope that one of these days they could be president, or they could have a position in government. They can see what America looks like. We’re a melting pot of all different races. That is hope for me,” she said.

Dobbs acknowledges there will be hurdles both at the social level and also at the business level, where retail remains challenged, but she ultimately feels an overall renewed energy.

“I feel like I’ve gotten a new vision,” she said, “and that’s what I’m excited about.” ■

C Dobbs



- **BUSINESS:** specialty retail
- **WHERE:** Newport Beach
- **FOUNDER/OWNER:** Carol Dobbs
- **NOTABLE:** Dobbs started her namesake apparel line in response to the pandemic, in addition to a local organization looking to combat racial injustice

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CELEBRATING BLACK BUSINESS

Pacific Rim Capital's CEO Believes in Actions, Not Words

Mills Sees Lots of Growth For His Leasing Company

By PETER J. BRENNAN

Since 1984, **Marc Mills** has worked alongside his colleague **David Mirsky**.

They believed a change in the tax code meant their leasing business could more efficiently work as a telemarketing model. Hence, in 1990, they formed **Pacific Rim Capital** with Mills, then 29, as the president and Mirsky, then 34, as the chief executive.



Marc Mills
CEO
Pacific Rim Capital

It lost \$6,000 in that first quarter but has been profitable ever since.

The Irvine-based firm leases forklifts, cranes and other material-handling equipment for large companies in the manufacturing and transportation industries.

The company provides operating leases in the U.S., Mexico and Canada with products made by manufacturers like **John Deere**, **Volvo** and **CAT**.

Pacific Capital is one of the nation's largest independent lessors that is not part of a bank.

They built their company to \$195 million in sales in 2019 with \$850 million in assets under management.

Minority Owned

In 2018, Pacific Rim won Honda's top indirect diverse supplier award.



Mirsky and Mills celebrate after Fuyo investment in 2019

"Considering a single plant can have more than 100 vehicles in operation, managing the fleet can be quite a burden," Honda said in a statement announcing the award.

"One innovative idea led by the supplier was an online signature process to decrease the lease contract processing time. Departments were spending too much time chasing down approvers to sign the lease paperwork, causing tight equipment deliveries and unnecessary follow up."

Last year's national unrest over racial tensions have provided opportunities for Pacific Rim, which since the early 1990s has been certified as a "corporate plus" minority-owned business by the **National Minority Supplier Development Council**.

"As a certified minority-owned supplier, many Fortune 500s are looking to provide opportunities to companies like ours," Mills

said.

Mills, who was born in Baltimore, said he has long followed the debate on racial injustice.

The Harvard graduate is a supporter of the **Black Lives Matter** movement, saying he prefers actions such as donations to the minority supplier group and support of organizations such as **CEO Action**, a group of more than 1,000 companies who have made a commitment to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

"I certainly see injustice out there," Mills said. "Things need to be addressed, not with talk but with action."

Meritocracy

The company's co-founders said their workforce is a blend of a variety of ethnicities based on meritocracy.

"Dave and I have always seen eye to eye about building a company based on meritocracy," Mills added. "We tend to judge people based on that."

After almost 40 years together, the pair has split up, as Mirsky decided to retire at age 65. On Jan. 1, Mills officially became CEO.

It's the second big change in the past two years.

In early 2019, Pacific Rim sold a 49% voting interest in the company to Japanese lessor **Fuyo General Lease Co.** Mills is still majority owner with 51%; Mirsky said he kept a 10% non-voting ownership stake.

Mills said the changes won't result in a winding down of local operations; in fact, it's looking to expand. The company has grown to 75 employees with plans to grow about 10% to 15% last year.

When contacted late last month, Mills said he was too busy to talk.

"I have no plans to retire," Mills told the Business Journal last year. "We've really refined the strategy over time, and I feel confident in the strategic direction of the company." ■

Pacific Rim Capital



- **FOUNDED:** 1990
- **FOUNDERS:** Dave Mirsky, Marc Mills
- **HEADQUARTERS:** Irvine
- **2019 ORIGINATION VOLUME:** \$250M
- **EMPLOYEES:** 75
- **NOTABLE:** Mills took over CEO spot at end of 2020, following retirement of business partner Mirsky

OC Black Chamber Entrepreneurs 2021

William N. Byers, Jr.
Owner-Explorer Studios
www.explorerstudios.com

Cathy Steele
Owner-Steele Travel Services
www.steeletravelservices.com

Enae Jackson-Atkins
Owner-Esquire Accounting
esquireaccounting.com

Dr. Jacqueline Eubany MD
Owner
Cardiovascular Wellness Institute
www.cvwelnessinstitute.com

Chuck Moore
Owner-Moore Educational Services
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Michael Adams
Owner-PressTime
michael@presstimeprinters.com

Sanford Coggins
Owner-VisionWise
<https://visionwisecapital.com/>

Martha Daniel
Owner-IMRI
<https://www.imri.com/>

Trina Fleming
CEO-WHW
<https://whw.org/>

Cash Sutton
Owner-Sutton Enterprises
<http://www.cash.eng.pro/>

William Jernigan
Owner-Apollo Tec
<https://www.apollotec.us/>

Timothy Coffey
Owner-TEC Constructors and Engineers
www.teccm.com

Joseph Johnson
Owner-Telein Group
www.telein.com

Abdi Ahmed
Owner-NetServe Systems
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State Farm Insurance
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The Orange County Black Chamber has been a strong positive force of dedicated men and women with the goal of helping African American and diverse business communities with access to information with the intention to improve, enhance and grow their businesses.

Visit ocblackchamber.com

CELEBRATING BLACK BUSINESS

Avanath

► from page 1

The topic of discussion was investing in economically disadvantaged communities.

"We primarily make investments in communities of color, and there are a lot of stigmas related to that and affordable housing here in the U.S.," Carter, who founded Avanath in 2008, told the Business Journal.

That's forced the apartment investor to often seek out nontraditional sources of funding, from churches to investors outside the country.

While the IPO for Aspire has been tabled for the time being, there's still plenty of interest in Avanath from those groups.

Last month, Avanath raised \$760 million in its fourth U.S. affordable housing fund. It is reported to be the company's largest such fund to date.

And money it's raising is now going to buy properties in Orange County, thanks in part to another local church group, Irvine's **Christ Our Redeemer AME Church**, the largest African American congregation in Orange County.

Fund Growth

Avanath's latest housing fund surpassed the firm's original goal of \$550 million.

This is partly due to a broadened financing pool that included institutional investors from Europe and Asia.

"European investors are very active in creating affordable neighborhoods in diverse communities," Carter said.

The effort to tap foreign markets kicked off about eight years ago, after Avanath closed its first fund for about \$120 million, he said.

The following funding rounds have nearly doubled with each close.

"In addition to speaking to the need for more affordable housing, our company's focus on ESG—or Environmental, Social and Governance sectors—has appealed to our investor base," Carter said.

The latest funding is part of Carter's prior stated goal to double its \$2.5 billion portfolio in the next three years.

Avanath, which acquires and operates affordable, age-restricted and workforce housing on behalf of institutional investors, has more than 80 properties with some 10,000 units in 43 cities across a dozen states.

COR Support

Carter said that Avanath has already deployed about 35% of the latest fund's capital on new buys throughout the country, including the first of two planned acquisitions in Orange County.

It recently closed on **The Grove Senior Apartments**, an 85-unit independent living community in Garden Grove.



Daryl Carter
CEO
Avanath Capital
Management



First OC buy for Irvine's Avanath

The property, just north of the 22 Freeway along Garden Grove Boulevard, sold for \$19.9 million, or about \$234,000 per unit, property records indicate.

It's the first local property for Avanath.

Though OC has served as a great home base for the firm, the company did not have any local projects, "which isn't for lack of trying," Carter previously told the Business Journal.

Prominent barriers to entry in OC are higher development costs and a reluctance from residents regarding affordable housing, which Carter referred to as the "not in my backyard" train of thought, he said.

Avanath's partner in the Garden Grove buy, property records indicate, is **COR Community Development Corp.**, a business development offshoot of Irvine's Christ Our Redeemer AME Church.

The Spectrum-area church and its business offshoot are led by the Rev. **Ralph Williamson**.

"Rev. Ralph and his predecessor, Rev. **Mark Whitlock**, have been tremendous partners for us," Carter said.

"The organization supports our effort to create upward mobility and support in the communities we invest in by providing strong resident services and after-school programming."

In addition to offering financing support, Irvine-based COR sees real estate deals as a way to expand the church's presence in disenfranchised communities.

"Just like Avanath, we take a holistic approach when looking at real estate, providing social services and resources for members of our communities," Williamson told the Business Journal.

One way COR is doing that is by preparing to become a vaccine center for Orange County residents and "providing new opportunities for members of the community to visit African American churches," he said.

Busy Season

COR and Avanath count more than 600 affordable housing units in the state, and have made several deals together in the past year.

The duo late last year entered the San Jose market, buying a historic apartment tower in that city for a reported \$17.5 million.

Avanath's also made recent investments in Boston, Seattle and Denver.

"We cater to people who have low to moderate incomes in very expensive locations throughout the country," said Carter, adding that residents typically make between \$30,000 and \$70,000 per year.

"A lot of owners don't like to take residents with Section 8 housing, while we have some projects with 100% Section 8 housing renters," said Carter, noting that Section 8 housing renters make up nearly half of the company's total portfolio.

"A good percentage of our revenues are derived from Section 8 housing, which has served as a stable source of business throughout the pandemic," Carter said.

About 15% of Avanath's portfolio is senior housing, with residents using pensions to pay rent, "which also has not changed during the pandemic."

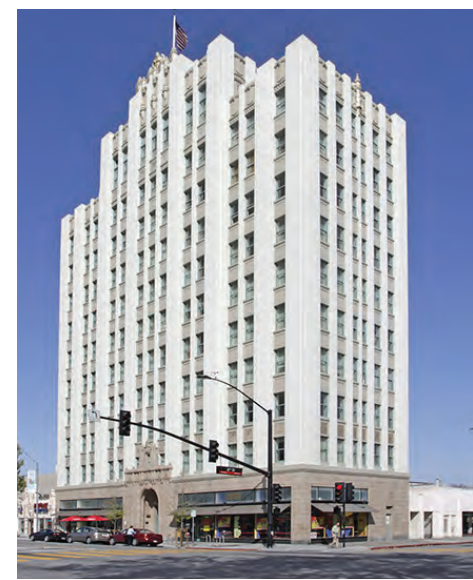
"We've been fortunate to have strong rental collection and occupancy rates throughout the pandemic."

A second OC property is slated to close soon for Avanath, according to Carter. It's not known whether COR is part of that forthcoming purchase.

IPO Plans

Avanath has nearly doubled in size in the past three years and there's no slowdown in sight, with plans to do that again in the next three years.

The company's portfolio is valued at \$2.5 billion, and the firm hopes "to reach \$5 billion in the next few years by expanding in new and existing markets," Carter said.



Vintage Tower: San Jose buy for Avanath, COR

Going public will aid in this expansion, especially in the Opportunity Zone realm.

An offshoot real estate investment trust of Avanath led by Carter, Aspire Real Estate Investor intended to become the first publicly traded REIT to pursue a strategy focused on affordable and workforce multifamily housing, and also expected to qualify as the first publicly traded Opportunity Zone Fund REIT listed on a national securities exchange.

After filing its IPO in October, Aspire launched its roadshow just after the election. It ultimately pulled the proposed offering, citing market conditions.

"Though we had some initial traction, concern about the election results as well as ongoing coronavirus issues dampened investment interest, and prompted us to press the pause button," Carter said.

"We may relaunch this year, but we are still evaluating our time frame."

That works with Avanath's schedule, and continued success with the company's private fund business.

"Private market valuations have fared better than public valuations throughout the pandemic, and we plan on giving it a few months to make sure we secure solid investments for our fund before launching another platform," Carter said. ■

Celebrating Black Business

Last June, amid the initial protests arising nationally from the death of **George Floyd**, the Business Journal made a commitment to improve and increase the coverage of Black-owned and led companies in Orange County.

That mindset has been reflected, we believe, in our ongoing work over the past eight months.

More can still be done. This month, through our **Celebrating Black Business** series of special reports, we're shining an even larger spotlight on notable businesses and executives in our community.

This week's focus includes news items and profiles on several of Orange County's better-known Black entrepreneurs, including longtime tech executives, fashion and finance leaders, and real estate investors.

There are common threads of community involvement among those in these pages. The local elders for Irvine's **Christ Our Redeemer AME Church**, a frequent co-investor with **Avanath Capital Management** in affordable housing projects in the state, include **Martha Daniel**, whose **IMRI** is profiled this week.

We welcome suggestions for additional companies and executives to cover over the course of this month, and the months going forward, at mueller@ocbj.com.

— Mark Mueller

Avanath Capital Management



- **FOUNDED:** 2008
- **CEO:** Daryl Carter
- **HEADQUARTERS:** Irvine
- **BUSINESS:** affordable housing investor, operator
- **PORTFOLIO:** 83 projects with value topping \$2.5B
- **NOTABLE:** made first OC buy in Garden Grove





Leading Lasting Change Through Addressing the Root Causes of Poverty

Community Action Partnership Orange County (CAP OC) has fought for the underserved and the marginalized in the Orange County community since 1965. Born of the Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty, the organization has always worked to support struggling community members through solutions for survival and building pathways to stability.

Today, the challenges both Orange County and the country face feel in part like a replay of 1965. There are largely unified pushes for social justice, racial equity and economic equality, except they're complicated by a global pandemic that has magnified social and cultural disparities and spawned hunger and economic crises.

Enter CAP OC President and CEO Gregory C. Scott

Scott is a social entrepreneur executive, leadership coach, sought after speaker, and trainer. He joined CAP OC in early 2018, has dedicated his life to ending social injustices and building economic opportunity for the underserved. At CAP OC, Scott leads his teams in stabilizing people in crisis by supplying them with food & rental assistance and homelessness prevention. CAP OC then applies a Whole Family Approach, working across generations to provide grandparents, parents and children the specific tools they need to set their own goals and achieve long-term positive change and stability. By addressing the **root causes that perpetuate poverty**, like poor education, employment readiness and systemic racism, CAP OC empowers people to find their way out of poverty and into roles of contributing to the economic health of their communities.



Scott feels a discourse on addressing poverty's root causes to lower the poverty rate and close the income gap—especially for our most vulnerable residents—is overdue. "Before the pandemic, poverty and racial injustice divided us, but now multiple crises have exacerbated the calls to bring parity to access to healthcare, good paying jobs, equal treatment under the law and affordable housing," Scott said. "It will take all of us to move the needle on eradicating poverty and ending injustices, whether they be economic or racial, that persists with our neighbors living in impoverished conditions. Our work at Community Action Partnership shares that commitment."

For Scott, the solution comes down to three elements working in a coordinated, equitable system: Nimble nonprofits, the public policy of state and local government and the influence of the private sector. With this, he feels, a vision to accelerate change in our communities can take shape.

Scott wants to send the message to leaders of nonprofits, businesses, healthcare entities and educational institutions that deepening connections is the key to innovating our future. Through collaboration on crucial yet empowering issues like workforce development and job retraining, Orange County can equip underserved populations to pursue the opportunities that will put them on sustainable paths to work, live and thrive. Scott is also an aspiring author, and mentor to other leaders, entrepreneurs, and business leaders in the community.

“COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF ORANGE COUNTY

aims to be a catalyst for creating vibrant communities by preventing and ending poverty through stabilizing and empowering people with the resources they need when they need them. This is built on the promise that every family should have an opportunity for success. Our goal in the midst of economic inequity is that a good quality of life is not out of reach for those dealing with poverty. Since 1965, we have boldly addressed the root causes of poverty by walking side-by-side with individuals, families, our youth, and seniors to ensure their immediate needs are met, while also providing the tools and resources they need.”

—Gregory C. Scott,
President & CEO



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ACTION
PARTNERSHIP
ORANGE COUNTY

capoc.org





Embracing Diversity to Grow Your Business

For over 37 years, The Orange County Black Chamber of Commerce has prided itself on being a multi-cultural, cross-cultural and diversified chamber providing Access to Information. Our mission has strongly supported our minority and diverse communities.

Now it's time to revisit opportunities and dialogue about ways to improve our business acumen regarding diversity, relationship building, entrepreneurship, economic development and review cultural changes to help enhance our business community, along with looking at harsh health issues.

Over the years, the Black Chamber has embraced diversity and encouraged our members to broaden potential networking circles. The chamber also took a business leadership role to ensure that when veterans return home from the battlefield, they will find an opportunity to continue their education, learn new skills, and find a place in the workplace or obtain resources to start a business.

We worked tirelessly with community partners to encourage underserved youths to stay in school, obtain a college degree and receive mentoring to find a valuable place in this competitive, technologically demanding workforce.

As we move forward this year, we are committed to the continuation of the opportunity to enhance, improve, and grow your business. For added value, we offer our members webinars featuring supplier diversity, business development, financial literacy, educational and career technical educational opportunities. We also offer a Department of General Services Matchmaking Event, created to help those looking to match up with prime contractors and corporate suppliers. A small business disabled veterans program is in the works too.

As we work through these extraordinary times, we are updating our website to include a special business directory section. If you have a minority business and you are



McDonald

interested in being part of our business directory, please go to our website <https://www.ocblackchamber.com/join-today-fill> out the form completely, and we will do the rest.

Again, thanks for your continued support and participation. We could not have reached this milestone without your support. It was very much appreciated and needed!

We at the Black Chamber are always looking for ways to help you improve, enhance and grow your business—with Access to Information.

For more information, please contact Bobby McDonald at bobby.mcdonald@ocblackchamber.com or visit us at www.ocblackchamber.com.

2021 Black Chamber Access to Information Opportunities

Networking and Community Engagement Virtual Events
Business Webinars & Educational Webinars
Newsletter: Sponsorships and Supplying articles about business
Business Supplier Diversity Matchmaking Opportunity
Website Development and Multi Media Services Availability
Veterans and Business Golf Classic
Black History Month Future Leader Luncheon
Black Chamber Annual Banquet
Black Chamber Business Directory
Black Organizations and OC Black Leaders List

Black Chamber Education Fund

Bricks/Bridges Student Mentorship & Scholarship Programs
Inaugural Business Entrepreneurial Board Mentor Program
Student internships
Educational Services

Cal State Fullerton TITANS of Tassel

Cal State Fullerton is No. 1 in California and No. 3 in the nation for awarding bachelor's degrees to **underrepresented students**, many of whom are the first in their families to graduate from college. CSUF is a catalyst for Titan-sized transformations — inspiring students' paths while providing the support they need to achieve their dreams of **earning a degree**.

Learn more at campaign.fullerton.edu/tassel



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THE CAMPAIGN FOR CAL STATE FULLERTON

The Fuel Shack Owners Help Fuel the Fight Against COVID-19

Since December 2018, retired physicians Yolanda and David Quam have worked tirelessly to build The Fuel Shack in San Clemente into a successful business. Featured in the "Daily Pilot" and "The Local Dish Magazine," and rated #13 in Yelp's Nationwide "Top 100 Places to Eat," The Fuel Shack is no stranger to accolades for its delicious breakfast and lunch offerings.

Quoting famed poet Maya Angelou, Yolanda states, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel." This sums up the experience at The Fuel Shack, where you can refuel the mind, body, and soul.

While they rely on Yolanda's lifelong passion for cooking to keep customers coming back, The Fuel Shack utilizes Cox Business Security Solutions (CBSS) for safety and monitoring, in addition to Cox Business phone and internet solutions to stay connected to customers and vendors and power operations.

"We were broken into the first year," Yolanda said. "Alarms came on around 4:30 a.m. and I could immediately see the intruders on camera via my mobile phone and send photos to the police. With these photos, they were able to connect the suspects to nearly 30 robberies in the area."

Fortunately, the Fuel Shack was unscathed.

But, last year, as the business was thriving, everything changed with COVID-19. When the pandemic began to impact Southern California in March 2020, David and Yolanda temporarily shut down The Fuel Shack for a higher, and familiar, calling.

David was recruited into the COVID-19 effort and asked to serve as a chief medical officer to reopen one of Southern California's oldest hospitals and transform it into a surge hospital.

"We took a hospital that was out of commission, unpacked the boxes, and cleaned and disinfected everything. It's been a huge, huge undertaking," David said. "We had



to build an entire hospital, except for the walls, in two weeks. It took an army of people from Dignity, Kaiser Permanente, the state, and the county."

"Really what we provide for the community is a relief valve, a safety valve if you will," he added. "Depending on how this pandemic plays out in Southern California, there's a possibility that hospitals can be overwhelmed. If that happens, we can take some of those patients that might be in the intensive care unit on ventilators."

Despite the herculean effort it took to reopen the hospital, David is glad he came out of retirement to help in the fight against COVID-19.

"I knew I wanted to pitch in and help. It's hard to sit on the sidelines when something like this is going on," David said. "I've been involved with a lot of things in my career. This is one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. Watching

this army of people come together, with the sole purpose of relieving the burden of COVID-19 on the community. It'll be special to me for the rest of my life."

David and Yolanda have an unwavering commitment to helping people and giving back to the community they love so much. In July 2020, they were able to reopen The Fuel Shack and stay open serving customers Tuesday through Sunday from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. in a wonderful family atmosphere. The couple is a perfect example of servant leadership, and they encourage everyone to do their part and contribute if they can.

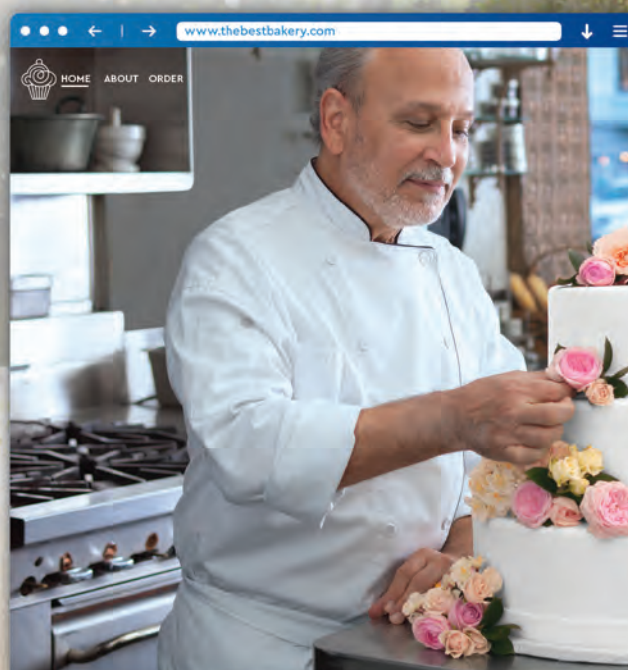
COVID-19 has changed how so many businesses have to operate these days, but Yolanda appreciates the peace of mind that comes with having Cox Business Security Solutions.

She uses Cox Business Security Solutions to primarily check on her business when she is away and make sure that they are adhering to state guidelines for restaurants operating during the pandemic. She is grateful that her culinary dream is still a reality and it shows when she grabs one of her brightly colored bull horns and walks around outside the restaurant asking patrons and bystanders to raise their hands if they are excited about life and ready to celebrate every day forward.



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Celebrating Black Business

"Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed." - Booker T. Washington

