WOMEN OF THE YEAR
An Orange County Business Journal Special Report and Custom Content

NEW OWNER CHARTS NEXT LEG FOR AVIONICS FIRM
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Avionics Vet Found Own Way in Men-Led Field

Meets Worker Shortfall Challenge as Work Builds

By CHRIS CASACCHIA

Kathryn Brewer is charting the next leg of growth for Leading Edge Avionics.

The company, which shares a 10,000-square-foot hangar at John Wayne Airport with Martin Aviation, is expanding operations in June to Chino Airport in San Bernardino County to meet rising demand in an industry plagued with workforce shortages.

“We can still accommodate [new and existing customers] and provide an opportunity for the company to grow,” said Brewer, who recently acquired Leading Edge from aviation entrepreneur Mike Manclark for an undisclosed price.

Leading Edge specializes in general aviation retrofits for avionics, such as navigation, Wi-Fi, flight management, GPS and transponder systems.

Call it a comeback for Brewer, who returns to the aviation sector after a nearly five-year run leading a marketing firm with her son, Jeff.

She’s flourishing in the male-dominated industry, but it took time to navigate the terrain. She said she avoided comparing herself to colleagues over the years, especially men, asked a lot questions, and wasn’t intimidated if her technical expertise didn’t match that of her co-workers.

“I focused on creating a collaborative culture, one in which the team learned or came to understand its importance to the overall vision and mission,” she said.

During her career, she’s been invited to Lockheed Martin to see F-22s roll off the assembly line, spent years at a manufacturer that produced 80% of the aerostucture of the Tomahawk Cruise Missile, and oversaw operations that produced hundreds of discrete parts for nearly every model of U.S. military and commercial aircraft.

“I find this industry very exciting, and very interesting,” she said. “It challenges me in a way no other industry has challenged me in terms of technical expertise, variety of disciplines.”

Business Boost

Business has been fueled by a looming deadline to meet federal aviation guidelines for a technological upgrade that improves aircraft tracking.

Most planes are required to install an automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast system by 2020.

The technology essentially improves ground-based radar systems with precise tracking using satellite signals. The Federal Aviation Administration adopted the regulation in 2010.

The upgrade allows pilots to see the same type of displays that flight controllers monitor, such as aircraft in the sky, hazardous weather and terrain, and other important flight information, such as temporary restrictions. The FAA says the technology reduces the risk of runway incursions, provides wider geographic coverage, and improves overall performance by saving time and money due to increased efficiency, while reducing fuel burns and emissions.

Meeting the deadline has prompted many plane owners and management companies to upgrade other systems so they can have them done all at once, particularly Wi-Fi, which is coveted by business charter passengers and leisure travelers alike. The improvements have also benefited Leading Edge’s bottom line.

“We cover the general aviation spectrum,” said Brewer, who’s spent more than 25 years in the aerospace sector, including nearly a decade in the Tomahawk Cruise Missile project.

“We transitioned to the aerospace sector after serving in the military, some of whom have funded or transitioned to the aerospace sector after service.”

The need has become so glaring that Congress is trying to close the gap. Senators Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., Jerry Moran, R-Kan., and Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., sponsored the Aviation Maintenance Workforce Development Pilot Program introduced on March 7.

The program is focused on recruiting the next generation of aviation workers, including skilled and experienced avionics technicians.

The company competes against Affordable Avionics, Advantage Avionics and Howards, among others.

Keeping Up

It added seven technicians in the past year, but like competitors is struggling to fill open jobs.

The global aviation industry is facing critical shortfalls of maintenance technicians, pilots and cabin crews as travel continues to rise due to decreased passenger prices.

“Because of all this activity, we’re seeing a lot of openings,” Brewer said.

The shortfalls come during a boom in complex aviation equipment and products, an aging workforce, and a diminishing pipeline of former military personnel, some of whom have transitioned to the aerospace sector after service.

Inhofe and Blumenthal introduced the Aviation Workforce Transition Program Act of 2018, which would allow the FAA to use federal grants to help modernize the training of the workforce.

The program focuses on training aviation technicians in a more efficient and cost-effective manner.

“By training young people to not only respond to the growth of the aviation industry, but help them continue to respond to its needs, we can help them get into the workforce,” Inhofe said.

The program is expected to cost $13 million, and the FAA would be able to fund it through a set-aside program.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation approved the program, and is expected to report it to the Senate. The House of Representatives version of the bill is expected to be introduced in the near future.

Women-Owned Industry

OC SECTORS’ STRENGTH

Chart shows business segments in four categories where 20% or more of the independent enterprises—no branch offices or companies based outside OC—are owned by women, and the total number of local firms owned in those industries.

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Source: Inside Prospects Inc.
Research by Paul Hughes

Note: Some numbers rounded

Graphic by Bronte Miller
Wells Fargo has long worked to enable women in business. In fact, since 1995, Wells Fargo has loaned over $58.6 billion to women business owners.

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She Adapted to Fit In and Now Stands Out in a Crowd

Fuel Distributor Owner Encourages Other Women

By MEDHIA DIMARTINO

Two out of four images on Koch Industries Inc.’s website were of women. One appears to be building something, while another, decked in protective gear, is standing in front of a wall of barrels, her picture a link to “rewarding careers.”

The petroleum industry was very different when Liz McKinley, founder of Huntington Beach-based fuel distributor Pinnacle Petroleum Inc., went for a job interview at Wichita, Kan.-based Koch in 1981. The company, executives said, would provide on-the-job training—she’d start out as a scheduler and work toward becoming a commodity trader.

She sounded glamorous for a girl from Stillwater, Oklahoma,” she said. “So I took the job, and it was not until I got there that I realized I was the only woman.”

Brewer said. “There was tremendous enthusiasm for a girl from a commodity trader. They say, ‘hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.’” McKinley said. “I had a ton of money for the company, and I just thought, ‘That’s crazy, I’m out of here.’ I quit and took some of my customers with me.”

She launched Pinnacle Petroleum in 1985, running it with three employees from her home in Huntington Beach for about six years. “I had the copy machine in the bathtub, and we were all jammed in this little room, but I didn’t really want us to get an office because I enjoyed being home where the kids were after school,” she said. “We finally got to the point where we couldn’t all sit together anymore, and I had to get an outside office.”

McKinley had few peers in the field at the time and plenty of skepticism. “I felt I had a real knack because it’s a relationship-based sale, and it’s a long-term sale,” McKinley said.

Firm Footing

After opening an office for Koch in Birmingham, Ala., McKinley moved on to work as a commodities trader at other fuel companies. The job was rewarding but stressful—you were only as good as your last trade.

She instead pivoted to wholesale distribution and established and ran what she says was a successful division for her last employer. “I felt I had a real knack because it’s a relationship-based sale, and it’s a long-term sale,” McKinley said.

Shortly afterward, the owner sold the company, and in the process failed its promise of an annual bonus to its workforce. “They say, ‘hell hath no fury like a woman scorned,’” McKinley said. “I had a ton of money for the company, and I just thought, ‘That’s crazy, I’m out of here.’ I quit and took some of my customers with me.”

Brewer and Manclark, who worked together for years at Leading Edge Aviation Services, in 1993, a lengthy process that ensures a company is woman-owned and provides new business opportunities, such as the ability to bid on contracts.

The state of California’s Small Business Enterprise Program requires California businesses to actively work with, and establish and run what she says was a successful division for her last employer. “I felt I had a real knack because it’s a relationship-based sale, and it’s a long-term sale,” McKinley said.

McKinley grew Pinnacle Petroleum’s revenue, which today is just under $200 million, supported by a staff of 22. The firm operates as a wholesaler-distributor—it buys fuel from refiners and sells to end-user accounts, such as government agencies and commercial fleets; several customers are Fortune 100 companies. Its revenue is tied to the price of fuel, while its sales volume has increased steadily over the past 24 years. She said.
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5 Tips to Help Women Become More Confident Investors

In more than 90 percent of families, women are either solely responsible for financial decisions, or make those decisions in conjunction with their partner.1 And by 2022, women are expected to control more than 60 percent of the wealth in the United States—giving women immense power over the financial health of not only their own situation, but the country as a whole.2

Since the vast majority of women—80 to 90 percent3—will be solely responsible for their finances at some point in their life, preparation is imperative, especially in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Here are 5 tips that women can follow to better prepare themselves in advance of a life-changing event:

1. Don’t undervalue yourself

It’s so important to understand that while being a woman means thinking about investing differently, it should not be looked at as a setback or an obstacle to overcome. Women are just as capable at investing as men when it comes to math and finances.4 In fact, women actually tend to be more decisive than men when it comes to figuring out their retirement expenses, how much health care coverage they will need once they retire, and other critical financial decisions.5

Start by familiarizing yourself with your or your family’s financial situation, from income to expenses, investments to IRRs. Get all that information in one place, so that it’s easily accessible if you need to refer to it. Schedule a meeting with your financial advisor to talk about “what-if” scenarios like death or divorce, and talk through how you or you and your partner/spouse might want to tweak your portfolio to account for unexpected life changes. Also, take advantage of any “financial wellness” programs that might be offered through the workplace—these are easy, low-stress ways to become familiar with the ins-and-outs of investing and financial planning, and you don’t have to take time away from the office to make it happen.

2. Surround yourself with a strong team of experts

You don’t have to navigate the entire process of planning for the future alone. Financial planning—especially for uncertain events—can often seem overwhelming at first. If you decided that you wanted to learn how to swim, would you simply jump in the water without any advice? Or would you seek out an expert who knows how to safely navigate the water? The same goes for getting started with financial planning: start by finding an expert—or a team of experts—who can help you navigate the process from the beginning. You need to make sure that you have a team of decision-makers, so start by identifying who you need to talk to in order to make decisions. At a simple level, it’s probably an accountant and somebody in the financial services industry. But your team can also involve people outside of the industry. Do you have a family member you trust, for instance? Identify who’s on your team.

3. Plan for an uncertain future by thinking about the short-term

One of the most important tips for ensuring financial success in the midst of an unexpected event—like illness, divorce, or death—is to keep some cash reserves accessible in stable investments or bank accounts, which can be easily accessed should you need to make an unplanned withdrawal. Work with your financial advisor to make sure you and your family members have the right kind of life insurance or disability insurance to supplement your finances immediately in the event of a tragedy.

4. Don’t be afraid to take some risks

It has become generally accepted based on the results of numerous studies that women tend to be more risk-averse and that’s one factor that hurts them from the get-go. Since women tend to be more risk-averse than men, they are less likely to take chances with their investments. And while that’s not necessarily a negative, it can leave women further behind than their male counterparts when it comes to saving for the future.

To avoid missing out on potential investments because of a fear of risk, work with your financial advisor to understand how much risk your portfolio can take while still achieving your baseline goals. Talking with a professional can help overcome some fear associated with investing, while helping you find a balance between too much risk and not enough. They can also help you break down the decision-making into what you need to know to overcome that fear.

5. Start planning for the future early

It’s crucial that women begin planning for long-term financial success early, not only because women tend to live longer, but also because they tend to make less than men. Saving for retirement as a woman, for instance, means needing to save an average of 26 percent more than men to make up for wage gaps and differences in life expectancy.6 The retirement gap between men and women is a real thing, but it’s not insurmountable with a little advanced planning. Make a list of long-term financial goals, and visualize the kind of life you want to lead in your retirement years. Then, make a plan for getting there.

Everybody thinks that saving for retirement is buying the hot stock. That’s not how life works. The key is understanding what asset allocation is, which helps you design your blend of investments. And you need to also understand diversification, which is about buying various kinds of investment forms under different conditions.

The Bottom Line

Whatever unexpected events life might throw at you, it’s important you’re surrounded by a team of experts to help protect the wealth that you’ve worked so hard to attain. The right team will help you create a plan so that you can enjoy the present knowing that whatever comes your way, your financial future will be protected.

Whether you’re the steward of family assets or want to protect the wealth you’ve worked so hard to build, The Private Bank can help. For more information contact Laura Dang at 949-553-4307 or email laura.dang@unionbank.com.

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3. ICMI, “Why we need to bridge the financial literacy gap between women and men” September 2016.
5. Personal Money Services, “Men vs. Women in Questions of Personal Finance”

Wealth planning strategies have legal, tax, accounting and other implications. Prior to implementing any wealth planning strategy, clients should consult their legal, tax, accounting and other advisers.

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It's spring break season, and if you recently had your child home from college or have a high school senior planning to attend college next year, tuition costs are likely on your mind. Hopefully you were able to plan and save when your child was young, but, regardless, below are some additional pointers to help plan for and minimize costs…and avoid costly mistakes.

**Paying for School**

**Student aid**
If your child is applying for federal loans or grants, a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed each year of college. Even if you don’t think you’d qualify for federal aid, it’s worth it for college students and their parents to complete the FAFSA, because schools often use the information for other aid. So, if your child has not done so yet, work together to renew the FAFSA before the following deadlines:

For attendance from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, forms can be submitted from Oct. 1, 2017, to June 30, 2019. But the amount of aid available is limited and it’s given out on a first-come, first-served basis, so it’s best to apply as early as possible.

**Scholarships**
Explore grant and scholarship opportunities through the college or affiliation sites (e.g., veteran, firefighter, church organizations).

Don’t assume you won’t qualify for aid or low-cost loans. Many assets, like homes and retirement accounts, are not counted in the aid/loan calculation. If you have other children in college, that might also lower your expected contribution. It’s worth applying to find out. Make sure to document qualified education expenses if utilizing college saving plans (e.g., 529) plans or Education Savings Accounts) or IRAs to pay for college.

**IRAs and savings accounts**
Remember that withdrawals from qualified education accounts and IRAs used to pay for qualified expenses must be made in the year the expense is incurred. Withdrawals made in a different year are considered non-qualified withdrawals and subject to taxes and penalties.

**Staying Out of Debt**

**Build a budget**
Work with your child to set a budget and strongly encourage her to stick with it. Don’t forget to include travel expenses between school and home.

**Credit cards**
Instruct your child to avoid on-campus credit card sign-up booths and discuss the negative impact of high-interest debt.

**Control spending**
If your child already has credit cards, discuss the importance of controlling usage. When your child uses a credit card for a discretionary expense, have her save the same amount in a savings account.

**Managing Expenses**

**Used versus new**
Purchase used books and classroom materials. Most campuses have online sites for sale/exchange of used books and materials.

**Go off-campus**
Buy school and household supplies off-campus. Such products are usually cheaper at off-campus budget stores or chains.

**Go car-free**
Leave the car at home. This will save on parking fees, gas, maintenance and possibly insurance costs. Uber, Lyft or a bike can be more affordable ways to travel.

**Be smart about gifts**
Have your child request money or campus bookstore gift cards from family/friends for holidays and birthdays.

**Meal planning**
Research school meal plans to save on food. If your child does not know how to cook, help her learn a few quick and healthy recipes.

**Part-time job**
Have your student consider applying for an on-campus job. Certain jobs, such as note taking for disabled students for classes your child is already enrolled in, can allow your child to earn extra money without affecting her studies.

**Medical Costs**

**Explore nearby options**
If your child is covered under your medical plan, make sure to go over the plan to identify in-network doctors and facilities near campus.

**Flexible spending accounts**
Have dependent children save receipts for any medical expenses that may be reimbursable through a health Flexible Spending Account (FSA) or deductible on your tax return.

Hopefully these pointers will help you get your college student off on the right financial footing and teach them money-management skills that will extend well beyond their college years.

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**Daniel Fan**
Daniel Fan serves as the Director of Wealth Planning for First Foundation Advisors. In this role, he oversees the firm’s Wealth Planning department and advises clients on sophisticated wealth strategies. Mr. Fan has over 15 years of experience as a Wealth Planner and specializes in evaluating and optimizing all clients’ wealth plans to meet their financial needs. He works closely with all teams across First Foundation and ensures he delivers a personalized experience to support all clients. Mr. Fan is a Certified Financial Planner™and holds his Juris Doctorate and Master’s in taxation from Pepperdine University School of Law and Golden Gate University respectively. He earned his Bachelor’s degree from the University of California, Los Angeles. Contact him at 949-535-5351 or dfan@ff-inc.com.
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Developing the Pipeline of Women Executives

Find out how sponsorship plays a key role in growing the number of women in the C-Suite

by Susan Pound, Executive Vice President, Regional Sales Manager, Wells Fargo & Company

Though the number of women in the C-suite continues to steadily increase, the rate at which those numbers climb is significantly lower than many would like to see. One of the most effective ways to increase representation is for female executives to sponsor the next generation of promising women who can enact change in future boardrooms.

Today women in many fields are advancing the executive ranks faster and further than their predecessors, but what exactly are they doing to develop the female executive pipeline? To ensure the number of women in the C-suite continues to grow, it would behoove those with the ability and means to sponsor promising up-and-coming female employees.

Despite modest gains in recent years, women are still severely under-represented in corporate suites and boardrooms. In 2016, only 24% of international C-suite positions were occupied by women—a slight improvement from 16% in 2010. Though difficult to say whether women’s advances in corporate leadership result directly from other women’s help, women who receive mentorship or sponsorship are paying it forward. 32% of women say they have a mentor at work and 65% of those mentored go on to become mentors themselves, thus perpetuating the developmental cycle.

A prime example of paying forward lessons learned and offering expertise to promising women is Betsy Duke, chairman of the Wells Fargo Board of Directors and first female chairperson of a top U.S. bank. “Mentors,” Duke says, “help to develop the next generation. It’s important to embrace being a role model because people look at you [and they see that] and they say, ‘I can do that.’”

While mentorship programs have been around for a long time, and most of us are familiar with them, what exactly is sponsorship? How does a sponsor help others advance? And do women need sponsors more than men do?

The impetus is on us. If we want to develop the next generation of women, we need to step up and act as sponsors to help them.

Not your typical sponsor
A corporate sponsor isn’t the person to confide in about personal issues, but in many ways, a corporate sponsor can make all the difference between stalemate and growth.

Research has shown that women who speak up and promote themselves heavily in the workplace can be penalized. Men are used to highlighting their accomplishments and speaking up when they want more responsibility, visibility, or a promotion. This double standard has plagued women for decades.

Mentors help others, informally or formally, navigate their careers by providing guidance for career choices and decisions. But sponsors go further. A sponsor who uses strong influence to help a woman obtain high-visibility assignments or jobs can make a real difference in that woman’s career. By promoting another woman, you help her bypass the double standard we have all learned to live with for so long.

Which should you be?
Are corporate sponsorship programs common? Not really. In 2017, about half of US companies run women-oriented mentorship programs, but less than a third run sponsorship programs. If you are looking for ways to help other women advance, a formal sponsorship program may not be a ready option in your company. But that need not stop you from inquiring or putting in a sponsorship.

As a sponsor you can:
► Connect protégés to career opportunities
► Advocate for a protégé’s advancement
► Publicly endorse protégés
► Expect high performance in return
► Help protégés confront and interrupt bias
► Prepare your protégé for the challenges in her executive roles

Keep this in mind: mentors advise; sponsors act. A sponsorship requires more time on behalf of both the sponsor and the protégé—but it can also be far more rewarding and increase the pipeline of female executives in your company.

Why be a sponsor?
Sponsoring can make you a more engaged, effective employee. This may sound counter-intuitive, until you consider the tightly knit sponsor-protégé relationship. Your protégé will keep you in touch with what’s happening at different levels in the organization; this, in turn, can lead to growth in your own career. A protégé can help you look at your environment and own role through a different set of eyes; your protégé’s approach to handling issues may in fact help improve your own.

But there is another good reason that tips the scales in favor of sponsorship: the personal pride and satisfaction that comes from helping another woman grow. Being a sponsor may prove one of the most rewarding aspects of your job and by helping develop the pipeline of the future female C-suite occupants, you have a chance to pay it forward and impact history.

Susan Pound
Susan Pound is an executive vice president and region sales manager for the Middle Market Banking South region, where she is responsible for new business development across twelve states. As a region sales manager, Susan provides sales leadership in collaboration with senior leaders, division sales managers, and partners to develop growth strategies for the Florida, Georgia, Mid-South, South Texas, and Southern divisions. She also leads the business development team for the region.

Susan’s middle-market banking and corporate finance experience includes 28 years with Wells Fargo and its predecessor banks. Her prior roles include division sales manager, Commercial Strategies group manager for the West and Mountain regions, regional vice president of the Atlanta Middle Market Banking office, director in the Consumer & Retail Group Investment Bank, and senior underwriter for the Georgia division of Middle Market Banking. Before joining Wells Fargo, she worked for the Bank of Boston in corporate finance.

Susan received a B.B.A. in management information systems from the University of Georgia in Athens. She earned her M.B.A. from Northeastern University in Boston and graduated with honors. Susan also completed the Executive Leadership Program at Wachovia, a Wells Fargo predecessor.

Susan co-chairs Wells Fargo’s Women’s Market Growth Initiative for Middle Market Banking and is the executive sponsor for the Women’s Business Development Officer Network. She is a past board member of the Middle Market Banking Diversity & Inclusion Council and a past president of the Atlanta chapter of Wells Fargo Volunteers. Susan is also a passionate supporter of The Trust for Public Land, a national non-profit organization that helps conserve land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places.

Contact Susan at 408-877-6659 or Susan.Pound@wellsfargo.com.
The accounting industry, like many industries, has long been populated primarily by men at the upper rungs of corporate leadership ladders. As the business world continues to evolve into a more inclusive and diverse workforce, women are advancing to higher management levels across numerous sectors.

In the 1970s and 1980s, female CPAs were expected to wear skirt suits or dresses, and women’s pant suits were rarely seen. It was clear that the accounting industry was obviously a male dominated profession. Nevertheless, this did not discourage women who were serious about their careers. As the 1980s progressed, two out of five women began to further their education by attending college and graduate school.

In the United States women have reached a tipping point in the accounting industry, now comprising more than 61% of all accountants in the United States. In 2011, approximately 38% of CPA firm senior managers were women. By 2017, that number soared to 47%. At the partner level, however, women make up just 24% of partners within a firm, according to Catalyst Workplaces that Work for Women. And while the pay gap between men and women in senior accounting roles is closing, the gap is still significant and persistent.

Susan Levinstein, CPA and Partner with HMWC CPAs & Business Advisors in Tustin, heads the firm’s Women-Owned Business practice. As one of six female partners (out of twelve) at HMWC, Levinstein says the ascension of women into corporate leadership roles begins to close the overall economic opportunity gap.

Levinstein points to several female trailblazers who continue to inspire in the accounting industry. The Journal of Accountancy prominently showcases women such as: Christine Ross, who on December 21, 1899, became the first woman CPA in the United States. She earned certificate no. 143 in New York City. Mary E. Lewis received her CPA certification no. 1404 in 1939. By 1947, Lewis had her own firm in Los Angeles. Another notable pioneer, Beth M. Thompson passed her CPA exam in 1951. In 1955, Thompson was the only female president of a state association in Dade County’s chapter of Florida’s Institute of CPAs.

Levinstein also acknowledges contemporary women for rising to the top of the accounting world and opening new doors for others to follow. At the top of that list is Cathy Engelbert, CEO of Deloitte, one of the largest professional services organizations in the United States. Cathy is the first woman to become CEO of a “Big Four” accounting firm. She recently told CBS News, “I talk about how we need to move these elevations of women into key roles from novelty to norm.”

“HMWC has always been focused on fostering diverse viewpoints across cultures, backgrounds and certainly genders. It is important for companies to embrace diversity, not only for the sake of equality between the sexes, but in order to thrive in a marketplace with increasingly diverse viewpoints.” Levinstein stresses that while equal gender representation in the workplace is important, the ultimate qualities that make someone a good employee, at any level, has nothing to do with gender.

“Integrity, a positive outlook, accountability, a performance-focus, enjoyment in the work process, adaptability to change, collaborative decision-making, and openness to innovation. Those are the traits that matter,” says Levinstein. “Your vision and culture should directly impact the qualities that you look for in selecting management personnel.”
The insatiable demand for wireless services has driven a corresponding evolution in wireless technology platforms to meet that demand and provide wireless solutions that deliver higher throughput, lower latency, and improved reliability and security. As these technologies evolve, so too do the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and the enterprises they serve. As a premier provider of in-building wireless solutions, Mobilitie has also had to anticipate and adapt to a changing technology and business landscape, staying in front of the evolving plans and preferences of the MNO partners that we serve and their customers.

Mobilitie has long been a leading provider of traditional neutral host Distributed Antenna System (DAS) solutions for large venues such as stadiums, arenas, casinos, and transportation hubs. The emergence of low-power, fiber-to-the-edge DAS platforms has allowed Mobilitie to take advantage of fiber and power backbone synergies to deploy converged wireless solutions with Wi-Fi and other unlicensed spectrum platforms. These traditional platforms provide the robust, scalable capacity, and coverage that MNOs have demanded. However, the cost of these systems, along with the emergence of new technology, have driven the demand for alternative solutions, particularly in venues that aren’t necessarily the highest trafficked venues in a particular market, but still have wireless coverage or capacity issues.

One of the alternative solutions that has gained much traction with the MNOs has been Distributed Radio Access Networks (DRAN), in which the MNO’s Radio Heads, as the RF source, are distributed throughout a venue. Mobilitie provides fiber and power aggregation points that the MNOs can use to plug small cells or other Remote Radio Heads into a passive RF distribution network. A variation on this solution is Centralized RAN (CRAN). CRAN is similar to DRAN with the exception being the baseband units that control the Radio Heads are located in an off-site, centralized location that can service multiple venues. In addition to lower costs, DRAN solutions also provide increased simplicity, control, and visibility to the MNOs, making it their preferred solution in many cases.

As LTE continues along its evolutionary path towards 5G, new wireless supplements such as Licensed Assisted Access (LAA) and LTE-LWAN Aggregation (LWA) are being utilized. LAA and LWA both augment a MNO’s Radio Access Network (RAN) by utilizing unlicensed 5GHz spectrum in the Wi-Fi band to provide additional capacity and higher data throughput. As with DRAN solutions, LAA and LWA provide promising options for the MNOs but venues may be less receptive due to the potential impact on their own Wi-Fi networks. Mobilitie must perform a careful evaluation of these various options for each venue and manage the sometimes delicate balance between meeting the MNO’s technology preferences and the venues’ desire for unobtrusive installations that do not adversely impact any of their existing wireless systems.

The industry continues to evolve and the next big step in that evolution is the emergence of Citizen’s Broadband Radio Service (CBRS). The FCC has allocated 150 MHz of spectrum, previously used by the U.S. Navy, in the 3.5 GHz band. CBRS offers a host of new opportunities for Mobilitie and provides a path towards business and technical models that feature shared RAN and shared spectrum, reducing the cost and level of complexity to deploy in-building wireless services. CBRS also opens new opportunities for wireless solutions in venues that have historically been difficult to deploy in-building systems in due to high costs or lack of MNO prioritization.

Mobilitie is perpetually evaluating the impact of these emerging technologies and anticipating how they will change the needs of our clients, namely the venues we serve, and our MNO partners. For the venues, Internet of Things (IoT) and industrial automation services are rapidly gaining traction and enhancing the need for robust Wi-Fi and LTE services. Venues also continue to demand solutions that will attract the MNOs to underserved verticals such as hospitals, factories, and commercial real estate. The MNOs are in the midst of their own migration to 5G services in pursuit of 1 Gbps data speeds, and Mobilitie must be in a position to facilitate that migration by providing the MNO’s with the ability to easily deploy new technologies and spectrum bands. That will include expanded antenna beam capabilities, virtualizing the RAN and the adoption of unlicensed spectrum platforms such as CBRS to reduce the costs and resources need to deploy in-building wireless services. Mobilitie has a long history of evaluating industry trends and anticipating their impact. The rapidly changing technology landscape of today only reinforces our commitment to evolving to meet our clients’ needs.

For more information, visit www.mobilitie.com. Contact Mobilitie at 877-999-7070 or solutions@mobilitie.com.

Christos Karmis
Christos serves as President & CEO of Mobilitie where he oversees all aspects of the company’s business. He is responsible for leading the company’s growth across its tower, small cell, DAS, fiber, and Wi-Fi solutions. Christos has led the Mobilitie team for the development of tens of thousands of cell towers, DAS networks, and small cell nodes across the US and international markets. In addition, he has led the company’s public venue strategy which has resulted in the deployment of some of the largest in-building DAS and Wi-Fi networks in the country, and installations at stadiums and arenas across all major professional sporting leagues.
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CFO, LA Clippers
Referred Gillian to City National

Gillian Zucker
President of Business Operations, LA Clippers

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*Based on interviews conducted by Greenwald Associates in 2016 with more than 15,000 executives at mid-size businesses across the country with sales of $50-500 million. CNB results are compared to leading competitors on the following question: How likely are you to recommend (bank) to a friend or colleague?

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WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING CAPITAL,
A TITAN EDUCATION YIELDS OPTIMAL RETURNS.

CSUF’S Titan Capital Management center engages business majors in a high-tech, interactive environment that mirrors the trading floor of global financial institutions. Titans gain a competitive advantage with firsthand experience in portfolio management using real capital in real time. In this immersive experience, Titans gain applied knowledge — growth far greater than dollars.

TITANS REACH HIGHER
Business Leaders and Girl Scouts Invest in Girls

Imagine a future where every girl grows up with the confidence and skills to try new things, take on tough challenges, and embrace a lifetime of leadership.

Girl Scouts is making this bright future possible. From taking a nighttime hike under the stars to accepting a mission on the International Space Station; from lobbying the city council with her troop to holding a seat in Congress; from running her own cookie business today to tackling cybersecurity tomorrow – Girl Scouts unleashes the G.I.R.L.™ (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader) in every girl.

Orange County’s business community understands the importance of investing in the next generation of female leaders— and Girl Scouts is leading the charge. Only Girl Scouts provides girls of all ages and abilities with a safe, inclusive, girl-led environment for them to build vital skills, explore their potential, and feel they can fail and get right back up and try again.

Girl Scouts Works!:
► 50% of female business leaders were Girl Scouts
► 76% of female U.S. Senators were Girl Scouts
► 80% of female tech leaders were Girl Scouts
► Girl Scout alum enjoy higher incomes, more rewarding careers, and are more active in their communities than non-Girl Scouts.

*Source: Girl Scout Research Institute

Securing a Strong Future for OC Girls

Now open in Newport Beach’s Marina Park, the Argyros Girl Scout Leadership Center is Orange County’s hub for Girl Scout STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs. Named after philanthropist and community leader, Julia Argyros, this state-of-the-art facility provides 20,000 OC Girl Scouts from all cultures and backgrounds with unique opportunities to explore diverse 21st century careers and learn how they can take action to make the world a better place — all while creating lifelong memories and enjoying the peninsula’s waterfront surroundings and activities.

At the heart of the Leadership Center is INSPIRE, Girl Scouts of Orange County’s signature multimedia program, through which girls virtually meet extraordinary women spanning diverse careers and learn the vital role STEM plays in what they do. Girls also hear from trailblazing Gold Award Girl Scouts from across the nation, who have taken action using STEM skills to change the world – and learn to do it themselves.

Girl Scouts of Orange County is looking to raise the remaining $1.8 million of a $5 million comprehensive campaign to support the newly opened Argyros Girl Scout Leadership Center in Newport Beach. For more information, contact Monica McDade at mmcdade@girlscoutsOC.org.

Celebrating Champions of Girls and Women

Girl Scouts of Orange County’s ninth annual Celebrate Leadership event on the evening of Friday, October 12 will recognize outstanding Girl Scout alumnae and champions of girls and women and raise funds for Girl Scouts’ transformational leadership programs. Honorees are paired with outstanding Girl Scouts, linking tomorrow’s leaders with the leaders of today.

Your business can empower, educate, and prepare girls for a lifetime of leadership. Learn more about sponsoring or attending Celebrate Leadership at girlscoutsoc.org/celebrateleadership.

For more information about Girls Scouts of Orange County’s upcoming events, or to volunteer or make a donation, visit GirlScoutsOC.org.
YOU DON’T DO THAT.

SO WHY DO THIS?

Distracted driving **kills an average of 9 people** and **injures over 1,000** every day in America. Put down your phone. Lives depend on it.

**Don’t drive intoxicated. Don’t drive intexticated.**

A sobering message from AAA

AAA.com/DontDriveDistracted
Tell us why you #DontDriveIntexticated
No Text Is Worth a Life
The truth about distracted driving and how it changed one family forever
By Kathy Sieck

I understand that the temptation to read a text or email, search for directions, or shuffle through smartphone apps while driving is enormous. But when I think of the heartbreaking stories of families who have lost loved ones due to distracted drivers, I find it easy to resist that temptation.

One such tragic story will be featured in the May issue of Westways, the Auto Club’s member publication. Dawn and Howard Mauer of Fountain Valley lost their daughter, Deanna, to a distracted driver in 2011. The woman who plowed into Deanna’s car had sent or received 14 text messages and two calls just before the crash.

“People would never believe you can cry every day for six years, but you can,” says Dawn. The Maurers now live with a grief most of us can’t imagine. But they are not alone.

Every day in the U.S. an average of nine people are killed and more than 1,000 people are injured due to distracted driving, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Those grim statistics alone should make people put down their phone. Lives depend on it.

Changing Behavior

We’ve worked hard on finding a way to convince drivers to change their behavior, especially because AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety research shows it’s getting worse. In 2017, 45 percent of drivers surveyed admitted to recently reading at least one text or email behind the wheel, and 35 percent admitted to typing one – up from 40 percent and 31 percent, respectively, in 2016.

Drawing upon decades of research into the efforts that have helped to cut alcohol-impaired crash fatalities in half since the 1980s, the Auto Club focused on what may be the key component to reducing distracted driving: making it socially unacceptable.

What Can You Do?

We urge everyone to actively prevent distracted driving. Speak out if you’re a passenger, and don’t call or text someone if you know they are driving.

Finally, remember that when you’re behind the wheel, nothing in that phone is more important than focusing on the road. No text is worth a life.

Kathy Sieck is the Senior Vice President for Public Affairs at The Automobile Club of Southern California.

“People would never believe you can cry every day for six years, but you can”

Our new public service initiative targets drivers who would never consider drinking alcohol behind the wheel, yet regularly engage with smartphones that dangerously take their eyes, hands and minds off the road.

“Don’t Drive Intoxicated – Don’t Drive Intexticicated” is the Auto Club’s sobering new message to make it clear that the consequences of both alcohol-impaired driving and texting while driving are the same: deaths and injuries. We hope the multi-year campaign to fight this deadly behavior along with increasing penalties and enforcement will help to save lives.

AAA.com/DontDriveDistracted
As the labor market becomes tighter, Talent Analytics becomes a crucial initiative for HR departments nationwide. According to Forbes, 69% of companies are integrating Talent Analytics data as part of regular HR transactions—a 54% increase compared to prior years. This shift is due to higher quality data, real-time collection abilities and urgent needs to report on specific factors.

What is Talent Analytics?
Talent Analytics is a platform that produces insights into a company’s workforce, including strengths/weaknesses of current and potential members. Employers utilize this data to reduce turnover, build HR programs, and increase engagement.

Talent Analytics can be broken down into three categories:

1. Hiring Analytics provides bias-free insight into future hires by analyzing skills and guiding companies into making impartial decisions based on data. Interview satisfaction and brand awareness are essential metrics tracked during the hiring process. The cost and time it takes to hire is also measured to ensure optimal productivity.

2. Ongoing Feedback Analytics focuses on the existing workforce. Are people happy and performing well? Are they placed in the right positions? Employee surveys, although simplistic, can provide great insight into employee performance, engagement and retention.

3. Optimization Analytics marries the data from hiring and feedback analytics to ensure the organization builds a robust internal process. These processes include Succession Planning, Benefit/Wellness Programs and Performance Evaluations.

What are the challenges involved?
To develop a Strategic Talent Analytics Program, HR needs to address key challenges:

- Where to initially focus Talent Analytics - Start small to showcase to senior stakeholders the importance of data.
- How to build a strong analytics team - Hire HR that will understand company data needs.
- How to build credibility including gaining C-level executives’ approval - Analytics needs to be credible; collaborate with key members to ensure the program creates strategic results.

As technology continues to evolve, so will the impact of data within the workplace. HR Analytics will continue to disrupt the industry as more organizations begin utilizing these advances to strategically enhance their departments.

Marquee WFS
Marquee WFS, a minority woman-owned company, combines innovative recruiting methods with years of industry expertise. We pride ourselves on connecting the best IT and Engineering talent with top employers nationwide. Partner with Marquee WFS—we will leverage our network of skilled professionals to help you attract top talent!

Emily Salanio
Emily joined the Marquee team in 1995, after her time in the US Coast Guard where she held various roles with a focus on Computer Systems Management. With her expertise in IT, Emily has transitioned to CEO of Marquee Workforce Solutions where she focuses on collaborating with her team to recruit the best in technical talent. Emily gives back by providing veterans the opportunity to participate in mock interviews with recruiters at Camp Pendleton. Emily also works with Working Wardrobes to help veterans find positions upon returning home. By assisting veterans to easily join the workforce, Marquee is able to provide the best talent to our most valued IT and Engineering clients.

Congratulations to the 2018 Women in Business honorees and nominees.
Orange County’s 20,000 Girl Scouts thank you for demonstrating courage, confidence, and character and for inspiring them to become the next generation of female leaders!

Invest in Girls. Change the World.
girlscoutsoc.org
We’ve all heard discouraging statistics about the lack of progress for women in the workplace. In fact, women hold only 4.2 percent of CEO positions in America’s 500 biggest companies.

The good news is that there are concrete steps business owners and leaders can take to improve gender diversity in their organizations, including:

- Increasing personal recognition of female leaders
- Understanding the power of stereotypes
- Fostering an inclusive culture

The suggestions are part of six recommended steps included in a new gender diversity study among Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. The study, Transforming the C-Suite: Developing and Advancing Women Leaders, was produced by Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) in collaboration with the Fortune Knowledge Group.

“This study shows that organizations with high proportions of senior female leaders also tend to have stronger financial performances,” said Sharon Solomon, managing director and U.S. head of Client and Marketing Strategy at RBC Capital Markets. “While other studies have also come to this conclusion, gender diversity at the most senior levels continues to be a challenge for businesses. It’s an issue we must draw attention to and one the business community must address.”

City National Bank’s Karen A. Clark, senior vice president and multicultural strategies manager, points out that the Nielsen Company reported in 2013 that women in the U.S. had roughly $5 trillion in purchasing power. And according to a 2010 report from The American College Today, 45 percent of the millionaires in the U.S. were women.

Additionally, because women typically live longer than men, it’s estimated that nine out of 10 women will eventually take charge of their families’ wealth.

“Business managers, owners and shareholders should care about these statistics, because attitudes about women and engagement with women in the workplace can determine a company’s share of the female purse. Without women firmly ensconced in the decision-making process about products and services designed for and offered to women, companies stand to leave money on the table,” Clark said.

Additional key findings from the RBC study include:

- Only 21 companies in the 2016 Fortune 500 list include women at the helm, down from 24 in 2015.
- Gender diversity in management, and specifically women in leadership roles, enhances corporate financial performance.

For more information, contact:
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Senior Vice President
Multicultural Strategies Manager
City National Bank
213-673-9124
Karen.A.Clark@cnb.com
U.S. Air Force Reserve Marjorie Williams wanted a top flight executive MBA program. She landed at Michigan Ross in LA.

Marjorie Williams’ legal career and service in the Air Force have taken her around the world. And to Michigan Ross in LA.

“It was important to me to go to a top school.”

“Working in a corporate legal department, I use many of the skills I learned at Michigan Ross to negotiate and structure deals. I have a better understanding of the financial provisions and can execute strategy with confidence.”

“Ross has benefited my career in obvious ways. People respect an MBA from the University of Michigan. It sets you apart.”

To learn how one weekend a month for 21 months in Ann Arbor or Los Angeles can take you higher, visit https://michiganross.umich.edu
For more than 90 years, Orange County United Way has brought together leaders in philanthropy, volunteerism and advocacy to combine their strengths and resources to make real and lasting change in our community.

Through affinity groups and programs that promote corporate social responsibility, Orange County United Way has paid particular attention to leveraging women’s skills and strengths to lift up our neighbors.

What we have learned in working with women at the upper echelons of their industries and communities is that there are no challenges so intractable to natural leaders won’t rise to solve them.

As we celebrate women in business in Orange County, we applaud the women among us who have taken up the causes of literacy, poverty, hunger and other societal determinants to health and well-being. Through their determination and perseverance, these leaders are moving the needle toward a better Orange County.

At United Way, we are proud to support these women as they work toward a collective vision of a healthier, brighter tomorrow.

Women United

Worldwide, Women United is a vibrant community of 70,000 women who combine their time, talent and resources toward identifying and solving vexing societal problems. In Orange County, Women United is a force of nearly 400 diverse, energized women whose support helps to improve the lives of children and families in our community.

The impact of this group is nothing short of phenomenal. Each of the Orange County members of Women United gives an annual gift of $1,000 to $9,999. Their financial contributions target the most critical, interconnected challenges we face as a community in a bold and united way:

- Cutting the high school dropout rate in half
- Increasing the number of healthy youth by one-third
- Cutting the percentage of homeless and housing-insecure children in half
- Reducing the percentage of financially unstable families by 25%

Through philanthropy, service and advocacy, Women United is supporting United Way’s effort to tackle Orange County’s most pressing societal needs by 2024.

“You always hear it said that no one person can save the world. But what I see time and again with Women United is that committed individuals, working together, can make a world-altering impact on their community,” said Susan B. Parks, President and CEO of Orange County United Way.

“When you join Women United, you give a voice to transformative change in our community,” said Shirin Forootan, Attorney, Call & Jensen.

Women’s Philanthropy Fund

Cultivating a culture of meaningful philanthropy, the Women’s Philanthropy Fund is a group of influential leaders who work together to move mountains and create long-lasting social and economic change in Orange County.

Part of the Tocqueville Society, a collection of United Way’s largest donors, Women’s Philanthropy Fund members not only give generously but inspire others to do the same.

For example, more than 800 community leaders gather at the annual Women’s Philanthropy Fund Breakfast to raise money for local programs and services that empower women and their children. Now in its 15th year, this professional event is recognized as one of the most successful breakfast fundraisers in the county. This year’s breakfast in May, featuring keynote speaker Earvin “Magic” Johnson, is already sold out.

Since 2004, the Women’s Philanthropy Fund has raised more than $35 million for local programs and services. These gifts support education and self-sufficiency for at-risk women and children with early-grade reading programs, after-school activities, innovative career assistance and initiatives to help families find permanent housing. Sometimes all a woman needs is that “extra helping hand” to make all the difference in her life.

Networking Events

By gathering together to improve the lives of others, women leaders in United Way often find their own lives enriched, as well.

Few other charitable organizations gather as many powerful women under a united cause, allowing for networking that builds strong relationships and partnerships among like-minded individuals. Last year, Bank of America partnered with Orange County United Way’s Women United to host a clever and dynamic three-part Women’s Empowerment Series, “Local, Global & Me.”

Each of the three evening events is centered around three different ways women can make a difference – locally, globally and personally.

The informative, lively events drew nearly 300 women to hear experts ranging in topics of global engagement to personal health awareness.

Back by popular demand, the “Local, Global & Me” series will kick off again this year in August with influential keynote speakers.

“Being philanthropic can support the world and support your own business at the same time,” said Shirley Quackenbush, Managing Director, Private Wealth Advisor, Merrill Lynch Investments. “It’s one of the reasons I tell people to stop thinking of philanthropy as raising funds and start thinking about it creating an impact.”

Get Involved

By giving their time, their skills and their resources, women leaders of Orange County United Way have worked together to solve problems, empower the disadvantaged and set children on a course toward success. It is work that is incredibly gratifying, but it is far from complete.

If you’d like to join this community of philanthropic leaders, please contact Sandy Morales at 949-263-6163 or SandyM@UnitedWayOC.org.
The Gender Gap in Retirement Planning

By Jeffrey M. Verdon
Managing Partner,
Jeffrey M. Verdon Law Group, LLP

Despite all of the advances women have made in recent years when it comes to saving for retirement, women still lag behind men. Financial planners report that women often have a lower risk tolerance than men so they earn less on their investments. Women have a longer life expectancy and need more income to last through retirement. And generally speaking, women shoulder a disproportionate amount of responsibility caring for significant others, care-taking of children and aging parents, working and volunteering. This increased burden means it is extremely important for a woman to take hold of her retirement planning.

We know that only 72% of women are saving for retirement while 80% of men are doing so. On average, men’s retirement accounts are 50% higher than women’s accounts. This leads us to the fact that fewer women have comprehensive estate plans and even fewer incorporate structures to protect their assets from lawsuits into their estate planning. Living in an overly litigious society, in the U.S., 15 million lawsuits are filed annually. Women need to consider how to protect their assets, retirement and their legacies should be a bad actor sue.

Fly first class or your kids will. Estate planning is not about sacrificing your lifestyle so your kids will have a more comfortable life. Enjoy your life and if you have more wealth than you can spend plan to maximize what you pass on free of administrative costs, death taxes and risk of loss due to lawsuits. Estate planning should never be about making your children and grandchildren richer. Working strictly within the Tax Code, a comprehensive estate plan can optimize income and estate tax deferral opportunities — all approved by the IRS.

Perhaps you remember George Carlin’s hilarious routine about our “stuff.” We all have stuff and we are pretty particular about it. During our lifetime we collect a lot of assets, some of it valuable, some of it not. But because it’s your stuff it means something to you. Asset protection should be incorporated into a well-designed estate plan which can place your assets into a living trust, which will not have to go through the long and expensive probate process that would be required if you only had a will.

And once your estate plan is in force, place effective “firewall” protection around your assets to promote the early and cost efficient settlement of potential lawsuits by eliminating the economic incentive of a “payday” from an unexpected and irresponsible lawsuit. Asset protection attorneys can offer you a variety of tax free or tax deferred trust options which protect your assets and can minimize your taxes.

Finally, don’t ignore life insurance. Today, millions of successful Americans are putting significant sums into tax efficient life insurance products. These products are the most tax efficient asset classes in the tax code; cash values grow income tax free, the owner may withdraw savings from policies income tax free, and death benefits are income tax free. When you couple this with premium financing, life insurance may be the singular more important planning strategy for women.
Building on more than 30 years of culinary excellence on the Orange County dining landscape, Prego Mediterranean has settled into its new home at The District at Tustin Legacy. Long-time supporters and new guests have been enjoying the lively bar area and grand dining room at the new location, where Chef Ugo Allesina continues to lead the culinary team. With two decades of experience at Prego, Chef Ugo has brought back signature items and has added new Mediterranean-focused dishes to the menu. The kitchen continues to focus on utilizing seasonal ingredients, the best meat and seafood, and freshly made pastas.

New Mediterranean-focused dishes include Seasonal Hummus of mushroom and truffle, sundried tomato and roasted garlic basil, served with house-made rustic flatbread; Golden Beet Salad with mixed baby greens, yellow beets, goat cheese and caramelized onions tossed in a balsamic reduction; and Lobster and Shrimp Stuffed Sole in a white wine, garlic, lemon and caper sauce.

Adding a splash of Mediterranean color to California, Prego Mediterranean features a lively exhibition kitchen, allowing diners to view the artful chefs creating their delicious dishes. With a capacity to seat more than 250 guests, Prego features al fresco dining, full bar, private dining and catering services.

For more information, visit www.pregoOC.com.

Prego owners Ruth and Tony Bedi
JEWELRY FOR SUCCESS
PRESENTED BY LUGANO DIAMONDS

Many of the most successful women in business attribute their career wins and achievements to confidence and the ability to constantly differentiate. That confidence exudes leadership, conviction and inspiration. Allow Lugano Diamonds to enhance your irreplaceability with our boardroom-winning pieces of jewelry that are everything but ordinary.

Strength in Diamonds
Lugano’s powerful Rose Cut Double Halo Drop Earrings will draw admiration across any room. These Yellow Gold Drops dangle 5 carats of Rose Cut Diamonds set in a double halo of Diamonds.

Pearls of Wisdom
Lugano’s Tahitian Pearl Necklace is a fresh and striking take on a classic pearl strand. In pastel hues of greys, pinks and purples this necklace adds graceful style.

Strands of Brilliance
Go ahead. Break barriers and take risks. Your talents will shine more than the 25 carats of Lugano Briolette Diamonds gracing your décolleté.

LUGANO DIAMONDS
An experience as remarkable as our collection

We welcome you to view our stunning collection at the Lugano Diamonds Grand Salon located at 620 Newport Center Drive, Suite 100, Newport Beach, and our additional locations in Aspen and Palm Beach. Please call 866.584.2666 or email info@luganodiamonds.com for more information.
ALUMNI NOMINEES

AMBER BONASORO '06 (MBA '14)
Director of Marketing, Berkshire Hathaway
HomeServices California Property

ANTOINETTE BALTA '03 (JD '06, LLM. '11)
President and Co-Founder, Veterans Legal Institute

ADRIENNE BRANDES (M.A. '84)
Real Estate Agent, Surterre Properties

REBECCA HALL '96
President and CEO, Idea Hall

CHRISTY LEWIS (JD '11, LLM. '15)
Attorney, Lewis Business & Estate Planning, APC

SAMANTHA MEYERS '06
Owner/Baker, Sugared and Iced

MICHELE WULFSTIEG (M.A. '08)
Executive Director, Southern California Hospice Foundation

CAMPUS COMMUNITY NOMINEES

LINDA PADILLA-SMYTH
Director of Property Management and
Real Estate, Chapman University

LISA SPARKS, PH.D.
Dean, School of Communication,
Chapman University

ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING IMAGINABLE.

We’re beaming with pride for the extraordinarily ambitious and endlessly talented Chapman University nominees for the 2018 Women of the Year Awards.

You inspire us every day.
Luncheon & Awards Program

May 3, 2018
12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Hotel Irvine

*Tickets $175 / Table of Ten $1,650

*Tickets are non-refundable. Ticket price includes self-parking and a six-month subscription to the Orange County Business Journal ($15 allocated to the subscription). New subscribers only.

Reservation Information
Visit www.objc.com/btevents or contact Jayne Kennedy at 949.664.5005 or kennedy@objc.com.

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Antoinette Balta - Veterans Legal Institute
Margaret Bayston - Laura’s House
Jacqueline Beaumont - Call & Jensen, APC
Shinir Belhadi - Ice Franchise Concepts
Janie Best - WHW
Clare Bielecki - Rickett
Amber Bonasoro - Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties
Adrienne Brandes - Surterre Properties
Lynnette Brown - KKW Trucking Inc.
Michelle Brown - Surterre Properties
Leslie Calhoun - Optivest Wealth Management
Victoria Carr-Brendel - Jenadi Value Technology Inc.
Leslie Carter - United Healthcare
Antonella Castro - KA7 International Inc.
Geri Cerikkov - Dale Carnegie of Orange County
Zara Cerini - Physicians Center For Renewal
Bernadette Chala - Arbonne International LLC
Brittney Champignon - Villa Real Estate
Julie Chassagne - Altex Inc.
Dr. Seema Choudhary - Montessori Funtime Preschool
Shelby Coffman - The Hood Kitchen
Lorie Collins - Lily O’ Blossom Inc.
Dr. Amy Osmond Cook - Osmond Marketing
Lili Daftarian - Lili Daftarian
Kristin Daher - Powerhouse Communications
Deborah Dickson - Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corp.
Diane Dillon - Hotel Irvine
Rhonda Ducote - Apriem Advisors
Christa Duggan - Pontola Coffee Lab
Jodi Duva - Cox Business
Neda Eaton - Irvine Public Schools Foundation
Barbara Edson - Fashion Island Hotel
Lauren Ellermeyer - Beyond Fifteen Communications Inc.
Roula Fawaz - Surterre Properties
Rehema Feleke - FunBand Inc.
Janelle File - Surterre Properties
Shrin Farooq - Cal & Jensen
Christie Frazier - The Hood Kitchen
Jennifer Friend - Project Hope Alliances
Marlis Fye - Hello Productions Inc.

Eulynn Gargano - FutureWISE Consulting
Kimberly Gerber - Excelerate Inc.
Loren Gilbert - WealthWISE Financial Services
Cindy Goss - Propel Business Solutions Inc.
Devin Graciano - Use Me Hair
Sue Grant - The Literacy Project
Anne Grey - Alzheimer’s Association Orange County Chapter
Jill Griffin - Advantage Solutions
Heather Hall - FreeConferenceCall.com
Karen Hall - uDirect IRA Services
Rebecca Hall - Idea Hall
Kate Hancock - OCF - Facial Care Center
Marla Brower Hemmell - BHE Management Corp.
Heidi Hendy - H. Hendy Associates
Stephanie Herrera-Alvarez - Dimond & Shannon Mortuary
Allison Hillgreen - Beacon Pointe Advisors
Amanda Horton - Surterre Properties
Shelley Hose - Orange County Community Foundation
Jo-E Inmill - Snyder Langston
Bronwyn Isom - Bronwyn Icon Yoga, Wellness, Balanced Living
Susan Jennrich - Outlets at San Clemente
Michele Johnson - Latham & Watkins
Monica Johnson - Ventura Foods LLC
Manna Kadar - Manna Kadar Beauty Inc.
Alicia Kao - Sender One Climbing
Dee Cohen Katz - Walworth
Hilary Kaye - HKA Marketing Communications
Jackie Kelley - Ernst & Young LLP
Pamela Kellogg - Designers Resource Collection
Shannon Kennedy - BNY Mellon Wealth Management
Lisa Kim - City of Garden Grove
Robin King - American Heart Assoc. & American Stroke Assoc.
Stacie Kitts - Haskell & White LLP
Dawn Knepper - Buchalter
Julie Leffler - Big Hype Marketing
Susan Levinstein - HMWC CPA’s & Business Advisors
Christy Lewis - Lewis Business & Estate Planning, APC
Leisl Licano - Beyond Fifteen Communications Inc.
Janna Lobos - Jenn Lobos
Summer Lynne Perry - Surterre Properties
Mina Maghami - Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties
Paula Mattson - Edison Energy
Nicolle McManick - Irvine Technology Corp.
Meghan Medlin - Orange County Re-Entry Partnership (OCRIP)
Samantha Meyers - Sugared and Iced
Collin Miller - GGG Demolition Inc.
Kendra Miller - B/F Restaurants Inc.
Natasha Minasian - The Studio at Designers Resource Collection

BETHA SCOTT
Assistant Publisher
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2018 Nominees!

Shruti Miyashiro - Orange County's Credit Union
Renita Moillman - Burns & McDonnell
Susan Morehead - Optima Asset Management Services
Darlynn Morgan - Morgan Law Group
Debby Morris - Apria Healthcare
Jennifer Morris - Ajenda Public Relations
Jody Moses - York Risk Services
Danielle Murda - Crepes Bonaparte
Kirti Mutatkar - UnitedAg
Shana Neuberger - American Heart Assoc. & American Stroke Assoc.
Karen Nguyen - Inspired Art Wine
Wendy Nugent - Auto Club of Southern CA
Heather O'Connell - GreenLink Financial
Annette Oltmans - The MEND Project
Natalia Ostensen - Oleen Properties Corp./Andrel's Restaurant Corp.
Linda Padilla-Smyth - Chapman University
Sara Palmer - StaffRehab
Summer Lynne Perry - Surterre Properties
Lauren Peterson - Whitter Trust
Sandra Pham - West Coast University & American Career College
Mehsh Pierce - AutoGravity
Jennifer Povitz - UBS Financial Services Inc.
Sandy Powers - Villa Real Estate
Robbin Narike Preclado - Union Bank
Shirley Quackenbush - Merrill Lynch, a Bank of America Corp.
Private Banking & Investment Group
Sunny Rajab - Business Communications Solutions
Song Richardson - University of California, Irvine School of Law
Maricela Rios-Faust - Human Options
Laura Roche - Villa Real Estate
Joni Rogers-Kante - SeneGence International Inc.
Angela Rowe - Global Genes
Ellen Roy - Mary's Path
Talia Samuels - Outshine Public Relations
Danielle Sapia - American Heart Assoc. & American Stroke Assoc.
Tina Schackman - Prudential Retirement
Sherri Sched-Merrill - Ameritye Financial Services Inc.
Betha Schnell - Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties
Kylie Schuyler - Global Q.O.W. & Le Nid Inc./California Bliss
Sunny Seegmiller - Law Media Inc.
Chahira Seth - Crowell & Moring LLP
Lisa Sparks, Ph.D. - Chapman University
Jessica Spaulding - Spaulding Thompson & Associates
Shana Spitzer - Villa Real Estate
Brenda Springer - Revelle Inc.
Paula Steurer - Sterling Public Relations
Susie Storey - DealerSocket
Ellisa Stowell - Surterre Properties

Keynote Speaker

Julie Hill
Anthem

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Kellie Aamodt, Vice President U.S. Inside Sales
UPS, Anaheim
Kellie Aamodt started with UPS as an international account executive in 1991. She was recruited from a competitor to represent UPS as it expanded internationally. Aamodt took on many account management roles and rose through the supervisor, middle manager ranks and was promoted to her first director assignment in Houston, Texas. After five years, she was transferred as director of sales to Ontario, CA. She was then transferred to the corporate office in Atlanta, GA to handle the growth activities throughout the U.S. In three years, she returned to California as the managing director for UPS in the Southern California district. In 2011, she was promoted to vice president of retail sales. In 2012, she was then transferred to the vice president in Chicago. In 2013, she was transferred back to Anaheim, CA as VP of the West Region, where she is responsible for all sales activities within the western 22 states. Aamodt lives in Orange County, and has four offices in San Antonio, Phoenix, Greenville and Atlanta, and handles the entire country. UPS is a multinational package delivery company and a provider of supply chain management solutions.

Olivia Duane Adams, Chief Customer Officer
Allexy Inc., Irvine
Olivia Duane Adams is the chief customer officer and a founding partner of Allexy. Along with co-founders Dean Stoecker (CEO) and Ned Harding (CTO), Adams acted on a vision to build a company that enables data scientists and analysts alike to feel the thrill of finding business-changing answers faster than ever. The founders view data as one of the greatest (and often underutilized) assets any company owns, and through their leadership and passion, have revolutionized data science and analytics for many of the world’s biggest companies. In her role, Adams manages Allexy’s overall customer experience strategies and has interacted with nearly every customer, giving her a holistic perspective of the overall experience from implementation to adoption success. These conversations and relationships have helped shape Allexy into the platform it is today, built for exuberant users around the globe. Adams’s leadership and drive, as with the other co-founders, feed into mentorship workshops, career development, and community outreach programs that help employees succeed in and out of the office.

Brateil Aghasi-Hamilton, Executive Director
Forever Footprints, Orange
In Brateil Aghasi-Hamilton’s first year as the executive director of Forever Footprints, a nonprofit formerly named Orange County A Walk To Remember, she was able to continue the legacy that the founders and board of directors envisioned—that no parent would be alone and no baby would be forgotten. Aghasi-Hamilton brought her proven 13-year track record as a nonprofit executive to Forever Footprints, and grew family services that are focused on a mental wellness by more than 25% in just six months, reaching thousands of families in Orange County, Los Angeles County and the Inland Empire. Aghasi-Hamilton is also expanding education programs to include training courses for hospitals, increasing collaboration and training to the healthcare industry. She also serves as the chair of philanthropy for The Elite OC Young Professionals Society, as well as the VP for CSUF Alumni Board of Directors.

Esther Ahn, Business Development Director
American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine
Esther Ahn joined American Heart Association & American Stroke Association in October 2016 from Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach. Leaving a career of more than 18 years in hospitality management, sales and marketing management, as well as event planning and operations, to make a difference in Orange County. Previously with Marriott, Ahn worked in Los Angeles; Orange County; Hawaii; Florida; and Asia Pacific – Singapore, Thailand and Philippines. Ahn was born and raised in Irvine, and went to Cal State University, Fullerton. At American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Ahn successfully secured John Wayne Airport as a host venue to the first CPR Kiosks on the West Coast. American Heart Association is the nation’s oldest and largest volunteer organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke.

Melissa Bovberg Aiello, Owner/Executive Director
The Queen Bee Networks, Irvine
Melissa Bovberg Aiello is self-starter who took a falling women’s networking group and turned it into� into a “buzzing” collection of “hives” throughout Orange County called The Queen Bee Networks. Under the business-savvy tutelage of Aiello, there are now nine locations with 125 members. This category-based group of businesswomen meet weekly to exchange referrals, network and promote each other’s businesses with the intention of growing their businesses. Leads, closed sales and referrals are all tracked per hive/location. The Queen Bee Networks’ mission is to help each other grow in a fun, uplifting and positive environment.

Amy Amirani, Vice President/Principal-in-Charge
NVS Inc., Irvine
Amy Amirani founded CivSource in 2006 to serve the public works agencies of Orange County and deliver civil engineering design and construction management services for capital improvement projects. She sold the company in December 2016 to NVS Inc., an emerging international engineering firm, and now serves as vice president and principal-in-charge of the Irvine office. Amirani came to the U.S. at the age of 18 and enrolled at California State University, Fullerton. Upon graduation, she worked at Lowry and Associates, where she specialized in the structural design of water treatment plants. She then transitioned to the public sector, working for the cities of Irvine, Hermosa Beach and San Juan Capistrano. She became the first woman engineer to serve as a public works director in Southern California. Amirani is also the first woman to serve as the president of the Southern California Chapter of the American Public Works Association.

Paula Ansara-Wilhelm, Co-Founder
Surterre Properties, Newport Beach
Paula Ansara-Wilhelm is a self-made entrepreneur with the distinction of being one of the few women in the world to have co-founded a company the magnitude of Surterre Properties, a $2.7 billion residential real estate brokerage based in Orange County and with clients from all over the world. And, she is the only female co-founder/co-owner of a top real estate brokerage in the region. On top of that, Ansara-Wilhelm also co-founded Blue Water Escrow, a top escrow company in OC, and Surterre Property Management. She is a leader who had the foresight and ingenuity to not just found one, but three companies—all of which work together to create a synergistic vertical of real estate services. Earlier in Ansara-Wilhelm’s career, she launched Strada Properties, which she sold shortly after to Coldwell Banker—a pivotal achievement and significant M&A transaction for OC. Few women have had such an impact on the OC real estate industry and OC economy as Paula Ansara-Wilhelm.

Patty Arvielo, President
New American Funding, Tustin
Patty Arvielo co-founded New American Funding in 2003. In the past 15 years as president, Arvielo has worked diligently to transform the mortgage bank into a national mortgage lender and servicer that funds more than $900 million in home loans each month, and maintains a servicing portfolio of $23 billion. Under her guidance, the company has brought the entire loan process in house—origination, processing, underwriting, funding and servicing. In addition to her role as president, she continues to originate loans while managing operations and sales for New American Funding’s headquarters, more than 145 branches nationwide and about 2,700 employees.

Antoinette Balta, President/Co-Founder
Veterans Legal Institute, Santa Ana
Veterans Legal Institute (VLI) is one of the few military-specific public interest law firms in the nation dedicated to current and former service members. As a 501(c)(3) organization, VLI provides pro bono legal assistance to homeless, at-risk, disabled and low-income current and former service members to eradicate barriers to housing, healthcare, education and employment, and foster self-sufficiency. VLI also advocates on behalf of its clients by providing community education and policy advocacy in an effort to increase awareness, resources and overall protections to current and former members of the U.S. military. Antoinette Balta oversees business development, outreach, public relations, marketing and strategic planning. Her relationship building across business sectors has fostered the building of a pro bono network of 80+ attorneys, serving more than 3,800 clients and restoring over $1.5 million dollars in veterans benefits. On average, a client may require up to 15 hours of attorney care. At a conservative estimate of $250 per hour, VLI provides a value of more than $3,700 per client.

Margaret Bayston, CEO/Executive Director
Laura’s House, Ladera Ranch
Under Margaret Bayston’s leadership, Laura’s House has become a prominent domestic violence shelter in Orange County, and has helped more than 55,000 victims throughout Southern California and beyond escape domestic abuse. This year, Bayston marks her 20th year with the organization, where she has been instrumental in the success of the nonprofit by expanding its services, emergency shelter and transitional programming, start-to-finish legal services, expert resources, and counseling and prevention and educational programs. Bayston has become the face of Laura’s House and has spearheaded partnerships with the nonprofit with major local businesses and foundations, including Barney & Barney, Verizon, Girls Scouts of Orange County, Urban Decay, Tilly’s Life Center, Tervora, Wet Seal and When Georgia Smiled: the Robin Mcgraw Revelation Foundation.

Jacqueline Beaumont, Shareholder
Coll & Jeronen, APC, Newport Beach
Jacqueline Beaumont is an experienced employment counsel who has been
recognized for her work representing corporate clients in all aspects of employment law and advising. She is a shareholder at law firm Call & Jensen, where she has built a practice defending employers in high stakes employment lawsuits, handling a range of matters including state and federal anti-discrimination, wage and hour, and employee class actions. Beaumont is a leader in women’s issues outside of the office as well. She serves on the board of directors for the Orange County Women Lawyers Association; is a past co-chair of the Orange County Bar Association’s Mommy Esquire Committee; and serves the community through involvement with Girls Inc., WHW, Public Law Center and other organizations. She frequently speaks and writes on issues of gender fair pay and obstacles and opportunities for advancement of women in the legal profession. She has been listed as one of Southern California’s “Up-And-Coming 50 Women,” and one of Orange County’s “Top 25 Up-And-Coming Attorneys” by Super Lawyers, and has been awarded for her pro bono accomplishments.

Shirin Behzadi, CEO
Home Franchise Concepts, Orange

Shirin Behzadi is a CPA by trade and an alumna of EY. Behzadi embarked upon entrepreneurship in 1999 when she joined Budget Blinds, a company in its infancy, and quickly became its principal. During the same journey, Behzadi has fought and successfully beat life-threatening illnesses and painful recoveries. Behzadi set out to create franchise systems that offer entrepreneurial individuals the chance to own their own home-related business. For Behzadi, home improvement made sense as the focus for Home Franchise Concepts (HFC) because of the emotional attachment people have to their homes. Unlike most franchise systems, she created HFC’s brands to operate on a flat royalty plan; owners would thereby see their net franchisor cost drop as they became more successful. HFC is the top-selling family of direct-to-consumer brands in the home-related goods and services space, one of the world’s largest franchise businesses and a recognized leader in franchisee-franchisor relationships. HFC’s three home-related brands – Budget Blinds, Tailored Living and Concrete Craft – are now well-respected and recognized top-industry forces, with more than 1,400 franchises covering 10,000 cities in North America.

Janie Best, CEO
WHW, Irvine

WHW is a nonprofit with a mission to provide the unemployed and underemployed the skills and resources they need to get and keep a good job. WHW believes that a good job is essential to creating a stable, safe and educated community, and that employment is a solution to many of the pressing issues in the community. Since Janie Best joined WHW in 2011, she has led a critical shift in organizational funding, decreasing dependence on government funding from 80% of WHW’s budget to 0%, and increasing individual contributions and grants 100%, placing WHW in a strong position to direct its own course and ensure impact without the burden, and often ineffectiveness, of government oversight. Best has been instrumental in growing the WHW Board of Directors, establishing an atmosphere that promotes collaboration; and in promoting the professional development of the staff.

Clare Bielecki, Business Development Manager
Kitchell, Tustin

Clare Bielecki identifies and develops new project opportunities for Kitchell throughout Southern California. As the business development manager overseeing the entire region, she has helped to increase revenue from $9 million to $14 million in the last four years. She has also helped the company to gain additional recognition in the public works industry and the private sector. As a young professional, Bielecki has built strong relationships via her excellent networking skills, client advocacy, organization participation and panel presentations. Kitchell began as a commercial contracting business and over the years, developed new talents and enterprises, acquiring complementary businesses and expertise to remain a competitive, privately owned company. Today, Kitchell Corp. is the holding entity of several companies that are part of Kitchell’s core business, as well as those that operate independently.

Amber Bonasoro, Director of Marketing
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties, Newport Beach

Amber Bonasoro oversees the strategic marketing, branding and creative direction of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties. In 2017, the brokerage assisted more than 12,000 clients in selling or buying a home with a total closed sales volume of more than $12.6 billion, earning the national Berkshire Elite Award. Bonasoro applies more than 12 years of experience in the luxury real estate market to...
help Realtors® secure and sell properties up to $30 million. Bonasoro earned an MBA from Chapman University’s George Argyros School of Business and Economics with an emphasis in entrepreneurship. She serves on the Alumni Association Board of Directors to address next generation alumni issues. A founding member of OCYPN, she has held leadership positions and published a Playground used by chapters nationwide. She is also a Big Sister with Big Brothers Big Sisters Orange County. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties’ dedicated real estate experts guide clients through the home buying or selling experience.

Adrienne Brandes, Real Estate Agent  
Surterre Properties, Newport Beach  
For 25 years, Adrienne Brandes has assisted her clientele in buying and selling luxury properties in the Orange County market. Armed with her master’s degree in counseling psychology and her experience of running a cosmetics business and public relations firm, her contributions to the industry include her comprehensive expertise in all facets of the enterprise, negotiating skills, and her tireless work ethic to ensure every client is satisfied. She has closed some of the most significant real estate deals in Orange County, including more than $194 million in sales in the last four years. Brandes is incredibly hands-on with each client, providing her undivided attention and personal touch to every encounter with passion from start to finish. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.

Lynnette Brown, CFO  
KKW Trucking Inc., Pomona  
After graduating college, Lynnette Brown started working for KKW Trucking Inc. in an entry-level position as a programmer. Through years of hard work, she climbed her way through the organization, spent time in every department of the company, and eventually was promoted to CFO. She has helped her current CFO position for the past 20 years and provides strategic direction for the company. Brown is also the current president of the California Trucking Association, an organization that promotes leadership in the California motor carrier industry; advocates sound transportation policies to all levels of government; and works to maintain a safe, environmentally responsible and efficient California transportation goods movement system. The organization has an 84-year history and is comprised of 12 regional units.

Michelle Brown, Real Estate Agent  
Surterre Properties, Newport Beach  
Michelle Brown is a highly acclaimed coastal real estate professional with 15 years in the industry and nearly $400 million in sales. Brown is an active investor and a 25-year resident of Corona del Mar. She is well-known for her market expertise and passion for garnering the maximum for her clients from their real estate investments. She formed her real estate group 15 years ago and proudly works alongside her partners, Dana Christensen and Cara Farley. She has enjoyed a variety of rewarding careers, including director of marketing for The Irvine Company’s Fashion Island, while also serving as an integral part of the development team of the Irvine Spectrum Center. Her past business experience includes coordinating campaign strategies for national and international pharmaceutical companies. Early in her career, Brown served as investor relations manager and spokesperson for a 130-store publicly traded women’s apparel chain. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.

Leslie Calhoun, Senior Partner/Chief Compliance Officer  
Optivest Wealth Management, Dana Point  
In her 11 years at Optivest Wealth Management, Leslie Calhoun implements tactical investment strategies and monitors investment performance. With more than 25 years of investment industry experience, she works to provide the utmost care in serving her clients’ financial needs and facilitating Calhoun’s passion lies in fostering financial growth for successful women leaders. She takes great pride in her ability to do more than just manage client portfolios; she works to instruct, guide, and deliver customized financial and investment insight for her clients amidst their fast-paced lives. Calhoun also coaches individuals through difficult transitions, working to build confidence, knowledge, independence and self-esteem. Optivest began in 1987 with the goal of providing holistic wealth management services to a select group of successful individuals and families in Southern California.

Victoria Carr-Brendel, CEO  
Jena/Valle Technology Inc., Irvine  
Victoria Carr-Brendel has more than 25 years of medical device experience, including the development and commercialization of products across disease states. She began her career with Baxter Healthcare in research and development of an artificial pancreas. She held increasingly higher leadership roles within PDI, including women’s healthcare (Adiana) and in glucose sensor technology (Dexcom). Jena/Valle Technology Inc. is a private, venture-capital-backed company headquartered in Irvine with operations in Munich, Germany. The organization develops, manufactures and markets transcatheter aortic valve repair systems to treat patients suffering from aortic valve disease.

Leslie Carter, Chief Operating Officer  
UnitedHealthcare, Cypress  
Leslie Carter has worked hard and accomplished a great deal in her 30-year tenure in the healthcare industry, most of which has been with UnitedHealthcare and its predecessor companies. She spent the majority of her career in network management, negotiating and managing relationships with key hospital and medical groups in California. She was instrumental in building the PPO network that now serves almost one million UnitedHealthcare members. Her achievements in her current role are focused on driving improved operational performance and employee teamwork by aligning goals and improving accountability. In addition to a wonderful combination of professionalism and enthusiasm, she has often been commended for her achievements in helping fellow executives and rank-and-file employees understand the complex world of health insurance.

Antonella Castro, Business Owner/Founder/Real Estate & Business Attorney  
KAP7 International Inc., Newport Beach  
Antonella Castro is a strategic leader making impactful strides in Orange County. She represents Mobilbi LLC as the outside counsel and is the acting general counsel for KAP7 International Inc. She has been recognized numerous times for her accolades in law and business and through her community and charitable efforts. In 2005, Castro and her husband founded KAP7 International Inc., the official water polo ball of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, USA Water Polo, CIF League of California Nations and is played with throughout the world. Recently, KAP7 International Inc. opened in the New Zealand market. As the special outside counsel for Mobilbi LLC, she drafts and negotiates agreements related to construction, installation and operation of distributed antenna systems and small cell wireless networks including, but not limited to, venue lease agreements, design, construction, installation and maintenance agreements.

Gerfi Cerkovnik, CEO  
Dale Carnegie of Orange County, Santa Ana  
Founded in 1912, Dale Carnegie has evolved from one man’s belief in the power of self-improvement to a performance-based training company with offices worldwide. The company focuses on giving people in business the opportunity to sharpen their skills and improve their performance in order to build positive, steady and profitable results. Dale Carnegie emphasizes practical principles and processes by designing programs that offer people the knowledge, skills and practices they need to add value to the business. Gerfi Cerkovnik serves as CEO of the company’s Orange County office. Under her leadership, the office received Dale Carnegie’s Award for Top Franchise Quality Training in Orange County.

Zara Cerni, Health Coach/Patient Liaison  
Physicians Center For Renewal, Newport Beach  
Zara Cerni is currently aesthetic director and patient liaison at Physicians Center For Renewal, which she co-founded 10 years ago, with her husband, Dr. Michael Cerni. As a certified aesthetic consultant, it was Cerni’s vision to provide wellness through nutrition and lifestyle modifications, along with cutting-edge aesthetic procedures to optimize health and appearance. Physicians Center For Renewal currently has locations in Newport Beach and Laguna Niguel. In addition to aesthetics, Cerni holds certification from the Inflammation Foundation in Anti-Inflammatory Nutrition founded by Dr. Barry Sears, author of The Zone. A significant part of Cerni’s outreach includes giving lectures with her husband, providing the latest breakthroughs in healthy lifestyle and fitness.

Bernadette Chala, SVP/General Counsel  
Arbonne International LLC, Irvine  
Bernadette Chala joined the Arbonne team in 2012, first serving as the corporate counsel. At Arbonne, Chala is now as senior vice president, general counsel. Chala serves as a key business advisor, advocate and liaison between the business units and Legal Team to maximize value to the company’s ownership. She successfully navigates emerging legal trends to serve the business needs of the company to ensure the highest rate of return for all stakeholders. Since her tenure, the company has nearly doubled in size, yet Chala continues to steer the entire organization through various legal, regulatory and compliance challenges. From her start as a member of the Legal Team, to now leading teams including General, Regulatory & Scientific Affairs, as well as Compliance or the Business Ethics Standards Team (B.E.S.T.), Chala serves proudly as a someone who is not afraid to be a “working leader” and believes the best form of leadership is the one that is set by the example of one’s own actions. Arbonne International LLC creates personal skincare and wellness products.
Brittney Champieux, Director of Marketing
Villa Real Estate, Newport Beach

In the approximately two years that Brittney Champieux has been with the Villa team, she has transformed the marketing department. She has accomplished this by boosting team morale, enhancing tools and technology, and increasing the overall efficiency of the department and company as a whole by putting the needs of staff and agents first. Champieux, along with her team, developed and released a new website, new marketing tools, an app and are working on the rollout of new internal systems. Champieux is involved in the local community by donating food and resources to families in need. She manages Villa’s involvement, donations and sponsorships of Susan G. Komen, Families Forward and support of local high schools in the Newport Beach. Villa Real Estate is a leading luxury residential real estate firm in coastal Orange County.

Julie Chassagne, Corporate Controller
Alteryx Inc., Irvine

Julie Chassagne started her professional career in the audit practice at KPMG. In 2016, after 17 years, she left the public accounting industry and joined Alteryx Inc. as the corporate controller. Her first major project was assisting with the company’s initial public offering, which was completed in March 2017. She was instrumental in the transition of the company from privately held to public, and in creating and enforcing Alteryx’s policies, processes and practices to comply with regulatory requirements. Chassagne works to support the company’s strategic initiatives, including two successful acquisitions that closed in the first half of 2017. She is active in the company’s international expansion initiative, and is responsible for setting up and managing the support of entities in Europe and Asia. Alteryx offers an end-to-end self-service data analytics software that empowers data analysts and scientists.

Dr. Seema Choudhary, Founder
Montessori Funtime Preschool, Irvine

Dr. Seema Choudhary is a former UCI chemistry professor and current executive director of Montessori Funtime Preschools in Irvine and Lake Forest. Choudhary developed a passion for teaching and her endeavors are a testament to her dedication towards the field of education. Being an educator and a mother, she was inspired by the local Montessori preschools which her children were attending, but at the same time, saw room for improvement in what could be taught to children at the preschool age. Her pursuit of excellence in education led her to further training in early childhood education and the Montessori methodology of teaching. Montessori Funtime Preschool was founded out of her desire to create a better learning environment for kids at an age when they are at the apex of their ability to learn.

Lorie Collins, Founder/CEO
Lil’O’ Blossom Inc., Newport Beach

One of Lorie Collins’s greatest achievements has been to translate a real-world personal need as a young mother into a trusted solution for other mothers and babies. With no industry experience, but a passion to work hard and give back, Collins sought out professionals to create gentle, yet effective, formulations to treat her own babies’ sensitive skincare challenges. She was then inspired to carry her experience one entrepreneurial step further to found Lil’O’ Blossom. This year-old pampering brand of luxury baby bath and body care products offers moms trusted quality skincare for their newborns and babies. Collins interacted with R&D/manufacturing and managed all aspects company development. Her countless early visits to high-end baby boutiques, pediatricians’ offices and hospitals have resulted in national awards, media/celebrity attention, critical development, The Hood has evolved into the go-to space for today’s food artisans.

The Hood Kitchen and Event Space was founded in 2012 by Shelby Coffman and Christie Frazier as an all-inclusive hub that provides commercial kitchen, prep and flex space for food artisans at every level and any specialty. From startup concepts to professional chefs, The Hood provides turn-key solutions for cooking, educating, training and entertaining. Recently expanding their one-of-a-kind facility, the addition provides solutions for food artisans who need packaging room, office space and large-scale storage. Also, the event space is home to a variety of corporate team-building workshops, cooking classes and private events. An incubator hub for small brands, a destination for catering companies and food trucks, while also being a preferred choice for new or existing restaurant concepts in need of menu testing, creating and development, The Hood has evolved into the go-to space for today’s food artisans.

Shelby Coffman, Owner
The Hood Kitchen, Costa Mesa

The Hood Kitchen and Event Space was founded in 2012 by Shelby Coffman and Christie Frazier as an all-inclusive hub that provides commercial kitchen, prep and flex space for food artisans at every level and any specialty. From startup concepts to professional chefs, The Hood provides turn-key solutions for cooking, educating, training and entertaining. Recently expanding their one-of-a-kind facility, the addition provides solutions for food artisans who need packaging room, office space and large-scale storage. Also, the event space is home to a variety of corporate team-building workshops, cooking classes and private events. An incubator hub for small brands, a destination for catering companies and food trucks, while also being a preferred choice for new or existing restaurant concepts in need of menu testing, creating and development, The Hood has evolved into the go-to space for today’s food artisans.

Lori Collins, Founder/CEO
Lil’ O’ Blossom Inc., Newport Beach

One of Lorie Collins’s greatest achievements has been to translate a real-world personal need as a young mother into a trusted solution for other mothers and babies. With no industry experience, but a passion to work hard and give back, Collins sought out professionals to create gentle, yet effective, formulations to treat her own babies’ sensitive skincare challenges. She was then inspired to carry her experience one entrepreneurial step further to found Lil’ O’ Blossom. This year-old pampering brand of luxury baby bath and body care products offers moms trusted quality skincare for their newborns and babies. Collins interacted with R&D/manufacturing and managed all aspects company development. Her countless early visits to high-end baby boutiques, pediatricians’ offices and hospitals have resulted in national awards, media/celebrity attention, critical approval from Orange County’s leading pediatricians, and the opportunity to provide Hoag Hospital’s Mother/Baby Unit with “luxury baby personal care” for all newborns.

Congratulations to Kaaren Hall,
CEO/Founder of uDirect IRA
Services, on this year’s Women In Business nomination

uDirect IRA Services helps you invest your retirement savings outside of Wall Street.

uDirect IRA Services, LLC
info@uDirectIRA.com
866-447-6598
Dr. Amy Osmond Cook, CEO
Osmond Marketing, San Clemente
Dr. Amy Osmond Cook is the CEO of Osmond Marketing and a healthcare businesswoman for the Orange County Register, Daily Herald, Family Share and Cupid’s Pulse. She is a regular contributor to Entrepreneur, Huffington Post and KSL, among other publications. Osmond Marketing is a woman-owned, full-service content marketing organization specifically designed to meet the needs of scaling businesses. Osmond Marketing’s innovative model allows companies to expand services seamlessly as they grow. With unsurpassed quality and customer service, Osmond Marketing has seen a 15% growth in 2015 and is on track to experience the same levels of growth this year. Osmond Marketing was recently featured in Forbes and Huffington Post.

Lili Daftarian, Realtor/Business Owner
Daftarian Group - Luxe Real Estate, Newport Coast
Lili Daftarian, co-founder and principal of Daftarian Group - Luxe Real Estate, was born and bred in the real estate industry, counting many highly successful real estate professionals as family members and mentors. Daftarian launched her own real estate sales and marketing career in 2007, and is known for skillfully representing a wide range of clients throughout Southern California, with a special focus on luxury communities within coastal Orange County. Proven effective in recording seamless transactions in any economic climate, Daftarian has a keen grasp of the region’s changing market conditions and the nuances of its submarkets – which proves to be a key competitive advantage for her clients.

Kristin Daher, President/Chief Storyteller
Powerhouse Communications, Santa Ana
Powerhouse Communications is a creative PR agency offering a wide scope of media relations, social media and strategic branding services. In December 2015, Kristin Daher purchased the company from founder Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corp., and rebranded the agency where she served as VP, and rebranded the company as Powerhouse, transitioning all employees and clients in the process. With a specialty in the restaurant and franchise segments, Powerhouse has represented fast-growing national clients such as Del Taco, Panda Express, Wienerschnitzel, Pieology Pizzeria and Juice It Up! to name a few. With 13 years of PR experience, Daher has kept her clients at the forefront of both traditional and new media, while helping to shape brand reputations, position emerging brands as ones to watch, and reinvigorate struggling companies. Between running the agency; overseeing strategic planning; and creating a healthy, high-energy environment for her employees, she loves to pitch her clients on behalf of out-of-market clients.

Deborah Dickson, President
Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corp., Irvine
From her beginnings as one of the few women working at the “Big 8” CPA firms, Deborah Dickson, CPA, CFF, MAF established Smith Dickson, An Accountancy Corp., in 1982. Dickson remains the only woman to found and manage a “Top Accounting Firm” in Orange County, as ranked by the Orange County Business Journal. In the process, Dickson has carved out a niche specialty, a Forensic CPA Litigation Support practice, in a very tough and competitive field. She has shaped this into one of the most well-known and highly respected forensic CPA and expert witness accounting teams in California. The firm works with leading national and boutique law firms, attest to Smith Dickson’s expertise and success in this field. Dickson has earned Certified in Financial Forensics and Master Analyst in Financial Forensics designations, which are important qualifications for leaders in the forensic CPA field and are only achieved by a small minority of CPAs throughout the USA.

Diane Dillon, Senior Catering Manager
Hotel Irvine, Irvine
If you have planned an event in Orange County, there’s a pretty good chance you know – and love – Diane Dillon. During her career, Dillon has planned hundreds of events at Hotel Irvine and has been responsible for serving thousands of guests. She has spent numerous hours and countless moments come to life, and hundreds of more hours behind the scenes planning and making sure that guests walk away with an exceptional experience. Through it all, the one thing that never changes is her infectious personality and constant desire to create an atmosphere of excellence. 2018 wasn’t the only year of success for Dillon. She has been an integral member of the catering team at Hotel Irvine for more than 19 years. She has an undeniable enthusiasm for her job, a consummate focus and attention to detail when it comes to event planning, and her commitment to her guests is unwavering. Her ideas and passion, along with her ability to wholeheartedly depend on Dillon to take charge and make their event a success.

Rhonda Ducote, President
Apriem Advisors, Irvine
As a dedicated wealth manager for Apriem Advisors with more than two decades of experience, Rhonda Ducote’s leadership has helped propel the investment advisory firm to more than $650 million in assets under management at the fastest growth rate for a firm its size in Orange County, according to Financial Advisor magazine’s 2017 RIA rankings. In the past year, Apriem was named one of the Financial Times Top Financial Advisors, earning a spot on the industry’s coveted FT 300 list. Ducote graduated from the elite Charles Schwab Executive Leadership Program this year. A featured columnist for Financial Advisor magazine, she offers national thought leadership about female investment trends and issues facing Baby Boomer women. Ducote also leads Apriem’s Women of Wisdom program, an initiative dedicated to increasing female client engagement and serving the needs of female investors.

Christa Duggan, Owner/CEO
Portola Coffee Lab, Costa Mesa
Christa Duggan, along with her husband Jeff, own the award-winning Portola Coffee Lab. Portola was created in 2011 with the goal to create a quality-centric coffeehouse that re-focused on the most important ingredient – coffee. Within a year of bringing a never-before-seen concept and style of coffee to Orange County, Portola Coffee Lab began creating a distinct brand that revolves around producing an artisanal culinary product, craft coffee. Portola Coffee Lab prides itself on having access to some of the highest-quality coffee beans in the world. While it usually takes a coffee company several years to establish direct trade relationships to start sourcing coffee at origin, Portola was able to do it within two years.

Jodi Duva, Vice President, Cox Business Orange Coast
Cox Business, Foothill Ranch
Jodi Duva learned during her years playing competitive sports that success requires dedication, training, good nutrition and strong team ethics. As vice president of Cox Business Orange Coast, Duva infuses these characteristics while leading her team in one of the most competitive telecommunications markets, and as a result has consistently increased market share and revenue. Her Orange Coast team normally encompasses Orange County, Palos Verdes and Santa Barbara, but for more than six months during 2017, she was entrusted to also serve as interim vice president for the San Diego Cox Business region. Her ability to maintain high levels of performance for all regions was noticed – revenue increased in Orange Coast by 5%, and San Diego 7% in 2017, helping Cox Business nationally reach $2.2 billion revenue. She simultaneously grew her OC sales team by 15% with the goal of delivering more customized communications solutions to local business communities.

Neda Eaton, President/CEO
Irvine Public Schools Foundation, Irvine
Irvine Public Schools Foundation (IPSF) is one of the leading educational foundations in the nation. Neda Eaton’s all-in commitment and uncompromised integrity is evidenced by her unparalleled success. She is passionate and passionate, and her leadership empowers and energizes the people she works with and for. Under Eaton’s guidance and leadership, IPSF has achieved tremendous success by strategically unifying the business, parent and resident constituencies to earn the reputation of the premier educational foundation in California. Eaton’s impact speaks for itself; since she joined the foundation, IPSF’s total annual revenues have increased by approximately 185%.

Barbara Edison, Community Relations Manager
Fashion Island Hotel, Newport Beach
Barbara Edison has been a pillar in the Newport Beach community for more than 20 years. She is currently the community relations manager for Fashion Island Hotel, where she directs all community outreach for the luxury property, and Santa Barbara, but for more than six months during 2017, she was entrusted to also serve as interim vice president for the San Diego Cox Business region. Her ability to maintain high levels of performance for all regions was noticed – revenue increased in Orange Coast by 5%, and San Diego 7% in 2017, helping Cox Business nationally reach $2.2 billion revenue. She simultaneously grew her OC sales team by 15% with the goal of delivering more customized communications solutions to local business communities.

Lauren Ellermeyer, President/Co-Founder
Beyond Fifteen Communications Inc., Irvine
Beyond Fifteen Communications Inc. has been a pioneer for going beyond the norms of traditional PR to bring the highest level of media and market attention to its clients’ brand propositions. By skillfully tying expert storytelling and results-driven strategies, the agency is setting new standards of PR execution, while redefining the agency/client relationship.
relationship. Since 2009, co-founder Lauren Ellermeyer, has leveraged her progressive business style, keen eye for new talent, and rock-solid public relations and social media expertise, to grow a home-based startup, into a flourishing, nationally acclaimed communications powerhouse that has doubled in size year over year since 2010, with 23% increase in revenue in 2017 with year-over-year growth. Apart from cultivating Beyond Fifteen’s collaborative, “client-first” business approach, Ellermeyer pours generous support into a variety of community organizations. She is a long-time partner of TEDxOrange Coast and currently serves as a board member and philanthropy chair for American Family Housing.

Roula Fawaz, Real Estate Agent
Surterre Properties, Irvine
For more than two decades, Roula Fawaz has been a top performer in the real estate industry, beginning with the number one Rookie of the Year award in her first year of business. She continues to be one of the top REALTORS® in Orange County by selling more than 1,100 homes. She started her career in real estate shortly after moving to the U.S. with the dream of providing a better future for her family. Building her business from the ground up, her entrepreneurial spirit flourished, and paired with her integrity, Fawaz is now one of the most trusted agents in the area. Being with Surterre for the past six years, she runs the mastermind program within the company and is an elite producer in the Irvine market. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.

Rehema Feleke, Co-Founder/CEO
FunBand Inc., Irvine
Dr. Rehema Feleke received her medical degree from Loma Linda School of Medicine, and currently practices emergency medicine at UCLA. She earned her Healthcare Executive MBA in 2016 at the Paul Merage School of Business. Her company, FunBand Inc., was conceived during her MBA program after a near-abduction experience of a friend’s daughter. FunBand’s mission is to help keep kids safe so families can focus on fun. FunBand has developed a system to keep track of young children that is convenient and gives families peace of mind. Feleke recruited a team, developed a business plan, entered the New Venture Competition and went on to win first place in May 2016. FunBand Inc. also won Best Presentation at the Orange County Tech Coast Angels Fast Pitch Competition in March 2017.

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Shirin Forootan, Attorney at Law
Call & Jensen, Newport Beach
Shirin Forootan’s legal practice focuses exclusively on employment litigation defense and counseling. Her dedicated commitment to her clients has yielded excellent results both inside and outside of court. She has had class actions dismissed, individual actions dismissed and class certification denied. Outside of court, she has negotiated favorable settlements for employers and has convinced the Labor Commissioner to dismiss wage claims. Forootan routinely speaks and is a published author on a variety of labor and employment topics. Because she has demonstrated an excellence in the practice of law, Forootan has been selected to Super Lawyers’ Southern California “Rising Stars” List multiple times, a distinction reserved for just 2.5% of attorneys in California. Call & Jensen has become the law firm of choice for many companies in high stakes litigation.

Christie Frazier, Owner
The Hood Kitchen, Costa Mesa
The Hood Kitchen and Event Space was founded in 2012 by Shelby Coffman and Christie Frazier as an all-inclusive hub that provides commercial kitchen, prep and flex space for food artisans at every level and any specialty. From startup concepts to professional chefs, The Hood provides turn-key

KKW Trucking, Inc. congratulates Lynnette Brown on her appointment as President of the California Trucking Association!

This is a well deserved honor and we are thrilled to see her commend for her work. We look forward to all that she will accomplish to help the trucking industry. Her platform is “The Heart of Trucking” to showcase the great men and women that make up the transportation industry.

Congratulations, Lynnette! You are an inspiration to the entire KKW team.
founder and president of WealthWise Financial Services, Gilbert then worked for a private company selling retirement services. She launched her career at Fidelity Investments, where she spent more than 25 years creating comprehensive wealth management plans. These experiences have taught her how to overcome different challenges and help families experience these same hardships motivated her to turn her avocation into her vocation. Under Friend’s leadership since 2012, PHA has moved more than 800 children and parents out of homelessness. In 2016 alone, PHA ended homelessness for 18 families – which included 47 children and 34 adults. 88% of families achieved financial stability within 12 months of ending homelessness – a number that continues to increase every year. PHA also launched two new education programs in 2016, serving youth from kindergarten through age 24.

Marlis Fyke, Co-Founder
Helio Productions Inc., Costa Mesa
In April 2014, Marlis Fyke and her husband came up with the idea to help their son, Porter, with his kindergarten sight words by reverse engineering a dream light’s top and replacing the stars and moons with his sight words and illuminating them on his ceiling so he could succeed. They realized at this point that what they could build all children. Since then, they have created an educational system that uses interchangeable discs that coincide with lesson plans for all grades and age groups. As of November 1, 2015, the company is in production on 5,000 helio base units, with five different color options for boys and girls. In addition to the base units, 40,000 discs with different learning curriculum for each age and grade groups are also in production. Helio has won numerous awards, including the Mom’s Choice Awards, and is STEM certified.

Eulynn Gargano, Business Owner
FutureWise Consulting, Irvine
Eulynn Gargano leads the test prep and tutoring branch of FutureWise Consulting. She has seen incredible success with her students and understands the importance of college readiness in life. Gargano is familiar with the test preparation process as a partnership among the student, parent, tutor and college counselor – working toward the same goals of empowerment and success. Gargano began her tutoring career in 2006 and is an expert at identifying how a student can improve, ensuring that they fulfill their college dreams. In addition to her successful business, she volunteers with organizations in Orange County focused on lifting up the underserved, including the Orangewood Foundation, Junior League and State Public Affairs Committee. This year, she has the additional role of championing her platform, Living With Purpose, as the reigning Ms. Southern California. Her goal is to educate, empower and inspire families with dementia. Grey is a champion for educating the community, and especially women, on the importance of brain health. In addition, she is a strong advocate for early detection of Alzheimer’s so that people can lead a rich life as long as possible and improve their quality of life. Today, her vision and leadership has made it her life’s mission to be a leading force in the fight against illiteracy. Her goal is to bridge the literacy gap.

Jill Griffin, President, Advantage Marketing Partners
Jill Griffin joined Advantage Solutions in 2008 to lead a then $30 million division within the emerging marketing services group. Since that time, she has evolved with the enterprise to build and lead Advantage Marketing Partners, a $1.2 billion agency with a suite of services in brand development, consumer and shopper marketing, digital marketing and media, experiential marketing, multicultural marketing and culinary marketing. With national reach, the company is honored to be agency of record for many of today’s most recognized brands across retail, packaged goods, technology, apparel, automotive, travel, beverage, entertainment and healthcare. Griffin has also led the development of new products and services which have been transformational to shopper engagement in the retail sector. In addition, she has led the M&A efforts to diversify the agency’s capabilities as well as the industries it serves.
Heather Hall, Vice President of Finance & Operations
FreeConferenceCall.com, Long Beach
Heather Hall joined FreeConferenceCall.com as director of finance, and has helped to lead the organization to the most successful annual sales in company history. In her role, Hall has mainstreamed analytical data and helped create comprehensive reports. She also assists with marketing and compliance. For her efforts, Hall was recently promoted to vice president of finance. FreeConferenceCall.com is the most recognized conferencing brand in the world with users in more than 800,000 businesses, including nearly all Fortune 500 companies. Service offerings around the globe with unlimited use include: high-quality HD audio conferencing, screen sharing, video conferencing, audio and visual recordings, customized greetings, security features, calendar integrations and mobile applications.

Kaaren Hall, CEO/President
uDirect IRA Services, Irvine
After 20+ years of experience at Bank of America, Indymac Bank and her own mortgage brokerage experience, Kaaren Hall saw the recession take hold and the mortgage market collapse. Rather than folding up her tent, Hall took her real estate and finance knowledge in a promising new direction – self-directed IRAs. Hall has helped thousands of Americans invest their IRA into real estate, notes and other assets outside of the stock market to improve their financial future. Now, Hall is a passionate educator and facilitator for better retirement through highly diversified and individually controlled IRAs. She has taught tens of thousands of people through live events, podcasts and webinars. Presently, she is working on her first book to be released next year. She is recognized as an expert in her field and serves on the board of directors for the Retirement Industry Trust Association.

Rebecca Hall, President/CEO
Idea Hall, Costa Mesa
Rebecca Hall’s brainchild, Idea Hall, turns 15 this year. Formed at a time when few public relations firms offered in-house design services, branding and marketing, it has proved the test of time. The unique model, combined with Hall’s ability to cultivate a team that shares her entrepreneurial drive and love for big ideas, has catapulted the agency to become the PR and marketing firm of choice for many of Orange County’s top businesses. Many of the county’s leaders personally turn to Hall for strategic counsel. Recently, she led her team in successfully helping the Irvine Company coordinate and garner media coverage around its Amazon HQ2 response. Today, Idea Hall is one of the most sought-after agencies in Orange County, ranked in the top 10 of the Orange County Business Journal’s “Best PR Firms” List for the past seven years. Idea Hall’s client roster includes Visit Anaheim, Swinerton, Bixby Land, R.D. Olson and more.

Kate Hancock, CEO
OC Facial Care Center, Lake Forest
Kate Hancock started OC Facial Care Center with one treatment room and grew the company into a seven-figure, revenue-generating company with two locations and celebrity clientele. She has a passion to effect positive change in people’s lives through spa treatments. She has donated footwear to kids in the Philippines and to people with medical conditions who can’t afford hospital treatments. This year, her business was named to the INC. 5000’s “Fastest-Growing Private Businesses” List, being one of the only spas to do so.

Marla Brower Hemmel, Founder/President
BHE Management Corp., Laguna Niguel
Marla Brower Hemmel is the founder and president of BHE Management Corp., a 25-year-strong premier Homeowners Association management firm representing many major homebuilders in Orange County. Hemmel leads her firm in a manner thatpleasesthebothdevelopers, who hire her firm consistently to create the initial association rules and budgets, as well as the homeowners themselves. This creates relationships that continue for more than a decade in nearly every case. Hemmel is a licensed broker in the State of California and holds her Certified Community Association Manager designation with specialty certificates in High-Rise, and Portfolio Management. Hemmel is a leader in her industry, serving as past treasurer of California Association of Community Managers, past chair of the California Association Institute’s Programs Committee, and is an active member and sponsor of the Building Industry of America, Orange County Chapter.

Heidi Hendy, Managing Principal
H. Hendy Associates, Newport Beach
Heidi Hendy launched H. Hendy Associates in 1979 to drive innovation in the field of interior architecture and planning. Nearly four decades later, the company has

CONGRATULATIONS TO

JODY MOSES

on your nomination for the 2018 Women of the Year Awards

You have had a tremendous impact on our organization over the last 25 years, and we’re grateful for your continued leadership on the York team and your commitment to quality for our clients.

YORK
www.yorkrsg.com
provides a client-centric approach to the building process. Jo-E Immel was selected by the firm's leadership to participate in its succession plan to become one of the organization's next leaders. Over the course of her 10 years at Snyder Langston, Immel's ability to incorporate wellness concepts into every design not only wins over clients and their employees, it reduces absenteeism and increases productivity.

Stephanie Herrera-Alvarez, Manager
Dimond & Shannon Mortuary, Garden Grove
Stephanie Herrera-Alvarez is manager at Dimond & Shannon Mortuary in Garden Grove. Since starting her career in the mortuary industry in 2009, she has touched on all parts of the business before assuming her current position, taking on roles such as service director, death certificate clerk, apprentice embalmer and funeral director. In addition to her current general operations and financial responsibilities at the mortuary, Herrera-Alvarez is dedicated to ensuring that all services provided exceed the expectations of the families that they serve. She is deeply rooted in the community, having grown up in a family established in Garden Grove for many generations. She is an active member of the community, the Garden Grove Chamber of Commerce and at her home parish, Saint Columban Catholic Church.

Allison Hillgren, Director, Head of Marketing & Communications
Beacon Pointe Advisors, Newport Beach
Allison Hillgren originally began her work with Beacon Pointe as an intern, and now holds the position of director of marketing and communications. The company didn’t have a marketing department when she began, so through the internship and then as a full-time employee, she developed the firm’s entire online presence through its website and social media platforms. She oversaw and implemented an entire rebrand of Beacon Pointe and expanded into a nationally recognized company. Hillgren also oversees the firm’s public relations department and created its proprietary communications department.

Amanda Horton, Real Estate Agent
Surterre Properties, Laguna Beach
In 2002, Amanda Horton obtained her broker’s license and partnered with her mother, Pamela, to sell residential real estate along the south Orange County coast. Since the inception of the Laguna Beach office in 2005, Horton has been a top-producing asset to the company, receiving the prestigious Remax Office Award for Excellence in 2017. Dedicated to providing the highest level of service to her clients, Horton continues her education, stays up-to-date on the latest real estate trends, and has forged her way as a pioneer in the Southern Orange County Market. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.

Shelley Hoss, President
Orange County Community Foundation, Newport Beach
Over the past 18 years under the leadership of president Shelley Hoss, Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF) grew 740%, leapfrogging from $43 million to $378 million in assets. This places OCCF in the top 10% in assets among more than 780 community foundations in the United States. Hoss has shepherded OCCF into granting a quarter of a billion dollars over the past five years. Hoss’s strategic vision has enabled OCCF to architect and drive several progressive community leadership initiatives serving the needs of at-risk youth in Anaheim, veterans and immigrant communities in Orange County. In addition, Hoss developed the county’s annual Giving Day, raising more than $5 million for Orange County nonprofits during two, 30-hour charitable giving campaigns. Hoss is widely credited with raising the profile of philanthropy in Orange County and evolving OCCF as the epicenter of philanthropy.

Michele Johnson, Partner
Latham & Watkins, Costa Mesa
Latham & Watkins employs more than 5,000 lawyers and personnel, with 31 offices around the world. Michele Johnson is one of nine members of Latham & Watkins’ Executive Committee – the highest decision-making body of the law firm. She previously served as the Orange County office’s managing partner and was amongst the youngest partners to hold that title. Johnson is an accomplished securities and trial lawyer and has received prolific recognition for her successes in and out of the courtroom. Notably, Johnson represented then-Orange County-based Allegian in its successful defense against the $54.6 billion unsolicited hostile takeover attempt by Valeant Pharmaceuticals. She recently acknowledged by Law360 as one of “The 25 Most Influential Women in Securities Law” and Profiles in Diversity Journal named her to its 14th annual “Women Worth Watching” List. This list recognizes women in leadership from law firms, corporations, nonprofits and government agencies in Europe and North America who are blazing a trail for others to follow.

Manda Kadar, Founder/CEO
Ventura Foods LLC, Brea
In her position as assistant general counsel at Ventura Foods, Manda Kadar has made a measurable impact on every facet of the company’s business, including sales and marketing, research and development, procurement, supply chain/logistics, regulatory compliance, quality assurance and vendor/customer relations. Johnson worked tirelessly with the food safety teams to develop company-wide food safety plans and response protocols as part of the Food Safety Modernization Act preparations. She also oversees all FDA plant inspections and is the team lead for all regulatory compliance and food recall matters. Most recently, Johnson led several months of negotiations resulting in a new multi-year customer agreement for Ventura Foods manufacturing dressings/cupcakes for their salad kits. Ventura Foods is a leading manufacturer of custom and branded dressings, sauces, mayos, oils, shortenings, margarines, bases and pan coatings.

B-E 2018 ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS APRIL 18, 2018

Shelley Hoss received the USC Remarkable Women’s Award in 2014. Johnson is one of nine members of Latham & Watkins’ Executive Committee – the highest decision-making body of the law firm. She previously served as the Orange County office’s managing partner and was amongst the youngest partners to hold that title. Johnson is an accomplished securities and trial lawyer and has received prolific recognition for her successes in and out of the courtroom. Notably, Johnson represented then-Orange County-based Allegian in its successful defense against the $54.6 billion unsolicited hostile takeover attempt by Valeant Pharmaceuticals. She recently acknowledged by Law360 as one of “The 25 Most Influential Women in Securities Law” and Profiles in Diversity Journal named her to its 14th annual “Women Worth Watching” List. This list recognizes women in leadership from law firms, corporations, nonprofits and government agencies in Europe and North America who are blazing a trail for others to follow.

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local community, the team at Designers Resource Collection has supported Bravo TV’s Jeff Lewis and HGTV’s Christina El Moussa. Dedicated to supporting the experience to the design community and their clientele including famous faces such as accessories, bedding, fabric, wall coverings and lighting.

A comprehensive selection of indoor and outdoor furniture, private client/designer collaboration spaces and a roof in the Stonemill Design Center, featuring more than DRC and Kenneth McDonald Designs, are now under one

Celebrating more than 30 years of excellence, Designers Resource Collection, Costa Mesa professional services firm.

acceleration, operational and governance process improvements, financial audits, management, finance readiness, financial reporting readiness assessments and roadmaps, IPO program C-suite executives and investors on enterprise-wide IPO/Exit

billion in revenue. She’s led a variety of projects and advised backed companies, foreign filers, public company spins and extensive capital markets client base on the IPO and Exit

Ernst & Young LLP, Irvine

Institute and member of Women Presidents’ Organization and Zonta Club of Newport is an Alzheimer’s Visionary Woman, founding member of NAWBO’s Women’s Business Award in the Community Involvement category. Kaye currently serves on the board of

Hilary Kaye is founder and CEO of HKA Marketing Communications, Tustin

Hilary Kaye, CEO HKA Marketing

HKA Marketing Communications, Tustin

Hilary Kaye is founder and CEO of HKA Marketing Communications, an award-winning agency established in 1986. Kaye spearheads business development and works with HKA team members to elevate visibility, strengthen credibility and promote business growth for clients. She is a known connector, often fostering mutually beneficial business partnerships and uniting for-profit and nonprofit organizations. A former author and reporter, she maintains a passion for business ethics and community service, and takes pride in providing highly accountable service to clients and media. In 2015, HKA proudly received the National Philanthropy Day Award in the Small Business category and a Silver Stevie Award in the Community Involvement category. Kaye currently serves on the board of Harbor.

Jackie Kelley, Partner, Americas IPO Markets Leader

Ernst & Young LLP, Irvine

Jackie Kelley is responsible for advising Ernst & Young’s extensive capital markets clients on the IPO and Exit readiness process. She has advised and assisted 200+ companies across all industries on the IPO readiness process. She has served venture capital and private equity backed companies, foreign filers, public company spins and others, ranging in size from early stage to more than $50 billion in revenue. She’s led a variety of projects and advised C-suite executives and investors on enterprise-wide IPO Exit readiness assessments and roadmaps, IPO program management, finance readiness, financial reporting acceleration, operational and governance process improvements, financial audits, internal audits, internal controls and compliance. Ernst & Young is a multinational professional services firm.

Pamela Kellogg, Principal

Designers Resource Collection, Costa Mesa

Celebrating more than 30 years of excellence, Designers Resource Collection is the premier destination for interior designers. Open exclusively to the trade, Designers Resource Collection and partner showrooms, The Studio at DRC and Kenneth McDonald Designs, are now under one roof in the Stonemill Design Center, featuring more than 50,000 square feet of combined showroom floor. The adjoining showrooms offer an all-new fabric display, semi-private client/designer collaboration spaces and a comprehensive selection of indoor and outdoor furniture, accessories, bedding, fabric, wall coverings and lighting.

Proud to be family-owned and operated, the collective brands provide an elevated experience to its design community and their clientele including famous faces such as Bravo TV’s Jeff Lewis and HGTV’s Christina El Moussa. Dedicated to supporting the local community, the team at Designers Resource Collection has supported philanthropic organizations such as National Charity League, Human Options, The Hebrew Academy, Toys for Tots, South County Outreach and Ronald McDonald House.

Shannon Kennedy, President, U.S. Markets – Southwest

BNY Mellon Wealth Management, Newport Beach After a 26-year career in financial services in Chicago, Shannon Kennedy was named regional president of BNY Mellon Wealth Management Southern California and relocated in June 2013. She was promoted to president, U.S. Markets: Southwest in 2016 where she stands as one of two female presidents at BNY Mellon Wealth Management, a leading wealth manager. Kennedy oversees $10 billion in assets under management and $218 million in assets under custody as of December 31, 2017, as well as a staff of 110 in six locations. Kennedy’s community involvement includes serving on the executive committee of Girl Scouts of Orange County, Women’s Philanthropy Fund, South Coast Repertory, UCI-CEO Roundtable, UCI Women’s Forum, The Belzecian Grove, and for the second year, will serve as the title sponsor for Voice for Girls.

Lisa Kim, Community & Economic Director

City of Garden Grove, Garden Grove

Lisa Kim is the community and economic director for the city of Garden Grove. She is a pro-business advocate and is one of the driving forces behind Mayor Steve Jones’s current success in revitalizing Garden Grove. Upcoming developments in the city include SteelCraft Garden Grove, a Nickelodeon-themed Water Park Hotel and $400 million in resort development on four acres of land. Prior to Garden Grove, Kim was with the city of Orange, where she was responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Economic Development Division, including business development and outreach; overseeing wind down activities of the former Orange Redevelopment Agency, including Successor Agency and Oversight Board responsibilities.

Robin King, Director, Go Red for Women

American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine

Robin King comes to the American Heart Association & American Stroke Association with more than 20 years of account management, sales and marketing experience. As a seasoned executive, she brings a fresh perspective to fundraising and a passion for raising awareness for heart disease, the number one killer in women. King jumped into her position and was able to provide leadership to the Go Red for Women movement.
Leslie Licano, President/Co-Founder
Beyond Fifty Communications Inc., Irvine

Leslie Licano co-founded Beyond Fifty Communications in September 2009 alongside her partner, Lauren Ellermeyer. They shared a desire to push the boundaries of traditional PR methodologies and new social media platforms in order to propel clients past the expected “fifteen minutes of fame” and onto a long-term trajectory of media and market visibility. Beyond Fifty continues to bring innovative ideas, keen focus and tangible results to both national and international clients. Approximately 70% of the agency’s new clients are referred by existing clients — cementing a domino effect of new client relationships. In addition, many of those included on Beyond Fifty’s original client roster still retain the agency today. The agency is on track to see another year of double-digit growth in 2018 after 2017’s 23% year over year growth. The firm added clients across healthcare, technology and consumer product and services categories.

Jenna Lobos, Founder

Jenna Lobos, Corona del Mar

In 2007, Jenna Lobos took a leap of faith and left a successful career as a mortgage representative in order to pursue her entrepreneurial dreams. Lobos’s new path began when she re-signed with a modeling agency at the age of 35. This sparked a newfound feeling of empowerment, motivating her to share this feeling with other women and start an organic tanning business. Simultaneously, Lobos earned her nutritionist license under the umbrella of holistic health. This inspired her to create a tangible product combining her two passions of beauty and health. BeautyMark Organics. BeautyMark is a skin care line that is 100% all-natural, paraben-free and vegan. To date, Lobos has returned to her real estate roots, working specifically in luxury real estate and will be working with a team of professionals featured at this year’s Art-A-Fair in Laguna Beach.

Mina Maghami, Real Estate Consultant

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties, Newport Beach

Mina Maghami has 26 years of real estate experience, with four and a half years with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Realty. Maghami has been involved in many different types of transactions, such as foreclosures, short sale, cash and procuring creative financing clients. Maghami earned a BA in interior design, which has been tremendous asset in creating value for investment and primary properties, giving her an extra edge in real estate and helps her clients see the potential of any properties that interest them. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties’ dedicated real estate experts guide clients through the home buying or selling experience.

Paula Mattson Vice President, Business Operations

Edison Energy, Irvine

Paula Mattson joined Edison Energy in 2015. However, she began her career at Southern California Edison (SCE) in 1990 and held a variety of executive roles at Edison International and SCE, providing leadership on strategic initiatives designed to prepare for the future while improving the customer experience, growing the business and increasing shareholder value. Currently, she is vice president of business operations for Edison Energy, a subsidiary of Edison International that operates competitive businesses in emerging sectors of the electric industry. Edison Energy acquired three companies across the United States when it formed, and Mattson led the integration of these acquisitions. She is currently responsible for assisting business performance through systems, operating controls, reporting and communication oversight. She is an active mentor for employees and executive advisor for SCE’s Employee Resource Group for Latinos for Engagement, Advancement & Development.

Nicole McMackin, President

Irvin Technology Corp., Irvine

Nicole McMackin is president of Irvin Technology Corp. (ITC), a national technology solutions and staffing firm with two local Orange County offices. McMackin is a partner in ITC and has led the company for the past 14 years. McMackin is attributed to making ITC one of the most successful firms, not only in Orange County, but in the country. When McMackin took over ITC, the company had 15 employees locally, and now under her leadership, the organization has grown to 200+ employees in Orange County alone. ITC is proud to service accounts such as AT&T, Molina Healthcare, USC, Trader Joe’s, CHOC, Xerox, Konica Minolta, Nike and many others throughout the country. McMackin’s leadership in all internal operations, brand development, strategic planning and implementation. She also currently holds total P&L responsibility in the United States.

Meghan Medlin, Project Director

Orange County Re-Entry Partnership, Santa Ana

Meghan Medlin has been on the Orange County Re-Entry Partnership (OCREP)
Advisory Committee since 2012. She became chair in 2014 and successfully led the organization to fiscal sponsorship in December 2016, becoming the organization’s project director. OCREP is a collaboration of organizations that unite to effectively reduce county recidivism. Medlin’s work with OCREP is 100% volunteer, she concurrently works for Hope Builders as the director of career services. Medlin represents the county’s community-based organizations on several committees, including Prop 47, AB109 and Stepping Up. She has led efforts to bring several large-scale events to the community, including the Reentry Resource Fair held at the Honda Center, Opioid Awareness event at the Grove of Anaheim, workshops, trainings and monthly meetings. Recently, she was named to the county’s Continuum of Care Governing Board to represent reentry challenges with the homeless population.

Samantha Meyers, Owner/Baker
Sugared and Iced, Coto de Caza
In just a short time, Samantha Meyers has taken Sugared and Iced from a hobby to a full-fledged business. Starting out making cookies for friends and family, Meyers now makes her custom cookies for many of Orange County’s charity organizations and local businesses, including Festival of Children, The Adoption Guild and Women of Chapman, Hyundai, Neiman Marcus and Blizzard Entertainment. Most importantly, she creates her custom delights for many families across Orange County, helping them to celebrate special occasions in a unique and delicious way. With its grand opening in 2017, Sugared and Iced quickly grew from small orders to serving the community with thousands of cookies. Not only was Sugared and Iced part of many Orange County events, large and small, but Meyers was featured on the nationally televised talk show, Pickler and Ben, where she competed in and won a holiday bake-off judged by Food Network stars, Duff Goldman and Nancy Fuller.

Celin Miller, President
GGG Demolition Inc., Orange
Celin Miller is president of GGG Demolition Inc., a woman-owned business she created from ground up. GGG Demolition specializes in full-service demolition and hazardous waste remediation. Miller started in the construction industry 18 years ago, working in demolition and mechanical contracting. She has established a seasoned team of construction professionals that generate positive results in the demolition and remediation industries. She manages day-to-day activities such as business development, bid schedules, sales, strategic planning, insurance and bonding. GGG Demolition is now doing $15 million a year in business with 200 employees and offices in Orange County and San Diego.

Kendra Miller, SVP/General Counsel
BJ’s Restaurants Inc., Huntington Beach
Kendra Miller joined BJ’s Restaurants Inc. six and a half years ago. Today, she oversees the Legal, Licensing, Team Member Relations, and Benefits Departments. She also assumed responsibility for the Loss Prevention Department last year. During her tenure, BJ’s has grown from approximately 13,000 team members at 103 restaurants in 13 states to approximately 23,000 team members at 194 restaurants in 24 states. She is a director of one of BJ’s nonprofit organizations, Give A Slice, which provides grants to team members in their time of need. In 2011, she founded BJ’s Women’s Career Advancement Network (WeCAN), an organization focused on empowering and developing women leaders with the knowledge, skills and network they need to expand their leadership potential and advance their careers at BJ’s. Prior to joining BJ’s, Miller was a partner in the Employment Departments at Crowell & Moring LLP and Carothers DiSante &Freudenberger LLP.

Natasha Minasian, Principal
The Studio at Designers Resource Collection, Costa Mesa
Celebrating more than 30 years of excellence, Designers Resource Collection is the premier destination for interior designers. Open exclusively to the trade, Designers Resource Collection and partner showrooms, The Studio at DRC and Kenneth McDonald Designs, are now under one roof in the Stonemill Design Center, featuring more than 50,000 square feet of combined showroom floor. The adjoining showrooms offer an all-new fabric display, semi-private client/designer collaboration spaces and a comprehensive selection of indoor and outdoor furniture, accessories, bedding, fabric, wall coverings and lighting. Proud to be family-owned and operated, the collective brands provide an elevated experience to the design community and their clientele including famous faces such as Bravo TV’s Jeff Lewis and HGTV’s Christina El Moussa. Dedicated to supporting the local community, the team at Designers Resource...
Collection has supported philanthropic organizations such as National Charity League, Human Options, The Hebrew Academy, Toys for Tots, South County Outreach and Ronald McDonald House.

Shruti Miyashiro, President/CEO
Orange County’s Credit Union, Santa Ana
In 2007, just prior to the great recession, Shruti Miyashiro assumed the role of president and CEO of Orange County’s Credit Union. During this time, she guided the credit union through the historically difficult economic period with no layoffs. Through her tenure, Miyashiro has broken down silos and led the creation and execution of Orange County’s Credit Union’s first strategic plan. She is a leader who has aligned the team with clear strategic direction, providing significant value to members, associations and communities. To members, she offers simple banking solutions designed for people, not profit. To associates, she fosters growth of confident leaders. To communities, she gives back through financial education programs and fundraising efforts.

Renita Rollman, Vice President, General Manager of Regional Offices
Burns & McDonnell, Brea
If you’ve flown in the U.S., you’ve probably landed in an airport Renita Rollman has helped improve. Rollman has spent most of her career in aviation engineering, managing civilian and military projects, while mentoring countless engineers along the way. Today, she leads nearly 180 employees in Burns & McDonnell offices across California, supporting clients in a variety of markets. Rollman joined Burns & McDonnell in 1988 as an assistant civil engineer. She was promoted in 1997 to overseen the firm’s Aviation and Federal Civil Department, which she grew from 15 to 35 employees in just 1 year. In 2003, she was appointed a general manager for California operations in 2009, and named vice president in 2011. In California, she’s led innovative projects at Los Angeles International Airport, Los Alamitos Sunburst Youth Academy and Shrap Army Depot. She was recently named Woman of the Year by WTS-San Diego and the Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Susan Morehead, President/Co-Founder
Optima Asset Management Services, Newport Beach
As president and co-founder of Optima Asset Management Services Inc., Susan Morehead’s greatest accomplishments at the company has been creating a tight-knit team and feeling of family. The majority of Optima’s employees have been with the company 15-30 years. Optima believes in full-service property management, and recognizes the power behind synergistic teamwork. The organization has nurtured a group of forward-thinking leaders who also represent the Optima brand. With more than 30 years of diverse experience, Morehead works closely with her team to ensure that employees are happy, quality and attentive care always exceeds expectations. Optima’s commitment to its clients is second to none, placing the company on the Orange County Business Journal’s “Commercial Property Managers List for the past several years.

Darlynn Morgan, Founding Partner
Morgan Law Group, Newport Beach
Attorney Darlynn Morgan has been practicing law in Orange County since 1996. She founded the law firm of Morgan Law Group in 2001, in the dream of making a difference in her client’s lives, which meant changing the traditional model of estate planning into something that serves families by helping them make the best legal decisions possible throughout their lifetime and guides them to leave the world a better place. Morgan graduated in the top 15% of her class from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, where she was also a member of the Loyola Law Review and was awarded an American Jurisprudence Award. After graduation, Morgan served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable John E. Ryan, a Ninth Circuit Federal Judge. She subsequently practiced at a premier business litigation firm in Orange County.

Debby Morris, Executive VP/CFO
Cha Cha’s Latin Kitchen, Lake Forest
Debby Morris leverages her broad industry experience from the hospitality, professional service, automotive, real estate and business process outsourcing industries to lead Cha Cha’s Healthcare through a period of significant challenge and price compression. While expert financial acumen and stewardship are part of Morris’s foundational mastery, she goes beyond the typical role of chief financial officer to drive cross-functional programs through collaboration, influence spanning all levels of the organization. During a period of significant price compression directly and materially impacting Apria, she has worked with the company’s financial leadership, regional sales and marketing leaders to drive change in the organization, resulting in a 14% EBITDA CAGR from 2014-2017 despite price compression totaling more than $200 million over that same time period. Apria has transformed from a company facing untenable performance impact to a high-growth, cost-efficient company serving 1.8 million patients across the U.S. Apria Healthcare is one of the nation’s leading providers of home respiratory services.

Jennifer Morris, Founder/CEO
Ajenda Public Relations, Orange
Ajenda Public Relations started as a one-woman business, approximately eight years ago. Today, it has grown into one of the leading restaurant and hospitality public relations and marketing agencies in Southern California, and now employs ten other hardworking and passionate women. While local and independent concepts like Old Vine Cafe, Cha Cha’s Kitchen and Greenbar Distillery still remain a focal point for Ajenda Public Relations, Founder and CEO Jennifer Morris has also grown the client roster to include national and international clients, including Farmer Boys, The Halal Guys and Papa John’s. The success of the company can be attributed to the positive reputation the company upholds and the Morris’s knack for hiring talented PR and marketing professionals who are likened to the success of Ajenda PR and its clients. Morris is also an active member of Les Dames d’Escoffier, a by-invitation membership and philanthropic organization of female leaders in the food, fine beverage and hospitality industries.

Jody Moses, President - Risk Services
Jody Moses brings more than two decades of experience in public entity claims administration to designing, implementing and managing customized claims management solutions for public entities. Moses is a certified professionals’ compensation claims adjuster with recognized expertise in the complex California workers’ compensation system. She is a licensed General Adjuster and has earned an Associate in Risk Management designation. Moses is a frequent speaker and workshop leader at regional and national public entity risk management conferences. She actively works with public entities to analyze and influence legislative and regulatory changes that directly affect public entity risk management programs. Your PR Services Group is the third largest multi-line TPA and has been a leading national provider of specialty claims and risk management services to the markets it has served for more than 60 years.

Danielle Murcia, Chief Operations Officer
Crepes Bonaparte, Fullerton
Established more than 10 years ago by husband and wife team, Christian and Danielle Murcia, Crepes Bonaparte is Southern California’s original crepe caterer. Crepes Bonaparte recreates the experience of enjoying French crepes on the streets of Paris, France with made-to-order savory and dessert style crepes. Under Danielle’s direction, Crepes Bonaparte has been featured on Food Network’s The Great Food Truck Race and Giada at Home, Cooking Channel’s Eat Street, was named as one of the Top 20 Food Trucks by QSR Magazine, highlighted on Food Truck Fanatics, and more. Danielle oversees all operational and marketing aspects of the business, and has helped develop it from a catering-only offering to two food trucks and a brick and mortar storefront in Downtown Fullerton.

Kirti Mutakar, President/CEO
UnitedAg, Irvine
Kirti Mutakar assumed the role of president/CEO of UnitedAg in May 2014. UnitedAg is a multi-commodity member-owned agricultural trade association dedicated to providing innovative solutions for a strong and healthy agricultural industry. She joined the company in 2001, and served as the CFO for 10 years. As CFO, Mutakar directed all operations of the organization and developed a deep understanding of each functional area of the company. Under her leadership, UnitedAg has grown from an $80 million company to a $155+ million company. This growth is attributed to her unique approach of leading innovation through empathy and enabling UnitedAg to create products that delight members and create a sense of awe. She does this by not only listening to members’ concerns and issues, but also by getting a deeper understanding of how taxing our current healthcare system can be. Her passion has positioned UnitedAg as one of the foremost association health plans for the agricultural industry.

Shana Neuberger, VP of Business Development
American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine
Shana Neuberger has overseen the American Heart Association & American Stroke Association staff who run the nonprofit’s three major campaigns in Orange County: The Orange County Go Red For Women Luncheon, The Orange County Heart & Stroke through collaboration with Orange County Heart Ball. Neuberger has a long history in the nonprofit field and enjoys working to help make a difference for future generations. Her focus is to engage with OC companies that are interested in taking the next step with employees’ health and engaging them with the American Heart Association & American Stroke Association in a way that can help them fulfill their interest in executive leadership, employee engagement, community health partnerships and/or reduced bottom lines.
Karen Nguyen, Founder/CEO
Inspired Art Wine, Costa Mesa
Since opening Inspired Art Wine (IAW) on February 16, 2016, Karen Nguyen has established a loyal client base with first-time turnings into regulars and now friends. Today, IAW has become a leading arts and entertainment company for corporate team building. In addition to art classes, Nguyen curates unique wines from across different regions and hosts monthly wine tasting events for enthusiasts. IAW also offers off-site trips to museums for VIPs (Very Inspired Painters). Customers who can frequent their technical painting skills at a fraction of the cost of attending a traditional art school.

Wendy Nugent, Senior Communications Specialist
Auto Club of Southern CA, Costa Mesa
Wendy Nugent is a senior communications specialist with 12 years of experience at the Auto Club of Southern California. Nugent oversees the internal website for 14,000 employees across 21 states, and is the executive producer of a monthly video news show for Auto Club employees. In 2014, Nugent was a recipient of the Auto Club President's Award. Despite her busy schedule, she has volunteered to lead the Auto Club of Southern California's United Way Employee Giving Campaign for nearly 12 years. As the leader of the annual campaign, she manages more than 160 Auto Club Ambassadors across five states and has increased employee donations over 60% in the last six years. As an employee engagement tool, Nugent has developed, managed and promoted different community involvement events for Auto Club employees to support United Way's initiatives in education, health, housing and financial stability.

Heather O'Connell, Senior Processor
GreenLink Financial, Irvine
Heather O'Connell started with GreenLink Financial in June 2016, and with only six months to end the year, she enrolled $10,593,439 worth of accounts. She won the coveted Rookie of the Year award with almost 575 enrollments in six months. For 2017, O'Connell pushed the year strong with $22,604,693 and six awards. Besides her proven track record, O'Connell's consistency from month to month gives her accomplishments that much greater. In 2018, as of March, her current enrollments stand at $4,618,078. Since the inception of GreenLink in 2014, no one has ever completed this many enrollments, which is especially impressive in a male-dominated sales floor. GreenLink Financial is a leader in the consumer finance industry. With more than 20 years of combined financial advisory experience, the company has helped thousands of people resolve their financial struggles and get back on the path towards financial freedom.

Annette Oltmans, Founder
The MEND Project, Laguna Beach
Annette Oltmans is the founder of The MEND Project, a 501(c)(3) organization created in 2016 to educate, equip and protect all those impacted by primary and “Double Abuse.” When victims finally find the courage to speak about their abuse or reach out for help, rather than being believed, they are often judged, silenced and even ostracized by their families, church communities and local communities. Oltmans’s research interviewing hundreds of victims revealed that this secondary layer of abuse often exacerbates trauma, harming victims on a cellular level. Oltmans interviewed more than 100 pastors and professional counselors. She observed that most were uninformed on matters of abuse and trauma. Oltmans trains professional clinicians, pastors and victim survivors on matters of abuse. She is passionate about naming covert emotionally abusive behaviors that are present in nearly every form of primary and Double Abuse. She also created a glossary of defining terms to provide clarity to victims and responders.

Natalia Ostensen, Executive Vice President, Olen Properties Corp., Newport Beach
President, Andrie’s Restaurant Corp., Irvine
Serving as executive vice president at Olen Properties, Natalia Ostensen oversees the company’s real estate operations, including 6 million square feet of commercial space (mostly in Orange County) and more than 5,000 multi-family apartments in five states. In the past five years, Olen has acquired three new multifamily properties in the Atlanta area (totaling roughly 1,000 apartments) and 4100 Newport Place, a nine-story office tower in Newport Beach. Ostensen also built and opened Andrie’s Conscious Cuisine & Cocktails in 2009 after losing her brother, Andrei, in a car accident. He was very committed to nutrition as healing and prevention, so Andrie’s Conscious Cuisine & Cocktails’ menu focuses on organic, local ingredients. In addition, the restaurant operates as a nonprofit, donating all net proceeds to the Andrie Foundation. In 2012, Olen Properties’ son won the Nature Conservancy’s Land & Water Conservation Fund’s 2012 Award for LAVOC’s favorite green restaurant, which was voted on by all Nature Conservancy members.

Linda Padilla-Smyth, Director of Real Estate and Property Management
Chapman University, Orange
Linda Padilla-Smyth is the director of real estate and property management for Chapman University. In her role, she provides leadership in the complex management and operation of university residential homes and commercial tenant-leased properties in eight states. She also oversees the real estate portfolio consisting of office buildings, apartments, condominiums, duplexes, bare lots, ground leases, educational use and donation agreements (locally and outside California). In total, real estate and property management oversees 170 properties. Padilla-Smyth works closely with University Advancement to analyze, provide opinions, evaluate, conduct due diligence, and liquidate real estate asset gifts donated to Chapman University.

Sara Palmer, Founder/CEO
StaffRehab, Newport Beach
Sara Palmer is the founder and CEO of StaffRehab, an educational outsourcing company staffing more than 200 service providers in school districts across the U.S. From its inception in 2009, Palmer has grown her team to 16 employees while providing exceptional customer service to schools. StaffRehab’s mission is to align candidates’ and clients’ values as the company’s own. Today, StaffRehab provides special education services to more than 5,000 students.

Summer Lynne Perry, Real Estate Agent
Surterre Properties, Newport Beach
Summer Lynne Perry became a licensed broker in November 2011, and in May 2012, started work at Surterre Properties. After a few years at Surterre, she seized the opportunity to start her own team. With a baby on the way and a team being put together, Perry sold more real estate that year and managed more transactions than she ever had before. From short sales to first-time homebuyers, The Summer Perry Group quickly made its mark on the Orange County market. Perry’s dedication to the industry is proven through her tireless work ethic, including closing deals from the maternity ward. Today, The Summer Perry Group represents one of the top teams in Southern California, and is among the top four producing teams at Surterre Properties. The Summer Perry Group has sold approximately $150 million in the last three years and has another $55 million in current listings and buyers. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.

Lauren Peterson, Vice President, Client Advisor
Whittier Trust, Costa Mesa
Lauren Peterson has more than three decades of experience in various leadership positions in the legal and financial industry. As a former practicing attorney focusing on estate, tax and business planning, her experience and education enable Peterson to assist many affluent families with complex estate plans. Peterson orchestrates her team of financial advisors, including attorney, accountant and investment manager, all working toward the same goal of perpetuating wealth and intergenerational transfers. Whittier Trust Company is the largest multi-family office headquartered on the West Coast. Since founding the company of family business in 1953, Whittier family in 1953, Whittier family has been helping high-earning individuals and families accomplish what is most important to them – enriching and enhancing clients’ lives by providing expert guidance, superior investment performance and exceptionally tailored experience.

Sandra Pham, CFO/President of Shared Services
West Coast University & American Career College, Irvine
Sandra Pham brought innovation and financial diligence to West Coast University and American Career College. Her ability to restructure the entire financial function has improved overall performance in all verticals of the business. She holds other accountable with compassion, caring and support, while setting the example every day for those who work directly and indirectly with her. Pham is known by her peers as a “game changer,” developing business analytics to support organizational growth and effectiveness. Her growth mindset has allowed her to successfully partner with operation leaders to improve efficiency, student outcomes and an exceptional student experience. Her results are phenomenal, with 23% revenue growth over the past three years. West Coast University is one of Southern California’s leading health care educators, offering programs in nursing, health care management and dental hygiene at campuses in Los Angeles, Orange County, and Ontario. American Career College is a health care educator with three campuses located in Southern California.

Meesh Pierce, VP Product Management
AutoGravity, Irvine
A dedicated leader with deep expertise in building industry-changing products, Meesh Pierce serves AutoGravity with her deep understanding of emerging technologies and agile development. With her track record of driving innovation across industries, Pierce...
leads the company’s product team, helping evolve its innovative technology platform and connect AutoGravity with more car buyers across the nation. Since its first pilot in the summer of 2015, the organization has attracted more than a million and half car shoppers through the AutoGravity iOS and Android apps. AutoGravity expanded its geographic reach in 2017, and now is live in 25 states nationwide. AutoGravity partners with the world’s leading banks and financial services companies. The platform has attracted 2,000+ franchise car dealerships, including four of the five largest, seven of the ten largest, and 100 of the largest in the United States. Through these partnerships, AutoGravity technology has simplified the auto financing experience, delivering personalized finance offers to prospective car buyers within minutes.

Jennifer Povlitz, Orange County Market Head
UBS Financial Services Inc., Newport Beach
Jennifer Povlitz leads the wealth management business for UBS Financial Services Inc. in Orange County. Since her arrival in late 2015, Povlitz has established the mission of “Aligning Clients’ Wealth With Their Purpose,” grown the business, and uplifted the core values and principles. Povlitz also launched 17 new chapters of All Bar None, UBS’s network to promote, develop and advance women. UBS is the largest global wealth manager in the world, helping affluent families plan, preserve and express their values through wealth decisions.

Sandy Powers, Agent & Leader of the Powers Team
Villa Real Estate
Sandy Powers brings 40 years of experience and results to the real estate market. Powers has a BS in physical therapy, and worked with head injury and spinal cord patients. She brings this same level of commitment and compassion to her real estate business. Powers has always demonstrated a personal, concierge approach with her clients with a hands-on attitude. Clients interact directly with her on each transaction. Powers has sold more than a billion dollars over her 40 years in real estate. Villa Real Estate is a leading luxury residential real estate firm in coastal Orange County.

Robbin Narike Preciado, Regional President-Southern California Retail Division
Union Bank, Orange
Robbin Narike Preciado has had an extraordinary 27-year career in banking. She has risen in the banking world, and is now the regional president of Union Bank with her geographic area covering Orange County, San Diego, Inland Empire, Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley. In that position, Preciado oversees more than 900 employees, 125 branches and more than 351,000 retail households. With her deep understanding of the banking industry and its evolution, and its importance to people in fulfilling dreams of homeownership, college savings and retirement, Preciado was selected to be the lead for Union Bank in reengineering the customer experience approach.

Shirley Quackenbush, Private Wealth Manager/SVP-Wealth Management
Merrill Lynch, A Bank of America Corp., Private Banking & Investment Group, Newport Beach
Shirley Quackenbush works with affluent individuals, families and institutions to design and implement sophisticated wealth strategies. She leads a multi-disciplinary approach that is firmly grounded in client goals and priorities. Quackenbush recognizes that significant wealth can entail both complexity and opportunity. She and her team offer sophisticated strategies to streamline the preservation and transfer of wealth. Driven to exceed expectations, Quackenbush serves clients with an intensity that mirrors her interest in their wellbeing. She integrates strategies across a spectrum of needs: investment management, executive services, trust and estate planning services, credit and lending through Bank of America, N.A., lifestyle services and philanthropy. The Private Banking and Investment Group offers a broad array of personalized wealth management products and services.

Song Richardson, Dean & Professor of Law
University of California, Irvine School of Law, Irvine
Song Richardson is a shining example of someone who has shattered the glass ceiling, both as a woman and a person of color. She is the second dean in University of California, Irvine School of Law’s history, and the only woman of color to currently serve as dean of a law school law school, as ranked by U.S. News & World Report. An award-winning teacher and scholar, Richardson has been a professor at UCI Law since 2014, and from 2016-17, served as the school’s senior associate dean for Academic Affairs. Her expertise and scholarship is in criminal procedure, criminal law, and social science. In the first year since Richardson assumed the deanship, UCI Law skyrocketed to its highest U.S. News & World Report ranking of all-time; the school now ranks No. 21 in the nation, up seven spots from last year. This past fall, Richardson’s first as dean, UCI Law welcomed its largest first-year class of all time – 159 students.

Marcela Rios-Faust, CEO
Human Options, Irvine
Marcela Rios-Faust’s leadership has been a key driver in Human Options becoming the most comprehensive domestic violence service agency in Orange County. Her commitment comes from a desire to raise her daughter in a world where domestic violence isn’t tolerated. Since 2006, she has capitalized on her 20 years of experience working with vulnerable populations. Recognized as a leader in the field, Rios-Faust is the past president of the board of directors for the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence. She also co-chairs the Orange County Domestic Violence Death Review Team, serves on the Orange County Women’s Health Project Advisory Board and the WeCan Coalition Steering Committee. Rios-Faust was named one of Orange County’s Most Influential of 2014 by the Orange County Register for her leadership on increasing awareness of health impacts of domestic violence.

Laura Roche, Luxury Real Estate Professional
Villa Real Estate, Newport Beach
With more than 16 years of residential real estate experience, Laura Roche has earned a reputation for excellence in her field. Joining forces with Shana Spitzer in 2013, they have sold more than $150 million in luxury real estate and are associated with the high-end firm Villa Real Estate. Roche is recognized for her strategic marketing that has both a local and international reach, strong negotiating skills and a commitment to 24/7 concierge services for her clients. She is the recipient of numerous accolades, but the long list of repeat clients and positive testimonials is what drives her to work relentlessly in the competitive real estate market. Villa Real Estate is a leading luxury residential real estate firm in coastal Orange County.

Joni Rogers-Kante, Founder/CEO/Chairwoman
SeneGence International Inc., Foothill Ranch
Joni Rogers-Kante founded SeneGence® in 1999 and the company has since become a recognized, international leader in the cosmetics industry. To Rogers-Kante, just as important as a flourishing business is the commitment to high-quality products that not only work, but give value to consumers and the communities in which the company’s distributors live, while not depleting the earth of natural resources or creating unnecessary waste. Rogers-Kante traveled to the other side of the world with a team of scientists and botanists to find different ingredients than those available in the U.S. for the unique formulas in SeneGence products. After she learned that cosmetic companies continuously use the same ingredients in one product to the next – just in varying amounts, she knew SeneGence had to be different. Today, these unique ingredients are used to help produce amazing results in SeneDerm® anti-aging SkinCare and long-lasting SenseCosmetics™ products.

Angela Rowe, CFO
Global Genes, Aliso Viejo
For the last three years, Angela Rowe has served as chief operating officer and chief financial officer for Global Genes, a leading rare disease advocacy organization. Overseeing a staff of seven and a $4 million budget, she acts as effective executive officer, handling all board meetings; committee work and external engagement; as well as governance, finance, legal, risk and employee matters. During her tenure, Global Genes has realized a 60% increase in net assets over fiscal years and has established the company’s first reserve and investment accounts. Rowe has written, implemented and oversaw adherence to the company’s first non-profit Governance Policies and Procedures, first Accounting Policies and Procedures, first Employee Manual and first Employee Performance Review Process. Rowe resolved several inherited audit management letters with 18 audit findings in less than 18 months and achieved a clean management letter for FY2016 by addressing all key governance deficiencies. She also implemented the first corporate health and retirement plans for the company in 2017.
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Ellen Roy, Executive Director
Mary’s Path, Santa Ana
As executive director, Ellen Roy drives the mission and vision of Mary’s Path, a safe haven for Orange County’s pregnant teens and young mothers under the age of 18. Before embarking on this role, Roy enjoyed a successful corporate career of more than 20 years. She brings a keen sense of business and finance to her organization, as well as a sincere passion to help the teen girls staying at Mary’s Path, many of whom have been victims of homelessness, abandonment, poverty, neglect and sexual exploitation. Roy joined Mary’s Path in 2016 with a determination to power and equip the vulnerable, teen girls and their babies for lives with hope, dignity and self-sufficiency.

Talia Samuels, President
Outshine Public Relations, Newport Beach
At 23 years old, Talia Samuels founded Outshine Public Relations in 2015 with the desire to shine awareness on Orange County’s top culinary talent. Recognized for her poise, tenacity and integrity, Samuels works on behalf of a top-tier list of award-winning chefs and restaurateurs that entrust her to help their businesses succeed by increasing exposure through earned print, digital, television and radio opportunities complemented with expertly executed social media and digital content strategies. Samuels has earned her clients national coverage in outlets including USA Today, Vogue, and Food & Wine, while generating local buzz through outlets including the Orange County Business Journal, KTLA, ABC7, CBS, the Los Angeles Times, Orange County Register and many more.

Danielle Sapia, Executive Director
American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine
Danielle Sapia is the executive director at the American Heart Association & American Stroke Association (AHA). She first joined the AHA as the senior business development director, bringing with her the experience and leadership skills to advance the organization. She has and continues to work with staff, Orange County corporate partners, volunteer leadership and the executive board to achieve maximum impact in equitable health and wellbeing through education, advocacy and research. Sapia’s background includes extensive experience in nonprofit management and proven capabilities in volunteer engagement, donor cultivation, marketing and sponsorship. She made an immediate and significant impact in Orange County, spreading AHA’s mission of reducing cardiovascular disease and stroke, bringing innovation to the organization, and being an advocate for health issues. Through strong engagement, focused collaboration and disciplined planning and execution, the team has been able to accomplish their goals and has set their sights even higher for continued growth.

Tina Schackman, VP, Strategic Relationships
Prudential Retirement, Irvine
Tina Schackman has been with Prudential Retirement for six years, starting as a key account manager for Prudential’s largest corporate retirement plans in the Western region. She was promoted to vice president, strategic relationships in 2013, where her primary responsibilities are to oversee Prudential’s largest intermediary distribution channels located in the Western region and develop strategy to align business growth. Schackman has spoken at several industry events on topics ranging from retirement industry trends to financial wellness. More recently, she has begun speaking about the retirement income gender gap and how women should think differently about how to plan for their financial security. Prudential Financial has provided clients with financial solutions since 1875.

Sherri Scheck-Merrill, VP Business Business, Product & Licensing Development
Amenity Services Inc., Tustin
A 25-year executive in the niche field of global hotel amenity product design and development, and a fixture at North American Hotel Headquarters, Sherri Scheck-Merrill’s exclusive licensing portfolio and custom-designed products and programs occupy space in more than one million North American hotel guest rooms. Scheck-Merrill is also the CEO and founder of an award-winning 501(c)3 Career-Exploring Internship Program accredited at 27 campuses. Scheck-Merrill is often featured as a trend columnist for Hotels Magazine, Refinery 28 and Vogue. Amenity Services Inc. celebrates its 30-year focus to the field of hotel amenities, embracing a spectrum of diverse roles including collaborator, licensor, partner, producer, developer and distributor.

Betha Schnelle, COO
Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties, Orange
Betha Schnelle is the executive vice president of the Orange San Bernardino Counties chapter of Planned Parenthood, the nation’s largest reproductive health care provider. In her role, Schnelle is held accountable for the organization’s fiscal stability and growth. Schnelle, with a background in maturation and business acumen, was key in reducing wait times from 60 to 15 minutes, increasing visit volume 60% in the last eight years, developing a primary care program with 10,000+ empaneled lives in three years, and helping to develop a smartphone app to purchase birth control pills—all while maintaining a 4.3 star average rating and a 95% patient satisfaction score. Schnelle’s forward-thinking style continues to enhance the Planned Parenthood organization and the Orange County community.

Kylie Schuyler, Founder/CEO
Global G.L.O.W. & Le Nd Inc., California Bliss, Santa Ana
In 2011, Kylie Schuyler founded nonprofit Global G.L.O.W. and social enterprise, California Bliss, a frozen yogurt chain in Europe established to provide funds for the nonprofit. Global G.L.O.W. helps transform the lives of strong girls, in grades 5-12 from vulnerable communities around the world, by empowering them to realize their full potential. Both organizations have achieved tremendous success in eight years. Global G.L.O.W. has grown from a small afterschool program for girls that initially started at one school in Santa Ana to operating programs in 27 countries with four program sites in Southern California. California Bliss, which started with one store in AX-IN PROVENCE is now in the process of expanding to other locations in France and in the U.S.

Sunny Seegmiller, CEO
Sunny Seegmiller has worked with her father in the personal injury legal field since she was 16. She officially began working in his PI practice as the front desk receptionist upon graduating from UCLA, and began working as a case manager at age 24 while going to graduate school at night. After completing her master’s degree in USC in technical writing and screenplay, Seegmiller began working as a demand writer at the firm for 12 years where she wore many hats and learned all aspects of the business of personal injury law. Seegmiller began to see the business opportunities in the world of legal marketing. After finishing a second master’s degree in education and psychology, Seegmiller returned to her dad’s law firm and started legal marketing firm, Law Media Inc. in 2017. Law Media Inc. has already supplied its partner law firm with 35 viable cases within the first month of opening its doors.

Chahira Solh, Partner
Crowell & Moring LLP, Irvine
Chahira Solh is a partner in the law firm of Crowell & Moring and has become one of the most sought-after antitrust lawyers in California. Leading corporations such as General Motors, Yamaha and Motorola/Leno von to Solh when they face high-stakes antitrust actions in California and across the United States. Her work has resulted in saved businesses and the recovery of tens of millions of dollars for clients. As a leader in the antitrust bar, Solh raises the bar in the highly specialized area of antitrust law involving large-scale, bet-the-company litigations. Solh also has an active pro bono practice and has made an indelible mark on the underserved and less fortunate.

Lisa Sparks, Ph.D., Dean, School of Communications
Chapman University, Orange
Dr. Lisa Sparks is the inaugural dean of the School of Communication and Endowed Professor at Chapman University. She previously served as chair of the Department of Communication Studies and founding head/director of the Master of Science graduate program in Health and Strategic Communication. Sparks is a highly regarded teacher-scholar whose published work spans more than 150 research articles and scholarly book chapters, and is the author and editor of 12 books in the areas of communication, health and aging with a focus on intersections of provider-patient interaction and family decision-making as related to cancer communication. Her innovative research has been featured in the Los Angeles Times, Orange County Register and TED.

Jessica Spaulding, President
Spaulding Thompson & Associates, Aliso Viejo
Jessica Spaulding founded Spaulding Thompson & Associates to offer a nimble, senior-level approach to providing public relations and marketing to the commercial real estate industry and public sector. The firm has built a solid reputation for delivering quality communications strategies. To underscore its success, Spaulding Thompson & Associates has been recognized for its contributions to the business, having achieved longstanding tenures of more than 10 years with many of its clients.

Shana Spitzer, Real Estate Agent
Villa Real Estate, Newport Beach
Shana Spitzer expanded her career as a successful interior designer to being a top-selling luxury real estate agent over the last eight years. In 2012, she partnered with colleague, Laura Roche, and together they have become a leading, top-producing team for Villa Real Estate. The key to much of her success has been dedication to providing

2018 Women of the Year Award Winners

Orange County Business Journal

April 16, 2018
2018 Women of the Year Award Nominees

24/7 personalized service to clients, buyers and sellers alike. Going above and beyond with an intensive marketing strategy to reach specific buyers has led to her achieving top dollar for her listings. An intimate knowledge of each neighborhood from her 25 years of living in the Newport area has also allowed her the ability to bring buyers the homes that they have dreamed of. Villa Real Estate is a leading luxury residential real estate firm in coastal Orange County.

Brenda Springer, Founder/CEO
Revelle Inc., Costa Mesa

When others were still reeling from the Great Recession, Brenda Springer eyed an opportunity: create a different kind of marketing and public relations agency. Eight years later, Springer’s vision, Reveille Inc., operates at the epicenter of culture, commerce and conversation in Orange County. She helms the full-service agency, 15-person team that is on the forefront of some of the county’s most significant initiatives, helping consumer brands, nonprofit agencies and public agencies to make an impact. From opening the much-anticipated FivePoint Amphitheatre and Orange County Great Park Sports Park, to taking Dendre and Albert Pujols’ Strike Out Slavery campaign national, to launching elnies “Buy a Shoe, Plant a Tree” initiative, Springer has her finger on the pulse of Orange County – and beyond. She also is a champion of traziblzing nonprofit initiatives to give veterans the homecoming they deserve, put a stop to human trafficking and more.

Paula Steuer, President
Sterling Public Relations, Corona del Mar

Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage. Eliisa Stowell has been with Surterre Properties since the company’s inception. She is and has been one of the firm’s top sales representative and increasing DealerSocket sales in the Pacific Northwest by more than 40%. She was awarded DealerSocket’s premier sales award, Winner’s Circle, in 2010. Her strategic contributions led to a promotion to sales director of the Central Region, where she continued to thrive. She soon advanced to managing the coveted East Coast Region, where she earned a second Winner’s Circle award for reaching 100% of DealerSocket’s sales goals. Today, Storey is DealerSocket’s vice president of sales, where she leads a Customer Success Department to help DealerSocket’s customers better leverage technology solutions. The department she leads has grown by 87 people in 2017 with the addition of the Customer Success Department. Storey provides dealerships with a single automotive platform containing marketing, sales, service, customer experience and data mining solutions.

Susie Storey, Vice President of Sales
DealerSocket, San Clemente

Sterling Public Relations is a full-service public relations, marketing and branding firm in Orange County, California and Dallas, Texas. Offering custom-tailored services including brand identity development, talent representation, public relations, advertising, email marketing, social media and graphic design, all services are handled in-house by Sterling PR’s award-winning team. The firm has extensive experience in industries such as automotive, aviation, entertainment, fitness, technology, health and wellness, interior design, philanthropy, professional services, real estate – both residential and commercial, and wealth management. Specializing in strategic solutions for clients across the USA, led by media strategist and marketing innovator Paula Steuer, the brand has earned a reputation for excellence.

Ellisa Stowell, Realtor
Surterre Properties, Newport Beach

Elissa Stowell has been with Surterre Properties since the company’s inception. She is and has been one of the Surterre’s top producing Corona del Mar agents for more than a decade. Stowell is not only a longtime resident of Corona del Mar, but a property investor, landlord and one of the seaside community’s most trusted real estate professionals. She is always giving back by mentoring new agents and participating in a mastermind panel. Stowell is recognized by many in the organization as a team player and an advocate of Surterre Properties’ unique business philosophy. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.

Autumn Stier, Co-Founder/CEO
Miracles for Kids, Tustin

Autumn Stier is the co-founder & CEO of Miracles for Kids, as well as the president of the Miracles for Kids Board of Directors. Under her leadership, Miracles for Kids has become a significant resource for families in crisis throughout Southern California and beyond, with financial aid and other basic needs programs providing long-term aid to more than 1,000 families with children battling 100+ different life-threatening illnesses. As the chief architect of all programs and services offered by the nonprofit organization, as well as its lead fundraiser for more than a decade, Stier has an unwavering commitment to serving those in great need.

Victoria Stromborg, Real Estate Agent
Surterre Properties, Laguna Beach

Victoria Stromborg has been one of the coastal community’s top real estate agents throughout her career. As a valued agent at Surterre, Stromborg stays involved with the company beyond her role as an agent by mentoring and recruiting new Surterre partners and agents, and by participating in Surterre’s Charity Matching program. Stromborg has also been awarded the National Association of REALTOR’s Green Designation – the only NAR conferred real estate designation for agents looking to learn about issues of energy efficiency and sustainability in the various facets of real estate. Surterre Properties is a residential real estate brokerage.

Mary-Christine “M.C.” Sungaila, Partner
Haynes and Boone LLP, Costa Mesa

Since joining Haynes and Boone in 2015, M.C. Sungaila’s track record as an outstanding appellate lawyer has raised the law firm’s profile in California. Sungaila, a partner in Haynes and Boone’s Orange County office and anchor of the firm’s California appellate practice, has briefed and argued appeals raising cutting-edge and core business issues, and helped secure important rights for women and girls nationally and internationally. Sungaila has repeatedly been named one of California’s Top 100 Women Lawyers by the Daily Journal and twice named a California Lawyer Attorney of the Year for victories before the California Supreme Court and Ninth Circuit U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Last year alone, two of the year’s five biggest appellate reversals cited by the Daily Journal involved Sungaila. In 2017, she was awarded both the Orange County Women Lawyers’ Association’s Attorney of the Year and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

Nicole Suydam, CEO
Second Harvest Food Bank of OC, Irvine

One conversation with Nicole Suydam, CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank, will change everything you think you know about food banks and hunger. Suydam is leading Second Harvest’s Bold Goal Strategic Plan to close the meal gap in Orange County by 2025 by sourcing and distributing more fresh, nutritious food and ensuring that the 315,000 people at risk of hunger – mostly children and seniors – can access high-quality food at a convenient and dignified location to see them through their time of need. Under her leadership, Second Harvest has provided a record 21.6 million meals in 2017 – up from 14.9 million in 2012, when she started – and increased total organizational revenue during this same time, including the value of donated food, from $35 million to $53.9 million. Last year, Suydam and her team launched two, first-of-its-kind Permanent School Pantry programs in high-need neighborhoods, making significant progress toward her Bold Goal vision.

Krista Taalley, Owner
Dolly’s Cotton Candy, Seal Beach

Dolly’s Cotton Candy is an on-site catering service started in 2011 by former advertising design executive, Krista Taalley, that provides a unique food entertainment experience for all ages. Taalley’s background in design and marketing has given her a unique approach to creating a successful business that masters visual branding. Dolly’s Cotton Candy has been featured on Keeping Up with the Kardashians, OC Housewives, Discovery Channel and WETV. Dolly’s unique style has also caught the attention of A-list celebrities, international events planners and Food & Wine 500 companies.

Kacey Taormina, Commercial & Residential Real Estate Broker, Compass, Newport Beach

Kacey Taormina has been instrumental in the development of Orange County. Through her commercial real estate work, she is continuously identifying ways to improve and reuse local properties to make the community better. As a residential real estate broker, she works with individuals and families on making Orange County home. Taormina is also deeply involved in finding a permanent solution to Orange County’s homelessness epidemic. She was recently
has allowed Valdovinos to build a culture of health in Orange County with a collective cholesterol control strategy, and usage of AHA’s Workplace Health Achievement Index focus on addressing social determinants of health, building with government, nonprofit, corporate, neighborhood and health and stroke disease awareness. Valdovinos has worked to improve cardiovascular health. She also created the to reach the Spanish-speaking community of Orange County

In her 10 years with the American Heart Association & American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine Marklem Valdovinos, Senior Director of Community Impact for 100 underserved high school kids to go to college on each continent. Business and Life, a book based on her dissertation study on continued at amazing levels in 2017. In 2017, Uribe also financial metric – ROE, ROA, Efficiency Ratio and Revenue world detailing how she led a “best-in-class” turnaround. In 2011 for the purpose of conducting a massive turnaround, not California Bank & Trust, Irvine

Dr. Betty Uribe, Executive Vice President California Bank & Trust, Irvine

When Betty Uribe was recruited to California Bank & Trust in 2011 for the purpose of conducting a massive turnaround, not even she could imagine that just five years later, she would be presenting to 30 banking executives from around the world detailing how she led a “best-in-class” turnaround. In 2016, the best year in the history of the bank, they had a 40% year over year, pre-tax profit increase, while every major financial metric – ROE, ROA, Efficiency Ratio and Revenue Growth – saw significant improvements. Those metrics continued at amazing levels in 2017. In 2017, Uribe also published Value$: The Secret to Top Level Performance in Business and Life, a book based on her dissertation study on values. The book instantly became an international best seller and has been presented to world leaders, while continuing Uribe’s goal of raising funds to provide scholarships for 100 underserved high school kids to go to college on each continent.

Marklem Valdovinos, Senior Director of Community Impact American Heart Association & American Stroke Association, Irvine

In her 10 years with the American Heart Association & American Stroke Association (AHA), Marklem Valdovinos has developed and implemented culturally appropriate initiatives to reach the Spanish-speaking community of Orange County to improve cardiovascular health. She also created the Legacy Leader internship program, engaging college students in supporting the AHA mission of prevention and health and stroke disease awareness. Valdovinos has worked with government, nonprofit, corporate, neighborhood and community leaders to build and implement plans driving toward opportunities to improve health equity for all. Her focus on addressing social determinants of health, building and implementing a cross-functional hypertension and cholesterol control strategy, and usage of AHA’s Workplace Health Achievement Index has allowed Valdovinos to build a culture of health in Orange County with a collective impact approach.

Nancy Vengoechea, Owner/Lead Interior Designer Vengo Design International, San Clemente

Nancy Vengoechea’s interest in interior design began while watching her father, a residential contractor, create 3D mock-ups of his projects. On occasion, Vengoechea would go with her father during summer break to showrooms and help him select tiles and color schemes, as he was color blind. Vengoechea went on to attend the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. Being a creative entrepreneur, it seemed obvious for Vengoechea to start her own interior design company. Once her three kids were in school full-time, Vengoechea established Vengo Design. Starting with calls from friends who wanted their kids’ rooms redone, soon after by word of mouth, Vengo Design expanded from new build to complete residential home renovations and eventually, a few commercial projects.

Gina Waggener, Executive Director/Owner OC Marketing Solutions, Laguna Niguel

Gina Waggener is best known for increasing public appeal through alignment of nonprofits and other causes with commercial enterprises to create strategic partnerships. She helps clients to create dynamic marketing and event strategies that amplify the brand and attract media attention. Waggener and her team provide tailored solutions that are cost-effective, and in doing so, have become trusted advisors. Acting as more than just marketing people, her team helps clients build their businesses. Waggener has successfully grown and launched many small business products and entrepreneurs. The OC Marketing Solutions team empowers business owners by implementing effective marketing strategies that help them to grow their customer base.

Margie Wakeham, CEO Families Forward, Irvine

Margie Wakeham has been the CEO of the nonprofit, Families Forward, since 1992. Her leadership has advanced the organization from a two-person operation in a small, donated office space to the present staff of 40, based out of an 18,500-square-foot, agency-owned Family Program Center. Families Forward initially served only a few families in Irvine with transitional housing and case management. Now, the agency assists more than 11,500 individuals each year throughout Orange County with a broad spectrum of services such as clinical counseling, life skills education, career counseling, rent and utilities assistance, advocated referrals, food pantry access, and housing and case management. Wakeham has been on the forefront of new and innovative housing services and spearheaded Families Forward’s move to a Rapid Re-Housing model, a first in the county. The organization houses families through a variety of housing resources, including agency-owned units, affordable housing providers and private housing partners county-wide.

Annette Walker, President of Strategy Providence St. Joseph Health, Irvine

A visionary strategist, author and public speaker, Annette M. Walker, MHA, is a healthcare executive who is transforming the industry. As the president of strategy for the nation’s third-largest health system, she guides the organization in developing a roadmap for improving the accessibility, affordability and quality of healthcare across seven states. She has developed new healthcare concepts and technologies, all with the intent of making quality healthcare more accessible. In Orange County, she is the architect of an innovative wellness concept that makes health and wellness more convenient for the modern consumer. The Wellness Corners she created focus on ‘everyday health’ for maintaining active lifestyles and preventing chronic disease, achieving successful outcomes for community members and helping employers manage health costs. She has done it all while mentoring other women and, along with her husband Chuck, raising a family that now includes six children and 10 grandchildren.

Jenny Wang, General Counsel MerchSource, Irvine

Jenny Wang has been a critical member of MerchSource’s Acquisition Team for two marquee brand purchases within four months of joining the business, MerchSource acquired both FAO Schwarz and Sharper Image Brands in December 2016. Recently,
Brenda West serves as president of RAJ Swim, one of the largest women’s swimwear companies in the United States. RAJ Swim designs, manufactures and sells swimwear under internationally recognized brand names, including ATHENA, NECK LUXE by Lisa Vogel, Basta Surf, Reef Swimwear, YVB Swim, Ella Moss and Splendid. West’s appointment is part of RAJ Swim’s long-term organizational strategy to align the business and continue to drive growth. West will lead the company as the first person outside the swimwear makers going behind family to hold the position as president. West’s big initiative is retiring older brands and going after new business initiatives. She brings new perspectives to the business and years of industry experience to execute RAJ Swim’s ever-changing progressive strategies.

Genine Wilson, Territory VP, Southern California
Kelly Services Inc., Orange
An experienced business leader and staffing executive, Genine Wilson oversees the staffing and business solutions operations for Kelly Services throughout Southern California, with a focus on engineering, information technology, science, finance and accounting staffing. She also manages Kelly’s administrative and light industrial recruiting businesses, as well as on-site client staffing and contact center solutions in the region. With more than 20 years in workforce management, talent procurement and results-driven leadership, Wilson’s experience in the staffing industry gives her customers attract and retain skilled candidates; supporting workers and employers with career development resources; and acting as a consultant assisting clients with identifying solutions for the workforce challenges by helping to develop strategy, solutions and efficiencies. Wilson joined Kelly Services in 1999, and has held increasingly responsible leadership positions in sales and operations before being named to her current position in 2008. Prior to joining Kelly Services, Wilson spent more than 10 years in sales and management leadership positions.

Keri Wilson, CEO
Goldsheep, Costa Mesa
Goldsheep is a vibrant, one-of-a-kind legging brand that is dedicated to bringing light to favorite Southern images and putting them on legs for the rest of the world to wear. What began as a simple concept on a New York studio floor soon became the core of every Goldsheep legging. Founder and head designer, Keri Wilson, has always loved the idea of transferring art onto leggings and wanted to create a movement blending both art and fashion where others could join in on her journey. Wilson started hand-making the leggings in her bedroom, one legging at a time with zero investor dollars. Today, Wilson has an office and warehouse in Costa Mesa where she makes on-demand and custom items for many different companies, with a huge following of online customers.

Rachelle Wilson, CFO/Director of Operations
Dance Discovery Foundation, Laguna Niguel
Rachelle Wilson has served in the nonprofit industry since 2010 with Dance Discovery Foundation (DDF). Having a passion for creating positive change and a love for the performing arts, Wilson’s involvement grew in 2013 when she took the position of treasurer for DDF’s board. In 2013, DDF was at a critical point, Wilson’s involvement pulled together all segments of the organization and allowed for focused on producing effective programming while positioning DDF for growth and sustainability. In 2014, she formally joined the nonprofit’s staff as chief financial officer of operations. With Wilson in her new role, the organization has increased its annual revenue by 75% and has had a continual growth pattern of 25% each year. One of Wilson’s most significant accomplishments is DDF’s scholarship program; launched in 2014, the program gave $2,000 in performing arts scholarships that year. By 2015, the program budget enabled DDF to grant $30,000+ in scholarships, and more than $40,000 in 2017.

Diane Wittenberg, Audit Partner
Haskell & White LLP, Irvine
Diane Wittenberg has more than 30 years of experience in attest services, including 17 at a “Big 5” firm before the company she worked with, Wittenberg, joined the firm. As a partner at Haskell & White, one of the largest independently owned accounting, auditing and tax consulting firms in Southern California, she directs many key matters for the firm and serves clients. She leads teams to conduct audits for public and private companies, as well as nonprofit organizations. Ensuring the audit process runs smoothly for each client and provides value beyond meeting compliance requirements is a key focus. This year, Haskell & White was named the state’s “Best Accounting Firm for the State’s Longevity” by Accounting Today magazine based on in the policies Wittenberg implemented. As a member of the Association for Corporate Growth Board of Directors, she chairs the group’s Women in Leadership Committee. She also serves on the Oceana Life Sciences Advisory Committee and chairs the Finance Committee for Mariposa Women and Family Center.

Dr. Tammy Wong, CEO
Fostering Executive Leadership Inc., Irvine
Dr. Tammy Wong is the CEO of Fostering Executive Leadership Inc., an international...
business results executive coaching firm. The firm consists of more than 400 leadership coaches worldwide. The coaches work with leaders by improving leadership capability, capacity and have established a proven record with a ROI through coaching engagements. The Fostering Executive Leadership team works with leaders at all management levels and are skilled in helping them understand the benefit in building leadership competencies within the organization, understanding team integration, and the creation of solid succession planning methodology to create strategic leaders within their companies. Organizations the company serves benefit from a focus on building leadership, performance, communication, accountability and strategy through a proven track record of experience, certification and research.

Karen Wood, General Manager/UCI Liaison
Irvine Barclay Theatre, Irvine

The role of general manager for the Irvine Barclay Theatre was re-imagined by President Jerry Mandel as Karen Wood was invited to join the organization’s professional team. The typical managerial scope of responsibilities was expanded to also include pro-active relationship building with the Orange County business community, the city of Irvine and the UCI community. Wood is developing opportunities for new and deepening partnerships, and has also designed a path for corporate meetings, special events, lecture series and potential artistic co-productions with these diverse constituencies. As one of the newer members of the Irvine Barclay Theatre team, she is providing key leadership with these external constituents and stakeholders, strengthening community access and participation, plus adding to the awareness of the nonprofit by presenting the organization as an important cultural resource throughout Orange County.

Michelle Wulfestieg, Executive Director
Southern California Hospice Foundation, Costa Mesa

Since 2010, Michelle Wulfestieg has served as the executive director of the Southern California Hospice Foundation (SCHF), a nonprofit organization committed to enhancing the quality of life of terminally ill patients and their families. Since the organization’s inception, SCHF has served more than 2,500 lives of terminally ill patients and their families. Since 2010, Michelle Wulfestieg has served as the executive director of the Southern California Hospice Foundation (SCHF), a nonprofit organization committed to enhancing the quality of life of terminally ill patients and their families. Since the organization’s inception, SCHF has served more than 2,500 lives of terminally ill patients and their families. Since the organization’s inception, SCHF has served more than 2,500 lives of terminally ill patients and their families. Since the organization’s inception, SCHF has served more than 2,500 lives of terminally ill patients and their families. Since the organization’s inception, SCHF has served more than 2,500 lives of terminally ill patients and their families. Since the organization’s inception, SCHF has served more than 2,500 lives of terminally ill patients and their families. Since the organization’s inception, SCHF has served more than 2,500 lives of terminally ill patients and their families.

Christina Zabat-Fran, VP/General Counsel/Corporate Secretary
St. John Knits Inc., Irvine

Christina Zabat-Fran is vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary for St. John Knits, the American luxury house with global headquarters in Orange County. A fast-rising executive for the brand known for its signature innovative knits and more than 50-year legacy dressing confident women, she leads legal affairs during a crucial era of the brand’s evolution and global expansion. Zabat-Fran has been extremely committed to serving the community, having served as the Orange County Bar Association’s Corporate Counsel Section chair and currently serving on the Bar’s board of directors. She dedicates her entrepreneurial drive to champion the advancement of women and minorities within the legal profession in order to better serve the increasingly diverse business community. Beyond her pro bono service, charitable work and mentorship, she most recently founded the county’s Filipino-American bar. She was named as the Orange County Business Journal’s Rising Star at the General Counsel Awards in 2016.

Dr. Julie Zimmerer, CEO/Founder
24/7 Family Homecare and Veterans Services, Canyon Lake

Julie Zimmerer retired from her chiropractic practice after 20 years and created 24/7 Family Homecare and Veterans Services from personal heartache, when a caregiver took advantage of her Korean War veteran paraplegic father following his last stroke before he passed away. She founded 24/7 Family Homecare and Veterans Services on specific family values. The company has been recognized with numerous awards. Since 2007, the organization has grown from one small area in Canyon Lake, Calif. to serving people in Los Angeles to the tip of San Diego and everywhere in between. In addition, there are now two offices (one in Canyon Lake and another in Dana Point) with 100+ employees working at all times in each location and a caregiver list that exceeds 400 people combined. 24/7 Family Homecare and Veterans Services also earned the Veterans Homecare Contract of Loma Linda Hospitals, providing veterans deemed disabled during time of war with homecare services.