

# AWARDS CEREMONY AT IRVINE MARRIOTT MAY 31, 2023



## FAMILY OWNED BUSINESS AWARDS

**From Centennial Anniversaries to Record  
Revenue Gains, 2022 Winners  
Celebrate New Milestones**

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**2023 Nominees**

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**ELSEWHERE:  
Second Generation  
Heads Pendry  
Offshoot in  
Orange County**

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# McKinley Family Pushes Pinnacle Sales Past \$500M

■ By KEVIN COSTELLOE

**Liz McKinley**, the founder and CEO of **Pinnacle Petroleum Inc.**, says the company's revenue will surpass half a billion dollars this year, continuing its strong growth after the pandemic.

"Demand is robust," she told the Business Journal on April 21.

Pinnacle, one of five companies that received a **Business Journal Family-Owned Business Award** last June at the **Irvine Marriott**, is a national provider of competitively priced petroleum products and services based in Huntington Beach.

"We keep pushing and are projecting a 20% growth path this year," McKinley said.

That growth continues a trend for the company, which saw sales of \$488 million in 2022, up from \$360 million the year prior, after the difficulties caused by COVID-19 in 2020.

McKinley, one of OC's top female executives who also won a **Business Journal Women in Business Award** in 2020, said her

firm has about 250 customers throughout the U.S. as of last month, including Fortune 100 accounts as well as cities and counties across 17 states.

McKinley launched the business in 1995 and it currently counts 25 employees.

She put herself through college at **Oklahoma State University (OSU)** and started out working for the giant **Koch Industries Inc.** conglomerate.

Since her first job at an **Oklahoma Dairy Queen** at age 14, McKinley always had a goal of becoming a top-level executive. She reached a new milestone this year, with OSU adding Pinnacle Petroleum to its "Cowboy 100 List" that recognizes the business and leadership achievements throughout OSU's alumni base while raising funds for student programs. It honors "Cowboy-led or Cowboy-owned businesses," named after the school's mascot.

McKinley's daughter, **Maddie**, is a key part of the Pinnacle Petroleum business, running the **Fleet Card Division**, where she specializes in the development and imple-



Pinnacle Petroleum founder Liz McKinley with daughter and colleague, Maddie McKinley

mentation of fuel card programs for the company, which services customers in all 50 states.

"We are a channel partner with U.S. Bank and provide fuel cards to fleets for retail sales," McKinley said. ■

# Tax & Financial Group Rebrands With New Logo, Website

■ By PETER J. BRENNAN

**Sean McCloskey**, chief executive of **Tax & Financial Group**, has a big announcement for the 53rd anniversary of the Newport Beach-based firm, begun by his father, **Dick McCloskey**, in 1970.

"We're really excited that we're launching a new brand update," Sean McCloskey told the Business Journal.

The update, announced April 27, includes a new logo that will be incorporated across all its communications.

TFG says the new look "continues to embody our principles and commitment to delivering exceptional financial solutions and reflects our innovative and forward-thinking approach."

TFG was one of five honored last June at the Business Journal's 23rd **Family-Owned Business Awards** in the Midsize Business category.

The company knows a lot about the impor-

ance of family. At least five key tenured associates have children or siblings serving in important roles in the company, which has 100 employees at offices throughout Southern California as well as Hawaii, Colorado, Ohio and Texas.

"Lots of family members are involved in the business," Sean McCloskey said last year. "We may not all have the same name, but we're all a

family. It's a beautiful thing."

When Dick McCloskey began the business, it initially focused on providing life and disability insurance to physicians and the professional community. In the 1980s, Dick McCloskey found a niche advising company owners on succession planning where there are plenty of what he calls "tax traps." He found little competition because he was "agnostic" about whether the owners should sell their companies as opposed to brokers who pushed for the sale, said Dick McCloskey, who occasionally will pop into



Sean McCloskey  
CEO  
Tax & Financial Group

his office.

"Orange County is the family business capital of the world," Sean McCloskey said. "There are more small and medium businesses than anywhere else by far in the

United States. That's who my clients are."

Later this year, TFG will also release an enhanced website. "We had a great year last year. We're continuing to expect real growth going forward," he said. ■

# Fuerstman Family Celebrates 20 Years of Montage Success

■ By KATIE MURAR

As Irvine-based **Montage International** celebrates its 20-year mark of operations, the high-end hotelier is in a new phase of expansion, with several hotel openings planned for in and outside of OC over the next several years.

Family remains at the forefront of the brand, with founder and Chief Executive **Alan Fuerstman** heading an international push for Montage, while the company's boutique spinoff brand, **Pendry**, prepares to open its first OC property under the helm of Fuerstman's son, **Michael Fuerstman**, the company's creative director.

**Pendry Newport Beach** will open in late summer, marking the first property of its kind in the region, and the third in Southern California. The debut will bring with it a new Montage concept: a social club, dubbed **The Elwood Club** (for more, see story, page 3).

Next year, Montage will open the **Montage**

**Cay** in the Bahamas, building on the company's international portfolio that kicked off with the 2018 opening of **Montage Los Cabos** in Mexico.

The firm has signed 11 new management contracts in the past year with a growing focus on Mexico, and new sights set on the Caribbean.

"Just going to a [new] market is not enough—being in the right location of any particular market is incredibly important," Alan Fuerstman previously told the Business Journal. "We're as much defined by the deals we turn down as by the deals we actually do."

It's part of the brand consistency Fuerstman hopes to set up across the portfolio, starting with a focus on Montage's "own



Alan Fuerstman  
Founder, CEO  
Montage International

backyard."

"If we do a great job with that, our reputation will spread and become well known regionally, nationally, and ultimately internationally," he said.

Montage will continue to focus on its first Orange County property, **Montage Laguna Beach**, which wrapped an extensive resort-wide renovation in 2019, and sold at the end of last year for \$641 million, or nearly \$2.5 million per key, setting a local and state record.

"Investment will continue to keep the hotel at the top of the luxury hotel market," Alan Fuerstman said.

Last year was also a record one for the brand's residential business.


The company recorded \$1.1 billion in sales volume last year, up 38% from 2021. That's ahead of the OC market, which saw luxury sales volume slip last year from the year prior, according to Business Journal research. ■

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# Community Celebrates Milestones for Theodore Robins Ford

■ By KAITLIN AQUINO

Two years ago, **Theodore Robins Ford**, the oldest **Ford Motor Co.** (NYSE: F) dealership in Southern California, celebrated its centennial as a business that started out as an auto repair shop. This year, the **Balboa Island Museum** commemorated the Costa Mesa-based company's 100th year as a Ford dealer with an exhibit that will be up until June.

"They were nice enough to put up an area in the museum for us to celebrate our 100-year anniversary," co-owner **Dave Robins** told the Business Journal.

The exhibit features photos of the dealer's founder, **Theodore Robins Sr.**, who originated the company as a **Model T** repair shop on the Balboa Peninsula in 1921. He previously served as a pilot in the Air Force Reserves during WWI.

In 1923, Robins Sr. secured a Ford dealer franchise for his repair shop. He sold his first Ford vehicle within a week for \$637.10.

Since its founding, Robins Ford has called multiple sites in Orange County home. The dealer in 1928 moved to a larger building

across from what today is the **Crab Cooker** in Newport Beach. In the '60s, the company moved to its current Costa Mesa site, nestled in a hub of auto dealers and repair shops.

The more than a century of Robins Ford's resilience earned the company the **Longevity Award** at the Business Journal's **Family-Owned Business Awards** last year.

"We went through the Great Depression in 1929 and got through WWII and we figured out how to get through the financial crisis in 2008 and the pandemic," Dave Robins, Robins Sr.'s grandson, told the **National Automobile Dealers Association** (NADA).

"That's what keeps me engaged in the business—the constant challenges you're up against ... whether it's an economy thing or a chip shortage, it's always evolving and there's always something new to figure out a way around," he added.

Dave's brother, and the company's



Dave Robins  
Co-Owner  
Theodore Robins Ford

other co-owner, **Jim Robins**, hosted the dealer's momentous 100th anniversary party last February.

The event drew around 300 attendees, including corporate officers from Ford's headquarters in Dearborn, Mich.

This year, the company plans to continue its legacy of charity by gifting \$125,000 to eight local charities.

Prior beneficiaries of Robins Ford include **Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian, Newport Beach** and **Costa Mesa** chambers of commerce and the **YMCA**.

The dealership counts four generations of family members who have worked at the company. Dave's oldest daughter, **Nicole Bouthaker**, plans to return to the dealership after her children enroll in school. His younger daughter, **Ashley Farrell**, currently works at Robins Ford as a compliance manager. ■

# Expansion on the Menu for Zesty Olives Mediterranean Grill

■ By EMILY SANTIAGO-MOLINA

After a fast launch in 2021 and a more cautious 2022, the family restaurant venture of **Boris Mitrev** and **Dessi Sarabosing** is preparing to more than double its portfolio in 2023.

The two siblings founded **Mitrevi Restaurant Group LLC** in June 2021 and within six months opened two locations for its Mediterranean food concept, **Zesty Olives Mediterranean Grill**, in Lake Forest and Irvine.

A third location is expected to open at the **Crown Valley Mall** in Laguna Niguel in May, with two additional locations on the menu this year and a goal to open 55 restaurants across seven states over the next five years through a new franchising program.

Zesty Olives was one of five honored at the Business Journal's 23rd annual **Family-Owned Business Awards** last June. The company won in the Up-and-Coming category.

The Laguna Niguel location will debut an updated menu for Zesty Olives with new options designed by the newest member to the

restaurant team, Chef **Jamie Moir**, who first met Mitrev in the United Kingdom in 2010.

"He is looking to elevate the brand from a culinary perspective," Sarabosing told the Business Journal.

Moir's appointment allows the siblings to focus on the next phase of growth for the restaurant chain.

Zesty Olives will add its first out-of-state restaurants in Las Vegas and Austin, Texas this year.

The former will be located in a mixed-use office campus while the latter unit will be a part of a redevelopment project.

Mitrev and Sarabosing registered the **Mitrevi Franchise Group LLC** in late 2022 and gained licensing to franchise in California, Texas and Florida for now, with recruitment efforts underway for franchise partners.

The company aims to have 10 new restaurants under contract by the end of 2024 through both acquisitions and franchising. Average annual store sales are about \$1.1 million per loca-



Boris Mitrev  
Co-Founder  
Zesty Olives Mediterranean Grill

tion, with an average ticket of \$32.

The average restaurant footprint is less than 2,000 square feet with an initial investment range between \$50,000 and \$150,000 with the expectation to open a minimum of three stores.

California will remain a priority market with sights on San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Zesty Olives is also boosting its tech efforts, noticing demand for self-ordering kiosks at its Irvine location at **Diamond Jamboree**.

Customers can also order their food through scanning a QR code at any table. Waiting times during lunch and dinner have gone down significantly since the addition of such tech upgrades, with kiosks also added to the Lake Forest location.

"This helps us to reprioritize and repurpose our resources in the right areas," Sarabosing said. "We have the infrastructure, now the culinary. It's just the matter of execution." ■

## Private Companies Wanted For Annual List

The Business Journal is preparing its annual list of privately owned companies for publication in June.

This list is the definitive source of information on the privately owned companies that make up so much of Orange County's economy.

We're looking for Orange County-based companies that are privately owned by an individual, a group of people, families, venture capitalists, private equity firms or other investors.

Publicly traded companies and subsidiaries won't be considered, nor will locally owned offices of national firms.

The list will be ranked by revenue for the 12 months ended Dec. 31, 2022.

Companies with more than \$500 million in annual revenue will be considered.

What's in it for you?

Your company could be ranked among the top private companies in Orange County, which is known for its diverse and wide range of businesses and industries.

The list brings great exposure to clients, customers, bankers, vendors, peers and potential investors.

The Business Journal has an online form for companies to fill out for consideration.

Go to <https://bit.ly/3YdpHhO> to nominate your company or another business.

The deadline is May 19.

For more information please contact Editorial Assistant **Daniel Pearson** at (949) 664-5051 or by email at [dpearson@ocbj.com](mailto:dpearson@ocbj.com). ■



Last year's edition had 35 entries

# Leading Employees Through a Leadership Transition

Authored by: Crystal Young, Vice President, Organizational Human Wealth

Transitioning leadership of a business to the next generation of a small or family-owned business is a complex and often stressful process. There are legal, financial, and operational considerations and changes. As well, these changes can have a significant impact on employees. It is important for business owners to ensure that employees are aware of the changes due to the transition and are supported during this time.

Often when making leadership transitions, there is a heavy focus on what needs to change legally, financially, and operationally, but employees can be unintentionally left in the dark. When employees are kept in the dark, they oftentimes start to speculate, become worried about their job security, the future of the company, and how the changes will affect them personally. This leads to lowered morale, loss of productivity, or even separation from the company. Leadership transitions are already challenging to work through. Losing key employees or productivity can add unnecessary disruption for the company, and ultimately for customers.

Particularly in family-owned and small businesses, team members likely joined you because they were drawn to the familial culture and can have deep ties to the business and the family. They are invested in the success of the organization, and it is important to support them during times of uncertainty and change.

To keep team members retained and productive, we recommend leaders:

- Develop a communication plan to keep employees informed. Communicate early and often with all those impacted. It is OK to not have all the answers but in the absence of information, employees often make assumptions. Communicate what you know and what areas still need figured out
- Provide employees with regular updates throughout the transition. Be clear in messaging about what is changing and what is not changing. Consider different areas: systems and processes, services and products, job roles and organizational structure, compensation, benefits etc.
- Be transparent and open with employees. This may involve holding team meetings to explain the reasons and specifics for the transition and how it will affect the company and employees. It may mean meeting with employees individually when possible or necessary

- Solicit their feedback in what they would like to stay the same and what they would like to change. This is a great opportunity to have them help shape the new culture, operations, and processes and get them excited about the future as they are part of building it. After all, they are generally more knowledgeable in the operations as they perform them most often. *Pro Tip: Setting up dedicated time to host a workshop to capture what they would like to stay the same and what they would like to change is a great way to collect meaningful feedback in a fun and collaborative way*

- Build new relationships. Employees who feel connected to their leaders are more likely to stay, even in the face of ambiguity. Take time with employees to build personal connections beyond the day-to-day work

Overall, it is crucial to ensure that employees are aware of and feel supported during a leadership transition. By taking the time to address employee concerns and support them, you can help create a strong and cohesive team that is better equipped to navigate the challenges of the transition while co-creating a better future.

If you would like assistance in supporting employees through an effective transition, please contact us at Human Wealth™. We can partner with you to protect your greatest assets – your people – setting you and them up for success in the next chapter of your business.



**Crystal Young** joined Human Wealth™ as VP of Organizational Human Wealth, to establish business advisory services offerings. Crystal is a partner in leading and supporting organizations and individuals through transformations and transitions. She brings strong organizational leadership, change management, and process optimization experience to connect individuals to organizational goals, improve employee experience, and optimize the ways in which people work.



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## Ten Business Tips for Technology Entrepreneurs

By Kenneth Johnson, CPA, Partner in Charge, Irvine, CA

The technology industry is a fast-paced, dynamic environment that requires you to continuously focus on your business operations in a highly competitive market saturated with innovation, disruption, data privacy considerations and even ethical issues. What can entrepreneurs in the tech industry do today to survive, thrive and grow in the face of numerous challenges?

Whether you are running a Software-As-A-Service (SAAS) company, starting up in AdTech or setting up a cryptocurrency strategy for your business, here are some tips and best practices for technology entrepreneurs to navigate current trends, opportunities and challenges to stay ahead of the tech game.

### 1. Take advantage of tax credits

One of the largest expenses typically incurred for early-stage and development-stage companies are costs associated with research and development (R&D) activities. Opportunities may exist when developing new products and ideas to reduce payroll tax liability and cover the cost of supplies and third-party contractors by qualifying for a refundable R&D tax credit. The R&D tax credit is just one example, and your company may benefit from other federal and state tax incentive programs.

### 2. Going public? Start preparing early

Preparing for an IPO (initial public offering) is an enormous task. Going public requires credible, audited financial statements under PCAOB guidelines to comply with strict SEC regulations. Your accounting team will need ample time to produce these statements. You'll also want to ensure you have the correct quality controls in place to adhere to the strict accounting and financial reporting rules and regulations of a public company.

### 3. Keep current with accounting technology

The future of auditing is evolving into a collaborative experience and can bring better value and broad insight to your business. Promoting an innovative internal mindset and ensuring your business advisors share this outlook will help your company adopt innovative technologies more effectively. Side-stepping advancements can cause your business to fall behind in value-add data analysis, business intelligence and data security.

### 4. Use data analytics to create a competitive advantage

Properly capturing and understanding company data can be challenging, especially for early-stage companies, without the right tools. Using data analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help you capture, store, share and analyze your data to make smarter decisions for your business. Are you harnessing the information in your databases and your core content repositories? If not, these tools will help you spearhead innovation in data analytics:

- Microsoft Power BI – Turns disparate data into real-time visual reports.
- Azure Analytics – Data analytics tools to support enterprise-scale data needs.
- Cloud Computing – Data security and a gateway to developing AI tools.

### 5. Prioritize internal controls with SOC Audit reports

System and organization controls (SOC) audit reports are a series of comprehensive internal control reports that a licensed CPA firm can only prepare. For example, if a tech company uses third-party vendors to process or store data, a SOC report will provide transparency surrounding the supplier's IT and business process controls. There are different levels of SOC reports, including a cybersecurity SOC report.

### 6. Focus on cybersecurity

All companies are targets for cybercrime, and thorough cybersecurity controls and assessments go beyond a single engagement with your cybersecurity team. You need a plan to ensure your information security solutions and strategy implementation protect your business's critical assets and operations. And, if the worst does happen, you must have an incident response strategy in place to contain a cyberattack and recover quickly. A crucial first step is for a business to monitor its Cyber Risk Score, which predicts the likelihood of a significant data breach and identifies measures to strengthen systems.



Kenneth Johnson, CPA, Partner in Charge, Irvine, CA

### 7. Consider outsourcing operations to keep up with growth

As a business leader, you need time to focus on your trade secrets, R&D, drive growth and provide unique value propositions within the market. If you find day-to-day operations are taking up too much time and it is proving difficult to scale your in-house finance and accounting function, outsourced accounting systems and services (OASyS) may be an excellent temporary or permanent option. Sub-contracted accounting, finance and CFO services can create greater flexibility, compliance and cost savings in a scalable manner to support the growth of your business.

### 8. Watch out for ASC 606 revenue recognition

Public, private and not-for-profit entities that enter into revenue contracts with customers must be ASC 606 compliant. Consequently, most tech companies will see the impact of ASC 606 on their revenue accounting and potentially their financial reporting, processes, systems, internal controls, financial ratios and contract language. These changes may be significant, notably when a business offers implementation or upfront customization services. Accurate revenue recognition is essential as it directly affects the integrity and consistency of a company's financial reporting.

### 9. Prioritize ESG considerations upfront

It is more important than ever for founders and entrepreneurs to consider Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues from day one to bolster the health and longevity of their business plans. Here are some examples of strategies delivering on the bottom line while making the world a better place.

- By reducing energy consumption, a company can reduce costs and better manage its carbon footprint – a strategy that consumers increasingly demand and is soon to be regulated by the SEC. And using renewable energy sources may lower energy costs while avoiding price spikes associated with fossil fuels.
- The Great Resignation has called for an even greater focus on company culture. A company with an aggressive growth plan needs to implement a robust employee recruitment, retention and training strategy to support its growth and remain attractive to talent. As leaders and entrepreneurs, it is our responsibility to create an equitable path of opportunity for the upcoming generation of tech leaders.
- Initiatives such as financial donations and drives for underprivileged groups, resume workshops and interview training at high schools benefit the local community and create harmonious relationships that generate support and potential investment for a business.
- Identifying and addressing governance risks and opportunities will allow a company to avoid costly governance-related scandals. Key factors to consider when investigating your company's governance structure include the role and makeup of the board of directors, executive oversight and compensation and overall corporate performance measurement strategies.

### 10. Don't forget about personal tax and estate planning

Founders and executives of tech companies face unique situations and tax issues, especially when a business is a startup or in a high-growth phase. Making the right choices about how and when to pay senior team members can mitigate personal income taxes and maximize wealth, so long-term personal and financial goals can be met. Qualified Small Business Stock (QSBS), sometimes called founder's stock, is one-way entrepreneurs are rewarded for their hard work and dedication in getting a company up and running.

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## Tools Available For Family Business Transitions

By David Kistner, Managing Director—Orange County Market, Wells Fargo Advisors

Transitioning your family business to your heirs may sound simple enough, but in fact, doing it successfully can prove difficult. To help improve your transition's chances for success, consider family business governance.

This is a system of correlated tools and actions to support the next generation with controlling, owning, and operating the business. It also puts in place a framework that contains business protocols, describes how future ownership changes occur, and establishes a precedent for making business decisions.

### Frequently used tools

There are several tools that can be employed as part of a family business governance system, including:

A **buy-sell agreement** is a legally binding contract that stipulates how an owner's share of a business may be reassigned if triggering events occur, the price that will be paid, and the payment structure.

A **family employment policy** document can be kept within the family for private use or incorporated into the business's human resource documentation. It sets expectations for heirs, spouses, and extended family members about such issues as how they can obtain employment in the business, the requirements to attain key positions, the compensation standards to be used, and incentive language for family members.

A **distribution or dividend policy** is key in setting expectations with family members regarding what distributions they should expect to receive from the business. Business owners must balance the need for cash to maintain or grow the business with the desire to receive distributions.

A **professional board of directors** is a governing body that helps oversee the business and makes major decisions. A board generally comprises three, five, or seven professionals from various industries that have the subject matter expertise

to assist the company strategically.

A **family board or council** is a group within the family — or may include the entire family — that comes together to make decisions about the business on the family's behalf.

A **company mission statement** can be valuable to your employees and your family as it addresses the business's purpose and vision and can help guide future company leaders.

Your **estate plan** can address ownership, control, distributions, and several other factors.

The business's governing documents should be reviewed at the same time the family business governance system and tools are put in place. Revisions to these documents or corporate resolutions stored in the corporate minutes may be needed to align these documents with the company's governance system.

### Helping ensure a successful transition

Transitioning the family business to the next generation is much more than transitioning shares. A well-thought-out and documented plan that addresses ownership, control, and operations helps build a strong governance system for your business. This system, combined with communication with the next generation, can be key to helping ensure your transition's success.

David Kistner is a Market Manager with Wells Fargo Advisors where he leads a diverse team of over 269 financial professionals across 85 locations in the Orange County Market.



## Taking your business to the next level

You're an expert in creating a successful business. We have the experience to help you take it further. So whether you're looking to grow, go public, or transition out, our guidance can help you navigate through stages of the process.

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## BALANCING ACT: FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESSES CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS

The founder of a successful family-owned business takes pride in his or her accomplishment. Through the development and success of the business the founder has faced both challenges and opportunities to achieve success. A family-owned business owner should allocate sufficient time and resources to both minding the vision of the business as it should to protecting and planning for the future of the business. Without adequately addressing the business challenges and planning for the future, the success of the business will be negatively impacted.

**Growth, Liquidity, and Control.** Often, a business owner faces competing challenges when trying to grow a business. In some instances, a growing company will encounter liquidity challenges and may resort to incurring debt, structured debt instruments, convertible preferred equity, or simply taking on additional owners to infuse capital into the business. Incurring debt or taking on an additional owner will have direct consequences for the founder resulting in a loss of control of the company. Obtaining additional liquidity may be a necessary evil to gain market space over a competitor; however, the debt instruments should be carefully analyzed to ensure that the owner understands the actual consequences and impact on the business. Similarly, when an additional owner is identified, the rights of each of the owners should be properly negotiated and documented to ensure all parties know their defined rights and obligations within the business. Without adequate planning and defining the rights of each owner, if any dispute arises, litigation may ensue resulting in a breakdown of the business from which it may be difficult to recover or may lead to the destruction of the business.

**Human Resources.** As a company continues to grow, it is important that the owners retain adequate human resources professionals. Similar to a business needing formation governance documents such as an operating agreement for a Limited Liability Company, or Bylaws for a Corporation; properly documenting company policies or providing employees a handbook is a necessary requirement for any business that takes on employees in California. The size or growth of your business can impact the requirements that each business owner must devote to Human Resources. As the business grows, allocating time and resources to developing employment policies or handbooks is often overlooked. Business owners should align themselves with Human Resources Consultants and/or Employment Attorneys who provide advice and counsel to businesses on an ongoing basis.

**Design or Redesign Corporate Governance.** Typically, when a successful business begins it is lead by an individual with a vision. In the business's infancy, many entrepreneurs do not plan beyond the first few years when designing a corporate governance structure. Understandably, the business owner is focused on building the business and devoting his or her time to ensuring their vision is fully recognized. But, as the business continues to grow, adequate time and efforts need to be placed on redesigning the corporate governance structure. All too often, when a business is preparing to scale up or take on additional investors, the owners' corporate governance documents do not adequately protect the founder. Without implementing a proper corporate governance structure, the founder can lose control of the company, lead to litigation and infighting between the owners, or even personal liability to the owners. To that end, it is important for business owners to periodically review their corporate governance documents to ensure they are in line with their intended goals.

**Defining Success.** Business owners should aim to define success for themselves individually and for their business. Few businesses owners have a clear definition or vision of success for their business other

than the initial plan to "keeping the doors open." The lack of clarity or vision can result in missed opportunities or an inability to retain talented employees. Clearly defining success helps the business owner to set objectives and encourages other owners or employees to work towards a common goal.

**Preparing for a Legacy.** At some point, every successful family-owned business owner is going to pass away. An unexpected death could have a devastating impact on the future of the business if no planning is in place. A failure to identify the next generation leader can result in the destruction of the business in a short period of time. Many business owners believe that simply identifying within their estate planning documents who will receive the business will address all questions of succession, which it fails to do. Without adequate planning, the death of the business owner could potentially result in liquidity gaps within the business, in-fighting between family members, and, in some instances, a lack of trust between family members. Such outcomes can destroy the business owner's legacy or, in a worst-case scenario, destroy the family and the business.

Preparing for a business legacy to pass on to the next generation takes years of planning. Identifying the next generation's leadership structure, training them for the position, and passing on the knowledge takes time that can be lost without proper planning. It is important to align your business with professionals that specialize in business succession planning who can assist in tailoring a succession to the business and to your assets through a comprehensive estate plan that can minimize estate taxes while allowing you to maintain control over the business. Adequate planning will ensure that your business may thrive for generations to come.

Ferruzzo & Ferruzzo, LLP is a full-service law firm that has been in Orange County for 42 years. Our attorney's provide legal services and guidance to Family-Owned Business Owners in the areas of: Business Succession Planning, Corporate Governance, Employment Practices, Real Estate, Business Litigation, and Estate Planning including tax planning for business owners. Ferruzzo and Ferruzzo, LLP is rooted in relationships with our clients, as we want to guide and serve our clients to ensure your success.



**TIMOTHY J McELFISH, Esq.** is the Managing Partner of Ferruzzo & Ferruzzo, LLP. His areas of practice include Corporate Governance, Mergers & Acquisitions, Real Estate, Business Succession planning and Estate and Tax Planning for business owners and individuals.



**BLAINE M. SEARLE, Esq.** is the Practice Group Leader for the Firms Corporate, Real Estate, and Employment Practices Department. Blaine's areas of practice include Corporate Governance, Mergers & Acquisitions, Business Succession planning and Estate and Tax Planning for business owners and individuals.

# FERRUZZO



## ROOTED IN RELATIONSHIP

### FERRUZZO & FERRUZZO, LLP CELEBRATES 42 YEARS



#### **IT'S YOUR BUSINESS IT'S YOUR FAMILY**

For the past 42 years, Ferruzzo & Ferruzzo, LLP has known how important your legal issues are because we take a personal interest in you. Strong, lifetime relationships form the cornerstone of our practice. In celebration of our past 42 years, we thank all of our clients and trusted advisors who have contributed to our success. We look forward to the next 42 years, Rooted in Relationship.

**BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS** We work closely with you, your business, and your trusted advisors to set and achieve strategic plans. From start-ups to business operations, expansion to acquisition or sale, and devising an exit strategy, our transactional attorneys bring powerful expertise in the areas of tax planning, merger and acquisitions, deal structure planning, real estate transactions, and asset protection.

**NEW DEALERSHIP REPRESENTATION** Beginning in 1984, Ferruzzo has represented new vehicle dealerships. In addition to advising new motor vehicle dealerships, we have negotiated with all of the vehicle manufacturers, set up and reorganized dealership entities, and provided advice on the daily operations and laws governing the sale, rental, lease, financing, and repair of motor vehicles.

**BUSINESS LITIGATION** Our trial lawyers vigorously prosecute or defend your case and have brought to successful conclusion trials in state and federal civil court, appellate court, arbitration and before federal, state and local administrative boards and commissions. Our caseload regularly includes corporate and partnership disputes, real property disputes, and construction defect defense. Whatever litigation issue you may be facing, we'll walk you through it every step of the way.

**REAL ESTATE** Working alongside both owners and users of commercial real estate, our goal is to add significant value to the processes of property acquisition, due diligence, development, operations and disposition. Our depth of experience in real estate extends to construction, environmental conditions and sophisticated lease transactions and our approach is both efficient and practical. It's not about meeting your expectations, it's about exceeding them.

**ESTATE PLANNING** Our team of estate planning attorneys design and implement estate plans that accomplish your objectives, ever mindful of preserving family harmony and providing smooth asset transition with minimal opportunity for dispute or court interference. You want experience, knowledge, and specialization. That's why our attorneys include Certified Specialists in the areas of Estate Planning, Trust and Probate Law. Meticulous planning – it's what we do.

**TRUST ADMINISTRATION & PROBATE** Let our trust administration group guide you through the complex legal, tax and financial issues that require expert analysis, discussion, and decision when administering a trust. We assist clients with properly administering a trust in compliance with a trustee's fiduciary obligations. Our team is highly skilled in administering and advising clients for both taxable and non-taxable estates. Our practice group will guide you through this emotional and difficult process.

**TRUST AND PROBATE LITIGATION** Our highly skilled trust litigation trial lawyers will zealously prosecute or defend claims related to a trust, estate, conservatorship, or guardianship matter. Our trust and estate litigators regularly handle claims related to the formation of trust agreements, amendments, fraud, undue influence, coercion, lack of capacity issues, and breach of fiduciary duties. We will enforce and defend your rights.

**EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES** We work hard to safeguard your business by providing preventative counseling and sound practical advice regarding the complicated employment laws that impact your business. And we are there to defend your business when a claim is brought alleging any of the myriad of state and federal laws that affect you and your employees. Our team of employment attorneys regularly defend wage and hour claims, allegations of harassment and discrimination, and wrongful termination. Your business deserves the proactive approach that our Firm offers and our litigation team is ready.

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# Family-Owned Businesses Make Miracles

Family-owned businesses hold a unique place in the heart of our community, embodying the spirit of hard work, determination, and dedication to family values. At **Miracles for Kids**, we are proud to have the support of many family-owned businesses whose dedication to our mission of providing support and stability to low-income families with critically-ill children is nothing short of extraordinary.

**Soul Community Planet**, founded by Miracles for Kids board member **Ken Cruse** and his wife **Pam**, is an impactful Corporate Partner helping to stabilize our families. Through their “Every Stay Does Good” program, **SCP** donates the cost of lighting a home for 24 hours on behalf of every guest who stays at one of their hotels. This initiative, launched in 2021, has helped us provide over 110,000 days of light for our families, enabling them to focus on what matters most – fighting for their child’s life.

In Ken Cruse’s words: “The vision of our family business is to make the world around us a better place by serving those who value wellness, kindness, and sustainability. When it comes to making the world a better place for those who truly need our love and support, we can think of no more compelling cause than Miracles for Kids.”



Soul Community Planet



TRAFFIK



Ashmore Construction



Javier’s

Our family-owned Corporate Partners have tremendously impacted our mission and made Miracles for Kids part of their families. At the helm of the groundbreaking marketing agency, **TRAFFIK**, is Founder & CEO **Anthony Trimino**. TRAFFIK gives generously to our cause and strengthens our reach by aiding us in defining our brand, website, and annual video communications. In addition, Anthony and his wife, **Jennifer Trimino**, have made supporting our mission a family affair, teaching their children the importance of charity and being leaders within their community.

Led by Founder and CEO **Harry Ashmore**, **Ashmore Construction’s** decades of commitment to the organization have been instrumental to the success of Miracles for Kids’ operations. His company has supported our main offices and the building and maintenance of **Miracle Manor**, our 12-unit apartment complex that provides safe and subsidized housing to our families most at risk of homelessness. In addition, Ashmore Construction’s team served as the general contractor overseeing the complete refurbishment and remodeling of the complex, donating services, and sourcing donations from subcontractors and vendors within the community. Since its opening in 2015, Ashmore Construction has continued to

oversee the needs of Miracle Manor.

Families that lead their businesses with a commitment to social responsibility are inspirational to their employees, as has been demonstrated by the overwhelming commitment of California’s favorite Mexican cantina, **Javier’s**. In addition to the generous support of **Javier Sosa** and his family, the staff at five Javier’s restaurants have supported us for 11 years through our payroll-deduction program, making voluntary donations to Miracles for Kids every pay period.

We are grateful to these family-owned businesses for their partnership, generosity, and commitment to our mission. They are leading by example, demonstrating to their families, employees, and industries the impact one company can have on the lives of those in great need.

The Miracles for Kids Corporate Partnership Program offers family-owned businesses the opportunity to engage year-round with customized volunteer experiences both on and offsite. To learn more about how you can make an impact today, contact **Ruby Foster, Development Manager**, at **714-705-4541** or **rfoster@miraclesforkids.org**.



## Your family-owned business can make miracles for families in crisis

There are many benefits to engaging with Miracles for Kids, the most important of which is the impact your support will have on critically-ill children and their families in financial crisis.

With custom volunteer opportunities available every month, in our office or yours, you and your employees can gather together in service of those in great need.

**YOU can help make miracles today in our community!**  
**Contact us TODAY to learn more.**



“True fulfillment comes from building something greater than a successful company – hope and support for those who need it most. We have been humbled by the strength and courage of the children and their families served by Miracles for Kids, and it has been an honor to be able to contribute to this important cause.”

-Harry Ashmore, President, Ashmore Construction

Please contact Ruby Foster, Development Manager, at [rfoster@miraclesforkids.org](mailto:rfoster@miraclesforkids.org) or call (714) 705-4541



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Miracles **FOR** KIDS

# TAKE THE STAND LIKE A CHAMP: TIPS FOR PRESENTING WELL IN FAMILY COURT

By Paul Nelson, Esq



**We all know divorce can be emotionally devastating.** Experts say it takes less than a second to sum a person up. This makes it even more critical to make a great first impression in court. After all, many of the things you hold dear hang in the balance during a family law proceeding: your home, your property, and most of all, if you have children, your kids.

This is why in my new book *Divorce Happens: Your Ultimate Guide to California Divorce* (Greenleaf, 2023) I stress the following axiom: Everything you do during a trial accomplishes one of two things: building—or eroding—trust.

Malcolm Gladwell is also a proponent of strong first impressions due to our tendency to make snap judgments. In his 2005 book *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, the bestselling author explores how humans developed the ability to size up a stranger literally in microseconds.

Such intuition is one of the reasons we've been able to survive for millennia despite our many physical deficits compared with other species. Experienced lawyers, especially the family law variety, hone this skill to a fine edge; they are able to assess a witness' veracity based on a brief conversation or a tell as subtle as a slight hesitation during a response.

Unusual word choice is often a dead giveaway someone is hiding. It's also something that can erode or build trust in court. Those who feel vulnerable choose their words *very* carefully. Example: At trial if I ask a husband, "Did you ever keep a separate bank account?" and his response is, "Not that I know of, but I really can't remember," you can sense something is off.

It's a thread any qualified attorney will pull.

Of course, at some point in a divorce trial you'll be asked to take the stand. When you respond to a question, please do so directly to the question asked. This means if the question requires a yes or no answer,

just reply yes or no. Don't go beyond that. And don't *explain* why you responded the way you did unless specifically *asked* to do so.

Also, try to keep all your answers short, sweet, and to the point. And keep as much negative emotion out of your voice as possible. (*Positive* emotion, on the other hand, always works to your benefit, again building trust.)

Another way you can build trust in court concerns how you dress.

This also comes back to the human tendency to size someone up fast. It's been nearly 50 years since John T. Molloy's *Dress for Success* published. In the time since, fashion has changed significantly. But the idea you'll be judged—sometimes harshly—based on your wardrobe remains as valid today as it was during the Ford administration.

How you look *will* make an impression and could bias your judge long before you or your attorney utter your first word. Again, this is because initial impressions are usually quick and subconscious.

Below are guidelines for "dressing for success" in court. This may seem trivial, but you cannot easily undue a first impression!

**Women:** Dress as if you are going to your most important job interview. Be conservative. An outer layer, such as a jacket or blazer, is a strong choice. I recommend red. It shows strength and confidence. You can't go wrong with dressing up.

**Men:** You can't go wrong with dressing up, either. A suit and tie are ideal. I suggest wearing a navy suit (sincere blue), white shirt, and a conservative tie. Shined shoes are a good idea. It's also helpful to approach court as if you are going for an important job interview.

It's been said the side with the best story (based on facts) often wins. While true, it's also the case that what you say, your appearance, and most of all, how you carry yourself in trial, can affect the outcome. Be sure that in all three areas you are building—not eroding trust—to achieve the best results.

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**125 YEARS**

## Forever Starts with The First 125 Years: First Citizens Bank

On March 1, 1898, the founders of a small bank in Johnston County, N.C., opened their doors with \$10,000 and a simple goal—to help local farmers rise above economic hardship by securely holding their money and making sensible loans to them and their neighbors.

Helping people and businesses succeed financially—125 years later—is still our goal at First Citizens Bank. And we’re doing it well beyond the bricks-and-mortar of that original storefront.

Today, our parent company, First Citizens BancShares, Inc. (NASDAQ: FCNCA), is a top 20 financial institution in the United States in assets.

We employ 17,000 associates, hold more than \$218 billion in assets, and maintain more than 500 branches in 23 states, coast to coast – plus we offer a direct digital bank that functions entirely virtually.

Our bank serves a broad spectrum of individuals, small and medium-sized businesses, commercial and industrial enterprises, and wealth customers—and delivers to them long-term thinking, service excellence and powerful results.



**Frank B. Holding**  
Chairman and CEO

Our chairman and CEO, Frank Holding, belongs to the third generation of the Holding family to lead First Citizens Bank.

“125 years: It’s an important milestone for First Citizens Bank, to be sure, but we like to think it’s just the beginning,” he said. “If the past is any guide, we’ll offer to our customers tomorrow the same core attributes we offer today—and we’ll make the same kind of difference in their lives, their careers, their bottom lines and their futures.”

Besides helping our customers succeed financially and plan for their futures, First Citizens invests in the vitality and viability of our communities.

We’ve promised to invest \$16 billion by 2025 in nonprofit organizations that support affordable home ownership, small business lending, and community development in low- and moderate-income communities. And we’re well on our way to fulfilling our commitment early.

First Citizens Bank has been stable, secure and strong since 1898—and we grow stronger every year.

That’s why our associates embrace our company’s motto, “Forever First.” The words reflect our understanding that banking is about people first and money second—and our promise to be there for customers, every step of the way.

First Citizens Bank: Forever First. For 125 Years.  
Firstcitizens.com

FirstCitizens.com

# FOREVER STARTS WITH THE FIRST 125 YEARS.

What does it take for a bank to stand the test of time? Strength, stability and a lasting commitment to helping customers. This year, we celebrate our 125th anniversary of supporting the countless families, businesses and communities we serve, but we’d like to think it’s just the beginning. If our past is any guide, tomorrow we will offer our customers the same long-term thinking, service excellence and powerful results we deliver today. **First Citizens Bank. Forever First.®**

**PERSONAL | BUSINESS | COMMERCIAL | WEALTH**



**125 YEARS**





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*This article is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice.*



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## Transactional or Consultative: What Kind of Bank Will Help Your Privately-Held Business Reach its Goals?

The decisions you make about cash and capital have never been more critical. Now, more than ever, selecting a bank is one of the most important decisions a business makes. Why? Because your choice in financial partner can significantly impact your financial strategy, cash flow, ability to fund expansion and ultimately your long-term success.

With many different types of financial institutions available to you, selecting a bank is seemingly complicated by the many free services and low rate offers advertised particularly by online-only banks.

One of the best places to start when making your banking decision is understanding the difference between a transactional bank and one that has a reputation for providing a consultative approach and long-term partnership.

### Both Types Exist for a Reason

Transactional banks can be thought of as offering basic banking services for free or at discounted rates. This business model focuses on delivering limited and repetitive banking products at a low cost. Many large banks or online-only banking service providers fall into this category.

By contrast, a consultative bank provides advice, guidance and enhanced services designed to maximize a client's long-term financial and business success. This difference is key.

Providing a higher level of service, consultative bankers get to know their clients in a way online-only banks and some large financial institutions simply cannot. Offering much more than online statements and an occasional satisfaction survey, truly consultative banks are designed to be an integral part of a business' financial team. Choosing a bank that offers clients financial guidance gives business owners access to strategic advice and financing options that may not be available from other types of banks.

A consultative banking relationship proves particularly valuable when a creative financing solution instead of a traditional loan may be in the best interest of a business. Only with an understanding of the nuances of a business and knowledge of a wide array of financial products can a banking advisor recommend and assist with nontraditional financing products.

Whether you're seeking a more efficient solution to even out your cash flow cycle, or you're exploring expansion capital, nontraditional financing with favorable terms may include operating lines of credit, equipment loans, SBA loans, asset-based loans, or tax credit loans to name a few.

Enterprise Bank & Trust clients can benefit from customized banking services, including specializations in professional practice financing, sponsor financing, property management banking, community association banking, customized life insurance financing, agricultural lending, aircraft financing, and escrow and legal services.

The technical expertise that a consultative banker brings to the relationship can result in many benefits, including access to favorable interest rates, low fees and flexible terms.

### Look for Added Value

Additionally, a consultative bank should provide value-added extras such as educational opportunities and research reports on topics critical to small and midsize businesses. A great example is Enterprise's signature no-cost business training program, Enterprise University.

The program has provided skill development courses for business professionals for 20 years — at no cost to attendees. Enterprise University offers live, 90-minute webinars every spring and fall, led by subject matter experts who work in the field and live what they teach. Attendees leave each course with valuable insights and actionable strategies they can implement right away to better their business or their career.

These classes also serve as a resource to business leaders to offer professional development opportunities to their teams, covering leadership and management, finance, human resources, marketing and sales and other trending topics.

Because expertise in these key functions is critical to operating any business, these courses are designed to quickly build critical skills and equip organizations for the future, all at no cost to participants.

And, because comparing notes with and speaking to other business owners can be very helpful, Enterprise provides access to events, webinars and other networking opportunities where company leaders can make connections with peers in the local business community.

Growing businesses can benefit greatly from expert insights and added-value resources. Opportunities for professional development help you gain perspective, sharpen your business acumen, and could be the difference between confidently setting your course for the future or just getting by.

### Seek Expert Guidance

In addition to the benefits of tailored financial solutions and additional resources for growing businesses, a dedicated advocate within the bank could help guide you toward long-term success.

A consultative banking relationship is a key part of your business's advisory team. A team of experts — including a banker, accountant and lawyer — can guide you through financial and strategic decisions, from developing a strategic business plan to a fraud prevention plan to a long-term succession plan. If you don't already have trustworthy experts you can turn to, now is the time to start to build these relationships. The stronger these relationships, the better the opportunity your team will have to learn the unique aspects of your business and understand your long-term financial and business goals.

### Consider Financial Strength and Stability in a Banking Partner

Through any economic climate, geopolitical event or changes in your industry, the benefits of having a strong banking partner shine through. Amid these headwinds, the reassurance of knowing you have partnered with a bank that takes a consistent approach in assisting businesses like yours can certainly make the difference.

Enterprise has a five-star rating (superior, the highest rating an institution can receive) from BauerFinancial, which reports and analyzes the performance of banks and credit unions. Our investment grade Kroll rating is A-, an indication of financial strength and a standard of excellence and integrity. Forbes also recognized Enterprise as #3 in the nation on its America's Best Banks 2023 list, which looks at growth credit quality and profitability. These are just a few accolades that reflect our dedication to financial wellbeing, to in turn best serve our clients.

Connect with one of our bankers to learn more about how a consultative banker and a relationship with a responsible banking partner like Enterprise can make a critical difference to your business.

### John Meek

EVP, Director of Commercial Banking  
John Meek is Executive Vice President and Director of Commercial Banking for Enterprise Bank & Trust for Los Angeles and Orange counties in California. Meek leads the Relationship Management and Business Development teams to expand the bank's current and future client base, reinforce and grow the bank's culture, and develop community and nonprofit partnerships in the region.



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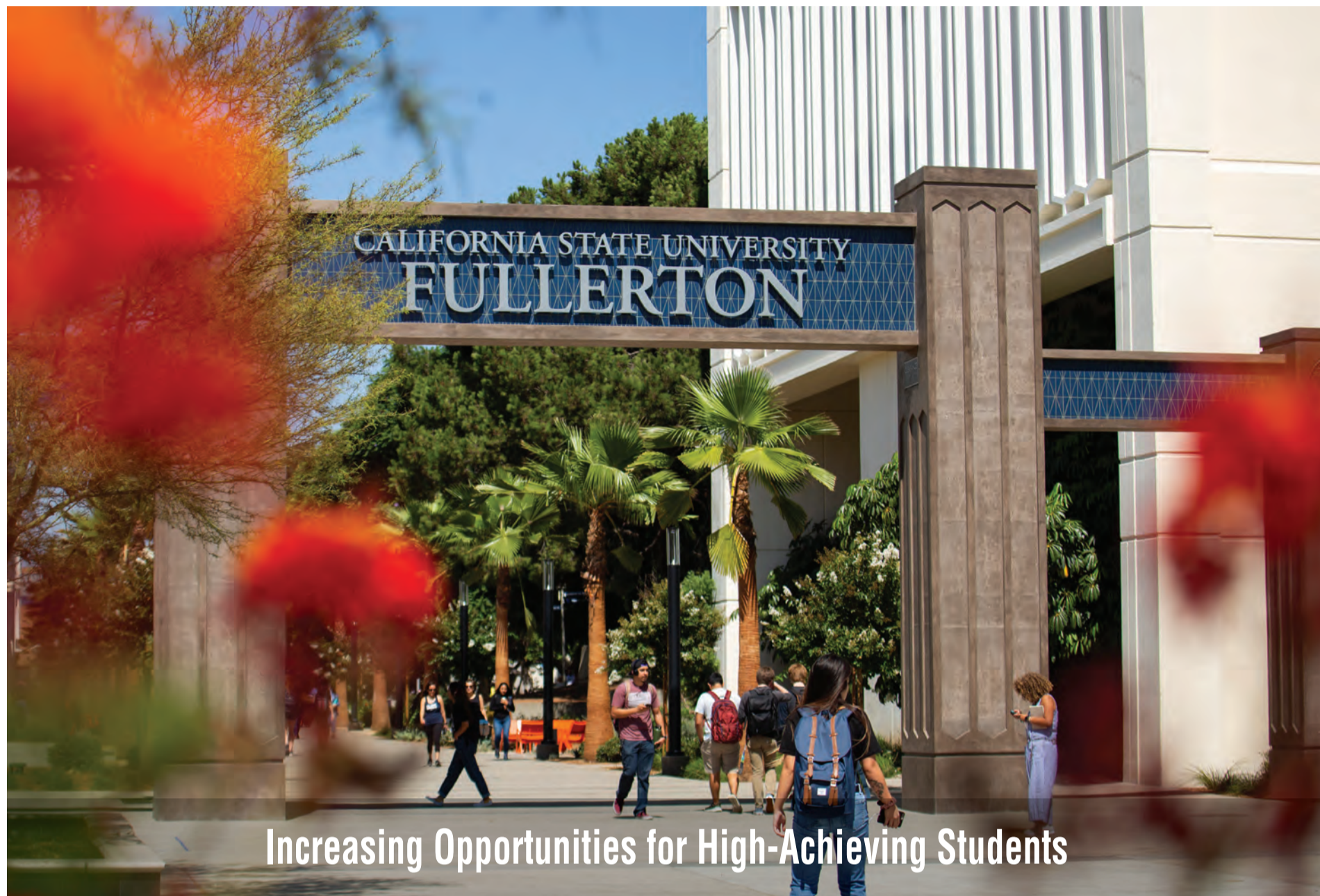
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**“CSUF allowed me to explore and find my passion, which was really, really big for me.”**

**- Makar Makarian**

Makar Makarian immigrated to the U.S. with little more than a dream to be the first in his family to go to college.

After enrolling at Cal State Fullerton as a transfer student in chemistry, faculty mentors encouraged him to engage in hands-on research to improve cognitive function in patients with Alzheimer’s disease. This gave him the knowledge and confidence to apply to graduate school.

Makar’s lab and research experience opened doors to pharmacy school and advanced his ultimate goal of working in the field of medicinal chemistry.

Cal State Fullerton empowers undergrads with real-world research and learning experiences to prepare them for future careers or graduate schools.



**“Let’s create a place where students build up their mental stamina.”**

**- Asha Bhattacharya**

Having experienced anxiety, Asha Bhattacharya understands firsthand the importance of mental wellness.

The Cal State Fullerton marketing student dreamt of creating a “gym for the mind” on campus — a place where students could train their brains and proactively cultivate mental toughness.

Asha’s participation in the President’s Scholars leadership program for high-achieving students encouraged and empowered her to pitch an idea to CSUF President Fram Virjee.

Impressed by her vision, the president sanctioned a new student wellness room that is scheduled to open in 2022.

Now a proud Titan graduate, Asha continues to advocate for mental wellness in her management role at Amazon.

Makar and Asha are just two examples of graduates who experienced Cal State Fullerton’s commitment to advancing student success. This empowered them to pursue their passions and career paths.

From admissions through commencement, CSUF works to empower all Titan students to reach their fullest potential.

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# FAMILY TRADITION LEADS STABILITY TO F&M BANK

## Only Solid, Well-Run Banks Can Help Their Communities

It is rare for a family-managed business to last more than two or three generations. It likely is even more rare when that business is a bank, given the nature of mergers and acquisitions in the industry. But that is precisely the case at Farmers & Merchants Bank. Founded by C.J. Walker in Long Beach in 1907, F&M Bank is led today by C.J.'s great grandsons, Daniel K. Walker, Chairman of the Board and CEO, and W. Henry Walker, President.

The Walker family believes strong and steady wins the race, declining to compromise the conservative banking principles that have led to 115 years of profitability and consistent dividends for its shareholders. F&M Bank boasts capital reserves more than three times the federally mandated requirement to be deemed "well-capitalized," and a stable and diversified client and deposit base, with no reliance on a particular client type or sector. **These basics of sound banking have been pursued by the Walkers since 1907.**



W. Henry Walker, F&M President, and his brother, Daniel K. Walker, CEO, celebrate the grand opening of F&M Bank's second office in Santa Ana along with community leaders of Orange County.

F&M Bank has endured economic recessions, world wars and the recent pandemic through a combination of personal service and conservative lending practices across Los Angeles, Orange and Santa Barbara counties. During each, F&M Bank remained open for business, prepared to serve clients, protect their deposits and assist communities in recovery. **In 2020, F&M Bank led the Long Beach area with the highest volume of processed loan applications for the first round of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) with 4,198 loans totaling \$713 million and saving 83,267 local jobs.**

"Protecting our clients' deposits is in our DNA, passed down from our great grandfather. That is a responsibility and oath we take every day. It will never change," said Daniel K. Walker.

To become a client of F&M Bank, is to join the Walker family. F&M Bank employees are known for remembering their clients' names, participating in local civic events, and even offering treats to their four-legged friends. **No appointment is needed to open an account or transact at any of F&M Bank's 26 offices.** "I feel blessed to have been a client at Farmers & Merchants Bank for many years, especially in the time and season we are experiencing now. May F&M continue to be steadfast, strong and stable," wrote a client in response to an email from Walker.

Philanthropy is another family tradition passed down by C.J. Walker. In 2022, F&M Bank provided more than \$4.6 Million in community support to more than 680 educational, religious, and non-profit organizations across Southern California.

Despite the uncertainties posed by the general economic environment, F&M is looking forward with optimism having celebrated the opening of a second branch in Santa Ana in March and preparing to open a new office in Laguna Beach in the next twelve months. F&M owns nearly all of its offices, demonstrating its permanence and stability in the local community.

## "Remaining true to our core principles,

F&M withstood the turbulence that reverberated throughout the banking sector during the first quarter. Compared with most other regional and community banks, F&M's total deposits were down only minimally from year-end, reflecting the loyalty of our core depositors and attracting new accounts, which were up 17% over the same quarter last year. The Bank also benefitted from its meticulous, conservative lending policies on quality assets, with no dependence on any one sector."

- Daniel K. Walker, Chairman of the Board & CEO



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## Commercial Bank of California Celebrates 20 Years of Success

*CBC is commemorating two decades in business. We're celebrating all that we've done to support a diverse portfolio of businesses throughout Southern California.*

CBC was founded by entrepreneurial business owners and led by a talented team with an ownership mindset. CBC is a full-service, FDIC-insured, business bank headquartered in Irvine, California.

We stand for PEOPLE, PURPOSE, and COMMUNITY.

### **Our Legacy of Purpose-Driven Banking**

The genesis of Commercial Bank of California is to help entrepreneurs grow their businesses and achieve their dreams. There were people supporting us when we first started, and we wanted to be that foundation for the next generation of entrepreneurs. We are transforming the business banking space by enabling our clients' success and driving the community forward.

Since 2003, we have been driving our business with three key pillars:

- Our Purpose to promote life wealth
- Our Vision to transform the way you think about banking
- Our Mission to empower our team, clients, and communities

### **Stability in Being Privately Owned**

We are unlike any other bank. We have purposefully taken the partnership approach in working with each of our clients to make their goals, our goals. We are a private bank, driven by our collective purpose, not just turning a profit. We chose to answer to our clients and to help them overcome obstacles and achieve their dreams.

CBC has strategically survived three historic financial crisis:

- 2007-2008 housing market crash & Lehman Brothers collapse
- 2020 COVID-19 pandemic
- 2023 Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank collapse

When our financial decisions are based on client business growth, we can build a stronger partnership and stable growth trajectory. For the last 20 years, we have been focused on being a purposeful partner while finding new innovations and programs that help businesses grow. And we owe it to our incredible team that is dedicated to our collective success.

### **Our Focus on Serving Our Community**

We're forging new roads and building partnerships to not only give back to our communities, but to empower them. We believe possibility is limited only by our imagination, which is why we've focused on giving back in the following ways:

- We have partnered with more than 12 community organizations and schools to start financial literacy programs to help our community better navigate their finances.
- During the pandemic, our team worked tirelessly to save more than 500,000 jobs by funding nearly \$250 million in Paycheck Protection Program loans. This impacted 30,000 families nationwide and helped save more than 800 businesses.
- We are minority owned and diversity minded. We have focused on working with good businesses and partners, and today have a diverse client base that mirrors the diversity of our employees.
- Other organizations we support with funding and volunteer efforts:
  - Boys Hope Girls Hope
  - California State University Fullerton
  - Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Orange County
  - Discovery Cube
  - Junior Achievement OC & LA
  - Ronald McDonald House
  - Samueli Academy
  - Taller San Jose Hope Builders
  - The Thomas House
  - United Way
  - Wise Place

### **Award Winning Team with Passion and Purpose**

Last year, CBC was named to the *Best Places to Work SoCal 2022* list by Best Companies Group. We were recognized and selected based on responses from a detailed and comprehensive survey of our employees.

"We have been very thoughtful about our culture and about our people. We believe the most successful companies have cohesive values and rely on transparency and alignment of culture," said Ash Patel, president, CEO & chairman of the board. "Our leadership team is committed to empowering employees to express their talents, take ownership of projects and share ideas with one another."

We are devoted to a conscious leadership model that embraces inspiration over motivation. Our team works with intentionality, passion and purpose - allowing us to connect with our customers, team, community and overall mission in more meaningful ways. We are committed to building an institution of which all stakeholders, employees, clients, leaders, investors and the community are proud to be a part.

### **Strategic Technology & Scalability**

We don't put a box around what we can do for our clients. Our culture of relentless innovation fuels our drive to transform business banking in the region. We invest in our team, partnerships and fintech products thoughtfully to democratize banking and directly support our clients' businesses in ways they never thought possible.

We have stability and predictability because of our innate identity as a business. Everything we do is filtered through the lens of a private bank, putting clients' needs and protection at the forefront of our decision making.

In growth stages, companies can become vulnerable to a range of problems if they have not laid a foundation to sustain rapid development. We support our clients as they scale their business - mitigating risk and ensuring that foundational operations are created that will support growth in the long term.

Overtime, CBC has acquired fintech companies like VeriCheck (VCI) and ACHWorks to better support our clients as they embrace technology and scale their businesses. As part of those technological advances, we are finalizing the development of a new scalable, secure and stable ACH payments processing platform. It is one of the first platforms of its kind built on Microsoft's Azure cloud platform and has the technology to help clients scale their payment processing while streamlining operations.

### **20 Years of Strength and Security and Many More to Come**

"I want to share our sincerest thanks to our colleagues, clients, and communities for their continued and overwhelming support throughout the years. CBC has continuously served clients through changing economic conditions and financial environments, and we are thrilled to offer strength and security as we continue to grow and evolve together," says Ash Patel. "We are honored to have been of service for the past 20 years, and we are confident in our ability to continue to provide unwavering, exceptional service to our clients and communities for decades to come."

**Ash Patel** has over 30 years of experience in the banking industry, and serves as Chairman of the Board, President and CEO of CBC. Ash has evolved from a banker with an entrepreneurial drive to a seasoned CEO, focused on inspiring his team and clients to achieve their dreams. Ash joined CBC in 2013, and under his leadership, CBC has shown significant growth from approximately \$200 million in assets, to \$2.1 billion as of December 31, 2022. This growth was accomplished through the acquisition of National Bank of California, VeriCheck and ACHWorks, by operating in line with CBC's life wealth values to organically grow its client base, and by scaling its lending business to support the increased need for small business loans amid the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Financial Times Group, 2022

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## Argyros School of Business and Economics



### Growing the Green Family Business

Seventy years ago, Van Vlahakis came to Chicago from Greece with \$22 in his pocket.

He lived in shelters and worked various jobs while learning English and studying for a degree in chemistry. After graduating, he worked in the cleaning products industry and noticed how toxic chemicals affected him and his coworkers.

In 1967, he started what is now ECOS in his garage.

Today, Vlahakis' vision and creativity for environmentally safe cleaning products lives on in the success of ECOS, which is still family owned and led by his daughter, Kelly Vlahakis-Hanks.

Vlahakis-Hanks, who took over ECOS after her father's sudden death in 2014, credits Chapman University with her success in leading the company to new heights.

"I got the time to just think, study, and take a 30,000-foot view of the business," says Vlahakis-Hanks, who got her Executive MBA from Chapman in 2016. "The strategic plan I created in 2015 at Chapman was the plan I utilized to turn to the next chapter of ECOS after my father's passing."

She started the program while she was executive vice president of ECOS.

"I knew I wanted to scale the company for growth and hone my business acumen. The Chapman program really spoke to me," she says.

In addition to Vlahakis-Hanks, two other members of ECOS' executive leadership got Executive MBAs from Chapman, and Chief Innovation Officer Jenna Arkin is

currently in the program. ECOS' general counsel and associate corporate counsel got law degrees from Chapman.

"Kelly told me, 'You'll learn something in the classroom and the next day, apply it in business,'" says Arkin, who has a background in chemistry and art. "Chapman gives us tools that are so practical."

Continuous learning is critical to leadership, Vlahakis-Hanks says.

"If you're not learning, you're not going to be winning in the marketplace," she says.

Besides learning at Chapman themselves, Vlahakis-Hanks and her team recruit Chapman graduates to work at ECOS – so much so that they have been recognized as a top employer of Chapman alumni. There is always a group of Chapman students doing externships at ECOS, and Arkin works with students in Chapman's Grand Challenges Initiative.

"It's a great pipeline for us," Vlahakis-Hanks says. "It's amazing having students working on these great projects for the ECOS brand – our team gets much larger."

That team is what has driven 40% growth in the first quarter of 2023 and has helped make the only woman-owned, Black-owned, nationally distributed green cleaning products brand become the nation's No. 1- selling green laundry detergent.

For information about Chapman's business programs, please visit <https://go.chapman.edu/register/ASBE-info> or contact Graduate Business Programs Director Serena Healey at (714) 516-7190; [healey@chapman.edu](mailto:healey@chapman.edu)



#3

Best Private Business School  
on the West Coast,  
*U.S. News & World Report*

#7

Best Business School  
in California,  
*U.S. News & World Report*



# DRIVING BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

“I had some of the most talented businesspeople in Orange County as a sounding board. I learned a lot from fellow students. I got the time to just think, study, and take a 30,000-foot view of the business. The strategic plan I created in 2015 at Chapman was the plan I utilized to turn to the next chapter of ECOS.”

— KELLY VLAHAKIS-HANKS (MBA '16)  
President and CEO, ECOS

Scan the QR code or go to  
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**Argyros School of  
Business and Economics**

# JEWELRY TO INSPIRE

Lugano Diamonds was established with a distinctive vision to create exceptional, one-of-a-kind pieces that place artistry at the forefront of all its designs, using the finest craftsmanship and opulent materials. According to Moti Ferder, the CEO and design director of Lugano, "Our clients are discerning and seek wearable works of art that stand out. We design to inspire with the rarest and most extraordinary pieces of bespoke jewelry."

Each piece of jewelry crafted by Lugano begins with a remarkable, unique gemstone. The brand's statement-making designs accentuate the gemstone's beauty, culminating in a masterpiece that demands attention. Lugano Diamonds' jewelry collection caters to various lifestyles, ranging from casual luxury to elegant subtlety. To explore more of their remarkable collection, we invite you to visit Lugano Diamonds at Fashion Island.



## MODERN ARTISTRY

### *Tassel Rubber Design Necklace*

Over 26 carats of brilliant round and rose cut collection VS diamonds are set in 18k white gold with black rubber for a tassel necklace that is a true statement of artistry and creativity.



## THE PERFECT PAIR

### *Mismatched Diamond Drop Earrings*

One-of-a-kind drop earrings are crafted from 19 carats of black diamonds with playfully mismatched heart and pear-shaped diamonds exemplifying the superior craftsmanship for which Lugano is known.



## EXQUISITE SPARKLE

### *Diamond Wrap Ring*

Showcasing 76 sparkling brilliant round collection VS diamonds, this exquisite wrap ring is the perfect addition to any collection.

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## 2023 FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS AWARD NOMINEES

**41 Olive, Irvine***Neil Naran, Owner**Dilip Naran, Father of Neil*

Malti Naran founded 41 Olive, high-quality authentic olive oil for cooks who strive to preserve and enhance the quality of their ingredients. Naran was known for her passion for food and clean living among her friends and family. Naran believed in eating whole foods, foods that are as close to their source as possible thus needed the right oil to make that possible. After years of thorough research on olive oil and its benefits, she decided to pursue her dream of sharing the oil that her family had always had on the table with a wider audience. Naran fought a hard battle with pancreatic cancer and lives on through everyone she reached with her knowledge. Her fight with cancer was one of the many reasons that motivated her to embark on the journey to provide the best oil for our health to everyone. Naran made many donations to the Pancreatic Cancer Research and had a passion for educating others.

**Albright, Yee & Schmit, APC, Newport Beach***Clifton W. Albright, President & Founding Partner**Clifton W. Albright, Jr., Associate**Alex Albright, COO**Stella Albright, Vice President**Eric Albright, Financial Consultant*

Clifton W. Albright is a founder and the president of Albright Yee & Schmit, APC, a prestigious multi-specialty law firm serving individuals, businesses & governmental entities throughout the United States. Founded 40+ years ago, Albright, Yee & Schmit, APC, has become well known for its high-level legal work and personalized service. Mr. Albright was the first attorney to win a lawsuit against the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regarding its Public Health Service Training Program. The case was United States of America vs. Robert Alfred St. Thomas, MD. Mr. Albright travels to Washington, D.C. and other locations to meet with government officials and others involved in international trade and trade relations. Mr. Albright was twice appointed to the Industry Trade Advisory Committee on Small and Minority Business (ITAC 11) by former President Barack Obama, and then, again, reappointed by President Donald Trump in 2018. ITAC works closely with the Secretary of Commerce and the United States Trade Representative to enhance trade between the United States and other countries. Mr. Albright was selected by his peers for Inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America (2023 Edition) in the area of Litigation - Labor and Employment.

**Apex Golf Carts, Laguna Hills***Ryan Moeller, General Manager**Jessica Moeller, CFO**Michael Moeller, Mechanical Lead*

Apex Golf Carts was founded in 2012 and is one of Orange County's Top Golf Cart businesses. Apex sells new and used golf carts, repairs, performs maintenance services and builds custom golf carts in California. In this region, they provide services to many personal users however they primarily work with businesses that require golf carts to perform their daily work. Apex strives to always provide the most incredible customer service to clients day in and day out. The success of Apex Golf Carts is a direct result of the core set of values instilled in the company and is modeled after respect, determination, integrity and teamwork. Apex Golf Carts participates in various community events from local sporting events to volunteering at local churches. They provide employees with a paid day for charity work so they can also participate or find programs that are important to them.

**Aura Accounting Solutions, Newport Beach***Brandon Kordower, Founder & CEO**Derek Kordower, COO*

Aura bridges the wide gap between a bookkeeper and a C-suite CFO. Many companies start with a bookkeeper who grows with the business, but the person's skill level is limited, and the needs of the company outgrow their abilities. Banks and investors, the business owners themselves, and acquirers rely on accurate, accrual accounting to secure funding, understand next steps in company growth, or successfully exit with the highest valuation possible. While these are all necessary asks, many companies can't afford the six-figure plus salary and benefits required to bring in the right talent to perform a proper month-end close. Leave the bookkeeper to data entry. Brothers Brandon Kordower (Founder and CEO) and Derek Kordower (COO) have brought together a highly qualified team that act as the company's third-party controller and advisers, performing month-end closure with a sophistication unparalleled by others, at a fraction of the price of comparable in-house staff. By leveraging functions and skill sets across the organization, they keep costs low, while providing objective third-party advisement and oversight. With month-over-month revenue growth of 1600% since its inception six years ago, Aura is on its way to becoming the trusted name in Orange County.

**Bar One By Il Barone, Newport Beach***Francesco Barone, Chef & Owner**Jon Barone, Chef**Franco Domicolo, Lead Server**Rachel Nagano, Bartender**Donatella Barone, General Manager*

Since opening a successful restaurant in 2010, Chef Francesco has earned to be one of the most respected Chef's and restaurant owners in Orange County. Both Donatella and Francesco are passionate about spending their spare time farming fresh vegetables



and sharing them with their neighbors and the less fortunate. They continuously help other Italian families by sponsoring them for citizenship and helping them become established.

**Battres Construction, Santa Ana***Israel Battres, Owner**Rudy Battres, Project Manager**Sammy Battres, Project Manager**Ilianna Battres, Designer**Brianna Peralta, Social Media**Joseph Peralta, Field Assistant**Isaac Battres, Foreman**Corrina Battres, Human Resource**Celeste Battres, Junior Designer**Ben Moore, Finance Lead**Rick Gutierrez, Foreman*

Battres Construction is a locally owned and operated family business in the city of Santa Ana, California. Battres Construction was founded in 2009, during the great recession, by Israel Battres in partnership with his two brothers and their close friend. The company has had a long tradition of community involvement by partnering with or contributing to organizations like Habitat for Humanity. Battres is hugely committed to serving their community and its families. Beginning in 2009, Battres originally started as a residential construction and remodeling company. In the intervening years it has evolved into Battres Home & Design Studio furthering its scope of business, which also encompasses Builder Finish Supply (material supplier to the Trades) as well as Pools, Plants, and Pavers (Landscape Architecture). Battres Construction has been the regular, featured builder on popular HGTV shows "Flip or Flop" and "Christina on the Coast". The company has also had a presence on the Qualified Remodeler Top 500 List.

**Burkhart Brothers Construction, Newport Beach***Bryan Burkhart, Founder & President**Mark Burkhart, Founder & CFO--*

Since 2007 Burkhart Bros Construction has focused on high-end renovations and luxury custom homes along OC's "Gold Coast" of Southern California. Both Bryan and Mark are natives of Newport Beach and USC graduates who involve themselves deeply in the community. Bryan Burkhart executed his initial career in the wine business and later developed a passion for building with his brother, Mark Burkhart. The increasing complexity and execution of numerous projects have contributed to their prestigious reputation as builders of unsurpassed integrity and cutting edge technology. The Burkhart Brothers have cultivated long-standing relationships with preeminent tastemakers of the community, premiere architects, designers, carpenters and artisans. They will celebrate 20 years of excellence in building this year. Burkhart homes have been featured in numerous publications showcasing their work alongside many famous architects such as Anders-Lasater, Teale Architecture, Horst, etc. From national recognition such as Wall Street Journal, Sunset Magazine, Better Homes & Gardens and California Homes to more personal coverage of their family-owned business in Newport Beach Living Magazine and Modern Home Builders. Their accolades can be viewed via Instagram @burkhartbrosconstruction and website www.burkhartbros.com.

**Chamberlain Backhoe Service, Placentia***Nick Long, Director of Operations**Tony Long, CEO**Wendy Long, President**Tyler Long, Fleet Manager**Jordan Long, Equipment Operator*

Chamberlain Backhoe Service was originally founded in 1957. It has been in the family since the early 70's. CBS has been located in Placentia, CA since 1991 and serves the surrounding areas. In 2022, CBS saw a 60% increase in revenue from 2021, which had previously been its best year. They were able to double the fleet size, increase the employee total from 20 at the beginning of 2022, to 35 by the end of the calendar year. CBS recently obtained its General Engineering license through the state which opens up a whole new market to us.

**Consolidated Contracting, San Clemente***Tony Elias-Calles, President & CEO**Joseph Troya, Principal**Alis Troya, Attorney-at-law**Matt Elias-Calles, Division Leader**Shane Elias-Calles, Business Development**Ryan Kraemer, Superintendent*

Consolidated Contracting is a full-service, minority- and family-owned general contracting firm providing preconstruction, construction, and construction management services for commercial development projects. Consolidated was founded in 1989 by childhood friends and also brothers-in-law, Jose "Tony" Elias-Calles and Joseph Troya, after emigrating from Cuba. Celebrating 34 years in business this year, the decision to pursue ownership of this company stemmed from recognizing the need for a personal touch in every project. Consolidated Contracting's relationship-driven approach, strong culture of dedication, and personal integrity are to be credited for more than 80% of its work coming from repeat clients and referrals.

**Crisp Imaging, Corona del Mar***Gary Crisp, Founder, CEO & President**Julie Crisp, Executive Vice President**Carter Crisp, Vice President of Marketing*

Crisp Imaging had humble beginnings as a single Copy Club shop in Orange, California which opened in early 2001. Their vision was to be a real family-owned business that would provide exceptional customer service throughout Orange County and Southern California. They envisioned themselves not



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## 2023 FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS AWARD NOMINEES

only able to serve the community through their company, but also in giving back as business owners, a key driver of their philanthropy that remains to this day. In the spirit of personal customer service, on the eve of their 15-year anniversary in 2017 Gary and Julie decided to change the company name to Crisp Imaging. Crisp Imaging currently has 23 West Coast locations, over 200 employees, and over 60 cars in its fleet to serve its customers. Crisp Imaging's "Customer Driven Culture" makes customer service its #1 priority at all times by understanding needs and exceeding expectations.

**Ever Pretty Garment Inc., Irvine**

*Anna (Dixia) Shi, CEO*

*Alan Pan (Leibing Pan), COO*

Ever Pretty Garment Inc. has 18 years of experience in the fashion industry, catering to thousands of customers worldwide. The company's journey began in the dynamic Canadian fashion market in 2005. In 2011, they brought their expertise to the United States. Their goal is to produce dresses that not only look stylish today but also stand the test of time and serve as timeless wardrobe staples. Modern women lead busy lives filled with important milestones, from proms to graduations, weddings to girls' nights out, and more. All Ever Pretty Garment designs are motivated by the desire to help women look and feel their best for every moment. CEO, Anna Shi, founded the company with a vision to revolutionize women's dress fashion globally by creating superior quality women's dresses with exquisite design. Today, Anna and her husband, Alan, oversee all aspects of the business, including design, manufacturing, quality control, and sales, which ensure the highest quality for all the products, and work to turn Anna's dream into reality.

**Fratzke Consulting, Fullerton**

*Ryan Fratzke, Partner & Executive Strategist*

*Lisa Fratzke, Partner & Executive Strategist*

*James Fratzke, Partner & Executive Strategist*

Fratzke is a human-centered strategic consulting firm that arms business leaders with tools to achieve their top priorities within Digital Marketing, Communications & Culture, and Brand Strategy. Partners Ryan, Lisa, and James Fratzke have 15+ years of experience with top brands including Disney, Walmart, Patagonia, and Dollar Tree. The Fratzke's combine their deep industry experience with a passion for storytelling to deliver transformative results for their clients. In addition to growing their firm, they have volunteered their time and expertise to organizations such as the Girl Scouts of America, DECA, and Cal State Fullerton's Center for Family-Owned Business. Their dedication to giving back to the community and supporting the next generation of business leaders is a testament to their values and commitment to excellence.

**Goodwin Company, Garden Grove**

*Don Goodwin, President*

*Tom Goodwin, Chairman of the Board*

*Christina Amidon, Employee Advocate, Health and Safety*

*Shane McCullough, Business Development & Marketing*

*Bradley Goodwin, Production Associate*

The Goodwin Company was founded in 1922 by Thomas Arthur Goodwin and his son, Maurice. The company manufactured and sold household chemical products in the Los Angeles area under the "Goodwin's" brand name. Goodwin's Magic Cloud Ammonia was their most popular product and was the focus of the business until they began contract manufacturing services in the 1960's. The business began to grow rapidly throughout the 1960's and 70's, and in 1973 they relocated all operations to a new facility in Garden Grove, CA. The rapid growth of contract manufacturing in automotive appearance chemicals and household cleaners led to the expansion of their Orange County operations, and new facilities in Lawrenceville, Georgia. Today, Goodwin blends and fills sixty million gallons of product per year across 26 production lines, 400,000 square feet of facilities, and 300+ employees. The company remains family owned and operated with Don T. Goodwin (Fifth-Generation) now in the role of President. Goodwin Company celebrated its 100-year anniversary in 2022, and is focused on the next decade of growth in liquid chemical blending and filling for various chemical product industries.

**Green Street Interiors, Los Alamitos**

*Judith Klabouch, Founder & Co-owner*

*Karen Klabouch Sullivan, Lead Designer & Project Manager*

*Kim Rubien, Sales Assistant*

*Don Klabouch, Various roles*

Green Street Interiors has been part of the Los Alamitos landscape for the past 45 years. Located on Los Alamitos Boulevard, Green Street Interiors has been a premiere family-owned and operated design and decorating store for decades. Judy Klabouch and her daughter Karen Klabouch Sullivan have distinguished themselves via their business accomplishments and contributions by serving, contributing, and participating with many local nonprofits in a multitude of ways. Judy has been extremely involved for years as president of the Los Alamitos Chamber of Commerce, president of Casa Youth Shelter Board of Directors, president of Hotline Southern California Board of Directors, and WE CARE, as well as serving as a volunteer with many other non-profit groups in the community. As a person of extraordinary personal character, Judy demonstrates over and over again her keen love and interest in the betterment of the non-profit community as shown in her long list of organizations that have been recipients of her time, talent, and treasure.

**HomeQuest, Yorba Linda**

*Shane Joffe, Partner & General Manager*

*Jim Joffe, Partner*

Founded 25 years ago, HomeQuest Sales is one the largest retailer of manufactured homes in the Western United States. The Orange County-based company is transforming the manufactured

housing industry and home buying experience by providing the technology for customers to shop and order a home online. This saves homebuyers both time and money, while offering an unprecedented number of floorplans, features and amenities from top manufacturers. HomeQuest can assist home buyers with everything from backyard ADUs used for home offices or guest quarters, to coastal weekend getaways or larger primary residences. HomeQuest is also a dedicated community partner, working with Habitat for Humanity over the years, as well as the Frank J. Evans Charitable Foundation every holiday to adopt families in need. This last holiday season, HomeQuest partnered with its community owner clients to donate nearly \$100,000 in gifts to families in need. HomeQuest also provides college scholarships for high school seniors in its communities, and during the pandemic, the company donated over 10,000 masks to residents and provided food to struggling families.

**Hydraflow, Fullerton**

*Cindy Ayloush, CEO*

*Len Ullrich, Founder*

*Sasha Ayloush, Director of Sales & Marketing*

*Ramsey Ayloush, Machine Shop Manager*

Founded in 1961 by Len Ullrich, Hydraflow is owned and operated by the 2nd and 3rd generations. Hydraflow designs and manufactures all products from its single facility in Fullerton and ships product worldwide.



Hydraflow believes employee satisfaction has been critical to its success. Hydraflow offers 100% tuition reimbursement for undergraduate and graduate degrees. In the last 10 years, Hydraflow has supported eighteen employees to earn their undergraduate degrees and twelve for graduate programs. Hydraflow partners with local community colleges to offer onsite education classes which have included blue print reading, problem solving, Excel training, and Spanish. In 2015, Hydraflow received the Commitment to Education Award from the CSUF Center for Family Business. Hydraflow also supports its local community by participating in Love Fullerton and donating use of its soccer field to local groups and high schools, including Rosary Academy. Hydraflow also believes in promoting and educating STEM careers and offers internships at both the high school and college levels to foster future aerospace industry employees.

**I AM Movement, Irvine**

*Donnella "Nel" Andraos, Co-Founder, Co-Owner & Boxing Coach*

*Timorei "Timi" Andraos Spaulding, Co-Owner*

*Michael Andraos, Boxing Coach*

*Brian "Blue" Spaulding, Boxing Coach*

*Wyatt Andraos, Videographer*

I AM Movement is a gym for adults with special needs and the elderly. Its mission is to use fitness and friendship to create a community so people can live fuller lives longer. Programs include: boxing classes that target and challenge the symptoms of Parkinson's disease to slow their progression, boxing that focuses on balance and fall prevention to improve daily functional movement, adaptive boxing for neurodivergent adults and creative movement dance class for people of all abilities and mobilities. I AM Movement was slated to open the week the lockdown was implemented in March 2020. It took determination, creativity, and an abundance of sweat equity but we managed to survive. I AM Movement is very involved in the Parkinson's community. The Parkinson's Foundation invited coaches to lead a boxing demonstration at the 2022 Orange County Moving Day event. Besides classes, they host free informative seminars and a care partners support group which are open to the public.

**IMPACT Properties Inc., Placentia**

*Aaron Zapata, President & Treasurer*

*Dawn Zapata, VP & Secretary*

IMPACT Properties, Inc. just celebrated its 10th Anniversary in March 2023. 10 years ago Aaron Zapata started the company as a sole proprietor and the company now has nearly 50 licensed real estate professionals operating in three states including California, Tennessee, and Alabama. IMPACT Properties was ranked the #3 fastest growing small businesses in Orange County by the OCBJ in the September 2022 issue. Aaron and Dawn are also on the planning committee for the annual Yorba Linda Mayor's Prayer Breakfast.

**Kaygen, Irvine**

*Rashmi Chaturvedi, President*

*Anshul Chaturvedi, CEO*

Kaygen was founded in 2003 by Anshul and Rashmi Chaturvedi to fill the increasing global shortage of technical and data talent to accelerate digital transformation. In 2007, she transitioned from a co-founder advisory role to full-time, and started an advisory and implementation service business model to assist its clients attain positive financial, environmental, and social effects on society. In 2020, at the peak of COVID, Kaygen reinvented its business model to talent-on-demand.

**KW Court Reporting, Irvine**

*Kamryn Villegas, Owner*

*Whitney Kumar, Co-Owner*

*Kathy Keala, Office Manager*

*Lynne Anerson & Lori Johnson, Calendar department*

Kamryn Villegas & Whitney Kumar, Co-Founders of KW Court Reporting and identical twin sisters,

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## 2023 FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS AWARD NOMINEES

started the company in 2013 and grew it into a multi-million-dollar company. Working out of their homes and starting families, they turned the company into one of the most revered and respected court reporting agencies in California. Their company works with the biggest law firms in Southern California and has covered many high profile cases. They have been featured on podcasts as leaders in legal technology; featured in magazines; do public speaking engagements, and they are active in promoting their profession. Villegas & Kumar have been invited into the exclusive Forbes Business Council two years in a row.

**M S International Inc, Orange**

*Manahar Shah, CEO Emeritus*  
*Rajesh Shah, Co-CEO*  
*Rupesh Shah, Co-CEO*

MSI is the leading nationwide distributor of flooring, countertop, wall tile, and hardscaping products in North America. Headquartered in Orange, California, MSI maintains over 40 state-of-the-art showrooms and distribution centers across the U.S. and Canada, with domestic manufacturing facilities for Q™ Premium Natural Quartz in Latta, South Carolina, and Premium LVT in Cartersville, Georgia. Looking ahead, their goal is simple: To contribute to a world where anyone can afford to create a beautiful space to live, work, and play. In support of this goal, we have very ambitious expansion plans, including opening new branches across the U.S. and Canada, as well as continuing to introduce new and innovative products across all major product lines.

**Miguel's Restaurants, Corona**

*Javier Vasquez, CEO*  
*Mary Vasquez, Founder*  
*Carol Vasquez, Corporate Secretary*  
*Sylvia Vasquez, VP Culinary Production*  
*Michael Vasquez, VP Development and Special Projects*  
Miguel's California Mexican Cocina was founded in 1973 by Mike and Mary Vasquez in Corona, California and named in honor of Mike's grandfather, Miguel. In 1975 the couple leased a fast-food restaurant located two miles from the original Miguel's restaurant and named it Miguel's Jr., which was an immediate success. Today, Miguel's Restaurants operates four Miguel's Jr. locations in Orange County, and 17 Miguel's Jr. locations and one full-service restaurant in the Inland Empire, with plans to expand across both regions. Throughout this growth and expansion, Miguel's Jr. has remained family-owned and operated and committed to frequently and consistently engaging in each of their local communities in meaningful ways by offering support to as many organizations as possible including local school districts and police departments, Rotary Clubs and charities. In 2023, Miguel's Restaurants will celebrate 50-years of business, serving Founder and Chief Recipe Officer Mary Vasquez's original homestyle Mexican recipes in a contemporary family environment.

**Millennium Tile and Marble, Anaheim**

*Amin Safa, Owner*  
*Michael Safa, Partner*  
*Idin Safa*  
*Reza Motadel*  
*Parham Shariatzadeh*

Millennium Tile & Marble has been serving SoCal for over 35 years. They are a general contractor based in Anaheim California, specializing in ground-up development and renovation of commercial and residential projects. They offer a wide range of home improvement services ranging from whole house remodels to kitchen & bathroom remodels. They also offer commercial remodeling solutions for businesses searching for a general contractor to help them with tenant improvements, office additions, and more. With years of experience in the construction industry, the quality of their projects speaks for themselves, and the trust they instill in their clients are what continue to make them the contractor of choice and the right fit for any renovation project.

**Mountain View Services Inc., Newport Beach**

*Eric Goodman, CEO*  
*Vanessa See, Marketing Manager*  
*Mark See, E-commerce Manager*  
*Roxanne Goodman, Finance Manager*  
*Grant Goodman, Social Media Manager*

As president/CEO of Mountain View Services, Inc., a leading Healthcare supply and distribution company, serving more than 500 Care Facilities for Developmentally Disabled Adults and Children, Home Care Facilities, Hospice Care Companies, Nonprofits, Schools, Care Centers and Homeless Shelters. Eric's mission is to provide the highest quality products and services available to his clients, so they, in turn, can provide the highest quality service to the residents they serve. Eric fosters his core belief in building relationships within the community as well. He has served on the Board of Directors for several prominent nonprofit organizations including the American Heart Association and Ronald McDonald House Charities. Eric won the Unforgettables Foundation Heart Award of the Inland Empire in 2020. Mountain View Services, Inc was a Civic 50 Honoree in 2022. Recognized as one of the top 50 community-minded companies in Orange County.

**Movandi Corporation, Irvine**

*Reza Rofougaran, CEO, CTO & Founder*  
*Maryam Rofougaran, CEO & Founder*

Reza Rofougaran is an inventor with over 900 U.S. patents and named to the list of prolific inventors. Reza was also recognized by UCLA as a pioneering figure in the wireless

communications industry and a prolific inventor, awarded the UCLA 2018 Alumnus of the Year. In 2021, he was inducted to the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) for the development of radio system-on-a-chip technology for wireless networking. Maryam Rofougaran built a team that developed all the wireless radios for a broad range of wireless products, including Bluetooth, WLAN, GPS, FM, ZigBee, NFC and Combos (integration multi-standard on a SOC), Cellular 2G/3G and 4G, Femto, Microwave backhaul, and 60GHz WiGig. Maryam provided the technology to grow the wireless business from zero to over \$3 billion in revenue annually, over 1 billion radios annually, and number one market share in multiple business segments. Maryam has over 300 issued patents and over 58 journal and conference publications, some of which have received best publication awards.

**Mutt's, Newport Beach**

*Alex Murray, Co-Owner*  
*Meghan Murray, Co-Owner*

Owned by husband-and-wife locals Alex and Meghan Murray, Mutt's in Newport Beach celebrates eclectic Americana while serving as a central gathering place for the community, serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner in a family-friendly, convivial atmosphere. Located in the Eastbluff Village Center, Mutt's exudes the same character and charm as its sister concept, Mutt Lynch's, but through a refined, family-friendly environment. At 2675 square feet, the restaurant offers plenty of indoor seating and a spacious patio. Its inviting vibe and at-home atmosphere are brought to life through furniture, art, and decor custom-made in-house. The Mutt's menu features approachable American eclectic dishes and a craft cocktail menu highlighting spirits from artisan distilleries across the United States. Meghan's parents, Gail and Dan Lynch founded Mutt Lynch's in 1976; which is now operated by Meghan and her husband. The Murrays plan to build and operate additional Mutt's locations throughout the United States. Each location will celebrate its respective community with distinct decor and menu items that reflect unique elements of the town and its history.

**OEM Materials & Supplies Inc., Santa Ana**

*Wendy King, CEO*  
*Brandy Romero, Sales Executive*  
OEM Materials & Supplies began operations in Santa Ana, CA in 2005 as a business-to-business distributor of stock and custom packaging, MRO, PPE, safety, and material handling supplies. They have evolved through the years as they have identified core competency to be a Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI) Service. They provide services and products to manufacturing companies that require turnkey solutions in the area of packaging supply replenishment. OEM works directly with the purchasing and engineering departments to identify, quote, and supply approved packaging, MRO, and industrial materials. OEM Materials has continued to offer kindness & support to the following organizations: Olive Crest Children's Foundation, Grandma's House of Hope, Calvary Chapel, Pacifica High School Boys Soccer, 19th Tee Golf Club Fundraiser, Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity, Lion's Club, Orange County Rescue Mission, World Vision, Helping Homelessness, Beyond Blindness, and Life Rolls On.

**Pacific Hospitality Group, Irvine**

*Garrett Busch, President*  
*Timothy Busch, CEO*  
*Kenzie Vath, Vice President of Strategic Innovations*

Garrett S. Busch, in his role as president of Pacific Hospitality Group, is responsible for driving the strategy and operations for the company's hospitality assets. In this role, Garrett oversees all of PHG, as well as the growing portfolio's performance and footprint. Garrett's personal passion is to further grow the Meritage Collection 4-diamond brand. Garrett also oversees Capital Markets, heading up the development, acquisition, investor relations, and debt financing. He leads the investment strategy for PHG, focusing on long term cash flow of assets. Under Garrett's leadership will be all asset management, property operations, human resources, sales, marketing and revenue management.

**Precision Wallcovering & Painting, San Juan Capistrano**

*Chad Horn, General Manager*  
*Allan Horn, President & Founder*  
*Lauren Horn, Secretary*  
*Jett Horn, Board Member*

Chad Horn is the third generation in the painting and wallcovering industry, starting with his grandfather in the 50's working at a paint manufacturer and working his way to President of the LA painting association. He has recently passed and Chad intends to continue his legacy in the Horn Family. Chad takes pride in this history and longevity that started many years ago. Chad has since become partners with his father in the company he started in 1979. Accomplishments include seeing team members success in their personal lives and professional development within the industry. Many team members still with the company, have started from bottom and grown into leaders and managers. The Horn Family takes great pleasure in seeing the team grow and succeed in their personal lives.

**Presidio, Irvine**

*Daniel Fierro, CEO*  
*Felicia Fierro, Vice-President*

Founded in 2014, Presidio is one of the few Latino minority-owned public affairs firms in Orange County. Since its founding, it has grown from a husband-and-wife team to a full-service public affairs, communications, and marketing firm. Presidio includes among its clients city governments,



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school districts, and nonprofits throughout California, the Mountain West, and Washington, D.C. Presidio prides itself on attracting and retaining a diverse group of professionals. The team frequently participates in and sponsors philanthropic organizations' activities, including the Little Lake Educational Advancement Foundation and the Arc of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Among its most significant achievements, Presidio's team led the strategic operations of ground-breaking campaigns, including the successful elections of the first openly gay Muslim in the United States, the first LGBTQ Iranian woman elected anywhere in the world, and the first Latina who uses a wheelchair in the United States.



**Primary Freight Services Inc., Buena Park**

*John Brown, CEO*

*Kathy Hogan, President*

*Chris Figueroa, Account Executive*

*Christina Breier, Export Procurement Senior Analyst*

Primary Freight has been providing world-class freight and logistics service and support to customers for 25 years. They take pride in the wellbeing of their employees and strive to maintain a healthy work-life balance enriching their lives by hosting team-building events, wellness activities, holiday gatherings, in addition to offering flexible work-from-home hours. They know that their team is their greatest asset. Primary Freight has built a close community of dedicated professionals who support and respect one another both inside and outside of the workplace. The key to their business success is their unique culture founded on the firm's commitment to consistent and personalized service, that's recognized by customers and global network partners. Furthermore, they're committed to giving back to the community every year by volunteering at food shelters, toy drives, food pantries, and city cleanup programs.



**Prime Management Company, Irvine**

*Pegah Fazeli, CEO*

*Lily Ghaneian, Accounting*

Prime Management Company, Inc has over 30 years of experience in providing complete professional management services for income properties throughout Southern California. Prime Management prides itself in its extensive knowledge of policies, regulations, procedures, and practices as they pertain to the various industries in which it deals in, e.g. retail of consumer goods, fuel service stations, health care facilities, single and multiplex housing, commercial buildings, new developments, etc. Prime Management manages and services over 20 businesses and properties throughout Southern California. Pegah Fazeli started the company 6 years ago to manage innovative businesses in the Southern



California area. She is expanding operations into various new cutting edge fields, such as health care and energy.

**Pro-Tech Design & Manufacturing, Santa Fe Springs**

*Pam McMaster, CEO*

*Aaron Swanson, President*

*Jeff Swanson, Vice President*

Pam McMaster started the company in her family room in 1980 as a single mom. Since then, under Pam's leadership, PRO-TECH Design has grown to include approximately 220 employees across three locations in CA, MN, and TX. She accomplished this during a time when there were very few female leaders in the medical device industry. The company supports several community organizations in OC/LA. Both Pam and her son, Aaron Swanson, who is the President of PRO-TECH Design, live in Orange County.



**S.R. Bray LLC, DBA: Power Plus!, Anaheim**

*Steven R Bray, Owner*

*Nancy J Bray, Giving University non-profit Board Director*

*Chandler Bray, DVS Technician*

*Chase Bray, Marketing*

*Anna Bray, Giving University non-profit Board Director*

*Connor Bray, DVS Business Development*

Power Plus is a multi-faceted, specialty electrical contracting firm, which owner Steve Bray started in 1987. The company's tagline, "Power, When You Need It, Where You Need It", encapsulates what they do in a few short words. With approximately 500 employees performing work in 40+ states, they operate three key business units: Construction Services - Permanent & Temporary Power Installation; utility infrastructure, Generator Rental & Portable Power - Fleet of 700+ units from 15 kilowatts to 4 megawatts; and Disaster Response, and Generator Service, Maintenance & Installations. In the past 10 years Power Plus has installed: 21 million feet of electrical wire; 240,000 power poles; 4.6 million feet of ground cord and power cable; 2,000 miles of phone/data cable; 250 permanent back-up generators; 100,000 generators serviced, maintained or repaired; 46,000 rental generators deployed.



**Slater Builders Inc., Costa Mesa**

*Lizabeth S. Slater, Co-Founder & CEO*

*Ed Slater Jr., Principal*

*Ted Slater, Project Manager*

A family of loyalty and legacy have led Slater to their success today. As 5th generation builders, the Slater family remains focused on client service, nurturing their deep network of local



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relationships to partner on successful and award-winning projects. The company was founded in 1993 by Ed Slater and current CEO, Liz Slater, the company is proud to be a certified Woman Business Enterprise. The Slater Builders core values have passed down through a family legacy of quality work, trust and reliability. Perhaps the most notable of accomplishments for Slater, beyond their success as a builder, is their dedication to their community. Not only has Slater created their own non-profit organization: Mae House, an adult residential facility for Orange County women with developmental disabilities, they also partner locally to sponsor high school tuition for under privileged high school students who participate in a mentorship program with the firm. This example epitomizes their commitment to the next generation, growth and support of their industry and giving back to their community.



**Tangram Interiors, Newport Beach**

*Joe Lozowski, President + CEO*  
*Sonya Lozowski MD, Chairman*

In 2002, Joe acquired a failing dealership, yet under his leadership, Tangram has grown to become one of the largest interior solutions providers in North America with revenue more than quadrupling. The company has grown from 75 employees to over 400 and from one to six office locations, expanding from Southern California into Central Valley and Dallas, TX. Additionally, Joe encourages entrepreneurship throughout the organization and has created a culture focused on customer satisfaction, but also employee growth. Outside of Tangram, Joe and Sonya are extremely passionate about giving back to the community. Joe sits on the board and is a consistent advocate of Orangewood Children's Foundation, a cause that hits very close to home for the Lozowski's. Additionally, Joe co-chaired the capital fundraising campaign for phase 1 and 2 for Samueli Academy that raised over \$26 million for the public charter school started by Orangewood Foundation. Moreover, Sonya and Joe have provided college scholarships to 11 Samueli Academy graduates and taken a personal interest in the students' success.



**Taqueria De Anda, Santa Ana**

*Rafael DeAnda, Founder*  
*Doña Lupe, Founder*  
*Marcella De Anda, Managing Partner*  
*Jaime De Anda, Managing Partner*  
*George De Anda, Managing Partner*  
*Lourdes De Anda, Managing Partner*

Starting out with founder Rafael "Don Rafa" De Anda's taco cart in the small town of Arandas, Mexico in the



1950s, Taqueria De Anda is now a household name for residents of Orange County with 13 locations (soon to be 14!) across Southern California. After immigrating to Southern California in the 1960s, Don Rafa and his wife Doña Lupe searched for the same delicious food they enjoyed growing up eating in Mexico, but their search fell short. Eventually, they decided to do something about it and planned to offer the most authentic "Mexican Taco" their community had ever tasted - thus Taqueria De Anda was born! More than 45 years later, their mission still lives on today with the sons and daughters of Don Rafa and Doña Lupe continuing on the legacy.

**The El Cholo Family of Restaurants, La Habra**

*Ron Salisbury, Owner*  
*Brendon Salisbury, CFO*

At 90 years of age, Ron Salisbury has long been - and remains - one of the most prominent and popular restaurateurs and entrepreneurs in Southern California. He has been successfully running restaurants for the last 68-years, a period of time during which most people are born, go to school, work and retire. Today, through his company The Restaurant Business, Inc., which he founded in 1967, Ron and his family are the owners of six El Cholo Restaurants: Western Ave., Los Angeles; Downtown Los Angeles; Santa Monica; La Habra; Anaheim Hills; and Corona del Mar. In addition, he is also the owner of the fine dining establishments The Cannery, and Louie's by the Bay, both located in Newport Beach, CA. Ron Salisbury is the grandson of Alejandro and Rosa Borquez - the founders of El Cholo, which first opened in Downtown LA (near the LA Coliseum) in 1923. In fact, the Coliseum itself opened its doors in 1923, and the Hollywood Sign was also erected that same year! Today, El Cholo, an iconic and beloved destination, remains the third-oldest continuously operating Mexican restaurant in the United States! During the course of 100 years, each El Cholo site has offered authentic and traditional Mexican dishes, many of which originated from Borquez Family recipes dating back to 1923. Along with their famous green corn tamales, combination plates, sizzling fajitas and irresistible nachos, as well as their classic margaritas, the El Cholo family of restaurants have become "must visit" destinations for hundreds of thousands of tourists to Southern California each year - along with the regular attendance of thousands more "locals" who consider it their "home away from home."



**The Historic Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, Newport Beach**

*Kelly Roberts, Keeper of the Historic Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, Vice Chairman of ECG, Vice Chairman and COO of the The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, President of Casey's Cupcakes and KRR Enterprises*

*Mr. Duane Roberts, Chairman*  
*Mr. Doug Reinhardt, President*

*Mrs. Casey Beau Brown, Founder, Casey's Cupcakes*  
Since 1992, Duane and Kelly Roberts have contributed significantly to the preservation, restoration, recognition and celebration of The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa in



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Riverside, California. Their dedication of time and resources continues to enhance this historic hotel which was previously designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Since their purchase of this legendary historic hotel in 1992, they have re-invested all operational profits back into the hotel to continue its legacy. Twenty-five years ago, the Roberts created and funded the acclaimed Festival of Lights annual holiday event where visitors can enjoy more than five million dazzling holiday lights and animated characters. This event shares the beauty and history of the Mission Inn Hotel & Spa. Building on the success of the Festival of Lights, the Roberts created a new festival, Festa dell' Amore, to celebrate romance for the entire month of February in Riverside. The Roberts are active leaders and role models in Southern California. Each year, they have generously donated money and their time to various charities and organizations. A partial list includes Loma Linda University Children's Hospital Foundation, Fox Riverside Theater Foundation, Fox Performing Arts Center, Mission Inn Foundation, and the Mary S. Roberts Foundation that supports many charitable causes ranging from helping children with special needs, the homeless and hungry, and animal assistance.

The Lukes Network LLC, Aliso Viejo

Jay Lukes, Co-Founder & COO
Anna Lisa Lukes, JD/MBA, Co-Founder & CEO
Demystifying sustainability and starting focused conversations about energy and the Triple Bottom Line of People, Profit and Planet is the bedrock of The Lukes Network, LLC (www.thelukesnetwork.com), an Orange County-based full-service strategy, public affairs, government relations and marketing firm that works with small businesses, multi-family real estate, commercial and industrial companies, utilities and the public sector. Founded in 2020 as a family-owned business that is co-owned by a woman, TLN differentiates itself by telling its clients' stories with an eye on Environmental, Social and Governance and Corporate Social Responsibility. TLN produces its annual Three B Sustainable Summit to break silos and connect stakeholders in the public and private sectors working in economic and workforce development and environmental sustainability.



The Rand Group | Hightower, Newport Beach

Paul Rand, Managing Director & Partner
Joel Rand, Managing Director & Partner
The Rand Group is a family-owned, concierge-style wealth management firm founded by brothers, Paul and Joel Rand, and their partner, Sarah Minakary. After 15 years of working together at a major wall street investment company, in 2016 The Rand Group came to the conclusion that they could better serve their clients in a fiduciary role by forming an independent firm. Today, The Rand Group is a nationally recognized firm with offices located in Newport Beach, CA and Maui, HI, dedicated to helping families, small business owners, and corporate executives navigate strategic financial decisions and help guide them through life transitions. With a client-centric focus, The Rand Group



has successfully led clients and their families through personal milestones, and through dynamic economic challenges. Paul, Joel and their team serve as the ultimate command center for their clients, centralizing and coordinating all aspects of their lives from investment management, to tax and estate planning, to business succession planning.

US Alliance Group, Inc, Rancho Santa Margarita

Fadi Cheikha, CEO
Kimberly Cheikha, Director
Jake Cheikha, HR/Compliance
Jaden Cheikha, Account Executive
In 1997, Electronic Cash Systems (ECS), was founded by Fadi Cheikha (CEO) and his wife Kim, with the mission of providing diverse payment processing solutions to businesses. In 2007, US Alliance Group Inc. (USAG) was born as a parent company to ECS, API, and PPI. Since then, ECS has opened external sales offices across the US, including Puerto Rico, Idaho, and Texas. Today, USAG continues to diversify its services as it focuses on industry changes. Providing its clients with the most seamless and cost-effective payment solutions in the industry. Including ATM, credit and debit card, check, and ACH processing. Not to mention, consumer and business financing, bank account support, and more for any business type or size. It maintains long-standing relationships with thousands of merchants and the very best manufacturers, processors, and network members. USAG does not stop at company growth. One priority is the success and happiness of its employees and the local and global communities. USAG and its employees regularly join forces to donate time and resources to those in need. USAGs mission and passion for people shows with its countless award recognitions in honor of its successes.



Zov's, Santa Ana

Zov Karamardian, Founder
Armen Karamardian, CEO
Taleene Karamardian, Vice President
Founded in 1987 by Chef Zov Karamardian, legendary Zov's Bistro & Bakery in Tustin has become a culinary institution. Family support has constantly been Zov's foundation and inspiration throughout her culinary career. Zov, along with her husband Gary, her son Armen, and her daughter Taleene, have created a rare family business recipe and turned it into a culinary empire. Over the years, the Tustin location has expanded into 14,000 sq. ft., encompassing an award-winning bakery, an acclaimed bistro, a luxurious private dining room, and a busy catering division that brings Zov's culinary style to homes and special events throughout Southern California. In addition to her critically acclaimed restaurants, Zov authored two best-selling hard-cover cookbooks, "Simply Zov" and "Zov: Recipes and Memories From the Heart," each of which has sold 50,000+ copies. She credits her mentor and dear friend, Julia Child, with guiding her hand in completing these projects. Now in its 35th year, the Zov's empire continues to expand with the opening of its fifth location in San Clemente.



Advertisement for HomeQuest featuring a '2023 NOMINEE' badge, the text 'HomeQuest Nominated as an OCBJ Top Family-Owned Business', a photo of the team, and contact information: (866) 720-2207. Includes a QR code and the HomeQuest logo.

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— David, San Diego



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