

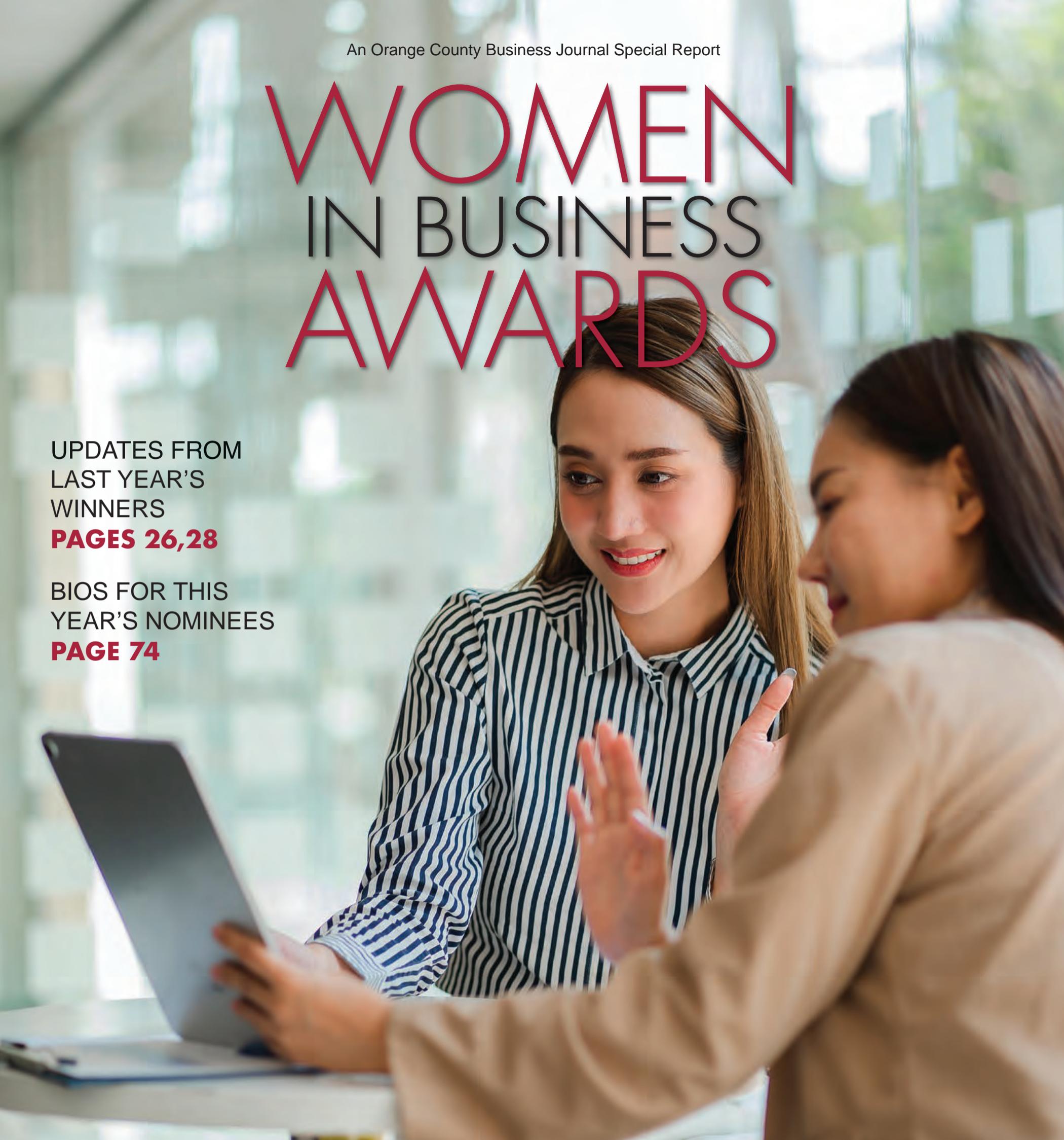
WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS

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Empowering women entrepreneurs



JPMorganChase’s Women on the Move fuels women’s ambitions, advances financial equity, and provides women within and outside the firm with opportunities to succeed in their professional and personal lives.

Women founders receive less than 2% of available venture capital in the U.S. For Black women entrepreneurs, that number is an even sadder 0.35%. The funding flow doesn’t match the economic opportunity. Women owned businesses are growing at double the rate of other businesses, according to the World Bank, and they contribute \$3 trillion to the economy annually.

That’s why it’s critical that we help connect women entrepreneurs with the resources they need to succeed. The numbers tell us that if they succeed, the entire economy will be better off for it. Here are some of the specific ways in which we can move the needle on right-sizing this disparity:

- **Greater access to capital:** Helping to provide greater access to capital is critical. Our **Founder Catalyst program** addresses this gap by providing the tools, resources and connections needed to support women entrepreneurs in taking their businesses to the next level. Since the program’s launch in 2021 in partnership with Techstars, we have sponsored over 110 founders over five cohorts. In 2023, we expanded the program to support more women through virtual cohorts. As of year-end 2022, 11 founder Catalyst alumni from our programs have been accepted into a Techstars accelerator.
- **Technical assistance:** Access to capital is only helpful if the business owners have the right knowledge and tools to apply that capital smartly. That’s where technical assistance comes in, including networking, expertise and advisory services. Our **Curated Coaching for Entrepreneurs program** provides free small group business coaching. In expert-led group sessions, entrepreneurs discuss their most

pressing concerns and together build an action plan for their businesses. Since launching in July 2021, the program has served over 5,000 women entrepreneurs and the program continues to scale into 2024.

- **Financial health:** Learning how to manage money is something that must be learned, and it has the potential to significantly alter one’s life. Since 2020, we have enabled financial literacy training for over 60,000 women and girls through partnerships with over a dozen widely known nonprofits, women-led businesses and universities, including Girls Inc., Girls Who Invest, IGNITE, Barnard College, Rutgers Center for Women in Business (CWIB), The Women’s Network, Women of Color and Capital, among many others.
- **Support when they need it the most:** Sometimes life hands you a lemon. The pandemic demonstrated the incredible hurdles that can come our way, and we know that hit women harder than anyone. In 2022, we launched a **Hardship Fund** to support single mothers at two community colleges in the U.S. In 2022, Women on the Move was able to connect 225 single mothers to small dollar awards through the hardship fund, and in 2023, we launched the Investing in Futures Fund, in partnership with Family Action, to support single parents in the U.K. Providing pathways to economic stability and wealth building for women employees, customers and community members means ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities to thrive. It’s good for business, for the economy and society. It’s how we move us all forward, together.

To learn more about our initiative to fuel female ambition and advance financial equality — visit jpmorganchase.com/WOTM, where we share insights from some of the most notable leaders working to secure a gender equitable future in the workplace.



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Bonnie Hammer: women in business should seek “tough love” mentors

Some professional mentors are like close friends. Others are who you depend on to widen your network of contacts. Then there are the kind of mentors who provide invaluable feedback, no matter how harsh, that can help people really grow in their careers.

The latter are who women in business, especially those early in their careers, should really form relationships with and seek out feedback — even if it is difficult, said Bonnie Hammer, Vice Chairman, NBCUniversal, at the 10th BMO Forum for Executive Women in Chicago.

“The mentors I’m really talking about — — the ones who I believe if it weren’t for them in my life, I’d have never done or achieved what I’ve achieved — I call them challenging mentors,” said Hammer, during a riveting on-stage conversation hosted by my colleague Kim Liautaud, Head of U.S. Real Estate and Infrastructure, BMO Commercial Bank.

“They push you. They put the ‘tough’ in tough love. And trust me, sometimes it’s very, very tough,” she said.

Drill sergeants

In her recent book *15 Lies Women Are Told at Work...And the Truth We Need to Succeed*, Hammer referred to mentors who have this role as “drill sergeants.” However, these people, as unvarnished sources of professional feedback and career advice, can really help women grow as business leaders.

Hammer recounted her own experience with her truth-telling mentor, the media mogul Barry Diller, who would push her to self-analyze the fine details of her own arguments over and over.

While she greatly appreciated the male mentors in her career, Hammer also encouraged the audience of primarily women to be “tough love” mentors to other women—which she called “womentors.” This is something that she said is becoming more common as women gradually take on C-suite roles. This was a common theme throughout the day’s event.

What’s important is that women seek out these kinds of mentors, who may not always have flowery things to say.

“Women shy away from them because often times what they tell you does not feel good...I’m not talking about abusive bosses or really lousy people,” said Hammer. “I’m talking about those [people] that will tell you the truth about something you’ve done that doesn’t feel good, but when you go home or go into the stall in the bathroom, you know they’re right.”

The importance of zig-zagging

During the conversation, Hammer also did some myth busting when it came to the assumption that people in their careers should always move higher and more senior in terms of roles and responsibilities.

“We’ve been brought up [to think] everything is a ladder, and rung by rung you get to the top,” said Hammer. But with today’s pace of technological and corporate change, it is no longer sound career advice to stay only focused on the next rung higher.

“When you are close to that rung, you have a single skill set and that industry may be gone, just doesn’t exist anymore. So, I’ve always been a believer in zig-zagging—sometimes taking jobs that aren’t necessarily a step up, you may not get more money...but you are gaining skills that you would never get in another way to broaden who you are and what you can do.”

Wrestling with wrestling

Hammer’s own example of making a beneficial lateral move in her career resulted in the creation of the pop culture phenomenon, World Wrestling Entertainment. In the 1990s, her boss asked her to oversee the USA Network’s professional wrestling franchise—something Hammer knew nothing about.

“I never watched wrestling in my life. I have neither gone to an event in my life nor did I ever intend to in my life,” she said humorously. Nevertheless, Hammer combined her knack for character development and drama with wrestling’s sport and physicality. She also acquired valuable experience in the process.

“Even though things may seem really weird and not connected to what you want to do, the skillset that you can gain from it and, for me, the ability to go toe to toe with anybody after I lived through that experience, nothing ever scared me again.”

Lift each other up

In addition to advising women business leaders to focus more on broadening their experiences instead of being fixated on moving higher, Hammer also emphasized the importance of women helping other women to advance in their careers.

Too often, she said she had witnessed women professionally jostling with each other for a seemingly limited number of leadership positions, particularly in male-dominated industries. Hammer encouraged women to support each other, especially the next generation of leaders.

“It doesn’t have to be ‘his’ world or ‘her’ world. It can be both of our worlds,” Hammer said.

“And the more women we bring up with us, the more women we help and empower to be there with us will mean that there will be more women in c-suites, which will help everybody.”

To learn more about BMO’s expertise in Orange County, contact:



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BMO Commercial Bank

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Championing DEIB: Ingram Micro's Commitment to Advancing Female Leadership

Ingram Micro is deeply committed to fostering a workplace culture that embraces Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB).

With more than 24,000 associates worldwide, Ingram Micro is enriched by a wide array of perspectives, each influenced by distinct experiences, backgrounds, lifestyles, and personal attributes. The company believes that a diverse and inclusive workplace is essential to driving innovation, enhancing decision-making, and mirroring the global marketplace it serves.

Ingram Micro's internal commitment to DEIB is recognized by many international and local corporate benchmarks, including a 95% score on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index.

Central to Ingram Micro's DEIB strategy is a focus on advancing and championing its female leaders, ensuring that women are represented, supported, and celebrated at all levels of the organization. To support this goal, the company has implemented a comprehensive DEIB framework that includes regular training, mentorship programs, and employee resource groups (ERGs) such as its Women's Leadership Forum.

Established in 2018 and now encompassing over 150 members at its Irvine headquarters, the Ingram Micro's Women's Leadership Forum ERG provides a platform for female associates to connect, share experiences and access leadership development resources. Members also benefit from a company-sponsored membership to the WIT (Women in Technology) Network — which offers networking opportunities with other women in the technology field, along with intimate, in-person meetings focused on professional growth and development.

The company is also proud to collaborate with Orange County-based nonprofit, Girls Inc. by way of an in-house externship program. Since the program's inception in 2018, Ingram Micro has mentored a total of 46 externs at its Irvine office. The program teaches local high school girls about technology, personal branding and presentation skills while providing them with visibility and exposure



to Ingram Micro's female leaders.

"At Ingram Micro, we believe that empowering and advancing our female associates is a priority and a must for our continued growth and success. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where every associate has the opportunity to thrive, lead, and make a lasting impact. This commitment ensures that we are building a diverse leadership pipeline that reflects the strength and innovation we strive for as an organization," said Jennifer Anaya, Senior Vice President, Global Marketing, Ingram Micro.

Ingram Micro is proud of its progress and remains committed to ensuring an equitable and welcoming work environment for all. By prioritizing DEIB, the company continues to drive innovation while nurturing a workplace where every associate can thrive and reach their full potential.

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Hedging Strategies for Managing Price Volatility With Metals, Materials, and Construction

A smart approach to reduce risk and enhance financial forecasting

With market volatility increasing for a whole range of commodities, a sudden shift in prices can upset a company's best planning. For many firms, financial hedging provides a solution by offering more price predictability, for budgeting and forecasting, and reduces risk so that they can focus on their core operations rather than speculate on factors outside their expertise.

"It feels like every week, every month, every year, that some sort of disruption takes place that causes big spikes in commodity price volatility," says Fifth Third Bank's Justin Brauer, Group Head of Metals, Materials & Construction. "And even if it's one where we haven't seen a big spike in volatility, businesses that have exposure to any commodity know that there's susceptibility around a potential spike."

There are a wide range of metals, materials, and minerals whose future price can be hedged. They include oil, unleaded gasoline, jet fuel, copper, aluminum, zinc, and tin as well as scrap metal. In addition, companies that import commodities often hedge the exchange rates of the U.S. dollar against foreign currencies as well as hedging future interest rates.

Using Futures

The simplest and cheapest hedges are in the futures market—contracts to buffer financial and supply-price volatility in a specific time period. Futures contracts require the buyer or seller to purchase or sell the commodity at an agreed price at an agreed time. A downside of these derivatives is that they trade on public exchanges and require the posting of collateral to ensure the deal goes through, which can tie up a company's capital and can be especially costly with high interest rates.

Instead, the firm can choose to have a financial partner arrange a "forward" or "swap" derivative for a particular risk. These derivatives cushion against supply price shocks, spikes of interest rates, or currency values. Because the forward is arranged on a bank's balance sheet, there is typically no need for a company to post collateral with an exchange. In order to pay for the bank's balance sheet utilization, a small credit spread is built into the swap price.

Forwards are used by many companies to obtain reliable price stability in this era of increased volatility caused by disruptions such as hurricanes, technology advancements, and wars. For example, energy and scrap metal are experiencing price volatility due to geopolitical conflicts and supply chain disruptions, prompting companies to hedge these commodities to mitigate risk.

Hedging Makes Forecasting Easier

"Hedging is a way to manage the risk and create more certainty, which allows businesses to budget and forecast more accurately," says Fifth Third's Rob Yokel, Director of Commodity Derivative Sales, adding that it's important to understand that hedging tools aren't designed to save money or win any commodity bets. "The intent is to protect the underlying profitability of the business," he says.

In some cases, a company's sales team may be able to obtain price escalators from its clients to take into account future increases in input costs. But when fixed-price contracts don't make such arrangements possible, or a company's fulfillment durations can't be synchronized with supply deals, a hedge can protect profit margins.

Companies tend to hedge in two principal ways: In order to offer their customers a fixed-price contract, they can use a swap that enables them to pass through the hedge on any increase or decrease on the underlying metal price. The other way a swap is frequently used is when a company knows its exposure and input needs and it wants to protect a certain percentage of margin against volatility.

Locking in a Fixed Price Is the Goal

The certainty of the result is key not just to a public company's quarterly results, but to the ability of a middle-market firm to finance capital investments to sustain and expand a business.

Protecting margins is considered by many to be a company-wide management responsibility. Supply-chain, logistics, and sales teams should be part of the



hedge discussions, not just the purchasing department and the finance team. These calls often require coordination.

A Minimum Benchmark for Hedges

For effective corporate use of hedge contracts, a yearly spend of \$1 million on a commodity is a good benchmark, says Brauer. "When it comes to trade execution, we don't have a minimum, and it's actually one of the key advantages of OTC derivatives versus futures." Diesel fuel, for example, would come in monthly lots of 42,000 gallons, but a hedge for that entire month might not always be needed. In contrast, a forward contract could be 54,000 gallons of diesel for one month, 37,000 gallons the next month, or much closer to any particular company's physical exposures.

Derivatives may seem complicated at first, but they are quite straightforward transactions. "Once you understand how derivatives work, it's actually very simple," says Brauer. "There's no interruption to your physical practices, how you're currently purchasing your metals or your energy products, and there's portability, allowing you to work with multiple suppliers and not be tied to one physical supplier." Small companies often have a multistep internal approval process for purchases, which delays the settlement process, so the removal of operational challenges allows business to streamline their processes.

Because vendors could represent a potential credit risk if they suffer business distress, a derivative hedge backed by the bank's credit rating can protect the buyer of the commodity from suffering substantial losses.

Adjusting Hedges Over Time

Firms can adjust hedges over longer periods, allowing flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. A layered approach might hedge 75% of critical inputs for the first 12 months, 40% for the second year, and 25% for the third. Targets can be revisited monthly or quarterly as business visibility improves.

To construct tailored hedging coverage using derivatives, companies should leverage the expertise of specialists in the specific commodities a company is using for its processes. Fifth Third has a team dedicated to helping companies implement financial risk management solutions, providing businesses with a mechanism for predictability in a world that is unpredictable.

Learn more from Aaron Olson,
Orange County Regional
Manager, at
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(949) 307-2454, or visit
53.com/Commercial.



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Congratulations to the 2024 *Women in Business* Honorees

You inspire so many, including our next generation of female entrepreneurs, to take on challenges and create a better tomorrow.

As champions of girl ambition, Girl Scouts' mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. We're fueling the pipeline for tomorrow's change-makers, cure-finders, and beacons of inspiration.





Closing the Wealth Gap, One Female Entrepreneur at a Time

By: Manishi Parikh, Credit Risk and Approval Executive

Did you know that U.S. women-led businesses:

- Generated \$2.7 trillion in revenue in 2023
- Grew their market share of new businesses by 72% between 2019 and 2023¹
- Started nearly half of all new businesses in 2023¹
- Increased average annual revenue 15.5%¹
- Grew new businesses 2X faster than men since 2019

Despite this surge, women business owners continue to experience barriers in funding, pay and valuation. Although women could be set to inherit a large portion of the \$9 trillion expected to horizontally transfer over the next decade from spouses and partners, closing the wealth gap will also depend on their independent financial success.

Barrier 1: Funding

Estimates show almost a \$1.7 trillion financing gap for women-owned small- and medium-sized enterprises globally. According to *Harvard Business Review*, capital access is a primary obstacle to women entrepreneurs' profitability.⁷ Female-founding teams averaged only 2.4% of total Venture Capital funding.⁷

While this gap seemingly stems from deal-sourcing and pitching, it could also be linked to women's historically held hesitation in seeking financing to avoid debt or being rejected by a lender.

Barrier-buster tip: Seek the funding you need.

Barrier 2: Pay

Women put themselves at a disadvantage when setting pay. According to University of Chicago, there's a big discrepancy in how women determine their compensation versus men.

It's common for an entrepreneur to refuse or take a lower salary during a

company's early days, yet data shows 42% of men paid themselves a salary consistent with industry standards, compared with 18% of women.⁹ Further, on average, female founders paid themselves 28% less than men.⁹

Barrier-buster tip: Compensate yourself fairly.

Barrier 3: Valuation

The valuation process for women-owned businesses should be a priority equal to establishing capital equality among founders. According to a Boston Consulting Group study, women-founded start-ups offer a stronger average ROI than men: 78 cents per dollar vs. 31 cents. However, because initial investment in women-founded start-ups is considerably less than men-founded, the timeline for demonstrating long-term viability is longer.

Barrier-buster tip: Be strategic in determining your valuation timelines.

Closing the gap, empowering women entrepreneurs

While women are founding new enterprises daily, there's still a long way to go towards ensuring they have equal opportunities for success. Closing the gender wealth gap starts with education and awareness, followed by thoughtful, deliberate action.

As a financial leader, myself for 20 years, I've seen considerable growth and resilience, among women-owned and led business owners. More than ever, I encourage you all to double-down: be strategic and recognize that your actions are not only empowering women economically, but that they are making strides to close the wealth gap.



Parikh



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Haunani Nakabara,
Director of Tax Operations, Intuitive,
and Women United co-chair



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LEARN MORE ABOUT WOMEN UNITED

To learn more about Women United, contact Jessica Garrity
Associate Director, Development, Orange County United Way
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What to Consider When Planning for Business Succession

By Stephen Ward, JD, Senior Wealth Planning Strategist for PNC Private Bank

When creating a business succession plan, the earlier you start, the better prepared you'll be for life after business ownership. Nearly half of small or family business owners who plan to retire in the next five years lack a succession plan, and with only one-third of family businesses surviving through the second generation, it is crucial for business owners to think about the future.

As you begin to prepare for your third act in life, think about how you'll want to manage your free time while ensuring you'll leave no uneasiness behind you. Dreams of traveling the world or moving to a vacation home might inspire you to sell your company. However, a large majority of business owners feel remorse their first year after selling due to losing their sense of purpose.

Whatever the decision may be – whether it involves staying in the business to a lesser extent or moving on to take new challenges in life – creating a succession plan early in the life of your business can create the flexibility you need to ensure your legacy (and your assets) are passed along according to your desires.

"Planning early for business succession is crucial because it ensures a smooth transition, maintains operational continuity, and protects the business's legacy," said Jim Benedict, managing director at PNC Private Bank Hawthorn. "By starting the process early, owners can identify and groom the right successors, while also addressing potential financial challenges. Early planning provides peace of mind, knowing that the business will thrive in the hands of the next generation. And this ultimately leads to more wealth staying within the family."

Staying vs. Selling

If keeping the business, one of the first questions to ask yourself is, "Who will succeed in leadership?"

Whether you decide to grant leadership to a family member, select an internal candidate, or bring on an external hire to shake up or grow your brand, choosing a successor will have longstanding significance for the future of the business. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, consider the current state of your business and the direction different leaders could take it.

If staying on in a limited capacity, ask yourself: What does a modified role look like?

Ensure that both you and your chosen leader understand your new function, whether it's an advisory role or one that comes with prominent voting or veto power. The last thing you want after your transfer is frustration regarding the company's future.

On the other hand, envision a scenario where you depart from the business entirely.

Selling your business can create a financial windfall, however, there are important questions to address before you take your leave. For instance, how will you manage the proceeds of your sale, and what do you want to accomplish in retirement? The fact is, most of the unhappiness post-business transition is because the owner needs to find what gives them meaning.

Your goals in retirement, whether they be personal, philanthropic, or passing along wealth to heirs, will come at a cost. Determining what it costs to achieve those retirement goals and how your business succession plan can work to fund them is key.

Planning Ahead

A key to making your business succession goals a reality is to start planning as early as possible, even in the early days of your business. Planning early allows for you to be flexible and account for family or business governance concerns, shifting financial goals and future tax implications of the sale, or transition of your business. Each plan should contain essential steps:

Understand the cost of your lifestyle – Know what part the income and wealth generated by your business plays in paying for your current life and future goals.

Perform due diligence – Evaluate honestly any potential problems within your business, so they can be remedied before a sale.

Understand value – Consider what drives the most value for your business and document it, so you can monitor and maximize that value over time.

Decide early – Evaluate the estate and transfer tax liabilities in your state so you can gift or transfer your business over time in a tax efficient manner.

Succession planning is important to ensure that your business carries on once you no longer wish to be fully involved, but it's also an important part of achieving your personal retirement goals.

PNC Private Bank can help you plan for the future. If you're interested in learning more, a PNC Private Bank advisor will be at the ready.

Stephen Ward, JD
Senior Wealth Planning Strategist
PNC Private Bank



Stephen has worked in Fiduciary Solutions and Wealth Strategy for 20 years and is currently a Wealth Strategist at PNC.

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To Thrive, Middle Market Needs More Women in Leadership

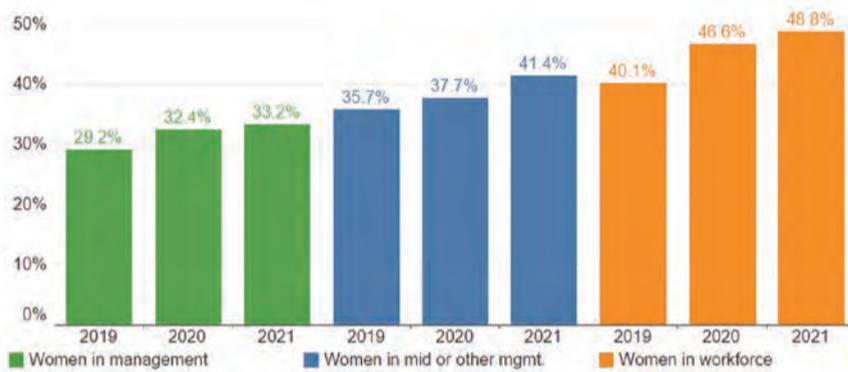
One of the fundamental changes in the workplace over the next decade will be the increasing role of women

Women not only make up half of the workforce in the United States but they also are the more educated half. College-educated women outnumber men with similar education in the United States, and the gap is growing, especially among younger adults.

Still, representation of women in senior leadership roles in American businesses remains low.

If businesses are to thrive in an era of chronic labor shortages, they must attract, retain, recognize and reward women.

Percentage of women in management in middle-market firms



Note: Data based on average samples of 100 public firms with annual revenue between \$10M and \$1B. Source: RSM US, Bloomberg

The data

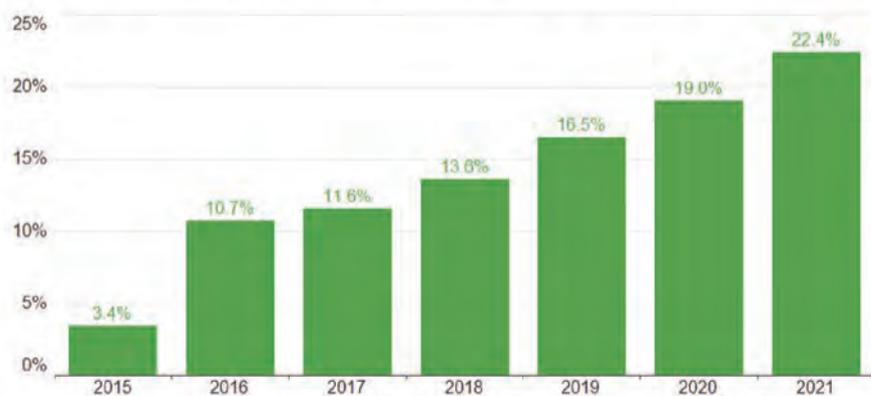
Middle market firms are no exception, and they have been making strides. Between 2019 and 2021, the percentage of female workers in middle market businesses increased from 40.1% to 48.8%, according to a sample survey conducted by Bloomberg. This increase came even as the pandemic placed added burdens like child care and housework on women.

The proportion of women in management has also been on the rise, going from 29.2% in 2019 to 33.2% in 2021, according to the Bloomberg sample survey.

But women in senior leadership and top management positions have not kept pace with their overall participation in the workforce.

Even as the share of middle market companies that have women leading a board of directors jumped from 1.2% 2015 to 6.9% in 2021, and as the share of board members overall grew from 3.4% to 22.4%, the disparity remains wide.

Average percentage of board members that are women



Note: Data based on sample of more than 1,000 public firms with annual revenue between \$10M and \$1B. Source: RSM US, Bloomberg

ESG performance

With workers still in short supply and gender diversity consistently lagging, it is more critical now than ever for organizations to attract and retain talent.

One reason for a company to promote women into leadership roles is that companies are being judged on how well they meet environmental, social and governance criteria.

Our research shows that gender diversity among board members is among the top 10 factors that determine a company's ESG performance. Increasing the

percentage of board members from 0% to 50% can help improve a company's ESG performance by 2.7%. In an evaluation process that factors in hundreds of variables, that increase is substantial.

It also affects the bottom line. Research published in the Academy of Management Journal has also shown that firms with more women in leadership positions are more profitable.

Yet in RSM's Middle Market Business Index survey for the third quarter, only 14% of senior executives explicitly include gender equity in their ESG plans, and only 44% include the gender pay gap in their external ESG reporting, a notable decline from last year.

When workers, including women, feel unappreciated at work, they leave, and companies lose out on talent as well as years of experience and relationships that are difficult to replace.

Gender diversity, equity and inclusion offer an alternative: DEI results in better outcomes for organizations, and female workers benefit from a workplace that values them.

The takeaway

Hiring more women in itself is not enough. Conscious efforts must be taken to prepare and promote women to senior management and leadership positions.

Make no mistake: The economic downturn will not end the talent shortage. Rather, it is a long-term challenge given the aging workforce and slowing immigration. The pandemic only made the shortage more acute as women opted out of the workforce to care for their children, adding to the challenge for employers.

Companies that provide flexibility and family-friendly benefits and culture will continue to attract talent.

As organizations prepare for the future of work, Diversity, equity and inclusion efforts must stay front and center.

Organizations need to create a workplace that values women and enables them to ascend to top leadership positions. This includes coaching, mentorship and sponsorship to higher roles. When employees feel there is equity in opportunity and the presence of advocates and they are put into a position to succeed, the workers, and their businesses, excel.

About RSM US LLP

RSM US LLP ("RSM") is the leading provider of assurance, tax and consulting services for the middle market. The clients we serve are the engine of global commerce and economic growth, and we are focused on developing leading professionals and services to meet their evolving needs in today's ever-changing business landscape. Our purpose is to instill confidence in a world of change, empowering our clients and people to realize their full potential.

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For more middle market insights, visit <https://rsmus.com/middle-market/mmbi.html>

RSM contributors

Tu Nguyen has a doctorate in economics and is an economist and director of environmental, social and governance (ESG) for RSM Canada LLP. Based in Toronto, she works with RSM's global economics team to provide thought leadership and data-driven analysis on both the Canadian and global economies.



Dr. Tuan Nguyen is an economist at RSM US LLP who analyzes high-frequency economic data within the United States and global economies to better understand its impact on the American middle market. Based in the firm's New York City office, Tuan's data-driven economic analysis and insights enhance the ability of middle market companies to thrive in an increasingly competitive and global economy.





CONGRATULATIONS MARICELA RIOS-FAUST

*2024 Women in Business
Awards Nominee*

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Maricela Rios-Faust provides vital leadership, support, and vision to Human Options, driving its growth since 2006. With over 30 years of experience working with vulnerable populations, she has been a key driver in making Human Options the most comprehensive domestic violence service provider in Orange County. Her strategic leadership and fundraising skills grew the budget from \$4.5 million to \$8 million, doubling survivor access to high-need communities. Recognized as a sector leader, Maricela serves on the Boards of the Family Violence Appellate Project, Hoag Memorial Hospital, Blue Shield of California Foundation, and Orange County's Continuum of Care Governing Board. In 2022, she was named one of Orange County's Most Influential for collaborating with the death review team and UCI on a decade-long analysis of domestic violence and homicide cases. Recently, she secured a \$1 million investment to launch innovation labs to design services for survivors with survivors.



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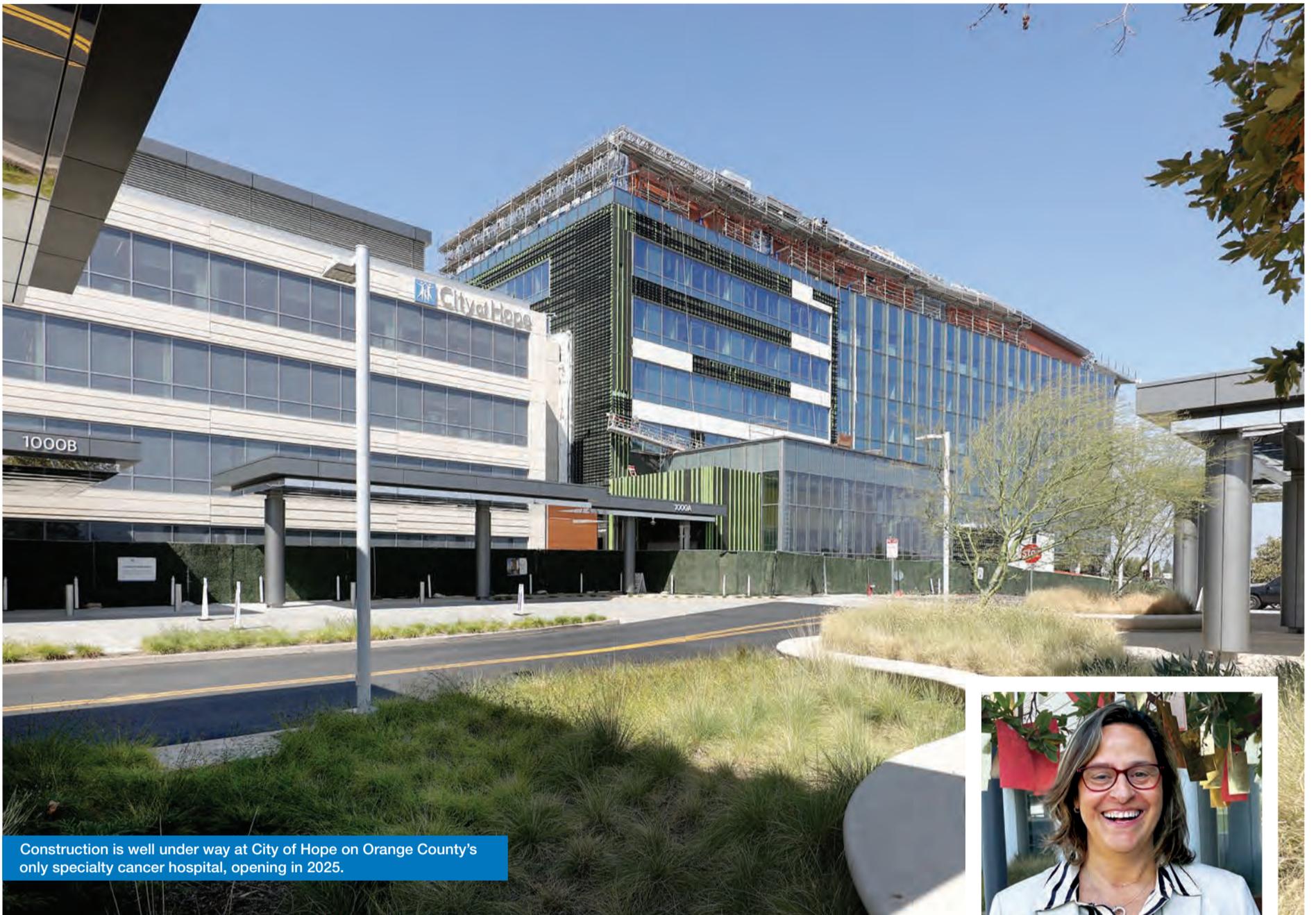
– Ricardo Garcia, Director, Plant Operation Engineering, Edwards Lifesciences

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City of Hope Orange County Clinical Trials Fuel Cancer Breakthroughs



Construction is well under way at City of Hope on Orange County's only specialty cancer hospital, opening in 2025.



Stephanie Casal
Executive Director, Clinical Research
City of Hope Orange County

City of Hope offers more than 800 clinical trials each year, providing patients with promising new treatments long before they become standard of care.

For many patients with cancer, participation in a clinical trial is an important part of their treatment. In Orange County, City of Hope is transforming cancer care by expanding access to leading-edge research and groundbreaking clinical trials. Many of these trials are led by renowned physician-scientists at City of Hope Orange County Lennar Foundation Cancer Center — the most advanced comprehensive cancer center in Orange County. The trials evaluate the safety and effectiveness of new treatments, paving the way for advancements years before they become standard of care.

“Our research team is committed to unlocking new possibilities in cancer treatment,” said Stephanie Casal, the executive director of clinical research at City of Hope Orange County. “We are poised to expand our impact on patients’ lives and push the boundaries of medical knowledge.”

Bringing Cancer Breakthroughs From Laboratory to Patient With Lifesaving Speed

City of Hope Orange County is expanding its portfolio, conducting research at its regional network clinics and in a specially designated Clinical Research Unit (CRU) for Phase 1 and high-complexity trials. Located at City of Hope Orange County Lennar Foundation Cancer Center, the CRU offers a separate area for infusion chairs and research beds specifically designed to allow monitoring of patients in a controlled environment for each trial.

The diverse range of trials includes City of Hope-sponsored trials that feature new treatments:

- Developed by City of Hope physician scientists in a bench-to-bedside model, with findings in the lab sped to the patient, and effects on the patient sped to the lab for testing.
- Sponsored by pharmaceutical companies, involving industry investigational drugs (IIDs), and cooperative group trials.

This extensive research effort highlights City of Hope Orange County's commitment to exploring new treatment options and providing patients with cutting-edge therapies.

A Legacy of Breakthrough Cancer Research

One of the largest and most advanced cancer research and treatment organizations in the United States, City of Hope offers more than 800 cancer-focused clinical trials each year, more than anywhere else in California.

Many trials at City of Hope have led to treatments that have made a global impact. Numerous breakthrough cancer drugs, such as Herceptin, Erbitux, Rituxan, and Avastin, are based on technologies developed at City of Hope.

First in research. First in treatment. First in survival.
When it comes to cancer, it's Hope First.





Attracting New-to-Career Women to the Insurance Industry

Like many sectors of corporate America, the insurance industry was not a diverse business community for decades. The landscape has improved over the last 15 years but with Gen Z now in the workplace and almost 25% of tenured insurance professionals expected to retire by 2030, the opportunity to further diversify is crucial. This is not just about gender equality but also a chance to reinforce the industry's sustainability and improve innovation. Women bring unique leadership styles, perspectives, and problem-solving approaches—key to navigating the evolving challenges of technology and customer expectations.

So, how can insurance employers appeal to this new generation of professionals?

Promote a Diverse and Inclusive Workplace

This new-to-career group values diversity and inclusion more than any previous generation. To attract young women, insurance employers (including carriers, brokers, and wholesalers) need to commit to creating inclusive environments. This means supporting women in leadership, establishing mentorship programs, and ensuring diversity at all organizational levels.

Marketing and recruitment materials should reflect these values, showcasing diverse teams and highlighting efforts to close the gender gap. Sharing employee stories and promoting inclusivity can position a company as a forward-thinking, welcoming workplace.

Offer Flexibility and Work-Life Balance

Our newest professionals grew up during the rise of the gig economy and remote work, so they place a high premium on flexibility. For new-to-career women, the option to work remotely at least part of the time or have flexible hours is especially attractive, as it offers a better balance between professional and personal life. Hybrid work models and customizable schedules are also appealing.

Highlight Purpose-Driven Work

Many modern professionals are motivated by purpose and values-driven careers. This generation is looking for more than just a paycheck; they want to contribute to the greater good. Insurance companies should emphasize their societal impact,

whether it's helping communities and individuals recover after disasters and losses, supporting families in times of crises, or facilitating economic stability. By highlighting social responsibility initiatives, sustainability programs, and community involvement, companies can attract young women seeking careers with meaning.

Leverage Technology and Innovation

Tech-savvy professionals expect technology to be integrated into their work. The insurance industry, historically slow to embrace tech, is now making significant advancements in areas like artificial intelligence, big data, and telematics. Companies should highlight their use of these cutting-edge tools and offer opportunities to work on innovative projects.

Providing avenues for growth and participation in digital transformation initiatives can help attract young women eager to engage with new technologies and contribute to modernizing the industry.

Attracting new-to-career women is vital for the insurance industry's future success. By promoting diversity, offering flexible work options, emphasizing purpose-driven work, and embracing technology, insurance carriers, brokers and wholesalers can position themselves as attractive employers for the next generation of women. These strategies will ensure that the industry benefits from the unique talents and perspectives women bring to the table.

Diana Granillo, CIC, CRM, is Chief Operating Officer, at SullivanCurtisMonroe Insurance Services (SCM). She also serves on its Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Committee.

Contact: information@sullicurt.com; (949) 250-7172; CA Insurance License 0E83670



SCM New faces, diverse voices, fresh perspectives



SCM is building a diverse team including women who are new-to-career or new-to-insurance to innovate our business and enhance future growth. Whether they're recently out of college or bringing expanded perspectives from different industries, our goal is to support them in leadership and ensure diversity at all organizational levels.

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"I was born and raised in Japan, but I was reborn and reared in the U.S. at Cal State Fullerton."

- Ryutaro Ichihara

CSUF ALUMNUS TURNS PASSION FOR SOCCER INTO RESEARCH CAREER

Growing up in Japan, Ryutaro Ichihara's life revolved around soccer. His passion for sports led him to Cal State Fullerton's kinesiology program, where he collaborated with faculty experts to conduct research on the authenticity of sports in Western culture and how individuals with cerebral palsy experience physical activity.

The two-time CSUF alumnus presented his findings at multiple academic conferences, was named the university's 2024 Outstanding Graduate Student, and found his purpose in teaching sports philosophy.

Ryutaro and Ramadhan are just two examples of graduates who experienced Cal State Fullerton's commitment to advancing student success.

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Learn more at fullerton.edu/opportunity



"Ever since I was in seventh grade, Cal State Fullerton has been an instrumental part of my life."

- Ramadhan Ahmed

BIOLOGY GRAD ACCEPTED TO 17 ELITE MEDICAL SCHOOLS

At Cal State Fullerton, Ramadhan Ahmed began working toward a career in health care, studying biological science and gaining hands-on experience through the innovative Bridges to Stem Cell Research program.

Ramadhan scored in the 97th percentile on the MCAT and was accepted to 17 top medical schools. He was offered 12 scholarships, including a full ride to Johns Hopkins University, where he now is a medical student.

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Empowering a Brighter Future for Families in Need

Homelessness has many faces, and among the most heart-wrenching is the plight of families living in unstable housing conditions. These families often go unnoticed, making it challenging to count and track the number of people experiencing homelessness, especially the children.

According to the 2024 Point-In-Time Count, 347 families (443 adults and 685 children) are experiencing homelessness in Orange County. In reality, this number is even higher. Unstably housed families in Orange County often live in crowded rooms, motels, cars, or public spaces, exposing children to high levels of trauma and uncertainty.

The lack of affordable housing is the number one reason families fall into homelessness. When families can't afford rent and basic necessities, their stability crumbles.

At Illumination Foundation, our mission is to disrupt the cycle of homelessness. We provide housing and healthcare services to those experiencing homelessness, creating spaces where families can heal, grow, and envision a new tomorrow.

Our five family emergency homes are more than shelters; they are sanctuaries of hope. Here, families find more than a roof over their heads—they find a community dedicated to their well-being and future success. Our Children and Families Program, rooted in compassion and trauma-informed care, unfolds right on site, addressing the unique needs of children and parents navigating homelessness.

Within these spaces, we offer a spectrum of support for transformative experiences:

- **Nurturing Children's Well-Being:** We walk families through case management and housing navigation.
- **Comprehensive Healthcare Services:** Families receive essential medical and behavioral health services, ensuring their holistic health.
- **Empowering Parents:** Through parenting education and tailored support, we empower parents with valuable insights to support their children's educational journey.
- **Enriching Lives:** Diverse and engaging programming enriches the lives of every family member, fostering growth and development.



During their stay, families work toward attaining permanent housing and gaining employment. Our ongoing development of partnerships, programs, and services ensures we meet the evolving needs of our communities. Integrating housing and healthcare services is critical to this mission.

When you invest in people's lives, you invest in our communities and in the future. Together, we can make a life-changing impact on families.

Join us in this vital mission. Your support can illuminate the path to a brighter future for families in need.

HOMELESSNESS HAS MANY FACES

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of homelessness.**

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When we make gender inequality a thing of the past, **OC Girls Can** make history.



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Words will never be enough to fully convey what makes Claudia a great leader.



We asked some of our Second Harvest Food Bank team members what words come to mind when thinking of our CEO, **Claudia Bonilla Keller**, and

pictured right is what they had to say.

Congratulations, Claudia, on your Orange County Business Journal Women in Business nomination. We're all so honored to work beside you to feed our Orange County neighbors in need.

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From primary care to specialists

The Providence network has you covered

During a visit with a primary care provider (PCP), the elderly patient noted some shortness of breath, not unusual as we age.

But the doctor listened carefully to the patient, evaluated the symptom and detected a heart murmur. The patient was referred to cardiologist Ihab Alomari, MD, on staff at Providence Mission Hospital who diagnosed severe aortic valve stenosis, potentially fatal if left untreated.

Dr. Alomari replaced a faulty heart valve through a minimally invasive transcatheter aortic valve replacement, known as TAVR, and the patient is recovering.

“The primary care provider is that important connection between their patients and the specialists they might need,” Dr. Alomari said. “Clearly, this patient’s treatment is thanks to the PCP. If the PCP hadn’t listened carefully and identified the murmur, the patient wouldn’t have been referred.”

At Providence, our network of doctors is a team that works together to ensure the best care as part of our commitment to keeping you healthy. We encourage our patients to get regular check-ups, bloodwork and health screenings so our doctors can detect disease in its earliest stage and make the necessary referrals before potentially serious conditions have a chance to develop.

Laura Leon, MD, is a Providence-affiliated specialist in family medicine in Irvine, providing primary care to all ages. Dr. Leon is confident of the advanced care available to her patients through the Providence range of specialists.

“I wanted more of the personal patient-doctor experience of taking care of people over time,” Dr. Leon said of her specialty. “It helps if you know your doctor and your doctor knows you.”

Preventive care, key to good health

“Annual physicals are crucial to continued good health – and for identifying any serious health issues,” she said.

These checkups help patients meet their personal goals by tracking weight, blood pressure, vaccinations, medications and other factors that are preventive that can indicate potential health issues – or mental health concerns.

“It’s a moment in time to catch up on the patient’s age and their stage in life,” Dr. Leon said. “We talk about their history and decide are we stable or are we working on things? And we talk about what we should be doing now in preventive health.”

That includes cholesterol and hypertension tests that can indicate heart health issues. Cancer screening tests such as mammograms for breast cancer, PAP smears for cervical cancer, colonoscopy or stool-based testing for colon cancer and lung cancer CT scans for certain at-risk patients are among the most important.

Your primary care physician will tell you when you need these screenings based on your risk, but generally:



Colonoscopy: The new recommendation is age 45, subsequent tests per doctor’s direction.



Lung screening: If you smoke or otherwise are at high risk for lung cancer.



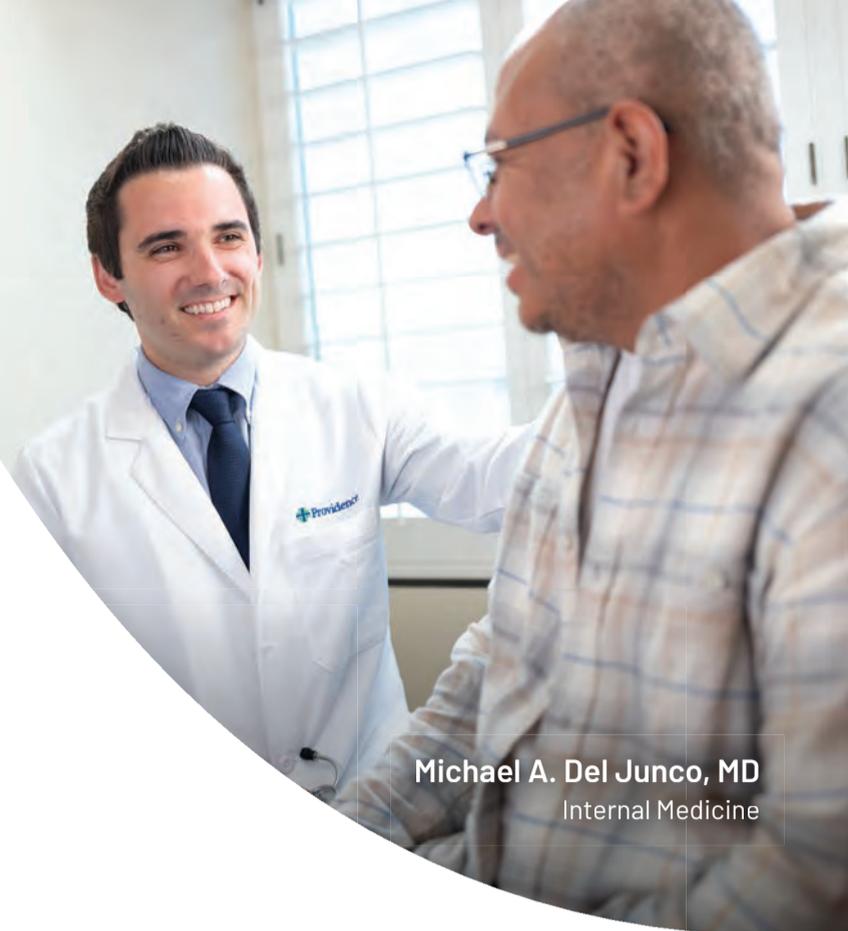
Mammogram: Guidelines vary, but Dr. Leon recommends annual screenings, starting at age 40.



PAP: Every three years, starting in young adulthood.



Prostate: Every two to three years starting at age 50. Discuss with your doctor after age 65.



Michael A. Del Junco, MD
Internal Medicine

Providence offers a simple Multi-Cancer Early Detection (MCED) blood test that can identify signals for more than 50 types of cancers, including pancreatic and ovarian that often are advanced before patients experience symptoms.

Next-generation cancer detection

Not only is Providence partnering with the manufacturer of the first MCED, called Galleri, but it is driving a vast research program across the seven states we serve for those with a strong family history of cancer. An out-of-pocket prescription program, primarily for those with nongenetic cancer risks, is also available at Providence St. Joseph Hospital, Orange; Providence St. Jude Medical Center, Fullerton; and Providence Mission Hospital in Mission Viejo.

“We have found breast cancer, pancreatic cancer, prostate cancer, lung cancer and one patient who had both lung and kidney at the same time,” said Ora Gordon, MD, a medical genetics expert and regional medical director for the Providence clinical genetics and genomics program in Southern California. “It’s not by any means a replacement for regular screenings. It’s another tool, particularly for patients with high risk of cancer.”

Providence is focused on simplifying health visits from making that first appointment to checking test results and paying bills online. The Providence app guides users to same-day care, including in-person clinics and online visits through Providence ExpressCare Virtual.

It also features information on the latest developments in treatments for a range of conditions and other features. And it includes access to MyChart, where patients can interact with care team members and see their medications, test results, upcoming appointments, medical bills and follow-up notes from their providers.

“The primary care provider is that important connection between their patients and the specialists they might need.”

– Ihab Alomari, MD, Cardiology

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Providence Congratulates Laureen Driscoll

ON HER WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARD NOMINATION

Congratulations, Laureen, on your Women in Business Award nomination, and thank you for serving the needs of our caregivers, patients and community by always delivering on the Providence Promise –
Know me, care for me, ease my way.

[Providence.org](https://www.providence.org)



Laureen Driscoll

Chief Executive, Providence South



CASA Board Member Kelly Vlahakis-Hanks: Leading with Passion, Purpose, and Community Impact

Kelly Vlahakis-Hanks, a dynamic business leader and passionate advocate for youth in foster care, is making a big impact as a member of the Board of Directors for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Orange County. As the President and CEO of ECOS, a leading manufacturer of plant-powered laundry detergents and cleaning products, Kelly brings her leadership skills and commitment to improving lives to both her business and her philanthropic efforts.

Kelly's personal journey is one of resilience, shaped by her family's diverse background. Her father immigrated to the United States from Greece, while her African American mother was raised here in the U.S. in the foster care system. Kelly's mother moved through a variety of foster placements before finally finding stability in high school. This experience profoundly influenced Kelly's dedication to youth in foster care. She explains, "My mom lived in twelve different foster homes until finally spending her high school years with one family. I want kids like my mom to have someone there for them so they don't get lost in the system. That's why I'm so passionate about supporting CASA."

Through her leadership at ECOS, Kelly has made it her mission to protect the health of both people and the planet. ECOS, headquartered in Orange County, operates with a strong commitment to social responsibility, safer chemistry, and sustainable manufacturing. Kelly's passion for environmental stewardship is matched by her dedication to fostering diversity and inclusion in the workplace, values that she brings to her volunteer work with CASA.

Embracing Diversity and Making an Impact

Since joining CASA OC's Board of Directors in 2022, Kelly has taken on an active role in CASA's Diversity Committee. Her unique perspective, shaped by her multicultural heritage, has been instrumental in advancing diversity within CASA. Kelly recognizes the importance of having advocates who reflect the backgrounds of the youth they serve. "There's a tremendous need for Spanish-speaking CASAs. If we can get more diverse volunteers involved, we can really move the needle on matching advocates who share similar life experiences with the children we serve," explains Kelly.

In addition to her role on the Diversity Committee, Kelly is actively working to engage the local business community in the work of CASA. She believes that businesses like ECOS have a vital role to play in supporting youth in foster care and ensuring they have access to dedicated, compassionate advocates.

Earth Day at ECOS: A Special Event for CASA Youth

One of the most impactful examples of Kelly's commitment to CASA came this past April, when ECOS hosted a special Earth Day event for CASA youth and their advocates. Held at the ECOS facility in Cypress, the event was designed to inspire CASA youth by introducing them to the world of green science and sustainable manufacturing. Over 30 youth and their advocates participated in hands-on activities and educational tours of the ECOS factory.

The event featured a variety of age-appropriate activities, including a recycling game, soap science demonstrations, and experiments such as a cabbage pH test and an "elephant toothpaste" demonstration. Older youth were given a behind-the-scenes look at the ECOS factory, where they learned about career opportunities in sustainability and green science.

Kelly was actively involved in the event, sharing her personal story and the importance of environmental stewardship. Kelly said, "Partnering with CASA



CASA OC CEO Regan Dean Phillips, ECOS President & CEO and CASA Board Member, Kelly Vlahakis-Hanks, and CASA OC Volunteer Recruitment & DEIB Manager, Norma Mendoza

allows us to empower these youth to see a future career path while also developing an understanding of environmental stewardship."

The event also provided an opportunity for CASA youth to interact with ECOS employees, many of whom shared their own personal journeys of career growth within the company. These stories of hard work, dedication, and perseverance provided inspiration to the youth in attendance.

For CASA volunteers like Anne-Marie, the Earth Day event was a memorable experience. "My youth had an awesome time making room spray with peppermint oil," Anne-Marie shared. "He especially loved it when ECOS employee Ricardo told his story about how he started in the warehouse and now works in the lab. It was so inspiring."

Engaging the Business Community for a Greater Cause

In addition to the Earth Day event, Kelly organized a Lunch & Learn session at ECOS to introduce her employees to CASA's mission and encourage them to volunteer. With over 50 employees attending, the event sparked enthusiasm on the team, many of whom come from different backgrounds and are native Spanish speakers—an invaluable asset to serving the diverse CASA youth.

Kelly is hopeful that her model of business engagement can be replicated by other companies. By partnering with CASA, local businesses have the opportunity to make a significant impact on the lives of youth in foster care while building a culture of social responsibility and community involvement. Kelly explains, "My goal is to ensure that any child who requests a CASA has one."

The Ongoing Need for CASA Volunteers

While the Earth Day event and Lunch & Learn were a resounding success, Kelly knows that there is still much work to be done. Currently, CASA OC serves over 600 foster youth, but there are still more than 200 children waiting for a dedicated advocate. The need for more CASA volunteers is urgent, particularly volunteers who can reflect the cultural and language diversity of the youth they serve.

If you want to learn more about how you or your business can make a difference in the lives of Orange County children in foster care, please visit CASA OC's website today at www.casaoc.org.



CASA Board Members: Anar Patel, Karen Jordan, Kelly Vlahakis-Hanks, Dana Strader, Sarah Minakary and Lindsey Poker



Youth served by CASA enjoying a hands-on aromatherapy activity during the ECOS Earth Day Event



SHOWING UP IS EXTRAORDINARY

CASA of Orange County extends heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed Governing Board of Directors for their invaluable guidance and unwavering commitment. Your expertise, leadership, compassion, and generosity have been instrumental in driving our mission forward. Thank you for consistently showing up and actively engaging with our vital work.

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Show up for a youth in foster care by offering guidance, support, and friendship to one of the 200+ local youth waiting to connect with a CASA.



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Orange County's first four-year college, Vanguard has been equipping students since 1920. Today we continue to offer a top-rated Christian education, combined with practical skills and training in liberal arts, sciences and professional programs, to prepare students for the next chapter in their life. With a tight-knit community of 2,200 students, Vanguard is a campus where each student is known; where their story matters.





WHAT'S NEW AT VANGUARD UNIVERSITY?

FREED CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

The Freed Center combines the kinetic with the intellectual as it centralizes Lion Athletics and the Kinesiology program. Our more than 450 student-athletes now have dedicated spaces for exercise, physiotherapy and competition. Our Kinesiology majors have two cutting-edge labs to hone their skills as they prepare to be athletic trainers in one of the nation's fastest growing professions. The Freed Center is 61,000 square-feet of multipurpose use.

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Estate Planning for Women: Empowering Your Future and Securing Your Legacy

By Jeffrey M. Verdon, Partner, Falcon Rappaport & Berkman

Estate planning is often considered a task for the wealthy or those nearing retirement. However, it is a vital process for all adults and, in some instances, even more critical for women. Women can face unique challenges and considerations when it comes to estate planning. It is essential to understand the importance of creating a plan tailored to their specific needs and circumstances.

For women who have male partners, statistically, women have a longer life expectancy than men. This means they are more likely to outlive their spouse or partner, potentially becoming solely responsible for their estate. They need to ensure their assets and health-care wishes are taken care of in the event of their incapacitation or passing.

Many women are the primary caregivers for children and elderly family members. As a result, it's crucial to designate a guardian and create contingency plans for their loved ones' care in their estate plans.

Women may have different

financial and career trajectories than men. These factors can affect their retirement savings, investments, and overall wealth. To that end, women should focus on the division and distribution of their assets.

There are several essential elements of a comprehensive estate plan for women:

1. **What is a will?** A will outlines the distribution of assets, provides the designation of guardians for minor children, and articulates the names of an executor to manage the estate.
2. **What is the definition of a trust?** Trusts provide more control over the distribution of assets and can help minimize taxes and protect privacy.
3. **How is Power of Attorney (POA) defined?** A POA grants someone the authority to act on your behalf if you become incapacitated. Women should appoint someone they trust to make financial and medical decisions.
4. **What is a Living Will?** This document specifies your preferences for end-of-life medical care, ensuring your

wishes are honored if you cannot communicate them.

5. **Do Beneficiary Designations need to be updated?**

It is crucial to regularly review and update beneficiary designations on retirement accounts, life insurance policies, and other assets. For example, there are occasions when a former spouse is not removed as the former beneficiary, and the new spouse is denied benefits.

6. **Do I need a Business Succession Plan?** Women who own businesses should create a plan for transferring ownership in the event of their passing or incapacitation.

Estate planning empowers

women to make informed decisions about their future and to protect their loved ones. By understanding their unique considerations, women can create a comprehensive plan tailored to their specific needs and circumstances.

As you embark on this journey, consider consulting an experienced estate planning attorney specializing in women's estate planning needs. Proper planning lets you secure your legacy and enjoy peace of mind, knowing your loved ones and assets are protected.

To learn more, you can order our book, *Estate Planning for Women Only*, on Amazon or call our offices at 949-333-8152 to order a personalized, signed copy.



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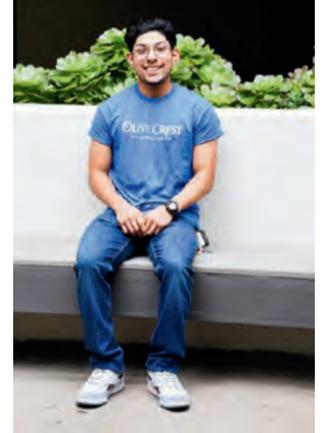
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Olive Crest is indebted to the strong woman leaders who stand with us on the Board of Directors to prevent child abuse and neglect in our community.



Jill Wallace | CEO, Casala Group, Inc.

Jill Wallace, after a distinguished career in public administration and city leadership, founded Casala Group, a government affairs consulting firm. For over a decade, Casala Group has been dedicated to assisting both private sector and non-profit clients navigate local governments throughout Orange County to obtain entitlements, permits, and community support for their projects. A mother of four and third generation Orange County native, Jill is committed to serving the community. In addition to the Olive Crest Board of Directors, Jill devotes her time to the Camp Pendleton Marine Foundation, Casa Teresa home for single mothers, various educational institutions and the Catholic Church. Jill has seen firsthand the effect on foster youth when they age out of the child welfare system. She is passionate about making housing available for them as they transition into independence.



Erin Burke | Partner, Jones Day Law Firm

Erin L. Burke is a partner at the law firm of Jones Day. She is a trial lawyer, who focuses on representing multinational companies in high-stakes, complex litigation. Her clients range across a variety of industries, including aviation, consumer goods, off-road vehicles, retailers, medical device and other healthcare entities, as well as consumer credit reporting. Erin represents clients in individual and class action litigation in both state and federal courts across the United States. Several of the cases she has tried have been recognized as “top defense verdicts” in California. She has also held a number of leadership positions at Jones Day and is currently the Partner-in-Charge of Jones Day’s Irvine Office. Erin is committed to giving back to the community. She is very active with Jones Day’s pro bono Laredo Project, where she serves immigrants by assisting them to understand the asylum process while upholding the rule of law. Erin is also a passionate advocate for children and families in crisis; she has been volunteering with Olive Crest since 2016, and was elected to the Olive Crest Board of Directors in 2023.



Kristina Shahoian | Global Marketing Executive, Accenture, PLC

Kristina Shahoian has a robust background in marketing and strategic leadership, she currently serves as the Global AI Marketing Program Lead at Accenture. She holds an M.B.A from Thunderbird School of Global Management and a B.A. in Communications from San Diego State University. Kristina’s career is marked by her deep commitment to innovation and excellence in digital transformation, having spearheaded major initiatives across global markets. At Accenture, Kristina has been instrumental in leading cross-functional teams to drive growth and value in the AI sector, managing global events, and executing integrated marketing campaigns with measurable success. Kristina’s leadership extends beyond her professional achievements, she is committed to serving her community as an advocate for vulnerable populations, keeping children safe and eradicating human trafficking. She has seen firsthand the trauma caused to victims and the incredible impact of providing a nurturing healing environment to survivors.

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UCI Health

Reimagining cancer care for all of Orange County

The UCI Health Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center has opened its second clinical hub in Irvine, bringing elite cancer care within reach of residents throughout Orange County and beyond. The spacious Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center – Irvine effectively triples the academic health system’s capacity to serve cancer patients. It is the second of three new clinical facilities to open at the \$1.3 billion UCI Health – Irvine medical complex on the UC Irvine campus.

“It is the ultimate in state-of-the art cancer care on the West Coast,” says Dr. Richard A. Van Etten, director of the cancer center and associate vice chancellor at the UC Irvine Susan and Henry Samueli College of Health Sciences.

The flagship UCI Health Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center at UCI Medical Center in Orange already delivers the region’s most advanced care. As one of only 57 U.S. centers to earn the “comprehensive” rating from the prestigious National Cancer Institute, it must adhere to rigorous standards of excellence in care as well as for

transdisciplinary research to develop better approaches to preventing, diagnosing and treating cancer.

Emphasizing excellence

Services at the Irvine hub – also named for longtime UCI Health benefactors, the Chao family – meet those same exacting standards for excellence while delivering patient-centered care, says Van Etten.

“This will be huge for patients,” he predicts. “It expands access to the latest in cancer care, clinical trials and research, and brings it all closer to people living in coastal and southern Orange County.”

In addition to shortening travel times for many county residents, the Irvine location offers easy access, with valet service and separate entrances for patients, many of whom come for intensive daily treatments.

Even before the new center opened on July 16, UCI Health provided care to more cancer patients and offered more



Infusion center patient bays

clinical trials than any other healthcare provider in the region. More than 500 active cancer clinical trials are currently underway and more will be added at the Irvine location in coming months.

A healing space

The five-story, 225,000-square foot facility was designed to promote health and wellness as well as offer the latest in radiation oncology therapies and the most advanced imaging services, all under one roof. It also has eight outpatient surgical suites, 52 private exam rooms, an expansive infusion center and a state-of-the-art women's breast health center.

With increasing numbers of patients needing chemotherapy, new immunotherapies and cellular treatments, UCI Health planners devoted special attention to the infusion services floor. Its 42 spacious bays are designed for privacy, comfort and to promote healing. Many of them have views of the serene San Joaquin Marsh Reserve, as does the adjacent terrace, which offers a quiet, soothing atmosphere for patients and their loved ones.

Patients and their families also can enjoy a respite in the center's cafe, which is infused with natural light from its floor-to-ceiling windows. A wellness center on the plaza level offers access to supportive services for patients and a convenient retail pharmacy is open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

"One-stop shop"

The center also is designed to be what Van Etten calls a "one-stop shop" for cancer care, giving patients immediate access to a multidisciplinary team of experts in their specific disease, plus all the diagnostic and associated services they need, ideally coordinated in a single visit.

The adjacent Joe C. Wen & Family Center for Advanced Care, which opened in April, also has specialists in gastroenterology, cardiology, neurology, kidney disease, pulmonary medicine, infectious diseases and many other disciplines that may be needed for a patient's continuity of care.

"Cancer patients can develop problems affecting nearly every organ system," Van Etten explains. "Here at UCI Health — Irvine, we are uniquely positioned to treat the whole person."

The Irvine center is expected to help address the region's growing demand for cancer services. Van Etten says he is in the process of recruiting at least 30 new cancer specialists to fulfill the cancer center's mission to provide the most advanced care for all types of cancers.

"Cancer isn't one disease; it's about 150 different ones, and each is completely different in terms of its causes, detection and treatment," he says. "We have true experts in all types of cancer, which allows us to be absolutely the most up-to-date on the latest research and technologies."



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HOUSE BEFORE SPOUSE?

HERE'S WHY JOINT TITLE IS YOUR BEST BET

By Paul Nelson, Esq



Buying a house together before marriage may seem like a romantic step, but as a divorce attorney, I advise caution. Here's why taking the house in joint title is crucial—before you say, “I do.”

AVOIDING LEGAL COMPLICATIONS

Without joint ownership, determining each party's share if the relationship ends can become a contentious, costly process. If you're not on the title, you may have no claim to the house despite any promises or oral agreements made. Joint title provides clear ownership delineation, preventing disputes and protecting both parties' interests.

FINANCIAL SECURITY

Joint title ensures that both parties are equally responsible for the mortgage and other costs, offering

a safety net. It simplifies selling the property or buying out the other party's share, reducing financial turmoil during a breakup.

SIMPLIFYING LEGAL PROCESSES

Joint ownership makes refinancing, property tax assessments, and property transfers easier. It streamlines these processes, avoiding unnecessary legal complexities.

CONCLUSION

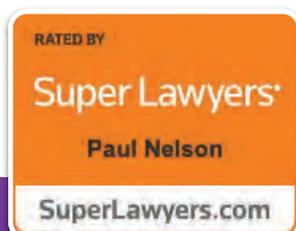
While buying a house together before marriage is significant, opt for joint title to safeguard your financial interests and simplify legal matters. Consult with a knowledgeable attorney to ensure your rights are protected.

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How Businesses Are Valued and Handled in a Divorce

For business owners going through a divorce in Orange County, understanding how their business will be treated is essential. The classification and valuation of a business can significantly impact the division of assets.

Is Business Separate or Community Property?

A business is classified ("characterized") as either separate or community property based on when it was acquired. If the business was founded or purchased before the marriage, it is generally considered separate property. However, even if classified as separate property, the community (both spouses) may be entitled to reimbursement for any increase in the business's value that occurred during the marriage.

Valuing and Apportioning the Business

When a business is considered separate property, courts assess whether its value increased during the marriage due to the owner-spouse's efforts. Two main approaches are used, though the court may combine them:

Pereira Approach: Typically applied to service-oriented businesses, this method values the business as of the date of marriage. The owner-spouse is awarded that initial value plus a reasonable return. Any excess increase in value during the marriage is attributed to the community, entitling the non-owner spouse to a portion of this increase.

Van Camp Approach: This approach is generally used for capital-intensive businesses. It examines whether the owner-spouse's compensation during the marriage was reasonable. If it was, the community is not entitled to additional reimbursement. However, if the compensation was inadequate, the community may be reimbursed for the difference.

Equalization of the Business Value

In cases where the business is community property, each spouse is typically entitled to half its value. The operating spouse usually retains ownership, while the other spouse receives assets or payments to equalize the division. Courts rarely order the sale of a business, instead structuring equalization payments over several years.

Awarding the Business

The business is typically awarded to the operating spouse, especially if only one spouse is critical to its success. Joint ownership post-divorce is uncommon due to potential conflicts, and courts aim to facilitate a clean division. The Experienced Team at Quinn & Dworakowski

The Experienced Team at Quinn & Dworakowski

Understanding the above principles is crucial for business owners navigating divorce, as the division of a business can have long-lasting financial implications. The lawyers at Quinn & Dworakowski provide a comprehensive approach to resolving complex divorce issues for high-level professionals and business owners. Contact us at (949) 660-1400.

David Dworakowski, founding partner of the Irvine based family law firm Quinn & Dworakowski, has been an attorney for over 35 years, earning a reputation for exceptional trial skills, negotiation abilities, and compassion for his clients. Certified by the State Bar, he is one of only two lawyers in Orange County recognized as both a Family Law and Appellate Law Specialist. He has tried over 350 cases and authored more than 100 appeals.



Attorney **Stephane Quinn** is a highly skilled divorce and family law attorney and a founding partner at Quinn & Dworakowski, LLP, a premier family law firm based in Irvine. As a Certified Family Law Specialist, Quinn is known for his exceptional negotiation skills, often achieving favorable outcomes for his clients without the need for prolonged litigation. He is adept at handling complex family law matters, including forensic business valuations, cash flow analysis, and determining income available for support.



Quinn's ability to navigate high-stakes negotiations makes him a sought-after advocate for clients facing challenging family law issues. Please visit quinn@orangecountyfamilylaw.com

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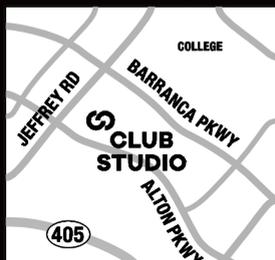


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The 30th Annual



Meet the Judges:



Rita Al-Silhi - Senior Vice President, U.S. Bank

Rita Al-Silhi is the senior vice president and commercial relationship manager at U.S. Bank. Al-Silhi is responsible for managing and cultivating relationships with middle market size corporations with annual revenues between \$25 million - \$1 billion. She builds and maintains strong relationships with clients, acting as the primary point of contact for their banking needs. Al-Silhi prioritizes understanding clients' financial goals, challenges, and industry dynamics to offer tailored banking solutions.



Julie Beckley - Senior Vice President - Business Development, Wells Fargo Commercial Banking

Julie Beckley is a tenured SVP - director of business development on the Southern California Commercial Banking team at Wells Fargo. She is responsible for the business development of new middle market relationships, targeting companies with sales in the range of \$25 million to \$5 billion in revenues with a focus on developing business in Orange County. Beckley's primary responsibilities include working closely with prospective clients to thoroughly understand their short- and long-term financial and strategic objectives and to provide appropriate thought leadership. Beckley provides an insightful understanding of the full range of credit and non-credit suite of products and services at Wells Fargo and her client centric approach is an asset to help meet the financial needs of OC companies across various industries.



Katherine Collins - Vice President, Treasury Management Officer, PNC Bank

Katherine Collins is a treasury management officer for PNC Bank's Orange County and Inland Empire market. Collins consults for and manages a middle market and corporate banking portfolio, develops treasury proposals for current and prospective clients, conducts an annual assessment of client treasury needs and works with internal partners on client deposit strategies. Collins helps companies drive efficiency in their business by leveraging technology to address challenges faced in corporate treasury. She works with clients to understand their businesses at a micro level to identify ways to optimize working capital and mitigate risk in an ever-changing treasury landscape. Collins has nearly two decades of experience with a diversified background in retail banking, sales and operations across segments including commercial banking, business banking, life sciences, property management, retail, and auto finance. Collins leads PNC's local Women in Business program including engagement and support for women financial decision makers. Collins enjoys connecting with women-led businesses and accelerating women's financial equality as a Certified Women's Business Advocate. Collins is a graduate of California State University, Los Angeles where she received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance and a minor in management. She resides locally with her husband and dog.



Hugh Connors - Senior Vice President & Regional Manager, BMO Emerging Middle Markets

Hugh Connors is a seasoned 37-year banking professional who has held a variety of roles in the regulatory, financial analysis, credit and relationship management environments. He is currently a senior vice president and regional manager for BMO's Emerging Middle Market team in Orange County, a role he has held for the past five years. Connors leads a team of a dozen professionals who seek to serve and grow the financial services needs of privately held businesses in Orange County. He supports a variety of charitable causes locally, and currently serves as treasurer of Orange County United Way. Connors lives in Huntington Beach with his family where he has resided for the past 28 years.



Yudit Freda - Senior Manager, State & Local Tax, RSM US LLP

Yudit Freda, partner, tax services at RSM US LLP (RSM), brings over 17 years of public accounting experience and expertise in unclaimed property matters. She advises clients on multi-state voluntary compliance agreements, including Delaware's program, and has successfully mitigated multi-state unclaimed property audit assessments. Freda leads the local STAR (Stewardship. Teamwork. Advancement. Retention.) network group, advocating for the advancement and retention of women at RSM in Orange County. Dedicated to fostering an inclusive community, she supports female professionals in balancing career and family. Freda holds affiliations with the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the Unclaimed Property Professionals Organization (UPPO). Her expertise spans various industries, including industrial products, consumer products, financial services, manufacturing, entertainment, gaming, and utilities.



Adelle Infante (She/Her) - Associate Vice President Global Corporate Communications, Allergan Aesthetics

Adelle Infante, the associate vice president of Global Communications at Allergan Aesthetics, an AbbVie company is an integrated communications professional with 20+ years of experience across aesthetics and healthcare and leads a team responsible for elevating the Company's internal and external corporate reputation, mission, and communications strategy. Prior to Allergan Aesthetics, she was head of media relations at AbbVie and held communications and finance roles at Abbott and Cigna, respectively. Adelle earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of the Pacific and an MBA from the University of Notre Dame.



Meet the Judges:



Tara I Netherton - Senior Vice President, U.S. Bank

Tara I Netherton is a senior vice president and commercial banking relationship manager at U.S. Bank. Netherton provides sales and relationship management for a diverse portfolio of companies in Southern California with annual revenue up to \$1 billion. Product offerings include treasury management services, investments, lending, equipment/technology financing, capital markets, merchant processing and corporate card programs.



Melissa Pollard - Senior Vice President & Senior Relationship Manager, Fifth Third Bank

Melissa Pollard is a senior vice president and senior relationship manager for Fifth Third Bank's commercial banking practice in Orange County where she brings 37 years of experience to her clients. She has been with Fifth Third for seven years where she is responsible for new business development and ongoing client management. She previously worked for Comerica Bank for 20 years and Bank of America for 10 years. She earned her BS and BA degrees from the University of Richmond in Virginia. An east coast native, Pollard has been married for 34 years with two grown children, and they have lived in Aliso Viejo for the past 27 years. She enjoys spending time with her family, traveling and other outdoor activities. Pollard is a longstanding director on the board of Association for Corporate Growth Orange County and their exclusive Women in Leadership banking sponsor since inception. She also serves on the Associates Board of Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Orange Coast's Women of Greatness Committee. In addition, she is an active member of Orange County United Way's Women United, Financial Executives International, Center for Business Growth, Executive Connections, and ProVisors.



Gloria Preciado - Chief of Staff, City of Hope Orange County

In her role as chief of staff, City of Hope Orange County, Gloria M. Preciado serves as a strategic partner to the president, facilitates effective communication, and spearheads the successful execution of organizational initiatives for the most advanced network of cancer care in Orange County. Preciado plays a pivotal role in ensuring the organization's alignment with its mission to drive innovation and excellent cancer care for City of Hope Orange County employees and will play a key role in helping open Orange County's only cancer specialty hospital in 2025. Prior to her Orange County role, Preciado led an 18-person external relations and visitor experiences team at City of Hope and served on the communications leadership team at Georgetown University. A graduate of Santa Clara University, Preciado considers it an honor to help ensure that people with cancer receive the most advanced cancer care and have access to pioneering research.



Richard Reisman - Publisher, Orange County Business Journal

Richard Reisman is publisher of the Orange County Business Journal. Reisman joined the Business Journal in 1990. Since then, the publication's acceptance by the business community has been dramatic. Paid circulation and advertising volume has grown significantly, making it possibly the top Business Journal in the country. Prior to the business journal, Reisman was director of mwwwarketing for the Orange County edition of The Los Angeles Times. Earlier in his career, Reisman practiced law in San Francisco and Washington, D.C. While in private practice in Washington, Reisman served as special counsel to the House Ethics Committee. Reisman holds an MBA from UCLA, where he was awarded the R.C. Baker Foundation Fellowship, and a law degree from George Washington University, where he graduated with honors. Reisman is listed in "Who's Who in America" and has served on numerous boards.



Brenda Rose - Executive Director, Business Banking Market Manager, OC, JPMorgan Chase

Brenda Rose joined Chase for Business in 2009 and has led the Orange County Market since 2021. Her team of 70+ relationship managers offer treasury management solutions, access to capital and full-service financial guidance to business owners. Prior to Chase, Rose's background included commercial real estate lending, large corporate banking and wealth management experience. Active in the community, Rose has served on the Advisory Board of the Orange County Business Council and is an active member of the OC Market Leadership Team at Chase. Personally, Rose grew up in Los Angeles, has a BS in Business Administration from California State University, Northridge and an MBA from University of Southern California, both on full academic scholarships. She also has a graduate degree in banking from Pacific Coast Banking School in Seattle. Rose loves fitness, photography, scuba diving adventures and international travel with her family. She is a proud stepmom to four grown kids and a new grand baby.



Lisa Westhafer - Senior Vice President, Middle Market Banking, Fifth Third Bank

In her role as senior vice president, Lisa Westhafer leads the marketing efforts for Fifth Third Bank's Commercial Banking office in Orange County, focusing on serving clients in the market with revenues between \$20 million to \$500 million. Westhafer assists privately run companies with their financing, treasury management and capital market needs. Lisa has been in the financial services industry for over 25 years. Prior to entering into the banking field, she worked for both the Walt Disney Company and Arthur Andersen. A Southern California native, Westhafer is married, has a 10-year-old son, and lives with her family in Nellie Gail. She earned her degree in business from the University of Washington and holds a CPA designation (currently inactive) and is Series 7 and 24 licensed. When not working or spending time with her family, Westhafer enjoys traveling, scuba diving, interior design and cooking.

2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

Reem Abousaif, Photographer

Studio ReTeen, Irvine

The simplest truth in photography is that every photograph tells a story, but selecting the right storyteller is not quite as simple. Reem Abousaif has spent the last 17 years of her life dedicated to mastering her technique for this reason: it is the honor of a lifetime to help tell someone's story through the art of photography. Her passion for visual arts was ignited in college where she studied graphic design and became intrigued by the ability of a single image to convey such depth of emotion and meaning. Photography was a natural extension of this, but it wasn't until her children were born that she realized the importance of documenting each fleeting, precious moment. This inspired her to pick up her first DSLR camera and embark upon a life-altering career path. Studio Reem was founded in 2015 with the mission of capturing the timeless moments along life's journey. Abousaif's ability to deliver this unique gift across different focus areas of photography—whether it be family (engagement to newborn), special events, or even runway fashion—has created a diverse and loyal base of clients that include high profile organizations like Komen Foundation and OC Fashion Week.



Kanika Aggarwal, Head of Production

Revive Real Estate, Irvine

Kanika Aggarwal has been with Revive for over two years now and always goes above and beyond for the company and her team. She has been known to be one of the first in the office and last to leave, mainly because she is dedicated to doing the best she can at what she does. As the head of production, she oversees two of the biggest teams at Revive: the Owner's Reps who oversee all production / projects, and the design team. The best thing about Aggarwal is she does it all with the kindest heart and biggest smile. She radiates positive energy, is a wife, and mama of two and still manages to work as hard as she does for the company. She respects all those around her from C-level to intern-level, and is truly an inspiration to those around her.



Melissa Aills, Vice President of Supply Chain

Juice It Up!, Newport Beach

Melissa Aills serves as the vice president of Supply Chain at leading smoothie, raw juice and superfruit bowl chain Juice It Up!, where she oversees profitability, cost structures and the procurement of high-quality products. Throughout her two decades at Juice It Up!, Aills has spearheaded the development of the brand's supply chain department, establishing strong, valuable relationships with suppliers and ensuring the maintenance of low costs for franchise partners. As inflation climbed in 2023, Aills deftly maintained below-average material costs through aggressive price contracting and even successfully decreased overall costs. When Aills arrived at Juice It Up! in 2003, the brand had fewer than 15 locations. Today, Juice It Up! has more than 100 locations open or in various stages of development in six states and is continuously sought by new and experienced franchisees looking to expand their portfolio with a proven smoothie, raw juice and superfruit bowl franchise.



Jessica Aliotti, Wealth Management Advisor

Northwestern Mutual-Orange County, Irvine

Jessica Aliotti joined Northwestern Mutual as a financial advisor in 2014 and currently runs her practice in Orange County. She works with her clients at every stage of life, helping them to understand both their needs and their potential. Her specialty is working with sales executives, tech professionals, physicians, attorneys, and business owners to find the best solutions for their unique needs. Aliotti has garnered significant recognition for her contributions to the industry. Forbes has recognized her as one of the top Best-In-State Financial Security Professionals in 2023. Aliotti was recognized as the number one or two ranked advisors in the Western Region in each of her first four years in the business. In the fiscal year 2021 - 2022, Aliotti achieved the coveted Northwestern Mutual FORUM recognition, which represents approximately the top 5% of advisors in the country. For the past 10 years, Aliotti has been running a successful financial planning practice nationwide. As an expert in tax efficiency, risk mitigation, and wealth preservation, Aliotti is passionate about helping others realize their vision of a sound financial future.



Michelle Armond, Partner

Armond Wilson LLP, Newport Beach

Michelle Armond left the partnership of the largest law firm in Orange County to co-found intellectual property litigation boutique Armond Wilson LLP in 2019 with her Federal Circuit co-clerk Douglas Wilson. Five years later, Armond Wilson is nationally recognized as an elite firm. In November 2023, she was called to testify at U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee as an expert on pending patent reform legislation. Armond and her firm have been recognized for their achievements by The Daily Journal, The National Law Journal, The Recorder, and many more—including being named a Leader of Influence by the Orange County Business Journal.



Nikki Arora, General Partner

CerraCap Cares, Costa Mesa

Nikki Arora is a multifaceted professional—an entrepreneur, investor, partner, and the founder of CerraCap Cares. For over two decades, Arora has been a passionate leader, driving transformation and organizational growth across various sectors, including private enterprises and non-profit organizations, both domestically and internationally. Her expertise spans a wide range of services, from exceptional marketing execution to effective



coaching and mentoring, all aimed at achieving tangible results. Beyond branding and fundraising, she is dedicated to empowering diverse women entrepreneurs and fostering human-centric technological innovations through CerraCap Cares. As an outstanding leader, Arora consistently prioritizes the well-being of individuals and organizations, ensuring their needs and goals are not just met but exceeded.

Michelle Bartolic, Managing Partner of Legal Production

The Estate Lawyers, Irvine

Since joining the firm in 2017, Michelle Bartolic has been an integral part of building The Estate Lawyers team. Joining the firm as the trust and estate litigation attorney, Bartolic worked her way up, obtaining partner status in 2021. As The Estate Lawyers continued to grow and expand, Bartolic's tenacity in litigation and ability to close cases saw her promotion to her current role as managing partner of Legal Production. Bartolic's new role is integral to the commitment to accountability in closing cases, elevating competency across the board, and streamlining team workflows. Her leadership is central to the strategic direction of The Estate Lawyers, focusing on enhancing The Estate Lawyers operational excellence and ensuring that every team member is supported in their growth and professional development.



Sandra Beaver, CFO

Evolus, Newport Beach

Sandra Beaver is the engine that drives Evolus' strong financial position. As CFO, she has worked tirelessly to help drive the rapid growth of Evolus' total net revenue in 2023 to \$202 million (preliminary unaudited), a 36% increase over full-year net revenues in 2022, positioning the company for continued growth and success into 2024 and beyond. In 2023, she supported and led the financial execution of milestones including the company's licensing agreements which expanded its product portfolio with the addition of late-stage dermal fillers in the U.S. and European markets while broadening the estimated total addressable market by 78% to approximately \$6 billion, as well as supporting the geographic expansion of the company's commercial footprint in Austria, Germany and Italy. Beaver continues to lead the organization to financial success and aspires to positively impact the company's mission through her strong leadership, guiding critical processes to drive smart strategic decisions and broadening the company's portfolio with aesthetic consumer brands.



Letitia Berbaum, Co-Founder & COO

The Zandbergen Group, Laguna Beach

Recognized as an inspirational leader within the community, Letitia (Tish) Berbaum has dedicated her career to making a True Wealth difference in the lives of those she serves. The advisor of choice for a dynamic array of entrepreneurs, multi-generational families, divorcees and widows, Berbaum specializes in "True Wealth" strategies within wealth management, with an emphasis on exit planning, asset transfer strategies, and full-service strategic planning. Her contributions to the advancement of women in a variety of industries are extensive, and have earned her recognition by Senator Bob Archuleta's office as a "Woman of Achievement" for her contributions to the community at large. Furthermore, Berbaum's insights have been featured by Forbes Business Council and she is one of the founding members of the Brea Chamber of Commerce Women in Leadership Council. A seven-time recipient of the Orange County Five-Star Wealth Manager, Berbaum holds a Series 66 securities registration.



Pooja Bhalla, CEO

Illumination Foundation, Santa Ana

Dr. Pooja Bhalla is the chief executive officer of Illumination Foundation, an Orange County-based organization whose mission is to disrupt the cycle of homelessness in Southern California. Under her leadership, Illumination Foundation has become a recognized and innovative leader in housing and healthcare services for those experiencing homelessness and is ranked the 9th largest nonprofit in Orange County. As CEO, Dr. Bhalla oversaw revenue of \$55.7 million in FY 2022-23, leading Illumination Foundation's integrated system of housing and healthcare that provides targeted, comprehensive services to individuals experiencing homelessness to increase their long-term health and housing stability. Dr. Bhalla joined Illumination Foundation in 2017 as chief operating officer. In 2021, she was promoted to executive director of Healthcare Services, where she focused on the complex issue of health equity to improve quality outcomes and reduce health disparities. She became co-CEO in July 2022 and was named CEO in May 2023.



Maureen Bissonnette, Principal, Marketing

Ware Malcomb, Irvine

Maureen Bissonnette began her career with Ware Malcomb in 1998 as a marketing assistant. Today, she serves as the firm's principal, marketing and oversees the firmwide marketing program and corporate marketing team for the firms' 28 offices across the Americas. As one of six female principals at the firm, Bissonnette leads the development and execution of the company's marketing strategy to enhance brand awareness, drive business development, and ultimately increase revenue. Throughout her time at the firm, Bissonnette has exemplified exceptional leadership and dedication to the Ware Malcomb core value of innovation through her continued effort to push the status quo. This year, Bissonnette played an integral role in elevating Ware Malcomb's online presence with the launch of a newly reimagined website (WareMalcomb.com). The site reflects the firm's passion for modern design and innovation through an elevated design with an enhanced user experience.



Fifth Third Bank congratulates the nominees of the OCBJ 30th annual Women in Business Awards!

Your business is unique. That's why we design custom solutions tailored to your specific goals and objectives. You define success, and Fifth Third can help you get there.

Contact:

Aaron Olson
Orange County Regional Manager
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2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

Kelly Blair, CFO

Mark IV Capital, Newport Beach

Kelly Blair has successfully broken the mold of how a CFO in commercial real estate is expected to look and lead. In a position oftentimes characterized by number crunching and a lack of interpersonal interaction, Blair has intentionally ushered in a welcomed culture of open communication and thoughtful coaching to the finance department at Mark IV Capital and beyond. Holding the title of CFO of Mark IV Capital, a leading private investment firm focused on high-quality commercial real estate and private equity investments across the U.S., Blair is greatly influential in setting up the firm's successful future, as she oversees all financial activities and reporting that directly drive the overall financial health of the company. With deep expertise in accounting, capital markets, strategic financing, and capital raising, the CFO role at Mark IV became significantly more strategically focused with Blair at the helm of financial operations.



Lynne Bolduc, Partner, Corporate and Securities

FitzGerald Kreditor Bolduc Risbrough LLP, Irvine

Specializing in crafting innovative financing solutions, Lynne Bolduc advises companies on fundraising, IPOs, acquisitions, and sales. Bolduc's over 30 years of expertise spans private and public offerings, SEC reporting, corporate governance, and mergers and acquisitions. As a sought-after speaker and expert witness, a director on the Board of the National Investment Banking Association, and an advocate to increase the number of women on Boards of Directors, Bolduc contributes significantly to the legal, business, and finance communities. Bolduc has been honored with prestigious awards, including being named a Southern California Rising Star Attorney by Los Angeles Magazine and Southern California Super Lawyers three years in a row. Bolduc exemplifies excellence in corporate law and finance. Her achievements include landmark securities transactions, high-profile mergers, regulatory compliance counsel, and impactful speaking engagements and publications, reflecting her unwavering dedication to her profession and community.



Claudia Bonilla Keller, CEO

Second Harvest Food Bank, Irvine

An established nonprofit executive with over two decades of experience in a senior leadership capacity, Claudia Bonilla Keller joined Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County as chief mission officer in February 2020 and was named CEO in January 2022. Coming on board a month before the pandemic shutdown—the most impactful time for the Food Bank in its 41-year history—Keller immediately assumed the tasks of chief development officer in addition to chief mission officer, guiding fundraising efforts as well as supporting Second Harvest's marketing and communication efforts in its time of greatest need. Under Keller's leadership, in FY23 alone Second Harvest provided 36.3 million pounds of food to those in need across Orange County and attracted the engagement of over 18 thousand volunteers, effectively serving the nearly 1 in 10 individuals in Orange County facing food insecurity.



Karie Boyd, CEO

Boyd Law, APC, Irvine

Karie Boyd is a certified family law specialist and the National Academy of Family Law Attorneys ranked her among the "Top Ten" Divorce Attorneys. Ms. Boyd represents celebrities in divorce, high net-worth marital dissolution, child custody, and support disputes. Ms. Boyd is a published author, and contributor to, *Inside the Minds: Strategies for Family Law in California*, Thompson Reuters' 2015 edition.



Olabisi Boyle, Senior Vice President of Product Planning and Mobility Strategy

Hyundai Motor North America, Fountain Valley

Olabisi Boyle is the senior vice president of product planning and mobility strategy for Hyundai Motor North America. Boyle leads the strategic direction of Hyundai's U.S. vehicle lineup, leading long-range planning, and overseeing market research, business analytics, and advanced pricing. She also leads Hyundai's U.S. mobility strategy, connected car technology, and future innovations. Boyle and her product team are at the forefront of Hyundai's evolution into an electrified era. From charging solutions such as Hyundai Home, to integrated partnerships with Electrify America, Boyle continues to find ways to expand Hyundai's EV footprint in the US market.



Janice Brady, CFO

Miguel's Restaurants, Corona

Janice Brady joined Miguel's Restaurants in 2012 as controller and was promoted to VP of Accounting & Finance in 2020 and CFO in 2024. She is an integral part of the leadership team, and oversees accounting, finance, IT and human resources. Brady is involved with all strategic business decisions, site selection, systems implementations, and automation. Since joining Miguel's, the Company has nearly doubled in size. Today, Miguel's Restaurants operates 22 Miguel's Jr. locations and one full-service restaurant, with one additional Miguel's Jr. location opening in 2024. Miguel's is a 50-year guest favorite in the Inland Empire and Orange County.

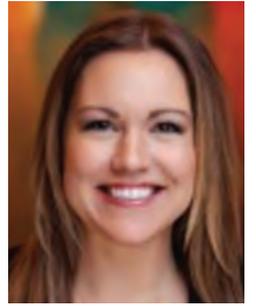


Christia Brockman, Partner

Sunday Brunch Agency, Huntington Beach

As partner and co-owner of Sunday Brunch Agency, Christia Brockman has spearheaded a revolution in marketing. Sunday Brunch Agency stands out as the first fully remote,

female-owned marketing agency in Orange County, CA, pioneering a flexible and dynamic work environment. Brockman's leadership has cultivated a culture of innovation and empowerment, attracting top marketing talent and high-profile clients. The agency's comprehensive services span design, strategy, branding, websites, social media, PR, media planning, consulting, and more, providing transformative results for independently owned companies and professionals. Sunday Brunch Agency thrives on challenging traditional marketing approaches, embracing change, and fostering creativity without limits. Under Brockman's guidance, the agency continues to push boundaries, delivering powerful and out-of-the-box marketing solutions that surpass clients' expectations.



Jasmina Brooks, President

Biosense Webster, part of J&J MedTech, Irvine

With nearly 25 years of experience in the cardiovascular field, Jasmina "Jass" Brooks has dedicated her career to championing excellence in patient outcomes and solving unmet medical needs. She has a proven track record of successfully driving growth and market leadership, as well as a commitment to developing talent and fostering a culture of collaboration and inclusivity in the workplace. In May 2023, Brooks was appointed president of Biosense Webster, part of Johnson & Johnson MedTech and a global leader in the science, diagnosis, and treatment of heart rhythm disorders. Under her leadership, Biosense Webster delivered 26% growth in Q1 2024, and continues to be the No. 1 global market leader in the electrophysiology space and a key growth driver for Johnson & Johnson MedTech.



Judy Brower Fancher, President

Brower, Miller & Cole, Newport Beach

Judy Brower Fancher increases the value of her Clients' properties through sourcing contemporary art and commission artists for both the private and public art needs of commercial real estate firms, interior designers, and high-net worth individuals. Her deep knowledge of commercial real estate and of contemporary art combine to create a white glove experience for her Clients. She is that rare person who can work joyfully with free-spirited artists and gallerists, while equally enjoying and partnering with her driven C-Suite Clients. Fancher brings to bear her university Art History minor, her Certificate in Contemporary Art: Theory and Structure from Christie's of London, and her two decades of art acquisition experience in art galleries and art fairs throughout 28 countries around the world.



Sheilah Buack, Director of Legal Operations

The Estate Lawyers, Irvine

Sheilah Buack joined The Estate Lawyers with over two decades of legal experience employed previously by Fortune 500 companies and Law Firms such as Qualcomm, Genentech, Jones Day, Boies, Schiller & Flexner and MoginRubin. As a pivotal member of the Firm's Executive Team, she is building a team of experts to take the company to the next level! Ms. Buack has a proven record of being a versatile professional with broad leadership experience over day-to-day office operations, business administration, process improvement, employee relations and HR, recruiting and talent retention, information technology, budgeting, and internal controls. She has the proven ability to communicate effectively across business functions and positively impact decision making, implementing innovative solutions that increase efficiency and efficacy. She modernizes company operational procedures that increase revenue and reduce overhead expenses. She leads with kindness and empathy and facilitates conversations about important issues and connects people to their true potential!



Kim Bubnis, Executive Vice President & Employee Benefits Division Leader

SullivanCurtisMonroe Insurance Services, Irvine

Kim Bubnis is executive vice president and employee benefits division leader at SCM, and a member of the ownership group. She plays a pivotal role in the agency's overall growth strategy and its pursuit of exceeding client expectations, and is also responsible for a key revenue growth initiative. Bubnis leads the strategy and day-to-day operations of SCM's employee benefits division, having made major contributions to its success while at the forefront of managing key accounts. Bubnis has also taken the lead in training, development, and process improvements, and has focused on driving communication and culture across all company divisions. Bubnis' leadership skills, energy and cooperative spirit epitomize the SCM culture (#OneSCM), and have significantly contributed to SCM's awards for Best Places to Work in Orange County (OCBJ) and Best Places to Work in Insurance (Business Insurance).



Stephanie Casal, Executive Director, Clinical Research Orange County

City of Hope Orange County, Irvine

As executive director of Clinical Research at City of Hope Orange County, Stephanie Casal, MS, RN, CNS, plays a pivotal role in advancing clinical studies that often yield some of the most promising treatments for cancer. In her role, she is responsible for developing and managing extensive clinical research operations across City of Hope Orange County Lennar Foundation Cancer Center in Irvine, supporting more than 50 physician-scientists and overseeing all clinical trials, including phases I-IV. Known for her professionalism and compassion, Casal advocates for researchers and patients alike, fostering a collaborative environment to improve outcomes. She is deeply committed to improving the health and well-being of Orange County, going out into the community to educate people about their risks of stomach cancer,



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2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

which disproportionately affects people of color. Working closely with world-renowned surgeon and researcher Dr. Yanghee Woo, Casal is focused on saving lives and connecting people to much-needed resources.

Zara Cerni, Chief Operating Officer

Forever Ageless Inc and Primary Care Physicians, Newport Beach
Zara Cerni co-founded Physicians Center for Renewal over ten years ago, and runs all aspects of the business operations and marketing, as well as acting as patient liaison. Additionally, she directs the business operations of Forever Ageless, Inc. Cerni's strong command of interpersonal communication skills has resulted in building both aesthetics practices to be amongst the largest in the United States. Whether she is working directly with patients, business partners or team members- she clearly identifies priorities and objectives- and then tirelessly executes on them to deliver results.



Maria G. Cervantes, Executive Director

UCI, Irvine

Maria Cervantes brings over 25 years of dedication to education and health equity, currently serving as the executive director of the UCI-OC Alliance, a trustee-initiated, university-driven community organization serving Orange County since April 2023. In her role, Cervantes has catalyzed significant initiatives aimed at transforming the University of California, Irvine into a Latino/a thriving institution. She has effectively orchestrated outreach, engagement, and partnership programs that have bolstered support for Latinx students. Her strategic efforts have enhanced mentorship, internships, and scholarship opportunities while fostering collaborations with 45+ influential business leaders across Orange County. Cervantes' proactive leadership and commitment to holistic advancement underscore her significant impact within the organization and the broader community.



Honeylyn Chang, CFO

Evriholder Products, Brea

Honeylyn Chang has been with Evriholder for 10 years. Her first few years were spent restructuring the company. Using the 80/20 principle, the company reduced personnel from over 100 down to 30, customers from over 1000 to just less than 100, and suppliers from over 80 suppliers down to four key ones. She implemented several reports and made process efficiencies within the finance department. Since then, the operational improvements that were implemented had laid the foundation for exponential revenue growth, with a six-fold increase during these 10 years. Chang has demonstrated expertise in mergers and acquisitions, as she seamlessly integrated several divisional acquisitions during her tenure. She has been in multiple ownership changes, currently overseeing the group under her fourth PE owner. Chang has also demonstrated technical expertise by developing financial dashboards that are used by various people within the company. Currently, she's also spearheading a new ERP implementation which will be consolidating multiple ERP systems into one.



Jennifer Chang, Education Rights Attorney

Law Offices of Jennifer Chang, Buena Park

The Law Offices of Jennifer Chang zealously represents students with special needs in all facets of special education law through advocacy, negotiation, and litigation. Chang's passion for helping others and her decades of experience have led her to accomplish exceptional results for California families who feel that they have nowhere else to turn. Chang's work protects students with disabilities and ensures they receive the curriculum and services required from public schools under The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). While some disabilities are apparent, others can manifest in many ways, causing students to struggle and fall behind academically. Schools are expected to identify these students and develop appropriate plans to provide them with services including therapies, individualized instruction, and one-to-one assistance among many others. Without appropriate advocacy, many times students do not receive the services they require or are mistreated by the district due to how a disability presents itself.



Jennifer Chi, Founder & CEO

Live Good Inc., Irvine

Jennifer Chi has devoted her entire career to working on human rights matters. Born in Detroit, Michigan to a Taiwanese American family, Chi received her B.A. from Stanford University, focusing on International Relations and Philosophy. During her undergraduate studies, she assisted scholars at the Hoover Research Institution think tank in analyzing disease migration in developing nations. Her first job out of college was at a public interest law firm where she counseled detained children who had been trafficked into the country. Chi spent time at the U.S. Department of Education in Washington D.C. working on policy issues concerning safety in the post Columbine era. She earned her law degree from George Washington University before becoming an investigator examining factory production in Asia and working on human rights cases. Through her international experiences, Chi formed a vision of a new mode of commerce that would prioritize human and environmental health.



Patricia Chikuturudzi, CEO

Healthy At Home Caregivers, Dana Point

Founder Patricia Chikuturudzi has worked for more than two decades as a registered nurse in Orange County hospitals such as St. Joseph Hospital, Saddleback Hospital, and Mission Hospital. An unprecedented shift in her life, leaving the fully supported staff in the hospital to help individuals in their homes was not easy, but



necessary and fulfilling. After Chikuturudzi lost her mother to cancer in 2006, she discovered that there was a severe lack of communication among the five doctors on her mother's case. These miscommunications in her mother's plan of care resulted in duplication of medications and procedures as well as poor follow-up on results. These fatal errors in treatment resulted in medication toxicity, leading to a painful, premature death.

Christine Cordon, City Manager

City of Westminster, Westminster

Before becoming the City's first Vietnamese-American city manager (and one of the youngest city managers in Orange County), Christine Cordon served as the interim city manager, appointed while she served as city clerk. She has worked for the City since 2016 and became city manager at a time of great tumult. The City was facing a multimillion dollar deficit at the sunset of its sales tax measure, the community was recovering from a global pandemic, and frequent turnover was leading to instability in all departments. Cordon was able to turn this around through a strategic effort to improve morale, increase communication between the city and community, adopt the City's first strategic plan, and give residents a chance to vote on essential sales tax initiatives - which they approved. She initiated the conversation with the City of Garden Grove for the recently opened Central Cities Navigation Center, which provides transitional emergency housing and services to homeless individuals in partnership with Fountain Valley, Westminster, Garden Grove, and Orange County. Her passion for public service and ability to thrive under pressure have served the City of nearly 91,000 well.



Alicia Cox, Founder & CEO

Prijkt Restaurant Group, Huntington Beach

Alicia Cox, founder and CEO of Prijkt Restaurant Group, is known for recreating the way people recreate (think: recreation) along California's vibrant coastline. Her innovation and drive have led her to open several notable SoCal restaurants, and even release her own wine label and margarita mix, but she has found her niche in creating elevated seaside dining experiences. With seven of eight beachside concessions open and operating at Bolsa Chica and Huntington State Beaches, locals and tourists alike turn to her team for an unmatched experience dining on the sand. These concessions run in partnership with California State Parks and each location features specialty menus with made-to-order dishes, Insta-worthy photo opportunities and phenomenal Pacific Beach views. She's also an investor in The Salty B, a boutique in downtown Huntington Beach and recently launched Prijkt Concessions featuring a mobile ice cream sandwich business, aptly named SeaScoops.



Kristin Daher, Founder & CEO

Powerhouse+Co., Santa Ana

Since founding Powerhouse+Co. in 2015, Kristin Daher has advanced its standing as one of Orange County's premier agencies by highlighting innovation, thought leadership and entrepreneurship. She has continued to reimagine the firm's approach to PR, influencer and social media programs to tell powerful client stories. Last year, Daher redefined what it means for Powerhouse+Co. to be sought for its industry expertise, recognizing the agency could accelerate client growth by leveraging generalist PR knowhow and wide-ranging communications proficiencies to engage with new clients in unique sectors, including technology. This shift yielded the most diverse client roster in company history, plus impressive revenue growth. Beyond growing the agency, Daher has fostered a transformative culture defined by creativity, development and achievement. In many ways, she has molded Powerhouse in her own likeness. It's an upbeat, innovative, high-energy workplace where team meetings yield productivity and laughs, unique personalities are always welcome, and collaboration is ubiquitous. With Daher at the helm, Powerhouse+Co. is a dynamic organization that's greater and more impactful than the sum of its individual parts.



Erin Davis, Director of Operations

Big Air USA, Ladera Ranch

With over 20 years in the location-based entertainment industry, Erin Davis began her career on the front lines of the original Wild Rivers in Irvine. When the company pivoted in 2013, Davis was there as a founding leader of Big Air trampoline parks at the corporate flagship in Orange County, then became director of operations in support of Big Air's nationwide franchise growth. Davis' strong background in operational management and cross-discipline collaboration led her to establish industry-leading facility inspection protocols and a system-wide safety compliance training program. Recently obtaining her MBA from the University of Massachusetts Lowell, she currently serves as the Treasurer for the Amusement and Adventure Institute (AAI), an education-driven non-profit organization dedicated to elevating operations, safety, and risk management principles for trampoline and adventure parks worldwide. Davis is honored and celebrated by her team as a mentor, partner, and award-winner!



Hema Dey, CMO

Iffel International Inc., Anaheim

KEA New Zealand awards Hema Dey World Class New Zealander, for excellence in growing hi-tech manufacturing companies internationally. Won gLEnnovate, Global Innovation Awards in 2016. Iffel International Inc. was recognized as a global innovative business in the Inland Empire, CA. This was judged by Cal State San Bernadino and presented by the Co-Director of the Global Management Center. Invested in all processes and legal compliance to be a 100% HIPAA compliant marketing agency for the medical sector.





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Head of Corporate Banking
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2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

Elise Diaz, Financial Advisor

Northwestern Mutual-Orange County, Irvine

Elise Diaz is a financial advisor with expertise in tax efficiency, risk management, retirement planning, investment strategy, and wealth preservation & distribution. Diaz works with clients across many different industries but specializes in working with breadwinning women, tech professionals, and women in sales or who own businesses. Diaz and her team work with clients in an end-to-end planning experience driven by the client's goals and desired financial outcomes. She sees financial empowerment as a key component of her work and helps clients, especially women, build confidence in their financial lives and futures, enabling them to stress less and live more.



Amy Dickerson, CFO

Regenesis, San Clemente

Ms. Dickerson is the chief financial officer of Regenesis, an environmental remediation company that has been eliminating exposure risks from PFAS and other contaminants in groundwater for over three decades. In this role, she oversees the financial management of Regenesis, including all financial reporting and transparency. She also leads global operations for the US and EU, and manages numerous departments, including accounting, finance, customer service, and human resources. Since joining Regenesis over a decade ago, Ms. Dickerson's leadership has been pivotal to the company's growth. She managed multiple projects to improve the company's financial reporting systems, including the implementation of both an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and a Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP) system to streamline operations and improve internal efficiency. She also played a critical role in establishing Regenesis' new manufacturing facility in Gallatin, TN, enabling the company to bring manufacturing in-house. Finally, Ms. Dickerson led several initiatives in human resources, establishing overall compensation strategies, performance monitoring programs and most recently launched an ongoing company-wide mentoring program to foster internal talent development.



Deborah Dickson, Managing Partner

Smith Dickson Certified Public Accountants, LLP, Irvine

From her beginnings as one of the few women working at the "Big 8" CPA firms, Deborah Dickson, CPA, CFE, CFF, MAFF progressed to form Smith Dickson Certified Public Accountants, LLP in 1982. Dickson remains the only woman to found and manage a "Top Accounting Firm" in Orange County. In the process, Dickson has carved out a niche specialty, a Forensic CPA Litigation Support practice, in a very tough and competitive field. She has shaped this into one of the most well-known and highly respected forensic CPA and expert witness accounting teams in California. The firm works with leading national and boutique law firms, attesting to Smith Dickson's expertise and success in this field. Dickson has earned CFE (Certified Fraud Examiner), CFF (Certified in Financial Forensics (MAFF) designations, which are important qualifications for leaders in the forensics CPA field and are only achieved by a small minority of CPAs throughout the USA.



Samantha Dorey, Partner, Co-Founder

Everett Dorey LLP, Irvine

Samantha Dorey is a founding partner of Everett Dorey LLP, a full-service civil litigation firm that represents multi-national corporations, non-profits, cities, public agencies, and school districts in all aspects of litigation. She specializes in complex civil litigation with an emphasis in catastrophic injury, public entity defense, employment law, mass tort, asbestos litigation, and environmental law. She also regularly advises clients on non-litigated matters, including development of risk management protocols and procedures related to property management and environmental issues. As a leading litigation firm in California routinely retained as trial counsel in complex and challenging cases throughout the state, Ms. Dorey has shaped a firm of exceptionally talented litigators with diverse cultural and personal backgrounds, with particular focus on creating an environment that empowers female attorneys. Additionally, Ms. Dorey has authored numerous articles, served on boards for the Public Law Center and Orange County Lavender Bar Association, and taught courses as an adjunct professor at Chapman University.



Sarah Downing, Financial Advisor

Northwestern Mutual, Irvine

Sarah Downing runs a comprehensive financial planning practice with a heart for guiding women, small business owners, and families to achieve their financial goals by creating confidence around their financial plan. Her partnership approach to financial success generates a sense of clarity that allows every client to grow personally as well as financially. After a 10-year career in fashion through Nordstrom, Downing stepped into the financial services industry. Here her priorities for clients shifted from helping them spend more money, to helping them save more money; "Finance, done fashionably" remains her professional motto.



Downing is a growth and development enthusiast, committed to learning. Outside of the financial practice, Downing is president of Marketplace Women of Orange County, a nonprofit with a mission to help empower women in the marketplace to integrate their personal, professional, and spiritual lives. Downing and her team at Northwestern Mutual show clients the value in having a financial plan that focuses on financial wellness by creating clear action steps that push clients to step into who they aspire to be through financial freedom.

Lauren Doyle, Partner

TLD Law, Irvine

Lauren M. Doyle, a partner at TLD Law, has significantly contributed to the firm's success

since joining. Specializing in estate and tax planning, trust administration, business planning, and property taxes, Doyle has built a robust practice assisting families and business owners. Her compassionate and comprehensive approach ensures thorough legal guidance for every stage of life. Recognized as a Rising Star by Super Lawyers for four consecutive years (2021-2024), Lauren's expertise and dedication have earned her a stellar reputation. She has successfully filed and won hundreds of property tax reassessment appeals across multiple counties, showcasing her deep knowledge of California's property tax system.



Laureen Driscoll, Chief Executive, Providence South

Providence South Division, Irvine

With an extensive background in health care administration, and as a registered nurse, Laureen Driscoll brings well-balanced expertise to the 17 acute care hospitals she oversees, as well as Providence's community programs and partnerships that help meet the needs of the poor and vulnerable in the community. Driscoll had previously been Providence's regional chief executive for Northern California. Prior to joining Providence, she served as president of Tacoma General and Allenmore Hospitals and was the West Pierce and Kitsap market leader for MultiCare Health System in Tacoma, Wash. She has also served as president of MultiCare Deaconess Hospital and vice president of operations to help lead the integration of their acquisition of Rockwood Health System. Prior to MultiCare, Driscoll served as chief operating officer for Providence Swedish Cherry Hill Campus in Seattle and vice president of Swedish Heart and Vascular Institute. She has served in a variety of administrative nursing leadership roles throughout her career.



Laurie Dubchansky, CFP® & Founder

Havaplan Financial, Newport Beach

Laurie Dubchansky founded Havaplan Financial in 2016 to serve those with financial concerns and provide comprehensive financial planning with the goal of helping anyone who wants to have a plan to meet short and long-term financial goals. Her specialties include advising and educating clients on planning for retirement, helping clients with debt reduction, cash flow management, education savings, retirement savings, student loan management, investment management, insurance planning, and preliminary estate planning. She is also a board member of the Financial Planning Association of Orange County (FPA-OC), manages their pro bono program and enjoys volunteering to provide pro-bono financial education for individuals, various military and community-based organizations.



Kristle Duran, Chief Operations Officer

Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Orange Coast, Irvine

Kristle Duran has been a dedicated member of the Boys and Girls Club since 2013, beginning her journey as an assistant. Over the years, her exceptional skills and commitment to the organization's mission have propelled her into the role of chief operations officer. In this leadership position, Duran has demonstrated remarkable proficiency, ensuring the smooth and effective operation of the club. She is a great asset to the communities they serve, tirelessly working to create and implement programs that address the needs of local youth. Her strategic initiatives and hands-on approach have made a significant impact, providing countless opportunities for personal and academic growth to the children and teens who rely on the Boys and Girls Club. Duran's growth within the organization is a testament to her hard work and unwavering dedication, making her an invaluable asset to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Orange Coast and the communities they serve.



Alison Edwards, CEO

Groundswell, Santa Ana

For over 25 years, Alison Edwards has worked with Groundswell, formerly known as the OC Human Relations Council. Before being appointed CEO in 2017, she served as program director for its BRIDGES program and then as deputy director. As CEO, Edwards enables leaders across Orange County to transform their organizations, businesses and schools to achieve a more equitable future. Last year, she spearheaded the organization's rebrand to 'Groundswell,' bringing a fresh identity to the over-30-year-old nonprofit. It was her mission to help Orange County better understand the breadth of services the organization offers. With a new name, clear messaging and look, Groundswell has reached more people than ever and anticipates its services to continue expanding beyond Orange County in the coming years. Her guidance has allowed the organization to reach new audiences and help each champion growing its voice and putting human dignity at the center.



Mona Elkebir, VP Commercial Operations

Planet Innovation, Irvine

Mona Elkebir is a senior executive in the medical device sector who leads the commercialization of world-first, groundbreaking medtech products and has led innovative corporate growth strategies at Planet Innovation and previously at BIT Group. Elkebir works at multiple levels including product commercialization and corporate leadership. At a product level, one example of Elkebir's achievements includes the commercialization of a medtech device that supports ER facilities diagnosing life-threatening diseases. She subsequently enabled the deployment of this product in developing nations to save newborns at risk. At a corporate level, she managed the



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue sleeveless dress, stands in an office setting with her arms crossed. In the background, there is a whiteboard and a desk with papers.

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successful merger of BIT with a competitor, Planet Innovation, doubling her business' size. Over her time at BIT and Planet Innovation, Elkebir has seen revenues grow from a modest \$1.5 million to nearly \$100 million. She is an active supporter of the OC community, holding board positions with the National Charity League and is involved with the University of California, Irvine.

Lauren Ellermeyer, Co-Founder/President *Beyond Fifteen Communications Inc., Irvine*

Lauren Ellermeyer is the visionary co-founder and president of Beyond Fifteen Communications, a pioneering full-service PR and marketing agency. She has revolutionized the industry by integrating entrepreneurial innovation with results-driven strategies, delivering unparalleled media and market attention for clients. Under her dynamic leadership, Beyond Fifteen has redefined agency-client relationships, earning national acclaim and growing from a startup to a full marketing powerhouse. Ellermeyer's astute business acumen, talent for identifying emerging talent and expertise in public relations and social media have been crucial to this success. Her efforts have expanded the agency's footprint nationwide, enabling it to serve a diverse portfolio of B2B and B2C brands across healthcare, technology, consumer packaged goods, energy and education. Her commitment to excellence and innovative approach continue to drive the agency's impressive growth and industry leadership.



Nazanin Emami, CFO *Parkia Inc., Tustin*

Nazanin Emami has brought extensive experience in finance and investment banking to her role as chief financial officer at Parkia, Inc. since joining in 2016. Her leadership and vision have been instrumental in steering the company through complex projects and dynamic market conditions. Throughout her tenure, Emami demonstrated exceptional leadership in risk mitigation, financial controls, budgeting, forecasting, and financial analysis. Her expertise in creating robust financial strategies significantly enhanced the company's financial stability. Her collaborative approach and commitment to excellence has earned her a reputation as a trusted advisor and an integral part of the executive team. Emami's contributions have been instrumental in positioning Parkia as a leader in its industry through innovative solutions and strategic initiatives. She is committed to maintaining the highest standards of financial stewardship. As CFO, Emami is passionate about leveraging her financial acumen to support Parkia, Inc.'s mission of delivering innovative and reliable electrical utility solutions.



Pamela Estes, CEO

Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach, Laguna Beach
Pamela Estes joined the Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach team in 2001 and has led as CEO since 2008. Her mantra is "do whatever it takes to help kids thrive." She led the organization to exponential growth in impact and revenue. She built a team of 68 youth development professionals who now serve nearly 4000 kids. Estes is forward facing and leads authentically with transparency, empathy, humor, and humility. She is an avid advocate for the mental health and wellness of young people and the powerful ROI of building resilience and protective factors in youth. People know that they can trust her and count on her to find a way to make things happen. Her every decision is based on what sustains and propels the purpose of the Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach, to promote the healthy social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of young people.



Becky Firey, Executive Director

American Red Cross of Orange County, Santa Ana
For nearly two decades, Becky Firey has dedicated her career to the mission of the American Red Cross. Since 2020, she has led the Orange County Chapter as executive director, showcasing remarkable leadership. Her Red Cross journey began in Biomedical Services, where she established vital partnerships for community blood drives in San Diego. She later ascended to the role of donor resources development training manager for Southern California. Prior to her current role, she served as district manager, launching the 'Aztecs for Life' and 'Celebration of Heroes' blood drives. Her career is a testament to her dedication and impact.



Maureen Flanagan, Managing Director *JPMorgan Advisors, Newport Beach*

As a co-founder of FGF Partners, Maureen Flanagan provides integrated planning, investing and wealth strategy to individuals and families, helping them pursue their goals with greater confidence. She advises a number of women clients who hail from varied backgrounds. Many are business owners, executives and professionals. Others have undergone a significant transition in their lives, such as the death of a loved one, a divorce or an inheritance. To each of these relationships, Flanagan offers the knowledge she has refined over forty years, as well as an empathetic perspective that supports clients in weighing their decisions. Prior to moving to J.P. Morgan Wealth Management with her team in 2023, Flanagan spent 11 years with First Republic Private Wealth Management, where she was a managing director and wealth manager. Earlier, Flanagan served for 17 years at U.S. Trust, most recently as a senior vice president and senior portfolio manager.



Theresa Fraser, Principal *Baker Tilly, Irvine*

Theresa Fraser is a certified public accountant and partner at Baker Tilly. She has 16

years of experience serving Orange County businesses in multiple industries such as technology, manufacturing and distribution, and consumer products. She specializes in corporate taxation and accounting for income taxes. She enjoys supporting a workplace where everyone thrives and helps to accomplish this by leading Baker Tilly's Growth and Retention of Woman (GROW) program and furthering diversity and inclusion in accounting. The mission of GROW is to enhance the attraction, development, retention and advancement of women. As a partner and leader of GROW, Fraser networks, mentors and strategizes with others in the accounting profession. Her goal is to help everyone reach their full potential and feel valued.



Carrie Freitas, CEO & Founder

Kitchen Table Marketing & PR, Newport Beach

Carrie Freitas has established a reputation as the region's go-to consumer public relations pro, with more than 30 years of experience working with major brands including Nintendo, Pepsi, Ford, Pizza Hut, Quaker Oats, Target, Nestle and more. After earning her stripes at multinational firms such as Edelman and Golin, she launched her own consultancy and is credited with introducing the application of PR to O.C.'s luxury real estate market in 2000. She's secured national and local media coverage for clients, including segments on The Oprah Winfrey Show, Good Morning America, The Today Show and CNN, and stories in the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, New York Times and Vogue, among others. She founded Kitchen Table Marketing in 2010 and continues to leverage her journalism experience at KABC-TV, KNBC-TV, CNN, Riviera Magazine and Coast Kids Magazine as the editor-in-chief and publisher of the agency's own Tableau Magazine.



Lisa Friend, Owner

Lifot Faith Inc, Newport Beach

Lifot Faith was created in 2022 with its main focus centered on creating a philanthropic design. Their goal is to create growth and jobs both here in the US and abroad that allows for creativity to expand and find its highest potential. They aim to utilize the talents and gifted skill set of artisans across the globe to bring financial and social stability. They are relentless in their pursuit of opening the door to the underserved and under utilized of the world.



Lisa Fujimoto, Executive Director & CEO

The Priority Center, Santa Ana

Lisa Fujimoto has over 35 years of corporate and nonprofit experience, currently serving as executive director/CEO. She was the executive director of the Change a Life Foundation for 18 years, where she oversaw the distribution of \$41 million in grants to over 250 organizations and \$8 million in scholarships for low-income and former foster youth. Her previous roles include working with Olive Crest and the Children's Bureau, focusing on child welfare, and managing community relations at Disneyland Resort. Fujimoto is known for her expertise in organizational development, board strengthening, and building partnerships across sectors, having served on 20 boards throughout her career.



Melissa Fulgencio, Esq., Founding Attorney

Uplift Law, Placentia

Melissa Fulgencio has amassed a distinguished 14-year career in law, culminating in the founding of Uplift Law six years ago. Despite facing initial skepticism and challenges, Fulgencio persevered with unwavering determination. Her journey epitomizes resilience and dedication, driven by a deep-seated passion for her field. Through relentless hard work and commitment, Fulgencio has not only established herself as a formidable presence but also built Uplift Law into a recognized entity within the legal community. Fulgencio's achievements are a testament to her grit and perseverance, embodying the spirit of overcoming adversity to achieve success through sheer determination and effort.



Ann-Marie Gabel, Vice Chancellor of Business Services

South Orange County Community College District, Mission Viejo

Ann-Marie Gabel began working for the SOCCCD in 2018 as the vice chancellor, business services and was appointed as the interim chancellor in May-June 2018. Gabel oversees the \$1 billion budget and is responsible for ensuring that the fiscal, facilities, procurement, and risk operations run smoothly. Gabel successfully negotiated two ground leases with tenants at the Advanced Technology Education Park in Tustin. The first of their kind since receiving the land in 2004. Gabel was instrumental in initiating an Integrated Energy Masterplan - Approach to Net Zero for Irvine Valley and Saddleback College. She played a crucial role in developing the 2020 Facilities Master Plan detailing the colleges' projects over the next 20 years and identified the annual cash flow need for implementation. Gabel created a five-year review cycle of the 215 Board Policies and 186 Administrative Regulations to meet accreditation standards and oversees the committee responsible for reviewing and updating them.



Kelly Galligan, Corporate Partner

Rutan & Tucker, LLP Irvine

Kelly Galligan is a corporate partner at Rutan & Tucker, LLP, standing at the forefront of corporate law, and specializing in mergers and acquisitions, private equity, and corporate governance. Go-to counsel for founder-entrepreneurs, Galligan is





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Julie Bloomfield-Beckley

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renowned for her adept handling of complex transactions, including stock and asset acquisitions, joint ventures, and private equity investments, particularly in the middle market with deal values ranging from \$5 million to \$500 million. Her role as outside general counsel to numerous corporate clients involves providing strategic day-to-day advice on transactional and governance matters. Galligan is dedicated to community service, evidenced by her pro bono work with the Public Law Center. Galligan serves as president of Project Youth OCBF, a non-profit that has kept young people in school, healthy and drug-free for more than 50 years, and serves more than 1,500 local youth and their families each year.

Lindye Galloway, Founder & Chief Creative Officer

Lindye Galloway Studio + Le Maé by Lindye, Costa Mesa
The Lindye Galloway Studio is a full-service interior design studio specializing in high-end residential and commercial projects across the United States. Their distinctive projects have been seen on Architectural Digest and featured in top publications including Architectural Digest, The WSJ, Forbes, HGTV, Better Homes & Garden, and many others. Le Maé by Lindye provides heirloom quality furniture and decor the Studio is widely known for. Designed in California, you'll find innovative designs based on timeless principles. And with their small batch approach, you won't see their furniture in your neighbor's home, allowing for a space truly unique to you.



Cristina Gamarnik, CEO & Founder

The Mommy Center, Laguna Hills
Cristina Gamarnik, a visionary entrepreneur and founder of The Mommy Center. Gamarnik's journey as a refugee from Moldova to Germany and ultimately to the United States embodies the American Dream. Overcoming significant obstacles, she started her company overnight, driven by a mission to revolutionize postpartum care. Dedicated to improving the lives of new mothers, Gamarnik has developed innovative programs aimed at reducing postpartum anxiety, depression, and isolation. Her initiatives have provided essential support to over 500 parents in Orange County and thousands more online, through workshops focused on infant care, emotional well-being, and building a supportive community. Gamarnik's work not only transforms individual lives but also sets new standards in community care, making her a true pioneer in maternal health. Founded by Gamarnik in response to her own severe postpartum depression and anxiety, The Mommy Center has become a beacon for new mothers, not just in Orange County, but across the nation. Gamarnik's vision to improve the postpartum experience for new mothers has gone beyond the 5,000 local families The Mommy Center has served and now reaches a nationwide audience through her new new business, Happily Raised.



Renee Gibson-Milch, VP, Operations

The Smart Agency, Irvine
As vice president, operations at The Smart Agency, Renee Gibson-Milch has played an integral part in the company's recent success, scaling the commercial real estate communications firm by about 50 percent during a time when the industry at large had contracted from the weight of rising lending costs and a mixed economic outlook. This extraordinary accomplishment was rooted in Gibson-Milch's oversight of the back office, directing critical organizational operations such as human resources, accounts payable and receivable, as well as supervising office culture and all company events. She manages relationships with a myriad of business partners and drives company processes forward to ensure client goals are met and expectations exceeded. A former advertising account executive and experienced sales representative for over a decade at a Fortune 500 publisher, Gibson-Milch brings a unique depth of business knowledge and a wealth of professional finesse to The Smart Agency at a pivotal time in the Orange County-based company's 30-year history.



Kimberly Goll, President & CEO

First 5 Orange County, Santa Ana
Kimberly Goll was appointed president/CEO in 2016 after serving as the director of strategy and operations since 2002. Goll has transformed First 5 OC into a data-driven organization that focuses on building a system-wide infrastructure to support early childhood development in order to have the largest impact on children county-wide. She's successfully engaged school districts, community groups, and early childhood organizations to utilize Early Development Index data on child development and kindergarten readiness to guide efforts to improve children's lives. She is advancing First 5 OC's policy work, as well as encouraging the private and public sectors to prioritize early childhood development and child care for very young children. As the organization celebrates its 25th anniversary while facing reduced state funding, Goll is leveraging every available dollar to support direct services, from well-child visits and developmental screenings, to early intervention, to quality child care, and more.



Amy Gostanian, Managing Partner

The Estate Lawyers, Irvine
In 2005 Amy L. Gostanian, shortly after passing the bar, founded the firm that would become The Estate Lawyers of today. Gostanian started by renting space from two seasoned attorneys who mentored her, particularly in estate planning. Gostanian's first significant trust and probate litigation case came in 2007, defending the eldest child against her siblings in a contentious family dispute, igniting Gostanian's passion for Conservatorships and Trust Contests. Immersing herself in the Probate Code, Gostanian achieved bar certification four years into her practice. With a commitment to excellence, Gostanian expanded the firm, and in 2017, Michelle C. Bartolic joined as an associate, focusing on trust and probate



litigation, and becoming partner in 2021. In 2023, Gostanian and Michelle merged with the Law Offices of Bradley R. Kirk, forming The Estate Lawyers, now the largest trust and probate litigation firm in Orange County.

Ashley Graham, Founder & Publicist

The Conscious Publicist®, Foothill Ranch
The Conscious Publicist® specializes in human-centric PR for high-growth thought leaders. As your dedicated advisory firm, they blend PR and media relations expertise with strategic thought leadership, ensuring your story and brand resonate authentically with your target audience, clientele, and stakeholders. Elevate your presence with an advisory partner committed to navigating the evolving landscape of authority, influence, and impact to meet the needs of contemporary visibility, communication, and rich engagement.



Diana Granillo, CIC, CRM, Chief Operating Officer

SullivanCurtisMonroe Insurance Services, Irvine
Bringing a broad depth of insurance knowledge and more than 30 years' industry experience, Diana Granillo joined SCM in 2019 as executive vice president and property & casualty leader. In 2021 she became chief operating officer and is now a member of SCM's ownership group. Granillo is instrumental to the agency's growth goals, having led the reorganization of the property & casualty commercial lines and personal lines divisions, and playing a vital role in SCM's continuous pursuit to exceed expectations of clients and carrier partners. Backed by a proven track record in agency operations and acquisitions of various complexities, she created an acquisition marketing platform that has added tremendous value to SCM. She also modernized several systems, processes and administrative functions throughout the company. Beyond her role as an agency leader, Granillo has helped mentor and develop new producers.



Sue Grant, Founder & Volunteer CEO

The Literacy Project, Newport Beach
Dedicated to eradicating illiteracy and empowering underserved youth, The Literacy Project was founded in 2009 by Sue Grant. Celebrating its 15th anniversary, the organization is a champion for educational advocacy, providing a comprehensive reading program to over 11,000 students from low-income families across six states. Mayor Will O'Neill recently recognized The Literacy Project with a special proclamation in honor of their impact which creates generational change. Under Grant's stewardship, The Literacy Project has secured over \$5.1 million in funding which has enabled the nonprofit to serve students in need and their schools at no cost. The Literacy Project's 30-hour program significantly improves children's reading abilities, with average skill improvements ranging from 76% to 129%. Additionally, The Literacy Project has donated \$1.96 million worth of reading games to 49,014 family members, promoting literacy within families. Grant was recently honored as a 2024 Woman of Achievement for the 30th Senate District.



Julie Green, Senior Vice President of Operations; Notice Expert

CPT Group Inc, Irvine
Julie Green has been a cornerstone of CPT Group, Inc. for nearly two decades. Starting as a case manager in 2005, she quickly advanced to director of operations by 2008 and has been the senior vice president of operations and notice expert since 2014. Green's leadership and vision have driven the company's success, overseeing operations with precision and excellence. She has designed and implemented hundreds of class action notice programs, ensuring effective, neutral, and confidential execution. Her strategic recommendations have consistently met the goals of complex settlements. By leveraging the Operations Team's strengths, Green has ensured that CPT's clients receive exceptional service and successful outcomes. Her dedication and expertise make her an exemplary leader and a driving force in the industry.



Anita Gross, Associate Principal, Corporate Accounts

Ware Malcomb, Irvine
Anita Gross is associate principal at Ware Malcomb, an international design firm based in Irvine, CA. In her role, she leads the Corporate Accounts team, which supports the project delivery of corporate accounts nationally. Gross joined Ware Malcomb in 2005 and has held multiple leadership roles. Previously director, Interior Architecture & Design, Gross was responsible for scaling and managing the firm's Los Angeles studio. Proving to be an exceptional relationship builder with large-scale clients, she became head of Ware Malcomb's Corporate Accounts program out of the firm's Irvine headquarters. The unique program leverages the firm's North American platform to deliver consistent, integrated design services to clients spanning various industries, including office, industrial, retail, science and technology, restaurant and education. Most recently, Gross helped lead the firm's rollout of PlanSpot, a secure website portal for critical real estate asset information. The platform assists with data access, management and security.



Brittany Grunau, Business Broker

Pacific Business Sale, Irvine
Brittany Grunau, is a seasoned business broker and manages transactions across industries such as manufacturing, construction, B2B services, and distribution. With over a decade of experience as an attorney, Grunau has represented corporations, municipalities, and consumers in the practice areas of construction, insurance, and public contracts. She is committed to





Lisa Karamardian, MD, FACOG
Jeffrey M. Carlton Endowed Chair in
Women's Health, in honor of Dr. Anne M. Kent

Caroline A. Pereira, MBA
President, Hoag Hospital Foundation

Congratulations to Dr. Lisa Karamardian & Caroline Pereira

and all the extraordinary women nominated for
their outstanding contributions to our community.

Your achievements inspire us all.

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thoughtful, transparent and effective representation for both sellers and buyers. Her extensive legal background enables her to guide clients through their options to achieve their specific goals. Grunau holds a J.D. from Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, and a B.A. in Philosophy from UC Santa Barbara. She presently holds her bar license in California and Arizona (inactive).

Deborah Gubernick, Partner *Snell & Wilmer LLP, Costa Mesa*

Deborah Gubernick is a partner in the firm's intellectual property and commercial litigation groups. She helps small and large clients protect and defend their brands and business in the U.S. and abroad. She has litigated cases in state and federal courts and has handled at least 220 matters before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board. Gubernick routinely advises clients on brand selection, clearance and global protection. She has handled multiple online disputes, DMCA take-downs, and has counseled clients in the NIL space as well. She handles UDRP domain name disputes, online infringement and branding issues, cease and desist demands and more. She litigates trademark, copyright and trade secret cases, as well as cases involving false advertising, breach of contract, unfair competition and related claims. Gubernick routinely litigates trademark, copyright and trade secret cases, as well as cases involving false advertising, breach of contract, unfair competition and more. She has negotiated assignments, settlements, trademark co-existence agreements and licenses involving household brand names, high-end retailers, famous clothing brands, national sports leagues and more. Gubernick has provided IP diligence support on multi-million dollar and billion-dollar transactions and routinely provides strategic counseling and assistance for her clients' global trademark portfolios.



Rebecca Hall, President & CEO *Idea Hall, Costa Mesa*

Celebrating 21 years in business, Idea Hall is a nationally recognized creative communications agency committed to championing good both at home in Orange County & beyond through an integrated marketing model that brings marketing, branding, public relations and advertising services together under one roof. Hall and her team have worked with some of OC's most established commercial real estate businesses, as well as non-profits taking on some of the county's biggest issues - including workforce development and mental health. The agency has also attracted top local talent through its strong corporate culture where people come first. Over the past two decades, Hall has earned the reputation of being one of the first and most successful female entrepreneurs in the county. She attributes her success to staying ahead, constantly innovating and maintaining strong relationships.



Amanda Han, Managing Partner *Keystone CPA, Fullerton*

Amanda Han, CPA is a nationally-recognized tax strategist & top-selling author. She is a managing director at Keystone CPA, Inc., a firm that specializes in proactive tax planning for real estate investors nationwide. Han has been featured on prominent publications such as Money Magazine, Talks @ Google, NBC News Radio and BiggerPockets.



Debbie Hansen-Bosse, Founder & CEO *The Flora May Foundation, San Clemente*

Debbie Hansen, founder & CEO of The Flora May Foundation, has made significant strides in supporting parents dealing with their children's mental health challenges. Drawing from her personal experiences, Hansen established the foundation to provide much-needed resources, counseling, transportation, workforce development & educational programs to parents and children in need. Hansen has done what takes most non-profits a decade to accomplish. Her dedication to partnering with like-minded non-profits took off like wildfire. Hansen's 2023 new years resolution was to meet all of her connections in person, versus Zoom or voice calls. It proved to be effective, as she acquired 25+ new partners in the last eight months. Under her leadership, the foundation has successfully implemented crisis intervention services, those that benefit parents of struggling kids. She developed comprehensive educational workshops, and launched stigma reduction campaigns. Hansen's dedication to mental health advocacy has fostered a supportive community, ensuring parents are never alone in journeys with their child or teenagers. Her visionary approach and unwavering commitment have transformed countless lives, making The Flora May Foundation a vital resource to parents of children with mental health services, addiction, and other issues.



Lesley Harper, Associate Vice President & Client Leader *CannonDesign, Irvine*

Lesley Harper has worked for over four years as an associate vice president and client leader at CannonDesign. She has managed a handful of influential projects such as the Gregory Bateson Building renovation - a historic office building that set the standard for sustainable design in the 1970s. Harper and her team are upgrading the building and transforming it into a modern, LEED Platinum workplace. Harper is also managing the VA Spinal Cord Injury Community Living Center in San Diego and the Riverside University Health System, a public/private partnership project that will provide new emergency care, a medical office building, and behavioral health hospital. Outside of her daily duties, Harper is also an advisory board member to Open Hand Studio of CannonDesign, the firm's public interest design arm that partners with nonprofits to create a global impact. She was part of a team that restructured and reimagined what Open Hand Studio could accomplish. She now helps oversee future projects accepted within the program.



Heather Heleloa, Director of Marketing

Big Air USA, Ladera Ranch

Heather Heleloa is a marketing leader in hospitality, tourism and entertainment. Her expertise stems from 20 years providing excellence in service and supporting influential brands. As a first-generation college graduate, she earned her B.A. in communications from Cal State Fullerton and M.S. in hospitality and tourism from the University of Southern California where she was awarded the Order of Arête. In her current role, Heleloa is responsible for the development and oversight of strategic initiatives to propel the nationwide growth of Big Air indoor trampoline and adventure parks. She serves the industry as a member of the Media & PR Committee for the International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions. As a respected advocate for her community, Heleloa honors her Native Hawaiian heritage as Secretary of 'Ahaui o Lili'uokalani Hawaiian Civic Club and creator of Heleloa.com, a directory of Pacific Islander news, businesses and events throughout Southern California.



Cheril Hendry, CEO

Brandtailers, Newport Beach

With over three decades of experience in the marketing industry, Cheril Hendry leads as the CEO and owner of Brandtailers, an ingenious advertising and marketing agency. Brandtailers empowers clients to build and expand their brands in the digital landscape using exceptionally smart strategies. Hendry's success is driven by innovation and creativity rather than hefty budgets. This approach embraces radical transparency and egoless collaboration, ensuring every voice is heard and valued. Her vast industry expertise enables Brandtailers to achieve what no other agency can. They are dedicated to crafting customized solutions that tackle each client's unique challenges, delivering measurable results and fostering sustainable growth. Hendry's unwavering commitment to excellence and passion for innovative problem-solving informs every project they take on, positioning them as a pioneering force in advertising and marketing. Hendry and her team have worked across a broad spectrum of industries, excelling in sectors such as restaurants, automotive, startups, and non-profits. Prominent clients include California Fish Grill, Il Fornaio, Palm Springs Motors, and Hope Builders.



Madelynn Hirneise, CEO

Families Forward, Irvine

Madelynn Hirneise is the chief executive officer of Families Forward, an organization that provides vital safety-net services to families experiencing homelessness in Orange County. For 40 years, it has helped families achieve lasting stability through housing and personalized supportive services, improving the lives of more than 14,000 people in 2023. Under her leadership, the organization has evolved to meet the unique needs and challenges families have recently faced; this includes securing funding from CalOptima Health and the City of Tustin to build a brand-new affordable housing complex and recently becoming the service provider for Orange's newly opened Valencia Garden community. For over a decade Hirneise's been with Families Forward, first as a housing resource specialist then senior director before becoming CEO. Guided by compassion, innovative thinking and a sharp strategic focus, Hirneise strives to see a world where every family has a home and the opportunity to thrive.



Maria Hollandsworth, President & Chief Operating Officer

El Pollo Loco, Costa Mesa

Maria Hollandsworth, as president and chief operating officer of El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc., has demonstrated exceptional leadership and impact. During her tenure as interim CEO from November 2023 to February 2024, she excelled by fostering a culture of accountability and recognition, leading the creation of the annual operating plan, and delivering performance results that exceeded Q1 2024 expectations. Her success in this high-pressure role showcased her adaptability and effectiveness, building on her extensive experience in the food service industry. Beyond operational achievements, Hollandsworth has made a significant impact as a mentor to El Pollo Loco's female workforce. Her commitment to nurturing and advancing women has empowered individuals and fostered a more inclusive corporate culture. This dedication to mentorship, combined with her strategic vision and operational expertise, highlights Hollandsworth's multifaceted contributions to El Pollo Loco's growth and cultural development. Her leadership continues to drive unit growth, profitability, and shareholder value while ensuring customer satisfaction and brand alignment.



Krista Hollinger, Chief Operating Officer

Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties, Anaheim

Krista Hollinger joined Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties (PPOSBC) as chief operating officer in December 2021. Hollinger has led the expansion of services at PPOSBC health centers, including the implementation of "opt-out" testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Automatically offering testing at every PPOSBC medical appointment has significantly decreased syphilis cases in cities with a PPOSBC health center. She has put in place a new analytics and project management structure, and her new plan for enhanced staffing on weekends to better serve patient needs has led to 5% year-over-year growth in health center visits (246,481 in FY 2023-2024, up from 233,919 in FY 2022-2023). Hollinger also built PPOSBC's Abortion Aid program from the ground up. The program, which is unlike any other in the country, helps out-of-state patients forced to travel to California for abortions and handle any other logistical needs associated with their procedure.



Lisa Hsiao, Partner

Musick, Peeler, & Garrett LLP, Costa Mesa

Lisa R. Hsiao is a talented and experienced trial attorney and focuses her practice on

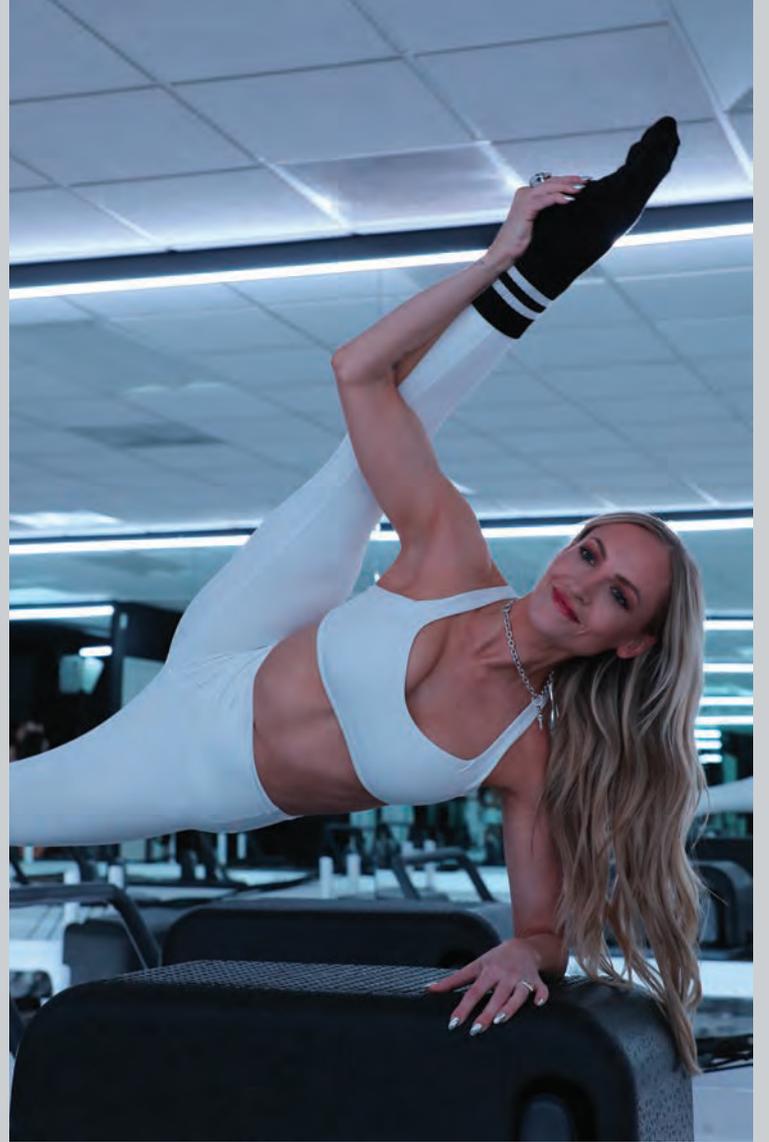


Amanda Jane

on her nomination for the 2024 OCBJ
Women in Business Award.

Amanda Jane founded Studio X in 2021 and is the sole owner + CEO with locations in Costa Mesa, Irvine and upcoming in 2025 - Orange!

Amanda is a former Professional Ballerina who was classically trained in the Russian Vaganova Ballet methodology and started her Professional Ballet career at 15 years old. She has danced with companies such as the Washington Ballet, Texas Ballet Theatre and Joffrey Chicago. Amanda discovered Pilates while healing from career ending injuries when she then realized she could help others through Pilates. She opened her first studio with a partner in Fresno at 20 years old. Amanda moved to Orange County because she wanted to get exposed to corporate gyms and Fresno felt limiting. After 10 years in the Fitness Industry and in the pressures of Covid - Studio X was born.



Studio X is **disrupting** the world of classical Pilates!

The Studio X approach is nothing like the traditional Pilates format. The studio aesthetic is black and white with a modern Techno vibe. We ditched the rocking chair mentality and installed acrylic swings to match our modern approach to Pilates! The scent, the sound, the lighting - it all matters to us here. Our classes have a classical foundation with a contemporary style. Studio X prides itself on being a place anybody and everybody can do Pilates! We are blunt with no filters and focus on building community over cliques.

The Studio X Comprehensive Pilates Certification Program launched in August 2023. Amanda ensures payments plans are also available to bridge accessibility in the community which is very important to her. This Certification Program is available to anyone in the community who wants to invest in their Pilates career, become a skillful Pilates Instructor and diversify their streams of income. Amanda teaches continuing education for current Instructors and offers in studio workshops for the Pilates community. Our mission at Studio X is to create opportunities for people to grow in their Pilates practice through focusing on a culture that emphasizes collaboration over competition.

Find us on  @studiox_oc. For more information on group or private Pilates classes, email us at admin@studioxpilates.com and check out our website www.studioxpilates.com for upcoming 2025 Comprehensive Pilates Certifications.

- Studio X Squad

“Studio X ditched the rocking chair mentality and installed acrylic swings to match our modern approach to Pilates!”

- Amanda Jane



Studio X invites you to check out our world!

Download the Studio X app to enable discounted rates!

2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

transportation, product liability, premises liability, real estate and employment. She represents Fortune 500 companies, small businesses and individuals in tort-based litigation with an emphasis on products liability, business litigation and transportation law. Hsiao has obtained favorable results for her clients through early mediation, dispositive motions, pre-trial motions, and jury and court trials. Due to her legal prowess and dedication, Hsiao was selected to chair the of the firm's Business Litigation Insurance Defense Group, whose work is invaluable to the Musick Peeler's work and clientele. In addition, she is a member and leader in the firm's 24-hour Accident Investigation Team, which ensures that when an accident occurs, the firm's clients are adequately represented and evidence is preserved, which is of critical importance given the delay that can occur between the accident and filing of litigation.



Jessica Hubbard, CEO

Casa Youth Shelter, Los Alamitos

Since stepping into the role of CEO in January 2023, Jessica Hubbard has hit the ground running for Casa Youth Shelter, the only emergency temporary shelter for children between Culver City and Huntington Beach. In just a year and a half, she has already made a significant impact - including doubling its service numbers to reach more youth in crisis and breaking organization fundraising. An expert in youth development and education, whose credentials include a law school degree and tenure as the chief program officer of Girls Inc. of Orange County, Hubbard also leveraged her diverse skill set to kick-start a strategic planning process and organization restructuring that has put Casa Youth Shelter on a path to not only continue providing critical short-term residential care, but also dramatically expand its existing counseling and therapeutic mental health services for every adolescent in crisis throughout the region.



Meymuna Hussein-Cattan, Founder & CEO

Tiyya, Santa Ana

Meymuna Hussein-Cattan is the founder & CEO of Tiyya, an award winning nonprofit supporting families of refugees, asylees, and low-income immigrants in Orange County. Born in an Ethiopian refugee camp in Somalia, Hussein-Cattan has been recognized as a 2022 Top 10 CNN Hero and a 2023 PBS Local Hero. Her tireless efforts have always centered on transforming the narrative around refugees, celebrating their strengths, beauty, and diverse histories to build spaces where everyone discovers a sense of belonging. In 2020, just as the pandemic lockdown began, Hussein-Cattan opened a social enterprise and refugee-run restaurant, Flavors from Afar. Rotating refugee chefs each month, a percentage of profits go back to fund Tiyya and its programs. This year, the foundation launched a free culinary academy to help participants gain the necessary experience and certification needed to start their own businesses or find work in the restaurant industry. Flavors also celebrates being twice awarded a Michelin Bib Gourmand.



Shelley Iocona, Founder & Principal

ON ITS AXIS, Costa Mesa

Shelley Iocona is the founder and principal of ON ITS AXIS, a strategic Innovation consultancy focused on preparing companies for the future with innovative product, people and process initiatives. With a background in tech and digital advertising, Iocona has carved her niche in empowering businesses to embrace sustainability to drive innovation and success. Her achievements include leading transformative ESG projects for Fortune 500 companies, as well as hosting workshops and speaking engagements on sustainable business practices. By founding ON ITS AXIS, Iocona has positioned herself as a thought leader in the ESG space, helping organizations foster sustainable cultures and drive positive change.



Amanda Jane, Owner, Founder & CEO

Studio X, Costa Mesa

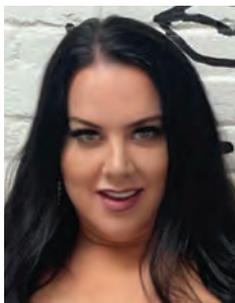
Amanda Jane, founder, owner and CEO of Studio X, is a retired professional Ballerina who danced with companies such as The Washington Ballet, Texas Ballet Theatre and Joffrey Chicago. Following a series of injuries that forced an early retirement, Jane found Pilates while healing her body and realized Pilates could have prevented her early retirement. Driven by a passion for helping others overcome physical challenges, Jane established her first Pilates studio in Fresno at a young age, then moved to Orange County, where she built a strong reputation working at prestigious studios/gyms. Three years ago, she founded Studio X, which now has locations in Costa Mesa and Irvine, with plans for a third in Orange. Her innovative approach combines Classical Pilates with Contemporary techniques, fostering a unique and engaging mind-body connection.



Amber Johnson, Owner & Founder

Facial Lounge, Corona Del Mar

Amber Rose Johnson, the visionary founder of Facial Lounge, has been at the forefront of personalized skincare for over two decades. Her journey began with a deeply personal struggle with cystic and hormonal acne, which significantly impacted her confidence. Determined to find a safe, clean, nontoxic, and effective approach to healing the skin, Johnson dedicated herself to the study of holistic wellness and advanced skincare techniques. Johnson has transformed the skincare landscape by integrating advanced techniques with clean, effective products. Her expertise and dedication have earned her a loyal clientele,



including celebrities and skincare enthusiasts who seek her innovative treatments and personalized care. At Facial Lounge, Johnson continues to inspire and empower clients to achieve their healthiest, most radiant skin, fulfilling her mission to give others the confidence she once sought for herself.

Ronnetta Johnson, CEO

Waymakers, Irvine

Ronnetta Johnson is a passionate executive leader who has dedicated over 38 years to the nonprofit sector. She has spent nearly 30 years at Waymakers, a nonprofit that shelters children and young adults, supports crime victims, and counsels families by providing stabilization and fostering coping skills, and educates communities in ways to live happier and healthier lives. Johnson was appointed CEO in 2015. Since then, Johnson has taken a visionary approach to the future of the agency. One of the first changes she made as CEO was to the leadership structure, a process that has continued to evolve. The primary purpose of that first change was to expand those involved in agency decision making. An authentic and well-respected leader, Johnson is committed to listening and learning. Her style is to emphasize open communication that ensures team members know they have a voice within the agency.



Chelsea Jubilee, CEO

Energized Health, Laguna Hills

Chelsea Jubilee co-founded the company in 2019 alongside her amazing husband John. Jubilee is currently the active CEO. She has managed to achieve amazing growth of the business recently making the INC Mag. top 5000 fastest growing private companies. She expanded the product line of the business and improved the overall operational success of the team. She invests countless hours into building a great team, she sees her role as a leader to equip and train up other leaders within the organization. She was recently a finalist in the 40 under 40 Irvine Chamber award where she was celebrated alongside other amazing women who are the next generation of business leaders. She loves helping others get healthy in their mind, body and spirit which is the overall goal of Energized Health.



Danielle Judd, Founder & CEO

FarmHouse Rescue, Trabuco Canyon

Danielle Judd is a visionary leader who founded FarmHouse Rescue, a distinguished 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, in 2018. This came after surviving a life-threatening illness that left her with enduring effects, including memory loss. Through her unwavering determination and passion, she sought to heal both animals and humans alike. As the driving force behind FarmHouse Rescue, Judd expertly manages, coordinates, and executes all programs and activities related to marketing, operations, and fundraising. Her remarkable abilities have propelled the organization to new heights, enabling it to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those it serves.



Patty Juneau, Founder & President

PMJ Insurance Services, Anaheim

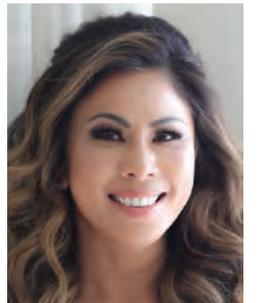
Patty Juneau has been a key player at Alzheimer's Orange County, contributing significantly to the organization's mission and initiatives. Over the past three years, she has served as a dedicated board member, offering strategic direction and leadership that has driven organizational growth. Her involvement with the golf committee has been instrumental in not only raising a remarkable amount of funds but also, raising awareness, and generating support through well-executed golf tournaments. Additionally, she excels in building and maintaining valuable community connections, leveraging these relationships to foster partnerships and further the goals of Alzheimer's Orange County.



Manna Kadar, Founder & CEO

Manna Kadar Beauty Inc., Irvine

As an Asian-American born in Paris, Manna Kadar relocated to Lincoln Heights, California by age five and was raised by a strong Asian single mom and grandmother. Growing up in a tough neighborhood and being Asian-American, she witnessed first-hand the everyday battle to survive, viewing education and enterprise as a way out of the struggle. At age 16, she purchased her first cosmetics store at the local mall. At age 18, she became one of a handful of students accepted into college. Kadar stayed close to home, studying Finance and Distribution Management at USC. A natural-born entrepreneur, she used what she learned in the classroom to grow her mall-based cosmetics chain to seven stores in six years. After college, she sold her beauty business to enter the world of corporate banking. Over the next six years, Kadar excelled rapidly, yet missed the fulfillment and purpose that entrepreneurship provided. In 2007, she exited the finance world, taking everything she learned and applying it to her new venture: developing a chain of tanning salons that would one day lead to the Manna Kadar Beauty empire. Seeking to creatively maximize revenues, Kadar turned her tanning salon lobby into a beauty bar. The idea quickly gained traction, giving Kadar her first opportunity to develop an original cosmetics line and thus Manna Kadar Beauty was born.



Katie Kalvoda, CEO

G3 Ventures, San Juan Capistrano

Katie Kalvoda is the founder and CEO of G3 Ventures, a social enterprise specializing in innovative philanthropy, impact investing, and community advocacy. In this role, Kalvoda has created a consultancy for social good that leverages data and analytics with



2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

community-centric design and programmatic expertise to develop targeted solutions for today's most pressing issues. G3 Ventures is home to a fast-growing community of mission-driven consultants who have domain expertise in social services, healthcare, education, finance, law, artificial intelligence and more. Their network of experts are experienced doers who have led large organizations and complex initiatives in the social sector. The company provides clients with a holistic range of services to "do good and do well." Whether you are looking to engage with the community or have a need for a seasoned project manager to carry out a new initiative, G3 Ventures provides strategic advice, technical assistance, program design, and C-suite services that is data-driven and equity-oriented.

Lisa Karamardian, M.D., Jeffrey M. Carlton Endowed Chair in Women's Health, in honor of Dr. Anne M. Kent, and medical director of maternal child health

Hoag, Newport Beach

Dr. Lisa Karamardian is the Jeffrey M. Carlton Endowed Chair in Women's Health, in honor of Dr. Anne M. Kent, and medical director of maternal child health at Hoag. Dr. Karamardian is experienced in high-risk obstetrics, including multiple births and pregnancies that are the result of advanced reproductive technologies such as IVF. Committed to utilizing less invasive surgical options to treat a variety of gynecologic conditions, she treats women throughout their lifetime with an emphasis on wellness and a passion for menopause care. As the Jeffrey M. Carlton Endowed Chair in Women's Health, Dr. Karamardian carries forward the remarkable legacy of Dr. Anne Kent, who delivered over 10,000 babies, and will ensure Hoag patients continue to have access to the most advanced treatment options in women's health.



the Bridges to Business (B2B) leadership initiative, offering students a range of experiential business workshops. Kavanaugh also established a popular speaker series featuring globally renowned leaders and designed an innovation and entrepreneurship program that teaches students to transform ideas into ethical business ventures in the social impact sector, including B Corporations and venture philanthropy. Her mentorship has impacted countless students and alumni, and has raised the university's profile and fostered student engagement. Kavanaugh's visionary leadership and commitment to the institution's mission and values have significantly advanced SUA's community outreach and engagement.



Emily Kearney, Founder & Managing Partner

The Kearney Firm, APC, Newport Beach

Emily Kearney, founder and partner, has over twelve years of legal experience and is dedicated to making a difference in her clients' lives. Previously working for a Fortune 500 company and a prominent litigation firm in Los Angeles, she brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her firm. As the founder and principal attorney, Kearney specializes in providing comprehensive outside general counsel services to businesses of all sizes. Her areas of focus include contract drafting, business and HR consulting, trademark and

Nicole Kasperbauer, Marketing Manager

Revive Real Estate, Irvine

Nicole Kasperbauer, a passionate creative marketing manager with 10 years of experience creating impactful campaigns, brings innovative ideas to the real estate industry. She excels at building brand awareness and customer relationships to create long-lasting value. Hype girl turned marketing guru, Kasperbauer leverages her creativity to develop and execute groundbreaking marketing strategies that elevate the brand and connect with target audiences across all channels.



Dee Cohen Katz, Managing Partner

Walsworth LLP, Irvine

Dee Cohen Katz joined Walsworth in 1995 as an associate attorney and was appointed managing partner in 2019. She currently oversees the firm's operations in Orange County, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, and has played a key role in shaping the firm into what it is today - a fast-growing, women-owned law firm that has thrived with the changing times. In addition, she has seized every opportunity to promote diversity in her community, and in the firm. Under her leadership, Walsworth received the Advancement of Women Award from the Orange County Women Lawyers Association, and grew into the largest California-based law firm member of the National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF).



Mary Patrick Kavanaugh, Director of Special Projects- Bridges to Business (B2B) and Critical Conversations

Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo

Mary Patrick Kavanaugh joined Soka University of America in 2011 and has since become a driving force in creating innovative programs that connect internal and external communities. She launched the Changemaker program, which evolved into

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Congratulations on your Women in Business Awards nomination.

JENNIFER WELKER
Chief Financial Officer

Shopoff Realty Investments is an Irvine-based, national real estate investment firm, founded more than 30 years ago by Bill and Cindy Shopoff.

The firm primarily focuses on the repositioning of commercial properties, the entitlement of land assets, and development.

Shopoff Realty Investments
18565 Jamboree Road, Suite 200, Irvine, CA 92612
(844) 4-SHOPOFF | shopoff.com

2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

copyright prosecution, privacy policy drafting, and compliance work. Kearney is deeply committed to understanding the unique legal needs of businesses in today's fast-paced environment. She collaborates closely with clients to develop tailored solutions that align with their specific goals and objectives. Her strategic guidance covers corporate governance, regulatory compliance, intellectual property protection, and risk management.

Adrienne Kessler, CEO

Speech and Language Development Center, Buena Park
Under CEO Adrienne Kessler's leadership, Speech and Language Development Center (SLDC) was selected as a 2024 California Nonprofit of the Year in the 67th State Assembly district. This recognition is not only a testament to the passion Kessler brings to serving individuals with disabilities and special needs, but also the deep impact she is creating through the programs that provide innovative education and therapies at all life stages. Since joining SLDC in 2016, Kessler has opened an office in Temecula, forged new partnerships with leading universities for the center to conduct original research and train future clinicians, and grown clinical services and the adult day program year over year. Additionally, Kessler influences special education policy as a board member for the California Association of Private Special Education Services and has positioned SLDC as a trailblazer in special education, making a profound difference locally and statewide.



Laura Khouri, President

Western National Property Management, Irvine
Laura Khouri is a gamechanger and a true inspiration to women in the commercial real estate industry. As president of Western National Property Management (WNPM), the residential real estate management arm of Western National Group (a 65-year-old company that has transacted more than \$20 billion in real estate), Khouri has spent the last 38 years perfecting the art of multifamily property management. Her work has redefined this specialization and underscored its importance to successful asset management in all economic climates. Khouri has led WNPM to earn a reputation for providing property management services that surpass owners' goals while enhancing the value of each asset and delivering a high-quality living environment at each community. Under Khouri's leadership, the company operates in California and Nevada, and currently manages over 23,000 multifamily units with a combined value of more than \$8 billion.



Tiffany King, VP of Finance

JSerra Catholic High School, San Juan Capistrano
Tiffany King has been with JSerra for more than five years now. She was originally hired as the controller for the business office and within a year of her joining the school she was promoted to her current position of VP of Finance. Mrs. King is a valuable member of the school's leadership team.



Robin King, Corporate Relations Director

The Shea Center, San Juan Capistrano
Robin King brings over 25 years of business development, marketing, promotion and sales experience to The Shea Center, a therapeutic equestrian facility dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through horse-related programs. As a seasoned executive in the for-profit world, she combines her knowledge of cause marketing, event sponsorship sales and passion for building relationships with her desire to engage organizations in corporate social responsibility to broaden the footprint of corporate support for The Shea Center. She, along with her team, engage board members, passionate committee members and corporate partners throughout Southern California to raise over \$7 million dollars annually. King has been responsible for national advertising campaigns across 300+ radio stations throughout the U.S. Landing multimillion dollar media campaigns for American Airlines, PepsiCo, P&G, Wells Fargo Bank, The San Francisco 49ers and San Jose Sharks to name a few. With that said, she has always focused on building meaningful relationships first, which has led her to build out a network of colleagues, and business partners that span 100's of industries.



Sharon R. Klein, Partner and Co-Chair, Privacy, Security & Data Protection Practice; Office Managing Partner, Orange County Office

Blank Rome LLP, Irvine
Sharon Klein is a nationally recognized leader in data privacy and cybersecurity law with more than 40 years of experience. She is co-chair of her firm's more than 40-attorney national Privacy, Security & Data Protection practice; managing partner of its Orange County office; on her firm's Executive Committee; and has served on the board of the Girl Scouts of Orange County for more than six years. Klein is a thought leader and problem solver in data privacy, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and complex technology transactions. Her experience includes 12 years as associate general counsel at Siemens Medical Solutions USA. Cybersecurity risk and legislation are rapidly evolving globally. In 2023, ransomware affected 72 percent of businesses, costing them more than \$20 billion a year. Klein ensures that her business clients minimize their risks, comply with myriad regulations, and avoid cyberattacks and breaches, while leveraging the exploding value of data.



Lee Ann Kline, President & Founder

STEM Advantage, Huntington Beach
Lee Ann Kline began her career as a programmer at IBM. As a Mathematics and Computer Science major, she was keenly aware of the lack of women in her field and the need for role models. As her career progressed and she became a consultant, she

observed firsthand the lack of gender and racial diversity in the technology organizations she served. See something. Do something. Inspired to create change, in 2012 Kline leveraged her network to create STEM Advantage, a 501c3 nonprofit, to advance equity through education and career development. Talent is equally distributed, but opportunity is not. STEM Advantage mentors, prepares and inspires women and underserved communities, primarily first-generation college students from low-income families, for STEM careers. Scholars say the program is "life changing" and empowering. They "pay it forward" as role models and mentors for younger students.



Danielle Knudson, Executive Vice President

DAUM Commercial Real Estate Services, Newport Beach
Danielle Knudson is executive vice president and a principal at DAUM Commercial Real Estate Services. She specializes in local and national Tenant Representation out of DAUM's Orange County office. Earlier this year, Knudson helped facilitate one of the largest office property sales in the county, closing a \$19 million Class A office property in Cypress during a period of slowing deal flow across the office sector.



Karen Kroeter, Director of Global Luxury Travel

Travelmation, Huntington Beach
Karen Kroeter, a luxury global travel agent with Travelmation, specializes in crafting unforgettable vacations tailored to her clients' needs. She meticulously plans travel for individuals, couples, families, and groups, both domestically and internationally. Her comprehensive services cover every detail, from securing optimal airfare to organizing ground transportation and exclusive excursions. Kroeter's dedication to exceptional service has earned her a reputation for creating dream vacations. Her partnerships with esteemed travel industry players like Marriott, Disney, Montage Hotels and Resorts, Four Seasons, and Bonvoy grant her clients access to some of the world's most luxurious accommodations and experiences. With an extensive network of contacts and a commitment to delivering cutting-edge travel plans, Kroeter is ready to redefine your travel experience and curate unparalleled adventures. She looks forward to being a part of your elite travel plans and showing you exclusive destinations.



Gila Kurtz, President, Co-Founder/Co-Owner

Dog is Good/ Dog is Good for Good Foundation/ The BOLO Project, Los Alamitos
Gila Kurtz founded Dog is Good with the mission to change lives one dog at a time with a brand focusing on messaging that expresses their love and joy of dogs. Since its inception, DIG has generously given back to animal welfare and veteran organizations. Most recently, The BOLO Project was started to develop teens to become confident and inspired future leaders of impact.



Reena Lalji, Chief Operating Officer

Research Affiliates LLC, Newport Beach
Reena Lalji is responsible for overseeing the finance, legal/compliance, human resource and Operations/Administrative functions of Research Affiliates. She is a member of the management committee and chairs the administration committee. Lalji joined Research Affiliates in December 2021 as partner and GC - Rob (Founder) & Chris (CEO) recognized Lalji broad set of skills. She was appointed to the board in 2022 and then made chief operating officer in 2023 due to her relentless work ethic, ability to create efficiencies across multiple business units, and leadership. At her prior firm (Wilshire), Lalji started as the firm's general counsel and over the next 12 years, took on increased leadership responsibilities including compliance, human resources and administration; in 2018 she was appointed to Wilshire's board of directors. During her time at Wilshire, she contributed to their significant growth in AUM from approximately \$9 billion to over \$80 billion and supported the creation of new index and analytics products. In 2020, she provided strategic guidance in the structuring and implementation of the sale of Wilshire to private equity buyers; the deal closed in 2021.



Kelly Lam, Founder & CEO

The Whole Purpose LLC, Newport Beach
Kelly Lam is a wellness expert and founder of The Whole Purpose, a company that offers individuals and corporations an innovative approach to physical and emotional wellbeing through Mindful Wellness and Purposeful Communication. The Whole Purpose creates customized wellness programs for corporations that boost employee morale, encourage team building and employee retention rates. After many years working in corporate America, Lam realized the vital need for healthy and balanced wellness solutions. Through her first-hand experience, she has brought 'whole' solutions to various global corporations and exercises her talents by producing corporate and specialty events that are customized to promote individual health on a broad scale. Lam's passion and expertise combine to create a unique connection with her clients that stems from her own personal journey towards wellness, coupled with the desire to empower others. With many years in the wellness and nutrition sector, Lam is a seasoned consultant and teacher of yoga, nutrition and health programs designed to achieve optimal wellbeing.



Xandra Laskowski, Founder & CEO

OSEA Ange Investors, Newport Beach
Xandra Laskowski is a seasoned entrepreneur and investor with over 25 years of experience in the tech industry. She is the founder and CEO of OSEA Angel Investors in

Congratulations Pat Chiku - President/Founder (Patricia Chikuturudzi, RN, BSN)

Healthy at Home Caregivers, **Compassionate Care for All** founded by **Pat** has become a beacon of hope for families in need of compassionate, personalized care. In recognition of her extraordinary work, Pat has been nominated for the **Orange County Journal Women in Business Awards 2024**.

From Personal Loss to a Mission of Care

In 2006, Pat's world changed when she lost her mother to cancer due to severe miscommunication among her medical team. This tragedy ignited her passion for improving healthcare delivery, ensuring families never face the same experience. Leaving behind her career as a hospital nurse, Pat embarked on a new mission: **starting Healthy at Home Caregivers** from a small office in her home, donating her time to at-risk individuals and training families to care for their loved ones. What began with just one client has now grown into a thriving, trusted home care provider serving **Orange County and surrounding Counties**. She continues to volunteer her time, partnering with **senior centers** and organizations like **Age Well** to offer **health screenings** and prevent hospital admissions.

A Vision Built on Compassionate Care for All

Pat's Vision is clear: **Everyone deserves compassionate care regardless of their circumstances**. No one is turned away, whether due to income, health conditions or immigration status.

- **Seniors and Disabled Individuals** receive personalized in-home care.
- **Medicaid and CalOptima** members are accepted **AT NO COST** with **Low-income/ No-Income**.
- **Veterans** receive specialized care honoring their service **AT NO COST**.
- **Private Pay and Long-Term Care Clients** get the highest standard of assistance.
- **Kaiser Permanente** members on Medicaid are accepted **AT NO COST**.

Holistic, Comprehensive Care

Healthy at Home Caregivers offers a broad range of services, all designed to address the **body, mind, and spirit**:

- **Hospice and Palliative Care**: End-of-life care focused on comfort and dignity
- **Dementia and Alzheimer's Care**: Expert support for memory care
- **Post-Surgical and Recovery Care**: Professional, tailored support for recovery at home.
- **In-Home Care**: Daily assistance, personal care, and companionship.
- **Medication** management/reminders



Why Choose Healthy at Home Caregivers?

Healthy at Home Caregivers stands out for its commitment to:

- **Accessibility**: Serving Medicaid, CalOptima, Veterans benefits, and private pay clients.
- **Tailored Care Plans**: Each client receives individualized care suited to their specific needs.
- **Compassionate Team**: A staff of dedicated professionals committed to client well-being.
- **Holistic Approach**: Addressing the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of clients.
- Focusing on **preventative care** and avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions.

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Dana Point CA, 92629

2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

2017, a women-focused angel investment group based in Orange County, California. Laskowski has a diverse entrepreneurial background, having worked in large multinational tech companies as well as startups as a founder, investor, advisor, and board member. Her professional experience includes holding positions such as worldwide commodity manager and national major accounts manager. In 2017, Laskowski founded OSEA Angel Investors to create a platform for women to learn about angel investing and gain access to deals. The group is a membership-based private angel investment group focused on and driven by women executives and entrepreneurs. OSEA provides a forum for introducing emerging companies to potential women angel investors and offers education on the vetting and investment process. Laskowski is also involved with Tech Coast Angels, Cove Fund, and Titan Fund, demonstrating her connections within the angel investing community. Notably, the Titan Fund of California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) recently invited OSEA members to join the fund.



Julie Laughton, Founder & CEO

Julie Laughton Design Build and Julie Laughton General Contracting, Laguna Beach

Julie Laughton, the CEO and owner of the largest female-owned design build company in the United States. And as part of her giving back efforts, collaborates with local leaders across various sectors - including government, business, academia, and nonprofit organizations. Julie Laughton Design Build is one of the few companies in the U.S. to bring together both the creation and execution functions of home construction. It's also the only American firm founded and owned by a woman. JLDB/Julie Laughton Design Build handles the architecture, interior design, custom kitchen and bath design, and engineering, as well as city submittals and getting plans permit-ready. The affiliated construction company, JLG/Julie Laughton General Contractor, provides licensed general contracting by Laughton, who has worked in the industry for over 30 years. Laughton has spent her life "drawing, designing, and standing in the dirt working on construction-related projects." By the time she was 14, she already was drawing buildings to scale, or "hand drafting." In college, she studied architecture, landscape architecture, and interior design. After working for prestigious NYC architecture firms, she moved back to Southern California to start her own business.



Catherine Lawrence, Founder

Recruitmentllc.com, Irvine

Catherine Lawrence has been a force within Southern California's Banking recruiting industry for over 20 years and in banking for over 40 years. Having done many of the jobs she recruits for herself, it's no wonder she was able to achieve seven figure gross revenue two years in a row. Lawrence is a leading national recruiter in the Banking industry and has placed direct hire and temporary employees from Tellers to C-Suite level for local, regional, and top 10 national banks.



Julie Leffler, President & Creative Director

Big Hype Marketing, Newport Beach

As the visionary leader and creative director of Big Hype Marketing & PR, Julie Leffler has built a powerhouse agency with a combination of grace, tenacity and panache. With her creative and discerning eye, on-point content writing skills, well-nurtured media relationships and her ability to multi-task as if she had eight arms, Leffler provides a next-level dedication to clients, and creates strategic campaigns that make an impact. For over 15 years, Julie Leffler has promoted both individuals and businesses across a variety of industries including, celebrities, fashion, events, charity, consumer products, service industry, theatrical movie releases, home video and non-profit organizations. Earlier in her career, Leffler worked at PR agencies in Hollywood representing home video releases and then celebrities, movie premieres and theatrical releases. She later managed both marketing and public relations at action sports company, Hurley. In 2006, Leffler launched her own public relations agency, Prestige Public Relations, representing fashion and lifestyle brands. Prestige PR grew in to Big Hype Marketing in 2015 with the addition of comprehensive digital marketing services including SEO, SEM, website design, influencer marketing as well as graphic design and print marketing.



Renee Loignon Dion, CFO & COO

Marquee Staffing, Irvine

Renee Loignon joined Marquee Staffing in 1994 as the company controller. Over the years, she excelled and now serves as the COO & CFO. She oversees accounting and finance, human resources, and information technology; playing a critical role in daily operations. Loignon ensures Marquee remains at the forefront of technological advancements. She manages the implementation of advanced technologies across all company functions, including operations, business development, and marketing. These technologies providing real-time reporting, assessment, and management capabilities that integrate seamlessly with business development strategies. Loignon is dedicated to bringing people together to develop solutions and achieve success. She values long-term relationships with employees, clients, and corporate partners and has earned the respect of her team by engaging them, providing clear direction, and supporting their individual roles. Her passion for her work is evident, and she thrives in her role as a leader.



Heather Lovato, CEO & Founder

clover PR, Yorba Linda

Heather Lovato has single handed built clover PR from the ground up to be a multi-million dollar company representing the top in beauty, health and wellness including barre3, Emily Skye FIT,



Origins, Manduka, MiniLuxe, PCRF, Shop Goodwill and more. She has created a work environment that is unseen in PR - founded on producing exceptional work while finding the balance that is needed to support her staffs personal needs without sacrificing in performance or client experience.

Billie Luzar, Director of Purchasing

Trumark Homes, Newport Beach

At Trumark Homes' Southern California Division, Billie Luzar leads a dynamic team as Director of Purchasing, a critical role within a homebuilding organization. Luzar is responsible for contract and pricing negotiations for all suppliers and trade organizations whose products and materials are used in the vertical construction of Trumark Homes' new home communities across Southern California, including Irvine and Rancho Mission Viejo. Luzar is an adept leader overseeing a team of purchasing and design specialists, a team that she has built and led through change by embodying Trumark Homes' renowned company culture. She is respected and well-known as a relationship builder and problem solver. Working in concert with the operations and construction teams, Luzar helps to ensure the highest quality and standards are upheld with every single product utilized in the construction of a Trumark Home. She is a natural leader and a valued member of the team.



Kate Marr, Executive Director

Community Legal Aid SoCal, Santa Ana

Community Legal Aid SoCal grew from \$8.5 million in revenue in 2017 to \$17.4 million in 2024-25 under Kate Marr's leadership. The staff grew from 90 to 145, and the organization has expanded its free civil legal services, resulting in significant impact for clients. In 2018-2020, Marr led the organization through a complete rebrand, a restructure of its legal program, the formation of a pro bono program, and creation of a case management program to provide more extensive and holistic services to clients. The organization made a commitment to a culture of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in 2020. In 2023, CLA SoCal was selected as a recipient of the State Bar of California's Silver DEI Leadership Seal in recognition of the work it has done to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and the legal profession. This year they elevated CLA SoCal to the Gold DEI Leadership Seal.



LaShanda Maze, Chief Development Officer

Community Action Partnership of Orange County, Garden Grove

LaShanda Maze is the chief development officer at Community Action Partnership of Orange County (CAP OC), a longstanding and trusted resource headquartered in Garden Grove. For nearly 60 years, CAP OC has been a pillar of support for Orange County community members facing obstacles such as food insecurity, unemployment, economic turmoil and more, providing services and programs that address these immediate needs. Since joining the organization more than five years ago as vice president of Philanthropy, Maze has been instrumental in elevating CAP OC's profile as a formidable nonprofit committed to ending poverty within two generations. Her dedication and expertise in fund development ensure that CAP OC continues to thrive.



Katie McDowell, Senior Vice President, Senior Relationship Manager

Western Alliance Bank, Newport Beach

Katie McDowell joined the Western Alliance Bank team in 2023 as a founding member of the bank's Aerospace & Defense team and has quickly become a force within the organization. Within just four months in her current role, she secured the bank's first Aerospace & Defense client under Western Alliance Bank's new commercial bank. This achievement was the culmination of years of relationship-building, managing the impact of the 737MAX grounding as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, which halted global air traffic and disrupted production in the aerospace and defense supply chain. She also recently secured a multimillion-dollar commitment from a client that's new to Western Alliance Bank, building on the momentum in her new role and gaining traction for the organization's new commercial bank.



Judy McMackin, President

CLEAR Solutions Inc., San Clemente

With over 30 years of process application experience and 15 years of distribution business ownership, Judy McMackin brings valuable technical expertise with an understanding of what is most important to the business. "In an environment where goods and services are being constantly reduced through vendor consolidations, we remain committed to personal service and delivering customer-driven solutions that result in a long list of satisfied and loyal customers."



Shachi Mehra, Founder & Executive Chef

Spice Girl Sauces/ADYA, Santa Ana

As executive chef and partner of award-winning ADYA Restaurant in Anaheim and founder of Spice Girl Sauces, Shachi Mehra has been following her passion of bringing the magic of Indian flavors to everyone. Celebrating her heritage and Indian roots for over 10 years at ADYA, she has been credited with bringing a new Indian experience to the region. In 2021, she launched Spice Girl Sauces, a line of sauces meant to elevate your everyday foods with Indian flavors. Spice Girl Sauces are available nationwide and will be launching new flavors in stores later this year. In Orange County, where Indian cuisine has been overlooked and underrepresented, Chef Mehra has worked to shine a light on it through cooking classes, local farmers markets, and large scale



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gala events. She has been a guest chef at Disney's Food & Wine Festival and on Food Network's 'Chopped', where she emerged as a national champion by presenting Indian inspired dishes. She is proud to have the opportunity to use her voice and food to share her culture and roots with so many.

Susan Meinhardt, Director of Real Estate Accounting Operations

KBS, Newport Beach

As an integral part of the finance and accounting team, Susan Meinhardt is an impactful and respected leader who has helped shape the accounting practices for KBS, one of the largest investors in premier commercial real estate (CRE) in the nation. Joining KBS in 2009, Meinhardt has climbed the ranks at the company to become the director of Real Estate Accounting Operations. In this role, she is responsible for making sure the accounting principles run smoothly, collecting and accounting for all property level aspects of KBS' world-class properties totaling over 17.3 million square feet. Meinhardt is a fearless leader in the male-dominated world of commercial real estate. She is passionate about elevating the next generation of women in the industry and dedicates her time to mentoring young professionals in their real estate accounting and finance career journeys.



Vivian Mendoza, Director of Strategic Operations Implementation

WaBa Grill, Anaheim Hills

For nearly a decade, Vivian Mendoza has left an indelible impression on WaBa Grill, contributing to various aspects of the business, from training and operations to product development, brand visibility and consumer awareness. In early 2024, Mendoza assumed the role of director of strategic operations implementation, where she drives significant operational improvements systemwide, including enhancements to the WaBa Grill Support Center, internal processes, menu development, employee training and more. Mendoza's exemplary skills, passion for the industry and impressive leadership qualities have been instrumental to WaBa Grill's growth, which now encompasses nearly 200 locations. Guided by Mendoza's operations team, the brand successfully debuted locations in Nevada and Texas in early 2024, and is poised for further expansion throughout the Western U.S. Mendoza's near decade-long commitment to WaBa Grill is commendable, and has been pivotal in driving the brand's mission of making healthy, quality-crafted food accessible to all.



Rashmi Menon, Vice President and General Manager, California Region

Burns & McDonnell, Brea

As vice president and general manager of the Burns & McDonnell California region, Rashmi Menon leads a team of multidiscipline professionals in delivering critical infrastructure projects in the energy, aviation, mission-critical, manufacturing, federal,

construction, environmental and technology industries. With a customer-focused mindset, Menon has more than 20 years of experience in leading diverse teams to deliver innovative solutions for clients. Menon is passionate about fostering inclusive teams that celebrate differences and create opportunities for innovation and collaboration. Serving as an executive sponsor for the Burns & McDonnell Asian Pacific Islander Employee Resource Group, she fosters a culture of respect and empowerment to succeed. Menon is also actively engaged in industry and community organizations throughout the region, serving in leadership roles for the California Chamber as well as other groups. Menon is deeply passionate about giving back to the community and supporting the next generation of women leaders.



Lauren Mills, President

Sea Pointe Design & Remodel, Irvine

Lauren Mills' career at Sea Pointe Design & Remodel is a remarkable climb. Starting as a sales and marketing coordinator in 2011, her dedication led to promotions from marketing manager to running the entire sales and marketing department. In recognition of her contributions, she was appointed vice president of design, sales, and client services. And just this year, 2024, she reached the top, becoming the company's president.



Christine Moghadam, Founder

Corc Yoga, Tustin

Started by Asian American Southern California native, Christine Moghadam, a yoga aficionado and a travel enthusiast, Corc Yoga was born from a healing holiday in Portugal. Moghadam visited the Iberian Peninsula while recovering from a tremendous family loss. During her journey she not only fell in love with the charm of Portugal and its kind people, but she also became aware of one of its precious natural resources, the cork tree, and the livelihood it provided for so many in the region. She returned inspired to couple her passion for wellness with a commitment to building a sustainable, fair trade style business and launched Corc Yoga in 2017.



Sandra L. Morgan, PhD, RN, Professor; Director, Global Center for Women and Justice

Vanguard University, Costa Mesa

Sandra Morgan, Ph.D., R.N. is an advocate for victims of exploitation and trafficking. Her leadership, research, publishing and public speaking have made her a globally respected expert on combating human trafficking. A tenured professor and director for Vanguard University's Global Center for Women and Justice, Dr. Morgan inspires women leaders to

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CONGRATULATIONS TO KELLY GALLIGAN, RUTAN CORPORATE PARTNER, ON HER NOMINATION FOR THE OCBJ WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARD!

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KELLY GALLIGAN

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prevent and counter human trafficking, equitably address immigration challenges, advocate for victims and protect human rights. She directs the annual Ensure Justice Conference, educating college students, teachers, healthcare workers, social workers, law enforcement and other community leaders on important topics. A founding member of the OC Human Trafficking Task Force, Dr. Morgan also co-chaired the Public-Private Partnership Advisory Council to End Human Trafficking by Presidential appointment. Her "Ending Human Trafficking" podcast has garnered listeners in 148 countries. She has presented in South America, Russia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East and partners with the State Department and U.S. embassies.



Jennifer Morris, Founder

Ajenda Public Relations, Orange

Jennifer Morris, founder and CEO of Ajenda Public Relations, launched her creative PR and marketing agency at 29, leveraging over a decade of hands-on experience in the restaurant industry. Over the past 14 years, she has transformed Ajenda from a sole proprietorship in Orange County into a thriving, full-service agency with a national presence. Today, Ajenda represents around 30 prestigious clients, including Michelin-starred restaurants, multi-unit franchises, corporate hotel chains, boutique distilleries, and coffee roasters. Under Morris' visionary leadership, the agency has expanded its services to encompass comprehensive public relations, dynamic social media management, and innovative content creation, delivering impactful, multi-faceted campaigns that drive brand success.



Jessica Morrow, Chief of Staff

Revive Real Estate, Irvine

Revive Real Estate's Jessica Morrow is a member of the founding team at Revive and today holds the position of chief of staff, overseeing company-wide operations and acting as righthand advisor to Revive's CEO, Michael Alladawi. With a background in real estate and ground-up construction, Morrow understands firsthand what it's like to be in the 'real estate trenches' and aims to empower Realtors with the knowledge and tools they need to grow their businesses and bring value to their clients.



Gianna Mulkay, Executive Director

Foster Love, Brea

Gianna Dahlia Mulkay, the executive director of Foster Love, has been instrumental in the organization's success since its founding in 2008. Starting as an intern, Mulkay's dedication and leadership have driven Foster Love's growth from a team of two to over 50 staff members. She played a pivotal role in creating the Family Fellowship scholarship program, empowering transition-age foster youth to secure college degrees and professional employment. Mulkay also innovated the Rapid Response program, providing emergency financial assistance to foster youth in crisis. Her efforts have significantly impacted thousands of foster children, earning her recognition and accolades, including the Supervisor Doug Chaffee Fourth District Kindness Award. As a former foster youth, Mulkay's unique perspective and passion continue to transform the foster care system.



Leilah Mundt, Founder

Crème collective, Costa Mesa

Leilah Mundt's entrepreneurial journey with Crème Collective exemplifies her visionary leadership in the beauty industry. With extensive experience spanning artistry, product development, and retail management, her team offers unparalleled expertise and dedication to their craft. As the founder, Mundt has positioned Crème Collective as a pioneering sales and creative agency, spearheading a transformative shift towards ethical and sustainable beauty practices. Her strategic guidance empowers emerging and established brands to navigate the competitive market successfully. Through authentic storytelling and innovative marketing, Mundt ensures each brand's unique identity resonates with consumers, driving accelerated growth and widespread recognition. Under her stewardship, Crème Collective has become a trusted partner for beauty and wellness companies seeking to lead the industry with integrity and impact. Mundt's unwavering commitment to clean beauty sets the stage for a future where ethical practices are the industry norm, fostering confidence and empowerment for all.



Jordan Murrel, Executive Director

JPMorgan Chase & Co., Irvine

Jordan Murrel is a relationship executive on JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s Middle Market Banking and Specialized Industries Team and is focused on providing banking solutions to mid-sized companies located throughout Orange County. Murrel has been with the firm for over five years and is significantly invested in various programs within the firm. Murrel manages the summer Intern Program for Orange County commercial banking, and is involved in the company's Women on the Move initiative which empowers the advancement of women with the mission to help drive their professional and personal development. Murrel is also focused on community service and is part of the associate board for Project Youth OCBF, a non-profit focused on keeping at-risk youth in school, healthy, and drug-free through education, counseling, mentoring, and family strengthening.



Hima Nippuleti, President & CEO

BoozDNA LLC, Irvine

Hima Nippuleti, the CEO of BoozDNA, has been instrumental in steering the company towards excellence since taking the helm. With a strategic vision and a focus on innovation, Nippuleti has significantly expanded BoozDNA's market presence and service

offerings. Under her leadership, BoozDNA has successfully implemented a hybrid onshore-offshore model, enhancing operational efficiency and client satisfaction. Nippuleti's expertise in emerging technologies and her commitment to professional development have driven the company's growth and positioned BoozDNA as a leader in the IT solutions space. Her achievements include spearheading key projects across various industry verticals and fostering a culture of continuous improvement within the organization.



Kelly O'Connell, Managing Partner | Executive

360 Venture Collective | ON ITS AXIS, Costa Mesa

Kelly O'Connell has an impressive track record with 360 Venture Collective and ON ITS AXIS. As the founder and managing director of 360 Venture Collective, she has played a pivotal role in supporting historically underfunded startups and entrepreneurs in developing innovative business strategies and securing funding. O'Connell's leadership has led to the successful growth of numerous companies within the venture capital ecosystem. Additionally, O'Connell's leadership at ON ITS AXIS has further showcased her expertise in guiding organizations towards sustainable growth and success. Her strategic vision and strong network within the industry have been instrumental in creating strategic partnerships. She is a respected expert in the impact and future of work space who has been featured in news, media and as a keynote speaker. Overall, Kelly O'Connell's achievements reflect her commitment to advancing purpose and profit in the business ecosystem.



Claudia Ogaz, Vice President, Corporate Controller

Health-Ade, Buena Park

Claudia Ogaz is a long term finance executive in the community. She joined Health-Ade in 2021 as the VP corporate controller after a long tenure at Jenny Craig and Hirsch Pipe & Supply. She reports directly to the CFO and to investors. She is responsible for the financials, forecasting and assisting with the operations of the Company.



Lindsay Oglesby, CEO

Tax Relief Advocates, Irvine

Lindsay Oglesby started her career with TRA in April of 2019. She immediately became a pillar for a company that was still just a few months old. Her unique combination of administrative expertise, operational awareness, leadership, and passion to help individuals helped revolutionize the tax resolution industry. Her tireless efforts and commitment played a vital role in transforming TRA into what it is today. Since the start of her journey at TRA, she quickly rose through the ranks starting as a settlement officer, moving quickly to a manager, director, then chief operating officer. She displays the unique leadership ability to take a hands-on approach while still allowing autonomy and growth for everyone she works with. Her dedication and tireless efforts are one of the key pillars for the unprecedented growth at TRA. Evidence of her impact can be seen through the many accomplishments TRA has been honored to receive. In 2022 TRA was awarded the #1 Fastest Growing Company in the Pacific Region and #10 in the entire nation. TRA was also the recipient of the Irvine Chamber's Business of the Year in 2022.



Anoosheh Oskouian, President and CEO

Ship & Shore Environmental Inc., Signal Hill

Anoosheh Oskouian is president and CEO of Ship & Shore Environmental, Inc. She directs the corporate strategy for engineering, product development, sales, and fabrication. Over 24 years since its formation, S&SE is now one of the leading providers of clean air technologies. Oskouian believes there is a balance between keeping the manufacturing industry alive and keeping the air clean. As a leader in the industry, she is a first in many professional endeavours, setting new standards and constantly thinking of ways to offer innovative solutions for clean air. S&SE has been featured in several renowned publications including The LA Times, CNN Money, Bloomberg, Plastics News, LABJ and more. In 2015, Oskouian was esteemed the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and in 2017, she was named National Association of Women Business Owner (NAWBO) "Business Owner of the Year." S&SE was also awarded the 2020 LABJ Disruptor Sustainability Award.



Joyce Pae, CFO

Verus Aerospace, Anaheim

Joyce Pae has been through the wringer at Verus with having survived the impact of Covid had on the aerospace industry to the grounding of the Boeing 737MAX. Pae not only kept the company afloat during this turbulent time but helped the company develop even stronger balance sheet. She led an effort to split the company early '23 and has managed as the CFO over both companies for 18 months. Pae has also been instrumental in raising growth capital for the company. She also left two additional acquisitions in '23 and rebranding of her companies. She is a winner of the CFO of the year award.



Ellen Pais, Executive Director

Pretend City Children's Museum, Irvine

Ellen Pais has been a transformative leader at Pretend City Children's Museum since joining as executive director in 2021. Under her visionary and charismatic leadership, the museum has seen a significant increase in visitor engagement, community outreach, and nonprofit and business partnerships. Pais has not only enriched the learning experience for children but has also strengthened existing and forged new partnerships with local schools, colleges, and organizations such as Orange County Department of Education,

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First 5 OC, Beyond Blindness, Second Harvest Food Bank, and Orange County Association for the Education of Young Children. Her collaborative spirit and steadfast dedication have played a crucial role in expanding the museum's impact, making it a hub for family resources in the community. Pais' leadership has ensured that Pretend City remains an inclusive and accessible visitor environment. In 2023, reduced admission and membership more than doubled, extending Pretend City's reach to a greater number of southern Californian communities.

Andrea Paris, Founding Partner

Andrea Paris Law, PC, Newport Beach

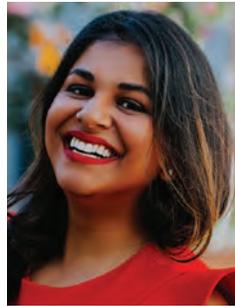
In 2011, after gaining valuable experience at large to medium-sized law firms, Andrea Paris founded her own law practice to provide clients with a holistic approach to resolving disputes. Paris' practice is characterized by her commitment to understanding her clients' goals and leveraging her extensive legal knowledge to help achieve them. She brings a unique perspective to her practice, informed by her experiences working abroad, studying cross-cultural communication, and international conflict resolution. Paris' expertise spans various legal specialties, including employment law, general corporate and business law, business disputes, general litigation, landlord-tenant issues, and appeals. Paris' dedication to her clients and her innovative approach to legal practice have made her a respected figure in the legal community. She consistently strives to put the odds in her clients' favor, whether through counseling on employment matters, navigating complex business disputes, or litigating unresolved issues.



Kumkum Patel, Gastroenterologist; President & CEO

Kumkum Patel MD, Inc. - A Medical Corporation, Tustin

Dr. Patel's journey from humble beginnings as the daughter of hardworking immigrant parents to becoming a successful board-certified gastroenterologist and entrepreneur is a testament to her resilience, dedication, and unwavering commitment to serving her community, particularly women. Dr. Patel's remarkable path began with her pursuit of education as a means to achieve success. Despite the challenges of moving to a new country and the financial constraints of her family, she excelled academically, earning a degree in engineering, followed by a master's degree in public health. Her passion for healthcare led her to medical school, where she faced the daunting task of accumulating significant loans. Undeterred, she persevered, ultimately achieving her dream of becoming a doctor. Throughout her rigorous training, Dr. Patel encountered her own health challenges, including gut health issues, pelvic floor dysfunction, postpartum depression, and hormonal changes affecting her digestive system. These personal experiences deepened her



understanding of the complexities of gastrointestinal health and fueled her determination to help others facing similar issues. Balancing the demands of medical training and motherhood, Dr. Patel became a two-time IVF warrior, giving birth to her sons during this period. Her experiences as a mother and a physician underscored the importance of addressing women's unique health needs, particularly in the realm of gastroenterology.

Reshma Peck, Chief Marketing Officer

Experian, Costa Mesa

Reshma Peck is CMO of integrated sales and marketing at Experian. Dynamic, innovative, and results-oriented, she oversees the development and execution of strategic marketing and sales excellence programs, cementing the business as a leader in the financial services space as well as adjacent and developing vertical markets. Always evolving the Experian brand, she advocates a people-first, "H2H" (human-to-human) storytelling approach to marketing. Peck drives revenue - \$2 billion in the last year alone - and differentiation via programs built upon the pillars that matter most to Experian's customers - partnership, innovation and interconnectedness - coupled with data-driven results. Such endeavors include revamping Experian's positioning and launching financial inclusion initiatives. But it's not all business to Peck. She leads a large, diverse team of high performers in multiple disciplines of marketing and operations. From in-person get-togethers to virtual huddles, she creates an inviting, winning culture, empowering team members to be their authentic selves and thrive.



Caroline Pereira, President

Hoag Hospital Foundation, Newport Beach

Caroline Pereira was recently named the president of the Hoag Hospital Foundation, the health system's philanthropic arm. Pereira, who has more than 20 years of fundraising experience mainly in academic health care and has led the fundraising of nearly \$1 billion for local health initiatives, joins Hoag during a pivotal time in the health system's evolution as it expands its footprint throughout Orange County. As president of the Hoag Hospital Foundation, Pereira will oversee one of the nation's highest performing nonprofit organizations, which raises over \$100 million annually to support Hoag's growing health network that had more than 35,000 inpatient admissions and over 639,000 outpatient visits last year.



Laura Peter, Senior Account Executive

e360, Irvine

For over 25 years, Laura Peter has dedicated herself to building strong partnerships with technology partners, ensuring that their clients receive a benefit from access to a broad portfolio of integrated solutions and exceptional services. Throughout her tenure, she has tirelessly nurtured numerous high-profile deals and cultivated trustworthy relationships

Congratulations, Julie Green

2024 Women in Business Awards Nominee

Julie has been a key driver of the company's success for over 19 years. Utilizing her extensive knowledge and experience, she has meticulously designed and implemented thousands of class action legal notice programs.

Julie is profoundly dedicated to developing a workplace culture that values integrity, compassion, respect, ethics, and diversity. Her leadership is a beacon of inspiration that touches every aspect of the operations. Her dedication to ensuring exceptional quality inspires her teams to be the best versions of themselves, consistently pushing them to reach their full potential. With her guidance, CPT's teams can support the business development team's objectives and deliver exceptional service that law firms have grown accustomed to. Julie made it a mission to elevate the standards and set the bar in class action administration!

Congratulations to **Julie N. Green, Senior Vice President of Operations at CPT Group**, on your 2024 Women of Business Award nomination. CPT is proud of all your achievements and thrilled to see you recognized for your dedication, leadership, and unwavering commitment to fostering a workplace culture of excellence.



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with both partners and clients. Her unwavering dedication and commitment to the business have played a vital role in shaping the e360 family, and they owe much of their success today to her remarkable contributions.

Kelsey Petersen, Program Director

OC Marathon, Costa Mesa

Kelsey Petersen has devoted over 11 years to the OC Marathon, currently serving as program director since February 2016. In this role, she oversees various facets of the OC Marathon, the OC Marathon Foundation, and the Kids Run the OC Program. Her responsibilities span digital marketing, program development, charity partnerships, brand development, and customer service. Notably, she has spearheaded initiatives such as managing the charity partner program, facilitating charities in raising over \$750,000 in 2019, and expanding the Kids Run the OC Program to encompass over 150 schools and engage 10,000 participants. Previously, as an event coordinator, Petersen assisted in planning and executing OC Marathon and OC Marathon Foundation events and promotions. With her extensive experience and commitment to community engagement, Kelsey Petersen has made a significant impact on the success and outreach of the OC Marathon.



Christina Pham, Founder & President

JMAC Lending, Costa Mesa

A Woman-and Minority-Owned Business, JMAC has grown into one of the nation's leading TPO mortgage lenders. Serving as an industry thought leader and influencer and a true role model for the organization, Christina Pham leads with forward-thinking emphasis on creating an empowered, knowledgeable and inclusive workforce. As an example, Pham led JMAC through the pandemic and changes in the industry by focusing on people. The pandemic did not pause her focus on purpose. It accelerated it. She democratized the way JMAC works and conducts business. Guided by Pham's strategic vision, the entire organization worked remotely, product offerings were overhauled to meet the market conditions, new technology was added, including a new company wide-loan Origination System (LOS), and communications hubs were added. All of this led to the 27-year-old company's most productive year ever with \$3.2 billion in loans funded. As JMAC's leader, Pham stayed close to the mission and values that started the business, and focusing on what JMAC does best: strength. Knowledge and service. She continues to be a change agent for new technology, product development and setting an example for service.



Bonni Pomush, CEO

Working Wardrobes, Santa Ana

Bonni Pomush is the chief executive officer of Working Wardrobes, a Santa-Ana based nonprofit that helps people overcome barriers to gainful employment. Under her leadership, the organization served a record number of clients in 2023, providing supportive and workforce readiness services to more than 5,500 individuals. Pomush strives to create a collaborative and positive workplace culture, which has led to many awards for Working Wardrobes including being named a "Best Place to Work" by the Orange County Business Journal in 2024. She is an accomplished executive with over 25 years of leadership experience in government and nonprofit work and has a proven track record of success. Her goals for the future of Working Wardrobes are to continue building upon its strengths, ultimately making the world better by helping one person at a time with a "hand up" rather than a "hand out".



Jeannette Preston, Managing Director

Liberty1 Financial, Irvine

Jeannette Preston co-founded, and serves as a managing director for Liberty1 Financial. Established in 2008, Liberty1 Financial specializes in innovative personal loans, debt restructuring, and debt consolidation loans, with a strong focus on educating clients to achieve better financial outcomes. Preston's deep understanding of clients' financial challenges fuels her activism and philanthropy, where she provides substantial support to families in need. As an armed forces veteran, Preston is deeply committed to supporting her country and contributes actively to veteran charities. Additionally, she extends her philanthropic efforts to charitable organizations, including those aiding women and children in need and promoting mental wellness. Liberty1 Financial boasts an A+ BBB rating and has been nominated for the prestigious BBB Torch Award for Ethics. The company is celebrated for its innovative financial services and compassionate culture, prioritizing quick loan approvals and comprehensive financial education. This dedication to client education helps individuals and families achieve long-term financial stability. Liberty1 Financial's commitment to ethical practices and client-centric services has made it a trusted name in the financial industry, continually striving to enhance the financial well-being of its clients.



Danielle Purcell, Broker & Owner

Team Laguna Inc, Laguna Beach

Danielle Purcell is the owner and founder of Team Laguna Inc. Danielle Purcell is an accomplished luxury real estate broker in Laguna Beach with over 35 years of experience in the industry. Widely recognized as one of the top agents in the business, Purcell has closed over \$1 billion in transactions throughout her career, earning a coveted position among the industry's elite. As a lifelong resident of Laguna Beach, Purcell possesses an unparalleled understanding of the local market, enabling her to anticipate industry trends and understands property values with ease. Known for her exceptional customer service, meticulous

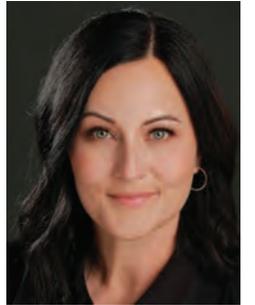


attention to detail and fearless approach to resolving complex issues, Purcell's comprehensive market knowledge and unrivaled negotiation skills set her apart from other agents. She is a trusted advisor for high-end buyers and sellers in the luxury real estate market, championing transparency, trust and communication.

Kendra Puryear, Chief Development Officer

Orangewood Foundation, Santa Ana

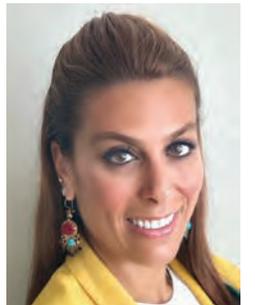
On the cusp of celebrating her 20th year working in the nonprofit sector, Kendra Puryear is a champion for change within the industry. As the chief development officer at Orangewood Foundation, she led the organization into a new era of ethical storytelling that has empowered youth to be the heroes of their own journeys and share their stories in a way that allows them to feel authentic and powerful. Through this initiative, she has positioned the organization as a local thought-leader in setting a new standard for nonprofit storytelling and helped Orangewood Foundation consistently deepen its impact over the last five years. With creativity, kindness, and curiosity, she has led a team of talented fundraising and marketing professionals, dedicated to securing the resources and building the community of philanthropists who support nearly 2,000 youth exiting foster care annually as they prepare for adulthood with programs and services that focus on the building blocks to a successful future: health and wellness, housing, employment, and education.



Caroline Raffi, VP Enterprise

Ducere Global Business School, Newport Beach

As VP of Enterprise, Caroline Raffi has championed a host of women in leadership and diversity agenda's. This includes hundreds of thousands of dollars in MBA scholarships for talented emerging female leaders. Promoting Women in Tech and Women in Leadership through events, speaking and webinars.



Meridith Randall, President

Golden West College, Huntington Beach

Meridith Randall has 30 years of experience in higher education, including three years as vice president of instruction at Golden West College before being selected as president in January 2024. Randall has been a chief instruction officer in the California Community College system for nearly two decades, and has served as president of the California Community Colleges Chief Instructional Officers (CCCCIO) organization twice.



Barbara Rea, Chief Operating Officer

Arden Logistics Parks, Newport Beach

Barbara Rea joined Arden Group in 2021 to help launch the industrial operating company, Arden Logistics Parks (ALP). Since ALP's inception in 2021, the company has become one of the top owners of multi-tenant industrial business parks and industrial service facilities in the country with a combined portfolio Gross Asset Value ("GAV") of \$1.39 billion throughout 10 U.S. markets. In her role as chief operating officer and member of the Investment Committee, Rea has been integral in the building the firm's infrastructure with a focus on scaling the business with the right people, processes and technology. Just three years later, the vertically integrated industrial operating platform is now 55 people across, 10.3 million square feet with a nationally recognized brand and named as a 2023 Best Places to Work.



Charlene Reynolds, Airport Director

John Wayne Airport, Costa Mesa

As the airport director, Charlene Reynolds has enhanced John Wayne Airport's business operations and community engagement. Under her leadership, the Airport exceeded its goals in the Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) Program and achieved a 13.9% participation rate in federally funded projects under the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program. She spearheaded the adoption of JWA's first FAA civil rights plan, ensuring inclusive community involvement in future projects. Reynolds cultivated strong relationships with local, state, and federal organizations, conducting 43 "meet-and-greet" meetings and 12 community/industry presentations in 2023 to strengthen ties with Orange County businesses and residents. Her efforts have been recognized by elected officials and community groups for her active engagement and responsiveness. Additionally, Reynolds focused on improving terminal accessibility and promoting the Helping Hands program to support travelers with disabilities, reflecting her commitment to enhancing the overall airport experience.



Anna Ricardo, CFO

MeriCal, LLC, Anaheim

Anna Ricardo, the chief financial officer at MeriCal, LLC, a manufacturer of nutritional supplements, has quickly become a driving force behind the company's resurgence. In an industry where women remain underrepresented, Ricardo's leadership stands out as a testament to the impact of female executives. With over 30 years of experience in strategic financial management, Ricardo joined MeriCal during a challenging period post-pandemic. Leveraging her extensive expertise in nutritional supplement manufacturing, she has played a pivotal role in revitalizing the company's top-line growth. Ricardo's strategic financial planning and resourceful problem-solving skills have streamlined operations, improved cash flow, and identified new revenue streams. Her leadership has not only stabilized her growing Accounting and Finance team but also positioned it for long-term success in the competitive nutritional supplement market. Under her financial stewardship, MeriCal has seen significant double-digit growth, reflecting her ability to turn challenges into opportunities. Ricardo exemplifies the



2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

transformative impact of experienced, innovative female leadership in navigating and overcoming business adversities.

Aimee Rickabus, CEO

Tomahawk Information Solutions, San Juan Capistrano
The decision to build out Tomahawk's Enterprise division began on March 13th, 2020, with the hiring of Quentin Thomas, VP of Global Sales. The world shut down the following day and that new team spent the following months studying emerging technologies. In 2022, in the middle of the Covid Pandemic, Tomahawk acquired WBENC Certification and landed a contract with PepsiCo, by winning an RFP for Software Consolidation. In June 2024, Tomahawk was chosen as an up and coming Vendor by PepsiCo and featured as PepsiCo "Voice of the Vendor" at their first Supplier Diversity Summit in Purchase, NY.



Maricela Rios-Faust, CEO

Human Options, Irvine
Maricela Rios-Faust provides vital leadership, support and vision to Human Options, driving its growth since 2006. With over 30 years of experience working with vulnerable populations, she has been a key driver in making Human Options the most comprehensive domestic violence service provider in Orange County. Her strategic leadership and fundraising skills grew the budget from \$4.5 million to \$8 million, doubling survivor access to high-need communities. Recognized as a sector leader, Rios-Faust serves on the Boards of the Family Violence Appellate Project, Hoag Memorial Hospital, Blue Shield of California Foundation, and Orange County's Continuum of Care Governing Board. In 2022, she was named one of Orange County's Most Influential for collaborating with the death review team and UCI on a decade-long analysis of domestic violence and homicide cases. Recently, she secured a \$1 million investment to launch innovation labs to design services for survivors with survivors.



Kelly Ripley, Owner

Oceanfront Electric, Costa Mesa
Kelly Ripley's accomplishment lies in her role as the owner of Oceanfront Electric, established in 2017 with a vision to enhance customer service and work quality in the industry. With a focus on innovative solutions, her company consistently surpasses client expectations, delivering projects that are timely, budget-friendly, and compliant with regulations. Oceanfront Electric has earned a trusted reputation in Orange County, thanks to its extensive portfolio and commitment to excellence. Services offered include complete electrical evaluation and repairs, new construction or remodel wiring, electric vehicle charging station installation, panel upgrades, custom lighting design, commercial projects, landscape lighting, and more.



Ripley's dedication to providing dependable and expert electrical solutions has made Oceanfront Electric a go-to choice for residential and commercial needs in Orange County.

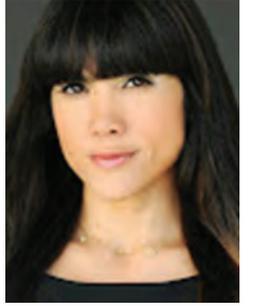
Shireen Rogers, Partner

Musick, Peeler & Garrett LLP, Costa Mesa
Diversity and inclusion are a core part of Musick, Peeler & Garrett LLP's fiber, and Shireen Rogers' role as an active member of the firm's Diversity Committee underscores the high regard in which both the firm and her colleagues hold her. As a partner, Rogers contributes her extensive expertise across multiple practice groups, including Business Litigation, Insurance Litigation, Labor and Employment, and Construction. Her legal acumen and strategic insight have proven to be invaluable assets, driving the firm's success in complex litigation. Her ability to navigate and resolve challenging cases showcases her talent, knowledge, and innovative approach, solidifying her reputation as a formidable attorney.



Johanna Rojas, Marketing Manager

R&D Incentives Group, Fullerton
Johanna Rojas has been an integral part of R&D Incentives Group for over 18 years. She began her tenure as a business development manager when the company was first known as "The Enterprise Zone Company." She played a key role in the rebranding and founding of the new company, R&D Incentives Group back in 2014, and has since risen to the position of marketing manager. Rojas is a cornerstone of the firm, known for developing deep, meaningful relationships with clients and partners. Her efforts have generated millions of dollars in revenue. A cold-calling expert and persuasive negotiator, Rojas brings warmth and expertise to every interaction. She is a loyal and thoughtful person and employee, embodying the values and mission of R&D Incentives Group.



Kate Romano Armado, SVP, Business Development Officer

Enterprise Bank & Trust, San Juan Capistrano
As senior vice president, business development officer at Enterprise Bank & Trust, Kate Armado facilitates day-to-day bank operations as it relates to sales, new business efforts and her team's contributions to the bank's growth strategy. A California native, she is passionate about helping her community succeed and sees firsthand the tangible effect that financial success has on businesses and owners, along with their families and communities. During her time at Enterprise, Armado has played an integral role in expanding the bank's footprint in Orange County. She consistently demonstrates a commitment to the business community by creating and overseeing numerous collaborative campaigns to generate new relationships. Her hands-on approach to client service has generated an impressive pipeline of new and prospective business for the bank.



Celebrating an
**INSIGHTFUL &
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BILLIE LUZUR
DIRECTOR OF PURCHASING
Southern California

TRUMARKHOMES

Congratulations Billie!
From all of us at Trumark Homes



2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

JoJo Romeo, Real Estate Agent

Pacific Sotheby's International Realty, Newport Beach

JoJo Romeo, a trailblazer in ultra-luxury real estate, has orchestrated nearly \$1 billion in sales since 2011, known for her record-breaking transactions. Recognized as a Dynamic Woman in Orange County and a four-time Orange County Business Journal Women in Business nominee, Romeo's unique "JOJO TRANSFORMATIONS" blend real estate expertise with feng shui and interior design, consistently setting new market benchmarks and yielding impressive returns. As a Top 50 Producer with Pacific Sotheby's International Realty, Romeo leverages global connections to facilitate high-end transactions with discretion. Her exclusive 'Luxury Living' events connect elite clients with financial advisors, venture capitalist, and philanthropists, offering value beyond traditional real estate services. Romeo's tech-forward approach and bespoke white-glove services cater to discerning international investors and local high net worth individuals. Her innovative strategies, integrity, and meticulous attention to detail have solidified her reputation as Orange County's premier luxury real estate expert, consistently delivering exceptional results for her elite clientele.



2021, some of her projects included planning and hosting board retreats for Orange County foundations, hosting grantee convenings across southern California for local foundations, leading strategic planning processes, and project managing fellowship launches for local nonprofits. Her company provides consulting services to philanthropic leaders and institutions such as Orange County Grantmakers, Marisla Foundation, and St. Joseph Fund. Her work is recognized with an international award from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) with its Excellence in Economic Development Award, highlighting the diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Michele Sabo Assayag, Partner

Snell & Wilmer, Costa Mesa

Michele Sabo Assayag practices in the areas of commercial finance, creditors' rights and bankruptcy litigation, and restructuring, where she has had extensive experience in the representation of secured and unsecured lenders. She has litigated in the state, federal, and bankruptcy courts on behalf of domestic, foreign, and international lending institutions, as well as on behalf of non-bank lenders and Fortune 500 companies. A substantial portion of Sabo Assayag's practice encompasses, on behalf of her financial institution clients, the documentation of commercial, real estate, and asset-based lending transactions. She has also represented the firm's clients in the acquisition and disposition of major real estate assets, including retail centers, apartment buildings, and business parks.



Skylar Romines, Founder & CEO

ATW Advisors, Irvine

Skylar Romines is the founder & CEO of ATW Advisors. After 17 years in the commercial insurance brokerage industry, she recognized an inherent need for business owners to have stronger representation during the insurance procurement process. ATW was designed to be an owner's insurance rep firm, bridging the knowledge and leverage gap between business owners and their insurance team, while maintaining incentive alignment between ATW and the clients they represent. Romines is also a mother of twin girls and a published author. Her book, *So She Did: Stories, Stats and Strategies to Help Women Win* includes interviews from dozens of female founders and C-suite executives who have created their own paths to success, just as Romines set out to do for herself with ATW, and she continues to strive to help the future generation of women do the same.



Chelsee Sachs, Managing Partner

MVP Accident Attorneys, Irvine

Chelsee Sachs' role at MVP Accident Attorneys involved contributing to the team's success in securing substantial compensation for accident victims in California and Nevada. Her efforts were instrumental in achieving noteworthy settlements, including \$1,125,000, \$1,000,000, and \$750,000 settlements for various automobile accident cases. Beyond her legal accomplishments, Sachs' expertise was recognized when she served as a speaker at the Law-Di-Gras conference. Her participation in this event highlights her standing as a respected figure in the legal community. Through her advocacy and speaking engagements, Sachs has made significant contributions to aiding victims in their recovery journeys while showcasing her leadership and expertise in the field.



Susan Rounds, Senior Managing Director, Operations

BKM Capital Partners, Newport Beach

A seasoned CRE executive, Susan Rounds has served at the helm of BKM's Operations Team since 2021, spearheading initiatives for the company's marketing, technology, property management, property accounting, and office administration teams. Rounds' accomplishments involving BKM's DEI initiatives have been a major triumph during her tenure at the company. As of YE 2023, BKM's total diversity was 72%, with 55% female diversity and 40% BIPOC diversity as a result of Rounds' hiring initiatives. In only three years, she has grown the firm from 85 to 97 working professionals. Rounds has made strides in driving employee wellness through resource groups like the BKM Working Parent's Group and the BKM Women's Network, while maintaining focus on policy development through her leadership on the Compensation and Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility Committees. Rounds' deep commitment to employee development is reflected in BKM's robust employee training program, enlisting 37% of the company's workforce in 2024.



Bitu Safari, CEO

GiGO Clean, Santa Ana

Bitu Safari is an Iranian-American philanthropist and entrepreneur. Serving as president for Simply Crystal Clean, a successful OC-based commercial cleaning company, Safari has gained a deep knowledge within the cleaning industry which has propelled her to launch a new technology platform bringing high quality cleaning to the masses. GiGO Clean is a technology company offering on-demand cleaning services utilizing an easy-to-use phone application to connect customers to cleaners directly. GiGO Clean began servicing the Orange County region in 2023, and has since expanded their reach to Los Angeles and San Diego. The company plans to expand their service statewide and beyond in 2024. Outside of work, Safari is a dedicated board advisor to Moms Against Poverty, a global non-profit organization with the mission to nurture and educate underprivileged children to their fullest potential, so that one day they can contribute and lead within their own communities and break the cycle of poverty.



Angie Rowe, President & CEO

Beyond Blindness, Santa Ana

Since joining Beyond Blindness in 2020, president and CEO Angie Rowe has expanded the organization to meet the growing needs of more than 500 children with visual impairments and other disabilities and over 800 of their family members. She has achieved impressive growth for Beyond Blindness, including launching a five-year strategic plan with a bold goal reaching 2,680 new families in the greater OC area by 2027. In addition to leading the nonprofit through a complete rebranding, she has also elevated the stature of the board with high-quality appointments and is fostering growth through collaboration with her appointment to the boards of several notable California agencies, including First 5 Orange County. Under Rowe's leadership, Beyond Blindness is now the leading accredited organization for children with visual impairments and other disabilities in OC, offering expanded areas services that include Early Intervention, Education + Enrichment, and Family Support.



Teresa Saldivar, CEO

Teresa's Jewelers, Santa Ana

Teresa Saldivar, a two-time graduate of Santa Ana College in nursing and gemology, began her entrepreneurial journey by significantly boosting sales at a jewelry store in East Los Angeles. Finding success, she returned home and in 1985, opened Teresa's Jewelers on Fourth Street and Broadway. Known for its quality and personalized service, Teresa's Jewelers offers fine jewelry at affordable prices, becoming a community cornerstone. Her influence extends statewide through roles like her presidency at the California Jeweler's Association and board of director at Jewelers of America. Beyond business, Saldivar is dedicated to community service and education, earning a bachelor's degree in ethnic studies from California State University Fullerton. Inspired by this, she supports scholarship programs such as the Hispanic Education Endowment Fund and mentors first-generation students. As a trailblazer and founding member of the Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the National Hispanic Business Women Association, Saldivar empowers Latina business owners through mentorship and sponsorship. Her journey from nursing aspirations to esteemed businesswoman reflects her resilience and commitment to enriching Santa Ana.



Jessica Roy, Executive Chef, Owner & Operator

608 Dahlia, Corona Del Mar

Executive Chef and owner-operator Jessica Roy, was born and raised in Orange County, California, and is the creative force behind 608 Dahlia, which opened in 2021. Celebrating fresh, California flavors, Chef Roy's cuisine is deeply influenced by her passion for gardening and cultivating healthy food. At 608 Dahlia, she provides a true garden-to-table experience, often hand-picking garnishes and herbs from her own garden. Committed to sustainability, she supports local purveyors and eco-conscious businesses, earning her restaurant a Level One Certified Green Restaurant status. With over a decade of professional cooking experience, including work in a three Michelin star restaurant, and two national TV show cooking competition wins, Chef Roy shares her culinary passion with her community and beyond.



Jacqueline Russell, Founder & CEO

Social Impact Advising Group, Huntington Beach

Jacqueline Russell founded Social Impact Advising Group to increase philanthropy's impact in the community. As the founder and CEO, she consults family foundations and philanthropic institutions as they startup, create succession plans, and redesign strategy to change systems. Since launching the company in



Talia Samuels, Founder & President

Outshine Public Relations, Newport Beach

Named one of the "Best PR Agencies in America" by Forbes, Outshine Public Relations specializes in restaurant, hospitality, and culinary public relations. Founded by Talia Samuels in 2015, her agency represents an all-star roster including James Beard Award-winning and Michelin-starred chefs, AAA Five Diamond-awarded properties, and new-to-market culinary brands. With deep roots in the hospitality industry, she has a passion for supporting hoteliers, restaurateurs, chefs, and food and beverage brands through her creative storytelling verticals. Recognized for her poise, tenacity, and integrity, Samuels is a force in her field. Her company, Outshine Public Relations, is a full-service agency providing public relations, social media management, photography, videography, and digital marketing.



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Lucy Santana, CEO

Girls Inc. of Orange County, Santa Ana

In 2024, Lucy Santana celebrates 25 years of inspiring girls to be "strong, smart and bold" through her work at Girls Inc. of Orange County. Her leadership, passion and connection to the community has grown Orange County to become one of the strongest Girls Inc. affiliates nationwide. More than 9,000 girls are supported each year with dynamic programming that addresses topics ranging from healthy body image, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship to making good life choices and preparing for college/career. In addition to expanding the organization's reach year over year, Santana has co-created innovative workforce development programs like Project Accelerate, launched in the 2022-23 school year thanks to her efforts in securing \$10 million in funding from Melinda French Gates' Pivotal Ventures' Equality Can't Wait Challenge. Her visionary leadership has been the driving force behind Girls Inc.'s transformative efforts to create parity for all girls in O.C. in education, career and society.



leadership has propelled both brands to new heights, offering unparalleled service and customized products. With a commitment to innovation and client satisfaction, Savio continues to innovate and deliver high-quality products, redefining the landscape of custom window coverings in Orange County and cementing her legacy as a pioneering force in the industry.

Daniela Schardinger, CEO

ELAFY Consulting LLC, Mission Viejo

Daniela Schardinger, founder and CEO of ELAFY Consulting LLC, has transformed the company into a leader in FemTech and women's health consulting. Since its inception, Schardinger has guided numerous startups in overcoming societal taboos, regulatory hurdles, and funding constraints. Her innovative strategies and deep industry expertise have driven the successful market introduction of groundbreaking women's health technologies, significantly improving global healthcare outcomes. Under her leadership, ELAFY has gained recognition for its exceptional service and impact, with Schardinger herself being honored with prestigious awards such as Forbes Superwoman, Entrepreneur100, and LA Times OC Inspirational Woman. Her commitment to advocacy and mentorship continues to drive ELAFY's mission forward.



Kavita Sarma, Managing Director, Client Services

Stretto, Irvine

For nearly two decades, Kavita Sarma has been a driving force behind new advances and solutions to streamline case management for U.S. panel bankruptcy trustees. As managing director of client services at Stretto, a bankruptcy services and technology firm, she leads a skilled team of regional directors, training experts and client-onboarding specialists. During her tenure at Stretto, formerly Bankruptcy Management Solutions (BMS), Sarma has climbed the corporate ladder from her first role with the company as a software support specialist to several executive leadership roles where she has pioneered new solutions in the market, built the company's first product management team, and evolved the role of the company's regional directors to become industry experts serving clients' needs. Sarma continues to draw upon her well-rounded expertise in business management and software engineering to drive innovation and identify new ways to provide support and solutions to U.S. trustees and her team members.



Amber Senteno, Vice President, CIO Operations - OH Care Delivery Technology

Optum, Huntington Beach

Amber Senteno currently serves as vice president - CIO strategy & operations vice president for Optum Health Care Delivery Technology at Optum. She has led the technology transformation and integration solidifying the \$22 billion company's healthcare delivery function supporting 8,900+ providers and 665k+ members. Responsibilities included: operations, strategy, roadmap, contracting, governance, capacity management, compliance, workforce management, technology enablement and adoption, change management, communications, and enterprise support services, plus managed eight direct and 200+ indirect reports. She built an enhanced workplace culture using a holistic approach that supports each employee's personal and professional development, career pathing, plus improvement of diversity and pay equity. Results dramatically increased employee satisfaction during extreme change and transformation. As chief information officer, Optum Health, Senteno headed regional care delivery of the parent organization serving 250K members, accountable for all technology development, operations, and execution. Prior to the above roles, Senteno also served as Senior Director - Enterprise IT Planning & Business Systems Analysis, Optum Health, and as Director, IT Enterprise Solutions & Services, Optum Health.



Jennifer Savio, President

Creative Window Designs, Costa Mesa

Jennifer Savio upholds a family legacy of excellence that began in 1971. As a second-generation leader, she builds on the solid foundation laid by her predecessors. Under her guidance, Creative Window Designs and Beach Drapery deliver bespoke window treatment solutions to customers, designers, and builders. Her



Congratulations to Chahira Solh on being named a finalist for the Orange County Business Journal's "Women in Business" award.

This well-deserved recognition highlights her exceptional leadership, dedication, and outstanding contributions to our firm and the community.

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2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

Mona Shah, Founder

Moxxe PR Inc., Santa Ana

Led by Mona Shah, Moxxe PR specializes in public relations and marketing for the region's most distinguished chefs and independent restaurants. Over the past two decades, Shah has built a name for herself by focusing on creativity, compassion, authenticity and integrity when representing local culinary leaders. Clients currently include one of only three restaurants in the county to receive a Michelin Star, one of the most prestigious, globally recognized designations. Most recently, Shah was selected as one of Forbes' "Next 1000" for redefining what it means to build and run a business today, and being proof positive that American entrepreneurship remains resilient, vibrant and ever-changing.



an unparalleled capacity for creating and maintaining a positive company culture at OTL, Shores is devoted to philanthropy, having been a passionate member of 100 Companies That Care for the last six years, helping to connect local businesses to local charities. Sarah is the heart of OTL, and her commitment to her work is truly exceptional.

Sona Shah, CEO & Founder

My Private Professor, Irvine

Sona Shah founded My Private Professor, LLC (MPP) to create a sustainable, impact-driven tutoring company that ensures all students have access to the academic resources they need to succeed. Transitioning from business litigation, Shah utilized her tutoring expertise and passion for education and philanthropy to build a company that provides high-quality tutoring and gives back with each hour to support students in underserved communities. By leveraging education to offer tutoring to support large corporations, and collaborating with nonprofits to support students experiencing homelessness, MPP is revolutionizing academic support. Today, MPP serves thousands of clients across the country and is scalable for further growth to meet the needs of students, families, employers, nonprofits, and communities. Through her leadership at MPP and community involvement, Sona Shah aims to continue empowering others to reach their highest potential and lead tomorrow's world.



Monica Shukla-Belmontes, Associate Dean, School of Business and Professional Studies

U Mass Global, Aliso Viejo

Monica Shukla-Belmontes oversees the Competency Based Education Bachelor's and Master's degree programs at UMass that include STEM subjects allowing several thousands of adult learners to continue their higher education online at their own pace. During the pandemic and post-pandemic 2020-2024 this has assisted the lives of thousands of Orange County learners, their families, and employers of the CBE graduates. Shukla-Belmontes is also an adjunct professor of Mathematics at Chapman University. She received an Award at the 2022 Distinguished Education Awards Dinner hosted by the Orange County Chamber of Commerce. She received a recognition from Congressman Lou Correa as an Orange County Woman of the Year Award. She is an Orange County Girl Scouts Gold Award winner and mentors young females interested in STEM careers. She influences Orange County a great deal through her community service and charity donations.



Guita Sharifi, CFO

Lifelong Learning Administration Corp., Irvine

Guita Sharifi has been a CFO in the nonprofit sector for 20+ years with extensive expertise in fiscal oversight and operations and a sought-after speaker at conferences and webinars. Noteworthy to mention that she was featured in Forbes for her inspirational journey as an Iranian woman and her contribution to the industry. Prior to her role at Lifelong Learning- Learn4Life she served as CFO of large healthcare organizations. For the past 22 years, Sharifi has been a community activist having served on numerous charitable boards, school boards, co-chair of the CFO Leadership Council and as the Orange County 5th Supervisorial District Representative on Taxpayers Oversight for Measure M. Sharifi's trajectory as a leader has been punctuated by commendation and honors. She has been nominated eight consecutive years for CFO of the Year awards, Lifetime achievement and Woman in Business Awards by Orange County Business Journal (OCBJ) including LA Times. She won the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Awards CFO of the Year and Outstanding Non-profit CFO of the Year Awards in 2019. In addition, Sharifi was named to the 2019 OCBJ's inaugural OC500, which is comprised of the most influential businesspeople and opinion shapers in the county. Nevertheless, Sharifi retains her humility, steadfast in her commitment to effecting positive change globally. Her accolades, though significant, pale in comparison to her overarching mission of leaving a meaningful imprint on society.



Laura Sillen, Investment Advisor & Founding Principal

Purus Wealth Management, Newport Beach

In 2005, Laura Sillen joined the team that would later become known as Purus Wealth Management. She began her career immediately after college as an administrative assistant. Through the years, her passion for helping clients became apparent and, as a result, her path evolved to an advisory role. Her background provided two critical lessons in the industry: a strong foundation regarding industry regulations and a deep understanding of how to manage money through a breadth of market cycles. This experience makes her proficient in thinking outside the box when building strategies to meet her client's needs. When Purus Wealth Management was established in 2015, she was offered the opportunity to join as a founding principal. Over time, her role expanded to also serve as the lead coordinator for the firm's financial planning and risk management services (under Purus Insurance Services). Sillen also serves as a member of the Purus Investment Committee.



Rachel Simon, Partner

Snell & Wilmer LLP, Costa Mesa

Rachel A. Simon is a corporate and securities partner at Snell & Wilmer who provides sophisticated legal services in the areas of mergers and acquisitions, tax structuring, financings and general corporate matters. She draws upon her extensive experience to provide legal advice and services to clients in a variety of industries including food and beverage, real estate, technology, manufacturing, healthcare and logistics, building trusted relationships and often serving as go-to outside counsel for long-term clients. Additionally, Simon provides business, corporate and tax advice to educational, public and religious charities and private foundations. Her work includes preparing applications on behalf of non-profit entities for tax exemptions and non-profit status under federal and state tax guidelines, assisting non-profits to joint venture on projects with both non-profits and for-profit entities, dealing with excess benefit and private inurement issues, and providing guidance on non-profit governance.



Anna(Dixia) Shi, CEO

Ever Pretty Garment Inc., Irvine

Anna Shi, the founder of Ever Pretty Garment, launched her entrepreneurial journey in Canada in 2005 and rapidly scaled operations to a global level. By 2006, she had established the company's presence in China, followed by the USA in 2010 and the UK in 2012, effectively creating a transcontinental enterprise. Throughout her career, Shi has been committed to redefining women's fashion by delivering uniquely crafted dresses that not only enhance the beauty of the wearer but also embody empowerment and elegance. Her visionary leadership was particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when she implemented strategic measures that not only sustained but also increased sales, achieving a remarkable \$120 million in revenue in 2023, with the US market contributing \$69 million.



Kimberly Smith, VP

Crawford Custom Homes, Costa Mesa

Kimberly Smith is the vice president of operations at Crawford Custom Homes, where she has been a pivotal leader for over 24 years. In her role, she oversees corporate policy, operations, finances, and job site administration, ensuring the company runs smoothly and efficiently. Smith's leadership and dedication extend beyond daily operations. She served as project manager for Crawford's award-winning participation in Home Aid's Project Playhouse and has been actively involved in community support initiatives, including Second Harvest Food Bank and SPIN. Additionally, Smith co-founded the Orange County Triathlon Club and has achieved the distinction of being a two-time Ironman triathlon finisher. Her extensive experience and commitment to excellence have made her a cornerstone of Crawford Custom Homes and a respected leader in the industry.



Mila Shmurak, Founder

Bare Pits, Newport Beach

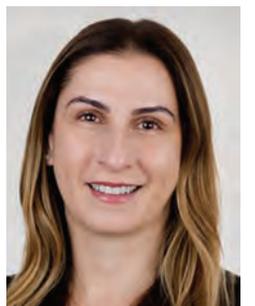
Mila Shmurak brings over 20 years of experience in the health and wellness industry. In the past two years, she discovered that her journey through emotional challenges inspired her to share what she learned. She is passionate about cultivating spaces that bring people together through health and wellness, crafting curated events that create lasting experiences. Her aim is to foster a vibe that resonates and supports daily life, collaborating closely with local businesses and practitioners to deliver unforgettable experiences.



Chahira Solh, Chair of Crowell & Moring Executive Committee; Partner

Crowell & Moring LLP, Irvine

Chahira Solh is a trailblazer and pioneering leader, whose innovative leadership and strategic vision have elevated Crowell to remarkable heights. As one of the youngest and first Arab-American women to chair Crowell & Moring's Executive Committee, she has broken barriers and set new precedents, positioning Crowell among the top 100 U.S. law firms. Solh is a role model for women and diverse lawyers, championing diversity within and beyond the firm. She holds key leadership roles, including on the firm's Management Board and Executive Committee. Solh's antitrust and competition law expertise makes her a key advisor to global companies, known for achieving outstanding legal results, and renowned for her role in safeguarding businesses and securing the recovery of millions of dollars for Fortune 500 clients. She has notably defended clients against class actions, market monopolization, and illegal "no-poach" agreement allegations.



Sarah Shores, Vice President of Administration

Outside the Lines Inc., Anaheim

Sarah Shores, vice president of administration for Outside the Lines, Inc. (OTL), is an exemplary professional and leading woman in commercial construction. In her more than ten years at OTL, a design-build construction company that specializes in water features, rockwork and themed environments, Shores has proven to be a master of accounting, contract and construction management, process scheduling, HR, and team building. Her agility, dedication, and leadership has been integral to the company's stability, resulting in an 89% growth in business despite challenging economic times in the industry. In addition to showing



Jessica Spaulding, President & Founder

The Spaulding Agency, Aliso Viejo

Now celebrating 15 years as the founder and president of The Spaulding Agency, Jessica

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Spaulding has enjoyed a longstanding and successful career in the public relations / marketing industry. She has developed a reputation for successful representation for the commercial real estate industry as well as economic development teams at cities and counties. Her work allows her to help support job creation and business investment as well as building the brand for some of the most innovative business leaders in commercial real estate.



Brenda Springer, Founder & CEO

Reveille Inc., Costa Mesa

Brenda Springer, founder and CEO of Reveille, Inc., is a trailblazer making a difference. Since founding her agency in 2010, Springer has been a creative and strategic partner to top health care, sustainability, consumer and nonprofit organizations delivering award-winning, innovative and highly strategic solutions for clients. Reveille's largest clients lead in cancer care and renewable energy, with others including Orange County nonprofits solving challenging community issues such as poverty, food insecurity, domestic violence, human trafficking, workforce readiness, unhoused families, and racial equity and equality, among others. Springer uses her tremendous talents to identify and communicate the most compelling stories in a way that both raises awareness of the issues and encourages the community to get involved. Her work has been recognized by the American Advertising Federation and the Public Relations Society of America, with her agency receiving many accolades, including its prestigious "Best in Show" award more than once.



Shyla Springmeyer, Business Development Manager

R&D Incentives Group, Fullerton

Since joining R&D Incentives Group in 2017, Shyla Springmeyer has earned the trust and business of over 1,000 business owners, significantly contributing to the company's growth and reputation. Springmeyer's remarkable presence at networking events has effectively represented the firm, further building the practice and expanding the client and business partner base. Her dedication, strategic approach, and exceptional performance have made her an invaluable asset to both the firm and clients, driving significant business success and solidifying industry standing.



Christine Stellino, Executive Director

Homeless Intervention Services of Orange County, Placentia

Christine Stellino's remarkable journey with Homeless Intervention Services of Orange County began in 2014 as an intern. Her unwavering dedication, resilience, and visionary leadership have been evident throughout her progression within the organization, culminating in her well-deserved appointment as executive director. Her commitment to

servicing the homeless and her ability to lead and innovate has been consistently demonstrated. Since assuming the role of executive director in May 2023, Stellino has made substantial contributions that have significantly strengthened the organization and expanded its impact. In just the first six months of 2024, HIS-OC staff, under Stellino's guidance, have redirected, supported, advised, mentored, and aided 2,936 individuals and families towards self-sufficiency. These achievements highlight Stellino's leadership and underscore her commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of those they serve. Under Stellino's leadership, HIS-OC has seen a remarkable increase in staff, growing by adding 30 more dedicated individuals. This expansion has allowed them to enhance services and reach more people in need. Stellino has been instrumental in expanding the shelter capacity and implementing three new program designs that specifically address the needs of unhoused, underserved, and underprivileged individuals, youth, and seniors in Orange County, California.



Paula Steurer, Founder & President

Sterling Public Relations, Corona del Mar

Entrepreneur Paula Steurer founded Sterling Public Relations as a publicity, branding, and marketing hybrid in 2008. With a reputation for building impactful PR campaigns and marketing strategies, Steurer's innate ability to connect, engage, and drive brands to the next level has positioned her as a trusted authority among entrepreneurs and executives across a wide range of industries. Her innovative vision and forward-thinking philosophy play a vital role in propelling the brands her firm represents into the spotlight, while earning her roles as a speaker and workshop leader for brands including Mindbody, Vizio, and Oracle. Steurer's tenacity and unparalleled strategic approach resulted in Sterling Public Relations being named as a Top PR Firm in the USA by Clutch. With a heart and soul invested in making a difference, Steurer is extensively involved with organizations such as CASA of Orange County, The Drake Gives, The Literacy Project and Sherman Library & Gardens.



Autumn Strier, Co-Founder & CEO of Miracles for Kids; President - Board of Directors

Miracles for Kids, Irvine

Autumn Strier is a driven nonprofit co-founder & CEO with significant leadership skills and a lifelong passion for helping those in need, having received support herself at a young age. Two decades ago, she built Miracles for Kids from a small employee contribution program into the consequential nonprofit it is today. To date, the organization has raised \$50 million+ in service of 3,200+ low-income families throughout Southern California and beyond



**Congratulations
Melinda Wohl - CFO**

On your Orange County Business Journal
2024 Women in Business Award Nominee

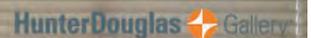


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- Jennifer Savio, CEO



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with children facing over 200+ critical illnesses. As its chief executive and lead fundraiser for 20 years, Strier is the architect of every program and event run by the organization. She is also the founding president of the Board, a handpicked group of executives whose expertise and contacts span all industries. Her deep personal commitment and unwavering dedication to those in need have led to years-long relationships and partnerships that result in notable fundraising and mission delivery achievements year after year.

Jennifer Strong, School Neuropsychologist

Cognitive Diagnostic Associates, Newport Beach

Jennifer Strong built Cognitive Diagnostic Associates from the ground up about 18 months ago, in April of 2023. She has prioritized the company's value system which centers around the wellness of its employees, thereby creating an impressive, flexible and warm work culture that breeds belongingness, balance and employee productivity. Since the company's inception, Strong has expanded the company to 40 employees in Newport Beach, Los Angeles, and San Diego and is currently working to expand the company to a number of other states. Strong is a staunch advocate of students with special needs, collaborates with special education providers, advocates, attorneys and medical and mental health providers. She also advocates for the field of school psychologists and Licensed Educational Psychologists in her role as the Region IV for the California Association of School Psychologists. After over a decade of working in public schools, Strong founded Cognitive Diagnostic Associates with the intent to create an innovative approach for assessing students with various types of learning disabilities and differences. While schools have resources to provide these assessments, CDA is able to provide quality evaluations when students require a more specialized approach or when an outside perspective may be helpful.



Mary-Christine (M.C.) Sungaila, Partner

Complex Appellate Litigation Group, Newport Beach

M.C. Sungaila heads the Orange County office of the prominent boutique law firm Complex Appellate Litigation Group. A distinguished appellate attorney, she has a decades-long track record of handling cases which shape underdeveloped areas within the law. Sungaila regularly files amicus briefs, often pro bono, on behalf of individuals and nonprofits which advocate for the rights of women, set new legal precedents, and inform the final opinions handed down by courts in high-stakes cases, including those vital to the protection of victims of domestic violence. Sungaila is also the creator and host of the groundbreaking podcast for women in the law, The Portia Project®. Currently in its second year, the podcast chronicles the careers of women judges, lawyers, and business leaders to inspire its audience of young women coming up in the industry. It also led to an important nationwide study on women judges published in the American Lawyer.



Rachel Svoboda, CEO

Sunday Brunch Agency, Huntington Beach

Rachel Svoboda's success as founder of Sunday Brunch Agency is a testament to her two decades of entrepreneurial and philanthropic endeavors across Southern California. As a prominent female business leader in Orange County, Svoboda's ability to cultivate impactful relationships has been key to her achievements. At Sunday Brunch Agency, she has modernized the advertising agency structure, leading large and boutique business offerings that continue to impact the region. Since its inception in 2016, Sunday Brunch Agency has been at the forefront of innovation, being the first fully remote female-owned marketing agency in Orange County. With a dynamic work environment and a wide range of services, Svoboda empowers marketing leaders to provide creative solutions for clients, embracing change and delivering powerful results. Sunday Brunch Agency thrives on creativity and collaboration, ensuring clients receive top-notch service tailored to their unique needs.



Dayse Tarakdian, President

Full Body Pilates, Tustin

Dayse Tarakdian co-founded Full Body Pilates and Movement Therapy in Tustin in 2018, bringing over 30 years of experience in ballet and Pilates. Under her leadership, the studio has flourished, offering high-quality Pilates and movement therapy services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Tarakdian innovatively moved the business outdoors and secured SBA and EIDL loans to ensure financial stability. Her strategic refinancing of their loan into a fixed-rate 504 loan helped alleviate financial pressure. Today, Full Body Pilates has grown to 160 clients and seven employees, and remains a profitable business. Tarakdian's dedication and expertise have been pivotal in the studio's success and resilience.



Alexandra Taylor, Principal & Founder

ATeam Agency, Newport Beach

Alexandra Taylor, founder and principal of Newport Beach based ATeam agency is a dynamic publicity professional with over 15 years of high level multimedia marketing experience. A native Newport Beach resident, she attended Newport Harbor High School and USC before beginning her journey in media. Known for her deeply rooted community connections and unique skill set that disrupts the typical "PR" industry, Taylor exhibits influence in a wide range of industries both locally and nationally. Her firm is highly sought after for its strong affiliations and partnerships, out of the box communication strategies and insurgent social media presence - with business development and sales impact at the core. Taylor is a leader in the community and a right hand of influence, representation and consult to an impressive portfolio of clientele including Happy Dad Hard Seltzer, Lounge Group, Burkhart Bros Construction, Bosscat Kitchen, Joe Stapleton for Newport Beach, OCDA Todd Spitzer, SkySail Coastal Development, Spinnaker Investment, The Tennis & Pickleball Club at Newport Beach, Tiny



Tooth Co, Ekam Pilates, Ten Sushi + Cocktail Bar, Fruition Communities, STA Jets, and John Stanaland Group to name a few. ATeam celebrates its 4-year anniversary this year after launching in February of 2020.

Kara Taylor, Chief Marketing Officer

ATTOM, Irvine

As CMO, Kara Taylor's commitment to innovation, employee empowerment, and community engagement has fueled ATTOM's success and positioned her as a key driver of strategic vision and growth. Promoted in 2023 after excelling as EVP of Marketing, Taylor leads a dynamic team responsible for brand, content, marketing strategies, PR, and lead development. Her efforts have significantly boosted brand awareness and data sales. Taylor also spearheads SEO initiatives, enhancing organic traffic and solidifying ATTOM's reputation as a premier property data provider. Her leadership in strategic acquisitions, such as EStated, GeoData Plus, and Home Junction, and the divestiture of RealtyTrac, allows ATTOM to focus on its thriving data licensing business. Taylor's holistic approach underscores her pivotal role in ATTOM's continued success.



Allison Taylor, Wealth Advisor, CEO

Taylor Wealth Management, LPL Financial, Huntington Beach

Allison Taylor is the founder and CEO of Taylor Wealth Management. As a wealth advisor, Taylor takes a planning-based approach with an emphasis in education. Through teaching she is able to provide clients a real understanding of investments, investment structures, fees and risks. She implements and manages investment portfolios that are consistent with a client's investment goals, objectives and ideas, to compliment her holistic approach to wealth management, Taylor is responsible for creating customized financial plans, portfolio analysis, succession planning, life insurance and long-term care.



Nickie Tran, President

IQ Risk Insurance Services LLC, Irvine

Founded in 2004, IQ Risk has relationships with multiple insurance carriers across the US helping clients navigate the complexity of choosing the right insurance for their specific needs, ensuring that their business and personal assets are protected. Nickie Tran has over 25 years of insurance experience and has been one of the company's founder and principal broker since 2014. In 2018 she became sole owner and president where she was able to double the company's revenue. IQ Risk is unique in several ways. Tran is first generation Vietnamese American woman owning an insurance agency in a predominately male dominated industry. Her boutique agency is licensed in 42 states and has close to 700 clients, the majority being privately held businesses with revenues between \$5 million to \$100 million. Tran has grown her agency's business through her strong client relationships. IQ Risk doesn't advertise to gain customers; instead, all their business comes from client and partner referrals.



Meg Treat, APR, Owner & CEO

Treat Public Relations, Mission Viejo

In 2016, Meg Treat sought to combine her passion with her profession, launching her consultancy focused on the running industry. As her business grew, Treat tailored her offerings to race directors and event organizers, narrowing her clientele to this special group of professionals. Since then, that consultancy has grown into a flourishing, award-winning agency. Treat PR now represents some of the most exciting and highest-attended endurance events in the US including the ASICS Falmouth Road Race, Christie Clinic Illinois Race Weekend, the Las Vegas Marathon, Boulderthon, the Carlsbad Marathon, and many more. In addition, Treat PR represents industry experts including long-time Boston Marathon Race Director Dave McGillivray. Treat PR represented nearly 20 events last year and is on track to eclipse that total this year. In 2023, Treat PR's revenue grew by barely 250% and is projected to experience another year of vast growth in 2024.



Cheri Tree, CEO

Codebreaker Technologies, San Clemente

Cheri Tree is a best-selling author, professional keynote speaker, and world-renowned entrepreneur and innovator. She is the founder and CEO of Codebreaker Technologies, with Codebreakers in more than 100 countries worldwide. She is the creator of the revolutionary B.A.N.K. methodology and Codebreaker's patented Personality Coding Technology and Artificial Intelligence, designed to help her clients increase their influence, income, and impact in the world. Tree is a top in-demand speaker and has spoken to millions of entrepreneurs and professionals globally at some of the top business conferences in the world. She has been invited to speak at Harvard University, the University of California, Google, GoDaddy, and the United Nations. Tree is leading a technology and transformation revolution with her high tech, high touch Codebreaker company and community. She has been featured in numerous international publications including Forbes.com and has received numerous awards and nominations, including Woman of the Year, Female Thought Leaders of the Year, Maverick of the Year, SaaS Company of the Year, Innovator of the Year, and Achievement in Technology Innovation. Tree is fueled by her mission to connect and empower humanity, and ultimately Make People Matter™. Her vision is to crack #8billioncodes, equating to the code of every human in the world.



Lauren Trevathan, Chief of Staff

ATTOM, Irvine

Lauren Trevathan, ATTOM's chief of staff, has over 15 years of real estate leadership experience. Her ability to align communication and initiatives across departments has been crucial to the



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company's success and growth. A visionary leader, Trevathan's focus on cross-departmental collaboration and customer engagement makes her a strong candidate for the OCBJ Women in Business Award. During her four years at ATTOM, she has driven numerous company-wide initiatives, ensuring seamless communication and alignment. Her leadership has fostered a cohesive organizational culture, improving efficiency and productivity. Trevathan's strategic approach has enabled ATTOM to achieve and exceed its objectives, positioning the company for sustained growth and success.

Jennifer Vallinayagam, Chief Technology Officer & COO
Sun West Mortgage Company, Cerritos

Jennifer Vallinayagam is a trailblazing force in mortgage lending. From humble beginnings in India to becoming the chief operations officer at Sun West Mortgage, Vallinayagam's journey is nothing short of extraordinary. Breaking barriers as the only female engineer at Sun West, she leads with finesse, driving her team to exceed targets and spearheading innovations like Morgan, Sun West's groundbreaking AI technology poised to revolutionize the real estate industry. Vallinayagam's resilience, leadership, and commitment to blazing her own path inspires us all. Vallinayagam was featured by NMP Magazine as one of their 2023 Mortgage Lending Women of Inspiration. Vallinayagam joined Sun West Mortgage Company in 1999 and has driven the company to be one of the most technologically advanced companies in financial services.



Sherrie Van Koevering, Wealth Management Advisor
Van Koevering Wealth Management and Insurance Services, Irvine

Sherrie Van Koevering is the founder and CEO of Van Koevering Wealth Management and Insurance Services, affiliated with Northwestern Mutual. She and her team provide comprehensive financial planning from professional beginnings to retirement, serving clients nationwide since 2007. Van Koevering has been named to Forbes' Top Financial Security Professionals List for four consecutive years. As a member of the Financial Educators Network and the Association of Financial Educators, she has educated tens of thousands on comprehensive financial planning and wealth management. In addition, Van Koevering was handpicked by the Senior Leadership Team to serve as the growth and development director at Northwestern Mutual-Orange County. Beyond her commitment to her clients, she plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of the company by mentoring the next generation of financial representatives. Her responsibilities as a GDD include scouting exceptional talent, guiding candidates through the selection process, and providing comprehensive development for new team members throughout their first five years. Van Koevering has earned numerous accolades, including Northwestern Mutual's Master Achievement Award, being the first female recipient in 160 years. Recognized as the top female advisor in the Central Region and now Western Region, she has been inducted into the company's elite Forum Group for eight consecutive years, distinguishing herself among the top 1% of Northwestern Mutual's financial professionals.



Nisha Verma, Partner
Dorsey & Whitney, Costa Mesa

Nisha Verma leads Dorsey's California Labor & Employment group, providing innovative solutions to complex labor and employment issues. Her expertise spans across advice and counsel, compliance support, traditional labor negotiations, and employment litigation. Verma's strategic vision and dedication to her clients' success have made her a respected leader in the legal community. She has been instrumental in driving the firm's growth and enhancing its reputation within the industry. Her leadership has not only contributed to the firm's success but also set a benchmark for excellence in legal practice.



Kamryn Villegas & Whitney Kumar, Owners
KW Court Reporting, Irvine

KW Court Reporting is a full-service court reporting firm co-founded by twin sisters and tenured court reporters, Kamryn Villegas & Whitney Kumar. KW Court Reporting is family-owned as well as being a certified women- and minority-owned business. They are considered leaders in virtual legal proceedings with the highest-quality reporters, unmatched customer service, and legal technologies. KW delivers excellence in service and industry expertise. Villegas & Kumar have been invited into the exclusive Forbes Business Council three years in a row.



Cindy Vyskocil, Vice Chancellor of Human Resources

South Orange County Community College District, Mission Viejo
Dr. Cindy Vyskocil is the vice chancellor of human resources for the South Orange County Community College District (SOCCCD). In her CHRO role, she serves as the District's chief negotiator, is responsible for overseeing employer/employee relations matters, District recruitment and hiring processes, District compliance and training related to sexual harassment/unlawful discrimination, and is responsible for the investigation and resolution related to complaints of bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct, Title IX, Title 5, and unlawful discrimination and leads the District's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) efforts.



Kimberly Wang, Founder & Photographer

Eardog Productions, Irvine
Kimberly M. Wang's clients are wildly diverse, but they share a few things in common: They are experts at what they do, they're proud of their achievements, and they know they need Kimberly to help set them at ease, and share their own special brand of magic, strength, and beauty with the world. As a former TV Director/Producer for nearly every major network, Kimberly's approach as a Legacy Portrait and Branding Photographer is grounded in

JWilliamsStaffing
Real Estate Recruitment and Staffing Solutions



JoAnne Williams is the CEO and founder of JWilliams Staffing. Her roots in rural South Dakota gave her a strong set of core values that she uses to guide her every venture. JoAnne crafts partnerships by carefully connecting extraordinary professionals with mutually respected real estate employers, facilitating success for all involved. Under her leadership, JWilliams Staffing has earned prestigious accolades, including Most Loved Workplace and receiving multiple awards for Fastest Growing Company & Best Place to Work.

CONGRATULATIONS
JOANNE WILLIAMS
2024 WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARD NOMINEE

The 30th Annual
WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS



Congratulations Zara,
On your nomination for Orange County Business Journal's 2024 Women in Business Awards. Your continued growth and service to the medical aesthetic community is highly valued and noteworthy. Wishing you much continued success.

~ Dr. Michael Cerni, Dr. Joe Cerni, your team, patients and friends

Zara Cerni, COO

Dr. Joe Cerni
Forever Ageless Inc.

Dr. Michael Cerni
Center For Renewal Inc.

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compelling storytelling. Her clients include The New York Times, Vogue, Meta, and many Emmy, Tony, and Golden Globe Award winners, as well as titans of industry, government, and the arts. But whether her clients are renowned, or working towards their dreams, her approach remains the same: She is collaborative, compassionate, and focused on creating editorial style imagery that is unforgettable, and grounded in truth.

Sabrina Wang, Partner *Knobbe Martens, Irvine*

Sabrina Wang is a partner at intellectual property law firm Knobbe Martens where she advises clients in Orange County and globally that are working at the forefront of innovation. Ms. Wang develops robust IP portfolios for companies in all growth stages at the cutting edge of technology, ranging from startups to Orange County-based health technology pioneer Masimo Corporation. In addition to her strong track record in patent prosecution and IP portfolio management, Ms. Wang is a demonstrated leader within Knobbe Martens, the largest law firm in Orange County. She has served on the firm's Executive Committee—the firm's highest-ranking committee—and is a member of the firm's Recruiting Committee and Women Associates Advisory Committee. In these roles, she helps provide strategic direction for the firm, and attract and retain top talent to the firm.



Jennifer Welker, CFO

Shopoff Realty Investments, Irvine

Jennifer Welker joined Shopoff Realty Investments in 2023 as the chief financial officer. In just one year as CFO, she has made remarkable strides in the company's accounting department, spearheading their budgeting and financial planning. She introduced efficient accounting systems and practices that have significantly improved Shopoff's financial reporting and compliance. Her expertise in real estate accounting has been crucial in navigating complex transactions, ensuring accuracy and minimizing risks. Additionally, her diligent financial oversight has enhanced the company's financial stability and investor confidence. Despite her relatively short tenure, Welker's impact on the company's financial health has been substantial.



Cynthia West, Director & Associate Professor

Chapman University: Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics, Irvine

As the director of the Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics at Chapman University, Cynthia West leads the strategic direction and execution of various initiatives and programs. She revitalized the Center post-pandemic, organizing 10 events with 250 attendees and 7800 visits, reestablishing its presence. West's efforts resulted in securing a \$1 million grant to establish the Accelerate California Inclusive Innovation Hub, empowering underrepresented innovators. She also recruited over 70 volunteer mentors and implemented a startup incubator and accelerator program, graduating 24 student entrepreneurs. Additionally, West created a community forum for small businesses and hired and trained a dedicated team to execute the Center's strategic vision efficiently. Through her leadership, the Leatherby Center thrives as a hub for entrepreneurial education, mentorship, and innovation at Chapman University.



Beverly Wiesen, Managing Director

APEX Executive Search, Irvine

Beverly Wiesen is a managing director of Apex Executive Search, LLC. Since its founding in 1996, Wiesen and her team personally handle VP and C level searches in management, finance & accounting, legal, IT, human resources and sales and marketing. She also handles specialized searches at the BOD level or in operations/logistics/supply chain as requested by her clients. Clients range in size from start-ups with VC backing to Fortune 50 companies throughout the US. Wiesen brings over 30 years of executive search experience and is known throughout the marketplace as a hands-on business partner and trusted advisor who helps build organizations through strategic placement of key leaders, making sure there is a strong cultural fit in addition to skill sets being on point. As one client put it, "Bev shows up as a consultant to the business who truly wants to build a synergistic leadership team."



Joanne Williams, CEO

JWilliams Staffing Inc., Irvine

JoAnne Williams, founder of JWilliams Staffing (JWS), grew up in a rural farming community in South Dakota as the seventh of eight children. Being a part of a large family in a region without much socioeconomic segmentation, her life principles became quickly evident with each venture. Williams is known for her integrity, work ethic, continuous education, mentoring, sharing knowledge, and community giving. With a passion for investing in others and an unrelenting entrepreneurial drive, Williams took out a home equity loan, sectioned off 1/2 of her garage for an office, and made a giant leap of faith - JWilliams Staffing opened for business in 2004. By developing a unique training plan to help her temporary associates excel and by offering the first program to 'hire direct at no cost after 500 hours of temping', Williams made it easy for her clients to hire JWS' temporary associates. Williams' trained and motivated candidates exceeded clients' expectations and caught the attention of homebuilders, property management companies, and real estate industry partners across the U.S. JWilliams Staffing quickly became the largest real estate staffing firm in the nation and has launched the careers of over 22,000 professionals (YE2021).



Ann Wilson, Sr. Vice President, Employee Benefits

Hub International, Newport Beach

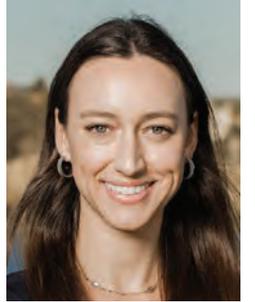
Ann Wilson has been in the insurance industry for almost 20 years, she joined Hub in 2015. In

April 2023, she was promoted to SVP where she is focusing on a new book of business. Wilson ran the HUB OC EB practice from 2018-2021. Prior to that she ran the Los Angeles / Orange County Employee Benefits practice from 2021-2023.

Anika Wilson, Financial Advisor

Spinnaker Investment Group, Newport Beach

Anika Wilson, financial advisor at Spinnaker Investment Group, provides personalized financial plans and investment management to individuals, families and businesses. Since joining in January 2021, Wilson has launched multiple new initiatives for Spinnaker Investment Group. One of those is a YouTube series called Spinnaker University, geared towards educating Millennials and younger generations on the basics of wealth management and preparing for financial success. Another initiative is a new business division called Women & Wealth and offers tailored services specifically for women. Through Women & Wealth, Wilson works with all of Spinnaker's women clientele to educate, inspire and empower them to take responsibility for their finances, so that they have the ability to protect and control their future, and their family's future, for years to come. Additionally, Wilson frequently speaks on a variety of podcasts and youtube shows discussing wealth and financial literacy for women.



Amy Wincell, CEO

DemandSkill Inc., Irvine

With more than a 30-year tenure in the industry, Amy Bartulis Winchell leads DemandSkill. She and the DemandSkill team are passionate about helping businesses grow their revenue and achieve their goals. DemandSkill seeks to work with business partners who truly understand the B2B demand generation industry and is committed to helping customers succeed. The company's goal is not just to be a demand vendor but to be a true partner in success.



Nicolle Winsor & Kirsten Potter, Principals & Owners

The Raymond Group, Orange

Nicolle (Nikki) Winsor is principal/owner of the The Raymond Group, responsible for all facets of the business and its business units. Winsor holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of Southern California, as well as a Master of Arts in Education from Pepperdine University. Winsor first began at Raymond in 1989, working in project management and marketing. She joined the Raymond Board of Directors in 1997 to help oversee the company's management and operations, while providing oversight and accountability.

Kirsten Potter, principal/owner of The Raymond Group, oversees all facets of the business and its business units. Potter graduated from the University of Southern California with a degree in Communications. She has experience in communications, having worked for a leading West Coast news network, and in sales overseeing over 130 sales representatives. Prior to her current role, Potter worked for Raymond in several capacities. In 1997, she joined the Raymond Board of Directors, helping to guide the company's strategic planning and decision making.



Diane Wittenberg, Partner

Haskell & White, Irvine

Diane Wittenberg, a partner of Haskell & White, one of Southern California's largest independently owned public accounting firms, brings over 35 years of public accounting experience to her clients and the expertise to help them navigate a complex economic and regulatory environment. Providing value beyond meeting compliance requirements is a focus for each of her clients. Her leadership is integral to many vital initiatives for the Firm, such as mentoring and training programs for young professionals pursuing a Certified Public Accountant license. She serves as a board member for the Association for Corporate Growth (ACG) Orange County chapter. She also serves as the Audit Committee chair for the Discovery Cube Orange County and is the Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair for Mariposa Women and Family Center.



Melinda Wohl, CFO

Decisionpoint Systems Inc, Laguna Hills

Melinda Wohl played a critical role in the execution and integration of 12 acquisitions, during her tenure driving rapid growth and expansion into new markets while managing the complexities of each acquisition, ensuring seamless integration and realization of synergies. She successfully led capital raising efforts, securing substantial funding through a combination of equity and debt financing. Wohl enabled strategic investments and operational expansion by ensuring the company had the necessary capital resources. She led the transition to public and subsequent sale: orchestrated the company's transition from privately held to public, initially listing on Nasdaq and later on the NYSE. In addition, Wohl managed the sale and merger of the business into a privately held entity, maximizing shareholder value. She served as a trusted advisor to the CEO and the board of directors, providing strategic financial insights and contributing to key decision-making processes. Lastly, Wohl ensured financial strategies were aligned with the overall vision and goals of the organization, driving sustainable growth.



Debora Wondercheck, Founder & CEO

The Arts and Learning Conservatory, Santa Ana

Debora Wondercheck is the founder and CEO of Arts & Learning Conservatory, marking its 20th anniversary this year. Her visionary leadership, combined with an unwavering commitment to social impact and equality, has positioned the organization as a leader in culturally inclusive artistic training and education empowering the next



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generation of thousands of children throughout Southern California. With nearly three decades dedicated to education and arts advocacy, Wondercheck is a true inspiration in both education and corporate leadership. Beyond her role at Arts & Learning Conservatory, Wondercheck is a professor of string pedagogy, a skilled cellist, and an accomplished orchestral conductor, enriching every aspect of her work with her multifaceted expertise. Additionally, she is the creative force behind acclaimed county-wide productions such as "Gospel Voices of OC" and "Music of the March," which celebrate the resilience and faith of African American ancestors through artistic expression.

Lisa Wood, CEO

Casa Tera, Orange

When Lisa Wood joined Casa Teresa in 2015, the organization was running at a \$500,000 deficit, jeopardizing the only maternity shelter in Orange County. Engaging business leaders and philanthropists, she stabilized the organization in two years. There were difficult decisions to be made including selling property and moving the Emergency Maternity program onto the main campus, enhancing services while significantly reducing cost. After regaining financial stability, Casa Teresa became a trauma informed organization deepening the healing for the women being served. Wood led a \$1.5 million capital campaign, partnering with Magical Builders to renovate its three buildings. Further, Wood increased programing for education, workforce training, and other skills to support greater self-reliance. A new long-term rental assistance program with case management was launched for women graduating from Casa Teresa and their children. This has resulted in women continuing a healthy lifestyle including housing, employment/education, and sobriety.



Kerstin Woods, Vice President, Solutions & Outbound Marketing

Toshiba America Business Solutions, Lake Forest

Kerstin Woods has notched numerous accomplishments as Toshiba's marketing leader. Upon joining Toshiba in June 2019, she was tasked with acquainting herself with new teams and products as well as an entirely new industry while shortly thereafter successfully leading her organization through the pandemic. Woods led several profitable product launches while defining and adding new product categories for Toshiba as well as launching Toshiba's popular cloud platform enabling organizations' print productivity and digital automation across the Americas. She additionally introduced integrated marketing campaigns to amplify Toshiba's marketing messages by aligning content across all marketing platforms. This resulted in exponentially more blogs (five times), webcasts (seven times) and other related digital marketing content. For her marketing excellence at Toshiba, Woods received the Stevie® Award for Female Executive of the Year. She is also an ENX Magazine Difference Maker, The Cannata Report Woman Influencer, and heads up the company's AI Task Force.



Robin Wright, Managing Partner

Wright, Finlay & Zak, LLP, Newport Beach

Robin Wright is a co-founder and the managing partner of Wright, Finlay & Zak, a WBENC certified women-owned law firm. She led the growth of the firm from one office with six attorneys to multiple offices with dozens of attorneys. As the firm's Managing Partner since 2001, Robin oversees the Firm's operations, multiple practice areas in 11 states, and office administration. Nearing 30 years of experience, Wright focuses her legal career on mortgage banking, business and real estate litigation, and servicing/trustee compliance. She also handles all aspects of default servicing and mortgage banking litigation, as well as compliance issues for lenders, investors, loan servicers, title companies, and foreclosure trustees. Additionally, Wright has held a real estate license since she was 18 years old.



Michelle Wulfestieg, Executive Director

Southern California Hospice Foundation, Costa Mesa

Michelle Wulfestieg is living out her life's purpose. After overcoming significant health challenges, including suffering a stroke at age 11 that left her disabled on her right side and a more severe one at age 25 that nearly killed her. Her personal experiences have given her a deep understanding of the needs of bedbound individuals. Following her second stroke, while working at a hospice, she decided to dedicate her life to helping those at the end of theirs. Since 2010 she has served as the executive director of the Southern California Hospice Foundation, providing care to over 7,000 terminally ill individuals. In 2023, she opened a six-bedroom residential care home in Mission Viejo, the Heavenly Home, to offer people a peaceful and dignified environment for their final days. This facility is the only nonprofit hospice care home in Orange County and one of just four in California.



Teresa Zmary, Doctor

Z Dermatology, Huntington Beach

Dr. Zmary is very hands on and goes above and beyond the call of duty with her patients. All though her specialty is dermatology she considers all aspects of patients' health. Teresa Zmary, DO, FAAD, is the founder of Z-Dermatology & Skin Wellness Center located in Huntington Beach, California. Dr. Zmary is a board-certified dermatologist and a fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology who specializes in medical and cosmetic dermatology. With her extensive training and years of experience, she provides comprehensive care with an individualized treatment program for every patient's needs. Dr. Zmary graduated from the University of California, Irvine, with a Bachelor of Science in biological sciences. She continued her education at Western University of Health Services in Pomona, California, earning her medical degree. After graduating, Dr. Zmary completed an internship at the University of California, Irvine Medical Center in Orange, followed by her dermatology residency at Pacific Hospital/Western University of Health Sciences in 2014 in Pomona, California, where she served as chief resident. Dr. Zmary takes a patient-centered approach and is a firm believer that successful treatment plans start by intently listening to the patient, communicating, and developing customized treatments.



Angela Zepeda, Chief Marketing Officer

Hyundai Motor America, Fountain Valley

Angela Zepeda is the chief marketing officer (CMO) for Hyundai Motor America. Angela is responsible for all of Hyundai's marketing and advertising activities in the U.S., including the strategic direction, brand development, national and regional advertising, experiential marketing, digital and social media, brand partnerships, and lead generation, among other responsibilities. Zepeda is known for her leadership, vision and dedication to the automotive industry. In her fifth year as CMO for Hyundai, Zepeda has transformed the brand by establishing deeper, less transactional relationships with customers.



Sally Zesut, VP

Avison Young, Irvine

Sally Zesut has paved her way in the Commercial Real Estate industry for over 26 years.

Through her career, she has diligently worked to serve her clients to the best of her ability, prioritizing an advisory role predicated on honesty, communication, and care. She serves as a mentor for the team ensuring their successful real estate career. In 2024, Zesut successfully brokered the second-biggest industrial lease in terms of square footage (over 1 million sft) signed so far this year in the Inland Empire earning her a Costar Power broker Top Deal Q124 recognition. In 2023, Zesut successfully brokered one of the top lease deals in the City of Industry for the year, and she was recognized by CoStar with her earning the Top Deal in Q1 and Q3 2023 award. That same year, she was also recognized numerous times by the Los Angeles Business Journal's Women's Business Council, as well as earning a nomination in the 2023 and 2024 Los Angeles Times' Inspirational Women Leadership Awards."



Stella Zhang, Founder & COO

American Lending Center, Irvine

Stella Zhang has been a powerful advocate for small business owners and underrepresented entrepreneurs in Orange County for twenty years. Following her MBA at The Paul Merage School of Business ('05), she matched her passion for helping others with her investment talents by joining the American Lending Center. As COO, she has built a successful small business lending team, managing assets of \$1.2 billion consisting largely of loans and other projects. As an alum, she named UC Irvine's Stella Zhang New Venture Competition, where 100+ students, staff and researchers have competed annually to fund their business ideas. Since 2021, winners have received \$300,000 and mentoring to transform product concepts into viable companies. In recognition of her impact, Zhang earned the Merage School's Distinguished Alumni Award at UC Irvine's 2023 Lauds & Laurels. This spring, she served as commencement speaker for the Merage School's 2024 master's graduate ceremony.



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LUNCHEON & AWARDS PROGRAM

October 30, 2024
12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.



RESERVATION INFORMATION:

Tickets*: \$185/Table of Ten \$1,750
Please visit ocbj.com/events



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Brieane Olson

Chief Executive Officer
PacSun

PAC SUN

*Tickets are non-refundable. Ticket price includes a one year subscription to the Orange County Business Journal (\$30 allocated to the subscription). New subscribers only. Current subscribers may gift the subscription to a colleague.

Congratulations 2024 Nominees

Kate Marr / Community Legal Aid SoCal
LaShanda Maze / Community Action Partnership of Orange County
Katie McDowell / Western Alliance Bank
Billie Luzar / Trumark Homes
Judy McMackin / CLEAR Solutions Inc.
Meg Treat, APR / Treat Public Relations
Shachi Mehra / Spice Girl Sauces/ADYA
Susan Meinhardt / KBS
Vivian Mendoza / WaBa Grill
Rashmi Menon / Burns & McDonnell
Lauren Mills / Sea Pointe Design & Remodel
Christine Moghadam / Corc Yoga
Sandra L. Morgan, PhD, RN / Vanguard University
Jennifer Morris / Ajenda Public Relations
Jessica Morrow / Revive Real Estate
Gianna Mulkay / Foster Love
Leilah Mundt / Crème collective
Jordan Murrel / JP Morgan Chase
Hima Nippuleti / BoozDNA Technology
Kelly O'Connell / 360 Venture Collective | ON ITS AXIS
Claudia Ogaz / Health-Ade
Lindsay Oglesby / Tax Relief Advocates
Anoosheh Oskouian / Ship & Shore Environmental, Inc.
Joyce Pae / Verus Aerospace
Ellen Pais / Pretend City Children's Museum
Andrea Paris / Andrea Paris Law
Kumkum Patel / Kumkum Patel MD, Inc.- A Medical Corporation
Reshma Peck / Experian
Caroline Pereira / Hoag Hospital Foundation
Laura Peter / e360
Kelsey Petersen / OC Marathon
Christina Pham / JMAC Lending
Bonni Pomush / Working Wardrobes
Jeannette Preston / Liberty1 Financial
Danielle Purcell / Team Laguna Inc.
Kendra Puryear / Orangewood Foundation
Caroline Raffi / Ducere Global Business School
Meridith Randall / Golden West College
Barbara Rea / Arden Logistics Parks
Charlene Reynolds / John Wayne Airport

Anna Ricardo / MeriCal, LLC
Aimee Rickabus / Tomahawk Information Solutions
Maricela Rios-Faust / Human Options
Kelly Ripley / oceanfront Electric
Shireen Rogers / Musick Peeler & Garrett LLP
Johanna Rojas / R&D Incentives Group
Kate Romano Armado / Enterprise Bank & Trust
JoJo Romeo / Pacific Sotheby's International Realty
Skylar Romines / ATW Advisors
Susan Rounds / BKM Capital Partners
Angie Rowe / Beyond Blindness
Jessica Roy / 608 Dahlia
Jacqueline Russell / Social Impact Advising Group
Michele Sabo Assayag / Snell & Wilmer
Chelsee Sachs / MVP Accident Attorneys
Bitu Safari / GiGO Clean
Teresa Saldivar / Teresa's Jewelers
Talia Samuels / Outshine Public Relations
Lucy Santana / Girls Inc. of Orange County
Kavita Sarma / Stretto
Jennifer Savio / Creative Window Designs
Daniela Scharding / ELAFY Consulting LLC
Amber Senteno / Optum
Mona Shah / Moxxe PR, Inc.
Sona Shah / My Private Professor
Guita Sharifi / Lifelong Learning Administration Corp.
Anna (Dixia) Shi / Ever Pretty Garment Inc.
Mila Shmurak / Bare Pits
Sarah Shores / Outside the Lines, Inc.
Monica Shukla-Belmontes / U Mass Global
Laura Sillen / Purus Wealth Management
Rachel Simon / Snell & Wilmer LLP
Kimberly Smith / Crawford Custom Homes
Chahira Solh / Crowell & Moring LLP
Jessica Spaulding / The Spaulding Agency
Brenda Springer / Reveille, Inc.
Shyla Springmeyer / R&D Incentives Group
Christine Stellino / Homeless Intervention Services of Orange County
Paula Steurer / Sterling Public Relations
Autumn Strier / Miracles for Kids

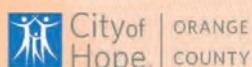
Jennifer Strong / Cognitive Diagnostic Associates
Mary Christine (M.C.) Sungaila / Complex Appellate Litigation Group
Rachel Svoboda / Sunday Brunch Agency
Dayse Tarakdian / Full Body Pilates
Allison Taylor / Taylor Wealth Management, LPL Financial
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