

BRANDED CONTENT

JULY 4, 2022

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

**WOMEN'S  
LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM  
& AWARDS 2022**

*Honorees  
& Finalists*

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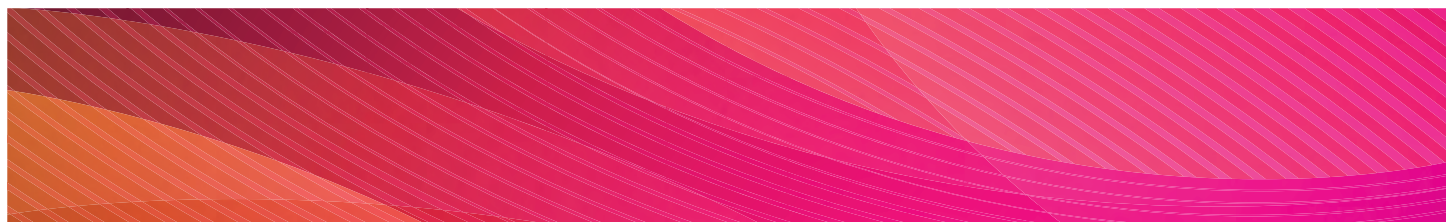
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## Letter from the Publisher



In a return to its in-person format, the *Los Angeles Business Journal* hosted the 2022 Women's Leadership Symposium & Awards last week. Through a limited capacity by design, attendees chose their social preferences and level of engagement with others. Some came to meet, mingle and network, while others were there to listen and learn from a distance. All in all, it was yet another inspiring day of information, education and celebration.

This year's symposium panelists covered topics of ongoing importance, from recognition and salary negotiation, to leading through change and an open discussion about how COVID has created new opportunities for women in the C-suite. In addition, our Awards program honored women of outstanding achievement in our business community.

With 360 incredible nominees, there are clearly many accomplished and impactful leaders to draw inspiration from. This year, we named honorees in the following categories: CEO of the Year; Executive of the Year; Innovator of the Year; Emerging Woman-Owned Business Leader Award; Champion of Women Award; Mentor of the Year; Community Impact Advocate Award; Woman to Watch Award; and NextGen Woman of the Year.

We honored achievements by a number of powerful women who have made a difference throughout Los Angeles. Each of these remarkable honorees and finalists are described in these pages.

Many thanks to our sponsors, who help to make this event possible, and once again, congratulations to the honorees – women who blend effective business vision, with a commitment to positively making a difference, both in the world of business and in the communities they serve.

Best regards,

Josh Schimmels  
Publisher & CEO



### STEWARDS OF SUCCESS

Inclusion and belonging matters at Prologis. Our people drive our success. That's why we've built a culture of personal and professional empowerment. In Los Angeles, our leaders are over 70% female and we are the better for it.



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## Achieving great things for our community

When a group of people comes along who have the courage and vision to turn dreams into reality, they make the future bright for everyone.

**The Women of the Leadership Symposium, we celebrate your achievements.**



LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

# WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS 2022

This year's Women's Leadership Symposium & Awards event, which took place at the JW Marriott LA Live on June 29th was a half-day of inspiration, education and recognition. Discussion topics included "Dream Big, Spark Change," "The Great Resignation – New Opportunities," "Live Your Best Life: Today's Work/Life Balance," "C-Suite Visionaries," and "Invention and Reinvention of Yourself." Many thanks to our outstanding participating panelists, who are listed here (along with accompanying quotes from the event) and to the sponsors who made the event possible.

To view highlights from the event, visit [labusinessjournal.com/events/wsa2022](https://labusinessjournal.com/events/wsa2022)

## DREAM BIG, SPARK CHANGE

MODERATED BY DR. BERNICE LEDBETTER



**Alice Juarez**  
Regional Banking Director, Los Angeles  
Wells Fargo Bank

“As a leader I am always learning from my team. My magic formula has been to listen with intent and have meaningful conversation with diverse perspectives. This has allowed me to create a positive change in the workplace and leave a lasting legacy.”



**Dr. Bernice Ledbetter**  
Dean of Students and Alumni Affairs; Faculty; Organizational Theory  
and Management Director, Center for Women in Leadership  
Pepperdine Graziadio School of Business

“It was an honor to be a moderator for the 2022 Women's Leadership Symposium. The Los Angeles region is a hotbed of women business leaders ready to take charge and change the world.”



**Jennifer Povlitz**  
UBS Managing Director, West Division Director,  
Wealth Management USA  
UBS Financial Services Inc.

“Capital and influence are highly correlated. I feel called to help more women oversee more capital, where the path to leadership and the need for talent converge.”



**Kiran Sanghera**  
People & Culture Manager  
Miller Kaplan

“Now, more than ever, successfully managing and retaining teams requires leading with intention by clearly communicating goals and expectations, and remembering to do so, first and foremost, with humility and empathy.”



**Dayle M. Smith, Ph.D.**  
Dean  
LMU College of Business Administration

“Organizations that survived and thrived during COVID required crisis management and effective leadership. Thinking creatively about culture and strategy with a commitment to purpose and mission enables leaders to withstand change and come out stronger.”



## THE GREAT RESIGNATION - NEW OPPORTUNITIES

MODERATED BY MARY OSAKO



**Inessa Burrola**  
 CEO, President of Sales and Recruiting  
 Boutique Recruiting



“Our tight labor market leaves employers feeling even more concerned about their #1 worry – finding top talent. If you want to be the first to quickly attract top talent, your game plan needs to start with professionals in the recruiting industry.”



**Jodie Poirier**  
 Executive Managing Director, Greater Los Angeles  
 Colliers



“As business leaders, we are responsible for shaping company culture, and culture starts with people. Put people first, deliver value, create a vibe where people want to be, and employee retention and recruitment will follow.”



**Mary Osako**  
 Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communications  
 UCLA



“It’s truly an employee-forward market. But with the odds of a recession heightening, it could be anyone’s ballgame. One thing is certain: Employers that treat every employee as a franchise talent will win.”



**Michelle Wroan**  
 Los Angeles Office Managing Partner  
 KPMG



“As employee expectations of companies continue to rise, leaders must demonstrate deeper levels of connection and commitment to the workforce, placing employee experience at the center of their strategy.”

## LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE: TODAY'S WORK/LIFE BALANCE

MODERATED BY DR. MICHELE NEALON



**Misty De Lamare**  
 Director, Communications  
 L.A. Care Health Plan



“Self-care isn’t selfish. Think of it like when you’re on an airplane. You have to put on your oxygen mask first, before you can help those around you.”



**Kandee Lewis**  
 CEO/President  
 Positive Results Center



“Learning to love yourself unconditionally, asking for what you need, and speaking your truth is a sign of good emotional and mental health! If you are not honest with yourself, how do you expect others to believe, follow or trust you?”



**Michelle C. Feng, Ph.D.**  
 Chief Clinical Officer  
 Executive Mental Health



“Mental health issues have become a greater focus and employee well-being is more important than ever. Creating balance and a sustainable career must include attention to these critical aspects of whole health.”



**Dr. Michele Nealon, Psy.D**  
 President  
 The Chicago School of Professional Psychology



“Women bear the brunt of stressors in everyday life—balancing work/family obligations and caring for children and parents, while still fighting gender stereotypes. Practicing healthy habits and personal wellness can mitigate these stressors, promoting self-confidence and performance.”

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## C-SUITE VISIONARIES

MODERATED BY PEGI MATSUDA



**Cheryl Calhoun, CPA, MBA**  
*Managing Director, Tax & Business Management*  
 CBIZ & MHM

“The road to the C-suite is different for each individual. But there are certain essential qualities and characteristics that are present in those who successfully navigate the path.”



**Precious Mayes**  
*CEO/President*  
 Pacifica Hospital of the Valley

“The impossible is possible and every day is a gift. Cherish every moment – you’re not guaranteed tomorrow.”



**Pegi Matsuda, MA, CFRE**  
*Owner*  
 On Board LLC

“The best leaders understand that every generation of employees need different experiences to feel successful in their careers. Understand employees, help them see your vision, seek out their opinions and invite them to engage in the process.”



**Lena Wilson, JD**  
*CEO and President*  
 Vista Del Mar Child & Family Services

“Always look back to see whose hand you can take as you move forward.”

## INVENTION & REINVENTION OF YOURSELF

MODERATED BY STACY D. PHILLIPS



**Tanya Acker**  
*Co-Host, Tribunal (Amazon Freevee);*  
*Host, The Tanya Acker Show podcast*

“There is always an opportunity to think about what you’re doing, where you’re going, and whether it is time to create a new path. It is a constant conversation. We’re never really finished.”



**Joan B. Kessler, JD, Ph.D.**  
*Mediator, Arbitrator, Special Master*  
 JAMS

“While developing my career from PhD professor/jury consultant, to litigator, and now neutral – I took the road less traveled, refused to embrace barriers about my ability to succeed in the profession as a woman, took risks and turned knocks into boosts. Each challenge is an opportunity for growth.”



**Stacy D. Phillips**  
*Partner, Matrimonial & Family Law*  
 Blank Rome LLP

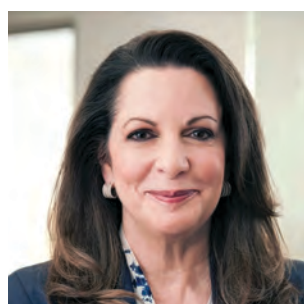
“Change is natural, healthy, and reinvigorating. When you have an opportunity and your gut tells you it is a good risk, don’t let your own or others’ doubts seep in or barriers deter you. Believe and invest in yourself!”



**Jackie Keller**  
*Founding Director and Executive Chef*  
 NutriFit, LLC

“Einstein said, ‘the measure of intelligence is the ability to change.’ My transition from corporate executive to entrepreneur and my constantly evolving, passion and

mission-driven businesses give life meaning and substance. I highly recommend you run towards change!”



**Julia Stewart**  
*Founder & CEO*  
 Alurx

“I’ve enjoyed over 40 years of corporate leadership in the restaurant industry growing iconic brands. I have added entrepreneur and founder to my previous title as CEO. This exciting transition provides for my passion, skills, and experience to focus solely on consumers’ health and wellness.”



# Embrace your future like you started your business: passionately



Your passion has turned into a successful business. But you may still have questions: What if I want to expand? Am I making the right investment choices for my business? Am I doing all I can to reward my best employees? When is the right time to start planning to exit my business?

Your UBS Financial Advisor team has what you need to help drive your business forward with optimism.

**Proceed with passion.**

**For some of life's questions, you are not alone. Together we can find an answer.**

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LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

# WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS 2022



CEO OF THE YEAR HONOREE

## JANICE BRYANT HOWROYD

Founder and CEO  
ActOne Group

**J**anice Bryant Howroyd, the first African American woman to found a multi-billion dollar company, launched the ActOne Group in Los Angeles in 1978. The workforce solutions and staffing solutions company has since provided millions of jobs for millions of workers across the globe. Operating in over 32 countries and 24 languages, Howroyd leads from the humanity, discipline, and excellence instilled in her childhood, where she weathered a segregated education in the deep south. Transparency and accountability frame her leadership style and the culture of her organization.

Howroyd was the first-ever BET Honors Entrepreneur of the Year, and for her company's keen, proactive work ensuring employment for women and diverse populations throughout the pandemic, she received Black Enterprise's 2022 Woman of the Year award. In 2013, she was appointed a USA Ambassador of Energy at the White House, in May of 2016, a key Presidential appointment by President Barack Obama to the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and in 2017, was appointed to the Federal Communications Commission's Advisory Committee on Diversity and Digital Empowerment.

Howroyd is an educator, ambassador, twice published author, advocate for women in STEM and entrepreneurship, and a champion of DE&I. She has donated millions of dollars to universities to ensure advanced education for minorities and women and serves on boards at Harvard, USC, Cal State San Bernardino, and NCA&T. She personally provides mentorships to women in business and funds programs that educate and promote young women at the nationally and internationally.



CEO OF THE YEAR FINALIST

### KELLY COFFEY

Chief Executive Officer  
City National Bank

**U**nder Kelly Coffey's leadership, City National is stronger and better capitalized than ever before in its 68-year history. Coffey has grown the bank to more than 5,600 colleagues and 74 offices in more than a dozen states. City National is now a \$91.3 billion bank, up from \$35 billion in assets when she took the helm in 2019.

Coffey took the lead just one year before the global pandemic. One area where the pandemic actually accelerated her plans was its innovation. Coffey has led the charge for City National to become a digitally enabled relationship bank, which proved even more critical during the pandemic, as demand for the bank's digital channels rose 800%. After relaunching its mobile app early in the pandemic, the bank's digital team turned to City National's website, which has become a more interactive experience for visitors by essentially transforming the website into an online branch.



CEO OF THE YEAR FINALIST

### JENNIFER HARK DIETZ

Chief Executive Officer  
People Assisting The Homeless (PATH)

**A** 15-year advocate in homelessness, Veterans, and mental health services, Jennifer Hark Dietz leads PATH's strategic direction, business management, and person-centered efforts across California. She guides the organization's statewide initiatives, working alongside 900 staff with a shared commitment to establish permanent solutions to homelessness that are faster and more affordable. As a licensed clinical social worker, Dietz ensures the use of evidence-based approaches to service delivery.

Dietz also helps manage the organization's assets, direct mergers and acquisitions, analyze risk for new projects and programs, and coordinate legal issues. Under her mission-driven leadership, PATH's programs statewide have increased by more than 20 percent each year, increased operations from \$15 million to \$140 million, and expanded its reach from 4,000 Californians across 90 cities to 25,000 across 150. She also works with PATH's real estate affiliate, PATH Ventures, with its housing portfolio's rapid expansion to 2,150 units completed or underway.



CEO OF THE YEAR FINALIST

### CONSTANZA PACHON

Chief Executive Officer  
The Whole Child

**I**n four short years, Constanza Pachon has used her tremendous managerial and mentoring talents to transform the nonprofit The Whole Child into a leading organization committed to reducing family homelessness and improving children's mental health. This comes from her own lived experience of homelessness as a child, which has become her legacy to transform the lives of women and children from ones of day-to-day trauma to ones of security and stability. During her tenure, the agency has grown from \$9.4 million annual revenue to \$21 million, and from 88 to 162 employees, with many new service sites.

Among Pachon's most significant accomplishments, she has undertaken three capital projects for organization, two to increase housing stock for families experiencing homelessness, and one to create the first "one-stop" service shop for families experiencing homelessness in the 26 communities of Southeast Los Angeles, where services have been scarce for these struggling families.



CEO OF THE YEAR FINALIST

### DR. SARA TERHEGGEN

Founder and CEO  
The NBD Group, Inc.

**I**n 2018, Dr. Sara Terheggen, who has advised clients on over \$110 billion in corporate transactions, left her role as an equity partner for a top law firm and founded a legal and business solutions professional corporation, The NBD Group, Inc. The mission of NBD is to disrupt the industry by bringing out a new paradigm that focuses on client service and advancing equality.

Not only is the founder and CEO a woman, but NBD has instituted transparent policies regarding promotion and pay, and has established policies and governance that help women and minorities rise up instead of cycle out. Under Dr. Terheggen's leadership, NBD has experienced year-over-year growth. In the four years since its founding in 2018, NBD has handled over 100 transactions for clients with an aggregate transaction value of over \$8 billion. 2022 shows no sign of slow-down. The NBD Group is already well underway for another phenomenal year.



# Think in the next.

At UCLA Anderson, we encourage tomorrow's leaders to look beyond the horizon and create a better future.





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EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR HONOREE

## JOHANNA FARIES

SVP / General Manager, Call of Duty  
 Activision Blizzard

A powerhouse business leader, with deep experience across strategic planning, commercial management, operations, and marketing, Johanna Faries serves as Activision Blizzard's general manager of Call of Duty (COD), one of the biggest gaming and entertainment brands in the world, and the No. 1 selling console gaming franchise in the U.S. for the past 14 years in a row. As general manager, Faries oversees all aspects of the global CDL business, including mainline and live operations, franchise-wide strategy, and commercial development.

Faries joined Activision Blizzard in 2018 as commissioner of Call of Duty esports. Since taking the GM helm in 2020, Faries has maintained COD's incredible momentum in the marketplace and is focused on shaping a new, long-term vision for the franchise geared toward continued growth and innovation.

While leading Activision Blizzard's esports leagues division, Faries led the formation and management of the global, city-based CDL, which includes 12 professional teams in major cities across four countries. These professional teams feature many of the world's best COD players. In its inaugural season, the CDL achieved several major milestones including its Championship Weekend becoming the most-watched esports event in franchise history, even amidst the disruptions presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Faries credits her 12 years working as an executive with the NFL for building the foundation needed to help Activision Blizzard reimagine the future of entertainment.

Ultimately, Faries focuses on the work first, aiming to collaborate with, develop and manage top-tier teams, while delivering exceptional business results even when the playbook for success is yet unwritten.



EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR FINALIST

### CELESTE M. ALLEYNE

Director, Executive Engagement & External Talent, Events, Studios, Communities  
 Microsoft

As a senior corporate leader for 28 years, Celeste Alleyne has put women's issues/needs at the center of her strategies. She has been an executive at Microsoft for 16 years. She is currently director of executive engagements & external talent for Microsoft's Events, Studios and Communities group. She oversees an internal "talent agency" for senior executives and external speakers: celebrities, thought leaders, emcees, hosts; for global corporate events.

Since she joined this group, Alleyne has influenced and grown the hiring of women and diverse talent by 47%. Formerly she oversaw corporate citizenship, digital equity and access, STEM education and artificial intelligence and community initiatives at Microsoft. Alleyne has always put women and young girls first, providing tech opportunities and resources for women in the workplace, and speaking publicly for hundreds of women and young girls supported by nonprofits across the US.



EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR FINALIST

### JEREMI GORMAN

Chief Business Officer  
 Snap Inc.

Jeremi Gorman is chief business officer at Snap Inc., where she leads global sales, agency partnerships, sales operations, revenue operations, and creative strategy. As a member of the Snap executive team, Gorman reports to co-founder and CEO Evan Spiegel and manages hundreds of employees across teams.

Over the past few years, Gorman has scaled and reorganized the sales team – from a regionalized to a verticalized structure. This new structure has allowed Snap to service more advertisers with sales experts for each business vertical. Gorman and her team work closely in partnership with Snap's Product and Engineering teams to drive business results for both Snap and their advertising partners. Their work to build Snap measurement, optimization, and self-serve platform, combined with the success of Gorman's verticalized sales and business orgs, have helped the company achieve new heights for revenue and business growth.



EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR FINALIST

### SARA (YOUNG) JACKSON

Chancellor  
 Pepperdine University

Sara Jackson has served Pepperdine University in key leadership roles since 1979. She began her decades-long career at Pepperdine as the assistant director of student life and advanced to the director position. In the late 1980s, she worked with student leaders to design and launch the Pepperdine Volunteer Center, a center where students, staff, and faculty members live out the University mission by engaging in service opportunities and building lasting partnerships within the community. In her role as founding director, Jackson developed the managing board and launched the earliest campus-wide volunteer programs.

Jackson was named chancellor in 2019. As chancellor, Jackson leads major initiatives to help strengthen the University's endowment while cultivating meaningful relationships to extend Pepperdine's reach throughout Southern California and around the globe. The chancellor is also a member of the University's senior leadership team and serves as an important advisor to President James A. Gash.



EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR FINALIST

### YOLANDA MACIAS

CCO and Head of Digital Sales  
 Cinedigm

Yolanda Macias has over 25 years of entertainment distribution and media experience. As chief content officer at Cinedigm, she is responsible for sourcing, evaluating, negotiating, renewing and acquiring global content rights from independent producers and studios for all distribution streaming platforms.

Macias also oversees third party digital streaming and physical distribution of over 30,000 films and series across all worldwide platforms and consumption models. Part of Macias' responsibilities also include supervising the relationships with the company's distributed content providers, in addition to overseeing the marketing strategy and customer growth. Her role within the company is not only essential, but a position for which Cinedigm relies on to grow and progress forward. With her leadership, Macias has helped Cinedigm transition from an aggregator of content to a full-service streaming company. She has secured home entertainment distribution and streaming rights for many leading brands.





**Blank Rome LLP** congratulates the extraordinary women selected as nominees, finalists, and honorees of the **Los Angeles Business Journal Women's Leadership Awards 2022**, including our colleagues:

**Mentor of the Year  
Finalist**



**Linda Kornfeld**  
Partner  
Insurance Recovery Practice  
Blank Rome LLP

**Woman to Watch  
Nominee**



**Ana Tagvoryan**  
Partner  
Business Litigation Practice  
Blank Rome LLP

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INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR HONOREE

## JOANNA McFARLAND

Co-Founder and CEO  
 HopSkipDrive

Joanna McFarland began her career paving the way for women in finance as one of the first and only women at both the investment banking and private equity firms at which she worked.

After attending Stanford Business School, she set out on a mission to use her skills to help underserved communities. She first put this into practice through her work at Green Dot, a leading retail-based financial services provider for underserved communities. Deciding she wanted to have a wider reach, McFarland joined larger companies (AT&T Interactive and OneWest Bank) to gain broader experience before founding her own company.

McFarland got the idea for HopSkipDrive from her own challenges as a working mom struggling to balance career and getting her children where they needed to go. As she learned more about youth transportation, she realized the massive challenge that lack of transportation poses to education and access.

Today, HopSkipDrive partners with districts, schools, government agencies and nonprofits to serve our most vulnerable youth. The company's mission is to create opportunity for all through mobility, and McFarland lives that purpose through the partnerships HopSkipDrive has forged.

HopSkipDrive's transportation solution enables children in foster care and experiencing homelessness to access their school of origin after moving home placements. It also helps youth with special needs who have transportation requirements in their IEP. HopSkipDrive continues to help busy families get their children to school and various activities.

McFarland is a true innovator who utilized a transportation network company model to create a youth transportation company to meet specific needs.



INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

## DEBORAH LA FRANCHI

CEO  
 SDS Capital Group

Deborah La Franchi is the founder and CEO of SDS Capital Group – a national leader in impact investing with over \$1 billion in assets under management. Each impact fund on SDS' platform employs a unique investment strategy developed by SDS to generate positive impacts for low-income communities, families and individuals.

La Franchi developed and launched the SDS Supportive Housing Fund, a first-of-its-kind private equity fund financing permanent supportive housing with a focus on the homeless population in Los Angeles. A year ago, La Franchi's funding approach to alleviate the homeless crisis in Los Angeles was just becoming known and launching. Today, La Franchi's vision for a new path to house the homeless has now become a reality: the fund is fully capitalized at \$150 million and investing in one project every 90 days, in order to house over 1,800 individuals who are today living on the streets.



INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

## PAULETTE PANTOJA

Chief Executive Officer  
 Blu Digital Group

Paulette Pantoja founded Blu in 2007 as a services company, providing quality assurances services (QA) for film and TV content, as well as consumer electronics products and technologies. She set the business up on her own, out of her apartment, using her credit card to fund the business.

Pantoja has focused on proprietary workflows and her patented applications help streamline key operational aspects for entertainment companies. These cloud-based automated systems improve operations, providing transparency, control, flexibility and greater efficiencies. Her creation of the cloud-based automation software for content distribution showed real innovation, and her founding of the localization division within Blu in 2021 further expands the services bringing international content to audiences around the world. She has taken big risks to realize her vision. Self-funding her business, she recognized how innovative technology can enable the growth of the business. She inspires her teams to evolve Blu's technology solutions.



INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

## MICHELE RUIZ

Co-Founder and CEO  
 BiasSync

Michele Ruiz's work has positively impacted the lives not only of those who know her personally, but also those who have read her writings, seen her as a trusted TV journalist, benefitted from her mentorship, and most recently the global community where she is working to mitigate unconscious bias on an unprecedented scale.

Through her company, BiasSync, Ruiz's dedication to mitigating gender bias in the workplace has affected hundreds of thousands of women, and the momentum continues to rise – as has her commitment to addressing intersectional biases that so often magnify the challenges faced by women of color, those across the LGBTQIA+ community, and those facing bias on the basis of age or disability. A true innovator, the product Ruiz champions through BiasSync's research and development is the first in the nation to provide actionable, scientifically-validated data to corporations seeking to mitigate unconscious bias – at scale.



INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

## MERCY TOLENTINO STEENWYK

President and CEO  
 ForensisGroup, Inc.

Mercy Tolentino Steenwyk is an inspiration and leader in her field and greater community. She started ForensisGroup over 30 years ago and entered a field where immigrant women of color were scarcely seen. Hailing from a small provincial town in the Philippines and a social activist grooming from the University of the Philippines, Steenwyk arrived in the US determined to make the most of the opportunity. Despite facing overt and covert sexism and racism, Steenwyk stayed true to her mission and vision of life and soon identified a need in the community and ForensisGroup was born.

Steenwyk set out to help move the world forward by connecting people to help solve problems. Testimony from her expert witnesses has helped keep oil out of oceans, dangerous chemicals out of food, and has led to safer skyscrapers. What is perhaps most inspiring is how her innovative leadership style is purpose-driven.





# CONGRATULATIONS JOHANNA FARIES



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**“EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR”**

FROM YOUR PROUD  
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THANK YOU FOR  
CHANGING THE GAME.



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LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

# WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS 2022



EMERGING WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR **HONOREE**

## MELANIE STRICKLAN

*Co-Founder & CEO*  
Slingshot Aerospace

Over the course of her 21-year career in the United States Air Force, Melanie Stricklan amassed an array of accolades, credits and achievements while protecting and defending space, but her work as a civilian is poised to have an equally great impact on civilization and human exploration. Following her retirement from the military, Stricklan co-founded Slingshot Aerospace in 2017 to address the increasingly urgent matter of space sustainability.

With 115,000 new satellites projected to enter space by 2030, the risk of on-orbit collisions dramatically increases between satellites that are critical to our daily lives and enable things like GPS, television, internet and more. Solving the space sustainability issue has become a key part of Stricklan's legacy.

A technology that allows organizations to accurately visualize the orbital environment, conduct scenario planning to ensure the safe deployment of satellites and other space movements, and even receive alerts about potential dangers during the course of a space mission would change the game. Stricklan leads the Slingshot Aerospace team that has transformed these science fiction concepts into science fact. A range of Slingshot Aerospace products, such as Slingshot Beacon, Slingshot Laboratory and the Slingshot Digital Space Twin, have been developed in partnership with the U.S. Space Force and commercial customers to help solve the space sustainability challenge and mitigate as much risk as possible for anyone conducting business in orbit.

Stricklan has also used her role as a leading female executive in the overwhelmingly male-dominated space industry to advocate for young women to explore STEM-related careers.



EMERGING WOMEN-OWNED  
BUSINESS LEADER FINALIST

## RACHEL MILLER

*CEO*  
Closegap

Rachel Miller is the founder & CEO of Closegap, a nonprofit that makes it easy for schools to support the emotional health of K-12 students through daily mental health check-ins. Recognizing the lack of touchpoints youth have for support and the staggering effect that has on emotional well-being, she developed Closegap's daily check-in platform to get kids the resources they need. Since its launch in 2019, Closegap has been used in over 3,000 schools and has captured over three million check-ins, giving youth across all 50 states and 25 countries the opportunity to connect with a trusted adult and develop emotion regulation, self-reflection skills and self-esteem.

Miller's proven success as Closegap helps improve the mental health of K-12 students, and her dedication to leveraging developmental psychology and evidence-based research is key to helping create a happier and healthier world.



EMERGING WOMEN-OWNED  
BUSINESS LEADER FINALIST

## STEPHANIE PIZA

*Founder*  
UNCMNN

Stephanie Piza is celebrating the three-year anniversary of her management company, UNCMNN, this year. Piza is a trailblazing woman who has forged her own path in a white male dominated industry with the goal of uplifting diverse digital talent, an increasingly growing market that has seen a huge surge since the debut of TikTok.

UNCMNN, a full-service talent management and entertainment strategy firm that amplifies the voices of diverse creators rooted in new media, has reached a milestone as a small, female led business, especially during a time when many companies were shuttering due to the pandemic. Piza is breaking down barriers for not just herself, but also her business partner Rana Zand, their team of female employees, and their growing client base of hungry and talented creatives. The company has grown exponentially, continuing to lead by example as a diverse, Latin female-led firm.

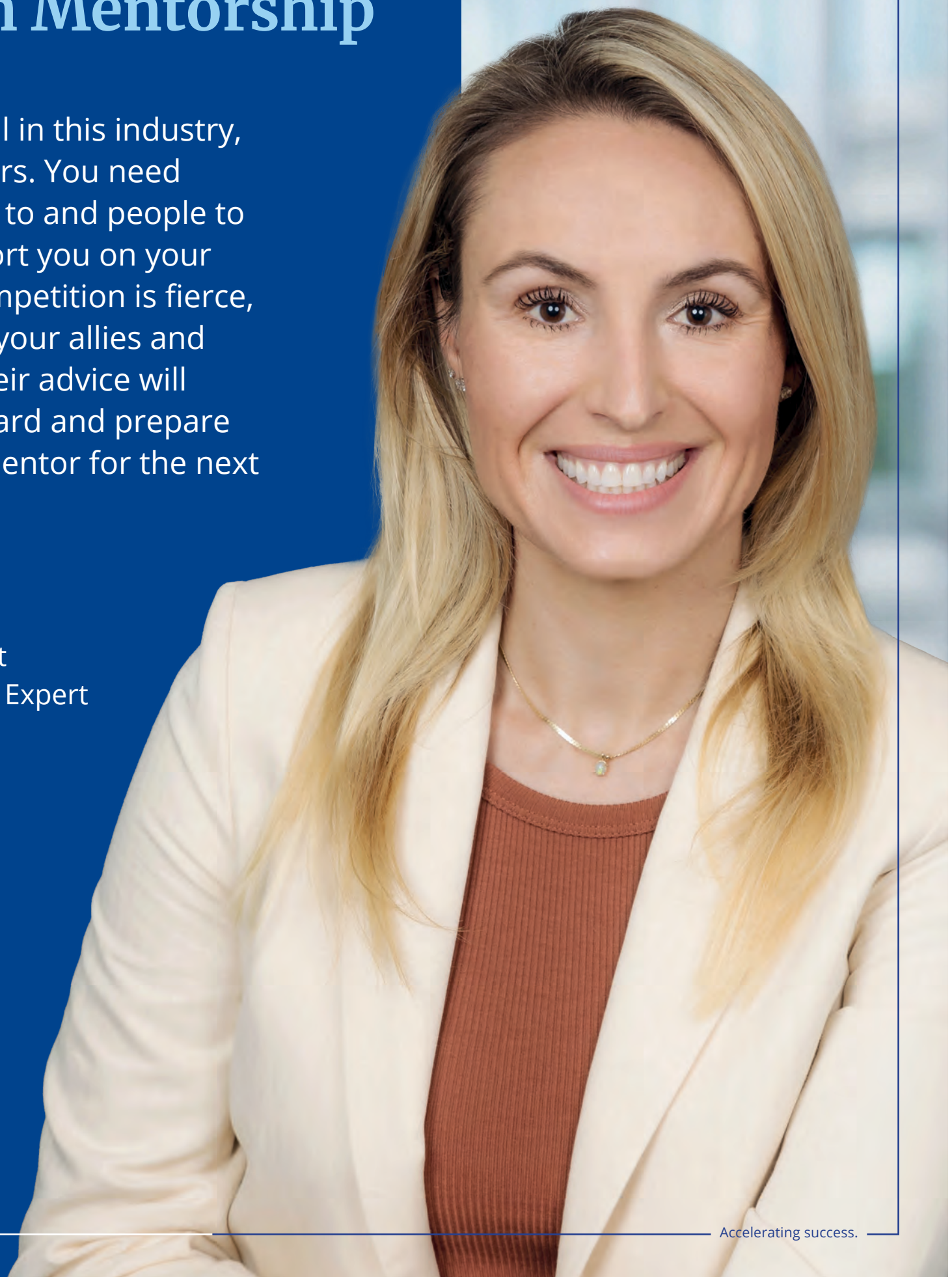




# Accelerating Success Through Mentorship

“To be successful in this industry, you need mentors. You need people to aspire to and people to guide and support you on your journey. The competition is fierce, but recognizing your allies and homing in on their advice will propel you forward and prepare you to be that mentor for the next generation.”

**Kristen Bowman**  
First Vice President  
Los Angeles Office Expert



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CHAMPION OF WOMEN HONOREE

## COMMANDER RUBY FLORES

*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer*  
 Los Angeles Police Department

Commander Ruby Flores' contributions to the Los Angeles Police Department related to mentoring and advancement of women have been ongoing and consistent throughout her career. She leads with compassion and conviction to improve the department in a manner that will benefit all throughout the city and department employees. Her responses to department projects and efforts, start and end with the best interest of the community and department employees in mind.

Flores makes time within her incredibly busy schedule to meet one-on-one with anyone to provide counsel and guidance, including those outside the LAPD. This is but one method in which Flores is quintessential to furtherance of women of LAPD. Another is her work hosting Promotional Hiring Seminars for the ranks of detective, sergeant and lieutenant. She prepares the attendees for success in their upcoming multiple choice, essay and interview; maintaining regular meetings with anyone seeking additional assistance.

The furtherance of the women and men of LAPD by Flores is also seen in the Candidate Assistance Program and seminars; which prepares female candidates to be successful in the police academy. Flores is also an active and vocal member of the Los Angeles Women Police Officer and Associates, for whom she has been assisting in furthering women throughout the department.

Flores established and published the department's first DEI plan. This plan expands on the manner in which the LAPD will foster an internal culture committed to engaging the voices, respecting the humanity of all people and reflecting the expectations of the communities LAPD serves.



CHAMPION OF WOMEN FINALIST

### RITA BOCCUZZI

*Financial Expert & Money Mastery Coach*  
 Flourish Inc.

Rita Bocuzzi's primary focus is financial education and empowerment in order to elevate her community, with a special focus on women. She believes that a financially educated society is an elevated society and she absolutely practices what she preaches. In her free time she hosts complimentary workshops such as "Wine Women & Wealth," "Money Mommy Daddy & Me," and "It's No Secret to be Wealthy: Money 101." These events exist to improve people's relationships with money.

Many women who Bocuzzi has supported through her events have come from environments that did not support their development and growth. She is sensitive to this and is mindful when hosting these events in order to empower these women. When she's not hosting workshops, she is working to build out her Money Empowerment Movement Bootcamp which is her way of sharing an immersive money education with wider audiences.



CHAMPION OF WOMEN FINALIST

### JESSE DRAPER

*Founder & General Partner*  
 Halogen Ventures

Jesse Draper is the founding partner of Halogen Ventures focused on early stage investing in consumer technology companies led by female and co-ed teams. Draper, the first solo female GP in Los Angeles, is also a fourth generation venture capitalist, and the creator and host of Emmy nominated television series, The Valley Girl Show. She brings deep expertise in understanding consumer trends and behavior and identifying entrepreneurs who will innovate and solve problems at scale. She is a fierce advocate for investing in women and the opportunity for using technology and innovation to solve some of the biggest issues facing women and families today.

Draper is a leading voice and role model dedicated to fighting for systemic change for women and diversity in technology and venture capital. Through her work, she is breaking traditional barriers and opening doors to increase access to capital, specifically for women.



CHAMPION OF WOMEN FINALIST

### ANA GUERRERO

*Senior Advisor to the Mayor of City of LA*  
 City of Los Angeles

Ana Guerrero has been a champion for women in City Hall. Under her leadership women have achieved gender equity on City Commissions. There are a total of 311 City Commissioners, thanks to Guerrero's hard work 57% of City Commissioners are women. For the first time in the City of LA, the powerful Department of Water and Power Commission is now 100% women. The City of LA Library Dept is also 100% women.

As Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's chief of staff from 2013 to 2021, Guerrero was responsible for directing all aspects of the administration and implementing the Mayor's ambitious policy agenda. Her work as chief of staff put Guerrero at the center of several transformative moments in modern Los Angeles history, including the successful movement to lift the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. She also led the Mayor's pandemic response efforts in 2020.



CHAMPION OF WOMEN FINALIST

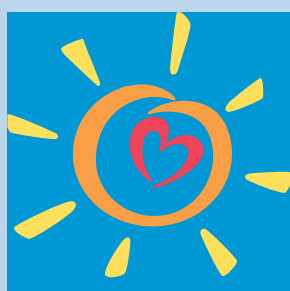
### DIEDRA PORCHE

*Managing Director, Business Banking*  
 California Division Director  
 JPMorgan Chase

Diedra Porché is JPMorgan Chase's California Division director overseeing the Business Banking team that manages the financial services of clients throughout the state with annual revenues up to \$20 million. In her career of over 28 years, she has held had eight different jobs – all at JPMorgan Chase, which makes her a unicorn. She has been able to take the work she does every day and create real, lasting and impactful change in our world.

Porché serves as a mentor to so many employees at all stages of their careers and across all different parts of the business. Similarly, she is an executive director and sponsor of Women on the Move (WOTM), JPMorgan Chase's commitment to fuel female ambition and advance financial equality. The WOTM program supports the recruitment, retention and promotion of women at all levels through mentorship to empower both professional and personal growth.





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MENTOR OF THE YEAR **HONOREE**

**CYNTHIA M. RUIZ**

*Author & Leadership Expert*

Cynthia M. Ruiz & Associates

Cynthia Ruiz has been a trailblazer her entire career. She was the first Indigenous/Latina to serve as president of the City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works. She is also the first Indigenous/Latina to serve as the president of the City of Los Angeles Pension Board overseeing billions of dollars. Through it all, she has always found time to help other women. She volunteered for a decade for Girls Today Women Tomorrow, a non-profit mentoring young Latinas, the majority of the time serving as chair of the Board, as well as directly mentoring the young women. Additionally, she continues to spend her time mentoring many women to help them succeed in their given fields. She always makes time to motivate and empower others.

Ruiz focuses on helping other women because she did not have mentors in her life and overcame many challenges. As a role model to both Latinas and Native American/Indigenous people, she mentors women individually and speaks at many conferences motivating the next generation.

During the pandemic, Ruiz volunteered her time to lead the Cherokee Nation Gen-Z Leadership program inspiring several thousand young people to become leaders and to believe in themselves.

Also, as president of the Pension Board, Ruiz is able to further advocate for women. No matter how busy Ruiz is, she always finds time to motivate and empower others. She is a role model and embodiment of authentic leadership by the very example of how she lives her life giving to others and empowering them along the way.



MENTOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

**ELLEN ENSHER, Ph.D.**

*Professor of Management  
 Loyola Marymount University*

Ellen Ensher, Ph.D., is a professor of management at Loyola Marymount University and a leading expert in mentoring and careers. Ensher has four courses currently available on LinkedIn Learning, over 50 published academic articles and book chapters, and her own book, "Power Mentoring: How Successful Mentors and Proteges Get the Most Out of Their Relationships."

An advocate for professional women, whether in business or general management, Ensher is a highly rated speaker and workshop leader at conferences and for public and private organizations in the U.S. and internationally. She has consulted for a wide array of organizations including the City of Los Angeles, Kraft Foods, Legg Mason, LinkedIn, Sisters of the Holy Cross, and the United States Navy. At LMU, Ensher continues to promote mentorship and be an advocate for female leaders. Students love her class and have maintained close relationships with her throughout their careers.



MENTOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

**KIRSTIN HARPER-SMITH**

*Project Executive  
 Shawmut Design and Construction*

Kirstin Harper-Smith is building the skyline, community, and future leaders of Los Angeles. While her project portfolio is extremely impressive – from her current work on the full renovation of UCLA's historic Nimoy Theater to the project credited with initiating the revitalization of DTLA: LA Live! Nokia Theatre (now Microsoft Theater) and Plaza – perhaps just as notable and impressive are her leadership and mentorship.

As a project executive overseeing office and field teams in an industry that's only 10% female, Harper-Smith recognizes that there's a preconceived notion around who knows how to build. She levels the playing field as a woman in construction (who did not work in the trades) by demonstrating her knowledge and skillset through her work product and forward thinking. Leading by example, she encourages her fellow women teammates to do the same, and works with them to establish their knowledge base and confidence.



MENTOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

**LINDA KORNFELD**

*Partner and Co-Chair,  
 Insurance Recovery Practice  
 Blank Rome LLP*

As one of the nation's most prominent attorneys in insurance recovery, Linda Kornfeld consistently represents high profile clients in some of the most pressing and high-stakes coverage cases. She has more than 25 years of experience, recovering hundreds of millions of dollars for her clients.

Despite her notoriety and busy schedule, Kornfeld is also known for being a fantastic mentor. She is patient, kind, trusting, and down to earth. She leads cases with grace and fine-tuned wisdom and encourages associates to take ownership of projects. A mentor who leads by example, she encourages her colleagues to grow in their roles and reach their full potential. The relationships she has built with other rising female attorneys over the years is a testament to her commitment to supporting the personal and professional growth of women in the legal profession.



MENTOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

**MEGAN MOLOUGHNEY**

*Vice President of Development  
 Skanska USA Commercial Development*

With more than 20 years of experience in commercial real estate management and development, Megan Moloughney is an unequivocal industry leader in the Los Angeles market. Her experience consists of a unique mix of roles across both development and property & asset management – for boutique private companies as well as large public firms – which have culminated in exceptional business acumen and remarkable perspective when approaching development projects.

Moloughney's skills are by no means limited to her practical know-how. She possesses an unmatched talent for bringing out the best in her own team members: her ability to maintain a thoughtful and creative approach to problem-solving, even in the face of unexpected obstacles, not only leads her team to successful, efficient solutions, but also raises overall team morale even on the most stressful of days. Through mentorship, she chooses to share her hard-earned wisdom with those starting out in the industry.



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COMMUNITY IMPACT ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR HONOREE

## ANGELA J. REDDOCK-WRIGHT, ESQ.

Mediator & Arbitrator  
 Judicate West/Reddock Law

Recently inducted into the prestigious College of Labor & Employment Lawyers and named a Top 50 Woman Attorney by the Daily Journal, Angela Reddock-Wright is an employment mediator, arbitrator, workplace, and Title IX investigator. She has practiced as an employment and labor law attorney for 25 years. After working as an employment litigator for 15 years, in 2011, she opened the Reddock Law Group and transitioned to becoming a full-time neutral.

The Reddock Law Group is a boutique, minority, and woman-owned dispute resolution and investigations law firm based in downtown Los Angeles, focused on the resolution of employment and labor law, Title IX sexual assault, hazing, and bullying legal claims through the alternative dispute resolution, investigation, and other neutral processes.

Reddock-Wright has mediated and investigated some of the most sensitive and high-profile cases involving private, public, and non-profit sector employers. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the civil and political unrest of the last two years, she handled several race discrimination, sexual harassment and other claims in the gaming, technology, and other industries.

She also has served in executive leadership board roles with such organizations as Ability First, the Brentwood School of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles African-American Women's Public Policy Institute (she's also a founding member). Currently, she serves on the board of directors for the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the Los Angeles Urban League, and Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles (WINTER). She also is an Advisory Board member for the Young Invincibles, Los Angeles office.



COMMUNITY IMPACT ADVOCATE  
 FINALIST

### CHERYL A. CALHOUN

Managing Director,  
 Tax and Business Management  
 CBIZ & MHM

As managing director at CBIZ, Inc. Los Angeles, Cheryl Calhoun brings more than 30 years of experience and expertise to all facets of the entertainment industry. She represents talent, production companies, entertainment service companies, media service companies, publishing companies and executives in varied tax and business matters.

Calhoun also champions the mission of organizations she supports by building strategic relationships and ensuring that the partnerships are in the best interest of each organization. She was recently named as chair elect of the Board of the American Lung Association. She has worked with the organization for more than 10 years, including as a founding member of its Advisory Council. She has also been influential in maintaining the success of Dress for Success Worldwide-West by serving as a founding member of its Advisory Council since 2010. She also recently became involved as a coach in CBIZ's Emerging Managing Director Academy.



COMMUNITY IMPACT ADVOCATE  
 FINALIST

### LUPITA SANCHEZ CORNEJO

Regional Vice President, External &  
 Legislative Affairs, Los Angeles Region  
 AT&T

Lupita Sanchez Cornejo is a proud Los Angeles native, dedicated to serving her community. At AT&T she has served as an advisor for HACEMOS, a company employee resource group dedicated to supporting the professional growth of Hispanic team members and philanthropic initiatives in the communities they live. Through HACEMOS she has mentored many young professionals through the group's Emerging Latina Leaders Program, which provides new career growth opportunities for her mentees.

Cornejo is an engaged leader who is passionate about advocating for education opportunities and the betterment of her community. She serves on the board of Hispanas Organized for Political Equality and the USC Latino Alumni Association. In 2013, she was recognized at the inaugural event of the USC's Latino Alumni Spotlight recognizing her achievements. Her tireless involvement in community volunteer work has made her a three-time recipient of the President of the United States' Volunteer Service Award.



COMMUNITY IMPACT ADVOCATE  
 FINALIST

### AUDREY HANDELMAN

Senior Associate and Studio Director  
 Gensler

Audrey Handelman is involved in the community and philanthropy both inside and outside of her work as an architect and design professional. Within Gensler, she leads the Southwest's six offices' philanthropic work by coordinating and overseeing the volunteerism, pro-bono design projects, and charitable sponsorships. She helps the teams connect while also encouraging the hyper-local grassroots efforts. Handelman personally participates in volunteerism throughout the year – most recently through a collaboration with Beautify Earth and artist Cloe Hakakian to paint a mural on a local charter school in Los Angeles.

Outside of Gensler, Handelman is passionate about advocacy for foster youth. She has been a Court Appointed Special Advocate for six years where she works directly with a child in the LA County dependency system to identify and advocate for their needs around health, safety, education, and permanency.



COMMUNITY IMPACT ADVOCATE  
 FINALIST

### GINNA CLAIRE NGUYEN

Associate Principal  
 Relativity Architects

At work, Ginna Claire Nguyen leads Relativity Architects' pro-bono services. The first of these projects was designing improvements for a boarding school in rural Nigeria. Relativity also became active in fund-raising for the project. The first phase – an 80-bed girls' dormitory – is complete. Nguyen also oversaw the design of an Administrative Learning Center & Library for the school. Further, Nguyen and Relativity provided complimentary design services for the historic Shoseian Japanese Teahouse in Glendale's Brand Park.

Nguyen is also integral to a grassroots movement devoted to building an equestrian center in Compton. The Connecting Compton initiative proposes re-purposing an 18-acre former landfill. The project will serve the community with services such as horse therapy, a youth rodeo team, after-school educational programs, and a public plaza for hosting community events such as street food vendors and farmers' markets.





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WOMAN TO WATCH OF THE YEAR HONOREE

**MICHELLE C. FENG, Ph.D.**

Chief Clinical Officer  
 Executive Mental Health

**D**r. Michelle C. Feng is a licensed psychologist with specialty training in geriatric psychology. She serves as the chief clinical officer (CCO) at Executive Mental Health (EMH). While working as a full-time clinician and executive, Dr. Feng continues to maintain an active academic portfolio, presenting on a range of topics. Dr. Feng has also served as an assistant clinical professor at UCLA. Additionally, she has provided training and clinical supervision to graduate students at UCLA and USC.

Dr. Feng works with colleagues at EMH to concept and implement various clinical services, including psychotherapy and neuropsychological evaluations. Her team's effectiveness is underscored by a recent survey carried out in July 2020, in which EMH reached out to 250 contacts at partner facilities to gather their opinions regarding the quality the care and documentation provided by EMH. Some 97.8% of responding partners said they were satisfied (met or exceeded expectations) with EMH's clinical psychologists and neuropsychologists.

Also, working with key management staff, Dr. Feng created a clinician-centered "best practice" to facilitate growth and retention of clinical staff. Activities included a Continuing Education Program and new internal communication. As a result, new hire departures (clinicians who left within three months after joining the company) went down over 50% in the two years after becoming CCO.

Dr. Feng's passion for serving the older population which began while she was a graduate student, continues to yield innovative and impactful results, and she is certainly a "woman to watch."



WOMAN TO WATCH FINALIST

**BURCIN BECERIK-GERBER**

Department Chair; Chair, Sonny Astani Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering; Dir-Center, Center for Intelligent Environments; Dean's Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
 University of Southern California

**A**s a woman faculty member in engineering, Professor Becerik-Gerber understand the issues female researchers might experience while pursuing their academic careers. She is one of the co-PIs and co-organizers of two NSF workshops that focus on connecting woman faculty in sustainable building research.

Professor Becerik-Gerber is also a pioneer in the field of "Human Building Interaction." The core of her research centers on the development of novel methods for high performing buildings and she has made significant contributions to the field of intelligent (cognitive) built environments. Her work has garnered attention across a wide spectrum within both academia and industry, due to its both scientific and engineering rigor, as well as for its societal and real-world impact. As a result of the recognition of Prof. Becerik-Gerber's work, her research has been funded by both public and private sources for more than \$7.3 million to date.



WOMAN TO WATCH FINALIST

**RACHEL DEW, DNM, Ph.D.**

CEO / Double Board Certified Doctor  
 ModiHealth / Natural & Integrative Medicine

**D**r. Rachel Dew's goal of reaching as many people with a complete solution "under one virtual roof" came to fruition with the launch of ModiHealth. She knows that physically getting to the doctor's office is often the biggest obstacle to better health. With ModiHealth, Dr. Dew has created an online platform that anyone can access for virtual care anytime. Clients can find traditional mental health practitioners, holistic health practitioners, functional medicine life coaches, health coaches, and health programs, leading them to their most optimal health.

On the tech side, this venture required an extensive online platform buildout and content production, for which Dr. Dew joined forces with ModiHealth's co-founder, Dr. Randall Wright. ModiHealth's technology platform is an integrative whole person care approach that will change how doctors and practitioners practice medicine and wellness care. Always a trendsetter, Dr. Dew is paving the way for the future of telewellness.



WOMAN TO WATCH FINALIST

**TRACY McSPARRAN**

Superintendent  
 Bellflower Unified School District

**O**n July 20, 2018, Tracy McSparran was named superintendent of Bellflower Unified School District. McSparran had been serving as the interim superintendent since the retirement of Brian Jacobs in January. Many were familiar with McSparran through her dedication and service to the students of the Bellflower Unified School District community since 1996. Along with serving as the interim superintendent for six months, McSparran had continued to operate in her previous assignment as the assistant superintendent of special education and support services.

Under her leadership, the Gear Up program concentrated on getting students to begin the college journey in middle school and enter college upon high school graduation. The program emphasized activities to engage students in math and science and completing the A-G curriculum. The program also spawned the Parent Institute which worked to create partnerships with parents to support their families in the journey to college.



WOMAN TO WATCH FINALIST

**JENNIFER PIÑA**

Global Head of Strategic Partnerships  
 MagicLinks

**J**ennifer Piña serves as the global head of strategic partnerships at MagicLinks. The Venice-based startup powers social commerce through an exclusive marketplace for video influencers and the world's leading brands. MagicLinks' technology enables content creators to earn steady income by sharing the products they love with their fans, while simultaneously providing brand partners with creator investment data and tools to propel creator success across all social video platforms.

Since joining MagicLinks in 2017 as the second ever full-time employee, Piña has played a critical role in the company's growth and resounding success. Today the company has over 60 employees and growing. She is consistently instrumental in developing products, leading campaigns, and securing key brand partnerships that drive the business. Over the past five years she has built several multi-million dollar partnerships and led campaigns for household name brands such as L'Oreal, lululemon, e.l.f. Cosmetics, Sephora, Express and more.



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NEXTGEN WOMAN OF THE YEAR HONOREE

## LAUREN ANTION

Vice President, Member of Beauty & Personal Care  
 Intrepid Investment Bankers

Lauren Antion is a vice president in the Beauty & Personal Care practice at Intrepid Investment Bankers, a subsidiary of MUFG Union Bank. In her current role, she works with deal teams on originating and executing mergers and acquisitions as well as helping to raise capital across the Beauty & Personal Care sector. She serves in key leadership positions in the firm's analyst recruiting program, firm training committee, and is involved in community outreach efforts.

During her seven-year tenure at Intrepid, Antion has held significant roles on several high-profile beauty and personal care transactions. She recently successfully executed the recapitalization and growth financing of professional skin care brand Obagi Cosmeceuticals with The TCW Group, and the sale of prestige lash and color cosmetics brand Lilly Lashes to Gauge Capital. She also held key roles in the sale of JD Beauty to ACON Investments, the owners of Goody Products; the investment by Kainos Capital in prestige skin care brand Beauty Biosciences; the sale of direct-to-consumer deodorant brand Native to Procter & Gamble; and the sale of iconic hair styling brand Salon Grafix to High Ridge Brands.

Antion is a member of the Cosmetic Executive Women and Professional Beauty Association. She recently participated on a beauty care M&A panel at the ACG Los Angeles Business Conference. In addition, she published an article titled "Building the Next Big Beauty Care Brand – Fast" in C-Suite Quarterly Magazine, detailing how to capitalize on consumer behaviors and technological advancements to scale faster and maximize value paid.



NEXTGEN WOMAN FINALIST

### SARAH BEAUMONT

Senior Content Lead  
 Tastemade

Sarah Beaumont is the senior content lead of Home & Design at Tastemade, a modern media company that engages a global audience of more than 300 million viewers each month. She began her career as a freelance arts writer for various LA-based publications, then moved into copywriting and content creation at an online interior design startup. There, Beaumont harnessed her expertise in design while simultaneously becoming extremely well-versed in digital and social media production.

At Tastemade, Beaumont joined the team in 2018 to help launch a new Home & Design vertical. She leveraged her expertise in design, social media, writing, and content creation to grow Tastemade Home's audience from scratch to where it is today – a community of nearly five million highly engaged followers. She is skilled in developing new video formats and interactive social experiences that foster two-way communication between Tastemade Home and its audience.



NEXTGEN WOMAN FINALIST

### ALLY FORSTER

Assistant Superintendent  
 PCL Construction

In 2018, Allyson (Ally) Forster landed a position as an intern on the \$1.4 billion West Gates at Tom Bradley International Terminal project at LAX. The five-level concourse adds 1.7 million square feet of space to the airport. She assisted with the processing of submittals and RFIs, schedule maintenance, and change order management.

Forster was brought on at PCL as a full-time field engineer in 2019. She was assigned to work on the Southwest Campus Apartments, a 368-unit student housing project that will provide housing for nearly 2,500 undergraduate and graduate students at UCLA. As the project progressed, Forster transitioned into an assistant superintendent role and oversaw exterior envelope and the progression of the building interior. She is currently working on the demolition of a 60,000 sf theater and neighboring tenant spaces for a major entertainment client.



NEXTGEN WOMAN FINALIST

### SOPHIE-MARIE PRIME

Critic Community Manager  
 Rotten Tomatoes

Sophie-Marie Prime is critic community manager at Rotten Tomatoes, where she specializes in growing the site's pool of Tomatometer-approved critics and provides career and educational support for underrepresented journalists. As the 2018-19 Rotten Tomatoes fellow in Digital Innovation and Film Criticism, she worked with the Critic Relations team to support its newly-launched critic criteria and application process, and developed an editorial column that spotlights rising and established voices in the community, before joining the team full-time.

Since joining Rotten Tomatoes in 2019, Prime has helped create change within the entertainment industry through her work with Rotten Tomatoes-sponsored initiatives aimed at increasing inclusion and diversity among film and TV critics. In August 2021, she was a key member of the team who launched "RT Labs," an educational resource program, designed to support aspiring critics in their career development and features recorded panel discussions and classes with industry experts.



NEXTGEN WOMAN FINALIST

### LACY LEW NGUYEN WRIGHT

Executive Director  
 Hillman Grad Foundations

Lacy Lew Nguyen Wright currently serves as the executive director of the Hillman Grad Foundation, overseeing and handling day-to-day operations of its Mentorship Lab and Indeed's Rising Voices initiatives, which both offer opportunities for marginalized storytellers in the entertainment industry. Wright takes the lead on organizing classes for all the mentees, connecting them with working professionals in the field. She was also one of the key players in the formalization of Hillman Grad Foundations.

As an Asian-American woman working in a field that is predominately white and male, Wright experiences first-hand the importance of promoting underrepresented communities which also serves as her passion point in all the work that she does. She truly wants to make a difference and wants others to succeed, as evidenced by her work at the Mentorship Lab, where mentees receive personalized instruction from industry professionals that they would not have access to elsewhere.





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WOMEN LEADERS  
ACROSS THE GLOBE



Cicely Beckman is a student in the The Chicago School's Psy.D. Clinical Psychology program in Los Angeles. She loves LA and hopes to establish a practice here working with underserved communities, especially with Black and Latina women.

"Women in these communities have borne the brunt of hardships and tragedies during the pandemic. Yet, they face numerous barriers to mental health services, so I want to help them overcome these barriers."

As president of the SoCal campuses' Black Student Union, Cicely is a mentor to fellow students and collaborates with local leaders to provide community services. She also serves on the President's Diversity Advisory Council, representing students at The Chicago School in areas of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Dr. Michele Nealon is President of The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (TCSPP) and a visionary thought leader in the areas of mental health, education, women's leadership, and diversity.

During her 12 years at the helm, TCSPP became a national leader in educating mental health and health professionals at seven campuses and 35+ programs across the U.S. and online.

Under Dr. Nealon's leadership, the University is at the vanguard of integrated medicine, leading with the mantra:

***"There is no health without mental health."***

**Dr. Michele Nealon**

President, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology







# Disruptors of Violence

By KANDEE LEWIS

**H**ave you been paying attention to how quickly this world is becoming a very scary place to live?

People are under attack, especially women, children, and People of Color! Our lives and livelihood, and that of our families are in danger! Our right to be safe in our homes has been compromised and the possibility of us being abused, raped, or murdered in our homes is increasing!

Every nine seconds in the US, a woman is assaulted or beaten. Behind closed doors (and some not so closed), women and children are experiencing physical, emotional, financial, sexual, and spiritual abuse.

Little girls (and boys) are being sexualized as young as four years old, touched inappropriately, or missing. Where are all the missing women and Children of Color, and why isn't there an all-out cry of indignation, and a demand for answers and resolutions to prevent and end this outrage?

If your child is a little different or identified other than what someone deems as normal, they could be bullied, threatened, or killed, by strangers, peers, or family members. They are also subject to sexism, homophobia, transphobia, sizeism, and colorism, to name a few.

For years, people have been experiencing severe declines in their mental health. Resources for self-care have expanded, although they are still severely limited in certain communities, and zip codes.

According to the CDC (Center for Disease Control), ER visits for suspected suicide attempts for girls 12-17 years old rose by 51% from early 2019 to early 2021. The rate is steadily increasing and suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people 15 – 24.

Once thought to be PTSD, we have come to understand we are really experiencing CTSD; "Continued Traumatic Stress Disorder."

Research has shown that the effects of chronic stress in childhood development can impact a child's ability to learn new concepts and memory functions. Stress has been shown to have a negative impact on our professional and personal lives as well as manifest in physical, psychological, and emotional distresses (APA; American Institute of Stress, 2014).

COVID-19 was a game-changer, devastating millions of people's lives, none moreso than women and children. Women lost jobs faster than men, earning 83 cents for every dollar men make. Black women earn 64% and Latinas earn 57%.

Our children, families, and communities are hurting! There will be no big bail out for those

**Every nine seconds in the US, a woman is assaulted or beaten. Behind closed doors (and some not so closed), women and children are experiencing physical, emotional, financial, sexual, and spiritual abuse.**

with the greatest need. We must fund community-based non-profit organizations such as Positive Results Center which works to address these concerns from a cultural perspective and provide safe spaces for participants to:

- 1) Feel supported;
- 2) Connect in a non-judgmental and safe environment;
- 3) Cultivate leadership skills to uplift their voices;
- 4) Explore how to make a positive impact in their communities;
- 5) Reduce, prevent or stop violence and abuse;
- 6) Complete school, develop into employ-

- able, contributing young adults;
- 7) Become financially empowered; and
- 8) Earn a living wage.

As Disruptors of Violence, we achieve these goals by working with people of all ages through programs such as:

• **Art & Writing to Heal**

A creative expression designed to help participants find the voice for their pain; identify and reflect on what has caused pain.

• **Music & Movement Therapy**

Historically used to reduce anxiety and promote relaxation and has proven therapeutic effectiveness in promoting well-being, controlling pain, and neutralizing negative emotions.

Other programs include Mental Health Ambassadors, Peer Advocates, Nourishing Our Bodies, and Promoting Healthy Manhood.

We need your support to create a world in which all people are safe and free from violence. Contact us at [info@prc123.org](mailto:info@prc123.org) to learn more about the project of community healing.



Kande Lewis is CEO of Positive results Center. Learn more at [prc123.org](http://prc123.org).



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Intrepid thanks Lauren for her great contributions in executing several leading transactions in the Beauty & Personal Care sector and helping build our industry-leading M&A advisory practice. We congratulate her on being selected as the 2022 Women's Leadership Award Winner as "NextGen Woman of the Year" by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*.

**LAUREN ANTION**  
Vice President | Beauty & Personal Care Practice  
[lantion@intrepidib.com](mailto:lantion@intrepidib.com)

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# Business Women See Progress in Move Toward Gender Parity

Nonprofit collaborative grows participation by more than 200% since founding

**W**omen Business Collaborative (WBC) has established itself as a leading collaborative and high-growth movement committed to achieving equal position, pay and power for all women in business. Founded in 2019, the nonprofit alliance of business organizations and leaders has grown to include more than 60+ women's organizations, 40 corporate sponsors and 400+ Council Champions.

WBC's network of business organizations and leaders are focused on achieving long-term results around Nine Action Initiatives, including: more women CEOs, in the C-suite and on boards; a demand for gender and pay parity; increasing capital for women entrepreneurs; driving more women as controllers of capital allocation; parity for women in technology; and leveraging learning and development to drive pipeline promotions. With diversity, equity and inclusion at the core of the col-

laborative's mission, every WBC Initiative has a goal to advance diversity.

Since WBC's founding, the number of collaborating women's business organizations has grown from 19 to 62 and corporate sponsorship has grown from five to nearly 40 top companies. Supporters include Diversified Search Group, Wells Fargo, Capital One, IBM, Bank of America, BCG, Cigna, and Deloitte. WBC's flagship Summit hosted a record 3,600 participants this past September.

"We're incredibly thankful for the passion and commitment that each of our partners and champions offer to this critical movement,"



said Edie Fraser, CEO of WBC. "While Boards have seen a sea change and there's been a major surge of women-owned and minority-owned businesses seeking capital, there is still much more to be done to accelerate gender parity for women. We project further

acceleration in 2022."

In 2021 the WBC with Catalyst, C200 and Ascend released the 2nd annual Women CEOs in America Report. According to the report, women comprise 8.2% of the Fortune 500 companies and are about 7% of CEOs across public and private companies.

The Women Business Collaborative in partnership with Equilar releases a monthly report, newsletter, and publishes the data on a website detailing women's status in the boardroom. This report lists and tracks women who have been named to the boards of public companies monthly along with showing ethnic and industry breakdowns. By the end of last year, the WBC monthly "Women Joining Public Boards" report shows an average of 42% women being named to public boards and one third of these are women of color.

Learn more about the Women Business Collaborative at [wbccollaborative.org](http://wbccollaborative.org). Also, follow the organization on LinkedIn and Twitter @WBCollaborative, Instagram @womenbusinesscollaborative and join the discussion with #WBCFasterTogether.

## SWINERTON

Swinerton is a proud sponsor of the 2022 Los Angeles Business Journal Women's Leadership Symposium & Awards.

Congratulations to Swinerton's own Lia Tatevosian and Gennelle Dedek on their nominations!

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**LIA TATEVOSIAN**  
VP, Division Manager



**GENNELLE DEDEK**  
Assistant Project Manager





# Number of Woman-Owned Small Businesses Continues to Increase

According to findings from the latest Small Business Trends report released by Guidant Financial, 32 percent of small business owners are women, a 13 percent increase from last year's 27 percent.

The report's findings are based on the annual Small Business Trends survey conducted by the Small Business Trends Alliance (SBTA), a group of companies dedicated to supporting small business with data insights. The SBTA teamed up to conduct a joint survey of over 2,400 current and aspiring small business owners across the nation.

"We've seen an annual increase in the number of women who own small businesses," said Guidant CEO David Nilssen. "This excellent growth shows how women are increasingly able to access funding and take control of their entrepreneurial journey."

Thirty-two percent of small business owners are women, a 13 percent increase from last year, according to findings from the latest Small Business Trends report.

The following are some additional Small Business Trends report findings.

#### AGE DEMOGRAPHICS

- 51% of women small business owners are Gen X
- 31% are Boomers
- 17% are Millennials
- 1% are Gen

#### REASONS FOR WOMEN STARTING THEIR OWN BUSINESS

- 29% wanted to be their own boss
- 20% wanted to pursue their own passion
- 13% were dissatisfied with corporate America

#### TOP FOUR INDUSTRIES FOR WOMAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

- Healthy, Beauty, and Fitness
- Food and Restaurant
- Retail
- Business Services

#### TOP FIVE NON-COVID CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

- Marketing/Advertising
- Lack of Capital/Cashflow
- Recruiting/Retention of Employees
- Managing/Providing Benefits

**'We've seen an annual increase in the number of women who own small businesses. This excellent growth shows how women are increasingly able to access funding and take control of their entrepreneurial journey.'**

- Administrative Work

#### POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION FOR WOMEN SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

- 36% said they didn't belong to or feel represented by any political party
- 33% Democrat
- 24% Republican
- 7% Libertarian, Green, or other
- 55% of female small business owners

surveyed voted for Biden

- 27% voted for Trump
- 18% didn't vote or voted for another candidate

#### COVID-19 REACTIONS

- 44% of women small business owners feel somewhat or very confident about small business post-COVID
- 40% feel somewhat to very unconfident
- 16% are neutral
- 21% of women-owned small businesses lost revenue due to COVID-19
- 77% percent of respondents expect their small business to survive the pandemic

Founded in 2019, the Small Business Trends Alliance (SBTA) is a group dedicated to supporting small businesses with data trends and insights. These data-backed insights are intended to help small business owners confidently make key decisions, and to bring transparency to small business for prospective entrepreneurs to learn more about their options. The 2020 SBTA includes Guidant Financial, Deluxe, Flippa, MyCorporation, FRANdata, and AP Intego.



CONGRATULATIONS

# Betty Liu & Cheryl Calhoun

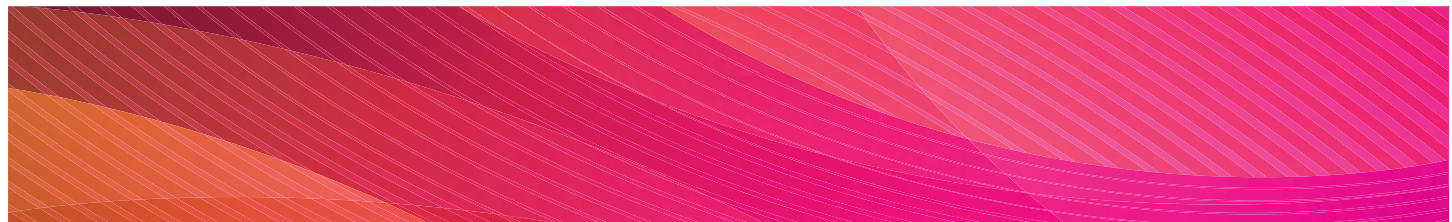
on your Nominations for the **LABJ's 2022 Women's Leadership Awards!**



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## Study Shows Regression in Global Attitudes Towards Gender Roles

**U**N Women and the Unstereotype Alliance, an industry-led coalition convened by UN Women to eradicate harmful stereotypes in advertising, last month launched “The Levers of Change: Gender Equality Attitudes Study 2022,” the latest iteration of a bi-annual global study that tracks attitudes towards gender.

The 20-country-wide survey shows that some antiquated views of gender have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study, developed under the leadership of UN Women in partnership with Johnson & Johnson, Kantar, Procter & Gamble and Unilever, examines perceptions across a multitude of areas including leadership and political participation, education, healthcare, the workplace, media representation, marriage and family life, safety and violence, and control over personal decisions.

While the 20 surveyed countries saw some areas of improvement, the sobering findings demonstrate that discriminatory social norms continue to stifle progress. Overall, most respondents agree that gender equality in all areas is essential to their countries’ success (91%), yet attitudes towards domestic violence have slipped backwards and young men now hold

some of the most regressive attitudes towards gender. Data from the survey also reflected the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the lives of women and girls in perceptions about gender roles, reinforcing trends of unpaid care responsibilities, gender pay gaps, and job segregation identified in other UN Women research.

Some key findings include:

- **COVID-19 has set back attitudes towards domestic violence.** 19% of all respondents believe that there are acceptable circumstances for someone to hit their spouse or partner—an increase of 2 percentage-points compared to 2018, most notably in India, Sweden and the United States.
- **Despite progress, women continue to face multiple barriers to political leadership and decision-making.** 82% of respondents agree that having more opportunities for women in politics is important for their country’s success, an increase of 2 percentage points since 2018. However, 63% of respondents agree that it is easy for men to run for elected office and only 38% agree that it is easy for women to do the same.
- **Prevailing attitudes hamper progress for women in business and leadership posi-**

**tions.** While 9 in 10 respondents agree that equal pay for equal work is important to their country’s future success, 52% of men aged 16-19 and 54% of men aged 20-34, agree that ‘women should work less and devote more time to caring for their family.’ 44% of all respondents agree that it is easy for women to be hired as skilled workers, while 57% believe that the same is true for men—a gender gap of 13 percentage points.

- **In times of hardship, gender attitudes and beliefs that drive people’s decisions can lead to reversals in the hard-won gains in gender equality.** A surprising 25% of respondents agree that ‘in times of food shortages, priority should be given to men’, and 31% of respondents agree that ‘when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women’.

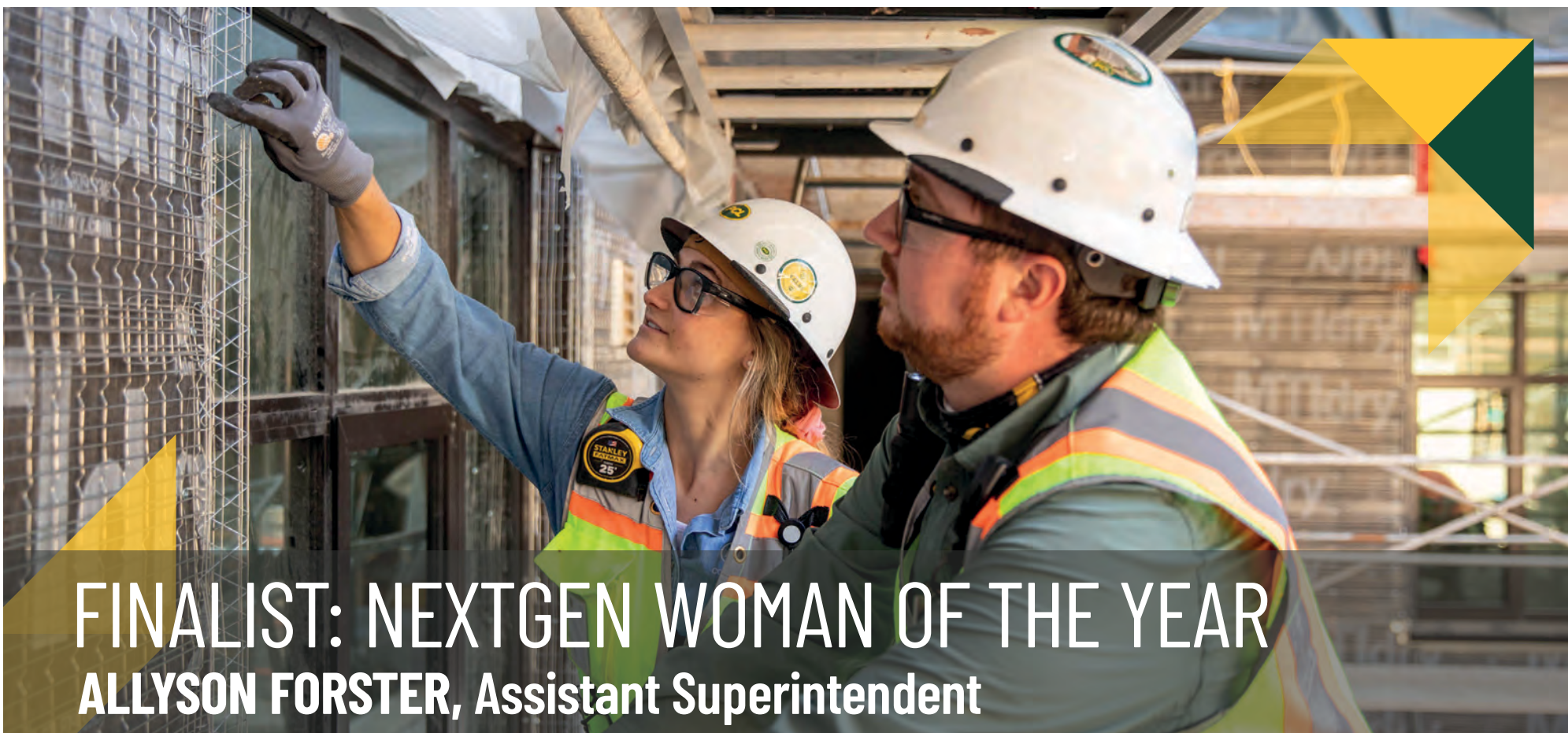
- **The media continues to portray traditional gender roles, particularly male roles.** Respondents believe that the media portrays women and men in traditional roles and this perception has increased significantly since 2018. 68% of respondents believe that the media portrays women in traditional female roles, such as wives, mothers, or caregivers (+14 percentage points since 2018) and 72% of

respondents believe the media represents men in conventional male roles, including as providers for the family, as leaders, or as businessmen (+20 percentage points since 2018).

Sima Bahous, under-secretary-general of the United Nations and executive director of UN Women, said: “The study findings reiterate the urgency of addressing the social norms holding back women and girls. The positive attitudes towards opportunities for women in political leadership are welcome and much needed. However, the increase in acceptance of domestic violence, held in particular by young men, is deeply disturbing and an alarm bell for action. These findings show exactly why social norms are at the heart of our strategic plan for gender equality.”

Attitudes towards gender equality vary vastly among the 20 countries. The findings aim to provide an evidence-based tool for decision-makers by highlighting locally nuanced beliefs and perceptions. The data can be leveraged to address harmful gender stereotypes.

Learn more at [unstereotypealliance.org](http://unstereotypealliance.org).



## FINALIST: NEXTGEN WOMAN OF THE YEAR ALLYSON FORSTER, Assistant Superintendent

*“Working in construction provides endless opportunities to learn and innovate. I love interacting directly with my work – there is no greater sense of satisfaction than walking through a building that I helped build!”*





# Women Use Unique Tactics to Accomplish Boardroom Goals

**W**omen directors on Fortune 500 boards skillfully use tactics that enable them to display warmth, competence or both, allowing them to avoid backlash and meet specific aims, according to new Cornell University ILR School research.

These tactics can help women directors achieve aims including diversifying conversations, clarifying perspectives and amplifying their expertise, and help them manage the “double-bind”— expectations for women to express both warmth and competence – to get things done in the boardroom, said Courtney L. McCluney, assistant professor of organizational behavior in the ILR School and second author of the research.

“Our study suggests that women directors expend an incredible amount of energy managing how and when they discuss matters, which can reduce the overall effectiveness of the board,” McCluney said. “It further undermines the reason for diversifying the board. Do companies truly want a different perspective, or do they want visibly different directors who agree with the status quo?”

McCluney co-wrote the study, “Managing

the Double Bind: Women Directors’ Participation Tactics in the Gendered Boardroom,” with Tiffany Trzebiatowski of Colorado State University and Morela Hernandez of the University of Michigan. The paper was published in *Organization Science*.

“In unpacking types of tactics, we develop a more complete understanding of women’s experiences participating in male-dominated roles, and emphasize the need for scholars to incorporate a broader and more precise range of behaviors to account for within-gender descriptions of participation behaviors,” the authors wrote.

The researchers discovered three groups of participation tactics by interviewing 43 women directors of publicly traded companies. Warmth-based tactics included asking questions and connecting with others on the board. Competence-based tactics required that women directors assert their opinions and qualify their skills. Waiting to share their insight and checking with others outside of board meetings were labeled as hybrid tactics as they combined warmth and competence.

By examining how and when these directors



managed the double bind with a group with which they had only several interactions in a year, the researchers found that the directors customized their tactics, depending on their goals. Warmth tactics worked best when trying to diversify conversations, for instance, and

competence tactics worked best when amplifying their experience. When clarifying perspectives, both warmth and competence based tactics were most effective, participants said.

“Identifying what makes women effective participants on boards expands their influence on company decisions, which can be critical for financial performance and safety recalls,” McCluney said.

Their work is timely given the current focus on diversity, equity and inclusion in organizations. Companies are increasingly focused on adding more women and members of other marginalized groups to their boards without considering whether these individuals will be free to participate and bring their expertise, McCluney said.

“Assessing the culture of boards and any governing body such as the U.S. Supreme Court is just as important as adding traditionally excluded members to its ranks,” McCluney said. “Creating change from within will need to start with foundational changes in what it means to participate as a director.”

For additional information, visit [news.cornell.edu](http://news.cornell.edu).

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# Post-Pandemic Business Trends are Digital-First, Female-Owned and Optimistic

**W**omen were more than twice as likely to start a business during COVID-19 than men - just one of the findings unveiled today recently from a study commissioned by NEXT Insurance, the leading digital insurtech company transforming small business insurance. The survey, conducted by interviewing more than 500 small business owners of various ages, gender, industries and geographic locations, was highlighted as part of the NEXT's Small Business Guide: How to Thrive from Day One.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its corresponding economic and human health impacts posed one of the biggest threats to American small business owners in a century. With partial or complete regional shutdowns impacting the ability of some businesses to service their customers for more than a year, small business owners were forced to adapt and find new ways to generate revenue, secure financing and make ends meet. "The State of Small Business Survey" showed how small business owners adapted to COVID-19 restrictions, while also uncovering some longer-term lessons, gender and generational trends. Some of the findings include:

## COVID-19 Forced Businesses to Go Digital, Embrace Government Assistance

- The pandemic had a major impact on small business with close to 44% of all small business owners saying they experienced a revenue or business loss due to COVID-19, with more than half of all GenX and Baby Boomer owners saying they experienced a loss.

- Digital-savvy Gen Z-owned businesses fared best with only 17% of those businesses citing a loss from COVID-19. This was likely due to the fact that more than 80% of Gen Z-owned businesses expect to get more than half of their revenue from digital (web, mobile, online delivery, social media) by 2022 versus only 33% of Baby Boomer-owned businesses.

- Overall, close to half of all small business owners said they embraced more digital practices in response to COVID-19 which will contribute to 52% of all small businesses getting more than half of their revenues digitally by 2022, up from 42% in 2019.

- More than half (56%) of all small business owners took advantage of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) as a way to supplement their revenue and pay key expenses.

## Women Are Starting Businesses More Than Men, Often from Scratch and by Themselves

- Women were more than twice as likely to start a business during 2020 than men, which is noteworthy in a year when new business applications reached an all-time high of 4.35 million according to Census.gov. This was likely in part driven by the 2.3 million women who left the labor force between February 2020 and January 2021 due to the economic, health and childcare impacts of COVID-19 according to the National Women's Law Center.

- Data suggests women are more likely to start a business from scratch than men, with men twice as likely (11.3% to 5.6%) to buy into an existing business or franchise. Women (57%) are also more likely to start their businesses without a partner or partners than men (42%).

## Small Business Owners are Bullish on Their Businesses and the Broader Economy

- When asked about the broader economy, 84% of small business owners said they are somewhat, very or extremely optimistic about a recovery.

- When asked about their own businesses, 94% expressed optimism about a recovery.

- Gen Z is the most optimistic generation and the only generation that was more optimistic about the broader economy than their own business.

## Other Interesting Findings

- Retail and ecommerce businesses tend to be the most exposed in terms of lack of insurance with 64% of those small businesses without insurance.

- Nearly half (49%) of small business respondents shared that PayPal is the most used product/service, followed by email and LinkedIn.

- 52% of respondents cited friends, family and colleagues as the most useful resource used for direction and business advice.

- More than half (55%) of small business owners expect to work from home in the next 12 months. Baby Boomers (65.5%) have higher expectations of working from home than any other generation. Gen Z (30%) expects to work more from an on site location than any other generation, followed by Millennials (20.9%).

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**CONGRATULATIONS,  
MICHELLE!**

On behalf of the entire team at Executive Mental Health, we congratulate Dr. Michelle Feng for this win in recognition of her significant contributions in geropsychology and as a business leader in Los Angeles.

We are so proud of you, Michelle!



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**Michelle C. Feng, Ph.D.**

Chief Clinical Officer  
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# Women Managers Competitively Advocate for Subordinates

Research has long demonstrated that men generally approach the workplace with a more competitive mindset than women. But a study published recently in Strategic Management Journal shows female managers are equally competitive when advocating for their subordinates – male or female, while men tend to advocate more strongly for other men.

Cristian Deszö and two co-authors at the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business wondered whether women – shown in other research to be “prosocial” in group or team settings -- would ramp up their advocacy when working on behalf of others, becoming as competitive as men in that context. They also explored whether homophily – a preference for someone like you – and discrimination would play a role. Such behavior from male managers, according to the study, works to reinforce and even cause gender disparities in organizations.

Deszö co-authored the research with Maryland Smith PhD candidate Nathan Barrymore and postdoctoral research associate Ben King.

In a series of experiments in a simulated organizational setting with online workers, they

found that when rewards accrue to protégés, female managers would become more competitive, regardless of whether they're advocating for a man or a woman.

“In essence, these results suggest that female managers are effective sponsors: they are willing to go to bat for their protégés at levels similar to those of their male colleagues,” said Deszö. “And that is not because male managers become less competitive when the rewards accrue to their protégés, it is because female managers are more competitive.”

However, even though male managers' competitiveness remains essentially unchanged when rewards would accrue to protégés, they were much more competitive when the protégés were male. That disparity, Deszö said, was notable – and closer examination revealed something else as well. The disparity would essentially disappear when male managers knew their protégés risk preferences.

“While there are small differences in average risk preference across gender in our sample, male managers behave as if they believe, incorrectly, that these differences are large,” the researchers wrote.

“The practical implication of this result is that short of providing information about female direct reports' actual risk preferences, male managers may perpetuate gender disparities through their decision of who to compete for. Our findings, thus, point toward a novel strategy to improve the effectiveness of sponsorship programs in organizations and hopefully stimulate more research.”

Sponsorship is key to individuals' career development and firms' human capital strategy. In this experimental study simulating an organizational setting, the authors investigated one aspect of sponsorship and asked whether managers' and protégés' genders affect managers' willingness to compete on behalf of their protégés. They clearly found that when the rewards from competition accrue to protégés, female managers increase their competitiveness and eliminate the



gender competitiveness gap present when rewards accrue to managers themselves. This suggests that, from a competitiveness standpoint, female and male managers are equally strong sponsors. However, male managers compete more for male, relative to female, protégés. This gap disappears when male managers have information about protégés' risks preferences, suggesting a novel approach that organizations can implement to reduce discrimination in sponsorship.

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