

W O M E N O F I N F L U E N C E : FINANCE



FROM OVERCOMING THE FISCAL REPERCUSSIONS OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC AND CONTINUING GLOBAL IMPACT OF international trade obstacles, to charting a course for responsible data protection in the age of A.I., the banking and financial services sector has faced many key challenges during the past couple years. The good news locally is that many of the nation's leading financial industry thought leaders are based in the LA region.

With 2022 well underway, and businesses and individuals focused intently on financial recovery, sustainability and protecting the bottom line, finance professionals are more essential than ever. There are some particularly stellar trusted advisors in the LA region – who happen to be women – and we've alphabetically listed some of the very best of them here, along with key information about their careers and relevant recent successes they've achieved.

These are the women we chose to recognize for exceptional leadership, knowledge, skill and achievements in banking across the full spectrum of financial responsibility along with the highest professional and ethical standards, and for contributions to the Los Angeles business community at large.

Methodology: The professionals featured in these pages did not pay to be included. Their profiles were drawn from nomination materials submitted to the Los Angeles Business Journal. Those selected for inclusion were reviewed by the editorial department and chosen based on a demonstration of impact made on the profession and on the Los Angeles community.

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: FINANCE

**ANA ALVARENGA**

Associate, Member of Food, Beverage & Agriculture
Intrepid Investment Bankers

Ana Alvarenga is an associate in the Food, Beverage & Agriculture practice at Intrepid Investment Bankers, a subsidiary of MUFG Union Bank. She works with deal teams on originating and executing mergers and acquisitions as well as helping to raise capital across the food, beverage and agriculture sector. She also works across other practices at Intrepid, executing mergers and acquisitions and capital raises. She serves in key leadership positions in the firm's analyst recruiting program, firm training committee, and analyst training program.

Alvarenga has held significant roles on high-profile transactions. She successfully executed Intrepid's first take-private transaction, in which The Riverside Company acquired Canadian-based green building products solutions provider PFB Corporation. Additionally, she held key roles in several food, beverage and agriculture transactions including the sale of authentic pickle and sauerkraut brand Bubbies Fine Foods to JE Global, among others.

**BELVA ANAKWENZE**

Entertainment Business Manager
Abacus Financial Business Management

As the Principal of Abacus Financial Management Group, Belva Anakwenze serves as a virtual CFO for several creatives in Los Angeles. Her clients range from entertainers and their closely held companies to large entertainment tech companies. She also serves several music live events and musicians. Some examples of Anakwenze's current clients include Jay Ellis (HBO's 'Insecure' and Paramount's 'Top Gun: Maverick') and ET host Kevin Frazier.

In the male-dominated financial world, Anakwenze is able to reach her goals as a CFO by facing challenges and tough conversations head-on and speaking in everyday vernacular to ensure complete transparency and financial climate understanding. She has made sharp pivots in the past, such as like when she changed her client base from professional athletes to entertainment industry talent, including actors, directors, producers, and writers for whom she handles day-to-day financial affairs as well planning and investment needs.

**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 close to seven-year tenure at Intrepid, Antion has held significant roles on several high-profile beauty and personal care transactions. In the past 24 months, she successfully executed a yet to be announced equity investment in a direct-to-consumer hair care brand to a leading private equity firm; and led the recapitalization and growth financing of professional skin care brand Obagi Cosmeceuticals with The TCW Group; among other successes.

**CLORY ARANA**

Senior Accountant
ECC

Clory Arana was born in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, where she grew up with parents who were good providers of the necessities of life, but with a dream for a higher education for their four daughters. With great vision they invested all they had in Arana's college education where she stood out as top of her class. After graduating, she joined a 900-employee sugar factory and immigrated to the US.

In 1986, Arana joined Environmental Contracting Corporation (ECC) as a payroll clerk and throughout her 34 years, she has performed all functions in the accounting department, as needed. That versatility and eagerness to serve have contributed to the advancement of her career. Her loyalty, strong work ethic and ability to adjust have led to her taking her current position – leading the accounting department of ECC, a role she has successfully exceeded in for the last 10 years.

**PERICA BELL**

Managing Director, Division Manager for Community
Development Finance, Originations
Union Bank

Perica Bell's career has focused on financing and building successful real estate projects, providing value to external shareholders and creating attainable, affordable housing for lower to moderate income residents. Today, within the Real Estate Industries Group at Union Bank, she leads the administration of Community Development Finance (CDF) originations activities throughout the Bank's footprint. Bell was promoted to this role earlier in 2021, a reflection of her being an instrumental leader and contributor to the success of the CDF team within Union Bank over the past 11 years.

Bell and her team originate debt and low-income housing tax credit equity for the bank's affordable housing developer relationships throughout California, and lead community development investment activities in wholesale markets outside of California. She collaborates with key stakeholders/leaders in the space to solve challenges around affordable housing production and capacity building for non-profit affordable housing developers.

**KARA BOCCELLA**

Partner
Camden Capital

Kara Boccella, a partner at Camden Capital, has successfully advised and managed her clients' portfolios and affairs throughout the length of her flourishing 30-year career. She currently manages approximately \$630 million assets under management (as of January, 2022) and is continuing to grow organically through a robust referral base.

Boccella's retention rate is above 99%. She works hard to create a trusting and transparent relationship with all of her clients. She was recognized as a 'Top Wealth Advisor Mom' by Working Mother and Shook for the second consecutive year. The Los Angeles Business Journal recognized Boccella as a 'Leader of Influence' for the second year in a row. Forbes recognized her as part of its 'Top Women Wealth Advisors' list as well as its 'Best-in-State Wealth Advisors.'

**NATASHA BONELLI**

Senior Vice President and Financial Advisor
Merrill Lynch

Natasha Bonelli is a senior vice president and financial advisor with Merrill Lynch. Specializing in building and maintaining wealth for individuals, families, and business owners, she's slowly grown her business and team from the ground up one client at a time. Now managing over \$500 million in assets, she and her team service hundreds of companies, nonprofits, and individuals.

Bonelli's passion and expertise is in the institutional market, specifically managing retirement plans for corporations and nonprofit organizations, helping clients who are every day workers build their wealth and others maintain and grow their millions. Known as the "401(k) Lady" locally, she helps clients by consulting on the aspects of plan management, funds, fees, fiduciary responsibility, and financial wellness for the employees. The team then creates a personalized financial plan customized to help achieve their personal goals. Bonelli and her team service over 300 corporate retirement plans in California.

**ALEXANDRIA BRAVO**

Senior Vice President, Region Executive
Bank of America

Alex Bravo is Bank of America's Preferred Bank region executive for the Los Angeles and Orange County region, overseeing nearly 140 financial centers with over 1,100 employees consisting of market leaders, financial center managers, assistant managers, relationship manager business owner specialists, relationship bankers, and customer service representatives.

Bravo has maintained the #1 deposit share amongst competitors, earning \$46.3 billion dollars in client deposits and serving 1.2 million households. Her region also consists of 98 Spanish-speaking centers, 22 community centers and 35 student centers, focused to deliver a local community bank experience while delivering a consistent quality client experience, managing risk, and driving responsible growth. The financial centers have served as an essential open business through the pandemic with a top priority of maintaining safety and access for clients and employees. She joined Bank of America in 2013 and has held several roles throughout the bank.

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: FINANCE

**SHERRY CEFALI**

*Managing Director & Head of LA Office
Duff & Phelps, A Kroll Business*

Sherry Cefali is a managing director in the Transaction Opinions practice and the head of the Kroll/Duff & Phelps Los Angeles office of approximately 100 people. She is also a member of the firm's Fairness and Solvency Opinion Senior Review Committee.

Cefali has been with Duff & Phelps, A Kroll Business for 30 years, advising companies and boards, rendering fairness opinions and solvency opinions and determining valuations of companies and securities. She has an MBA from USC and FINRA 7 and 63 licenses. She is on the board of RF Industries and chairs its compensation committee as well as the nominations and governance committee and is a member of the audit committee. Cefali is also a member of the National Association of Corporate Directors and Women Corporate Directors. Recent notable transactions include a fairness opinion to the board of Chiasma, Inc. in connection with its sale to Amryt Pharma.

**HAYLEY DICKSON**

*Wealth Management Advisor
Northwestern Mutual*

Hayley Dickson, CFP seeks to help clients un-learn shame, fear, and paralysis when it comes to their financial reality. She realizes that even among highly educated groups, members of our communities have too long gone without the important resource of a sound financial education. An advocate for women, Persons of Color, and the LGBTQ+ community, Dickson views financial planning as a means of empowerment for her clients. Dickson shares her insights on panels, in workshops, and across digital media in Los Angeles and throughout the nation.

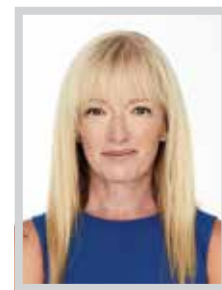
Earlier in her career, Dickson made a major career change – from entertainment executive to financial advisor at Northwestern Mutual, a role in which she has flourished. She has made FORUM, an honor representing the top percentile of Northwestern Mutual advisors, in her 3rd and 4th year as an advisor.

**SABRINA DUKHOVNY**

*VP of Loan Operations
Arixa Capital*

Sabrina Dukhovny has 15 years of experience in mortgage finance, with a focus on senior leadership and technology. She has excelled by addressing inefficiencies; identifying, defining, and implementing process changes; and designing and executing technology solutions.

Dukhovny is the VP of loan operations at Arixa Capital. She is an integral part of the senior leadership team which has collectively grown origination volume to record levels for the company in 2021. Dukhovny grew her team by 100% in the past year to meet the needs of the business, which involved recruiting and developing professionals in the closing, servicing and construction draw review groups. All the while, Dukhovny and her team have helped to maintain Arixa's net promoter scores well above 90, which means that the great majority of Arixa's borrowers are enthusiastic about the service they received.

**LINDA DUNCOMBE**

*Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing,
Product and Digital Officer
City National Bank*

Throughout the pandemic, Linda Duncombe and her team have found ways to reassure City National's clients and communities that the bank would continue to support them, just as it has for nearly 70 years. Through marketing campaigns and virtual events, Duncombe has amplified City National's assistance of clients and communities through this time – providing useful information and ensuring clients knew the bank was there for them.

Duncombe led a partnership with Conde Nast that created thought leadership content for middle-market companies in The New Yorker, Vanity Fair and Wired. It consisted of custom articles and video conversations between City National CEO Kelly Coffey and executive leaders representing a cross-section of industries. The campaign generated over 120 million impressions in markets like Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco and resulted in a 19% lift in unaided brand awareness (vs. benchmark of 10%).

**LINDSAY DUNN**

*Executive Vice President and
Head of Real Estate Banking
City National Bank*

Lindsay Dunn, executive vice president and head of Real Estate Banking at City National Bank, brings more than two decades of experience in real estate banking. She leads a team that provides a wide range of financial services to real estate developers and investors in communities across the country. Dunn is a member of the bank's executive committee. Her division's portfolio is primarily composed of commercial, construction and short-term financing, as well as unsecured and term debt for real estate developers and investors.

She assumed her current position last year and over the last 16 years, Dunn has held various leadership roles at City National. Throughout her successful career, she has spearheaded much growth and innovation and her past successes will be a model for how she achieves her vision of making City National the number one commercial real estate lender in all of the communities the bank serves.

**KIMBERLY ESTERKIN**

*Managing Director
Addo Investor Relations*

Kimberly Esterkin has made a name for herself in investor relations in Los Angeles and nationally. Her recent accomplishments, all of which have raised her company's profile and resulted in a record year for Addo – in the midst of a global pandemic. She also achieved a personal record for new clients won for Addo in 2021, with a phenomenal track record of pitching and winning new business.

It's not just winning the business that makes Esterkin stand out in her profession, it's also the way in which she has been able to fully integrate and maintain her client relationships. For one client, she successfully messaged four acquisitions and the sale of a \$500 million business unit, and also orchestrated an 80-person hybrid in-person/webcasted investor day in which the company debuted a new three-year financial plan. Esterkin treats each of her clients as if they are her top priority.

**KIRSTEN FRAUNCES**

*EVP and Head of Capital Markets
Wedbush Securities*

Kirsten Fraunces began her career at JP Morgan Investment Management as an associate in Equity Research, and later worked at Merrill Lynch as a VP Equity Research. After relocating to Los Angeles in 2002, then Wedbush Securities managing director Sheri Kaiserman pitched the idea of Fraunces joining sales team at the firm. This would be an opportunity to learn a new side of the business, broaden her knowledge base and skillset, as well as reaching more clients. She has since risen to head of equities, and in 2019 was named executive vice president and the head of capital markets.

When she was named head of capital markets in 2019, Fraunces was elevated to rarified air, to preside over a division where very few women have. In this role she is responsible for overseeing the Capital Markets Division; including Investment Banking, Equity Research, Equity Sales & Trading, and Fixed Income.

**SAMANTHA GARCIA**

*Wealth Advisor
Halburt Hargrove*

Samantha Garcia started in the finance industry as an accountant. She knew she had a knack for numbers and helping people, so she took it one step further and found her love for financial planning and investment management, particularly helping clients meet their financial goals. She connects with her clients on a daily basis providing them support for today and tomorrow. Garcia believes in fearless conversations – those that ask the tough questions needed to uncover the real pain points that need to be addressed in order to reach clients' goals.

Garcia stands out due her expertise in various subjects, from navigating divorce to investments (she is a certified financial planner), to career choices (she is a Designing Your Life certified facilitator). The Designing Your Life certification allows her to help others think thoughtfully into their true desires and help them design a life that allows them to thrive.

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: FINANCE



LYNN HOPKINS
Chief Financial Officer
Banc of California

Lynn Hopkins is a highly successful banking executive with more than three decades of experience. She has gained a deep mastery in finance and risk management while compiling an impressive record with growth-oriented community banks.

Hopkins has led Banc of California through several financial milestones, including a successful subordinated debt raise of \$85 million in October 2020, to refinance the company's preferred stock. This year she oversaw the acquisition of Pacific Mercantile Bank, which closed in October 2021 and brought Banc's total assets to over \$9 billion, accelerating Banc's operating scale and growth in key markets. She also oversaw an investment into fintech Finexio's recent \$10 million funding round. Banc plans to use Finexio's payment services to extend more products to business clients by the first quarter of 2022. She, along with the executive team, have worked to improve Banc of California's performance and balance sheet through strategic initiatives.



LANA HOUT
Managing Broker
First Choice Business Brokers Los Angeles

Lana Hout is a rising star in her industry, attaining worthy recognition for her numerous career accomplishments, including running a successful female-owned business brokerage for over eight years.

A top business broker and M&A advisor with First Choice Business Brokers Los Angeles, Hout specializes in small business transactions across all industries with transaction sizes up to \$50 million. As one of the founding managing brokers of this female-owned brokerage, Hout has focused her efforts in disrupting the traditional and male-dominated business brokerage industry by bringing a fresh and modern approach to transaction advisory, mergers & acquisitions and business development. By focusing on how to better serve small business clients, Hout has quickly made a name for herself in the industry as a leader and top performer by working diligently to provide her clients with a higher level of professional service and financial analysis.



MOLLIE KAISER
Private Wealth Advisor
Strategic View Advisors

Mollie Kaiser brings with her extensive experience from both Bernstein Global Wealth Management and Credit Suisse, where she handled a broad range of planning and client service responsibilities. At Strategic View Advisors, she sits on the financial planning and investment committees. She has an MBA from Pepperdine, and maintains Chartered Life Underwriter and Retirement Income Certified Professional designations, as well as the Certified Financial Planner certification.

At Strategic View Advisors, Kaiser has played a crucial role in shaping the firm both in terms of procedures and people. She has held a variety of roles and, in each, she has improved operational efficiencies and built out repeatable, documented processes to make sure that as she hands off responsibilities to new hires, they are able to hit the ground running. She regularly seeks opportunities to provide structure to existing systems, which led to the formal creation of the financial planning committee.



GRACE KANGDANI
Senior Vice President,
Market Manager for Business Banking
Bank of America

Grace Kangdani is a market manager for global banking & markets business banking at Bank of America, leading an 18 member team. During the pandemic, Kangdani and her team of relationship managers assisted clients through the Paycheck Protection Program application process and providing the best solutions for clients during the pandemic. She is also part of the Greater LA West Regional Business Integration committee that works with various lines of business to grow market share.

Kangdani serves on the board of trustees for P.S. Arts, a non-profit organization that promotes equity and opportunity for children through arts education programs in public schools and communities. She is a board member for the Women's Leadership Council, a women networking organization built around the spirit of both professional and personal accomplishment through collaboration, inspiration and support. She also serves as a mentor for Cherie Blaire, Asian Leadership Network and Women Leadership Council.

Congratulations

Natasha Bonelli, Alexandria Bravo, Grace Kangdani, Jennifer N. Lee, Karen Sessions and Telebah Woods for being recognized as the Los Angeles Business Journal's 2022 Women of Influence: Finance.

Your exemplary professional achievements and extensive volunteerism helps make financial lives better for our clients and communities.



2022 WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: FINANCE



Natasha Bonelli
Senior Vice President,
Senior Financial Advisor



Alexandria Bravo
Senior Vice President,
Preferred Banking Region Executive,
Consumer & Small Business



Grace Kangdani
Senior Vice President,
Market Manager,
Business Banking



Jennifer N. Lee
Senior Vice President,
Private Client Advisor



Karen Sessions
Pacific Southwest Region Executive,
Global Commercial Banking



Telebah Woods
Senior Vice President,
Neighborhood Lending

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: FINANCE

**MICHELLE KATZEN**

Managing Director
HCR Wealth Advisors

Michelle Katzen has over a decade of experience in the financial services industry, including being part of the groundbreaking team who was responsible for issuing the world's first green bond in 2014. The \$1.75 billion bond's net proceeds were used to finance new Toyota and Lexus gas-electric hybrid vehicles and various other green initiatives. Katzen developed an amazing track record in socially responsible investments and has brought that expertise to HCR Wealth Advisors, encouraging the advisory team to consider these alternative investments for client portfolios.

Katzen displays leadership through co-founding and co-managing the investment committee at HCR Wealth Advisors, which collectively manages over \$1.5 billion in assets. She has also personally achieved significant growth in AUM over her career. Over the last four years, she has accomplished over 50% growth year over year in AUM and now manages over \$320 million for the firm.

**FRANCINE LAI**

Financial Advisor
Gerber Kawasaki Wealth and
Investment Management

Francine Lai's primary goal as an investment advisor representative is to help individuals and families achieve their financial aspirations. Helping her clients look at the bigger picture, she puts together customized plans for each client based on what his or her financial goals are. Lai enjoys working with all types of people, but focuses her practice on women and families. It is her mission to educate and empower women in all stages of their lives; single women, women with families, career-oriented women and home makers so they can make educated choices to help in reaching their goals.

Over her career, Lai has obtained Series 6, 7, 63, and 66 licenses, as well as her CFP, CDFP, and California Accident and Health, and Life Insurance. She currently has over 140 million in assets under management. She is dedicated to making sure each family becomes financially independent.

**JENNIFER LEE**

Senior Vice President and Private Client Advisor
Bank of America Private Bank

Jennifer Lee is a senior vice president and private client advisor with Bank of America Private Bank in Los Angeles. As a private client advisor, she leads an all-female collaborative team of wealth management specialists to provide strategic planning and investment management services to high-net-worth individuals, families, multi-generational family offices, private foundations and nonprofit institutions.

In the past year, Lee thoughtfully built her team of advisors, comprised of dedicated and passionate women who continuously advocate for and empower one another. Lee and her team currently oversee approximately \$2.8 billion in client balances, a 67% increase over the prior year. In 2021, Lee and her team generated over \$1 billion dollars in new assets – \$700 million in investments, \$135 million in lending/credit, and \$250 million in deposits. In her first full year as a private client advisor, she ranked in the top five of revenue producers in her market.

**Yael LUSTMANN**

Managing Director
William & Henry Associates

Yael Lustmann has over 20 years of experience in a wide range of business, advisory and legal environments, including acquisition, financing, joint ventures and restructuring transactions in several industries.

Lustmann was a senior corporate attorney for over 10 years at leading international law firms, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP in New York and Bingham McCutchen LLP in Los Angeles. She led a diverse range of corporate matters, with a focus on private and public M&A, private equity, and acquisition, mezzanine and asset-backed financing. Lustmann worked on deals in media and entertainment, technology, food and beverage, manufacturing and defense. Subsequently, she was a managing director at Cohen & Associates, where she managed the identification, evaluation, marketing and financing of syndicated real estate acquisitions. Lustmann received her MBA from the Anderson School of Business at UCLA and her law degree from Yale Law School and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

**SUSAN M. MLOT**

Executive Vice President & Head of Operations
Citizens Business Bank

Susan Mlot, Citizens Business Bank's executive vice president & head of operations, has over 30 years of experience in providing strategic leadership for operational and risk management, change management, and business process improvement for financial services companies. She joined Northern Trust Corporation in 1999 as vice president & division manager in Chicago. During her 17 years at Northern Trust, she was promoted to the role of senior vice president of global operations, being tasked to lead, develop, and grow the company's operations in Bangalore, India. Prior to joining Citizens Business Bank in July of 2020, she served as senior vice president of enterprise operations for Investors Bank in the New York City area.

Mlot earned her Master of Business Administration in Finance from DePaul University in Chicago. She is also a graduate of Northern Illinois University, where she received a Bachelor of Applied Science in Operations Management.

**MICHELLE NGUYEN**

Managing Director
First Foundation Advisors

Michelle Nguyen is a rising star at First Foundation Advisors. She is the youngest of the firm's 11 BDOs, consistently exceeding her peers with decades more experience. In 2021 alone, she brought in \$100 million in new assets under management to the firm. She has steadily achieved a number of impressive accomplishments over the last 14 years. She is considered a symbol of growth and success at First Foundation.

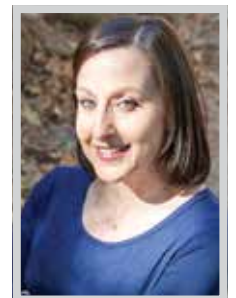
In addition, Nguyen has committed to her philanthropic work serving the LGBT community as an ally and in support to her family. She has served as the president of the USC LGBT group, the LA LGBT Center YPC, and mentored transgender youth at the LA LGBT Center. She also manages some of the firm's largest non-profit and 501c3 clients, delivering wealth management solutions for continued grantmaking and program development for these institutions.

**DIEDRA PORCHE**

Managing Director, Head of Business Banking for California
JPMorgan Chase & Co

Diedra Porche is Chase's Business Banking California Division director overseeing all of Chase's Business Banking clients across the state with annual revenues up to \$20 million. Her team provides client banking services across the state including business checking and savings, cash flow management, and business loans and lines of credits. Porche is also chairwoman of JPMorgan Chase's Market Leadership Team for Los Angeles – overseeing the entire firm's strategic decision making and civic engagement in Southern California.

With Chase Bank for over 25 years, Porche has held senior leadership positions across the firm in retail, business banking and the commercial bank. She is also overseeing the firm's Racial Equity Commitment execution in Los Angeles. Launched in October 2020, JPMorgan Chase is committing \$30 billion over five years to address the racial equity gap, including a \$2 billion commitment for 15,000 loans to small businesses.

**AMBER ROMO**

Managing Director
Northwestern Mutual

Amber Romo is the managing director of Northwestern Mutual's newest location in Ontario. She has been instrumental in the continued mentorship, development, and attraction of talented financial advisors. She left behind a lucrative position in the entertainment industry to make a greater impact on people's lives. Over the past five years, she served as a field director and a growth and development director for Northwestern Mutual in Downtown Los Angeles. She also served as associate director of new advisor performance, leading the firm in achieving record-breaking performances in new advisor productivity. Romo has blazed the path in leadership for women in a traditionally male-dominated industry.

Romo has led by example and built a thriving financial planning practice focused on trust, respect, and exceptional service. She has impacted the lives of hundreds of clients, striving to build lasting bonds and human connection in a world of uncertainty.

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: FINANCE

**CHRISTINE SARKISSOF**

*Regional Manager, Los Angeles Metro
Union Bank*

Christine Sarkisof is the managing director and regional manager of the Los Angeles Metro Region at MUFG, Union Bank, comprised of more than 90 colleagues in 14 branches, with a geographic footprint that spans throughout the San Gabriel Valley and Los Angeles. Sarkisof brings extensive banking and leadership experience in the financial services industries. She has been with Union Bank since 2000, working in the Greater Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Pacific Northwest markets in a variety of leadership roles throughout her 12-year tenure with the bank.

Sarkisof is an accomplished leader with a reputation for team engagement, and talent development. She has a passion for delivering an exceptional client experience and instills a strong sense of client service in every team she leads. She has been the recipient of several internal accolades including multiple President's Awards and Top 100 Producer Awards as well as Branch of the Year.

**KRISTINA SAWYER**

*Vice President of Lending
Arixa Capital*

Kristina Sawyer is the vice president of lending for Arixa Capital Advisors and Crosswind Financial. In her role, she works with many of Arixa's skilled real estate investor and developer clients to craft loan solutions that fit their specific needs. She is also active in rolling out new products, such as Arixa's new 30-year maturity fixed rate permanent loan for small apartment buildings, mixed use properties including apartments, and portfolios of rented single family homes. She also has played an important role in developing Arixa's technology platform that the company uses to manage all of its upcoming and existing loans and borrower relationships.

Perhaps Sawyer's greatest career accomplishment to date has been helping Arixa grow over the past nine years into one of the largest lenders on the West Coast, serving the under \$10 million segment of the non-bank lending market.

**KAREN SESSIONS**

*Pacific Southwest Region
Executive of Global Commercial Banking
Bank of America*

In her role as Pacific Southwest region executive of global commercial banking for Bank of America, Karen Sessions leads 250 commercial banking teammates across California, Arizona, Nevada and Utah. Under her leadership, they serve more than 1,000 commercial clients with annual revenues of \$50 million to \$2 billion, and specialize in technology, entertainment, gaming/casinos, consumer and retail, agriculture, aerospace and defense, distribution, general industrials, and financial sponsors/private equity sectors.

Sessions' her division has been one of the fastest growing regions in Global Commercial Banking for Bank of America. Among the many notable deals Sessions helped to lead was a \$750 million transaction with Hawthorne-based SpaceX. The deal allowed SpaceX, in its first-time issuance of debt, to raise funds to expand its commercial rocket launch business, work on Falcon Heavy and developing Starlink internet broadband satellites.

**MARY ANN SIGLER**

*Chief Financial Officer and Partner
Platinum Equity Advisors*

Mary Ann Sigler is one of the most important and influential senior leaders at Platinum Equity, a \$25 billion AUM private equity firm headquartered in Los Angeles with operations globally. She serves as the firm's chief financial officer and chief compliance officer, which puts her at the nexus of strategic planning, investing, operations and compliance for the firm.

Sigler also oversees financial operations for Platinum Equity Founder and CEO Tom Gores, a Forbes billionaire and owner of the Detroit Pistons. On any given day she may be working on complex negotiations over NBA local television contracts; or on multi-billion dollar acquisitions by Platinum; or on moving billions of dollars in wires to complete a transaction; or to ensure the firm's compliance program is at the leading edge of ensuring ethical business practices.

**ADRIANNA SMITH**

*Managing Broker
First Choice Business Brokers Los Angeles*

Adrianna Smith's career accomplishments to date include trailblazing in her industry, owning and operating a successful business brokerage firm, and winning a myriad of awards, accolades, and press. As a business broker and M&A advisor with First Choice Business Brokers Los Angeles, Smith specializes in executing small business sale transactions across all industries with transaction sizes of \$50 million and under. While the business brokerage industry is highly male-dominated, with most competitors nearly twice her age, Smith has proven that a young woman can be just as or even more effective in leading business transactions to success.

Smith's accolades include listing over \$80 million in businesses for sale, working with over 250 small businesses to date, winning over seven national awards (including 'Top Sales Associate Nationwide,' and being featured in an array of business press outlets.

**ERIKA SPITZER**

*Partner
Leonard Green & Partners*

Erika Spitzer joined LGP in 2011 and leads Leonard Green & Partners' marketing, investor relations, and limited partner co-investment activities. Prior to LGP, she was with Centerbridge Partners and Renaissance Technologies, both based in New York. She began her career at PwC. Spitzer earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Wellesley College cum laude and is a Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst. She is a member of the Wellesley Business Leadership Council, serves on the Southern California Education Committee of 100 Women in Finance, and is a board member of CoachArt.

Spitzer, along with the partners of LGP, are supporters of numerous not-for-profit organizations specifically focused on helping the underserved members of LA County. These organizations include SEO, MLT, the Los Angeles Food Bank, Homeboy Industries, Brotherhood Crusade, Chrysalis, Jenesse Centers, Minds Matter, and the Downtown Women's Center.

**DAISY STALL**

*Executive Vice President, Entertainment Finance
California Bank & Trust*

Not many banking professionals have Daisy Stall's breadth of experience as an executive in finance and entertainment. Her resume includes 30 years in banking, credit and corporate treasury, with over 20 years specializing in media and entertainment; operating experience managing corporate cash flow, optimizing working capital, and overseeing daily global liquidity planning for a \$7 billion global media corporation; and experience collaborating with senior executives as the treasury/finance lead on strategic initiatives including mergers/acquisitions, divestitures, establishing operations in emerging markets, monetizing assets, and closing on and off-balance sheet transactions.

When Stall migrated from finance into entertainment in 2002, she knew there would be obstacles to overcome. Two decades later, as the executive vice president for entertainment at California Bank & Trust, she is closing major deals in the entertainment industry – and extending a helping hand to other women who are seeking executive positions within the business.

**NICOLE SWAIN**

*EVP, President Private Banking
Bank of Southern California*

Nicole Swain is a well-respected and highly accomplished senior banking executive with more than 30 years of experience. As the current executive vice president, president of private banking at Bank of Southern California, N.A., she leverages her knowledge, expertise and ability to understand the business and credit needs of her clients to deliver on time, innovative solutions. She is an expert on structuring complex credits, including but not limited to secured and unsecured lines of credit, commercial real estate transactions, bridge and construction financing, C&I lending and SBA lending. Certainty of execution is her reputation which provides her clients with peace of mind.

Previously, Swain was the executive vice president and chief banking officer of First Choice Bank where she played a pivotal role in growing First Choice from approximately \$380 million in assets in 2013 to over \$2 billion in assets at the time of its sale.

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: FINANCE

**KAREN M. TATMAN**

SVP, Senior Investment Officer
Northern Trust

Karen Tatman currently serves as the senior investment officer located in Century City and leads the investment practice for the Los Angeles market. Her team works with business owners, corporate executives, private equity professionals and other successful families providing comprehensive and holistic investment advice. Tatman was promoted to leading this top region as a recognition of her ability to influence through servant leadership with a passion for delivering Northern's industry leading client experience. Over her 24+ year investment career, Tatman's team-based approach, commitment to clients, core investment expertise, and passion made her stand out.

Prior to her current role, Tatman was a regional director and senior portfolio manager for Northern Trust's National Investment Practice. In this role, she earned a promotion to senior vice president. Tatman and her team designed and developed communication and strategy for the investment practice and their Goals Driven Wealth Management application.

**WENDY TURK**

Financial Advisor
Gerber Kawasaki Wealth and
Investment Management

Wendy Turk works with clients to create comprehensive plans that consider both the numbers and the emotions surrounding money. She has an ongoing podcast, Money Talks, where women of diverse backgrounds tell stories about their personal experiences with money, and she also created Money & Me, a children's education program that teaches financial literacy at an early age.

Turk loves creating the community she wants to live in and believes that is only possible through volunteering. She is an active member of Grass Roots Neighbors, serving Westchester and Playa del Rey, and El Segundo's Center Street School PTA. Grass Roots is actively helping community members who cannot afford food and other necessities, so she has been donating food and time.

**CHIKAKO TYLER**

Chief Financial Officer
California Bank & Trust

Chikako Tyler is the chief financial officer of California Bank & Trust, and responsible for development and execution of the bank's financial and strategic plans. With broad experience in finance, strategy, risk management and corporate services sales, she has achieved many milestones of critical importance to the bank, including executing on \$10 million in cost savings over four years while driving continued revenue growth.

Tyler also created a state-wide mentoring program as well as key diversity and inclusion (DE&I) initiatives. She was selected two years in a row to be named as one of the 'Most Powerful Women in Banking' by American Banker. She also built a ground-up centralized team to risk-grade the credit portfolio, including hiring, training and developing staff. Tyler drove multiple projects to the finish line (risk and control self-assessments, strategic plans) across 26 departments.

**ALYSE WAGNER**

Partner
Leonard Green & Partners

Alyse Wagner has been an integral member of the investment team of Leonard Green & Partners for nearly 19 years. She joined LGP as an associate in 2003. Prior to joining LGP, she had been in the investment banking division of Credit Suisse First Boston, formerly DLJ, in its Los Angeles office. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

As the only female investment partner of the firm, she has led or been involved with many of LGP's investments, particularly in the healthcare space. Most recently, she led the firm's investment in Epiphany Dermatology. In 2021, she also completed a very successful exit from MDVIP, a healthcare deal that she sourced in 2017, resulting in a gross MOIC of 3.6x for LGP. Wagner is well regarded by her colleagues at all levels across the firm and broader industry.

A WELL-DESERVED BRAVO

**CHIKAKO TYLER**

EVP and Chief Financial Officer

**DAISY STALL**

EVP and Director of Entertainment Finance

Congratulations to the
California Bank & Trust

2022 WOMEN LEADERS OF INFLUENCE IN BANKING

We celebrate their achievements and all the extraordinary women who earned this special recognition.

You continue to inspire us every day with your visionary leadership.

calbanktrust.com



WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: FINANCE

**AMY K. TAKEUCHI WANLASS**

*Vice President, Wealth Advisor
Northern Trust*

One of Amy Takeuchi Wanlass' biggest career accomplishments to date was being recognized as an emerging thought leader in the estate planning community by presenting at the Hawaii Tax Institute on post-mortem estate planning techniques. This prestigious conference is attended by professionals across the United States and even internationally.

While presenting at the Hawaii Tax Institute was a career highlight, Wanlass feels her most rewarding accomplishments are her day to day responsibilities in educating and advising high-net worth families on their personal, financial, and philanthropic legacies. She uses her first-hand experience as a former practicing trusts and estates attorney to provide sophisticated and practical advice to clients. Her experience in both the estate planning and financial services industries allows her assist clients in seamlessly bridging the gap between planning and implementation of various wealth planning strategies.

**ALYSSA WEINBERGER**

*Chief People Officer, Senior Managing Director
Lido Advisors, LLC*

Alyssa Weinberger joined Lido Advisors in 2004. She is the firm's second longest tenured employee and was the firm's first female partner. She previously ran Lido's Operations and Marketing team, which led to her current role as senior managing director and chief people officer. In addition to her executive position at Lido Advisors, Weinberger serves as president of Lido Consulting, a related firm focused on the family office industry. She is a third generation licensed CPA who started out her career at Rothstein Kass & Co. (now KPMG) where she performed audits, prepared tax returns, and provided back-office services for numerous hedge funds.

Today, as a certified financial planner, Weinberger works closely with family offices, high net-worth individuals, and entrepreneurs. She believes in consistent and frequent communication as the best way to serve clients and build trust.

**TELEBAH WOODS**

*Senior Vice President, Neighborhood &
Community Lending, Bank of America
Bank of America*

Telebah Woods' career in financial services expands more than 20 years and began as a bank teller through a college scholarship program. She joined Bank of America in 2006 and, with her specialty expertise of mortgage lending, has been promoted six times, currently serving as SVP of neighborhood & community lending for the west across 18 states. Woods is responsible for driving the bank's \$15 billion Community Homeownership Commitment to make homeownership affordable and sustainable for low-to-moderate individuals and families; and manages the bank's relationships with over 100 housing nonprofits.

A key element of Woods and her team's efforts here in Los Angeles was helping to deliver more than \$9 million in free down payment and closing cost grants to low- and moderate-income homebuyers and over \$268 million low-cost home loans in 2021 alone.

"You can only become truly accomplished at something you love. Don't make money your goal. Instead, pursue the things you love doing, and then do them so well that people can't take their eyes off you."

- Maya Angelou



Platinum Equity congratulates Mary Ann Sigler for being recognized as an LABJ woman of influence. Her wisdom, guidance and commitment to our principles have made an immeasurable impact on our firm, our investors and the communities we serve.

Platinum Equity

Bank Economists See Return to Full Employment in 2022

Interest rates to rise, inflation to slow

Economic growth will slow relative to last year's robust pace but remain above long-run potential, according to the latest forecast of the American Bankers Association's Economic Advisory Committee. The EAC consensus forecast also anticipates softer but still elevated inflation in 2022 along with three interest rate increases from the Federal Reserve.

The committee made up of 16 chief economists from some of North America's largest banks forecasts economic growth to slow from an inflation-adjusted 5.5% pace last year (Q4 over Q4) to 3.3% this year and 2.3% in 2023.

The group expects the post-omicron economy to spur continued gains in employment this year, driving the unemployment rate lower.

"We are knocking on the door of full employment," said Ellen Zentner, managing director and chief U.S. economist at Morgan Stanley and the current committee chair.

The bank economists expect the national unemployment rate to decline from 3.9% at present to 3.5% at year-end. Job gains averaging near 550,000 monthly last year are seen slowing to a still-vigorous 280,000 this year. Labor force participation will also see continued recovery as pandemic-driven impediments recede.

"The tight labor market continues to drive

wage gains across all income segments, which will encourage more people to go back to work," said Zentner. "More jobs with rising wages will ensure the consumer remains the bulwark of our economy in the year ahead."

Average hourly earnings are expected to remain in a 4.5%-to-5.0% range this year and next, according to the group.

The bank economists see business investment as the strongest component of the current rebound. The consensus forecast is for capital spending to grow about 5% in 2022, following a nearly 7% increase last year.

"Higher wages along with low-cost financing have spurred investment in technology and increased efficiency," said Zentner. "Firms are also beginning to replenish depleted stocks as bottlenecks in supply chains diminish."

The committee expects a big swing in inventory accumulation, from down nearly \$70 billion last year to up around \$90 billion this year and next.

The expected resolution of supply chain issues should allow for inflation to slow substantially from its 6.7% increase in 2021 to a still-elevated 3.0% this year and 2.4% in 2023 on a Q4-over-Q4 basis. Inflation measured by the core personal consumption expenditures index preferred by the Federal Reserve is expected to decline from 4.5% last year to 2.7% this year.

With the economy approaching full employ-

ment and inflation above its 2% long-term average goal, the Federal Reserve's mandates have been met so that it can begin to reverse monetary accommodation in measured steps,

at present to 3.7% later this year.

Vigorous home price increases are expected to continue, driven by mortgage rates remaining low by historical standards, a dearth of

'Higher wages along with low-cost financing have spurred investment in technology and increased efficiency. Firms are also beginning to replenish depleted stocks as bottlenecks in supply chains diminish.'

according to the committee. The mean forecast is for the current 0-25 basis point target zone for the federal funds rate to be raised by 25 basis points three times this year beginning in March. The group also expects the Fed to begin running down its balance sheet of long-term U.S. Treasury and federal agency bonds around mid-year.

"Inflation surprises and labor market tightening necessitate an appropriate response from the Federal Reserve," said Zentner.

The 10-year Treasury bond rate will rise from 1.7% now to 2.1% later this year and 2.2% next year, according to the committee. Correspondingly, the 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage interest rate is predicted to rise from 3.2%

housing stock, and resilient household incomes. The bank economists predict the national average home price to rise about 7% this year on top of a nearly 19% increase in 2021.

"While we recognize early-year COVID-19 drags and the gradual removal of monetary and fiscal policy accommodation, we expect the economy to display resiliency and growth to remain above trend," said Zentner.

The American Bankers Association is the voice of the nation's \$23.3 trillion banking industry, which is composed of small, regional and large banks that together employ more than 2 million people, safeguard \$19.2 trillion in deposits and extend nearly \$11 trillion in loans.

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WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: FINANCE

Nonprofit has Taught More than 1400 Women Key Investment Skills

Girls Who Invest (GWI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming the investment management industry by attracting and advancing women investors, changemakers and leaders, today announced that it has taught more than 1,000 students since its inaugural class in 2016, bringing the total number of alumni to over 1,400 – and counting. This important achievement comes amidst their busiest and most exciting year yet, supported by several key partnerships, milestones, and announcements.

Girls Who Invest was founded in 2015 by Seema R. Hingorani with a vision of having 30% of the world's investable assets managed by women by 2030. Through both their flagship Summer Intensive Program (SIP) and successful Online Intensive Program (OIP), Girls Who Invest has been instrumental in driving tangible and meaningful results within finance, with more than 75% of their SIP scholars now working within the industry.

"While the industry still has work to be done, it's clear that diversity and inclusion are a key business imperative to investment management firms. We're proud to play a role in educating the marketplace on the importance and benefits of a diverse workforce and are encouraged by our partner firms' commitment and the momentum we're seeing," said Katherine Jollon Colsher, president and CEO of Girls Who Invest. "2021 has been one of the most

professionally and personally rewarding years in my life, and I'm grateful to work with such a fantastic team of inspiring individuals."

Added Hingorani, "Since launching Girls Who Invest six years ago, I have been overwhelmed with how much we have positively impacted the investment management industry and the lives of so many young women in such a short period of time. Over 1,000 college women have completed our programs successfully and this is a testament to all of the hard work from our team and academic and investment firm partners. I'm incredibly excited about the tremendous opportunities ahead of us to inspire and prepare even more young women to go on to become leading investors of the future."

KEY 2021 GIRLS WHO INVEST MOMENTS INCLUDE:

"Changing the Face of Investing"

- **Largest Class Ever:** More than 530 women completed the programs this year, as compared to GWI's very first class of 29 scholars in 2016
- **Enhanced Diversity:** GWI pledged to have at least 25% of their Summer Intensive Program scholars come from historically underrepresented communities by 2025

Tremendous Support

- Strengthened existing partnerships with over 100 leading investment management firms

'It's clear that diversity and inclusion are a key business imperative to investment management firms.'

and continued to develop relationships beyond the commitment of industry firms

- Received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support GWI's recruiting efforts, with a particular focus on reaching underrepresented populations
- Partnered with The Investment Company Institute Education Foundation to help grow the Online Intensive Program

Recognition of Pioneering Work

- Hingorani received the Chevalier of the National Order of the Légion d'Honneur, France's highest order of merit for military and civilians
- Hingorani was featured by Barron's in its list of 100 Most Influential Women in Finance

A Growing Team

- GWI added several key executives to its team over the last year:
- Katherine Jollon Colsher completed her first year as CEO after joining from Goldman Sachs in late 2020
- Michelle DeFossett joined as chief

operating officer in May

- Christina Kim joined as head of partnerships in April
- Heather Perceval joined as head of programs in June

"GWI has shown me an invaluable community of strong women, great leaders, and amazing friends," said Adalix Siri, 2018 alum and former Alumni Council Co-President. "There are many rewarding things about being part of the GWI community, specifically the knowledge of all facets of investments and the confidence to channel that intellectual curiosity into any and all things that we do," added Keana Bloomfield, 2016 alum and current advisory board representative.

Girls Who Invest is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing gender diversity and inclusion in investment management with a focus on growing the pipeline of women in frontline investing positions. They accomplish this through education, mentoring, internships, and a supportive community. The organization's flagship summer program enables college students to explore investment management careers through four weeks of free educational training with top university professors followed by a six-week paid internship at one of more than 100 leading investment management firms. Girls Who Invest's vision is for 30% of the world's investable capital to be managed by women by 2030. For more information, visit girlswhoinvest.org.



Congratulations Kimberly Esterkin on being recognized as one of LABJ's Women of Influence: Finance for 2022. We commend you for always going above and beyond for clients.



Kimberly Esterkin
Managing Director
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Rising Leaders in M&A

Intrepid congratulates Lauren Antion and Ana Alvarenga for being recognized as Women of Influence in Finance by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*. Lauren and Ana are rising leaders in the West Coast investment banking community and committed to mentoring other women looking to break into finance. We are proud of their leadership and dedication to providing strategic capital raise and M&A advice to our clients.



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Banks Play Key Global Role in Gender Equality Advancement

UN Women and the Agence française de développement (AFD) have launched the “Public Development Banks Driving Gender Equality” report, with learnings from participating institutions from around the world on their contribution to gender equality. The launch took place at the “Gender Equality, Climate Change and Funding” thematic session late last year, organized by the two institutions in the context of the Finance in Common Summit (FICS) – Gender Equality in Rome.

The report celebrates accomplishments and renews the sense of urgency, accountability, ambition, and transformative possibility around Public Development Banks’ (PDB) gender equality commitments (financial and otherwise).

“There is tremendous benefit for PDBs interested in understanding how they can address and measure their own gender equality commitments, as organizations and with their partners, to create a more inclusive and equal world,” said Anita Bhatia, deputy executive director, UN Women. “This report highlights how PDBs are currently tackling gender equality commitments, recognizing that this is a journey. UN Women is your ally in this journey. We are here to collaborate, as well as help implement and strengthen the work on gender equality and women’s empowerment.”

The report offers a unique perspective by providing, through case studies, numerous



concrete examples of how leading PDBs with various mandates, histories and methods of engagement have committed and delivered on the gender equality agenda both internally (as organizations) and externally (in programming, investments, and partnerships). These included the adoption of gender responsive practices, mechanisms and tools, as well as gender mainstreaming approaches in the programming and funding cycle.

During the event, the nexus between gender equality and climate change was also highlight-

ed as inherent to the achievement of the SDGs. Seven speakers and numerous participants shared the contributions of development banks in this area, and shared research initiatives in this field.

As concluded by Marie-Hélène Loison, deputy general director of AFD, “PDBs coalition is a real framework for sharing and exchanging experiences on best practices for the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment. The nexus between gender equality, climate change and biodiversity is an utmost

priority for sustainable development, and Development Banks have a crucial role to play in this fight.”

The session also introduced the new signatories¹ of the Paris Development Banks Statement on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, namely the Financial Corporation for the Territorial Development S.A. of Colombia (Financiera de Desarrollo Territorial S.A.), the Bank of Northeast of Brazil (Banco do Nordeste), and the National Bank of Costa Rica (Banco Nacional), within a total number of signatories of 36 public development banks.

The Finance in Common Summit (FICS) was the second convening of PDBs to highlight their role in achieving the SDGs and reiterate their joint commitments to joint action for climate and sustainable development.

The first-ever global meeting of Public Development Banks – The Finance in Common Summit – focuses on how Public Development Banks can influence the global financial system to better protect our planet and societies. By rallying and challenging a new and significant global community with enhanced capacity of action, and by promoting sustained collective action, the Finance in Common Summit is a key milestone on the way to the COP26.

Information for this article was provided by UN Women. For more information, visit unwomen.org.

Celebrating Christine Sarkissov and Perica Bell

Union Bank® congratulates Christine Sarkissov and Perica Bell for being recognized by the Los Angeles Business Journal as Women of Influence in Finance for 2022.

We salute these two extraordinary women and all of the honorees who made this list for their outstanding leadership and commitment to excellence. We are looking forward to seeing what they’ll achieve in the coming year.



Christine Sarkissov
 Managing Director
 Community Banking Regional Manager
 Los Angeles Metro



Perica Bell
 Managing Director
 Division Manager for Community
 Development Finance – Originations

