

BRANDED CONTENT  
JUNE 23, 2025

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

# WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS 2025

*Honorees & Finalists*



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# The 2025 Women's Leadership Symposium & Awards: Recapping the Event

This year's 2025 Women's Leadership Symposium & Awards, which took place Wednesday, June 13th at the Intercontinental Los Angeles Downtown was a half day event of inspiration, education and recognition.

The top businesswomen in Los Angeles shared their wisdom through a series of dynamic discussions during the breakfast symposium covering topics such as the new era of leadership; building relationships; risk-taking and innovation; perspectives from CEOs; and much more.

The afternoon portion was a spirited luncheon awards program where we honored outstanding achievements by women who make a difference throughout Los Angeles.

With hundreds of 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



JOE GRETO PHOTOGRAPHY

Year; Emerging Woman-Owned Business Leader Award; Champion of Women Award; Mentor of the Year; Community Impact Advocate Award; The Accelerator 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. Special thanks to our Diamond Sponsor, **KeyBank**, and our Platinum Sponsor, **UCLA Health**.

Once again, congratulations to the honorees – Los Angeles area women who “lead by example,” successfully blending effective business vision with a passionate commitment to positively making a difference, both in the world of business and in the communities they serve.

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**WOMEN'S**  
 LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM  
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# Honorees & Finalists



FOR-PROFIT CEO OF THE YEAR HONOREE

## SHOKOUH SHAFIEI

President; CEO  
 DSA Signage

Shokouh Shafiei is a seasoned executive with 20 years of diverse leadership experience in heavy industrial manufacturing. Her expertise spans engineering, operations and supply chain disciplines. Her background in turnarounds and corporate restructuring allows her to identify growth opportunities and develop highly profitable businesses that operate to their fullest potential.

Shafiei joined DSA Signage in July 2019 as COO and was quickly transitioned to the CEO role by the end of year. In her first four years as CEO, she successfully doubled revenue despite global pandemic challenges. Prior to joining DSA Signage, Shafiei held multiple leadership roles at Cummins Inc., a Fortune 200 global manufacturing company, where she guided manufacturing strategy and optimized operations.

Shafiei faced countless challenges after moving to the US on her own when she was 18 years old without speaking English. She started her career in construction and crossed paths with an inspiring senior client who helped her navigate the college application process – an interaction which set the foundation for all that she would accomplish both academically and through her career.

Shafiei serves on the board of directors for Rebel Vac Systems, a privately held Canadian manufacturer in the oil, gas and utility sectors across the United States and Canada. She is a firm believer in the power of leadership to create positive change within communities. She actively supports local nonprofit organizations such as We Are Family, Youth Business Alliance, Downtown Women's Center, and the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank.

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NONPROFIT CEO OF THE YEAR HONOREE

**JOANNE NOWLIN**

CEO - LA Region  
 American Red Cross

Joanne Nowlin has demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication throughout her career in the nonprofit sector. Since joining the American Red Cross Los Angeles Region in July 2020, she has overseen a team of staff and volunteers serving over 10 million residents across five chapters. Nowlin's resilience and strategic acumen were evident as she guided her team through major disaster responses, including the 2025 California Wildfires, Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Dorian, and the Parkland Shooting.

Nowlin's professional journey is marked by her commitment to alleviating human suffering. Her leadership skills were honed at esteemed organizations such as Florida Atlantic University, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Gilda's Club South Florida, and Kids In Distress. She holds a bachelor's degree in finance from Florida State University, which has provided a strong foundation for her impactful work.

Nowlin's innovative strategies have not only enhanced the effectiveness of the Red Cross's disaster response but have also strengthened the organization's presence in the community. She has a passion for growing community outreach, strengthening government relationships and providing unwavering support to those impacted by disasters. With a deep commitment to celebrating diversity, she has fostered a culture of inclusivity and respect within her team, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued.

Nowlin's vision for the future includes expanding the Red Cross's reach to underserved areas and implementing programs that address the root causes of vulnerability. Her forward-thinking mindset and dedication to continuous improvement make her an inspiring leader and a true champion of humanitarian efforts.



**VERONICA ARTEAGA**

FINALIST (NON-PROFIT)

President; CEO

Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF)

Veronica Arteaga is the president & CEO of Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF), and the first woman to hold this leadership position in the organization's history. She is responsible for leading ECF's lifespan continuum of programs and services for children and adults challenged with special needs. This includes a \$28 million operating budget, 375 employees, a 21-member board of directors, and the provision of services to nearly 4,000 children and adults with special needs and their families annually.

A licensed clinical social worker, Arteaga is credentialed in Pupil Personnel Services. She holds a Master of Social Work from USC and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from USCS. She is currently developing the ECF's long-term strategic plan to increase public and private funding, ensure fiscal stewardship and sustainability, build business and community partnerships, and increase agency enrollment, advancing the organization's impact in the community.



**VERA QUINN**

FINALIST (FOR-PROFIT)

President; CEO

Cydcor

Vera Quinn is a transformational leader whose strategic vision and people-first leadership has positioned Cydcor as the industry leader in outsourced sales and customer acquisition. As CEO and president of Cydcor, she has spent over 25 years shaping the company's growth, cultivating top talent and driving exceptional results for the company's Fortune 500 and emerging brand clients.

Quinn began her journey as a recruiter at an independently owned sales company before launching her own business as a bookkeeper. She later joined Cydcor, where her deep understanding of sales and business operations shaped her leadership approach. In 2024, Cydcor achieved double-digit revenue growth for the second consecutive year, setting a company record. Under Quinn's leadership, the company has expanded its network and successfully entered new industries including home security, consumer packaged goods, and experiential marketing, broadening its service offerings and strengthening its market position.



**JUDY ZHU**

FINALIST (FOR-PROFIT)

CEO

Synear Foods USA

Judy Zhu has been a fierce leader for Synear Foods USA, overseeing all facets of the company's marketing and brand strategy while also guiding a strong team that champions innovation.

Zhu's leadership has influenced Synear's success in a variety of ways, including securing national Costco distribution of its Pork Soup Dumplings across the United States, while overcoming regulatory and supply chain hurdles. The dumplings quickly became one of Synear's best-selling products. Additionally, she spearheaded the launch of more than five new items with Costco, including Wagyu Beef Soup Dumplings, Panda Buns and Ube Dessert dumplings, leveraging cutting-edge product design and R&D advancements to meet evolving consumer demands. Zhu is devoted to staying on top of consumer trends and keeping in close touch with the company's audience. Her expert negotiation also earned Synear a coveted Golden Ticket from Walmart Open Call in 2024.

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**EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR HONOREE**
**KARLA SALAZAR**

Executive Director  
ScholarMatch

**K**arla Salazar is the executive director of ScholarMatch, an organization with the mission of supporting underserved, first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds to earn a bachelor's degree within five years. ScholarMatch serves 1,300 students annually, with an emphasis on students in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area.

When Salazar joined ScholarMatch in June 2021, the organization and the students it serves had been through some deeply challenging circumstances caused by the pandemic. Even as its students struggled with their virtual classes, funders decreased their support due to fears of a recession while an increasing number of first-generation students nationwide paused or set aside their dreams of college.

Despite these challenges, Salazar's leadership has brought ScholarMatch to new levels. She ideated a vision to expand the organization's programming to community college transfer students and secured funding from Genentech to support this dream. She also developed a partnership with UC Scout to offer free A-G classes – required courses in high school for a student to be eligible to apply to schools in the University of California system.

In 2024, Salazar launched a new initiative to provide 1:1 college coaching to first-generation students in Southeast LA. This year, the organization plans to serve up to 200 students and reach 600 students annually in Southeast LA by 2027. She spearheaded partnerships with funders, school districts and school officials to bring this launch to fruition, including a \$1.2 million grant from the Ballmer Group that provided seed funding for college persistence services for Southeast LA students.


**MEGAN CREECY-HERMAN**

FINALIST

President - West Region  
Prologis

**M**egan Creecy-Herman is known for being a disciplined and forward-thinking leader in the dynamic supply chain and logistics industry – one of Southern California's most vital economic sectors. As West Region president for Prologis, the world's leading logistics real estate company, Creecy-Herman oversees a 260 million square foot portfolio across 12 major markets, generating more than \$2.5 billion in annual net operating income.

Prologis develops and operates modern, sustainable logistics facilities such as warehouses and distribution centers, leasing them to a wide range of entities, from small and medium-sized businesses to some of the world's most recognized brands. Creecy-Herman has led the digital transformation of the company's property search experience, reimagining how customers discover and lease logistics space. Under her leadership, the team streamlined and digitized the process, eliminating 19 manual steps, five administrative queues and three approval layers.


**SHERRI FRANCOIS**

FINALIST

Chief Impact Officer, SoLa Impact;  
Executive Director, The SoLa Foundation

**S**herri Francois began her career in journalism, TV news, and documentary film making, producing pieces with Channel One, CBS, CNN, NBC, MTV and HGTV. After 15 years in NYC, where she started a family and earned an Emmy nomination, she returned to LA to become an entrepreneur, founding South Bay Multimedia, a television and video production company.

In 2017, Francois joined SoLa Impact as chief impact officer, where she drives all social impact and community development to ensure SoLa uplifts the communities in which it invests. Her double bottom line strategy focuses on accessibility to high quality affordable housing, jobs, capital and education. Francois established the SoLa Foundation (SoLa Impact's 501c3 affiliate) in 2018 to help end intergenerational poverty in Los Angeles through creating access to STEM career training, higher education, and home ownership in underinvested and under-resourced communities.


**EVE GLAZIER, MD**

FINALIST

President, Faculty Practice Group, UCLA Health,  
Health Sciences Professor of Medicine David Geffen  
School of Medicine at UCLA  
UCLA Health

**D**r. Eve Glazier has served as president of the UCLA Health Faculty Practice Group (FPG) since 2017. As the top executive leader of the FPG, she oversees all aspects of business solutions and administrative functions for Physician Support Services, Managed Care Contracting and the Office of Population Health and Accountable Care at one of the largest academic health systems in the world.

In the fall of 2024, Dr. Glazier helped to launch UCLA Health's first-ever Medicare Advantage Plan, which provides eligible individuals comprehensive health care coverage and convenient access to care. The plan includes 7,000 in-network physicians, specialists, hospitals and clinics comprising UCLA Health, as well as select independent physician associations and medical groups that provide patient-centered care. A trained internal medicine specialist, Dr. Glazier provides expert advice in the weekly syndicated Ask the Doctors column that is popular in news outlets around the country.


**SHAWN SHEFFIELD**

FINALIST

Chief Strategy Officer  
Keck Medicine of USC

**S**hawn Sheffield, MBA, MHSA, is a highly regarded and energetic health care executive with deep experience in academic medicine. She has led Keck Medicine of USC's clinical growth and expansion efforts for over a decade. Sheffield oversees network development, including mergers and acquisitions, strategic partnerships, capital and venture planning and physician alignment strategies. Under her leadership, the health system's annual revenue has more than tripled, reaching \$3.4 billion. During her tenure, she developed a regional network that spans from Bakersfield to Irvine.

In 2022, Sheffield played a key role, in Keck Medicine acquiring USC Arcadia Hospital, formerly Methodist Hospital of Southern California, bringing residents of the San Gabriel Valley greater access to specialized care and breakthrough technology. She also led the development of the new 100,000 square-foot medical office complex in Pasadena, which will serve the city and surrounding areas beginning in the fall of 2025.

# **UCLA** Health congratulates

all honorees of Los Angeles Business Journal's  
Women's Leadership Awards including

## *Finalist*

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### **Eve Glazier, MD | Executive of the Year**

President, Faculty Practice Group, UCLA Health  
Health Sciences Professor of Medicine,  
David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

## *Nominees*

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### **Johnese Spisso, MPA | CEO of the Year**

President, UCLA Health  
CEO, UCLA Hospital System  
Associate Vice Chancellor, UCLA Health Sciences

### **Fola May, MD, PhD | Community Impact Advocate**

Associate Professor, Department of Medicine, Digestive Diseases  
Attending Physician, Greater Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center  
Associate Director, UCLA Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Equity  
Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center

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**INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR HONOREE**
**JULIE UHRMAN**

 CEO; Co-Founder  
 Angel City Football Club

**B**usiness innovator Julie Uhrman, CEO and co-founder of Angel City Football Club (ACFC), has led the club in becoming the most valuable women's sports team globally, with a \$250 million USD valuation following its sale to Disney CEO Bob Iger and Willow Bay in 2024. Uhrman personally managed the entire sale process, carefully selecting Iger and Bay from multiple bids due to their shared values and strong commitment to developing the soccer program and ensuring players and coaches receive the facilities, resources and funding they deserve.

Uhrman's ability to transform ACFC into a cultural and financial powerhouse is reflected through its record ticket sales, league-leading \$35.4 million revenue in 2024, and unmatched merchandise sales. She leads by fostering a community-first ethos that inspires fans and players alike, building a fan base that averages 19,500 attendees per game – setting a world record for women's football attendance.

Through ACFC's innovative 10% sponsorship model, Uhrman has ensured that \$7.5 million of the club's sponsorship revenue is reinvested into Los Angeles communities, supporting programs focused on equity, essentials and education. She has personally attended over 100 Angel City community events, including partnering with Sprouts Farmers Market to replant LAUSD school gardens where children learn to grow food and prepare meals with fresh fruits and vegetables. Additionally, Uhrman facilitated ACFC's partnership with DoorDash, which has delivered over 2,000,000 meals to shelters, LGBTQ centers, homeless communities and other underserved groups across Los Angeles. Her leadership extends globally through initiatives like iACT, which empowers refugee communities through sports.


**JENNIFER ACREE**

FINALIST

 Founder; CEO  
 JSA+Partners

**J**ennifer Acree is the founder and CEO of JSA+Partners, a Los Angeles-based communications agency specializing in digital media, consumer technology, and esports & gaming. As the firm's strategic lead, Acree ensures its roster of clients is supported day in and day out, spearheading tailored communications programs that garner tangible results and tie back to business objectives.

Acree launched JSA+Partners with a mission to disrupt a flawed traditional public relations agency model. As new business requests quickly flooded in, she expanded the firm from an individual consulting practice to a boutique agency powerhouse, offering strategic counsel, media relations, thought leadership messaging, and crisis communications. Acree is responsible for launching the firm's innovative Coverage Analysis and Tracking Solution, which enables painless coverage tracking, easy integration with existing PR trackers, quick visualization and analysis through a proprietary, multi-layered filtering system.


**JERI HARMAN**

FINALIST

 Founder; Chairman  
 Avante Capital Partners

**F**ounder and chairman of Avante Capital Partners, Jeri Harman has more than 30 years of experience in finance and M&A, involving more than \$1 billion in aggregate investments, and has held numerous board roles across more than 20 private middle market companies.

In 2024, under Harman's leadership, Avante Capital Partners invested and committed nearly \$180mm and was named the #3 best performing private credit family of funds, globally, by Pitchbook. That year, the firm launched an innovative employee ownership program not otherwise seen in the finance industry, through which eligible employees gain the opportunity to acquire ownership stakes in the company. Harman also facilitated the firm's Small Business Investing Scholars Internship Program, creating inclusive enterprises by promoting gender, racial and ethnic diversity in the private equity and direct lending industries. The 2024 internship program received more than 1,300 students applying to participate in the opportunity.


**PILAR ORTEGA**

FINALIST

 Founder; CEO  
 International Technologies and Services, Inc.

**W**ith over 30 years of experience in the chemical and environmental technology sectors, Pilar Ortega has dedicated her career to creating practical, science-driven solutions to some of the industry's most pressing challenges. As the founder of International Technologies and Services Environmental, she has developed and patented a line of eco-friendly products that reduce hazardous waste, improve worker safety, and lower the environmental impact of hydrocarbon use across multiple industries.

Ortega has overcome significant challenges as a Latina woman in a male-dominated field, remaining focused, purpose-driven, and resilient, while growing her company into a trusted name among major refineries and environmental agencies. Having worked hands-on in industrial settings, Ortega witnessed firsthand the toll traditional chemicals and processes take on workers' health. This fueled her passion to create safer, plant-based alternatives – products that not only perform better but also align with modern environmental standards.


**MERCY TOLENTINO STEENWYK**

FINALIST

 CEO; President  
 ForensisGroup

**M**ercy Tolentino Steenwyk is the founder and CEO of ForensisGroup, a nationally recognized expert consulting firm she launched in 1991 with a vision of bringing clarity to complex cases and justice in the legal system. She founded the firm as a mother navigating a male-dominated industry and built it into a pioneering enterprise that has supported over 30,000 legal matters.

Over the last three decades, Steenwyk has transformed the expert consulting industry by building a rigorous vetting model that connects attorneys, insurers and government agencies with top-tier experts in over 8,000 specialties. Her commitment to integrity and innovation has led ForensisGroup to develop proprietary technology that streamlines expert matching, reducing case delays and elevating outcomes. Her leadership has earned the company repeated recognition in the legal industry, including awards from the National Law Journal and AM Best.

# Built to Lead. Trusted to Deliver.

The Women's Leadership Symposium reminded us of what great leadership looks like: consistent, clear, and rooted in results.

As a nominee for **Executive of the Year (Non-CEO)**, **Megan Creecy-Herman** represented the Prologis teams that show up every day for our customers and broker partners—teams who lead with purpose and deliver with precision.

We're proud to stand alongside L.A.'s brightest—and even prouder to keep building what's next, together.



**Megan Creecy-Herman**  
President, West Region



**Erin Mergenthaler**  
Leasing Manager



**Mackenzie Lynch**  
Director, Investments



**Analise Guttman**  
VP, Leasing



**Lauren Achtemeier**  
VP, Investment Officer



**Lisa Reddy**  
VP, Leasing Office

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EMERGING WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESS LEADER HONOREE

**ANNE-MARGOT RODDE**

Founder; CEO  
 Creators Corp.

**A**nne-Margot Rodde has established herself as an influential leader in the traditionally male-dominated gaming industry. As founder and CEO of Creators Corp., a leading Fortnite game studio, she has led collaborations that bridged the gap between traditional sports and gaming, including creating games with the US Open and top professional athletes. These initiatives have addressed the ongoing challenge of integrating real-world sports with the virtual realm, and under Rodde's creative leadership, Creators Corp. won a Webby Award for its highly successful collaboration with basketball star Stephen Curry.

One of Rodde's biggest achievements lies in how Creators Corp. has cracked the code for engaging Gen Z, a demographic many brands and publishers have struggled to reach. By focusing on driving gameplay and player engagement, she unlocked the full potential of Fortnite Creative, transforming it into a dynamic platform for innovative brand experiences. In 2024, Creators Corp. partnered with influential internet personalities such as Dude Perfect creator group, Fortnite star Clix, and more to amass 500 million minutes of play across their games. The company doesn't just build games; it creates cultural moments that resonate with millions of players.

As a visionary founder, Rodde has been featured in major outlets like Fast Company, Forbes, Digiday, VentureBeat and Variety. This year, Rodde has spoken at both SXSW and CES, and is gearing up to speak at the Cannes Festival in June. Her drive continues to reshape the future of gaming, not just through her business acumen, but by inspiring the next generation of female creators and leaders.



**ASIA YUYU QUIROZ**  
 FINALIST  
 Founder  
 BESUKOH

**A**sia Yuyu Quiroz is the founder and designer behind BESUKOH, a brand she created to express intentional design and honor the strength, complexity and elegance of women. Quiroz was born in Los Angeles to Mexican immigrant parents. During her years at Cal State LA, she interned at Rocnation, where she developed a love for discovering new artists. Her background in communications and years in the music industry contributed to her deep understanding of the cultural impact of creative expression. She began by designing handbags as her first canvas to explore form, function and emotional connection.

BESUKOH is a small ethical brand taking pride in craftsmanship and originality. The company makes unique bags that are ethically and meticulously crafted in one of the meccas of leather goods, Spain. Quiroz's designs are an ode to femininity, celebrating the interplay that between grace and strength.



**AMY ROSSETTI**  
 FINALIST  
 Founder  
 R[AR]E Public Relations

**A**my Rossetti is an emerging force in the Los Angeles business landscape, redefining real estate public relations through her boutique firm, R[AR]E Public Relations. With a decade of experience and a track record working with high-profile real estate clients, Rossetti launched R[AR]E at age 27 during the height of the pandemic, building it from the ground up into a national agency headquartered in Beverly Hills.

Rossetti's work elevates narratives around some of LA's most transformative residential and commercial developments, and the visionaries behind them. From revitalization efforts of historic projects to high-end residential spec homes, R[AR]E PR helps attract investment, attention and opportunity for the region and beyond. Rossetti has played a pivotal role in hiring talent locally, including professionals from top institutions like Douglas Elliman and the American Institute of Architects, ensuring LA remains a hub for creative and strategic communications professionals in the real estate space.



**KAREN TATMAN**  
 FINALIST  
 Founder; CEO  
 KMT Wealth Management

**K**aren Tatman is the founder and CEO of KMT Wealth Management, an SEC Registered investment advisory firm that adds value to their client's financial lives through empathy, expertise and an evidenced-based framework. In mid-2023, Tatman courageously left her corporate role to start up her company and create more space to do what she loves - serving clients as their personal, trusted advisor and sharing her expertise to make a difference in their lives.

Under Tatman's leadership, KMT's clients committed new assets under management totaling over \$175 million in the past 12 months. She has carved out a niche client base by offering holistic wealth services for clients with \$10 million and more in investable assets. With a deep financial expertise and a wealth of technical experience, Tatman combines her financial acumen with empathy, authenticity and a keen understanding of the psychology of money.

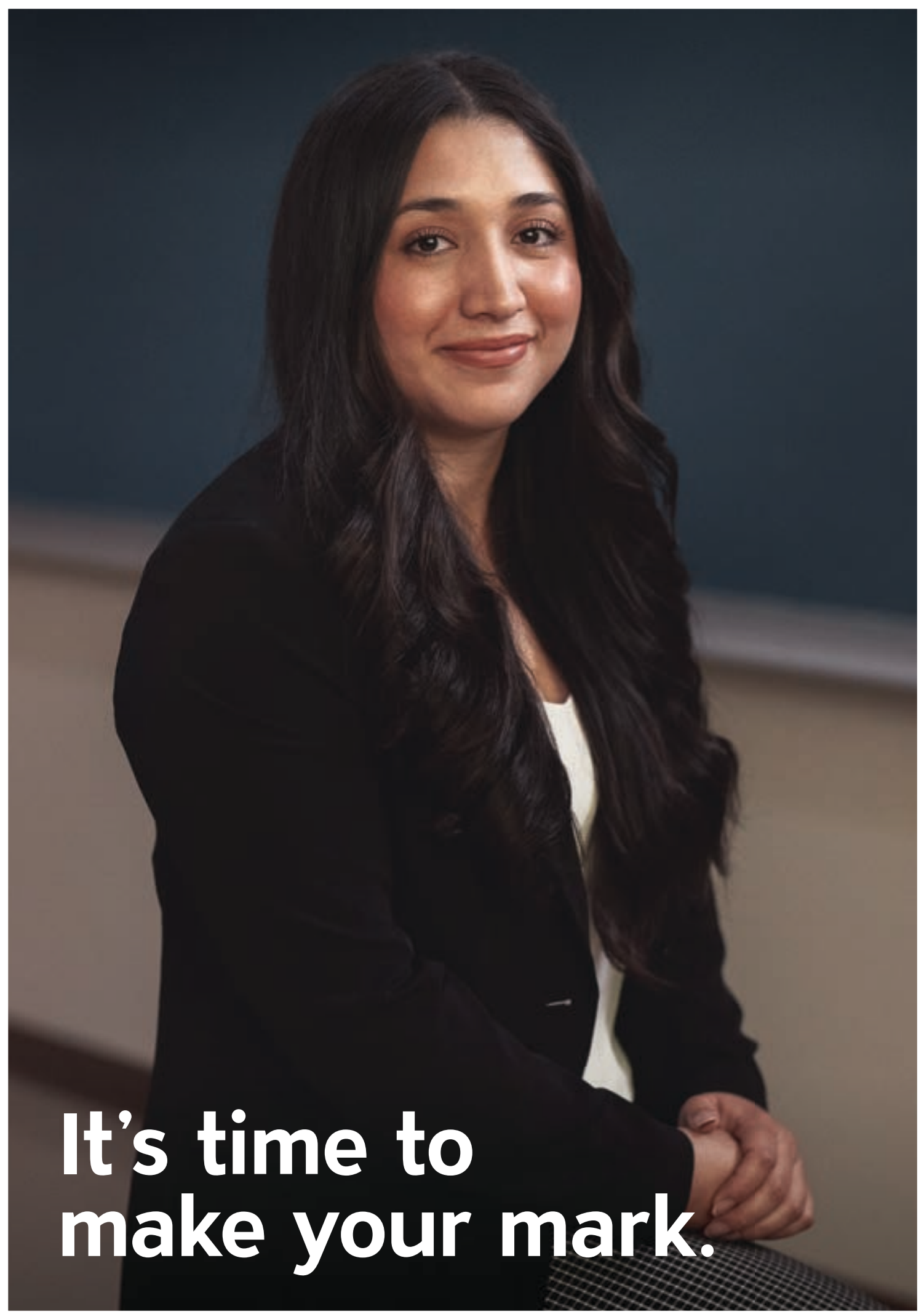


**LUZ ZAMBRANO**  
 FINALIST  
 CEO  
 Casupo

**A**fter years of working in the footwear industry, Luz Zambrano combined her deep industry expertise with a passion for sustainability and design to launch Casupo, a leather goods brand known for its color-forward, eco-conscious approach. With Casupo, she has established herself as a force in traditionally male-dominated world of manufacturing. One of the brand's key innovations is its commitment to reusing excess leathers left behind by larger brands at factories — an initiative that within five years has repurposed nearly three tons of leather that would have otherwise gone to waste.

Zambrano later transitioned from brand ownership to building Casupo Manufacturing, a full-service studio that helps emerging designers and established brands produce leather goods ethically and efficiently in Los Angeles and Mexico. Her company not only helps brands bring their visions to life, but also makes sustainability and transparency accessible to small and mid-sized businesses.

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**CHAMPION OF WOMEN HONOREE**
**LYDIA COLARESİ**

VP, Digital Marketing - CRM and Marketing Solutions  
Live Nation Entertainment

As a vice president for digital marketing and CRM strategy at Fortune 500 company Live Nation Entertainment, Lydia Colaresi builds and lead cross-functional groups across product, engineering, data science and marketing to develop AI-first messaging platforms. She leads a team of 90% women, with all leadership positions held by women. She is a passionate mentor, formally mentoring through her company's programs and personally guiding her team to achieve their career goals.

Colaresi has successfully advocated for equal pay and promoted eight women to manager and senior roles within her organization. Additionally, four of her previous direct reports have risen to become digital marketing leaders in the entertainment industry, showcasing the lasting impact of her mentorship. Her dedication to empowering women extends beyond her immediate team through active involvement in Women in Leadership, Women in Tech circles, and the Women Nation employee group.

Colaresi volunteers annually to promote science and STEAM education at Burbank schools, inspiring young minds to pursue careers in technology and innovation. As a Burbank Parent Education Council board member, she fosters educational initiatives that benefit local families, specifically new mothers.

Beyond her local contributions, Colaresi actively supports the National Council of Jewish Women, whose mission aligns with her passion for equity and empowerment. By advocating for their work in providing financial support to women in times of need, she furthers her commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of others. Her community involvement complements her professional dedication to mentorship and advocacy, creating a ripple effect of positive impact.


**SMITA BAGLA**  
FINALIST

Managing Partner  
Aligned Strategies

Smīta Bagla has exemplified visionary leadership through her multifaceted career as a serial entrepreneur, corporate strategist and global advocate for innovation. As managing director of Aligned Strategies and managing partner at Amritt, she drives transformative strategies for Fortune 500 companies and startups alike, specializing in AI, healthcare, education and digital transformation. She has founded multiple ventures, including an enterprise software company in the medical field in 2001 and a gamification innovation firm a few years later. She also pioneered AI solutions for cancer research early in her career.

As TiE SoCal President (SoCal chapter of The Indus Entrepreneurs, the world's largest nonprofit organization for entrepreneurs), she led and achieved a 400% chapter growth, launched the TiE SoCal Angels network, and established the West Coast Woman Entrepreneur of the Year award to spotlight women founders. As TiE Women's global co-chair, she mentored 1,200 women entrepreneurs worldwide in investment readiness.


**ILEANA HOLGUIN**  
FINALIST

Executive, Higher Education & Healthcare  
The PENTA Building Group

Ileana Holguin holds the position of executive for higher education and healthcare at The PENTA Building Group (PENTA), a general contractor based in Southern California, Nevada and Arizona. She guides teams through all phases of construction, from the initial project concept to final execution, with a passion for delivering legacy buildings that provide value to the community, such as schools and hospitals.

When Holguin began her career in construction over 25 years ago, she faced many challenges as the number of men far outnumbered women in the industry. She became an annual member of the National Association of Women in Construction, which further sparked her passion for advocating for and mentoring women and minorities in construction. At Holguin's previous construction firm, she spearheaded an annual construction event, inviting female high school students to learn and explore different career paths in the construction industry.


**TIFFANY HUGHES**  
FINALIST

Managing Director, Foreign Exchange  
PNC Bank

Tiffany Hughes began her career in foreign exchange on the trading floor – a fast-paced, high-energy environment where she thrived amid the intensity. She quickly built her own book of clients, setting the foundation for a career that would evolve alongside the industries she served. Her early years were spent in Silicon Valley, working with middle-market firms, growing alongside them as the sector transformed.

As her expertise deepened, Hughes expanded her focus, working with money managers and eventually Fortune 500 corporations. She became a trusted advisor in managing foreign currency risk, optimizing foreign denominated cash flows, and developing strategies to mitigate financial risk. She joined PNC to grow the bank's capital markets division in Los Angeles. In addition to managing foreign exchange, Hughes serves as a market champion for PNC's Women Business Development board, leading local initiatives that support women financial decision makers.


**MAJA MATARIC**  
FINALIST

Chan Soon-Shiong Chair and Distinguished Professor of  
Computer Science, Neuroscience and Pediatrics  
University of Southern California

Maja Mataric is the Chan Soon-Shiong chaired and distinguished professor in the Computer Science Department at USC, with appointments in the Department of Pediatrics Neuroscience Program, founding director of the USC Robotics and Autonomous Systems Center, co-director of the USC Robotics Research Lab, and the lead of the Viterbi K-12 STEM Center.

Dr. Mataric's research in the past two decades has been in the new field of socially assistive robotics (SAR) that she pioneered. SAR is focused on assistive HRI, enabling machines to help people through social rather than physical interaction. Dr. Mataric's work is known for validation and evaluation with beneficiary populations, including post-stroke rehabilitation, social training for children with autism spectrum disorders, and cognitive and movement exercises for healthy elderly users and those with Alzheimer's Disease, in real-world, challenging contexts such as in low-income homes, nursing homes and rehabilitation clinics.



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# Honorees & Finalists



## MENTOR OF THE YEAR HONOREE

### KARLA LUNA

Tax Partner  
 BPM LLP

**K**arla Luna, tax partner at BPM LLP, has demonstrated exceptional leadership and mentorship throughout her nearly 25-year career in accounting. Early in her career at Gumbiner Savett, Luna was the only Latina tax practice member among 70 employees, navigating a predominantly white male environment. Rather than being discouraged, this experience fueled her ambition to succeed and create pathways for others. When Gumbiner Savett joined BPM in 2021, she took on the role of regional group leader for the Santa Monica tax team, integrating staff into the larger, regional firm dynamic and BPM's processes and culture.

As the founder and executive sponsor for BPM's Hispanic & Latinx Community Resource Group, Luna has grown the group to over 70 members, creating a safe space for collaboration and professional development. Her commitment to mentorship is evident in her dedication to helping women and minorities advance in their careers.

Understanding the importance of education, Luna has identified an elementary school in an underprivileged area to receive backpacks filled with school supplies, ensuring that Latino and other minority children have the necessary tools to succeed in their studies.

Luna is also actively involved in the CalCPA PATH Mentorship Program, guiding college students as they navigate their accounting careers. Her participation in this program reflects her dedication to building a diverse pipeline of talent for the accounting profession. Her efforts also demonstrate a deep understanding of the challenges faced by underserved populations and a commitment to creating positive change through education, access to resources, and mentorship.



### MELISSA HARMAN

FINALIST  
 Partner  
 Moss Adams

**A**s Melissa Harman advanced in the world of public accounting, she grew aware of the limited representation of women as partners in the industry, often overcoming adversity to build a respected career. She went on to become a leader at Moss Adams, where she'd become known for her dedication to people as much as her technical expertise. She has mentored countless professionals, sharing the wisdom she gained through both her personal challenges and the invaluable mentorship she received along the way.

Harman continues to be a forward-thinking, instrumental driver to technological innovation in the accounting industry. By spearheading initiatives to integrate data analytics and innovative auditing tools, she has transformed business operations to keep Moss Adams at the forefront of the field. Through her work she exhibits the rare talent of turning technical topics into actionable insights that help organizations and individuals move forward.



### MICHELLE ITURRALDE

FINALIST  
 Market Executive, Global Commercial Banking  
 Bank of America

**M**ichelle Iturralde is market executive for Global Commercial Bank at Bank of America in Los Angeles, overseeing a team of 12 specialists to provide banking solutions and capital services to LA-based global companies with annual revenues between \$50 million to \$2 billion. As a female banker in a male-dominated specialty, she heads up the bank's 75-year-old Aerospace & Defense practice for the Western United States and general industries for the LA and Inland Empire market. A top performer year after year, Iturralde leads her business peers in achieving double-digit growth, doubling the number of new client relationships and overseeing nearly \$10 billion within her portfolio.

Iturralde dedicates her career and professional time to helping minority- and women-led businesses succeed, incorporating mentorship into her professional activities and bridging the gap between the organizations she volunteers with and her volunteerism and mentorship roles within Bank of America.



### NIKKI KHORRAM

FINALIST  
 Associate Attorney  
 Winston & Strawn LLP

**N**ikki Khorram is an associate attorney at Winston & Strawn (Winston), one of the 50 largest law firms in the United States. In addition to working on multi-million-dollar, high-profile litigation matters for Winston's clients, Khorram has made it her mission to help new attorneys – particularly women and other diverse professionals – advance their careers through formal and informal mentorship.

Khorram's propensity for mentorship is shaped by her inherent need to give back to her community however she can, from pro bono and volunteer work to fostering inclusion in every facet of her professional life. Khorram advocates for her mentees when they aren't in the room, makes sure they are considered for meaningful assignments, and supports them as they grow into roles they might not feel ready for. Khorram has served as an informal mentor for years and officially began mentoring junior attorneys through Winston's Mentorship Program three years ago.



### GISELE RAGUSA

FINALIST  
 Professor of Engineering Education Practice  
 University of Southern California

**P**rofessor Gisele Ragusa is an educator, researcher and mentor transforming impact-focused pedagogy in STEM. Since 2014, she has served as a professor of Engineering Education Practice for the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. Born with cerebral palsy, Ragusa faced early motor and language skills challenges, receiving formative formal and informal support and mentorship during childhood. She later chose to devote her early professional career to the service, support and mentorship of Pre-K-12 children as a bilingual science and special educator.

Ragusa currently leads the USC STEM Education Research Group with the mission to advance the lifespan of careers and achievements in STEM. Her research centers on STEM education, literacy, assessment and measurement. Her work is focused specifically on engineering education and innovation, global preparedness, PK-12 and teacher education, as well as advocating for sustainable pathways to higher education for historically underrepresented students.

# Congratulations



**TO PENTA'S ILEANA HOLGUIN FOR  
BEING SELECTED AS A FINALIST FOR THE  
LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL  
2025 WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM  
CHAMPION OF WOMEN AWARD**

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# Honorees & Finalists

## COMMUNITY IMPACT ADVOCATE HONOREE

### KATHERINE KIRCHHOFF

Managing Director  
 Cain Brothers, a division of KeyBanc Capital Markets

**K**atherine Kirchhoff is a managing director at Cain Brothers, a division of KeyBanc Capital Markets' Post-Acute Care group. Her 40-year finance career has focused on helping business leaders achieve their organizations' growth goals by assisting them with capital funding, financial planning, feasibility analysis and strategic planning. Throughout her career, Kirchhoff has completed transactions totaling more than \$6 billion, primarily in California.

Kirchhoff realized early in her career that she wanted to make a positive difference in the nonprofit healthcare industry, particularly in the senior living sector. She brings a breadth and depth of technical knowledge and leadership experience in strengthening senior living communities in California, having spent more than three decades on this mission. As Kirchhoff progressed in her career, she noticed that many senior living facilities require greater access to capital to provide safe, secure and comfortable environments for aging community members. She recognized this as a niche where she could make long-lasting impacts on the well-being of older adults and the organizations providing housing and care for them.

In 2023, Kirchhoff initiated efforts that led to new statewide legislation (Assembly Bill 839), modifying the eligibility criteria and enabling certain nonprofit senior living facilities to access the California Health Facilities Financing Authority, which serves as a conduit issuer for tax-exempt bonds and provides other financial assistance through loans and grants.

Kirchhoff was appointed to the State of California's Continuing Care Advisory Committee by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2007, and she has served on the LeadingAge California Finance Committee since 1997.



**MERIDITH BAER**  
 FINALIST  
 Owner  
 Meridith Baer Home

**M**eridith Baer is a trailblazing entrepreneur, designer and businesswoman, celebrated for her pioneering role in establishing the practice of "home staging" and founding Meridith Baer Home, the premier home staging firm in the United States. As an innovator in design and real estate, she has elevated countless properties, from modest homes to multi-million-dollar estates, helping homeowners achieve unparalleled success.

Under Baer's leadership, the company has transformed thousands of properties and gained recognition in elite publications such as Architectural Digest, The New York Times, and Forbes. Through her company, Baer has donated over 150 truckloads of furnishings to charitable organizations that uplift individuals and families in need. Her contributions span a diverse range of impactful initiatives, including ArcSpace, The Broad Stage, No Kid Hungry, YWCA Greater Los Angeles, Children's Home, Exceptional Minds, Girls Inc., Habitat for Humanity, Hopics, among others.



**CYNDIE CHANG**  
 FINALIST  
 Managing Partner, Los Angeles Office  
 Duane Morris LLP

**C**yndie Chang is a dynamic legal industry leader who resolves and manages business challenges and risks, including litigating lawsuits to trial. She advises and partners with clients to enforce their rights, mitigate exposure and litigate their commercial disputes involving complex, class action or B2B disputes. Her practice involves contracts, licensing, products liability, product safety and recall, unfair competition, fraud, construction defect, trademarks, trade secrets, California Proposition 65, COVID-19 and real estate.

Chang has held significant leadership roles in organizations and nonprofits that advance diversity and professional development in the community. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, and the Committee of 100, a nonprofit group of prominent Chinese Americans, which recently published its report on the state of Chinese Americans and its advocacy on behalf of victims of hate crimes and Asian racial profiling.



**ANN KONO**  
 FINALIST  
 Co-Founder  
 TeachAAPI

**A**nn Kono is a dynamic leader with a distinguished career spanning finance, operations and education. As the co-founder of TeachAAPI, she has been instrumental in advancing inclusive education, ensuring that Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) history and perspectives are integrated into K-8 curricula. Kono's ability to navigate complex systems, build strategic partnerships, and drive impactful change has positioned her as a transformative force in the nonprofit sector.

Kono grew up in the inner city of Boston, where she learned firsthand the power of education in shaping opportunities. Despite the challenges of navigating under-resourced school systems, she excelled academically and went on to build a successful career in finance, often being one of the few women in leadership rooms. Now, through TeachAAPI, she is working to ensure that all children, regardless of background, have access to a more inclusive and representative education.



**ANGELA REDDOCK-WRIGHT**  
 FINALIST  
 Employment & Title IX Mediator  
 Signature Resolution / RLG

**A**fter 25 years as an employment litigator and workplace and Title IX investigator, Angela Reddock-Wright transitioned to a full-time neutral in 2020. She is a leading Title IX attorney mediator with her own firm and part of the distinguished panel of neutrals with Signature Resolution. Reddock-Wright has mediated some of the most sensitive and high-profile cases involving private, public, entertainment, gaming, technology, union/labor and nonprofit sector employers, addressing issues such as race and gender discrimination, retaliation, sexual harassment, assault, hazing, bullying, pay equity, PAGA and wage and hour claims.

Reddock-Wright is a past president of the Southern California Mediation Association and is a member of the panel of mediators with the US District Court, Central District of California. Additionally, she is a distinguished fellow with the International Academy of Mediators, the National Academy of Distinguished Neutrals, and the College of Labor & Employment.

Invite Shirley to Speak!  
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# LEAD TO LET GO: BUILD A BUSINESS THAT THRIVES WITHOUT YOU

## Signature Keynote

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### Founder & CEO | Culture Architect | Growth Strategist

Shirley Wiliani is not just a business leader—she’s a business liberator. As the founder and CEO of ALC, a thriving global CFO advisory and HR Consulting firm, Shirley built a high-performing company from the ground up—then made the boldest move of her career: she fired herself. After 15 years of being indispensable, she let go of control, empowered her team, and created a business that could scale without her at the center of every decision. Through her keynotes and workshops, she is inspiring business leaders to do the same.



Shirley Wiliani



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- THE CULTURAL ADVANTAGE:**  
Outperforming Competitors Through Workplace Dynamic
- CULTURENOMICS:**  
The New Science of Organizational Wealth

SPEAKER TOPICS



An eye-opener... Shirley’s workshop was inspiring and deeply impactful.  
- Aaron Blank, CEO of Fearey



# Honorees & Finalists

## THE ACCELERATOR AWARD HONOREE

### ALANA ABBITT

Chief Product Officer  
 Miso Robotics

With over 15 years of experience in product management, Alana Abbitt has established herself as an expert in growing global service businesses, with a particular talent for driving recurring revenue generation across diverse industries. Her career trajectory spans payment services at PayPal, consumer product innovation at Honest, pioneering IoT solutions at Ring, and now, revolutionizing robotics services at Miso.

In her current role at a robotics startup, Abbitt faced a great challenge: within her first six months, the entire leadership team, including the CEO, departed. Rather than retreat in the face of this unprecedented vacuum, she stepped forward to fill the void. She reimagined the company's direction by auditing product lines, analyzing market potential, and presenting a compelling new vision to a new CEO and board. Her leadership accelerated a new course for the company, completing an 18-month product development cycle in just six months.

Abbitt exemplifies the multifaceted nature of modern leadership, making waves in both cutting-edge technology and cultural entrepreneurship. She's revolutionizing robotics in the quick-service restaurant industry, leading product development in automation solutions that tackle the dull, dirty and dangerous work that has long challenged the sector.

As one of few Latina executives in robotics, Abbitt's become a powerful advocate for diversity in tech, actively mentoring others and creating pathways for underrepresented voices. It's this unique combination of technical acumen, cultural awareness and entrepreneurial spirit that makes her not just an "Accelerator," but a leader who's actively shaping the future of multiple industries while inspiring the next generation of diverse leaders.



### FARRAH BRITTANY

FINALIST  
 Founding Agent  
 The Agency

With over a decade of experience in luxury real estate, Farrah Brittany has played a pivotal role in shaping the growth and vision of The Agency, where she serves as a partner and founder. Collaborating with the renowned Umansky Team, Brittany has played a key role in over \$5 billion in real estate transactions. As an emerging leader with an ever-expanding network, her ability to navigate high-profile, multi-million-dollar transactions with poise and insight has garnered the attention of industry leaders and clients alike.

Throughout her career, Brittany has faced challenges ranging from high-stakes negotiations to managing client expectations in an ever-evolving market. These experiences have shaped her resilience and adaptability, further solidifying her leadership capabilities. Additionally, she dedicates time to mentoring aspiring real estate professionals, offering guidance and support as they grow in their careers.



### MONICA DINSMORE

FINALIST  
 Head of Esports  
 Electronic Arts (EA)

Monica Dinsmore is the head of esports at EA, where she spearheads the publisher's competitive gaming strategy across a trio of IP: Apex Legends, EA SPORTS FC, and Madden NFL. Her focus on player-centric strategies has cultivated loyalty among the core player base and successfully re-engaged lapsed players. Her forward-thinking approach – centered on long-term fan investment and development of sustainable and accessible esports ecosystems – has helped EA to grow during times of industry volatility.

Since joining EA in 2021, all three esports brands registered record-breaking viewership and attendance year-over-year. The first-ever season of the EA SPORTS FC Pro Open set the bar at the highest engagement to-date with more than 100,000 viewers tuning in to watch in addition to millions of views across social media platforms. In February 2025, the Apex Legends Global Series Year 4 Championship set the record as the most-attended event in EA esports history.



### MIKESHAYA EDWARDS

FINALIST  
 Director of Operations Member Services  
 M. Edwards Legacy LLC

With a heartfelt desire to serve in a field where she could help people in their most vulnerable state, she pursued higher education to broaden her career opportunities, graduating as class valedictorian from California Baptist University with two master's degrees. After overcoming several hurdles while attempting to climb the corporate ladder, she took on a position as a prominent health care executive for one of the largest hospitals in Riverside County. Most recently, she serves as hospital operations director at Kaiser Permanente in LA, where she is responsible for the development and implementation of organizational growth strategies and profitability related to member satisfaction and retention.

Edwards recently built and purchased two rental properties and continues to purchase additional properties under her LLC, M. Edwards Legacy, increasing her economic reach and ability to provide housing to low-income families.



### ERICA ELSASSER

FINALIST  
 SVP; Senior Relationship Manager,  
 Commercial Banking  
 KeyBank

Erica Elsasser began her career at KeyBank Capital Markets in 2011, working with clients to evaluate capital structures, issue bonds, and evaluate ratings strategies and considerations. After completing hundreds of transactions and helping her clients raise over than \$100 billion, she was offered her current role of SVP, senior relationship manager, commercial banking.

Elsasser currently works closely with clients to meet their commercial banking needs through KeyBank's capabilities in cash management, payments, equipment finance and other banking products and services. In just 11 months, she has brought new clients to the platform, managed over 20 client relationships, and expanded the team's prospecting efforts. She has also spearheaded the development of the team's commercial banking sponsor coverage initiatives, building out COI relationships with sponsors in the region. Beyond business development, Elsasser is actively involved in recruiting and mentoring talent as KeyBank builds its West Coast presence.



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# Honorees & Finalists

## NEXTGEN WOMAN OF THE YEAR HONOREE

### DANIELLE WILLIAMS

Analyst  
 Avante Capital Partners

**D**anielle Williams has been a rising star at Avante Capital Partners since she joined the firm in 2019 as manager partner Ivelisse Rodriguez Simon's assistant and to support the firm's marketing efforts. Williams has continued to work her way up in the firm, now serving as an analyst and supporting the fundraising team. She is also responsible for identifying, underwriting, executing and managing investment opportunities. Prior to her ascension at Avante Capital Partners, she was an office services assistant at Latham and Watkins in San Diego.

Williams graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. During her undergrad, she was a student-athlete on the Michigan Women's Basketball team for four years. Her experiences with high-level college basketball have provided a competitive advantage for her in the finance industry. She comfortably excels in a corporate environment while working with teams and individuals, finding ways to win in today's market. Williams also holds a Master of Management degree from the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan.

Williams has been heavily involved in supporting Avante Capital Partners' Small Business Investing Scholars Internship Program since its inception, which helps to bridge the gap between the industry and students who may not otherwise have exposure to certain positions or firms. From its launch in 2020 to 2024, the program expanded from hosting nine interns to 40 interns with 31 SBIC firms participating. Last year, the program received a record number of over 1,300 students applying to participate in the opportunity.



**BARBARA AGUIRRE**  
 FINALIST  
 Project Coordinator  
 AC Martin

**B**arbara Aguirre began her professional journey at the University of California, Riverside, where she earned a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. Despite being one of the few Hispanic women in a predominantly male field, she thrived, balancing rigorous coursework while conducting sustainability-focused research. Her work sparked a deep interest in material science and sustainable design. Aguirre went on to study at USC, where she pioneered a new academic path pursuing a dual master's degree in architecture and building science.

Graduating in 2021, Aguirre entered another male-dominated industry – architecture – with the same resilience. She has since won numerous accolades, including the Paul Welch Scholarship, the Jim House Scholarship, the LAA Scholarship, Women in STEM honors, and the Great Minds in STEM award. At her firm, Ac Martin, Aguirre helped pioneer the internship program, actively participating in hiring and mentoring high school and college students seeking meaningful professional experience.



**CAYLIE BONTZ**  
 FINALIST  
 Senior Associate  
 KWP Real Estate

**S**ince her start in the commercial real estate industry just three years ago, Caylie Bontz has demonstrated exceptional professional growth and commitment, rapidly expanding her knowledge and network while achieving an impressive 88 leasing transactions and representing over 177,000 square feet of retail.

Bontz is a licensed sales agent and senior associate at KWP Real Estate, representing over 750,000 square feet of commercial space across Greater Los Angeles, and the current president of the Association of Corporate Real Estate Executives of Southern California. She currently represents over 750,000 square feet of commercial space across LA. She is responsible for property marketing, tours and contract negotiations on behalf of private capital and institutional landlords, working to secure future business through constant pipeline development. As an expert advisor, she provides commercial property owners with merchandising plans and proposed marketing strategies.



**KRISSEY DELAPINIA**  
 FINALIST  
 Digital Content Coordinator  
 Hope the Mission

**I**n her role as digital content coordinator at Hope the Mission, Krissy Delapinia has demonstrated exceptional leadership and innovation. Her creative use of social media has revitalized the organization's digital presence, effectively engaging younger audiences through authentic storytelling and strategic content that resonates with new generations of supporters. Notably, Delapinia raised over \$50,000 in a single day for global generosity movement event GivingTuesday with just a two-person team. Her strategic marketing efforts led to record-breaking attendance at Hope's annual Thanksgiving event, Drumstick Dash LA, establishing it as the largest Thanksgiving Day race in LA for three consecutive years.

Delapinia's innovative approach to raising awareness about homelessness is exemplified by her 40-hour immersive experience living homeless in Oildale, which provided valuable insights and directly contributed to the establishment of Hope the Mission's first tiny home facility.



**MEREDITH GEE**  
 FINALIST  
 Head of Product Design  
 Akido Labs

**M**eredith Gee is a rising healthcare and technology leader shaping the future of access and equity in LA and beyond. As head of product design at healthcare provider and AI company Akido Labs, she has designed and scaled platforms that have reduced the cost of patient visits by 90% and enabled doctors to see six times more patients, helping address the nation's physician shortage while improving care quality. Gee's AI-driven care model was featured in Fast Company and presented at MIT's AI Symposium for its potential to transform access to care globally. She has since scaled the program across a 500,000-patient network, leading implementation of new models of care that blend technology with human connection.

Gee serves on the Akido AI Ethics Council, a cross-institutional initiative with Caltech and USC, and advises the nonprofit Future Communities Institute, focused on tech-enabled care programs and civic innovation.

# Recognizing the remarkable.

Congratulations to Partner  
Karine Philippon and all the  
2025 Women's Leadership  
Awards nominees!



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*Congrats to the 2025 Nominees*

- |                           |                                      |                      |                         |                      |                    |                    |                     |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Alana Abbitt              | Melanie Babyan                       | Kelley Brack Jamison | Amy Chen                | Anita Dharapuram     | Deanna Garcia      | Betsy Hart         | Kulwant Kaur        |
| Jennifer Acree            | Sarah Bacay                          | Giovanna Brasfield   | Stephanie Chen          | Hayley Dickson       | Maria Garcia       | Sarah Hartman      | Nikki Khorram       |
| Ranee Adipat              | Meridith Baer                        | Michelle Brazil      | Weihua Cheng            | Kerra Diener         | Ellyn Garofalo     | Jonelle Hayes      | Debby Kim           |
| Barbara Aguirre           | Smita Bagla                          | Priscilla Brehm      | Diana Ordaz Cherrington | Monica Dinsmore      | Anush Gasparian    | Wessam Hazaymeh    | Katherine Kirchoff  |
| Bridget Ahern             | Paula Bahamon                        | Elizabeth Brink      | Sandra Cho              | Robin Dodson         | Meredith Gee       | Kelly Heinen       | Lee Ann Kline       |
| Wanda Ahmadi              | Sarvenaz Bahar                       | Farrah Brittany      | Andrea Choe             | Erin Donovan         | Eve Glazier, MD    | Elva Hernandez     | Taylor Kogler       |
| Susie Albin-Najera        | Nuzi Barkatally                      | Katie Brody          | Nancy Coblenz           | Jesse Draper         | Tessa Graham       | Sandra Hernandez   | Ann Kono            |
| Veronica Alcaraz          | Laura Baron                          | Kerri Brouillette    | Lydia Colaresi          | Sabrina Dukhovny     | Samantha Grant     | Mary Hewitt        | Sara Kornblatt      |
| Farah Alkayed             | Jamie Barrios                        | Dawn L. Brown        | Margo Conley            | Carolyn Dundee       | Demetria L. Graves | Beth Hilbing       | Alexandra Krasovec  |
| Katherina Alznauer        | Jill Basowski                        | Kellie Brown         | Moirra Conlon           | Kathryn Edgerton     | Debra Gray         | Jade Hoang         | Jennalynn Kriedtja  |
| Cindy Ambuehl             | Theresa Becerra                      | Lila Brown           | Nicole Conn             | Mikeshaya Edwards    | Lindsay Green      | Ileana Holguin     | Jenny Krusoe        |
| Belva Anakwenze           | Laura Berens                         | Stephanie Bum        | Erika Contreras         | Erica Elsasser       | Dianne Gubin       | Katrina Holliday   | Rosanne Kuder       |
| Mona Andrews              | Susan Berman                         | Cheryl Calhoun       | Megan Creecy-Herman     | Tamika Farr          | Ikram Guerd        | Cathy J. Hood      | Kristina Kury       |
| Nancy Antoniou            | Barbara Bernstein                    | Galen Callahan       | Nicole Cressman         | Mia Farrell          | Tamara Gurney      | Lana Hout          | Amy Kwan            |
| Edana Appel               | Kavitha Bhatia, MD, MMM, FAAP, FACHE | Babette Campbell     | Jessica Cruz            | Bernadette Fernandez | Emily Gustin       | Maki Hsieh         | Deborah La Franchi  |
| Sharon Appelbaum          | Tania Birker                         | Kaitlynn Campbell    | Heather Culbertson      | Tanya Flynn          | Isabel Gutierrez   | Tiffany Hughes     | Francine Lai        |
| Veronica Arteaga          | Christina Blumer                     | Reena Hajat Carroll  | Eva Davis               | Suzy Foster          | Adaobi Gwacham     | Neela Hummel       | Marie A. LaMolinara |
| Elen Asatryan             | Kristen Blunt                        | Rachel Casal         | Martha de la Torre      | Sherri Francois      | Kristen Haines     | Maria Hunter       | Tina LaMonica       |
| Rosemarie Chiusano Aubert | Shelby Boagni                        | Cécile Chalifour     | Penelope Deihl          | Mindy Freedman       | Candice Hakimfar   | Michelle Iturralde | Wendy Lane          |
| Sally Aubury              | Caylie Bontz                         | Cyndie Chang         | Krissy Delapinia        | Elaine Fresch        | Dominique Hamler   | Jenn Johnston      | Dina LaPolt         |
| Rainy Austin              | Amy Born                             | Jennifer Chang       | Rosa Delgado            | Susan Fries          | Brandy Han         | Christianne Jordan | Kate LaQuay         |
| Anna Avetisyan            | Pamela Bosco                         | Michelle Chang       | Christine Deschaine     | Barbara Gadbois      | Jeri Harman        | Courtney Jurado    | Amanda Lee          |
| Jaclyn Aviles             | Alona Bowman                         | Verna Grayce Chao    | Kat Dey                 | Kristen Gaer         | Melissa Harman     | Grace Kangdani     | Eunice Lee          |
|                           |                                      | Shawna Charles       |                         | Karyn Gallen         | Jennifer Harris    | Ava Kaufman        | Jaime Lee           |

# Women Who Build.

At KPRS, we believe it's the invaluable contributions of women that make us an even better building partner. We're proud to be a part of the 2025 Women's Leadership Symposium & Awards and celebrate our nominees, Michelle Rabinovich, Director of Preconstruction & Director of Los Angeles and Jennalynn Kriedtja, Director of Learning and Development. Congratulations to all the honorees!

Let's build together.



LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL  
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- |                          |                        |                      |                                |                   |                          |                       |                       |
|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Jennifer Lee             | Bailey Masullo         | Octavia Morgan       | Karine Philippon               | Sarah Robarts     | Della Shaker             | Viktoriya Stinson     | Jackie Ward           |
| Guadalupe Lemus          | Jessee Matana          | Elisabeth Moriarty   | Meghan Pinchuk                 | Katie Rodd        | Nada Shamonki            | Kelly Stupi           | Tracey Waters         |
| Julia Leonard            | Maja Mataric           | Ali Wood Moser       | Emily R. Pincin                | Anne-Margot Rodde | Margaret Shanley         | Coco Su               | Jessica Wellington    |
| Andrea Leventhal         | Folade May             | Devon Munos          | Angela Pinto                   | Lauren Rodriguez  | Shaama Sharada           | Shanelle Sua          | Jill Welton           |
| Lavena Lewis             | Natalie May            | Susan Napier         | Lauren Plichta                 | Raquel Román      | Shawn Sheffield          | Paula Sweis           | Jennifer Whisenant    |
| Michelle Lewis           | Marcia Mayeda          | Lizbeth Nevarez      | Hanna Polson                   | Erin Ross         | Audrey Simons            | Rachel Guanwei Tao    | Jessica Wiederhorn    |
| Jennifer Lieser          | Leslie Mayer           | Toni Newman          | Amy Proctor                    | Amy Rossetti      | Martine Singer           | Karen Tatman          | Shirley Wiliani       |
| Courtney Lingle          | Erin McAnally          | Puanani Norwood      | Heather Quinn                  | Miri Rossitto     | Anne N. Slusser          | Iliana Tavera         | D'Aundrea Williams    |
| Betty Liu                | Carly McGinnis         | Joanne Nowlin        | Vera Quinn                     | Lori A Roth       | Cherise Small            | Julie D. Taylor       | Danielle Williams     |
| Ruishan Liu              | Laura McHolm           | Ifunanya Nweke       | Asia Yuyu Quiroz               | Stacey Roth       | Adrianna Smith           | Marie Taylor          | Rayni Williams        |
| Dana Lowy                | Stacey McKinnon        | Kelly O'Neil         | Michelle Rabinovich            | Whitney Jones Roy | Shayla Smith             | Ashley Teesdale       | Donna Wilson          |
| Karla Luna               | Parini Mehta           | Rose O'Sullivan      | Tirue Rafayelyan               | Natalie Rutledge  | Wendy Smith              | Vanessa Terzian       | Tara Wilson           |
| Allie Lutz               | Rashmi Menon           | Adrianna Cruz Ocampo | Stephanie Ragle                | Marian Sahakayan  | Aerin Snow               | Tatevik Torossian     | Ellen Kaufman Wolf    |
| Mahru Madjidi            | Debra Ellwood Meppen   | Doreen Olson         | Gisele Ragusa                  | Karla Salazar     | Farnaz Solomon           | Nina Torres           | Molly Ann Woods, CFRE |
| Hannah Maile             | Thea Mercouffer        | Dana Ontiveros       | Lourdes Ramirez                | Mia Samson        | Danielle Martin Spicer   | Nora Trueblood        | Jessica Yasukochi     |
| Rochelle Maize           | Sheri Messerlian       | Jessica Ormandy      | Rani Ranade                    | Leticia Sanchez   | Johnese Spisso           | Elizabeth Tuan        | Luz Zambrano          |
| Lana Manganiello         | Lisa Helfend Meyer     | Pilar Ortega         | Angela Reddock-Wright          | Misty Sanford     | Daisy Stall              | Kimberly Burns Turner | Kemia Zeinali         |
| Leslie Margolin          | Karen Miessner         | Anoosheh Oskouian    | Sunitha Reddy, MBA, MPH, FACHE | Malak Santini     | Nicola Staples           | Julie Uhrman          | Carmen Zella          |
| Nina Marino              | Janice Miller          | Kylene Oswald        | Amanda Rees                    | Loyda Sarmiento   | Emily Lou Steenwyk       | Minoti Vaishnav       | Sally Zesut           |
| Sheila Marmon            | Julie Miller           | Tami Pardee          | Chelsey Reynolds               | Lara Schmoisman   | Mercy Tolentino Steenwyk | Stephanie Vasquez     | Judy Zhu              |
| Marianne Martin          | Ekaterina Mironova     | Sonia Parikh         | Amber Rivas                    | Michelle Schwartz | Michele Stein            | Nicole Vatter         | Rosie Zilifyan        |
| Angella Martinez         | Cynthia Mitchell-Heard | Rachel Park          |                                | Sierra Scoggins   | Michele Stein            | Lucy Villanueva       |                       |
| Jasmyn Masters-Culpepper | Kayoko Mitsumatsu      | Prital Patel         |                                | Susan Seflin      | Kimberly Stepp           | Erin Voisin           |                       |
|                          | Carissa Moore          | Nora Perez           |                                | Shokouh Shafiei   | Marty Stevens-Heebner    | Janifer Wallis        |                       |



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 ALL THE NOMINEES AND WINNERS  
 WHO CONTINUE TO RAISE THE BAR**



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 Director of Operations



**LESLIE MAYER**  
 Executive Managing Director



**ROBIN DODSON**  
 Executive Managing Director



**EMILY GUSTIN**  
 Senior Marketing Manager