

Lorraine Hutchinson

Deputy fire chief’s career and cancer battle serve as inspiration

By JENNIFER McENTEE
Special to The Daily Transcript

Lorraine Hutchinson, a deputy chief with the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, has played the odds in work and life and come out ahead.

In a paramilitary fire-rescue department with just a handful of African-American women, she has ascended to one of its highest ranks. And while African-American women have the highest breast cancer mortality rate overall despite a lower incidence rate than white women, Hutchinson is a breast cancer survivor who has served as a spokeswoman for the Susan G. Komen breast cancer foundation's San Diego affiliate.

She is battle-tested but sees her fire-rescue work and her breast cancer fight as part of the same calling in life.

"It's all an extension of my public service," she said in a recent interview. "Any time you come face-to-face with something that can kill you, you see things differently. I think that's what my journey did for me."

As a shift commander at North Park's Fire Station 14, Hutchinson supervises seven battalion chiefs. Fire-rescue duties run the gamut from structure and vegetation fires to medical and rescue emergencies. While big fires typically make the headlines, the department's calls in fiscal 2014 were 87 percent medical/rescue-related.

San Diego Fire-Rescue serves a 331-square-mile area, representing more than 1.3 million people. The city of San Diego department includes 47 fire stations, nine permanent and 25 seasonal lifeguard stations, and some 1,300 budgeted personnel, according to department data.

Hutchinson didn't grow up wanting to be a firefighter. She moved to San Diego from South Carolina in

“When I mentor women, I say: ‘Work harder, be better.’ I take it as a positive. I knew I needed to always be studying, always making sure I was on top of my game.”

1982 with plans to become a registered nurse like her aunt. When Hutchinson became pregnant with her daughter, she put her nursing education on hold to work two jobs while going to school to become a medical assistant. As a medical assistant, she worked for various doctors before landing at San Diego State University's Health Services department, where she met a woman whose husband was a firefighter.

"I knew I liked excitement. A lot of your work as a medical assistant is taking someone's blood pressure or temperature, but if someone was having a heart attack or had a traumatic injury, that's where I shined," Hutchinson said. "It's funny because I had never seen a woman firefighter before."

Once it was suggested she pursue firefighting, Hutchinson found mentors along the way who encouraged her to apply with the San Diego department. From a candidate pool of 8,000, she was one of just about 100 prospects — including only one other African-American woman — picked to attend the academy.

"Everything fell into place," she said. "I love my job. I knew I'd like the medical side of it, but it turned out the firefighter part was also an awesome fit for me. It's been a good marriage and a really good career."

Over the course of 25 years, Hutchinson moved through the

ranks of firefighter, engineer, captain, battalion chief and now deputy chief by taking every promotional exam available to her, she said. Along the way, she also trained as a paramedic and earned a bachelor's degree in organizational leadership from National University.

Despite the breadth of her medical training, Hutchinson wasn't particularly concerned in 2012 when her doctor suggested a follow-up appointment after an irregular mammogram. She was just 48 and had no family history of breast cancer. She was busy with work, school and family, so she put off the appointment for several months.

Hutchinson didn't sense the urgency until a subsequent mammogram and ultrasound necessitated a biopsy. The Stage 1B breast cancer diagnosis came as a complete shock, she said.

"I did a lot of research after I was diagnosed and found out that most women who develop breast cancer don't have a family history of it. I preach that to everybody now," she said.

Susan G. Komen San Diego sought Hutchinson as its honorary survivor in 2014 because she represents an underserved population, she said. African-American women are less inclined to get mammograms because of factors including a perceived lesser risk and lower insurance enrollment.



Hutchinson

"African-American women get breast cancer less but die at a higher rate," she said. "The Susan G. Komen Foundation is working to address this disparity and toward removing some of the barriers. They thought I'd be a good face for getting that information out there."

Beyond speaking to the media and community groups on behalf of the breast cancer foundation, Hutchinson participates in the organization's fundraising walks. She walked 60 miles in the Susan G. Komen 3-Day just six months after completing chemotherapy. "It was mind over matter," she said.

"I was still exhausted, but I just put one foot in front of the other."

Hutchinson's firefighter family has been supportive of her breast cancer battle since the beginning, she said, and she's returned the favor by serv-

ing as a resource for others in her department who've faced the disease within their own families.

"It is a negative experience, but you can make it a positive by helping someone else," she said, explaining she advocates to friends, family and co-workers to do regular self-exams and schedule annual mammograms. "It's a survivable disease. If caught early, most people will survive."

Hutchinson said she also advocates for women and minorities to consider fire and rescue careers.

"Firefighting is a male-dominated profession, but I've never had any bad experiences because of the way I carry myself. When I first started in the department, I didn't socialize unless someone asked me, so I developed a no-nonsense reputation. I was a single parent with a 5-year-old, and this was a job for me. Failure wasn't an option," Hutchinson said. "When I mentor women, I say: 'Work harder, be better.' I take it as a positive. I knew I needed to always be studying, always making sure I was on top of my game."

Hutchinson today is cancer-free and is nearing retirement. If anyone is to glean some inspiration from her experiences, Hutchinson hopes it's to stay positive and push forward despite obstacles.

"Everyone has challenges in life. It's how you come across at the end of the challenge that matters," she said. "Finding out I had breast cancer, I was devastated and knew I could die. But through surgery and chemo, that whole journey, I tackled breast cancer like every other thing I do: I didn't cry, I did what I needed to get through it. When we're challenged, it builds character."

McEntee is a San Diego-based freelance writer.

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Lynn Hajar

San Diego’s one-woman international trade dynamo

By KATHERINE CONNOR
The Daily Transcript

A coalition of 30-some organizations banded together at the start of March to announce the launch of a GoGlobal San Diego campaign aimed at increasing the region's exports by \$6 billion in five years and actively working to attract foreign direct investment — two areas that a Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase report found San Diego performed poorly in.

The buzz around foreign trade, while welcomed, was nothing new for Lynn Hajar, founder of iBiz247, a San Diego-based website that compiles information and resources on exporting and importing to anyone around the world, and who has had a hand in the international trade market for years.

Hajar grew up in Mexico City and moved to San Diego at age 11 with her parents, who opened an export shop here in the states, and said she always loved to travel and was intrigued by different cultures. This led to an internship at the World Trade Center in San Diego where she was able to work on market research projects for companies wanting to expand their footprint in San Diego, or local firms seeking to create or grow a presence internationally.

She enjoyed the work so much that she accepted a full-time position at the WTC to manage these market research teams, getting to work on projects such as assisting Grupo Aeroportuario del Pacifico investigate the possibility of expanding their cargo infrastructure in the region, and helping local companies chart export plans.



Hajar

"I think her knack with cross-cultural communications, language and the connections she has, especially in Mexico and the U.S., propelled her, unfortunately for us as it was our loss, into a great position as chief of protocol," said Bella Heule, the former president of the World Trade Center San Diego and now executive vice president for the national WTC. "Not only did we recognize her talent, but so did Naval Air Forces and the city. It was a joy to work with her."

Through a reputation for solid work and perhaps a twist of fate, Hajar became the chief of protocol for the commander of Naval Air Forces, and after working for two admirals, was invited to serve as the chief of protocol for the city of San Diego under Mayor Jerry Sanders from 2006 through 2009.

"I would manage all the diplomatic and international relations, so I was pretty much that liai-

son with the consular corps, all the ambassadors that would come to town, the presidents, I had royalty like the Princess of Romania — oh, it was fun," Hajar said.

Fun, but difficult. As a representative for the mayor she would often attend three or four events a day, not to mention serve as a city representative on international boards including the World Trade Center and Japan Society, as well as prepare for the

visits of foreign dignitaries which happened at least twice a month, select appropriate gifts with culturally appropriate wrappings, and brief the mayor on topics to talk about and what to shy away from.

Even in the midst of this more cultural position, Hajar was able to maintain some focus on the business side of things.

"It was very interesting. I met a lot of interesting people and learned a lot, especially about that connection between international relations, diplomatic relations and business," she said.

Take the case of United Kingdom-based grocery chain Tesco looking to potentially expand in San Diego, for example. Hajar said many other countries don't conduct business deals the way U.S. firms do — "If they don't feel welcome, they just will not put their money there," she said, noting that it was part of her job to ensure that the business development teams, including that

of Tesco, felt welcome here.

In 2009, she caught the entrepreneurial bug and ventured out on her own, working on several different concepts tangential to international business, including filming a collection of video interviews with CEOs on their career paths aimed at inspiring college students.

Then Heule, her friend and mentor who was the CEO of the World Trade Center San Diego, took a job as an executive vice president for the national WTC organization in New York, leaving Hugh Constant with interim president responsibilities here in San Diego. Hajar said Constant asked her to return to the WTC to open its Latin America desk, which she did through October 2013 when she saw the trajectory of the organization trending down and decided to return to her video work full-time, but in a more comprehensive way.

"The idea was, with my years of doing research, I always found it very frustrating that to get to trade statistics you had to go to the census department and then you're lucky that they didn't change the link, because of course you bookmarked everything, now you have to go on a wild goose chase to find it," Hajar said of the piecemeal and lackluster international trade resources available. "So I started thinking that was my frustration, let me build something that would help people take all these official links ... and try to make it user-friendly so that a student who has a business school project, or a CEO that is contemplating exporting to new markets, or just

starting to export or whatever, that it's user-friendly enough that everyone can find the information they're looking for."

iBiz247 officially launched about a year ago and is free to explore. Hajar and her team of 10 are just starting to add advertising to the site but wanted to hold off until it was thoroughly built out. iBiz247 also outsources to reliable service providers around the globe able to answer trade questions and talk companies through the process, has a marketplace component and job and event posting boards.

The site gets about 150 visitors a day, the majority from the United States, followed by the U.K., Brazil and Mexico, in that order. Half of these are return visitors, and the average time spent on iBiz247 is a whopping 13 minutes, way above the typical handful of seconds most websites achieve.

While the site has been a success thus far, Hajar has high hopes for what it will become when all of her plans are fully executed. And though iBiz247 was created to facilitate exports and imports globally through easily accessible information about the process, Hajar has a soft spot for San Diego. "I think people know, wherever you go around the world, you travel and say you're from San Diego and they've heard it, but I don't think we've educated people to think about San Diego as a place where they can actually come do business," she said. "And if we just plant the seed I think it'll grow very fast: San Diego, business — ah, the perfect combination."

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Candace Moon

Attorney finds her niche as San Diego’s go-to craft beer lawyer

By LYLE MORAN
The Daily Transcript

While studying at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, Candace Moon worked as a bartender at Hamilton’s Tavern, a craft beer bar in San Diego’s South Park neighborhood.

The job not only helped Moon pay her bills, but also gave her the chance to meet many people in the craft beer industry.

But Moon says she wasn’t sure what to do with her law degree until she met a wine lawyer about a year after her 2008 graduation.

“A light bulb went on,” Moon said. “I thought, ‘I know a bunch of brewers and I don’t know any craft beer lawyers, so I’ll be a craft beer lawyer.’”

Six years later, Moon has established herself as a nationally recognized legal expert on all things craft beer and has worked with more than 100 breweries. She is known in the industry as “The Craft Beer Attorney,” and she secured a desired domain name to match her moniker (craftbeerattorney.com).

Moon assists planned breweries with business formation, alcohol regulatory law, con-

tract review and trademark law, while also serving established breweries.

Most of her clients are in California, but she does some national trademark work, as well.

Her office has a kegerator in the kitchen and she says she offers visiting clients beer, but they rarely take her up on the offer.

Moon, founder of **The Craft Beer Attorney APLC**, sees a lot of her work as educational because she says California’s laws pertaining to the industry have a lot of gray areas. She is often barraged with the question: “Can I do this?”

“One reason I love working with breweries is they all want to follow the law, but they want to know what the law is,” Moon said.

Trademark law is also a frequent focus of Moon’s work, because as the industry has grown, disputes over brewery and beer names have become increasingly common.

Mediation can be a very good forum to resolve trademark disputes, Moon said, because the industry is a collaborative one in which most people are willing to work

things out.

She said she tells clients with strong trademark cases that the easier they make it for a competitor to let go of a company or beer name, the sooner things will get resolved.

“For example, if you call and demand somebody pull their product off the market, that does not go well,” Moon said. “If you let them sell through what they have and agree not to do it again, that seems to go over a bit easier.”

Peter Zien, owner of **Ale-Smith Brewing Co.**, said Moon works vigilantly to protect his company’s trademarks, often catching potential infringements his staff had yet to flag.

He also said Moon has been very helpful as his company has moved ahead with a large expansion project at a new site on Empire Street in Miramar, while working out a new partnership at its previous location on Cabot Street.

Zien said Moon is great to work with because of her knowledge of the industry, along with how she treats her clients.

“She is really easy to work with, you can reach her quite



Courtesy photo

Candace Moon bartended at Hamilton’s Tavern while in law school and now assists several of the area’s craft breweries with their legal needs.

easily and she really wants to help,” Zien said. “She really is the go-to person in the field.”

Other clients include **Fall Brewing Co.** and **Green Flash Brewing Co.**, both of San Diego.

As some of the breweries Moon represents have grown in size, more of them are also reaching out to her firm with employment law inquiries,

prompting her to hire employment lawyer Jessica Hardacre-Gianas as of counsel.

The firm has another attorney well-versed in business matters, an office manager and a legal intern whom Moon plans to bring on full-time once she graduates.

Meanwhile, Moon is working to become certified to do legal work in Arizona and

Colorado so she can serve more clients. But she said she doesn’t plan on the firm growing much more when it comes to staffing.

“I don’t want to get too big, because I want to deliver the same level of service,” Moon said. “I like the personal feel we have.”

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Pregnant workers backed by U.S. Supreme Court in UPS case

By GREG STOHR
Bloomberg News

The U.S. Supreme Court backed the rights of pregnant workers, reviving a lawsuit by a former **United Parcel Service Inc.** driver who left her job when the company wouldn’t provide the less strenuous work recommended by her doctor.

The justices, voting 6-3, sent the case back for a possible trial, which would center on UPS’s reasons for refusing to accommodate Peggy Young’s needs while giving temporary assignments to

workers recovering from on-the-job injuries.

The ruling is the Supreme Court’s first since 1991 on employers’ duties toward pregnant workers.

Although it may have limited significance going forward because of legal changes at the state and federal level, the case touched on issues that have driven a wedge through the court and American society.

The justices divided to some degree along ideological lines. The court’s three women — Ruth Bader Gins-

burg, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan — joined Justice Stephen Breyer in the majority, as did two Republican appointees, Justice Samuel Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts.

Writing for the court, Breyer said the lower court that threw out the suit should have scrutinized UPS’s justification for accommodating other workers.

“Why, when the employer accommodated so many, could it not accommodate pregnant workers as well?” Breyer wrote.

‘Middle ground’

The opinion adopted what Kagan characterized during arguments in December as a “middle ground” approach, rejecting more sweeping contentions from both sides.

Because lower courts had generally backed employers on the issue, it gives some pregnant workers a new avenue to win cases.

UPS (NYSE: UPS) contended that the Pregnancy Discrimination Act leaves room for companies to have neutral policies such as seniority systems and special preferences

for workers who are injured on the job.

“UPS is pleased that the Supreme Court rejected the argument that UPS’s pregnancy-neutral policy was inherently discriminatory,” the Atlanta-based delivery business said in a statement. The company said it was confident the lower courts “will find that UPS did not discriminate against Ms. Young under this newly announced standard.”

Young’s lawyer, Samuel

See **UPS** on 5

Stephanie L. Seidman, Ph.D.

McKenna Long
& Aldridge^{LLP}



If necessity is the mother of invention, there is perhaps no greater necessity than the health of human beings and the eradication of disease, worldwide. To this end, scientists regularly invent drugs to treat a wide range of maladies and bring them to market, hope-

ful for a multimillion-dollar acquisition by a large pharmaceutical company.

The process can take many years and is fraught with obstacles. Protecting inventors’ intellectual property, such as patents, copyrights and trademarks, and navigating the long and expensive course leading to the issuance of a U.S. patent takes an individual who possesses the rare combination of professional training as a scientist and as an attorney. It takes someone like Dr. Stephanie Seidman, of the San Diego law firm, McKenna Long & Aldridge.

Seidman, originally from New York, has more than 27 years of experience providing strategic counseling on the development and commercialization of patent portfolios for the bio-pharma industry. She has prosecuted hundreds of pharmaceutical, biotechnical and chemical patents, notably patent

portfolios involving complex technologies including therapeutic proteins, small molecules, antibodies and diagnostics.

“I started off as a scientist. I have a Ph.D. in molecular biology/biochemistry from Indiana University. I did post-doctoral work at NIH (National Institutes of Health),” said Seidman. “I was looking around for alternative careers, as jobs for Ph.D. scientists were not plentiful. My boyfriend at that time saw an ad soliciting applicants for a master’s degree program in patent law. He met with the professor, who indicated that molecular biology expertise was going to be in demand. Neither of us were interested in obtaining a master’s degree, but it did get me interested in patent law, and I applied to law school. (The ex-boyfriend) is now a CEO of a well-known biotech company.”

In 1985, Seidman earned her J.D. at Catholic University of America’s Columbus School of Law in Washington, D.C. Following graduation from law school, Seidman spent three-and-half years as a patent examiner, which

provided invaluable training.

San Diego’s burgeoning biotech industry, with more than 400 companies, has been the launchpad for drugs to treat a broad spectrum of diseases and was a major catalyst for Seidman’s decision to move here from the East Coast 21 years ago.

“There always are new start-ups (here) and a lot of basic scientific research and many entrepreneurs, and new companies,” she said.

Although McKenna Long & Aldridge is a general practice firm, it has a robust and large patent practice. Seidman’s practice is focused on the biotechnology industry and the pharmaceutical in-

dustry. She heads a team of a dozen Ph.D.’s, including three other attorneys and several patent agents and law students, working on behalf of clients. Her clients include local San Diego companies, with technologies including protein therapeutics, antibodies, viral therapeutics, diagnostics and pharmaceuticals. Her group has drafted and prosecuted and obtained patents, in the U.S. and worldwide, for clients in these areas.

To what does Seidman attribute success on behalf of her clients?

“I work a lot,” she said with a chuckle. “I work a lot and I hire a lot of smart people.”

Patently accurate.

By Tony Lovitt, Special to The Daily Transcript.
Lovitt is a freelance writer based in La Jolla.



Monica Piepenkotter

La Jolla financial adviser named one of the top in the nation

By DEAN CALBREATH
The Daily Transcript

Monica Piepenkotter learned her first major lesson in finance in rural Minnesota at the age of 8, when — like many young kids — she asked her parents if she could have a horse someday.

“They told me I could have whatever I wanted, as long I could finance it,” she says.

So Piepenkotter got a paper route, saved up every penny, and by the end of the year she had enough to buy a horse, which she continued to feed and care for using money she earned delivering papers and working other jobs.

Piepenkotter said the experience taught her the value of money — and the importance of having goals for how much you need and how you intend to use it.

Since then, Piepenkotter has used that personal drive and interest in finance to become one of the nation’s top five female financial advisers, according to rank-

ings by *Wealth Management Magazine*.

As the head of a private wealth advisory team in the La Jolla offices of **Merrill Lynch’s** private banking and investment group, she manages \$1.6 billion in assets, which she says reflects how much personal wealth has grown throughout the San Diego region.

“Although we don’t have real geographic restrictions on where we get our clients, most of them are right here in San Diego,” she said. “We’ve just built our business one client at a time, mostly through referrals.”

Piepenkotter, who holds a master’s degree in finance from the University of Wisconsin, began her career **Chase Securities Inc.** in New York in 1994, helping institutions manage the risk of their investments in derivatives.

“That was really the hot market back then and I enjoyed being where the action was,” she said.

Although the industry was then heavily dominated by men, she said she never encountered any gender-related hurdles, although she did feel awkward sometimes sitting at the trading desk after hours, when all the men around her started talking about sports — a topic she had no interest in.

“At first, I thought I should come up with things to say, just to fit in, but then I decided it would be better just to be myself,” she said.

In 1997, she joined Merrill Lynch as a vice president of its corporate and institutional client group, working with the finance managers of some of the world’s largest enterprises to hedge their exposure to fluctuations in interest rates, foreign exchange and equities.

But as a person who loves the outdoors, she eventually decided that New York City was not where she wanted to end up.

After a brief return to Minnesota to work on the equity

portfolio management team for **Alliance Capital’s** \$60 billion Premier Growth Fund, Piepenkotter moved to her husband’s hometown of San Diego in 2000 to rejoin Merrill Lynch just as it was beginning to roll out its private banking group focusing on individuals with high net worth.

Dealing with individuals rather than institutions was a change for Piepenkotter, but she built a solid base of customers by putting together custom-built strategies for each client, focusing on their unique goals, priorities and preferences.

When one of her clients came into a windfall of money by selling his company, for instance, Piepenkotter worked to develop a plan that included what price targets he wanted for his stock investments; how to finance his notion of maintaining several residences in the United States and abroad; and how to build charitable trusts to meet his philanthropic goals.



Piepenkotter

In her spare time, Piepenkotter enjoys reading, hiking (making annual treks to hike Montana’s Glacier National Park with her husband and kids) and running, including the New York Marathon.

“So many studies show that the more active you are physically, the more active your mind is,” she said. “Sometimes when I’m running and my mind is relaxed, I do find that I come up with creative ideas about my work. I’ll be running and suddenly I’ll think, ‘Oh, this is something my client might like.’”

Piepenkotter also devotes time to Salkexcellators, building support for the Salk Institute for Biological Studies. “It’s good to feel that you’re contributing to a new generation of scientists who are going to make real differences about how we live in the future,” she said. **dean.calbreath@sddtc.com**
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Carey Lohrenz

First female F-14 pilot translates her story to business world

By KATHERINE CONNOR
The Daily Transcript

Becoming an F-14 Tomcat fighter pilot for the U.S. Navy is no small feat. Logging 1,000 flight hours, 132 successful day landings and 45 night landings on aircraft carriers are impressive accomplishments. But doing it knowing that a small group is actively working to ensure you don’t succeed — that seems impossible.

Not so for Carey Lohrenz, the Navy’s first female Tomcat pilot, who completed aviation officer candidate school and graduated first in her class from fighter pilot training while a ban on women in combat roles was still in place.

In fact, the ban wasn’t lifted until the very day she was scheduled to select the aircraft she would fly, but Lohrenz refused to relinquish her dream.

Lohrenz, now a mother of four, author and speaker, said her experiences — though extreme — translate to the business world. She recently shared her tips on succeeding at the Farmers Insurance Open’s fourth annual Astellas Executive Women’s Day at the Hilton Torrey Pines.

“When you think about what it takes to get your performance to that level, at the end of the day it’s focus,” Lohrenz said. “And going all in, understand what your purpose is.”

She said that taking time to reflect on where you are and mapping out where you want to go is key to identifying your goal.

“If you lose sight of what it is you say is your priority, you will lose the fight,” Lohrenz said, noting that life on an aircraft carrier is about only one thing: successfully launching and recovering aircraft.

Once you have your focus, maintaining no more than three major priorities at a time will let you devote enough energy to keep you on the path to success.

“I say there’s a rule of three — you really can’t have more than three big things,” Lohrenz said. “And that means you need to learn to say ‘no.’ And that’s very hard because ‘no’ feels like a four-letter swear word.”

Fear and failure play major roles in reaching success, whether in the military or private industry. Lohrenz said one of the main points of aviation officer candidate school is to get students to understand what failure feels like.

“Failure will happen, but it’s what you do with it that defines you, and what you do with that, that defines who you are and who you will become,” she said.

She said fear of failure is universal and a big reason why people pass up valuable opportunities. Learning to



Lohrenz

cope with failure and choosing to improve, rather than never trying, is what makes strong leaders and successful people. Lohrenz said she tries to go outside her comfort zone every day to improve herself.

“If you don’t, that means you’ve gotten complacent,” she said. “And as soon as you get too comfortable, what happens? The competition starts coming around, getting up next to you. You think you’re doing good enough, and you are no longer relevant. You

will be very quickly replaced. So get comfortable being uncomfortable.”

F-14 pilots typically fly in formations with two to 20 wingmen who serve several purposes: they can point out mistakes fellow pilots are making, provide extra protection and call out each others’ blind spots. The same goes for business.

“Follow up and follow through and develop trusting relationships,” she said. “Start working that in, send those emails, communicate with one another’s and start building that network, that safety support system.”

You can survive solo, Lohrenz said, but a team is needed for major victories. She didn’t always have the support of everyone who should have been on her team as she trained to become a fighter pilot.

She found out her first week of aviation officer candidate school that her drill instructor had never allowed a female who started in his class to graduate, because he believed women didn’t belong in combat roles. This just fueled her

drive, and Lohrenz became the first female to graduate from that instructor’s class.

But the barriers didn’t end there. Shortly before graduating at the top of her class from flight school in Corpus Christi, Texas, she was pulled out of a brief by her commanding officer. He told her that because she’d be graduating soon and the military’s combat exclusion clause prohibiting women from entering combat roles hadn’t been lifted, she must either leave the Navy or take a desk job.

“I looked around and realized that the only reason I just had that conversation in the

commanding officer’s office is because I dared to show up different,” Lohrenz said.


“I dared to show up as a female. ... I came from the perspective of the jet doesn’t know the difference, so I finished the brief, went back into the commanding officer’s office and just said to him, ‘I don’t want to get out of the Navy, I don’t want to go to a nonflying job, so we need to find a third way.’”

And they did, planning to designate her a flight instructor after she got her wings. This was a tough pill for Lohrenz to swallow because her dream was to be in the

cockpit of the F-14, not teaching others to fly, but she finished flight school still working toward the goal of the F-14. The day Lohrenz and her class selected their aircraft of choice, the ban was lifted.

“It’s important to remember when [there’s] adversity, when barriers are thrown in front of you, you have to still stay focused on your dreams,” she said. “Stay focused on where it is you want to go because the big golden prize at the end is not always given to the smartest or most gifted — it’s given to the most tenacious.”

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SAN DIEGO UNIFIED'S \$5 BILLION Construction Program

San Diego Unified School District has a \$5 billion capital improvement bond program to repair, renovate and revitalize district schools. There are many opportunities for local contractors to participate in these construction projects.

Upcoming Opportunities	
Adams Elementary School Heater Replacement	Less than \$100K
Gage Elementary School New PA System	Less than \$200K
Hearst Elementary School New PA System	Less than \$200K
Juarez Elementary School New PA System	Less than \$200K
Ericson Elementary School Reconfigure School Office Area	\$5-10 million
Correia Middle School Burnt Ash and Retaining Wall	Over \$10 million
Creative Performing Media Arts Middle School Roofing & HVAC	Over \$10 million
Crawford High School Stadium and Sports Facility Improvements	Less than \$200K
O'Farrell Community School Whole Site Modernization Project	Less than \$200K

Project Opportunities
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www.sandi.net/Page/3228
(see Management Report)

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For business, more women in charge means bigger profits

By **DANICA KIRKA**
The Associated Press

LONDON — When Rohini Anand took over diversity programs at multinational catering company **Sodexo** in 2002, she had one goal: To prove that it pays for a company to have equal numbers of male and female managers.

Sodexo, which has 419,000 employees in 80 countries, says she's done just that. A companywide study last year found that units with equal numbers of men and women in management roles delivered more profits more consistently than those dominated by men.

"It has become embedded now. It's not just me talking about it anymore," Anand says.

Evidence is growing that gender equity is not just politically correct window-dressing, but good business. Companies are trying to increase the number of women in executive positions, yet many are struggling to do so because of a failure to adapt workplace conditions in a way that

ensures qualified women do not drop off the corporate ladder, surveys show.

The case for companies to act is compelling.

In a survey last year of 366 companies, consultancy **McKinsey & Co.** found that those whose leadership roles were most balanced between men and women were more likely to report financial returns above their national industry median.

Companies with more balanced leadership do a better job recruiting and retaining talented workers, reducing the costs associated with replacing top executives, McKinsey found. They also have stronger customer relations because management better reflects the diversity of society, and they tend to make better business decisions because a wider array of viewpoints is considered.

Apple CEO Tim Cook, who came out as gay last year, told PBS it was important to hire people who "complement you, because you want to build a puzzle."

"You don't want to stack

Chiclets up and have everyone be the same," he said.

While most big companies now have programs to increase gender diversity, many executives express frustration that these programs aren't working. McKinsey found that 63 percent of the employers it surveyed had at least 20 initiatives to address gender equity, but women held less than a quarter of the top jobs in 92 percent of the companies.

Sandrine Devillard, who has been studying the issue for the consultancy for about 16 years, said companies were nonchalant about retaining top female talent when she started. Now they want to know what programs work. Fast.

That's because a woman's prospects for promotion fall off at every step of the career ladder, according to a separate survey of 130 large companies conducted by McKinsey in 2012. While women made up 37 percent of the total workforce, they consisted of 22 percent of middle managers, 14 percent of senior managers

and vice presidents, 9 percent of executive committee members and 2 percent of CEOs.

In France, Norway, Spain and most recently Germany, governments have sought to mandate progress by imposing quotas for women on boards.

Norway had the highest percentage of women on boards — 35 percent — among 20 countries in Western Europe, North America and the Asia-Pacific region last year, according to data compiled by Catalyst, which researches gender equity. The United States and Australia were tied for 10th at 19 percent.

Board quotas alone won't close the gender gap because they address only the final step in the career ladder, researchers say. The real challenge for employers is to hire, train and promote talented women so they have a pipeline of qualified female candidates when they need to fill senior roles.

"We're on the cusp of a revolution," says Cary Cooper, a professor at Lancaster University Management School in Britain. "If organizations

don't allow more flexibility, more autonomy, they're just going to keep losing (women)."

The average workplace remains locked in a postwar factory mentality with structured hours and a requirement to be at the office — and the expectation to keep working from home even when not physically present, researchers say.

The use of the Internet has helped working remotely, but for top managerial jobs that might lead to the boardroom, physical presence in the office and attending work-related social events remain crucial. Add in broader social factors, such as expectations that moms do domestic duty, and the pressures can become too much.

Take Emma Arkell. As a top divorce attorney at a large London law firm, she counted celebrities and the British aristocrats among her clients. Her career seemed certain to soar — until the kids came along.

After watching female colleagues struggle to balance family responsibilities with demands at work, Arkell realized she couldn't do both. Instead, she started her own company making a line of natural skincare products after developing a cream that successfully treated her daughter's rashes.

"I could do it from home," she said of the business. "I had complete control of it."

It's not just about hours. Women often struggle with a male-dominated culture at executive levels, surveys show.

Some have accused such a culture for the aggressive risk-taking that led to the global financial crisis. IMF chief Christine Lagarde quipped that if collapsed investment bank Lehman Brothers had been Lehman Sisters, the crisis would have looked different.

A recent study at Harvard Business School urged a rethink on why more women

aren't getting and keeping top jobs.

The study, released in December, surveyed more than 25,000 graduates of the school since 1963, when women were first admitted to the MBA program. Harvard researchers Robin Ely and Colleen Ammerman, together with Pamela Stone of City University of New York, found that while men and women start out with similar career goals, women progress more slowly because of institutional hurdles and the demands of spouses for them to manage family responsibilities.

The report suggests employers need to move beyond the idea that "family-friendly" policies such as flexible working hours are enough.

This means re-examining "unspoken but powerful perceptions" such as the assumption that women are riskier hires because they are more likely to give up their careers for parenthood. Women also have a role to play in ensuring that their spouses are "real partners" in sharing household and childcare responsibilities, the authors say.

Such factors can be hard to influence at a policy level, however, as they reflect social views.

While governments have focused on the boardroom, companies including Sodexo decided they had to start by building a pipeline to get them there.

Anand, the company's global chief diversity officer, said Sodexo's goal is for women to make up 25 percent of its top 300 managers this year. Women already make up 42 percent of the board of directors and 38 percent of the executive board.

"The current workplaces were made by and for baby boomers," Anand said. "If we are to retain the best and brightest, we need to look at workplaces differently."

Source Code: 20150323nl

Scripps Health ranks high for women execs

By **DEAN CALBREATH**
The Daily Transcript

For the third year in a row, the National Association for Female Executives recently named San Diego's **Scripps Health** as one of the top 10 companies for executive women, based on its policies and practices encouraging women's advancement.

Betty Spence, president of the National Association of Female Executives, said Scripps Health is an example of how women are excelling in the health care industry.

"Women are running hospitals' operations and controlling major decisions — opportunities that at for-profit companies still often elude women," she said.

With the sole exception of the **TIAA-CREF** retirement planning group, the other companies on the association's top 10 were associated with health care, including **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina**, **Bon Secours Health System** and **Children's Healthcare of Atlanta**.

At Scripps, women make up 76 percent of the 13,700 employees and 68 percent of its management group. Of the company's 61 top executives, 24 are women, or 39 percent.

"Scripps has been shaped in every way by the more than 100,000 women who've passed through its doors since its founding in 1924, and we continue to build on the

strength of that history today," said Chris Van Gorder, president and CEO of Scripps.

Scripps' latest Form 990 filing available from the Internal Revenue Service showed that its highest paid woman executive — June Komar, executive vice president for strategy and administration — received total compensation of \$1.5 million in fiscal 2012-13, including deferred compensation and benefits, second only to Van Gorder, who received \$4.1 million.

Out of the 21 highest-paid executives listed on the IRS form, however, there were only two other women: Barbara Price, corporate senior vice president for strategy and business development, in


17th place with \$765,307, and Cathy Guibal, who was then chief financial officer of the Scripps Medical Foundation, in last place with \$528,585.

Guibal has since moved on to become a principal at **Sullivan, Cotter & Associates**, a San Francisco consulting firm specializing in compensation programs for health care groups and other nonprofits.

Scripps has been included on the "Best 100 Companies" by *Working Mother* for the past 10 consecutive years. Additionally, Scripps last year was named for the seventh time to *Fortune* magazine's 17th annual list of America's "100 Best Companies to Work For."

Source Code: 20150304cze

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Wall Street women are heading to Silicon Valley

By **CAROL HYMOWITZ**

Bloomberg News

Ruth Porat shows how Wall Street could help Silicon Valley solve its woman problem.

When **Google Inc.** tapped the 28-year **Morgan Stanley** veteran as its new chief financial officer, Porat became not only the latest from Wall Street to migrate to the technology industry but also the highest-ranking woman at the world's largest Web search provider. Other tech companies need financial expertise and would benefit from an infusion of female talent as they face criticism about the lack of diversity in leadership ranks.

"They have no choice but to parachute in talented and proven women," because there are so few in line for promotion to key jobs, said Pat Cook, president of **Cook & Co.**, an executive-search firm in Bronxville, N.Y. While Wall Street has its own issues with gender diversity, "women who started careers there decades ago and pushed to advance are hot prospects now for technology companies."

Tech companies tend to be male-dominated, and not only in the executive suite. Payroll data released last year by Google (Nasdaq: GOOG), **Apple Inc.** (Nasdaq: AAPL), **Facebook Inc.** (Nasdaq: FB) and others showed that Asian and white men hold the vast majority of highly paid technical positions. Most of the companies are headed by men, most directors are men and the startup and investing environment favors men.

Other industries don't look that much different, at least at the top. Porat, 57, spoke out about it last year,

calling it an "embarrassment" that so few women run U.S. companies.

Women hold 24 of the CEO jobs at Standard & Poor's 500 Index companies and 58 of the CFO positions, according to the S&P Capital database.

Top talent

Some of the female finance officers are at tech companies, including **Microsoft Corp.**'s Amy Hood, **Cisco Systems Inc.**'s Kelly Kramer and **Oracle Corp.**'s Safra Catz, who is also co-CEO.

Silicon Valley companies have been recently turning to Wall Street. **Snapchat Inc.** named **Credit Suisse Group AG**'s Imran Khan as chief strategy officer, and **Twitter Inc.** hired Anthony Noto, who had been with **Goldman Sachs Group Inc.**, as CFO. And Porat's not the first female tech CFO with a finance industry background: **Square Inc.**'s Sarah Friar worked at Goldman.

"Wall Street has much of the top talent still in the marketplace, and it's certainly an area where you can expect people looking for future leaders," said Nada Usina, who leads the CEO/Board Services practices for the technology sector in the Americas for Russell Reynolds Associates. "The women being put in these roles are extraordinary for their talent, and for how much they invest in helping move along those percentages" in an industry with a gender imbalance.

Gina Scigliano, a spokeswoman for Google, declined to comment.

No shortcoming

Porat has an undergraduate degree from Stanford

University and graduate degrees from the London School of Economics and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. She went to work for Morgan Stanley in 1987.

In a speech last year to the Japan Society in New York, she recounted how after climbing the ranks she was shown internal performance review documents from when she started. Reviewers said she lacked stamina to get past the associate level, a junior rung.

"I'm quite confident I outlasted the man who questioned my stamina," she said.

Women tend to start at lower salaries at U.S. corporations than men and rarely reach the top posts that pay the most, she said, suggesting that lawmakers consider structural changes, such as requiring companies to provide family leave, so women aren't forced to choose between careers and children.

"Women are still not reaching the most senior levels of corporations," Porat said in the speech. "This is not a shortcoming of women."

Martha Gallo, a former executive vice president and chief compliance officer at **JPMorgan Chase & Co.**, said women from Wall Street would be open to overtures from Silicon Valley if they were offered jobs where "they have a place at the table, are listened to and have fun." Plus there's a key similarity, she said.

"Wall Street, like Silicon Valley, is a place where you can make money," Gallo said. "If you're going to work hard and be challenged, you also want to get paid."

Source Code: 20150325fab

Magazine publisher Meredith finds success focusing on women

By DAVID PITT
The Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — The nation's top publisher of magazines and websites for women has its origins in a journal sold door to door featuring tips to help farmers get ahead in the early 1900s.

From there, **Meredith Corp.** (NYSE: MDP) grew and evolved, surviving depression, recession, the Internet and an increasingly crowded field of magazine competitors to now reach more than 200 million people a month.

It has done it by developing a keen understanding of its readers, using its huge database to hone in on how women seek and use information in the areas of food, home, parenthood and health.

Its portfolio includes *Better Homes and Gardens*, one of the most widely read magazines in the nation, and Allrecipes, the world's largest digital food brand visited online more than 1 billion times a year by home cooks.

"They unapologetically and enthusiastically deliver both content and product experiences around that particular woman and they know more about her than anybody else," said Mary Berner, CEO

of MPA-The Association of Magazine Media, an industry trade group.

Meredith has compiled an unmatched database of 100 million women with an average of 800 data points for each one. That's detailed information on about three-quarters of American homeowners, which helps the company cross-market its products.

"If you come to *Better Homes and Gardens* you might come because you're a decorator. You might come because you're interested in food," CEO Stephen Lacy said. "We need to know that because if you're interested in food we might say, 'What do you think of Rachael Ray?' or, 'What do you think of *Eating Well*?' If it's really that you're into decorating, we might offer you *Traditional Home* or *Martha Stewart*."

Meredith has made acquisitions to help it reach those women, adding *Every Day With Rachael Ray*, *Allrecipes*, *Shape* and *Myweddings* in recent years. Last year, it took over the advertising and business management for *Martha Stewart Living* and *Martha Stewart Weddings*.

The company's roots date back to Edwin T. Meredith, who began selling *Successful Farming* magazine door to door in 1902. He launched *Fruit, Garden and Home* in 1922, then changed the name to *Better Homes and Gardens* in 1924.

It now has nearly 8 million monthly print subscribers and an estimated monthly audience of over 50 million when mobile, Internet and video

viewers are included. That's second only to *People* magazine.

Dee Nash, 52, writes the Red Dirt Ramblings gardening blog from her home in Guthrie, Okla., where she subscribes to Meredith's quarterly magazine *Country Gardens*.

"They're a bright spot that comes in the mailbox," she said. "When it's 19 degrees in February you need some-

thing bright."

A frequent reader of *Better Homes and Gardens* from the newsstand and online, she also has membership in All-recipes.

Meredith, which has about 3,500 full-time employees, publishes 21 subscription magazines and last year sold 120 special-interest magazines at newsstands on topics including quilting, kitchen and bath designs, and living

with diabetes. About a quarter of its revenue — which totaled about \$1.47 billion in the company's last fiscal year — comes from its 17 television stations, but the rest comes from its magazines.

Samir Husni, director of the Magazine Innovation Center at the University of Mississippi, called Meredith a pioneer in "service journalism."

See **Meredith** on 6

UK study: Women to make up 25 percent of boards by end of 2015

By DANICA KIRKA
The Associated Press

LONDON — The percentage of women on the boards of the country's top companies is on track to meet a target of 25 percent by the end of the year, a study tracking female achievement said March 24.

The report from the Cranfield International Center for Women Leaders said that 23.5 percent of boards of the companies listed on the U.K.'s main stock index, the FTSE 100, are now comprises women, up from 20.7 percent last year. Some 263 directorships are held by women.

Though a paltry 8.6 per-

cent of women are in executive directorships, that figure represents an all-time high.

"This is a critical time for British businesses, not just to meet the 25 percent target, but also to continue to diversify their boards and organizations beyond the 2015 target," said report co-author Ruth Sealy. The 25 percent target is a voluntary goal set up by a British government steering group.

The progress is important because of the symbolic significance placed on the board level — and the message it sends to other women in the so-called pipeline to get to the top. The focus on boards has

forced companies trying to figure out why women professionals were leaving at every level on their way to the corporate suite, despite programs designed to keep them.

With growing evidence to suggest that gender equity improves profitability, top U.K. firms are being pushed to act. Progress is also coming from data showing the cost of losing top talent.

"They understand it is costing them money," Sealy said. "That's what makes them act."

Also pushing companies is the threat of quotas on boards and the fallout of the 2008 financial crisis, which some

said was exacerbated by a lack of diversity and viewpoints within corporate leadership.

Researchers say the government reviews and the threat of EU-wide quotas have had a major impact on the makeup of boards. Some 41 of the FTSE 100 companies has hit the 25 percent target, with two companies, Diageo and Intercontinental Hotels Group, hitting 45 percent female participation.

"It is crucial that the momentum that has built up around this issue is maintained," said report co-author Susan Vinnicombe.

Source Code: 20150325nm

UPS

Continued from Page 2

Bagenstos, said companies will be hard-pressed to justify not giving pregnant workers the same sorts of accommodations as other groups of employees.

"We basically got to the place where we wanted to go, even if the court chose a route that wasn't our first choice route for how to get there," Bagenstos said in an interview.

Heavy lift

Young worked at a UPS facility in Landover, Md. Her job required her to load packages onto vehicles and deliver them to their destination. Although she says the vast majority of those packages were envelope-size, her job description required her to lift parcels of up to 70 pounds.

In 2006, Young became pregnant after in vitro fertilization. Her doctor and midwife said she shouldn't lift

objects weighing more than 20 pounds during the first half of the pregnancy or more than 10 pounds for the rest.

She says UPS refused to accommodate her needs either by adjusting her job responsibilities or by temporarily assigning her to a position that didn't require heavy lifting.

She went on an unpaid leave of absence and returned to work after her baby was born. Young later left UPS and sued the company for compensation.

Seniority system

UPS says it was simply abiding by its seniority system and union contract, which makes no provision for pregnant employees with physical limitations. The union agreement called for reassignments to be available to workers with job-related injuries and those considered permanently disabled under the Americans

with Disabilities Act.

The accord also made provisions for people who lost their federal driver's certification, letting them temporarily take jobs that don't involve operating a vehicle.

The company shifted its policy after the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case. UPS says it now treats pregnant employees in need of special accommodations the same as workers with on-the-job injuries, giving them light-duty assignments if available. Young, now 43, continued to press her case in an effort to win damages.

UPS said one reason for the change was the increasing number of states that require accommodations for pregnant workers. At least nine states will have those requirements, up from one at the time of Young's pregnancy.

Federal aid

Rights for pregnant work-

ers may be broader under federal law in the future as well. The Obama administration says a 2008 amendment to the federal disabilities law may give additional protections to women whose pregnancies limit their activities.

The amendment, as interpreted by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, provides protections for workers with temporary disabilities that aren't connected to on-the-job injuries. The change also expands the definition of disability to make clear that an inability to lift, stand or bend is covered.

Because the UPS dispute predated that amendment, Young wasn't able to invoke it in her case, and the Supreme Court didn't consider it.

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act says employers must treat pregnant workers the same as other employees "not so affected but similar in their

ability or inability to work."

Breyer said each of the litigants — UPS, Young and the Obama administration — had misinterpreted that clause. His opinion instead adopted what he said was a familiar approach used by courts with other types of job-discrimination lawsuits.

Discrimination pretext

Breyer said judges should assess an employer's explanation for treating workers differently and determine whether those reasons were a pretext for discrimination.

Breyer said plaintiffs can use "circumstantial proof to rebut an employer's apparently legitimate, nondiscriminatory reasons." He also said employers won't be able to claim that accommodating pregnant workers is too costly or inconvenient.

Breyer told the appeals court to determine whether Young had shown enough evi-

dence of pretext to warrant taking the case to trial.

"The Supreme Court has made clear that federal law mandates employers to accommodate pregnant women on the same terms as everyone else," Carol Robles-Roman, president of the womens-rights group Legal Momentum, said in a statement.

Alito didn't join Breyer's reasoning, writing separately to explain his views.

In dissent, Justice Antonin Scalia said the majority departed from the Pregnancy Discrimination Act's text.

"The court seems to think our task is to craft a policy-driven compromise between the possible readings of the law, like a congressional conference committee reconciling House and Senate versions of a bill," Scalia wrote.

The case is *Young v. UPS*, 12-1226.

Source Code: 20150326fw

Facilities Bond Program: Propositions S and Z

San Diego Unified School District's capital improvements are funded by two General Obligation bond measures — Propositions S and Z. A board-approved phasing plan for bond projects is being implemented by the district's Facilities Planning and Construction Division.

In an effort to provide a quality school in every neighborhood, the district is using Prop. S and Prop. Z funds to repair, renovate and revitalize district schools. Bond projects include classroom technology, safety and security upgrades, Americans with Disabilities Act upgrades, new/renovated facilities for College, Career and Technical Education, temporary classrooms replaced by permanent classrooms, air conditioning, ADA improvements to athletic facilities, turf fields, and other capital improvements at traditional and charter schools throughout the district. By law, capital improvement bond funds cannot be used for teacher or administrative salaries.

All district schools have benefited from the bond program through classroom technology upgrades. The first priority for the Prop. S bond program was to provide 21st century technology that would improve the teaching and learning environment for all students. The five-year phased program provided interactive

classrooms at all schools and individual computing devices for each student. The main components of the classroom suite included: an interactive whiteboard, an audio-visual cabinet, a teacher's presentation station, a wireless voice amplification system, an advanced-model document camera, a classroom DVD player, a netbook or iPad for each student, and a tablet for each teacher.

In addition, several College, Career & Technical Education projects have been completed at high schools throughout the district. Funded by Prop. S and matching funds from the state's Prop. 1D, College, Career & Technical Education Programs integrate core academics with technical and occupational training to prepare students for college and careers.

To learn what improvements are slated for specific schools during the facilities bond program, visit <http://www.sandi.net/page/1913>.

To ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent appropriately, the Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee monitors Prop. S and Z bond expenditures. Annual financial and performance audits will be also performed on Prop. S and Z.

Visit www.sandi.net/page/946 for additional information on San Diego Unified School District.

Submitted by San Diego Unified School District.

Elite Lifestyle Management, the ultimate company perk

When the job conversation gets around to talking about benefits, applicants and employees know to ask about 401(k) plans and health insurance. But what about 5-star perks like fertility benefit programs, childcare or concierge services? Today's savviest companies know that providing high-quality perks can help them recruit and retain the very best employees.

Compensation is a hot topic. According to a 2014 Glassdoor survey, 39 percent of American workers say they don't get paid fairly for their efforts. When that much of the workforce — 42 percent of women surveyed and 34 percent of men — feel they're under-compensated for their work, employee morale and performance suffer. Furthermore, 57 percent of workers surveyed said it's up to employers, rather than the government, to address compensation issues.

Smart companies are taking notice. Employee-focused perks are not exclusive to Fortune 500 companies. Smaller organizations are getting into the game because they know they face stiff competition for the best employees, and keeping great employees is far more cost-efficient than managing turnover. And, of course, perks help to define the corporate culture.

At the family company SC Johnson & Son, more than 12,000 employees have access to a concierge service that will see to it that their chores get done. The Wisconsin-based maker of Pledge and Windex offers an on-site



(Left to right): Toktam Roosta, Michelle St. Clair, Jessica Petrinovich.

employee concierge to handle their daily tasks and chores. Workers can request a concierge to pick up groceries, shop for the best deals on car insurance, interview potential nannies, take a car in for oil changes, wait in line for concert tickets and more. Stress goes way down, productivity and morale go way up.

Elite Lifestyle Management is arguably the most exclusive members-only club in California. From their busy office in Bankers Hill, ELM is a 24-hour concierge that caters exclusively to members and their wide array of requests. ELM memberships range from private memberships, corporate packages being offered as a sustainable loyalty solution for a company's most valuable clients, to ELM Office which is designed as an enviable perk for employees and executive staff.

"ELM Office provides businesses with an unrivaled employee benefit and business advantage. We've

designed these memberships for organizations looking to foster employee retention and establish an enviable company culture," said Michelle St. Clair, founder and CEO. "We work with corporations to better understand the needs of their business and develop a strategic approach that's malleable to their clients' and employee's lifestyle."

Authorized employees or clients will have access to a dedicated team of concierges that will assist them 24 hours a day with requests ranging from reservations to the best restaurant in town to a private tour of the Vatican.

Michelle St. Clair

Founder & CEO

Michelle St. Clair is the founder and CEO of Elite Lifestyle Management. A San Diego native, St. Clair owned and operated an event planning company with a primary focus on corporate events. After identifying a need in the marketplace for a full-service concierge service, she found

ed ELM to the lively attention of the community. She draws on her vast work and personal experience to provide a one-of-a-kind service to her clients.

Jessica Petrinovich

Lifestyle Manager

Jessica Petrinovich is a lifestyle manager at Elite Lifestyle Management. Her role in the company is to provide service and assistance to Club ELM members (ELM's invitation-only private membership) She is a graduate of University of Colorado at Boulder with a degree in communication.

Toktam Roosta

Supplier Relations

Toktam Roosta is a supplier relations manager at Elite Lifestyle Management. Her role is to vet and add contacts to ELM's ever-growing network. Toktam is a graduate of the University of Nicosia, Cyprus, with a degree in travel and tourism. She also holds a degree in psychology from Gilan University.

Submitted by Elite Lifestyle Management.

Tina Howe of Bill Howe Plumbing Heating and Air

It was two years after Bill Howe started his plumbing business in 1980 that Tina Howe arrived from Yorkshire, England, and moved into 974 Thomas Ave., Unit 5, in Pacific Beach. Bill's office was in Unit 9, downstairs.

"I needed a job," Tina said. "He (Bill) was changing out his telephone announcing service. He realized that his customers would be better served speaking with a live person. He hired me as a new secretary and to answer the phones."

Tina worked an old-fashioned phone system with caller-hold buttons. Sometimes, she lost a customer on a call.

"I think I got them with my (English) accent, because they always seemed to call back," she said.

The company was small then, with one truck and two technicians.

After becoming best friends, Tina's chemistry matched Bill's and they married in 1985. She worked another 20 years answering the phones and dispatching before she became the operations manager. She said she is very good at holding people accountable.

The company now has 85 trucks and has had four company moves during its 35-year tenure.

"There are three divisions: plumbing, heating and air conditioning and restoration and flood services," Tina said.

"As Bill's hard-working operations manager, I am very good at holding people accountable," she explained. "Then as now, I lead by example, arriving before anybody else and leaving after everybody else. Of course, now I don't always arrive before everybody else. However, one week a month, I do arrive before everybody else because it is our (themed) 'Challenge Week.' Division meetings start at 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. during that week."

Bill and Tina have a family of four girls. Three of them work in the business.

"It is one of the blessings of a family business, you get to see your children every day," Tina said. "So I get to see my grandchildren often." They also have two grandchildren and another on the way.

The three daughters are Jamie, dispatch manager; Halee, who runs the restoration division and acquired the company contractor's license,



Howe

which includes expertise in emergency water restoration repairs; and Jessica, who helps with the accounts payable and receivables. There is an extended family team that does the hiring. General manager Bill Haus married one of the daughters and has 27 years with the company. Niece, Amber Baynard, has been with the company for 18 years, and heads up human resources.

When asked how the family business works with children on the team, Tina replied, "Bill and I lead by example. Our children are extremely hard working. They set the stage. They are very good listeners. Our children just did not step into their current roles. They had to earn those positions by starting at the bottom, answering the phones to learn the business. They learned their weakness and strengths and today the positions they hold complement their strengths."

The children report to managers and Tina cited one of their learning moments:

"When Jamie first started working with us, we had 'Challenge Week.' On Tuesday everyone had to be here at 7 a.m. and everyone had to be on time. Jamie was late — and because we all lead by example she had to go around to every staff member and apologize because she was late. She was never late again. I am passionate about (discipline) and my children are no exception."

When Tina was asked how she would counsel her younger self knowing what she knows today, she said,

"I know that there was heartache and mistakes. But it is all part of the journey. I married Bill when I was 22 years old, and as a young girl you can't have that knowledge that you have now. Wisdom comes with time. So I wouldn't change anything. I think the mistakes that we made were natural mistakes to grow a business our size."

"I am very proud of the Bill Howe brand and organization. I feel very privileged to be Tina Howe. I love my husband, I love my children. If there was one thing I would do over is that I would have defined Bill's and my role more clearly. A lot of our anguish has been because we treaded on one another's toes. Sometimes an ego can get the better of us. Husband-and-wife businesses should have clearly defined roles with honest communication, minus any ego in the relationship. Neither is better than the other. You are equals. The ultimate goals of the business are the same."

She noted that Bill is the strategic thinker and planner, and wants to make changes. She, however, is good at orchestrating those changes and in this way they complement each other.

"I love being an employer and employing people. I love creating an environment where people can flourish; where they make a great paycheck and support their families. We are a service business. Our assets are our technicians. They are the face of Bill Howe. They are the ones who knock on everyone's doors, 'Good morning! How can I help you today?'"

Tina proudly stated that Bill Howe Plumbing would want to be known as an exceptional employer.

"We want people to stay with us," she said.

Not only do people stay with the company, but they have recommended their families and friends to be employed there. There are several technicians who have recommended their brothers and sisters. There are about five families at Bill Howe Plumbing with extended families working there.

"We actually now have a program where we take people in as laborers," Tina said. "We have plumbing school that we pay for and send them to. We have a very rigid program that we put them through for two years. Two years

as a laborer and four years to get their journeymen license and then they go out on the truck as a skilled technician. Even there we have a hierarchy where they start at the bottom. They are managed closely, because it is very easy to make mistakes out there."

Tina devotes a lot of time and energy to charitable endeavors and makes sure that giving back to the community is a key aspect of Bill Howe Plumbing. The company works with the Food Bank once a month. Company team leaders head up the community outreach.

"Sometimes, it's difficult to get ourselves there on Wednesday night from 6 to 8:30 p.m., but it is so rewarding," she said. "It really helps overall company morale."

The company is also involved with the American Heart Association.

"Right now we have a drawing contest for children 5 to 12, to draw their idea of a healthy heart with a short description of what keeps their heart healthy," she said.

Bill Howe Plumbing is also involved with the Burn Institute, Warrior Foundation Freedom Station, and local sports clubs. The company has a softball team and Tina says she acts as team mom, bringing the snacks and water to the games.

"I knew we would be successful, because we are both hard-working, driven people," she said. "We want more for our children than we had for ourselves. I am sure that was a big driving factor. I wanted my children to go to college. Back then in the '80s, I did not think college was important to run a business, but today with the social media world, you have to be more articulate. Nevertheless, I think if you are intelligent and hardworking you can succeed."

She was asked how she would want people to know about the Bill Howe family business.

"We are honest, ethical, hard-working, and a great employer," Tina said.

Tina is also an avid runner and has completed a marathon on every continent and in more than 25 states. When asked how she would like to be remembered today, she said, "I live life relating to people. I want my kids to say I am a great mom!"

Meredith —

Continued from Page 5

"It's like typical heartland of America, down to earth like having conversations with your neighbor or with your buddy," he said.

At Meredith's 600,000-square-foot headquarters in downtown Des Moines, culinary specialists in 10 kitchens test thousands of recipes. A half-block test garden is used to study new plants and serve as outdoor studios for photographers.

It has successfully extended the Better Homes and Gardens brand beyond magazines and books to nearly 3,000 retail products sold at Walmart stores. The retailer sells just over \$2 billion of BHG branded products a year, Lacy said.

The company has had its struggles. The recession reduced advertising revenue by 15 percent in 2009. There were layoffs. *Country Home* was discontinued as a subscription magazine in March 2009 and last July, *Ladies' Home Journal* was reduced from subscription to newsstand quarterly.

Adapting to the digital age, Meredith has managed to create digital versions of its publications that help drive customers to its magazines.

Twenty of its brands are available as tablet editions. The company generated 7 million digital orders for print magazine subscriptions last year. About a quarter of the company's revenue now comes from digital sources, Lacy said. In 2007 it was 5 percent.

Looking ahead, the company wants to understand the needs of younger women.

"Right now, the only thing we talk about from the marketing perspective is the millennial women, the daughters of the baby boom women who built this business," Lacy said. "We want to make sure that from a life-stage perspective these brands are relevant to her."

Source Code: 20150320ne

Patricia Prado-Olmos



As the youngest of five children growing up in a traditional Latino home in El Monte, Calif., Patricia Prado-Olmos was raised in a supportive and nurturing environment and taught the value of a good education. Throughout her career as an educator and in her current position as vice president of the Division of Community Engagement for California State University San Marcos (CSUSM), she has helped create a similar supportive and nurturing environment for students and the conditions to help them succeed in their educational endeavors.

"My mom's mother (born in Mexico) had always told my mother she could do more and she should get an education. So my mom's goal was to finish high school and make sure her children attended college," Prado-Olmos said. "My (eldest) sister was the first in our family to go to college and so, by the time it came to me, I had a lot of resources, even though I had to figure things out on my own. My mother and my sisters ... we've always been there for each other."

Like each of her three sisters and her brother before her (all of whom have graduate degrees), Prado-Olmos studied at Pomona College, where in 1987, she earned a B.A. in psychology. Six years later, she earned a Ph.D. in educational psychology at UC Santa Bar-

bara. She joined the faculty of CSUSM after a pair of two-year stints at the University of Houston and Pomona College, respectively. She ascended to the vice-presidency in January, having previously served as a faculty member in CSUSM's School of Education, an associate dean, and dean.

"My basic responsibility is to oversee the Division of Community Engagement," Prado-Olmos said. "The division is responsible for nurturing meaningful relationships and building innovative partnerships around the community. Our work includes forging partnerships for student internships and other civic engagement programs as well as supporting faculty as they do research and teach in collaboration with community organizations."

Prado-Olmos attributed the school's community connectivity to Dr. Karen Haynes, CSUSM's president since February 2004.

"(President Haynes) arrived with a very deliberate intent to understand the community that we serve, and to actively connect and engage us with the community. She has done that. This idea of engagement with the community matched very well my own experience in the School of Education," said Prado-Olmos, who said her Division of Community Engagement is unique among all schools in the California State University system.

"In terms of my leadership and what I try to do, I see that my job is to create the conditions and find the resources and support for people to do the work that they are the most talented to do," Prado-Olmos said. "So, with my (associate vice presidents) and the staff here, if someone

comes to me with an idea and it was feasible ... I always try to work to 'Yes, how can we make it possible?' because this is going to support students and the community."

Prado-Olmos is the by-product of her training as a psychologist and her Latino heritage. She said "her story" has helped her connect in various ways with a lot of students, not just Latinas.

"You know, how I approach the world is grounded in my learning and family background. For me, it's all about how people learn and how do people make sense of what's happening around them, reflect on it and then how does that eventually lead to learning?" she explained. "And that kind of perspective is rooted in my identity, as a person who was raised in a somewhat traditional Mexican household, with a particular history and family ties and cultural traditions. So aspects of my identity and how I connect with people are wrapped up all together."

A self-described "science fiction geek," Prado-Olmos observed the parables in various Star Trek episodes and has used them in her teaching.

"There's this one episode ('Turnabout Intruder') where Kirk and a female character switch personalities and they're living in each others' body. And to me, it's a fascinating study of behaviors that are attached to gendered identities," said Prado-Olmos, who is



quite happy with her own identity.

"Cal State San Marcos is a great place to work. It's a wonderful place to get an education," Prado-Olmos said of the educational institution, which this year is celebrating its 25th anniversary. "We have fabulous faculty, caring staff and an administrative team that is authentically concerned with the well-being and the success of the students here."

None of them more so than Patricia Prado-Olmos.

By Tony Lovitt, Special to The Daily Transcript. Lovitt is a freelance writer based in La Jolla.



Sandy Coventry



Clients of Sandy Coventry would probably be surprised to know that she overcame great shyness as a youngster to become the gregarious, helpful and dedicated employee benefits consultant she is today with Wateridge Insurance Services.

Coventry, who joined Wateridge in 2008, has more than 27 years of experience as a specialist in group employee benefits including health, dental, vision, life and disability insurance, as well as 401(k) retirement plans. She arrived in San Diego as a 17-year-old to attend UC San Diego and pursue a law degree. By that time, the New York-born, Australia-bred (her family is Australian) Coventry had already done extensive global travel.

“All that moving around makes you very interested in getting to know people, so you become more outgoing,” Coventry said. “Because if you move around and want to meet new people, the only way to do that is to open your mouth and start talking with people.”

Indeed, “talking with people” is a critical element of Coventry’s job. On a daily basis, she helps her clients navigate through the often-murky and complex waters of a variety of employee-benefit packages.

“We work for employers to do all the employee-benefit research, quoting, implemen-

tation, and servicing of the employee-benefit programs that they offer their employees,” Coventry explained. “So, it’s not just service during and after the sale; it’s throughout the year. My team is completely interacting with our clients and helping them determine what’s the best benefits program to offer their employees and helping them implement that and helping them work with the (selected) insurance company through any kind of service issues they might have during the year.”

According to Coventry, the challenges she and her team face are unique, relative to tailoring a cost-effective employee-benefits package for a particular client. She said Wateridge has clients representing a broad spectrum of industries, including law firms, manufacturers, convenience stores, construction companies, breweries, and engineering and computer software firms.

“For example, right now, we have a client who’s just renewing (their employee-benefits insurance program) and we’ve looked at the market for them and have been able to help the client — through the market research we did, and the analysis and the negotiation with the insurance companies — save over 10 percent on their health insurance compared to their (previous) year,” Coventry said. “So, it’s going to be 10 percent less this year going forward than it was last year, with similar coverage, for a company of about 100 or so employees. That’s really a big bottom-line difference for a company that size.”

As Coventry can surely attest, employee-benefits packages are not “one-size-fits all.” Ad-

ditionally, the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare) further complicated the task for Coventry and her counterparts in the industry. Although she long ago eschewed a law career in favor of a degree in international relations with a minor in Spanish, she jokingly admits the law degree might have come in handy these days.

“It’s a lot more interesting, let’s put it that way,” Coventry said. “I became like an ‘attorney,’ even though I didn’t really plan to be an attorney (laughs) because I had to learn all of the effects of the laws associated with (Obamacare) — how It interacts with the benefit programs that we offer. So, we certainly are very knowledgeable about the law through our professional association membership, because of the fact that it affects our clients so significantly and it has become a big source of concern for clients. So, we’ve spent a lot of time educating clients about it, answering questions, going out to clients and sitting down and going over with them how the law is going to affect them, because every employer has a different situation.”

As a young gymnast, the still-athletic Coventry was influenced by Mary Lou Retton, because she “was so well-liked by people and just exuded strength and leadership in terms of being a great ambassador for the sport of gymnastics.”

Today, Coventry is more than happy to do “mental gymnastics” on behalf of her diverse



mix of clients, in order to achieve for them the employee-benefits package perfectly suited to their respective needs and budgets.

“I think the main thing I’d like to be known for is someone who really goes the extra mile and makes people’s lives easier, like an ‘easy button’ for your health insurance and your employee-benefits package,” Coventry said. “I think the main thing people ought to get from being associated with my team over the years is that they’re able to trust and rely on us and that we’re going to make their life simpler.”

By Tony Lovitt, Special to The Daily Transcript. Lovitt is a freelance writer based in La Jolla.



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Patricia Trauth



As a young girl growing up in Cincinnati, Patricia Trauth developed a deep appreciation of art from her mother, and nature from her maternal grandfather. Today, as principal landscape architect in the San Diego office of AECOM, a global interdisciplinary architecture, engineering and construction firm, she uses her artistic skills by designing public spaces with natural elements for the betterment of the public.

“I didn’t discover landscape architecture until I was in my 20s, but as a child I always found plants fascinating. I have a plant that I’ve had since I was 10 years old,” Trauth said. “I think nature is pretty interesting, how water and sunlight produce plant growth. It’s a very dynamic type of material to design with.

“Landscape architects are educated to be stewards of the land. Our task is to bring nature into development and vice versa — take development and try to sensitively integrate it in with nature, producing cohesive development,” said Trauth, a former art teacher whose career as a landscape architect spans 28 years in San Diego. “It’s very interesting to see how my profession has changed over the last 30 years, and how sustainability has become such an important issue with development.”

Specifically, she says, there are more re-

quirements associated with designing a landscape, particularly with regard to water use. Therefore, public open space has become much more valuable.

“In the past with development, the positive space was the building and the negative space was what was in between the buildings,” said Trauth. “Today, every square foot of outdoor space is highly valued and that’s exciting to see.”

Trauth has a particular affinity for the use of plant material in her designs.

The roundabouts on La Jolla Boulevard and the Coronado City Hall and Community Center are among the many projects bearing Trauth’s landscape architectural signature. Most recently, and for virtually her entire six-year tenure at AECOM, Trauth worked on the expansion of Terminal 2 at San Diego International Airport/Lindbergh Field.

“It was a very exciting project because many of the facilities that I designed are very much indoor/outdoor facilities, and they take advantage of the great climate we have here in San Diego,” said Trauth. “So I was able to design the paving materials as well as the plant material. It was cool to utilize the tensile fabric, the tentlike structures that are reminiscent of the sailboats that are right across Harbor Drive.”

Since the expansion of Terminal 2, Trauth said she has been working on several projects along the north side of the airport.

“The streetscape along Pacific Highway is



“I think women need to, as Sheryl Sandberg would say in her book, ‘Lean In,’ they need to sit at the table.”

going to be redone with a series of mature palm trees along the street, new sidewalks and a new parkway. There will be entry monumentation on either side of Sassafras, which is currently under construction,” Trauth said. “As I go to the airport, it’s exciting to see how

the area has changed with the redevelopment. You’re starting to see pedestrians walking about and I anticipate, in the next year when the rental car center opens, you’ll see a lot more people enjoying the outdoor space.”

Trauth also worked on the expansion of Carlsbad’s McClellan-Palomar Airport. As a member of the South County Economic Development Council, Trauth helped research and write a white paper discussing the feasibility of transforming Brown Field into an “aerotropolis,” an airport as the centerpiece for new development.

A past president of the San Diego Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects, Trauth is highly respected in her profession, though still one of its relatively few females.

“I think we’ve come a long way, but I think that we’ve got a ways to go toward getting more women professionals in the development industry. It’s not just business in general, it’s also women and the way we view themselves,” said Trauth, who said her six sisters have had a profound influence on her life. “I think women need to, as Sheryl Sandberg would say in her book, ‘Lean In,’ they need to sit at the table. Women need to volunteer to do things, take on the tough projects and get comfortable with failing once in a while, not worrying about it and just moving on.”

By Tony Lovitt, Special to The Daily Transcript. Lovitt is a freelance writer based in La Jolla.



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Marie Jebavy



When it comes to being knowledgeable about real estate and having the utmost regard for customer service, Marie Jebavy sets the bar. She is an owner, broker and Realtor for The Real Estate Consultants. She covers all of North County with heavy involvement in Oceanside, where she resides.

“As you can tell, Oceanside is my favorite city,” Jebavy said. “It is just an absolute diamond in the rough.”

Jebavy’s interest in real estate sparked in 1987 when she began working toward obtaining her license. A Wisconsin native, she wanted to break into real estate, but was deterred by the low pricing and extreme weather. Jebavy set her sights on a city with more potential — San Diego.

She gained experience in the real estate markets working for places including Heritage Realty, Prudential and Coldwell Baker. She spent several years learning the business

and managing real estate offices. In 2004, she decided to open her own office, The Real Estate Consultants.

“I wanted to do it for myself,” she said of her desire to take initiative.

In the years leading up to this point, Jebavy had lost her husband as well as a close broker friend to cancer.

“There are things and people that matter in our lives, and things that don’t,” she said of her experience. She was ready to do things her way.

Real Estate Consultants employs 14 agents and manages 87 properties. The firm is planning on a slight expansion to a maximum of about 125 to 150 properties.

“We don’t want to be huge. We want to make sure clients are really well taken care of,” Jebavy said.

Client satisfaction is what is most important to her. She doesn’t want to expand beyond a point where she and her daughter, Jessi, can handle it.

“Between my daughter and me, we can handle it,” she said. “If we got bigger than that I’d have to hire and then I’d have to count on people treating my clients the way I want them to be treated, and that doesn’t always work.”

When clients call Jebavy’s office they know they are going to speak to her or her daughter.

“The only people they are talking to is either me or Jessi. There is no other person they are talking to. It makes them feel very comfortable. Some people who have transferred from other companies will say, ‘Oh, we never know who we’re going to talk to’. My clients always know,” she said.

Jebavy’s dedication to her work and her clients is unparalleled. She is always going to be personally involved. She builds a certain level of trust with clients as they work closely with her.

Jebavy holds many certifications and is involved in several organizations and local government. She is a certified real estate appraiser and registered property manager. She is director of the North San Diego Association of Realtors (she was the president in 2014), Region 29 Assistant Chairwoman for California Association of Realtors, and California Association of Realtors Director. She also won the “Realtor Award of Excellence” in 2003.

She emphasizes the importance of staying involved in the community.

“The more you get involved, the more you learn and what you perceive changes,” she explained. “You learn about how things really work.”

She attends City Council meetings to provide input where she can.

“That’s what getting involved is about, as a



Realtor, is to help city leaders make good decisions when it comes to real estate,” she said.

Once a semester she donates her time as a guest speaker to a group of students taught by her friend, Kevin Burke. She says she really enjoys teaching.

At the end of the day, Jebavy doesn’t have a whole lot of free time. And the time she does have she likes to spend with her family.

“All my extra time goes to my two daughters, four grandchildren (ages 4, 8, 10 and 16), and two really great son-in-laws,” she said.

By Jamie Miller, Special to The Daily Transcript



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Candace Friedman



Whenever you drive past an orange cone or a detour sign in San Diego, they’re very likely the pride and joy of Candace Friedman, who has been providing safety products from her National City company, Acme Safety and Supply, since 1999.

Friedman is not only proud of the barricades, message boards, arrow signs and other products Acme rents and sells, but also of the way she and her 30 employees conduct business with clients throughout the region.

“We find that service is our most valuable item,” the San Diego native said. “People don’t give good service anymore and we specialize in service. There are other woman-owned traffic-safety companies in San Diego. Mine is just the best.”

Friedman has earned the right to sound so confident. About 30 years ago, the Granite Hills grad went to work for a traffic-safety company that wasn’t in the best financial shape. She helped bring structure to the firm’s billing and merchandising operations, and stayed there for 15 years, eventually becoming manager. When the company was bought out by a Los Angeles-based competitor, she was told the new owners didn’t feel a woman should be in management in a male-dominated field.

“They said they would keep me as a front



person but not in management,” she said. “Customers came to me and said they heard about it through the grapevine, and it wasn’t right. Why don’t you go out on your own, they said. So I quit and opened Acme.”

Her reputation helped gain clients, which include Hazard Construction Co., San Diego Airport Authority and G. Scott Asphalt. Networking within the industry brought more clients and events, such as traffic control and all signage for Super Bowl XXXVII in San Diego in 2003. The firm was named most valuable vendor for its work at the event.

Friedman also credits networking, professional and community involvement for helping Acme grow.

“Getting involved in networking was the best thing for me,” she said. “I always tell other

women to get involved — not just become a member of an organization, but get on committees, get involved and meet people. Networking is the key.”

The connections led Acme to conducting traffic control and signage for feeding the poor and homeless on Christmas Eve, as well as events for Habitat for Humanity, St. Madeleine Sophie’s Center, elementary schools jog-a-thons and carnivals, United Way, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Father Joe’s Villages, March of Dimes and Wounded Warrior Project. Friedman also has been a member of a volunteer fire department, and a volunteer for Special Olympics and San Diego Blood Bank.

Professionally, she has served on the board of Associated General Contractors of San Diego (AGCSD), and is current president of the

Women’s Construction Coalition, working in outreach to young professionals and college students to promote jobs in construction and provide guidance on entering the profession. She also is chairperson for construction and commodities for Caltrans District 11, which is developing a mentor protégé program.

Even with all her extracurricular activities, Friedman has managed to expand her site on several acres in National City and add another site in El Centro. Her employees sell, rent, and service barricades, message boards, arrow boards, light towers and other equipment used in road construction. They also carry products such as striping paint, vests, hard hats, safety glasses, first-aid kits and earplugs, and help clients develop traffic-control plans. A custom sign shop at the National City site also creates banners and vehicle graphics.

A single mother of a 24-year-old special-needs daughter and 21-year-old adopted son, Friedman credits the strong work ethic she learned from other women for keeping her focused. She cites as inspiration Diane Keltner, president of Synergy Electric and the first woman president of AGCSD, and her sister Debra Jackson, Director of Finance of a medical device company.

“My first job was at Kentucky Fried Chicken, where I learned customer service, and my first office job was at a real estate appraiser’s office, where I learned research and office skills, and to look for details,” Friedman said.

“I have worked as a dog groomer assistant, rented surfboards at the beach. I enjoyed everything I did and learned from each job I had.”



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Teodora D. Purcell

FRAGOMEN

Even as a young child, Teodora Purcell was a good person to have on your side.

“I had a very strong sense of fairness and was always trying to make things right and fair,” said Purcell, an immigration attorney with the San Diego office of Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy, LLP. “Growing up, I would always defend those kids who don’t necessarily fit in, and found myself advocating for them.”

Born and raised in Bulgaria, where she completed law school, Purcell came to the United States 16 years ago on a scholarship from University of San Diego School of Law, fell in love with the city, and decided to stay. She entered the school’s LLM (Master of Laws) in Comparative Law program designed specifically for foreign-educated attorneys, and after obtaining her degree, passed the California Bar Exam.

An immigrant herself, Purcell started practicing immigration law and later became a Specialist in Immigration and Nationality Law, certified by the State Bar of California, Board of Legal Specialization. “Having gone through the process and because I speak several languages, immigration law was a natural fit for me,” she said. “Immigration is very personal. It allows me to help clients with their issues, and it also lets me make an impact on their lives.”

While at USD, Purcell spent many hours volunteering at Casa Cornelia Law Center, a non-profit legal provider in San Diego, where she was an interpreter, a law clerk and, after graduating, was hired as a staff attorney working with indigent asylum seekers, victims of domestic violence and other human or civil rights violations. She found the work very rewarding, and the experience helped shape her career.

“Sister Ann Durst, who is an attorney, a passionate advocate and founder of Casa Cornelia Law Center, was the first professional who believed in me and gave the opportunity to do real legal work, and to this day, she remains my inspiration and I am forever grateful for her mentorship,” Purcell said.

In 2006, she joined Fragomen, a global immigration firm that serves clients in more than 20 countries and has been recognized as the Corporate Immigration Law Firm of the Year by The International Who’s Who of Business Lawyers (2005-14). But the law wasn’t her first choice.

“As a child, I initially I wanted to become a doctor, but then I realized I couldn’t really deal with human pain,” she said. “So I ended up choosing the legal profession because it also allows me to help people make a difference in their lives, and advocate for those who can’t advocate for themselves.

“I take a lot of pride in my work and always try to do the best for my clients. But I’m especially proud of my pro-bono cases where I’ve helped some very vulnerable clients. One I remember is a special immigrant juvenile status case for a teenage boy from Iraq, whose moth-

er was killed in Iraq, and he fled with his father from the persecution in Iraq. But his father passed away shortly thereafter. This boy ended up with a Navy SEAL who stepped up and became his guardian, and I helped him in what was one of the first cases of its kind in San Diego County. It is a special avenue to get a green card for certain foreign children in the United States who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected and are unable to be reunited with a parent and are found to be dependent on state court. I was fortunate to help him through the process.”

Another highlight of her early career, she said, was the opportunity in her second year of practice to successfully present an oral argument before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on an interesting immigration issue.

Purcell credits her mother, who still lives in Bulgaria, as a major factor in her life. “She undoubtedly influenced me the most personally, and professionally too, because although she is not a lawyer, she always urged me to do my best, be strong, never give up, and be always kind and loving,” Purcell said. “She had three degrees, a political career, and a family with two twin girls at a very young age. By example, she influenced me for my drive and success.”

In 2014, Purcell was voted by her peers as a finalist in immigration law in *The Daily Transcript’s* annual San Diego County Top Attorneys program. She is also the multiple



recipient of the Wiley Manual State Bar of California, and the Casa Cornelia Law Center pro-bono public awards. She and husband Keith, a business owner, live in Scripps Ranch with their daughters, ages 6 and 9, who are “almost bilingual” and love spending their summers in Bulgaria with their grandparents.

Her advice for women who want to be successful in their chosen profession:

“Do your best, believe in yourself, become an expert in your subject matter, be persistent, be creative, and always treat your clients with the highest level of service, professionalism and integrity. Surround yourself with people who support you. Treat everyone with respect and kindness no matter their position.”



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Susan Couch

Bank of America Merrill Lynch

Susan Couch, senior vice president and senior client manager for Bank of America Merrill Lynch, is responsible for developing and maintaining business relationships in San Diego, focusing on companies with revenues from \$5 million to \$50 million. She has also worked on growing and expanding the defense and government contracting industry focus for San Diego. Couch joined Bank of America 24 years ago and her experience allows her to be a comprehensive advisor, enabling her to provide tailored credit and treasury solutions to help meet each client’s goals.

She is a graduate of University of Washington Pacific Coast Banking School, Phoenix Community College with an associate degree in banking and finance, and a LEAD San Diego Honor graduate. She serves on the board of Rancho YMCA, PsychArmor Institute and is active with Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) San Diego, National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA), La Jolla Country Day School, Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center and Teen Volunteers in Action.

Couch has made countless professional, charitable and volunteer connections throughout the years. Her clients and strategic partners are quick to praise her skills and dedication.

Marjorie Morrison is CEO of PsychArmor Institute, a nonprofit that helps employers understand the psychology of military veterans they hire who have PTSD and other service-related conditions.

“Susan was one of my very first board invites,” Morrison said. “I knew without a doubt that she’d be instrumental in helping us get off the ground. Her community influence, coupled

with her ability to effectively network, is absolutely top-notch. She not only uses her connections to introduce us to the top influencers at BofA, but also to executives she knows around San Diego who can benefit from our services. She is currently doing an outstanding job as PsychArmor’s board treasurer.”

Robin S. Ash, CFO of Sentek Global Inc., a network security consulting firm, also acknowledges Couch’s professional and interpersonal skills.

“Sentek and Bank of America have had a banking relationship since 2008,” Ash said. “From the beginning, Susan was involved on a personal level, ensuring that Sentek received the highest-quality services, from credit facilities to daily customer care. Susan is extremely well-connected in the banking industry, the defense and government markets, and the overall San Diego community. In the past eight years, she has been influential in connecting Sentek with strategic relationships that have helped us grow in the defense and cyber communities. She works tirelessly and is very active in maintaining and growing her network to the benefit of her clients.”

John Wallace, CEO/owner of JW Floor Covering Inc. and Resource Floors Inc., said Couch has been integral in the firms’ relationship with Bank of America. “For a company that prides itself on its customer service, it is refreshing to deal with a person who has those same values at heart. She makes promises and delivers every time. We are always confident in the fact that if we need something from Bank of America, no matter how big or small, it takes one phone call to Susan and that request is going to be taken care of. Her professionalism and dependability have helped not only to solidify our relationship with Bank of America, but also to grow our company significantly over the past four years.”

Mark Larsen, director of Cask LLC, a San Diego-headquartered technology-business management firm, credits Couch with positioning the business for a strong financial future.



“Susan first talked to us about our business needs a couple of years ago,” he said. “At the time, we didn’t have any compelling credit needs for additional capital. But about a year ago, we had identified, based on accelerated growth, that we were going to need a better banking partnership. We had been with another bank and it was very difficult to get anything additional out of them, even what we needed to know about how to best position ourselves for growth.

“We started talking to Susan and she was really wonderful with providing the business advisory side of the relationship. She really blew out all the other options and capabilities that anybody else was going to bring to us. We now feel we have all the things in place that are going to help us get from a \$30 million business to a \$100 million business.”

Glenn Arnold, senior managing director of DTZ, a global leader in commercial real estate services for occupiers, tenants and investors, has

worked with Couch for 15 years.

“We’re a referral source for each other, more like a partner,” he said. “She’s very thorough and pulls together a very good team. She has many good clients who absolutely love her. She always asks a lot of good questions and is very good about helping my clients with real estate loans. She qualifies them, talks them through the process.

“Susan is a very hard worker and very focused, a high-level performer. She’s a really solid, very ethical professional who does what’s best for the client. She works for a company that has many competitive products.”

Victor Ramsauer, CPA, president and shareholder of Levitzacks Certified Public Accountants, a large San Diego-based firm, shares clients with Couch in the defense contracting space.

“I have had the pleasure of working with Susan for many years,” he said. “She is highly regarded in the business community. Susan is dedicated to her clients and their success. She is well-respected and has an excellent background in working with the nuances of the defense contracting industry. She focuses on making connections for her clients, peers, prospects and other professionals. Susan listens to her clients and is willing to go the extra mile for them.”

Couch has been the recipient of several awards, including the YWCA Tribute to Women in Industry, one of San Diego’s most prestigious business-recognition awards given to women who have made significant contributions to their industries and communities; *San Diego Business Journal* finalist Women Who Mean Business; plus Bank of America Spirit of Excellence, Leadership, Superstar and Top Gun honors.

She is celebrating 23 years of marriage to her husband, a Financial Advisor, and has two active children. Her son, age 17 attends La Jolla Country Day School and her daughter, 20 is attending University of Alabama. She enjoys bike riding and lives in the Scripps Ranch community of San Diego with her family.



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Susanna P. Starcevic

SUSANNA P. STARCEVIC FIDUCIARY SERVICES
OUR SOLE PROMISE IS TO CONTINUE EARNING YOUR TRUST.

Every time Susanna P. Starcevic takes on a new client, she starts a new journey.

“Every case is different and unique. Each one stems from an individual life. You get to slowly discover that person and how their life unfolded,” said Starcevic, a licensed professional fiduciary practicing in the greater San Diego region. “I run the gamut. I’ve had cases that involved buried treasure and one trust that owned racehorses. There’s always something new.”

A San Diego native, Starcevic’s personal journey included several byways that prepared her for her current career. She was a practicing attorney, a Wall Street stockbroker and an East Village bakery owner until getting involved in her own family’s trust several years ago.

She discovered that the work suited her. Word about her good work reached a friend’s relative with a large trust, who then hired her. More clients soon followed.

“I realized that handling trusts and estates was a perfect confluence of my education, skills and experience,” she said. “My legal, financial and business backgrounds are a big part of it. I’ve started a small business. I’ve done real estate development and property management. And I’m very comfortable in the realm of litigation. A lot of fiduciaries want

nothing to do with litigation, but I don’t have any problem with taking on cases that may be headed to court. While I no longer practice law, I still relish the give and take of litigation.”

Starcevic earned a bachelor’s degree in Visual Arts from the University of California, San Diego, and then a Juris Doctor at Uni-

“If you do something you like to do, you’re going to be good at it and you’re going to be successful.”

versity of San Diego School of Law, where she was a member of the Law Review. After spending her final law school semester on an internship at the U. S. Attorney’s office in New York City, she fell in love with New York and stayed, working in the stock and municipal bonds markets on Wall Street. After 10 years on the East Coast, she was ready to make a change. She returned to San Diego, eventually opening Bread on Market, an artisan bakery near Petco Park that she eventually sold, to the dismay of her regular customers.

She believes the combination of her wide-ranging experiences helps set her apart from other private fiduciaries, who by law are solo practitioners. “I have an assistant/office manager, but it’s just me,” she said. “I think that’s why people hire a fiduciary. It’s a personal, people business. They hire one person to be responsible, and I am the responsible party.

Because so many cases involve families, she likes that she can often help mend fences. “A lot of times, the reason a fiduciary is called in is because there is discord among the family. My most satisfying cases involve when I can navigate that kind of situation, keep the family intact and reach a satisfying resolution.”

But she also relishes non-family assignments around the region. “I love complicated cases. I like one that’s got a lot of different moving parts. Business-oriented, litigation, real estate — I enjoy all of that.”

Starcevic credits several women who have made an impact on her personally and professionally.

“I come from a long line of independent, strong-willed and smart women,” she said. “My mother, grandmother, aunt and sisters have all been a wonderful influence on me. But the person who probably influences me most is my 22-year-old daughter, Paloma.



She’s a real inspiration to me. I’m very heartened about the next generation and how women are creating their own lives from a very young age.

“I think this is a career that is well-suited to women,” she said. “My advice to other women is: Do what you love. I love what I do. I’ve worked as an attorney, in the brokerage field, in real estate, business, and it’s all come together in this perfect job for me. If you do something you like to do, you’re going to be good at it and you’re going to be successful.”



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Carmen Vann Turner

As a young girl interested in architecture and construction, Carmen Vann was fortunate to live in Washington, D.C., an area that provided ample opportunities to get involved in both fields.

“D.C. had a lot of interesting summer programs for young people,” said Vann, now a project executive with the San Diego office of Turner Construction Co. “One that I was involved in, sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, was called ‘Renaissance Rascals,’ where we studied architecture of the Renaissance period by taking advantage of all the cathedrals in the D.C. area.

“From there, I continued on the path of preparing myself for a career in either engineering or architecture. One day I learned about a degree called architectural engineering, and as I pursued that degree, I realized that what I really wanted to focus on was construction management. Every step in my growth as an individual and as a woman has been in or around the idea that I would be in this industry in some way.”

Fortunately for San Diego, Vann’s ambition resulted in her directing construction of some iconic local structures built by Turner Construction. One of her most notable projects was the award-winning \$185 million San Diego Central Library, where she served as the

project executive, leading and managing all construction efforts.

She currently is project executive for the 16-story Sempra Energy headquarters project downtown. Previous recognizable projects include the \$65 million Ten Fifty B apartments, at 23 stories, the tallest affordable-housing high-rise on the West Coast; the \$102 million Hard Rock Hotel; and ongoing modernizations at multiple schools for Grossmont Union High School District.

Vann earned a bachelor’s degree in construction management from North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro. Her first job after graduation was with her uncle’s construction management firm, the Vann Organization in Cherry Hill, N.J., as junior construction engineer. There she conducted scheduling and upfront preconstruction coordination for several assignments in the New York and New Jersey areas, including the Columbia Residence Hall project and Tuttleman Learning Center on the campus of Temple University.

After a year and a half, she pursued her career further in Nashville, Tenn., joining residential construction firm Zaring Homes for two and a half years before deciding to get back into commercial construction. She joined Turner in Nashville in 2000, and transferred to San Diego in 2003. Her responsibilities have included cost estimating, systems analysis, scheduling, phasing plans, value engineering,



constructability reviews, construction planning, procurement and field management. All of her assignments are now in the San Diego region, where she directly supervises 15 to 35 employees.

Since arriving in San Diego, she has made a name for herself in the local construction industry. “Of course, you always have to prove yourself as a woman in this field,” she said. “But my experience has been that San Diego is open and welcomes all people as long as you are willing to put the work in. And so I allow my work product to speak for myself and hope that people see me not through the lens of me being a female or a woman of color, but rather an effective project manager/project executive in my professional life.”

She also has made it a priority to give back to the community and has been recognized

for efforts. She earned the *ENR California* website’s prestigious Top 20 under 40 Award for 2011, *San Diego Metro Magazine’s* Top 40 Under 40 Award and was named among San Diego’s 2011 Women Who Mean Business by the *San Diego Business Journal*. She has also served as an ACE Mentor for high school students for several years and actively participates in Rebuilding Together San Diego. She is the past chairwoman of Associated General Contractors of America Education and Foundations for Success Committee, and serves on the board of the San Diego Architectural Foundation. She is a board member of Mission Gathering Christian Church in North Park, and previously served on the boards of North Park Community Association and the Balboa Park Conservancy.

“I’m on the brink of getting deeply involved with the Girl Scouts of America, San Diego chapter, as a supporter,” she said. “I used to be a Brownie and I’m really looking forward to re-engaging that organization and providing my time and talents in any way possible to promote the advancement of Girl Scouts.

“This is a great profession for women, with so much to offer. It’s no longer just a good-old-boys’ world, and we’re seeing more and more females enter this industry and finding themselves being successful.

“My advice to women who want to enter the field is to find a female mentor who can encourage you, give you advice and coach you to get through those difficult times. More importantly, know yourself and do not let anybody devalue who you are, period.”



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Elizabeth Smith-Chavez



Litigation can be stressful and expensive. Elizabeth Smith-Chavez' passion is resolving disputes before delays and costs of litigation make everyone a loser. In 2014 and in 2015, she was named San Diego's Top Real Estate Conflict Resolution attorney by *San Diego Magazine*. After 37 years of experience in every type of business and real estate dispute, Smith-Chavez knows how emotional and disruptive such disputes can be, and that speedy attention and resolution is critical.

After practicing in a big downtown law firm for over three decades, Smith-Chavez formed her own firm to give her clients the benefit of her years of experience without the costs and overhead of a big law firm. She relocated to East County in 2014 to be close to her La Mesa home and to many of her clients who live in the area (although she continues to practice throughout the County and elsewhere). Smith Chavez Law has been certified as a woman-owned business by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) and the California Public Utilities Commission.

Smith-Chavez literally wrote the book on the subject of real estate litigation. She is the lead author of a 3-volume publication, California Real Property Litigation, and is a former chair of the San Diego County Bar As-

sociation Real Property Section, where she remains on the Executive Committee. She teaches numerous seminars on the subjects of real property, ethics in the practice of law, civil litigation and related fields. She recently returned from Reno where she taught a convention of surveyors about the pitfalls of being an expert witness.

Smith-Chavez jokes that she is a "Valley Girl," growing up in the San Fernando Valley. As soon as she graduated from high school, she headed off to experience the world, at Santa Clara University and a year in Vienna, Austria. "The advantage of having no money was that I was forced to travel to lesser known places, mostly behind the then Iron Curtain where people would literally take me into their homes to find out about the rest of the world." Smith-Chavez even enjoyed a stint teaching English in the Middle East. "Those experiences gave me a deeper understanding into the diversity of world and life views, experiences that help me in dealing with clients, opposing parties, judges and jurors."

After graduating from college, Smith-Chavez went to the University of San Diego, where she was on the law review and graduated first in her class. Since then, she has been active in the legal community — a Master in the American Inns of Court (where a program she presented received a national award for excellence), a Director of the Foothills Bar Association, on the Advisory Committee for the Federal Bar Association, a member of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers and of the San Diego Defense Lawyers, an arbitrator for

the American Arbitration Association, a member of its Construction Industry Advisory Council and an instructor for Advanced Arbitration Training, among other activities.

Recognizing that life does not start and end with the law, Smith-Chavez is an active participant in her community. As a Board member and President of the YWCA for San Diego, she worked hard to support abused women, including the formation of Becky's House. She has been a Board member for the Mercy Hospital Foundation, the Mercy Hospital Auxiliary (where she was President), and the San Diego City College Foundation. She is currently President of the National Association of Women Business Owners — San Diego, as well as an active member of the San Diego Association of Realtors, the Pacific Southwest Association of Realtors, and the East County Chamber of Commerce where she is a member of the Ambassador's Council.

These activities, and her excellence as an attorney, have resulted in numerous awards, including the *San Diego Business Journal* Women Who Mean Business award in the field of law.

The travel bug never left Smith-Chavez, who spent months in remote places such as Mongolia and China with paleontologist



friends, digging up dinosaurs. She is certainly the only attorney in San Diego with dinosaur poop and bones in her office.

Smith Chavez Law specializes in resolving business, real property and probate disputes, as well as most aspects of oil and gas law. Smith-Chavez' practice covers every area of real property disputes, ranging from boundary and construction problems to purchase and sale problems to large "bet the company" lawsuits.



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Jolanta Campion



"It happened by surprise," said Jolanta Campion, director of research for DTZ, upon discussing the inception of her career in commercial real estate. "Up until that moment, I didn't know anything about commercial real estate."

Campion came to Los Angeles from her home in Latvia in 1999. She spent eight years working in high-end retail stores, one of them being Louis Vuitton on Rodeo Drive. After two years in L.A. she moved to Peoria, Ill., where she earned her M.B.A. in business management from Bradley University. She spent two years in Peoria before returning to Southern California, making San Diego her home.

"I felt like a fish in the water," she said of Southern California. "Sometimes you just have the feeling you fit in some places better than others."

It was upon her return that Campion dove into her career in commercial real estate.

"I thought it was very interesting because real estate involved dealing with people — meeting a lot of new people, finance, accounting, market analysis — so it seemed like an interesting industry," she said.

DTZ's real estate services range from agency leasing, tenant representation, and investment and asset management, to research, project and development management, and consulting. As of Jan. 1, DTZ became an international

company with offices in 50 countries, employing upward of 28,000 people. Campion is looking forward to future opportunities for international collaboration.

"I'm excited to get to work with the many other wonderful DTZ offices located around the world," she said. "As a leader of a research team, it's thrilling to have the opportunity to learn more of what our colleagues are doing across the globe in countries like France or China, and discuss their local markets. As a unified company, I think we're all excited at this great opportunity to build new relationships and expand and deepen our knowledge, experiences, and service capabilities."

Campion stresses the importance of providing accurate information.

"My job is kind of separating the noise from what's actually real when it comes to making decisions," she explained. "In our industry, so many people seemingly write articles without hard concrete evidence and support — so it becomes just an opinion, more or less. We spend a great deal of time, energy and resources in researching our internal data, and so we are confident in the figures and analyses we produce."

DTZ has the ability to refer to its internal data when decisions are being made and know the information is supported by extensive research.

Campion has been shaped by several people she considers professional mentors. Some of these mentors include DTZ's current regional managing principal, Daniel Broderick, who taught her to take charge of her life and take responsibility. Past President John Frager always emphasized the importance of training.



"His philosophy was, 'Make sure every 12 months you have something to put on your resume,'" she said.

She also says Rick Reeder, one of the founders of her company, taught her to "work hard and play hard. It's all about the relationships and taking care of your clients, no matter what they ask for."

Professional growth is imperative in Campion's life.

"Training is huge. If you don't train yourself, if you don't educate yourself, you are just yesterday's news," she said.

Campion's drive for self-improvement is apparent, not only in her professional life, but in her personal life as well. She is an avid run-

ner, having completed three marathons (4 hours, 24 minutes), and has been a member of the San Diego Track Club since 2004. In 2012 she signed up for a one-year personal coaching program to push herself to the next level. Included with the enrollment for this program was a ticket to a four-day Anthony Robbins conference titled "Unleash the Power Within." What she didn't know upon enrolling was that she would be participating in a "Fire Walk." The exercise (walking across fire) was intended to teach participants to "take the first step," overcome their fears and do what they have been putting off in their lives and break through. The idea is that you can do anything you set your mind to if you can get past your inner fear.

"I had no idea I would be walking on fire when I arrived at the event on day one. I was scared and was questioning my sanity, but did not want to go home without this experience," Campion said. "I would do it again in a heartbeat because I am no longer afraid. As long as you prepare and do what you have control over, there is no reason to be afraid. Just go for it."

Whether Campion is working, running, spending time with her 9-year-old daughter, Valerie, visiting her family in Latvia, or walking on fire, she is always striving for personal growth. She has been able to learn something from all of her life experiences and apply it to her everyday life. She is constantly challenging herself and every time, it seems, coming out on top.

By Jamie Miller, Special to The Daily Transcript



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Anneke Stender



It doesn't take long when speaking with Anneke Stender, executive vice president of TAG, to notice her deep-seeded passion for her work. "I never come to work thinking, 'Oh, I'm going to work,'" she said. "I love what I do".

Stender came to California in 1997 after she finished high school in her home country, Germany. She was planning to be in San Diego for only nine months, but after six months of San Diego's culture and weather, she fell in love.

"I called my dad and said 'Dad, I think I am going to go to college here,'" and that is exactly what she did. She went so San Diego State University and earned her business finance degree, graduating in 2002 summa cum laude.

"So it's very simple. I've only been with TAG," Stender said of her professional work history.

She had a couple of internships — one at Merill Lynch and another at Smith Barney. Moving forward from her internships, she knew she didn't want to become a stock broker. She looked to her professional mentors at

“We create that peace of mind for our clients. I know that’s why we are successful.”

the time, who told her financial analysis was not really the industry in San Diego. They suggested she go into accounting — learn where the numbers come from, then analyze them.

Robert Scherer founded TAG in 1997, opening a small office in Little Italy consisting of just eight employees, Stender said. She joined the team in January 2003.

"I was doing everything. I was the office manager; the accounting person in-house; worked with clients on a consulting basis as their accountant; I did marketing and HR, which was great," she explained. "It was a perfect job out of college as a business major because I didn't know what I really wanted to do."

She worked as a "chameleon" for two years until she began to assume the role of internal controller. At that point, the company was expanding and she began hiring new people.

As the company was expanding, so were Stender's ideas.

"In 2007, I wrote a business plan and presented it to Rob (Scherer) because I had the idea of starting a family CFO division," she said. "When working with business owners, I realized how unorganized they were on the personal side. As their controller, when I had to renew a line of credit or get a loan for the company, banks generally asked for a personal



financial statement from the owner. It was always very difficult to get that personal financial statement from the owners, so I came up with the idea. You know, what we're doing for these companies, well, individuals need help as well."

The business plan was put into action. In 2008, the family CFO division was born and since its inception has grown 40 percent every year.

Stender became an owner in TAG in 2009. "We've really grown the company together," Stender said. "I've learned everything from Rob. He's always been and will always be my

mentor. We are generally on the same page and work well together as business partners and it's been a great ride."

As executive vice president, Stender oversees the entire outsource accounting division. Her family CFO division services about 110 families with offices in Orange County, Rancho Santa Fe and La Jolla, and the corporate accounting division services about 50 companies in San Diego and Orange County.

"I know we add a lot of value and people see that passion. I think that's why people want to work with us," she said. "We create that peace of mind for our clients. I know that's why we are successful."

In addition to growing a successful business, Stender is an active participant in a few professional associations, including STEP (Society of Trust Real Estate Professionals), Estate Planning Council of San Diego, ProVisors and SDSU Business Alumni Association. Last year she was awarded "Top 20 Women Who Impact San Diego," and is a four-time finalist for "Women Who Mean Business." She was a finalist in the 2015 Women of Influence Award. She also received a nomination to Scripps Health Gift Planning advisory board in January 2015.

When she isn't taking on the business world, winning awards and participating in several professional associations, you can find her at home in Mission Hills with her husband, Steve, and her two children Emma and Ellis. She is active and enjoys running and Pilates.

By Jamie Miller, Special to The Daily Transcript



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Zeldes Haeggquist & Eck

Zeldes Haeggquist & Eck has gone up against some big names, including Apple, Sony and Trump University. The San Diego-based law firm represents employees who are wrongfully terminated, retaliated against, or experience workplace discrimination and harassment. In addition, the firm handles consumer fraud, securities and employment class actions.

Stepping up for people in need is a motivating force for Helen Zeldes, Alreen Haeggquist and Amber Eck.

"At our firm, we share a passion to speak up on behalf of those who don't have a voice," Zeldes said. "As women who live in a democratic country where we can exercise our civil rights, we feel it is a privilege to do so for our clients."

The partners met while working at the nation's largest plaintiff's class-action firm, Robbins Geller Rudman & Dowd LLP ("Robbins Geller," formerly known as "Lerach Coughlin" and "Milberg Weiss"). Zeldes and Haeggquist left to start their new practice in 2008, and Eck joined them in March 2010. The firm has since grown to six attorneys, including one of counsel, and two support staff. In June, the team will move to new offices in the NBC Building downtown. Clients are serviced nationwide depending on practice area, such as consumer class actions and securities. Employment cases are primarily litigated in San Diego.

Clients around the country are thankful they've had the only all-female-partners plaintiffs' law firm in San Diego on their side. Each partner points with pride to particular cases that had positive outcomes.

"When I was in law school at the University of Hawaii, I was a paid intern on a human-rights case on behalf of Burmese refugees. It was a very inspiring case that motivated me to do the kind of work that I do," Zeldes said. At Robbins Geller, Zeldes and Haeggquist worked for many years in the consumer, antitrust and insurance fraud class-action practice group. Zeldes was instrumental in litigating a series of nationwide senior annuities fraud class actions in which Lerach Coughlin was appointed co-lead counsel.

At Robbins Geller, Haeggquist participated and played an instrumental role in the successful prosecution and settlement of numerous antitrust and unfair competition cases.

"Now, I primarily represent employees who have been discriminated against or harassed by their employers," Haeggquist said. "I'm always proud when we obtain a recovery that changes the employee's life, so they can move forward and get past the conduct they unfortunately had to endure."

Eck was a partner for 12 years at Robbins Geller. She litigated many shareholder and derivative class actions, resulting in substantial recoveries for investors, and extensive corporate governance changes.

"I have had the opportunity to stand up for clients' rights in a wide variety of situations," said Eck, "from shareholders harmed by securities fraud, to victims of real estate investing



Helen Zeldes



Alreen Haeggquist



Amber Eck

scams, unethical timeshare practices, or other consumer scams, to employees who have been treated unlawfully and unfairly. It is often challenging, but is extremely rewarding."

The partners credit other women for influencing their decision to pursue legal careers.

"My mom was a very strong and outspoken woman and because of her, it always occurred to me to speak up," Zeldes said. "I come from a family with a background in activism. My grandfather was active in the civil-rights movement and my mom always encouraged us to speak up to injustice."

"My mother also inspired me to stand up," Haeggquist said. "However, it was her passivity — witnessing her failure to stand up when she needed to — that gave me the motivation to stand up for others, ever since I was a young girl."

"I was fortunate to have the support and encouragement of several strong women in my career, from my law school mentor and professor Jane Cohen, to my mom and my aunt, Harvard professor and author Diana Eck, and my colleagues Anita Laing and Mary Blasy," said Eck.

All mothers of children younger than age 11, the partners are active in their profession and the community. Zeldes serves on the advisory board of the Girls Thank Tank, which works on behalf of the homeless community in San Diego.

Haeggquist is a founding board member of GTT, is on the advisory board of GTT, on the board of Consumers Attorneys of San Diego, and is co-chairwoman of its Community Outreach Committee. Eck has been active in the legal community as a member of the Enright and Welsh Inns of Court, and in her local community as a Girl Scout leader, Deacon and GATE District Advisory Council representative.

"We create a really positive environment for ourselves and our employees," Haeggquist said. Zeldes Haeggquist and Eck walk their talk. "We go the extra mile to take care of our employees, host special events for them and encourage our staff to join us in activities that give back to our community."



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