Winners and sponsors of the Business Journal’s CFO/HR Professionals of the Year Awards: (Bottom row, from left) Ann Henzgen of Hydra-Electric Co.; Carolyn Hansen of gish SEIDEN; Stuart Tross of MannKind; Dina Britten of Dina Britten CPA, CFP; Glenn Corey of JH Capital Group; Mark Puleo of Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital; John Kneisel of Simulations Plus; and Jill Smith of California State University – Northridge. (Top row, from left) Dak Gilinsky of the DLC Group; Cindy Randall of gish SEIDEN; Sarina Kaye of the DLC Group; Danone Simpson of Montage Insurance Solutions; and Charles Crumpley, publisher of the Business Journal.
(Not pictured: Mark Partin and Patrick Villanova, both of BlackLine.)

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Welcome to the San Fernando Valley Business Journal’s Chief Financial Officer and Human Resource Professionals of the Year Awards special supplement, in which we celebrate the achievements of our region’s leading stewards of financial and personnel management.

The Business Journal paid homage in person to some of the most accomplished CFOs and HR professionals in the Valley area at an awards luncheon June 13 at the Hilton Woodland Hills hotel.

This is the 11th year that the Business Journal has honored outstanding local CFOs. But this is the first year we added awards to human resource professionals. Their jobs have become more complicated and challenging in recent years – and more important.

From the nominees, we selected 33 finalists. All are among the finest CFOs and HR executives in our region. Thanks to the help of our selection committee, made up of representatives from the DLC Group and Montage Insurance Solutions, we selected nine winners.

Profiles of the winners are on the following pages, along with a list of the finalists.

Of course, I’d like to thank our sponsors for making this possible. The presenting sponsors: CalCPA, California State University – Northridge, the DLC Group and Montage Insurance Solutions. Our gold sponsor is the Century Group.

Thanks to the sponsors and to all others who support the awards event, we are gratified to be able to acknowledge and celebrate some of the top professionals who help drive the economy of the entire Valley area. So to all the terrific CFOs and HR Pros nominated (and listed in this volume), we say thank you and congratulations!

Sincerely,

Charles Crumpley
Editor and Publisher
Congratulations to all of the CFO & HR nominees and winners!

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**CFO OF THE YEAR: LARGE PUBLIC COMPANY**

**MARK PARTIN**
BlackLine

As Chief Financial Officer, Mark Partin ensures BlackLine’s finance organization continues to drive growth, capitalizing on the rising demand worldwide for software solutions that generate greater efficiency, financial governance and risk management across all financial operations. BlackLine is a leading provider of financial automation software solutions that enable continuous accounting, with over 1,800 organizations now using BlackLine’s cloud platform in more than 130 countries.

Prior to taking the fiscal helm at BlackLine, Partin served as CFO at global Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) company Fiberlink Communications, and at Headhunter.net (now Careerbuilder.com), helping lead its IPO.

Partin has experience overseeing finance organizations for high-growth companies. He prepared BlackLine for the company’s October 2016 debut on the Nasdaq Global Select Market and built a “best-in-class” finance organization that has consistently driven growth and leveraged efficiencies. Under his financial stewardship, the company and management team also were recently honored with the “IPO of the Year” award from the Los Angeles Chapter of the Association for Corporate Growth (ACG LA).

Partin brings a broad array of skills to BlackLine’s finance and accounting team from his experience at the several growing companies where he was instrumental in providing the finance vision, strategy and leadership to help the organizations get to the next level. In his 20 years of finance and operations experience, he has managed a successful IPO, completed multiple M&A deals, raised capital in debt and equity markets, and managed shareholder exits.

**CFO OF THE YEAR: SMALL PUBLIC COMPANY**

**JOHN KNEISEL**
Simulations Plus, Inc.

John Kneisel, a CPA since 1982, has over 35 years of experience in Finance and Accounting. He is currently the Chief Financial Officer of Simulations Plus Inc. in Lancaster, where he oversees the financial operations of three divisions that develop and sell software and consulting services mainly to the pharmaceutical industry. He joined Simulations Plus in November 2013 and has helped guide the company through two strategic acquisitions. During this period the company has seen revenue grow from $11 million to over $24 million annually, with a stock price that has increased from $5 per share to over $17. Kneisel also serves as the company’s Director of Human Resources, managing a staffing increase from 30 employees to the current 89.

As a senior corporate officer, Kneisel reports to the chief executive and board of directors and has primary day-to-day responsibility for all financial-related activities of the company including, but not limited to, SEC filings, accounting, finance, forecasting, Sarbanes-Oxley compliance, payroll, and Human Resources. He is an acting 401K fiduciary and helps administer the company’s stock compensation plan. His first year with the company he worked directly with the CEO and the legal team to renegotiate the company’s royalty agreement on its flagship software product. In addition, renegotiation of this agreement has put more than $1.1 million into pretax earnings since signing, as well as setting the company up for even better earnings in the future.
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CFO OF THE YEAR: LARGE PRIVATE COMPANY

GLENN COREY
JH Capital Group

Glenn Corey, CPA, is the Chief Financial Officer of JH Capital Group. Over his more than 30-year career in the financial services and accounting industries, Corey has successfully closed over $1.5 billion in mergers and acquisitions and capital transactions. Corey is a member of the California Board of Accountancy, the American Institute of CPAs, Association of Corporate Growth and the Alliance of Merger & Acquisition Advisors. He began his career at Touche Ross, prior to its merger into Deloitte. Corey received his bachelor's degree in Finance and Accounting from the University of Washington.

Corey is an accomplished strategist and accounting expert who has brought a high level of financial expertise to his responsibilities at JH Capital. He is responsible for integrating the strategic vision and growth initiatives of JH Capital into a financial infrastructure while overseeing all of the company reporting systems. Corey also brings a high level of financial and business acumen, entrepreneurial spirit and expertise in order to optimize EBITDA and build shareholder value. Immediately prior to his arrival at JH Capital in 2013, Corey served as CFO for Consolidated Smart Systems where he oversaw the successful closing of over $1.5 billion in M&A and capital transactions. In addition, Corey managed the start-up, growth, and divestiture of strategic investment entities, including a $50 million EBITDA route servicing business, which sold for $475 million.

CFO OF THE YEAR: SMALL PRIVATE COMPANY

CAROLYN HANSEN
gish SEIDEN LLP

Carolyn Hansen is the Chief Operating Officer at award-winning CPA firm gish SEIDEN LLP in Woodland Hills. With over 30 years of experience, her areas of special expertise spread across accounting, financial analysis, process development, human resources management, employee recruiting, benefits administration, and business/security risk mitigation. After spending 28 years with RBZ LLP (which merged into Aminianin LLP in 2015) as a controller, a firm administrator, and then as director, she then moved on to gish in 2016.

As a chief operating officer, Hansen optimizes processes to drive sustained business growth and success. As a highly analytical leader, she creates solutions that enhance productivity, efficiency and profitability by building environments of collaboration and alignment to centralize information across an organization. She is an innovative problem solver who excels in research, analytics and performance optimization. She is able to integrate information from disparate sources in order to provide solutions that enhance productivity, efficiency, and bottom-line results. As a skilled communicator and trusted advisor, Hansen is committed to building and developing top performing team members; working with all parties – internal and external – to build consensus and partnership in meeting gish SEIDEN’s objectives. Although she has worked for gish for only about two years, her experience is remarkably vast. While working at RBZ, she redesigned internal accounting and billing systems to elevate tracking of performance data across five service lines and 11 niche specialties, managed accounting system conversion to ERP system, formulated comprehensive financial and productivity analytic reports by key categories; among other significant financial achievements.
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HR EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR: LARGE PUBLIC COMPANY

STUART TROSS
MannKind Corp.

Since joining MannKind as its Chief People and Workplace Officer, with responsibilities for Human Resources, Information Technology and West Coast Facilities, Stuart Tross has single-handedly helped rebuild the entire HR organization that spans from Connecticut to California; and helped MannKind hire over 70 percent of its employees in less than 18 months. Tross joined the company during a time of transition, and in his short time there, has helped make numerous impactful changes to enhance the culture and help position the company for growth by ensuring the right people are in place. As MannKind continued to grow, Tross quickly helped recruit a new executive team, comprised of top talent.

Tross has nurtured a culture that has instilled in the employees a passion to help deliver a product and make a difference in the lives of those living with diabetes. MannKind has always encouraged and motivated its employees to be their best and recognize the contributions of others. Tross has helped take that philosophy to a new level. He has also been influential in helping establish a best place to work and transforming the culture at MannKind. He understands the features and amenities that attract and also keep employees excited to work there, and works with all levels of the company, encouraging support, rapport and teamwork that not only attracts new colleagues, but also builds workforce loyalty.

Tross was also instrumental in MannKind’s headquarters relocation. He developed an integrated plan that included all facets of the company and pulled off the move seamlessly, while helping employees understand how it benefited each of them.

HR EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR: LARGE PRIVATE COMPANY

ANN HENZGEN
Hydra-Electric Co.

Ann Henzgen has led a successful career in Human Resources since 1997. Since 2014, she has been working at Hydra-Electric, managing the personnel of a company that has 175 employees. When she began at Hydra, the past leader had passed away and there was much work to be done. Henzgen worked hard, along with the company’s CFO, to organize and clean up the company’s aging facilities by working with and hiring the correct general manager and staff to clean a huge warehouse of chemicals and left-over waste to a recent sale of that building. With safety walk-throughs and assistance-trusted advisors at Montage, Henzgen created a plan and safety committee to get this enormous project done in the building where most of the employees worked.

Having converted the facility to a more pleasurable place to work, the building now has a bright and cheery large kitchen with a wall mural, colorful chairs and vending machines transforming the workplace rest and lunch area into a collaborative and exciting place for employees to enjoy. The staff, worked directly with Henzgen, organizing the entire facility from a weathered shop to a clean, state-of-the-art manufacturing facility. She implemented incentives for the employees (such as taking photos of staffers pitching in to help clean up the facility, which were then published in company newsletters, not to mention dramatic improvements to the employee benefits plans), and each step of the way has played a significant role in the company’s transformative recent success.
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HR EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR: SMALL PRIVATE COMPANY

CINDY RANDALL
gish SEIDEN LLP

Cindy Randall is one of the most dedicated and loyal employees at gish SEIDEN LLP and has shown her whole-hearted devotion throughout the more than 22 years that she has been employed with the firm. At the time she arrived, the firm was “Gish, Seiden, Klinc, & Co.” Randall oversaw the expansive growth of the firm from 25 employees to 37 and counting. Her administrative department has developed to a well-rounded administrative staff of seven. Randall’s efforts at strengthening the gish culture have become one of the firm’s great assets. Alongside overseeing all aspects of Human Resources for the firm and her administrative duties, Randall plans and orchestrates every firm event in and out of the office including fun monthly staff meetings to the exuberant firm retreats.

As the firm administrator, Randall is in charge of recruiting, screening, and hiring new staff for the administrative team. In addition, she handles all payroll, billing, and benefits. She works very closely with the COO and with the Managing Partner in an effort to keep the firm running smoothly and efficiently. She provides steady leadership and shows initiative in making key decisions for the betterment of the firm. She has implemented new benefits and has helped implement the switch to a more user-friendly 401(k) provider. She has also helped upgrade the firm’s Practice Management system and facilitated in making a seamless transition to newer, more efficient software. Furthermore, her colleagues report that Randall is a pleasure to work with and her presence in the workplace truly lightens the overall morale of the gish SEIDEN team.

HR EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR: NON-PROFIT

MARK PULEO
Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital

Mark Puleo is a key member of Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital’s executive leadership team. He is responsible for the coordination of all Human Resource management functions and also oversees all campus security and disaster preparedness programs. He is responsible for labor relations, recruitment/retention, leadership development, benefit programs, compensation plan development, workplace injury reduction and wellness. He has over 25 years of Human Resource experience mostly in acute health care.

Puleo is recognized by his peers as a transformational leader in health care employment and engagement issues. He was brought on board at Henry Mayo at a time when the hospital’s public reputation was poor and employee engagement and morale were low. And that’s probably understating the situation. Since joining Henry Mayo, Puleo has worked tirelessly to raise employee morale and engagement. Employee engagement scores are compiled each year by a third-party firm. There is also strong correlation between high employee engagement and positive patient experience scores. Henry Mayo’s engagement scores have gone from needing improvement when Puleo joined Henry Mayo to well above industry averages today.

Puleo has introduced innovations such as “the daily huddle,” a practice in which department staff members gather at the beginning of a shift to center themselves before the start of their day. He has hired staff members in his department to assist other hospital departments that struggle with engagement scores. He has also implemented a rigorous annual review process to ensure all employees are treated equally and given useful feedback for career development.
PATRICK VILLANOVA
BlackLine

Patrick Villanova, BlackLine’s Principal Accounting Officer, Vice President and Controller, spent over 16 years in PwC’s audit practice before joining BlackLine in 2005. He is a senior financial and accounting operations professional with both public accounting and private industry experience. He also has diversified experience in SEC reporting, internal controls over financial reporting, initial public offerings, 144A and public debt offerings, acquisitions, multi-year budget analysis, pre-IPO Sarbanes-Oxley readiness, and valuation modeling within the software, manufacturing, and retail industries. Villanova has also developed a reputation as having a proven ability to manage large international finance teams and execute within fast-paced, changing business environments to meet client demands.

While not a “rising star” in the traditional sense – he has a wealth of experience and many success stories on his resume – Villanova in recent years has taken his reputation as a financial steward to the next level and his star is certainly on a steady ascent.

As Corporate Controller, Villanova led a multi-national accounting function through the acquisition of Runbook Inc. in August 2016 followed by a successful Initial Public Offering of BlackLine’s common stock in October 2016. He partnered with FP&A on critical cash flow management and forecasting initiatives, the Internal Audit department on enhancing internal controls and accounting processes, as well as Sales & Marketing on demonstrating the practical application of the BlackLine solution to the financial leadership of potential customers.
AT THE EVENT
1 Danone Simpson of Montage, left, and Charles Crumpley of the Business Journal, right, present award to Stuart Tross of MannKind.
2 Dina Britten, representing CalCPA, announces a winner.
3 The awards luncheon was held at the Hilton Woodland Hills on June 13.
4 Kimberly Gibson, Sarina Kaye, James Little, Dak Gilinsky of the DLC Group.
5 Dani Villalobos, Jennifer Jacobs, Madison Garshman, Phil Bruno, Anna Coumans and Sabrina Maharaj, all of Century Group.
6 Jill Smith of CSUN announces a winner.