Christine Ward and Laura Korkolian, center, were among the nominees at the Women in Business Awards luncheon April 26 at the Hilton Woodland Hills hotel. They are with colleagues from New Horizons.
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The San Fernando Valley Business Journal was proud to celebrate and honor the women of outstanding achievement in the Valley business community with the annual Women in Business Awards Reception and Luncheon event at the Hilton Woodland Hills on Wednesday, April 26th, 2017.

Described by attendees as an uplifting and inspirational event, the celebration honored Valley based women who have “led by example” and provided inspirational success stories for the Business Journal year round. These remarkable women were applauded for demonstrating effective business vision and a passionate commitment to positively impacting the world of business, the communities they serve or in many cases, both.

Eighty five nominees were submitted to the San Fernando Valley Business Journal this year. The judges had the unenviable task of narrowing the field down to honorees in eight categories for this year’s big event.

Awards of Recognition were presented to nine women who have truly blazed a path of business excellence for all of us in the Valley area.

It wasn’t easy to select just nine honorees for this year’s awards, so we have also taken the time to single out, for honorable mention, a selection of finalists -- superb examples of women who genuinely lead by example and are all winners in their own right. Each is profiled in these pages.

Many thanks are due to our Presenting Sponsors: California State University Northridge, Dignity Health Northridge Hospital Medical Center and Wells Fargo. Also deserving thanks are our Gold Sponsors: gish SEIDEN LLP, Tharpe & Howell LLP and Valley Community Healthcare.

Congratulations to all the honorees, finalists and nominees!

Charles Crumpley
Editor and Publisher
San Fernando Valley Business Journal
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BUSINESS OWNER OF THE YEAR

SHERYL L. MAZIROW

President
Mazirow Commercial, Inc.

Sheryl Mazirow is the President of Mazirow Commercial, Inc. and has set the gold standard for tenant representation and advisory services. Ms. Mazirow and Mazirow Commercial only represent Tenants to avoid any conflict of interest that is inherent in the commercial real estate industry.

Mazirow holds the coveted Certified Commercial Investment Member designation from the CCIM Institute, which less than 1% of the world’s commercial real estate professionals achieve. Mazirow spent 20 years, as a top producer at a national real estate firm gaining invaluable experience, prior to establishing Mazirow Commercial, Inc. in 2002.

Mazirow’s client rooster represents the most significant business organizations in the San Fernando Valley and the Conejo Valley. Mazirow has led the way in the industry in tenant advisory services and is passionate that tenants must possess the same expertise in the leasing of premises for their business organizations as the landlords. She created Mazirow Commercial to only represent tenants and she has become a leading tenant advocate.

Mazirow becomes part of her clients’ executive team and is a trusted advisor for all real estate matters. The more than 20-year retention of many of her existing clients is a testament to the value she brings to the table for organizations.

Mazirow has insured that facilities are in alignment with each client organization’s growth over the years, while minimizing costs, providing flexibility and insuring the landlords were administering the leases accurately for the tenants. Mazirow mentors professionals within Mazirow Commercial who have gained invaluable experience and are successful in their own right, providing the growth of Mazirow Commercial and the ability for the company to provide services to a wide audience.

CEO OF THE YEAR

THERESE TUCKER

Founder & CEO
BlackLine

2016 was a tremendous year for BlackLine and Therese Tucker, the company’s founder and CEO. On October 28, BlackLine became the first company in Los Angeles funded by venture capital to go public with a female CEO, and the first company based in the San Fernando Valley to go public in 2016. BlackLine had its 10th year of consecutive growth, underscored by being listed on the prestigious Deloitte Technology Fast 500 and the Software 500 for the seventh year in a row, obtaining the #7 spot on the Women President’s Organization 2016 list of the fastest-growing women-owned businesses in the U.S. In 2016, the company grew to over 1,700 clients around the world, and expanded offices into Germany and Singapore, adding to the company’s eight international offices.

Tucker founded and bootstrapped BlackLine in 2001 after retiring from a career where she had advanced to the position of CTO of a major financial services software company. BlackLine was the first cloud-based software focused on back-office automation for Finance & Accounting. By developing software to automate traditionally manual financial close processes, Therese has helped improve the lives of accountants around the world. BlackLine clients, who include Boeing, Costco, eBay, Eurostar, Northrop Grumman and Qantas Airways, rave about how the software has “given them their lives back,” allowing them to spend more time at home with their families, and to focus on more important strategic issues at work.

Tucker built a growing, international company that is firmly based in the San Fernando Valley. The company currently employs over 550 employees worldwide, with 322 of those jobs based in the Valley.
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EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR
RACHEL HOWITT
President & CFO
NAI Capital, Inc.

Rachel Howitt is President and CFO of NAI Capital, Inc., the largest independently held, full-service commercial real estate firm headquartered in Southern California. With over 25 years of experience leading the company, Howitt is responsible for exploring strategic alliances that serve to enhance the scope and breadth of services offered by NAI Capital. Howitt is also on the Leadership Board of NAI Global, which encompasses 6,700 professionals with 375 offices worldwide.

Her business savvy and entrepreneurship haveearned her the coveted distinction of Los Angeles Business Journal’s Executive of the Year and CFO of the Year. Furthermore, she has been honored by NAI as one of the top 50 Los Angeles Power Women in the commercial real estate industry for two consecutive years. Howitt is on the Leadership Board of NAI Global that encompasses 6,700 professionals with 375 offices worldwide.

Howitt earned her B.A. from The University of Massachusetts Amherst, attended the Brown University School of Engineering, and earned an MBA from the UCLA Graduate School of Management while simultaneously working at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory on an unmanned spacecraft project.

Howitt is an enthusiastic supporter of the Navy SEAL Foundation and a member of the Board of Directors of the Ziman School of Real Estate at UCLA. Howitt is on the Leadership Board of NAI Global that encompasses 6,700 professionals with 375 offices worldwide.

Howitt is an enthusiastic supporter of the Navy SEAL Foundation and a member of the Board of Directors of the Ziman School of Real Estate at UCLA. She uses this opportunity to help mentor graduate students in the UCLA Anderson AREA Mentorship Program. She says that the most rewarding aspect of her career is inspiring other women to break the glass ceiling.

She continues to foster the independent entrepreneurial spirit of NAI Capital and grow the company to new heights. Her leadership skills, business acumen, and philanthropic endeavors are an empowering example to women the world over.
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Valley Community Healthcare

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Please contact Judi Rose at: 818.301.6321 or jrose@vchcare.org

Valley Community Healthcare, a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable agency providing a medical home to more than 25,000 low-income men, women, and children in 2016.
NOT-FOR-PROFIT LEADER OF THE YEAR

ARMINE MURADYAN
Vice President, Human Resources
Los Angeles Federal Credit Union

Armine Muradyan brings to the Los Angeles Federal Credit Union an MBA/HR in Human Resources and a diverse array of human resources experience, having worked in HR and strategic business partnerships now for over 18 years. She has extensive knowledge and experience in payroll, employee relations, compensation and benefits, technology, organizational development and hierarchy, legal documentation, executive management and workers compensation and negotiations. She has also been the Vice Chair of the Burbank chapter of PIHRA (Professionals in Human Resources Association) in order to give back to other HR colleagues.

Muradyan’s colleagues report that she is knowledgeable and goal-oriented, and backs up her expertise with enthusiastic initiative. She consistently hits all three HR facets (employer bottom line, employee satisfaction and morale and furthering the mission of her company) on a day-to-day basis.

Right after joining LAFCU, Muradyan was able to save thousands of dollars by leveraging her business relationships with vendors. She was able to add services from vendors to her organization and also find ways to save money at the same time by doing more with less. She has also successfully launched wellness campaigns to drive a “healthy and fit” culture at her organization and hosted a large health fair that received rave reviews from employees.

Furthering LAFCU’s culture and fostering an atmosphere of learning and professional growth is very important to Muradyan. She consistently looks at her team and gives them tangible methods to enhance their career. It’s not just about Muradyan and her role; she looks at everyone’s roles and strives to find ways to make a positive impact in each person’s life.

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LAURA KORKOIAN
Executive Producer
Bunim-Murray Productions

Laura Korkoian is an Emmy-winning producer and director. Her reality television credits include MTV’s The Real World, Starting Over, The Bad Girls Club, and The Simple Life, among many others. After earning her doctorate in clinical psychology, Dr. Korkoian was offered a job as a casting associate at Bunim-Murray Productions. Under the guidance of the production company owners, she grew into learning the mechanics of making television shows and worked her way up from casting to producing.

Her current TV docuseries on A&E, Born this Way, depicts young adults born with Down syndrome who pursue their passions while defying society’s expectations. The show also features loved ones who talk about the joy their sons or daughters bring to their family, and the challenges they face in helping them live as independently as possible. Dr. Korkoian and the Born This Way producing team won the 2016 Emmy Award for Best Unstructured Reality television series for this groundbreaking and memorable program.

Through the critically acclaimed show (shot mostly in the Valley), Dr. Korkoian has also created a vehicle, which speaks to all developmental disability communities well beyond Southern California. As she showcases an atmosphere that sees the “ability” in those who are not so dissimilar from ourselves, Dr. Korkoian is helping to change perceptions. By the very nature of what the show is all about, she has provided employment opportunities in Hollywood, no less, for persons with disabilities. In a timely fashion she is bringing diversity to her industry and into our homes one episode at a time, helping others overcome their challenges both on and off the television screen.
HONOREES

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

CHERI FLEMING
Dealer Principal
Valencia Acura

Cheri and Don Fleming embarked on an entrepreneurial challenge in 1997 when they purchased Valencia Acura at a time when the dealership ranked dead last nationally in sales and customer satisfaction. Infusing a culture of treating customers the way they would want to be treated, the Flemings turned the struggling dealership into one of Acura’s top dealerships in the nation.

Outside the dealership, Cheri Fleming has made her mission to single-handedly better the lives of women and girls on a global level. As president of Soroptimist International of the Americas, she led 28 regions with more than 14,000 members in approximately 1,360 clubs in 19 countries. Fleming also spearheaded the WE Build effort for Habitat for Humanity building homes for military veterans in the heart of Santa Clarita, exceeding goals set in its inaugural effort.

Fleming’s life journey has not been without challenges. She was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis at age 28. She suffered a stroke during surgery to fuse her C1 and C2 with the spine a decade ago and had to learn to walk again. And then this past October, she learned that the previous surgery was failing, making any sudden movements potentially dangerous. She credits the precision of her skilled physicians at Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital, on her ability to survive and recover fully.

In her newest volunteer role, Fleming sits on the Board of Directors of the Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital and is chairing the capital campaign for the new patient tower. So strong is her commitment to the community’s hospital that she and husband Don have also pledged $100,000 to the campaign.

When it comes to employment law, this is not a strategy:
DEBRA L. HAMMOND  
Executive Director, University Student Union  
California State University Northridge

Debra L. Hammond has more than 35 years of experience in higher education and currently serves as the Executive Director of the University Student Union (USU) at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). Among her many achievements is her spearheading the opening of a $60 million Student Recreation Center, as well as a Pride (LGBTQ) Center, a Veterans Resource Center, and a state-of-the-art Oasis, Wellness Center, as part of her areas of responsibilities.

She also serves as a faculty member in the Michael D. Eisner College of Education, where she received the Outstanding Professor of the Year Award in 2012.

She is a member of a number of professional organizations, including the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) where she has served as President and Co-Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee. In 2002, she received the Association’s highest honor, the Butts-Whiting Award for outstanding service to the association and the profession. At CSUN, she served as the Interim Assistant Vice President for Student Life, as a member of the Western Association of Schools & Colleges (WASC) Accreditation Team, and she heads up the Division of Student Affairs program review efforts. She has also conducted program reviews at a number of student unions throughout the country.

For her body of work, the California State University (CSU) selected Debra from among the CSU’s 23 campuses as its outstanding staff member of 2016. It is the highest award presented to an administrator by the CSU. She was recognized for her meritorious commitment and dedication to advance the CSU’s mission, bringing benefit and credit to the CSU, and enhancing the CSU’s excellence in teaching, scholarship and service.
Sylvia W. Allen
Sylvio Productions LLC - the Future

Sylvia W. Allen, a filmmaker, executive producer, and author, owner and CEO of Sylvio Productions LLC, rose upward from a youth spent in Baltimore’s urban core neighborhoods to achieve international recognition at film festivals, book award competitions, and prestigious events. Her accomplishments include the 2013 Indie Film Festival Award of Merit winning for her short-length motion picture “I Want A Man.” A full-length feature-length adaptation of “I Want Man” was a Hot List 100 winner at the 2015 Capital Film Screenplay competition. Allen’s debut novel, “Witness to Love: When Loyalty Kills,” received Honorable Mention at the 2016 New York Book Festival. This novel details not only the gritty reality of living on city streets, but also business dealings conducted on both the street and board room levels, moving its focus beyond Baltimore and the Eastern Seaboard to a tale of global intrigues.

Bita Ardalan
MUG Union Bank, N.A.

Bita Ardalan is Managing Director, Head of Commercial Banking for MUG Union Bank. She is part of the Executive Committee and Decision Making body for MUG PBC Union Bank’s Regional Bank, a voting member of the Regional Bank’s Deal Screening Committee, and as a Regional Bank’s primary liaison to the bank’s Transaction Banking Group, representing all units within the Regional Bank. She oversees a top-caliber team of commercial bankers that deliver products and services in 12 Regional and four satellite offices to middle market clients across California, Oregon and Washington State. Ardalan and her team are responsible for methodically growing MUG Union Bank’s market share in the bank’s West Coast footprint, which includes the San Fernando Valley.

Denise Bean-White
Consortium Media

Dene Bean-White is the president and CEO of Consortium Media, a brand development agency with a 26-year history of enhancing clients’ brand recognition and engagement. Through a results-based, strategic multimedia relations approach, she helps local, regional, national and international clients bolster their bottom lines and break through development goals. She represents a diverse range of clients in the for-profit and non-profit sectors, as well as government agencies. The fabric of Consortium Media culture is woven with a deep commitment to helping non-profits, as Bean-White donates thousands of professional service hours to raise awareness for hunger alleviation, foster care and social justice causes. A sponsor of a transition-age foster foster youth herself, Bean-White also helped shift the language and perception of foster care, as it changes to resource parenting, by helping change the thought process around foster care adoption and debunking myths and misunderstandings about becoming a resource for youth.

Jennifer Berzon
Innovation PR

Jennifer Berzon is a San Fernando Valley native, born & raised in Tarzana. She returned to the Valley after attending law school at USC and practicing civil litigation for 4 years, and started her successful PR & Social Media Marketing agency, Innovation PR, in Sherman Oaks in 2009. Her company specializes in promoting beauty, baby & lifestyle brands, and she and her team have earned clients media attention on top national shows and broad-reaching media. In the last year, Berzon has tripled revenue in her business, secured two multi-million dollar clients, and hired four additional team members.

Despite all of the demands of her busy family life and thriving business, this past year Berzon established Jeneration Academy, an online community for (primarily) female entrepreneurs to share strategies to help them grow their businesses. In the last 12 months since she started this community, the group has grown to over 1,200 entrepreneurs around the world!

Jaye Brooks
Capstone Turbine, Inc.

Jaye Brooks is Chief Financial Officer and Chief Accounting Officer for Capstone Turbine Corporation, the world’s leading producer of low-emission microturbine systems, and publicly traded on the Nasdaq (CPST). Brooks has more than 20 years of diversified strategic financial management experience in the equipment manufacturing, intellec
tual property management services, aerospace and public accounting industries for both public and private companies.

She is a leader in partnering with senior executive teams and Board of Directors to execute tactical and strategic initiatives focused on per
f ormance and operational improvements to increase efficiencies in both high growth and challenged environments. She is a seasoned leader, understanding both operational and customer challenges with the ability to drive employee engagement. Brooks has had suc
cessful leadership roles in finance, accounting, information technology, investor relations, human resources and risk management.

Lori Burnell
Valleym Presbyterian Hospital

Some Chief Nursing Officers prefer to work behind the scenes, instituting policy and changing systems without venturing onto the patient floors or getting into the trenches with their bedside nursing staff. Not Lori Burnell. Despite her numerous academic nursing achievements and an impressive career at some of the largest hospital systems in Southern California, Burnell joined Valley Presbyterian Hospital’s executive team in March 2014 because she wanted to make a difference. As Senior Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer at the San Fernando Valley’s only independent, nonprofit hospital, Burnell oversees more than 700 nurses and nursing administration staff, as well as the rehabilitation staff, clinical education team and outpatient wound care clinics, and manages a $326 million budget. She is using processes, programs and programs to improve patient outcomes and the patient experience. And, she is hardwiring a nursing culture based on evidenced-based practice and compassion, while recruiting new nursing talent.

Tracey Carpen
tier
ACT Holdings, Inc.

Tracey Carperteri currently serves as Chair of the Board of Directors for ACT Holdings, Inc., a leading provider of business process and financial services and business process outsourcing for the education, government, healthcare, consumer and community markets. In this role, Carperteri oversees close to 3000 employees around the country from her Woodland Hills office. She also serves on the Board of Directors for Tailored Label Products, a privately held ISO 9001 certified manufacturer of labels and die cut adhesives.

Carpenter is currently involved in several volunteer and mentor
ing organizations. She serves on the Executive Council for City Scholars, a leadership institute that trains, coaches, mentors, connects and inspires Club of Education non-profits that currently serve over 125,000 low-income youth throughout the Greater Los Angeles region. She also serves on the Board of Soroptimist International of Greater S this is a global volunteer organization working to improve the lives of women and girls through education and economic empowerment.

Elenna Cervantes
Child Care Resource Center

Elenna Cervantes has dedicated her personal and professional time to helping others. From her early years as a community service mentor and mentor and, throughout her career, her one true goal has been to make the world a better place for everyone regardless of age, background or education. To further her life’s mission to support others’ success, she earned her Master’s Degree in Social Work from the University of California, Berkeley.

Cervantes has extensive experience in community education, family services, and nonprofit management with an emphasis on program design, implementa
tion and oversight. She currently leads CCRC’s direct service work, which includes its three core busi
dnesses: Head Start & Early Head Start, Child Care Financial Assistance, and Resource & Referral/ Child Development. In addition to these core programs, she also provides strategic vision and direction for the agency’s Social Enterprise ventures and is responsible for Real Estate & Facilities.

Celina Chavez
Telemundo KVEA

Celina Chavez is the President and General Manager of Telemundo 52 Los Angeles (KVEA), the NBC Universal-owned television station that serves Spanish-language view
ers in the Los Angeles market. Chavez, who brings more than 20 years of local broadcast experience to her role, is responsible for the overall management of the station’s broadcast, sales and digital operations.

Before joining Telemundo 52, Chavez was President and General Manager of Telemundo 44 / WSSN in Chicago for three years and President and General Manager of Telemundo Las Vegas / KBLD and Telemundo Denver / KDEN. Before that, Chavez was Vice President and General Manager of Telemundo KXDA in San Antonio from 2006 to 2008. Prior to joining NBC Universal, Chavez worked at MundoFOX Los Angeles / KFWY in various Sales roles with increasing responsibilities. She began her career at KFWY in 1988 as an Account Executive in the Sales Department.

Adrianna Cruz
U-Frame-It Gallery

Adrianna Cruz’s native roots were born in Cali, Colombia. In 1973 she immigrated to California with her parents and sister. Attending Blessed Sacrament Elementary and Our Lady of Cerrillos High School in Studio City, she was actively involved in a number of activities, including photography. She acquired the entrepreneurial bug while still in high school when she began to work at a small frame shop called “Super Art Mart.” She decided to stay on at the frame shop, where her photography background allowed her to apply her creative side to the framing business. After college, she was given the opportunity to buy the small frame shop in which she had contin
tinued to work since high school. In 1998, with her own savings and a business loan from a local bank, she was able to purchase the shop renaming it “U-Frame-It.” Since then she has grown the business into one of the most successful and customer friendly frame shops in the San Fernando Valley.

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NOMINEES

MICHELLE CURRY
AXA Advisors, LLC

As a financial advisor in the San Fernando Valley and Greater LA area since 2007, Michelle Curry has been serving individuals and businesses owners as a financial planner in the San Fernando Valley and Greater LA area since 2007. While at AXA Advisors, she has spent time as a Divisional Vice President and is currently a member of AXA Advisors’ Elite Producer Group. Curry provides education and planning for wealth accumulation, retirement income planning, family protection, estate planning and long-term care. She also works with employers, planning for their needs such as buy/sell funding, business succession planning and group benefits.

She earned the Certified Financial Planner professional designation in 2010 and has also obtained the Chartered Financial Consultant and Chartered Life Underwriter professional designation. These require a big commitment of studying and exams outside of her regular work schedule. These certifications reflect her ongoing commitment to the industry and her desire to be a reliable source of knowledge for clients and colleagues.

LESLEY ELKAN
Village at Sherman Oaks Business Improvement District

Leslie Elkan is currently serving her second term as President of the non-profit Village at Sherman Oaks Business Improvement District (Village BID). She was instrumental in creating the thriving district in 1999, and has been closely involved in managing its growth and success ever since. As one of a handful of founding board members, Elkan has worked closely with Los Angeles city officials to shepherd the BID from a lackluster area with maddening rents to a bona fide commercial destination with strong rents, very few vacancies, brisk pedestrian traffic.

In the 18 years Elkan has volunteered with the BID, she has also served a stint as a Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Councilwoman and is Co-chair of the Sherman Oaks Beautification Committee, which she helped form in 2007. She has been an annual Big Brother Big Sister volunteer and has spent time as a Divisional Vice President and is currently a member of AXA Advisors’ Elite Producer Group. Curry provides education and planning for wealth accumulation, retirement income planning, family protection, estate planning and long-term care. She also works with employers, planning for their needs such as buy/sell funding, business succession planning and group benefits.

The California Luxury Living Company

LISA ELKAN
Lisa PR

Lisa PR is currently serving as a Managing Director at Lisa PR, a full service public relations firm founded by veteran MarCom professionals, Lisa Elkand, Michelle Curley and Lisa Kalman. Lisa Elkand, Lisa Curley and Lisa Kalman are experts in current and time-tested marketing strategies such as social media marketing, direct marketing, public relations, press interfacing, event planning, advertising, and brand and business development. Lisa Elkand has over ten years experience with prestigious organizations such as Charter Reniker Corporation, Proactive, Minor Palma, Tony Robinson, Los Angeles law firms Feinberg Mindel Bronick & Fries, as well as Russ August & Kabat (preeminent patent law firm). She is an entrepreneur at heart and has written several patents.

Elkan is also a frequent guest speaker on Marketing, PR, Social Media and Business Development. She has spoken for Beverly Hills Bar Association, USC Gould School of Law Alumni, UCLA Anderson School of Business, Sherman Oaks Chamber of Commerce and The Esquire Network, among others.

LISA ELKAN
Lisa PR

Lisa PR is currently serving as a Managing Director at Lisa PR, a full service public relations firm founded by veteran MarCom professionals, Lisa Elkand, Michelle Curley and Lisa Kalman. Lisa Elkand, Lisa Curley and Lisa Kalman are experts in current and time-tested marketing strategies such as social media marketing, direct marketing, public relations, press interfacing, event planning, advertising, and brand and business development. Lisa Elkand has over ten years experience with prestigious organizations such as Charter Reniker Corporation, Proactive, Minor Palma, Tony Robinson, Los Angeles law firms Feinberg Mindel Bronick & Fries, as well as Russ August & Kabat (preeminent patent law firm). She is an entrepreneur at heart and has written several patents.

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NANA DEEB
Deputy Health Northridge Hospital Medical Center

Nana Deeb is the COO of Deputy Health – Northridge Hospital Medical Center. Her experience as a senior executive within Healthcare Administration and her proven expertise in change management have made her a leader in her field. She has regularly provided visionary leadership, strategic insight, and competitive plans during challenging economic periods.

Deeb has a track record of increasing revenues, improving quality and productivity, leading brand differentiation, executing business strategies, and directing turnarounds and transitions in tough markets. At Northridge Hospital her positive leadership style elicits high levels of respect and loyalty from staff. She has been successful in building and empowering productive, quality teams. Deeb also possesses well-honed executive presentation and communication skills, with the ability to connect benefits and value of recommendations to stakeholders’ needs.

KRISTINE DE LA CRUZ
Crème Caramel LA

Kristine De la Cruz is the Executive Director of Crème Caramel LA. She began her career in the food industry in 2010 with the opening of the first Crème Caramel LA location in Los Angeles. Her passion for community service led her to partner with the non-profit in 2013 and to establish the first corporate partnership in 2015. She is dedicated to supporting local non-profits through corporate partnerships and private events.

The Los Angeles Business Journal recently named her one of the 2017 Women in Business Awards in recognition of her contributions to the food and beverage industry. She is also the recipient of the 2017 Mayor’s Business Recognition Award for contributions to the community. Her passion for education drives her efforts towards mentorship and the development of future leaders.

THE DKKD STAFFING TEAM
DKKD Staffing

The DKKD Staffing team is a full-service staffing and recruiting firm focused on providing exceptional talent to Los Angeles' leading employers. We specialize in providing temporary and permanent staffing solutions across all industries. Our team consists of seasoned professionals who have built a reputation for their ability to deliver exceptional results.

The team is highly experienced and dedicated to providing outstanding service to both our clients and candidates. They work closely with clients to understand their needs and develop customized solutions that meet their unique requirements. Their expertise in recruitment and talent management allows them to source, screen and place the best candidates for each role.

In addition, the team is committed to providing an exceptional candidate experience. They work with candidates to understand their career goals and develop a plan to help them achieve their objectives. They provide ongoing support throughout the recruitment process, ensuring that candidates are well-prepared for interviews and have a positive experience.

The DKKD Staffing team is dedicated to providing exceptional talent to Los Angeles' leading employers. They are committed to delivering exceptional service and have built a reputation for delivering results that exceed expectations.
MAY 1, 2017

Toccara Jones

Toccara Jones Intimate Apparel

TOCCARA JONES

cover of Vogue Italy -- quite an awesome plus-size women to grace the cover of a magazine that traditionally features women who are a size 0 to be a supermodel. She listened to her inner voice and turned it into an empire that is flattering. She has been a size 0 to be a supermodel. She has ignored the body-shaming attacks from America's Next Top Model season 3 and turned it into an empire for plus-size and curvy women who need intimate apparel that fits and is flattering. She listened to America and realized that women of all sizes need to feel beautiful and confident.

Tocara Jones has paralyzed her experience from America's Next Top Model season 3 and turned it into an empire for plus-size and curvy women who need intimate apparel that fits and is flattering. She listened to America and realized that women of all sizes need to feel beautiful and confident.

JENNIFER GARCIA

With over 25 years of experience counseling businesses in all aspects of employment law, Karen L. Gubler has earned the reputation for developing proactive and creative strategies to enhance workplace productivity and avoid employment disputes. Gubler co-founded Light-Gabler in 2011. She was instrumental in the firm’s unprecedented growth, helping to build the firm from seven to twenty people and from 287 to over 2,000 clients today. Gubler serves as the employment law expert for over 200 businesses of all sizes and industries, providing counsel to management and conducting training programs for both management and employees. Gubler also performs internal audits of clients’ employment practices to ensure strategic compliance with current laws and regulations, develops and administers workplace compliance training programs for both management and employees, and helps her clients with the myriad of legal challenges they face in today’s business environment.

Ryan Jordan earned a multi-subject teaching credential and Master of Arts in Education from Pepperdine. She began her new career working with children and families as a 1st through 6th grade teacher, nursery, and tutor over 20 years ago. During her years working as a professional nanny for high-profile families, she became known as “The Educated Nanny” because of her positive attitude, background in education, and Midwest work ethic. It was also during that time that she became disillusioned by the lack of integrity many placement agencies possessed. Determined to make a difference, Jordan took a leap of faith and launched Educated Nannies in May of 2013. Educated Nannies is a full-service referral agency that specializes in placing college-educated nannies and Newborn Care Specialists with families. Her goal is to provide top-notch childcare options for families and individual representation for top-notch nannies while strictly following the childcare rules and regulations spelled out by California law.

CARYN KARPEL

Caryn Karpel co-founded Zetroon, a luxury fragrance company, in 2009. She is an experienced perfumer who has worked with numerous celebrity clients and has received numerous awards for her work. She is best known for her eau de parfum and perfume oil. She is a member of the International Federation of the Perfumery and has received numerous awards for her work.

Diane Krehbiel-Delson

Diane Krehbiel-Delson is chief headhunting officer at DKKD Staffing. She has worked in the recruiting business since 2000 and founded DKKD Staffing in 2011 with colleagues from prior employers. DKKD Staffing aligns job seekers with clients who are looking to fill their job openings. Primary roles include executive roles, IT, finance & accounting, HR, recruiters and administrators, staffing contractors and full-time salaried employees across the US. Krehbiel-Delson works with private executive leadership business programs, coaches and mentors on a regular basis to further their education. She is a member of the NACD and has served on the board of directors for various organizations.

NANCY LAZKANI

Nancy Lazkani is the founder of Icon Media Direct in 2000 with a vision to innovate how media is purchased and analyzed, to foster continual growth and success for her clients. With over 10 years of media expertise, she has played a pivotal role in disrupting industry norms for major advertisers and their return on investment. The primary functions of her agency are to secure high-quality media at competitive rates, measure sales and profitability, and optimize campaigns around high-performing, efficient media. Throughout her career, Lazkani has been a passionate advocate for accountability and maximizing return on investment for her clients. Lazkani and her dedicated team have not only managed successful direct response campaigns but have also executed iconic national campaigns including the #1 spending television advertisement in the U.S. with the monumental campaign for FanDuel that rocketed the fantasy sports category to fame.

SHERA GROBSTEIN

Shera Grobstein is the founder and President of Truly Your Parfums, a company dedicated to the creation of premium fragrances for the luxury consumer. The company was born out of a love for fragrances and the desire to give back. Starting Truly Your Parfums has been a way to further her philanthropic efforts by pairing her socially responsible ideals with a childhood passion for fragrances. Truly Your Parfums, and its first scent, Reina, was born. Grobstein works with industry experts, including bottle and package designers, fragrance houses and perfumers to conceive, source, produce and design her products. She continues to work with independent retailers, both locally and across the country, to promote and carry her eau de parfum and perfume oil. Her success has taken Truly Your to New York Fashion Week and the Oscars, and over five percent of proceeds from the company are donated annually to support various charities that empower youth, raise funds for medical research and provide assistance where it is lacking.
JILL LEDERER
Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce

Shortly after selling her tegen local (Dominos Pizza) locations, Jill Lederer, also affectionately known in the community as “the pizza queen,” found herself recruited to be the next CEO of the Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce instead of heading into her planned retirement. As a longtime member and Chair of the Board for this Chamber in 1992, Lederer led the Chamber through key decisions and mentoring new board members for future leadership continuity.

In 2008, Lederer was appointed as President and CEO for the organization and began her next successful endeavor. Some of her initial accomplishments in the role were evaluating Chamber staff and programs focusing attention on membership value, targeting responsible and efficient budget and operational practices and bringing the City of Agoura Hills on board to become its official Chamber in 2012 and rebranding the organization as the Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce.

PATRYCJA MALINOWSKA
The Encounter Group

Psychotherapist Patrycja Malinowska founded The Encounter Group in January 2008. Since that time, she has developed a growing practice, now based in Burbank, which provides compassionate, confidential and highly effective counseling services to individuals, couples and families, primarily in the San Fernando Valley. She specializes in working with clients who are struggling with depression, anxiety, substance abuse, adjustment disorders, personality disorders, self-esteem, body image, family conflicts and bereavement.

Malinowska takes a holistic approach to her practice by helping her clients reframe not only their minds, but also their bodies. She emphasizes exercise and proper nutrition as keys to achieving goals and realizing one’s full potential.

In addition to her work at The Encounter Group, she separately operates Fitness Revolution 180 — a boot camp that offers classes four times a week at the Main Event Gym in Glendale. She also recently became certified as a yoga teacher and leads a Sunday morning class.

DIANNE MCKAY
Mustang Marketing

Upon joining the Mustang Marketing team in 2010, Dianne McKay helped the company attain a consecutive three-year growth rate of 85 percent. She supervises all internal communications and works directly with the management team to maintain Mustang’s stature as the premier marketing firm in Ventura County. She has been extremely successful at retaining and recruiting new clientele to bring Mustang continued success and maintain substantial growth.

While McKay’s business acumen speaks for itself, she has also cultivated a commitment to her lifelong passion for education. She has provided more than 20 years of volunteer service in public education, earning local organizations like the PTA and District Advisory Council, a founding member and past president for the Conejo Schools Foundation, and participating on numerous boards and committees. McKay was also re-elected in 2016 as a trustee for the Ventura County Community College District.

ERICKA MARTINEZ
American Income Life Insurance Company

Ericka Martinez is a senior sales manager at American Income Life Insurance Company. She is a leader in the Valley branch office. Martinez recruits and mentors new agents throughout the San Fernando Valley, Simi Valley, and Santa Clarita Valley region. Diversey experienced, Martinez was a leader in the mortgage industry before moving to the insurance industry. Martinez set a new standard at American Income Life for mentoring new agents. As a sales manager, she monitored dozens of new agents starting their careers in insurance. Martinez connects particularly well with her agents. One example is that she is currently mentoring a young adult who is transitioning from a minimum wage hotel job into the insurance industry. She also works closely with her clients, in particular Latino families in the San Fernando Valley. She works hard to create insurance plans that fully protect families and that are affordable for the long term.

WOMEN BUSINESS AWARDS
MAY 1, 2017

NOMINEES

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WOMEN BUSINESS AWARDS

NOMINEES

JAVE MELAMED-TRIPP
J-4-K Services, Inc.

When Jave Melamed-Tripp established J-4-K Services in 1988, she did what everyone did before the advent of the internet – she pounded the pavement and knocked on doors to find customers. Her persistence and drive helped develop a thriving commercial printing and graphic design business in the heart of North Hollywood’s theatre district over the past 29 years. Melamed-Tripp’s objective has always been to provide clients with the best solutions for their companies’ needs, whether they are a small business or a Fortune 500 firm. Jave-K’s client list includes Tel-Pacific, Warner Brothers, Parsons, The Genii Agency, Volunteers of America, East West Players, L.A. Family Housing and Phoenix House among others. Over the years, Jave-K has developed a reputation for thorough, innovative work in graphic design and print materials.

LAUREL MINTZ
Elevate My Brand

Laurel Mintz’s standard, Going above and beyond for clients is Laurel Mintz’s standard, one she has set for the rest of the Elevate My Brand team as well.

SHAWNA R. MORRIS
Phoenix Houses of California, Inc.

Shawna Morris joined Phoenix House in 2016 as the Senior Vice President and Executive Director of Phoenix House in California. Morris is a creative, strategic, visionary, energetic, and results-oriented healthcare executive with 26 years of experience in a variety of healthcare and behavioral health organizations. Her strengths include strategic planning, operational excellence, driving services and increasing business revenue, talent management and managing change.

TUNISIA OFFRAY
Shepherd’s Door

In 2009, after being laid off due to the economy downturn, seasoned professional Tunisia Offray decided to leave corporate America to venture into a successful career as an entrepreneur. She has found that being a business owner has afforded her the flexibility she needed to balance her family and career life. As well as being a business owner for 15 years, Offray has taken on the challenge of following her passion, which is helping others through teaching, motivating and inspiring families who have experienced domestic violence. Offray is a certified Domestic Violence Counselor in which she received her certification and training through the accredited Project Peace Makers at the 77th District police station in Los Angeles. She is currently the program director of Shepherd’s Door Domestic Violence Resource Center where she does Youth Violence Prevention Education in the high schools and community.

DANA PICORE
Picore International

Led by Dana Picore, J.D., a former LAPD officer, Picore International provides security services staffed by armed, unarmed and off-duty law enforcement officers for A-list celebrities, mobile carriers, educational institutions, museums, financial institutions, hotels, retailers, office buildings, private residences, executives and large-scale special events. Picore International is making a name for itself in what has long been considered a predominantly male-oriented field. Taking an “out of the box” approach to modern-day security needs and requirements of the public and private sector, Dr. Picore and her team offer the same quality and professionalism expected from large-scale security companies, delivered with a personalized, client-centered approach achievable through a boutique-style security firm. Under Dr. Picore’s stewardship, Picore International provides fully integrated security solutions for companies of all sizes, leveraging a workforce that is as diverse as its clientele.

ROSE PONDEL
Pondel Law/The Family Formation Law Center

Rose Kesten Pondel, founder of the Family Formation Law Center, is a California licensed attorney. Her focus is on family formation and reproductive matters including surrogacy, egg donation, sperm donation, parenting plans, family estate planning and mediation. She is recognized as one of the top surrogacy lawyers in California and regularly speaks to physicians groups, attorneys and fertility patients regarding the state of surrogacy law in California and how to effect the options of assisted reproduction that are available to her clients.

TONI RICCI
Elite Dance and Performing Arts Center

Toni Ricci has been studying dance for almost 30 years. Today, she owns and operates a massive dance studio, the Elite Dance and Performing Arts Center in Woodland Hills. She got her start in Maine where, after her first recital, she fell in love with the world of dance. In her dance career, Ricci has toured the United States, performed on Broadway, and made numerous television appearances. She also studied ballet with the Anaheim Ballet and has taught at numerous dance schools in the area. Throughout her life, Ricci has been awarded numerous dance scholarships and awards and is a proud member of Dance Masters of America. Last year, she was awarded Entrepreneur of the Year for Southern California by the California Senate. Ricci has taught and inspired hundreds of students in southern California in the past decade. The Elite Dance Center is a testimony to her love dance. As she says herself, “My job isn’t just to teach dance, it’s to teach students to love to dance.”

ALOYLYNN SPERBER
Marketing Maven Public Relations

Aloylynn Sperber is a seasoned, bicoastal office set-up and clients throughout the world in various time zones. She was recently promoted to this role due to her client strategy, strong campaign analytics skills, deep knowledge across every service offered and her ability to manage staff. She is a trailblazer, encouraging me to start a social media division years ago, which led to significant company growth by being ahead of the curve. Sperber has always been in the know when it comes to social media trends and it has served Marketing Maven’s clients well. Her ability to use promotions and social media advertising and her execution of social media initiatives have led to increased sales for clients and top trending topics on Twitter. She has also assisted clients such as a major beverage distributor to identify their key influencers to help build online brand awareness among the Hispanic community.

CARRIE NEBENS
Equa Staffing

Carrine Nebens is a 25-year staffing industry veteran, including 10 years running Equa Staffing, which she founded in 2007. She previously served as the EVP for North American Operations for On Assignment. She was part of the management team that took the company public in 1992 and was responsible for $180 million out of $200 million in revenue before moving on to start her own firm, Equa Staffing. Under her leadership, Equa has experienced impressive growth. She is adept at creating and fostering a customer focused, highly accountable, results based business culture. Equa has also been named one of the San Fernando Valley’s top staffing agencies for the past nine years through the San Fernando Valley Business Journal.

DANONE SIMPSON
Montage Insurance Solutions

Danne Simpson is the President and CEO of Montage Insurance Solutions with over eighteen years of experience in all lines of insurance. She has built an agency focused on employee benefit and property & casualty programs for the commercial and non-profit sectors. Under Simpson’s leadership, the firm has partnered with over 100 carriers in order to find the perfect insurance solutions for their clients. Her company utilizes Human Resources tools, consulting, wellness campaigns, health fairs and safety initiatives to reduce premium and employee costs. These programs have proven to be effective in retaining and improving the health and safety of employers. These client events and services are unparalleled in the industry. Simpson understands the challenges of the Human Resources Professional and has established My HR Summit – a leadership series to educate HR Departments in the ever-changing world of legal compliance and employee management.

LAURIE ARudder
Elevate My Brand

Laurel Mintz
Elevate My Brand

Shawna Morris
Phoenix Houses of California, Inc.

Rose Kesten Pondel
Pondel Law/The Family Formation Law Center

Toni Ricci
Elite Dance and Performing Arts Center

Danne Simpson
Montage Insurance Solutions
State Senator Steve Knight established a liaison with various services to the 38th Assembly District. Since 2011 he has gained experience with the developmentally disabled northeast San Fernando Valley. His administration (SBA) liaison for the San Fernando Valley Health care field. He led the $4 million capital campaign that funded the new center and recruited new corporate partners and donors to increase the design, opening and operations of the North Hills Wellness Center. The team’s continued efforts increased the agency’s budget from $15,446,000 to $20,301,000, solidified fiscal sustainability, and added 114 new staff positions to better serve the 25,000 patients who now depend on VCH for primary care.

**NOMINATES**

**SIM TANG-PARADIS**
City National Bank

Sim Tang-Paradis is vice president and branch manager of the Newhall and Canyon Country offices of City National Bank. Tang-Paradis oversees the delivery of the bank’s full range of financial products and services, including commercial, consumer, and real estate loans, cash management services, deposits, international banking services, and foreign exchange for both Ventura County branches. She also manages the online customer service and business development efforts. In addition, Tang-Paradis is the Small Business Administration (SBA) liaison for the 13 branches of City National Bank from Universal City to Ventura.

A banker for more than twenty years, Tang-Paradis throughout her career has been committed to helping minority and women-owned businesses in Southern California thrive. She is also a leader in the local business community, dedicated to serving her community in every way she can.

**CHRISTINE WARD**
California State Representative Steve Knight (D-25)

Christine Ward has an 18-year history in health care services. She was office administrator for the late California State Assemblymember, Keith H. Richman MD, when he served as General Practitioner (and internist) with a large medical practice serving the northeast San Fernando Valley. Ward gained experience with the developmentally disabled due to personal experiences with her association with Tems Del Sol and the San Valley Child Care Center.

Since joining the California legislature in 2000, Ward has been a director of community services to the 38th Assembly District, 485,000 residents in the San Fernando, Sun Valleys and Santa Clarita. She has been re-elected by community organizations and politicians for advocating for exceptional solutions to constituent complaints. She has established liaison with various state agencies, which allow her to address and resolve a variety of issues for constituents. She currently represents California State Senator Steve Knight (D-25).

**NORMA WARD**
Santa Clarita Arts Association

Norma Ward is an accomplished fine art photographer of the Santa Clarita Valley area. Upon retiring in SCV in 2011 she joined the Santa Clarita Arts Association as a member and has served as the board president for the past two years. The mission of the SCAA is to promote art in the Santa Clarita Valley by “Making Visual Art Viable.”

During the two-year Ward has served as president of the SCA she has most notably been at the forefront of receiving two grants from the city of Santa Clarita, which has allowed for the SCAA to open their own gallery in Newhall. The gallery has been a great opportunity to showcase local artists in their own community. Warden and the SCAA team perform a held art exhibits throughout the year.

**PANNEY WEI**
See the Way Consulting

Panney Wei is an award-winning TV/Radio host, hypnotherapist, and motivational speaker on the power of the mind and achieving one’s potential, inspiring people to break through negative patterns, overcome obstacles, and achieve their dreams in their personal and professional lives. She is also the CEO of See the Way Consulting, giving individuals the tools, solutions and wisdom – both personally and professionally – to overcome life’s obstacles, achieve a mission or purpose, and manifest the life of their dreams.

She is also the host of “See the Way with Panney Wei,” featured on her website, www.panneywei.com and iTunes for weekly doses of inspiration, positive messages, and interviews with some of the brightest minds in entertainment, business, and thought-leaders in the world.

**GLORIA L. WILLIAMS**
Footnanny, Inc.

Gloria L. Williams is the founder and CEO of Footnanny, Inc. She is a licensed nail technician, spa consultant, and certified reflexologist (not to mention the personal pedicurist for Oprah). Williams’ Footnanny cream made the Oprah’s Favorite Things list.

Williams’ journey to bringing a philanthropist has taken her to help women all over the world through Kiva, an international non-profit, founded in 2005 and based in San Francisco. With a mission to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty. From there, she has partnered with Sole4Souls, a non-profit that creates sustainable jobs and provides relief through the distribution of shoes and clothing around the world. The company has distributed more than 30 million pairs of shoes in 127 countries and all 50 U.S. states.

**BOB WEINBERG**
Pacific Coffee

Bob Weinberg is the co-founder of Pacific Coffee, a coffee company with stores in all 50 US states. In 1994, Bob was employed by Kiva, an international non-profit that creates sustainable jobs and provides relief through the distribution of shoes and clothing around the world. The company has distributed more than 30 million pairs of shoes in 127 countries and all 50 U.S. states.

**CARRIE OGAWA WONG**
White Lotus Kang Fu

A 2005 inductee into the Martial Arts History Museum Hall of Fame, Sifu Carrie Ogawa Wong is a world renowned martial artist, author, instructor, and competitor. She has managed to balance her heavy schedule to enjoy her love for the martial arts and her family. Her credits include training videos, TV and film roles, live performances, and several feature articles in Inside Kang Fu. With her husband, Master Douglas Wong, Sifu Carrie has trained actors such as Jason Scott Lee, Kevin Sorbo, Lucy Lawless, and Ryan Gosling.

Wong teaches Children’s Kang Fu, Adult Kang Fu, Tai Chi Chuan, and private classes six days a week. She also volunteers her time and teaches Tai Chi twice a week at the Nikkei Senior Gardens.

**TIA ALESE WONG**
Tia Ales W (Blog)

With an already broad writing, music and performance work life, Tia Ales Wong is quickly becoming a Supervision Producer for TeenNick Top 15, a music video countdown show hosted by Nick Cannon that is finishing its 7th season on air, it’s a wonder that Tia Ales Wong is able to keep up with her popular and active social media style blog, “Tia Ales Wong.” By day she is an entertainment industry talent manager and television producer with a history in the fashion industry. But by night she maintains her popular and lifestyle blog that she packs with photos and information she generates herself.

Wong is a self-proclaimed social media being who draws inspiration from her moods and surroundings. Her blog is as much about as she is and full of great outfit and beauty posts that we can all take inspiration from.