Business Leaders of Color
Chicago United 2015

Chicago United
ADVANCING MULTIRACIAL LEADERSHIP
We are pleased to introduce the 2015 Chicago United Business Leaders of Color. These 50 remarkable men and women drive global competitiveness through demonstrated, effective leadership. They lead large scale operations domestically and internationally. They cultivate innovation, motivate others within their organizations and within their spheres of influence, and direct transformational change that positively impacts the bottom lines of their respective organizations.

The leaders featured in this publication should be considered for corporate board directorships due to the diversity in perspective, broad range of professional experience, and proven track records of success they each uniquely offer the greater business community.

Human capital and innovation remain at the top the list of business challenges, not only here in the United States, but globally. One untapped resource that addresses both of these issues is diversity. According to a recently published McKinsey & Company report titled Diversity Matters, it is 35 percent more likely companies with ethnically diverse leadership will outperform those that are less diverse. The study found companies in the top quartile for racially and ethnically diverse leadership are 35 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry median. Particularly, in the United States, the study found a linear relationship between diverse leadership and better financial performance: for every 10 percent increase in racial and ethnic diversity on the senior-executive team, earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) rise 0.8 percent.

Chicago United presents this impressive group to the public as well as nominating committees and search executives who seek the benefits diversity delivers to corporate boards. We are proud to showcase them as candidates who are ready and able to add significant value to Fortune 1,000 enterprises.

Through its Business Leaders of Color publications, Chicago United is proud to have featured nearly 320 board ready candidates biennially since 2003. During this time, these men and women have already rendered service in over 200 corporate directorships. It is a remarkable record, and one worthy of further increase.

Please join Chicago United in applauding the transformational leaders profiled in the following pages.

Sincerely,

Mark Furlong
Retired President & Chief Executive Officer
BMO Harris Bank, N.A.
Chairman, Chicago United

Gloria Castillo
President & Chief Executive Officer
Chicago United
We have tremendous appreciation for the members of Chicago United and the Chicago business community who provided nominations of exceptional individuals for recognition in this publication. Special thanks to George Mui for his extraordinary ongoing efforts to nominate candidates for consideration.

We thank Northern Trust for hosting the introduction of the 2015 Business Leaders of Color. We express our gratitude to Crain’s Chicago Business for their extraordinary contribution of the distribution of the publication.

The following Chicago locations agreed to serve as a backdrop for our photography and we are appreciative of their hospitality:

- Adler Planetarium (35)
- Art Institute of Chicago (17, 37)
- Chicago Architecture Foundation (51)
- Chicago Botanic Garden (34, 39, 47)
- The Chicago Zoological Society (12, 26)
- Maggie Daley Park (9, 33)
- Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (15)

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**PLEASE RECOGNIZE THE CHICAGO UNITED LEADERS COUNCIL** for their extraordinary efforts to introduce another stellar group of talent through this 2015 Business Leaders of Color publication. Their thoughtfulness and insight at identifying and selecting 50 best-in-class executives through the five levels of review performed by the Nominating, Screening, Rating, Balancing, and Final CEO Review Committees provided the fairest and most effective process. I commend everyone on the committees who made it possible for Chicago United to present this important publication. Their dedication, ability to reach into their networks, and resolve have yielded a valuable resource for corporate boards and executive search firms.

Billy Dexter  
Partner, Heidrick & Struggles  
2015 Business Leaders of Color Committee Chair
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D’Andrea M. Anderson
Executive Director, J.P. Morgan Securities

“If opportunity doesn’t knock, you need to build the door for yourself”

D’Andrea Anderson is someone who has confidence in the face of the unknown. When she accepted a part-time position at First Chicago Capital Market at age 17, she didn’t know what a Fixed Income Support Team was, but she had confidence in her skills and ability to take on new challenges.

“I quadrupled my net worth by raising my hand and saying I’ll try it. I don’t know much about it, but I’m pretty sure I can learn it.”

Over the course of her career as a leader in financial management, Anderson has been able to transfer that same confidence to the teams around her. “You need the power of influence to convince people that it really is okay to let go of what you did that made us successful yesterday and to adapt to what is coming towards us tomorrow.”

In her current role as the executive director of corporate and investment bank documentation management at J.P. Morgan, Anderson is responsible for the documentation functions for businesses throughout the Wholesale Bank as well as supporting the Private Bank.

Additionally, she is responsible for partnering with peers to implement a common operating model for the end-to-end life cycle of client documentation across corporate and investment banking in the Americas, Europe, and Asia.

All this requires significant coordination as she works with teams across a large organization. Through collaboration with her diverse teams, she is able to help the organization visualize new concepts and create new platforms to build on for the future.

One of Anderson’s passions is helping others achieve. Whether it’s seeing a former intern advance to vice president, building a succession plan for corporate leadership, or leveraging the resources of J.P. Morgan to help the Posse Foundation students she mentors succeed in college and in their careers, Anderson is inspired by watching others grow.

“Of all the things that make me the most proud, it’s really utilizing the resources and assets of our massive organization to benefit the community.”

• Board director; Finance Committee, Just The Beginning Foundation (since 2013)
• Former Board director; treasurer, Chicago United Futbol Club (2010)
• Advisory Board member for The Posse Foundation Leadership Council, The Ancona School, and Year Up
• Other involvements include Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Chicago Chapter, Junior Achievement, Chicago Cares, and Salvation Army Evangeline Booth Lodge
• Member of National Association of Securities Professionals and Economic Club of Chicago
• Anderson is a financial expert as defined by SEC guidelines, FINRA Series 7 & 63
From his position as a global executive responsible for a $28 billion supply chain budget and $3 billion in development for McDonald’s corporation, Jose Armario has a truly worldwide perspective on business.

Quite a difference from the first time he worked for McDonald’s and was fired after three months. “At 14, I didn’t think about the consequences of my actions or inactions. The embarrassment my dismissal caused my mother and her reaction when she came to pick me up, that moment changed me forever. I realized work is a serious responsibility. If you have a job to do, you should go in and do it the very best you can.”

This shift in perspective gave Armario the work ethic that led him to take opportunities all over the world. Relocating his family was often a difficult process, but at the same time, it gave him the opportunity to learn about other cultures and lifestyles, experiences that serve him well working for McDonald’s. From vantage points in Japan, Russia, and Puerto Rico, Armario understands, “We do our best to ingrain ourselves into local society. We happen to be a global brand with a lot of local relevance.” Responsibility takes many forms when it comes to Armario’s career. As the leader of franchising strategy, he continually strives to enhance diversity among the company’s franchisees and suppliers to ensure the communities McDonald’s serves are represented within the organization.

As the manager of a global supply chain, he believes the more you know about your customer and address their specific needs and desires; the more likely you are to succeed. “Our customers are telling us that they want to know where their food comes from, who’s made it, and that they were treated right.”

The McDonald’s supply chain team considers a number of things, from animal health and welfare to higher workplace accountability and sustainability, when evaluating its success. Armario explains, “We rely heavily on the great people that we have working in each market to understand our consumers, so that we’re providing the right products and services to be successful. I like to think that the work we do results in everyone being better positioned.”

“\textbf{I’ve never even considered walking away from a challenge. I see challenges as opportunities to better understand the customer, the investor, and the employees.}”

Jose Armario

\textbf{Corporate Executive Vice President – Global Supply Chain, Development, and Franchising, McDonald’s Corporation}

- Board director; Audit, Compensation and Organization Committees, USG Corporation (since 2007) and Board director; Corporate Program and Strategy Program Committees, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (since 2007)
- Member of the President’s Council of the University of Miami, Florida (since 2004) and serves as an advisor to the supply chain management graduate program at Loyola University Chicago
- Armario previously served as group president of McDonald’s Canada and Latin America, in addition to overseeing international franchising simultaneously. He has held numerous management positions, including president of McDonald’s Latin America, international relationship partner for Latin America and president of McDonald’s Chile. He also served as president of Ronald McDonald House Charities Chile and Latin America (1997 – 2007)
“A successful leader has to be able to convene and bring others into the fold to carry out the work. No leader succeeds on his or her own.”

Dr. Patricia Arredondo’s leadership in both the business and the academic world was inspired by her heritage and concern for social justice. “In high school, I took on leadership roles because I was driven by knowing there were no Mexican-Americans in leadership at the school. Demonstrating that women, women of color, Latinos, and Latinas can deliver has been a motivator throughout my career in different sectors.”

After beginning her career as a professor, Dr. Arredondo created her own space in the corporate world. She spent 13 years running her own consulting firm, Empowerment Workshops, Inc., focused on spurring organizational growth and change by fostering diversity in the workplace. The business provided a way to help others actively combat the exclusion and marginalization she observed in her early years growing up in an immigrant community in Lorain, Ohio. “All of my work has really been about a strength-based approach to valuing people and helping them to be successful.”

In 1999, Dr. Arredondo returned to academia as a tenured associate professor at Arizona State University, but soon shifted to more administrative roles that allowed her to interact more fully with students and the community around the university. “It’s important not to be in an ivory tower and to understand not only how the work of higher education benefits community groups, but, also, how we can learn from community groups.” She continued on the administrative path as associate vice chancellor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and as president of The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, while maintaining active involvement in nonprofits addressing human services issues.

Dr. Arredondo is extensively published in the areas of multicultural competency development, immigrant issues in counseling, counseling with Latinas/Latinos, women’s leadership, and organizational diversity. She has also authored more than 100 referred journal articles, book chapters, and training videos, and is regularly invited for keynote addresses nationally and internationally. Her most recent book, *Culturally Responsive Counseling for Latinas/os* was published in 2014 by the American Counseling Association (ACA) Press.

Currently, Dr. Arredondo is co-principal investigator on a three-year training grant from the National Science Foundation, which advances women of color in the STEM fields to administrative opportunities at historically Black colleges and universities and tribal colleges.

- Served as founding president of the National Latina/o Psychological and president of the American Counseling Association (ACA), the American Psychological Association Division 45 - Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, and the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development of the ACA
- Civic leadership roles included president of the Board of Family and Children’s Services in Boston, Board director of the Diversity Leadership Committee for the City of Phoenix, and vice-chairwoman of the Social Development Commission for Milwaukee County
- Awards include Distinguished Madrina Recognition from the National Latina/o Psychological Association (2014), Henry Tomes Award for Distinguished Lifetime Contributions to the Advancement of Ethnic Minority Psychology, American Psychological Association (2013), and Lifetime Achievement Award, Division 45 of the American Psychological Association (2009)
Since her career in nursing, Cynthia Barginere has embraced caring for others and building relationships as part of the job. However, she never considered taking on a leadership position until a friend suggested that being in management was a way to change things for others. She says that taking that leap “was really born out of wanting to see people enjoy what they do, especially because what we do is so important.”

As soon as Barginere understood how leadership roles provide a platform from where she could drive greater change, she applied for a manager job and was selected for the position. From there, she continued moving upwards in her career, holding positions such as chief operating officer and chief nursing officer at Baptist Medical Center South in Montgomery, Alabama, where she led a cost reduction plan that resulted in a $6 million improvement in net operating revenue. Barginere also served as chief nursing officer at Rush University Hospital, where she oversaw a $165 million operating budget to direct nursing operations and clinical services affecting approximately 2,000 staff.

A recent promotion led Barginere to her present role as senior vice president and chief operating officer at Rush University Hospital where she is able to impact not only the hospital network’s patients, but also the hospital staff. She initiated a talent management program to determine specific leadership development programs for the entire nursing leadership group, using different methods tailored to the individual’s needs. As a result, over the last four years, Rush has been able to fill more than 40 percent of their leadership positions internally. “Not only does this decrease the length of time it takes to fill these positions, it also enhances the level of engagement with your team. Because they can see that there are rewards of upward mobility and career opportunity, they’re more willing to go that extra mile.”

Barginere also views relationship building as an asset for fostering inclusion in companies at all levels. “What I learned as a bedside nurse is that relationships are really the key. We may all come to the table with different belief systems, with different backgrounds, and with different colors, but we all have the human experience in common.” However, Barginere believes building a team with diverse backgrounds and opinions is not enough to create the collaboration that results in positive change. “In order to be successful, you have to be deliberate about developing these working relationships.

• Board director at YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago (since 2012) and INROADS Great Lakes (since 2012)
• Developed an Advanced Practice Provider Institute that supports the professional development of Advanced Practice Nurses and Physician Assistants and houses the first ever Director of Advanced Practice for Rush
• Awards include the Ida V. Moffett Courage to Care Award (2014), the Montgomery Black Nurses Association – Legend in White (2010), and the Birmingham Black Nurses Association – Legend in White (2006)
Hospitals generally focus on treating their patients after they are admitted; Brenda Battle, however, is working to keep people out.

As vice president of Care Delivery Innovation and the Urban Health Initiative at The University of Chicago Medicine, Battle is directing efforts to help providers develop a care delivery model to prevent both hospital admissions and emergency room recidivism.

As she says, “I’ve been leading the development of systems and processes that enable us to be more proactive in caring for patients, as opposed to being reactive after they show up on our doorstep.”

It can be a risk to try new approaches in any industry, but the aptly named Brenda Battle has never been afraid to take on challenges. Early in her career, in order to switch from nursing to business, Battle answered an ad offering an earning income range and providing very little other information. She arrived without securing an interview and faced a receptionist who was, at first, unwilling to let her proceed. Battle explains that that she wasn’t being combative, but was “certainly being persistent” that they should interview her for the role. Unbeknownst to either of them, the company’s COO was eavesdropping on the conversation and hired Battle that same day. “I left a salaried role for one that was straight commission, because I wanted to position myself for opportunities outside of the hospital.”

That success eventually led to positions as director at the Center for Diversity and Cultural Competence of Barnes-Jewish/St. Louis Children’s Hospitals where she led the organizations’ community benefit strategy between the hospitals and community-based health care organizations in the care for the underserved and uninsured. Battle previously served in two senior management roles at Medical Transportation Management, first as vice president of operations where she managed a $100 million budget while leading operations strategy and as vice president of Government and Community Relations where she served as a corporate lobbyist overseeing a national team of contract lobbyists.

Battle’s diverse experience enables her to work across multiple groups and disciplines. “I look at all the things that impact the ability of patients, individuals, and populations to have better health outcomes and bring those all together.”

Brenda A. Battle
Vice President, Care Delivery Innovation Urban Health Initiative and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, University of Chicago Medicine

“You’ve got to frame diversity and inclusion with the intention of creating an outcome that provides equity. People must believe opportunities prevail for them and that they can contribute.”

• Board director; Blood Services Committee, American Red Cross of Greater Chicago (since January 2015), Board director; Strategic Planning Committee, CommunityHealth (Since 2014), and Board director; Strategic Planning Committee, South Side Health Collaborative (since 2013)
• Previous Board secretary at Missouri Foundation for Health (2012) and Board director for American Heart Association St. Louis (2010), Court Appointed Special Advocate St. Louis (2008), Gateway Homeless Shelter (2012), St. Louis International Film Festival (2001), and St. Louis Black Repertory Theater (2002)
• Past Advisory Board Memberships include the Program to Eliminate Cancer Disparities at Siteman Cancer Center and the African American Advisory Board for the Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center at Washington University School of Medicine
During his time playing NCAA football at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Ken Battle learned that you don’t necessarily need to be the best player on game day to be a leader. Battle recognized that what he did during practices, and even off the field, turned out to be just as important. “Every day you come to practice, work hard with no complaints, and you take care of business. And every now and then you notice somebody following your example, doing what you do.”

During his sophomore year, an incident happened that required a different set of skills. A racist remark had been scribbled on the dormitory door of one of the African-American students. “Before this, it was very congenial, we all got along. But the atmosphere became very divisive and hurtful.”

Battle spoke up and insisted, “This is not a time to sweep things under the rug and hope they go away, this is the time to step up and talk about it.” He called for an emergency meeting where many people got a chance to air their concerns about race. “In the end, through that incident and the conversation, we got a lot stronger. It made us all grow.”

Battle is also not shy about stepping in to lead from the front. Whether it was starting his own law firm during the economic downturn in 2010, or radically restructuring the Board of the local Little League International chapter to improve operational guidance, he is willing to make the hard decisions needed to get the job done successfully, while still being able to delegate effectively.

As a partner at Quintairos, Prieto, Wood & Boyer, Battle learned to apply his leadership philosophy to create a corporate culture that fosters teamwork and facilitates continued growth. Managing the firm’s fast-growing Chicago office, he was adding new employees rapidly and needed a way to get them up to speed quickly. By using social activities to help coworkers get to know each other better, employees were able to better appreciate each other’s principles and strengths. “Once you let your hair down and get to know your coworkers, it makes it easier to work together.”

Battle sees diversity as a critical part of effective teams. Since his appointment as the Special Assistant Corporation Counsel, working as outside counsel for the City of Chicago in the Civil Rights Litigation Division, he sees how diverse corporate and board leadership, employee teams, and vendors can build a stronger organization in terms of financial success and longevity. “There is empirical data to prove the business case for diversity.”

“Lead by example. Sometimes that means stepping up and saying, ‘This is what we need to do, and this is how we’re going to do it.’ Other times, you have to step back and let someone else be the point person.”

Kenneth M. Battle
Partner, Quintairos, Prieto, Wood & Boyer, P.A.
Alex Bell
Managing Director, KPMG LLP

“There’s a myth that to succeed as a leader, you have to play a lot of politics. I have gotten to this place in my career by being empathetic, authentic, and true to the values that I hold. You don’t have to compromise your integrity in order to be an effective leader. Once you know who you are and you know exactly how you should behave, then all of the other stuff becomes noise.”

Alex Bell’s parents instilled in her two powerful virtues: compassion and hard work.

She is the youngest of seven children. Growing up, her Jamaican immigrant parents took in two other children, raised them as their own, and regularly opened their home to other families in need. Despite her parents’ modest salaries, through their hard work and resourcefulness, they were always able to take good care of all of the people they supported.

These traits have been present throughout Bell’s own career. While in college, Bell sought a position at Continental Bank through INROADS, a nonprofit that places talented underserved youth in businesses to prepare them for corporate and community leadership. After college, she joined Anderson Consulting where she moved quickly into a leadership role.

When Bell joined Blackwell Consulting in 1994, it was a small start-up of three people. Still only in her 20s, she was made partner within two years and helped grow the company to become the largest minority owned consulting firm in the United States. During her tenure, she developed a global business with a diverse team of nearly 400 employees hailing from places like Africa, Venezuela, the UK, Ireland, the Caribbean, Australia, and Asia. This vision, approach, and success led to her being featured in Diversity Workforce magazine in 2000.

Today, Bell is a managing director in the Advisory practice at KPMG, a global tax, audit, and advisory services firm operating in over 155 countries. A recent project was working with a global insurance client undertaking a $1 billion transformation in Asia and a $100 million transformation in the U.S. to identify risks and mitigation strategies to deliver successful engagements.

A former co-worker described Bell’s key strength as, “The ability to probe and develop trust with participating managers to draw solutions from them that lead to outstanding results.”

As her parents before her, Bell’s compassion compels her to create a corporate culture of caring and inclusion. She says, “Being a technologist and being a diverse woman, I think I have a significant responsibility to develop others.” She acts as a mentor and sponsor, maintaining an open door policy. “Going through the hallways, I introduce myself to people. I want people to know who I am so that they know I am always available to them when they have a need.”

- Advisory Board Member, Special Olympics of Chicago (since 2014)
- Previous Board director; Nominating and Advisory Committees, Herzing University (2012)
- Past awards include KPMG’s Leadership Award for Excellence (2008) and Blackwell Consulting Services’ First Recipient of the Chairman’s Award & Achievement of Partnership Status
Michelle Blaise leads projects that impact millions of Chicagoans directly, every day. As the primary steward of ComEd’s $2.6 billion smart grid program, she is modernizing the utility’s infrastructure to provide reliable and efficient electric service to keep Chicagoland’s high-tech lifestyles going without interruptions.

While her scientific expertise was vital to the project, she finds her ability to brainstorm with others is just as important to foster innovation. Blaise says, “The only way to succeed was to bring the team together and say, ‘Here’s where we need to go. We have these commitments and these stakeholders. I’m looking for your ideas on how we can make this program happen.’ I see myself as an orchestra director where I’m guiding, but the team is doing the work.”

Blaise also focuses on ComEd’s analytics and consumer communication to gather both the big data and qualitative insights needed to understand the community’s changing needs and to improve service. “Information is king and queen. So how do we get better data, more information, and how do we interact more with our customers and understand what they need from us today?”

She is a fan of getting information from the field, meaning reaching out to her customers, her vendors, and her field teams. “I get ideas from vendors and from our folks in the field about how to do things differently. They’re doing it every day and they tell us about the constraints to being able to execute. We’re very open to new ideas and to trying new things, at the same time staying focused on the goal and the end result.”

By bringing new technology and better communication into the grid, Blaise ensures ComEd connects with the customer now, while also staying ahead of changes that will redefine the utility industry during the next decade.

• Board director; Governance and Finance Committees, Women’s Business Development Center (since 2011) and Board Trustee; Education Committee, Chicago Architecture Foundation (since 2011)
• Previous Board director; Fundraising Committee, Chicago Urban League Woman’s Board (2008)
• Oversees the ComEd Engineering Excellence Program which fosters technical skills enhancement, career development, and the sharing of best practices and insights beyond engineering between engineers across the Exelon family of companies
• Sponsors of ComEd’s “Ice Box Derby,” a contest where girls make electric cars out of recycled refrigerators, to promote women in STEM fields
When Lawyer Burks was the leader of ITW’s Medical Division, he became accustomed to thinking globally. Burks was managing manufacturing plants in the United States, Mexico, and Ireland, while also leading sales teams in the United States, China, Brazil, France, United Kingdom and Germany. “Leading hundreds of people outside of the U.S. taught me how to value diversity across different cultures, while sharing a common vision and strategy for business success.”

Rather than sending in American or European leaders, as other global organizations often do, Burks leveraged local talent who understood local business and manufacturing – as well as the local culture, to reduce risks and increase efficiencies in the plant.

Burks sees the value not only of ethnic or national diversity, but also diversity of thought. He wants his team members to be comfortable pushing back on ideas.

He uses an analogy from Star Trek: “The Starship Enterprise has warp speed, which is really fast. But if the shields are up on the ship, the ship can’t fly at warp speed, nor can it use its weapons. If an individual comes into the workplace, and they’re not able to bring their whole self to work and know that the environment is comfortable with them being themselves, then they’re going to have their shields up and we’re not going to get their best work.”

Burks credits Scott Santi, ITW’s CEO, for creating an environment where he felt comfortable enough to take risks and become one of the “blue collar leaders” of the firm. After he developed a new team and culture, grew sales by 138 percent and operating income by 112 percent, and successfully integrated the $40 million acquisition of Coeur Medical, Burks was moved into the role of vice president and general manager of Commercial Construction North America, with responsibility for a $155 million global budget.

“I believe that with a large enough ‘Why?’ people can endure almost any ‘How?’ The keys to effective leadership are to really admire one’s team, and then use the leadership role and the business as a vehicle to help deliver on people’s dreams.”
Denise Cade stands out as a diverse leader in more ways than one.

“People used to call me a triple minority, because I’m a woman, I’m African-American, and I’m 6’1”. So, when they looked at me, I didn’t know which one of those things they were looking at.”

By following her dream and not focusing on whether others judged her from the outside, Cade took a calculated risk to learn business from the inside. After 15 years in private law practice, she made the move toward her goal of becoming a corporate general counsel. She not only left her practice, she moved to a new city, and took on a new role as the divisional general counsel for PPG Industries.

At this vantage point, Cade could develop the skills she needed to serve as general counsel, while also drawing on her past experience as the chief M&A counsel. Her ability to navigate the new and the familiar helped her learn and advance quickly.

She rose through positions as a public securities lawyer and corporate secretary to her present position as general counsel, corporate secretary, and chief compliance officer for SunCoke Energy, Inc., a spin-off of Sunoco, Inc.

SunCoke needed to be built from the ground up. Cade’s inside and outside experience gave her the perspective to build the legal department from a green field. She was responsible for hiring lawyers, establishing an Office of the Corporate Secretary, developing a global ethics and compliance program, and devising an international patent and trademark strategy.

In 2013, she led the formation and initial public offering of SunCoke Energy Partners, L.P., the only steel-facing master limited partnership. As one of four inside directors of that partnership, she also established and managed the recruiting process for securing three independent members of the board of directors.

“Experience, diversity of thought, and the ability to be collaborative, were important as we interviewed and selected directors,” explains Cade.

Denise R. Cade
SVP, General Counsel, Corporate Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer, SunCoke Energy

“Follow your dream; stay the course when it gets tough; live what you expect from others; and set an example to work and live with integrity. These are basic things, and they’re the foundation I come back to.”

• Board director, SunCoke Energy Partners GP LLC, (Since 2013) and Board trustee, Chicago History Museum (since 2013)
• Former Board director; Executive Committee, Hill House Association (2011) and former Board director; general counsel, Suited for Change (2005)
• Advisory Board member, Georgetown Law Alumni Board (since 2014)
As a leader in the fast-paced technology start-up space – specifically the intersection of the Internet, telecom, and airline services – Yang Chao has learned to implement structure and systems quickly while accommodating growth and change.

She explains, “A lot of the time, you have to sacrifice some of the processes and some of the orderliness for growth, but you can’t grow revenue and then grow your expenses at the same rate. We really dive deep into the quality metrics in order to manage a tight ship.”

With growth of over 300 percent in the first few years, it is also difficult to project long-term performance. By analyzing the market from different perspectives, Chao was able to lower the revenue variance to less than 3 percent and the expense variances within 5-10 percent over the last 3-4 years. She says, “I’m very passionate about start-up companies and creating new things, getting to new markets, and growth.”

In addition to focusing on quality, she also developed the rewards and recognition program at the company. She observes, “We run so fast, we don’t stop to celebrate.” By making employees feel appreciated, they feel comfortable taking risks and adapting, qualities that are crucial in a new industry.

Prior to Gogo, Chao was senior strategy and business development manager at Motorola where she led market analysis and financial modeling for their global mobile TV business. While there, she also conducted financial modeling, M&A valuation, and due diligence of over $20 million in equity investment for multiple startup companies in the mobile TV industry.

After playing a major part in raising Gogo’s $175 million equity investment, $135 million debt investment, $113 million debt add-on, and IPO in June 2013, Chao has been applying her experience to support other start-up companies, such as 1871 and Illinois Ventures, helping them improve their projections and get venture capital funding.

Given the talent, telecom presence, and support from large corporations, Chao says, “Chicago should be an environment where we have more growth in startups.”

Yang Chao
VP, Financial Planning and Analysis, Gogo

“We can’t let challenges beat us down. It’s up to us as leaders to motivate our teams and transform those challenges into solutions.”
Posh M. Charles

Vice President, Community Affairs, Northwestern Memorial HealthCare

“Celebrating diversity is a really good thing, but even more important is understanding diversity. There’s so much value in different ways of doing things and in outside opinions. Every single day we’ve got to consider who’s not at the table.”

It’s rare nowadays to find someone who has been with the same company for more than twenty years. It’s even rarer to find a long-term leader with such a talent for continuous innovation.

Having found an organization with a culture in which he truly believed, Posh Charles saw growth potential for himself and his organization. He says, “I saw an opportunity to not only stay and move within the organization and learn every facet of it, but to also move the organization in a direction that was truly impactful to the community.”

Now that so many more people are insured through the Affordable Care Act, Charles sees the next challenge as higher quality and less expensive healthcare that also delivers better patient outcomes.

To do so, Charles looks for innovative ways to connect with people who are new to healthcare systems. He also asks questions, lots of questions. “What are some of the cultural barriers to receiving healthcare? How can we use lay healthcare workers in the community to explain better ways to navigate healthcare? How can we start looking at transportation resources as a barrier to care? How can we offer different office hours and different locations that are closer to home? These are things that are not traditionally talked about in healthcare.”

Charles’ commitment to the community extends even beyond healthcare delivery. One example is his work with the Bronzeville Dream Center. Charles is the lead for Northwestern Medicine in the partnership with Brightstar Church, the University of Chicago Health System, and the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago to reduce youth violence on the south side of Chicago through counseling and other social services.

To him, corporate responsibility means “being able to see beyond the four walls of your company, to the interconnectedness of everything that you’re doing in the community.”

- Board director; Policy and Planning Committees, Together 4 Health (since 2013) and Board director; Ops Development Committee, Brightstar Community Outreach (since 2015)
- Previous Board director; Marketing Committee, Cabrini-Green Legal Aid Clinic (2009), previous Board director; Marketing Committee, Cornerstone Children’s Learning Center (2007), and previous Board secretary; Development and Planning Committees, The LaSalle Foundation (2002)
- Advisory Board member; Operations Planning and Development Committees, Bronzeville Dream Center (2013)
- Other involvements include Chicago Cares (since 2009), and Medical Explorers (since 2008), South Loop Elementary School Girls Basketball (2012), AYSO Youth Soccer (2009), Save Grant Park (2006), and Erie Family Health Center (2005)
- Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow (Class of 2013)
- Awarded the Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Martin Luther King Humanitarian Award (2006)
Eileen Chin has combined her entrepreneurial background and her passion for communication to successfully transform her family business.

After starting out as a TV news producer, Chin joined Carolyn Grisko and Associates. She grew with the company, gaining experience not only in public relations, but also in operations and administration, working her way up to vice president of Aviation Services.

By then, her family’s firm had reached a turning point. She recalls, “My mom retired and my father had to decide to either shrink the company to a one-person consultancy, or to grow it to the next level. I told him, ‘I develop marketing and strategic business plans for other companies. I can do it for the family business.’”

Since Chin joined R.M. Chin and Associates, she has lead the firm’s expansion into new services, increasing new sector growth by approximately 20 percent and gross revenue by approximately 80 percent. In 2004, one client represented almost 80 percent of the firm’s total revenue. At the end of 2014, that same client’s revenue increased, but now only comprises 40 percent of total revenue. Chin is now the firm’s President.

Chin believes that integrating technology was what made the biggest difference. “In a business where associates spend most of their time out of the office, having an internal communication system is crucial.” She automated processes like time sheets and asset requests and provided a platform for communication. “I have people blogging, we have instant messaging, we’re collaborating on documents and proposals, and people know exactly what their teammates are doing.”

Working in the male-dominated transportation space, she understands firsthand the importance of listening to someone’s opinion and ideas, especially if they look very different from what you see in the mirror, before jumping to any conclusions. For example, Chin makes sure her male team members attend the Women’s Transportation Seminar. “It’s not a women’s organization; it’s an organization that advances women. Interacting in a professional development setting helps them see women as peers and equal, so the mindset becomes, ‘That’s just another colleague of mine.’”

- Board director, Nominating and Marketing Committees, Women’s Transportation Seminar International (since 2014) and Board director, Co-Chair Ball Committee, Chicago Sinfonietta (Since 2009)
- Previous Board director, Women Transportation of Greater Chicago (2012)
- Past chairwoman of the Associate Board, Chinese American Service League (2008)
- Other involvements include Asian American Political Action Committee, Asian Americans Advancing Justice and Hispanic American Construction Industry & Association
- Named 2015 Mandarin Leader in North American

“Innovation doesn’t have to be something huge. It can be a new way of looking at an issue, big or small. When you get a diverse perspective, you’re getting a bigger, broader picture.”
Throughout his career as a litigator, Michael Chu has always looked to broaden his experience and outlook.

In his previous position at Brinks Gilson & Lione, he helped start the China Task Force to promote significant business and marketing opportunities in China, working towards opening an office there. He is working on a similar task force in his current role at McDermott, focusing on initiatives to expand the business in Asia and build stronger relationships in the Pacific region. “Encouraging people from different socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, and countries of origin to better understand each other and collaborate, whether in a commercial environment, a business environment, or a legal environment, enhances all aspects of an organization’s mission,” explains Chu.

As he sought to expand his horizons globally, Chu also wanted to broaden his perspective in terms of his own work and community involvement. A turning point for him occurred at a convention for Asian Pacific American lawyers organized by the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA). After sitting through several sessions on patent law, he recalls, “I walked into a session across the hall on Asian American civil rights issues. There were panelists that had dedicated their lives to public service relating to civil rights and it was fascinating.” The experience started him on a path of involvement with Asian American community issues. He joined NAPABA, and eventually became president of their Board. Hoping to add even more direct impact, he joined Asian Americans Advancing Justice in Chicago, a community service organization.

Another of Chu’s passions allows him to give back in a more personal way. He is a photographer through Flashes of Hope (FOH), a nonprofit that raises funds to accelerate a cure for children’s cancer while honoring their unique lives and courage in photos. Chu finds the work rewarding. “FOH, sets up a studio in the midst of a busy hospital with professional makeup artists and assistants. The children and their families are made to feel special. I was thrilled to be selected as one of their photographers.” He also acknowledges that it is technically and emotionally challenging. “Sometimes the photos I take are the last ones a family has of a loved one.”

Chu strongly believes people have a responsibility to give back to the community by committing themselves to public service and civic causes that are important to them. And, he advises that young professionals get started early. “Why wait? These organizations need young dynamic individuals.”

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Michael Chu
Partner, McDermott Will & Emery

“The best way to understand a customer base is to have people within the organization, management, or legal environment that come from their various backgrounds. When there’s a better understanding of the needs in the community, then you can come up with innovations that are useful to more people.”

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• Incoming chairman, Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms (2015), Incoming chairman, University of Illinois Alumni Leadership Council (2015), served terms as president, vice president, and secretary; Finance and Nominations Committees, NAPABA Law Foundation (since 2006), and as president and vice president; Finance, Personnel, Fundraising and Evaluations Committees, Asian American Institute (Since 2007)

• Advisory Board member for Asian American Bar Association (since 2010), Korean American Bar Association (since 2011), Chinese American Bar Association (since 2012), and American Bar Association (since 2005)

• Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow (Class of 2006)
Virginia Clarke
Senior Partner, Executive Search, Knightsbridge Human Capital Solutions

“Talent is the only thing that an organization really has. You can’t produce anything or provide services unless you have the people to do it; and, having talent means you have to access people from all over the world.”

Ginny Clarke fosters a global perspective on diversity that comes from her years of experience as a talent recruiter.

As a partner at Toronto-based Amrop Knightsbridge, located in Chicago, Clarke has led the Executive Search practice in the U.S. since 2013. Before that, she was a partner at Spencer Stuart for 12 years, where she co-founded and led the firm’s global diversity practice, working with international businesses to address their diversity recruitment protocols and making key executive placements.

Clarke credits her experiences as a woman of color and her ability to speak French with giving her a better appreciation of other cultures and nationalities. “The ability to communicate with people in their native tongue is really helpful. It shows awareness that America is not the center of the universe.” In her view, the executive of the future can transcend different cultures and have a global vision. She believes people need to experience other countries and broaden their perspective in order to become change agents. Clarke introduced a process she calls a ‘diversity pipeline’ to help her change corporate culture. “I will identify women and people of color for a particular role or job group and introduce some of these vetted candidates to my clients, while training the hiring managers to better assess talent.”

By having managers interact with candidates who don’t conform to the expected education or experience profiles, she encourages organizations to think beyond hiring minorities simply to hit quotas and to focus on the skillsets that make people and teams successful.

Clarke applied this approach in her role as chairwoman of the Board of the Chicago Sinfonietta. She was responsible for the development and implementation of a new vision and strategy for how the organization programs its performances. Her leadership resulted in significantly deeper levels of audience engagement and record-breaking ticket sales.

Through her work in executive search, Clarke developed a passion for helping people become empowered. She has made it her mission to help them realize that they own the process and are able to create opportunities. “People were really not thoughtful in the way that they were approaching their careers,” notes Clarke. That compelled her to write, Career Mapping, a book that delivers a proprietary process for assessing and setting direction for one’s career.

- Immediate past chairwoman of the Board; Nominating and Governance Committees, Chicago Sinfonietta (director since 2009)
- Previous Board director, Medical Properties Trust (2011)
- Other involvements include: Economic Club of Chicago (since 2010), The Posse Foundation (since 2007), and Northwestern Council of 100 (since 2012)
- Named among “100 Women to Watch” (2012) by Today’s Chicago Woman
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Roger O. Crockett began his career as a journalist and spent 13 years as the Chicago deputy bureau chief for *BusinessWeek*. He managed a team of reporters writing on business issues and working with corporate leaders across the globe. Now, he is putting those communication skills to work as the co-founder and principal of Global Performance Partners Inc., a research-based consulting company that focuses on making diversity and inclusion relevant to business growth for senior executives.

He is also president of R.O. Crockett Leadership Advisory, which provides strategic advice to companies’ senior leaders as they seek to enhance their thought leadership portfolio. While he still publishes an e-magazine, contributes to *Harvard Business Review*, and often appears on WTTW Channel 11’s Chicago Tonight “Week in Review,” he primarily advises corporate leaders directly, rather than reporting on them.

Crockett prefers to use the word ‘inclusivity’ instead of diversity. “‘Inclusivity’ is the combination of embracing diversity and practicing inclusion. Unless you have an inclusive organization where different perspectives are respected, where different races are present, and where different ages are present, you cannot perform at the highest level.”

He believes inclusion is becoming increasingly important as local markets are getting saturated, requiring organizations to look to emerging markets for growth.

Crockett also focuses on age inclusivity, observing that companies don’t take their responsibility to develop young leaders seriously enough. “Often the average age in boardrooms is over 65 years old. If you bring Millennials into the boardroom, everyone will be smarter and business will be better.” He works with companies to fast-track Millennials into those positions so they can better collaborate with experienced leaders. This also helps senior leadership gain a fresh perspective on their customer bases.

Crockett cites Dr. Martin Luther King as his role model, admiring King’s moral character, social consciousness, intelligence, and, especially, his ability to listen. “Dr. King had his ear to the ground to hear what all of America, not just black America, was saying.”

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**Roger O. Crockett**

President, R.O. Crockett Leadership Advisory

“Too often people view leadership as talking. It’s just as much about listening.”

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- Anchor and co-producer of the video series *Leadership in the Field*, which explores leadership and corporate governance topics with CEOs and Chairmen of Fortune 500 companies
- Crockett’s Web Magazine *In The Lead* won the “2012 Small Business Online Marketing” award from The City of Chicago’s Treasurer’s Office
- Board trustee; Executive and Student Affairs Committees, Saint Xavier University (since 2012), Board director; chair Nominating and Governance Committees, Chicago Sinfonietta (since 2012), and Board of Governors member, The Metropolitan Club of Chicago (since 2013)
- Previous Board director; Events Committee, San Jose Jazz Society (1992)
- Received the Peter Lisagor Award. (2007)
- Other involvements include i.c.stars (since 1999) and Circle of Friends (since 2004)
In a business climate where change is the new normal, Yolanda Daniel is able to draw on her varied career history to adapt to new environments and challenges and to expect change in others.

Daniel developed her business expertise at TCI Southeast, CVS Caremark, Inc., and Acklands Grainger, Inc. While serving as CFO at Acklands Grainger, Inc., she led the finance, controllership, merger and acquisition, real estate, tax, treasury, financial services, and indirect purchasing functions. As Global Chief Audit Executive (CAE), she developed and led a world class internal audit function that provided audit, advisory, and various corporate governance services.

At CVS, Daniel played a major role in the divestiture of their core business, going from $27 billion down to $2 billion. She also aided in the company’s revitalization through organic growth and acquisitions back up to $7 billion. That experience gave her an in-depth understanding of business cycles and how to integrate corporate cultures and grow teams. In her current role, she leads the finance, controllership, tax, treasury, and financial services functions for a growing global healthcare and technology organization, and is able to draw from her diverse experiences in health care, finance, and nonprofit stewardship.

Daniel believes that the rise of conscious consumerism has made knowledge of end customers and partnerships between service providers essential. “It’s a three-legged stool. How do you get industry, government, and nonprofits to work together and ultimately deliver the greatest value to the consumer?” She believes this cooperation can help organizations create efficiencies, whether they are driven by budget cuts or by trying to optimize investments.

She also believes that companies can create positive change. “Leaders who understand what it is to be a profitable organization, but are consciously aware that what they do changes the world, can be positive influences on corporate culture.” Daniel cites Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos, as a role model. “His book, Delivering Happiness: Profit, Passion and Purpose, is about how aligning who you are to the organization where you work ultimately optimizes the performance of the individual as well as the organization.” Positive change, she says, starts with every leader and one word. “My favorite question is: ‘Why?’ By driving down to the root cause, you can satisfy external customer demand while also satisfying business partner demand.”
Just two years after joining the 100-year-old Ziegler organization, Angelique David became, at age 33, one of the youngest general counsels in the country. She was also the first African-American member of the Ziegler Executive Committee, which operates in an industry that lacks diversity.

David also chairs Ziegler’s Ethics Committee, is a pivotal member of the Business Acceptance, Operating, Risk Management, and Capital Committees, and serves as corporate secretary where she is responsible for all corporate records and management of the Board of Directors.

One of David’s biggest challenges, despite the friendly culture at the Wisconsin company, was winning the faith of her colleagues. Because she became General Counsel during one of the most turbulent economic times in recent history and at a time when regulation changes transformed the way investment bankers needed to do business, it was important that people trusted her advice. She says, “I have probably had conversations with all 276 associates in our firm. People want to follow people who care about them, who listen to them, who have high integrity, who are confident, and who exhibit excellence. You have to win hearts and minds when you’re a leader. You don’t do that by thinking that you know everything and running around talking.”

Part of establishing trust was to change the way the legal and compliance departments were perceived. Many of her colleagues believed the legal department was in charge of impeding progress. David says, “I have a motto, and all of my legal and compliance people can recite it. We are not the ‘no’ department, we are the ‘no, not this way, but yes this way’ department.” David appreciates that when developing new strategic lines of business, products, or financing structures within a strict regulatory framework, you need to have a collaborative process with experts who understand regulations and technology and can look at a problem from different perspectives.

For the Business Development Committee at Ziegler, she says, “the idea was to diversify the group with a combination of senior individuals and up-and-coming Millennials, who are going to have ideas that the guy who’s been working here 30 years doesn’t have.”

Angelique Athiena David

Senior Managing Director, General Counsel, & Corporate Secretary, Ziegler

“Have hard discussions with people, but in a compassionate way. It does no one any good if we know there is a pink elephant in the corner, but we’re all afraid to talk about it.”
As senior vice president of Information Technology for Tribune Publishing, Jeff Dorsey oversees the company’s IT infrastructure which includes more than 60 digital properties and more than 180 verticals across the country.

You would never guess he started out running a barbeque restaurant.

After graduate school, Dorsey and some friends opened a restaurant together, which they eventually grew to three locations and sold. Dorsey recalls the experience: “It was probably just as valuable as my MBA from Northwestern. I learned how to manage people and run things.”

That entrepreneurial self-sufficiency and ability to connect with people has served him well over his varied career. He has taken on roles in marketing, product management, operations, and now technology. “Even though I might not have had the background, people took a chance on me because they thought I could deliver.”

Dorsey is passionate about mentoring; so passionate that his mentoring doesn’t stop after his mentees leave the organization. He keeps track of their progress and promotions long after they stop being his reports.

When it comes to mentoring and leadership, he stresses clear direction and communication as an important factor. “I always tell people, if something goes wrong, it’s probably my fault because I didn’t provide the right objectives or the right direction.”

He admits that clear communication has become more difficult, despite (or perhaps due to) the increasing usage of technology in our world.

“Technology can increase the ability to communicate, but it’s easy to lose focus on the main objective. You need to be well versed in communication and have your vision present in every facet, whether it’s on Facebook or on your company Intranet.”

Jeffrey Dorsey
Senior Vice President Technology, Tribune Publishing Company

“’It’s important to me that the company is in a better place; stable and positioned for growth. At a broader level, I want people to say, ‘He helped us develop so many people, all across the company, and our company is soaring because of him.’ That is the legacy I hope for.”

• Board chairman; Finance, Fundraising, Programs and Nominations Committees, Young, Black and Proud (YBP) (since 2012) and Board director; Finance, Fundraising and Programs Committees and Legacy Advisory Council, Teen Living Programs (since 2010)
• Former Board director, LEAD (2002)
• Served as chairman of the Chicago Tribune United Way Campaign (2006-2007)
As a teenager in the inner city, Willard Evans, Jr., worked in his high school library. “The library was my window to the world. I hadn’t travelled anywhere. The library was that vehicle for me.” He discovered his passion for engineering by reading about projects, which ultimately led him to Peoples Gas and a career that now spans more than 40 years.

Evans learned early on that the best way to lead is not micromanaging direction. He recalls a leadership seminar in college. “The instructor stood up and closed one of the doors to the room. Then, he asked the students to leave, which they did — through the open door. Calling them back in, the instructor said, ‘I could have told you, ‘Everyone, go out this door. But because I gave you a choice, you feel better about doing it and I got what I wanted as the leader.’” Evans says, “I’ve tried to emulate that, to think about how people feel when you want them to do something, and to put them in situations where they want to fit and can succeed. Leadership is about caring. It’s about getting people to work for you, through you, and with you.”

Evans began his career with Peoples Energy as a summer engineering intern in 1974 before joining full-time in 1977. In his 40-year career with the company, Evans has held several senior positions across the business. In 1997, Evans was appointed vice president of Information Technology Services, a position he held until 2003 when he was promoted to vice president of Operations. Evans rose to assume the role of vice president of Gas Engineering in 2007. There, he led a team that provided engineering services to a number of Integrys’ subsidiaries across the Midwest, including Peoples Gas, Wisconsin Public Service, Michigan Gas Utilities, North Shore Gas, and Minnesota Energy Resources.

Evans is a firm believer in work-life balance. While he was president of Peoples Gas, he also served as president of the parent organization at his children’s school and as their basketball coach. “People ask, ‘How can you do that?’ and I say, ‘How can you not do it?’ That’s my first job, to raise my children.” He believes that companies should foster work-life balance, since that balance helps the local community. “It’s good for business and all of society to do well.”

• Board director; Claims Committee and chair of Audit Committee, Energy Insurance Mutual (since 2011); vice chairman of the Board; Finance Committee, Chicago Commons (since 1991); Board director; Development Committee, Chicago Urban League (since 2009); and Board director; Grants committee, African American Legacy Fund (since 2013)

• Previous Board director, The Peoples Gas Light and Coke Company (2014), North Shore Gas Company (2014), and Board governor, Lake Forest Openlands Association (2013)

• Other involvements include serving as president of Saint Ignatius College Prep Parents Organization (since 2010), chairman of the Human Relations Commission at the Village of Skokie (since 2013), and participating in the Business Leadership Council (since 2013)
As a clinical associate of medicine at the University of Chicago, Dr. Thomas Fisher consults and advises multiple health care ventures and directs medical care for acutely ill patients.

Dr. Fisher has seen the healthcare system from all angles. Trained as an emergency room physician in his hometown of Chicago and in Gary, Indiana, he saw the impact of policy on patients. This led him to the other end of the spectrum as a White House Fellow, where he was special assistant to Kathleen Sibelius as health care reform was underway.

While there, Dr. Fisher contributed to the development of regulations related to the Affordable Care Act and the Medicare Shared Savings program. He also led the delivery of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ national action plan for health disparity, which helped align the federal government and its health resources around the identification and solving of health disparities on a national level. “I met some of the best leaders. I also saw some failures of leadership, which were equally informative.”

In his former role as vice president for Health Delivery Transformation at Health Care Service Corporation, he directed strategy focused on improving health outcomes for over 14.5 million Blue Cross and Blue Shield members. Dr. Fisher was also responsible for a $3 million budget and a key contributor to several enterprise-wide projects, including Exchange Preparedness, Customer of the Future, Enterprise Wellness and Product Development, Collection and Use of Data and Analytics, and Enterprise Management Strategy. The total combined budgets were in excess of $250 million. He is also the creator of a multistate strategy to improve health care engagement and care processes in the African American, Latino, and Asian communities.

In the emergency department, that’s never going to work. Remaining grounded is extremely important to ensure leaders make quality strategic decisions.

Dr. Fisher has been a board director; Strategy and Nominating Committees, Cook County Forest Preserve Foundation, (since 2014) and vice president of the Board, Executive and Program Committees, Leadership Greater Chicago (since 2012)

• Previous Board director; Strategy Committee, White House Fellows Foundation (2013) and previous Board director, Project Brotherhood (1999)

• Other involvements include serving as a sponsor and mentor for Link Unlimited (2006-2010) and serving on the Illinois Governing for Results Task Force (2011)

• Featured in Crain’s Chicago Business 40 under 40 (2013)

• Leadership Great Chicago Fellow (Class of 2006)

• Keynote speaker at the Mayo Clinic’s Transform 2014 Symposium

Dr. Fisher also recognized the importance of staying connected to actual patients. “When you’re creating one solution for the entire country, you are far removed from where the rubber hits the road.”

In his former role as vice president for Health Delivery Transformation at Health Care Service Corporation, he directed strategy focused on improving health outcomes for over 14.5 million Blue Cross and Blue Shield members. Dr. Fisher was also responsible for a $3 million budget and a key contributor to several enterprise-wide projects, including Exchange Preparedness, Customer of the Future, Enterprise Wellness and Product Development, Collection and Use of Data and Analytics, and Enterprise Management Strategy. The total combined budgets were in excess of $250 million. He is also the creator of a multistate strategy to improve health care engagement and care processes in the African American, Latino, and Asian communities.

In the emergency department, that’s never going to work. Remaining grounded is extremely important to ensure leaders make quality strategic decisions.

Dr. Fisher still takes shifts in the emergency room. “It’s easy to become self important in a board room.

“Things like diet and exercise, mental health challenges, and getting folks jobs, are more influential in improving people’s health than anything we can do in the healthcare setting.”

Thomas L. Fisher
Clinical Associate of Medicine, The University of Chicago
Sharon Grant sees her role as one of community responsibility. She is responsible for all aspects of the contact centers, customer care, and refunds for United Airlines, managing a $300 million budget and impacting approximately 40 million customers annually. That’s one out of every three of United’s customers.

“We are only here as servants. Yes, we are a for-profit organization, but through our people, our time, and our talent we impart that back into the social, political, and geographical landscape in which we operate. If we are not here to do that, then we have missed the boat.”

Grant believes communication is the key to both service and efficiency. By expanding the response channels and increasing speed in her group’s back-end processes, she was able to transform two critical business lines that were consistently out of compliance with internal and external requirements. Her leadership has resulted in 20% productivity improvements, 100% compliance, significant cost savings, and sustainable business plans.

Grant developed and executed the core competencies growth model for managing the career progression of internal audit professionals. The model combined leadership and behavioral indicators with auditor roles and responsibilities to accelerate development, long-term contribution, and retention.

In her former position as president of the Institute of Internal Auditors Research Foundation, Grant led a 40-person international board. It was comprised of chief audit executives, academicians, and professionals.

The board focused on the strategic oversight of the professional development of 170,000 global institute members and in the production of training materials for professors’ to use in their curriculums for future internal audit professionals.

Grant believes people need to feel safe to communicate, especially when you talk about race. “A lot of people don’t move there because they haven’t opened the door in their own thoughts. I have a responsibility to be willing to have that engagement.”

• Former chairwoman Research, The Institute of Internal Auditors (2012), former president, The Research Foundation (2013) and former chairwoman (years 2004 and 2001), The International Association of Airline Internal Auditors (2012)
• Former member, DePaul University Internal Audit Advisory Board (2013)
• Received the Institute of Internal Auditors-Chicago Chapter “Inspirational Woman of the Year” award (2013)
Symeria T. Hudson
Global Home Therapies Franchise Leader – Renal, Baxter Healthcare

“People tend to think that leaders have all the answers and that is absolutely not true. It is about having the right team engaged. Partnership and collaboration are extremely important. It’s also really important to me that I don’t overshadow other leaders’ opportunities; that I know when to step in and when to pull back and allow others to shine.”

Symeria Hudson runs Baxter’s Global Home Therapies, Renal Franchise business. She manages a team of twenty, a portfolio of approximately $2 billion, and an operating budget of approximately $15 million. However, what matters to her more than the numbers is the impact on the lives of patients with end-stage renal disease.

By enabling patients to have access to healthcare in their homes, she believes she is giving them a better quality of life. “When you think about the home, it’s a place that you enjoy and where you feel comfortable. People want to be supported and receive treatment in their home.”

She uses her position to promote better use of technology and employ innovative home therapies that can improve care and increase comfort. Chairman and CEO Robert Parkinson said, “I’m impressed by Symeria’s ability to work with cross-functional teams such as R&D, Manufacturing, Medical, and Quality to execute a strategy that makes a real difference to our patients with end-stage renal disease.”

Hudson feels that companies need to combine the adoption of technology based on local needs with a global business perspective. She contends that while a patient in Asia might have some needs in common with a patient in the U.S., the way they approach that experience and how an organization should address that need could be very different. “It’s important to put on our global hat and look at ways that we can drive commonality in our technology, because we do need to think about resources and creating efficiencies. We also need to address local nuances related to products and services in order to ensure that we are connected to the patient and customer need within that market.”

Hudson sees a three-part approach to leadership. First, leaders must put the patient and customer first. Second, is being financially responsible. That is “being accountable to the stakeholders and shareholders that have invested and entrusted us with the assets.” Finally, leaders need to continually coach team members. “I don’t wait until there’s a formal review or there’s a performance checkpoint. I think it’s well received by my team. It’s something that they appreciate.”

“People tend to think that leaders have all the answers and that is absolutely not true. It is about having the right team engaged. Partnership and collaboration are extremely important. It’s also really important to me that I don’t overshadow other leaders’ opportunities; that I know when to step in and when to pull back and allow others to shine.”

- Board director, Kohl’s Children’s Museum (since 2013) and Board director, Baxter Foundation (since 2015)
- Former Board director; Planning Committee, Seed of Hope Foundation (2013) and former Board director, Kaleidoscope, Inc. (2004)
- Former Advisory Board member, Hospira’s Women Network (2013)
- Received the Fexy Gold Award - The Fexy Award for creative design campaign (2010), the B2B Summit Creative Marketing Award - Human Perspective Marketing Campaign (2010), and First Place in the New England Direct Marketing Association (NEDMA) for Integrated Multimedia Campaign (2002)
When she was first tapped to be a team leader, Mahrukh Hussain was thoughtful about her decision. A bit of an introvert, she remembers thinking, “I’m not sure I want that job. It seems like you need to have a lot of difficult conversations. But, I found I really enjoyed it.” Her team thrived, and she decided to continue moving up in the organization.

In her current role as vice president and U.S. general counsel for McDonald’s Corporation, Hussain manages a $10.8 million budget and a team of more than 50 lawyers, paralegals, and administrative staff. In this role, she is directly responsible for overseeing a wide scope of legal issues affecting the 14,000 restaurants that make up the U.S. business of McDonald’s Corporation, including franchising, communication, real estate development, safety and security, litigation, and marketing.

A child from an Asian immigrant family, Hussain has always understood that different cultures have different viewpoints. She used this sensibility to manage international teams and to promote diverse employee networking groups.

For example, when she was general counsel for McDonald’s Europe, she led a team that came from 12 countries and supported 39 different countries on their legal matters. “I think what I brought to that position was the ability to appreciate differences in people, find strengths in those differences, and then utilize those strengths to have the best department we could.”

She believes that global attitude and awareness is becoming more important across the globe, including in the U.S. “With globalization, people want new and exciting flavors, whether that comes from visiting other countries or hearing about them through social media.”

Hussain credits social media with creating an ever-flatter world, whether it’s affecting opinions on topics such as GMOs or providing a feedback and discussion forum. “Business has to be open and listening to what people are saying on social media, and respond to issues in real time.”

• Board director; founding member, Muslim Bar Association (since 2010)
• Advisory Board member and sponsor of 2015 Diversity Summit, McDonald’s USA Asia Pacific Middle Eastern Employee Network Officer Advisory Board (since 2013)
• Other involvements include serving as the executive sponsor of McDonald’s European Centre Women’s Leadership Network (2013), the co-sponsor of the Central Division Asia Pacific Middle Eastern Employee Network (2009-2011), and serving as a panelist and roundtable leader for the University of Chicago Taking the Next Step Conference (2011, 2014, and 2015)
• Served as a judicial clerk for Justice Rita Garman, currently the Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court

“I value compassionate leadership, someone who is available, listens, is open to learn from the people who see them as a leader, and who also imparts knowledge.”

Mahrukh Hussain
Corporate Vice President/U.S. General Counsel, McDonald’s Corporation
Carl Jenkins is guided by his passion. “I’m driven by my unwavering curiosity for the world we live in – the neighborhoods, the communities, the environments – and how they evolve, why they do, and what’s behind it. You become better at your subject once you have a passion for it.” However, sometimes it takes time for passion to find its best path, and more often than not, that path is likely not a straight line.

Jenkins started out his career as an architect, wanting to improve urban environments through design. After three years, he realized architecture wasn’t right for him and turned his passion for communities into facilitating neighborhood development rather than planning the actual buildings.

As a member of the Community Development Lending team in the early 2000s, he successfully underwrote BMO Harris’ first tax increment financing loan to fund a $5 million City of Chicago neighborhood redevelopment program on the West side.

Soon thereafter, he founded and now manages BMO Harris’ Community Investments Group, an alternative investment group responsible for originating and managing a portfolio of private equity funds and structured debt instruments with commitments exceeding $500 million. This created a new platform for investing bank equity into affordable housing and small businesses that is both regulatory-compliant and provides acceptable returns. Using this platform, Jenkins is able to leverage his private equity and finance knowledge to help community development in a sustainable way—the goal he had at the outset of his career.

Retired BMO Harris Bank Chief Executive Officer Mark Furlong recently said, “When I think about Carl’s business acumen and innovation, I often say to myself, ‘If he didn’t exist, our company would have to invent him.’”

A member of multiple corporate advisory boards for capital investment companies, Jenkins believes diversity at the board and management levels provides a recognizable financial benefit for the organization. “If you are serving a diverse population, you really do not have the option of looking at it with just your own individual binoculars.”
As senior vice president, regional head of business banking, Oscar Johnson, Jr., oversees $1 billion in loan commitments and over $900 million of deposits. He also leads four regional commercial teams consisting of 56 professionals who are accountable for sales, portfolio management, and administration.

Johnson had two great examples to help him develop the work ethic these responsibilities require: his mother and father. “My mom was an educator and my dad was in sales, but they both worked two jobs in order for us to have more.” Their sacrifice enabled the family to move to a better neighborhood and prosper. His parents’ work ethic continues to inspire Johnson to not only work harder, but to also always be thinking about how to help others.

While most people believe that success means sacrificing their work-life balance, Johnson thinks it’s a matter of focus and planning. “There are 24 hours in a day, and you shouldn’t miss the important things in your kids’ lives. You just find different hours when you work and get stuff done.” For Johnson, this sometimes involves leaving work at 4pm to go to his child’s soccer game, then working from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. to meet deadlines.

In the field of banking, where bringing in new clients and deals is critical to the bank’s success and often limiting to a banker’s career, Johnson appreciates that his ability to make friends quickly is a success factor. What’s his trick? Staying authentic and true to himself.

These same qualities, explains Johnson, are also important for team building. “People enjoy working and doing business with people they like.” He explains that, in the long run, operating in a caring manner for your employees works better than cutting overhead to increase shareholder value.

As group senior vice president at Associated Bank, Johnson managed $700 million of credit commitments and related budget. Having grown the portfolio in excess of 50 percent, his unit was the largest contributor to the region’s revenue and net income. He’s confident that his “servant leadership style” and “team-first approach” will help him to continue contributing to his organization’s success.

• Board director; Finance Committee, Urban Prep Academies (since 2006), Board director; Finance Committee, Union League Cub of Chicago (since 2013), and Board director; Finance Committee, Providence St. Mel. (since 2014)
• Former Board director for Oak Park Development Corporation (2013), Congo Square Theater Company (2012), Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Chicago (2009), and Goodman Theatre Scene Markers (2008)
• Other involvements include serving as a volunteer youth soccer, baseball, and basketball coach for the Oak Park Park District since 2010 and as a former youth Sunday School teacher volunteer at Judson Baptist Church (2013)
Throughout his career, Steve Kim has strived to make more connections between Chicago and the rest of the world. Early on he had the opportunity to work with Governor Jim Edgar. Kim recalls, “The experience provided me with a broader view of how the world functions, how government and business correlates, and how larger public policy issues can impact the daily lives of small businesses and individual citizens.”

Originally, he was considering a career in politics and won a seat as a Northfield Township trustee in 1997. After that, he became the first Asian American nominee to run for statewide office in 2010 as the Republican nominee for Illinois Attorney General.

While he hasn’t entirely given up on politics — he joined Dan Rutherford in his bid for Illinois Governor as his running mate in 2014 and was part of Governor Bruce Rauner’s Economic Development Transition Committee — Kim’s focus has shifted to international business and legal services. He opened the first American law firm in Baghdad, Iraq, after the war and was the CEO of DirectAlly LLC, a global procurement company with offices in China and Vietnam. He is currently managing partner at RKJ Legal, which has offices in Baghdad, Dubai, South Korea, China, Turkey, and Taiwan. He also serves as general counsel to several international companies and is the president of Al Rajhi TRAC, a Dubai-based development and investment firm.

Kim understands that when it comes to expanding globally, doing business is just one of the challenges. Other important considerations include “the instability of countries and currency, political issues in those countries, and the associated legal ramifications. You have to get down into the weeds. Those are things that I have done and continue to do.” Kim strongly believes that Chicago has the components to succeed in the global business environment and encourages the city to work harder to improve its international stature.

“If you ask some foreign business owners about Chicago, they talk about Al Capone and, if something positive comes up, they talk about Michael Jordan.” He challenges local and minority business leaders, of all size businesses, to promote globalization and appreciate that the entire world is their market.” Clearly, Kim is leading by example in this regard.

• Advisory Board member; Basra Iraq Steering Committee, United States State Department Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) (since 2012) and Small Business Advisory Board member; Asian American Advisory Board chairman for United States Senator Mark Kirk (since 2010)
• Board director; International Committee, Prima Civitas Foundation (since 2013) and Board Trustee; Public Works and Public Safety Committees, Northfield Township (since 1997)
• Former chairman of Treasurer Performance Audit Commission and Business Advisor to the chairman of the Illinois State Treasurer (2014)

“The news portrays the world as a crazy and chaotic place. However, in any country I’ve been to, whether in Africa, Asia, or here in the U.S., when you talk to the average person, most people want the same things: to be able to care for their family, educate their children, and have a good life.”
As you might expect from the president of a scientific company that researches and makes semi-conductors for solar panels and night vision technology, S. Raja Krishnamoorthi is a big promoter of innovation. What is unexpected are the factors he thinks are critical to creating an innovative climate: patience and appreciation.

People often think that technological breakthroughs happen overnight, but that usually isn’t the case, according to Krishnamoorthi. “Often, innovation takes a long time to bear fruit. You need to allow people to iterate and develop an idea until it works. Innovation comes when people are allowed to try new ideas, without fear of being punished because they didn’t get it right the first time.”

Krishnamoorthi believes that leaders need to model a willingness to take risks to foster innovation. He credits the founder of his company, Dr. Sivananthan, with establishing the requisite culture of security and independence.

He then moved on to serve as deputy treasurer in the Illinois State Treasurer’s Office, but ultimately left his practice to run a company, something he had never done before. Accepting a different role, he says, “gives you a chance to find those abilities you didn’t realize you had. Once you exercise those muscles, you discover you can do something you didn’t know you could do.”

Krishnamoorthi extends his support for innovation outside of the walls of business. He is president and co-founder of the Institute for Solar Photovoltaic Innovation, Research, and Edu-training (InSPIRE), which collaborates with Leave No Veterans Behind, University of Illinois at Chicago, and University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign to provide training for veterans and college students in solar technology skills. These students go on to work with inner-city grade school children on solar energy projects. “The idea is to excite kids to get involved in STEM, as well as exciting veterans to explore potential careers in the solar sector.”

S. Raja Krishnamoorthi
President, Sivananthan Laboratories, Inc.

“Innovation and diversity go hand-in-hand. If 10 similar people approach a problem in the exact same way and that way doesn’t work, you will have 10 people who failed. Whereas, if you have 10 different people trying four different approaches, one of them will probably work.”

As Board director, Episensors, Inc. (since 2013), Board director, Episolar, Inc. (since 2015), and Board director, Institute for Solar Photovoltaic Innovation, Research, and Edu-training (InSPIRE) (since 2012)

As Advisory Board member, Health-I-Pass, Inc. (since 2013), Asian-American Advisory Board member for Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth (since 2014), and is a member of the President’s Circle for Chicago Council on Global Affairs (since 2015)

As vice-chairman of the Governor’s Illinois Innovation Council at which he helped create the Chicago tech start-up incubator 1871, served as a member of the Global Cities Taskforce for Chicago Council on Global Affairs (2007), and was selected to participate in the Emerging Leaders Class of Chicago Council on Global Affairs (2008)
When people think about the globalization of manufacturing, they tend to think of outsourcing jobs to other countries.

For Ash Luthra, president and founder of LSL Healthcare, Inc., a 25-year-old $40 million medical supplies manufacturer based in Chicago, Ill., the focus is to move markets overseas, not the production.

“My passion is to manufacture in the U.S. and to employ people from the communities where we reside and service. We brought a lot of manufacturing business back to the U.S. and are planning to bring back even more.”

All their medical devices are made in the U.S. and are competitive in both price and quality with products made overseas. This makes it possible for LSL to export American-made products to the Middle East, Mexico, Canada, and the UK. According to Luthra, an important part of keeping operations local is supporting minority communities and companies.

Over 90 percent of LSL employees are minorities and Luthra actively mentors smaller minority companies. In addition, he currently serves on the Board of the newly-established National Advisory Council for Minority Business Enterprises, which provides recommendations to former Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke on a broad range of policy issues affecting the minority business community.

He recognizes that, especially in the healthcare space, quality is more important than price. “You can save a dollar on a kit, but if the quality is poor and you end up with a bloodstream infection, all those savings are gone. If you don’t have the right outcomes, it doesn’t matter what you do on price. It could become very costly.”

Luthra uses his engineering background, his focus on innovation, and his previous experience as a turn-around leader at American Can Company to continually improve efficiencies and meet changing customer needs. As a result, LSL grew even during the recession and he expects it to double over the next few years.

- Board director, Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (since 2014), Board director, Health Industry Supply Chain Institute, Washington D.C. (since 2007), Board director, Development Council, Lutheran General Hospital / Advocate Healthcare (since 2007)
- Member of the National Advisory Council on Minority Business Enterprises for the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency

“The culture of being heard and being able to bring ideas forward plays a big role in execution. It helps increase our speed to the market, because we have a free flow of ideas.”

Ash Luthra
President, LSL Healthcare, Inc.
In his previous roles as director of diversity and inclusion and CFO of Aon, Leonard McLaughlin showed the relationship between reducing costs and providing increased ROI while simultaneously promoting inclusion and diversity.

Now, he is president of Cornerstone Innovative Solutions, a division he launched in 2009. Cornerstone teams with minority business partners to provide quality products, services, and solutions that solve strategic problems for Fortune 1000 corporations. It also provides training and mentoring programs for its certified minority business enterprise (MBE) partners.

“My team specializes in a little bit of everything. We solve difficult problems for our clients, while creating opportunities for women and minority owned companies,” say McLaughlin.

McLaughlin grew the division from a beta concept to a fully operational $100 million entity in 36 months. His team garnered numerous accolades along the way, including a prestigious innovation and supplier diversity best practices award from the Dallas/Fort Worth Minority Supplier Development Council.

McLaughlin argues that client expectations are changing. He puts it simply, “They expect diverse teams from their suppliers.” He has been successful in getting senior management at Aon to understand that “clients are asking for this diverse representation, so it’s our obligation to meet their expectations. Having a diverse team when you’re interacting with a client is mission critical.”

Along with increasing the visibility of his own diverse team members, he brings the MBEs to the table with clients. “Typically the MBE is sitting behind the scenes and doesn’t necessarily get exposure. Our program presents MBEs as a core part of the team. They meet with the client along with our colleagues.”

McLaughlin appreciates those who came before him to give him the opportunity to do what he does. And, he takes what he does very seriously. He explained, “I know the shoulders that I’m standing on, and knowing and understanding that makes me hungry and makes me work harder. It is part of my work ethic.”

Leonard McLaughlin
President, Aon Cornerstone Innovative Solutions, Aon

“My motto is to ‘lift as I climb.’”
Michael McMurray sees one moment that best revealed the desire for a shift in his career trajectory. “When I went to work for the City of Chicago in the Department of Aviation, most of my work experience had been in law.”

He held positions as assistant state’s attorney for the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office, assistant regional counsel for the U.S. Social Security Administration, senior counsel for the United Auto Workers Legal Services, and senior staff counsel for the Chicago Housing Authority. McMurray says, “I enjoyed the law, but in government you can change how institutions operate and affect people’s lives on a mass scale. That’s really important to me.” He went on to serve in other key senior-level positions in Chicago government, including managing deputy commissioner, managing deputy procurement officer, and contract compliance officer for the City of Chicago.

Among many other successful initiatives in the latter role, McMurray spearheaded the re-drafting of legal requirements for the City’s Minority and Women owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) Construction Program. He led a task force of elected officials, civic leaders, business executives, and community activists to improve the City’s procurement policies and diversity initiatives.

Combining his legal training and analytical skills with policy making and operational skills, McMurray joined Globetrotters Engineering Corporation, an international architectural and engineering firm providing construction management, program management, facility management, and information technology expertise.

Under his guidance the company expanded its services into new areas, partnering with companies like Aramark for facilities management and moving into fiber optics design and installation projects. He also leads the initiative to expand the firm’s international business, seeking out strategic partners in China. McMurray sees public-private partnerships as a way to address public policy problems. However, he believes it also takes an all-hands-on-deck approach. “I was invited to a White House briefing on infrastructure financing. Our infrastructure is failing, and it’s not a Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative, black or white issue; it’s an American issue.”

“Mentoring is very important, particularly today, when you look at what’s happening in communities of color where the crime rate is high and the employment rate is low.”

Michael J. McMurray
President, Globetrotters Engineering Corporation

**Newly appointed Board director, 1871 (since 2015), Board director; Governmental Affairs, Buildings and Grounds Committees, Chicago Botanic Garden (since 2010), and Board director; Audit and Finance Committees, the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago (since 2014)**

**Former Board director; Program and Governmental Affairs Committees, Chicago Children’s Advocacy Center (2014) and vice president of the Board; Finance and Audit Committees, United Way of South Cook County (2003)**

**Other community involvement includes serving on the Curriculum and Budget Committees for the Local School Council Advisory Board to the City of Chicago’s Board of Education (since 2010) and participating in The Economic Club of Chicago (since 2010) and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (since 2012), and serving as a member of Business Forward (since 2013)**
Edgardo Navarro started his multi-cultural career in Panama as a student assistant with different internships each summer at the old Panama Canal Company.

He remembers, “One year, I repaired office equipment. Another year, I worked at an engineering division that did sophisticated analysis on slopes to make sure the mountains would not fall on the ships. I also did an internship with the U.S. Army Southern Command in payroll.”

After college, Navarro started an office supply business, but sold it because he lacked growth capital. He says, “it was a huge lesson in trying to create something without having the money to do it.”

After joining McDonald’s, he led the turnaround of McDonald’s Central America from 1999 to 2003 through the acquisition of restaurants in various countries in the region. In 2008, he became the general manager of the Indianapolis region, a group of 600 restaurants.

“It was the height of the financial crisis. People were being laid off and our business partners were nervous. Many questioned how this new leader was going to manage the region. For the next two years we had the best performance for that region and the company. It was done with the same team and business partners.”

Navarro then became vice president of Multicultural Marketing, responsible for the strategic, ethnic, and field marketing efforts for the U.S. business. Now, as president of McDonald’s Latin America, he is in charge of a $50 million marketing budget.

Navarro sees vision alignment and talent development as crucial components of his role. “There is a diversity gap in many organizations, because there isn’t a robust pipeline for the entirety of the employee base.”

One way he addresses this is by leading groups like the McDonald’s National Hispanic Employee Business Network to help develop high potential Hispanic talent for the company.
David Nichols embraces change. He also embraces big data. As Ernst & Young’s Americas IT transformation leader, Nichols developed teams to deal with the increasingly shorter cycles of technology adoption. Starting with a team of 30, he achieved a five-fold staffing growth in three years.

To stay ahead of the curve, Nichols says, “Be an avid reader. Look at what’s being written in nontraditional places.” He reads publications from universities in the U.S. and abroad, from industries that are tech-focused and from government-funded research labs, looking for data that point to trends. “I love data. When you can show trends with data, then you can start to see where things are going.”

In his current role, Nichols is responsible for growth in the advisory practice through innovation, alliances, and acquisitions. Over the past two years, he has closed more than a dozen new deals, all aligned to realizing the firm’s long-term strategic plan. Prior to Ernst & Young, Nichols served as the global managing partner for Accenture’s Service Orientated Architecture practice, which he started and grew from $56 million in year one to $285 million in year two. By year five, the practice grew to generate $1.6 billion in revenue.

Nichols originally believed whoever was assigned the best projects and strongest teams would have the greatest success. His personal experience and watching the Bulls have changed his opinion. “You can have one coach come into a team and that team can never win a championship. With the exact same personnel, another coach can create a dynasty. That’s what happened with the Chicago Bulls when Phil Jackson came in. That dynasty wasn’t because of personnel, it was because of culture. He understood exactly who the people were and played them to their strengths.” With modern business so entwined with technology, Nichols stresses the need to look to alternative revenue models for future growth. “You need to have an end goal, but you also need to be flexible; to fail quickly and try again. Figure out how to make yourself relevant in a way that drives value for your clients.”

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Ronald V. Redd
Director, BMO Capital Markets

“As director of BMO Capital Markets, Ronald Redd stresses the importance of partnering and developing deep relationships with clients. “It’s important to have relationships that make clients, businesses, and governments want to do business with you. It may sound simple, but some of this is getting lost.”

Redd has been instrumental in getting his group to partner up. This has proven to be an innovative approach toward creating opportunities, particularly in his role in public finance. “By partnering with other organizations, whether it is lobbyist firms or local firms that really understand the footprint, it becomes a three-way relationship that really helps drive business.” Creating “three-way” relationships has helped Redd expand BMO into new markets in Michigan and Missouri.

As BMO’s lead banker for Detroit, he worked with city government to finance the restoration of street lighting across the city after it had been absent for years. The transaction closed in June, 2014, and marked the first successful transaction in the city backed by municipal taxes since Detroit filed for bankruptcy in July 2013. BMO acted as co-managing underwriter on the $185 million financing.

Developing expertise in a market can be an important part of forming relationships as well. As part of a group at BMO that researched U.S. Department of Education regulations, Redd helped develop the operating metrics and template for lending in the regulated post-secondary education sector. Redd completed more than $250 million in debt financings, involving 12 multi-bank and stand-alone transactions. He also provided expertise to other institutions in managing the risks associated with loans.

Redd extended his partnership strategy into the area of recruiting and mentoring. Partnering with Morehouse College since 2006, he has worked to recruit undergraduate students for jobs at BMO Harris Bank. He also mentored each of them individually. “I am proud that the culture among the Morehouse

BMO Alumni is one of giving back and community involvement.”
Early on in life, Max Reed learned to rely on himself and take risks.

Growing up as a ward of the state in Chicago, he was unable to depend on any adults to help him, so he looked out for himself. Upon entering adulthood, Reed joined the Navy, serving in the Gulf war as an electronic technician. After leaving the military, he put his technical skills to work, building a career at AT&T and then IBM.

In his role as managing consultant for Business Strategy and Organization Change at IBM, Reed led a team that developed business strategy for a major telco company which resulted in the sale of its DataComm unit for $310 million.

Despite his success in systems integration, he felt that he needed human resources experience to get where he wanted in his career. Reed left IBM to take a HR position at CDW. “It was a huge risk. My professional friends thought I was insane to leave IBM, where I had a good career ahead of me. I joined a much smaller company and took an HR role. I’ve learned over my life to trust in the decisions I make.” Since he joined, CDW has grown to be a global corporation.

As CDW’s director of Human Resources, Reed made a compelling business case for diversity to management. “My approach at CDW was to start talking with business leaders about competitive talent and leadership characteristics. That’s why I participate in the Illinois Diversity Council, because at some point we have to move past the demographics and start focusing on the best and brightest talent.” Reed believes that when leaders understand these factors, they will naturally choose a more diverse workforce.

As vice president of Program Sales at CDW, Reed oversees a $9 million budget and leads a business unit of more than 110 members that supports $4.5 billion in annual U.S. and Canada program sales. Reed spends a great deal of time giving back. “I was a young kid running around the South Side of Chicago with no parents, being raised by the state and trying to figure out where my next meal was coming from. I didn’t know that one day I’d be a VP. There’s an important need in me to give back to my community.”
Al Reid started out with a passion for journalism. He recalls that while in college, “I wanted to be the next Walter Cronkite.”

However, over the course of working in communications and enrolling in a very quantitatively oriented graduate program at Carnegie-Mellon, he changed his focus. As a journalist, he was reporting on global problems, but at graduate school he found himself surrounded by students from all over the world and he gained a different perspective. “I was turned on by the whole global approach of the program and more importantly, the thinking they instilled about becoming problem solvers.”

Having now led international teams in more than 60 countries, Reid believes globalization provides companies with a better talent pool and the world’s best talent is attracted to truly global companies.

His strategic world view also advocates for new global markets. In his previous role, he served as vice president of Business Development at Baxter World Trade, Baxter’s emerging markets subsidiary. Currently, Reid oversees more than $20 billion in revenue from both domestic and international markets as divisional vice president, Corporate Development, at Abbott, where he is focused on developing strategies to expand the global pharmaceutical and healthcare brand into emerging markets such as Russia, China, India, and Africa.

In addition to his global outlook, Reid sees engagement with local communities as key to responsible corporate success. In the United States, he led efforts to address health disparities by partnering with local and national organizations to promote healthy lifestyles and support wellness activities for chronic diseases like diabetes, renal, cardiovascular, and HIV/AIDS via health screening and science fairs.

He is also the co-founder of Black Business Network, an employee affinity group for African-Americans at Abbott. Reid attributes his and other leaders’ successes to a strong internal compass. “During the heat of the storm, I remain calm and collected while keeping a sense of purpose. That motivates the team and keeps them focused on the bigger picture.”

- Board director; Development and Communications Committees; Chicago Youth Centers (since 2007), Board director; Technology Committee, The HistoryMakers (since 2009)
- Advisory Board member, Senior Helpers LLP (since 2013), Auerlia Group (since 2008), Asian Capital (since 2008) and member, Executive Leadership Council (since 2008)
- Former Board president; Finance, Education, and Governance Committees, Advocates USA (2014) and former Advisory Board member, Association for Corporate Growth (2005)
- Created the Laptops for Learning program for North Lawndale area students
- Established McClure Scholars award for high school seniors and college recipients with $1,500 - $2,000 annually for scholastic excellence
I believe everything you do in life is timing,” declares Puerto Rico native José Sánchez.

Prior to moving to Chicago, Sánchez spent fifteen years at the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation. In his role, he was responsible for integrating three hospitals and 34 clinics, from three very different communities in terms of ethnicity and culture, into a single large healthcare system.

After Sánchez successfully accomplished the mergers, he moved to Norwegian American Hospital to take on a crucial challenge.

In 2010, the 200-bed “safety net” hospital with 83% of its patients reliant on Medicaid or Medicare, was on the verge of bankruptcy. Sánchez was hired to turn it around, becoming Norwegian’s first Latino CEO.

The Affordable Care Act also passed the same year leading to huge changes in the healthcare industry. “This called for a major transformation in the way we deliver care and the way we get paid. Many colleagues complained about how difficult it was going to be. I decided it was better to embrace the reform and adapt. Now we are one of the strongest safety net hospitals in Chicago.”

After building a cohesive management team, Sánchez focused the hospital on delivering high quality primary care to the community. He also initiated partnerships with Swedish Covenant Hospital and several clinics to create an Accountable Care Organization.

He created MyCare Chicago, a Medicaid Accountable Care entity, and Be Well, an entity to coordinate care for individuals with mental health issues. More recently, he initiated a partnership to develop post-acute care via a new hospital home health agency, positioning Norwegian as a leader in new care coordination efforts.

Extending his community collaboration beyond care-providers, Sánchez works with local high schools to develop students interested in healthcare careers, pairing them with hospital professionals for mentoring. “Our contribution to the community is to make Norwegian’s resources available to create a new generation of healthcare workers.”

• Board director, Illinois Hospital Association; chairman, Ill. Healthcare Transformation Committee, IHA Safety Net Hospital Forum; Board secretary, Puerto Rican Arts Alliance; Board director, City Club of Chicago; Board chairman, Family Health Network; Board director, Community Care Alliance of Ill.; and Board trustee, Boricua College

• Former Board chairman, East Harlem Economic Development Corporation (2013)

• Executive Training Fellow, Coro Foundation and NYC Partnership (1993-1994) and NAPH Fellow (1997-1998)

José R. Sánchez
President and Chief Executive Officer, Norwegian American Hospital

“An important part of success comes from understanding the present and not missing opportunities. By understanding the current politics of healthcare, the health conditions of our communities, and relying on data to drive decisions, I’ve been able to successfully plan for the future.”
In his current role at the American Medical Association (AMA), Rodrigo Sierra is leading a transformation of the 165-year-old organization. As a result of his oversight of a $15 million budget and his repositioning efforts and overhaul of all communications, the association has achieved four years of subscription increases after years of decline.

Under his guidance, the organization has shifted from being internally focused to being customer driven. Sierra appreciates that people’s expectations are evolving. Even traditionally non-consumer organizations must put control in the hands of the consumers. “Customers expect an Amazon-type of experience no matter what they’re doing. There’s no way you’re going to meet those expectations unless everybody is connected and understands the customer experience.”

Sierra has honed his rebranding and communications skills in a diverse group of industries, using consumer insights and engagement to produce tangible results. At Johnson Publishing Company Sierra’s leadership resulted in an increase of more than 400% in social media metrics in eight months. He also garnered earned media coverage valued at well over $2 million. At Peoples Gas, he used statewide town hall meetings to build consensus and improve the energy assistance program, ultimately ending the cycle of disconnection for low-income consumers while increasing revenues by $14 million.

His background as a reporter and broadcast journalist made him a natural for public relations roles. “My reporting background has always been a great skill base. Asking a lot of questions helps me quickly understand the inner workings of an organization and how to apply that to marketing, communications, and strategy.”

Sierra credits his upbringing for grounding him in the values of family and the appreciation of hard work. “I grew up in southern California in a Puerto Rican family, surrounded by a Mexican community. All of those things are part of what makes me who I am. The values that Latino families often have – hard work, respect for others, giving back to the community – have served me well.”

“Be confident in what you know, but don’t be a know-it-all.”

Rodrigo Alfonso Sierra
Chief Communications and Marketing Officer, SVP, American Medical Association

• Vice chairman and commissioner; chairman, Pension Committee, Chicago Housing Authority (since 2013), Board director, Community Neighborhood Initiative (since 2010)


• Named one of the Top 10 Lideres by Hispanic Executive Magazine (2013), awarded the Silver Trumpet from Publicity Club of Chicago’s Silver Trumpet Award (2013), and received Gold for best content and Platinum for best site design for AMA website from E-health Leadership Awards (2012)
Gurpreet Singh is a technology innovator, leading more than 600 consultants as part of the leadership team that sets direction for nearly a billion dollar portfolio focused on health industries at PwC.

His team works on projects such as PwC’s health partnership with Google, creating the infrastructure for a $20 billion Chicago-based pharmaceutical company, and providing quality assurance to the initiative that will endeavor to cure cancer through technology innovation and data.

Singh serves as a personal coach for partners and staff. He directly manages two teams of more than 60 people each in Chicago and Indianapolis. He is also responsible for recruiting, interviewing, and on-boarding over 50 prospective consultants per year into PwC. When mentoring, Singh relies on listening and understanding differences, something he knows well from personal experiences, like having grown up looking very different from his classmates. “I’m Indian and an American Sikh, which means I wear a turban and don’t cut my hair. Early experiences, while difficult at the time, have formed who I am in terms of wanting to understand people and help them succeed.” As a result of his commitment to talent development, all of his formal mentees have experienced successful career advancement, with many now serving as partners at PwC.

Prior to working at PwC, Singh was the managing partner of the Pharmaceuticals and Life Sciences practice for Diamond Management and Technology Consultants. He led Diamond’s IT strategy practice and was responsible for launching the firm’s Center for Technology Innovation.

Singh has found innovative ways to use technology to help clients succeed. In one case, he streamlined the process for tracking and reporting adverse events of pharmaceuticals to government regulatory agencies. Using a cloud approach to data combined with electronic reporting integrated with the FDA, he reduced the cost per case from $1,000 to nearly $300.

By approaching patients more as consumers, he re-envisioned how people with type-2 diabetes could get better outcomes from their insulin delivery system. “Innovation comes from matching up ideas from different perspectives. We helped our client build a digital ecosystem where they could connect directly with patients and help them with their medical injection devices. We wanted to create a connected experience with the physician to address any problems.”

• Board director; chairman of the Audit Committee and member of the Finance and Technology Committees, Adler Planetarium (since 2012) and Board director; Aspire of Illinois (since 2013)

• Other involvements include People’s Resource Center (since 2013) and Prospect School Enrichment Program and Fundraising (since 2010)

• Singh opens his home multiple times a year to all of his employees and shares his life stories about family and inclusiveness

• He also built one of the first semiconductor blue lasers now used in blue ray players
As a child growing up in inner city Baltimore, Eric Smith had no frame of reference for his eventual career in investment banking.

He recalls, “I didn’t have parents that read the Wall Street Journal and I didn’t have a role model for what it’s like to be an African American in investment banking.”

As Smith started his career, he frequently found himself the only person of color in meetings. “You basically have to decide if you are going to be an agent of change or if you are going to sit on the sidelines and wait for change to just happen.”

Smith is currently the CFO for Middle Market Banking at JPMorgan Chase, which provides credit, cash management, capital markets, and corporate finance advisory solutions to companies with annual sales between $50 million and $500 million. He has worked as an advisor on a variety of notable transactions in the consumer sector including the $56.9 billion merger of InBev and Anheuser Busch, the $5.3 billion leveraged buyout of Del Monte Foods by KKR, and the $700 million sale of McDonald’s Latin America business.

Smith credits his mentors for helping him reach this point, but when he looks for a true role model he turns to his friend, John Rogers.

“I look at what John has accomplished in his career. He is so well connected, not only in terms of his role as an entrepreneur and a business leader, but also in terms of the civic community and political realm. He’s a true example of a dynamic and visionary leader.”

As a senior leader himself, Smith follows Rogers’ example and brings strategic perspective and financial acumen to the table, while also offering a real-world perspective to help organizations understand the value proposition of diversity. He makes sure his team is actively developing a robust pipeline of diverse young professionals who can become future leaders for JPMorgan Chase.

“Arising tide lifts all boats. It’s important from a business standpoint to have a strong economy at the local level, but also at national and global levels. With the interconnected dynamics of our global economy, it is critical that we hire employees that are diverse and have a global perspective.”

• Executive Board member; committee chairman of Lyric Unlimited, Lyric Opera (since 2010) and Board director; Program Committee, Chicago Urban League (since 2013)
• Former Board director; Development Committee, Family Focus (2009) and former Board director; Program Committee, Urban Gateways Center for Arts Education (2009)
• Global co-chair of the Black Organization for Leadership Development (BOLD) at JPMorgan Chase and Senior Executive Sponsor for The Fellowship Initiative (“TFI”) a mentoring and scholarship program of the JPMorgan Chase Foundation

Eric S. Smith
CFO – Middle Market Banking, JPMorgan Chase

“A rising tide lifts all boats. It’s important from a business standpoint to have a strong economy at the local level, but also at national and global levels. With the interconnected dynamics of our global economy, it is critical that we hire employees that are diverse and have a global perspective.”
Lucino Sotelo is the chief marketing officer for BMO Harris Bank. He is a strong customer advocate and aims to generate win-win outcomes for consumers and the bank.

Born and raised in Mexico, Sotelo learned the importance of putting the customer first as a customer sales representative at Grainger.

“A simple conveyor belt can mean millions in up time and production to a company, even though it was just a $30 sale for Grainger. By giving the customer the right product, they will think of you first when they have big orders because you took care of them and didn’t try to oversell them on something they didn’t need.”

Immediately prior to joining BMO, Sotelo was the head of digital strategy at Grant Thornton, LLP, where he developed and implemented an industry leading digital vision and strategy. Before that, he was inspired to balance his career with deep community involvement, which brought him to HSBC to help start their e-commerce business. The business quadrupled in just over a year.

A key reason he joined HSBC was to make a difference in the Latino community in terms of lending, access to capital, and financial literacy. “I was really tired of my aunts and uncles getting pulled into loans for products and services they should never have signed. There was an opportunity for me to come into HSBC and make a difference.”

He learned he could make an even bigger difference in the industry and the Latino segment by establishing a broader reputation on the strength and depth of expertise he brought to his role.

Sotelo believes it’s a great time to be in marketing. “We live in a time of transparency of information. You have everything at your fingertips to do one-to-one marketing. Recommendations have always been the holy grail of marketing and the beauty of today is that you can actually make that a science because you know where the centers of influence are.”

- Board director, Leadership Greater Chicago and Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow (Class of 2006)
- Former vice chairman of the Board, Rauner YMCA and was a former Board member of Executive Service Corps of Chicago, National Society of Hispanic MBAs, Association of Latino Professionals For America, and Peace & Education Coalition
- Contributed to the Forrester Leadership Boards of the CMO Group and eBusiness Councils, as well as served on the LendingTree Advisory Council
Early on in her career, Farah Bulsara Speer realized she had a passion for working in communications for the healthcare industry. “It brings together my altruistic side and my business skills, at one of the most defining points of our history in terms of the transition of healthcare.”

As executive director and North American health practice lead, she specializes in healthcare and public health marketing communications for pharmaceutical companies, associations and government institutions. Speer is constantly dealing with technological and societal change. She is not a proponent of technology for technology’s sake, though. “Just because you can do everything doesn’t mean you should. You sometimes have to step back and say, ‘What are the things we need to be doing that will make a difference?’”

Prior to joining Golin, Speer was with Ketchum in New York and Chicago. While in Chicago, she managed a global image campaign for Lions Clubs International. The campaign aimed to generate recognition for the organization’s ongoing commitment to sight preservation. As part of the campaign, Speer oversaw and coordinated the work of ten international offices. The campaign won the International Public Relations Association’s Golden World Award.

As someone who embraces change, Speer feels positive about the future based on her experiences with younger generations. “They have a generous nature and want to make everything better: the environment, the earth, their way of doing things and, their lifestyle. Those are values that we should all have.”

Speer views herself as “a person of the world,” attributing her adaptability to her multi-cultural experiences growing up. She was born in India and lived there until she was seven when her family moved to Africa for a number of years. After that, they moved to California and then Connecticut. As a result, she was constantly exposed to new cultures and societies. “I learned very early how to read an environment and step forward to take the opportunities that were in front of me. In each place, I picked up different things to add to who I am as an individual.”

- Dedicated coaching and mentor inside Golin, “As a woman of color and a working mom, it is a responsibility I take very seriously. I do my best to informally and formally advocate for those around me.”
- Speer has won numerous awards including the PRSA Silver Anvil, National Public Health Information Coalition (NPHIC) GOLD Award for Information Campaigns, and the Publicity Club of Chicago’s Silver Trumpet Award
- Speer has led crisis management and media training around bio-terrorism for the State of Illinois Department of Public Health and worked directly with local health departments to train their communications leaders. She also has led anti-smoking campaigns for the State of Illinois
- Volunteers at Ascension Catholic School
Gilda Livingston Spencer
SVP and Deputy General Counsel, Allstate Insurance Company

“I rarely look back. I think everything I have done has brought me to the place I am now. I made choices along the way with respect to work and family and I don’t have any regrets. I don’t think I would have done anything differently.”

Gilda Spencer grew up in a socially conscious family, so it has always been important to her to work for companies that share that value and help to advance community involvement. She found a good match in Allstate. “We recognize that we are important in this city. This is our home, so it’s important to bring out the good.”

As senior vice president and deputy general counsel at Allstate, Spencer leads a team of 64 employees in the Dispute Resolution Services division of the legal department. She is responsible for developing litigation and patent strategy and spearheading efforts to mitigate risk and litigation exposure.

Prior to Allstate, Spencer held positions as vice president and chief litigation counsel at Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company and was an assistant United States attorney in Columbus, Ohio.

Spencer currently serves as the sponsor of Allstate’s Executive Diversity Leadership Council. She has demonstrated her passion for minority advancement in the legal profession by promoting diversity efforts throughout her career.

Spencer also demonstrates her passion for advancing diversity through mentorship. “I have never lost sight of the fact that people took time out of their busy schedules to mentor me as a young lawyer. I rarely say no to anyone who asks for advice or a formal mentoring relationship.”

In addition to mentoring lawyers in Allstate’s Law and Regulation Department, she is also the executive sponsor for the firm’s African American Working Network. She mentors a summer intern through the Association of Corporate Counsel’s Minority Summer Internship Program, which she brought into Allstate.

Ironically, for someone who helps others develop personalized career plans, Spencer admits she never really had one for herself. Her explanation will resonate with many working parents. “There were times in my career when my plan was to just get out the door with both kids dressed appropriately and a lunch bag in their hands. Hopefully, I had on matching shoes.”

• Board director; Dreamkeepers Fundraising Gala Committee, LINK Unlimited (since 2014)
• Advisory Council member; Corporate Partner Program and Insurance Employment Law Committees, National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms – Awarded Outstanding Service (2011)
• Former Board trustee, Mid-Ohio Food Bank Board (2004)
• Named among the “Women Worth Watching” by Profiles in Diversity Journal magazine (2012)
• Received the Legal Diversity Champion Award from the Ohio Diversity Council (2011)
• Received the Top Corporate Counsel Award, Champion of Diversity Award from Columbus Business First (2012)
In his first job out of college, Jason Spigner was given free rein to develop an organizational development and change management plan for a manufacturer, without having any experience in manufacturing or training. “I laugh because I had a training series and my boss said, ‘Let’s call it Jason’s World!’”

Creating the program from scratch gave him a deep understanding of the type of lean production methods and process improvement strategies used in manufacturing that are now crucial in today’s healthcare market. This provided Spigner a head start when he shifted to the healthcare space.

His manufacturing experience also helped his focus on data-driven results – an unusual quality in the human resources area of healthcare at that time. This approach helped him accomplish a cultural overhaul at Advocate Condell Medical Center, resulting in its designation as a Truven Top 100 Hospital.

Cultural change was also crucial to the transformation he implemented at Advocate South Suburban Hospital. “When I went into that organization, they were changing some of the ways they did business, but it was not a trusting culture and there was high turnover. We really worked on how to build pride into the culture.” He implemented the “Circles of Commitment” strategy to strengthen employee engagement. It produced dramatic results within 18 months.

In his current role as vice president of Human Resources at Advocate Condell Medical Center in Libertyville, Illinois and Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital in Barrington, Illinois, Spigner is directly responsible for an $8.2 million budget. He heads strategic and operational human resources functions that include leadership development, workforce engagement, performance management, and employee relations.

Spigner wants to ensure that others get the early career support he lacked. “Even though I have always had a community to support me, I did not have a mentor. Now, I look to be that person for others.”

• Board director; Educational Policy Committee, Y.A.P.S., Inc. (since 2014), Board director; Professional Standards Committee, Primacare Home Health Services (since 2014), and Ex-Officio Board director, Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago (since 2015)

• Advisory Board member; Outreach Committee, Lake County Teen Alcohol Prevention Program (since 2014) and member and founding chairman; Nominations and Fundraising Committees, Carolyn D. Scott Scholarship Fund (since 2006)

• Former Board director; Personnel Committee, Omega Home Health (2005), former Board director; Education and Policy Committee, Omega Health Care Technical School (2009), and Former national and central chairman; Scholarship Mentoring Programming Committee, National Young Adults in Christian Ministry

• Former Advisory Board member, U-TURN and Employer Relation Committees, North Lawndale Employment Network (2005) and former Advisory Board member; Workforce Development and Community Partnering Committees, Sinai Urban Institute (2006)
When it comes to transportation technology, Russell Stokes is at the cutting edge.

Stokes is president and CEO of GE Transportation, a division of General Electric that has 12,000 employees globally and delivers $5.7 billion in revenue and supplies to customers with best-in-class products across a range of industries.

GE Transportation was established over a century ago, serving as a pioneer in passenger and freight locomotives. Today, GE Transportation is at the forefront of the Industrial Internet with innovative technology.

Stokes directed investment in the company’s RailConnect 360 product, which is a leading suite of software tools that deliver real-time data and insights to improve safety and decision-making across the rail ecosystem. “Our locomotives are smart. We monitor 80 physical sensors and 250 virtual sensors per locomotive.”

Under his leadership, GE Transportation booked a record order of more than 1,300 Tier 4 locomotives, totaling nearly $1 billion. He signed the division’s first ever Master Services Agreement in Indonesia and Mozambique and GE Transportation was selected as GE’s 2014 Business of the Year. “I feel really excited about what we have done as a team. We made a product that is a game changer in the industry. What we do differently is consider our customer’s perspective of our product.”

Through collaboration with software companies in Silicon Valley, Stokes has learned how to implement entrepreneurial techniques in a large corporate environment. “I believe that software and analytics is going to disrupt the world unlike anything people have seen before.”

One innovation at GE is the ‘Execute Growth Board,’ based on a venture capital model. Internal development teams looking to fund their ideas pitch them to the board. They have to define their ‘leap of faith’ assumptions: What is the market? What would get someone to place an order? How fast do you need to get there to beat a competitor? They break the execution down into stages and the board considers funding each stage. The risk is smaller than funding the final grand vision and allows for faster innovation.

“...We are going to need to step back and ask ourselves, ‘Do we have the right kinds of people?’ The person that I hired ten years ago for a certain job may not be the person that I need today. We may need to retrain some people, but we also need to think about the schools we recruit from and the degrees that we recruit for.”

Russell Stokes
President & CEO, GE Transportation

• Board director, World Business Chicago (since 2013)
• Partnered with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the National Society of Black Engineers, and the Illinois Institute of Technology and Chicago Public Schools to welcome the first-ever SEEK Program to Chicago, a program designed to expand students’ access to high-quality STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) learning opportunities
• Currently serves as the GE program leader and sponsor at the Undergraduate Leadership Institute of Kappa Alpha Psi (since 2009) and provides advisory support to Willowbrook Corner Community House (since 2012)
• Other involvements include having assisted City Colleges of Chicago to generate financial investment to expand educational benefits and financial support to Chicago Public School Students (2014), participated in the Teen Entrepreneur program at Chicago Urban League (2003), and served on the Strategy 4 Task Force Leadership Team at United Way (2003)
Prior to joining Northern Trust in 1986, Eric Strickland served two years as a legislative staffer on the House Labor and Commerce Committee in the Illinois General Assembly, and four years as a Policy Assistant for Labor and Economic Development to the Governor of the State of Illinois. He recalls, “I worked with a lot of people that would eventually become household names, like Carol Mosley Braun, George Ryan, and Dennis Hastert.” Strickland found the lessons learned in government service were transferrable to business, particularly how to isolate the core of the huge, unwieldy problems. “It’s really important to be able to parse through all the noise to get to the real issue, and then be able to articulate a solution.”

In his current role, Strickland is responsible for a team managing 75 Fortune 500 corporate relationships, servicing clients with $390 billion in retirement and corporate assets under custody and $57 billion in assets under management.

Strickland believes mentoring is critical to developing the next generation of leaders. He currently has four mentees at Northern Trust, including a mid-level manager located in Bangalore, India, who is a member of the high-potential Enterprise Talent Program.

In addition, he sits on the Advisory Board of the Bank’s Rotational Development Program, focused on identifying and recruiting diverse college graduates. “Your team’s success is a reflection on you. I have spent a lot of time making sure they have everything they need. If they are successful, then I am going to be successful.”

Outside of the bank, Strickland puts his finance and team-building skills to work for the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, working with Board leadership on a $35 million capital campaign. The funds will go to build a third stage at Navy Pier and will allow the theatre to greatly expand its Chicago Public School Educational Outreach Program, which currently impacts some 40,000 students annually.

- Board treasurer; Finance Committee, Chicago Shakespeare Theater (since 2010)
- Former Board director; Finance Committee, Open Hand of Chicago/Vital Bridges (2008), Board treasurer and president; Finance Committee, Pegasus Players Theater (1999), and former Advisory Board member, Alternatives, Inc. (1997)
- Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow, (class of 1986)
- Strickland is both a Michael Curry and Mellon Scholar

“Art has an integral part to play in opening the minds of young people to possibility. It is important that they learn science and math. It is also important that they learn the artistic endeavor because it fosters innovation.”

Eric Strickland
Senior Vice President, Managing Director – Corporate Group, Northern Trust
Fresh out of college, Dave Tan took a job with the Museum of Television and Radio in New York. Now he acknowledges, “There’s a thing called YouTube that does that for everyone. It shows how much has changed in that 20-year time span.” Since then, during his extensive 19-year career specializing in brand/search/interactive marketing, online publishing, product development and general management, Tan has held senior marketing positions at Resolution Media, Navteq-Nokia, Chicago Tribune Interactive, and Shure Inc.

When Tan reflects on his career growth, he believes the mental model of top down leadership was a challenge for him. His experience has proven, “Regardless of who you’re working with, things don’t happen just because the manager said it. They come together with collaboration and vision-setting.”

In Tan’s current role, he leads the U.S. Performance Media Agency Development Team at Google. He sets the culture and strategy for 160 divisional team members who consult and partner with leading media agencies to drive their media businesses, clients, and partnerships with Google. Tan is accountable for growing the division’s multi-billion dollar agency revenue business, which has increased 20 percent annually over the last two years, making it Google’s largest sales division.

Tan believes successful communication and collaboration is rooted in understanding the different cultures and business styles of a global team. “Tools like Skype and Google Hangouts help foster understanding through personal engagement because you can hear and see people’s reactions, even from the other side of the world.”

Tan believes that companies and boardrooms need more digital knowledge and know-how, and more diversity. “They are still traditional, not diverse in thinking or in culture – and they continue to do things incrementally. They need to consider bringing on someone who has a digital and marketing background, and who is culturally nuanced.” They need to bring on someone like Dave Tan.

• Board director; Membership and Communications Committees, Search Engine Marketing Professionals Organization (since 2015), Board director, Creative Good Executive Council Member (since 2006)
• Co-chair; Advisory Committee, Interactive Advertising Bureau (since 2013), and Board of Governors member; Communications Committee, The Hotchkiss School (since 2013)
• Former Board director; Memberships Committee, McCormick Tribune YMCA (2008), former Advisory Board member; Summit Planning Committee, Search Insider (2012)
• Annual guest lecturer covering digital marketing and communications at University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business, Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism, and UIC’s School of Marketing
• Coaches youth soccer year-round for two age groups (since 2010)
• One of the paradigms Tan learned at Google is “Fail fast, learn from it, and move on.”
A 20-year veteran of the financial services and consumer products sectors, Eduardo Tobon is now president of Diners Club International. His scope of responsibilities includes a global P&L of $33 billion in annual payment volume and presence in 185 countries and territories, via 80 franchises with over 20,000 combined employees. He is responsible for the entire business worldwide including marketing, product management, operations, the service center, client relations, and business development.

Although he works for the company that started the credit card industry, Tobon consistently looks to the future. He describes innovation as having a big ‘I’ and a small ‘i’. “The big ‘I’ is for ingenuity, big leaps of creativity that make big changes.” But he believes the small ‘i,’ for improvements, is often more important.

As an example of an improvement, he describes an arrangement Diner’s Club made with Can Roca in Spain, currently the number one restaurant in the world. Guest hopefuls typically wait more than two years for a reservation. Tobon explains, “We’ve been working with them on a digital format with privileges, where our customers can book advanced reservations in significantly less time.”

Whether it involves dealing with a customer or an employee, Tobon is committed to offering real-time feedback. With employees, he regularly provides both constructive and positive reinforcement quickly, so the impact is immediate. His principle also works externally. Tobon implemented methods that allow customers to contact Diner’s Club instantly and get responses just as quickly through its social media channels. “The way customers interact with brands today is very different. We need to make it easy for customers to be helped in the way they want.”

Tobon grew up in Columbia and believes the country’s limited resources drove his creativity and helped him accomplish more with less. He lived in other countries, which, according to Tobon, “opens your mind when you try to solve a problem, because you see so many different ways it can be solved. Often times, there’s more than one good answer.”

Eduardo Tobon
President, Diners Club International

“I live very vividly in the present. The best time is the present time, looking towards building a better future. By having this philosophy, even if times are challenging, it creates an effusive passion that can be viral and inspire people.”

• Board trustee, Ravinia Festival (since 2014) and National Advisory Board member, Association of Latino Professionals For America (ALPFA) (since 2014)
• Founding member of Milagros para Niños at Boston Children’s Hospital - a first-of-its-kind initiation from a major U.S. pediatric institution dedicated to finding healthy solutions for Latino kids affected by disease

"I live very vividly in the present. The best time is the present time, looking towards building a better future. By having this philosophy, even if times are challenging, it creates an effusive passion that can be viral and inspire people.”
Everett Ward, a partner in Quarles & Brady’s National Real Estate Group, is working with others in the group spearheading the formation of the firm’s Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) Practice Group, an interdisciplinary team of attorneys who seek to represent REITs in all aspects of their businesses.

While his practice is predominantly national in scope, he has done transaction work in Japan and the Ukraine. Types and sizes range from single-site transactions having a value of less than or more than $3 million, to multi-site/multi-state portfolio transactions valued in excess of $2 billion.

In December, 2014, Ward led a team in representing John Hancock Real Estate, the U.S. real estate unit of Manulife, in the sale of an office building in Chicago to a joint venture between Manulife Asset Management Private Markets and Allianz. The transaction was the first step in creating an investment vehicle and structure to purchase up to $1 billion in U.S. real estate.

Ward takes a cerebral approach to mentoring, believing it is important to help his mentees become critical thinkers. “You need to get used to stretching yourself intellectually, thinking about things and figuring out how to make them better.” Then, says Ward, you have to take it to the next step. “You need to be able to speak up when things aren’t going the way you think they should.”

For Ward, this kind of mentoring is crucial for organizations to empower their people and create foundational value. “The ability to push down decisions to a level where they can be analyzed and improved by the people who are going to be implementing them, without going through a ton of corporate process, will drive how we perform in the future.”

Through his “first Tuesdays” monthly lunch meetings, Ward created an elegant way for his team to leverage their collective ideas and expertise. Ward also encourages lawyers to volunteer and participate outside of the office in charitable, civic, and private organizations. “It provides perspective and makes you unafraid of change.”

- Board trustee; Public Programs, Repatriation and Deaccession, and Facilities Committees, The Field Museum of Chicago (since 2009), Board director, Executive Committee, The Oak Park Economic Development Corporation (since 2012)
- Other involvements include serving on the President’s Council of the Museum of Science and Industry (since 1994), the Princeton University Alumni Society Committee (since 1987), the Economic Club of Chicago, where he previously served a term as chairman of the Membership Selection Committee, (since 2004)

“Some leaders are all about acquiring power and influence. I’m more interested in how to use whatever power and influence I have to help younger people develop. I want to share the opportunities that I have been fortunate to have with others.”

Everett S. Ward
Partner, Quarles & Brady, LLP
When Adrienne White-Faines reflects on her career, whether at the American Cancer Society, where she worked to pass Smoke-Free Chicago legislation; Northwestern Medical Center, where she led a $600 million hospital redevelopment project; or in her current position as CEO of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), she finds a common thread: “All of my roles have been about helping institutions find new visions to achieve.”

At AOA, White-Faines spearheaded a strategic realignment of the association during a time of unprecedented growth and changing demographics within the profession. She worked to get approval to transition to a single accreditation system for graduate medical education. She also delivered a $43 million budget, which turned a deficit into a $1 million surplus in 2014.

White-Faines says strategic planning today has a completely different pace than in the past. “When I started my career, you could spend two years working on a plan that would then be implemented over five years. In today’s environment you don’t have that kind of time.” Instead, she argues, you need to move toward your vision quickly, but be nimble and flexible enough to realize when you are making mistakes and correct them. “Leadership requires a level of bold confidence, not that you have the right answer, but that you are willing to accept and acknowledge mistakes and work to fix them.”

Whether it is thinking about the complex nature of healthcare or ways to reach a changing demographic of physicians, White-Faines believes it is crucial to have people who are comfortable dealing with diversity.

She believes Chicago has the perfect environment for this. “You can’t look at any situation from a singular monolithic perspective. Chicago is an exciting place because you can find really wonderful talent and individuals who appreciate them and can look at the world in many different ways.”

Adrienne White-Faines
CEO, American Osteopathic Association (AOA)

“Wellness, like excellence, is not something that has an endpoint; it’s something you should constantly strive toward.”

Board director; Executive and Strategic Planning Committees, Erickson Institute (since 2010), Midwest Chapter president; National Conference Planning Committee, National Association of Health Services Executives (since 1985)

Former National Board director, American Field Service, USA, (2008), served as Board chairwoman, vice chairwoman and director; chairwoman, Public Policy Committee, Planned Parenthood Chicago (2001), former Board director; Capital Facilities Committee Chairwoman, Near North Health Service Corporation (1996), former Advisory Council on Women - a mayoral appointment, Chicago Commission on Human Relations (2002), and former Parent Athletic Advisory Committee Chairwoman, CPS/Walter Payton College Prep (2013)

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Keith Wagenknecht
Senior Vice President of Global Human Resources
Bank of America

Michael E. Williams
Partner
Krieg DeVault LLP
THE BUSINESS LEADERS OF COLOR publication was conceived through fierce discussion that has become a trademark of Chicago United.

In 2001, Chicago United launched The Corporate Diversity Profile Survey. The study, which occurs on a biennial basis, was the first national survey of its kind to measure racial diversity specifically in leadership ranks, on corporate boards, and in executive level management of large corporations. It serves as a benchmark for corporations to measure their progress in this area. When examined from a leadership perspective, the study continually finds corporations visibly lacking in racial diversity in corporate governance and senior management.

After the first study was conducted, Chicago United viewed the results as an opportunity to understand resistance to greater board diversity. The debate uncovered a widespread call for the need to identify diverse talent for the Fortune 100, 500, and 1000. In response, Chicago United's leadership took action to create a highly visible publication that demonstrates the level of diverse talent available in Chicago and the Business Leaders of Color publication was born.

We see the Business Leaders of Color publication used often as a reference. It also serves as inspiration, as was envisioned by the Chicago United thought leaders. The publication is a resource for those seeking to increase inclusion of diverse candidates in their boardrooms and business networks.

CHICAGO UNITED is an advocacy organization that promotes multiracial leadership in business to advance parity in economic opportunity. Chicago United supports the business community’s need to maximize the use of corporate and entrepreneurial talent and brings together diverse senior business leaders to break through barriers to realize the benefits of diversity and inclusion.

Chicago United is the premiere organization creating an environment where racially diverse CEOs and executive level management can share common experiences to promote multiracial leadership in governance, management, and business partnerships while delivering best practices for diversity practitioners and building relationships among leaders who share common values.

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Farah Bulsara Speer
Gilda Livingston Spencer
Jason Spigner
Russell Stokes
Eric Strickland
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Eduardo Tobon
Everett S. Ward
Adrienne White-Faines

2013

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Paula Allen-Meares
Leslie J. Anderson
Anthony A. Armada
Erik D. Barefield
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Enrique Beckmann
Jerome Byers
Marie Carr
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Cathy Peng
Juliette W. Pryor
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Kwame Y. Raoul
Sreeram Reddy
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Z. Scott
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David Wade

2011

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Gwendolyn L. Butler
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Ram Raju
Kwame Y. Raoul
Sreeram Reddy
Stephen Rhee
Z. Scott
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Kitty Pon
Cheryl Richardson, Ph.D.
Lac V. Tran
Mabel C. Tung
Monica L. Walker
Kimberly L. Waller
Norma J. Williams
Theodore I. Yi

2009

David R. Andalcio
Nancy Andrade
Andrea G. Barthwell
Linda Boasmond
Ramón Cepeda
Pedro Cevallos-Candau
Johnathan U. Choe
Michele Coleman Mayes
Michelle L. Collins
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Max W. Reed
Al B. Reid
José R. Sánchez
Rodrigo Alfonso Sierra
Gurpreet Singh
Eric S. Smith
Lucino Sotelo
Farah Bulsara Speer
Gilda Livingston Spencer
Jason Spigner
Russell Stokes
Eric Strickland
David S. Tan
Eduardo Tobon
Everett S. Ward
Adrienne White-Faines

2013

Leo Alaniz
Paula Allen-Meares
Leslie J. Anderson
Anthony A. Armada
Erik D. Barefield
Earl J. Barnes II
Stephen W. Beard
Enrique Beckmann
Jerome Byers
Marie Carr
Donna Cooper
Kermitt R. Crawford
Ana Dutra
Manny Favela
Guillermo Garcia
Sunil Garg
Maurice Grant
Cheryl A. Harris
Michael J. Hernandez
Patricia Brown Holmes
Lisa Haley Huff
Miroslava Mejia Krug
Jeongling Liu
Paul E. Martin
Joseph Q. McCoy
Juan J. Mir
Jackie Clark Muhammad
Kevin Newell
Tracey Patterson
Cathy Peng
Juliette W. Pryor
Ram Raju
Kwame Y. Raoul
Sreeram Reddy
Stephen Rhee
Z. Scott
Patrick R. Scotto di Luzio
Cedric Shaw
Donna N. Smith
Maurice S. Smith
Kurt A. Summers, Jr.
John P. Trainor
Valerie J. Van Meter
Yman Huang Vien
David Wade

2011

Robert Aguilar
Arabel Alva Rosales
Terrell D. Anderson
David Arenas
Jeanna D. Bridges
Kevin B. Brookins
Julia M. Brown
Rebecca S. Busch
Gwendolyn L. Butler
Calvin G. Butler, Jr.
Carlos F. Cata
Jorge V. Cazes
Gary Chan
Hugo Chaviano
Sona Chawla
Michael Chin
Nim Chinniah
Eric L. Conley
Jeanne M. Collins
Richard Gamble
Michelle J. Gaskill
Graham C. Grady
Maria C. Green
Brett J. Hart
Ahmad Islam
Nicole Johnson-Scales
Aylwin B. Lewis
Deborah Liverett
Eddie P. Lou
Wilfred J. Lucas
Maribel Mata Benedict
Anthony R. McCain
Henry J. Munez
Luis Nuñez, Ph.D.
Gerald L. Perry
Cheryl Pearson-McNeil
Kevin Newell
Tracey Patterson
Cathy Peng
Juliette W. Pryor
Ram Raju
Kwame Y. Raoul
Sreeram Reddy
Stephen Rhee
Z. Scott
Jeffery S. Perry
Kitty Pon
Cheryl Richardson, Ph.D.
Lac V. Tran
Mabel C. Tung
Monica L. Walker
Kimberly L. Waller
Norma J. Williams
Theodore I. Yi

2009

David R. Andalcio
Nancy Andrade
Andrea G. Barthwell
Linda Boasmond
Ramón Cepeda
Pedro Cevallos-Candau
Johnathan U. Choe
Michele Coleman Mayes
Michelle L. Collins
Nelda J. Connors
D’Andrea M. Anderson
Jose Armario
Patricia Arredondo
Cynthia Barginere
Brenda A. Battle
Kenneth M. Battle
Alex Bell
M. Michelle Blaise
Lawyer Burks III
Denise R. Cade
Yang Chao
Posh M. Charles
Eileen Chin
Michael Chu
Virginia Clarke
Roger O. Crockett
Yolanda Daniel
Angelique Athiena David
Jeffrey Dorsey
Willard S. Evans, Jr.
Thomas L. Fisher
Sharon T. Grant
Syrerma T. Hudson
Mahrurkh Hussain
Carl A. Jenkins
Oscar D. Johnson, Jr.
Steve Kim
S. Raja Krishnamoorthi
Ash Luthra
Leonard McLaughlin
Michael J. McMurray
Edgardo A. Navarro
David Nichols
Ronald V. Reed
Max W. Reed
Al B. Reid
José R. Sánchez
Rodrigo Alfonso Sierra
Gurpreet Singh
Eric S. Smith
Lucino Sotelo
Farah Bulsara Speer
Gilda Livingston Spencer
Jason Spigner
Russell Stokes
Eric Strickland
David S. Tan
Eduardo Tobon
Everett S. Ward
Adrienne White-Faines
2007

Anthony (Tony) Anderson
Adrienne Banks Pitts
Robert D. Blackwell, Sr.
Phil Cabrera
James S. Cabrera
Luz Canino-Baker
Judith Carre Sutfin
Warrick L. Carter, Ph.D.
Wheeler Coleman

Michael F. DeSantiago
Lena Dobbs Johnson
Sarah Garvey
Chester A. Gougis
David A. Gupta
Darrel Hackett

Avis LaVelle
James R. Lewis
Eugene Morris
Virginia Ojeda
Angela D. Robinson
Allen A. Rodriguez

J.D. Salazar
Manuel (Manny) Sanchez
Amir Shahkarami
Luis Sierra
Melody Spann-Cooper
Nathaniel K. Sutton
Andrés T. Tapia

David P. Thomas
Don Thompson
Donna J. Thompson
Joyce E. Tucker
Mark A. Urquhart
Sona Wang
Ernest C. Wong
Joset B. Wright

2005

Ralph Alvarez
Joel Arce
James A. Bell
Carole Brown
Todd Brown
Peter C.B. Bynoe
Adela Cepeda
Thomas F. Chen
Gery J. Chico

Betty P. Chow
Carolyn H. Clift
Joy V. Cunningham
Pedro Dejesús, Jr.
Robert Der
Eduardo Fernandez
Venita E. Fields
G.A. Finch
Raymond Grady

Randall C. Hampton
Gail D. Hasbrouck
Louis Holland, Jr.
John T. Hooker
Ralph V. Hughes
Cynthia J. Johnson
Michael W. Lewis
Connie Lindsey
Cheryl Mayberry McKissack

Renetta McCann
Eric McKissack
Ralph G. Moore
Clare Muñana
Michelle Obama
Leticia Peralta Davis
Desiree Rogers
Steven Rogers

José L. Santillan
Smita N. Shah
Paula A. Sneed
Jorge A. Solis
John D. Sterling
Christina M. Tchen
Timothy W. Wright III
Andrea L. Zopp

2003

Sanjiv Anand
Brian Anderson
Yasmin T. Bates
Lester Blair
William Bonaparte
Martin Cabrera
Marty Castro
Clarissa Cerda
C.W. Chan

Alison L. Chung
Frank Clark
Lester N. Coney
Ron Daly
William McKnight Farrow, III
Phil Fuentes
Brenda J. Gaines
Michael Gonzalez
James Hill, Jr.

Mellody Hobson
David Holly
Tao Huang
Abe Tomás Hughes, II
Darrell Jackson
Valerie B. Jarrett
Bernard Loyd
Lester McCarrall, Jr.
Gary E. McCullough

Tom McLeary
Francisco Menchaca
Willie Miller
Bob Nash
Lou Nieto
Roderick Palmore
Barbara M. Quintana
James Reynolds
Mary Richardson-Lowry

Jesse H. Ruiz
Niranjan Shah
Alejandro Silva
Stanley B. Stallworth
Charles Tribbett
Edward J. Williams
Desmond C. Wong