



Chicago United



Business Leaders *of* **COLOR**
2021





We are honored to present the 50 newest members of Chicago United's *Business Leaders of Color*. Join us in celebrating their successes and future contributions to the business world.

Since its inception in 2003, Chicago United has identified 420 board-ready candidates who have served in more than 300 corporate directorships. Now, in 2021, we are proud to increase that number to 470. This year's Business Leaders of Color are a strong representation of our work at Chicago United. This publication is the sum of 50 qualified, dynamic, visionary, and talented executives of color who are ready to step into corporate directorships in Chicago and beyond.

Powered by tenacity and courage, these 50 leaders have risen through the ranks and today are trailblazers — dedicated, willing, and able to both lead and innovate. They share recurring themes of resilience, determination, and inspiration. And in each of their stories, you will read compelling reasons of why and how they are equipped to serve and see their impressive track records of accomplishments.

An ever-growing body of data show that corporate boards comprised of talent from diverse racial backgrounds and unique mindsets govern better and create stronger outcomes. And now, more than ever, shareholders, employees, customers and the public have come to expect representation across all categories of business, including their boards.

Corporate America has made some progress. But there is still work to be done. Corporations have a responsibility to pursue diverse leadership, and the caliber of skill and talent highlighted on the following pages is an excellent place to start. Here are individuals who will ask the difficult questions, work to solve pressing problems, and help drive corporate change while elevating shareholder value and innovation.

Enjoy this year's publication, and congratulations again to these outstanding members of Chicago's business community. We hope to see some of them on your boards soon.

John C. Robak
Chair
Chief Executive Officer
Greeley and Hansen

Tiffany Hamel Johnson
President and CEO
Chicago United

Chicago United



Mission

To achieve parity in economic opportunity for people of color by advancing multiracial leadership in corporate governance, expanding the talent pipeline for executive level management, and growing minority businesses.

Vision

A Chicago region that is the most inclusive business ecosystem in the nation.

- 06. Verneda Bachus**
Chief Executive Officer, Friend Health
- 07. Regina Cross**
Vice President, Investment Management Division, Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC
- 08. Dr. Roberto Curci**
Vice Provost and Dean, Brennan School of Business, Dominican University
- 09. Melissa B. Donaldson**
Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, Wintrust Financial Corporation
- 10. Jose Flores**
President & Chief Operating Officer, Wynndalco Enterprises, LLC
- 11. Steve Flores**
Partner, Winston & Strawn LLP
- 12. Michelle Flowers Welch**
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Flowers Communications Group
- 13. Cristy Garcia-Thomas**
Chief External Affairs Officer, Advocate Aurora Health
- 14. Jose Garcia**
President & Chief Executive Officer, Northwest Community Credit Union
- 15. Darius A. Gill**
Senior Vice President, National Practice Executive, Northern Trust
- 16. Jeanne M. Gills, Esq.**
Partner; Vice Chair, IP Department; Member, Firm Management Committee, Foley & Lardner LLP
- 17. Jesus Gonzalez**
Deputy Global Practice Leader, Aon, plc
- 18. Denitra Griffin**
President, AGB Investigative Services Inc.
- 19. Jasmine Guy**
Vice President of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, CCS Fundraising
- 20. Nickol Hackett**
Chief Investment Officer, Treasurer, The Joyce Foundation
- 21. Erik Hall**
Executive Director, GCM Grosvenor
- 22. Douglas E. Harrell**
Chief Financial Officer, Office of Special Deputy Receiver
- 23. Lisa M. Harrell**
Chief Human Resources Officer, Cleveland Avenue
- 24. Stephen Harris**
President, Medicaid, Health Care Service Corporation
- 25. Glenn Harston II**
President, The Gemini Group LTD
- 26. Anuradha Hebbar**
Partner, Global Practice Leader, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Kincentric, a Spencer Stuart Company
- 27. Lee Henderson**
Partner, Ernst & Young LLP
- 28. John O. Hudson III**
President and Chief Executive Officer, Nicor Gas
- 29. Julieta LaMalfa**
Chief Financial Officer, Canela Media, Inc.
- 30. Gordon C.C. Liao**
Founder & Managing Partner, Promise Holdings LLC
- 31. Gregg Lunceford, Ph.D., CFP®**
Senior Vice President, Mesirow Financial
- 32. Suzet M. McKinney, DrPH, MPH**
Principal, Director of Life Sciences, Sterling Bay
- 33. Samara Mejia Hernandez**
Founding Partner, Chingona Ventures
- 34. Deidra Merriwether**
Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, W.W. Grainger, Inc.
- 35. Lourdes Mesa González, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, ND, NCARB**
Senior Vice President, Primera Engineers
- 36. Martin Montes**
Vice President, Large Customer Services, ComEd – An Exelon Company
- 37. Reginald Moore**
Vice President & General Manager, Newell Brands
- 38. Tracie Morris**
Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resources and Inclusion Officer, BMO Harris Bank N.A.
- 39. Marisol Pantoja**
Senior Vice President, Chief Audit Executive, TransUnion
- 40. J. Todd Phillips**
Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Parson Partners
- 41. Nadia M. Quarles, Esq.**
Assistant Vice President for Business Diversity, Office of Business Diversity, The University of Chicago
- 42. Sumant Ramachandra**
President, Pharmaceuticals and Chief Science & Technology Officer, Baxter International
- 43. Sendhil Revuluri**
Managing Director, PEAK6 Capital Management
- 44. Craig Richey**
Senior Managing Director, Strategy & Consulting Lead – Midwest Market Unit, Accenture
- 45. Derreck James Robinson**
Managing Director, National Sales Leader, Deloitte Consulting LLP
- 46. Louis Sandoval**
President & Chief Executive Officer, Knnected Inc. Db a SupplyHive™
- 47. David Segura**
Chief Executive Officer, VisionIT, a Softtek company
- 48. Anne Shaw**
President, Shaw Legal Services, Ltd.
- 49. Thurman “Tony” Smith**
Senior Vice President & Territory Executive, PNC Bank
- 50. Sunitha Thomas**
Regional Senior Investment Officer, Senior Vice President, Northern Trust
- 51. Cedric D. Thurman**
Executive Vice President Chief Diversity Officer, Group Head Community Investment and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago
- 52. Edna Uribe**
Vice President, Director of Sales, Univision Chicago
- 53. Lizette Williams**
Global Head of Vertical Solutions Marketing, Facebook, Inc.
- 54. Suzanne Yoon**
Founder & Managing Partner, Kinzie Capital Partners LLC
- 55. Weifang Zhou**
EVP & President of Testing, Inspection & Certification, UL Inc.



Verneda Bachus

Chief Executive Officer, Friend Health

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Medical Home Network
- Illinois Primary Healthcare Association
- HRDI a subsidiary of Friend Health
- Southside Health Care Collaborative
- Zion Economic Foundation
- P-TECH Network
- 211 Advisory Committee
- The Links Incorporated
- The Chicago Network
- Economic Club of Chicago

My leadership career is a clear example of what is possible when purpose, diligence, and the right influences converge.

Love, faith, education, and service were foundational in my upbringing in Kansas City, Kansas. My family's passion for service inspired me to pursue a career that reflects that principle. I am the daughter of a Baptist pastor and an exceptionally supportive mother.

The educational pursuits of my parents, four siblings, and I, represent four earned doctorate degrees and a master's in healthcare jurisprudence.

Much like my father, I am also a connector. The relationships I have built have been critical in delivering new opportunities, transformation, operational excellence, and corporate governance.

It is rare to see a woman, let alone a Black woman rise through the ranks of the male-dominated energy sector. I credit my success to strong mentors who recognized the value of my work and encouraged me to pursue nontraditional assignments and roles.

I became the first female and Black Vice President of Western Resources, Inc., and I led the transformation of a substantial operating unit that services more than 1 million customers across three states. As a result, service levels improved substantially, I was a major contributor in merger and acquisitions activity, and I co-led post-merger integrations.

My early career experiences are at the core of my commitment to developing new generations of leaders. As Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Friend Health, a health center supporting underserved populations in Chicago, I see people as our greatest strength in fulfilling our vision to achieve the best health outcomes for our communities. I was instrumental in rebuilding our governing board, led the acquisition and integration of an established community-based organization, and spearheaded the launch of an expanded, tech-enabled healthcare facility.

My leadership career is a clear example of what is possible when purpose, diligence, and the right influences converge.

Leadership and trust must work in tandem.

I lead with compassion, consideration, and support causes that will change the trajectory of the communities where we live, work, and play.

I am the manifestation of my ancestors' wildest dreams. As a young woman of color in an industry historically dominated by older white men, I manage a \$2 billion investment management team within Goldman Sachs, a Fortune 500 company with more than \$44 billion in annual revenues and one of the largest global investment banks.

Leadership and trust must work in tandem. I am a trusted advisor that has guided multigenerational clients and families worldwide with decision-making in their professional and private lives. Throughout moments of uncertainty, economic downturns, and a global pandemic, I've advised teams that in turn created optimized portfolios that often outlive those that we service.

While at Eli Lilly and Company, I managed Six Sigma teams in Shanghai, Lima, and Vienna focused on technology-enhanced planning, forecasting, and reporting solutions. Within our corporate office, I had dual reporting responsibility to both the finance and marketing divisions, leading the largest division of Lilly USA at the time, a \$4 billion division. In this role, I was awarded the Global CFO Award, recognized for my ability to develop strategic plans, guide trade-off discussions, and leverage cross-divisional conversations across legal, marketing, sales, finance, and operations. As a team, we brought a sense of ownership for all parties and executed our goal: to deliver best-in-class drug therapies and medicines that improve the quality of lives for our loved ones in all the communities we touch.

Hard work, dedication, passion, and innovation are skills that I've acquired throughout my career and have demonstrated in my civic leadership roles as incoming Board Chair of KIPP Indy Charter School, Co-Chair of the Annual Luncheon for the Chicago Foundation for Women, Corporate Principal with Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and the Diversity Chair on Victory Gardens Theater Board.

My ability to engender trust, listen with empathy, and guide corporate executives, family offices, and nonprofit entities is evident in the lifelong relationships that I've built and nurtured.



Regina Cross

Vice President, Investment Management
Division, Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Victory Gardens Theater
- Chicago Foundation for Women
- KIPP Indy Charter School
- Riley Children's Hospital Foundation
- Cara Chicago
- Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- Leadership Greater Chicago, Class of 2022



Dr. Roberto Curci

Vice Provost and Dean, Brennan School of Business,
Dominican University

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy
- Rome International Properties, Inc.
- Global Market Ventures, Inc.
- AACSB Small Schools Network Affinity Group Steering Committee
- AACSB Initial Accreditation Committee
- Merrill Lynch Diversity Board of Advisors

Education has been and will continue to be the most important lever for upward mobility in our society.

I am proud of my Hispanic heritage and am deeply committed to advancing social justice and fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community. I also care deeply about entrepreneurship development and helping minority and women-owned business owners succeed.

Education has been and will continue to be the most important lever for upward mobility in our society in my role as Dean of the Brennan School of Business at Dominican University — a liberal arts institution — I directed the school's strategic development, day-to-day operations, faculty and staff, academic programs, centers of excellence, accreditation, and external relations. In 2019, I assumed a concurrent role as Vice Provost for Strategic Initiatives and External Relations. In addition, I oversee the Offices for Career Programs and Employer Relations, Civic Learning, Global Learning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Research and Sponsored Projects.

In my tenure at Dominican, I advanced the University's strategic plan, secured federal grants, developed a blueprint for global learning, and designed a decision-making process to launch new programs. As Dean, a priority for me has been to prepare students for professional success in a competitive job market. Currently, all business majors are now required to complete an internship. This endeavor has benefited all students, but it has been particularly effective in supporting first-generation and minority students.

Prior to Dominican, I served as Associate Dean and Eugene Ratliff Endowed Chair Professor of Finance at Butler University's Lacy School of Business. As Associate Dean, I worked alongside a team within the Brookings Institution's Global Cities Initiative. We launched a strategic plan to advance the internationalization of regional firms and to connect the City of Indianapolis with business communities around the world.

I am a lifelong learner and specialize in international finance and international business and have been published in those areas as well as in immigrant-owned businesses. In 2011, I was a Fulbright Scholar at Lingnan University (Hong Kong, China). In 2005, I was a Research Fellow at Instituto de Empresa's *Euro-Latin American Research Center* (Madrid, Spain).

My leadership skillset in academic institutions also extends to my work as President of the Indianapolis Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, where I united Hispanic-owned and mainstream businesses and spearheaded a merger with the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, establishing the Hispanic Business Council.

I encourage corporate leaders to address the gaps in diversity and inclusion and expand possibilities to marginalized people that are excluded from key assignments.

My background includes a mosaic of experiences and accomplishments that have been transformative in shaping my point of view and leadership skills in mid-sized and mega-sized businesses in three different industries.

In my 35-year career, there were peaks and valleys. I saw opportunities in those valleys. For example, I entered college as a computer science major. Still, I graduated with a business degree in management science which satisfied my desire for learning quantitative analytics after the university eliminated the computer science program. It paid off and opened the door to experiences outside of what I was accustomed to. Working on the \$18 billion-dollar U.S. Air Force F-16 fighter program exposed me to federal contracting. Working in this capacity, I obtained sales excellence awards from former computer giant Digital Equipment Corporation and developed a global women's conference at Walgreens.

From these experiences, I refined my approach addressed business challenges, including the impact on corporate culture. As a result, I imparted effective selling skills, leadership development, diversity, equity, and inclusion at an \$8B technology solutions company. This led to receiving the George W. Bush Administration's Exemplary Voluntary Effort Award for demonstrated workplace diversity and inclusion results.

I encourage corporate leaders to address the gaps in diversity and inclusion and expand possibilities to marginalized people that are excluded from key assignments. For example, I organized and implemented diversity, inclusion equity progress monitoring as a quarterly agenda item during Wintrust Board meetings during a nationwide moment of reckoning.

I am a civic leader and consensus builder with high integrity.



Melissa B. Donaldson

Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer,
Wintrust Financial Corporation

Board Experience & Affiliations

- YWCA Lake County
- Chicago Sinfonietta
- Financial Services Pipeline
- The Executives Club of Chicago
- The Links, Incorporated, North Shore Illinois Chapter
- UCAN Diversity Advisory Council
- Skills for Chicagoland's Future
- Mortgage Bankers Association



Jose Flores

President & Chief Operating Officer, Wynndalco Enterprises, LLC

Board Experience & Affiliations

- College of DuPage
- Stanford Latino Entrepreneurship Initiative Education Program, 2019
- IBTTA – Leadership Academy Experience

I continue to find new ways to leave an impression, create a legacy by helping others, and try to inspire others to do better regardless of any circumstance.

I grew up in Logan Square at a time where crime and violence were widespread. Despite what occurred outside the walls of our home, my parents, a first-generation Mexican father and a Puerto Rican mother instilled invaluable skills in my sibling and I including, hard work, persistence, kindness, and fairness.

The lessons I learned from my upbringing were vital for the launch of a technology mentorship program at a community high school that I created. The program trained a cohort of students in computer, network and server support. While working with students I witnessed exponential growth of all participants involved. I replicated similar programs in other school districts and the mentorship program created job opportunities for participants.

I continue to find new ways to leave an impression, create a legacy by helping others, and try to inspire others to do better regardless of any circumstance. In the span of my career, I've managed large scale projects including Dell, Caterpillar, New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) and Citibank, led a \$34 million project for Chicago Public Schools (CPS). I managed projects with the Dallas Independent School District, New York Court Systems, Pace Bus Systems, Puerto Rico Department of Education and Texas Department of Transportation.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I assisted CPS with technology support while students worked remotely and as students prepared to return for in person learning in 2020.

As an avid learner I consistently search for ways to refine my skills. Recently, I completed a scaling program at the Stanford Graduate School of Business alliance with the Stanford Latino Entrepreneurship Initiative Education Program which centered on giving back to the communities that we serve. I am honored to serve on the Board of the College of DuPage Foundation which champions diversity and inclusion. I am committed to being a leader and inspiring others to do their best.

We owe it to our communities to invest our time, energy, and skills to tackle the collective problems that we face.

Perseverance is a lesson that I learned early on from my parents, who immigrated to the U.S. with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. By watching them and seeing their many sacrifices, I learned that no matter how difficult a situation seems, there is always a way forward. Many of the traits that have helped me succeed include hard work, resourcefulness, adaptability, accountability, and respect for others across all backgrounds.

I supported myself through college and law school and built a successful practice at one of the country's preeminent law firms. I am a respected attorney and have earned the trust of clients, and have assisted some of the country's leading enterprises with matters related to their businesses.

We owe it to our communities to invest our time, energy, and skills to tackle the collective problems that we face, and as a board member of several organizations, I am working to address some of the issues that are most pressing in our communities. I was appointed twice by the Mayor of Chicago to serve on the Chicago Police Board. Duties of the Board include nominating candidates for the position of Superintendent of Police and making judgments on cases involving allegations of police misconduct within the Chicago Police Department. We hold monthly public meetings where we listen to the public and advise the public of our decisions. As board members, we understand that our work is subject to the highest levels of public scrutiny and we strive to perform our duties with independence, integrity, and fairness.

It has been my great pleasure to work with officers and the staff of several non-profit organizations to tackle the ways in which they deliver services. It's an opportunity for us to reimagine how we do things to better serve our constituencies in the future. I look forward to continuing that work.



Steve Flores

Partner, Winston & Strawn LLP

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Cristo Rey Jesuit High School
- Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms
- Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois Charities
- City of Chicago Police Board
- Hispanic National Bar Association
- Illinois State Bar Association
- Employee Benefits Section Council
- UIC John Marshall Law School Center for Tax Law and Employee Benefits



Michelle Flowers Welch

Chairman & CEO, Flowers Communications Group

Board Experience & Affiliations

- PR Council – National Board
- Salvation Army Chicago Metropolitan Division
- Public Relations Society of America - Chicago Board
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.
- Chicago Urban League
- Alliance of Business Leaders & Entrepreneurs (ABLE)

Empowering others is integral to my company's work.

I've known I would have my own business since I was a little girl growing up in North Carolina with parents who nurtured my ambition. I started my first business in high school. My father was a born entrepreneur but could not live his life's dream because he chose a regular nine-to-five to support his family, including my mom and five siblings.

Before journeying into entrepreneurship, I developed sales and marketing materials to help insurance agents grow their businesses at Integon National Insurance Company. After moving to Chicago, my career path led me to the Chicago Urban League's Communications Department. I led marketing communications for various League programs, including one that helped Black contractors secure more lucrative, multi-million-dollar projects.

Empowering others is integral to my company's work. I founded Flowers Communications Group (FCG), an award-winning, integrated marketing firm, to help iconic brands like McDonald's, Honda, AT&T, and Nike build connections with diverse consumers utilizing public relations, advertising, social media, content development, and a portfolio of marketing communications services. The firm is laser-focused on helping brands redefine success – to understand, appreciate and value the importance of doing well by doing good in multicultural communities.

FCG was named to the Forbes 2021 List of America's Best PR Companies, and is celebrating 30 years in business. FCG has developed various brand campaigns and programs to drive clients' sales while making a systemic impact by creating scholarships, homeownership, employment opportunities, minority supplier development, and other social good.

Of the campaigns that we've worked on, my favorite was the MillerCoors Urban Entrepreneurs Series designed to help small businesses grow, create jobs, and advance their communities. The program awarded millions of dollars in business grants and other resources to small businesses nationwide. It empowered entrepreneurs to build wealth, employ others, support communities, and, like all successful businesses, pay it forward in meaningful ways that make a difference.

With each new role, I've been introduced to new people and a new community that's shaped my understanding.

It's great to be an expert in your field, but it's more important to evolve and understand the world and community around you. This sentiment reigns true in each of the roles that I've held throughout my career. With each new role, I've been introduced to new people and a new community that's shaped my worldview. Each move served a purpose and created my well-rounded perspective that helps me lead external affairs at Advocate Aurora Health.

I recall the moment I moved away from home. I was ready to learn something new, but it wasn't easy. There were moments where my drive to learn was almost overshadowed by my fear of the unknown. My drive to succeed did not yield. I became a leader at a major metropolitan newspaper with revenues of \$230 million and developed the concept for a bi-monthly local Hispanic magazine. I later became CEO and president of the largest united arts fund in the country which provides \$198 million in support for the performing arts.

Stepping outside of my comfort zone paved the way for my transition into the health care world, where I am now responsible for shaping the overall experience for patients, team members, and community partners for one of the top 12 largest not-for-profit systems in the country. I lead critical efforts around health equity, and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies as well as community health, community relations and the foundation.

My work in health care began with foundation work, and my drive to learn and tackle new opportunities ultimately led me to where I am today. Every year, Advocate Aurora Health provides more than \$2 billion in community benefits for health care like trauma services, behavioral health, immunization programs, school-based health care, community outreach, education programs, language services and more.

My commitment to shaping communities extends beyond health care. I am a board member for several companies and organizations including WEC Energy Group, a Fortune 500 company and parent company of Peoples Gas, Delta Dental, Chicago United, and United Way.



Cristy Garcia-Thomas

Chief External Affairs Officer, Advocate Aurora Health

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Chicago United
- Delta Dental
- United Way of Greater Chicago
- United Community Center
- WE Energies
- Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot's Racial Equity Rapid Response Initiative
- National Association of Latino Healthcare Executives
- WEC (overseas People's Gas)



Jose Garcia

President and Chief Executive Officer, Northwest Community Credit Union

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Illinois Credit Union League
- Saint Xavier University Alumni Board
- Northwest Community Credit Union
- Governor's Advisory Board for Credit Unions
- League United Community Housing Association (LUCHA)
- Illinois Financial Credit Union

My passion for my job does not stop at the office. Still, it continues through serving on business, government, and community boards, volunteering, networking with our local chambers of commerce, or connecting with local businesses.

For many, there is a perception that the financial services industry is comprised of large, faceless organizations where money is the priority, but that notion isn't accurate. I have always believed that banks help people solve everyday financial problems. The credit union industry was founded on the principle of "people helping people." This philosophy resonates now more than ever. As far back as I can recall, I've always envisioned working at a bank. I was interested in all the banking industry's intricate details, and I desired a career with a meaningful purpose.

I was raised in Little Village and Chicago Lawn and learned the value of and importance of obtaining an education. I graduated with a degree in business from Saint Xavier University (SXU). Before my father passed away, he shared an invaluable piece of wisdom that I still hold onto today. He said, "try to help others that are not as lucky as you."

My first professional position was as manager of the accounting department at a credit union. I subsequently moved into a leadership role at Baxter Credit Union. The cumulative experience prepared me for my next position. My father's words continue to motivate me, and I've used them to bring to life my vision to bring financial literacy to underserved areas. Most recently, that vision was fulfilled by opening a branch of the credit union at SXU, which serves a large Latino population. Additionally, a financial literacy initiative at SXU was incorporated into the freshman orientation curriculum.

My passion for my job does not stop at the office. Still, it continues through serving on business, government, and community boards, volunteering, networking with our local chambers of commerce, or connecting with local businesses.

When given a playbook, we can all manage, but only a true leader can operate when there is no established roadmap.

My early exposure to being thrust into a completely foreign environment helped me develop my ability to navigate change and uncertainty, which I believe are essential for any leader. As a first-generation immigrant from India, I owe my success to my parents, who uprooted their lives so that my brother and I would have more opportunities for success.

When given a playbook, we can all manage, but only a true leader can operate when there is no established roadmap. Moving to the U.S. as a teenager was challenging, but I would not change a thing.

While taking on a project at U.S. Bank, I introduced best practices for investment to the international banking arm of the institution. This experience would be one of the first that I've had as a leader. In this role, I traversed the globe and had to navigate different cultural and regulatory norms. When the project was complete, I walked away with skills in conflict resolution and strategic planning.

As my career progressed, I constantly questioned how and why we did things and gradually realized that I wanted to lead from the front. As a result, over the last 20 years, I have been in various leadership roles culminating in my current role as head of the Foundation & Institutional Advisors practice within Northern Trust. Under my leadership, the practice has grown from \$11 billion in assets under management in 2011 to over \$19 billion in assets in 2021.

I am a member of various leadership groups within Northern Trust, including the Wealth Management Leadership Group, the Executive Corporate Social Responsibility Council, and the Executive Community Reinvestment Act Committee.

I believe corporate cultures that maintain a close connection and clear lines of communication from the C-suite to the front line are the most successful. As a leader and a manager of a P&L, I know that our people are our most valuable asset. In addition, I believe in creating a culture that promotes intellectual curiosity and provides the freedom for partners at all levels to challenge our thinking, so we are continually improving.



Darius A. Gill

Senior Vice President, National Practice Executive,
Northern Trust

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Ruth Lake Country Club
- Deborah's Place



Jeanne M. Gills, Esq.

Partner; Vice Chair, IP Department; Member, Firm Management Committee, Foley & Lardner LLP

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Chicago State Foundation
- Art Institute of Chicago
- Corporate Counsel Women of Color
- National Bar Association
- Black Women Lawyers Association
- American Bar Association

It is vitally important that we all champion diversity, equity, and inclusion and leave our legal profession better than we found it.

As a Black female engineer and attorney in management at an Am Law 50 law firm, I've overcome obstacles every step of the way. I am grateful for those challenges — they've made me humble, resourceful, resilient, creative, and adaptive.

My experiences have paved the way for leadership, including roles as a member of the firm's Management Committee; national vice-chair of Foley's Intellectual Property Department, where I guide strategic marketing and business development; and as the founder of Foley's first African American Affinity Group over 20 years ago.

I'm passionate about service and being a trusted legal advisor to clients, both corporate and nonprofit. I serve as lead trial counsel for complex IP litigation and appeals, including nuisance and "Bet-the-Company," with more than \$500 million at stake. The ability to manage risk and opportunities has dovetailed into my role leading the IP portion of significant M&A transactions, with a reported value of more than one billion.

As one of the few first-chair Black patent litigators in the country and a female equity partner in a large law firm, I take my duty to give back seriously. I carve out time to mentor others. As a single mother to an adopted Black male, I enjoy mentoring women on work-life balance and the joys of adoption by reinforcing multi-tasking, managing stress, and pivoting—skills that any company should want in an attorney handling complex and challenging matters. Part of my lasting legacy is as co-founder of the Chicago Black Partners Alliance, which helps companies realize the benefit of diverse perspectives by improving the promotion, retention, and success of Black partners.

Helping my in-house clients grow professionally is also a passion. I have sourced qualified candidates for open IP counsel and general counsel positions and have outpaced client contacts making their next career moves. Organizing a complimentary General Counsel Boot Camp at Foley for a first-time GC and involving multi-disciplinary attorneys to provide the underlying training is just one example of these efforts.

It is vitally important that we all champion diversity, equity, and inclusion and leave our legal profession better than we found it. Unfortunately, we still have a long way to go, and I look forward to ushering us into the next era: with a diverse profession and even more success.

Mentorship is also an area that I am passionate about, and I am committed to paying it forward by investing time and energy in educational causes.

As the son of a retired union carpenter, I inherited a strong work ethic and a specific skill set such as meticulousness, problem-solving, and analysis. And like every journey that involves mastering your craft through formal education, preparation, and real-world experiences, my mantra extends beyond measuring twice and cutting once. Instead, it consists of applying critical thinking skills and a balanced approach to any board.

I was raised on the south side of Chicago, where at an early age, my parents knew education to be an equalizer, and as the oldest of five children, I was the first to receive a bachelor's degree. After receiving an engineering degree, I started working at Motorola on leading-edge technology. It was there where I came to appreciate the value of technical education. Whether it is understanding the evolving regulatory environment or evaluating a new technology such as blockchain, it is my job to bring a global perspective on new cyber perils and their inherent impact on our clients.

Mastery of any craft, especially cyber technology, involves investing a significant amount of time in continuous education. My tenured history in the technology space has given me a 'leg up' with critical insights into the full scope of managing risk for a firm to protect its operations, reputation, and balance sheet. In addition, I can exchange ideas with thought leaders through industry participation in conferences including CES, RSA, and DePaul University Cyber Summit. We are currently working on the 2022 Aon/Ponemon Study.

Mentorship is also an area that I am passionate about, and I am committed to paying it forward by investing time and energy in educational causes. I've done so by serving as a board member for Working in the Schools and the Instituto del Progreso Latino (Charter High School and College).

As a trusted advisor to many Fortune 1000 multinational firms, I bring a balanced approach to address their needs regarding governance, ransomware, business interruption, risk transfer due diligence, and most recently, losses stemming from intellectual property. This extends across industries and geographies.

Finally, investing significant time in the Latin American region for the last five years has armed me with industry insight into the region's approach to cyber perils, ultimately landing me the "self-professed LatAm Cyber expert" title.



Jesus Gonzalez

Deputy Global Practice Leader, Aon, plc

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Instituto Del Progreso Latino
- Working in the Schools
- Aon Apprenticeship Council



Denitra Griffin

President, AGB Investigative Services Inc.

Board Experience & Affiliations

- African American Legacy Board - Chicago Community Trust
- Always Giving Back Foundation
- Imani Pearls Community Development Foundation
- Loyola University Quinlan School of Business Leadership Council
- P.A.C.E., National Louis University
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.
- Jack and Jill of America - Windy City Chapter

I am committed to disrupting the cycle of poverty through workforce development, financial wellness, and philanthropy.

In a male-dominated field, I have led transformational change and improved business resiliency with sustainable growth models. I am an accomplished business owner and executive for the largest black-owned full-service security company in the country.

My extensive experience in physical and cybersecurity governance, performance management, strategy, execution, leadership development, and P&L management has turned around underperforming business units and driven EBITDA and profit margins over the industry's national average.

As President, I have pivoted AGB Investigative Services from an entrepreneurial company to a business enterprise with over 1,500 employees in five states. I demonstrated leadership skills early on in my position by putting measures in place to track the progress of AGB's strategic plan. I evaluated the department's progress, identified areas for improvement, and hired consultants to complete a gap analysis. Findings from that report resulted in changes that put AGB on track to meet their goals and objectives by implementing companywide performance dashboards and key performance indicators to evaluate productivity and incorporate high-level revenue-building strategies.

Other examples of my leadership include identifying software and technology that addressed workforce management and fleet management issues that negatively impacted the bottom line. As a result of my efforts, AGB was the first to market with technology that manages a large workforce and fleet. The addition of the management tools resulted in a significant performance improvement and has allowed AGB to work on new business opportunities efficiently.

My experience with best practices for creating, implementing, and overseeing ESG governance that mitigates risk, increases productivity and increases revenue has prepared me for board positions. As CEO of the Always Giving Back (AGB) Foundation, I am committed to disrupting the cycle of poverty through workforce development, financial wellness, and philanthropy. The Foundation has served more than 300 youths and provided 8,800 hours of internship and coaching. In addition, more than 450 families have been supported annually through the Family First Program, which has also awarded \$65,000 in scholarships.

The AGB Foundation and my experience on non-profit boards have enabled me to empower those in underserved communities by providing for their needs and creating opportunities that will empower them to make a difference in their communities.

I intuitively see the threads of opportunity that weave through organizations, thread them together, empower others to extend their thinking, and drive innovation.

I take vision and make it a reality through sound strategy development. I intuitively see the threads of opportunity that weave through organizations, thread them together, empower others to extend their thinking, and drive innovation. My work is grounded in financial information and historical data.

I have a proven track record in leading diversity and inclusion and human resources strategies. Before recently joining CCS Fundraising, I was the Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/Corporate Social Responsibility at Major Lindsey & Africa and Allegis Partners. I sat on the management team and develop strategic initiatives and programs that support both companies' overall diversity, equity, inclusion, corporate social responsibility, and social justice goals.

I previously served as Diversity & Inclusion Specialist for Foley & Lardner LLP, where I advised firm leadership on embedding diversity, inclusive and cultural competency within the firm's operations and established organizational priorities, including initiatives aimed at increasing diversity in client teams, leadership pipeline development, and external corporate partnerships.

I began my career in Human Resources at the University of Chicago. As Special Assistant to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources, I assisted with team projects. In addition, I launched a professional development program, which increased the team's organizational effectiveness, morale, and professionalism.

As a natural leader, I noticed that communities are suffering and are no longer safely anchored to solid principles. Concerned that Chicago communities are beginning to drift without a clearly defined roadmap, I answered my calling through nonprofit board leadership. Through solving problems, creating new initiatives, and forming partnerships at the intersection of community, business and nonprofits, I have managed more than 500 volunteers, fundraised over \$1 million for worthy causes, raised budgets to \$1.7 million, and designed more than 200 events and programs.

I currently serve on the Board of Directors of Margaret's Village, Transitional Shelters for Women and Families. I am President of the Women's Board of the Chicago Urban League and Vice President of Programming & Professional Development for the National Association of African Americans in Human Resources Chicago. Also, I served as a board member and secretary of the Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals and the Bronzeville Lighthouse Charter School. Through board leadership, I have proven that young professionals can make a difference by leading by example. I am an inspirational leader who empowers others through storytelling.



Jasmine Guy

Vice President of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion,
CCS Fundraising

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Margaret's Village
- Women's Board, Chicago Urban League
- National Association of African Americans in Human Resources Chicago
- Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals
- Bronzeville Lighthouse Charter School
- Polished Pebbles Girls Mentoring Program
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc
- Jackson Park Advisory Council



Nickol Hackett

Chief Investment Officer, Treasurer, The Joyce Foundation

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
- First Women's Bank
- Economic Club of Chicago
- Hyde Park Neighborhood Club
- Art Institute of Chicago

Now is the time for making the aspirational values of our missions actionable.

There is an opportunity to drive positive and substantive outcomes that make the aspirational actionable in every situation.

Starting my career in investment banking taught me the value of being enterprising and executing accurately. Those lessons served me well when I became Chief Investment Officer (CIO) at the onset of the global financial crisis.

While it was a big moment of firsts, a woman of color leading public pension assets in the state, it was also high-stakes. The consequences of failure would have been catastrophic for our many stakeholders. However, by assembling a great team, having the confidence of the board, and formulating a clear vision of how to establish a resilient investment program, I was able to build a high-performing fund strategy that not only doubled in value but was positioned to weather financial market turbulence.

Over the 13-plus years as a CIO, I know that what distinguishes excellent portfolios also distinguishes worthy organizations, and that is differentiation. For example, a differentiated thesis, strategy, skill, and experience enhance the ability to source great ideas and manage complexity. Where some might see a “lack of,” I see an “opportunity for.”

Looking ahead, organizations will differentiate themselves by delivering innovative solutions which address complexities that go beyond supply chain management. Now is the time for making the aspirational values of our missions actionable. By taking a long view and offering collaborative, sustainable solutions, organizations can differentiate themselves as partners and deliver solutions as new compounds of mutual value creation.

As an allocator, I've built differentiated portfolios by sourcing new and emerging investment talent and allocating over \$3 billion to diverse managers who have gone on to construct best-in-class investment platforms. This approach is also taking shape in philanthropy, where The Joyce Foundation is extending the model by powering up our asset pool to invest in next-generation investment managers.

As a board member, civically and in business, I can help advise around how we continue to build on our core strengths and evolve to meet the challenges presented in our external environment and changing expectations of stakeholders. I am grateful to serve on the boards that are meeting these challenges head-on, including the recent launch of the First Women's Bank.

Mentorship is invaluable and too often lacking for younger people of color in organizations.

In my nearly 25-year career in financial services, I have managed risk, co-led a municipal investment banking business, sat on my department's operating committee, originated relationships with sophisticated institutional investors, and headed my division's diversity efforts. This myriad of experiences has culminated in a deep understanding of complex financial and credit products, alternative investment strategies, industry regulation, and relationship management.

Today, I am a senior member of the client group at GCM Grosvenor, a \$65 billion global asset management firm. I deliver the firm's private equity, absolute return strategies, and tangible assets to our clients.

Day-to-day, I work closely with the investment teams and governing boards of endowments, foundations, pension plans, health care organizations, and family offices. I also connect prospective investors interested in committing significant capital to the community of high-performing, diverse-led alternative investment managers, where GCM Grosvenor commits billions of dollars.

I have been willing to take on new challenges throughout my career, pivoting into different markets and industries at a senior level. That can be daunting, particularly when you're expected to be productive in a short time. But, in retrospect, I realize that advocates and coaches along the way significantly bolstered my possibility of success.

For example, I recall a challenging time working as an associate on a derivative sales desk on Wall Street, when the newly hired head of my group pointed out that my best skill — the ability to make complex topics simple — was underutilized. I soon counted him as my mentor, friend, and the executive that undoubtedly had the most significant effect on my career.

Mentorship is invaluable and too often lacking for younger people of color in organizations. It's one of the reasons I've taken a leadership role in the National Association of Securities Professionals, a 35-year old organization co-founded by former Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, to achieve equal opportunities for people of color in the securities industry.

A fierce commitment to mentorship is also why I'm always willing to engage meaningfully with younger professionals. So many have paved the way for me, and I feel the obligation to pass along what I have learned to others as they pursue their careers.



Erik Hall

Executive Director, GCM Grosvenor

Board Experience & Affiliations

- National Association of Securities Professionals
- Chicago Community Loan Fund
- Urban Bush Women Dance Company
- Chicago Summer Business Institute
- Katalusis Foundation
- Economic Club of Chicago
- Association of Black Foundation Executives
- Leadership Greater Chicago, Class of 2011



Douglas E. Harrell

Chief Financial Officer, Office of Special Deputy Receiver

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Office of Special Deputy Receiver
- Step One Substance Abuse Services
- Special Children's Center
- Toast Masters International
- Druid Club of Chicago
- NAACP
- Operation Push

I am also passionate about the success of others that may not have access to the same opportunities.

I remember the first time that I felt the weight of a quarter in the palm of my hand. I received 25 cents after helping a neighbor carry their groceries inside their home. I learned a valuable lesson that day that I could earn a living by providing a service.

My desire to learn about business and economics prompted me to attend college. As a result, I became the first in my family to attend college and business school. Now, I am a licensed CPA, and my work centers on examining and analyzing complex financial statements across many different industries.

As a senior vice president and portfolio manager at Mesirow Financial, I acquired many skills, including interpreting company strategies and competitive positions by interviewing C-suite senior management and building financial models to determine company valuation. I am well-versed in research technology, retail, energy, industrial, insurance, and financial service companies. As a reoccurring guest analyst on Bloomberg Television, Bloomberg Radio, and WBBM-AM "Noon Business Hour", I have had the opportunity to share my expertise in a public forum.

In my current role, I have to be a quick study. We take control of insurance companies that are not adequately capitalized, including assuming control of banking operations, cash management, and tax auditing and establishing internal controls. In the past five years, we have marshalled and distributed more than \$1.9 billion to policyholders and creditors while managing \$1 billion company assets.

My prior treasury experience at Chrysler-Mitsubishi Motors includes training in Japan, trading a \$1.2 billion annual Japanese yen portfolio, and managing a \$300 million corporate line of credit with 21 American and Japanese banks. In addition, as a corporate finance manager at Sara Lee, I led a \$100 million capital spending budget for North America. I launched a financial model to justify return-on-investment and net present value while managing capital spending limits and variances.

While I am passionate about my career I am also passionate about the success of others that may not have access to the same opportunities as I had. I built a building maintenance company that has provided nearly 100 low-income families jobs and serviced more than 100 clients. In addition, my company won second place in the Chicago State University College of Business U.S. Senator Mark Kirk Entrepreneurial Idol Competition.

My dedication to my career is driven by my desire to help improve the lives of those around me who may feel hopeless. I hope to inspire them to reach their full potential.

Leadership is not a title but a responsibility and privilege to engage, nurture, and grow talent.

I create space for people to do their best work. This is my superpower. I'm not sure if I chose human resources or human resources chose me, but it's the human part for me either way. I genuinely believe that an organization's greatest asset is its people, and my impact is in this space.

Growing up in Roseland, my parents taught me what was possible. Circumstances taught me resilience, and education gave me access. I learned that when exposed to what is possible, you can do anything with support. This philosophy, and my belief in the human spirit, is what guides my work.

My career reflects this belief. I received a scholarship to attend college for accounting, and with it came an internship. I knew nothing about business, and this was my first exposure. Part of that internship was a stint in human resources, which piqued my interest in this career path. As an intern, I saw the direct correlation between people and business outcomes, and I witnessed outstanding leadership. I was hooked and never looked back. Having led every function within HR, from compensation to recruiting, I eventually became Vice President of Human Capital and Executive Development for a \$250 billion healthcare company before taking the leap into entrepreneurship, founding an HR consulting firm. This diverse experience led to my current role as Chief Human Resources Officer for Cleveland Avenue (CA), where I am enjoying my most significant impact yet. In addition to my primary role, I serve as Executive Director for CA's non-profit venture, launching in 2022, to support the success of Black, Latinx, and women entrepreneurs; and I oversee our college internship program that provides industry experience to first-year college students.

Leadership is not a title but a responsibility and privilege to engage, nurture, and grow talent. Whether it be at CA, like Governors State University Board of Trustees Chairwoman, or serving alongside my beloved sisters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., it will always be the human part for me. If the impact of COVID-19 has taught organizations anything, it is to value their people.

From the South Side to the boardroom, these experiences inform how I engage and lead. In the words of my friend and mentor, Liz Thompson, "I succeed, not in spite of where I come from, but because of it." I bring value, not only because of what I do but because of who I am. This is my superpower.



Lisa M. Harrell

Chief Human Resources Officer, Cleveland Avenue

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Governors State University Board of Trustees
- School District 161 Board of Education
- Oasis Foundation for Education
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated
- Top Ladies of Distinction, Skyline Metropolitan Chicago Chapter



Stephen Harris

President, Medicaid, Health Care Service Corporation

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Health Insurance Service Corporation
- Blue Venture Fund Managed Medicaid Advisory Group
- Solera Health
- Heritage Strategic Advisory Council
- Broad College of Business, Multicultural Business Programs
Michigan State University

I know firsthand that the best mentor/mentee relationships are mutually beneficial and evolve well beyond career path discussions.

I attribute my success to discipline, determination, humility, and discernment. With over 20 years of experience leading strategic business development and performance improvement initiatives for top healthcare organizations, I've established a solid track record of driving growth and profitability while maintaining excellence. I routinely draw on my past roles as a CPA and serving in financial management leadership roles and from my experiences in core health plan operations. As a thought leader and change agent, I pride myself on being authentic and approachable, with the ability to advance business priorities through accountability.

As the President of Medicaid for Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC), I serve at the forefront of driving enterprise growth and positive performance for a line of business with one million members and more than \$7 billion in revenue. Although I am a Detroit native and grew up in a community with crime and poverty, I feel grateful for the opportunity to impact underserved communities and some of our most vulnerable members. During my time in this role, I have collaborated with key leaders to reprioritize initiatives to improve compliance and achieve the most impactful, tangible results.

From unlocking creative best practices to enhancing member care management innovations and celebrating performance improvement milestones along the way, I've been able to better position HCSC for long-term success in an increasingly competitive marketplace. In addition to leading my team through the challenges of the pandemic, our line of business experienced more than 20% membership growth. Through it all, we demonstrated our true capabilities and furthered our mission to ensure healthcare needs for our members.

As a strong proponent of serving as a mentor to "pay it forward," I intentionally share lessons learned, whether through formal or informal mentor-mentee relationships. I am fortunate to have had many mentors who encouraged me to excel or broadened my perspective on my career journey and life in general. Therefore, I know firsthand that the best mentor-mentee relationships are mutually beneficial and evolve well beyond career path discussions.

The pride you place in your work produces quality results, and further, it teaches people how to be invested in every aspect of their work, no matter how small their role may appear to be.

I always thought I would follow in my father's footsteps and construct buildings and developments. I did not become a contractor, but I did become a significant relationship builder. I have counseled notable people and brands throughout my career, from global icons to major league sports team owners and a U.S. President.

I have a very diverse background in general and segmented markets. My rapid and proven record of success led me to found and develop The Gemini Group in 1998. The Gemini Group is a leading integrated marketing, public relations, and crisis management firm specializing in segmented marketing, brand development, media relations, community and public affairs, and event planning.

In *Crain's* Chicago Business, The Gemini Group ranked 53rd in the publication's "Chicago's biggest minority-owned businesses 2020" list. I established the firm with the philosophy of strategically developing long-lasting, beneficial relationships. We create strategies that enable clients to connect with their mass target markets. Our services include helping clients navigate change and crises, protect reputations, build images, grow brands, and beat competitors.

I am an avid sports fan, and just like in sports, there is no "I" in team. The success I have enjoyed is due to The Gemini Group and those around me. I was taught early to value collaboration. I position my team to be leaders in their own space by encouraging them to be firm owners. Owners, not in stake or stock, but work ethic and pride. The pride you place in your work produces quality results, and further, it teaches people how to be invested in every aspect of their work, no matter how small their role may appear to be.



Glenn Harston II

President, The Gemini Group LTD

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Build For the Future
- Chicago Blitz Youth Football Organization
- BCU Youth Build
- Bailey Boy A.D.E. Foundation
- Project SYNCERE
- Earth Equity
- Rainbow PUSH Coalition
- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.



Anuradha Hebbar

Partner, Global Practice Leader, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Kincentric, a Spencer Stuart Company

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Women's Business Enterprise National Council
- Rhea of Hope Foundation
- Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund
- Business Insurance Diversity & Inclusion Institute
- Catalyst Research Partner

My parents taught me to “be the change you wish to see,” and I continue to be inspired by those words today.

I credit my success to the values my parents instilled in me as immigrants who brought me to the United States seeking better opportunities for their family. Despite facing numerous challenges when the U.S. population was just one percent Asian, they role-modeled perseverance, hard work, determination, and a dedication to excellence. While my mother could not go to college, she held an unwavering belief in the importance of education.

My parents taught me to “be the change you wish to see,” and I continue to be inspired by those words today.

I have more than 25 years of Fortune 500 corporate and consulting experience, which has impacted positive organizational change and results. Currently, I serve as the Global Practice Leader responsible for the commercialization of DEI solutions for Kincentric, Spencer Stuart, and Cambria, the three operating businesses of Spencer Stuart, a privately held company with revenues of more than \$750 million. Our clients expect leading-edge counsel to succeed in unlocking the power of people and teams. As a trusted advisor to CEOs and their teams, I help connect the dots between culture, leadership, talent, engagement, diversity, equity, and inclusion to transform their organizations to accelerate business value.

My career path has not been linear. With every role that I've held, I have enjoyed incredible experiences that have nourished my ability to learn, adapt, grow, and persevere. I began my career as a lawyer but went into marketing communications, helping to build some of the world's most iconic brands. My success in the field put me in a position to lead DEI initiatives for Fortune 100 organizations like McDonald's and Verizon.

At Verizon I played a critical role in driving transformational change, evolving the organizational culture to create a diverse, inclusive, and inspiring workplace—a company objective. My efforts increased supplier diversity goals by 10% in just one year, resulting in \$5.2 billion of tier one and tier two spend with women and minority-owned businesses.

Now, more than ever, leaders must understand that diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical to a company's ability to attract and retain talent, innovate, improve performance, and drive results.

If I can help a staffer progress in their career, clients accelerate their business, go into underserved communities, and share my journey with young men who look like me, I know I am living my purpose.

My childhood was split between Kingston, Jamaica, and Oakland, California. However, both Jamaica and Oakland left an indelible mark on me. In Jamaica, I was raised by my grandmother, a successful entrepreneur. What she lacked in formal education, she made up for it by being the hardest-working person I've ever met, and she was full of wisdom. In Oakland, my father, an entrepreneur, taught me the importance of treating everyone you encounter with respect, no matter their role in your life or society.

The cultural differences between Kingston and Oakland were vast. Transitioning between these two worlds was one of the most challenging things I've ever done, yet it left me with resilience, grit, and a thirst to improve the lives of others.

Ernst & Young (EY) has provided me the opportunity to make an impact in the lives of my family, friends, and colleagues by helping them achieve their goals, those I encounter through the entrepreneurial programs run by my practice (Entrepreneur of the Year, Entrepreneurial Winning Women and Entrepreneurs Access Network) or as an Executive Board member of the Big Shoulders Fund. When I combine the network I've built, the knowledge I've amassed over 25 years of helping clients solve their most pressing issues, and the platform provided to me by EY, it's a powerful change-making force.

My career has taken me from the dot-com era in San Jose to our national offices in New York City and London, where I served as COO of EY's UK & Ireland Assurance practice and oversaw 1,900 professionals. This incredible breadth of global experiences prepared me for my most exciting role yet – leading EY Private in the Americas, with thousands of professionals who support entrepreneurs and private businesses in achieving their ambitions while serving notable companies. The excitement of these high-growth companies takes me back to watching my grandmother and father pour sweat into their businesses; I know what it takes to bring these dreams to life.

Every day, I reflect upon the great Jackie Robinson's wisdom: "A life is not important, except for the impact it has on other lives." If I can help a staffer progress in their career, clients accelerate their business, go into underserved communities, and share my journey with young men who look like me, I know I am living my purpose.



Lee Henderson

Partner, Ernst & Young LLP

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Big Shoulders Fund
- DuPage Children's Museum
- East Bay Community Law Center
- 1871
- Perspectives Leadership Academy
- EY Launch
- Sigma Pi Phi
- Economic Club of Chicago



John O. Hudson III

President and Chief Executive Officer, Nicor Gas

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Southern Company Gas
- Bronze Valley Corporation
- Cloverly
- United Way of Metro Chicago
- A. G. Gaston Boys and Girls Club
- Alabama Power Foundation
- Birmingham Museum of Art
- Children's Hospital of Alabama
- Birmingham Jefferson Film Commission
- Kiwanis Club of Birmingham
- Trillion Communications

Be authentic. Never let anyone place a label on you. The only person who has sole custody of your life is you.

I am a licensed attorney and serve as the President and CEO of Nicor Gas, the largest natural gas distribution company in Illinois.

In my previous role as Southern Company Gas' Chief External and Public Affairs Officer, I led the development of two new departments to support the company's continued commitment to addressing climate change and reinforce the importance of natural gas in a sustainable energy future.

At Nicor Gas, that mission continues as we work to achieve Illinois' clean energy goals while protecting our most vulnerable populations and maintaining access, choice, and affordability.

With over 25 years of experience in external affairs, marketing, economic and business development, corporate philanthropy and equity and inclusion within the utility and banking industries, there are five principles that have guided me.

1. Be on time. Punctuality is certainly a sign of respect, but it's more than that — it's about showing up and having a ready-to-go mindset.
2. Be grateful. No one gets to where they want to go by themselves. Be grateful and make sure you express your gratitude in meaningful ways.
3. Be authentic. Never let anyone place a label on you. The only person who has sole custody of your life is you.
4. Be a life-long learner. Everyone remembers graduating college and feeling that sense of accomplishment. If you're smart, you recognize that learning doesn't stop once you graduate college, or get that law degree, or land that big promotion.
5. Be of service. No matter what you accomplish in life, there's no greater reward than serving others both through your chosen profession and outside of it.

Service has always been interwoven with my professional endeavors. In the last few years, when I served as president of the Southern Company Gas Charitable Foundation, I guided \$2.5 million to nonprofits providing COVID-19 relief and supported a \$1 million donation to Morehouse School of Medicine's efforts to create equity in healthcare and advanced social justice efforts.

One of my personal passions is inspiring young entrepreneurs. I serve as chairman of the board of directors of Bronze Valley Corporation, which I launched to expand the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem among people of color in the technology industry.

As business leaders, we must engage with the communities in which our businesses operate. I value organizations that understand we are all part of an interconnected ecosystem that is only successful through collaboration.

I was born in Mexico, and I was raised on the South Side of Chicago. I credit my success to civic business leaders who supported educational initiatives designed for under-resourced communities, the extracurricular programs provided by non-profits, and my teachers for instilling in me the importance of education and its impact on economic stability.

Now I am a Director in the Disputes, Compliance, and Investigations practice at Stout, a global investment bank and advisory firm. From a competency perspective, I am a business professional with degrees and credentials in accounting, finance, and business valuation. I bring skills and experience to the table related to reading and interpreting financial statements and filings and understanding risk. In addition, my knowledge extends to the identification, testing, measurement, and mitigation of business and financial risks.

The skills that I have acquired are essential in my day-to-day client advisory and expert testimony work, my board work (for-profit and non-profit), and my role as Commissioner for the Illinois Liquor Control Commission. In all of my spaces, objectivity is top of mind, and I pride myself in consistently searching for and answering the “why.”

In my role at Stout, I consult with litigators, general counsels, boards of directors, and key executives across industries, both nationally and internationally. I assist my clients through complex government and corporate investigations and often testify in commercial litigation disputes. My role requires me to rapidly assess my client’s needs and then develop strategic approaches to address and resolve litigation, regulatory, and valuation issues. The work is dynamic and requires my team and I to understand the business and its industry holistically and then quickly drill into the relevant business units to identify key facts and data sets on which we base our advice and strategy.

At my core, I am mission-driven with a strong work ethic and a growth mindset. As business leaders, we must engage with the communities in which our businesses operate. I value organizations that understand we are all part of an interconnected ecosystem that is only successful through collaboration.



Julieta LaMalfa

Chief Financial Officer, Canela Media, Inc.

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Wintrust Bank
- Instituto del Progreso Latino
- Teatro Vista
- Destination Imagination - Wilmette
- Leadership of Greater Chicago, Class of 2021
- Educational Alliance for Social Change
- Angeles Investors
- McKenzie PTA
- TEDx Wilmette
- Latino Corporate Directors Association
- Private Directors Association
- Women’s White Collar Defense Association
- Illinois Liquor Control Commission



Gordon C.C. Liao

Founder & Managing Partner, Promise Holdings LLC

Board Experience & Affiliations

- AKIRA
- Chicago Switchboard
- Association of Asian American Investment Managers
- Hickory Farms
- IGeneX Inc.
- MVI, Inc.
- Gateway Newsstands
- Galaxy Technologies
- Maya Romanoff
- Soil & Clay
- Definition Theater

My core mission in life is to lift underserved and under-resourced communities, emphasizing wealth creation, entrepreneurship, professional development, and empowerment through the performing arts.

I am a first-generation Asian American that grew up on the far South Side and South suburbs of Chicago. For the first 24 years of my life, I was undocumented. In my high school career, I was the only Asian student, while in school, I was an active member of the basketball and baseball team, school choir, and drama department. My experiences in high school are what shaped who I am today. Coming from a diverse school population and city has prepared me for engaging in dialogue with people from all walks of life. I carry this skill with me in my personal and professional life.

My core mission in life is to lift underserved and under-resourced communities, emphasizing wealth creation, entrepreneurship, professional development, and empowerment through the performing arts.

As an undergraduate student at the University of Illinois, I was the recipient of the Bronze Tablet and in the top ten in the school of Business. My academic success in college positioned me to obtain my MBA at Harvard Business School.

I led the acquisition of Hickory Farms, a \$150 million revenue food gifting program, and I am a board member and shareholder of the company. I founded Promise Holdings in 2014 as a diversity-focused long-term holding company and investment firm. We have ownership interests ranging from two to 60% stakes in 17 companies, including Hickory Farms, AKIRA, Chicago Switchboard, Pear's Snacks, Maya Romanoff, IGeneX, and more. I am proud to say that over 50% of these companies are women and minority-owned. My passion also extends to the Chicago arts community. I served as a former board member of the Goodman Theatre, and Chicago Sinfonietta. I am currently a partner with Definition Theater & Incubator, which allows me to have a unique perspective in all aspects of my life.

I believe professionals should be empowered to bring the best of themselves to the individuals and institutions they serve.

I began my career in financial services as an analyst at J.P. Morgan Chase. After completing my MBA, I knew I had potential; however, as a first-generation graduate, I recognized all that I needed to learn.

The gap between the South Side of Chicago and corporate America often felt wider than Lake Michigan. However, leaders and mentors in my life bridged that gap, expressing genuine concern and letting me know I mattered. These leaders' mentorship still influences my leadership style today: achieving results while being thoughtful, supportive, and inclusive. I believe professionals should be empowered to bring the best of themselves to the individuals and institutions they serve.

Leading a fast-growing team at Mesirow, I can see the fruitful outcomes of running my business while keeping these values top of mind. Crafting custom, comprehensive financial planning strategies for our clients at Mesirow, I have expanded our business to include specialized expertise that addresses the unique needs of professional athletes, as well as a targeted focus on retirement planning.

My practice, writing, and thought leadership approach has increased revenue generation and business growth at Mesirow. I have authored various articles at Mesirow and as a member of Forbes Finance Council. My work has also been published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, a peer-reviewed academic journal. In 2019 I published the book *Exit From Work—What Will The New You Look Like*.

My parents made great sacrifices for their children to be educated. I credit them for teaching me a work ethic that included community service, which has helped me as a practitioner and scholar. They often said, "If you see something needs to be done, you shouldn't wait to be asked to do it."

I believe in giving back to the community and have actively served on boards throughout my career, including more than a decade with Chicago Scholars Foundation. In addition, I have had the honor of holding public office as a Flossmoor Board of Education member and as Board President led initiatives to expand technology, facilities, finances, and curriculum for a \$30 million district.



Gregg Lunceford, Ph.D., CFP®

Senior Vice President, Mesirow Financial

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Juvenile Protection Agency
- American Heart Association
- Flossmoor, IL Board of Education
- Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park
- School of Business Administration, Governors State University



Suzet M. McKinney, DrPH, MPH

Principal, Director of Life Sciences, Sterling Bay

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Wintrust Wealth Management
- Matter Chicago
- Lurie Children's Hospital
- The Thresholds
- Eagle Scouts of America
- The Chicago Urban League
- Chicago Central Area Committee
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control
- National Academies of Science, Engineering & Medicine
- Susan G. Komen Chicago
- Fifth Third Bank, Community Advisory Board
- Leadership Greater Chicago, Class of 2019

*My leadership philosophy has evolved,
but my goal is to create lasting,
impactful, transformative change.*

The person who levied the most significant influence on my career was my grandmother. She instilled in me the value of education and the motivation to pursue excellence always. A strong moral compass guided my grandmother, and she passed that along to me when I was a young child.

I am a public health expert, medical executive, thought leader, strategic thinker, and nationally recognized expert in emergency preparedness and response. My unique and varied skillset includes strategy development, operations, organizational transformation, planning, public/private partnerships, innovation districts, and economic development community empowerment. I am an emerging thought leader on developing knowledge communities, Qualified Opportunity Zone development, and COVID-19's impacts on healthcare, real estate, and the economy.

As the Principal and Director of Life Sciences for Sterling Bay, I lead the Life Sciences practice and am responsible for expanding the company's footprint into major target markets nationwide. In my former role as CEO of the Illinois Medical District, I operated a 24/7/365 environment that included 560 acres of medical research facilities, labs, a biotech business incubator, universities, raw land real estate development areas, four hospitals, and more than 40 healthcare-related facilities.

I accomplished a financial turnaround of the organization, successfully retiring more than \$40 million in debt. I also envisioned and initiated a development boom in the district, with nearly \$1 billion in projects underway and additional projects in the pipeline, totaling over \$500 million at the time of my departure in early 2021. My vision included developing a 40-acre life sciences innovation park, clustering healthcare, science, and technology-based companies and institutions while also advancing economic development in one of Chicago's most underserved communities.

My leadership philosophy has evolved, but my goal is to create lasting, impactful, transformative change. That same philosophy also describes my strength as a leader. I am adept at solving complex problems and applying a strategic lens to enact change.

I take pride in bringing my perspective to the capital venture and business world to achieve significant outcomes.

I'm a Mexican immigrant raised in a low-income, dual-language, multicultural household. I moved to this country at a young age and saw firsthand the struggles my family faced working multiple minimum wage jobs while experiencing racism.

I picked up math quicker than I learned English which led me to pursue an engineering degree at the University of Michigan. After that, I started my career at Goldman Sachs, where I provided market insights and advised on portfolio construction while continually ranking top five in selling financial products. Next, I sharpened my business acumen at The Kellogg Business School at Northwestern University.

After business school, I was an early employee at MATH Venture Partners and developed expertise in venture investing and how to build a firm from the ground up. During this time, I also served as a Board Member of nonprofits, including VentureUP, a network of rising investors in Chicago, and Communities in Schools of Chicago, a non-profit affiliate, the nation's largest dropout prevention organization.

These early experiences honed my passion for investing in founders, and it was during this time, I reflected on my experience as a Latina and person of color in venture capital. I launched Chingona Ventures, an institutionally backed pre-seed and seed-stage fund to address this gap. Less than one percent of Latinas own their own firms in venture capital, translating into who gets funding. My goal is to invest in founders that have great businesses but may not have a network or know the language of how to obtain venture capital funding.

I am actively involved in the Chicago tech community and passionate about helping underrepresented groups get into STEM education, venture capital, and entrepreneurship. I co-founded the Latinx Founders Collective, an organization that brings Latinx founders, investors, and community leaders together to support the entrepreneurial startup ecosystem.

I also serve on advisory boards for Angeles, a local Latinx angel investing group, Camino Financial, which provides funding for Latinx-owned businesses, and Chicago Blend. This organization increases diversity in tech and venture capital. I also hire and mentor many aspiring venture capitalists who have pursued careers in venture capital.

I am the summation of a broad array of experiences gained from working in corporate America, being a first-generation Latina and an immigrant. For this reason, I take pride in bringing my perspective to the venture and business world to achieve more significant outcomes.



Samara Mejia Hernandez

Founding Partner, Chingona Ventures

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Early Bird
- SUMA Wealth
- Tiny Organics
- VentureUp
- Communities in Schools of Chicago
- Liveoak Technologies, Inc.
- Angeles Investors
- Camino Financial
- Chicago Blend



Deidra Merriwether

Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, W.W. Grainger, Inc.

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Weyerhaeuser Company
- North Carolina A&T State University Athletic Fund
- March of Dimes
- Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

I lead by example and learn by doing.

My mother, Deborah Hamilton, was a strong influence in my life. As a stay-at-home mom, she kept a disciplined budget but found creative and innovative ways to update our home. She took it upon herself to learn to fix everything around the house. She set high standards and focused on moving everything forward.

My upbringing instilled confidence in me that I could accomplish anything. I played basketball all four years in college and was captain for three at North Carolina A&T State University. While a female student-athlete, I pursued a degree in chemical engineering, one of the more challenging academic pursuits in my family and my teammates.

This can-do attitude continued in my professional life. I led the packaging operations at Eli Lilly, where I practiced servant leadership. A part of my team worked the night shift, so I'd alter my hours to work with them. To this day, I will not ask my team to do work that I am not willing to do myself. I furthered my experience by attending the Kelley School of Business to learn the ins and outs of managing packaging operations.

After receiving my MBA, I did a short stint in consulting before spending the bulk of my early career at Sears Holdings. I oversaw areas in finance, retail, and real estate. My team and I developed new systems and processes, improved customer service, and launched back-office operations abroad to improve productivity by more than \$1 billion.

When I joined Grainger, I had relevant business and financial experience. I started as CFO for the Americas before leading one of Grainger's most significant pricing initiatives in its 94-year history. As a result, we delivered 200 BPS operating margin improvement and drove substantial shareholder value. The pricing experience took me to lead North American Sales with 5,000 team members and 1.5 million customers. Together, we grew market share during the pandemic by 900 basis points – a company record.

The combined business and financial experience prepared me to take the helm as CFO of W.W. Grainger, Inc., an \$11.8 billion company with 23,000 employees and five million customers.

My leadership philosophy is constant throughout my professional career: I lead by example and learn by doing. In every one of my jobs, I spend time on the front lines to understand the customer and improve.

*The strength that I have witnessed
from those that I've helped is
incredible and continues to motivate
me to cultivate an attitude of
resilience wherever I can.*

When I look back on my life and career path, one word comes to mind: resilience. This superpower has been passed down from generation to generation in the Mesa household and has been my life's mantra ever since I can remember.

My first encounter with what this word meant was when I understood my family's origin story and what my parents endured to get me to where I am today. My parents fled Cuba in 1960 following the Cuban Revolution. They lost everything they had built in their country and immigrated to a new place with a different language and a different culture. As one of the first Cuban families to arrive in the U.S., my parents were part of the trailblazing movement that brought a Latin flavor and Cuban culture to this country.

My parents left Cuba with nothing and started anew. Slowly, they took this traumatic experience and rebuilt their lives, creating their own success story along the way. I have carried this narrative with me in the back of my mind as I have progressed down my path and career.

When I am met with adversity, I think back to what my parents must have felt during that difficult time, and I tap into my strengths to overcome challenges. Their strength is what got me through the most challenging times in my career, like when I had to convince my parents to be the first one in my extended family to go away to college, or entering a male-dominated profession when I was just one of a small group of females in my Architecture program, or when I helped, Primera conceive its Sustainability group and help position them as an innovator in the green building movement.

My resilience has served me well during my 30-plus-year career, and it is what I have tried to instill in my own family and those that I mentor.

Hearing my parents' story has also driven me to give back and volunteer my time to those who face similar challenges. It is the reason why I sit on the Governing Board for UCAN (Uhlich Children's Advantage Network) and also why I am a long-time wish granter for Make-A-Wish. The strength that I have witnessed from those that I've helped is incredible and continues to motivate me to cultivate an attitude of resilience wherever I can.



**Lourdes Mesa González, AIA,
LEED AP BD+C, ND, NCARB**

Senior Vice President, Primera Engineers

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Uhlich Children's Advantage Network
- Construction Management Association of America
- Arquítina
- Maine East Fine Arts Boosters
- Primera Foundation
- Make-A-Wish



Martín Montes

Vice President, Large Customer Services, ComEd –
An Exelon Company

Board Experience & Affiliations

- National Museum of Mexican Art
- Lakeview Pantry
- Leadership Greater Chicago, Class 2020
- Maurer School of Law Latino Advisory, Indiana University
- Legal Prep Charter Academy

Understanding the need to “pay it forward,” I’ve focused my professional career on advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

“Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres.” My late father spoke those words to me at a very early age. In English, the phrase means, “You will be judged by the company you keep.” As the son of Mexican immigrant parents with limited formal education that worked tirelessly as migrant farm workers and factory laborers for our family, I’m honored and humbled that Chicago United selected me as a Business Leader of Color. I’m in the company of leaders who will serve as champions for diversity, equity, and inclusion at the corporate board level. Judge me now by the company I keep!

My personal and professional journey began in Humboldt Park. I am a proud graduate of the Chicago Public School system. At eleven years old, I planted grass seeds for the newly constructed Bickerdike Public Housing apartments in Humboldt Park. Since then, I have consistently applied the strong work ethic I learned from my parents in my personal and professional life.

I achieved my dream and goal of earning a law degree, making me the first lawyer in my family. My law career has included stints as a U.S. District Court law clerk; Senior Associate at a major national law firm; successful employment, corporate compliance, and international lawyer at Fortune 100 company Walmart; and strategic legal administrator for the top energy company in the U.S., Exelon. My previous work experiences positioned me to my current role as an executive at ComEd, the largest utility in Illinois.

I have championed innovation and strategic change throughout my career – advising clients to mitigate significant legal risks; creating and rolling out a global anti-bribery program; administratively overseeing a major in-house legal department; establishing meaningful relationships with regulatory agencies; and in my current role, leading a team to combat the climate crisis by serving as an energy advisor to the largest commercial and industrial customers in Illinois and the U.S.

Understanding the need to “pay it forward,” I’ve focused my professional career on advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion. I advance programs that recruit, retain, and promote individuals of color at law firms and in-house legal departments in entry-level, middle management, and C-suite positions, and my voice has been heard. I’m eager and ready to leverage my experience serving on several non-profit boards and a Fortune 500 corporate board. Are you ready for me?

*I have built winning teams by being
an influencer, a courageous supporter,
and a visionary.*

Over the last 20 years, I have been responsible for building and leading some of the world's most well-known products, brands, and businesses by delivering revenue, profit, and market share growth annually. I attribute this success to my ability to build dynamic teams, create sound strategy, and execute flawlessly.

Today, as Vice President and General Manager for Newell Brands, my journey of building and leading successful businesses continues as I am responsible for the profit and loss of the company's beverageware business in the United States and Brazil while also leading the global strategy for this business in other parts of the world.

The turning point in my career was learning that leadership without management is chaos, and management without leadership takes you nowhere. This valuable lesson helped transform me from an individual contributor to an effective leader of people.

As a global leader, I am constantly reminded of the value of this lesson as I know when to wear my leadership hat and when to wear my management hat. With my teams spanning multiple functions, geographies, and languages, this lesson is now more critical than ever as I continue to build diverse teams that consistently win in a dynamic and global marketplace.

In addition, I have built winning teams by being an influencer, a courageous supporter, and a visionary. As an influencer, I convince people through logical, emotional, and cooperative appeals to support my teams and our business-building initiatives.

As a courageous supporter, I step up to move things in the right direction for my teams and the organization. Finally, as a visionary, I have the uncanny ability to predict outcomes with limited information. These three critical leadership traits have become the cornerstones of my leadership platform.

I credit my success to the many mentors who have enriched my life and the unwavering support I receive from my wife and family. In addition, I give a tremendous amount of credit to my mother for instilling in me the notion that success of any kind is paved with grit, education, empathy, and hard work. I stand proudly on the shoulders of these professional and personal influences as I continue my commitment to making myself, my teams, my business, and my company shining examples of excellence.



Reginald Moore

Vice President & General Manager, Newell Brands

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Chicago's Garfield Park Conservatory
- Chicago Collegiate Charter School
- Grace Lutheran Church & School Board
- L.E.A.P. (Learning Empowers All People)



Tracie Morris

Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Inclusion Officer, BMO Harris Bank N.A.

Board Experience & Affiliations

- North Central College
- Girl Scouts of America
- Boys and Girls Club of Chicago
- Junior Achievement
- Leadership Greater Chicago
- Business Leadership Counsel
- Women Employed
- Black Ensemble

For me success means achieving your highest potential while helping others along the way.

I was born and raised in Chicago with my parents, a hardworking dad and strong grandmother. My grandmother, who migrated from the South to Bronzeville, taught our family how to persevere and be resilient. Her life experiences and influence shaped the values that I hold today – kindness, self-love, service, passion, determination, resilience and the pursuit of knowledge.

Those values, along with my grandmother's guidance and encouragement, led me to become the first person in my family to graduate college, the first to have a master's degree, the first to pursue a Ph.D. and the first to work in corporate America. My dad frequently quoted Shirley Chisholm, "Service is the rent that you pay for room on this earth." I aspire to live up to those words every day.

For me success means achieving your highest potential while helping others along the way. I define success more by what we do for others than what we do for ourselves. I am fortunate to have received support from others in my career journey and I made sure to sow into others just as others sowed into me.

In my role as U.S. Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Inclusion Officer for BMO Financial Group, I oversee the strategic and operational governance for all aspects of HR including our strong focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. I also serve on the board of directors' HR Committee and work directly with C-suite leaders to prioritize culture, talent and inclusion utilizing data rich assessments and developing strategic plans.

I am as passionate about giving back to the community as I am about my role at BMO. One of the ways I give back is by serving on the boards of directors for several non-profit organizations. One of my board appointments is with Junior Achievement, a non-profit that works with local businesses, schools and organizations to deliver experiential learning programs in the areas of work readiness, financial literacy and entrepreneurship to students.

My experiences through non-profit leadership have enriched my professional and personal life by increasing my understanding of the unique challenges in underserved communities and giving me a chance to truly make an impact that can change the lives of those around me.

I enjoy investing time and energy in understanding how to leverage talent, skills, and knowledge to contribute to the overall success.

Early in my career, I recognized the value of building relationships. I realized that connecting with people was one of my top strengths, and I was comfortable conversing with individuals about what they want to accomplish personally and professionally. By building relationships, I also discovered the gift of mentoring. As a result, I enjoy investing time and energy in understanding how to leverage talent, skills, and knowledge to contribute to the overall success and well-being of TransUnion (TU) associates.

I am a strategic and dynamic leader with over 22 years of experience in auditing, business continuity, risk management, and corporate governance. I have advised global clients, management, and board of directors on risk and control management solutions for Fortune 100, Fortune 500, multinational, publicly-held, and privately-owned companies. I also have over ten years of experience working with and presenting to the C-suite and boards of directors.

As Senior Vice President, Global Audit Executive of TU, I have enjoyed the opportunity to drive the transformation of our function to become a valued business partner by improving the effectiveness of the organization's risk management, control, and governance processes.

I leverage our high-performing teams across regions to redefine the vision and strategy for the global audit function to drive change across the globe. For example, in partnership with other TU leaders, we established the Integrated Assurance Committee to optimize cross-functional collaboration with Compliance, Risk, Global Technology, Privacy, and GRC teams. In addition, I was an advisor to the strategic system implementation teams across strategic markets.



Marisol Pantoja

Senior Vice President, Chief Audit Executive,
TransUnion

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Kids In Danger
- Association of Latino Professionals in Finance & Accounting
- Junior Achievement
- March of Dimes



J. Todd Phillips

Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Parson Partners

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Cara
- NEIU Foundation
- Land of Lincoln Health
- Northeastern Illinois University College of Business & Management
- Leadership Greater Chicago, Class of 2013

*Take pride in everything you do and
always have fun.*

“Take ‘em to the woodshed!”

As a young baseball pitcher with two strikes on an opposing batter, I would hear my dad yelling this from the sidelines, encouraging me to “strike ‘em out!” His coaching style promoted excellence, teamwork, pride, and fun. These lessons guided me through a successful baseball career and have positioned me in senior executive positions at some of the nation’s most successful companies.

Whether as Senior Vice President with accountability for a multi-billion dollar P&L, founder and CEO of a successful management consulting firm, or as coach of a competitive travel baseball team, my work ethic, leadership style, and advice to young professionals stem from the lessons I learned from Dad years ago.

My journey began 25 years ago in roles including IT, project management, finance, and corporate strategy before transitioning to the health insurance industry in 2002. After nearly three years in a corporate strategy position, I dove into sales & account management functions, which allowed me to live and work in several major cities throughout the U.S. I relocated to Chicago in 2011 and was tasked with stabilizing and growing a \$14 billion P&L supported by a team of more than 200 professionals.

Armed with the skills, lessons, and professional network earned during my corporate career, I launched Parson Partners; a management consulting firm focused on delivering strategic advisory services to C-suite executives. In addition to the consulting services offered through Parson Partners, I have served as interim CEO, Chief Revenue Officer or CHRO of more than ten companies, served as Managing Director and COO of a start-up private investment firm, and guided numerous executives and board members through intense organic growth, mergers and acquisitions, new product development and launch, and crisis management activities.

In business and life, I strive for the very same excellence Dad taught me years ago: “Take pride in everything you do and always have fun.” I have been very fortunate to have worked with incredible colleagues and clients, to have delivered strong results, and yes, I continue to have fun. The road ahead will undoubtedly be both challenging and rewarding; I will cherish it.

In every encounter, I strive to be a person of good character. In addition, being a great leader requires honesty and the ability to listen.

My life is influenced by my faith in God. Additionally, my close girlfriends influence many of my decisions, and they each have different personalities and areas of expertise. They pray for me, encourage me, serve as my truth-tellers, and keep me lifted up.

In every encounter, I strive to be a person of good character. As the Assistant Vice President for business diversity, I engage with people at every level of the University of Chicago. My ability to connect with all types of people is a key strength that allows me to succeed in my role. In addition, being a great leader requires honesty and the ability to listen.

Under my leadership, the University of Chicago has paid more than \$166 million to over 100 minority and women-owned professional services firms within the legal, money management, financial services, communications, HR, IT and architecture, and engineering industries. In addition, I created a model program where our university-wide goals and objectives are top-of-mind when seeking diverse business talent. This shift opened the door to develop mutually beneficial relationships with MWBE's in vital professional services industries that impact the growth of the University and an economic impact within the City of Chicago and nationally.

In 2010, the University of Chicago Endowment made the historical hiring of the first two minority money management firms. Before that moment, the University had never employed a minority manager in its investment lineup. To date, the university has retained 26 minority and women-owned money management firms to invest endowment funds.

This year, my responsibilities are expanding to include a new Business Diversity Institute. In partnership with our Professional Education Program, the Institute will provide instruction to supplier diversity professionals, procurement managers, and DEI experts on building successful business diversity programs at their organizations.



Nadia M. Quarles, Esq.

Assistant Vice President for Business Diversity, Office of Business Diversity, The University of Chicago

Board Experience & Affiliations

- PAWS Chicago
- YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
- Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council
- Changing Worlds
- Obama Foundation Inclusion Council
- National Association for Securities Professionals MIDA Africa Institutional Investor Advisory Council
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



Sumant Ramachandra

President, Pharmaceuticals and Chief Science & Technology Officer, Baxter International

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Alvotek Holdings SA
- Celerity
- AROG Pharmaceuticals
- Baxter's Global Inclusion Council

My commitment to inclusion and diversity is rooted in my lifelong experiences, and the desire to ensure that our brightest, most diverse stars can shine to their full potential.

Leading teams means understanding how to inspire, align and motivate great people from diverse backgrounds towards common goals that impact healthcare in the far corners of our world. This is essentially how I learned — and continue to develop — my leadership principles in working with talent to solve some of the most complex business and technical challenges in the innovative delivery of quality medicines and therapies.

These principles were shaped by witnessing the socio-economic and healthcare access disparities that existed while living in India, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and the United States. While completing my undergraduate, post-graduate, and medical schooling at Rutgers University and my internship and residency at Massachusetts General Hospital, I had the opportunity to serve in lower-income areas where access to care was inequitable. This taught me humility but also gave me the determination to do my part to better the situation.

A discussion with a cherished mentor opened my eyes to new possibilities that would enable me to fulfill my passion for patient care and science while providing opportunities to lead and develop others. Therefore, I moved into the pharmaceutical industry, where I have had the privilege of managing multiple global research and development teams to deliver innovative new treatments to patients.

Along the way, I gained vital on-the-job business experience in leading teams through product launches, mergers and acquisitions, and other business development opportunities while also creating several billion dollars in value. I built on that business knowledge by earning an MBA at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

I have always been impressed by Baxter International's simple yet powerful mission statement: "Saving and Sustaining Lives." This mission provides a "true north" for Baxter's 50,000 plus employees worldwide and speaks directly to my motivation. In 2017, I took a new role as Baxter's chief science and technology officer (CSTO). In 2019, I was appointed president of Baxter's fast-growing \$2 plus billion Pharmaceuticals business, in addition to my role as CSTO leading several thousand professionals focused on bringing this mission to life.

I proudly serve as chair of Baxter's Global Inclusion Council and work with senior leaders to champion all aspects of inclusion and diversity. This commitment is rooted in my lifelong experiences and the desire to ensure that our brightest, most diverse stars can shine to their full potential.

I've learned vital skills that have helped me make a durable impact in business, education and policy contexts and the intersections among them.

Throughout my career, I've never been in the demographic majority. I was repeatedly the only student in a classroom, professional on the exchange or trading floor, or director in a board room that identified as Asian American or even as non-white.

I've also often been in contexts where I'm in the minority by viewpoint — the most or least expert in the domain, the most liberal or conservative politically. Yet, I've navigated these situations successfully, and I've learned vital skills that have helped me make a durable impact in business, education, and policy contexts and the intersections among them.

As my career has progressed, I've shifted from building solutions to identifying strategic questions, getting a diverse set of minds to the table, and steering the process to ensure the organization makes informed, effective decisions that result in successful long-term outcomes.

For example, in my work in education, I built on a foundation of one-on-one coaching and professional learning with hundreds of teachers and administrators to guide the strategy of departments and schools and ultimately transition our organization from philanthropic support to an innovative, sustainable model funded by the participating districts.

In my current role, I've led efforts to drive innovations with real business impact (like our twice-annual Hackathon) or reimagining the process of training our new team members to share their expertise of traders, technologists, and product managers. While other accomplishments in my current role are proprietary, they've made us more effective inventory managers and liquidity providers, expanding into new asset classes and trading strategies, and making the whole organization grow and become more strategic, supporting success in volatile and competitive markets.

In my work as a board member, I've made an impact even when not implementing the change. For example, at the Bright Promises Foundation, I led us to define our current six-year focus on how parents can promote social and emotional learning.

At Math Circles of Chicago, I advanced a new model that leveraged our program and school staff's connections to dramatically grow the number of children we expose to new inquiry experiences. And at Chicago Public Schools, I've worked to push increased engagement across multiple domains to ensure that our \$8 billion budget equitably meets the needs of all our students, to drive an innovative and inclusive process for school communities to reimagine school safety, and rebuild understanding and trust between parents and the district.



Sendhil Revuluri

Managing Director, PEAK6 Capital Management

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Chicago Board of Education
- Math Circles of Chicago
- Bright Promises Foundation
- Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- School Board Partners
- Leadership Greater Chicago, Class of 2016



Craig Richey

Senior Managing Director, Strategy & Consulting
Lead – Midwest Market Unit, Accenture

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Link Unlimited Scholars
- Black Enterprise
- CALIBR

My leadership style centers on building the “next you.”

I am a Senior Managing Director who leads Accenture's strategy and consulting business in the Midwest. Strategy and consulting deliver key services across all industries and functions, including the domains of finance, talent, and human potential, supply chain and operations, customer sales and service, applied intelligence, and technology strategy.

I have responsibility for over 2,000 high-performing team members within the Midwest. I also proudly serve as one of the highest-ranking African American leaders at Accenture globally, with more than 500,000 employees. Additionally, I am responsible for leading one of the most significant segments within the Midwest with monetary responsibilities of more than \$1 billion.

As a leader at Accenture, I cultivated the brand of our CFO practice within the Midwest and globally for power and utility clients. I continually meet and manage the C-suite relationships at several Fortune 500 companies within the U.S. and Europe across industries like finance to drive transformation agendas.

I am a passionate board member for Link Unlimited Scholars, which connects high-potential Black students with the resources and support for success as they advance to, through, and beyond college. I actively work with the organization to build awareness about the opportunities in technology and consulting. I also proudly serve as a member of the governance committee on the board.

At Accenture, I was appointed by Julie Sweet, Accenture CEO, to be the executive sponsor for the African American Employee Resource Group. This provided me with the opportunity to work directly on behalf of fellow African American peers to address the pressing issues of police violence, social inequity, and internal challenges related to inclusion and diversity promotions and the experiences of diverse professionals.

I am also actively involved in coaching and mentoring of professionals within and outside of Accenture. For example, I have served as a panelist for CALIBR, a global leadership development association dedicated to accelerating senior leadership readiness for mid-to-senior level managers and executives of African descent. I also served as a panelist for Black Enterprise on leveraging mentorship to ascend to the C-suite and moderated an Accenture Martin Luther King Jr. event at Apollo Theater with Tracey Travis, CFO of Estee Lauder and Accenture Board Member.

My leadership style centers on building the “next you.” Success is driven by growth in others in and outside of Accenture. Many leaders in my life have taken the time to invest in my success, deliver criticism, and celebrate achievements along the way. As I look back on my career, my measure of success is helping others achieve their dreams.

***Be bold, passionate, genuine and
adaptive.***

Humble beginnings and a road paved with adversity fueled my passion for being someone, making something of myself, and elevating above what statistics said I would become based on my skin color. However, my two heroes, my mom and older brother, helped me harness my emotions into an unwavering commitment towards professional success, but life success including being of service, investing in people, making a difference, and most importantly, family.

Today, I serve as Managing Director, National Sales Leader for Deloitte Consulting LLP, leading a sales, marketing, and alliance organization that currently delivers \$300 million in sales across a \$2 billion ecosystem.

As a result of the immeasurable lessons learned during my youth, I have focused on developing my skills and career in leadership, culture creation, sales excellence, cultivation of high-performing teams, exceptional client relationships, the art of negotiation, and delivering results. One of my strengths is anticipating trends in the market and being the first to innovate on behalf of our clients.

Outside of my professional responsibilities, I also champion diversity, equity, and inclusion at Deloitte. For example, I am the executive sponsor for the Connections Mentorship Program focused on developing, retaining, and advancing the firm's Black professionals. In addition, I serve as executive sponsor for the Deloitte Chicago Office Black and Allies Community and an executive member of the Chicago/Midwest Inclusion Council whose mission is to embody a culture of inclusion for all professionals.

My experience has led to board positions, including a Board President role for a non-profit entity focused on improving the lives of those in underserved communities. Additionally, I serve on the board of my alma mater, Drexel University's LeBow College of Business, to open the doors of education and opportunity to the next generation of leaders.

I have learned through life's journey to embrace key practices. Be bold, passionate, genuine, and adaptive. I believe leadership is achieved through the success of others within your sphere of influence. The value of a smile is often greater than one realizes. Empathy and kindness are free giving to others without an expectation of personal gain are what's needed most.



Derreck James Robinson

Managing Director, National Sales Leader, Deloitte Consulting LLP

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Breakthrough Urban Ministries
- Drexel University LeBow School of Business
- Big Brothers Big Sisters, Philadelphia, PA
- Big Brothers Big Sisters, Muscatine, IA



Louis Sandoval

President & Chief Executive Officer, Knected Inc.
DBA SupplyHive™

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Wintrust Bank
- Boatrax
- K4Mobility Inc.
- Chicago Yacht Club
- Boy Scouts of America
- Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation - Washington, D.C.
- Sail America
- BSA Pathway to Adventure Council
- Breakwater LLC
- Storm Trysail Club

I have combined my passion for technology and impacting diversity equity and inclusion.

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I – I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”

I am a seasoned senior executive with over three decades of experience as a business leader and entrepreneur with a robust and award-winning record of success as an entrepreneurial builder of businesses, brands, and high-performing teams across technology, consumer goods, and biotechnology verticals. A career I credit to have occurred in thirds and indicative of the road less travelled. I have successfully driven profitability, scale with a keen eye for talent by being a staunch advocate for digital transformation and generating organizational efficiency through technology and innovation.

I recently held a senior leadership position at Brunswick Corporation, where I was instrumental in developing and commercializing a new technology brand in the connected marine technology products category. As a pilot initiative, I was resourceful in driving adoption and change management in an industry resistant to change with an agile six-person team to execute the strategy in 28 months. I did so by leading a multidisciplinary team comprised of technical development and business management professionals.

Prior to that, I spent 15 years as the owner and founder of a retail marine dealership in the Great Lakes region, where I garnered national accolades for developing the business into a national brand. Then, as one of the few Latinos in the industry, I created my brand as a subject matter expert in the marine industry to advocate for diversifying the sport and workforce within the mostly mainstream participants.

Before my marine industry success, I had a successful 17-year career in the biotech and biomedical industry. I held many positions of increasing responsibility for several FORTUNE 100 companies, including serving as a trusted management consultant.

In January 2021, I was recruited by the investment team of Knected Inc. DBA SupplyHive™, to lead the scale and fundraising for the Chicago-based software technology company. It is here that I have combined my passion for technology and impacting diversity equity and inclusion.

SupplyHive's SaaS platform digitally transforms Supplier Performance Management for Fortune 100 companies, providing measurable insights that improve their procurement and supplier diversity. Under my leadership, I led a priced seed funding round with key Venture Capital groups and developed the market strategy resulting in valuation growth from \$7 million to \$12 million.

My greatest joy has come from the impact our businesses have had on the lives of others.

For the past 25 years, I have been an entrepreneur and CEO, building a global technology services company, VisionIT, from a startup to a midsize corporation. After a few years in business, my angel investor, an NBA player, and now TV commentator Grant Long believed in my vision. A company that positioned itself ahead of the market in high growth technologies riding waves in web, mobile and enterprise applications with talented delivery teams that could support major corporations. My sister, Christine Rice, left her comfortable role as Director of HR at EDS and joined me early on this journey. We eventually secured a \$100 million national contract from EDS that fueled our expansion across 20 major U.S. cities.

In addition, the National Minority Supplier Development Council highlighted us in their largest MBE category as the top minority supplier of the year. Since then, I have integrated our company with Softtek, a 15,000 person worldwide technology IT outsourcing and solutions company with global delivery centers in Mexico, India, and China.

My love for technology has also branched out into helping other entrepreneurs achieve their dream. For example, in 2014, I was an original investor in FreightVerify, a technology software company based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which has grown into the leading visibility platform for tracking materials, parts, and supplies in complex global supply chains.

My passion for impacting diversity, especially in the technology sector, made me a lifelong member and sponsor in Information Technology Senior Management Forum (ITSMF), expanding opportunities for African American CIOs and technology leaders. With ITSMF's support and model, I became a co-founder of HITEC, the Hispanic IT Executive Council, which is the leading organization for Hispanic CIOs and IT leaders.

My greatest joy has come from the impact our businesses have had on the lives of others. From over 200 internships we have granted to high school and college students, creating two technology learning labs in Detroit and Las Vegas for youth, mentoring other minority business owners, and the many IT professionals we have hired for new opportunities that have helped them achieve tremendous success in their field.



David Segura

Chief Executive Officer, VisionIT, a Softtek company

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Alumni Association of the University of Michigan
- FreightVerify
- VisionIT
- Detroit Regional Chamber
- Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Hispanic IT Executive Council
- Stanford University Latino Business Network



Anne Shaw

President, Shaw Legal Services, Ltd.

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Midwest Asian Health Association
- Albert and Bernie Wong Senior Living
- UCA Illinois
- Asian American Coalition of Chicago
- Women of Color Coalition
- American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois
- Asian American Bar Association of Greater Chicago
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice Chicago
- East Village Association
- Asian American Bar Association Law Foundation
- National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

My lifetime work has always included a balance of running a successful business with social, equitable, and diversity-focused mindfulness.

I am the daughter of Asian American immigrants. I have lived and worked in the greater Chicagoland area my entire life and am a proud business owner and attorney. My lifetime work has always included a balance of running a successful business with social, equitable, and diversity-focused mindfulness.

I became a lawyer after witnessing my father be discriminated against at his job. In 2003, I founded Shaw Legal Services, Ltd., a woman and minority certified law firm. My legal practice centers around taking care of families and the businesses that support those families. I have successfully practiced law for more than 26 years and have grown my practice by over 500% since its inception.

My work focuses on civil litigation, transactional, and consultation work in civil rights, real estate, estate planning, and business. My firm also handles commercial transactions, estate planning, municipal bond compliance, commercial and residential real estate, and business representation.

I have successfully represented clients negotiating contracts with multi-national Fortune 500 companies, litigation against countries and governments, and effectuated material changes in local ordinances. I have also successfully worked to have the Illinois Cosmetology exam be translated into Chinese, which has enabled many small businesses and individuals to pursue this profession. I have also represented successful startups and businesses in Title VII employment compliance matters.

In 2011, I was honored by Chicago Volunteer Legal Services for founding the first pro-bono legal clinic in Chinatown in 2010, which has continuously served thousands of low-income immigrants. In 2009, I was the first Asian American appointed to serve as a Commissioner on the Cook County Board of Ethics, where I served for five years.

I am also a nationally and locally recognized, award-winning attorney for my legal expertise and civic leadership. I was named a 2021 Illinois Super Lawyer, a peer-reviewed recognition of the top 5% of lawyers in Illinois; awarded the Vanguard Award from the Chicago Bar Association; an outstanding pro bono award from Chicago Kent College of Law, and awarded the Outstanding Community Service Award from the Cook County State's Attorney.

Additionally, I have served on numerous boards and committees, including the Women of Color Coalition, Midwest Asian Health Association, United Chinese Americans Illinois, Asian American Coalition of Chicago, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, and a past board member of the Illinois chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

I hope my legacy is defined by my ability to interpret data and creatively craft equitable solutions to shareholders, employees, and the community and that my work inspires others to do the same.

It's been said that if you teach someone to fish, you feed them for life. Experience, however, suggests that we should help them buy a boat and hire a crew. In this way, they can create wealth, provide for their family and raise themselves from subsistence. As a banker working with large corporations, local governments, nonprofits, and advocates for the underserved, this adage has shaped much of my professional life.

Since 2010, I have enjoyed the privilege of leading PNC Bank's regional community lending and investing activities, creating opportunities for affordable housing, revitalizing communities, solving problems that lead to economic equity, and working with entrepreneurs who want a chance. Whether it's facilitating creative lending to help launch The Hatchery in Garfield Park or reinvesting in Ogden Commons, Chicago's largest mixed-use Opportunity Zone project in North Lawndale, this and other valuable work reflects our culture and ability to balance opportunities for the communities that we serve.

These experiences and other valuable work included leading teams where we consolidated complex companies into one cohesive unit. I am skilled at crafting policies that adapt to changing federal regulations. This skill is key and reflects my understanding of how a recession can impact communities and how, as a banker, I can help create solutions designed not just to protect business interests but to best serve our clients and communities. I took the lead on devising a strategy to develop small minority-owned businesses from concept to launch. While identifying partners that could execute this, I helped craft the business agreement to make it operational. Our goal with this project was to help 300 Chicagoland entrepreneurs of color.

As a member of the Executive Committee of the Community Investment Corporation Board, and in my daily work, I have learned that we can drive shareholder wealth and do what is right. Of course, these are not mutually exclusive ideals. They are, in fact, among the most important lessons in business.

I hope my legacy is defined by my ability to interpret data and creatively craft equitable solutions to shareholders, employees, and the community and that my work inspires others to do the same.



Thurman "Tony" Smith

Senior Vice President & Territory Executive, PNC Bank

Board Experience & Affiliations

- City of Chicago Inclusionary Housing Task Force
- Quad Community Development Corporation
- University of Chicago Community Programs Accelerator
- Ascendance Capital
- National Community Investment Fund
- Benefit Chicago, Chicago Community Trust



Sunitha Thomas

Regional Senior Investment Officer, Senior Vice President, Northern Trust

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Harris Theater
- CFA Society of Chicago
- Music Institute of Chicago
- National Kidney Foundation
- National Charity League
- Executive Club of Chicago

Achievement naturally follows when you combine expertise, hard work, and a passion for making a positive impact on those around you.

Academic excellence, knowledge and goodness, and Non Sibi (not for self) were guiding values I learned early in my education. My focus on continual learning and my passion for positively impacting those around me have led to career success across multiple roles and organizations.

I studied economics at the University of Chicago, I obtained my MBA at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and earned both the Charter Financial Analyst (CFA) and Certified Private Wealth Advisor designations.

Early in my career, I was the youngest associate to be promoted to an analyst in our group at Fidelity Investments and was chosen for a newly created expatriate assignment in Hong Kong.

Over the past 17 years at Northern Trust, I have been asked to take on new roles over nine times, including launching a new virtual family office advisory strategy, serving as National Segment leader for the Ultra-High Net Worth business, co-founding the first Asset Management Diversity Inclusion Advisory Council and serving as one of only two National Portfolio Advisors at the company. Since its inception seven years ago, I have participated in growing the virtual family office advisory business which has exceeded new business objectives each year and was presented to the Board of Northern Trust as a key growth driver in the Central Region.

While executing this growth opportunity, I outperformed my new business goals each year and built a book of business that ranks top five of all Northern Trust private wealth portfolio managers. In addition to my direct business functions, I was selected to serve on Northern Trust's Corporate Investment Policy and Investment Governance committees and the Northern Trust Employee Benefits Investment Committee. My engagement in diversity and strategic initiatives has been recognized with a Chairman's Recognition Award and a Chairman's Diversity Advocate Award.

Consistent with my business contributions, I have sought to contribute to the professional and civic communities. I have held trustee roles and actively engaged in the CFA Society of Chicago, the Harris Theater, and the Music Institute of Chicago.

My experiences have shown me that achievement naturally follows when you combine expertise, hard work, and a passion for making a positive impact on those around you.

By having a plan and believing in myself, I know that my work can impact others and make the world a better place.

My path to corporate America is not linear; I aspired to be a priest before entering the workforce. In high school, I went to a Catholic seminary and wanted to pursue the priesthood after graduation. Before graduating, my father advised me to explore other opportunities to determine if the priesthood was my calling. I later learned that my calling was service. I was encouraged to attend an information session for INROADS, a leadership development organization for underserved youth. I was fortunate enough to secure three internships with INROADS, and they provided exposure to corporate America and confirmed that service was the path I wanted to pursue.

Two expressions were foundational during my time in seminary and are what I live by today, personally and professionally.

“If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.”

“Whether you think you can or you can’t, you’re right: and the belief is I can make the world a better place.”

I joined the Federal Home Loan Bank in Chicago in 2018 as the Chief Diversity Officer. While in this role, I realized that we needed a plan that would transform our organizational culture. While the new plan was underway, I was asked to take on additional responsibilities for our community investment group. As an organization, we saw the intersection between how we help our members meet community needs and our own DEI practices with our business strategy.

By having a plan and believing in myself, I know that my work can impact others and make the world a better place.



Cedric D. Thurman

Executive Vice President, Chief Diversity Officer,
Group Head Community Investment and
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Federal Home
Loan Bank of Chicago

Board Experience & Affiliations

- UCAN
- Urban Initiatives
- Museum of Science and Industry
- University of Illinois Gies College of Business Alumni Association
- Leadership Greater Chicago
- Junior Achievement of Chicago
- Financial Services Pipeline



Edna Uribe

Vice President, Director of Sales, Univision Chicago

Board Experience & Affiliations

- Chicago Advertising Federation
- Univision Chicago Women's Leadership Council
- Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
- Univision Media Center

My goal is to inspire intrinsic motivation, build a foundation of loyalty, commitment, and, most important, purpose.

My journey has fundamental truths that mirror many immigrant families. Not taking things for granted is my truth. Having lived in Mexico until the age of 15 and starting again in a new country with a different language, culture, and systems allowed me to expand my boundaries, grow in unexpected ways, and ultimately shaped my core philosophy.

Through the years, I've developed a keen sense of duality without rooting myself into one identity but instead embracing the intersections of my identity. Earlier in my career, I traveled, explored different parts of the world, and even moved to Spain for two years. Treasured experiences have forged my leadership style and shaped my approach to each step in my professional growth.

As a sales leader, I recognize how my actions influence my team, and I adapt accordingly. Being fluid and open to new environments have served as fundamental examples for my sales team as we navigate unprecedented changes in the way we work, our families, our industry, and the world. One of the pillars in my leadership approach is recognizing each individual's strengths and whether motivation comes intrinsically or extrinsically. My goal is to inspire intrinsic motivation, build a foundation of loyalty, commitment, and, most important, purpose.

In my role as Vice President, Director of Sales, I've been described as a "structural engineer" with a deep understanding of how sales processes and people skills play a key role in productivity and delivering revenue results.

When I first took over the role, my most challenging task was turning around a disjointed, unmotivated, and failing sales organization into a high-performance energetic team that consistently delivers revenue goals. This has been the biggest challenge and the most rewarding experience yet.

When I got my first promotion, my best friend sent me a postcard with a straightforward quote: "Whatever you are, be a good one." It resonated with me then as much, if not more, as it does now. I keep that postcard on my desk as a constant reminder that the only answer is to do my best when challenges come my way. This summarizes my philosophy while serving as Board Director of the Chicago Ad Federation, joining new organizations like The Chicago Network, running a sales organization, or managing my kid's schedules.

My upbringing was instrumental in shaping me as a courageous leader that will continue to innovate, drive change and grow businesses.

“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear—not absence of fear.” – Mark Twain

This leadership philosophy has been the underpinning of my life for as long as I can remember. At 14, I left my familiar South Bronx community in New York City to attend an elite boarding school in New England through a scholarship program. I became the first person in my family to go to college when I matriculated into a joint program at Columbia University and The London School of Economics. These were the foundational decisions I made at a young age that prepared me to be a catalyst for change and a courageous leader.

These values have presented themselves in my career in a multitude of ways. After spending five years at PepsiCo in classical brand management roles, I became the first multicultural marketer hired in the history of Kimberly-Clark Corporation. I went from managing the \$1 billion Huggies business to building an entirely new multicultural marketing function across the \$6 billion North America business with responsibility for brands like Kleenex, Scott, and U by Kotex. My focus on marketing and cultural relevancy reversed a declining trajectory for several of those businesses during a time of national decline. I also drove marketing industry change by championing responsible marketing practices focused on elevating how people of color are depicted in the media.

As the Head of Cultural Engagement and Experiences at McDonald's, I led music, sports, entertainment marketing, social and digital marketing, multicultural and experiential marketing functions. I managed 11 agencies and more than \$100 million in media spend. I was instrumental in developing and launching the most extensive African American campaign, McDonald's "Black and Positively Golden," which resulted in a turnaround on guest count and brand equity with African American consumers. Black and Positively Golden continues to be the evergreen campaign for the brand.

I lead the Global Vertical Solutions Marketing team at Facebook, and I am responsible for our go-to-market approach for e-Commerce, gaming, CPG, auto, retail and government, politics, and non-profit verticals. I completely repositioned the team with a new vision, organizational approach, and an expansion to insights-driven marketing.

My upbringing was instrumental in shaping me as a courageous leader that will continue to innovate, drive change and grow businesses.



Lizette Williams

Global Head of Vertical Solutions Marketing,
Facebook, Inc.

Board Experience & Affiliations

- RealSelf, Inc.
- Chicago Advertising Federation
- Diversity Thought Leaders' Council
- GoodCity Chicago
- Emerald City Theatre
- American Advertising Federation Hall of Achievement
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.,
- Leadership Greater Chicago, Class of 2022



Suzanne Yoon

Founder & Managing Partner, Kinzie Capital Partners LLC

Board Experience & Affiliations

- National Philanthropic Trust
- AERO Design Labs
- Colony Display
- Chelsea Lighting
- KitchFix
- Private Equity Women
- Investor Network
- Women's Association of Venture and Equity
- Chicago Public Library
- Council of Korean Americans
- National Immigrant Justice Center

I am deeply committed to mentoring, educating, and raising the profile of women in finance.

I am the founder and CEO of Kinzie Capital Partners, one of few private equity firms founded and led by women focused on exceptional returns and value creation for the companies that we acquire and manage.

With over 20 years of direct investing experience in private equity, debt, and capital markets, I have led, sourced, and closed more than \$3 billion in middle-market deals and advised on global restructurings totaling more than \$10 billion in asset value. Today, I serve on several private company boards, including two Kinzie portfolio companies, where we see expansive growth.

Before Kinzie, I served as a Managing Director at Versa Capital Management. I led transaction development throughout North America. In addition, I was a senior vice president at CIT Group, and while there, I conducted more than \$1 billion of transactions.

In 2017 I launched Kinzie Capital Partners. I wore many hats initially as Chief Investment Officer and managed our human capital. Since then, the firm has grown into a 15-person team of forward-thinking professionals leveraging technology and data analytics to discover new avenues for growth. Just three years after its founding, Kinzie was recognized as the North American Female Founded Firm of the Year by the Private Equity Women Investor Network.

As an entrepreneur, I've been able to build a culture around diversity and collaboration. For example, our first portfolio company was 70% Latinx and 52% women at the time of acquisition, but no persons of color or women were in leadership roles. We quickly procured new recruiters and bilingual HR managers to reshape its leadership to represent its employee base.

I am deeply committed to mentoring, educating, and raising the profile of women in finance. I was named a Top Female Deal Maker by the *Wall Street Journal* and to *Mergers and Acquisition's* list of Most Influential Women in Mid-Market M&A for two years running.

My civic responsibilities extend to roles on several boards, including the National Philanthropic Trust, where I am Chair of the Board of Trustees and helped manage the growth of its assets under management from \$2.5 billion to over \$17 billion over my seven-year tenure as an Executive Committee Member.

I've worked hard to earn success as an outsider in a competitive industry. I am committed to promoting innovation through business and philanthropy, supporting the community, and tirelessly advocating for representation in all sectors.

I have had a very diverse and remarkable career, which has allowed me to combine strategic thinking and deep technical expertise with every organization I have worked with.

I truly enjoy bringing out the best in people – it is a personal passion. The greatest joy in my career is taking my experience and mentoring Asians around the world. While working at UL, I have educated and mentored young Asian professionals and emerging leaders; by establishing a leadership training program for Asians in China. The program helps them understand and meet the expectations of American companies.

I use the breadth of my experience working for a Chinese government testing and inspection agency and my work with European and American companies to guide emerging leaders.

It's thrilling and exciting to see others grow and gain confidence when they present their ideas and perspectives in a way that contributes to UL.

I also gain a lot from experience; those I mentor have also helped me learn and grow in my career.

I have had a very diverse and remarkable career, which has allowed me to combine strategic thinking and deep technical expertise with every organization I have worked with throughout my career.

I am fortunate to be one of few native Chinese to rise to the rank of General Manager at General Electric and lead the business in China.

I am proud of my experience with European and American multinationals in the Power Generation Industry, including renewable energy. It has given me an invaluable perspective on renewables and the case for sustainability.

In my 12 years at UL, the global safety science leader with more than 14,000 employees in 40 countries, I have led and managed diverse and complex businesses, including industrial automation, appliances, cybersecurity, medical devices, HVAC, engineered materials, automotive, and mobility.

I genuinely enjoy evaluating business opportunities in emerging and developed markets, discovering an unmet opportunity, and creating a business to fill that untapped need.

Soon, I hope to join a corporate board of directors. My expertise in the UL-China Certification and Inspection Group JV Board since 2009 sharpened my strategic and business decision acumen and respect for diverse perspectives, making me a great board director candidate.



Weifang Zhou

EVP & President of Testing, Inspection & Certification, UL Inc.

Board Experience & Affiliations

- UL - China, Certification & Inspection Company (CCIC) Ltd. Joint Venture Board
- China Association for Consumer Products Quality and Safety Promotion

Business Leaders of COLOR

2019

Aurora Austriaco	Joseph Dominguez	Pran Jha	Michele Baker Richardson
Isaac Akridge	Miguel Edwards	Kevin Johnson	Susan Marie Santiago
Anne L. Alonzo	Talita Ramos	Tomoko Kizawa	Karriem Shakoor
Victor Alvarado	Erickson Kimberly Evans	Katherine Kohatsu	Omer Sultan
Teri Arvesu	Jose Feliciano	Brian Lee	Lynn Sutton
Danielle Brown	Lori Flores Rolfson	Juan Leyva	Russell E. Toney
Levoi K. Brown	Marion K. Gross	Vincent A. Marin	Manika M. Turnbull
John H. Campbell	Leo Harmon	Sandra Cordova Micek	Pallavi Verma
Carlos R. Cardenas	Doug Harris	David Olivencia	Chad E. Walker
Marta Carreira-Slabe	Stephanie Hickman	Rebecca Martinez O'Mara	Roopa Weber
Hamilton Chang	Adrienne D. Hughes	Nichole Owens	Tianyi Joe Zhu
Manuel Cuevas-Trisán	Francis O. Idehen	Sankat Patel	
Remberto Del Real	Parrish Ivy	Reaz Rasul	

2017

Shradha Agarwal	Opella F. Ernest	Raj V. Nagarajan	Emma L. Rodriguez-Ayala
Luis A. Avila	Verónica Gómez	David C. Namkung	Jacobo Schatz
Nichole Barnes Marshall	Craig A. Griffith	Seema Pajula	Stacy Sharpe
Pat Auveek Basu	Pedro Antonio Guerrero	José Paz Peña, Jr.	Luther E. Siebert
Cecelia Bolden	Steven V. Hunter	Sergio Pereira	Srinivas Veeramasuneni
Joseph Malik Bradley	Ted Jackson	Maria de J. Prado	Lisa W. Wardell
George Burciaga	Rudy Juarez	Jose Luis Prado	Alex E. Washington
Louis Carr	Michael Leong	Anjoo Rai-Marchant	Lynn Watkins-Asiyanbi
Guoxing Chai	Marco A. López	Terika Richardson	Paul S. Williams
Eduardo Conrado	Mike Maali	Debbie Roberts	Melvin D. Williams
Stephen Davis	Christopher C. Melvin, Jr.	Dee M. Robinson	Ann Marie Wright
Billy Dec	Carey Mendes	Levoyd E. Robinson	
Peter M. Ellis	Juan Gabriel Moreno	Robert Rodriguez	

2015

D'Andrea M. Anderson	Virginia Clarke	S. Raja Krishnamoorthi	Lucino Sotelo
Jose Armario	Roger O. Crockett	Ash Luthra	Farah Bulsara Speer
Patricia Arredondo	Yolanda Daniel	Leonard McLaughlin	Gilda Livingston Spencer
Cynthia Barginere	Angelique Athiena	Michael J. McMurray	Jason Spigner
Brenda A. Battle	David Jeffrey Dorsey	Edgardo A. Navarro	Russell Stokes
Kenneth M. Battle	Willard S. Evans, Jr.	David Nichols	Eric Strickland
Alex Bell	Thomas L. Fisher	Ronald V. Redd	David S. Tan
M. Michelle Blaise	Sharon T. Grant	Max W. Reed	Eduardo Tobon
Lawyer Burks III	Symeria T. Hudson	Al B. Reid	Everett S. Ward
Denise R. Cade	Mahrukh Hussain	José R. Sánchez	Adrienne White-Faines
Yang Chao	Carl A. Jenkins	Rodrigo Alfonso Sierra	
Posh M. Charles	Oscar D. Johnson, Jr.	Gurpreet Singh	
Eileen Chin Michael Chu	Steve Kim	Eric S. Smith	

Business Leaders of **COLOR**

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
Kermit 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. Cazares
Gary Chan

Hugo Chaviano
Sona Chawla
Michael Chin
Nim Chinniah
Eric L. Conley
Jeanna M. Cullins
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. Pauling II
Cheryl Pearson-McNeil
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
Billy Dexter
Sue Ling Gin
Quin R. Golden

J. C. Gonzalez-Mendez
Wallace Harris, Jr.
Ted Hawkins
Amy S. Hilliard
Kym M. Hubbard
Robert Johnson
Earl Jones
Dolores A. Kunda
Deryl McKissack
Dorri C. McWhorter
Verett Mims
Ray Mota
Linda M. Nolan

Linda O'Bannon
Nam Hung Paik
Terry Peterson
Anita Ponder
Quintin E. Primo III
Nazneen Razi
Eric A. Reeves
Judith C. Rice
Brenda A. Russell
Gene Saffold
Donna Sims Wilson
Michael Sutton
Sheila G. Talton

Nigel F. Telman
Shundrawn A. Thomas
Darryl Tom
Jason Tyler
Neli Vazquez-Rowland
George A. Williams
James H. Wooten, Jr.

Business Leaders of **COLOR**

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 Karen Eng
Leana Flowers

Sarah Garvey
Chester A. Gougis
Marguerite H. Griffin
David A. Gupta
Darrel Hackett
Avis LaVelle
James R. Lewis
Fidel Marquez, Jr.
Michael Mayo
Eugene Morris
Virginia Ojeda
Julian G. Posada
Angela D. Robinson

Allen A. Rodriguez
J.D. Salazar
Manuel (Manny) Sanchez
Deborah M. Sawyer
Amir Shahkarami
Luis Sierra
Melody Spann-Cooper
Guy Summers
Nathaniel K. Sutton
Andrés T. Tapia
David P. Thomas
Don Thompson
Donna J. Thompson

Joyce E. Tucker
Mark A. Urquhart
Sona Wang
Rufus Williams
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
Stephen H. Pugh
Desiree Rogers
Steven Rogers
José L. Santillan
Smita N. Shah
Paula A. Sneed

Jorge A. Solis
John D. Sterling
Christina M. Tchen
Roxanne M. Ward
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 McCarroll, Jr.

Gary E. McCullough
Tom McLeary
Francisco Menchaca
Willie Miller
Bob Nash
Lou Nieto
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