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# MOST ADMIRABLE LEADERS

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**C**ongratulations to the nominees and winners of the Phoenix Business Journal's Most Admired Leaders. Aon is proud to sponsor an awards program that honors and recognizes the best and brightest leaders in Phoenix, people who make their companies, our economy and our region stronger as a result of their commitment, integrity and diligence, producing new strategies to achieve sustainable productivity and results.

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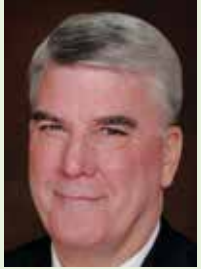

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The result: a dynamic partnership, now in its second year, with the *Phoenix Business Journal* that shines a light on Arizona's **Most Admired Leaders**.

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MOST ADMIRABLE LEADERS



Barbara **RALSTON**

Director of strategic initiatives | Homeward Bound

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

*The puzzling work of improving the Valley*

BARBARA RALSTON'S SENSE OF COLLABORATION HAS BROUGHT HER AND THE PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY SUCCESS

**W**hen Barbara Ralston has some time to herself, she likes to do jigsaw puzzles. It's a break from her time as director of strategic initiatives for the nonprofit organization Homeward Bound, which provides transitional housing and comprehensive social services to families with children fleeing domestic violence and homelessness. But it also represents what Ralston does best.

"A friend told me I like to take all those pieces and put something big together," Ralston said of her interest in jigsaw puzzles.

Creating something greater than the sum of its parts is what has made Ralston so successful in her career, and it's why she's receiving this year's Most Admired Leaders Lifetime Achievement Award from the *Phoenix Business Journal*.

"I've had lots of people I've watched and said to myself, 'I'm gonna take that little piece and learn from it,'" she said.

Ralston made a name for herself in the nonprofit world as the former executive director for Fresh Start Women's Foundation, where the mission is to empower women to transform their lives through education and engagement, and the former CEO of Homeward Bound.

Even before she fully integrated herself into the nonprofit world in 2005, Ralston was always involved in the Phoenix community – even in her more than 40-year career in banking.

Ralston had been involved in banking before she graduated from Camelback High School in central Phoenix, and was in a leadership position with Continental Bank for a number of years. Before it was acquired by JPMorgan Chase in 1985, Continental was Arizona's sixth-largest bank with \$500 million in assets, deposits of about \$400 million and 13 branches in the Phoenix area.

What Ralston remembers as her largest accomplishment in the banking industry was not her work with the bigwig. It was starting a community bank.

In 1997, while many smaller banks were gobbled up by corporate entities, Ralston helped to start Camelback Community Bank.

"Starting from ground zero and trying to figure out how to do everything, being able to start it off and do it my way was pretty special," Ralston said.

That experience of founding a community bank, working directly with the community and tapping into people's needs was part of what motivated Ralston to become more involved in the nonprofit world.

"Because of being a community banker, and doing loans and things in the community with the big banks, it was always an expectation that you were involved in your community," she said. "So I was always on (non-profit) boards."

**What leadership means to you:** Leadership is all about people, building a strong team, challenging and growing individuals, thoughtful listening and recognizing and celebrating each person's success. A great leader is a calculated risk-taker who thinks strategically, creates big visions and builds highly effective teams to deliver results.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** By trying to never miss an opportunity to mentor and lead by example. Encouraging potential leaders to continue to explore personal development that widens their scope and enhances their skill set.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** While continued growth has many benefits, it also brings with it increased challenges, such as more families and children living in poverty and an increased demand for social services. It is imperative that we collaborate in new and innovative ways to deliver the best possible outcomes with the limited dollars available to support these services. The biggest challenge is creating a Valleywide plan that makes the best use of the limited financial and human resources available. The idea of more children graduating from high school, less dependence on state-funded programs and fewer young people being incarcerated should motivate all of us to move this agenda forward.

Despite her passion for community, it was a moment of loss that put Ralston's work into motion. In 2007 – while Fresh Start was searching for an interim executive director – Ralston's husband died unexpectedly.

"It changed my whole perspective," Ralston said. "I needed something to hold onto, to make a difference, to be productive."

What began as an interim position ended up being a five-year tenure with Fresh Start, where Ralston and her team were able to improve the organization through two initiatives: putting in place an aggressive yet achievable strategic plan, and creating a more balanced revenue stream.

Ralston accomplished both, and after a year and a half, Fresh Start broke even – a rarity in the nonprofit world, where organizations almost always operate at a loss.

"It was a nice dimension to an organization that was totally privately funded," Ralston said.

When Ralston left in 2012, she was selected as the CEO of Homeward Bound, which had similar successes under Ralston's leadership.

"Right now we have a clear strategy and we're growing through expansion," Ralston said.

That expansion includes more residencies for families in need, with an apartment complex near 23rd Avenue and Colter Street that will serve about 150 families a year.

Though Ralston stepped down from her role with Homeward Bound, she'll assist for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Her philanthropic work isn't stopping: she's joined the board of the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center, which is extending its reach as well.

"I'm just intrigued and thrilled with work they're doing and that they're fulfilling their mission in so many unique ways," she said.

From a leadership perspective, Ralston stresses even nonprofits need to have a strong business model – but like everything else in her career, the most important aspects are involvement and awareness within the community.

"Phoenix is a vital city with a lot of action, but it needs to be carefully planned how it's going to be served and how we'll serve those in need and the rest of our citizens," she said. "I'm convinced that the most successful leaders are those who think strategically and look beyond what's in front of them."

Just like her time working on jigsaw puzzles, Ralston's work – and her aspirations for the rest of the Valley – are to put the little pieces together to make something great.

"If I had a big magic wand," Ralston said, "I'd look for more collaboration."

— Steven Totten

## MOST ADMIRED LEADERS

David **RACICH**

President and CEO | Brokers Alliance

**W**hile some family businesses are handed down to younger generations, David Racich decided to work for his share of his father's company.

The CEO of Brokers Alliance, an insurance agency based in Fountain Hills, bases his leadership style on his experiences.

"I've always just done what I've done because that's how I would want to be treated if the roles were reversed," he said.

Racich got involved in business early, starting a high-speed internet company while attending Arizona State University. With the help of friends, the business grew and eventually evolved into a software development company.

While his imprint on the business world continued to expand, Racich was presented with life-altering news: His father had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and had just weeks to live. He asked Racich to merge his companies with the family insurance business.

"I would never let his legacy die," he said. "I would always let his legacy continue."

But, Racich didn't feel right taking over his father's business without fully understanding the culture of the work. In 2004, he took an entry-level position as an assistant for his father's business.

Racich worked his way up through the company, and by 2009 had bought 100 percent of the shares.

Racich said a good leader is a good listener. He regularly sets aside time to connect with his staff on a personal level, getting to know them as human beings rather than just co-workers.

— Becca Smouse

**What leadership means to you:** I feel leadership is the ability to inspire and motivate those around me; either through action or by example. Leadership is an immense responsibility, and one I take very personally.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** I like to challenge our team to strive to seek new information and new challenges to continue to better themselves and evolve them in the business community. I truly believe that innovation and the confidence in ideas today are what will mold the leaders of tomorrow. I and my colleagues are also inspired to share the knowledge and leadership experience we have gained with younger generations.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** I strongly believe that two of the greatest challenges to Valley communities are the issues of sprawl and socio-economic diversity. Remote communities are often at a disadvantage when it comes to community resources, education and job opportunities. It is vital that private businesses establish strong relationships with community organizations and that they work together towards the common goals of enriching education and promoting opportunity.

Felicia **THOMPSON**

Vice president of communications | Better Business Bureau

**T**welve years ago, Felicia Thompson joined the Better Business Bureau to bring its public relations efforts in-house.

Over time, her role grew, and now she's the vice president of communications with a staff of 11 people in Phoenix and scattered in the BBB's regional offices around the state.

"I was surprised at being nominated and humbled by the recognition," Thompson said of the Most Admired Leader honor. "I believe in being a servant-leader and hiring staff smarter than me."

Thompson credits those for whom she's worked with giving her the chance to grow and take risks.

"I like to listen and observe what's said and what's not being said," she explained. "I don't like to speak first. I learn more from open dialogue."

She said great ideas come from her group.

"I was told by my CEO that you're judged based on your team," said Thompson. "I don't micromanage. I'll give direction and let the team do their work. It's what comes from hiring people who are smarter than you are."

Thompson faces challenges that many leaders find in their way.

"I have learned to delegate more to my team," she said. "It's hard for me to say no, but I do it more often now because I've learned I can't do it all."

Trusting the team has been her hallmark. It gives her the ability to move her organization to the next level.

"Because of a good team, I have the confidence to get out of my comfort zone and help BBB grow," she said.

Thompson said she's looking forward to shaking up the space in which the BBB operates.

— Eric Jay Toll

**What leadership means to you:**

For me, it's about all being a servant-leader. Listening, observing, giving away credit and stepping outside of my comfort zone to have those difficult conversations. Being transparent with those I lead and work with is important, even if that exposes my vulnerabilities. I believe it opens the door for better working relationships built on trust, laughter (very necessary) and motivates everyone involved to work harder for the team and organization.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:**

I live by the saying, "You are not a leader unless you are growing leaders." I was given a chance and the tools to lead early on in my career and don't take it for granted. There is so much talent at BBB that it has been a privilege to recognize emerging leaders by giving them a seat at the table and a chance to grow.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:**

The beauty of our community is there are so many great local businesses, charities, organizations and individuals all striving to do the right thing and make an impact on those they serve. To avoid significant overlap of key initiatives, more conversations should take place to leverage relationships, look for the gaps and build strength in numbers.



MOST ADMIRLED LEADERS



# Kevin HICKEY

President and CEO | BeyondTrust

**F**our-time tech CEO Kevin Hickey said he learns a lot from bringing people together. When he was CEO of eEye Digital Security in Irvine, California, its New York-based owner Insight Ventures liked the way they operated. His team was put into leadership positions of the new entity in May 2012, which now is the Phoenix cybersecurity company BeyondTrust.

"We were the smaller of the two, but I think they liked the way we operated," Hickey said.

BeyondTrust, originally based in Carlsbad, California, began in 1985 and moved to Phoenix in October 2013.

Hickey commuted to Irvine, but decided to move the company here. He had lived in Arizona since 1990 when he started working for International Business Machines.

"I liked it out here," said Hickey, who opted out of IBM when they wanted to move him back East.

One of his first ventures as a business leader was at Viasoft Inc. As president, he grew the company's revenue from \$5 million to \$100 million and helped to take it public.

His next venture was the online-based Homebid.com, an online auction site for homes that eventually was bought out by Homestore.com.

NetPro was his next gig as CEO and president, and in four years, he built it to \$45 million in annual revenue and helped the company get acquired by Quest Software on Sept. 12, 2008.

With BeyondTrust, he's helped the company get to more than \$100 million in revenue and with 400 employees.



**What leadership means to you:** Leadership to me is having one heartbeat within a company, infused with a culture that transcends generations so everyone is working toward the same goals. Day-to-day leadership is having employees passionate about our solutions, evidence on the ability for growth and recognition while having a culture that is truly lived.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** Within BeyondTrust it's through inclusion and mentorship. You usually know those that have the capacity to lead. Include them in strategic discussions, ask their opinion on issues, truly listen and positively question future leaders.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** Building and promoting successful businesses. With success comes more investment, talent and national recognition. I also believe I, along with other leaders, need to embrace and become more involved with great programs such as the Arizona Technology Council. We have a governor who's promoting our state as a great place to build and grow companies. It's now up to current and future leaders to feed and promote the Valley.

— Hayley Ringle

Congratulations  
**Mark Jacobs**

**Most Admired Leader**  
of Barrett, the Honors College at ASU

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-New York Times

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We congratulate Lisa Daniels, KPMG Phoenix Managing Partner, for her recognition on being named one of Phoenix Business Journal's Most Admired Leaders.

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## MOST ADMIRED LEADERS

## R.F. "Rick" SHANGRAW JR.

CEO | Arizona State University Enterprise Partners and Arizona State University Foundation



**R**ick Shangraw has been CEO of the Arizona State University Foundation since October 2011, helping to raise more than \$200 million in new gifts and commitments this year and setting a new fundraising record.

When he and his board realized ASU needed to look at different ways to generate revenue for the university, they created a new nonprofit called Enterprise Partners, which oversees five distinct nonprofit organizations that each make money in their own unique way.

When that was created this summer, ASU President Michael Crow appointed Shangraw to lead the effort.

"We've had some great outcomes," Shangraw said. "But at the end of the day, it all comes back to the people that we have. My focus is almost entirely on my people, my employees, my staff. If they're happy, then they do great things and they have great outcomes. If they're not happy, they don't have great outcomes."

He's been CEO or leader in some capacity during the past 30 years. He also serves on several boards.

"My board positions allow me a chance to help organizations grow and succeed," he said.

That doesn't leave much time for hobbies, although he enjoys traveling with his family. He took his family, including his 86-year-old mother, on an African safari this summer.

Despite his busy schedule, Shangraw said he doesn't consider himself a workaholic.

"One of the things I've learned over the years is to try to balance work life with family life or home life," he said. "I really promote that these days. I try to demonstrate leadership by example."

— Angela Gonzales

**What leadership means to you:**

Leadership is a tremendous gift and opportunity to invest in the lives of others while you collectively drive an organization forward. It's about creating the type of culture where team members feel valued, empowered, and a deep sense of ownership. It's about casting a vision and creating a plan that achieves desired results.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:**

Current leaders must realize the next generation of leaders are watching.

Through our example, good and bad, their leadership philosophies and approaches are being influenced. So the greatest way current leaders prepare future generations is through the power of example which also includes how we deal with failure and mistakes.

More than anything, I hope values-driven leadership and results-driven leadership always remain one and the same. It's not one or the other. It's both.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:**

Focus. It's really the same challenge every city, company or organization faces. I once read, "We can do anything, but not everything." So it's important for our Valley leadership and communities to continue to identify needs, determine available resources, prioritize those needs, and then pursue those at the top of list with a laser-like focus.



## Arjelia "Argie" GOMEZ

President and CEO | Open Hearts

**A**rjelia "Argie" Gomez has come a long way from her youth in Superior, but she's still all about helping others.

As CEO for Open Hearts, a nonprofit focused on behavioral health and wellness for children and families, Gomez stands as an ally to the Phoenix community.

"Since taking the helm in July 2015, Argie transformed the organization known for 40 years as Youth Evaluation and Treatment Centers into Open Hearts Family Wellness," said January Contreras, CEO of Phoenix-based nonprofit Arizona Legal Women and Youth Services. "She renewed the company not only in name, but in presence and culture."

Her life as a leader began young, when Gomez recounted traveling to the Arizona State Capitol with her mother to protest for equal rights.

She started her career in service as a juvenile probation officer, connecting with the community's most vulnerable. Later, Gomez attended community college, then Northern Arizona University, which she said led her to become the director of juvenile services for the Arizona Supreme Court.

Gomez spent seven years as a volunteer counselor for sexually exploited children, and she has been an advocate for LGBT issues, serving on the One Community board.

With an impressive list of volunteer positions and board memberships, she said becoming a leader was something she found came naturally to her.

Gomez said people should find their passions and then network with others to find their place of leadership, just as she did.

— Cassidy Trowbridge

**What leadership means to you:**

Leadership is about demonstrating a servant leader's heart through service to others. It means being poised to help, teach and learn at every stage of our careers. I believe serving our community is a gift, one I have treasured and taken seriously for over 35 years.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:**

I listen and engage in conversations, promote a workplace where talent can flourish and look for "diamonds in the rough" to build skills through special projects and workgroups. Our company provides a rich professional development fund for every employee, and we are focused on leadership development through coaching, performance growth and a mindset of excellence.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:**

Leaders have to listen and hear what our community has to say about their own needs. Much like we believe parents are the best resource when we work with their children, I believe the community knows what is needed to thrive, how we can help in relevant, sustainable ways and how to move entire communities forward, in many cases, ZIP code by ZIP code.





# Led by Passion

## POWERED BY POSSIBILITIES

Changing lives for the better requires selflessness, compassion and a champion spirit. Together, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona and Homeward Bound thank all 2016 Most Admired Leaders and Lifetime Achievement Honoree, Barbara Ralston, for their efforts that make life better for thousands in our community.



### Congratulations to this year's 2016 winners

**David Adame**  
Chicanos Por La Causa

**Pete Bolton**  
Newmark Grubb Knight Frank

**Thom Brodeur**  
Maria Shireen

**Paul Charlton**  
Steptoe & Johnson LLP

**Lisa Daniels**  
KPMG LLP

**Michelle Dionisio**  
Benevilla

**Patrick Edwards**  
Burns & McDonnell

**Arjelia "Argie" Gomez**  
Open Hearts

**Kevin Hickey**  
BeyondTrust

**Michael Hughes**  
A New Leaf

**Mark Jacobs**  
Barrett, the Honors College at Arizona State University

**Paul Johnson**  
Redirect Health

**Eric Miller**  
Phoenix Analysis & Design Technologies (PADT)

**James Murphy**  
Willmeng Construction

**Annette Musa**  
Comerica Bank

**David Racich**  
Brokers Alliance

**Barbara Ralston**  
Homeward Bound

**Barbara Ryan Thompson**  
Helios Education Foundation

**R.F. Rick Shangraw, Jr.**  
Arizona State University Foundation  
for a New American University

**Morris Stein**  
HKS, Inc.

**Jim Swanson**  
Kitchell

**Patricia Tate**  
Casino Arizona

**Felicia Thompson**  
Better Business Bureau

**Craig Weems**  
Sunland Asphalt

**Russ Yelton**  
Pinnacle Transplant Technologies

**Steve Zylstra**  
Arizona Technology Council



## MOST ADMIRLED LEADERS



## Paul CHARLTON

Managing partner | Steptoe & Johnson's Phoenix Office

**P**aul Charlton learned plenty when he was part of a group of U.S. Attorneys fired by the George W. Bush administration in 2006.

Charlton had been appointed by the same Bush in 2001 to head the U.S. Attorney's Office for Arizona. He points to a quote by military theorist John Boyd to summarize what he learned from his high-profile firing.

"If your boss demands loyalty, show him integrity. If he demands integrity, show him loyalty," Charlton said.

Charlton now is Phoenix managing partner for the Phoenix law firm Steptoe & Johnson LLP. The firm has more than 500 attorneys with offices in Silicon Valley, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Washington, Beijing, Brussels and London.

In addition to his managing partner duties, Charlton works on high-profile litigation, white-collar and internal investigation cases.

Charlton was one of the attorneys representing former Maricopa County Supervisor Don Stapley when he was arrested and charged, while still in office, by Sheriff Joe Arpaio and former County Attorney Andrew Thomas on corruption allegations.

Those charges were dropped. Stapley later sued the county, which settled the case for \$3.5 million.

Charlton also is a top attorney in Native American law. He's represented several Arizona tribes — including the Navajo Nation and Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community — and prosecuted cases on reservations during his tenure as a federal prosecutor. He was an assistant U.S. Attorney for 10 years before becoming the state's top federal prosecutor.

— Mike Sunnucks

**What leadership means to you:** Integrity.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** It seems a self-selecting process. Those who want to lead usually find a way to do so.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** Joe Arpaio



## James P. MURPHY

President | Willmeng Construction Inc.

**J**ames Murphy doesn't look far for his role models. "My personal role model is my father," said Murphy, president of Willmeng Construction Inc. in Phoenix. "Although we have entirely different personalities, he has always been an example of treating people with respect and working hard. He's the true definition of 'ownership' when it comes to being accountable for your paycheck."

Murphy also points to Jack Willmeng, who founded the Arizona construction company in 1977.

Murphy joined Willmeng's construction firm in 1999 as a project manager. He was promoted to vice president in 2001. Murphy bought the company in early 2006. Jack Willmeng died in 2005.

"Jack taught me the ins and outs of the business, but more so than all, he taught me how to truly appreciate and value our clients," Murphy said.

Willmeng has built some big commercial, industrial and education-related projects in Arizona. That includes work on InfusionSoft's headquarters in Chandler, Northern Arizona University's campus in north Phoenix and some large data center projects.

Murphy was born in Corpus Christi, Texas. His family moved to Arizona when he was sophomore in high school. Murphy graduate from high school in Kearny.

Murphy loves living in Arizona and is into hunting, fishing, golfing and hiking.

But he's also knows the state needs to improve its schools and lagging pay for teachers.

"Everyone in the state is aware that our teachers are under paid and the system simply needs attention to retain good teachers and recruit more," he said.

— Mike Sunnucks

**What does leadership mean to you:**

Leadership is the ability to push for the right answer consistently even in the face of adversity and resistance. Popular opinion has little to no impact on a true leader.

**How are you preparing the next generation of leaders:**

I have had the fortunate opportunity to guide and mentor future leaders within my company and in the greater industry and believe the most important aspect is a holistic outlook to leadership. I strive to get everyone to see that life is much more than the sum of what we do for a living and whatever hobby consumes the weekend. I believe that community support is not optional. It can mean different things to various people.

**What's the biggest challenge to moving the Valley community forward:**

I believe the state and the Valley have the same challenges as a whole. That is to overcome the national perception of being the "Wild West" so that we can truly realize the full potential of the great state of Arizona. The state is propelled by the Valley's success. From a national firm's willingness to call Arizona its corporate headquarters to our current labor shortage, leadership has work to do get our state back on top.



MOST ADMIRED LEADERS



# Michelle **DIONISIO**

President and CEO | Benevilla

**M**ichelle Dionisio, president of Benevilla, started out as a programs operations manager for the Surprise nonprofit 26 years ago.

“I came in providing direct service, directing the staff and volunteers to help the elderly in our community,” she said. “It’s been a passion of mine. I have a love of helping people, and especially older people.”

Over the years, her passion was noticed and she was promoted to various leadership roles before being named CEO in 2000.

“During that time, we were truly a grassroots organization where community residents came together and saw a need to help people stay in their own homes,” she said.

Founded in 1981, Benevilla started with a handful of volunteers and now has more than 900. Dionisio said she’s proud of the intergenerational campus in Surprise built to serve children and seniors.

“It really fosters and nurtures relationships between the little ones and the older adults,” she said. “Many times, people miss their grandkids or their grandmas and grandpas because they live so far away.”

But it was a long process to get the campus built because the Great Recession put a damper on fundraising.

The land was purchased in Surprise in 2006, followed by a fundraising campaign kickoff in 2007 that raised \$5.8 million before funding dried up.

Around that time, many nonprofits closed their doors or merged with others. Dionisio cut back a few positions and hours during those tough times.

Today, the organization has 130 full-time-equivalent employees.

— Angela Gonzales

**What leadership means to you:**

Leadership means being able to effectively share a vision that will inspire others to be compelled to actively participate in achieving that vision. I also believe leadership is about motivating and engaging people, giving them the opportunity to share their gifts of talent for the greater good.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:**

Over the years I have had the opportunity to work alongside many young, motivated professionals through my affiliation with community organizations, leadership associations and my workplace. Over the years, we have provided leadership academies for younger employees and educational opportunities within our business community. We also

encourage and support our employees serving on local community boards and committees, which gives them great experience in working with other leaders outside of our organization.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:**

With the growth of the 65 and older population, we need to be strategic in our thinking about how this population can be a resource and not a burden to our local economy and quality of life. Our leaders need to look at how we can improve our economic, physical and social environments.



**Jim Swanson // CEO // Kitchell**

# Admire

əd'mī(ə)r/

verb (used with object), admired, admiring.

To regard with wonder, pleasure or approval:

*I admire his ability to bring value to our company, for his commitment to the community and his unwavering commitment to family and friends.*

See also: *motivate, inspire, lead, appreciate, applaud, respect*

**Congratulations on being named a Most Admired Leader, from your Kitchell colleagues.**

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## MOST ADMIRED LEADERS

Thom **BRODEUR**

President and COO | Maria Shireen

**M**entoring inspiration is Thom Brodeur's mission.

"Most people have the potential that they believe they do," he said. "I want to inspire them to be excellent."

The recently appointed president and COO of Maria Shireen, a women's fashion accessory company, started as an adviser to the company. The company is showing 350 percent year-over-year growth in its third year.

"I have been active in the tech community for years," said Brodeur. "I don't know if I'm a 'leader,' but for the last eight years it seems that label has stuck with me. One doesn't become a leader; leadership calls you."

Brodeur leads by doing.

"I'm very hands-on when it comes to doing the work," he said. "I don't believe in management by barking, I believe in leadership by example."

Accountability is one of leadership's aspects Brodeur believes is shared throughout a team.

"We take credit for the boat rising and sinking together," he said. "You have to be accountable for greatness."

Brodeur said he emphasizes the importance of leading employees to believe in themselves.

"A leader needs to show up when employees fall down," Brodeur said. "I run to the problems to help solve them. I just believe it's important for a leader to let someone better than me do it."

Brodeur looks forward to continuing in a role to be useful in business and the community.

— Eric Jay Toll

**What leadership means to you:** It's about empowerment and accountability. Inspire smart people to do more than they thought possible; give them tools to be great; hold them accountable for greatness, and help them if they falter.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** I have mentored startup executives and teams over a 20-plus year career. From establishing mentoring programs to networking and advocating for up-and-coming leaders in the private and public sectors. I've gained a reputation in servant leadership.

I've also earned a reputation for a no-nonsense approach to clear, candid and constructive feedback.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** Without

over simplifying, I do think we have an opportunity to position the Valley uniquely by clarifying, investing in and marketing a single-minded brand. It bothers me when I hear us refer to ourselves or are referred to by others as the Silicon Desert, or as the Valley of the Sun. The former positions us as No. 2 to some other destination. The latter is a great slogan for Convention and Visitors Bureau marketing. We need to commit to this movement of entrepreneurship, tap back into our pioneering spirit and build on those assets.

Craig **WEEMS**

COO | Sunland Asphalt

**F**or Sunland Asphalt COO Craig Weems, the success of his business isn't measured in revenue but in the value of his staff.

"I feel like it's my job to make sure that every employee here has the opportunity to be a better person and have an opportunity to have a better career," he said.

The Southern California native moved to Arizona after graduating from San Diego State University. Weems' now has nearly 20 years of construction work under his belt.

Weems said he joined Valley-based Sunland 10 years ago, starting a new sales division in the growing company. Once sales became established, Weems moved to develop a division in public works. These expansions helped doubled the company's growth, he said.

Weems said he feels incredibly luck to have fallen in love with construction. He said the hard work and dedication of his staff keeps him motivated in the industry.

"In this business, people are your number one asset," he said. "I don't know anyone who works harder for a living than construction workers."

Weems said he leads with an open-door policy, and works to connect with his staff on a personal and professional level.

"My big wins are watching people win," he said. "It's not about me, it's about the other people that I serve."

However, Weems does find some wins of his own. He found great appreciation for his role as a leader when two colleagues from his past joined the business, one of whom ran a division Weems had established years prior.

"I realized that people saw something in this company," he said.

— Becca Smouse

**What leadership means to you:**

Leadership is not defined by executive titles, advanced college degrees, age, race or gender. It's about exerting influence, nurturing relationships and complete humility across an entire organization. Great leaders never take credit for the success of an organization; but will point to themselves first when there is a failure.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:**

Without millennials, our organization would not be in the position we are in today. Our future executives are leading our company every day in their respective areas. They are a prideful, hardworking and intelligent group at Sunland.

Most important, they possess the characteristics and values we are looking for.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:**

Education is critical to our state on multiple fronts. First, we need to make sure our children are receiving an excellent education. Without it, our state will not be able to sustain our projected growth numbers. We also need to educate our communities on the importance of our infrastructure. Lastly, we need to educate our teenagers and young adults that there are great careers in Arizona without a college degree.

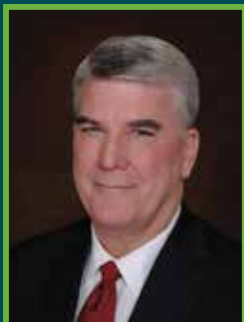


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## MOST ADMIRED LEADERS



## Eric MILLER

Principal and co-owner | Phoenix Analysis and Design Technologies Inc.

**W**hen Eric Miller was working at Allied Signal, he often did simulations, advanced design and 3-D printing.

After Allied was acquired by Honeywell International Inc., Miller thought it was a good idea to start a company based on those tech practices but develop it outside the aerospace industry.

"The technologies that were popular and made possible in aerospace had costs coming down, and we thought they could work in other industries," Miller said.

Miller co-founded Phoenix Analysis and Design Technologies, better known as PADT, in Tempe 22 years ago. The company mainly works in electronics, medical devices, consumer products and alternative energy, though aerospace still represents a large portion of the companies with which PADT works.

The 85-employee PADT also has a startup lab at the Center for Entrepreneurial Innovation on the GateWay Community College campus, and offices in Albuquerque; Murray, Utah; Littleton, Colorado; and Torrance, California.

"My leadership style is very cooperative," Miller said. "I like being part of a team but not leading, not dictating."

Miller, who has a mechanical engineering degree from the University of California, Berkeley, spent time in the Valley as a child while his father was in the U.S. Air Force. He returned for his job with Allied Signal.

"Allied Signal was an incredible group of engineers, and then I started PADT," said Miller, who lives in Ahwatukee with his wife and two sons. "I stayed here because life is very easy and convenient here, other than it being hot and the politics. I ignore both of them."

— Hayley Ringle

**What leadership means to you:**

Leadership means taking the initiative to understand things and then taking action to bring about needed change. From helping an employee be more efficient to assisting in growing the Arizona startup community, leadership is about listening, building an action plan and taking responsibility.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:**

The first step to preparing the next generation is to empower them to lead their own activities. Give them guidance and lead by example, but let them find their way. Once they have shown an ability to lead, we try to give them training and guidance as they take responsibility over leading other people. The key to their success is empowering them while holding them accountable.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:**

For it to stop hanging on to the extreme political positions and a broken education systems that hold us back. We need to fix our K-12 funding problems, stop wasting time on social issues and contentious political positions, and build on the fantastic but unfortunately disconnected communities we already have. The Valley needs moderate, proactive, and inclusive leadership to turn things around and make this the amazing community it is so close to being.



Congratulations to Steptoe partner  
Paul Charlton for being recognized as a  
Most Admired Leader in the Valley.

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MOST ADMIRED LEADERS



Patrick **EDWARDS**

Regional vice president | Burns & McDonnell Engineering Inc.

**P**at Edwards and his wife, Regina, grew up together in America's heartland. "We both went to the University of Nebraska," said Edwards. "We dated in high school."

Edwards said he grew up in "middle of nowhere Nebraska, 10 miles from a paved road and 15 miles from a metropolis of 1,800 where my wife lived."

That all changed. The pair married and moved after Regina got a job offer at the University of Hawaii. They moved to Arizona in 1993 when he was offered a job.

"My wife and I were living in Hawaii and my boss came to me and said I need you to move to Phoenix. I said ok," Edwards said.

Now, they are prominent in the Valley's business community.

Pat Edwards is regional vice president for Burns & McDonnell Engineering Inc. The architect heads the construction firm's Phoenix office. He took over in 2011 growing it from 25 to 100 engineers.

Edwards spent nearly two decades as a managing principal for the Leo A. Daly architecture firm.

His portfolio includes Casino Arizona, the first phase of the Phoenix Convention Center and a total of 30 million square feet of commercial and hotel projects worldwide.

Edwards said technology is having a big impact on the construction and design industries.

"The speed at which technology is changing our workforce requirements," Edwards said. "We now require even our entry-level hires to be advanced college graduates with exceptional comprehensive skills in technology and construction dynamics."

— Mike Sunnucks

**What leadership means to you:** Coaching and empowering those around you to be the best they can be, and persuading those who are unwilling participants to stay out of the way.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** The speed at which technology is changing our workforce requirements. We now require even our entry level hires to be advanced college graduates with exceptional comprehensive skills in technology and construction dynamics.

As a result the pool of qualified candidates is dramatically smaller than 10 years ago.



**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** We have many great people engaged for the right reasons who see education as an investment and not an expense, and who feel it is their duty to give for no other reason than they have been fortunate to receive. To move our community forward we need less "me" and more "us."



Patricia Tate,  
Senior Vice President and CFO  
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## MOST ADMIRED LEADERS



## Mark JACOBS

Vice provost and dean | Arizona State University Barrett Honors College

**M**ark Jacobs was a leading scholar, teacher and administrator from top-ranked Swarthmore College when he was recruited to become dean of Arizona State University's Barrett Honors College in August 2003.

He was the first dean hired by ASU President Michael Crow and second dean of the honors college since it was founded in 1988. Crow was looking for someone who came from a top-ranked private liberal arts college to take the honors college to a new level.

Under his leadership, honors faculty has grown from seven to 44. He also grew the number of honors courses from 60 to 600 per academic year, and the number of honors college students from 2,400 to 6,600.

While the Tempe campus has its own 20-acre site just for honors students, the Downtown, Polytechnic and West campuses have their own wings or floors dedicated to honors students within residential halls.

"When I first came to Barrett, I felt they had to prove to the other parts of the university that their students were good," he said. "They had arcane rules. They had to maintain a 3.8 GPA each semester. If you fell below, you got kicked out of the honors college. At Swarthmore, you don't harangue them for the rest of the four years about their grades when you want them to spread their intellectual wings and fulfill their desires."

Jacobs said he's most proud that many parents who had their children at Brophy College Preparatory, Xavier College Preparatory and Phoenix Country Day School are considering ASU when in the past they would have sent their children to Princeton, Harvard or Yale.

— Angela Gonzales

**What leadership means to you:** I think a lot of leadership is being someone with innovative, useful ideas for an organization and then the ability to clearly explain them to members of your group in a way that gets everyone on board and eager to put them into effect. I think every leader must be open, honest and fair.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** There are two main ways we prepare the next generation of leaders at Barrett. Of course, by supporting and encouraging the Barrett honors students themselves as they move through college, we train and produce what is literally the next generation of Arizona's and the nation's leaders. But I hope to be training young and optimistic faculty and staff within the college as well to be the academic leaders of the next 10 to 20 years.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** I think as big and sprawling as the Valley is, the population of 4.5 million needs some cohesion, some central rallying points, in sports, in cultural activities and in education to be proud of and to take part in. I think the building of quality institutions in each of those areas that the Valley's residents will visit and use regularly, for themselves and their children, is a good way forward.



## Paul JOHNSON

Co-founder and CEO | Redirect Health

**F**ormer Phoenix Mayor and City Councilman Paul Johnson is now bucking the status quo health care system with his Phoenix-based Redirect Health company.

Redirect Health designs and builds health care systems for employers. It created a telehealth platform that gives employees 24/7 access to a doctor, all while reducing costs and claims.

"Health care is overly problematic," said Johnson, who started Redirect Health three years ago with two doctors. "The status quo needs to be disrupted."

He's created several different companies, mostly involving real estate, and during the past 20 years has served on a variety of different health care boards. The last company, Arrowhead Health Centers, which offered primary care for small offices, grew to 11 clinics under his leadership.

Johnson is in business with five of his brothers and sisters in a variety of companies, and they jointly invest in one another's business plans.

Redirect Health started with his various companies putting employees in the system, and then offered it for outside clients. It now has 13,000 members in 21 states.

Johnson grew up in Phoenix with his nine brothers and sisters. He graduated from Sunnyslope High School, received a history degree from Arizona State University and has a master's degree in science business administration from the University of Phoenix.

"I'm good at networking and bringing people together. I like to jump start things," said Johnson, who is married with two sons and nine grandchildren. "My mantra is, 'Think the unthinkable. Change the world, and have a blast.'"

— Hayley Ringle

**What leadership means to you:** True and effective leaders possess optimism, belief in the future and belief in our ability to tackle all problems. They hold a belief in our people and have an satiable appetite for knowledge. They have a vision for what lies ahead. And will take risks, even to their own well being, to accomplish their goals.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** The upcoming generation will be America's greatest generation.

However, this group rejects the traditional institutions, specifically the two political parties. Increasingly, the two parties are being controlled by narrow ideological groups and significantly older populations. Empowering these young people to get back into the system is a major priority.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** Most major challenges we face will be solved by the private sector. Phoenix and other cities need to create an environment that helps these disruptive technologies flourish and blossom. Government needs to create incentives for investment, innovation, technology. We need to focus on high-quality STEM education. We also need to reduce the friction which comes from regulations and taxation that keep new startups from forming.







# DAVIDRACICH

**Current President & CEO**  
of 6 locally-owned, nationally-recognized companies

**Tireless Philanthropist**  
who's influence extends well beyond the local community

**Serial Entrepreneur**  
in both financial and technology industries

**Mentor & Inspiration**  
to nearly 70 employees in 11 states

**Dedicated Husband & Father**  
who takes inspiration and motivation from family

We can talk about his incredible reputation and philanthropic approach to the community, yet, that's not what makes him a good CEO. These accomplishments are important, but they don't make us want to work for him. What drives us to come to work every day is knowing he truly cares about the success of everyone who makes up our family of companies. Accolades are nice, but knowing someone is looking out for you carries true weight. David Racich is a CEO whose bio is about what he created around him for others, not himself. He is a leader we can count on.



Congratulations, David!



## MOST ADMIRED LEADERS



## MoSTEIN

Director | HKS Inc.

**M**o Stein, director at HKS Inc., has spent his life fostering leadership in Phoenix.

Born and raised in Phoenix, Stein's community service lies in his dedication to housing policy, city planning and design.

Appointed to the Phoenix Planning Commission in 1997, he served eight years and focused on infill development, collaboration and housing policy.

After leading the effort to update the city general plan in 2002, he was appointed by Mayor Greg Stanton to update the plan again in 2012. The plan was adopted with more than 76 percent of the vote.

"Through his leadership and mentorship, Mo is establishing the next generation of architects, planners and designers that will impact not just the Phoenix skyline, but the world as a whole," said zoning attorney Larry Lazarus, partner at Lazarus, Silvyn & Bangs PC, who nominated Stein as a Most Admired Leader.

As an advocate for affordable housing, Stein led the development of Steele Commons, a 60-unit transitional housing project. He also served as director for Central Arizona Shelter Services and president of affordable housing nonprofit Arizona Housing Inc.

Stein is helping to shape the next generation of architects. He was president of the Arizona State University Council for Design Excellence in 2002. He is also an appointed distinguished affiliate faculty member at the Design School at ASU.

His volunteer work also includes pro bono architectural services for the Fresh Start Women's Resource Center and the Florence Crittenton's campus in Phoenix.

— Cassidy Trowbridge

**What leadership means to you:**

Leadership is our ability to make a positive difference in people's lives.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:**

I believe these characteristics are consistent for what we do, no matter job, role or experience. This is what I pass on: Always lead by example; character and integrity do matter constantly; lead from the front; and finish big.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:**

I believe it is a challenge of commonality. For the most part, our concerns and goals for our community, be it education, jobs, growth or investment, tend to be consistent. The challenge is implementing change that is sustainable and feels like it is each of our ideas. In that sense, commonality must be community driven, bottom up, not top down. I call that a design problem, with a design solution.



## SteveZYLSTRA

President and CEO | Arizona Technology Council

**I**f you have anything to do with technology in Arizona, you probably already know Steve Zylstra head of the Arizona Technology Council.

He has been president and CEO since late 2007.

Zylstra moved back to the Valley from Pittsburgh, where he ran that city's tech council for seven and a half years. Prior to that, he'd been in aerospace and defense, first starting with Ford Motor Co. He eventually landed in Phoenix through a job with General Pneumatics Corp. running its Western Research Center in Scottsdale.

Zylstra moved to run the largest tech council in the U.S., the Pittsburgh Tech Council and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center.

Because of his research and development experience in Phoenix, he was a part of a group that created a national innovation network in 1985. He ran that as a volunteer for its first five years before it was handed over to a series of other tech leaders.

Zylstra also went on to lead several of the clusters that formed from that group.

"It was that experience that got the attention of the Pittsburgh Tech Council," Zylstra said. "I was recruited to do it based on my volunteer experience doing the same thing. I found out I was pretty good at it."

After growing Pittsburgh's tech council into what he called one of the best in the U.S., he came back to Arizona and do it all over again. The AZ Tech Council now has 10 employees and more than 800 members.

"Our goal is to help our members succeed at whatever they do, predominantly tech companies," Zylstra said. "We break down barriers through legislative actions, educate and inform them, and promote and advocate for them through various platforms and publications."

— Hayley Ringle

**What leadership means to you:** A fundamental characteristic of a leader relates to their ability to create a vision for the future that others will follow.

Ours has been that we are the driving force behind making our state the fastest-growing technology hub in the nation. Great leaders bring out the best in those around them, helping everyone cooperate in pursuit of common goals.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** The council was instrumental in launching the Arizona SciTech

Festival and growing it into the national's third largest, with more than 50 Arizona communities collaborating around STEM events. We also support numerous student activities including the Arizona Science

Bowl where middle and high schools throughout the state have proven their science and math intellect. The council is also a part of the Manifesto Project, which is dedicated to making Arizona the "place to be" for young talent.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** Arizona needs to continue to improve its support of K-12 education. The recent education funding plan passed by voters in May won't solve our long-term issues. This is just a first step in boosting funding for schools that desperately need more. Arizona still ranks 48th nationally in per-pupil spending.



MOST ADMIRED LEADERS



Pete**BOLTON**

Executive vice president and managing director | Newmark Grubb Knight Frank

**P**ete Bolton was born in Greenwich, Connecticut, but he's an Arizonan and a Phoenician through and through. Bolton — managing director and executive vice president for commercial real estate firm Newmark Grubb Knight Frank — moved to Phoenix when he was four. He grew up here and lives and breathes the Phoenix market.

"I'm a total desert rat," said Bolton, an Arizona State University graduate.

Bolton was Phoenix managing director with Grubb & Ellis before the real estate firm merged with Newmark in 2012.

He's hopeful the last real estate meltdown — along with enhanced due diligence by lenders and other players — have helped mature the Phoenix market and could help avoid a repeat of past boom, bubble and bust cycles.

"The pros are in charge now," said Bolton. "We are most definitely out of that old model."

Bolton knows plenty of prominent private sector players, but he cites a far more down-to-earth experience as helping serve as his role models.

"The Mexican laborers that I worked with on construction sites (during) summers in high school and college and picking cantaloupes in Blithe, California. Those wonderful, hard-working people taught me how to work efficiently and how hard making a living can really be," Bolton said of some of his role models.

Bolton said he now wants to help his grown children get going with their careers and spend time with his grandson.

— Mike Sunnucks

**What leadership means to you:**

Leadership is the ability to take a task, weather mandated or situational, and find the team to assist in executing that task successfully. Leadership is making sure everyone is heading in the same direction and understands the desired outcome. Next, is listening to each team member, their suggestions on how to get it done better and faster and then making quick decisions based on information at hand. Leadership is rewarding those individuals, monitoring the progress and changing the direction when necessary. It's fun.



**Preparing the next generation of leaders:**

Hire ambitious people, give them the tools they need to be successful, support them enthusiastically and monitor their progress.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:**

Our biggest challenge consistently, is our competition and what's working for them. We need to monitor what they're up to and move our community/legislators in that direction. We've got to be more agile and willing to change. It's so easy to see what they do to be successful and yet such a battle to make those changes quickly if at all, here in the Valley. So the quick answer: understand the competition, what makes them successful, emulate it as best and fast as possible.

Lisa**DANIELS**

Managing partner | KPMG

**F**or KPMG Inc. Managing Partner Lisa Daniels, leadership was a matter of balancing risks and rewards, and everyone around her played a role. "My father encouraged risk-taking and pushing boundaries," she said.

Daniels attributes her success to the culture at KPMG. "It's more than a place to work, it's an environment where people can live the culture," she said. "It's what makes KPMG the company it is because the company aligns with my own core values."

The CPA deflects her leadership style to the success of those she's mentored at KPMG.

"There's a difference between being a leader or a manager, and I help those coming up to change mindsets," Daniels said.

She helps the newly promoted shift focus from self to developing others.

"It's a different perspective as a leader," she said. "It's a matter of helping others understand the importance of listening to all perspectives and recognizing that taking these viewpoints into account is important to being open to understanding and finding solutions."

She uses a metaphor to illustrate the need to be open to understanding.

"If I were to give the team each \$1,000, the reactions would be different," she said. "One third would accept the bonus. One third would want to see it donated to a charity. One third would have said, 'If you had just let us know this was coming, I would have done something differently.' None are wrong, but all make you see that little that changing your approach may have built a better consensus."

— Eric Jay Toll

**What leadership means to you:** To me, leadership is about inspiration and empowerment. Great leaders have the ability to inspire people to reach their full potential and empower them achieve great things.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** At KPMG, I am truly fortunate to work with a group of high-energy professionals that are consistently looking for ways to make a positive difference. Therefore, it is more about helping them gain experience that will support them as they develop their leadership skills. We definitely have our share of more formalized leadership development and mentoring programs, but I believe hands on experience is key.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** To continue to grow business in Arizona that will create jobs for our people. While we have recently seen some new companies relocate to Phoenix, we have also had our share of losses through consolidation or relocation. We have also seen some exciting local programs to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, but we still have work to do. I believe our K-12 education system has to improve before we will be able to make a significant impact in this area.



## MOST ADMIRLED LEADERS



## Michael HUGHES

CEO | A New Leaf

**M**ichael Hughes, CEO of A New Leaf in Mesa, has worked to provide support services to individuals and families in need for nearly 40 years.

A New Leaf serves more than 20,000 people across the Valley, with Hughes overseeing 350 members and more than 5,000 dedicated volunteers.

He began his journey of service as a special education teacher at Mesa Public Schools before moving into the private sector, carrying his passion for teaching with him.

Even after leaving his teaching career, Hughes remained dedicated to helping Mesa education. He served on the Mesa Arts Academy, Arizona State University Lodestar Center Advisory Board and volunteered with the Friends of Arizona School Board Association.

Additionally, he has been five-time president of the Mesa Public Schools governing board over 20 years, been an Arizona School Board Association Governing Board Member, and involved with the East Valley Institute of Technology Foundation.

As chief executive officer of A New Leaf, Hughes said he helps to foster leadership by promoting from within his organization and supporting education.

"The most rewarding part is seeing people really grow into positions of leadership," Hughes said.

"Michael has a big heart, which is important for a leader," said Michael Harris, in his nomination for Hughes.

Hughes said in all his years of service he has learned to appreciate each day.

"I had the opportunity to value what I do," Hughes said. "At the end of the day you have to feel good about what you've accomplished."

— Cassidy Trowbridge

**What leadership means to you:** To me, the most important task of a leader is to remove any roadblocks that may hinder our employees from performing their jobs effectively. I also feel it's leadership's responsibility to create a culture where employees feel like they are part of a team, that they are working with us rather than for us, and to model how we want our employees to conduct themselves. We are all in this together.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** I strongly believe in promoting from within. This creates momentum for those who wish to move their careers forward and encourages longevity in the organization. We provide ongoing leadership training, annual retreats, and I have an open door policy, where any employee is free to meet with me to discuss concerns, their career path, etc.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** Arizona has so many wonderful people, but we need to change how our state is perceived nationally to highlight Arizona's many positive accomplishments. We want to be seen as a state that is pro-education, business, and human rights, and one that respects the dignity of all.



## Annette MUSA

Arizona market president | Comerica Bank

**A**nnette Musa's leadership style was nascent when she was a bank receptionist greeting those holding titles she'd ultimately earn. "I worked my way up in the business world," she said. "It gives you a very different perspective, and you really get to know people."

Musa said she does things on a different level and sees people differently as well. It's why the Arizona market president for Comerica Bank makes helping others her priority.

"My goal is to empower employees," she said. "I want to make their jobs rewarding and empowering so they feel like they can be innovative and creative."

Musa doesn't limit her mentoring to the Comerica team. She takes her skills into the community working with women to inspire others to grow and be successful in any endeavor.

In her banking career, Musa said she didn't get promoted into leadership, it just happened.

"Suddenly one morning, you realize, you have a team to lead," said Musa. "I started at Comerica Wealth Management Group as a team of one."

Her effort in the new role was successful. It became necessary to add staff. First one person, a second, and Musa found herself responsible for a group of people.

"It becomes natural to join in and take a vested interest in each person's success," she said. "As you get older, the way you measure success becomes different. But through it all, you always appreciate the people you work with."

— Eric Jay Toll

**What leadership means to you:** Bringing the best out of people, and inspiring colleagues and peers to obtain their goals and dreams.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** By pursuing and encouraging active mentorship opportunities – both internally and externally – and by being specific but supportive to our younger colleagues. Millennials in the workforce need and seek specific direction and some pushing, coaching, encouragement and validation along the way.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** Getting the next generation involved and engaged in our community. Since we live in a state with strong population growth, it is important to get our younger workforce involved in community and civic endeavors – especially those that support our education system – so that those cultural values can be continued and passed down to future generations.





# Congratulations

## Barbara Ryan Thompson

Helios Education Foundation's Board and Staff congratulate our Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Barbara Ryan Thompson, on being recognized by the *Phoenix Business Journal* as one of our community's most admired leaders.

Barbara's passion for and commitment to education is impacting the lives of thousands of students throughout Arizona and Florida, and we applaud her tireless efforts to ensure that every student, regardless of zip code, receives a high-quality education.

## MOST ADMIRED LEADERS

David **ADAME**

President and CEO | Chicanos Por La Causa

**H**istory drives David Adame forward as a leader.

Adame, president and CEO of Chicanos Por La Causa, shaped his leadership under the mentorship of the Phoenix-based community development corporation's former presidents, moving the organization towards further economic self-sufficiency.

With more than 10 years of total involvement with CPLC, he has served as director of economic development, chief economic development officer, COO and CFO prior to his appointment as CEO and president.

Adame said he has just three goals he would like to accomplish before he feels comfortable leaving his position at CPLC.

"I want to leave when I feel we are in a stronger financial position, that we are able to change the narrative of the community and instill a culture of family and entrepreneurship," he said.

Adame's extensive involvement with CPLC speaks to his knowledge and dedication to his community. He refers to all his employees and others as "mi familia."

With less than a year at the helm of CPLC, Adame said he is proud to be able to partner with UnitedHealthcare on the opening of a community center in the Maryvale neighborhood of Phoenix and provide \$22 million in investment for housing.

Bill Irwin, director of CPLC who nominated Adame, said the CEO and president has raised more than \$250 million in resources for the organization and has completed 12 real estate development projects across Arizona.

"David is thoughtful, encouraging, and demonstrates excellence in everything he pursues," said Irwin.

— Cassidy Trowbridge

**What leadership means to you:** It's about serving, and with that comes responsibility, gaining trust, and accountability. A leader is responsible to make sure that they're providing their team with a vision and the road map of where they want to go. A leader must also provide the tools and resources needed including finances, resources, infrastructure, and training.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** By making sure they understand the challenges we have faced and overcome during the last four decades, because it's important to understand that while we have accomplished much there is still much left to do in pursuit of life, liberty and happiness for all.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** We need to unify the community by understanding that we all desire to have a quality life, to support our families, to have safe affordable housing, and the opportunity to become self-sufficient and contribute to society. These are core values that all Americans embrace. The next challenge is for every community member to take personal responsibility to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to pursue these values. In the end, everyone benefits.




His passion is contagious.  
His compassion is genuine.

Known for his energetic personality and leadership skills, Pat Edwards is a mentor to all. His enthusiasm and creativity are contagious, which is why people love working with him. It's also one of the reasons the Phoenix office has grown by almost 100 percent within the last five years under his direction. Whether he's working on one of the largest solar projects in the world or raising money for a local charity, you'll find him at the forefront, leading the way, and inspiring those who follow.

Congrats, Pat, on this well-deserved award.

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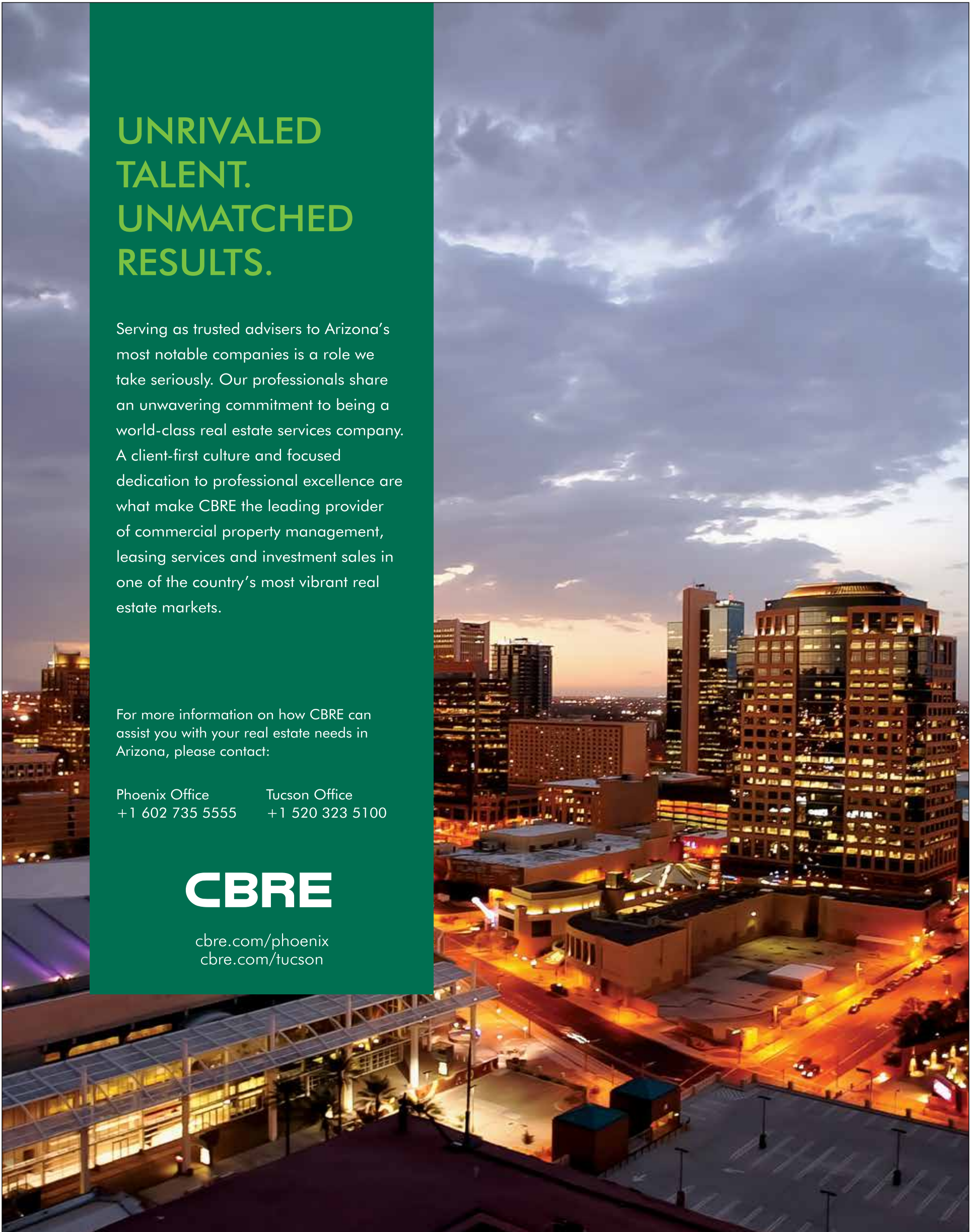
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MOST ADMIRED LEADERS



# Barbara Ryan THOMPSON

Executive vice president and COO | Helios Foundation

**B**arbara Ryan Thompson has been part of Helios Education Foundation since before the nonprofit was created in 2004.

She had worked with Vince Roig, founder of Southwest Student Services Corp., since 2000. When Roig sold that student loan company to Sallie Mae in 2004 for \$525 million, he used the proceeds to create an endowment for Helios, which focuses its philanthropic efforts on education in Arizona and Florida.

For a short time, Roig, Ryan Thompson and a few others were employed by Sallie Mae until they left to start Helios. At first, she served as a consultant.

"I was happy to be helpful in that respect while I was trying to decide what I was going to do," she said.

With a legal background, Ryan Thompson thought about going back to practice law. By then Paul Luna had been named president and CEO of Helios, and she realized she enjoyed working with him.

"When he asked me to join him, it was a fantastic opportunity and wasn't something I originally contemplated," she said.

While her official title is executive vice president and COO, her hidden title is chief legal counselor.

She said she has enjoyed being part of Helios from the beginning.

"I joke that it gave me a lot of my gray hair," she said. "We all felt incredible satisfaction."

She said she doesn't consider herself a workaholic and is able to balance family time.

Now that her children are out of the house, she and her husband spend time golfing and traveling together.

— Angela Gonzales

**What leadership means to you:** Strong leadership involves creating an inspiring vision of the future and motivating people to embrace that vision. As a leader, I hope to see the big picture, be decisive and empower the talented staff I have around me.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** As an organization focused on creating opportunities for students to succeed in postsecondary education, Helios is directly involved with preparing the next generation of leaders. We know that students sitting in classrooms today will be the leaders of tomorrow. We are working to build a strong education system in which every student in Arizona is prepared for success in college and career and ultimately will become the next generation of leaders in our state.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** Ensuring success for Arizona's Latino students. There is a demographic shift happening in Arizona, and Latinos will make up the majority of our workforce pipeline tomorrow and far into the future. However, there is an achievement gap between Latino students and their white peers. We must focus on closing that gap in order to increase Arizona's ability to expand, attract and retain vital growth industries.





**Steven G. Zylstra**  
President + CEO


**The Arizona Technology Council Staff and Board of Directors**

Would like to congratulate President + CEO Steven G. Zylstra on his selection as one of the **Phoenix Business Journal's 2016 Most Admired Leaders!**

**Congratulations to all of 2016's Most Admired Leaders including Arizona Technology Council members:**

- Lisa Daniels of KPMG LLP
- Kevin Hickey of BeyondTrust
- Eric Miller of Phoenix Analysis & Design Technologies (PADT)
- David Racich of WiredUp Installation
- Russ Yelton of Pinnacle Transplant Technologies
- R.F. "Rick" Shangraw, Jr. of Arizona State University Foundation for a New American University

aztechcouncil.org | info@aztechcouncil.org




**Her dream** was to help the "Grandmas and Grandpas" in her neighborhood, stay at home as they aged.


**What is your dream?**

Michelle, thank you for serving thousands of older adults and their families who with your help, were able to combat isolation, hunger and disease with courage and dignity. Thank you for your leadership at Benevilla for the last 25 years and for helping all those around you dream of a better world.

Congratulations Michelle Dionisio on being named one of **Phoenix Business Journal's "Most Admired Leaders."**



Michelle Dionisio  
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MOST ADMIRLED LEADERS



**Jim SWANSON**

President and CEO | Kitchell

**J**im Swanson, president and CEO of Valley-based construction agency Kitchell, said he stays humble when it comes to business.

"The most important thing to know in business is what you don't know," he said.

Swanson's business roots are in finance and accounting. In 2008, his work growing his own business caught the eye of Kitchell's then-CEO Bill Schubert.

Schubert recruited Swanson to serve as president of the company. He eventually was named CEO as Schubert transitioned to retirement. Swanson said he dedicated several years to learning the company's culture.

"It's really important that those values and the family culture that we have is continued," he said.

Swanson said the company is 100 percent employee-owned, which allows it to make decisions with a longer view of the market, compared to public companies that make short-term decisions.

"We get to look at how we manage the business to best build the future for our employee owners," he said.

Swanson said his employees would likely call him a "consensus builder," always encouraging his staff to push Kitchell to be better.

"I believe in empowering people because it lets them grow," he said. "We've been very successful in empowering champions in starting businesses within Kitchell."

The Michigan native, who spent time working jobs in Minnesota and California, settled in Arizona in 1995. Swanson has since developed strong relationships within the community.

"Part of I think being a leader is not just leading in your company, but leading in your community," he said.

— Becca Smouse

**What leadership means to you:** Leadership is about having the humility to understand that it is not about the leader but about the people around you, the mission in front of you and planning for the future. It also means one of your most important jobs is to know what you don't know. A clear understanding of your personal blind spots and how to manage them is key.

**Preparing the next generation of leaders:** Because we are an employee-owned company, we stress stewardship. It is a strongly held view within Kitchell that we should leave more behind for our next owners than we had when we got here. In order to execute on this vision we really focus on succession planning. The more connected you feel, the more inspired you are to be involved and make a difference.

**Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:** Theoretically, we should be a highly desirable place to live - for climate, community, commerce. We are already there - the only thing falling short is education. We just need to find a way to adequately fund and manage a world-class education system. Many of the pieces are in place. As a community we need to commit to that goal and be willing to take the hard steps to achieve it.



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THOM BRODEUR  
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**CONGRATULATIONS**  
**Kevin Hickey**

ON BEING RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE VALLEY'S MOST ADMIRLED LEADERS.

## MOST ADMIRED LEADERS



## Russ YELTON

CEO | Pinnacle Transplant Technologies

**A**s CEO of Pinnacle Transplant Technologies, a medical company that runs a human tissue bank, Russ Yelton believes in cultivating leadership from within.

"I believe in leading by example,"

Yelton said.

Yelton spearheaded an internal leadership academy for the Phoenix-based regenerative medicine company.

The year-long program includes 24 units and has helped 15 employees earn promotions. The units include topics such as setting expectations and delivering bad news, said Yelton.

While Yelton has been with Pinnacle Transplant for more than two years, he also has more than 20 years experience with incubating businesses.

His experience scaling companies has given him insight into the leadership program at Pinnacle.

"We have had remarkable growth, and so this program helps us keep up the pace of growth and promote from within," he said.

Yelton said it has been easier for his company to advance careers of existing employees because they are familiar with the culture and have developed the skills required from the company's own leadership.

Each leadership academy graduate class teaches the incoming class, Yelton said. When the program is taught by former program graduates, Yelton said it serves as inspiration for incoming employees.

In addition to his work within Pinnacle, Yelton serves as a chairman on the AZBio board, chairman on the Flinn Bioscience Entrepreneurship Committee, and is part of the Arizona Bioscience Roadmap Steering Committee and GPCC Forward Bioscience Leadership Council.

— Cassidy Trowbridge

### What leadership means to you:

Leadership means being able to work with groups of people with different viewpoints and possess the ability to bring everyone together for the good of the organization.

### Preparing the next generation of leaders:

We are preparing the next generation of leaders in our company by having open ended communication with our associates, establishing an internal Leadership Institute, supporting an associate-led SOP review committee,

focusing on promoting from

within whenever possible

and establishing individual

professional development plans

for all of our leads, managers

and supervisors. We will expand

those plans to all associates in

2017. We believe you cannot invest

enough in your people.

### Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:

One of the biggest challenges in moving the Valley forward is uniting groups with different perspectives to work together to promote what is best for everyone. It can be done and is by several organizations but requires everyone to actively participate.



## Patricia A. TATE

Senior vice president and CFO | Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort

**B**efore Patricia Tate was named senior vice president and CFO of Casino Arizona and Talking Stick Resort, she found herself working in computer software, gaming and other related industries.

One common factor she kept noticing of her career path: These positions were all male-dominated.

"As a female, I had to be assertive, aggressive, but at the same time remembering the core of what I was brought up as, which was to be respectful as much as possible as you move through life," she said.

Tate continued to grow in each new market she entered. She began working for Casino Arizona in 2004, serving as the controller. Just two years later, she was named the CFO.

The University of Arizona alumna said she's seen a progress during the past 12 years with the organization, which has since outgrown its original small family-owned business model.

Tate said one rewarding part of her job has been the impact she has made in developing the company, from small lighting projects to playing a large part in the contract to build Talking Stick Resort in 2006.

"I worked on that. I did that," she said. "I can actually see my footprint."

Tate also takes pride in watching her staff grow within the business, moving staff members from supervisor roles to managerial roles and so on. Tate said she tries to instill confidence in her co-workers, just as a mentor in one of her first jobs had done for her.

Tate said while she considers herself an introvert, her leadership role and her relationship with her staff have helped her break out of her shell.

— Becca Smouse

### What leadership means to you:

I believe leadership is knowing how to achieve goals while inspiring people along the way by knowing and understanding my weaknesses and how to utilize my talents while effectively leveraging the natural strengths of the team to accomplish the mission. Each project is different, each team is different and there is no one approach, one answer, one way or one person who accomplishes the mission.

### Preparing the next generation of leaders:

Preparing the next generation for leadership for a project, department, or organization is giving them the opportunity to exercise their critical thinking skills while being a team player. I find most individuals have the ability but need to have someone to believe in them.

### Biggest challenge moving the Valley forward:

Change. It is human nature to resist change, but only through change can we move forward; therefore, today's Valley leaders not only need to have the vision but must inspire to bring change so the future will become the present.



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