Women in Business 2012

February 24, 2012

Recognizing Phoenix-area women who are leading the way in business
Congratulations to the 25 Women in Business honorees in the Phoenix community! American Express is again proud to sponsor this year’s Phoenix Women in Business initiative, and we are honored to salute them for their outstanding contributions.

Empowering women pays dividends on so many levels. As president of American Express OPEN, I co-chair our company’s Women’s Interest Network (WIN), which helps develop female talent at our company. With more than 60 percent of our company’s workforce comprised of talented women, supporting women is not only gratifying, it is good business. Through American Express’ “Pathways to Sponsorship” program, we continue to promote women to senior level positions and continue to be recognized around the world as an employer of choice for women.

By empowering, coaching and giving women opportunities to accelerate their development, we are unlocking their talent and the impact they have on serving our customers and shareholders.

Today we celebrate 25 Phoenix women for their leadership, accomplishments and contributions to the community. You are among the talented women across the country who serve as mentors and role models. You are helping the next generation accelerate their career progress and inspiring them to succeed. I encourage you to continue to help them see what is possible and ultimately realize their potential.

Sincerely,

Susan Sobbott
President, American Express OPEN

There are many women in the Valley who are making a difference in their workplaces and in the community every day. They are business leaders, mentors and community supporters. They do amazing things to make our community a better place to live.

This year’s Women in Business honorees stand out for their many accomplishments and the ways they have influenced those around them.

The list is impressive, ranging from C-level executives to nonprofit leaders to lawyers and even one “head cheese.”

Our honorees’ stories this year provided an invaluable crash course in leadership and career development. Whether you are looking to become a stronger leader or a better communicator, you can learn a great deal from the 25 outstanding women who were selected for the Phoenix Business Journal’s 2012 Women in Business awards.

Each story behind these 25 winners is unique, but there are common threads. These women understand compromise. They show up every day ready to work as hard as it takes to reach their goals. They are Grade A movers and shakers, with the power to make other people powerful. And they are not only leaders, but visionaries.

For all of their different backgrounds, all are exceptionally bright, dynamic and dedicated to their work. In many cases, they have overcome challenges — thriving in male-dominated fields, making career moves during the recession, and raising companies and children at the same time.

The 25 influential women profiled on these pages represent just some of the growing number of women business owners, founders, directors and CEOs in the Valley. They were chosen by an advisory panel along with Phoenix Business Journal reporters and myself.

As you learn about them and read their brief essays on the following pages, you also will see the importance of self-confidence, persistence and mentorship in their lives. This special section offers a snapshot of what makes these women tick. To read their full essays and profiles, go to our website, phoenix.bizjournals.com.

The 2012 Women in Business honorees were recognized Feb. 23 at a special awards reception held at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa in Phoenix.

We hope you enjoy this special publication. Please contact us if you know an outstanding Valley businesswoman who should be considered for future Women in Business honors.

Ilan Lowery is editor of the Phoenix Business Journal. Contact her at ilowery@bizjournals.com or 602-308-6553.
EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in telecommunications and business, Indiana University
FIRST JOB: Making Dilly bars at Dairy Queen
WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE LEADER: There is no substitute for knowing your product inside and out. I really have my heart in the game. And I think because I love my job, I can work anyone under the table.
HOBBIES/INTERESTS: Going to Suns games, reading, hiking, going to movies, or anything my 12-year-old son, Dominick, wants to do
FAVORITE CHARITY: Fresh Start Women’s Foundation
IMPORTANT BUSINESS DISCOVERY: Change is the new normal.
WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: I played the piano for 10 years.
VISION OF SUCCESS: Early in life, I was taught that success in sales is a two-way street. When establishing any proposition and revenue goal, it is vital to understand these are not just numbers on a board; this is a strategy of thinking as well as a means of looking past the finish line and into the future with the customer, creating a long-term goal. I have taken this message and structured my life to fulfill this philosophy. Whether it’s with a marketing partner or an employee, both parties should feel they have come out of the conversation with a positive experience and with a degree of success. Tailoring your efforts to the needs of the client and surpassing their expectations is necessary to accomplish this.
WHAT LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT MEANS TO YOU: I was blessed to experience empowerment at an early age. My parents raised me to make my own choices. They were always ready to provide help and support, to catch me when I fell. The important lessons came through the consequences of my bad choices and the rewards of my good ones. I could only hold myself responsible for those choices, and it taught me not to fear making a decision, but to embrace it. As a business owner, I lead with this same philosophy. It begins by putting the right person in the right job and then trusting that each person has good intentions in their position; that they will do the right thing for the company and the customer, as well as for themselves and their families. I personally meet every person prior to their employment. We discuss their philosophy, their beliefs, their commitment to taking care of the customer, their ability to follow through on their commitments. Once they are hired, they know they have my trust from day one and that, as long as there are good intentions, a wrong decision only provides an opportunity to learn, grow and move forward. Our leaders are ready with their support and guidance. Empowerment is critical for those people who are on the front lines... (It) gives them the freedom to be creative and make decisions on the spot, providing customers with instant feedback, instant communication and no red tape. If mistakes are made, we regroup and try again. Empowerment is at the root of our corporate culture and drives our destiny. I can tell you that great things happen when you have an entire team of employees that own their actions.
WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: My oldest brother is my employer.
WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: I have attempted stand-up comedy.

Lynn Cnello
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS, SUITE SALES AND SERVICE
Phoenix Suns and Phoenix Mercury

First Job: City of Tucson lifeguard
Education: Bachelor’s degree in business administration and marketing, University of Arizona Eller College of Management
What Makes An Effective Leader: Innovation, intuition, empathy and decisiveness
Hobbies/interests: Tennis, family, fitness, wine, food and fashion
Favorite Charity: Red Cross
One Thing You’ll Never Do Again: Buy anything off Craigslist
Staying Motivated: My eldest brother is my employer.
What Others May Not Know: I have attempted stand-up comedy.

Molly Busch
Vice President
Thomas Title & Escrow

Meaning of Empowerment: Empowerment is an ongoing cycle of maximum effort followed by maximum success. It is a process I can encourage in others and in myself. In both cases, the practice is very satisfying. Maximum effort includes taking on a challenge and honoring the unique commitment it requires. It might be preparation, legwork or creativity. It might be rigorous communication or learning a new skill. You can measure success in many ways, and in my experience maximum effort usually produces the desired outcome. Sometimes outcomes are unexpected and surprising, but successful in the final analysis. I have been fortunate in my professional and personal life to receive exposure and guidance from several gifted “empowerers.”

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To be successful, it is about going above and beyond what is expected.

I enjoy the challenge of seeking the path that will lead to growth.

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Michelle DE BLASI
PARTNER
Quarles & Brady LLP
HQ: Milwaukee
TYPE OF BUSINESS: Law firm

EDUCATION: Juris Doctorate with Certificate of Emphasis in environmental law, University of Washington School of Law; BS, magna cum laude, ASU
FIRST JOB: Counsel for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE LEADER: Communicating a clear vision and surrounding yourself with the right team
STAYING MOTIVATED: Helping my clients successfully attain their goals.
IMPORTANT BUSINESS DISCOVERY: It’s not just about giving legal advice. My ability to counsel is my most valuable asset.

‘An effective leader must be willing to share credit and relinquish recognition to others.’

EDUCATION: MBA in science, innovation and commercialization, George Washington University; bachelor’s degree in communications, Ohio State University
FIRST JOB: My first job where I received a paycheck was serving soft-serve ice cream at age 15 at Dairy Isle. I was a gift wrapper at Carlisle’s Department Store at age 16.
FAMILY: Husband, Lee Evans; children, Joseph and Raleigh Guerra-Sacks; stepson, Alexander Evans
HOBBIES: Reading, tennis, working out at the gym, and learning to meditate and be silent
FAVORITE CHARITY: After BioAccel, Girl Scouts of America
ONE THING YOU WILL NEVER DO AGAIN: (I seem to be a slow learner on this one!)

‘A great leader supports informed risk-taking to challenge the status quo.’

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP: Leadership is about leading, following and being part of the team. It is about knowing your personal strengths and weaknesses and then taking on the right role, at the right time, for the right project. It’s knowing when to coach, get on the field or sit on the bench. As a leader, it is important to lead, but it is just as important to listen and to delegate. Being a role model is important, but your organization needs to step out on its own, make its own mistakes and then evolve from those mistakes. No organization or individual can develop, create and innovate without making mistakes. While this is a scary thought for senior leadership, it must be woven into the fabric and values of an organization. Leadership must be based on a sound set of values that are clear, understood by all and practiced daily.

AN EFFECTIVE LEADER: An effective leader must stand by all and practiced daily. Nevertheless, it turned out to be a rewarding experience — just very difficult.

EFFECTIVE BUSINESS LEADERSHIP: An effective business leader is a person who is willing to take calculated risks to move the company forward and to take responsibility when things go wrong. It is a caring person who is willing to give credit to others when something is successful and cares about the needs of their staff. An effective business leader listens to and respects the differences and opinions of others. It is someone who is resourceful, creative and innovative, who always applies values, integrity and honesty in their daily business practices.

STAYING MOTIVATED: Reflecting on how blessed I am, and looking back on all I have accomplished in my life and career, help me to stay focused and motivated. Because of this feeling of gratitude, I believe I have a responsibility to give back to the community and to make a difference for others when possible.

IMPORTANT BUSINESS DISCOVERY: One of the biggest impacts I ever had was creating a new organizational model within the federal government. Revising the organizational ‘boxes’ — physical location of staff to be side by side with those to whom they were providing support — and delegation of authority had a dramatic, positive impact on both scientific and business operations and created a culture of innovation. The new organization allowed the employees to believe everything was possible, even in a large government bureaucracy.

ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF: Next to my children, it is founding BioAccel with Dr. Ron King. We had a vision, and we implemented that vision. We did it in awful economic times, with minimal community support and against great odds. The fact we are here, three years later, in a growth mode and making a difference in our community is unbelievably rewarding.

WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: When I got out of college, I moved to Washington, lived in a mobile home and was a drug counselor at the VA Medical Center. This is a life experience that has definitely had a profound and lasting impact on my personal life and professional career.

Mary Ann GUERRA
CEO
BioAccel
HQ: Phoenix
TYPE OF BUSINESS: Helps companies move from discovery through development and into the marketplace.
2011 REVENUE: $2.7 million
2010 REVENUE: $4.0 million
EMPLOYEES: 6
WHAT IS LEADERSHIP: Leadership is linked to bravery and the courage to envision a radically different future. Look around: So many people are afraid to venture beyond the norm. Leadership takes opening your heart and mind to the broader world and allowing yourself to be enlightened. I purposely open myself up to history, science, technology, world events, economics, psychology, sociology, pop culture, art, music ... along with business, because these varied perspectives provide me with insight and inspiration. I could narrow my focus to just business, but why? That’s like trying to see the world by circling a tiny pond when the ocean is right there. Being a leader means bravely honoring who you are, standing up for what you passionately believe in, and putting it out there for the broader world to see and hear. It’s about being solid enough in your beliefs and experiences to go toe-to-toe with the naysayers and take the heat. Leaders have earned this right because they have won and lost, succeeded and failed, and lived enough to confidently defend their positions. Finally, leadership means being brave enough to be vulnerable. I have found that when I am at my weakest, I am at my strongest. I regularly discuss my scars, but seldom my crowns, of my weakest, I am at my strongest. I regularly discuss my scars, but seldom my crowns, of my failures have shaped me far more than my successes. Leadership means being a whole person, a real person whose vulnerabilities and experiences go toe-to-toe with the naysayers and take the heat. Leaders have earned this right because they have won and lost, succeeded and failed, and lived enough to confidently defend their positions. Finally, leadership means being brave enough to be vulnerable. I have found that when I am at my weakest, I am at my strongest. I regularly discuss my scars, but seldom my crowns, because my failures have shaped me far more than my successes. Leadership means being a whole person, a real person whose mission it is to bravely better the lives of those you serve.

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in advertising, Penn State University

FIRST JOB: Greeter at Rattlesnake Steak House. I was the girl who announced over the loudspeaker, “Ribeye medium, ribeye medium.” I worked split shifts for a month and made a total of $96. That was a dose of reality and motivation.

FAMILY: Married to Mike for 24 years. No kids unless you count our dog, Pima, and our three rescue cats, Sierra, Rigby and Misty.

FAVORITE CHARITY: Best Friends Animal Society

MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB: Patience. I can see the vision of better business and a better world, so I always want to move faster than I know is wise.

MOST FULFILLING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB: When we help clients define and build their “Heart & Mind” brand. They feel it, their clients feel it, and so do we. It’s very gratifying to everyone on our team.

BEST CAREER ADVICE YOU’VE EVER RECEIVED: Five months after being laid off for the second time and feeling pretty worthless about myself, Mike (then my fiance) told me on my birthday at a restaurant to “stop feeling sorry for myself and get back in the game.” Bad timing, great advice. I’ve been in the game ever since.

STRONGEST BUSINESS SKILL: The ability to walk into a company, figure out who they are and what they stand for, and pull that essence together into a nicely packaged brand including messaging, images, actions and systems.

WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: I was voted “Best Sense of Humor” in my senior class. Guess I used to be funny.

MEANING OF EMPOWERMENT: Throughout my life, empowerment has meant making choices and decisions that would not only make me happy, but also a better person. From an early age, my mother always told me I could do and be whatever I wanted. Keeping in mind that it can only be attained once you set your mind and heart to it, empowerment can be achieved in many different aspects of life: spiritual, educational, professional, social, financial, etc. Empowerment can be as simple as being able to recognize that something in your life requires change and making that change occur. In my life, my own empowerment came from using available resources to accomplish my goals of finishing graduate school, increasing my awareness of my own wants and needs, and being able to initiate and accept the growth process of life and changes that will be never-ending.
Maurine Karabbitsos
Partner
Social Venture Partners

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor’s degree in economics, Tulane University; MBA, University of Michigan Ross School of Business
**FIRST JOB:** Ice cream scooper at Haagen-Dazs
**WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE LEADER:** The ability to attract, support and motivate a talented team
**HOBBIES/INTERESTS:** Travel, wine, hiking, reading
**FAVORITE CHARITIES:** Junior Achievement and Home- ward Bound
**ONE THING YOU’LL NEVER DO AGAIN:** Probably skiing — too cold and dangerous to be recreational
**STAYING MOTIVATED:** Creating a strong work-life balance — mixing things I need to do with things I love to do
**ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF:** Helping a deployed soldier bring a puppy home from Afghanistan

**BEST CAREER ADVICE RECEIVED:** Not go with my gut.

**WHAT IS LEADERSHIP:** Leadership is seizing the opportunity to steer or guide a vision and its constituency toward the intended goal. In the case of downtown organizations, a leader must direct smart, urban initiatives while understanding and representing the needs, desires and abilities of the stakeholders as well as the potential customers. Through experience and time, a leader will understand the points of all sides, learn to negotiate and compromise for the betterment of the goal. A leader’s ability directly affects the performance of those working closest to them. This can include an organization’s management and support staff, a board of directors or even a city council. In each of these cases, belief in the goal and the leader is essential.

**WHAT IS SUCCESS:** To me, success is a journey rather than a destination, and my vision of it evolves as I grow and change. While the metrics and trappings of success may vary widely from one person to the next and will surely change over time, the keys to feeling successful and happy are to believe in what you’re working toward, to appreciate life for what it is rather than yearning for what you had hoped it would be. I don’t yet know what my future success will entail, but I am immensely grateful for the many blessings in my life that allow me to feel satisfied when I go to bed at night and to wake with excitement for the day ahead. To me, that is success.

**‘Let the passion for what you do shine through in your day-to-day work …’**

Nancy Hormann
President and Executive Director
Downtown Tempe Community

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor’s degree, University of California-Los Angeles
**FIRST JOB:** Dressing troll dolls in a local toy store
**FAMILY:** Married with three grown children, and two grandchildren on the way
**FAVORITE CHARITY:** American Diabetes Association
**MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB:** Managing the wants and needs of a diverse constituency in a public-private partnership
**MOST FULFILLING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB:** Being able to see the fruits of our labor
**BEST CAREER ADVICE RECEIVED:** Find out what you like doing best, and get someone to pay you for it.

**WHAT IS LEADERSHIP:** Leadership is the ability to at- tract, support and motivate a talented team
**WHAT IS SUCCESS:** To me, success is a journey rather than a destination, and my vision of it evolves as I grow and change. While the metrics and trappings of success may vary widely from one person to the next and will surely change over time, the keys to feeling successful and happy are to believe in what you’re working toward, to appreciate life for what it is rather than yearning for what you had hoped it would be. I don’t yet know what my future success will entail, but I am immensely grateful for the many blessings in my life that allow me to feel satisfied when I go to bed at night and to wake with excitement for the day ahead. To me, that is success.

**‘I have a career that challenges and interests me everyday.’**

Kerry Hester
Senior Vice President, Operations Planning and Support
US Airways Group Inc.

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor’s degree, Arizona State University; paralegal certificate, University of San Diego
**FIRST JOB:** At the White House, as a volunteer for President Gerald Ford’s election campaign. I was 14 years old and in charge of an entire group of college kids. I can still hear one of them asking me after I’d finished bossing him around, “Just how old are you?”
**EFFECTIVE BUSINESS LEADERSHIP:** A well-nurtured Rolodex
**HOBBIES/INTERESTS:** I’m an avid golfer, I enjoy skiing and, as one of the lead partners for SVP’s investment at Camelback High School, I’m a loyal supporter of just about anything going on at the school.
**FAVORITE CHARTITY:** Social Venture Partners. SVP uses a hands-on philanthropic/venture capital model to fund nonprofit startups. As a partner, I not only invest my time and money, but also use my professional expertise to help drive innovation in the community. As a board member and past chair, I can say it is personally the best investment I have made for myself; I no longer give money charitably; instead, I invest it philanthropically.

**IMPORTANT BUSINESS DISCOVERY:** Don’t burn a bridge as you’re crossing it — and it involved calling my boss, who was president of the company, on his lack of integrity ... At some point we all have a business associate, client or team- mate whose actions caused us to wonder how he or she sleeps at night. Those are the ones you keep an eye on. I prefer to have someone keeping an eye on me because they like what I’ve done.

**ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF:** Not go with my gut.

**WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW:** I own eight pairs of cowboy boots.

**IMPORTANT BUSINESS DISCOVERY:** Don’t burn a bridge as you’re crossing it — and it involved calling my boss, who was president of the company, on his lack of integrity ... At some point we all have a business associate, client or team- mate whose actions caused us to wonder how he or she sleeps at night. Those are the ones you keep an eye on. I prefer to have someone keeping an eye on me because they like what I’ve done.

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It’s not how many. It’s who

Suppose your mid-market company has a highly specialized need – a complex transaction or new acquisition. One way to approach it might be to start throwing hours and people at it. But that’s not our style. At Deloitte Growth Enterprise Services, our size means we have advisors who specialize in the very service you need. We quickly put the right person with the right experience on it. You save time and money. And get what you seek – answers.

To learn more about Deloitte Growth Enterprise Services and its customized offerings for mid-market and privately held companies, contact Jonas McCormick at +1 602 234 5100 or e-mail us at dges@deloitte.com

Gain insight with Perspectives, our series of reports, podcasts, and events for mid-market and privately held companies at www.deloitte.com/us/dges
A twist of business side as a publisher.

The perfect storm. My current role combines political news and information from Arizona's model that revolves around the latest time I had the opportunity to relocate to the Dolan Co. (based in Minneapolis), they years I developed an interest in the business trade publication for lawyers and was later promoted to editor. My goal was to work on the editorial side, but during the next few years I developed an interest in the business side. After the newspaper was acquired by the Dolan Co. (based in Minneapolis), they asked me to join the publisher ranks with a position in Kansas City, Mo. In 2005, Dolan purchased Arizona News Service, and this time I had the opportunity to relocate to Phoenix. It was an offer too good to refuse — a chance to run a platform and savvy business model that revolves around the latest political news and information from Arizona's state Capitol. There are many other details, but as I look back, I can see this was the perfect storm. My current role combines my training as a reporter and editor with the business side as a publisher.

The best thing you can do is to always have integrity and honesty in what you’re doing. And if you believe in something, be persistent and go after it.

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Talking about seeing someone in the newsroom proved to be a case of being in the wrong place at the right time. The editor put me to work, and for five days I had the time of my life shadowing reporters, editors and photographers. The internship was extended, and at the end of my senior year the editor offered me a paid, full-time job as family-page editor — beating out many college graduates. After college, I dabbled in extended, and at the end of my senior year the editor offered me a paid, full-time job as family-page editor — beating out many college graduates. After college, I dabbled in news for a talk radio station, but ink was in my blood and I missed working at a newspaper. I landed a job as a reporter with a daily trade publication for lawyers and was later promoted to editor. My goal was to work on the editorial side, but during the next few years I developed an interest in the business side. After the newspaper was acquired by the Dolan Co. (based in Minneapolis), they asked me to join the publisher ranks with a position in Kansas City, Mo. In 2005, Dolan purchased Arizona News Service, and this time I had the opportunity to relocate to Phoenix. It was an offer too good to refuse — a chance to run a platform and savvy business model that revolves around the latest political news and information from Arizona’s state Capitol. There are many other details, but as I look back, I can see this was the perfect storm. My current role combines my training as a reporter and editor with the business side as a publisher.

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French leader is not a matter of money or material things, but a matter of people.

Lauri LEADLEY

Valley Sleep Center

HQ: Mesa
TYPE OF BUSINESS: Sleep disorder testing, diagnosis and treatment

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in human biology, master’s degree in biology and MBA, Stanford University
FIRST JOB: Scuba instructor
FAMILY: Husband of 21 years, Conrad; children, Matthew, 19, Kylie, 17, and Annelise, 10
HOBBIES/INTERESTS: International travel, photography and cooking

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP: I have found effective leadership to depend on the same principles:
• Time is the most valuable currency.
• Schedule meetings and assignments with work-life balance in mind.
• Match talents to tasks when hiring.
• Align mission, vision and values, and communicate it often.
• Be a thought leader and demonstrate the distinction between strategy and tactics.
• Focus on results, not process.
• Create a fun and respectful environment.
• Listen more; lead better.
• Leave preconceptions at the door.
• Be accountable.
• Be confident; gracious; and evolve.

EDUCATION: Registered Polysomnographic Technologist (RSPGT) and Respiratory Care Practitioner (RCP) credentials, Collins College
FIRST JOB: “Skinny dipper” (ice-cream scooper) at Baskin-Robbins
WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE LEADER: Surround yourself with people who have the qualities you lack.
FAMILY: Husband, Glenn; three adult children
HOBBIES/INTERESTS: Travel, skiing, yoga, mentoring people, volunteering, speaking
FAVORITE CHARITY: United Food Bank
ONE THING YOU’LL NEVER DO AGAIN: Go through chemotherapy while pregnant
HOW DO YOU STAY MOTIVATED: Hearing from those whose lives have been changed for the better as a result of our work

ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF: Phoenix Chamber of Commerce Impact Award, Business of the Year 2011

DEFIN SUCCESS: In 1992, just two years after the launch of what now is Valley Sleep Center, and pregnant with my third child, I was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive type of cancer. Doctors told me I needed immediate treatment or else I would die. It was the most frightening time of my life, and I had a lot of decisions to make. Fortunately, it has always been my philosophy that success begins and ends with people. I had surrounded myself in business and in life with smart and caring people. When I called upon them to help me, they came through. Because of them, my business was able to survive. Several chemotherapy treatments later, I gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Today I am cancer-free. I’m often asked about how I got to be so “successful.” Success to me is not a matter of money or material things, but a matter of people. From the start of Valley Sleep Center, it has been my goal to help people, because at the time when I needed it most, other people helped me.

Beth McDonald
Woman of the Year
Presented by Schumacher Mercedes-Benz

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The Beth McDonald Woman of the Year

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CLIMBING THE CORPORATE LADDER: As fulfilling and rewarding as my 23-year-and-counting care career at USAA has been, it hasn’t always been a smooth ride. At a crossroads several years ago, I had to make a decision to apply for a demotion. It was a humbling experience, but in the end it was exactly what I needed, setting into motion subsequent career moves that prepared me for my current role. That example also illustrates the first of six principles I feel have been key in my personal success:

1. Chase experience, not titles. Success doesn’t always mean a forward or upward path. It comes with steps forward, backward and sideways, and maybe even a few stumbles.

2. Be a go-giver. We’ve all heard of go-getters, but I subscribe to the belief that taking care of and giving to others — in personal life as well as career — will ultimately impact your own success.

3. Practice “servant leadership” and mentor others. I have benefited greatly from tremendous mentors who shared advice and encouragement. In turn, some of my most rewarding moments have been when people tell me I helped inspire their achievements.

4. Have clarity in core values. USAA’s values of service, loyalty, honesty and integrity are clear to our 24,000-plus employees and align with the values of the community we serve.

5. Never underestimate importance of perseverance. When I applied with USAA as a new management trainee, I had no real aspirations for moving up the corporate ladder. Our CEO, Jim Teter, had different plans. I worked hard and was satisfied in my role with Arizona in September 2007 as the controller. I started my career in public accounting, where I spent 10 years in various financial management roles and responsibilities that are necessary to accomplish goals.

6. Remember expressions of gratitude. Always make a point of deliberately thanking others. I have benefitted greatly from tremendous mentors who shared advice and encouragement.

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS: My vision of success has evolved. When I first started working and learning about investing, success was gaining as much knowledge as possible. It was never being satisfied with a minimum effort, but always doing my very best. It was absorbing as much information as possible from people I admired. From the beginning, it has always been about using what I learn to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Today, after 35 years in the investment business, success means being able to help my clients reach their goals while accomplishing my own and adhering to my values. It is the ability to use my energy, knowledge, talent, experience and commitment to my chosen field for the benefit of those we serve. I like to think we lead with our experience and perspective, which contributes to our success. Having the opportunity to mentor and be a positive influence on others has also shaped my vision of success.

‘Truly being able to give back — that is the final true measure of success.’

CEO AND PORTFOLIO MANAGER
Pathlight Investors LLC
HQ: Phoenix
REVENUE: $1 million-plus

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in accounting, Thomas College; enrolled in Executive MBA program, ASU
FIRST JOB: Retail associate
HOBBIES/INTERESTS: I love to ski, hike, mountain bike and golf.
MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB: Resource allocation in a growing, dynamic social enterprise
MOST FULFILLING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB: Knowing we’ve helped thousands of Arizonans in need each year, and that I’ve had a small hand in that
BEST CAREER ADVICE: Be authentic.
WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: Being born and raised in New England, I’m passionate about the outdoors.

VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER, PHOENIX OPERATIONS
USAA
HQ: Phoenix
TYPE OF BUSINESS: Financial services
2010 REVENUE: $17.9 billion
EMPLOYEES: 3,000 in Phoenix, 24,000 companywide

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in economics, Utah State University
FIRST JOB: Margin clerk at Merrill Lynch
FAMILY: Husband, Marty; sons, M.J. (wife, Julie) and John (wife, Susan); grandchildren, Avery, Case and Phoenix
WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE LEADER: Having a long-term vision for the company and its business strategy. Bringing together leaders who have the diverse but complementary skills necessary to accomplish goals.
FAVORITE CHARITY: WellCare Foundation
SOMETHING I WILL NEVER AGAIN: Go hiking — my knees are not up to it.
WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: I was in a ballet operetta in Bremerhaven, Germany, when I was 12.

VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER, PHOENIX OPERATIONS
USAA
HQ: Phoenix
TYPE OF BUSINESS: Financial services
2010 REVENUE: $17.9 billion
EMPLOYEES: 3,000 in Phoenix, 24,000 companywide

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in business administration, Liberty University
FIRST JOB: Entry-level phone representative for USAA
WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE BUSINESS LEADER: Practicing “servant leadership,” and taking care of team members to make sure they stay engaged and happy. In turn, engaged team members will take good care of customers.
FAMILY: Very close to my mom, dad and four siblings
HOBBIES/INTERESTS: Live music, theater, reading, travel, and quiet time on the balcony of my Central Phoenix condo
FAVORITE CHARITY: Any organization dedicated to the betterment of our wonderful senior citizens
ONE THING YOU’LL NEVER DO AGAIN: Fall asleep while reading a book at high noon in mid-July on my west-facing balcony
STAYING MOTIVATED: Family, friends, health, career and fellow team members at USAA — just thinking about the magnitude of the good fortune I’ve been given keeps me motivated.
IMPORTANT BUSINESS DISCOVERY: I learned early on that the principle of karma applies at work just as it does in life. Taking care of and giving to others ultimately will impact your own success.
ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF: Two things stand out: Hearing my parents tell me they are proud of me, and having team members thank me for the part I’ve played in them fulfilling professional or personal goals.
WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: Because of my highly visible role and responsibility, I appear to be extroverted; in reality, I am an introvert.

‘Success doesn’t always mean a forward or upward path. It comes with steps forward, backward and sideways, and maybe even a few stumbles.’

Patsy Nodilo

CEO AND PORTFOLIO MANAGER
Pathlight Investors LLC
HQ: Phoenix
REVENUE: $1 million-plus

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in accounting, Thomas College; enrolled in Executive MBA program, ASU
FIRST JOB: Retail associate
HOBBIES/INTERESTS: I love to ski, hike, mountain bike and golf.
MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB: Resource allocation in a growing, dynamic social enterprise
MOST FULFILLING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB: Knowing we’ve helped thousands of Arizonans in need each year, and that I’ve had a small hand in that
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‘Success doesn’t always mean a forward or upward path. It comes with steps forward, backward and sideways, and maybe even a few stumbles.’

Harriet Martin

Senior Vice President and CFO
Goodwill of Central Arizona
HQ: Phoenix
TYPE OF BUSINESS: Nonprofit
2010 REVENUE: $90 million
2010: $77.8 million
EMPLOYEES: 1,800-plus

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in accounting, Thomas College; enrolled in Executive MBA program, ASU
FIRST JOB: Retail associate
HOBBIES/INTERESTS: I love to ski, hike, mountain bike and golf.
MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB: Resource allocation in a growing, dynamic social enterprise
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‘Success doesn’t always mean a forward or upward path. It comes with steps forward, backward and sideways, and maybe even a few stumbles.’

Tanya Perry

‘I am humbled, blessed, and do not for one day take for granted the opportunities and responsibilities that are part of my role.’

Tanya Perry

‘I am humbled, blessed, and do not for one day take for granted the opportunities and responsibilities that are part of my role.’

Tanya Perry
EDUCATION: Monroe (Iowa) High School
FIRST JOB: Working on my parents’ farm
WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE LEADER: Be involved in the community; surround yourself with good leaders; and walk the talk
FAMILY: Husband, Daniel; son, Shannon; daughter-in-law, Kirsten; grandchildren, Braden, Cameron and Keegan
FAVORITE CHARITY: United Way
ONE THING YOU’LL NEVER DO AGAIN: Relocate to a new city to start another bank office
STAYING MOTIVATED: I’m very competitive and want to succeed.
WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: That I went to work for a bank right out of high school

CLIMBING THE CORPORATE LADDER: Growing up on an Iowa farm in a loving and caring family, I learned responsibility and accountability at an early age. In a household of seven, everyone worked; it didn’t matter your age or gender.

My brothers and sisters and I were taught to get the job done right and on time. Back then, “climbing the ladder” meant climbing to the loft in our barn to get hay for the dairy cows. In addition to a strong work ethic, my parents encouraged us to get involved in a variety of activities, from sports to church events. We were raised not only to work hard but to give back, and that we would be rewarded in many ways.

I’ve carried this solid foundation into my professional career. I entered the banking industry immediately after graduating high school and knew I had to prove myself more than those with a college education. Consequently, I set out to gain as much experience, knowledge and confidence as possible.

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP: A leader’s shadow is a long one, and our essence can make or break the institution. The example that we set, be it ethically, behaviorally or otherwise, is reflected back to us daily by others inside and outside the organization. Knowing what reflection you want to see, and live it. Over the years, I have learned from others’ mistakes by observing the wrong behaviors and failures in business strategy and people management. I have accepted that true leadership is quite lonely, sometimes frightening. It requires a good deal of courage, as the business decisions we make affect the livelihood of many other individuals and the perpetuation of the organization. The higher we go in the organization, the more the role is 24/7 and needs constant attention and refreshing. The leadership role is all about getting things done through other people, so trust and support of others are crucial.

Being a CEO is much like being the captain of a ship: holding firm at the helm, during good and bad seas; demonstrating to the team that I know where we are headed; deploying the resources (people, financial capital and technology) to match priorities to keep us heading toward our agreed destination; and constantly communicating with the crew so they know what to do, and what challenges or rewards are up ahead.

Most leaders say, “Follow me.” I say, “Let’s go!”

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in political science, cum laude, ASU
FIRST JOB: Slathering bagels with cream cheese at Lox, Stock and Bagel in Scottsdale
FAMILY: Husband, Eric Butruff; Nancy, the cat
HOBBIES/INTERESTS: Reading, cooking, fine dining, travel, shopping, tennis, arguing about politics
FAVORITE CHARITY: Share Our Strength
MY PHILOSOPHY: Self-awareness is the key to enlightenment.
WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: I’ve lived in Arizona for 20 years, and I’ve never been to the Grand Canyon.

VISION OF SUCCESS: For many people, success is defined by money, accolades, job titles, and in general climbing up the corporate ladder. My vision of success includes some of these elements, certainly; but mostly, success to me is a keen sense of awareness of my strengths and weaknesses leading to a focus on honing my talents and gifts, while constantly striving to improve my areas of weakness. If I can accomplish this in any situation, relationship or business transaction, I am successful. I find that defining success only in monetary terms or through the accolades the world bestows upon us can be ultimately shallow, selfish and, frankly, short-lived. Self-awareness and self-worth go hand in hand, and once we as individuals cease to define our successes and ourselves by the words and actions of those around us, we can truly maximize our effect on our world.

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE BUSINESS LEADER: A high degree of self-awareness mixed with humility, respect, focus, curiosity, courage and humor
HOBBIES/INTERESTS: Global travel; studying history and other cultures
FAVORITE CHARITY: St. Mary’s Food Bank
ONE THING YOU’LL NEVER DO AGAIN: Accept any job with a title that starts with “op.”
STAYING MOTIVATED: I am pathologically positive, so there is a constant source of inner energy that keeps me going.

IMPORTANT BUSINESS DISCOVERY: Though usually very decisive, I have learned that sitting on the fence isn’t always a bad thing. When I do fence-sit, it is usually because that one piece of critical data needed to make the right call on a market or strategy hasn’t appeared. When I wait, it eventually comes, and big mistakes are avoided.

ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF: Steering WorldatWork through an incredibly challenging decade to become the globally recognized organization it is today: relevant, sustainable, resourceful and fun
WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: I played the mean accordion throughout grade school.
DEFINING SUCCESS: Initially, as a 16-year-old businesswoman, my vision of success was to earn the same salary as the successful men in my neighborhood. I interviewed my friends’ fathers regarding their annual incomes, and those figures seemed to be the magic numbers. For years, I worked toward earning these magic numbers. When that monetary success finally was mine, I realized that while my company’s balance sheets certainly could be viewed as a sound business accomplishment, the magic really wasn’t in the money at all. What did matter were the adventures and challenges of seeing a dream flourish day in and day out. I realized that my success was measured by the jobs I created for others and the joy I could infuse into their daily tasks. As I coached my team to bring their best into each situation, I grew by watching this happen. Each day, we give our employees our best support and a positive and creative working environment. Consequently, our team members embrace our company’s passion to take exceptional care of our customers by offering exceptional products. Being exceptional is our mantra, and we stand behind our words by offering a lifetime guarantee on every one of our products. We founded our company with our products. We founded our company with the belief that my success was measured by the positive effect on everyone I touched. When we treat the course that did the most good. It was an innovative adventure that my business could help make the community a better place, and through that I realized my capacity to help others.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF: Continuing the legacy that my mom and I started three decades earlier

WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: I started my first business when I was in fifth grade, and I spent the proceeds on cheese.

EDUCATION: MBA, Nova University; Bachelor of Arts, University of Florida

FIRST JOB: Water girl at a deli in Florida

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE LEADER: Tenacity, vision, integrity and joy

FAMILY: Husband, Steve; children, Jack, 16, and Sarah, 10; and golden retrievers, Aspen, 8, and Zeus, 1

HOBBIES/INTERESTS: Hiking, mountain biking, skiing, reading and golf

FAVORITE CHARITY: Gabriel’s Angels

ONE THING YOU’LL NEVER DO AGAIN: Allow a big customer to bully me

STAYING MOTIVATED: I love that my work can make people smile and improve their lifestyle.

IMPORTANT BUSINESS DISCOVERY: That my business could help make the community a better place, and through that I realized my capacity to help others.

EDUCATION: Fine arts degree, Northern Arizona University

FIRST JOB: Graphic design for a ski shop

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE BUSINESS LEADER: Tenacity, vision, integrity and joy

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WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: I started my first business when I was in fifth grade, and I spent the proceeds on cheese.

EDUCATION: BA in elementary education, University of Wisconsin-Madison; master’s in organizational management, University of Phoenix; master’s in educational leadership, Northern Arizona University

FIRST JOB: Busing tables at Ponderosa Steakhouse

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE LEADER: Vision and execution

FAMILY: Son, Bill; daughters, Molly and Colleen

HOBBIES/INTERESTS: Sudoku and crossword puzzles

FAVORITE CHARITY: United Methodist Outreach Ministries

WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: I was a cowgirl on the crew team in college — yelling out the orders and steering the shell.

EDUCATION: 10

FIRST JOB: Water girl at a deli in Florida

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE LEADER: Tenacity, vision, integrity and joy

FAMILY: Husband, Steve; children, Jack, 16, and Sarah, 10; and golden retrievers, Aspen, 8, and Zeus, 1

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IMPORTANT BUSINESS DISCOVERY: That my business could help make the community a better place, and through that I realized my capacity to help others.

WHAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW: I started my first business when I was in fifth grade, and I spent the proceeds on cheese.
**Define Success:** Leaders have both a passion to excel and the ability to motivate others. Leaders are found at all levels of any organization. A true leader has the courage necessary to assume risks, especially when that person is responsible for producing significant results. Nimbleness is required as well as a balanced mix of candor, certitude and the ability to inspire teamwork. Leadership is about investing time and energy in people. The best results come from a strong desire to collaborate. Being true to oneself is the ultimate responsibility — doing the right thing. It requires looking at all sides, remaining unbiased and having the willingness to make unpopular decisions. Demonstrating by example, trusting others, providing growth opportunities and motivation, and the willingness to take calculated, educated risks are required ingredients for any good leader. Our statewide business community is robust with incredible talent from diverse backgrounds; a network of leaders who are generous with their time and energy, and interested in producing the best results. I am grateful to have so many peers and mentors who inspire me to strive to do my best.

**Leadership is about investing time and energy in people. The best results come from a strong desire to collaborate.**

**Education:** Honors Bachelor of Commerce, Laurentian University; Global Leadership Certification, Thunderbird School of Management

**First Job:** Business development manager, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Ontario, Canada

**Effective Business Leadership:** Someone who has a focused vision and is open to new ideas and approaches, but always aware of the end goal.

**Family:** Husband, Sandy; children, Alex, 15, Taylor, 13, and Madison, 10

**Hobbies/Interests:** Watching my daughters dance and son play hockey; traveling with my family; and decorating our home.

**Favorite Charity:** Charities related to children

**Awards & Accolades:** Founding editor of the Tech Connect magazine. Recipient of the Arizona Technology Council Chairman’s Award; named a Phoenix Business Journal’s “Forty Under 40” as an up and coming Arizona leader.

**Affiliations:** Member of the National Association of Industrial and Office Parks Arizona Chapter, the Phoenix Community Alliance; and the U.S. Women’s Chamber of Commerce Arizona Chapter.

**Staying Motivated:** Chocolate and lots of candy (sweet and sour)! Seriously, working with incredibly talented people and knowing that the work we do helps to advance Arizona’s economy and provides quality jobs for Arizonans.

**Important Business Discovery:** A model that sparked the creation of a new funding approach to support our state’s economic development efforts.

**Accomplishment You Are Most Proud Of:** Being the mother of three children who are talented, responsible and independent. I am proud of what each of them has achieved.

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

**Arizona Commerce Authority (formerly Arizona Department of Commerce)**

**HQ:** Phoenix

**Type of Business:** Economic development

2010 Revenue: $5.5 million (fiscal year ended June 30, 2010)

Employees: 48

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BY MATTHEW PHILLIPS
Contributing Writer

More professional women are migrating to female wealth advisers, and they are attaching core values to their financial portfolios — something rarely seen prior to the economic meltdown.

Many female investment counselors already were targeting career women when the markets began to tumble, but pressures of an erratic economy expedited that shift to advisers with similar backgrounds and values.

BALANCING WORK, FLEXIBILITY

Recognition of women as stewards of wealth is undergoing a bit of an evolution, although their role as the primary family caretaker has remained constant.

Empathetic guidance for female clients is natural for Candace Wiest, president and CEO of West Valley National Bank in Avondale.

“Tend to think they know more than they do.”

The delicate balance of career and family isn’t void of failure.

Women’s careers are in limbo an average of 12 years, according to the Social Security Administration. Breaks in employment, typically a result of family demands, can cause a savings hiatus and result in depressed wages when returning to work.

But today’s economic environment could change this pattern. Wiest sees an immediate impact and uncertain future.

“The blessing and curse of this economy is there is a whole generation of women who can’t afford to be out of the workforce for extended periods,” she said. “I’m guessing if we looked at these numbers in 10 years, we might note a big change.”

Women seeking guidance from female financial advisers is becoming more common, experts say.

“High-level professional women do seek female wealth advisers to support them,” said Deborah Bateman, executive vice president and director of wealth strategies at National Bank of Arizona.

Because higher-income women investors face unique issues, an adviser who shares similar life experiences becomes valuable, she said. Beyond the portfolio there are also distinct traits more common among female investors.

“I do believe there are some core values that are truly appreciated by women,” Bateman said. “Women are more willing to admit what they don’t know, while many men tend to think they know more than they do.”

Bateman said the intrinsic value of money is regarded in different ways: “Women tend to equate wealth with lifestyle, and men tend to use wealth to define or validate their success, or keep score.”

Bateman and Wiest view time as a significant factor when advising women. Frequently, women in the caretaker role already are seeing the clock as a precious commodity. Add the demands of a high-level career and time management becomes problematic.

LIVING LONGER, LIVING LEANER

In a twist of actuarial fate, living longer also may mean living leaner, at least financially. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a 65-year-old woman typically can expect to live for 20 more years. Females dominate the nation’s retired population, composing 68 percent of that demographic. With every passing decade, women become increasingly vulnerable to an eroding economic terrain.

Investing from a risk-averse position partially is a result of influences outside the financial world. Women face a compressed investing window and do so with fewer resources, two factors that make developing solid financial strategies more difficult. The decision to put family before career and the loss of time in the workforce has changed all of the rules.

“If you are 12 years behind in your retirement account, most folks would be inclined to take fewer risks,” Wiest said.

Women are considered cautious portfolio managers with a low threshold for risk, but their measured style and deliberate approach often are byproducts of a highly engaged individual, financial industry professionals say.

Even after a financial adviser takes charge of a portfolio, 52 percent of high-income women remain part of the process, according to a 2011 Metlife/Harris Interactive study of female investors.

The women surveyed, with annual incomes of more than $200,000, said a combination of instinct and education provides guidance.

THE FINANCIAL MOVING TARGET

For highly successful women, the same personal assets that resulted in accomplished careers also are keys to investing.

“(Women use) the same or similar skill sets and core values that led (them) to their own personal success,” Bateman said.

Despite an economy that dealt blows across every demographic, opportunity can be found in its wake. An optimistic Wiest sees promise for business as the cost of borrowing dips into record territory.

A Small Business Administration loan hovers below 6 percent and favorable terms on conventional paper make fresh capital more attainable. With real estate firmly a buyers’ market, businesses can move from renter to owner.

The end result in investing isn’t always about money, either. Wiest finds that her clients’ portfolio often is less about percentages and more about preservation.

“I believe it is more about security — being able to afford a home they love and are proud to live in, and good schools for their kids,” she said.

Altruism remains a character trait for women investors. “Many women take care of themselves last,” said Wiest, emphasizing that active wealth management often is defined by perception. “Investing in your future is a habit, not an event.”
Attorney turns her youthful struggles into job successes

BY LINDA OBEL
Contributing Writer

Cynthia Estrella, a lawyer in the Phoenix office of Polsinelli Shughart PC, specializes in insurance recovery and construction litigation. She has a mechanical engineering degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a law degree from the University of Iowa, and she is active in the community.

But that’s only part of her story.

To fully comprehend where she is and where she’s going, you have to understand where she’s been. Then, it becomes clear why Estrella believes so passionately in the next generation of Latina lawyers, and why she works so hard to see them succeed.

Estrella, 42, was born in San Diego. She was the only child of working-class parents who met in Mexico while her mother, a San Diego native, was living in Tijuana. Her father, a Mexican national, spoke no English.

They married over the objections of Estrella’s maternal grandparents and divorced shortly after she was born. With her father gone, Estrella and her mother plunged into years-long struggles with poverty.

“I attended 12 elementary schools because we were always getting evicted,” she said. “We lived in government housing, used food stamps and stood in lines for government food. My mom did the best she could, but she struggled to put food on the table.”

Despite her family’s economic challenges and the stresses of constantly changing schools, Estrella was a bright student who excelled academically. She thrived on the attention and praise from her teachers.

“You can do this. You belong here,” Estrella was expecting.

Estrella’s good grades paved the way for her to pursue college after high school. She decided to apply to MIT.

“I didn’t even know what MIT was, but they waived the application fee for me, so I applied,” she said, adding that she was the first person on either side of her family to attend college. “Everybody made a big deal about it when I was accepted.”

She finished her undergraduate degree and landed a job as a test engineer at Hughes Aircraft Co. After three years there, she was ready for a new challenge. She accepted a voluntary layoff and applied to law school.

At the University of Iowa, Estrella began identifying more actively with her Hispanic heritage. As she did so, she noticed a dearth of Latina role models and even fewer Latina lawyers.

“People on the Move”

Cynthia Estrella, a lawyer in the Phoenix office of Polsinelli Shughart PC, specializes in insurance recovery and construction litigation. She has a mechanical engineering degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a law degree from the University of Iowa, and she is active in the community.

But that’s only part of her story.

To fully comprehend where she is and where she’s going, you have to understand where she’s been. Then, it becomes clear why Estrella believes so passionately in the next generation of Latina lawyers, and why she works so hard to see them succeed.

Estrella, 42, was born in San Diego. She was the only child of working-class parents who met in Mexico while her mother, a San Diego native, was living in Tijuana. Her father, a Mexican national, spoke no English.

They married over the objections of Estrella’s maternal grandparents and divorced shortly after she was born. With her father gone, Estrella and her mother plunged into years-long struggles with poverty.

“I attended 12 elementary schools because we were always getting evicted,” she said. “We lived in government housing, used food stamps and stood in lines for government food. My mom did the best she could, but she struggled to put food on the table.”

Despite her family’s economic challenges and the stresses of constantly changing schools, Estrella was a bright student who excelled academically. She thrived on the attention and praise from her teachers.

“You can do this. You belong here,” Estrella was expecting.

Estrella’s good grades paved the way for her to pursue college after high school. She decided to apply to MIT.

“I didn’t even know what MIT was, but they waived the application fee for me, so I applied,” she said, adding that she was the first person on either side of her family to attend college. “Everybody made a big deal about it when I was accepted.”

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At the University of Iowa, Estrella began identifying more actively with her Hispanic heritage. As she did so, she noticed a dearth of Latina role models and even fewer Latina lawyers.

She decided to build on the mentoring practices she had begun in elementary school by reaching out to young Latina lawyers coming up through the ranks.

Today, Estrella mentors at least 15 law students and young lawyers each semester, volunteering through the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at Arizona State University, the Phoenix School of Law, the Arizona Women Lawyers Association and Los Abogados, Arizona’s Hispanic bar association.

“I can tell kids in law school, ‘I did this. You can do this. You belong here,’” Estrella said. “They can ask me dumb questions because I can say I asked that question, too.”

Daryl Gonzalez, a second-year law student at ASU, has been meeting monthly with Estrella for almost a year. They connected at a mentoring event sponsored by the Arizona Women Lawyers Association.

“Cynthia has really helped guide me with in-depth conversation,” she said. “She invited me to her firm for a mock interview with associates from her firm and arranged lunch for me with one of her firm’s bankruptcy attorneys. It was way more than I was expecting.”

Perhaps even better, said Gonzalez, is that “she believed in me, maybe even before I deserved to be believed in. I really appreciate that.”

Estrella’s boss, Polsinelli shareholder Troy Froderman, uses words such as “creative” and “appropriately aggressive” to describe Estrella.

“She’s a good example for young women, for Latinas. She’s pretty remarkable.”
## Another look...

### Just missed the list, 52-100

| Rank | Company Name | Address | Telephone | Web | Local gross revenue | # of Valley employees | Primary business | Top local executives | Year estab. | Locally |
|------|--------------|---------|-----------|-----|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------|--------|
| 52.  | Desert Fleet-Serv | $3.6 M | | | | | | | 2002 | | |
| 53.  | R.O.I. Properties | $3.5 M | | | | | | | 2003 | | |
| 54.  | Elontec LLC | $3.5 M | | | | | | | 2001 | | |
| 55.  | Holiday Cruises and Tours | $3.5 M | | | | | | | 2003 | | |
| 56.  | ADM Group Inc. | $3.4 M | | | | | | | 2004 | | |
| 57.  | Nibblers Catering | $3.4 M | | | | | | | 2005 | | |
| 58.  | Compass Cleaning Solutions | $3.3 M | | | | | | | 2006 | | |
| 59.  | Specialized Services Co. | $3.1 M | | | | | | | 2007 | | |
| 60.  | Decision Consultants Inc. | $3 M | | | | | | | 2008 | | |
| 61.  | Magic Touch Mechanical | $3 M | | | | | | | 2009 | | |
| 62.  | Decision Consultants Inc. | $2.8 M | | | | | | | 2010 | | |
| 63.  | W&W Structural Inc. | $2.6 M | | | | | | | 2011 | | |
| 64.  | Martz Agency | $2.5 M | | | | | | | 2012 | | |
| 65.  | Archaeological Consulting Services Ltd. | $2.3 M | | | | | | | 2013 | | |
| 66.  | Benjamin Franklin Plumbing | $2.2 M | | | | | | | 2014 | | |
| 67.  | Duffy Group Inc. | $2.2 M | | | | | | | 2015 | | |
| 68.  | Abalos & Associates PLLC | $2.1 M | | | | | | | 2016 | | |
| 69.  | Diversified Transportation Inc. | $2 M | | | | | | | 2017 | | |
| 70.  | All-Tel Data & Fiber Inc. | $2 M | | | | | | | 2018 | | |
| 71.  | Broadband Holdings LLC | $2 M | | | | | | | 2019 | | |
| 72.  | Cruise Holidays of Arrowhead | $2 M | | | | | | | 2020 | | |
| 73.  | Grand Canyon Business Solutions | $2 M | | | | | | | 2021 | | |
| 74.  | i-logy | $2 M | | | | | | | 2022 | | |
| 75.  | International Insurance-Seguros | $2 M | | | | | | | 2023 | | |
| 76.  | Ownby Design | $2 M | | | | | | | 2024 | | |
| 77.  | Sigrist, Chick & Potter PLLC | $2 M | | | | | | | 2025 | | |
| 78.  | Sue Sinclair Travel Center | $2 M | | | | | | | 2026 | | |
| 79.  | Urias Communications | $2 M | | | | | | | 2027 | | |
| 80.  | AWE Corporate Interiors | $1.9 M | | | | | | | 2028 | | |
| 81.  | Renaissance Personnel Group | $1.9 M | | | | | | | 2029 | | |
| 82.  | Axis Employment Services LLC | $1.8 M | | | | | | | 2030 | | |
| 83.  | Factors Southwest LLC | $1.7 M | | | | | | | 2031 | | |
| 84.  | Hanson, Ayala & Associates | $1.7 M | | | | | | | 2032 | | |
| 85.  | Kinetic I.T. Inc. | $1.6 M | | | | | | | 2033 | | |
| 86.  | Premier Graphics Inc. | $1.5 M | | | | | | | 2034 | | |
| 87.  | Phoenix Institute of Herbal Medicine & Acupuncture | $1.5 M | | | | | | | 2035 | | |
| 88.  | Dad’s Catering Service | $1.4 M | | | | | | | 2036 | | |
| 89.  | PHX Architecture | $1.4 M | | | | | | | 2037 | | |
| 90.  | Horizon Travel Inc. of Arizona | $1.3 M | | | | | | | 2038 | | |
| 91.  | Jesse Owens Urgent Care | $1.3 M | | | | | | | 2039 | | |
| 92.  | Michaels & Associates | $1.3 M | | | | | | | 2040 | | |
| 93.  | Docitrain Ltd. | $1 M | | | | | | | 2041 | | |
| 94.  | Manes Attraction Salon | $1 M | | | | | | | 2042 | | |
| 95.  | Marlene Irizan & Associates Architects | $1 M | | | | | | | 2043 | | |
| 96.  | Sun Valley Interiors | $1 M | | | | | | | 2044 | | |
| 97.  | Accurate Placement | $1 M | | | | | | | 2045 | | |
| 98.  | Blade Editorial | $1 M | | | | | | | 2046 | | |
| 99.  | Fisher Shotcrete Inc. | $1 M | | | | | | | 2047 | | |
| 100. | The James Agency | $1 M | | | | | | | 2048 | | |
| 101. | Donna Decker Design Inc. | $1 M | | | | | | | 2049 | | |
| 102. | Especially 4-U Tours & Travel | $1 M | | | | | | | 2050 | | |
| 103. | Kirsch-Goodwin & Kirsch PLLC | $1 M | | | | | | | 2051 | | |
| 104. | Plaza Travel | $1 M | | | | | | | 2052 | | |
| 105. | Thrive Marketing | $1 M | | | | | | | 2053 | | |

Continued on page 36
Centennial project to honor 48 women enhancing lives

The Arizona Centennial Legacy Project has chosen honorees hailing from all walks of life as Arizona’s 48 Most Intriguing Women, ranging from a jail minister to a bullfighter to a municipal judge.

Partnering with the Arizona Historical Society and Arizona Community Foundation, the project was created to honor women from diverse backgrounds whose leadership and commitment contribute in a positive way to the future of Arizona during its centennial year as the nation’s 48th state.

The 48 honorees, by city, are:

BULLHEAD CITY: Olivia Brusso McCormick
PARADISE VALLEY: Lonnie Noga
NOGALES: Anna Maria Coppola
GLOBE: Delphine Rodriguez
MESA: Diana Yazzie Devine
BULLHEAD CITY: Olivia Brusso
PHOENIX: Ali, Barbara Barrett, Jacquie Dorrance, Diane Halle, Jeanne Herberger, Susan Levine, Barbara Mundell, Cheryl Barrett
MORRISTOWN: Nadjai, Dr. Coral Quiet and Mary Schroeder
PHOENIX: Mary Black, Virginia Counts, Diane Humetewa, Cindy McCain, Rose Mofford, Joanna Morfessis, Margaret Mullen, Roxanne Song Ong, Andrea Pursley, Judy Schubert, Diana Taurasi, Mary Rose Wilcox, Jeri Williams, Nicola Winkel and Kimberly Yee
PINE TOP/LAKESIDE: Jane Dee Hull
SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA: Indian Community: Diane Enos; Scottsdale: Gladys Johnston, Gerda Weissmann Klein
TUCSON: Carmen Bermudez, Susan Claassen, Ann Day and Cindy Parseghian
SEDONA: Vernon’s Carnival, Merle Kajikawa Wilkinson
SUN CITY: Pat Mathiesen
TEMPE: Christine Sullivan
SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA: Indian Community: Diane Enos; Scottsdale: Gladys Johnston, Gerda Weissmann Klein
TUCSON: Carmen Bermudez, Susan Claassen, Ann Day and Cindy Parseghian
SEDONA: Vernon’s Carnival, Merle Kajikawa Wilkinson
SUN CITY: Pat Mathiesen
TEMPE: Christine Sullivan

In addition, four women will be recognized in a special “Legacy Legends” category for their significant national influence and global impact: former U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords of Tucson; U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano of Washington; retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor of Phoenix; and Grammy-winning recording artist Linda Ronstadt of Tucson.

In the Institutional category, the Sisters of Mercy will be honored. This religious order of Catholic women is dedicated to a merciful life and a just world.

“Individually, the 48 women governing board knew there were many Arizona women who are working hard every day to enhance the lives of others and to make Arizona the best state it can be,” said Connie Robinson, who chairs the 48 Women project.

“The level of statewide involvement and the number and quality of the nominations confirmed that. In fact, the scope of their work and commitment is remarkable,” she said.

Hundreds of nominations came in to the group’s Scottsdale office, she said.

A luncheon to honor Arizona’s 48 Most Intriguing Women will be held March 26 at the Phoenix Convention Center. Guest speakers will pay tribute to the honorees, and those attending will have an opportunity to meet them.

A coffee-table book titled “Arizona’s 48 Most Intriguing Women,” which tells the honorees’ stories in words and photos, may be purchased during the luncheon for $85.

After that, the books will be available at select bookstores and other locations throughout the state.

To place an advance order, call 602-896-9000 or email cbrobinson@cox.net.

Table sponsorships for the luncheon range from $5,000 to $25,000 may be purchased by calling 602-896-9000. Individual tickets are $500. Checks payable to Arizona Community Foundation/

The attorneys and staff of Quarles & Brady congratulate our colleague and friend Michelle De Blasi on her selection as one of the Valley’s 25 Most Successful Business Women.

Contact us at today at 602-795-7600 to find out how we can assist you with your investment needs.
### WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

#### Ranking: 2011 local gross revenue

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>W.J. Maloney Plumbing Co. Inc.</td>
<td>9119 N. Seventh St.</td>
<td>602-944-5516</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mjmaloney.com">www.mjmaloney.com</a></td>
<td>$11.6 M</td>
<td>$8.6 M</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>commercial, industrial, design-build, plumbing and piping, commercial and residential plumbing and HVAC service.</td>
<td>Kathy Langmade</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Global Cigaretes LLC</td>
<td>8080 E. Golfing Drive, Ste. 110</td>
<td>480-513-0827</td>
<td><a href="http://www.globalcigaretes.com">www.globalcigaretes.com</a></td>
<td>$11 M</td>
<td>$10 M</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>hotel and venue selection brokers for companies planning offsite meetings in hotels, resorts and conference centers anywhere in the world.</td>
<td>Patricia M. Doshier</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Rural Electric</td>
<td>5502 E. Main St.</td>
<td>Mesa 85207</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ruralelectric.com">www.ruralelectric.com</a></td>
<td>$10.4 M</td>
<td>$12.6 M</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>industrial, heavy commercial, heavy highway, airport manufacturing of instrumentation and controls</td>
<td>Ann Fugerty</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Harmonic Electric Inc.</td>
<td>4450 N. 15th St., Ste. 112</td>
<td>623-879-0010</td>
<td><a href="http://www.harmonicelectric.com">www.harmonicelectric.com</a></td>
<td>$10 M</td>
<td>$7 M</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>commercial/residential electrical and solar contractor</td>
<td>Julie King</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Knoodle</td>
<td>5801 N. 15th St., Ste. 120</td>
<td>602-530-9900</td>
<td><a href="http://www.useryournoodle.com">www.useryournoodle.com</a></td>
<td>$9 M</td>
<td>$9 M</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>advertising, public relations, media buying and social media, digital media</td>
<td>Rosaria Cain</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>MDI Group LLC</td>
<td>2710 S. Washington St., Ste. 111</td>
<td>603-393-2900</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mdigroup.com">www.mdigroup.com</a></td>
<td>$8.6 M</td>
<td>$8.5 M</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>IT work force solutions, technical staffing and IT staff augmentation, managed service programs</td>
<td>Allan Dunn</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Infincom</td>
<td>175 S. Hardy Drive, Ste. 1</td>
<td>602-648-3000</td>
<td><a href="http://www.infincom.com">www.infincom.com</a></td>
<td>$7.6 M</td>
<td>$8.5 M</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>provider of Toshiba, Konica Minolta and Lexmark office products; managed IT Services, MFP and Print and copy center services.</td>
<td>Tiffany Bucher</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Air Marketing</td>
<td>419 E. University Drive</td>
<td>480-921-3220</td>
<td><a href="http://www.airmarketing.com">www.airmarketing.com</a></td>
<td>$7.6 M</td>
<td>$7.5 M</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>advertising, branding, traditional/new media, creative, analytics, digital/interactive, social, B2B/B2C</td>
<td>Elaine Kalls</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Daniel’s Moving and Storage Inc.</td>
<td>3201 W. Sourine St.</td>
<td>602-278-6130</td>
<td><a href="http://www.danielsmoving.com">www.danielsmoving.com</a></td>
<td>$7.2 M</td>
<td>$7 M</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>local, Interstate and International transportation, storage and distribution services of household and industrial goods</td>
<td>Denise Ooton</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>A World of Travel</td>
<td>3426 E. Basin Road, Ste. 110</td>
<td>480-892-4992</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aworldoftravel.com">www.aworldoftravel.com</a></td>
<td>$7 M</td>
<td>$7 M</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>travel consulting agency specializing in all-inclusive resorts, cruises and river cruises worldwide</td>
<td>Pam Carter</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Invasion Auto Body</td>
<td>4310 W. Thunderbird Road</td>
<td>602-503-1414</td>
<td><a href="http://www.invasionautobody.com">www.invasionautobody.com</a></td>
<td>$5.7 M</td>
<td>$5.5 M</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>auto body repair</td>
<td>Leslie Danielson</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Canyon Communications Inc.</td>
<td>1955 S. Val Vista Drive, Ste. 101</td>
<td>480-775-8880</td>
<td><a href="http://www.canyoncom.com">www.canyoncom.com</a></td>
<td>$5.5 M</td>
<td>$5.3 M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>business-to-business integrated marketing communications firm specializing in digital marketing, advertising, public relations, Web design, sales, and demand generation</td>
<td>Nancy Landl</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>The Producers Inc.</td>
<td>4742 N. 24th St., Ste. 340</td>
<td>602-264-7100</td>
<td><a href="http://www.theproducersinc.com">www.theproducersinc.com</a></td>
<td>$5.4 M</td>
<td>$5.3 M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>business-to-business marketing services for the aerospace, medical device, secure telecommunications, hearing health care, oil, petroleum and chemicals industries</td>
<td>Judi Victor</td>
<td>1977</td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>RCD Services Inc.</td>
<td>19501 N. 19th St., Ste. 160</td>
<td>602-278-0045</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rcdservices.com">www.rcdservices.com</a></td>
<td>$5 M</td>
<td>$4.5 M</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>facility services</td>
<td>Rose Doyle</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Santa Barbara Catering Co.</td>
<td>1090 W. Fifth St.</td>
<td>480-921-3150</td>
<td><a href="http://www.santabarbaracatering.com">www.santabarbaracatering.com</a></td>
<td>$5 M</td>
<td>$5.9 M</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>catering and restaurants</td>
<td>Patricia Christofilo</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Accounting &amp; Finance Professionals Inc.</td>
<td>366 N. 48th St., Ste. 115</td>
<td>602-306-4473</td>
<td><a href="http://www.afprofessionals.com">www.afprofessionals.com</a></td>
<td>$4.2 M</td>
<td>$4.5 M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>staffing and recruiting firm specializing in the placement of administrative, accounts receivable, health care, IT and executive level candidates</td>
<td>Deanna DeSaulto</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Arizon Best Real Estate</td>
<td>333 N. Scottsdale Road, Ste. 100</td>
<td>480-948-4711</td>
<td><a href="http://www.arizonbest.com">www.arizonbest.com</a></td>
<td>$4.2 M</td>
<td>$4 M</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>residential real estate, relocation, corporate transfers, real estate investments</td>
<td>Charmayne MacIntyre</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Above and Beyond Delivery Inc.</td>
<td>106 S. 54th St.</td>
<td>480-705-5555</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aboveandbeyond.com">www.aboveandbeyond.com</a></td>
<td>$3.8 M</td>
<td>$3.8 M</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>provider of outsourced transportation services, partnering with clients to provide solutions specifically tailored to their needs</td>
<td>MJ Hill</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**About this list**

**SOURCE:** Representatives of the women-owned businesses. To be included in future surveys for this list, please send an email with contact information to Research Director Dale Brown at dbrown@bizjournals.com.

**NOTES:** In case of ties, companies are listed alphabetically.

**RANKING:**

- **2011 local gross revenue:**
- **2010 local gross revenue:**
- **# of Valley employees:**
- **Top local executive:**
- **Year:**

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- **Top local executive:**
- **Year:**
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