

# BIZWOMEN

## MENTORING MONDAY

### ST. LOUIS BUSINESS JOURNAL

## 2017 MENTOR BIOS

### **Cynthia D. Ackins, MA, MBA**

Director of Philanthropy  
Nurses for Newborns

Cynthia Ackins possesses more than 25 years experience in the corporate and nonprofit sectors and has demonstrated track record of building successful partnerships and strategic alliances, locally and nationally. In her role, she's responsible for Corporate and Individual Giving, Planned Giving and the NFN Endowment. Ackins serves on the advisory boards for Manasseh Ministry and Grace Hill Women's Business Center. She's an instructor for the Workshop in Business Opportunities program, hosted by Grace Hill WBC, dedicated to providing micro-business development for aspiring entrepreneurs in the community.

### **Maggie Barton**

Chief Development Officer  
Butler's Pantry

A St. Louis native and graduate of both Ursuline Academy & Truman State University, Maggie Barton has hit her professional stride at Butler's Pantry for the last eight years. Starting in Sales, she grew to pioneer and ultimately lead the Marketing Department, as well as oversee the company's creative processes through the Butler's Pantry Design Studio. Most recently, Barton was promoted to Chief Development Officer, overseeing the company's growth, and ensuring its unique culture is preserved, from recruitment to event execution. During her tenure, Butler's Pantry has gone from selling \$4.5M annually to chasing \$13.5M in 2017.

### **Cheree Berry**

Founder  
Cheree Berry Paper

Prior to starting Cheree Berry Paper in January 2006, Berry was an associate art director at kate spade where she was the lead designer on the company's stationery line. Prior to that, Berry worked at the design firm Pentagram, after graduating from Washington University in St. Louis with a Bachelor of Fine Arts. Berry's design achievements include recognition as a stationery expert by *New York Magazine* and *Martha Stewart Weddings*. In 2006, she designed and wrote "Hoorah for the Bra," a humorous pop-up book on the history of the brassiere. The book has been listed as a must-read by *Redbook*, *Self* and *Woman's Wear Daily*. Outside the office, Berry donates her time to various organizations and serves on half a dozen local committees and boards. Berry has also been an adjunct professor at Washington University.

### **Amy Boschert**

Director of Business Development  
Pinnacle Contracting, Inc.

Amy Boschert cultivates new opportunities in the commercial design build market while establishing new relationships through networking. Her professionalism and communication skills are keys to her success in the industry. Trained in sales, she has a unique 10 year background in construction, professional leadership, client relationships, community

outreach, and business development which provide her clients with excellent customer service. Boschert currently serves the Missouri and Texas construction markets.

### **Samira Boudiab**

VP/Chief of Staff to the president and CIO, Operations & Technology (O&T)  
MasterCard

Samira Boudiab is the primary liaison for O&T across the company on strategic projects, business planning and reporting; leads the development of department strategy and objectives and serves as the global lead for Mastercard's Women in Technology efforts. Boudiab earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Management Information Systems from Notre Dame University in Lebanon. She founded the Women's Leadership Network chapter for Mastercard in the company's Turkey office, to support and encourage women in technology fields to start and grow their careers with Mastercard. She is a member of the International Institute of St. Louis' board, and is a member of the 40 Under 40 Class of 2017 by the *St. Louis Business Journal*.

### **Laura Burkemper**

Director of Brand Strategy  
Express Scripts

Laura Burkemper provides strategic business and brand guidance, innovative solutions and thought-leadership to St. Louis' largest "startup turned Forbes' most innovative company." Burkemper rose through positions of increasing responsibility at McDonald's Corporation and Coca-Cola, elevating organization, people and product performance. She earned her MBA from Saint Louis University where she's also a Senior Adjunct Professor for seven years. She serves as a lead mentor/investor in the global sports innovation accelerator [StadiaVentures.com](http://StadiaVentures.com). Burkemper is a lead mentor, advisor, investor of multiple startups, dedicated to the growth of individuals, businesses and the entrepreneurial spirit.

### **Leilani Carver, PhD**

Director of Strategic Communication and Leadership  
Maryville University

Before entering academia, Professor Carver worked as a training manager, project manager and performance improvement consultant for organizations such as Jack Henry & Associates, Sprint Telecommunications and the American Public Works Association. She spent a year abroad in Jilin City, China, teaching and creating the curriculum for the New Horizon International Institute. After returning to the states, Carver earned her PhD at the University of Kansas where she taught university courses for five years and served as Assistant Basic Course Director for the Communication Studies department. Subsequently, she received the prestigious Buehler Teaching Fellowship award. Her areas of expertise include career communication, cross-cultural communication competencies, and social media.

### **Jessica Ciccone**

Director of Communications  
Saint Louis University School of Law

A former journalist living among lawyers, Jessica Ciccone serves as the director of communications for Saint Louis University School of Law. She earned a bachelor of journalism from the Missouri School of Journalism. Having spent her early years in broadcast news, Jessica transitioned to public relations after 4 years in the field. She led communications for various nonprofits before cutting her teeth in public relations at The Castle Group, located in Boston. There she represented numerous professional service clients including law firms, mutual banks, insurance agencies, medical tech companies and universities. She joined SLU LAW in 2012 after moving back to her hometown of St. Louis.

### **Alexandra Corey**

Anchor/Reporter  
KSDK Newschannel 5

Alexandra Corey joined KSDK in August 2016, where she co-anchors Today In St. Louis. Before joining Newschannel 5, Corey worked in Providence, RI as evening anchor. While there, she covered the horrific Boston Marathon Bombings, the lengthy trial and the resilience of the survivors. Corey also worked as a reporter in Gainesville, FL. She's native of Florida and graduate of Florida State University.

### **Maggie Crane**

Communications Director, Deputy Director of Operations  
Office of the Mayor, City of St. Louis

After spending nearly a decade as an award-winning broadcast news journalist, Maggie Crane became the appointed Director of Communications for City of St. Louis Mayor Francis G. Slay. She is a strategic communicator with more than 12 years of proven success developing communications for broadcast, print and social media, as well as internal and external business and branding. Innovative troubleshooting skills also earned her the role of Deputy Director of Operations for the City of St. Louis. Maggie graduated *Suma Cum Laude* with her Bachelor's Degree in Communications from Saint Louis University.

Fun fact: In a national address, President Obama once read from a speech she wrote.

### **Nikki Crawford**

Wealth Management Advisor  
Northwestern Mutual

Nikki Crawford has been affiliated with Northwestern Mutual since 2005. Her practice focuses on helping individuals, families and business owners achieve their financial goals through comprehensive financial planning. As a Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU®), and holder of the Certified Financial Planner™ (CFP®) designation, Crawford advises clients on retirement planning, investment allocation, risk management strategies and employee benefits. Crawford has served as a co-Chair of United Way's Young Leadership Society for three years. In 2012, Crawford was named one of the *St. Louis Business Journal's* 30 Under 30. Currently, she is serving as co-chair for the 2016 and 2017 Kids in the Middle Gala.

*Northwestern Mutual is the marketing name for The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, Milwaukee, WI (NM) (life and disability insurance, annuities, and life insurance with long-term care benefits) and its subsidiaries. Nicole Lynn Crawford is a Representative of Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Company®, (NMMWC) Milwaukee, WI (fiduciary and fee-based financial planning services), a subsidiary of NM and federal savings bank.)*

*Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ CFP® (with plaque design) and CFP® (with flame design) in the U.S., which it awards to individuals who successfully complete CFP Board's initial and ongoing certification requirements.*

### **Nancy Cripe**

President & Auctioneer  
GRS Auction & Appraisal Services

Nancy Cripe leads one of the few women owned commercial auction firms in the country. Cripe sees her strength as a servant leader using her natural curiosity and interest in learning to understand her clients. Her experience includes serving as Vice President of Sales for a Commercial Office Furniture Dealership, and Director of Business Development for Rosemann & Associated Architects. Cripe believes in setting both personal and professional goals to achieve results. As an Auctioneer, she has developed a sense of value of corporate assets and uses that knowledge to effectively value and strategically market for GRS clients. Her favorite quotation is from Chuck Swindol is "Life is 10% of what happens to you, and 90% how you respond."

### **Danette Davis**

Partner  
Dentons

As a member of the Dentons' Real Estate practice, Dani Davis has a multifaceted practice focusing on complex

commercial real estate including real estate development and construction, construction financing, asset-based lending and commercial leasing. Davis works with owners, developers, lenders, landlords and tenants to document, perform due diligence for and close financings, acquisitions, sales, leases and the development of real property, including mixed-use properties, shopping centers, office properties, multifamily projects, resorts, charter schools, movie theaters and other commercial properties. She has represented domestic and foreign lenders on a wide variety of secured transactions. Her experience further includes preparing and negotiating contracts for the construction, design and engineering of complex public and private projects throughout the United States and abroad. She represents clients, including energy providers, industrial developers, hospitals, luxury hotels and resorts, multi-unit residential housing developers, mixed-use developers and other commercial, retail and industrial developers, in a variety of such construction projects, counseling clients in connection with complex contracts with diverse project delivery methodologies, as well as related management agreements, subcontracts, professional service contracts and other ancillary documents. In addition, Davis represents national and international retailers, as well as office and restaurant tenants and shopping center developers in leasing matters.

### **Lori Eaton**

President

NextGen Information Services, Inc.

In her role at NextGen Information Services, Inc., a national talent engagement firm, Lori Eaton provides Fortune 500 companies, small businesses and emerging tech organizations with a diverse talent community. With more than 20 years of industry experience, Eaton has helped take the business beyond expectation to become the \$60 million company it is today. She's responsible for developing international strategic initiatives and expanding the firm's global interests with the expansion of the company's services, programs and capabilities. Eaton has been featured by the Diversity Journal's Women Worth Watching, by Small Business Monthly as an A-Player and by St. Louis Women's Journal article, Inspiring Women. She has been named to the prestigious list by the St. Louis Business Journal as one of St. Louis' Most Influential Business Women and one of only six women in Missouri for the MAC Women of Distinction and one of *100 St. Louisans to Know to Succeed In Business*.

### **Cindy Erickson**

Chief Executive Officer

American Red Cross of Eastern Missouri

Cindy Erickson is responsible for Red Cross services in the City of St. Louis and 62 surrounding Missouri and Illinois counties. Now serving more than 4 million people, Eastern Missouri is one of the country's top performing Red Cross regions. Under her direction, the Red Cross in Eastern Missouri orchestrated the regional response to the tragic 2016 holiday floods that displaced 2,400 families. During that effort, the Red Cross opened 15 shelters; provided more than 55,000 meals and snacks and nearly 27,000 relief and clean up supplies to affected communities. Some 500 volunteers from 30 states gave more than 60,000 hours to the relief operation. Erickson is spearheading regional resiliency programs, including a campaign to install 9,000 smoke alarms in at-risk, fire-prone neighborhoods by 2017. With a goal to reduce death and injury by 25 percent in five years, the Eastern Missouri Home Fire Campaign is credited with saving seven lives in the region.

### **Jill Farmer**

Author, Life Coach

Jill Farmer is the author of "There's Not Enough Time... and Other Lies We Tell Ourselves" which debuted as a bestseller in the Time Management category on Amazon. In 2015, The Washington Post named Farmer to its 21-Day Time Hacker team as one of the top time experts in the country. Farmer travels the U.S. delivering keynotes and teaching her acclaimed program for some of the top corporations and organizations in the world. For more than a decade, she was an Emmy Award winning consumer reporter and television anchor in St. Louis.

### **Rachel Ganousis**

Manager of Analytics

## ROi (Resource Optimization & Innovation)

As the Manager of Analytics at ROi (Resource Optimization & Innovation), Rachel Ganousis is responsible for developing and overseeing utilization and compliance analytics to deliver cost savings opportunities. Her team supports the Senior Sales team by providing customized cost studies for prospective commercial members being recruited by ROi. Ganousis also chairs ROi's Mission Outreach committee that supports co-workers in crisis and the STL community through various external outreach volunteer opportunities. In her downtime, she loves to travel with her husband, cook and spoil her dog.

### **Susan Gerard**

Principal  
Gerard Marketing Group

Susan Gerard built out Gerard Marketing Group fully in 2013 after 20 years of experience working at big-name advertising agencies like TBWA Chiat/Day and DMB&B as well as on the client side, managing marketing for small businesses and start-ups. She holds a B.A. in Journalism and a minor in Graphic Arts from the University of Missouri, Columbia. Gerard runs her company from her home office and purposefully has built a 100% virtual team who all do the same.

### **Amanda Gioia**

Vice President, Senior Business Leader for the Communications Team  
MasterCard

Amanda Gioia is responsible for managing and implementing internal/external communications, leadership communications and philanthropy efforts for Mastercard's technology organization. She was recognized by the *St. Louis Business Journal* as one of the Most Influential Women in Business in 2012, and honored as an Outstanding Alumna of the Year by Webster University's School of Communications. She is on the Student Impact Committee for Junior Achievement of Greater St. Louis and the School of Communications Advisory Board for Webster University. Gioia has a Master's Degree in Media Communications from Webster University, and a bachelor's degree in English from Truman State University.

### **Jan Hess**

Vice President  
St. Luke's Hospital

Jan Hess is vice president and a member of the senior administrative staff at St. Luke's Hospital. Hess joined St. Luke's Hospital in 1976 and has served on the leadership team for nearly 40 years. Hess is also the executive sponsor of St. Luke's Spirit of Women initiative, helping improve the quality of life in our community by providing leading health services and community outreach to women and their families.

### **Stephanie Hosler**

Partner  
Bryan Cave LLP

Stephanie Hosler concentrates her practice in the areas of business and transactional counseling. Her practice includes mergers and acquisitions, general commercial counseling, joint ventures and strategic alliances, private offerings of securities, stock-for-stock acquisitions, and acquisitions of minority interests. Hosler has experience representing public companies, closely held businesses, venture capital firms, investment partnerships, portfolio companies of venture capital and buyout firms, and financial institutions. She has experience with companies in a number of different industries, including telecommunications, banking, consumer goods, life sciences, and private equity. Prior to joining the firm, Hosler was a management associate with LEK Alcar, an international consulting firm which focuses in mergers and acquisitions. She was also an associate with a law firm in Chicago, IL. Hosler is a member of the National Hispanic Bar Association as well as the Hispanic Bar Association of St. Louis. She's a board member of City Academy, Forsyth School

and National Conference for Community and Justice of Metropolitan Saint Louis.

### **Veta Jeffery**

Manager, Community Economic Partnerships  
State of Missouri, Dept. of Economic Development  
Also leading the effort to found the Heartland-St. Louis Black Chamber of Commerce.

Veta Lynn Jeffery has spent her life fighting for the rights of others. After graduating from the University of Missouri – St. Louis, Jeffery began her professional career advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities. Her conflict resolution abilities allowed her to serve families by helping them to successfully navigate through school, employment and housing issues. She went on to spend 18 years working in the financial services industry as a licensed professional and the Manager of Financial Services, where she ran agencies gaining national recognition. She received awards and recognition for her ability to develop strong leaders in business and communities and positioned them to serve as ambassadors offering a voice to the voiceless. Jeffery identifies as a Servant Leader and her desire is to be positioned to help facilitate avenues for others to have access. She has had the opportunity to travel nationally speaking on behalf of various corporations where her role was to bridge diversity and inclusion gaps; teach others to be financially independent and develop economic development platforms and programs for individuals and communities. Her passion is in helping others to become economically sound, building communities and strengthening families. She currently serves as the Manager of Community Economic Partnerships for the State of Missouri in the Department of Economic Development. In her current position, Jeffery celebrates success as she engages the community on various projects from helping to develop the Missouri Governor’s Collegiate Fellows Program to helping establish the Heartland St. Louis Black Chamber of Commerce. She currently serves on the board for Money Smarts School of Finance for Children and serves as a Co-Founder and Board Member for The Center of Life Christian Church and as a Co-Chair for the St. Louis Regional Unbanked Taskforce and she also sits on the Metro Housing Task Force.

### **Shanise Johnson**

Executive Director  
St. Louis Internship Program

Shanise Johnson is the Executive Director of the St. Louis Internship Program (SLIP) and has directed programming at SLIP since November 2002. Johnson is a proud product of the St. Louis Internship Program, where the goal is to provide hope and opportunity for high school students in financial need through paid summer internships, intensive employability training, and year-round college and career planning, in partnership with businesses and community organizations, and to build the St. Louis community by developing motivated, well-trained, and talented future employees. She is responsible for overall management and fiscal oversight, managing community partnerships, designing student programming, and directing evaluation and reporting.

Johnson holds a B.S. in business administration from St. Louis University, an M.B.A. from Webster University, an M.A. in teaching from Lindenwood University, and Business/Career Education Professional Certification for teaching at the secondary level. In 2016, she received a Diverse Business Leader award from the St. Louis Business Journal. When she’s not engaging with the students of SLIP, she is providing educational support, career counseling or event coordination to a number of organizations. Through her many endeavors, Johnson is committed to ensuring that every student she serves graduates from high school fully prepared for college and careers.

### **Missy Kelley**

President & CEO  
Downtown STL, Inc.

Missy Kelley is the president and CEO for Downtown STL Inc. and the Downtown St. Louis Community Improvement District. In addition to leading efforts to make downtown a thriving business district, neighborhood and entertainment destination, Kelley has become the communications lead for downtown St. Louis, regularly tapped by the media to comment on current events, issues and initiatives that impact downtown. Prior to joining Downtown STL Inc., Kelley spent over 20 years in marketing and business strategy roles at Fortune 500 companies such as The Coca-Cola Co.,

Energizer Battery Co. and Express Scripts. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Truman State University and an MBA from Washington University's Olin School of Business. Kelley currently serves on several boards, including St. Louis Economic Development Partnership, St. Louis City Crime Commission, St. Louis Civic Pride Foundation, The St. Louis Fashion Fund and Friends of T-REX. Kelley volunteers at St. Patrick Center.

### **Abigail Kepple**

President, Tax Credit Services  
Enterprise Bank & Trust

Abby Kepple is the President of Tax Credit Services for Enterprise Bank & Trust and Executive Director for Enterprise Financial CDE, LLC, an affiliate of the bank with a dedicated low-income community focus. She leads the bank's strategy to create and manage opportunities related to tax credit programs at both the state and federal levels, including Historic Tax Credits, Low Income Housing Tax Credits and New Markets Tax Credits. Under Kepple's leadership, Enterprise Bank has received four New Markets Tax Credit awards totaling \$183 million in allocation in a highly competitive federal program designed to spur economic growth in disinvested communities. She and her team are responsible for directing and administering NMTC loans and investments into qualifying businesses and real estate developments throughout Missouri, Illinois, Kansas and Arizona.

Kepple has been with Enterprise Bank & Trust since September 2000 and has excelled in a variety of roles, most notably launching the bank's Small Business and Consumer Lending group, managing a commercial loan portfolio, and developing and managing the Life Insurance Premium Finance niche product. She's a member of the bank's Strategic Planning Group as well as the Audit Committee and was a founding member of the bank's Diversity Council. In addition to her bank responsibilities, Kepple serves on the Finance Committee for Rise, a non-profit organization that connects key groups to revitalize low-income areas of Greater St. Louis.

Kepple is a graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, with emphasis in Finance and Real Estate. She is currently enrolled in the Women's Leadership Forum at Washington University.

### **Karen T. Kirk**

CEO & Executive Director, Lydia's House, Inc.  
CEO, Lydia's Ladle, LLC

Karen Kirk takes a vision and makes it reality through sound strategy development. She intuitively sees the threads of opportunity that wind through an organization, brings them together and helps others extend their thinking, and drives the organization to its fullest potential. She is an inspirational leader who inspires action while at the same time is grounded in financial soundness that levers the nonprofit agency.

Currently, as CEO and Executive Director of Lydia's House, Inc, a 501(c) 3, a domestic violence agency, Kirk oversees the operations and assets of a 5 million dollar plus organization that provides transitional housing for up to two years for abused women and their children who are victims of domestic violence.

As the CEO of a social enterprise, she also led the successful startup and business development of Lydia's Ladle, LLC providing employment opportunities and the ability to develop job skills for the women at Lydia's House, and launched new growth of the 22-year old organization over the last 5 years.

During this time, Kirk drove the additional acquisition of two facilities, continuing to position Lydia's House as the only stand-alone Domestic Violence Transitional Housing agency in Missouri and one of the largest Transitional Housing Domestic Violence agencies in the United States. Kirk is now heading the further development of the organization to serve more women and children in our community while providing additional housing, needed resources and education for those women and children who are in need of safety.

Kirk holds a B.A. in Business Administration and a CMA-P from Georgia State University. She serves on the City of STL

Continuum of Care - serving the homeless), MCADSV Public Policy Committee (Missouri Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence), Board of Governors - NANO (National Association of Non Profit Organization & Executives) and a Diakonal Minister - CHSSM (Council on Health & Human Services Ministry).

### **Dr. Paula Knight**

Associate Superintendent  
St. Louis Public Schools

Dr. Paula Knight was appointed in July 2009 to serve as the Associate Superintendent for Early Childhood Education and the Elementary Superintendent Zone schools for the St. Louis Public School District. Her responsibilities include overseeing the early childhood, kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers/classrooms in 45 elementary schools.

Dr. Knight began her career with the District in 1994 as a classroom teacher at Hamilton Elementary School. She has served as an Instructional Coach and Principal at Waring Academy of Basic Instruction and Washington & Euclid Montessori School and the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12. Knight has a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education from St. Louis University, Master of Arts degree in education administration and a Doctorate in Teaching and Learning/Educational Leadership from the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

An active community servant, Knight serves as a member of several community organizations: She is past-president, Urban League Guild-St. Louis Chapter; former Troop Leader for the Boy Scouts of America; member of the Board of Directors with the United Way of Greater St. Louis; member of the NAACP; member, Charmaine Chapman Society; St. Louis Ambassador, University of Missouri-St. Louis; and Education Steering Committee member, Regional Arts Commission. Knight was accepted into the 1999-2000 Leadership cohort sponsored by FOCUS-St. Louis.

Dr. Knight provided leadership coaching, training, and instructional development frameworks first year and aspiring principal/administrators in the Syracuse Public Schools in Syracuse, New York.

To date, Dr. Knight serves as the educational consultant in the Riverview Gardens school district where she supports the curriculum, assessment and professional development work for the early childhood center.

To further her accomplishments, Dr. Knight received the 2013 gubernatorial appointment to the Early Childhood Coordinating Board for the state of Missouri as well as receiving a 2016 appointment as the Chief of Staff for the St. Louis Public Schools.

### **Melissa Lenz**

Financial Advisor  
Edward Jones

Melissa Lenz is a financial advisor with Edward Jones with an established practice here in the St. Louis community. She began her career with Edward Jones in 1997 and was named a limited partner in 1999, a regional leader in 2010, and became a principal in the firm in 2014. Lenz holds her Accredited Asset Management Specialist designation from the College For Financial Planning. Lenz and her team work with individual investors to assist them in identifying and achieving their long-term financial goals. With an established planning process, Lenz and her team build personalized strategies to achieve these goals, and together she and her clients partner to achieve this success. Lenz has served as a co-chair for the United Way branch campaign, co-chair for the Arts and Education Council branch campaign, past president of the Crestwood/Sunset Hills Kiwanis Club and is currently president of the Claymont Elementary Parent Teacher Organization.

### **JoAnne Levy**

Vice President– Mercy Research  
Mercy Health System

JoAnne Levy is Vice President of Mercy Research for Mercy Health System. In that role, she is the senior leader of Mercy



Research, a 501(c)(3) entity that is managing and supporting all clinical trial research and product development activities in Mercy's acute and non-acute facilities across its four-state region. Prior to serving in her current role, Levy spent five years at Resource Optimization & Innovation (ROi), one of the nation's leading healthcare supply chain companies, partly owned by Mercy. At ROi, JoAnne led the Operations and Integrated Sourcing Solutions teams, leading ROi's Group Purchasing Organization to significant growth and expansion. Before joining ROi, Levy was vice president of Global Logistics with Covidien (now Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals) in St. Louis. She managed the customer service, distribution, transportation, compliance and planning functions for the \$1.2 billion global pharmaceuticals business. Before moving into Covidien/Mallinckrodt management, Levy served in various legal roles focused on controlled substance, environmental, and safety and health law. She received her undergraduate, law, and master of business administration degrees, all with honors, from Washington University in St. Louis. In 2016, she was named a Top 25 Most Influential Business Women in St. Louis by the *St. Louis Business Journal*.

### **Dawn Manske**

Founder/CEO

Made for Freedom

Dawn Manske came face to face with the effects of human trafficking while living in China. After seeing the breadth of this atrocity, being introduced to the concept of social enterprise, and numerous compliments on her favorite pants from Thailand, Made for Freedom was born. This St. Louis based social enterprise offers fashion and lifestyle products created by survivors of human trafficking and those at-risk. Made for Freedom has products from 12 restoration centers around the world. The manufacturing of these ethically-made products helps prevent human trafficking by providing dignified employment to victims and women at risk globally. An Arch Grants award-winning organization, Made for Freedom has provided over 9,000 hours of dignified employment for at-risk women worldwide since 2014.

### **Debbie Marshall**

Senior Vice President, Director of Client and Community Relations

PNC Financial Services Group

Debbie Marshall is Senior Vice President and Director of Client and Community Relations for St. Louis and Southern Illinois at PNC Financial Services Group. In this role she oversees business strategy and implementation for the market, managing the PNC brand, directing the philanthropic aspect of the company business and working with 12 business lines and 44 retail branches to grow the company presence in the Greater St. Louis area.

Prior to joining PNC, Marshall served as Vice President and Marketing Manager of the wealth management area at U.S. Bank in St. Louis where she was responsible for marketing strategies and tactics, negotiating and leveraging sponsorships and cultivating external business partnerships.

A native of the Greater St. Louis area, she received her Bachelor of Science in marketing from Missouri State University, and her Master of Business Administration from Saint Louis University. Marshall serves on the governing committee for the Regional Early Childhood Council, the advocacy board for Family Resource Center and the University of Missouri-St. Louis Women's Giving Circle. Previously she has served on the Go! St. Louis Marketing Committee and the Convention and Visitors Commission St. Louis Brand Leadership Taskforce.

### **Kimberly McKinney**

Chief Executive Officer

Habitat for Humanity Saint Louis

As Chief Executive Officer of Habitat for Humanity Saint Louis for over a decade, Kimberly McKinney is responsible for the overall operation of the St. Louis affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International. Locally, Habitat for Humanity Saint Louis has built almost 400 houses. McKinney's primary duties include board recruitment and development, strategic planning, community relations, and advocacy.

McKinney initially began as Development Director with Habitat for Humanity in 1997 after relocating to St. Louis from

Tennessee where she held management positions in both the public and private sector. In 2012, she was selected as one of the twenty-five “Most Influential Women” by *St. Louis Business Journal*.

McKinney serves on the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of Rise (formerly, RHCD), the Board and Executive Committee of The Community Builders Network of Metro St. Louis, the Board of Innovative Technology Education Fund, and the Board of Nonprofit MO. She is a past member of the US Council for Habitat for Humanity International and a current member of St. Louis Women’s Forum and CREW.

### **Lisa Melandri**

Executive Director  
Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

At CAM, Melandri is charged with the leadership, administration, and management of the region’s premier contemporary, non-collecting institution. Since joining CAM in 2012, Melandri has reshaped the exhibition program and launched such initiatives as: *Street Views*, a monumental exterior façade exhibition series; *Audible Interruptions*, a guest-curated sound art series which activates the interstitial spaces of the Museum; and a landscape design project for CAM’s internal courtyard, on view in the summer months.

### **Kim Plank**

General Manager  
CIC St. Louis

Kim Plank comes to CIC as a seasoned economic developer from the St. Louis Regional Chamber, where she recruited businesses to the St. Louis Region as the Director of Health Science and Services & Biosciences. Her position also allowed her to work with startups in the health science and bioscience spaces. Prior to her role at the Chamber, Plank served as the Executive Director of Urban K-Life, a Christian sports and mentorship ministry serving teens in the comprehensive public high schools of North St. Louis with mentors and athletic coaches.

Plank launched her entrepreneurial career working in her family’s motorcycle business in Southeastern Ohio. After moving to St. Louis she opened Runaround Sue, a domestic cleaning company and KpWired Designs, a jewelry design company, donating profits to single moms struggling in North St. Louis. Plank plans to continue her work with women and teens in North St. Louis to create pathways to entrepreneurship and workforce development that will allow for sustainable employment opportunities. She is also active in networking together young leaders to carry out efforts for racial and economic reconciliation and restoration for St. Louis.

### **Felicia Pulliam, J.D.**

Co-Founder, STL Renew  
Founder, FOCUS Impact Fellows Program

Felicia Pulliam designed and directed the FOCUS Impact Fellows program, the most advanced leadership training in the FOCUS St. Louis portfolio. The fellowship used the Ferguson Commission’s report, *Forward Through Ferguson* as its foundation and applied leadership competencies and innovative thinking to create three tangible tools to advance racial equity. The projects are The Catalyst Circle Toolkit which uses a book club model to teach race policy and social justice, The Racial Equity Opportunity – an initiative to increase diversity in construction professions with the potential to generate \$400 million in new revenue for the St. Louis metropolitan region and LEAD: Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline, a campaign to eliminate disparities between black and white students in out of school suspensions and end suspensions for Pre-K to third grade. Before joining FOCUS in 2009 as Development Director, Pulliam had 15 years of demonstrated success as director of development to and independent development consultant for many area non profit organizations and local governments.

Pulliam earned her Juris Doctor from Tulane Law School where she was honored with a National Jurisprudence Award and national CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocate service award. She graduated from Xavier University with a BA in political science and sociology. She is a graduate of the FOCUS St. Louis 2004-2005 Leadership St. Louis® class and

received a *What's Right with the Region!* award in 2010 for her work with Interfaith Partnership/Faith Beyond Walls and 2016 for the Ferguson Commission.

Pulliam was appointed to the Ferguson Commission by Governor Jay Nixon and Co-chaired the Economic Inequity and Opportunity working group charged with creating a strategy to advance economic mobility. This body of work developed the Opportunity to Thrive section of the Forward Through Ferguson report. She is a co-founder of ONE Ferguson, the citizen based organization committed to creating a community that respects and serves all of its residents. She serves as Trustee of the Come Together Ferguson fund at Greater St. Louis Community Foundation, is a Trustee of Incarnate Word Academy, and board member of Prosperity Connection. She is a member of Association of Leadership Professionals, a Mosaic Ambassador and an active member of the Phyllis Wheatley Committee on Administration (COA) where she chaired the YWCA Metro St. Louis fashion luncheon. Pulliam received the 2016 St. Louis Business Journal Diverse Leader Award and is a 2016 St. Louis Business Diversity Fellow. She received a 2015 Citizens for Modern Transit award for the advancement of a public transit agenda for the region. Felicia previously served as Trustee for MICDS-Mary Institute St. Louis Country Day School and Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) as Chair of the Mentoring Committee. Felicia spent 7 years as an adjunct professor in the criminal justice program at St. Louis Community College teaching Criminal Law, Law and Procedure, Criminal Investigations, and Juvenile Justice.

### **Stephanie Regagnon**

President/CEO, FieldWatch, Inc.  
Founder, Ava's Grace

Stephanie Regagnon is the CEO of FieldWatch, Inc. a non-profit company promoting communications and stewardship in agriculture. She has devoted the bulk of her career to the agriculture and renewable energy industries in Washington, DC, and St. Louis, MO – most recently with Monsanto. She has been recognized for her work in community outreach by the St. Louis Business Journal as “40 Under 40” leader in 2012 and by Ameren Corp as a “Community Light” in 2014. As part of Missouri’s Ag Leaders of Tomorrow (ALOT), president of the St. Louis AgriBusiness Club and a graduate of FOCUS Leadership St. Louis and FOCUS Impact Fellows, Regagnon has developed key leadership skills and critical relationships. She currently serves on the board of the non-profit she founded in 2010, Ava’s Grace Scholarship Foundation, as well as a founding member and current chair of the Young Friends Committee of the Danforth Plant Science Center.

### **Nicole Roach**

Associate VP for Diversity and Inclusion, Sr. Director for Community Engagement  
Webster University

Nicole Roach currently serves as the inaugural associate vice president for diversity and inclusion and senior director for community engagement at Webster University. She also contributes as an adjunct faculty member teaching women in management and leadership and change leadership - diversity and inclusion. Roach is the founder of covenant exCHANGE. The organization’s mission is “equip people to lead.” Through structured programming — face-to-face and virtual — individuals and groups are educated on strategies to lead in purpose, on purpose.

### **Jeri Schultz**

President and Owner  
Jeri Schultz & Associates, LLC

Jeri Schultz is a leadership and professional development executive with an expertise in Organizational Leadership and Corporate Relations. Schultz serves as a business consultant to numerous St. Louis-area businesses, Fortune 500 companies and non-profit organizations and is known for building leadership programs for women.

Schultz has presented across the nation on topics such as Change Leadership, Mentoring, Confidence, Generational Differences and more. She currently serves as an Adjunct Full Professor for Webster University and has taught Women and Leadership courses at Webster for more than three decades. Schultz has been on faculty and leadership teams with Webster, Maryville, Lindenwood and Fontbonne universities throughout her 30-plus year career in higher education.

Schultz is a member of the Board of Directors for Girls, Inc., and is actively involved with the United Way Women's Leadership Society, serving as a Cabinet Member for Education. Jeri believes in giving back and also dedicates time to the YWCA of Greater St. Louis and numerous community boards and committees. Schultz is a Founding Member of RISE Collaborative Workspace led by Stacy Taubman.

Schultz, as a graduate of Webster University, leads by example, having been mentor, sponsor and advocate to thousands of women. She shares her knowledge through state-of-the-art seminars, keynote addresses and presentations. Her accessibility, spirit of collaboration and amazing collection of business sources and resources earned her the well-respected nickname—"The Connector."

### **Cherie Summa, P.E.**

CEO

St. Louis Radon Test & Mitigation

As a graduate of the Missouri University of Science & Technology with a degree in geological engineering, a certified general contractor and a licensed professional engineer in four states, Cherie Summa brings credentials and skills rarely seen in the radon testing and mitigation industry. She has covered everything from project and construction management of large residential home developments to quality control and management of heavy construction projects like interstate highways. Now she brings that experience to St. Louis Radon Test and Mitigation. Summa is a member of the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technicians (AARST) and currently serves as the vice president of the heartland chapter of AARST.

### **Stacy Taubman**

Founder & CEO

RISE Collaborative Workspace

Stacy Taubman is a thought leader in female empowerment and entrepreneurship. Before becoming an entrepreneur, Taubman worked for 12 years in the academic world and holds a master's in administration and counseling. In 2013, she founded Girls Dreaming Big, a tutoring and coaching company for teenage girls. In 2015, she launched her second company, RISE Collaborative Workspace. RISE is a 6,500-square-foot co-working space devoted to women entrepreneurs in Clayton. The space features private offices, flexible areas and conference rooms. Taubman has won awards and recognition for her work in the small business industry and is a frequent public speaker. In January 2017, Taubman won the 2017 Catapult Competition at the *Business Journal's* annual Women's Conference.

### **Erin Valentine**

Director

McCarthy Building Companies, Inc.

Erin Valentine's career in the construction industry has spanned a wide range of projects, from complex commercial, education and healthcare facilities, to federal, state and local government. In her role with McCarthy Building Companies, Inc., she collaborates with clients and project teams to develop and implement construction solutions, with a focus delivering an exceptional experience for clients. Since joining McCarthy in 2001, she has actively contributed to expanding the company's specialized expertise, helping to drive the firm's overall success both locally in St. Louis and across America, and solidifying it as one of the nation's premier commercial builders.

Recognized as a 2017 Young Top Professional by *Engineering News-Record* and a member of the 2016 Class of 40 under 40 by the *St. Louis Business Journal*, Valentine is passionate about mentoring others. In 2016, she spearheaded the development of a McCarthy Women's Resource Group in St. Louis to provide an opportunity to further personal and professional development, foster a diverse, inclusive workplace, and strengthen networking. Valentine holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Saint Louis University and a Master in Business Administration from Washington University.

**Galen Vassar**

Senior Associate  
Lawrence Group

Galen Vassar started out as a visual merchandiser for Gap and Restoration Hardware then transferred her eye for design into an interior design career. Now professionally certified with 12 years of interior design experience, Vassar is a senior associate with Lawrence Group and her work can be seen throughout the community. She has played an integral role in preserving several historic St. Louis landmarks, presenting creative design solutions for projects such as Peabody Opera House, The Marquette Building, Park Pacific and the award-winning Sun Theater. She has also completed education renovations such as John Burroughs School, Saint Margaret of Scotland and Forsyth School.

**Beth-Anne Yakubu**

Executive Director of the Emerson Leadership Institute  
Saint Louis University, John Cook School of Business

Beth-Anne Yakubu oversees the development and execution of the Institute's business model, strategic objectives and daily operations. Additionally, she builds partnerships and raises awareness for the Institute within the St. Louis region and the global business community. Under her direction, the Emerson Leadership Institute serves as a "hub" for education and training, research and community engagement on ethical and responsible leadership in business. Yakubu has a background in creating programs, developing community partnerships and fundraising at Saint Louis University. In 2013, she led SLU's Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations. As its Director, she was responsible for raising funds for all schools, colleges and centers campus wide. Yakubu started her career in higher education in 2010 when she assisted in launching the Center for Sustainability as the first Assistant Director.

Prior to joining Saint Louis University, Yakubu spent nearly two decades in the private sector as a financial services and human resources professional in the Washington, D.C. area, where she discovered and honed her talent for building business relationships. A native of St. Louis, she cherishes the opportunity to do the same in her hometown. She earned her undergraduate degree in finance from Georgetown University and her MBA from Saint Louis University.

**Michelle Yates, APR, CPSM**

Director of Marketing  
Lawrence Group

Michelle Yates is director of marketing for Lawrence Group, a national design and project delivery firm headquartered in St. Louis. Leading a four-person marketing team, she oversees firm-wide marketing strategies and plays a key role in winning work. She is a Certified Professional Services Marketer and leader in the A/E/C marketing industry through her involvement in the Society for Marketing Professional Services. She has spoken locally, regionally and nationally and has written articles on a variety of marketing topics. Yates is also accredited in public relations and serves on the executive board of Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) St. Louis

**Jackie Yoon**

St. Louis Market President  
Bank of America US Trust

As Market President, Jackie Yoon serves as Bank of America's local enterprise leader across the St. Louis Market. With a goal of delivering one company to clients and customers, she works across the region to connect Bank of America's business lines to deliver integrated financial services to individuals, families and businesses. She also leads Bank of America's corporate social responsibility work in the region, which leverages the unmatched capabilities of the company

to help partners, people, communities and a broad client and customer base more effectively address a wide range of issues.

In addition to being St. Louis' Market President, Yoon is head of US Trust Bank of America's practice for the Midwest region. She leads the firm's efforts, working with the firm's most distinguished high net worth and ultra high net worth families, businesses, and nonprofit institutions. Yoon partners closely with teammates across the firm to provide the expertise and consultation necessary to deliver the best solution for the client.

She has held various leadership positions over her 20+ career across the Midwest. She brings extensive experience from top global financial institutions. Yoon is very involved in her community. She has served in different leadership capacities in St. Louis, including Executive Board Member and former Chair of Finance Committee of Youth In Need; Board of Directors for Civic Progress; Board of Directors for Chaminade College Preparatory School; and Board of Directors for Contemporary Art Museum. Yoon serves on the Executive Board of the United Way of Greater St. Louis and is a member of the de Tocqueville Society Cabinet.