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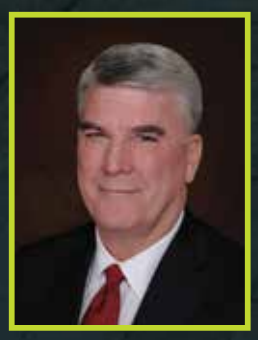

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Meet some of the Valley's movers and shakers as they share their motivations, interests, success secrets and other personal details. This collection showcases the 51 profiles originally published in the *Phoenix Business Journal* during 2017. The stories are reprinted just as they appeared on the original publication dates. Some information may have changed.

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Left to right: Drew Alcazar, Carolyn Eynon, Drew de Weerd, Christine Kajikawa Wilkinson

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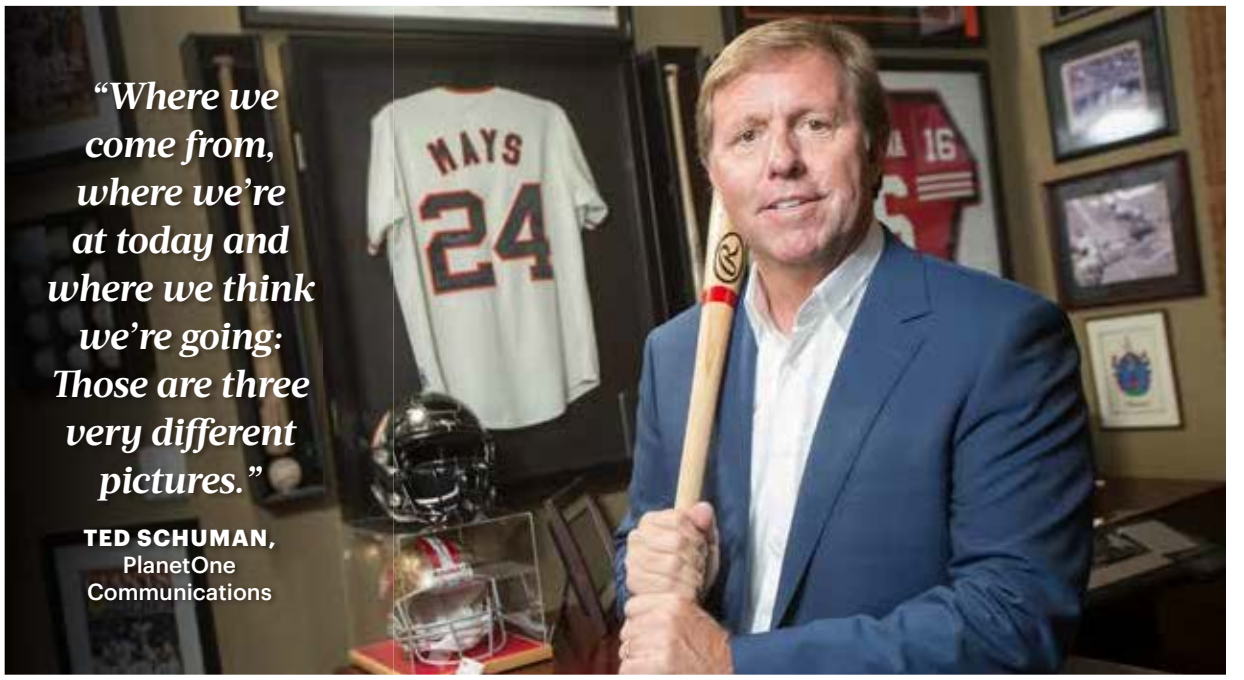





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January 6, 2017

More than just a check

LYNDSEY WAUGH CONNECTS BUSINESSES TO CHARITABLE CAUSES

BY STEVEN TOTTEN
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Lyndsey Waugh always had been around charitable causes.

Her mother was a social worker, and she would hand out food on Thanksgiving. But Waugh said she never considered it as a career path.

"I always envisioned myself working at a fast-paced PR agency," she said.

That's what she did after graduating from the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. Waugh landed an internship with R&R Partners.

While there, she was looking to hone her skills, and her bosses pointed her in one direction.

"One of the partners said to me, 'If you want to learn from the best in town, track down Denise Resnik and see her agency,'" she said.

While she built a successful agency in DRA Collective, it was Resnik's other passion project – Southwest Autism Resource & Research Center – that struck Waugh the most.

"I never saw myself going into nonprofits," Waugh said. "But what was so amazing was when I started at SAARC, I quickly learned that value of PR is so important because you're shining a spotlight on things that make the community better and connects them to the cause."

Waugh said she realized her work in PR could go further if she jumped into the nonprofit sector, where she could bond the work between a charitable organization and a company donating money.

"There was always this way that businesses would talk about charity as, 'It's the right thing to do,' and that always struck me, because I saw the value in the company being aligned with the cause," she said.

Waugh began to do nonprofit consulting, marrying the passion of nonprofit work with the philanthropy of businesses in a deeper way. She still did work for SAARC – helping the organization launch its autism walk from 2,000 walkers raising $187,000 to an event now with 20,000 walkers that raised $1 million – as well as organizations such as Mission of Mercy and the Arizona Recreation Center for the Handicapped.

It was around that same time Waugh began to connect SAARC's efforts with Sprouts Farmers Market, in which the Phoenix-based grocer began an annual fundraising campaign.

"It was great work," she said. "But the questions had always been in the background of how and when could we do more."

Sprouts was going through major shifts at the time, with two major acquisitions and going public. Once the dust settled, the leaders of growing grocery chain wanted to start a foundation.

Luckily, they already had someone in mind to lead it: Lyndsey Waugh, whose sense of connection has been at the root of her work as executive director of Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation.

Waugh made sure the grocer's philanthropic arm wasn't throwing money at organizations willy-nilly. She helped it to develop clear, specific mission, that it directly affected the communities Sprouts operated in, and that every part of Sprouts makeup – from its customers to its vendors to its CEO – were involved.

"It's not just writing a check, it's an alignment of who we are as a resource to the community and leader in health," she said. "The connective tissue that we're developing with our nonprofit partners is lasting."



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

LYNDSEY WAUGH

Title: Executive director

Company: Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation.

First job: Borders bookstore

What makes you tick: I'm driven by the process — the creative problem solving, collaboration and work it takes to make something happen. I wake up motivated by the "three things" that need to be addressed/solved/accomplished that day to keep moving forward.

Celebrating life: With friends, family and great food. My weekends always include Sunday brunch with a big group.

Your "aha" moment: At 25, I realized the importance of nonprofit organizations and for-profit businesses supporting one another and becoming allies.

Three things always in your fridge: Taylor Farms Southwest Chop Salad salad kits, C20 Coconut Water and Thai chili hot sauce

What you wanted to be when you grew up: I wanted to be a journalist for National Geographic magazine. As a kid, I actually started a "family paper," but it didn't last long because my reporting consisted of detailed accounts of my three sisters and what they did right/wrong throughout the day. After about a week, my parents canceled their subscription.

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Putting children first

HOSPITAL CEO CREATES WORLD-CLASS FACILITY IN PHOENIX



Robert Meyer has spent more than 13 years taking care of all the needs of the children and adults at Phoenix Children's Hospital.

PROVIDED BY PHOENIX CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

BY ANGELA GONZALES
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A certified public accountant – and a partner at Ernst & Young for 18 years – Robert Meyer earned a national reputation as a hospital turnaround artist.

So it was no surprise in May 2003 when he received a call from the Phoenix Children's Hospital board to help get the fledgling hospital on track. Two years earlier, PCH ended its lease with Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center, which now is owned by Banner Health.

Meyer had helped several children's facilities separate from their parent hospitals across the country, which typically is how children's hospitals are born.

"In the consulting business, you do something once and you're an expert," Meyer said. "Every time a children's hospital opportunity came up, I'd get a call."

When he arrived at PCH, the hospital was in financial trouble.

The administration tasked with operating the new endeavor knew nothing about running hospitals, except for operating a nursing unit within an adult hospital.

Billings, collections and operations were a financial mess, he said.

It took about a year to financially turn around the children's hospital. About halfway through those efforts, the PCH board asked if Meyer would stay as a permanent president and CEO.

He said yes because he had a vision to create a world-class children's hospital.

Today, PCH is among the 10 largest pediatric hospitals in the country, with *U.S. News and World Report* recognition in all of its service lines.

But what's most important to Meyer is that Valley residents don't have to leave their community to get a transplant or advanced services.

When Meyer and his wife, Diane, first moved to Arizona, they had four children and no grandchildren. Today, married 46 years, they have 13 grandchildren.

One year they added five grandkids to the family – a set of triplets and a set of twins from two of their kids.

Diane spent a much of her time in the three years following the two multiple births in California helping out with the grandchildren.

Meyer's only son who lives in Arizona, Brian Meyer, is vice president of business systems for PCH.

"He applied for the job without my knowledge," Meyer said. "We really had a lot of IT problems. He fit a need we had very badly. He's up to his eyeballs as we speak, converting to new billing and registration systems."

A self-proclaimed workaholic, Meyer said he has the typical hobbies – playing golf, reading, exercising – but admits his wife has said he doesn't have enough hobbies.

"This job consumes a lot of time," he said. "You get hooked on the kids. I get tremendous satisfaction out of this."

ROBERT L. (BOB) MEYER

Title: President and CEO

Company: Phoenix Children's Hospital

First job: I was a laborer in a forge shop in Toledo, Ohio, making leaf springs for trucks. While the money was good, the work was very hard and dirty, and most importantly, the 50+ old guy next to me was making the same wages.

Education: Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Michigan; became a Certified Public Accountant in 1981

Best advice received: "If you want to be a partner, act like one."

Meyer talks about his wife, children and his other kids at Phoenix Children's Hospital. **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Caesar of Classic Cars

DREW ALCAZAR PARLAYED A LOVE OF CARS INTO A LONG CAREER



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY STEVEN TOTTEN
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Like most red-blooded baby boomer boys, Drew Alcazar's life has revolved around cars.

"Cars have always been a part of my life," he said. "It's the only thing I know how to do. As a kid I was always playing with Hot Wheels and Matchbox cars."

While most boys would look at owning the real versions of those toy cars as a pipe dream, Alcazar pushed the envelope, and convinced his parents to co-sign on a Ford Mustang Mach 1 when he was 16.

"It was sort of like giving a weapon of mass destruction to a kid. I was never home after that," he said. "Because of that they decided to take it away and give me a 1963 Ford Galaxy six months later."

Despite the short time with the Mustang, the car sparked a fire in Alcazar, in which he spent every waking minute looking at every nook and cranny of the car, and looking over the shoulders of mechanics at gas stations.

It was enough for him to begin a side job in high school, where he would fix up one car a year and sell them. Alcazar hit a high point when he was able to restore a 1969 Ford Mustang Mach 1 Cobra Jet for Otis Chandler, the publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*.

"That was my nest egg," he said. "It was more money than I'd ever seen in my lifetime."

The cash was enough for Alcazar to open his own restoration shop in L.A., Concours Restorations.

Alcazar had a successful business revamping classic cars for 15 years, taking them to auctions in Scottsdale and Monterrey, California, and selling them to people such as Chandler and Georges Marciano, one of the brains behind the Guess Jeans empire.

But the thrill eventually disappeared.

"After taking them to auctions for so long, the hairs didn't stand up on your neck anymore," he said.

Alcazar decided to close down his restoration shop. Around that same time, he met Brian and Craig Jackson, who were running the Barrett-Jackson Classic Car auction. A week later he was working for the the duo, eventually becoming the general manager for five years.

During that time, Alcazar said the Barrett-Jackson shows went through a renaissance – one that became so successful the auction itself "had become another spoke in a very large wheel," he said.

"You certainly can't fault it, it's very successful, but my love is for the cars and the enthusiasts," said Alcazar.

That's when he decided to start his own auction, Russo & Steele, a venture that began in his garage in 2000.

Alcazar's auto show has gone from a $100,000 venture with 75 cars to a $2.3 million event with 800 cars, generating more than $20 million in revenue.

Alcazar has taken the time to ensure the cars remain the auction's focus, using features such as an auction-in-the-round format, in which the cars run through the middle of the crowd, who view the action from elevated seats.

"People call it 'Drew's Gladiator Sport,'" Alcazar said. "It has a sort of Coliseum gladiator-style effect."

The Coliseum-eqsue car auction has expanded to Salt River Fields at Talking Stick, continuing Alcazar's vision for an auto show that's 100 percent dedicated to the cars.

DREW ALCAZAR

Background: Born in Colorado. Family owns Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch (70 years), a working dude ranch in the Rocky Mountains near Estes Park.

First job: Zeezo's Magic Castle — Fort Collins Mall

Your "a-ha" moment: When I paid a member of our Team more money than I ever thought I would make myself

Best conversation piece in your house: The 1969 Boss 429 Mustang parked in my living room. Most people say: "That's cool you park a car in your house." I say: "My wife is cool for allowing me to park a car in my house."

One thing you'll never do again: Start a collector car auction company.

Drew Alcazar talks about the past and future of cars at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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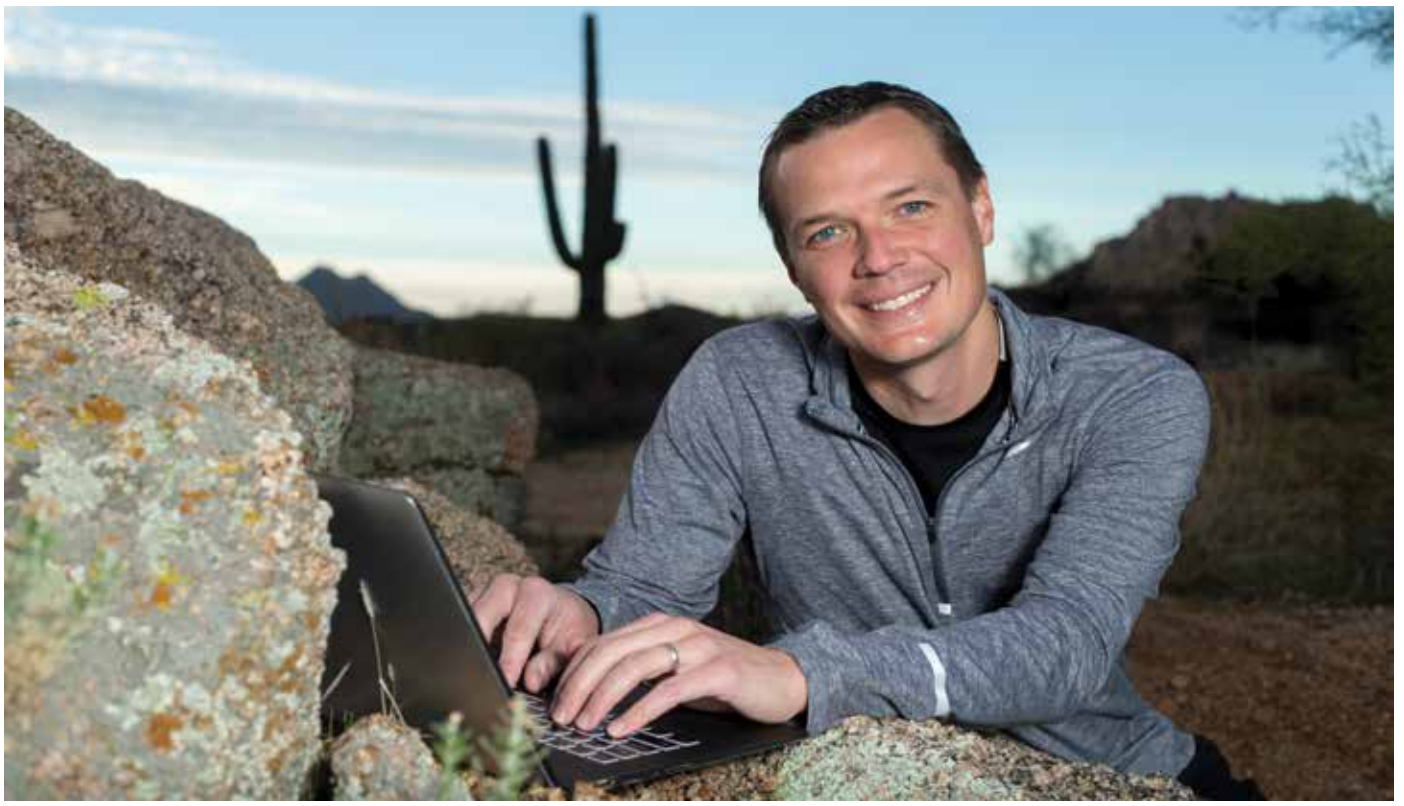
Finding the source

NEILL FEATHER TRANSFORMED A LOVE OF CODING INTO ENTREPRENEURSHIP



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY HAYLEY RINGLE
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Neill Feather learned to code from his dad on a Commodore computer.

Feather used his skills at 12 years old when he began writing code for his dad's labor union in Pittsburgh.

"I thought I was going to be a programmer," Feather said. "I worked there every summer through high school and college. I always found systems interesting."

He loved data, and after high school he gravitated toward business. He majored in statistics information technology and international business at Penn State University.

Feather had internships with Kimberly-Clark Corp. and GE Capital in college where he developed websites for both companies.

"I liked the idea of working for a big company," he said. "I worked on fun, cool projects and enjoyed it."

After graduation, he worked for nine years at Johnson & Johnson using data to find trends.

NEILL FEATHER

Title: President and co-founder of SiteLock LLC

Age: 37

Family: Wife of 10 years Katie, a stay-at-home mom; three kids: Jack, 8; Claire, 6; and Grace, 3.

Favorite book: "The Great Gatsby"

Favorite band: Blues Traveler

Three things always in refrigerator: Milk, IPAs and Kim Crawford wine

If you had one, name of your autobiography: "What are the chances?" I love data and stats, and it's become kind of a joke in my family.

On your bucket list: Visit every U.S. state and travel to every continent.

"I was very driven to be successful there," Feather said.

After nights spent working on pages of reports, he realized he wasn't as good at coding as others, but was better at data and statistics. He worked in IT roles for the company's pharmacy business, and last worked in the contact lens division managing global pricing.

He attended graduate school while at Johnson & Johnson, earning his MBA from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business on nights and weekends.

"In school, I met a lot (of people) who had an entrepreneurial mindset," he said. "I realized in this huge company, it was not possible for me to have any impact."

Feather began exploring different career paths, and met Tomas Gorny and Tracy Conrad in Boston in 2007. The duo were co-founders of fast-growing web hosting company iPower Inc. IPower merged in 2007 with Tempe-based Endurance International Group Inc.

While doing side projects for Gorny and Conrad, Feather started working on an idea for a web security company. From that idea, SiteLock was born.

The company aimed its market at the growing number of small businesses getting attacked online that had no products available to help them fend off cyberattacks.

The plan was to fill the gap to protect website owners by analyzing data, trends and stats for small-business owners.

"The truth is most attacks are not targeted at specific businesses but focused on acquiring personal information the hackers can use to launch future attacks," Feather said. "It's a constantly evolving market because the financial motivation is there. Criminals are always looking for new ways to get in."

SiteLock began in 2008 with Feather moonlighting with the company during the first few years while still working at Johnson & Johnson.

The business grew enough in 2011 for Feather to leave Johnson & Johnson and work full time for the startup. He moved to Scottsdale in 2013 to be closer to the UnitedWeb headquarters, the parent company of SiteLock and Nextiva. Gorny is CEO and Conrad is president of both UnitedWeb and Nextiva.

SiteLock now has 175 employees and plans to double its staff by the end of 2017. It was named the fastest-growing software company by Deloitte for the past two years.

The company now partners with Scottsdale-based GoDaddy Inc., Endurance International Group and Web.com.

"We have enough demand for our products and services," he said. "We're only scratching the surface with the companies we can work with. The biggest competition is companies who do nothing and are unaware of the potential risks. Over 75 percent of websites have no security."

Neill Feather talks about his love of data and statistics, the local tech scene and his leadership style at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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A new pitch

ANDY MARKHAM LEADS THIS YEAR'S WASTE MANAGEMENT PHOENIX OPEN



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY MIKE SUNNUCKS
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For one week out of the year, Andy Markham might be the most important person in Phoenix.

Markham is the current chairman of the Waste Management Phoenix Open. The Scottsdale golf tournament is the largest on the PGA Tour, attracting more than 618,000 fans last year.

It's also the rowdiest and arguably the best business development and sales meeting venue in Arizona. Hundreds of companies and business professionals entertain, connect and even party with clients at the four-day event.

Markham said the Phoenix Open has a special connection with the local community from the charitable giving of the Thunderbirds, which hosts the event, to the more than 200,000 fans that show up on the Saturday of the tourney.

"This is our Green Bay Packers," Markham said of the Open.

But leading the Phoenix Open's organizing efforts isn't a one-week deal. Markham has been working on the 2017 tournament for 18 months, taking over as chairman last June.

Markham – a former minor league baseball pitcher and currently an executive managing director for the Cushman & Wakefield commercial real estate firm – first got involved with the Thunderbirds in 2005.

Now, he is at the helm.

He's quick to point out all the people working and volunteering to pull off the tournament.

"These guys have been grinding since October," Markham said.

Markham was born Denver but grew up in Phoenix. He played baseball and pitched at Brophy College Preparatory and Scottsdale Community College before pitching for minor league teams of the Montreal Expos and Baltimore Orioles from 1992 to 1997. That career ended with an injury.

"I blew out my elbow," Markham said.

His brother-in-law worked in commercial real estate and suggested the industry to Markham, who received a business degree from the University of Arizona. He joined Grubb & Ellis in 1998, and then worked for Cassidy Turley until it became DTZ and then merged with Cushman & Wakefield.

Markham said it's a challenge donating so much time to the tournament and being away from his day job and his family.

But it does help promote Cushman's brand and the team of commercial brokers with whom he works, he said.

Markham said the most rewarding part of his Phoenix Open job is the charitable giving that comes out of the tournament and the Thunderbirds. The group raised $9.4 million for local charities last year.

Markham said that is the most gratifying, but he also is looking forward to going back to hanging out with his family after this year's tournament is over.

ANDY MARKHAM

Title: Executive managing director

Company: Cushman & Wakefield

What's at the top of golf course bucket list: Augusta

If you could play golf with anyone who would it be: Arnold Palmer, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush

Birthplace: Denver

Where did you grow up: Phoenix

Industry honors: Markham has been honored four times with NAIOP AZ's industrial broker of the year award.

Andy Markham talks about golf, his family and one of Phoenix's biggest events at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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February 10, 2017

Stepping out

SCOTT SALKIN KEEPS TAKING RISKS AND FINDING BIG REWARDS WITH STARTUPS



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY HAYLEY RINGLE
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Scott Salkin learned how to be an entrepreneur from his parents, who owned an interior design business in McKinney, Texas.

Starting when he was 12 years old, Salkin spent his summers and nights installing mini blinds with his dad.

"I learned how hard it is to own a family-run business," Salkin said. "It's hard to turn it off, but you need that balance. It's a constant roller coaster. We didn't go on a lot of vacations."

His parents owned the business for more than 20 years, with his mom working in operations and his dad in marketing and sales.

After his parents moved to San Diego, Salkin followed and majored in business at San Diego State University.

During his senior year, Salkin interned at the nonprofit San Diego Regional Tech Alliance. He stayed on after graduation to help with the alliance's digital divide program. His job was to develop, market and set up computer labs for the underprivileged in community centers, schools and libraries.

"It was amazing," he said. "I was doing sales, marketing, technology and training staff at 21."

SCOTT SALKIN

Title: CEO and founder

Company: Allbound Inc.

Age: 38

Family: Wife, Rachel; 2-year-old twins Jackson and Harper

Degrees: San Diego State University, bachelor's degree in business administration

Favorite musician: Garth Brooks

Name of your autobiography: "Turbulence: The High-Speed, High-Flying, Bumpy Life of an Entrepreneur"

On your bucket list: Grew up in Dallas, so I'm dying to take my son to see the Dallas Cowboys or Texas Rangers win a championship. Also lots of travel to Ireland, London, Paris, Prague, Australia, New Zealand and Israel.

Unfortunately, the program was shuttered because of a lack of funding, and Salkin was laid off.

After a stint as a copywriter for a diamond grading university, he was one of 25 people recruited by Cisco Systems Inc. for a year of training in Raleigh, North Carolina.

He moved to Phoenix after training to be a sales executive in east Phoenix.

"Wireless and IP telephony were taking off," he said. "Cisco taught me how to translate the benefits of technology into business benefits for a company."

Salkin realized he loved being creative and discovered marketing was his passion. He taught himself graphic design and web development. Because of his sales experience, he was hired as the product marketing manager at Phoenix software maker NetPro Computing Inc.

"I liked the feeling of a small business and loved the startup, growth and ability to make an impact," he said. "They were taking a risk on me. They liked my energy and that I could do a lot with a little."

NetPro grew to more than 100 employees and $35 million in revenue. Salkin started the company's first email marketing and graphic design programs.

Despite the success, he had an itch to do something on his own, so he did some side work to make extra money.

Meanwhile, NetPro hired a high-priced local marketing agency for a project Salkin said he could do for much less and better.

He saw the opportunity to offer marketing services for tech companies, and started IDS Technology Marketing in 2006.

Within two years, the company grew to more than $1 million in revenue with just him. He was working a lot, realized he couldn't keep doing this and started hiring. Within 18 months, he had 25 employees at a Scottsdale office.

Then he had another epiphany. He noticed all his customers never sold without a partner. Since everything was project based, they started over every month.

"Partner programs were archaic," Salkin said. "There was no communication portals or tracking, so I built a system for a client."

As more clients wanted his product, he saw a software market for it and designed a prototype in 2014 for what became his next startup, Allbound Inc.

He was accepted as one of seven startups with the San Francisco accelerator program Acceleprise, so he moved his wife and then 5-month-old twins to San Francisco for six months so he could get help on starting Allbound.

"Being around six other startup founders who were at the same level was most valuable," Salkin said. "I figured out the market and what it was going to be, and then moved back to Phoenix in March 2015 to start my software company Allbound."

He had to let go of most of his IDS staff as he started building the Allbound product with his IDS head of development Kyle Burnett, who is now Allbound's chief technology officer.

Allbound has raised $2.5 million, has 22 employees and moved to Phoenix in 2015 after winning a free office contest in downtown Phoenix. Allbound helps companies who sell through indirect sales channels to accelerate their marketing, sales and customer service through a software-as-a-service platform.

"We've come a long way really fast," Salkin said. "All of my results came from what I learned at the other companies I worked with and the people I met."

Scott Salkin talks about the Valley's tech scene, his bucket list and "what ifs" at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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No horsing around

PARIS DAVIS KEEPS A SHORT RESUME TO REFLECT A LONG CAREER IN BANKING



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY CASSIDY TROWBRIDGE
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Paris Davis has only two companies on her resume: Dairy Queen and Washington Federal.

The vice president and northwest Arizona retail banking division manager spent only 90 days at a Dairy Queen before starting her 33-year career with Washington Federal. She was only 19 at the time of her first job with the bank.

"I like to say that I was born and then came to Washington Federal," Davis said.

Altogether, Davis has worked one-third of Washington Federal's 100-year existence, witnessing almost all 20 acquisitions during the bank's history.

"I found my calling accidentally," she said.

Growing up in the Oregon City, Oregon, area, Davis said she was hired for a position at the bank and thought it would be a solid job for at least the time being.

Davis ascended the ranks of Washington Federal with dedication. Without a four-year degree, she found that raising her hand to new opportunities gave her invaluable skills and knowledge.

Three years into her first job as a teller, the opportunity to move into the retirement department came up. Davis volunteered.

She would go on to serve as deposit operations manager, retirement specialist, and Phoenix human resources manager.

After 17 years in Oregon, Davis relocated to the Valley in 2001 as Arizona operations manager. She hit the road from Oregon with her two rescue horses, Lottie and Scooter, in tow. Her new Valley home included space for her horses, one dog and husband, Layne.

Davis said she enjoys spending time outdoors in her motor home and taking trips to Lake Powell ever year. Additionally, Davis said she and her husband attend and watch the Indianapolis 500 every year.

The only time Davis has ever put her career on the back burner was to fight thyroid cancer. What started as an ear ache turned into a diagnosis and two surgeries two years ago.

"You hear about it, but never think it will happen to you," Davis said. "When something like this happens, you really see the true heart and humanity of people."

Since her battle with thyroid cancer, Davis said she has been cancer-free and is grateful.

Davis said she found support in her cancer fight through the Washington Federal family.

"I had people all over our eight-state footprint reach out to me," Davis said.

Since then, Davis has poured herself into work, specifically leadership and philanthropy. Last year, Davis co-chaired a company-wide effort to raise money for United Way. The 2015 campaign raised a record-setting $515,000 toward community nonprofits statewide, including her personal favorite, the Save at School Program through Washington Federal.

Davis spent more than four months in advance of the program rolling out information to employees and providing advocates for each region of the bank's operations.

"I came away thinking it was a lot of hard work," she said. "But I wouldn't trade it for anything."

Davis said she enjoys visiting schools where students are able to open savings accounts and meet with bankers monthly to learn about financial literacy.

As a leader within her company, Davis recently was able to showcase her problem-solving skills as part of the executive leadership committee at Washington Federal.

Adding another 10 to 15 hours of work per week, the project focused on employer branding. The assignment began in October 2016 and will be presented to executive management in June, alongside her 12 cohorts.

If there's one piece of advice Davis said she could give, it would be to step out of you comfort zone.

"You should always want to volunteer, and with a can-do spirit," she said.

PARIS DAVIS

Title: Vice president and Northwest Arizona Retail Banking Division Manager

Company: Washington Federal

Age: 52

Your "Aha" moment: "This is a career. And I can be here, I can retire here. I was lucky. I walked into a position for a company that I thoroughly enjoy. Honestly, within my first year of employment."

Favorite book: "Fly with Eagles: The business of winning." Roy Rhodes signed it for me. Talks about how to see the big picture, to be a winner in the business world and taking risks and teaching people how to treat others."

Paris Davis talks about Canadians' love for Arizona and her leadership style at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Learning to help others

SUSAN TRUJILLO BROUGHT GIRL SCOUT MOXIE TO A CAREER THAT LANDED HER IN LAW



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY ANGELA GONZALES
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Growing up in Scottsdale, Susan Trujillo wanted to become a doctor.

Her mother and several aunts were nurses, and her brother also went on to become a doctor. But organic chemistry was brutal, killing her dream of practicing medicine.

While working on her bachelor's degree in English at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Trujillo landed a part-time job working as a pharmacy technician in the University Medical Center pharmacy.

She worked there through her bachelor's and master's degrees, giving her enough experience to get a job at a hospital pharmacy, where she practiced the art of compounding, or creating personalized treatments for patients.

She wasn't quite sure what her future held, after having worked for the Arizona Board of Regents, the Arizona Auditor General's Office and the Arizona Students Association.

SUSAN TRUJILLO

Title: Partner

Company: Quarles & Brady, LLP

Age: 43

First job: Babysitting

Education: Bachelor's degree in English and master's degree in higher education administration, University of Arizona; law degree, University of Notre Dame

Family: Husband, Rhett; sons, Andy, 8, and Luke, 5

Celebrating life: I'm a working mom. I celebrate life when I get my kids out the door in time for school and make it to work in matching shoes.

Three things are always in your refrigerator: Milk, eggs, broccoli

"When I took a step back, I think that I recognized a theme of advocacy," she said. "I really liked to help people."

That's when she started thinking about law school.

"I didn't have any lawyers in the family – except an uncle in Cincinnati, and I didn't hang out with him," Trujillo said. "It took me awhile to figure that out for myself."

Growing up in a Catholic family and attending Catholic elementary and high school, she applied to the University of Notre Dame's law school, even though it seemed like a long shot to her.

"Notre Dame was always 'that' school to my family," she said. "I was accepted, and that was it. My family would never have forgiven me."

Building on her college experience as a hall director at UA, she took the position of assistant rector during law school. There she was, a 30-year-old law school student living with a bunch of 18-year-olds in a dorm.

"It took me awhile to figure out what I was going to be when I grew up," she said.

When she joined Quarles & Brady's litigation group in 2004, she was interested in joining the health practice group, but there weren't any openings at the time.

She approached Roger Morris, who was chair of the health law practice group at Quarles & Brady and a third-generation pharmacist.

The two started talking about their time spent working in pharmacies, and as luck would have it, one of the health care associates was leaving the practice at the time, opening a spot for Trujillo.

Today, she is both a partner at Quarles & Brady as well as its Phoenix Health Law Group practice chair.

"I like to say I'm into drugs," she said. "Basically, I help companies with drug and device manufacturing and distribution through the entire supply chain. I help manufacturers, wholesalers, logistics providers and pharmacy chains figure out how to manufacture and move product around the country, and represent all of these companies, plus mom-and-pop pharmacies and even individual pharmacists and other health care providers in front of their regulatory boards when they have trouble."

Helping people has been a theme throughout Trujillo's life, going back to her days as a Girl Scout when her mom was a troop leader.

With two boys, she won't be following in her mother's footsteps as a Girl Scout leader. But she missed being part of Girl Scouts, and joined the Girl Scouts council board last year.

"I want to help girls grow up with the passion to succeed and help others that I did," she said.

She still remembers the Girl Scout law – fitting, given that she ended up as an attorney.

"Looking back, everything we did in Girl Scouts was designed to help us grow into well-rounded adults equipped to successfully meet the future, which included instilling in us the desire to help others," she said.

Susan Trujillo talks about her experiences as a Girl Scout at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Playing ball with tech

TED SCHUMAN TAKES A SWING AT BUSINESS WITH PLANETONE COMMUNICATIONS



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

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In the summer of 1992 – one of his first in Arizona after moving from the Bay Area – Ted Schuman sat sweating in his 1978 Buick Park Avenue.

With no working AC, the Scottsdale sun was harsh after a day of going door-to-door in a full suit and tie. As he drove home, his rear-view mirror fell off.

The CEO and founder of PlanetOne Communications called this scene his "a-ha" moment.

"I realized there literally was no looking back," he said. "It's funny how I remember that moment and the message that I think was being sent – and I got it."

Twenty-five years later, Schuman has seen his company grow exponentially. Last year, the company received an Arizona Corporate Excellence Award from the *Phoenix Business Journal*, ranking 45th in highest 2015 revenue for private companies. PlanetOne made $23.4 million that year. In 2015, it also took home another *Business Journal* honor when it was ranked No. 1 in the Best Places to Work micro-size category.

PlanetOne Communications provides IT and telecommunication services, ranging from online-based backups to scalable network solutions for its business clients. With nearly 20 employees, PlanetOne's workplace vibe is both focused and relaxed – not unlike its CEO.

It was impossible to ignore the hulking massage chair in Schuman's office, complete with crevices to rest both arms and legs for a full-body experience. Although he said he didn't use the chair as much as he wished, it spoke to the environment he wanted his employees to enjoy.

From taking afternoons off to volunteer with local charity projects to getting everyone's car washed, the company tries to stay true to keeping its employees happy.

In his desk, Schuman keeps his original business plan in a manila folder.

"At its core, it hasn't changed a great deal," he said.

Although technology and time have pushed PlanetOne to stay modern, Schuman said many of his original ideas and core values survived – even if some details evolved.

Schuman spent four years in the U.S. Navy, was honorably discharged and said he made a decision to punch his own resume. Growing up, he wanted to play baseball for the San Francisco Giants, but instead became the first in four generations not to go into the car business.

"My family was the largest Chevy dealer north of the Golden Gate Bridge," he said. "I grew up in the muscle car era, so I've had gas in my veins from an early age."

His passion for cars has not dissipated, and Schuman said he still enjoyed driving, racing and collecting cars. However, doing it for a living didn't appeal to him nearly as much as technology did. To him, technology's fast-paced, ever-changing nature was an opportunity to continuously learn.

His office reflects his life outside of PlanetOne, complete with signed baseballs and photographs of his family lining the shelves.

Schuman said his wife Jocelyn is the most influential person in his life.

"She would be my best friend even if she wasn't my wife," he said.

They have two sons: Jake, who runs a PlanetOne office in Orange County, California, and Max, who plays baseball as a senior at the University of Utah.

"Ted has always been a really hard worker," Jocelyn Schuman said. "He loves what he's doing, and that was my hope and wish for my children, too – that they find something that they're as passionate about as their father is."

Schuman coached baseball for his sons, his wife said, and has kept some of those relationships alive, now mentoring former players in business and setting them up for success.

Now celebrating the company's 25th anniversary, Schuman said he is as motivated as he was a 25 years ago.

"Where we come from, where we're at today and where we think we're going: Those are three very different pictures," he said.

TED SCHUMAN

Title: CEO

Company: PlanetOne Communications

First job: Cleaned pots and pans for a German bakery

Family: Wife, Jocelyn; sons, Jake and Max

What makes you tick: I enjoy life and love to travel – my motto is "Do what you love, and love what you do."

Three things always in your refrigerator: Coors Light, ice cream and eggs

Wish you knew 20 years ago: How hard it was going to be, how long it would take and how much it was going to cost me.

Ted Schuman talks about coaching his sons as preparation for the business world and his dream car at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Cutting it close

JIM VALENZUELA WENT FROM RODEO DREAMS TO CUTTING HAIR, THE LONG WAY



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

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It's not unusual these days for people to move from job to job every couple years, but there are not too many folks who have dipped their toes in real estate, government, health care, barbershops and rodeos – unless you're Jim Valenzuela.

Valenzuela spent his childhood in Tucson working as a rodeo cowboy. It was something he wanted to carry on into his college experience at the University of Arizona, where he studied business management.

But that was short-lived.

"I decided I wanted to focus on getting an education," he said. "There weren't many business-successful cowboys."

Upon graduating from college, Valenzuela "bounced around in the finance business" in Tucson – but he quickly exited that field as well.

"When you're 22 and don't have a deep knowledge, it's tough to sell high-end investments," he said.

Then he got his first big break: Phoenix developer Tim Sprague reached out, and "with the lure of a new car," Valenzuela made his way to the big city, where he was able to make some major real estate deals with Sprague.

"He was the guy that was instrumental in doing things here," he said of Sprague.

The connections he made working with Sprague brought him to Tom Freestone, who, at that time, was on the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

"He knew the real estate business was kind of in the doldrums and asked me if I wanted to be his executive assistant," he said. "He gave me a wonderful view into the inner workings of the Valley and how power was diffused statewide."

The connections he made through Freestone brought him to the health care sector, where he helped to develop numerous projects. He also was hired as executive vice president for Medical Professionals of Arizona, a group that developed $60 million to $70 million in revenue, he said.

"The whole health care industry was in upheaval," Valenzuela said.

At that point, Valenzuela felt he had time to relax and figure out what to do for the rest of his life – and then he got a call from men's retailer Joseph A. Bank, which wanted Valenzuela to franchise in Arizona.

When he went to tour one of their shops, something else caught his eye: a barbershop.

"It was a thunderbolt in my life, and the seeds were sown," he said. "It awoke something in me that was dormant."

Valenzuela was reminded of when he used to get haircuts with his dad, and have the feeling of a "Scorcese, Godfather-style, really cool 1950s barbershop."

He did some financial modeling, found some barber chairs on eBay, and created branding and a logo.

About a year later, in late 1999, V's Barbershop was born. Almost 20 years later, the barbershop has grown from a small Arcadia site to 30 locations in more than a dozen states.

Valenzuela said the old barberhshop aesthetic – especially one that needed to be authentic, he stressed – is something people wanted.

"It's pretty common feeling in a lot of guys. They wanted to go back to a well-done venue that's made for them," he said.

While Valenzuela is proud of his accomplishments, he doesn't put the idea of entrepreneurship on a pedestal.

"There's nothing sexy about being an entrepreneur," he said. "It's a lot of work and a lot of stress."

JIM VALENZUELA

Title: Founder/CEO

Company: V's Barbershop

Family: Wife, Dr. Deborah Vernasco; son: Diego Valenzuela III; daughters: Christina, Bella and Helena

What you'd do if you could not fail: Buy a couple of horses to start roping again and enter team roping competitions throughout the West.

Most influential book you've read: I have read so many, but the latest influential book was "Shoe Dog" by Phil Knight of Nike.

Favorite sport: Rodeo or college hoops

Favorite way to relax: Either watching a game with my son or shopping with my girls.

Jim Valenzuela talks about haircuts and business at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Conducting herself with grace

CAROLYN EYNON'S SALES PITCH IS NOTEWORTHY



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Born and raised in Michigan, Carolyn Eynon grew up surrounded by music.

Her parents were both professionally trained musicians – her mother played the pipe organ and her father played the piano and violin – so it was no surprise Eynon started playing the piano when she was 5 years old.

She played piano for her church choir and at all the high school concerts. At 17, she won a scholarship to travel to Europe to study classical pipe organ music.

She earned her music education degree at University of Michigan and taught for a few years before going back to the university to work on her doctorate of musical arts.

She was almost done with her coursework when her husband was offered a job in Scottsdale, so she moved with him before finishing her dissertation.

At the time, she was raising three children, so it wasn't a priority to finish the doctoral degree in Arizona, she said.

"It was something I never thought I needed out here in Scottsdale," Eynon said. "I was offered the opportunity to go to Arizona State University but I turned it down."

She started her musical career in Arizona as a director of the choirs for the Scottsdale Symphony, which paid a small stipend. That job led to a role as president of the women's auxiliary of the Phoenix Symphony, where she continues to help raise money for the nonprofit.

In 1997, she created the Arizona Arts Choral, a nonprofit community choir of 60 singers, but by 2007 she was beginning to have different goals than the board.

"I wanted to do more serious music and they wanted to do more theater and Broadway music," she said. "I could not limit my artistic future to that kind of music. It was truly an artistic difference."

It came to a point in 2007 where she wasn't invited to a board meeting and found herself out of a job.

"I've always had the philosophy when one door closes another door opens," she said.

About a dozen of the choir members left the Arizona Arts Choral to join her new choir, the Carolyn Eynon Singers.

"I did not recruit them," she said. "When I was released, they just left and came with me."

Today, she celebrates the 10-year anniversary of her nonprofit choir, which she likes to limit to 24 to 26 singers, with four to six singers on each choral part.

She's gearing up for a March 18-19 Music of the Soul Concert in Carefree and Prescott, and is preparing to take her choir to New York, where it will perform at Carnegie Hall with the Phoenix Children's Chorus in June.

Looking back, she wishes she could have finished her doctorate, but that opportunity expired seven years after she left the school.

"It could have made connection with the choral music world a little easier than being a total entrepreneur," she said.

But now, with 45 years of experience under her belt, the doctorate doesn't really matter.

"Back then it would have helped, but it doesn't matter anymore," she said.

Eynon looks at her role in the male-dominated choral and orchestral conducting arena as providing a role model for others to follow, she said.

"I hope to inspire women to follow that path if they are passionate, hard-working, disciplined and thick-skinned," she said.

In 1980, Eynon was the first woman accepted into the University of Michigan doctor of musical arts program.

At the end of her preliminary exams, one of her professors asked what she would do with her doctorate. Her response: Would you ask that question of a male conductor?

"He went blank," she said. "No woman until recently has achieved an orchestral or operatic conductor position in the professional scene. There are only two female conductors in the USA who are 'professional.'"

Eynon makes it a point to only perform music composed by American composers, including Craig Bohmler, composer-in-residence with the Arizona Opera.

"She's terrific," Bohmler said. "Carolyn is tough, but in a good way. She wants everybody to be very good. She is deeply disciplined. When you're a choir director you must be."

CAROLYN EYNON

Title: Founding Artistic Director

Company: Carolyn Eynon Singers

Age: 68

Education: Bachelor of music education, masters in choral conducting and attended the doctorate of musical arts program in conducting, all at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Family: Husband, Dennis; three adult daughters; two grandchildren

Most important in job: Since I work with all volunteers, the most important part of my conducting singers is to show appreciation for their time and talent — always remembering they could choose to sing with someone else.

Carolyn Eynon discusses her passion for choral conducting at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Traveling man

BILL RINEHART HAS BUILT PLENTY OF TECH COMPANIES AND NOW HELPS THE ROAD WARRIORS



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY HAYLEY RINGLE
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A lifelong interest in technology and computers has propelled Bill Rinehart through a career that saw him start several technology companies involving the internet, streaming videos and mobile applications.

Rinehart started his career in sales and marketing, first for the E&J Gallo Winery, which had an intensive sales training program, and then for Infonet in Los Angeles, selling access to what was the precursor to the internet.

He worked for a joint venture between IBM and Motorola Inc. selling the ability for large enterprises to communicate with their field service organizations wirelessly, way before texting.

Rinehart was involved with the beginning of the internet with MFS Communications, what he called one of the most important companies in the development of the commercial internet.

He moved into helping to build the first commercial data centers as the vice president of sales at Genuity, then as the senior vice president and general manager at GlobalCenter.

BILL RINEHART

Title: CEO, founder and chairman

Company: Dufl

Age: 52

Family: Wife, Natalie; boys, Max and Zach

Education: Bachelor's degree in business administration at Ball State University, full football scholarship

Three things always in your refrigerator: Juicero Packs, wine and tobacco

"Aha" moment: Seeing the Netscape browser for the first time

Favorite musician: Bruce Springsteen

On your bucket list: Catch a 750-pound Marlin, stand on the South Pole, visit the Great Wall of China and fly fish the salmon run in Alaska.

"This was high-end, complex web hosting," Rinehart said. "We hosted Yahoo and Netscape."

As vice president of worldwide sales at Critical Path, he worked for the innovator in emails, one of the first abilities to give companies a customized outsourced email domain.

During his time at Critical Path, he was involved in a financial scandal at the San Francisco e-mail tech firm where two executives were charged with criminal and civil violations for their roles in exaggerating revenue by more than $10 million.

Although Rinehart was not charged in the scandal, and didn't admit or deny any wrongdoing, he had to pay $108,000 in fines and couldn't be the director of a public company for five years.

"I learned to never watch anyone take a shortcut, let alone take one yourself," Rinehart said.

After his legal problems, he started Limelight Networks Inc. in 2001, a Tempe-based company that enables faster websites, high-quality streaming video and consistent video game and software downloads to any device.

"I understood complex web hosting, and so we built content delivery networks for media," Rinehart said.

After 9/11, he moved to the Valley from San Francisco and was CEO of Limelight for six years.

Half of the company was sold to Goldman Sachs, and the company went public in June 2007.

"Limelight's Series B with Goldman Sachs was interesting," he said. "The headlines were that we raised $130 million, which is true, but the remarkable part of the deal was that only $20 million of the raise went into the company, while $110 million was paid out directly to the four founders and early investors. It was definitely a unique deal."

Rinehart wanted to do something "fun and new," so he left to start Tempe-based Unicorn Media Inc. in 2007.

With the iPhone out, Rinehart said he knew video would be big, but there wasn't a good way for ads to be embedded in video content, which is the problem Unicorn Media was solving through its Once online ad system.

After close to seven years, Rinehart sold the company to Brightcove Inc. in January 2014 for $51 million.

He stayed for six months as part of the transition, and then invested in Octoblu Inc., an Internet of Things company with a machine-to-machine networking platform. As a board member and co-founder, Octoblu was sold to Citrix in December 2014 for an undisclosed price.

Rinehart developed the idea for his most recent company during his frequent travels. He was in a London pub with a big backpack, because he refused to check a bag, and realized he had to be in New York next. He didn't want to spend hours doing laundry and packing for his next trip, so the idea for Dufl, a personal valet travel service that cleans and ships clothes anywhere, was spawned.

"Dufl is a service for road warriors, built by road warriors," Rinehart said. "This is the way business travel should be. When you tell people you never have to pack again, do laundry again or carry bags through the airport, it's life changing."

Bill Rinehart talks about the Valley's tech scene, his leadership style and his bucket list at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Getting fired up

DOUG DOYLE FINDS HIS HAPPY PLACE WORKING IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY STEVEN TOTTEN
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Doug Doyle tried a lot of jobs when he was younger. He worked in hotels, in sales and even taught sailing.

But it was one of his first jobs that set a path for him, when his sister landed him a job at Sizzler's restaurant as a server in southern California.

Though he went on to explore other industries, the significance of his teenage job didn't hit him until he got another restaurant job later in life.

"I moved to Phoenix and worked for Houston's as a server," he said. "And that's when I was like, 'I've always worked in restaurants, I like working in restaurants, and I know restaurants.'"

From Houston's, Doyle went to California Pizza Kitchen as a server, then eventually moved up to management, where he met Fred Morgan.

Though he didn't know it at the time, meeting Morgan created a pipeline for leading the way in a hot dining trend.

"We've always had a very close relationship. Sometimes he's been my boss, other times we've been on same level," he said. "It's not just a business relationship, it's a friendship."

That friendship helped to boost Doyle from a manager to general manager, and eventually a regional director in one of the hottest pizza restaurants at the time.

Then Doyle got a new boss at CPK and went to St. Louis, which didn't have the same feel as his time in the Southwest.

"I wasn't happy in St. Louis. The fun had come out of it. It had run its course," he said. "I wanted to move back to California."

Doyle left CPK and found gigs with Benihana and Buffalo Wild Wings, but neither were what he was looking for. Doyle said Benihana wasn't structured enough and Buffalo Wild Wings was too structured.

That's when he heard from Morgan, who was COO at Phoenix-based Oregano's.

"I didn't know that we'd work together again," he said. "But I know now I can't really go back and work for anyone else again."

Together, Doyle and Morgan had plans for the casual Italian concept, wanting to take its growth to the same potential as their previous pizza home at CPK. Their aspirations, however, didn't align with Oregano's owner.

"We had different viewpoints," he said. "We thought the company could grow."

Morgan and Doyle left Oregano's, but couldn't shake the pizza that by this point was deep in their restaurant veins.

It was around that time that fast-casual pizza chains were popping up, and the two saw an opportunity to run a franchise.

"At that point, we knew that this custom pizza thing was just beginning, at the beginning of the curve," he said.

Once they saw some of the spots that opened up, they knew running a franchise wouldn't be enough.

"After looking at the concept, we felt we didn't need a franchise model, with our experience it was something we could do on our own," he said.

Doyle and Morgan developed Fired Pie, and are now riding the wave of the fast-casual pizza trend, with 18 locations throughout the state.

"We're kind of living out every restaurateur's dream, to open up their own place and have it be a hit and then grow the concept," he said. "I feel like we're living out our dream and it's working out."

DOUG DOYLE

Title: Co-founder

Company: Fired Pie

What makes you tick: I love what we've created and working for ourselves. People seem to have a craving for what we are doing and the reaction we get from our guests is what keeps me going, and makes me want to do more.

What you'd do if you couldn't fail: I would love to be in a place where we could come up with another concept. Perhaps get back into the casual dining game.

Three things always in your refrigerator: Bai drink, not much since I am single.

Month-long trip to anywhere: Years ago I spent two months in France as a bicycle tour leader. I loved the history and museums. I would love to go back and explore more of Europe.

Doug Doyle talks about the pizza business at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Living in a virtual world

BOB FERRIS BUILDS A BUSINESS SAVING REAL LIVES FROM THROUGH VIRTUAL REALITY



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY HAYLEY RINGLE
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Bob Ferris originally wanted to be a fighter pilot, but his life changed after reading a book about virtual reality.

After two years attending the U.S. Air Force Academy and discovering no positions available as a fighter pilot, Ferris transferred to the University of Arizona because of the high ranking of its systems engineering degree program.

As a 21-year-old at UA, he found virtual reality so "exhilarating" he started a company around it. He moved the company to Phoenix in 1995 after graduation.

"I had no products, no money and no customers," said Ferris, who started coding in fifth grade on his Commodore computer. "But I had passion and knew the best engineering students."

The original idea behind Ferris Productions Inc. was using VR to teach science.

"I had an idea that VR could revolutionize education," he said.

Unfortunately, there was no money for VR in education, so he focused instead on high-fidelity simulation for entertainment.

BOB FERRIS

Age: 45

Family: Wife Nichieli Ferris, 46, VirTra's accounting and contracting manager; son Antonio Ferris, 17, attending Stanford University; and daughter Anissa Ferris, 15, high school freshman

Degrees: Attended the U.S. Air Force Academy from 1990-1992; systems engineering degree from University of Arizona in 1995

Aha moment: Learning that the most important thing about any employee or vendor is their integrity. Don't get me wrong, their productivity is very important, but never more critical than their integrity.

On your bucket list: Visit Alaska and see the Northern Lights.

Ferris' company built simulators with personal computers, building driving simulators for Buick Motor Co. and theme park simulators for Six Flags Entertainment Corp.

"We were pushing the envelope for custom-designed simulators for brands," said Ferris, who was once called the grandfather of VR in the 1990s.

Then 9/11 happened, and like many businesspeople, Ferris didn't know what the future held.

He looked at the technology he was working with, and decided he would change the company's focus to help first responders and police officers.

"We started creating an immersive world to help them train in more realistic scenarios for more effective learning of skills," Ferris said.

Ferris Productions went public in 2001 after merging with a public company. The company changed names to VirTra Systems Inc. in 2002, and is now known as VirTra Inc. (OTCQX: VTSI).

With the new focus, the company essentially started over.

"That was a difficult reset button for us, but it turned out to be an excellent move," said Ferris, who lives in Mesa with his wife of 22 years and two children. "We're one of the few companies that is still around (from 1993) working in VR, maybe the only one in the U.S."

Now, instead of working with demanding *Fortune* 500 customers, Ferris developed systems to help police officers and other first responders.

VirTra developed a firearms simulator using no bullets but compressed gas to replicate the recoil of shooting a gun.

The company also built a 300-degree use-of-force and de-escalation training simulator for police and the military. The 50-foot screen wraps around the person during training using video content developed with the help of veteran police officers and top subject matter experts.

"It's the most realistic and effective of its type in the world," Ferris said. "We do very well in this niche when you compare training values."

VirTra sold its first simulator in 2004 to Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. Since then, VirTra has deployed more than 1,000 simulators that have been used in 19 countries.

The simulators have been used by police, federal and state agencies, the military, security companies and colleges and universities.

"We're known for our threat-fire device that simulates a return fire with an electric impulse, like a snap of a rubber band, to induce a physiological reaction to put skin in the game," he said. "You feel nervousness knowing you could feel pain. We want training to be relevant and heart pounding. We want the pressure and training to be similar to real life."

Ferris said it's his dream to have a viable company that has a positive impact on the world.

"We're unique in that we're a small, growing company with a mission for a safer, better place through simulation products," he said. "VirTra is about making sure they can practice under stress in a challenging environment."

VirTra moved to Tempe in 2010 and has 63 employees who handle all the software, filming, hardware and making the simulated weapons.

Bob Ferris talks about changes in virtual reality, the Phoenix tech scene and training first responders at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Love or Money

SALLY TAYLOR FINDS WAYS TO BRING FAMILIES TOGETHER USING FINANCES



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY CASSIDY TROWBRIDGE
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Sally Taylor used to think money was the root of all evil.

Her attitude changed as CEO of KeatsConnelly, a Phoenix-based financial planning business specializing in U.S. and Canadian clients.

Growing up in Cleveland, Taylor said family arguments over money left a bad taste in her mouth.

"I told my parents I never wanted to work with money. I wanted to be an artist," Taylor said.

Coming from a religious and often restrictive home, Taylor said she wasn't encouraged to go to school. But at 18 years old, Taylor eloped with her husband, Ed, and began a career in finance.

She first worked at Sterling, a division of National City Bank, in Ohio. The division did financial planning for wealthy families.

It was there Taylor said she learned wealth could bring families together.

"Instead of money breaking apart families, I saw how it could educate them," she said.

Taylor's favorite part of financial planning became helping families create scholarships and foundations.

"I really enjoy helping families work together on their legacy," Taylor said.

Finding joy and accomplishment in financial planning, Taylor entered school and earned an accounting degree from John Carroll University in 1999.

From there, her thirst for education never ended. Taylor received her master's degree in financial planning from the College for Financial Planning in 2008 and added numerous financial certifications.

Among the acronyms that follow her name are for certified public accountant, personal financial specialist and certified financial planner.

"I'd really like to go back and get my doctorate," Taylor said.

But with little time outside of her duties at KeatsConnelly, Taylor said further education will have to wait.

After 15 years at Sterling, Taylor said she wanted to move to Arizona. She met Dale Walters, the former CEO of KeatsConnelly, and began her career as a financial planner for the company.

Taylor transitioned after nine years on the job from director of financial planning to CEO in November 2016.

Beyond her dedication to her career and education, Taylor also has been active in her community. She was appointed by former Gov. Jan Brewer in 2013 to the Arizona College Savings Plan Oversight Committee, making sure future college money funds are being invested properly.

She also is a former president and current member of Soroptimist International of Phoenix, which seeks to improve the lives of women and girls.

Taylor has mentored women through her membership with the Soroptimists and through her participation in the Phoenix chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners.

"I've always like to mentor and help anyway I can," Taylor said.

She said her hope is women will continue to forge into new territories. Taylor said she hopes to see more young women enter finance, where there are still ceilings to break.

SALLY TAYLOR

Title: CEO

Company: KeatsConnelly

Aha moment: When I changed my career path. Waking up to the fact money could bring people together.

Most influential book: "How to Win Friends and Influence People" by Dale Carnegie because it gave me perspective on working and with managing people."

Influential person: "Hedy Demsey, a partner at the family office I started at. She worked in a very male-dominated business, and she was my idol and mentor."

Sally Taylor talks about what brought her to Arizona and her love of greyhounds at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Taking a different trail

A BAD JOB IN FAST FOOD SPURRED STAN JOHNSON TOWARD LAW



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY MIKE SUNNUCKS
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When Stan Johnson was a teenager in Illinois, he worked at Hardee's, and he hated that job.

Johnson said he despised the job so much he burned his uniform when he quit. It was one of his motivations for becoming an attorney.

"I actually took it out back and doused it in lighter fluid," said Johnson, now Arizona Real Estate Practice Group chair at the Quarles & Brady LLP law firm in Phoenix. Johnson even danced around the burning fast-food uniform outside his parents' house.

Johnson started working in farm fields in down-state Illinois when he was 14. But he disliked that Hardee's job more.

"My first job was out in the cornfields," said Johnson, who has been with Quarles since 2008, after stints with Lisker, Page & Gibson PLLC, Bryan Cave LLP and Jennings Strouss & Salmon PLC.

Johnson, 43, said working at Hardee's was special motivation to go to college and get a professional office job. He moved to Phoenix in 2002 after earning his law degree from the University of Utah, finding a home in real estate practice after discovering transaction-related law.

Johnson went to Quarles in 2008 ,right when the last recession and real estate crash were taking hold in the Arizona market. Moving to Quarles was fortuitous because bankruptcy, restructuring and the attorneys there kept him and other real estate attorneys working on during the downturn.

Johnson lists his four sons – Abe, Luke, Josh and Sam, age 7 to 18 – and his wife, Jen, as his main motivations professionally and personally.

The Quarles attorney also is an avid biker rider. Johnson said he will ride more than 30 miles some weekday mornings and 60 miles with a group of riders on Saturdays. It takes an early schedule to get that kind of riding in before work.

"I get up at 4:15 a.m.," he said.

His goal is to qualify and ride in the 100-mile marathon Leadville Trail in Colorado. Johnson said mountain bikers have to qualify for that race but it's on his bucket list.

"It's just brutal," he said of the Colorado course.

STAN JOHNSON

Title: Arizona Real Estate Practice Group chair

Company: Quarles & Brady LLP

Family: Wife, Jen; sons Abe, Luke, Josh and Sam.

Education: Bachelor's degree, Brigham Young University; law degree, University of Utah

Most influential book you've read and why: Aside from "The Bible" and the "Book of Mormon," the book that has most influenced me is "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," by Steven R. Covey, because of its many nuggets of wisdom that apply to all facets of life.

Your mentor: My professional mentors have been attorneys Steve Lisker and Diane Haller. Steve and Diane always demanded my best and gave me lots of opportunities to learn and grow.

Taking up biking: My first biking adventures were on my Big Wheel. One day when I was 4, I got picked up by the police when I ventured too far from home. I took my first mountain bike ride on a borrowed bike from a friend in college in 1991 and have been hooked ever since. I added a road bike to the mix in 2008.

What you learned most from the last real estate cycle: In every deal, have an answer for what will happen in a worst-case scenario.

Stan Johnson talks about real estate, law and mountain biking at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Finding a 'business with legs'

FRED MORGAN GOES FROM FAILING FARE TO THE PIZZA KITCHEN



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Fred Morgan knows pizza.

He had it early in his life, being born and raised in one of the pizza capitals of the world: Chicago.

But when a former co-worker told him about California Pizza Kitchen, a "cool new company that was coming to Chicago," Morgan guffawed at the idea.

"I thought, 'That will never work in Chicago,'" Morgan said of the concept. "Barbecue chicken pizza? No way."

But his friend persisted in his persuasion, not only asking Morgan to try it, but to work at CPK as well.

He had been working at Ponderosa Steakhouse for 15 years, since high school, and had moved up through the ranks. He was doing well in his work, but Ponderosa wasn't. So Morgan took a shot on this pizza concept from California.

"I finally went into the restaurant and talked with the director, and found it to be so challenging," he said. "At that time, Ponderosa was closing a bunch of locations, so I saw the opportunity to move on and try something different."

What at first seemed strange ended up boosting Morgan's career: He stayed at CPK for 17 years, starting as a manager and ending as a regional vice president, opening more than 60 locations.

As he grew in the company, he made sure others did too, as long as they had his same drive.

That worked out for Doug Doyle, with whom Morgan would establish a strong partnership down the line.

"Doug had the passion and drive that I liked to see," he said. "As I moved up, I brought him up with me."

Not only did Morgan bring Doyle up through the CPK ranks, he brought him to other companies as well, such as when he took on the COO role with Phoenix's Oregano's.

"It was definitely a concept with legs," said Morgan. "I felt that I could help the process."

While Doyle and Morgan had big plans for the concept, Oregano's owner, Mark Russell, wanted to run the business differently.

So they left, because Morgan said he wanted "something with a lot of legs."

Those legs turned out to be in the fast-casual pizza world, which was just beginning to sprout by the time Morgan and Doyle were thinking about what to do next.

They went to California to talk to some people who had gotten into the fast-casual, make-your-own pizza scene, with plans to do a franchise in Arizona.

Once Morgan saw what they were doing and thought about his own experience, he knew he could do one better.

"We asked them, 'Where's your model work, who's your demographic, what's your buildout,' but they had no answers," he said. "So why were we paying this royalty but not getting those answers, when we knew those answers should be right off the top of their heads. we knew we could make a better model."

That model turned into Fired Pie, which has been growing at a rapid pace in the state, and likely will grow beyond that.

"We want to go outside the state, but not as a one-off model," said Morgan. "Whichever market we choose, we're going to sustain four or five."

FRED MORGAN

Title: Co-owner

Company: Fired Pie

First job: Ponderosa Steak House dishwasher

Family: Wife, Susan; children, Sarah, Stephanie and Staci

Celebrating life: I enjoy spending time with family and friends, I always make sure we make all holidays with family in Illinois and Louisiana.

Three things always in your refrigerator: Hot sauce, cold IPA beers, bacon

Wish you knew 20 years ago: It would have to be going into business for myself. It was not as hard as I thought.

One thing you'll never do again: Working behind a desk in an office for 40 hours a week.

Fred Morgan talks about his passion for pizza at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Transforming the present

BILL AMELIO LOOKS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN BUSINESS OR NONPROFITS



DARRYL WEBB | SPECIAL TO PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY HAYLEY RINGLE
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Bill Amelio's life is all about transformations at work and home.

In the eighth grade, Amelio originally wanted to be a chemical engineer, tracing where organic transformations occur.

"I liked the idea of mixing things together and creating something you wouldn't expect," said Amelio, who grew up in Pittsburgh.

Ever the athlete, he enjoyed transforming his body while playing football and wrestling in high school. He went to Lehigh University on a wrestling scholarship and majored in chemical engineering.

"I wrestled all four years because I liked the ability to constantly improve," Amelio said. "There's no one to blame but the guy in the mirror. I think sports are terrific. It keeps you focused and out of trouble."

His first job out of school was for IBM as a process engineer helping to build circuit boards for mainframe computers. He helped to develop a process to reduce costs, but was tasked with going to the Germany factory and convincing them to use the new cheaper process. He had to transform their minds.

"It was good negotiating experience, and I was able to convince them," said Amelio, who worked at IBM for 18 years, with his last position running operations for the international giant.

At age 23, he decided to go into management. While he loved science and technology, he needed to move from the technical side to leadership to further his goal of becoming a CEO and helping to transform a company.

Amelio's desire to run a business lead him to Allied Signal, where he ran the turbo charging group and the automotive sector, and then to NCR Corp., which makes ATMs and service computers, as the COO.

"This was my first opportunity to work with a board of directors," he said. "I was looking for that experience."

His next tranformative opportunity lead him to Dell Inc. during the dot-com bubble. He moved his family to Singapore to run the Asian Pacific region for the computer company and they stayed for 10 years.

"It was fabulous," Amelio said. "It was the melting pot of Asia with various different cultures. It also had a great family environment and terrific schools."

The opportunity allowed him to travel for work to places such as South Korea, New Zealand and India. He learned to negotiate with different cultures and to use different influencing skills.

During one of their family travels, his wife, Jamie, was so moved by a little girl in Cambodia asking for money so she could attend school she started a nonprofit – Caring for Cambodia – to build schools. Jamie is still the nonprofit's CEO, and Amelio is the board chairman.

Caring for Cambodia, which began in 2003, has built 21 schools from prekindergarten to 12th grade, helping more than 6,500 children get an education. The charity also hosts a teacher training program and a food for thought program.

"My family had so much, and we wanted to give back," said Amelio, who also became legal guardians to two Cambodian girls who are now both in college.

His transformation quest continued as CEO of Lenovo Group Ltd. in Singapore, where he trained the Chinese chairman to take over after three years.

While there, Lenovo was the IT backbone for both the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing and the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy.

CHC Group, the Canadian Helicopter Co., which offered search and rescue and transportation for offshore oil and gas rigs, took Amelio to his next transformation. After oil prices plummeted and the company was bought out, Amelio joined the board of Avnet Inc. in 2014 because of its "great name" and reputation.

When Avnet was looking for its own transformation, Amelio was asked to become interim CEO in July 2016 and then permanent CEO in September.

Since taking over, Avnet has sold one-third of its company, made its biggest acquisition and undergone a major global rebrand.

"At Avnet we guide today's ideas into tomorrow's technology," said Amelio, who splits his time between living in Austin, Texas, and Scottsdale. "We bring suppliers and customers together to make connections. We will be best in class to take makers, help them scale into a large company and make us their supply chain of choice."

WILLIAM AMELIO

Title: CEO

Company: Avnet Inc.

Age: 59

Family: Wife, Jamie, CEO of Caring for Cambodia; children: Austin, 29; Rathana, 24; Cherry, 23; Riley, 24; Bronson, 16; and Avery, 12

Education: Bachelor's degree in chemical engineering, Lehigh University; master's degree, Stanford University Graduate School of Business

3 things always in your refrigerator: Steak, cheese and salad

Favorite musician: Elton John

On your bucket list: I'd like to have more time to train dogs and horses.

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Leading by serving

JOE GAUDIO BRINGS A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE TO BUSINESS ROLE



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Servant leadership clicked with Joe Gaudio.

"It just connected," he said. "Basically, a servant leader focuses on the growth of the people around them. It's a leader who seeks to serve others first, and that resonated very well with me."

Gaudio is the CEO of UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Arizona, the Medicaid division of UnitedHealth Group. Since starting with the company in 1999 as the CFO in Arizona, he has taken the company's core values – integrity, compassion, leadership, innovation and performance – to heart.

When he was just over a year old, his family moved from Chicago to Scottsdale. He grew up and started his career in Phoenix after graduating from Arizona State University in 1987 with a degree in public accounting. He's still an avid Sun Devil fan, going to sporting events and cheering on his alma mater.

Gaudio met his wife, Mary, at a dinner party and the two recently renewed their vows on the beach in Maui, Hawaii, in celebration of their 25th wedding anniversary.

"No matter what, even through his career and traveling, he never once missed a parent-teacher conference," Mary said. "He was at almost every event held at the school. He was very much an involved dad. The kids called him Coach Joe.

"That's pretty rare, I think," she said.

After college graduation, Gaudio joined a subsidiary of UnitedHealthcare called Arizona Physicians IPA. He remembers the time fondly and said that he loved his role at the company.

Eventually, a promotion to be West Region CFO took him to Dallas with his wife and then 6- and 4-year-old children, Alex and Maggie. The Gaudios raised their children in Texas during their 15 years there.

Both children attended the University of Texas, and his daughter still is enrolled. As "semi-empty nesters," Gaudio said he was excited when an opportunity brought them home to Phoenix.

Since his return to the Arizona community, Gaudio has been able to speak at different affordable housing conferences, volunteer at events and work toward making a difference.

Mary also talked about how heavily her partner has thrown himself into the community since returning to Phoenix.

"Now that he has more time as an empty-nester to devote to causes, and in his role of CEO, he sees it as an opportunity to lead by example and inspire that community engagement in his employees" she said. "And I've seen that first hand."

On his desk, he keeps a picture. In it, two middle-schoolers wear soccer jerseys, and the third sports a volunteer t-shirt.

It was career day at their school, the Monday after Gaudio volunteered with an event called Kick It with Dr. Health E. Hound girls' soccer clinic in collaboration with PlayWorks, a nonprofit dedicated to eliminating playground bullying. During the event, the kids were given backpacks, balls and jerseys for participating. He remembers getting sent the image and realizing the impact he could have on individuals through his work.

Between job duties and program responsibilities, there's a theme that runs throughout Gaudio's life.

"It comes down to serving others," he said. "I'm given an opportunity to make a difference in lives, especially the less fortunate."

Jeri Jones, West Region CEO for UnitedHealthcare Community and State, has known Gaudio for 15 years through his work with the company.

"He uses the term servant leader," Jones said. "And he depicts that every day. He's one of those good guys who really cares about his employees and the people he works with and wants to help in the community."

Jones said she sat in on one of Gaudio's staff meetings a few weeks ago, where he spoke to a room of about 300 people.

"Watching him speak to his team about compassion and the change they can make was pretty incredible," she said. "He comes in every day looking to make someone's life better."

JOE GAUDIO

Title: CEO

Company: UnitedHealthcare Community Plan

First job: Burger King

Family: Wife, Mary; children, Alex and Maggie

Three things always in your refrigerator: Hummus, olives and cheese

Aha moment: First time I heard servant leadership discussed in detail passionately.

Definition of success: Happiness

Wish you knew 20 years ago: Don't sweat the small stuff.

Favorite book: "A Man Called Ove" by Fredrik Backman

Joe Gaudio talks about being involved in the community and his leadership style at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Playing by ear

JAY HIEMENZ FINDS MULTIFAMILY SUCCESS, BUT STILL BELIEVES IN MUSIC



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY MIKE SUNNUCKS
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Jay Hiemenz started out wanting to be musician, heading off to college with that major in mind.

He ended up being a top executive at one of the largest apartment development firms in the U.S.

Hiemenz is president and COO at Phoenix-based Alliance Residential Co. He grew up in Texas and attended Texas Christian University majoring in music.

"I was a double major in piano and voice," he said.

He soon decided to change his major to business after gauging the odds of a successful professional career. He also noticed some students pursuing music majors came from more well-off families. He didn't have that luxury.

So Hiemenz switched to a business major and earned an accounting degree with a music minor. He still plays piano and has done some TCU music alumni events.

"It's a great hobby," he said.

Out of college, Hiemenz went to work for Ernst & Young LLP and became interested in real estate when he worked in that practice area for the big accounting firm. That included work for one of the top real estate firms in the country.

"I had Trammell Crow as a client," he said.

His work included time spent on the financial side of the divorce of one of the company's top executives.

Hiemenz eventually went to work for Trammell Crow in 1990. He became CFO and managing director for capital markets when BRE Builders merged with a Western division of Trammell Crow Residential.

Hiemenz was a founding executive of Alliance Residential in 2000 along with CEO Bruce Ward, who also is a Trammell and BRE alum.

Hiemenz said he tried to bring some of the cultural and business practices he learned at Trammell to Alliance.

The Alliance president moved to Phoenix in 1996 while still at Trammell. He said moving up the real estate leader's ladder required relocating from Texas. He had the choice of a job in the Washington or Phoenix market. He looked the D.C. market.

"I'm not an insider," he said, and opted for Phoenix.

JAY HIEMENZ

Title: President, COO

Company: Alliance Residential Co.

When did you realize he wanted to change from music to business? Early in my college life, I realized that music as a career presented some challenges. I ended up with a minor in music, and have retained my love of music throughout my life.

What is the most important thing to look for in the multifamily market right now? Given that we're late in the cycle, we're looking for any signs that demand drivers fall off significantly. We're not seeing any evidence yet that that is the case.

Who are your favorite composers? Ravel, Debussy, Rachmaninov and Mahler.

What is the next big thing in apartments? Connected home technology and urban apartments with little or no parking needed.

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Drawn to service

PAUL MULLIGAN FINDS A GREATER CALLING AFTER EARNING HIS MBA



When he's not on the water, Paul Mulligan likes to take in land via a mountain bike.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY ANGELA GONZALES
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Paul Mulligan was CEO of Catholic Education Arizona for seven years when he decided to pursue an executive MBA program at Arizona State University's W.P. Carey School of Business.

"I went to business school trying to prepare myself for some better leadership opportunities," he said.

While in the midst of his course work, a president and CEO role opened at Catholic Charities Community Services.

"It was a perfect fit," he said. "It melded my desire for good leadership challenges and organizational management with the deepest values of serving others."

Mulligan said he doesn't think he would have gotten the job without the MBA.

"I was told by somebody on the search committee that had I not been an MBA candidate, they felt I would have been over my head," he said. "There is no question that getting that background helped my confidence to be able to step up the game to a higher level. It's been terrific."

Mulligan took over the president and CEO post of Catholic Charities Community Service in September 2014. Founded in 1933, the nonprofit has an annual budget of $35 million and 462 employees providing services to the most vulnerable populations in central and northern Arizona.

"We work with refugees, immigrants, domestic violence, sex trafficking," he said. "We also work with persons experiencing homelessness."

Mulligan grew up in Phoenix, attending Catholic elementary school and Brophy College Preparatory, a boy's Catholic high school. When he graduated in 1988, he shipped off to the U.S. Naval Academy.

"I loved the idea of military service," said Mulligan, whose father served in the U.S. Army.

"Ultimately, military service is really about the willingness to lay down your life," he said. "It's a high calling. A lot of men and women don't come back or they don't come back the same."

There are many parallels between the military and nonprofit work, Mulligan said.

"They are all part of the same continuum, the same spectrum," he said.

While in the military, Mulligan wanted to be a pilot. His father was a private pilot, and Mulligan flew with him as he was growing up. But his eyesight wasn't good enough for the skies, so he ended up on the sea as a Naval officer.

He took to the water, handling ships, weapons and systems operations. Today, wind surfing is his favorite pastime.

"I'm totally a water guy," he said. "For me, when I get near the water, on the water or in the water or under the water, I'm really happy. I love sailing, wind surfing and swimming."

He and his wife, Michelle, are celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary this year. They met in 1987 as high school seniors when Pope John Paul II visited the Valley and held a Mass for about 75,000 people at Arizona State University's Sun Devil Stadium.

"Little did I know the adventurous journey of life and love that would begin from that one simple introduction," he said.

As they developed their friendship, Mulligan had been considering becoming a priest, putting their relationship on hold as he sorted things out. They reconnected while he was at the Naval Academy.

"I thought, 'Well, she's going to be my best friend in seminary or I'm going to make that woman my wife,'" he said. "I wasn't quite sure. There is no question that my call to marriage came through her."

Mulligan said his calling for living a life of service came while he was stationed overseas with the U.S. Navy in Guam and working with his wife and 24 village leaders to establish a pregnancy resource center where women could seek assistance and find alternatives to abortion.

"I recognized any leadership skills and talents I have could be put to more meaningful use in dedicated, full-time service of others, especially the most vulnerable," he said.

It's important to Mulligan to serve God and neighbor.

"You do realize the people we serve it really is like God is coming to us in these special people, with their challenges in their lives," he said. "We're in a position of being able to show them that they are loved. Really, our role in the community is to reach out to those people that are out on the margins of society. You drive past them and you don't see them. We're these agents going out to serve. In many cases, we go out and find them."

PAUL S. MULLIGAN

Title: President and CEO

Company: Catholic Charities Community Services

Age: 47

First job: Age 6, Janitorial staff, my dad's office (2 cents per hour – younger brother got a penny). I graduated to selling Mexican gum out of my backpack in grade school: 8 cents each or 12 for a dollar. I may be a nonprofit guy but I'm not going to miss the chance to make a little extra margin if someone's willing to give it to me!

Education: Bachelor's degree, U.S. Naval Academy; master's degree, Pontifical John Paul II Institute; executive MBA, Arizona State University

Family: Wife: Michelle; children, John Paul, 23, Faith, 19, Maria, 17, and Peter (in heaven)

Paul S. Mulligan talks about servant leadership at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

ADVERTORIAL

The Life-Changing Journey of Foster Parents

Catholic Charities COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Phoenix, AZ 85013
602-285-1999 | www.CatholicCharitiesAZ.org

Catholic Charities Community Services

By Jean Christofferson

Mimi Condon of Gilbert, Ariz. never imagined that reading an ad in the newspaper asking for foster parents would change her life so completely.

"I saw this ad for Catholic Charities that said you can be a working parent, and still be a foster parent. I talked to my husband (Tom), and we started training with Catholic Charities." The couple had two biological children, both girls, ages 10 and 11 at the time. But after experiencing two miscarriages and finding out how many children were in need of care, the Condons knew fostering was meant to be.

But it certainly hasn't always been easy. In fact, their first foster experience was one that took a life-changing emotional toll. But the Condons forged ahead, even more determined to help children.

"Our first placement was these two boys—siblings. There were three siblings, but the girl was already placed, so we took in both boys, who were 14 months apart," said Mimi.

The Condons worked with the biological parents and developed a relationship with them. They stayed in close contact. They kept them engaged with the goal of reuniting them with their children.

"We felt pretty proud of ourselves," Mimi said. We were like, "Wow, look how good we did. Little did we know." It all came crashing down with one phone call.

Mimi got a call one night that the boys' sister, the one who had been placed with a different foster family then also reunited with the biological parents, was in a coma after being beaten. She was only 3 years old. The little girl later died from her injuries. The parents are currently in prison serving a 15-year sentence.

That only fueled Mimi's desire to do even more to help children.

The Condons have fostered 15 children, all ages 0-5. They have adopted four of the children since their start as foster parents in 2006: A 10-month old, an 8-month old, a 5-week old and a 2-day old (at the time of placement).

The road was always very up and down, said Mimi. At one point, the Condons let their license expire because they were feeling spent. But after some reflection, they renewed it because, "there is so much more work that needs to be done. There are so many children that need help."

She encourages others who are considering fostering to step up to the plate. "Please do it. But I'd want them to have a mentor, someone who can walk them through the system. There is so much to learn. Seriously, look me up, I will help you."

If you're considering becoming a foster parent, please contact the Catholic Charities Foster Care Program at CatholicCharitiesAZ.org/foster or 602-943-3843.



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Wearing many different hats

CHRISTINE KAJIKAWA WILKINSON HAS DONE MANY JOBS, ALL FOCUSED ON MAKING ASU BETTER



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY SYDNEY MAKI
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Christine Kajikawa Wilkinson always has known the importance of education.

When she started working at Arizona State University, close to 47 years ago, it was as a director of student activities for the Memorial Union. Now, she serves as the senior vice president and secretary of the university, president and CEO of the ASU Alumni Association and managing director of the Trustees of ASU.

The list of positions she has held at ASU is long, including interim athletic director in three different instances – all in high-stress times for the department, she said. She held five new positions in the first three years, followed by a new title or new responsibilities every three years thereafter for a period.

From a young age, Wilkinson's passion for education was clear. Her father, Bill "Kaji" Kajikawa, started a 41-year career at ASU, coaching the Arizona State Teacher's College freshman football team, the Bulldogs, in 1937. He was there as the school attained university status, the Bulldogs became the Sun Devils and the practice field named after him.

Wilkinson said her greatest memory and source of pride was awarding her father an honorary doctor of laws degree on behalf of the university.

"My parents have been very influential in my career," she said. "I couldn't think of anything that could be more special than that. I remember pretending it wasn't him (receiving the honorary doctorate) because I knew I wasn't going to make it through."

She grew up in the ASU community, her father in athletics and her mother working as a banker in a building that once stood near where her office in the Fulton Center is now.

She met her husband, Don Wilkinson, while at Tempe High School. They married after she received both her bachelor's degree from ASU and master's from the University of California at Berkeley.

Years later, in 1976, she received a doctor of philosophy degree in higher education administration from ASU.

After Berkeley, Wilkinson started working at Coronado High School in Scottsdale as a teacher with the goal of becoming a counselor. Growing up, she knew she wanted to be an educator.

At Coronado, she said she wanted to be the kind of counselor that knew every student on her roster.

At the time, she said most counseling positions were only given to teachers with a master's degree and at least five years in a classroom. Regardless, she was moved to the counselor's office within a year and a half. After another 18 months, the job as an activities director opened up at ASU and she took the leap.

Her pride in the university and her role in it is made clear with her involvement in the lives of students, faculty and athletes. She attends all ASU sporting events frequently. Although she lettered in high school – she played softball, tennis and was captain of pom line – she said one of her favorites to watch is basketball. Both her father and her husband coached basketball at some point in their careers. Her husband retired from Tempe Union High School District after 28 years as the district's athletic director.

Wilkinson's love of sports makes sense within her leadership style.

"I think one thing that makes me feel really good is that we've done it as a team," she said. "I think it becomes a culture over time."

She remembers times at the university when she was the only women in the room, especially as she climbed the ranks within administration. Once, during her time as interim athletic director, a man walked up to her and said that she had done such an amazing job – that he couldn't even think what a man could have done had he been in the role.

"I just smiled," she said.

This April, she took on a role in spearheading the fundraising efforts surrounding ensuring student access and excellence, and championing student success – these are two large Campaign ASU 2020 objectives. Campaign ASU 2020 is a university-wide effort to raise at least $1.5 billion during the next three years. She also took charge of the new Office of University Ceremonies and Events, in which she plans, builds and executes massive events like commencement.

Today, Wilkinson's involvement in the community isn't limited to the university. She sits on the boards of a number of Phoenix-area nonprofits.

And like her current and former responsibilities at ASU, her awards are plenty.

CHRISTINE KAJIKAWA WILKINSON

Titles: Senior vice president and secretary, Arizona State University; president and CEO, ASU Alumni Association; Managing director, Trustees of ASU

First job: Babysitting

Education: Bachelor's and doctorate, ASU; master's degree, University of California at Berkeley

Family: Husband, Don

What makes you tick: Helping the university advance and preparing the next generation of leaders.

Celebrating life: Enjoy each day to the fullest.

Best advice received: My mom was ever the optimist and frequently said, "Things always work out for the best."

Christine Kajikawa Wilkinson talks about the most influential people in her life and her favorite position held at ASU at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Playing with a full deck

JIM HOOKER FINDS CHALLENGES IN HELPING WOMEN IN PRISON, COMPETITIVE BRIDGE



PROVIDED BY TELEVERDE

BY HAYLEY RINGLE
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Jim Hooker's life has been filled with getting into deals he couldn't refuse.

After majoring in anything but school during college, and after being drafted into the Army following the Vietnam War withdrawal, Hooker didn't start to get serious about his career until earning his MBA at American University in Washington.

"I was a top student. I liked finance and liked the challenge," said Hooker, who was born in Baltimore and spent two years in the Army. "I got more focused. I wanted to run IBM."

He started selling IBM computers to companies in Brooklyn, New York. He admitted he sold a lot but didn't finish many deals.

A former manager asked him, after a couple years working for IBM, to be a marketing director for a reseller of computer hardware and software. Hooker said he thought it was a good career move, at least until he got another deal a few years later that he couldn't refuse.

That job was to run a hardware, leasing and maintenance business for a software company focused on the apparel business. But he left after a couple years because of professional differences.

Yet the move helped him to start his own computer leasing company in Manhattan, where he leased and sold hardware. He ended up selling his Ceres Capital Corp. to PacifiCorp Capital Corp. after six years for an undisclosed price.

Hooker continued working for PacifiCorp, moving to Virginia with his wife and three boys. After a year there, he became the company's president and COO.

After PacifiCorp merged with Bell Atlantic Capital and became Pacific Atlantic Capital Corp., Hooker moved to Phoenix as its executive vice president.

"I never wanted to live in Phoenix, but I got a deal I couldn't refuse," he said. "I liked the money and the opportunity. It looked like an interesting kind of deal. It was better for two companies to be together than competing."

Yet again, the deal that seemed good soured for professional and cultural differences, Hooker said.

In college, Hooker said learned to play bridge after his roommate was one of the top card counters and a gamer. Instead of plunging back into the business work, Hooker said he decided he would focus on being a world-class bridge player.

"It was always a hobby I was pretty good at," Hooker said.

He entered competitions and won regional events, playing with the best players in the world.

But, once again, after a couple years he became bored and decided to look for something else.

By then it was the dawn of the early World Wide Web, and he found an opportunity after meeting the founder of Televerde in 1995. The Phoenix-based sales and marketing solutions provider used trained women in correctional facilities as call center employees.

"The business idea was small, but I really liked the idea of being able to do something for the women who were incarcerated," Hooker said. "I loved the challenge. Everyone said I couldn't make this work."

Although he initially was just an investor, he bought out a partner and became CEO in March 1996.

"They needed a leader, and I wanted to create the best solution," Hooker said. "I found the ladies to be intelligent, perceptive and willing to learn the most complex things. It was an exciting time."

Televerde now has 600 employees and works with women in prisons in Rockville, Indiana, and Perryville Prison in Goodyear. The company also has offices in Glasgow, Scotland, and Cordoba, Argentina, and works with 110 mainly tech companies.

Hooker said while he's managed to stay in this job for close to 20 years, he still plays bridge a couple days a week to keep his mind sharp.

"The game is so addictive and very competitive," said Hooker, who plays at a couple local bridge clubs. "My mother always said if you learn how to play bridge and golf, you'll never be alone."

JIM HOOKER

Title: President and CEO of Televerde

Age: 67

Family: Wife, Robin; three sons, Jack, 27, Joey, 32, and Jimmy, 33

Three things always in your refrigerator: Sharp cheddar cheese, hot sauce and Tito's vodka

Aha moment: On a recent trip to Papua New Guinea, the commonalities of all people and the importance of planet sustainability really impacted me. While visiting some indigenous tribes in the jungle, it was clear they valued each day, appreciated each other and the role each plays in the community and lived life happily.

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Getting a taste of business

MICHAEL TIERNEY TAKES HEED OF THE HEALTHY EATING CRAZE



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

Michael Tierney talks about cooking healthy at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com.**

BY STEVEN TOTTEN
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New York and Long Island definitely have a food culture – hot dogs, bagels and smear, pizza.

That's where Michael Tierney spent most of his life, but that wasn't the kind of food he was interested in.

"It seems like (my life has) always revolved around food, but with a concentration on healthy living," he said.

Tierney's only 27, but he's spent all his life in the culinary world. He went to school at the Culinary Institute of America, worked in the fine-dining scenes of New York and Nappa Valley, California, at establishments such as French Laundry and Eleven Madison Park – "some of the top restaurants in the world," said Tierney, who also did some catering on the side.

Tierney was in some of the most prestigious spots for food, but it wasn't what he was looking to do.

"It was all just a means to an end," he said. "I always wanted to be in the branded sector."

Tierney saw a void, and a demand, for healthy food.

While healthy eating has been growing at a faster rate than ever in any food-related industry, the products many companies offer don't always meet expectations, Tierney said.

"You always look at a package that promises these healthy ingredients and never lives up to it," he said.

Through his catering work, Tierney was able to create foods for Get Healthy America, a gourmet grocer in Plainview, New York.

Tierney began with 25 to 30 items, ranging from scones to frozen chocolate mousse, all with a health focus – think gluten free, low calorie, low carbohydrate – and baking all night long.

After a while, Tierney realized one of his products was outperforming all others: his English muffins.

"They were outperforming big gluten-free bakery and bread brands, even with no brand name and no packaging, so I closed down the other items I was making," he said. "I saw opportunity in this."

That kicked off Mikey's in 2014, a line of health-focused products. Tierney found a co-packer and got distribution from a small retailer, which was around the time he decided to move his business to Arizona.

"You've seen brands hinge on healthy, outdoorsy demographics to build their presence, and Scottsdale and Phoenix are definitely healthier than NYC," he said. "The retailers we supply and consumers are much better here."

Mikey's now has nine products, including muffins, pizza crust, and soon will be releasing a line of tortillas, all of which are hitting aspects of the healthy eating scene – gluten free, paleo-focused, low carbohydrate and low calorie among other dynamics.

The products are now distributed at more than 5,000 locations across the country.

"So many products only touch on one benefit, but for Mikey's we make sure all of our products touch on several," he said.

Tierney has integrated himself into the same demographic he's been pursuing as well. He's been on a no-carb diet for almost a year, and he's been enjoying the outdoors here more than he ever could in New York.

"It is unbelievably nice when you come from a congested area to get on a bike and get some fresh air," he said. "It makes it really special."

MICHAEL TIERNEY

Title: CEO/founder

Company: Mikey's

First job: My first job was washing dishes for free at a Sur La Table teaching kitchen at the age of 13. I was too young to be paid, but wanted to be in the kitchen, so it was an easy trade for me. This matured into an assistant teaching position at both Sur La Table and Viking Culinary School through middle school and high school.

What you'd do if you could not fail: Become a rock star – who doesn't want to do that?

Three things always in your refrigerator: Nitrite-free bacon, Vital Farms eggs and avocados (and a ton of Mikey's!).

Most influential book you've read: "Shoe Dog" by Phil Knight, the founder of Nike.

If you could do another job: I would move to France and make wine for a living.

Gambler or measured risk-taker: Can I say yes to both? I don't think you can be a successful entrepreneur without having both qualities.

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Return to Sender

TEMPE ATTORNEY BRINGS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING TO LIFE AROUND THE VALLEY

BY MIKE SUNNUCKS
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Darin Sender wasn't always sure about being an attorney.

The Chicago native wasn't even sure about going to law school. But her father kept encouraging her to go as she was finishing her undergraduate degree in architecture at Arizona State University.

Sender ended up looking at the job market in 1993 for architects and opted to take her parent's advice and went to DePaul University's College of Law.

She got her first taste of zoning law working for her father – who was a Chicagoland real estate developer.

"I didn't know what that was," she said.

Now, Sender, the managing attorney and owner of Sender Associates in Tempe, is a leading zoning and land-use attorney in an Arizona market where real estate and development are two of the top sectors.

The Tempe attorney said her profession offers opportunities to do things one is interested in whether that is real estate and land-use or the arts and nonprofits.

"You can do anything you want with a law degree," Sender said.

Sender also is working in the right part of town as Arizona finally throws off the vestiges of last real estate and economic crash and moves on with more residential development.

Her zoning work in Tempe includes Opus Group's dual-tower high-rise development at University Drive and Forest Avenue in downtown Tempe.

That project is under construction now and will include 20- and 12-story towers with 453 apartments.

Forum Real Estate Group's Local development – also in downtown Tempe – which will include a 10-story development at Ash Avenue and University Drive.

The development will include 300 apartments and a Whole Foods grocery store.

Sender said downtown Tempe is poised to beat downtown Phoenix when it comes to grabbing a big national grocery. A Fry's Food Store is slated for RED Development's Block 23 project in Phoenix.

She's also doing work on the 24-story Pier development on Tempe Town Lake, a project in Lake Havasu City and a 320-unit Class A multifamily development called The Flats at Santan Village in Gilbert.

Sender likes the variety of work that comes with zoning, development and land-use cases.

"It is something different every day," she said.

In her off time, Sender likes to run. That includes jogging and running with fellow attorney Jennifer Krieps.



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

DARIN SENDER

Title: Managing attorney

Company: Sender Associates

Birthplace: Oak Forest, Illinois

Studying architecture: ASU had one of the best architecture programs. My dad is a real estate developer and my mom an interior designer. Architecture just made sense. And Arizona was much warmer than Chicago.

Miss most about Chicago: My family, and real Chicago dogs with the bright green relish.

Cubs, White Sox or Diamondbacks: All of the above, especially D'Backs.

Favorite restaurants: St. Francis, House of Tricks, Pedal Haus and the Yard Tempe.

Listen to in the car: Modern country

Lesson learned from last real estate crash: Partner with great clients, work hard on their behalf, be honest and trustworthy, over-prepare, and be fiscally responsible.

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Going big in small business

DIANA VOWELS RETURNS TO HER ROOTS IN HEADING GALVANIZE IN PHOENIX



Diana Vowels enjoys photography as a hobby.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY HAYLEY RINGLE
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Diana Vowels' life has come full circle since experiencing the good, the bad and the ugly of her entrepreneurial dad's aircraft parts business.

Vowels spent 18 years selling advertising to small businesses for various newspapers with Gannett Co. Inc.

Now, as the general manager of the Phoenix Galvanize, she works with local entrepreneurs and startups every day.

"I saw small-business ownership front and center through my dad's company," said Vowels, who grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, with her seven brothers and sisters.

With an interest in graphic design and layout, she went to the University of Missouri's School of Journalism. As president of the school's Ad Club, she was tasked with getting local business people to talk to students, similar to what she's doing now at Galvanize.

Vowels was recruited by Gannett after graduating with a bachelor's degree in journalism, and she first worked in advertising sales at the *Desert Sun* in Palm Springs, California.

"I met so many business owners," she said. "I learned how to relate to a lot of industries."

DIANA VOWELS

Title: General manager

Company: Phoenix Galvanize

Family: Husband, David Vowels; daughters, Lauren, 12, and Kendall, 10.

Education: Bachelor's degree, University of Missouri

Three things always in your refrigerator: Eggs, apples and olives

Aha moment: Realizing there is no balance between work and life. It's a journey that is constantly changing.

Most influential book you've read: "Freakonomics"

Favorite music group: Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers

Name of your autobiography if you had one: "Are We There Yet?"

As she worked her way up to management and then vice president of advertising for Gannett, Vowels moved eight times in her 18-year career with the newspaper giant.

"I saw big and small markets," Vowels said. "I got an appreciation for different cultures and business styles."

She worked in Pennsylvania, Iowa, New York, Florida, Delaware and then, finally, the *Arizona Republic* in Phoenix, spending one to four years in each city.

"I was sent to fix or optimize the broken (advertising) operations for each newspaper," she said. "I reorganized sales teams and developed new compensation models."

Vowels decided to move to Phoenix because she thought it was a vibrant opportunity and growth market.

Her husband, David Vowels, who she met in Florida, worked in rehab medicine and designed prosthetics, mostly for legs.

After three years as the advertising director at the *Arizona Republic*, Vowels opted out to do something drastically different.

"The *Arizona Republic* was in the middle of a restructuring, and I was offered a buyout package," she said. "I was burned out with traditional media."

The couple had the opportunity to buy the Phoenix practice where her husband worked, and they jumped at the chance in 2008. She brought her business operations, marketing and financial experience to help run the 12-person operation.

"I put structure in place to make the business run smoothly," Vowels said.

After two years of streamlining the business, she turned to management consulting part time. Her consulting included a stint for Deckers footwear in Flagstaff, consulting for the e-commerce division that sold Ugg and Teva shoes.

After the Vowels sold the prosthetics business in 2014, she decided to turn her attention to technology.

"I had always been involved in tech projects," she said. "Every job I had involved using tech to make teams more efficient."

Vowels ran the Scottsdale office of Deem, a travel and expense management company, for two years. After Deem's operations moved to California, she had the opportunity to open the Scottsdale sales office of Groupon in 2015 at SkySong.

"It was fast paced," she said. "We hired 150 people in nine months."

In May 2016, Vowels started talking to Galvanize's executives after hearing the Denver-based company was interested in opening a campus in Phoenix.

"They were looking for someone who understands how technology works, had business operations experience and knew the Phoenix community," she said. "That was me, especially when I found out I didn't have to be a developer."

With the trend of large companies bringing back-office operations to Phoenix but keeping skilled tech workers in other states, Galvanize is working to close the tech skills gap through full-time classes to launch careers as web developers and data scientists.

Vowels started with Galvanize in August, hired 15 people and opened the Phoenix campus in February. So far, she helped bring in more than 90 companies and 300 members who use the co-working spaces or have offices at the local campus.

"I've never been more exhausted and more energized at the same time," Vowels said. "I've been really busy, but I'm having so much fun. I finally feel like I'm where I'm supposed to be and I'm making a difference."

Diana Vowels talks about working in the Phoenix tech scene and something no one else knows about her at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Being a late bloomer

DR. RICHARD AVERITTE MOVES TO MEDICINE IN A NON-TRADITIONAL WAY



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY ANGELA GONZALES
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Dr. Richard Averitte, founder, CEO and managing partner of Affiliated Dermatology in Scottsdale, is a johnny-come-lately to the world of medicine.

"I always thought about medicine, but I wasn't really into school and didn't want to be in school that long," he said.

Born and raised in Akron, Ohio, Averitte worked as an engineer for seven years when he noticed that many fellow engineers were working for the same firm for decades with not much chance of upward mobility.

"They started getting phased out and became irrelevant," he said. "That started to concern me."

Even though he was slated to become a vice president, it wasn't something he thought he could count on.

"It was the typical corporate story," he said. "I was managing $50 million a year and making less than $100,000. It was crazy."

Plus, he was traveling 25 weeks out of the year, living out of a suitcase.

"When you're a young man that works out, but as I got older and wanted to have a family, I started thinking this isn't going to work out so well," he said. "I was making good money, but it wasn't the best life. I didn't like that."

Averitte said he considered starting his own engineering construction company and was starting to look into getting financing when he ran into a college friend who had gone into medicine.

"It started me thinking about being a physician again," he said.

He was almost 30 years old when he began the medical school process. Averitte was what some consider a "crooked arrow" because he didn't go straight to medical school out of undergraduate school.

"That's the nice term for a non-traditional student," he said.

During his medical school interview process, he was told students are very focused. It was suggested that because he was married and had a mortgage, he might have too many distractions to succeed.

He applied to at least 30 medical schools and faced many rejections because he was a non-traditional student.

The first college to accept him was Medical College of Ohio – now the University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences – about two hours from his home town.

Usually for medical students, the third year of medical school is the toughest. Making matters worse during that third year, Averitte divorced and his father died six months later.

"I've gone from having those times in life where you go through a really, really bad period, then there's some light at the end of the tunnel better than you ever imagined," he said.

After graduating from medical school in 1998 and before embarking on residency training, Averitte's brother, who lives in Phoenix, set him up on a blind date with Marlie Dresher, a coordinator of the cardiology fellowship program at Banner University Medical Center-Phoenix.

"I've only been on two blind dates in my life," Averitte said. "The first was the worst date I've ever been on, and the second was the best one."

The couple, who have 13-year-old triplets, will celebrate their 17th anniversary in November.

During his residency training, Averitte began making plans to start a dermatology practice in Scottsdale. At first, he was paying a consultant to help set up the business, with Marlie pitching in.

Over the years, as Affiliated Dermatology grew, his wife pitched in more, overseeing billing and physician credentialing. Today, she is the CFO for the practice that employs more than 150 people.

At first, it was tough working together while raising triplets, Averitte said. Particularly in the beginning and after delivery while his wife worked at home on bedrest.

"We had to keep things going," he said. "There have been times over the years that I wanted to talk business and as a mom she didn't want to."

But for the past 11 to 12 years, they have date night every Thursday, which he said has been instrumental in maintaining their relationship over the years.

"I see couples that work together who do business together and everyone thinks it's hunky-dory," he said. "Figuring out a way to be married and do business and not have one of the two overpower your life is really complicated. We do a real good job of it now 15 years into it. But there's been some times where, man is it gonna be the marriage that breaks the business or the business that breaks the marriage."

RICHARD L. AVERITTE JR, MD

Title: CEO and managing partner

Company: Affiliated Dermatology

Age: 51

Education: Medical College of Ohio

Family: wife, Marlie; triplets – Rylee, Richard III and Kennedy

Title of your autobiography: "Flirting with Disaster"

Will never do again: Do business with friends

What makes you tick: Family, loyalty and fear of failure. I love to see things grow.

How you celebrate life: I love being active outdoors.

Definition of success: Balancing business with family.

Important in job: Happiness

An effective business leader: The ability to motivate large groups to work as a team.

Dr. Richard L. Averitte Jr talks about switching careers into medicine at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Learning to chill

BANKING MADE JAN WICHAYANUPARP SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

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When Jan Wichayanuparp was a child, she was a picky eater. There was only one thing she had no reservations about eating.

"The only thing I could be convinced to eat was ice cream," she said.

Wichayanuparp's love for ice cream evolved into a more adventurous palate by the time adulthood hit, especially since she moved from her hometown of San Gabriel Valley in Southern California to Bangkok to work in finance for Salomon Smith Barney.

Yet ice cream remained the best pick-me-up during a long day of investment banking.

"Ice cream was always there. It's always been a constant in my life," she said. "You're having a bad day, ice cream makes it better. You're having a good day, ice cream is there for celebrating."

Wichayanuparp's love for not just ice cream but food in general put her on the same path as Helen Yung, who was working for the same finance company as Wichayanuparp.

The two met during a conference in New York in 2001, and became friends "because we were only two people who showed up with restaurant reservations," Wichayanuparp said.

"We bonded over our love for food," she said.

When Wichayanuparp came from Thailand and Yung came from London to the states for Salomon Smith Barney work, it was at the World Trade Center.

What happened that September had a profound impact on both their lives, especially for Wichayanuparp, who was in New York during the 2001 terrorist attack.

"The actuality of something like that happening in real life right in front of me completely boggled my mind," she said. "That put a different spin out of what I wanted to do in life."

Hung made the decision to leave finance first, and ventured into the culinary world. Several years later, Wichayanuparp followed suit and decided to venture into one of the things she loved most: ice cream.

She moved back to the U.S. in 2007, and while brainstorming her foray into the ice cream world, Wichayanuparp was convinced by her sister to join her in Arizona.

"I really fell in love with it, and the 120-degree summers worked as a better place to sell ice cream," she said.

Soon after, she recruited Yung to join her, and the two opened their first ice cream shop, Sweet Republic, in Scottsdale during 2008.

The business has become one of the popular ice cream shops in the Valley, and Wichayanuparp and Yung have grown it to three locations with their own kitchens, where they make everything from scratch.

Running Sweet Republic has been a continuous culinary adventure for Wichayanuparp. She goes to conferences and courses to learn how to make better ice cream and experiments with new flavors. When she's not running one of Sweet Republic's locations, she's learning how to make Thai food.

"I miss homeland cooking," she said. "I used to spend summers there, and I've been missing the food."

JAN WICHAYANUPARP

Title: Co-founder and chief ice cream hustler

Company: Sweet Republic

One thing you'll never do again: Eating whale sperm for breakfast, a rare delicacy I have been privileged to (fortunately) experience only once at Tokyo's legendary Tsukiji fish market.

Favorite way to relax: Cooking. Lately I have been cooking a lot of Thai food, particularly from the Northern region where my Mom's family is from.

Best part of job: I am a rock star to the 8 and under crowd!

Title of your autobiography: "Life is like a hundred flavors of ice cream, don't always pick vanilla"

Jan Wichayanuparp talks about her favorite foods and her affection for ice cream at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Leaning into Life

MICHELLE OLSON FINDS A HOME IN ARIZONA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY SAYO AKAO
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Michelle Olson has been able to do it all.

Olson successfully balances her career and personal life, while finding time to travel and exercise thanks to her natural curiosity for all life has to offer.

That curiosity led her to spontaneously move from across the country to Arizona 26 years ago, to the surprise of her friends and family in her native Minnesota.

"Minnesotans go back to Minnesota," Olson said jokingly.

For Olson and her husband – who was just her boyfriend at the time – Arizona's warmer climate drew them in and the pair never looked back.

Prior to moving to Arizona, Olson worked in the public relations division at Colle & McVoy, a regional advertising agency in Minneapolis.

Olson easily adapted into public relations from a background in journalism. Her love for writing led her to journalism in high school, which she said was her sport of choice, adorning her letterman jacket with letters acquired from being first sports reporter, then editor of the school's newspaper.

"My wish was to be a reporter," said Olson, up until she was told she wouldn't make any money doing it. Enter Olson's high school counselor who introduced her to public relations and told her the best part – she could continue writing and she would make good money.

"It gave me all of the things I was craving, like storytelling and persuasion and helping companies solve problems," Olson said.

Her first job in Phoenix at BJ Communications allowed Olson to integrate into the community, despite the difference between Phoenix and the more progressive PR community she was accustomed to in Minnesota.

Olson spent eight years at BJ before moving on to the Lavidge Co. where she worked as director of public relations up until the 9/11 terrorist attacks abruptly shifted her focus.

"I was so impacted by those moments," she said, particularly because of her two sons who were only seven years old at the time. "I was working my life around Lavidge and I needed to work my life around my boys."

Her renewed focus on family served as the catalyst to a decision that would impact Olson's entire career. Less than two months after 9/11, she left Lavidge and opened her own firm, Olson Communications in January 2002. Olson ran the firm out of her home for the first eight months with a small team, working long hours after her sons went to sleep.

Flexibility allowed Olson to spend time with her family while building her business.

"Parenting and family is what motivated me to do more and do better," said Olson.

The company flourished, landing notable clients such as the Phoenix Coyotes and Glendale Arena in the company's formative years.

Before selling Olson Communications to Fingerpaint Marketing in 2014, the firm had just under $2 million in revenue and 13 employees.

Although Olson admitted she was nervous to sell her company, her excitement for "all of the tools that go along with that, the assets and the digital presence giving us a national stage locally," eased her nerves.

The merger was ideal for Olson to expand on the work her firm was doing at the time, encompassing all areas of the communications field.

"Our world changed when social media started," said Olson. "We had access to talk to our audiences directly."

Olson said she believes journalism opportunities have changed for the better since the days when she had to decide between her love of the field and its money-making potential, because of the convergence across the communications field.

"After 32 years that's what gets me excited, how technology is helping us do those things," said Olson, particularly integrating communication fields from across the board.

The merger also gave Olson time to continue the outdoor activities she enjoys such as hiking and cycling. She began cycling at 19.

"Cycling to me is a freedom, but it's also a stress relief," she said.

Nowadays she bikes three to four times a week, sometimes for 30 to 45 miles at a time.

She credits engaging in outdoor activities and traveling for how she manages her heavy workload as both the head of the Scottsdale Fingerpaint office and head of public relations for the whole company.

Olson travels to places such as Colorado and Italy, where she revels in activities offered by different climates. Olson and her husband can be found hiking the Rocky Mountains or biking throughout Italy.

"I like to go do something, I don't like to just sit on the beach," Olson said.

MICHELLE OLSON

Age: 53

Title: Head of Scottsdale office

Company: Fingerpaint Marketing

Education: Bachelor's degree Minnesota State University at Moorhead

Best family memory: Vacation in London with the in-laws when my boys were young; following my boys around golf tournaments in high school, watching them learn anything

Favorite local hiking spot: Phoenix Mountain Preserve and the Gateway Trail in the Sonoran McDowell Preserve.

Biggest lesson learned in life: It never ends well when you allow others to pull you across your line in the sand. Stay true to your values and the rest of life's mysteries work themselves out.

Michelle Olson talks about what she would do every day if there was no limitation and her biggest inspirations at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

EXECUTIVE INC.

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Taking flight

ROB DONAT HITS THE SKIES WHEN HIS COMPANY ISN'T BUSY TRACKING TRUCKS



JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY ARREN KIMBEL-SANNIT
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After five years working at the company, employees of Scottsdale-based GPS Insight get an impressive, if not on-the-nose, gift: a GPS-enabled wristwatch that updates automatically when it enters a new time zone.

"I'm a big watch guy," said company CEO Rob Donat from his airy corner office in the Henkel building in Scottsdale. On his wrist was a Seiko GPS watch; it doesn't get that much use because it fails to command attention as much as the higher-end pieces other execs wear, he said.

A look at the now 47-year-old Donat's desk reveals he is more than a watch guy. He is, or at least at one point was, a hoverboard guy, a 3D-printer guy, an airplane guy and a scuba guy.

He's a serial hobbyist. Some hobbies he sees through – he worked to get a pilot's license and keeps a flight simulator in the office. Other hobbies get kicked to the curb as his company grows and his attentions shift: The dual 3D printers in his office, for example, are just two of several he once had and eventually gave away.

The rest of GPS Insight's office feels as if it's in Palo Alto, California. As Donat walked by ping-pong tables and conference rooms named for "Fast Times at Ridgemont High" characters, not a single honorific was uttered. He stopped in a few offices to find someone to go to a Roger Waters concert with him.

But Donat, who has a finance background, does not run a millennial-age, sharing-economy firm. Instead, his company, which he started in 2005, provides tracking and location solutions to fleets of commercial and government trucks, playing an integral role in one of the nation's biggest industries.

The company is "big brother," Donat said. GPS Insight products enforce compliance with the web of government regulations that rule the industry. They notify drivers and supervisors if a vehicle is left idling, track employee hours and track the locations of the vehicles themselves.

GPS Insight now works with 4,200 fleets and is expected to pull in $40 million in revenue this year, Donat said. The company has grown to 145 employees.

Roads haven't always been smooth, though.

"When I started, I thought, if we could just track 2,500 trucks, that would be a nice little business," Donat said. "We didn't get profitable until we were tracking 25,000."

The company has sat pretty since, paying off its debt and pulling in $20 million in profit. After other companies were bought or shuttered, GPS Insight is now the only privately held company of its kind.

But Donat's business aspirations initially were not in trucking, a fact fairly obvious when speaking with him. He thinks several steps at a time, and an email from his communications director said interviews would need to be kept short since he was unlikely to sit still for more than an hour or so. He lists impressive computer achievements – learning how to use an Apple IIe back in elementary school in Chicago and being asked to install his school's computer system, for example – with little thought given to how impressive they might be.

He groomed himself to be a stock trader, analyzing options in his free time and eventually working for an investment group. With his computer knowledge, he helped bridge the gap between old-school finance folks and technologists. In 2003, with a growing resume trailing behind him, Donat moved to Arizona and discovered the jobs he dreamed of as a kid didn't really exist in the desert Southwest.

At first he commuted back and forth to Chicago and New York, but grew tired of the slog, so he did some business consulting. One of his friends asked for help finding tracking products for his trucking company, and before long, GPS Insight was born.

"This is way more fun," Donat said. "I used to think (trading) was the best job ever, but I realize now that all we were doing was stealing shavings of pennies billions of times a year. Here, we're saving real companies with real people who do real work from bad employees, traffic jams, anything that impedes them."

ROB DONAT

Company: GPS Insight

Title: CEO

What makes you tick: I try to always be learning something and challenging myself.

Aside from your mother, the most influential person in your life: I had a collection of "fathers" growing up – my grandfather, uncles, and a couple family friends. They all shaped who I became.

Best conversation piece in your house: I have a 5,000 pound or something petrified wood end table. I joke with big guests to ask if they'll just move it over there for me. It doesn't move.

Favorite book: "Confederacy of Dunces" by John Kennedy Toole

Rob Donat talks about leaving finance for being an entrepreneurs and his hobbies, which include flying at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Finding the right balance

ALONE TIME, HIKING HELPS BRENDA SCHMIDT FIND EQUILIBRIUM AT WORK, HOME



DARRYL WEBB | SPECIAL TO PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY SAUNDRA WILSON
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Brenda Schmidt has a full house, complete with a husband, three kids, two dogs, two cats, fish and geckos.

The entrepreneur runs Solera Health, a Phoenix-based company she founded that forges partnerships with health insurance plans and connects them to a network of community organizations and digital solutions for chronic disease prevention. Solera Health has nearly 70 employees and manages millions of dollars in funding, enough to keep any CEO's hands full.

Schmidt says hiking helps her manage her stress and keep her life in balance.

"I think the hardest thing for me is turning my brain off," she said. "If I can just stick my headphones in and go hike and be in nature, I can turn my brain off a little bit."

Schmidt hikes about 10 miles a week, shooting for the most strenuous trails. She's conquered Phoenix's Squaw Peak and Camelback Mountain, and Westwing Mountain in Peoria, hiking even when she's on vacation.

Schmidt says people may be surprised that she's an introvert, and because of this she prefers to hike alone.

"I speak nationally all the time, and I talk a lot but I get my energy from being by myself," she said.

Another thing Schmidt does by herself is read – and at a hasty pace. She goes through a book every one to two weeks.

"I really like the feel of books. I like the smell. I just like books and I hope books continue to be available," she said.

Nonfiction is Schmidt's genre of choice, though she started out reading fiction. She reads books about history, personal development and business.

"At first I felt a lot of pressure reading any kind of business books because I didn't feel like I was doing it right," she said.

Now, Schmidt says she tries to get one or two takeaways from each book that she can apply to her life. The book "Play Bigger: How Pirates, Dreamers and Innovators Create and Dominate Markets," by Al Ramadan, Dave Peterson, Christopher Lochhead and Kevin Maney, left a particularly strong impression on her, teaching her how to create and dominate her own market category.

When she isn't reading or hiking, Schmidt enjoys spending time with her husband Dave, 28-year-old daughter Abby, who lives in Seattle, 20-year-old daughter Maddie, and 17-year-old son Cole.

The Schmidts have been married for 21 years. They dated when they were 18 and 19 while living in the same dorm at Indiana University. The two went their separate ways for graduate school and didn't talk for 12 years. Brenda Schmidt says she decided to call Dave when looking through an old photo album before taking a business trip to Phoenix.

"He was one of those people that had a big impact on my life, and I just wondered what he was up to, assuming he was married with four kids," she said.

Schmidt reached out and the two reconnected, dating long distance for nine months before Brenda moved to Arizona.

"I could never do what I do without his support," she said. "I think it takes a really strong support system to be successful as a female entrepreneur."

BRENDA SCHMIDT

Title: Founder and CEO

Company: Solera Health

First job: My part-time and summer jobs through high school and college were all at pizza restaurants.

Family: Husband Dave, kids Abby (28) Madison (20) and Cole (17). My husband is the jazz director at Glendale Community College and a professional saxophone player. We have lots of music at our house.

What makes you tick: I measure my self-worth by how much I accomplish, whether personally or professionally.

Your ideal month-long vacation: I would spend time in a foreign country volunteering.

Brenda Schmidt talks about how she unplugs from work and how she stays motivated at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

EXECUTIVE INC.

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Medicine, not just business

DR. STEVE NARANG FINDS A SWEET SPOT IN RUNNING BANNER'S FLAGSHIP HOSPITAL



Dr. Steve Narang was named CEO of Banner – University Medical center Phoenix in 2013. Narang is well traveled and enjoys many types of ethnic foods. One of his local favorites is the Authentic Ethio African Spices in Phoenix.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY ANGELA GONZALES
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Dr. Steve Narang spent the first 10 years of his life in Brazil, where has father conducted research on malaria.

Both his parents were professors teaching microbiology and molecular genomics, so it was no surprise that Narang would go into medicine.

They moved to the U.S. when Narang was 10, originally teaching at the University of Florida. Narang spent a lot of time in his parents' laboratories, which influenced his love of science.

"As I got more involved in medical school years later, I realized that even though I loved looking at cells, i liked looking at the bigger system," said Narang, who also earned his health care management degree at Harvard University.

Going to business school transformed the way he looked at the world.

As the oldest of three children, who all chose to go into medicine, Narang moved to Arizona in 2011 to take a job as chief medical officer at Banner Cardon Children's Hospital in Mesa. At the time, his brother, Aneesch Narang, was working at Boston University.

Narang began trying to convince his brother to move to Arizona. But he didn't actually want him to work at the same hospital, telling him to take a job at Banner Health's flagship hospital, Banner University Medical Center-Phoenix. Narang figured he wouldn't ever work there.

"I never thought about being a CEO," Narang said. "I wanted to be a leader to help improve outcomes and bring doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists together."

But Kathy Bollinger, president of Banner University-Medical Division, heard him give a speech about patient safety and transparency. She told him she was looking for a physician to lead Banner's flagship hospital and asked him to apply for the CEO spot

He took the position in 2013

Bollinger is his mentor, he said, "who teaches me how to lead authentically and courageously every day."

As it turns out, his brother ended up taking a job as associate program director of residency at the same hospital.

"I don't get a chance to see him at work, which is probably a good thing," Narang joked.

He said it's too early to say if his two children will follow in his footsteps.

"I've been reading articles that say if parents are physicians their children are less likely to be physicians," he said. "My daughter is much more interested in communications and music. My son is a young scientist. We'll see what happens."

While most of his time is spent running the hospital, Narang manages to work once a month at one of Banner's pediatric emergency rooms.

"It keeps me grounded," said Narang, who also volunteers his time providing pediatric medicine around the country and the world.

When he's not running one of the state's largest hospitals or treating patients, Narang and his wife – a nephrologist practicing in the East Valley – enjoy hiking with their two Labradors. He also enjoys trying new restaurants – anything from Ethiopian to Cuban to Japanese food.

One of his favorite small places in the Valley is the Authentic Ethio African Spices, which specializes in Ethiopian cuisine and is located in central Phoenix.

"I like to find small places nobody looks for that aren't in the tourist guides," he said.

Narang and his wife Jhumka met when he was finishing at Northwestern University Medical School. He took a year off before he started his residency training at Johns Hopkins Hospital, headed to San Diego, hoping he would meet someone.

"I prowled the beach," he said.

Instead, some friends tried to set him up with Jhumka, but they didn't actually meet until after emailing each other for three months.

"She was the only reason I left Southern California," he said.

DR. STEVE NARANG

Title: CEO

Company: Banner-University Medical Center Phoenix

Age: 45

First job: Little Caesar's Pizza

Education: Northwestern University Medical School; Johns Hopkins Hospital-residency; Harvard University-Health Care Management

Family: wife, Dr. Jhumka Ghosh-Narang; son, Vivek Narang, 13; daughter, Aria Narang, 15

What makes you tick: Finding potential, period. I'm a big believer in unleashing passion in every single soul I connect with.

Dr. Steve Narang talks about living with a family of physicians at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

EXECUTIVE INC.

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August 18, 2017

Finding a new service

MARINE CORPS VETERAN JUSTIN KELTON TAKES THE HELM OF MCCARTHY COS. IN THE SOUTHWEST



Justin Kelton served in the Marines and admires antique war posters.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY MIKE SUNNUCKS
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Justin Kelton is no stranger to the construction sector. He grew up in it.

Kelton, the head executive in Phoenix and the Southwest region for McCarthy Building Cos., one of the biggest construction firms in the country, said his father and grandfather worked in the sector.

"We also had a family construction business," Kelton said

That experience of working in a family firm was beneficial for Kelton as he worked his way all the way up McCarthy's ladder. He took over as president from Bo Calbert for a regional market that includes Arizona, Nevada, Colorado and Utah.

The McCarthy Southwest division has 645 employees, to which Kelton gives due credit for pushing the company's growth and ability to tackle even the most complex projects.

"We have a lot of collective talent," he said.

Kelton started working for McCarthy as a laborer in his native New England in 1989 when the company was constructing a hospital project. Calbert was the manager on that project and has been a mentor to Kelton since.

"Bo helped me to learn the benefit of asking hard questions, and being sure to then offer a trusted environment where I listen to people so they are comfortable providing an honest answer," Kelton said.

Kelton then went into the U.S. Marine Corps in 1989 and served in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Somalia.

"It makes you grow up quick," Kelton said of his Marine Corps service, which included time helping build an orphanage in Somalia.

He rejoined McCarthy as a project engineer in 2001 and worked his way up to executive vice president before succeeding Calbert, who had been with McCarthy for 35 years and was one of Arizona's leading construction executives.

He said experiences in the military and what he saw in those two war zones helped with his maturity and future focus.

Kelton serves on the board of the American Heart Association's Phoenix Chapter. He's also part of the Support Sky Harbor Coalition, a group that supports Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

A history buff, Kelton collects World War II and other war posters used for bonds and other efforts during the war.

"I love history," he said.

With the economy booming, the McCarthy boss is seeing boosts in business regionally. McCarthy saw some of that from the construction of a new $1.9 billion stadium in Las Vegas for the relocation of the Oakland Raiders.

The Raiders picked a joint venture between McCarthy and Mortenson Co. – which also has a regional office in Phoenix – to build the new stadium.

"It's really exciting," Kelton said.

Kelton said the work is turning into a welcomed benefit for McCarthy's regional operations and the construction industry.

But workforce – finding and keeping tradesmen and construction workers – continues to be a challenge for the industry and McCarthy.

JUSTIN KELTON

Title: President, Southwest Region

Company: McCarthy Cos.

Education: Bachelor's degree, Vermont Technical College; University of Chicago Booth School of Business

On your bucket list: To see a World Series game at Fenway Park.

What do you listen to in the car: Talk radio and classic rock.

Favorite restaurant: Maestros.

Biggest challenge facing your industry: The construction industry overall continues to struggle with developing its workforce for today's projects, and with developing a pipeline of future talent coming into the industry.

Jim Kelton talks about his admiration for war posters and his adjustments moving from Vermont to Arizona at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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"At McCarthy, we strive for excellence in everything we do. Bringing our best to clients and partners gives communities across Arizona award-winning world-class projects. Thanks for making us part of your success!"

Justin Kelton
Southwest Region President

EXECUTIVE INC.

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Muscling to the top

SHARON BONDURANT HELPS COMPANIES FIND THE BEST TECH TALENT



Sharon Bondurant is the CEO and founder of AZ Tech Finders. At 41, she started getting involved in bodybuilding and works out at four nearby gyms.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY HAYLEY RINGLE
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As a graduate of Chaparral High School in Scottsdale, Sharon Bondurant knew she wanted to make her own money, be independent and have her own business.

While earning her psychology degree from Arizona State University, Bondurant said she knew she loved helping people and figuring out things, she just didn't know what job that would entail.

"I wanted to make people better," said Bondurant, who moved to Scottsdale at 6 years old after living in Germany and Chicago. "I needed something with a purpose."

Her first job was with weight-loss company Jenny Craig because she loved helping women and was passionate about health and fitness.

But when her friend got a job at a recruiting company, which wasn't as mainstream as it is now, she was intrigued with the idea.

"I found a recruiting consultant company to get trained, and I knew right away this was what I wanted to do," Bondurant said. "I got the job on the spot as a staffing consultant."

She loved her commission job, mainly because she had no preconceived notion of not being successful. She loved making money by helping people find jobs for her clients in the technology and engineering space.

"There were no computers at the time so I used a phone book, phone and fax machine," Bondurant said. "I did that for two years and excelled quickly as one of their top consultants."

She was promoted to open the Tempe office of General Employment Co., but after having her first son, she decided to quit her job instead of going back to work as planned.

"I didn't want to do 10-hour days and be away from my son," Bondurant said. "It was a hard thing to do."

Instead, Boundurant started her own company, AZ Tech Finders Inc., in 1998 from her Phoenix home.

"I knew what worked and all about the relationships," said Bondurant, the company's CEO and founder. "We needed to connect candidates and clients, so I started with all new clients and candidates. After a while, I got a nanny and started working even more."

After a year working from home, she moved into an executive suite in Phoenix and hired her first two employees after a couple years. The self-funded AZ Tech Finders grew slowly from there.

"There's always challenges and always something for me to learn," said Bondurant, who now lives in Cave Creek. "Tech changes so quickly. It's market-driven. We're trying to find the right technical and cultural fit. It's like an art to find people for the long-term fit."

Her first breakthrough client was Phoenix-based Cable One Inc. (NYSE: CABO), one of the largest cable companies in the U.S. Bondurant ended up staffing hundreds of people for the company. Grand Canyon University is another long-time client.

AZ Tech Finders has placed more than 5,000 employees in 350 tech companies and large tech departments within companies. The company has 14 full-time recruiters, and it is one of the largest, privately owned, locally based recruiting firms in Arizona, she said.

The company made $5.5 million during 2016 and is on track to make $7 million this year.

In 2012, Bondurant launched HR Finders to staff human resources professionals for any type of company, not just tech. Last year she launched Finance Finders for mid-level to leadership roles in finance. Both are divisions within the company.

Work isn't her only driving motivation. Recently, at age 41, Bondurant became interested in bodybuilding. That was six years ago when she was looking for a personal challenge to break out of her comfort zone.

Bondurant ended up winning local fitness competitions starting in 2011, and won her first national competition in 2015. She earned her professional card with the International Federation of Bodybuilding and now competes at the pro level as a professional bodybuilder competing in bikini competitions.

"My business got better because I had to train," said Bondurant, who trains at least an hour a day six days a week. "I gained confidence and made better business processes at work. It's done wonders for my business."

SHARON BONDURANT

Title: CEO and founder

Company: AZ Tech Finders Inc.

Age: 47

Family: Sons, Ethan, 19, a sophomore at Northern Arizona University; Mason, 16, a junior at Cactus Shadows High School; and boyfriend, Patrick Thomas, owner of a fitness training company.

Education: Bachelor's degree, Arizona State University

Aha moment: Winning my first bodybuilding/fitness competition. I had a mental meltdown the night before and almost didn't go through with it. Showing up and busting through the fear was life changing for my personal life and also my business life.

Sharon Bondurant talks about Phoenix's tech scene, body building and leadership styles at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

EXECUTIVE INC.

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Being Mr. Fixit

VIXXO CEO JIM REAVEY FOCUSES ON KANSAS CITY BARBECUE AND DOING REPAIRS



Jim Reavey is CEO and president at Vixxo Inc. The firm collects backpacks and donates them to local schools for children in need.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY ARREN KIMBEL-SANNIT
akimbelsannit@bizjournals.com

Jim Reavey is a firm believer that customer service separates the winners from the losers in business.

Reavey, CEO of Scottsdale-based asset management company Vixxo, has taken this core value and scaled it internationally, using up-to-the-minute digital diagnostics and local contractors to serve more than 150 companies, most of which are in the *Fortune* 500.

"We're very much a technology-enabled company that focuses on distributive portfolio customers," Reavey said. "We have a long history of delivering services to customers that have hundreds and thousands of locations across the U.S. and Canada. We use third-party service providers, small contractors."

In other words, Vixxo helps businesses, retailers, restaurants and more get stuff – or "assets," in the industry parlance – and keep it running. It sounds vague, but it's an important, multidisciplinary process for the success of any business.

JIM REAVEY

Title: CEO

Company: Vixxo Inc.

If you could live a double life, what would it be: CIA agent

What makes an effective business leader: Being authentic, and being a continuous learner.

Wish you knew 20 years ago: That leaders don't have all the answers, all the time.

One thing people misunderstand about you: True grit isn't always pretty but it will often lead you to a better place.

And Reavey got into this game doing what he's always done: fixing things.

Although he was born in Brooklyn, New York, the now 50-year-old Reavey grew up in a small farming community north of Kansas City.

He developed a mechanical inclination working on farms, where outsourcing repairs was not an option. He fixed up houses and helped with renovations. It was at this point he also cut his teeth as a barbecuer, a hobby he continues today with multiple smokers and a propensity for lean brisket.

Early on, his father, who worked for an airline, gave him a piece of advice that would guide Reavey throughout the rest of his career: Get a college education, but stick close to the trade.

"You always need someone to repair equipment," Reavey said, looking back on that moment.

He heeded that advice and went to work for manufacturing multinational conglomerate Johnson Controls after finishing school at Rockhurst University. His time at Johnson put him on a jet-setting path to Thailand, Australia, Russia, India and more.

"But at a certain point, you want to raise a family and be close to home," he said.

So he took a job as the CEO of a small technology company in Hartford, Connecticut, called IPT, which then would become FM Facility Maintenance. He grew it to a $500 million company by 2012, using skills he picked up while on the road.

"I learned how to communicate and build a culture, how to build scalable systems," he said. "I learned coaching and developing leaders."

In 2013, FM merged with Scottsdale-based First Service Networks – a transition Reavey led – to become Vixxo, staying in the Phoenix area.

"The availability of talent is very strong in the Valley," he said. "We have a very welcoming community. The state of Arizona is a lot more business friendly than Connecticut."

The tech pipeline here has been instrumental as well, he said.

"Typically, companies would have to go to a big multinational if they wanted consistent work across their large portfolios," he said. "They would have to pay a lot more expensive pricing to get their work done. Now we're using local contractors to do that work and instantly getting reports on how the equipment is running in real time. Five years ago that was unheard of."

Despite his traveling, Reavey's Kansas City spirit has not left him – he's still a true-blue Kansas City Royals fan. Moreover, the construction savvy he picked up working on Kansas farms is still a big part of his business acumen.

"When you're building a company, it's almost like renovating a house," he said. "There are things you need to do infrastructure wise to make sure it's sustainable long term. If you don't do it the right way, it won't be around much longer. It's in my blood."

Jim Reavey talks about his affection for barbecue and what he learned growing up in a farming community at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

EXECUTIVE INC.

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September 8, 2017

The Sweet life of Asperger's syndrome

ROBIN SWEET TRANSFORMS THE LIFE OF HER SON AND OTHERS



Robin Sweet, executive director and CEO of Gateway Academy, started the school after her son Nikolai was diagnosed with Asperger's when he was 10. The business began because she couldn't find a school to meet his needs she started her own.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY ANGELA GONZALES
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When Robin Sweet and her husband, Thomas, adopted Nikolai from Russia, he was a malnourished 6-month-old who weighed less than six pounds.

"When we brought him back to the states, he was very, very ill," she said. "He had double pneumonia. He was one sick little camper. We got off the plane and went right to the pediatrician's office. She said the last thing to go is the brain. I wasn't quite sure what she was trying to tell me."

Living in California, they nurtured the infant and were happy to see him developing intellectually and physically on track.

"His first words were weird," Sweet said. "He used to like the Venetian blinds and would take the cord and wrap it around his neck. And so we would yell at him, 'Don't touch the cords!'"

His first word was cord.

"When he started speaking he was very articulate and spoke like a little professor – like a little adult," she said. "We thought he was really smart. It wasn't until preschool when he would sit next to kids when he was playing. He would play but he wouldn't play together."

As he grew, he began getting complaints about his behavior in school. He wouldn't take naps.

"He got kicked out because he wouldn't take naps," she said.

She and her husband tried private school, but that didn't work because they sought to make Nikolai fit into a box of what they thought he should be.

Public schools were no better, where he read all the books in his classroom but was refused higher-level books.

"Every day, teachers would come with their little pink slips and I would hide in the car," she said. "It was so painful."

That's when little Nikolai said to his mom: "Mommy, I'm a bad boy."

No, Sweet told him. You are not a bad boy. Who told you that?

"Teachers."

When she called a meeting, they wanted to re-introduce the dunce theory where they would put him in a corner facing the students. She immediately pulled him out of public school.

"That was the end of his second grade year," she said.

She put him into a special education day school, which she and her husband later bought and began operating on their own. By the time he was 10, he was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, a neurobiological disorder on the higher-functioning end of the autism spectrum.

"At that point, Asperger's had just become a diagnosis," she said. "He was bullied, teased and tortured. He didn't understand social norms and social expectations."

By 2005, they moved to Scottsdale to start another school that focused only on children with Asperger's syndrome. Gateway Academy started with six students and now has 89 students.

"We've grown exponentially," she said. "It's a passion and a mission for Tom and I, but also for everybody that is involved with the school. You feel it and you hear it and you see it everywhere."

While it's rewarding, it's also mentally and physically exhausting, she said.

"Nikolai is the love of our lives and the disabler of our days," Sweet said. "That's the reality for most parents. I'm just honored to be able to provide these services for other families because I wouldn't want anybody to go through the flames the way that Tom and I did."

Today, Nikolai has two college degrees. If you ask him how he eventually understood social norms, he says he doesn't; he just knows that he needs to comply.

"It wasn't until he turned 25 that he was willing to comply," Sweet said.

O. ROBIN SWEET

Title: Executive director and CEO

Company: Gateway Academy

Age: 64

First job: Medical surgical nurse

Education: Hartford Hospital School of Nursing; and Yale University School of Management

Family: Thomas, husband; children Gretchen, Alexis and Nikolai

What makes you tick: Motivated by my passion for children with Asperger's syndrome, which was initiated when my son was diagnosed with Asperger's at age 10.

Most influential book you've read: "Look Me In the Eye" by John Robison

An effective business leader: Being respectful

Best part of job: Children

O. Robin Sweet talks about her son's Asperger's diagnosis at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Filling the blank canvas

CHAD LITTLE TURNS FROM TECH TO ART AND EMBRACES AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ETHOS



Chad Little makes art to raise money for charities.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY SAYO AKAO
Contributing writer

Chad Little's ambitions are anything but little.

The artist turned tech entrepreneur – turned artist again – constantly is chasing a challenge that kindles his creativity.

"I really have to challenge myself to feel satisfied to a large degree," he said.

The Arizona native got his associate's degree in graphic arts from a local technical school, although he aspired to go to the California Institute of the Arts. As a young adult, he contemplated traditional professional career choices but ultimately was drawn to an unconventional career that presented him with the challenge of making a living.

"I wanted to know if I could actually earn a living in the arts," he said. "A lot of people view it as, if you want to be an artist, 'Can you actually go out there and put food on the table?'"

Little's first attempt at putting food on the table began at Audio-Visual Graphics, where he made about $13,000 a year creating computer graphics.

"It was a job that I really wanted because it gave me access to high-end computer systems at the time," he said. "I would just work all day and then I would stay and do artwork on the computers at night."

CHAD LITTLE

Age: 48

Title: Founder

Company: Hivewyre

Biggest lesson learned as an entrepreneur: It's better to be different than really good or just better than the rest.

Favorite artist or works of art: It changes every day. A couple favorites are Alex Kanevsky's "J.W.I.," Kim Cogan's "Edge of the T.L.," and Sherri Balassen's "Swinger."

Piece of advice you wish you'd heard: I only wish that there were stronger influences in my life that were artistic in nature (where art was their career) and it wouldn't be so much what they said as much as showing me what life meant by doing it.

Little turned his focus toward entrepreneurial ventures, beginning with Tracer Design in 1991. Since then, he has taken part in the formative beginnings of four other technology startups.

"Doing a startup in a company, it's the first two to three years that are the most fun because it's the most challenging," he said. "It's where the biggest problems are, it's where the biggest creativity needs to be."

This notion is why Little has moved from company to company, staying at each for under 10 years.

First it was as founder and CEO of the AdOn Network, which started in the infancy of the online world placing ads. Then it was FetchBack, a company involved in retargeting online users to convert sales for companies. FetchBack was bought in 2012 by eBay Inc.

Hivewyre is the most recent company he founded in mid-2012. Although Little is still involved with the advertising technology company as founder, in January of this year he decided to focus on other ventures; particularly in the artistic field he had always sought to work in.

"To me, a startup is not much different than a painting because it's a blank piece of canvas and you've got to figure it out," he said. "You've got to figure out something that is going to add value to somebody, you've got to figure out something that somebody's willing to pay for, and you've got to create it from nothing."

Little uses oil paints as his medium of choice. His pieces range from $200 to just under $3,000 and typically focus on one subject. A number of his most recent pieces are inspired by vintage photographs, but Little says he still is solidifying his personal style.

"I think that some of the more successful artists are the ones who narrowed down to a specific style," he said. "I need to narrow it down a bit further."

He added that his pieces are not created out of simple inspiration, citing a quote from famous photorealistic artist Chuck Close, who said, "I always thought inspiration is for amateurs."

"You just got to get ink on the canvas, got to get paint on the canvas, and you got to keep doing it and trying it," Little said. "There are inspiration moments, don't get me wrong. Usually those moments to me are when you're doing it, you're in process or making it happen."

Although Little still seeks his personal style, he holds steadfast to the belief that success can only be reached by doing something different than those before, a lesson he learned as an entrepreneur.

"Business is the same; so many people want to just be better than. Good luck being better than, more likely than not to succeed you really need to be different," he said.

Little said success is difficult to define but that presenting a solo show in a major art market would be a goal of his.

Showcasing his art in a major market likely will result in Little bringing in a decent amount of revenue from his venture as an artist, but money is not the sole motivation for Little. He will donate all of the money made from his art to skinnypigs, a foundation Little and his wife founded about four years ago.

"This isn't about money, this is about a new challenge," said Little.

The foundation has aided a handful of organizations since its inception, primarily focused on helping animals and youth. Altered Tails, an organization that provides spay and neuter services, and One-n-Ten, an organization serving LGBTQ youth, are local groups the foundation has worked with.

Chad Little talks about his favorite artwork, his studio and making creative choices at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Playing with numbers

NUMERICAL SIMULATIONS AND 3-D PRINTERS CHANGED ERIC MILLER'S LIFE



Eric Miller, who started PADT with two co-workers, enjoys baking when he's not working.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY HAYLEY RINGLE
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When your dad is a fighter pilot, your family moves a lot.

Air Force brat Eric Miller remembers moving about a dozen times between kindergarten and 10th grade.

While living overseas in Rome, Germany and Turkey, he recalled a few times being involved in or knowing of violence and turmoil around him.

Miller was caught in a riot in Rome when his school bus tipped over. He also remembers getting caught in riots in Turkey.

Although he was never hurt amid the violence, his parents sent him back to the U.S. to live with his maternal grandparents in Sacramento, California.

"It was hard to settle down and make new friends," said Miller, who spent about a third of his childhood in Phoenix and Tucson.

With interests in technology, building Legos and writing, Miller said he initially wanted to be a lawyer or a fighter pilot. So he applied to the Air Force Academy and the University of California, Berkeley.

Berkeley was the school that took him in, and while majoring in mechanical engineering, he fell in love with the subject.

"I loved the combination of math and creativity," he said.

After graduation, Miller was hired by Garrett Turbine Engine Co., a division of Allied Signal, as an entry-level engineer. The company now is Honeywell Aerospace Inc. after a merger.

"No one was really hiring, so I thought I would move out to Phoenix and eventually move back to California," Miller said. "But then I realized life was easy here."

That was back in the late '80s, and he hasn't left the state yet.

Miller was involved in numerical simulation, building math models of how physical parts would behave in an engine. He also was working with high-end 3-D computer monitoring, which was the beginning of 3-D printing.

After nine years at Allied Signal, he was tired of seeing his friends get laid off and wondering how long he would continue to be employed. He was tired of going to work and wanted to be at a place where he enjoyed going to the office.

He decided to start a new company with two co-workers Ward Rand and Rey Chu. The three built a business around the advanced 3-D modeling and printing typically used in aerospace with plans to expand the technology to other industries.

The engineers started Phoenix Analysis & Design Technologies Inc., or PADT, in 1994 in Tempe. The company was self-funded through family and friends for less than $100,000.

After the company moved to Gilbert for seven years, it moved back to Tempe in the ASU Research Park to be among other high-tech companies, where PADT still resides.

"We leased our first 3-D printer for $250,000 and bought our first high-end computer," Miller said. "It was the first 3-D printer not owned by an aerospace company."

About half of PADT's customers are aerospace and electronics companies, while the rest are involved in everything from toys to medical devices. Numerical simulation using computers still is about 40 percent of the company's business.

"Any engineer that designs a physical product should be using virtual testing before building and testing their product in the real world," Miller said.

The company now has more than 20 industrial 3-D printers, and more than 2,000 computer cores, at its locations across the country.

PADT has 75 employees, with offices in Torrance, California; Salt Lake City, Denver, Albuquerque and a lab in Phoenix at the Center for Entrepreneurial Innovation.

It still is a private company owned by the same three co-founders.

"I still enjoy coming to work every day," Miller said. "The bigger we get, the more difficult it is. I like to look back and see what we've created. We have very loyal employees."

Outside of work, Miller enjoys spending time with his wife and two sons in Ahwatukee. He loves to run, cook, travel and drink craft beer. His specialty in the kitchen is baking.

ERIC MILLER

Title: Principal and co-owner

Company: Phoenix Analysis & Design Technologies Inc.

Age: 53

Family: Wife, Heidi Miller; children, Benjamin Miller, 19, a sophomore film studies major at ASU, and Andrew Miller, 14, a freshman at Desert Vista High School

Education: Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from University of California, Berkeley in 1986

Three things always in your fridge: Cheeses, vegetables we probably won't eat and bagels.

Most influential book you've read: "1984"

Fave music group: Rush

Eric Miller talks about starting his own company, the Phoenix tech scene and his leadership style at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Going the distance

NEW JDA SOFTWARE CEO CAREER RUNS FROM INDIA TO VARIOUS TECH COMPANIES



Girish Rishi is the new CEO of JDA Software. Part of the culture at the office is the game room, complete with video games, billiards and ping pong.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY HAYLEY RINGLE
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While Girish Rishi grew up in a small, mountainous town in India, both his father and brother studied in the U.S.

Rishi said it was a "natural gravitational pull" for him to move to the U.S. to study.

After receiving his economics degree from the University of Mumbai, Rishi received a full scholarship to earn his first master's degree from the University of Hartford in Connecticut.

"It was my first time in the U.S. and it was a big culture shock," he said. "I came with $100 and a bachelor's degree, but I had a prospect for a job and pay for tuition."

Though he started a marketing services company at 19 years old with friends in Bombay, Rishi wanted to move to the U.S. because he sought "more knowledge, greater legitimacy and exposure."

Rishi began working as a graduate assistant with Margery Steinberg, a "dynamic" lady who paid for his schooling through the two-year job.

"I learned from her there is no substitute for hard work," he said. "I made mistakes and I experienced recovery, but I learned empathy, trust and to focus on recovery. What I admired and learned from her still helps me today."

GIRISH RISHI

Title: CEO

Company: JDA Software Group Inc.

Age: 48

Family: Wife, Himangi Rishi; sons, Arjun, 14, and Mohan, 10

Education: Johns Hopkins University, master's in international public policy; University of Hartford, MBA; University of Mumbai, bachelors in economics

Residence: Paradise Valley

Three things always in your refrigerator: Guinness, Chobani yogurt and blueberries

Aha moment: On a trip to Washington in 2012, being invited to spend a good part of a day at the White House, visiting the historic rooms, exploring the grounds, spending time with the executive chef and visiting the kitchen garden created by the first lady.

With an interest in technology and how it would shape the world, Rishi said he wanted to work for the iconic Motorola Solutions Inc. (NYSE: MSI), but his career took several turns before he joined one of his dream companies.

After graduation, Rishi drove to the San Francisco Bay area and got a job as an industry analyst studying technology and tech trends for Frost & Sullivan. After two years, he was recruited to Boston for a boutique consulting company, doing the same work but as a director. This gave him his first exposure to CEOs, talking to the press and building his confidence.

"I loved doing it," he said.

After plateauing in consulting, Rishi said he yearned to actually be in the game. He wanted to build, sell and not just be an adviser. Plus, he planned to marry his girlfriend, Himangi, who followed him from India.

Rishi was hired as a product manager in wireless, mobility and data collection for Symbol Technologies. As part of his nine-year tenure with Symbol, Rishi spent three years in London where he ran the company's Europe, Middle East and Africa divisions, managing 850 people.

"It was fantastic. The experience changed my wife and I," Rishi said.

When his wife became pregnant with their first son, the couple wanted to move back to the U.S. to have the baby. Rishi wanted a more entrepreneurial job, so he left Symbol and started working for Washington-based Matrics Inc., which sold radio-frequency identification technology to serve the retail supply chain.

Ironically, that company was bought by Symbol within a year for $230 million.

Rishi left the company and decided to go back to school. He earned his second master's degree from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

"I had an intelligence curiosity on how business and government intersect," Rishi said. "I needed structure."

After earning his second master's degree at 35, Rishi was recruited by Motorola. He wanted to do something different, so he ran the applications software business for the government division serving government emergency command in Chicago.

In another confluence of his career, Motorola bought Symbol for $3.9 billion. He continued with Motorola for five years, running the enterprise business with the Symbol group.

In 2014, he lead the sale of the solutions' enterprise business, which was 40 percent of Motorola, to Zebra Technologies Corp. (Nasdaq: ZBRA) for $3.45 billion.

After two years, and a merger with newly-formed Johnson Controls (NYSE: JCI), Rishi was approached by JDA Software Group Inc. for the open CEO position. While he been given about 30 CEO opportunities before, he was "instantaneously attracted" to JDA because of its presence in the marketplace.

"To shape the supply chain at the helm of JDA was enormously attractive," he said. "Everything felt right."

Rishi was hired as Phoenix-based JDA's CEO in January in Chicago. After traveling weekly to the Scottsdale headquarters, Rishi and his now family of four moved to Paradise Valley in August to be closer to the headquarters.

With 4,300 employees and just shy of $1 billion in revenue, Rishi has helped change the product strategy and launched new common values.

"I'm looking forward to our global growth in retail manufacturing and logistics sectors," he said.

Girish Rish talks about the Valley's tech scene, his leadership style and his bucket list at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Leaving a cotton-picking life

ALLAN ALLFORD LEARNS BUSINESS SKILLS AT THE AGE OF 12



Allan Allford is the president and CEO of Delta Dental of Arizona

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY ANGELA GONZALES
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Allan Allford got his first taste of business when he was 12 years old working in the Texas Panhandle cotton fields for 75 cents an hour.

"I realized early on that with any type of job comes a certain level of expectation and performance," said Allford, president and CEO of Delta Dental of Arizona and president of the Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation. "(The farmer) had expectations of his crew, even though they were young. He would come out and inspect. His livelihood depended on our ability to take weeds out of the cotton field so it didn't choke the cotton. Early on, you learn about responsibility and roles and doing things right."

He lasted one summer, moving to Kansas at the end of that summer with his parents, who were high school teachers.

"They saved me from becoming a professional cotton field worker," he said.

In Kansas, his father was an honors English teacher and his mother was head of the choral music department.

His father died last December, but his 85-year-old mother still plays piano for her church every Sunday at an assisted-living facility where she lives in Kansas.

R. ALLAN ALLFORD

Title: President and CEO of Delta Dental of Arizona; president of the Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation

Education: Bachelor's degree, University of Kansas

Age: 61

Family: Wife, Debbie; Children, Josh and Ben

How you celebrate life: Quietly, with family, good friends, good food, good wine and good music.

If you knew you could not fail: I would attempt to play alongside Eric Clapton.

Three things always in your refrigerator: BBQ sauce, fresh-brewed tea, garlic

Mentor: Charles Koch. I worked for Koch Industries Inc. and with Mr. Koch in the mid-part of my career. It was an invaluable education and experience.

"We brought along very few possessions, except her grand piano," he said.

Both his parents are musically gifted – his father attended college on a vocal scholarship and his mother took her first teaching job as a choral music director at the age of 19. But Allford said he inherited none of their musical abilities, and he had no interest in becoming a teacher like his parents.

"I heard too much about the challenges of being a school teacher," he said. "I didn't want anything to do with that."

He liked the idea of becoming a football coach until he realized he probably would have to teach at a high school so he rejected that idea.

His passion was architecture.

"When I realized how hard those guys had to study, I majored in business instead," he said. "I thought that was the easy way through school – to major in business and accounting – and wouldn't be as hard as architecture."

Both he and his high school sweetheart, Debbie, attended the University of Kansas, marrying after they graduated from the Lawrence, Kansas, school.

Allford said his first job was with a public accounting firm in Kansas, where he realized he didn't want to do public accounting for a living. Instead, he worked as a controller for a series of high-net-worth entrepreneurs, transitioning to Koch Industries Inc. to help form a private equity investment group.

"Mr. Koch was interested in doing some private equity investing," he said. When he left Koch nine years ago, he was the CFO for the company's global chemicals business.

He left Koch because he was tired of traveling.

"I woke up in Dusseldorf, Germany, one morning working on the purchase of a large, global chemical company. And our sons were at that point about 14 and 7. I found myself away from home, missing my family."

Leaving Koch was the "dumbest career decision I ever made," he said. "Most of the guys I worked with are now retired or nearing retirement in their second or third home at Whisper Rock. But it's all turned out pretty good. I'm not complaining."

Allford was recruited to run Delta Dental of Arizona seven years ago.

"I said, sure. We're open for an adventure," he said. "My wife and I were about to become empty-nesters. We were ready for the next phase of life. We've been coming to the Valley for golf outings and vacations."

The KU alumni brought with them to Arizona a large fiberglass Jawhawks statue they "won" in a silent auction for the alumni association fundraiser.

Debbie, who helped organize the fundraiser, commissioned an artist to create the statue, thinking everyone would bid on it, which she figured would raise thousands of dollars for the alumni association. She was so sure it would be a hit, she guaranteed it would sell for at least $2,000.

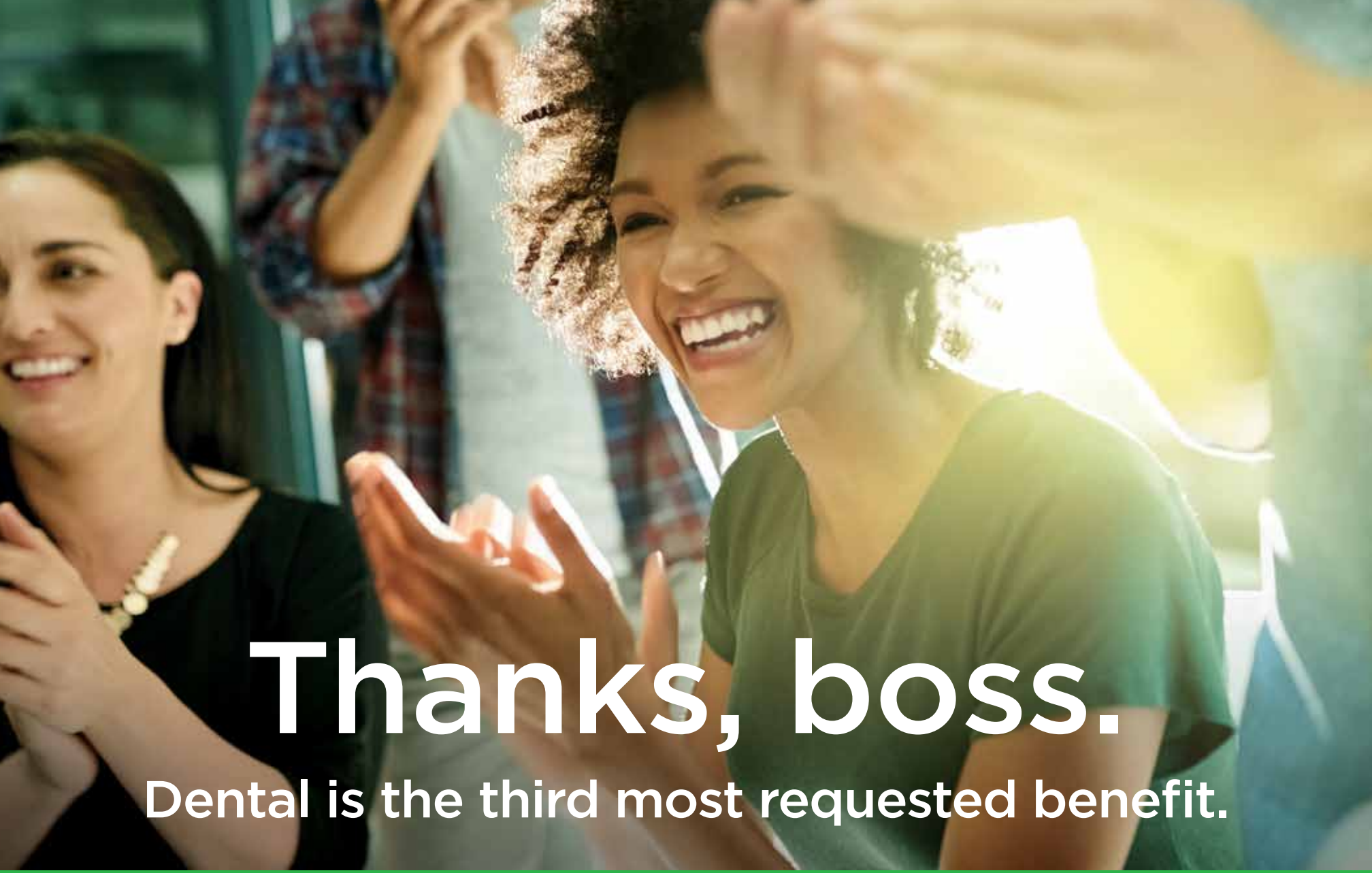
As it turned out that night, there were two other major social events, including a huge wedding and opening night for the Wichita Symphony Orchestra.

"Lo and behold, we ended up with it," Allford said. "I think secretly she wanted it. She just never told me."

Now, when the couple has family and friends over for barbecues in their spacious Scottsdale backyard, the Jawhawks statue joins the party.

"I love to fire up the barbecue pit and smoke barbecue and hang out with friends and family," he said.

R. Allan Allford talks about the Kansas Jayhawks and working for Koch Industries at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**



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Dragon boats and dragonflies

ATTORNEY KAREN GAYLORD ENJOYS THE ENVIRONMENT IN HER OUTSIDE PURSUITS



Karen Gaylord hits the lake as a member of a dragon boat team when she's not practicing environmental law.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY MIKE SUNNUCKS
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Karen Gaylord is one of Arizona's top environmental attorneys.

She previously was an assistant city attorney in Chandler, Tempe and Yuma. And she has dealt with cleanup cases at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and the property that would be Tempe Marketplace.

While Tempe Marketplace now features numerous national retailers and restaurants, at one time it was home to multiple industrial properties, and the site held six landfills with everything from auto salvage to chemical waste. It was declared part of the Indian Bend Superfund Site in 1983.

Working on those types of projects provided an in-depth look at environmental law, Gaylord said.

"It was immersion learning," she said.

Gaylord moved to private practice in 1998 and is a partner with the Phoenix law firm Jennings Haug Cunningham LLP, but still pursuing environmental law.

Environmental law, unlike some other areas, can be a constantly moving target. That uncertainty is what Gaylord said is most disruptive to businesses facing environmental issues.

"My environmental clients must be able to secure timely agency review and approval of documents and permits," she said. "They need to be able to predict and plan for next steps in any long-term project or cleanup. Sudden or unpredictable changes in rules, standards, or processes can throw long-term projects into chaos. Those changes delay completion, increase costs, and complicate the client's internal financial planning."

Gaylord's environmental practice spills into her pursuits outside of work. She serves on the board of the Audubon Arizona and is leading an effort to get more home and property owners to develop plants, bushes, ponds and trees conducive to birds and reducing the region's heat island effect.

Gaylord said she put in scores of plants and a pond in her own East Valley back yard that attracts birds and other wildlife. She even recognizes some of the return dragonfly visitors.

Gaylord's efforts are part of an ongoing one in the Phoenix area as temperatures climb during the summer. The region saw record high temperatures this summer and wrestles with how to create more shade in the arid Sonoran Desert.

Gaylord's other major interest is as a member of a dragon boat team. Dragon boats originated in China and are powered by a team of rowers. Teams – such as the Tempe-based one Gaylord is part of – attend races and festivals around the country and world.

Gaylord has been part of dragon boat teams that have gone to Oregon, Nevada and California for races.

She said the dragon boat teams practice on Tempe Town Lake – even during the region's scorching desert heat.

"It's brutal," she said of the evening summer practices.

Gaylord also is involved with an Arizona dragon boat team comprised of some cancer survivors and serves as a coach of the Phoenix Desert Dragons.

"I see women who have faced not just cancer, but multiple challenges in life," said Gaylord, who has not had breast cancer. "As they practice paddling as one synchronized team, each paddler mirroring the other, I see them gain strength and determination. We say that 'the dragon only rises when all are one.' I believe that feeling of being one with a group of other survivors is uniquely healing for them."

Gaylord hopes to travel to Italy next year as part of the Desert Dragons team for the International Breast Cancer Dragon Boat Festival.

"We are in the midst of a large fundraising campaign to allow Arizona's survivors to compete at this international level. Dragon boating has changed the lives of many survivors. Meeting and competing with survivors from around the world would be a dream come true for all of them," she said.

The competition is something Gaylord said helps her every day.

"I am continually reminded to sacrifice my ego for the greater good," she said. "That means I volunteer to take the jobs no one else wants to do, I honestly assess my strengths and weaknesses, and I work to get better every day."

KAREN GAYLORD

Title: Partner

Company: Jennings Haug Cunningham LLP

Education: Bachelor's and law degrees, Arizona State University

Residence: Chandler

Biggest challenge for your practice: There are two that I spend a lot of time thinking about these days. First, we have to be vigilant in trying to adopt best practices to keep our client's information confidential and stay ahead of cyber threats. Second, we have to bring young lawyers into the environmental practice. One obstacle to success is the continued decline in women willing to work as full-time lawyers and to consider a role as equity partners.

Karen Gaylord talks about her involvement with dragon boats and her focus on Audubon Arizona at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com.**

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Standing on a different path

DREW DE WEERD TAKES ON THE TERRAIN OF BUSINESS, LIFE AND OFF ROAD



Drew de Weerd became CEO of MultiTable, a stand-up desk company, in 2010. In his free time he speeds across the terrain on a motocross bike.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY BRIANNA BRADLEY
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When Drew de Weerd, founder and CEO of MultiTable, isn't in the office, he is probably hiking or cycling.

De Weerd, originally from the Netherlands, moved to Phoenix in 1997 for what he expected to be one year. He spent his first summer in the U.S. riding motorcycles through Zion National Park.

In 2002, while skiing in Telluride, Colorado, with his brother, de Weerd expressed his frustration about the lack of height-adjustable desks in the U.S.

"Height-adjustable desks have been part of the normal office furniture line in Europe for probably at least 20 years," de Weerd said. "My family actually was manufacturing height-adjustable desks 10 to 14 years ago."

From an entrepreneurial family, de Weerd identified there was a market for standing, height-adjustable desks in the U.S. and found a way to easily address the market demand by taking action himself. MultiTable is a manufacturing company of height-adjustable standing desks headquartered in Phoenix.

"If you see something and there is a need for it, jump on it," de Weerd said.

The use of standing desks is scientifically proven to burn more calories, alleviate stress on the spine, improve blood pressure, and boost energy and productivity for office workers.

"I can feel the difference between sitting down for an hour versus standing for an hour," de Weerd said.

In 2010, de Weerd began manufacturing and marketing height-adjustable desks in the U.S. It took about six months to get the operation going.

"We purposefully wanted to make it an e-commerce product," de Weerd said. "Since the height-adjustable frame was already designed, we had to make sure we had a consumer-ready, mom-tested product."

De Weerd said he often would send his mother the next version of MultiTable's standing desk and ask her to put it together. If she was able to put it together, Weerd knew it was "mom-proof."

He has brought the family business of manufacturing and selling height-adjustable standing desks to the U.S., and his brother is on his manufacturing team.

"Most of the time I spend with my family. We love going up north and getting out of town for a bit," de Weerd said.

He appreciates Arizona's diverse climate and particularly enjoys being only a few hours away from Flagstaff skiing resorts.

From one of the wettest countries in the world, de Weerd optimistically embraces the dry Phoenix heat.

"If you've lived with wet socks for your whole life, being dry is great," de Weerd said.

De Weerd said he enjoys the risk and spontaneity of being a CEO. He said MultiTable is expanding as it attempts to quadruple production of table tops and standing desks in the near future.

With hopes of having more free time as he further establishes his business, de Weerd's future plans involve being somewhere on a sailboat within the next 20 years.

DREW DE WEERD

Title: President

Company: MultiTable

First job: My first job was working for my dad in construction. I was 13 years old.

Family: Wife, two kids.

What makes you tick: I'm a problem solver. I always have been. When I see a need, I just can't help but try to find the solution.

Three things always in your refrigerator: Grapefruit juice, plain Greek yogurt and Dutch cheese.

Your "a-ha" moment: It was Christmas 2009. I was telling my brother that I was frustrated because I couldn't find a height-adjustable desk online so I decided to start selling them myself.

Aside from your parents, the most influential person in your life: My wife. She's always there for me. She's incredibly supportive and a great sounding board.

Best conversation piece in your house: My wife's electric car, BMW I3. It's all electric and everyone wants to see it/talk about it. Everyone always asks about the range anxiety.

Definition of success: Smiles and laughter both at home and in the office.

Important in job: Flexibility

Wish you knew 20 years ago: How to read a balance sheet.

Favorite book: A Dutch book by author Jooft Zwagerman called "Gimmick." It's about the '80s and '90s in Amsterdam. A true coming-of-age story.

Drew de Weerd talks about talks about his leadership style and his bucket list at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Seeing through imagery

MIKI GARCIA'S FULL-CIRCLE VIEW OF ARTS AND CULTURE DELIVERS HER TO ASU



Miki Garcia is the new director of the ASU Art Museum.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY STEVEN TOTTEN
Contributing writer

Despite growing up in the poor, rural border town of Brownville, Texas, Miki Garcia had a fairly liberal and cultural upbringing.

Her parents were educators and artists, involved in Chicano rights and feminism. When they traveled as a family, the first thing they'd do was visit museums and cultural institutions.

"I had a little of bohemian upbringing despite being from that part of the country," she said of her Texas roots.

But Garcia never wanted to be an artist.

"It was the '70s so it was all beading and macrame and pottery," she said. "I was interested in learning political science and history and all the things that weren't available to me in Brownsville."

Garcia ended up at Vassar College in New York, aspiring for more societal pursuits, but she found herself at the end of the list to choose classes, and by default ended up in an art history course.

It completely changed her perspective.

"I had a professor say that art history was the discipline of all disciplines, that you can learn about philosophy and religion and science and sociology through art history," she said. "I was so hungry for knowledge that it really appealed to me that I could see all that through images."

She graduated Vassar with an art history degree, and while she pursued potential careers in investment banking and fashion, Garcia ended up close to where she started in Brownsville by studying Latin American and Latino art at the University of Texas at Austin.

After graduating and working at a variety of museums, Garcia eventually made it to the Santa Barbara Museum of Contemporary Art, which at the time wasn't much.

"A very small alternative arts space," is how Garcia classified it.

Through 13 years, Garcia helped to grow the space from a $250,000 annual budget with four staff members to a full-fledged museum with a $6 million annual budget and 17 staff members.

That work, and her perspective on expressing social, political and cultural views through art, landed her at the Arizona State University Art Museum, where she is the new art director. Though the Valley doesn't have the same reputation for art as New York or Los Angeles, Garcia said Phoenix's political climate, as well as ASU's push for innovation, gives a special opportunity.

"The good thing that cities like Phoenix and Detroit have going for them is they have socio-culturally and politically charged reputations, and some of the most interesting art is coming from there," she said. "It's really compelling for those of us that live in the bubbles of New York and L.A. I want the museum to act as a laboratory in the same way that ASU is doing across the board."

MIKI GARCIA

Title: Director

Organziation: Arizona State University Art Museum

First job: Gallery attendant for the student galleries at Vassar College

Education: Bachelor's degree, Vassar College; master's degree, University of Texas at Austin

Family: Stepdaughter, Jasmine; and black pug, Nacho

Why you get up in the morning and do what you do: The promise of a new day, the idea that I am being of service

How you celebrate life: By seizing it for all its worth and by being grateful to have it.

Miki Garcia talks about the Valley's cultural future and and how ASU's innovation model can be used at the museum at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Working for the vulnerable

DAVID HANEKOM BRINGS HEALING TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST



Born and raised in South Africa, Dr. David Hanekon is now the CEO of Arizona Care Network.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURANL

BY ANGELA GONZALES
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Born in Cape Town, South Africa, Dr. David Hanekom knows first-hand the atrocities of apartheid – institutional racial segregation and discrimination that was practiced in South Africa from 1948 until the early 1990s.

"Apartheid was a terrible, evil system," he said.

His ancestors immigrated from Germany and the Netherlands during the late 1600s, and have been part of South Africa for so long they don't consider themselves Europeans or immigrants.

"My family is as much African as any other African," said Hanekom, who learned to speak Afrikaans and English at a young age.

With roots in 17th century Dutch, Afrikaans is one of the youngest languages in the world.

"It is a unique language but for a long time, British colonial leaders of South Africa did not allow African children to learn Afrikaans in school," he said.

He grew up in a middle-class family, where his father was a technician and his mother was an executive assistant in a factory. As the eldest of four siblings, Hanekom was the first in his family to become a physician.

Apartheid laws kept people of color from living in his neighborhood or attending his school. Hanekom said he remembers when Africans of color would work in gardens and homes of his neighborhood.

"That was an opportunity for me to learn that people are people, irrespective of their skin color," he said. "We all had the same human dignity. We should have the same rights."

The first time the South African government allowed television to be broadcast was in 1976, during which Hanekom said he remembers seeing the uprising where young individuals were shot by police protesting for rights they didn't have.

"That had a significant impact on me, understanding that to change this community and this system, we had to do things that made people equal and served everybody," he said. "It was very formative."

As a physician, it's always been important to him to take care of those without health insurance coverage. When he took over as CEO of Arizona Care Network last year, it was important to him to serve all patients, regardless of their ability to pay and whether or not they had insurance.

"I've always had a need to serve individuals, especially those vulnerable," he said. "Looking back now over 30 years, it was the right decision for me. I've been a very happy, content healer for a very long time."

As the CEO of Arizona Care Network, he is taking his physician healer role to a higher level, overseeing large populations of patients at a time.

"I work with an exceptional leadership team – people who are trying to make this a better place to be," he said.

Through the years, Hanekom taught medicine in Canada and was in private practice in North Dakota, where he sought to bring up his children in a wholesome environment.

He later worked for various companies focusing on population health until he moved to Florida, where he wanted to retire by the ocean in a home where his boat was at his back door.

But last year, he was recommended for the position at Arizona Care Network and was asked to look into it. Hanekom said he was attracted by the mission and vision of Arizona Care Network, which is jointly owned by Dignity Health and Abrazo Community Health Network.

"This was an opportunity for us to move here to continue with what we love doing, bringing value and doing something meaningful," he said.

Hanekom said he returns to the ocean as much as he can, where he enjoys fishing.

"I look forward to when our children and grandchildren can spend more time with us at the ocean," he said. "As long as I do meaningful work and feel I'm contributing to the Phoenix area, I will remain here. I love what I do."

DR. DAVID HANEKOM

Title: CEO

Company: Arizona Care Network

Age: 54

Education: MBBCH in Medicine, University of the Witwatersrand School of Medicine & Health Sciences.

Family: Wife, Lucinda; children, Damian and Megan

What makes you tick: Working in health care is holy work. I'm trying to do good in the world, serve my team and improve my community.

Wish you knew 20 years ago: Everything doesn't have to be done today; some things take time and the journey matters.

Dr. David Hanekom talks about apartheid at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Mixing things up

DAN SANTY AND HIS COMPANY GROW UP WITH THE INTERNET



One of Dan Sandy's favorite indulgences is making martinis.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY BRIANNA BRADLEY
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Dan Santy recalls being fascinated with advertisements from his parents' *Life* magazines as a child.

"I had this affinity for advertising ever since I was a young man," said Santy, president and CEO of Santy, a Scottsdale branding and marketing agency.

Santy said he admired his father when he was growing up, adding that his dad was a big influence, and he enjoyed talking about business with his father.

"My father was a traveling salesman," Santy said, "He would leave on Monday and come back on Friday."

Santy said his dream job in high school was becoming a pilot. He was drawn to the romance of what a pilot was back in the day.

"I wanted so bad to be a pilot, and I am just not smart enough for that," Santy said.

If he were not in his current role as CEO, Santy said he would be driving a bread truck in Italy. He describes an idealistic job of being a bread truck driver as waking up early, picking up freshly-baked bread, having some coffee and being done by noon.

Those kinds of hours aren't what Santy is used to in the advertising trade. Though the marketing industry can be challenging, Santy said he enjoys the excitement of seeing results from clients.

"I like to motivate people and create a positive environment for their success," Santy said. "I hire really smart people and try to stay out of the way."

When not in the office or on business trips, Santy said he and his wife often entertain at home, travel extensively and work out. He said he spends a lot of time with the couple's five children.

Santy's namesake agency is 26 years old and in the process of an acquisition plan to help grow it and take it to new markets. Recently Santy acquired Phoenix-based BJ Communications.

"Change is our only constant," Santy said. "We are going to see where opportunity takes us."

Santy describes his employees and himself as students of the internet, having used the online world since 1991.

"Our digital practice has been in place for 26 years," Santy said.

The advancement of the internet and digital resources has been tumultuous but presented plenty of opportunities. Santy said since its clients aren't students of their industry, he and his company aim to guide clients by teaching them how to manage change and take advantage of the right opportunities.

As CEO, Santy said his job is to set a vision for the company. In 10 years, the company has doubled in size.

"I see us continuing to be that change agent staying ahead of the change curve," Santy said.

Santy said he sees artificial intelligence and augmented reality being large facets of the future of the marketing industry.

DANIEL SANTY

Title: President and CEO

Company: Santy Integrated Inc.

First job: Selling Spam for Hormel.

Family: Wife, Liza; children, Josh, Jackson, Courtney, Adam, Sarah

Makes you tick: Being surrounded by smart people.

Three things always in your refrigerator: Eggs, turkey, almond milk

Favorite sport: Does sipping martini's count?

Aside from your parents, the most influential person in your life: Continental Homes C-Suite circa late 1980s.

Daniel Santy talks about his dream job growing up and where he'd like to travel at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Off to the races

ROB MARTENSEN TAKES THE WHEEL FOR REAL ESTATE GROUP AND THROUGH THE DESERT



Rob Martensen is a desert and short course off-road racing driver.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY MIKE SUNNUCKS
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At first glance, Rob Martensen has a career timeline like a lot of other commercial real estate brokers in Phoenix.

The Phoenix native went to Brophy College Preparatory in Phoenix, and for a time had plans to get into the real estate business with his dad.

But Martensen – who is the new Arizona chapter president of the Society of Industrial & Office Realtors and an executive vice president with Colliers International (Nasdaq: CIGI) – has taken a different path compared to his cohorts.

He went to Arizona State University instead of the University of Arizona like many of his high school friends. There he earned a psychology degree.

The Colliers broker said that degree helped him in the commercial real estate business in figuring out motivations and challenges to deals.

"If you can understand people, you can do a lot with it," Martensen said. "You can apply that to anything."

Martensen just celebrated his 20th year with Colliers specializing in industrial, warehouse and manufacturing space.

ROB MARTENSEN

Title: Executive vice president

Company: Colliers International

Residence: North central Phoenix

Education: Bachelor's degree, Arizona State University

Family: Wife, Stephanie; daughter, Milan, 9; son, Kino, 6, named after the Jesuit Priest Father Eusebio Kino, one of the first Europeans to discover Mexico and southern Arizona.

Car you drive: GMC Sierra three-quarter ton diesel. It's not perfect for anything but good for everything. I am probably the only broker in the business that drives a truck this big.

That's taken him to major U.S. ports such as Long Beach, California, and Charleston, South Carolina, as well as huge logistics and distribution hubs such as FedEx's (NYSE: FDX) headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee, and a viewing of the super cargos that now can traverse the Panama Canal.

But Martensen also has a unique passion outside of work. He's been driving cars in off-road racing for 20 years.

That includes racing and winning the Baja 1000, which runs through desert areas of western Mexico, and driving for racing teams in other competitions in Nevada and Arizona.

Martensen said his family, including his father and uncle, are into racing.

"I just grew up at the races," he said.

Driving and racing give him a competitive thrill most athletes don't get after competing in high school and perhaps college.

"It keeps me feeling alive," he said.

Martensen said he is hired by racing teams to drive and loves working with family-owned and -operated teams

As for real estate, Martensen said he likes the flexibility and deal making. But he sometimes sees the downside of the profession, including "losing deals over things that are not in my control."

"Some people can be challenging," he said.

Martensen has been involved with SIOR for nine years. SIOR is an exclusive commercial real estate industry group offering professional designations for its members. Brokers have to meet experience, transaction volume and revenue producing numbers to be accepted into SIOR.

"It shows instant credibility," Martensen said of real estate brokers with SIOR membership. "We should be considered as the experts."

Martensen said there are 45 commercial brokers with SIOR status in Arizona.

Still, he is aware of how close-knit business and real estate can be in Phoenix. He said he has known a number of other real estate brokers since elementary school.

"We're a really small town," he said.

Rob Martensen talks about off-road racing and real estate at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Making the world a better place

GARY EDMONDS MAKES SHIFT FROM SHOOTING HOOPS TO FEEDING THE POOR



Gary Edmonds is the president and CEO of Food for the Hungry.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY STEVEN TOTTEN
Contributing Writer

Gary Edmonds could have made it big in the sports world.

At the University of California, Los Angeles, Edmonds played basketball, football and baseball and went on to be part of the coaching staff at the university.

The coaching gig took him overseas, where he shot hoops in Asia and Africa. That adventure changed his life forever.

"I encountered extreme poverty in ways I'd never seen before," he said. "I saw a lot of destitute people who were barely surviving."

Edmonds remembers going to Mali, where he met people living in 4-foot mud huts, cooking over wood fires and having a single-bladed plow driven by an ox, which was their first modern invention.

"A light bulb went off," he said. "I knew I was being called to work with these people."

Edmonds went back to the U.S. and started to take courses on cultural worldview issues, which led him to do work in eastern Europe during the Cold War. Because of restrictions at the time, Edmonds was able to go in and do humanitarian work under the guise of coaching clinics.

"I would get contracts from governments and Olympic committees and I'd bring over amateur teams," he said. "There'd be teaching times, but then I'd help bring medicine, provide clothing and began to get business people who would train refugees how to run a business."

In the 1980s, Edmonds worked with different faith-based humanitarian groups such as Christian Associates and Crossroads, working in the same areas and sending people in to do business training. He continued to live and work in Europe through the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall, all the while raising a family.

His children wanted to go back to the U.S. to study at American universities, so in 1999 Edmonds and his family moved to Seattle, where he worked with International Development, putting together partnerships in North Africa, the Middle East and central Asia.

Throughout this time, Edmonds was consulting with Food for the Hungry, a major international faith-based humanitarian organization. When the organization needed a new leader, Edmonds took the call and moved to its headquarters in Phoenix in 2014.

Food for the Hungry now is one of the largest nonprofits in the state, with roughly 2,400 staff who respond to human suffering following disasters and emergency relief situations.

When Edmonds and his family aren't working to make the world a better place, he's using his worldly experiences to cook.

"I can cook in some different styles," he said. "I learned some things in Italy, Spain, France and Switzerland."

GARY EDMONDS

Title: President and CEO

Company: Food for the Hungry

Age: 67

Background: I have worked internationally in different organization since 1971.

First job: Overseas I worked with Christian Associates International starting in 1974.

Family: Wife, Patricia; children Matthew, Karina, Andrew, Kimberly

Wish you knew 20 years ago: I don't have to solve everything alone, for great decisions come through team work.

Gary Edmonds talks about the best thing to come out of his coaching years at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Bringing the heat

FORMER PRO BASEBALL PLAYER AARON KLUSMAN HITS HOMERUN AS SERIAL ENTREPRENEUR



Aaron Klusman wanted a different type of education for his four boys — one that provided them with competitive skills for the workforce. That's why he helped start Acton Academy in Phoenix.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY ANGELA GONZALES
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Wearing the clothes he designed, Aaron Klusman has been an entrepreneur since he was a sophomore at Arizona State University, where he pitched for the school's baseball team.

He started a clothing manufacturing business as a sophomore, calling the company AK Clothing.

It started out as a hobby when he would find himself sketching various designs during class. A teammate liked one of his designs, offering to pay $30 for the clothing. It quickly caught on, and soon other fellow athletes began submitting their orders.

He ran the business while pitching for ASU through 2003 and for the Los Angeles Dodgers' minor league teams, where he pitched from 2004 to 2006.

"I was great, but you have to be the best in the world," Klusman said of his pitching. "I joke that I was an average player. I was 6'4" and could throw 90 miles an hour. There are 12-year-old Dominican kids that can do that."

He continued to run the clothing design business until 2010 in one form or another, but keeping up with what's fashionable and cool for the masses can be a tough business.

By then, he became interested in retail development. His company, Klusman Family Holdings, currently has nearly $20 million worth of projects under construction and another $25 million in the pipeline in different stages of development. He also is co-founder and managing partner of Camelback Partners, a private investment firm, and Camelback Realty Group, which invests in land development.

As if that's not enough, he also is founder and owner of Neighborhood Concepts, where he has started such companies as Zoyo Neighborhood Yogurt and Modern Grove neighborhood eatery and market. In addition, he created Arcadia Food & Beverage Co. to cover his seed investments in unique food and beverage products, most recently a beverage company he founded called Neighborhood Initiatives.

But that's not where it ends for Klusman, who is founder and chairman of New Learning Ventures, a private philanthropic venture capital fund that invests in educational entrepreneurs who are rethinking and reshaping education in Arizona. He also launched Acton Academy Arizona, a K-8 private school focused on helping kids find a calling that will change the world.

His most recent venture is a film studio called Escondido Inc., which he said provides him and his partners unique exposure to a broader media industry that is aggressively clamoring for creative content. He said he plans to take the company public next year and release a film based on a musical called "Stuck," and will begin filming his next film called "The Manuscript," starring Morgan Freeman.

"Retail development gives me working capital to invest in new ventures and partnerships," he said.

Klusman said he became involved in Acton because he wanted something more for his four sons and "to help Arizona youth find their calling and change the world, to become lifelong learners and to prepare for the new economy."

While he doesn't discount a college education, Klusman said he is seeing too many college graduates entering the workforce without core skills to succeed in today's economy.

Students don't earn traditional grades, but instead they earn badges after showing full mastery of a subject. Annual tuition is $7,000.

AARON KLUSMAN

Title: Founder

Company: AK Holdings

Age: 36

Education: Bachelor's degree in business management, ASU

Family: Wife, Sarah; sons, Austin, Carson, Hudson and Camden

How you celebrate life: Finding a deep joy in knowing I'm here for a purpose and life's great journey is the adventure of pursuing it.

Best advice received: Being an entrepreneur is like jumping off a cliff and having to build an airplane before you hit the ground.

Your "aha" moment: Exponential learning only happens by doing.

What would you attempt if you knew you could not fail: I'd like to own a baseball team, specifically the Dodgers, and I'd move them back to Brooklyn where they began playing baseball.

Aaron Klusman talks about how pitching at ASU prepared him for business and starting Acton Academy at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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Hearing her calling

SHERRI COLLINS FINDS THE JOURNEY IS THE BEST PART OF LIFE



Sherri Collins, executive director of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, loves to travel with her husband around the state, particularly to Cottonwood, where Collins enjoys the wine country.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY JANET PEREZ
Contributing writer

Born deaf, Sherri Collins' early childhood was one of isolation and sadness. But even before she hit her teens, her deafness had started to widen her world.

Collins, executive director of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, grew up in the small town of Bourbonnais, Illinois, in a home off a main road that sat on a dead-end street with a sign reading, "Deaf Child Lives Here."

It was all an apt metaphor for the emotional toll of living in a small town where she took special education classes but whose only exposure to the world came from following her older brother around. At age 12, Collins was sent by her parents to study at the Illinois School for the Deaf in Jacksonville, Illinois, more than three hours away from Bourbonnais.

"It was the hardest thing they had to do. We're a very close-knit family, but at that point I was miserable," Collins said. "I was crying at home. I was not a happy child because I was just so isolated. Going to the School for the Deaf really turned my life around, to be honest. That was the turning point. I never came back home."

Collins said she became involved in just about every activity at the school, especially the volleyball team. Surrounded by other deaf students, as well as teachers and administrators, Collins thrived.

"It made me grow up fast. I was away from home and making my own decisions," she said. "The school really changed my life for the better. That's where I discovered that I had a future."

After graduating from the Illinois School for the Deaf, Collins moved to one of the nation's most important cities – Washington – to attend Gallaudet University, a federally chartered private university for the education of the deaf and hard of hearing. Not only did she meet students from all over the world, she learned how to navigate her new life in a large city – a challenge for any person.

"I never envisioned what it would be like to live in a big, old city. I didn't know how to use public transportation," Collins said. "I had to learn how to get around on the subway and be careful about my own safety. It was eye-opening. But I got to see Princess Di when she came in the United States. I actually saw her come to the Arlington National Cemetery."

Travel would continue to be the theme of Collins' life. Even before graduating from Gallaudet, the school hired her to travel around the country to recruit students. Suddenly, the girl from the little town of Bourbonnais was driving to cities across the nation. And, Collins cheerfully points out, this was during an era when there were no such things as Google maps or GPS.

"I had to learn how to read a map overnight, mostly because I traveled alone," she said. "I literally had to turn the maps upside down because that was the only way I could figure out my left and right."

Collins kept moving. She took a job in Florida, where she met her husband of more than 25 years. Then they both took jobs in North Carolina. The moving stopped almost 20 years ago, when Collins took up her current post at the ACDHH.

It was in Arizona when Collins' world expanded yet again, pushing the horizons of her life. In 2005, she received a cochlear implant and heard her husband's voice for the first time.

Today, Collins is a step-grandmother to five children, and while she and her husband have put down roots in Arizona, that doesn't mean the traveling has stopped.

"My husband got me out of the country" Collins said. "I was a little uncomfortable to go to Europe, but he taught me to appreciate travel out of the country. I was nervous because I didn't understand what people were saying and I couldn't read a menu in French, but now I have no problem with it and I love it."

Not all of the couple's trips are to faraway lands. The two love traveling around the state, particularly to Cottonwood, where Collins enjoys the wine country.

"I love their wine fair. I love the wineries," she said. "We bring back a case of my favorite wine every time we go out there."

Collins also has a passion for novels featuring women detectives, and she and her husband faithfully follow college football – specifically North Carolina State University and the University of Georgia.

"My husband and I are college football fanatics," she said. "I could talk college football all day long."

SHERRI COLLINS

Title: Executive director

Organization: Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing

Makes you tick: New ideas with solutions

Three things always in your refrigerator: Wine, cheese and water

Aha moment: That tree leaves make noise.

Definition of success: I'll let you know when I get there.

What makes an effective business leader: Really listen to other people.

Wish you knew 20 years ago: Chocolate was fattening

If you could do another job: Own a cafe

Most treasured memory: Trip to Mexico with my dad. He passed away in August 2016.

Sherri Collins talks about her travel bucket list, leadership style and her hero at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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King of the jungle

JASON PISTILLO TAKES TO DISRUPTING TECH EDUCATION WITH HELP FROM HIS CAT



Jason Pistillo is president and CEO of University of Advancing Technology.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY ANGELA GONZALES
agonzales@bizjournals.com

Jason Pistillo wrote his first computer game when he was 8 and learned computer-aided design and drafting a year later.

It's no surprise that computer bytes are in Pistillo's blood. His father started the University of Advancing Technology in 1983 when Pistillo was 7, setting the stage for a life in technology.

"We had access to computers that no one else had back then," he said. "Most people didn't have a computer in 1983."

By the time he was in high school, Pistillo started working at UAT, first doing computer repair when he was 15 and later as a network engineer when he was 17. At the time, his father didn't know his son had started working at the company because he was hired by another UAT staffer to help out.

If you're envisioning a skinny nerd with no athletic skills, you would be wrong. Pistillo's father first took him big-game hunting when he was 3, and he has fallen off cliffs and gotten shot as a youngster.

"I was always outdoors," he said. "On weekends, we might canoe down the river all day, fish and that kind of thing. Nevertheless, I was into technology and good at it."

JASON PISTILLO

Title: President and CEO

Company: University of Advancing Technology

Age: 41

First job: Network engineer

Education: Bachelor's degree in software engineering, University of Advancing Technology; Executive MBA, Ken Blanchard School of Business, Grand Canyon University

Family: Cat, Luciano Medici

Celebrating life: Travel, adventure and enjoying the people around me ... and a tasty beverage once in a while.

Something you'll never forget again: Administrative assistant day

One thing you'll never do again: Get divorced

That set the stage for a love of fishing, hiking, fly boarding, skiing, boating and sailing, trail running and playing sand volleyball. He also enjoys salsa dancing, Reggae festivals and crafting tasty adult beverages.

As an only child, Pistillo said his father was his best buddy. And when his father was ready to retire, Pistillo was in his early 20s.

"I saw the magic that could happen here," he said. "That desire to honor thy father concept is the whole reason I do this. It's a labor of love. I worked pro bono more often than I've gotten paid here. I do it to create something amazing."

At 41, Pistillo has worked at UAT for 22 years – putting in more time than his father, who transitioned out of the company by 2004.

"While I never intended to be the president of UAT, or go into higher education at all, when my dad began talking about his exit plans and retirement, I realized that I'd be devastated if UAT became a low-brow, certificate-issuing school instead of the elite institution it was shaping up to be," Pistillo said.

Before starting UAT, Pistillo's father was in the Air Force. His parents had just married – 45 years ago – and moved to Germany, where his father had top-secret clearance work building nuclear weapons during the Vietnam War.

They moved back to Arizona when their only son was a year old, living in Tucson for a short time before settling in Gilbert, back when Gilbert High School was the town's only high school and the world ended at Warner Road, he said.

Pistillo took some classes at Arizona State University, Western International University and community colleges before finishing his undergraduate degree at UAT. He later earned his executive MBA at Grand Canyon University.

He said he collected credits from other schools so no one would accuse him of skating through a degree at his father's university. Plus, it gave him a chance to see how other universities operated.

"I was never out of school for more than six months until I was 35," he said. "I was always in school. Some of that was Spanish classes at night or something interesting – a leadership class – and I accumulated a lot of credits."

His goal is to disrupt technology education in America.

"We're like Julliard for tech," he said. "It's about mastery. It's not just about learning."

Enrollment at the 6-acre campus is nearly 750 students, complete with a 260-bed dorm in Tempe.

Pistillo's Bengal cat, who he named Luciano Medici – "I always name my cats after Italian bad-asses" – makes an appearance in Pistillo's university office from time to time.

If Pistllo leaves Luciano's food out, the cat will grab a napkin and cover the dish.

But as a cat, Luciano can be a finicky eater. A former girlfriend had three cats who liked to eat bread. Luciano would jump on the counter, grab the bread out of the cabinet and throw it on the ground for the other cats. Eating bread was beneath him.

The 3-year-old cat, who has his own Instagram account, is popular at the 34-year-old school, which has had a virtual reality degree since 1990 and started a cybersecurity program in 1998.

"I operate the school like a tech company," he said. "It requires you to be authentic with who you are. Most people don't see a college president as someone with tattoos and an exotic cat that comes to work," he said.

Jason Pistillo talks about his Bengal cat and growing UAT at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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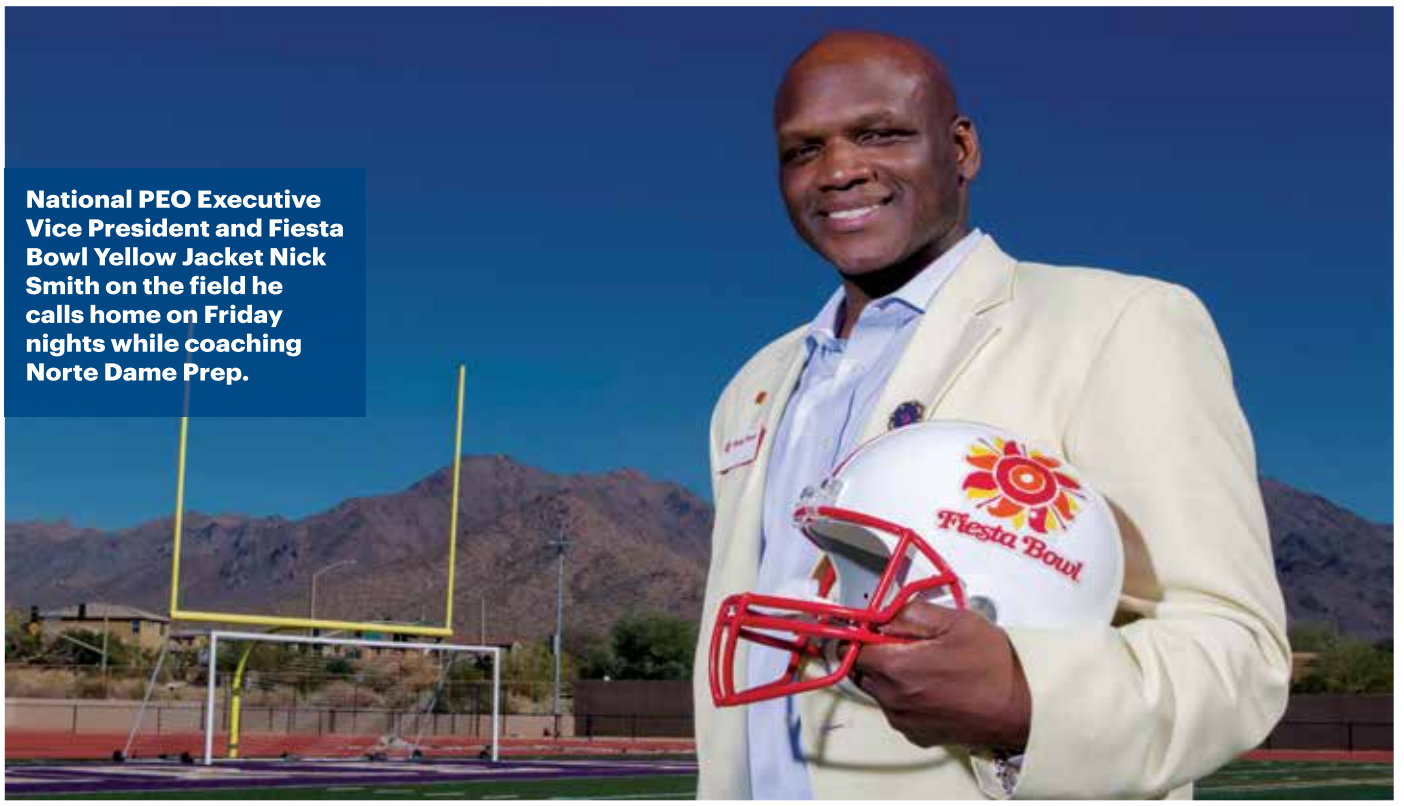
More than a game

NICK SMITH BRINGS LIFE LESSONS FROM FOOTBALL TO THE BUSINESS WORLD



National PEO Executive Vice President and Fiesta Bowl Yellow Jacket Nick Smith on the field he calls home on Friday nights while coaching Norte Dame Prep.

DARRYL WEBB SPECIAL TO THE PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY JANET PEREZ
Contributing Writer

Nick Smith played football at Notre Dame under legendary coach Lou Holtz, was in the Canadian Football League, at practice camps for two NFL teams, coaches his son's football team and sits on the Fiesta Bowl's Yellow Jacket Committee.

Smith loves the game, but what he loves more is the opportunity that the sport gave him to give back to the community and shape young people's lives.

"Coach (Holtz) is one of those individuals who had messages for us – messages that allowed us to figure out who we were," Smith said. "That was a real important part in those formative years. And then part of Notre Dame is, of course, to give back. Those two things tied together and made sense to me because part of the deal at Notre Dame that you have to do some community service work. So, it's great to be allowed to be a part of the Yellow Jackets and get involved."

Smith is an executive vice president at Scottsdale-based National PEO, a professional employer organization that provides human resources services to hundreds of companies in Arizona and the U.S. In his seven years as a Yellow Jacket, Smith was named Rookie of the Year in 2012-13 and is a two-time Media Operations Committee chair.

When he is not working or volunteering with the Yellow Jackets, Smith serves as defensive coordinator on his son's football team at Notre Dame Prep High School in Scottsdale.

Although football shaped his philosophy on life – his father played for Grambling State – Smith started his playing career at a late age in Ohio where he grew up.

'You know, I've always loved football," he said "I didn't start playing until I was in eighth grade because my mother, she just wasn't having it. She didn't think I was big enough or strong enough to take care of myself. But once I started playing, I just absolutely loved it; the competition, the atmosphere, pushing myself – all of the things that you learn in terms of life skills about hard work and effort – and that helps you move your life forward."

As a member of the Yellow Jackets, Smith is part of the marquee events the Fiesta Bowl committee is responsible for – the Fiesta Bowl and the Cactus Bowl – but they are involved in a number of community activities, such as an aerospace challenge with students, a major golf tournament and, a favorite of Smith's, giving to schools.

"You're really making an impact in the community when you start talking about giving back millions of dollars to the community, working with different nonprofit groups," he said.

Smith makes sure his son and teammates also learn the lessons of giving back to the community. Notre Dame Prep requires students to give 30 to 40 hours of community service each year.

"That makes sure he is involved and has an understanding and an awareness that there are needs out there that are greater than himself," Smith said.

When Smith can, his son and his teammates have been part of charity events put on by the Fiesta Bowl committee.

After years of playing football at a level very few other people reach, Smith said at age 46 he doesn't play anymore. He occasionally plays some basketball with his children – two daughters as well as his son – but mostly keeps in shape by walking. Dominoes and cards are now his games. He also enjoys action-adventure movies, especially superhero flicks.

"I tell my football players they are superheroes. I tell them to think about the wonderful powers God has given them; the power to think, the power the love, to create, to imagine, to plan – and the greatest power is the power to choose," Smith said. "And that's what those superheroes do, make choices. And I tell my players that the choices they make impact other people."

As he teaches young players, Smith said he continues to listen and learn as well, a skill he acquired through his years of play.

"I like to be successful with the things that I try," he said. "I take a lot of pride in doing a great job with the Fiesta Bowl. I take a lot of pride in doing a great job with National PEO and I take a lot of pride in the kids and what they were able to accomplish at Notre Dame prep."

NICK SMITH

Title: Executive vice president

Company: National PEO

First job: Busing tables at Olive Garden

Family: Three children

Three things always in your refrigerator: Lemonade, cheese and lunch meat

Your "a-ha" moment: I still don't have it figured out.

Best conversation piece in your house? I have an Indian Rug that is a reflection of life. People see a perspective that creates conversation.

Definition of success: Pray, laugh and love everyday! It inspires others.

What makes an effective business leader: Great leaders get others to join, not follow.

Nick Smith talks about what the Fiesta Bowl means to the community and the biggest lesson he's taken from football at **PhoenixBusinessJournal.com**

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6/17/18 Chicago
w/ REO Speedwagon

8/12/18 Weezer and Pixies
w/ The Wombats

8/21/18 Charlie Puth
w/ Hailee Steinfeld

8/23/18 Lady Antebellum & Darius Rucker
with Russell Dickerson

9/13/18 Rascal Flatts
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