


2013

THE DAILY RECORD

VIP LIST

VERY IMPORTANT PROFESSIONALS





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Letter from the Publisher



SUZANNE FISCHER-HUETTNER

The Daily Record's recipients of the 2013 VIP List — Very Important Professionals Successful By 40 awards — represent an impressive cross section of the young professionals performing great work in Maryland each day.

These VIPs are the ones to watch – at law firms, companies large and small, hospitals, nonprofits and universities.

The Daily Record created its VIP List in 2011 as a means of recognizing younger professionals who are finding success in their careers and volunteer work. Winners are selected on the basis of their professional accomplishments, civic involvement and the overall impact of achievements.

Our 2013 VIP list winners, selected from 117 nominees, are amazing individuals who are making an impact in their communities. We celebrate our honorees' accomplishments and hope that by telling their stories, other young professionals will be inspired. I hope you will enjoy reading more about them in this publication.

A panel of eight judges, including a representative of The Daily Record, selected the following 40 winners for the 2013 VIP List, but we know there are more out there to be recognized in 2014. You can help us to celebrate the achievements of young professionals you feel are deserving of this honor by forwarding us their names. We want to ensure Maryland's future leaders are rightfully given the recognition they deserve.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Fischer-Huettner
Publisher
The Daily Record

VIP JUDGING PROCESS

The judging process for The Daily Record's third VIP — Very Important Professionals Successful By 40 award — was a particularly difficult task because the judges faced an embarrassment of riches. It turns out Maryland is chock-full of accomplished and impressive professionals age 40 or younger.

The judges were looking for young professionals who are making especially significant contributions not just to their professions but to their communities as well.

The judges emerged with a list of 40 young Marylanders whose influence is being felt across the state and beyond. They are an impressive group.

We hope you will enjoy the stories of these young go-getters. The Daily Record is proud to present them to you.

Here are the distinguished past-VIP winners and Daily Record staff who comprised the judging panel.



Heather Dhopolsky
Attorney
Linowes & Blocher LLP



Torbin Green
CEO
Smalltimore Events LLC



Brian Minnich
Project Manager
Rubeling & Associates



Mark Shaver
Senior Director of Business Development
Johns Hopkins Medicine



David Simon
Editor
The Daily Record



Thara Taylor
Director of Development & Communications
Living Classrooms Foundation



Courtney Thomas
Executive Director
Allegany County HRDC



Mark Tyler
Social Services Attorney
Wicomico County Department of Social Services



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NAOMI CROSS
Registered Nurse
Perinatal Bereavement Services Coordinator, Johns Hopkins Hospital

Naomi Cross cannot recall a day in her life when she didn't want to be a nurse. Her career path was solidified after her high school sweetheart was diagnosed with leukemia and treated at Johns Hopkins Children's Center. He passed away from the disease. "The care they gave was so incredible that I promised myself I would work as a nurse at Hopkins one day," she said. Today, Cross is a labor and delivery nurse at Johns Hopkins Hospital. She relishes the teaching aspect to her job, including guiding mothers through labor and breastfeeding and instructing new dads on how to swaddle their babies. Cross also serves as coordinator for Perinatal Bereavement Services, which assists patients who have lost a child before or right after birth. "The first question I always ask my patients is 'What did this pregnancy mean to you?'" she said. "Many times the answer to this question will help guide how I can best comfort a patient. I find that listening is the best thing I can do for most of my patients."



DENNIS ROBINSON JR.
Partner, Whiteford, Taylor & Preston LLP

Dennis Robinson Jr. was drawn to the legal field because he wanted to help people navigate the system and achieve their personal and business goals. Robinson, a partner at Whiteford, Taylor and Preston LLP, is a trial and appellate advocate, where he focuses on business disputes, class actions, employment matters and environmental claims. Robinson, 37, says his favorite part of his job is working with clients to protect their interests. "I find it rewarding to be able to serve as an advocate in those circumstances and work with my clients to achieve a positive outcome." Robinson and his family regularly host family dinners for those who are staying at the Believe in Tomorrow house near Johns Hopkins Hospital. He also serves as president of the Perry Hall Improvement Association. "I like engaging in activities that made me feel like I am making the community a better place," Robinson said. "While I do not have any grandiose visions of drastically changing the world, I am convinced it is possible to make substantial progress in your community by being actively involved."



AMY LUPPENS
Assistant Director, United Way of Lower Eastern Shore

Having been an active volunteer throughout her life, a career in the public service sector was an obvious choice for Amy Luppens. The 32-year-old Salisbury native now serves as the assistant director for the United Way of Lower Eastern Shore. "Knowing that I'm helping my friends, family and neighbors inspires me to work hard," she said. In May 2012, Luppens obtained a grant to start Imagination Library, a program dedicated to providing children under the age of 5 a free book mailed to their homes each month. More than 1,200 children are enrolled. Luppens also co-founded and continues to manage United Way's Young Leaders Society, which provides opportunities for young professionals to volunteer and give back to their community. Launched in 2010, the group has more than 300 members. "Initially, I thought we would be dealing with the challenge of young professionals being too busy to roll up their sleeves and get involved in the community, but the challenge has been keeping up with the demand for projects," she said.



TRACY SORZANO
Wealth Management Director and Senior Vice President
PNC Wealth Management

As wealth management director and senior vice president for PNC Wealth Management, Tracy Sorzano aims to grow the company's client base in the central Maryland region and make sure her team helps clients achieve their financial goals in banking, trust, planning or investments. She takes pleasure in helping her team identify the best solution to offer to a client and helping her co-workers grow in their careers and achieve their goals. Understanding the importance of higher education, Sorzano earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Maryland and a Master of Laws degree in taxation from the University of Baltimore. The 40-year-old gives her time to four nonprofit organizations: Art with a Heart, Greater Baltimore Technology Council, Baltimore Choral Arts Society and the YWCA of Greater Baltimore. "It is rewarding to know that there are many ways that I can help to make a difference in the community and how important all of these organizations are to the area. I have been able to use my network to help these organizations find sponsors for their work and new supporters through my friends, family and co-workers," she said.

Johns Hopkins
congratulates

Naomi Cross and Patrick Murray

and all the 2013 VIP Award recipients



JOHNS HOPKINS
UNIVERSITY



JOHNS HOPKINS
MEDICINE



LARA LAW
Program Director, Youth Empowered Society,
A Program of Fusion Partnerships, Inc.

Growing up in Maine, Lara Law was not exposed to acute poverty and inequalities until she went to college in an urban area and studied abroad in Bolivia, Kenya and Tanzania. Wanting to get involved and finding ways to contribute came from within, guiding her on a career path toward helping others.

Law, 32, is the program director for the Youth Empowered Society which is Baltimore's first homeless youth drop-in center and also serves as a workforce development program. Between 25 to 35 individuals drop-in each night – getting identification, accessing government benefits and receiving support from the staff comprised of former homeless youth and allies, like Law.

In 2011, Law was named an Open Society Institute Baltimore Community Fellow and given the opportunity to work with homeless and formerly homeless youth leaders on bringing the drop-in center to fruition.

Law previously worked with the city's Homeless Youth Initiative and as an organizer and advocate for the Mississippi Youth Justice Project. She first came to Baltimore as an instructor with Outward Bound.



TODD MARKS
CEO, President, Mindgrub Technologies

Todd Marks has always had an entrepreneurial mindset – even while he was teaching math and computer science in Howard County.

After working with several technology companies, Marks decided to launch his own in 2008. He knew he had the experience and background to be successful, and he wanted to be home more to help raise his family.

Also “the paradigm shift when the iPhone came out left a huge disruption in technology, and I knew I could grow a company around that,” he said.

Using his Internet handle dating back to the 1990s, Mindgrub Technologies LLC was created in his basement.

“I came up with the name because I can learn from others very quickly by picking their brains,” said Marks, 34.

The company creates innovative software geared toward mobile, social and web applications. Today, the company has two locations in Baltimore, with more than 50 employees and offices in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

“Customers come to us with a problem and look to us for the solution,” he said.



ERIN O'KEEFE
Director, York Road Initiative, Loyola University Maryland

Erin O'Keefe's professional life has been geared toward service and helping others, including working at Associated Catholic Charities and serving as coordinator of community affairs for Johns Hopkins University.

"Social justice and access to strong, healthy communities are closely held values in my family," she said. "Working for the greater good comes naturally to me."

Since 2010, the 32-year-old has served as director of Loyola University Maryland's York Road Initiative, which aims to improve the quality of life for the communities east of the facility's North Baltimore campus.

"I listen, try to understand, analyze and communicate community needs," she said. "I build relationships with individuals and partner groups to form alliances around common needs."

One of the group's successes was starting a farmers' market in the community, which was a "food desert."

"I have a purpose," she said. "I work for an institution that values long-term strategic thinking and planning and with community members who are passionate and driven to make positive change in our neighborhoods."



ANGELIQUE REWERS
CEO, The Corporate Agent

Many small business owners and entrepreneurs wonder how to get big-name corporations interested in their products.

As the chief executive officer for Cockeysville-based The Corporate Agent, Angelique Rewers teaches people how to land lucrative big business accounts.

Before opening Agent and Bon Mot Communications LLC, Rewers spent more than a decade in the corporate world serving as communications manager for Northrop Grumman and principal communications consultant for Constellation Energy.

Rewers has won numerous awards for her work and is a faculty member on Destination Seven, a program run by Million Dollar Income Acceleration mentor David Neagle dedicated to helping entrepreneurs reach the seven-figure earning mark within 12 months of joining.

In April, Rewers hosted her first large live conference, called INSIDE EDGE. The three and a half day conference in Washington, D.C., hosted more than 350 small business owners and entrepreneurs from throughout the country.

Rewers – whose driving philosophy is "Why not?" – constantly strives to do more, achieve more and change more lives every day. She often says to people, "What are you waiting for? Do what you want. Do it now and don't wait for permission to do so."



WES MOORE
Author, CEO, FrontCort LLC

There is nothing more satisfying to Wes Moore than knowing he is truly making a positive impact on the people around him.

Moore, 34, founded STAND! – an organization dedicated to working with Baltimore city youth in the criminal system.

"The camaraderie that STAND! fosters is remarkable and what's more is it matters to the boys who finally feel like they are worthwhile and that their actions – for good or for bad – mean something to others," he said.

Moore has made a career out of finding and sharing stories from different viewpoints in order to start conversations about issues communities should examine and raise expectations for what people can aspire to be.

He wrote The New York Times best-seller "The Other Wes Moore" – the true story of the two men with the same name and similar backgrounds but different life paths.

One is a Rhodes Scholar, White House fellow and decorated combat veteran. The other is serving a life without parole sentence for murder.

Moore also serves as an NBC news analyst and host for OWN's "Beyond Belief."



LAUREN ADES
Attorney, Pessin Katz Law P.A.

While earning her bachelor's degree in business administration at Emory University, the curriculum required Lauren Ades to take a business law class.

"I was immediately drawn to corporate law and the intricacies of structuring deals and creative tax planning," she said.

Today, the 31-year-old is a corporate lawyer with Pessin Katz Law P.A. and uses her knowledge, experience and creativity to put deals and people together.

"I enjoy developing relationships with clients by taking the time to understand their business and their goals and expectations," she said. "Thinking outside the box when structuring transactions and deals and drafting documents for clients is exciting to me."

Ades also gives her time to The Associated, leading the Young Adult Board. She has gone on several mission trips including helping to rebuild a school in New Orleans, reading to students in Las Vegas and visiting the land of her ancestors in Israel.

"All of this renews my commitment to helping to make our community back home a better place while engaging other young adults to continue this mission," Ades said.



Congratulations to
Robyn Brenza

AND ALL OF THE 2013 VIP AWARD WINNERS

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NAN ROHRER
Vice President, Economic Development and Planning
Downtown Partnership of Baltimore

As vice president of economic development and planning for the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Nan Rohrer’s work revolves around improving the things that people want in a city.

“The city has so many things that make it unique, fun and a great place to call home,” Rohrer, 39, said. “There are, of course, challenges or not yet discovered opportunities, and that is how I spend my work week – playing matchmaker between opportunities and those who can be successful in making them a reality.”

She grew up in Lancaster, Pa., where her dad owned and worked on the family’s dairy farm while her mother was a newspaper reporter.

Before taking on her current position in 2004, Rohrer served as a neighborhood liaison for the mayor’s office and director for the Office of Partnerships through the city’s Department of Recreation and Parks.

“I have met so many people – from local restaurant and small retail shop owners to leaders of major institutions and corporations – who care greatly about this city and never tire while striving to make Baltimore its best,” she said.



ROBYN BRENZA
President, FeatsEDU, a division of Feats

On the final day of her business law class at Penn State, Robyn Brenza’s professor read Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Definition of Success.” She was so inspired by the quote she bought a framed copy at the university’s bookstore. Today, the quote hangs in her office at FeatsEDU, where she serves as president.

“I read it every time I need to remind myself about what is truly important,” she said.

Brenza leads a creative strategy, design and production team that serves the needs of the higher education community.

“Our specialty is designing live events that help universities to tell their stories in compelling and engaging ways that inspire philanthropy,” she said.

She enjoys working with and learning from the people she meets. Clients include Duke, Rice, Emory and Johns Hopkins universities.

“We encounter brilliant people at every university, and I fall in love with the story of each place,” she said. “We get wonderful feedback from clients that we are providing a unique and much needed service to the higher education community.”

Brenza also participates in The Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle and serves on the board of the Pride of Baltimore II.



RACHEL MILLER YASSER
Assistant United States Attorney
U.S. Attorney’s Office, District of Maryland

As an avid volleyball player, Rachel Miller Yasser learned to aggressively pursue the ball and fight for every point.

The philosophy is one that she has carried throughout her life.

“I am not afraid to fight for and go after what I believe in,” she said.

The 34-year-old advocates to protect the public as an assistant United States attorney, prosecuting cases involving child exploitation, sex trafficking, violent and organized crime and fraud.

Yasser developed an early interest in criminal justice and interned at a public defender’s office in her hometown of Nashville, Tenn., after her first year of college.

“I saw there that the legal profession presented the opportunity to do both challenging and rewarding work whether through the representation of individual clients or working on behalf of the government to promote the rule of law,” she said.

Since 2009, Yasser also has served as chair of the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force, which is composed of officials who aim to help victims and prosecute those who exploited them.



MATTHEW VOCCI
Associate attorney, Ober|Kaler

When Matthew Vocci was younger, his parents always told him he should consider becoming a lawyer.

“I was very inquisitive and vocal about my view of the world,” he said. “Being a lawyer is a great fit for me because I enjoy advocating and promoting my clients’ positions while constantly learning about different subjects.”

The 35-year-old is an associate attorney for Ober|Kaler, handling construction-related litigation matters and plaintiffs’ personal injury and products liability litigation.

Vocci advocated to retain the Maryland DREAM Act during last year’s referendum “because the children who will benefit from the ability to go to college are real people who merely want to make a better life for themselves and their families.”

Working with the Immigration Legal Services team at the Esperanza Center, Vocci aims to expand their pro bono outreach.

He also works to help Baltimore’s homeless population.

“I wanted to help the individuals and also find a way to assist in advocating for a change in the systems that have allowed poverty to remain a serious issue with detrimental impacts on children being of particular concern,” he said.



SAM ABED
Secretary, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services

When Sam Abed was named Secretary of the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services in 2011, he started by putting together an excellent staff.

“My accomplishments are really a reflection of the great team that I have,” he said.

Abed, who came on board during a troubled time for the department, said his role involves providing a vision for where the agency goes in the future, setting priorities and representing the department before the legislature, the public and the governor’s office.

“As a leader, I believe that my job is to create more leaders and then empower them to lead,” he said.

Before his appointment, he served as a prosecutor in Virginia and as chief deputy director for the state’s Department of Juvenile Justice.

Among other things, Abed says he gets a lot of satisfaction from his work and the colleagues he serves with.

“I enjoy the satisfaction I get from making a difference in so many kids’ lives. And I very much enjoy the satisfaction that I derive from watching an organization evolve into something that our staff are proud to work for,” he said.



MICHAEL HARDY
Partner
Rosenberg Martin Greenberg, LLP

Michael Hardy initially wanted to become a lawyer so that he could work with businesses, investors and their executives to help them with their projects and challenges.

“I was drawn to the profession by the opportunity to apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills in my daily work,” he said.

The 36-year-old is a partner at Rosenberg Martin Greenberg, LLP, advising clients on a variety of business and legal issues. His most rewarding work involves developing relationships with owners and/or managers of a fledging business enterprise and helping the investors and management team grow the business from a shoestring budget to a successful company.

Hardy also does pro bono work for a number of nonprofit organizations in Baltimore, including the Maryland Food Bank and Helping Up Mission.

“The legal advice I give on a pro bono basis is not unlike the advice I give to my other clients – in essence, I’m working with the organization to help it accomplish its goals and mission,” he said. There’s an added satisfaction as well, though, in knowing that my efforts are helping those in need.”

**Nominate young professionals
in your circle for the VIP List 2014!**

The Daily Record’s VIP List recognizes Maryland leaders based on their professional accomplishments, a commitment to inspiring change in their community, and their tremendous accomplishments achieved before or by age 40.

Nominate your family, friends and colleagues for this prestigious award.

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KIMBERLY NEAL
Lawyer, Niles, Barton & Wilmer, LLP

When Kimberly Neal is told by clients she does not seem like a lawyer, she takes the comment as a compliment. “I really do not want to be the stereotypical attorney that jokes are made of,” she said. “I am in this profession because I genuinely find it to be fulfilling. When people need a lawyer, they need someone they can trust, and I want to be that person.”

The 33-year-old serves as an associate in the litigation department of Niles, Barton & Wilmer, LLP. With a love of both written and spoken language, Neal decided to become a lawyer. “I originally wanted to write speeches for politicians, but I realized that I would rather present my own ‘speeches’” as a lawyer, she said. Neal gives her time to several charitable organizations including the Maryland affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Serving as Sponsorship Chair, she helped to raise \$400,000 to help fund the annual Race for the Cure. “I believe we can only be fulfilled when we are reminded that this world is bigger than our own lives and when we take the time to share our talents and treasures for the benefit of others,” she said.



MICHAEL DODD
Partner, Simmons & Dodd, LLP

Michael Dodd’s job as a general practice lawyer is never boring. One day, he is defending a client in a trial for allegedly driving under the influence, and the next day he is involved in a hearing in a child custody case.

“It’s the constant challenge of solving the next problem that I thrive on,” said Dodd, a partner at Simmons & Dodd, LLP. The 30-year-old initially wanted to be a prosecutor and after passing the bar served as an assistant state’s attorney for Caroline County, where he grew up. “After about 18 months of practicing only criminal law, I decided to broaden the scope of my services so as to provide help to more people in more ways,” he said. Feeling an obligation to his community, Dodd formed a partnership with Mid-Shore Pro Bono to create a free monthly legal clinic for residents of Dorchester and Caroline counties. “Providing pro bono services is an important aspect of being a lawyer, because giving access to the underprivileged embodies the idea that we as lawyers are charged with being leaders in our communities and doing so with compassion and respect,” he said.



ANDREW SEGALL
Corporate and Real Estate Attorney, Saul Ewing LLP

After securing a summer internship at Saul Ewing LLP, Andrew Segall decided he wanted to become a lawyer. Now, 13 years later, Segall serves as a corporate and real estate attorney for the firm. “When you’re surrounded by really smart people, who constantly are teaching you and challenging you intellectually, it makes coming to work actually fun,” he said. “Couple that with well-respected clients that are working on interesting and high-profile projects, and you quickly realize how lucky you are to have this job.” After losing a friend to leukemia, Segall decided to honor his memory by giving his time to the Ronald McDonald House. Once a month for the past eight years, he has hosted a bingo game night and buys small prizes for the winners. “To look across the room and see the euphoria in a child’s eyes as she screams ‘BINGO’ and proudly marches up to the table of prizes to choose her winnings is an incredible feeling,” he said. “That feeling, coupled with knowing that I am making a difference in people’s lives, keeps me coming back month after month, year after year.”



RONNA HERTZANO, M.D., Ph.D.
Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery
University of Maryland School of Medicine

With her mother working as an audiologist, Ronna Hertzano has always been interested in hearing loss. She grew up understanding how deafness can impact children and adults. While attending medical school in her native Israel, she also performed research. “When I started to do deafness research, the ear struck me as the most interesting organ I came across in my medical studies,” she said. “Its small size, difficult reach, incredibly complex micro anatomy and high capacity were fascinating.” Working toward her Ph.D, she met several surgeon-scientists and decided to become both a doctor and researcher. The 38-year-old currently works in the Department of Otorhinolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Hertzano volunteers her time to serve as a mentor to graduate and medical students. “I enjoy seeing the students grow, understand their own data and get excited about mini discoveries along the way,” she said. “I specifically enjoy seeing how happy they are to come to the lab, read at home and engage in research. Their enthusiasm and true interest is wonderful to nourish and observe.”

OBER | KALER
Attorneys at Law



Congratulations to Matthew T. Vocci
on being named a 2013 VIP.

A rising star in Maryland’s legal community, Matt has a sincere commitment to social justice. He serves on the boards of the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Safe and Sound Campaign, and is co-chair of Ober|Kaler’s Community Grants Program. Matt stepped to the forefront of a key immigration issue in 2012, writing and speaking on the Maryland Dream Act. We honor Matt’s continuing commitment to improving the lives of Maryland’s youth and families.



KARLA AGHAJANIAN
Associate Principal, Ayers Saint Gross Architects & Planners

Growing up in Cleveland, Ohio, Karla Aghajanian was always fascinated with old buildings, gritty landscapes and how they got that way. While attending college, she was introduced to the field of urban and regional planning and went on to receive a master's degree in the subject. The 40-year-old currently serves as an associate principal for Ayers Saint Gross Architects & Planners.

"My field of work requires the constant interplay between the detail and the big picture to solve problems," Aghajanian said. "One of the best parts of my job is bringing together a group of technical experts to delve deep into a problem and then helping them come back to 30,000 feet to translate the big picture back to our clients. Even though I consider myself a generalist in my field, I've been told that if I were a fictional character, I'd be MacGyver."

One of her clients is the Smithsonian Institution, where she has served as the project manager for the Comprehensive Facilities Master Plans for the National Air and Space Museum, the National Zoo and the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute.

Since 2008, Aghajanian also has given her time to 1,000 Friends of Maryland, serving on the board of directors.



GABRIEL ADAMS
Assistant Vice President, SunTrust Investment Services

Becoming a financial adviser is Gabriel Adams' proudest professional achievement to date. His job gives him the ability to help people realize their goals and dreams beyond their perceived needs. The 35-year-old also serves as assistant vice president at SunTrust Investment Services.

After graduating from Bowie State University in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in history and government, he soon entered into a career in banking.

"A dream that I always had as a kid was realized when I started my journey into banking," he said.

Beginning as an account manager with MBNA America, he also worked as a licensed financial specialist for Wachovia Bank and as a financial adviser for Wells Fargo Advisors.

"My key to success is my overwhelming strong belief that you can do anything in your mind that you can imagine if you put God first," he said. "I believe that persistence overrides resistance, and excuses are monuments of nothingness."

For the past two years, Adams has served as a mentor for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Chesapeake. He also has given his time to other nonprofit organizations like Junior Achievement and Habitat for Humanity in Sandtown.



MICHAEL HOOD
Vice President, Safeguard Maintenance Corporation

Since joining Safeguard Maintenance Corporation in 1997, Michael Hood has enjoyed watching employees succeed over the years.

The 39-year-old remembers the smile that stayed on an employee’s face after he was promoted to manager and the proud look another had the day she saw her name on a business card for the first time.

The company has expanded from government-based services to include commercial and secure facilities work. Hood, the firm’s vice president, likes helping and supporting customers and employees.

“Being able to solve a problem or become the ‘go-to person’ for a current or potential-ly new customer is very satisfying,” he said. “Having the ability to potentially change some-one’s life by giving them a job and showing them how to turn it into a career is particularly rewarding to me.”

And, when not coaching his employees, Hood can be found on a baseball diamond, basketball court or soccer field. For the past nine years, he has served as a coach at the recreational and club level.



JAMIE SEWARD
Assistant Attorney General, Office of Attorney General of Maryland

Growing up, Jamie Seward found she had a knack for talking her parents into allowing her to do things they would not have otherwise allowed.

“I used rational arguments and advocated my position,” she said. “I made it very hard for my parents to say no.”

After earning her law degree from the New England School of Law, Seward received a commission in the United States Navy’s Judge Advocate General’s Corps. Her public service was inspired by her father – a lieutenant commander for the U.S. Public Health Service.

Seward, 38, now serves as assistant attorney general for the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit of the Office of the Attorney General of Maryland, where she helps to return fraudulently obtained funds to the state’s coffers.

Seward is involved with several philanthropic organizations, including The Auxiliary of Family and Children’s Services of Central Maryland, and has co-chaired the Maryland Antiques Show of Hunt Valley.

“Every day, I take a moment or two to remind myself that I am very, very lucky,” she said. “I feel a moral obligation to do as much as I can for others and to give back in every way possible.”



ANGELA SCOTT
Attorney, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Civil Rights Division

Whether working as a civil rights attorney for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or being a community activist, Angela Scott makes giving back to those in need a priority.

“Everything I do is fueled by my commitment to serving others,” she said. “I proudly consider myself an advocate for vulnerable, disadvantaged and under-represented popu-lations in our society, including individuals with disabilities, the poverty stricken, those without adequate access to health care and those who face discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age and religion. I am fortunate enough to have a full-time job which allows me to address many of these issues, and for that I am grateful.”

Inspired by the implementation of the Martin Luther King National Day of Service, Scott created an outreach effort called 10weeks10deeds in 2010. She invited friends and family to perform a community service project once a week for 10 consecutive weeks.

Scott also was elected to the Maryland Democratic Central Committee in 2010 and helps register people to vote and assists in voter protection efforts.



DAVID ELLIN
President, Attorney, Law Office of David Ellin, P.C.

David Ellin always knew he wanted to be an attorney and follow in the footsteps of his grandfather Marvin Ellin, who was called the “Dean of Medical Malpractice Attorneys.”

“As a child I would often visit his law office and developed a real admiration for the way in which [his grandfather] helped people who had been seriously injured and for the procedures and traditions of the judicial system,” he said.

He worked at the firm beginning in his teens and throughout college and law school.

Wanting exposure to areas of the law other than personal injury and medical malpractice, Ellin became a Baltimore City assistant state’s attorney for three years, and after returning to his grandfather’s firm for three years, he opened up the Law Office of David Ellin, P.C. in 2004.

The 39-year-old mainly handles cases involving personal injury, including car accidents, wrongful death, medical malpractice and birth injury. He also does pro bono work for those who cannot afford a lawyer.

“I always try to defuse difficult or intense situations with humor, and through humor com- passion and patience I’ve been able to resolve matters that most others would consider lost causes,” Ellin said.

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EMILY DATNOFF
Public Defense Lawyer, Immigration Counsel
Maryland Office of the Public Defender

As a state public defense lawyer, Emily Datnoff handles cases at the intersection of the criminal justice and immigration systems.

Non-citizen defendants can be deported if convicted of certain charges. The 32-year-old aims to explain the ramifications to her clients and fight to keep them in the country.

“I like telling the client’s story,” she said. “Showing the immigration judge that my client is not a ‘criminal alien;’ rather, my client is someone who has made some mistakes but is a hard-working husband, wife or child, who supports and loves his or her family.”

Datnoff, who became fluent in Spanish while studying abroad in Chile, decided to become a lawyer after taking a civil liberties class in high school.

She decided to focus on immigration law while obtaining her degree at the University of Maryland School of Law.

“With some clients, I have made a connection for life,” she said. “I often get phone calls from certain former clients just to catch up. They want to know how I am doing and tell me about new developments in their lives.”



DANNY FARRAR
Founder, CEO, Soldierfit & DDT Fitness

Danny Farrar is a 13-year veteran of the U.S. Army and Army Reserves. He spent a year in Iraq and was a first responder to the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.

But, after finishing his active service, there was a time when he was homeless. Unable to afford a security deposit for an apartment, Farrar slept many nights in his truck.

Fast forward several years, the 33-year-old is now the founder and CEO of Soldierfit – one of the fastest growing fitness groups in the country over the past two years. There are currently four locations in Maryland and one in Virginia, with plans to franchise the company nationwide.

One way the fitness company stands out among the competition is its motto: “Pride, not ego.” Farrar aims to push a culture of helping each other – not just yourself – and ensures that his members, or “troops” as they are known, take ownership in the company by asking them to refer to Soldierfit as “our company.”

Farrar also thrives off being able to change people’s lives for the better, watching them transform over time with the help of Soldierfit trainers.

“You can see them stand a little taller, a little straighter,” he said. “That’s an amazing thing to witness.”



MICHELLE SIRI
Assistant Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General of Maryland

An aspect of the legal profession that has always fascinated Michelle Siri is problem solving.

“Regardless of your practice specialty, whether you’re a litigator or a transactional attorney, all attorneys are tasked with essentially the same job: Someone has a problem; how can we solve it within the confines of the law?”

As an assistant attorney general representing the Department of Juvenile Services, the 35-year-old primarily handles labor and employment matters, including grievances, appeals of disciplinary action and whistleblower complaints in a variety of legal venues.

“Whatever issue may arise, I have an abundance of knowledgeable and experienced attorneys with whom to confer,” she said. “The fact that such collaborations are not only permissible but also encouraged is a unique and wonderful aspect of public-sector practice.”

Siri also has devoted her time to Planned Parenthood of Maryland, serving as vice chair of the Board of Directors and Funding Diversification Committee chair.

“The more involved I became, the more passionate I felt about the organization and its mission,” she said.



TAMMY BROWN
Executive Director, Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention

While working as an attorney and Open Society Institute fellow, Tammy Brown recalls helping a homeless man expunge a non-prosecuted charge from his record.

She even helped him move into a home. While she was hanging a shower curtain, he began to cry.

“I asked him why he was crying, and he said, ‘I’ve never had one of these before!’ I said, ‘A shower curtain?’ in which he replied, ‘No. A home.’”

Since 2012, Brown has served as executive director of the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention.

Her office is the State Administering Agency for all federal funding coming to Maryland regarding criminal justice, juvenile justice and victims’ services. Another duty is making sure money is being spent on programs and priorities in line with the governor’s three-year crime reduction plan.

She loves working with her co-workers, who “are all truly dedicated to the crime fight and spend their days saving lives,” she said. “Being able to be a part of that and being able to support them with programs and technology that we know work is really rewarding.”





TONG ZHANG
Chief Operations Officer, Incentive Mentoring Program

Tong Zhang, 29, began volunteering for the Incentive Mentoring Program while at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Working as an immunology researcher, she found himself spending her days thinking more about social issues than biological mechanisms. She decided to leave her job and join IMP — first serving as chief innovations officer and now as chief operations officer. The group aims to help underperforming high school students with difficulties outside of the classroom by pairing them with volunteers and providing access to community resources. “IMP has enabled me to see Baltimore no longer as disjointed neighborhoods but as a very sophisticated web of relationships that can be leveraged to accomplish great change,” said Zhang, 29. She vows to never give up on a student or volunteer, which she believes is the most important element to the program’s success. “It is always difficult to stick with because the process of building a real relationship with a teenager can often take years but the payout is gaining the trust of someone who lets you in to participate in and being a part of making some of the biggest celebrations and triumphs of their life happen.”



JENNIFER MEYER
Chief Operations Officer
Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore

While in high school, Jennifer Meyer moved from Chesterfield, Mo., to Maryland, learning first-hand what makes the Baltimore area a great place to live and work. Serving as chief operations officer of the Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore, she now aims to inform others about the area. “It’s a city with small-town, neighborhood appeal that also has big-city amenities and incredible access at your fingertips,” she said. She earned an executive master’s in business administration from Loyola University. As a part of the degree, she got to study abroad in China. “It was a great experience and really opened up my understanding of international markets and the impact that businesses have in their respective geographic locations but also the impact that they are able to make internationally,” she said. Her career has included several marketing management positions. She got into the field because she found the analytical part of marketing very interesting and engaging, she said. In her current role, Meyer says she enjoys working with her co-workers and meeting new people.



PATRICK MURRAY
Director of State Affairs, Johns Hopkins Institutions

Patrick Murray was first drawn to the world of policy and politics because they serve as an avenue for regular people to make their voices heard. “It can be a messy business, but it remains the most powerful tool for people to come together to enact meaningful change and set priorities for their communities,” he said. Murray is well-known in Annapolis for his previous work as deputy chief of staff to Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. and senior policy analyst for House Speaker Michael E. Busch. The 34-year-old now serves as director of state affairs for Johns Hopkins Institutions, representing them before the state legislature and executive branch agencies. “Higher education and health care play a critical role in our region’s economy, and both fields are under intense pressure right now,” he said. “Many of the opportunities and challenges for hospitals and universities are closely tied to public policy decisions, so I couldn’t imagine a more interesting place to work right now. ... As someone who cares deeply about this city, I enjoy seeing the links between what I do for a living and the vitality of our community.”



JACLYN VINCENT
Chief of Staff and Director for Gaming Research
Maryland Lottery & Gaming Control Agency

As chief of staff and director for gaming research for the Maryland Lottery & Gaming Control Agency, Jaclyn Vincent gets to do a little bit of everything. Whether she is working on staffing for the Video Lottery Location Commission or working on a variety of different projects including coordinating strategic planning or handling constituent issues, Vincent is passionate about the service aspect of working in state government. “As a state employee, I truly believe it is our duty to be as helpful and accessible as we can be to all Marylanders,” she said. With a desire to work in education policy, Vincent started her professional career as a fifth-grade teacher in Montgomery County. The 33-year-old has achieved an impressive resume, including working as senior policy adviser to Speaker of the House Michael E. Busch and as acting policy director for the Maryland Higher Education Commission. She also has given her time to the Montgomery County Commission for Women, serving as a member and president. Vincent said she enjoys “seeing actual change occur as a direct result of our action(s).”



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TONYA JACKSON
Chief Nursing Officer, The Agape Health Group Inc.

Since beginning the Fort Washington-based The Agape Health Group Inc. in 2007, Tonya Jackson has seen the business grow from four to 50 field employees and five office staff. She decided to pursue her dream of opening Agape because she knew her work could change and touch lives. Her work has been successful because she knows “anything worth having is going to take work.”

Jackson serves as chief nursing officer for the health care business, which offers home care, medical staffing and education. “My accomplishments have shown other nurses that their career is vast and can be turned into a business,” she said.

The 39-year-old received her Bachelor of Science degree from Winston-Salem State University and a Master of Science degree in health care administration from Central Michigan University. Jackson also has worked with the Maryland Community Connection Quality Assurance Board and the Prince George’s County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. She is also a member of the National Black Nurses Association, Prince George’s County Women Business Owners and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.



KATHERINE LAWLER
Associate Counsel, Miles & Stockbridge, P.C.

Katherine Lawler’s parents have a very strong work ethic, and they taught her that anything worth doing is worth doing well. She has carried this belief throughout her life from house chores to little league basketball and All-State Band. Today, she works as an associate counsel at Miles & Stockbridge, P.C., representing a wide range of corporate clients including manufacturers, suppliers and insurance carriers against claims stemming from alleged exposure to toxic substances.

“In my career, regardless of the size or valuation of the corporation I am representing, I always give them my best effort,” said Lawler, 29. “My pro bono clients and various community activities receive no less from me.” Lawler received her bachelor’s degree in business administration, marketing and psychology from the University of Notre Dame in 2005 and her juris doctor degree from Syracuse University School of Law in 2008. She volunteers her time for several organizations including as director of the Baltimore Ballet, president of the Notre Dame Club of Maryland and financial adviser for St. Brigid’s Roman Catholic Congregation.

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QUINTON HERBERT
Assistant Solicitor, Baltimore City Labor and Employment Practice Group

When Quinton Herbert was growing up in the Forest Park community, he remembers watching episodes of “Matlock” and “Perry Mason” on television. He declared at age 6 that he wanted to be an attorney. Inspiration to achieve his dream came from seeing successful attorneys and judges such as the Hon. Robert Watts and Warren Brown, who also came from his neighborhood.

After obtaining his law degree from the University of Maryland, Herbert served as an assistant public defender for Baltimore County for three years before opening his own firm. With a penchant for writing and defending briefs, the 35-year-old began serving in June 2010 as associate counsel of litigation for the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. In April, Herbert became assistant city solicitor for the Baltimore City Labor and Employment Practice Group. Herbert also serves as organizing pastor for Christway Christian Baptist Church. He aims to live his life to inspire others. “I strive to be for others what Warren and Judge Watts were to me, living proof that the dream ... could be accomplished with hard work, determination and skill,” he said.



ELLIOTT RAUH
Managing Director, Single Carrot Theatre

Growing up, theater provided an outlet to Elliott Rauh. He found camaraderie with the other performers, thrived off bringing different stories to life on the stage and connecting with audiences. Upon finishing degrees in English and theater performance at the University of Colorado at Boulder, he and a group of friends did not want to stop collaborating together. They formed Single Carrot Theatre and moved their troupe to Baltimore “with an idea and a dream” after a nationwide search for the best city to relocate. Founded in 2007, the company aims to produce works that are new and diverse, as well as socially significant pieces by young artists. “We are very much a family,” Rauh, 30, said. The group also hosts a two-week theater boot camp for high school students in the summer. He enjoys the energy of the participants and says it’s one of his favorite times of the year. Rauh also team teaches a course called Lawyers, Legal Systems and Their Social Context at the University of Maryland School of Law. Budding lawyers write, rehearse and perform a play based off a real-life case – preparing them to keep the attention of jurors.



DANETTE HOWARD
Secretary, Maryland Higher Education Commission

While in the third grade, Danette Howard attended her mother’s college graduation ceremony and remembers how their lives changed for the better after she earned her degree. “I’ve always believed that education was the universal equalizer, that regardless of background, gender, race or economic status, everyone should have the opportunity to receive a high-quality education and that education was the key to a world of opportunities and to a successful future,” she said. “So, I decided to enter higher education so that I could make that opportunity a reality for more people.” Howard was appointed secretary for the Maryland Higher Education Commission in 2012 after serving as interim secretary since 2011. When she married William Howard four years ago, they had a photo booth at their wedding. The booth was a hit and gave the couple the idea to start a business –Lovely Day Photo Works. The couple now donates their booths to charity events, including Relay for Life. “We know that we have been blessed tremendously, and donating our booths allows us to give back to others,” she said.



ANGIE LIENERT
Founder & CEO, IntelliGenesis LLC

Angie Lienert decided to start her own company, IntelliGenesis LLC, because she wanted to create a supportive and fun corporate culture that provides career and growth opportunities, invests in its employees and makes a positive impact through the services it provides. “I truly care about my employees and their families,” she said. “Some of the best moments of my job include an employee getting married, buying their first house, having a baby or finishing their degree.” She also finds being a true partner to clients rewarding. Originally from Kentucky, Lienert did not have the money to attend college, so she decided to join the U.S. Air Force. While enlisted, she served as an Arabic linguist. Upon completing her six-year enlistment, Lienert obtained her master’s in business administration and worked in the web and business fields all with an eye toward getting enough experience to launch her own company in June 2007. Lienert also serves on the Chesapeake Regional Tech Council Board of Directors, where she serves as liaison to the Women in Tech chapter she started a little over a year ago.

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A black and white portrait of Alissa Gulin, a woman with long, dark, curly hair, smiling. She is wearing large, round earrings.

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