

THE DAILY RECORD

# PATH TO EXCELLENCE



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SERVICE

HOW TO JOIN A  
NONPROFIT  
BOARD

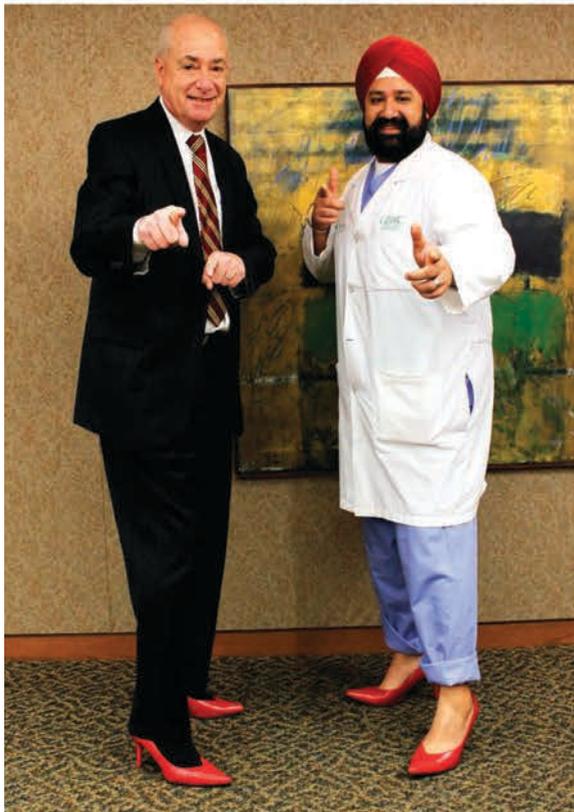
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# PATH TO EXCELLENCE APRIL 2016

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# Letter from the publisher

This month The Daily Record celebrates the 21st year of Maryland's Top 100 Women. It's always a remarkable occasion, one in which we are annually astonished at the vitality, compassion and excellence of the 100 honorees and the extraordinary contributions they have made to our state.

The April issue of Path to Excellence focuses in part on one aspect that distinguishes these honorees – their unswerving commitment to doing good and to serving the larger community, often through leadership roles on the boards of nonprofits and charities. Inside the magazine, you'll meet:

Mindy Mintz Mordecai, who transcended a family tragedy to form a national nonprofit that is helping blaze new research trails in the fight against esophageal cancer.

Randi Pupkin, who dropped off the legal fast track to pursue a passion for art and whose brainchild – Art with a Heart – now touches virtually every neighborhood in Baltimore.

The Dining Divas, a group of professional women who started meeting for dinner then realized that, together, they had the power to invest back in the community.



**Suzanne E. Fischer-Huettner**  
Publisher,  
The Daily Record

Five accomplished women – Shelonda Stokes, Laura Frietag, Lori Villegas, Cheri Krug and Jenny Trostel – who will share their hard-earned wisdom about how to truly serve as nonprofit stewards.

And Kelly Hodge-Williams, who has helped hundreds of successful women assume board leadership roles and who offers our readers a detailed guide for how you can find the

best match for your skills and passion.

Also this month, we take a look at the women administrators of the Jemicy School. At a time when women still are fighting to earn leadership roles in many educational settings, Jemicy has attracted an administrative team that sets a lofty standard for gender diversity and accomplishment. And, in our “What Was Your Path” feature, we chat with Betty Buck, a legend in the national beer distributorship industry.

As always, feel free to contact me if you have story ideas or feedback about Path to Excellence at [Suzanne.Huettner@TheDailyRecord.com](mailto:Suzanne.Huettner@TheDailyRecord.com).

Suzanne E. Fischer-Huettner

## TECH TIP



### Kate Rowe

Director of Media Relations at National Aquarium  
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### A tool to help you stay organized

Life gets busy, and in today's world we all have increasingly more and more responsibilities, both assigned and self-inflicted. These responsibilities, and the tasks that come with them, usually run the gamut – keeping us busy and forcing us to be multitaskers. In a chaotic world, we need tools to help us live optimally and organized. Between turtle photo shoots, surf n' sip fitness events and planning recipes for National Cereal Day, I can get pretty overloaded with to-dos. I've always been a list maker, but post it notes don't do the trick anymore. I've found Asana to be a tool that meets those needs. Asana is a user-friendly project management system that can be used for life and work. For BeachFit and BMOREtoned, the team assignment and conversation capabilities make it easy to communicate and work through a project. To balance both work and life, I have tasks and projects for me – like articles to read later, recipes to keep on file or positive quotes to remember. Through the app, you can access it anywhere. It's a great way organize your personal and professional life.

**Find it here:** <https://asana.com/>

**Cost:** FREE

Thank you to **Kate Rowe** for this month's Tech Tip. If you have a Tech Tip you'd like to share in an upcoming issue of Path to Excellence, please contact Tom Baden at [Tom.Baden@TheDailyRecord.com](mailto:Tom.Baden@TheDailyRecord.com) or 443.524.8150.

## Promoting Nursing

Assistant professor Vanessa Fahie has spent 20 years developing programs to increase diversity in nursing. Because of her work, dozens of local nurses from under-represented minorities and disadvantaged descent are delivering health care today throughout Maryland.



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**THE DAILY RECORD**



MARYLAND'S  
**TOP 100  
WOMEN**

**April 18, 2016**  
*Meyerhoff Symphony Hall • 5 p.m.*  
Honors 100 outstanding women for professional accomplishment, dedication to community and mentoring.  
**TICKETS ON SALE**

**Leadership  
in Law**

**May 5, 2016**  
*The Annapolis Westin • 5:30 p.m.*  
Honors legal leaders who are making a significant impact on the profession and their community.  
**TICKETS ON SALE**



**20 IN THEIR  
TWENTIES**

**June 22, 2016**  
*Gertrude's at the Baltimore Museum of Art • 5:30 p.m.*  
Recognizes the best and brightest under the age of 30 who are already contributing to Maryland's growth with their endless energy and entrepreneurial spirit.  
**NOMINATIONS CLOSE MARCH 11**

**VIP LIST**  
SUCCESSFUL BEFORE 40  
VERY IMPORTANT PROFESSIONALS

**August 25, 2016**  
*The Pier 5 Hotel • 5:30 p.m.*  
Recognizes very important professionals who are 40 years old or younger for their professional accomplishments and community involvement.  
**NOMINATIONS CLOSE MAY 13**

MARYLAND'S MOST ADMIRED  
**CEOs**

**September 22, 2016**  
*BWI Hilton • 5:30 p.m.*  
Honors talented business CEOs and nonprofit executive directors throughout our state who are admired by their employees and the community for their leadership and professionalism.  
**NOMINATIONS CLOSE JUNE 10**

**INNOVATOR**  
OF THE YEAR

**October 13, 2016**  
*Visionary Arts Museum • 5:30 p.m.*  
Recognizes individuals and companies that have created a product, service or program that has had a positive effect on their business, industry or community.  
**NOMINATIONS CLOSE JULY 8**

**Leading Women**  
Maryland's Future

**December 5, 2016**  
*The Annapolis Westin • 5:30 p.m.*  
Recognizes women 40 years old or younger for their professional accomplishments, community service and commitment to inspiring change.  
**NOMINATIONS CLOSE AUGUST 26**

## Let's Get Social! #TDRawards

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For more information or to nominate, call Jay Blankenship at 443.524.8139 or email Jay.Blankenship@TheDailyRecord.com

**TheDailyRecord.com**

# WHAT'S IN YOUR PURSE?



## In each issue of Path to Excellence, we'll ask a successful woman, "What's in your purse?"

As MaryBeth Hyland was pulling items from her purse, most were pretty standard. Android phone. Kleenex. Sunglasses.

Some were not so standard, including what appeared to be a silver snail figurine.

"It's actually a tape measurer," said Hyland, who recently left the United Way of Central Maryland, where she ran the organization's Emerging Leaders United program, to start her own firm, SparkVision. "I just started wood-working classes."

Since first starting classes in September, she has built a table and chair and now has plans to build a wine cellar in her basement.

Hyland says she started taking woodworking around the time she started her own business.

"When I started my company, I decided to win all aspects of life," she said.

The tape measure isn't the only clue in her purse that she's a changed woman since becoming an entrepreneur.

The Brick Bodies membership card on her keys is a reminder that when she started her own company she made her health a top priority.

"I'm going more than I have in years," she said of the gym.

The purse, she got from her sister, Stephanie Mykonos, about five years ago. Hyland says her family does a "recycled Christmas," in which family members give each other items they already have. Hyland got the purse from her sister and wears it so much she's had the strap replaced twice.

"It's a really good re-gift," Hyland said.

When asked whose purse she would like to see inside, Hyland said Julia Tiofeyeva, the chief risk officer at Mariner Finance, and her purse . and her purse will appear in an upcoming issue of Path to Excellence.

Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record



1. Card holder. "I couldn't shut my wallet. I had too many cards."
2. Wallet with a court document from the day she became a foster parent, April 2, 2014.
3. Scuba card. "You never know when you have to dive in."
4. Snail tape measure. "I just started wood-working classes."
5. Change purse. "I always give exact change."
6. Lipstick/lipgloss. "I always like multiple options of color."
7. Keys
8. Portable phone charger from AJ Billing
9. "Tribes" by Seth Godin. "My Bible for work."
10. Android phone with a photo with her husband, James Hyland, on a recent trip to Iceland.
11. Purell
12. Kleenex. "I started tutoring at Reading Partners. The girl I tutor has a runny nose."
13. Live United sunglasses from her time at the United Way of Central Maryland. "It gave me the platform to do what I do today."
14. Wallet. "I've never really spent money on a wallet."
15. Program for Philanthropic Education Organization. "I'm the fourth generation of women in my family to be a member."
16. Hair tie. "Always need to have one on hand especially since I'm going to the gym again."
17. Yogi tea. "I don't drink coffee. This has the same amount of caffeine as coffee."
18. Sheppard Pratt pen
19. Business card

# STORIES OF SERVICE

**By Meg Tully**  
Special to The Daily Record

**F**or Cherie Krug, it was about helping others achieve the dream she was able to reach. For Lori Villegas, it was about making sure her volunteer efforts have a real impact.

Shelonda Stokes saw board membership as a way to heal a struggling community, while Jenny Trostel learned how it's about matching your interests with your talents.

For Laura Freitag, it gave her a chance to help save a life.

Serving on nonprofit boards, these five women said, provided some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. Here are the stories of how they got involved.



## LORI VILLEGAS

**L**ori Villegas, senior vice president of investments at Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, had been volunteering and serving on boards for years when she realized that her giving was haphazard.

She had a transformative moment when she joined a giving circle of young entrepreneurs who worked together to pool their resources and give to worthy projects.

“It gave me the ability to really make an impact with my time and money,” Villegas said.

She is now on the executive board for Women’s United with the United Way, the United Way Baltimore City Partnership Board, Green and Healthy Homes and has served on the development board for Believe in Tomorrow.

Through the United Way, Villegas is able to tap into the same type of group –

Women’s United, formerly known as the Women’s Leadership Coalition, which selects projects that group members want to support together.

One of her favorite experiences was taking her children, now 8 and 10, to a Women United “stone soup” event at a soup kitchen. Through this and other shared philanthropy experiences, she feels she is making an imprint on their life.

Villegas urges people who serve on boards to volunteer first and find one that they are passionate about so they can make an impact and get the most out of the experience. For her, that meant finding charities that would help children.

“If you can give up your time and your efforts, I think it is an incredibly rewarding experience,” she said. “It’s taught me a lot about what’s important in life, and it gives you perspective on life.”



# CHERIE KRUG



Cherie Krug went back to school as a college student at age 38. Now she helps make that dream attainable to students at Maryland's smallest community college.

Krug, executive director of the Garrett College Foundation, was the first college graduate in her family.

"That experience of having an education to me was transforming," Krug said. "I became passionate about educational opportunity and change for underserved populations. I know how it changed my life when I earned my college degree."

After teaching at a small rural school for a year and volunteering in the community often, Krug took a job building volunteerism at the State University of New York at Oneonta. In the decades since, she has built a career and

life around service.

Krug is now a board member of the Garrett County United Way and previously served on the United Way of Allegany County and was campaign co-chair in 2005, as a board member of the Cumberland Theater, and as board president of the Volunteer Center of Allegany County. From 2006 to 2014, she served on the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism.

At the Garrett College Foundation, Krug supports the board and recruits new board members. She looks for people who care about the college, the students and the willingness to make it a top charity priority.

"As our Garrett College Foundation Board chair always shares with all board members, it is a commitment of your time and your talent and your treasures, too," she said.

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Kristie Snedeker,  
Director of Clinical Operations,  
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[facebook.com/TUWomensLeadership](https://facebook.com/TUWomensLeadership)





## LAURA FREITAG

**T**wenty years of serving on boards can boil down to a single moment. For Laura Freitag, that moment was when she met Keymar Woods, who took a CPR class she helped implement and then just four days later saved the life of his young brother.

Freitag serves on the board of the American Heart Association of Greater Maryland and is involved in the Go Red team, which focuses on women's heart health and advocates for hands-only CPR training for all graduating Maryland high school students.

A few years after establishing the training, the organization celebrated Joshua-Jaden Woods' sixth birthday – a birthday he might

not have had after his heart arrhythmia.

Freitag, a Baltimore-based partner who leads the health assurance practice of Ernst & Young's North East Region, also serves on the board of the Waldorf School of Baltimore, The Greater Baltimore Committee's Leadership program, and as treasurer and board member for the Community Conferencing Center.

Though she holds many positions, she urges those who are first getting involved to limit themselves to one board. For her, the others have crept in based on her interests and the needs of organizations.

"If you can pick one that you are really passionate about and put focus on it and make a difference there, it's so much better than spreading yourself thin," Freitag said.

## SHELONDA STOKES

**T**hrough her leadership on the Greater Baltimore Committee's LEADERShip program, Shelonda Stokes has been able to open doors to people in Baltimore who'd never connected with the program.

"If you're truly going to be a leader and make an impact in Baltimore, then you need to understand Baltimore from all sides," she said.

It's important to have diversity in racial, ethnic, sexual preference and types of businesses, she said.

Stokes, who is president and CEO of greiBO, is co-chair of the LEADERShip board along with Karen Miller. Since becoming involved in LEADERShip, Stokes has worked to increase outreach so that people and organizations who never participated can.

One of the things she loves about board leadership is being able to do more collectively than she could as an individual or as a business owner. She also serves on the boards of the Center for Business Inclusion

and Diversity, Downtown Partnership, Visit Baltimore, Morgan State Board of Regents and Humanim.

The Visit Baltimore board made a big push last year to focus within the city after Freddie Gray's death and subsequent civil disturbances. The organization wanted to connect with the community and make sure residents were heard; bolster businesses; and remind people of all that Baltimore has to offer.

"That's something we as an individual media company could not have done alone, shifting the way people saw Baltimore post-civil unrest," Stokes said.

She advises those getting involved with boards to find something where they can make an impact and not get overwhelmed serving on too many. At one point, she was on 10 boards.

"I think they're great for giving back, great for networking, great for the collective impact, just doing it in moderation," she said.





# JENNY TROSTEL

**J**enny Trostel found out she would be a good fit for the board of a child abuse prevention organization, The Family Tree, when she served on its development committee.

Now, she advises anyone who is interested in serving on a board to try joining a committee first. That way, the person can discover the dynamics of the group, how the mission is put into practice, meet board members also serving on the committee and show the board that they have a good potential board member. As a bonus, many event-based committees are not a long-term commitment.

“It’s kind of like dating, going on a committee,” Trostel said.

As part of her committee work, Trostel met many board members and helped put on an annual fundraising event, the Great Chefs’ Dinner. She then served on the board of The

Family Tree for about five years before her schedule changed.

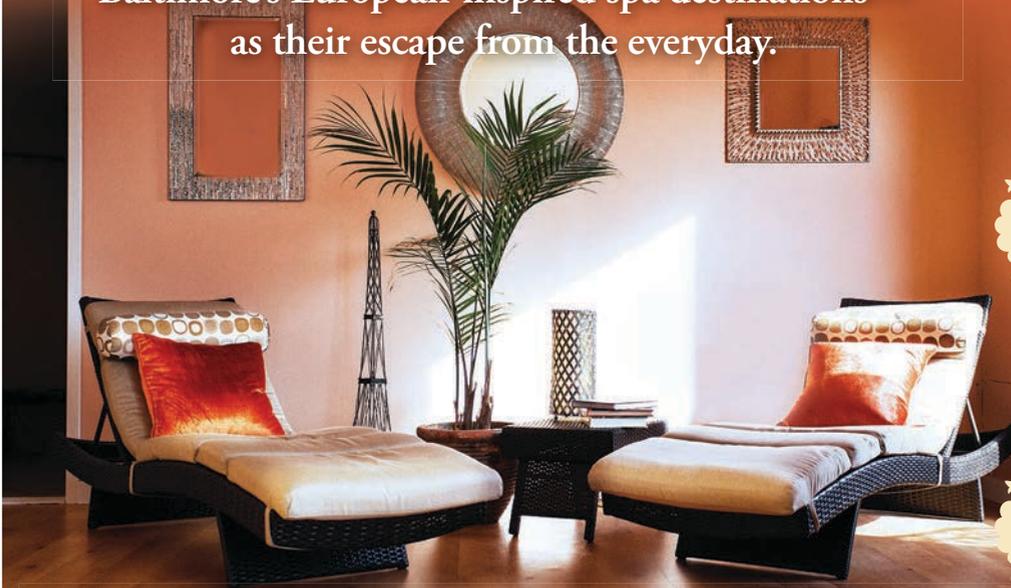
Now, she is on the board of Planned Parenthood of Maryland and its finance committee. She was treasurer for two years and, as an accountant, helps bring a business perspective to the board.

Trostel runs two committees for the National Kidney Foundation of Maryland, where she is on staff as a major gifts officer. She looks for committee members who match up with the events they plan – young, vibrant daredevils for a rappelling event and mature, serious golfers for a golf tournament. She likes to look for young candidates on her committee who might eventually step up to board service; the committees help prepare them for that.

“Especially when people are young and starting out in their career, they’re also learning about that board interaction,” she said.

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FOCUS ON: **GIVING BACK**

# IS NONPROFIT BOARD SERVICE THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOU?

*Here's a step-by-step guide for making a successful match*



By **Kelly Hodge-Williams**

**A**fter serving 12 years as the president of Business Volunteers Maryland, a nonprofit organization with a mission to create a better community by engaging businesses and professionals in volunteerism and community service, I have had the opportunity to indirectly support more than 700 people in connecting with a nonprofit board. It's been amazing to learn about so many diverse people's interests, backgrounds, and reasons for wanting to give back through board service.



Kelly Hodge-Williams

There is no question that there are a lot of personal and professional benefits of serving on a board -- providing you with new experiences; helping to build your skills; expanding your networks; and providing you with opportunities to lead. But equally, if not more important, is the opportunity to use your unique skills to make a difference in some way.

Before you start to pursue a nonprofit board to join, you first need to understand the roles and responsibilities of a nonprofit board member.

Below are the 10 key responsibilities of a nonprofit board member:

1. Determine and evaluate the organization's mission and purpose
2. Select the chief executive
3. Support and evaluate the chief executive
4. Ensure effective planning
5. Monitor and strengthen programs and services
6. Ensure adequate financial resources
7. Protect assets and provide proper financial oversight
8. Ensure legal and ethical integrity
9. Build a competent board
10. Enhance the organization's public standing and reputation

### Important questions to ask

There are thousands of nonprofit organizations in Maryland

that are doing important, charitable work in our community, and to better fulfill their missions they need committed board members who understand their roles and are prepared to contribute in meaningful ways. Therefore, it is very important that you think seriously about your ability to be an effective and engaged participant. In addition to understanding the roles and responsibilities of a board member, there are a variety of other considerations to make before joining a board. These include asking yourself:

- Are you personally ready to commit?
- Do you have the time? If so, is the organization the best place to spend your time?
- Can you handle the financial/fundraising expectations?
- Are you passionate about the mission or cause?
- Do you understand the organization's culture?
- Can you serve the needs of the organizations and be selfless?

So, through your personal assessment you decide you are ready and interested in moving forward. Now, how do you get started? Each organization handles its board recruitment a little differently, but, in general, there are three basic steps to the recruitment process: (1) express interest; (2) interview; and (3) evaluate the fit.

### Express interest

In general, the recruitment process begins when a candidate expresses interest in a position. This can occur through a formal outreach program or by responding to a board recruitment posting, like you can find on LinkedIn or other board or job posting sites.

Alternatively, if the organization that interests you does not have a formal outreach program or any open board postings,

**SEE BOARD** PAGE 12

# BOARD

Continued from page 11

then you can contact it directly to express your interest.

Prior to reaching out, you should understand that some organizations prefer to have prospective board members serve on a committee first. This is a great opportunity for you to evaluate the culture of the board, and it allows the organization to assess your commitment and passion for the mission.

Whether you follow a formal outreach process or contact the organization directly, these tips will help you establish your credibility as a candidate:

- Be familiar with the organization, its activities, and its challenges.
- Be proactive, ask questions, and answer questions thoroughly.
- Be prepared to articulate how your skills and leadership experiences can benefit the board and organization.

## Interview

The interview process is the most critical step in the recruiting process. This is the opportunity for you to understand what is expected of you as a board member and for the board to understand how your skills, talents, experiences, and perspectives will enhance its ability to advance the mission of the organization.

You should prepare questions to ask and be prepared to answer many questions about yourself. You want to be part of an organization with a well-planned process that treats recruitment as a two-way street. Here are some potential questions to ask when you meet with an organization:

- What is the organization's mission?
- How do you achieve your mission? What are the key programs and services?
- What is the revenue structure and key funding sources?
- What are some of the challenges facing the organizations now and in the future?
- Are there opportunities for organizational development and growth? What are they?
- Do they have a strategic plan? Ask to see it, and the budget.
- Do they have directors' and officers' insurance?
- What is expected of board members? What skills are they seeking?
- What are the financial expectations?

Both parties should get what they are looking for. Being willing and able is not enough. You must fill a need on the board at a given moment. You may bring marketing acumen to the mix at just the right time, for example, or the board may be trying to fill a gap in financial expertise.

Effective boards combine various skills, talents, backgrounds, and perspectives, and they often use a matrix of their present composition and future needs as a recruitment tool.

## Evaluate the fit

Only you can determine if a board service opportunity is the right one for you. Here are some questions to ask yourself as you consider a specific board opportunity:

- Am I excited about this organization and the work that it does? Is this a cause or mission that I want to dedicate my time, energy, and money to support and lead?
- Can I have a positive impact? Is there an opportunity for me to make a difference in this organization? Can I help propel this organization forward with my expertise and connections?
- Do I feel comfortable with the overall health of the organization? Do I know what the challenges and opportunities are, and am I comfortable with the level of risk that I will be assuming as a part of my legal

**YOU MUST FILL A NEED ON THE BOARD AT A GIVEN MOMENT. You may bring marketing acumen to the mix at just the right time, for example, or the board may be trying to fill a gap in financial expertise.**

responsibility as a board member?

- Do I like and trust the people who are affiliated with the organization? Do I want to spend time working with these people? Do I think I can work well with them and be a positive part of the board's culture?
- Am I comfortable with the financial and time commitments necessary to serve on this board? Am I comfortable with all elements outlined in the board member job description?

Board service can be one of the most meaningful and rewarding experiences. But you should enter into it with a full understanding of what is expected of you and what you want to get out of it, making sure you engage with the right organization for your interests.

*Kelly Hodge-Williams is president and CEO of Business Volunteers Maryland, a nonprofit organization that connects companies and individuals to results-focused volunteerism.*



Stephanie Hau, president/ and CEO of Chesapeake Environmental Management and recipient of the 2015 ATHENA Award, left, presents this year's award to Carolyn Evans, partner at Sengstacke and Evans, LLC.

Lauren Giambuschini/Harford Community College

# Evans receives 2016 ATHENA award

**Daily Record staff**

Carolyn Evans, a partner at Sengstacke and Evans, LLC, received the 2016 ATHENA Award at the Annual Women's Leadership Breakfast at the Richlin Ballroom on March 4.

The ATHENA Award is presented yearly to a woman who has achieved excellence, creativity and initiative in her business or profession; served the community to improve the quality of life for others; and assisted women to achieve their full leadership potential.

Evans has been a partner at Sengstacke & Evans for the past 15 years and has spent nearly 40 years in the field of law. She also has worked for Hertsch, Gessner & Snee, P.A., Venable Baetjer & Howard and Mercantile-Safe Deposit & Trust Company.

While maintaining a full-time law practice, Evans has been the volunteer interim executive director for the Center for the Arts. She co-chairs the Dancing for the Arts gala, which has raised \$100,000 each of the past two years, and also serves on the nonprofit's board of trustees.

She is the former chair or president of the Harford County Chamber of Commerce; Chesapeake Professional Women's Network; Bel Air Rotary Club; and the Harford County Commission for Women. She has served on the boards of the Harford County Board of Elections, The Upper Chesapeake Health Foundation and Home Partnership. Currently, she serves on the board of the

Harford Community College Foundation.

Evans co-founded the mentor program of the Women's Bar Association, University of Baltimore, Student Chapter; provides pro-bono bankruptcy services and assists with landlord-tenant matters and employment issues. She also serves as pro-bono appointed child counsel in divorce proceedings.

The 2016 finalists for the ATHENA Award were:

- **Claudine Adams**, president and CEO, Bravura Information Technology;
- **Jesse Bane**, town administrator, Town of Bel Air;
- **Paige Boyle**, director of marketing and customer relations, Boyle Buick GMC;
- **Susan Manning Bresuciak**, business development specialist, Freedom Federal Credit Union
- **Anita A. Brightman**, founder and CEO, A. Bright Idea Advertising and Public Relations
- **Kimberly Nikitas**, principal research scientist, Battelle; and
- **Amy Woolf**, coordinator, Global Studies and International Baccalaureate Magnet Program, Edgewood High School.

The ATHENA Award presentation and Women's Leadership Breakfast were organized by the Harford Community College Foundation.

Proceeds from this year's breakfast will fund the new, \$1,000 annual ATHENA Leadership Scholarship. First preference will be given to a female adult returning to college who exemplifies professionalism and commitment to the community. The recipient must be a Harford County resident, enrolled at least half time (six-plus credits) with a minimum 3.0 GPA.



‘DO WHAT YOU LOVE’

Some of the top leaders at the Jemicy School are, from left, Eugenia Gyftopoulos, director of business and finance; Laura Karey, director of education, Upper School; Patricia Utz, director of enrollment management & financial aid; Jane Evans, director of institutional advancement; Beckie Fisher, assistant director of development; Megan McGowan, head of lower school; Bonnie Wasserman, director of communications & publications. Photos by Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record

## Women at Jemicy find their true calling in education

By Anamika Roy • [Anamika.Roy@TheDailyRecord.com](mailto:Anamika.Roy@TheDailyRecord.com)

**T**he Jemicy School in Owings Mills is unique for the way it shapes its curriculum to educate students with dyslexia, but there’s something else that makes Jemicy special.

In a country where women make up the majority of educators but only 14 percent of leadership positions, Jemicy’s administration is powered by women.

“I believe in building a team,” said Ben Shifrin, Jemicy’s head of school, who hired most of the school’s administrative staff that is now

split between men and women.

Shifrin looks for two big qualities when hiring staff: a passion for the school’s mission and people who can think outside the box.

The result has been a team of administrators who love their job and stay for long a time. On average, the women administrators at the school have been at Jemicy for over a decade.

Founded by Margaret Rawson in 1973, Jemicy offers K-12 education to about 365 college-bound students. The school uses a more hands-on curriculum, devoid of stacks of worksheets and textbooks, to help the children learn better.

The women within Jemicy’s leadership, who make up seven of the 15 administrative positions, come from a range of backgrounds. Some had previous ties to a school because of a loved one who is a student there; one is a former alumna of the school; while others started careers in completely different fields.

# “We’re not special education, WE’RE GOOD EDUCATION.”

Megan McGowan, Head of Jemicy’s lower school

“I got the best job of my life when I was 60 years old,” said Bonnie Wasserman, director of publicity and communications.

Wasserman came to Jemicy after running an executive recruiting firm with her husband.

“I decided there was one more act in this play,” she said.

Megan McGowan, head of the lower school, grew up wanting to be a teacher.

“I was the girl who always played school,” said McGowan.

But she didn’t want to be just a teacher, she wanted to be a teacher at Jemicy. Growing up with a brother with dyslexia who attended Jemicy, McGowan knew she wanted to help other dyslexic children get the support they need.

“We’re not special education, we’re good education,” said McGowan.

Some of the other women had careers fields outside education before they realized that working with children was their true calling.

Laura Keri, now director of education at Jemicy’s upper school, was a systems engineer before embarking on career in education. She has since taught in every kind of school, from boarding to public.

“I always knew I wanted to be in a classroom setting,” she said.

Growing up, Keri’s family told her she could do anything, a message children with dyslexia often don’t hear, she said. As a teacher and administrator, passing on that message keeps Keri going.

Patricia Utz has been at Jemicy for almost 20 years and is director of enrollment management and financial aid. She started her career in corporate America at Fortune 500 companies, including Procter & Gamble.

“I always envisioned myself as a corporate woman,” said Utz. Working in the corporate world, which has long been a boys club, gave Utz a challenge she was determined to meet. “It was the challenge of saying ‘I’m going to succeed!’” she said.

But after spending time volunteering at her children’s school, Utz realized what she really wanted to do. So she told herself, “Wake up! Do what you love.”



Jemicy offers K-12 education to about 365 college-bound students. The school uses a more hands-on curriculum, devoid of stacks of worksheets and textbooks, to help children learn better.

The corporate background still informs Utz’s work ethic at Jemicy, but she gets to do it in an environment that fosters creativity. It’s not unusual to see teachers dressed up in costumes on a regular school day.

Some came to Jemicy after taking time away from the work.

Jane Evans, director of institutional advancement, came to Jemicy after responding to a newspaper ad that said the school was looking for a person who could multitask to fill an assistant development position. Evans had started her career as a middle school teacher before taking some time off to raise her children.

As people in education can attest, the job comes with a major time commitment.

“There’s no such thing as a clock,” said Evans. But that doesn’t stop her from loving her work. “I love what I do.”

But that balance would not be possible without support from the administration and the women’s families.

“We have families who support what we do here,” Utz said.

And that sentiment is true across the board for the Jemicy women. Shifrin also makes family a priority for his staff.

“That trickles down to the whole organization,” said Keri.



**‘I want this  
to be common  
knowledge’**

**By Meg Tully**

Special to The Daily Record

**M**onte Mordecai felt perfectly healthy. He exercised, he didn't eat added sugar and he looked years younger than he was.

But sometimes at night he felt a choking sensation while lying down. This symptom of reflux disease was so mild he never even told his doctor about it.

It is something that his wife, Mindy Mintz Mordecai, wishes he had. When he finally went to his physician, Monte was diagnosed at age 62 with Stage 3 adenocarcinoma esophageal cancer.

He had a six-centimeter tumor. Surgeons battled it with chemotherapy, radiation and even a surgery that removed his esophagus.

Monte Mordecai died in 2008, six months to the day after his surgery.

The Mordecais didn't know that persistent heartburn or gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) can cause stomach acid to splash into the esophagus, producing cellular changes that can ultimately result in cancer.

It was a senseless and preventable death because there are treatments available if caught early enough, Mindy Mordecai said.

Their daughters were 9 and 12.

"I looked at their faces and thought how many families are going to go through this until someone tells you that taking over-the-counter medication or not paying attention to reflux could actually end your life?" she said.

Monte wasn't at his daughter's bat mitzvah, but she held an event that raised almost \$20,000. The next year, they did another one. But Mindy Mordecai realized that doing events in Baltimore wasn't enough. It was the fastest-growing cancer in the U.S. at the time, but no one was talking about it.

"People were dying everywhere," Mordecai said. "We were holding our events in Baltimore and what I realized is that if I lived even two media markets over I'm not going to hear that message."

Mordecai got together with her husband's care team at Johns Hopkins, and in 2009 they founded the national nonprofit Esophageal Cancer Action Network.

Mordecai, a former attorney and television reporter and anchor, is now founder, president and CEO of ECAN. When the organization was first starting up, she worked for two years without a salary out of her basement.

Since then, the organization has grown and already made strides toward greater awareness and research.

#### **UPCOMING EVENT**

ECAN is hosting The Charm City Celebrity Game Night on April 9 at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel. This night of live game shows and VIP reception will include broadcast personalities competing for the Jerry Turner Trophy, a tribute to the news anchor who died from esophageal cancer in 1987. Visit [ECAN.org](http://ECAN.org) for information on tickets.

## FOCUS ON: GIVING BACK

“In my dream world, people will understand the risk of heartburn as well as they understand the risk of going outside without sunscreen,” Mordecai said. “I want this to be common knowledge.”

One of ECAN’s first accomplishments was working with the National Cancer Institute to include esophageal cancer in its genome mapping project, The Cancer Genome Atlas. That research is expected to be published this summer. The NCI also formed an Esophagogastric Task Force, of which Mordecai is a member. It focuses on improving clinical research.

Researchers are making strides. Mordecai hopes one day soon that tests for precancerous changes in heartburn patients won’t require sedation so that more patients have access to the tests.

Barrett’s Esophagus is the precancerous condition that precedes esophageal cancer. This condition can be treated through outpatient procedures that lower a patient’s risk of developing cancer.

Many people with GERD will never go on to develop cancer.

“If you’re one of the unlucky ones, the chances are really good

**“In my dream world, people will understand the risk of heartburn as well as they understand the risk of going outside without sunscreen.”**

Mindy Mordecai

that by the time they catch it, it’s too late,” Mordecai said. “Fewer than 1 in 5 will survive in five years.”

ECAN has hosted a running festival in New York City with more than 1,000 attendees and an Esophageal Cancer Awareness event in Los Angeles at an NBA game.

Comedian Jeff Foxworthy helped ECAN with its No Laughing Matter campaign at comedy clubs across the nation. And the nonprofit’s partnership at the Humphrey Bogart Film Festival has resulted in trailers being played with Bogart’s son Stephen

speaking. Humphrey Bogart lost his life in 1957 to esophageal cancer.

One woman who saw that trailer wrote to Stephen Bogart. An art teacher in Florida, she had heard him in the trailer. She went to the doctor and found out she had Barrett’s Esophagus. She was treated and several years later is still cancer free.

“It’s an exciting time for the work we’re doing, and our vision is that we will have no one die from esophageal cancer,” Mordecai said. “I think we’re going to get there, and I think we’re going to get there in my lifetime.”

### Are you or someone you know at risk?

Esophageal cancer kills more than 80 percent of its victims, in large part because it’s usually detected at late stages, according to ECAN. This type of esophageal cancer is different from squamous cell carcinoma, which is often linked to smoking or drinking.

Consult your primary care doctor or gastroenterologist if you have:

- Heartburn symptoms that have gone away
- Pain or difficulty swallowing
- A family history of Barrett’s Esophagus or esophageal cancer
- More than occasional heartburn symptoms
- A chronic, unexplained cough
- A hoarse voice over several weeks
- A long-lasting sore throat
- Coughing or choking upon lying down

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*For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities*

# 'IT FEELS LIKE A SISTERHOOD'

## Dining Divas networks to serve the community



Attendees at the Dining Divas' Feb. 23 event clap during a portion of dinner when each woman shares a recent "Rah Rah" moment. Photos by Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record

**By Meg Tully**

Special to The Daily Record

**M**et the Dining Divas, a group of "freakishly smart" professional women who meet informally at restaurants in Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

It started with just LaTara Harris and Virginia Knowlton over dinner at Reggie's in Federal Hill. They hoped to gather like-minded women leaders who want to give back to the communities where they live and work.

Harris, regional director for external and legislative affairs at AT&T, and Knowlton, executive director of the

Maryland Disability Law Center, now count about 152 women as friends and members of the informal group, which meets every other month in smaller gatherings of eight to 10 women for dinner. They have visited more than 30 restaurants so far.

"(These are) outgoing people, very smart, very dedicated, really invested and care about the community," Harris said. "It's so important that we give back as we move forward."

Many of the women like Harris met through the LEADERShip program of the Greater Baltimore Committee, and the group now invites other women to join informally.

When the Baltimore civil unrest broke out in late April

## FOCUS ON: GIVING BACK

2015 following the death of Freddie Gray, the group had been scheduled to meet. A curfew was declared, and they were able to meet right before curfew. They decided they wanted to try to help a woman-owned business in the area and later connected with Maisha McCoy, owner of Breathe4Sure Pharmacy Solutions LLC.

McCoy, a pharmacist for more than 20 years, had been in businesses for about two and a half years at her Harlem Park location when the rioting started. Rioters looted the pharmacy, destroying or stealing much of her inventory.

She had already closed up for the night but was only able to watch as it all came down.

“Horrible, nothing pleasant about it at all,” McCoy said about that night.

She reached out to the mayor’s office for support and was connected to Dining Divas.

More than anything, they have provided her with the moral support and encouragement she said she needed to continue.

McCoy is now renovating the pharmacy and hopes to have a grand re-opening soon. Meanwhile, she has continued to serve almost 80 percent of her customers through a window drive-through and delivery service for elderly clients.

She attended a few Dining Divas dinners and said the energy was refreshing for her.

“It helped me continue to rebuild because I was so devastated,” McCoy said. “They really motivated me and encouraged me to continue.”

McCoy worked for many years as a pharmacist in retail stores before starting her own business.

“I’m more community-driven, I’m from the inner city not far from



Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record



Above, a group photo of the Dining Divas at the group’s Feb. 23 event at LaTavola Restaurant in Baltimore’s Little Italy.

At left, Dining Divas’ founder LaTara Harris makes some announcements before dinner.

here,” McCoy said. “It’s a resource that was greatly needed, so I wanted to get away from feeling like I was working in a mill to get back to the community and give them the service that they – that we – deserve.”

Three women from Dining Divas, Harris, Terri Harrington and Gina Merritt, met with McCoy biweekly to keep the project moving forward. More than 20 other women stepped up to offer support to the project.

The Baltimore Development Corp. gave the pharmacy a \$35,000 loan that turns into a grant if it stays open for two years, and another \$6,000 grant to replace the door and window. A group from T. Rowe Price has offered to do a marketing plan and website with McCoy.

Nichelle Schoultz, deputy state director for U.S. Sen. Barbara Mikulski, is among the group members supporting the project. She is making sure McCoy is aware of federal resources available from the Small Business Administration and other federal agencies, and has offered letters of support if she needs them.

Schoultz, who is president of the nonprofit Sisters in Touch and a commissioner on the Anne Arundel County Human Relations Commission, said Dining Divas is a group with a casual yet vibrant energy.

“It feels like a sisterhood. It’s really women who are trying to help other women win in life and help other women succeed,” she said. “It’s an opportunity to share and get advice, to uplift one another to encourage, to really serve as cheerleaders for one another, to celebrate each other’s success and to help other women reach their professional goals.”

**“It helped me continue to rebuild because I was so devastated.  
THEY REALLY MOTIVATED ME AND ENCOURAGED ME TO CONTINUE.”**

Maisha McCoy, owner of Breathe4Sure Pharmacy Solutions, which was damaged during the 2015 riots

# Art with a Heart grew from humble beginnings

**By Meg Tully**

Special to The Daily Record

**R**andi Pupkin walked into the group home and was led down into a basement with no windows. She pulled out her box of art supplies and started talking to eight boys who gave her looks that said, “I do not care about art.”

It was one of the first classes led by the Art with a Heart founder and executive director. Now, 16 years later, she has established a wide-reaching organization that teaches 10,000 classes a year, has installed mosaics and murals across Baltimore, offers job training programs and operates a social enterprise art retail store.

She can still remember that day, her first at that group home. She called her husband from the car after the class to say that she barely got through the project.

“A person lesser than me would have never walked back in that place again, but I was so determined to create a connection with the kids,” Pupkin said to him.

And so she did, taking them to New York City twice and leading programs at the home for years.

When one of the boys was aging out of the group home, Pupkin welcomed him into hers and informally adopted him.

Isiah Bullock has now joined their family, along with their son and daughter. He served in the U.S. Marines and is attending Stevenson University.

## How it all got started

Pupkin was working as a practicing attorney in commercial



litigation when she had yet another adversarial phone call with opposing counsel. She wanted a change, and started the organization on a shoestring budget on the evenings and weekends.

She was a creative thinker who had always enjoyed art classes. She decided to bring those classes to underserved people, starting at two group homes -- a shelter from domestic violence for women and children and an Alzheimer’s facility. It was, she hoped, her first step to doing something productive and meaningful – something she had always dreamed about as a child of the Civil Rights era.

“I always say I jumped off a cliff and then checked to see if I was wearing a parachute,” she said. “I just knew that I had incredible

**“We watch them walk in the door kind of cynical and we see them six weeks later COMMITTED, ENTHUSIASTIC, EXCITED ABOUT THEIR FUTURE.” — Randi Pupkin**

passion about the work and about the connections that we were making.”

Art with a Heart began in March 2000 while Pupkin was still practicing law. It now has eight full-time employees, a headquarters and the store Heartwares next to it in Hampden.

Art is essential to the soul, Pupkin said. She believes that the ability to think creatively is necessary for success.

“If you don’t have access to opportunity for creativity, you can be the best engineer in the world but I think it will be challenging to solve problems,” she said.

Art with a Heart reaches people by providing consistent, structured nurturing presence from adults, and by allowing them to tap into their creative side.

The job-training program works with youth over a longer period of time, so Pupkin can see the impact it makes. Some of the youngster that trainers work with come from unfortunate circumstances like dropping out of high school or aging out the foster care or group home system with nowhere to live.

“We watch them walk in the door kind of cynical and we see them six

weeks later committed, enthusiastic, excited about their future,” she said.

Art with a Heart is perhaps most visible through the way it has transformed public spaces in the Baltimore area. About 5,000 volunteers annually have helped create 45 art installments. At Restoration Gardens, a supportive permanent housing facility for homeless youth, for example, 250 volunteers completed an 18-foot-by-10-foot mosaic mural.

And the projects are continuing. To help celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BGE this year, Art with a Heart is creating 100 smaller mosaics that will be installed at schools within the BGE service area.

The newest initiative of the organization is the Art of Leadership, a leadership program where 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders are brought together to create a public art piece and spend 15 months learning about the issues facing Baltimore.

Pupkin did not build Art with a Heart alone. She said that is a crucial ingredient for other women leaders.

“I started this organization but certainly it wouldn’t be there if I didn’t have the support both professionally and personally to help make it successful,” Pupkin said.



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TOWSON  
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VOLUNTEERING:  
WHAT'S IT  
WORTH?

\$\$\$\$\$

By **Corinne L. DeRoberts**

**T**owson University will hold one of its largest gatherings this month. It's not a lecture, a concert or even a sporting event. It's The Big Event — when Towson students give back to surrounding neighborhoods by raking leaves, weeding and doing spring cleaning for area residents. It also offers students the chance to give back to the Towson community by helping nonprofit organizations.

In its six years TU's Big Event has grown to encompass over 1,400 students and over 100 different project sites. TU's Office of Student Activities works with the Towson Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Towson Council of Community Associations (GTCCA) to promote this day of service. Towson also offers additional volunteer opportunities such as First Friday, a monthly event to engage students at local nonprofits.

There is a payoff to these programs. In the last academic year, 17,875 Towson University students completed 1,000,629 hours of community service. This adds up to an economic impact on the local community of more than \$2.6 million, according to Independent Sector. (This nonprofit values an hour of volunteer time at \$23.07 nationwide, \$26.41 an hour in Maryland.)

Yet there are countless other rewards for volunteers and the organizations they serve.

During his travels across the United States in the 19th century, Alexis de Tocqueville, French historian and political thinker, observed how integral volunteer associations and their services were to the public good and declared this spirit of volunteerism as uniquely American. In keeping with that spirit, many corporations, governments and other entities, including TU, now provide paid time for employees to volunteer.

As passionate as volunteers may be, companies also benefit when their employees take up a cause. According to a Do Good Live Well study, "Employers who support volunteering programs in the workplace experience even deeper benefits — employees appreciate their employers when volunteering programs are offered in the workplace, and the goodwill that is generated can drive positive results directly to the bottom line." The study also indicated that volunteering develops work skills including time management, stronger relationships with colleagues, people and teamwork skills



**In the last academic year, 17,875 Towson University students completed 1,000,629 hours of community service. This adds up to an economic impact on the local community of more than \$2.6 million, according to Independent Sector.**

and professional job skills.

In another study, researchers found that 70 percent of employees with a favorable perception of their company's community commitments planned to stay at that company for the next two years, compared with 50 percent of those with a less favorable perception. Considering that most companies offer employees eight to 16 hours of paid volunteer time per year, the ROI seems evident — a happier, more accomplished and loyal employee. And that's worth more than one can imagine.

If you're looking to volunteer, [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org) posts opportunities across the country daily.

*Corinne L. DeRoberts is coordinator of community services at Towson University.*

# 5 WOMEN WHO CHANGED MY LIFE

In each issue of Path to Excellence, we'll ask one woman to name five women who have influenced her — personally or professionally. If you would like to be featured in this space, please contact Tom Baden, at tom.baden@thedailyrecord.com or 443-524-8150.



This issue features **Patricia Omaña**, case manager for the Attorney General's health education and advocacy unit, board president at Center of Help Inc. and a board member of the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

## Joan van der Plas de Omaña ▶

**Mother**

Strength, humility, independence, gratitude, love and much more. She always says, "No matter what you become, be the best." Much of what I do and accomplish is because of her. Someone who not always has it easy, but always with her strength making it work. Someone who always shows kindness. Someone who opens her home to anyone and everyone. No matter who they are. Someone who sees the best in everyone, always non-judgmental. My mother is the best advocate and cheerleader, beaming proud when we do well and being strong and truthful when needed.

## Carmen Dolores Cordero de Omaña

**Grandmother**

Family. A matriarch in the true form. Born in 1910, a time when women in Latin America were homemakers. She continued her studies after high school to earn a teaching certificate. A true teacher till the end of her life. She was the backbone of the family, always making sure that we were there for each other. Loved adventure and life. An amazing cook, through food she gathered the family and friends. So typical in a Latino household.

## Milagros "Millie" Carrasquillo

**Former boss while at Univision Communications**

Leadership, management, work ethic. I worked under Millie in my mid-to-late 20s, as she helped me surge the ranks from an analyst to a manager, overseeing a whole department. She taught me focus, achieving goals and being confident at the decisions I made. She gave me the space to grow. She always answered my questions with a question, making me figure it out; it was nerve-racking but it made me analyze and search for answers. I use the method today when I mentor or manage someone. It was a great way to learn.

## Sonia Sotomayor

**Supreme Court justice**

Perseverance, willingness, inspiration. I met the judge some years back when she came to Baltimore. In an event that my friend Veronica Cool invited me to, I could not miss the grand opportunity. I did not know much about Sotomayor, but I read



her book and it opened my eyes to all kind of possibilities. Meeting her was wonderful, I saw the tenderness, wittiness, smartness in her. I am fascinated till this day that I was able to have such a great opportunity. I took my book and had her sign it. I bought two extra books to give to my eldest nieces in hopes that they got inspired as I did with her words and life.

## All the mothers I know and help

**Clients of the Center of Help**

Survivorship, sacrifice, love. The mothers of all of the kids that I have mentored and tutored through the Center of Help. Stories very similar, wanting to give the best they can to their children, trying to give them the opportunities they never got. Pushing them to achieve, while holding two and sometimes three jobs. Not knowing well the American Way, but trying to understand so they can guide their children to strive and be better than what they are. Some of them having left their children behind. Some able to reunite with their children. Some who at first were not able to recognize their children because so many years had gone by. Pushing them to graduate, to go to college. I have helped many fill out college applications and even scholarship and grants applications. Their mother sitting watching, beaming with pride. How much they gave up. How much they have gained.

# MOVERS & SHAKERS

Each issue of Path to Excellence will feature women on the move.

Please share your promotions, new positions and other professional milestones at [thedailyrecord.com/movers](http://thedailyrecord.com/movers).



**Ellen Lord |  
TEXTRON SYSTEMS**

Ellen Lord, president and CEO of Textron Systems Corporation, has accepted the invitation to join the board of trustees of the Naval Institute Foundation. Founded in 1873 in Annapolis, the U. S. Naval Institute provides an independent forum for the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.



**Cynthia M. Allen |  
M&T BANK**

Cynthia M. Allen has been promoted to administrative vice president at M&T Bank. She has been with the bank for 20 years, having most recently served as vice president. As senior regional property manager, Allen is responsible for the preservation, maintenance and capital improvements for 563 M&T retail branch and corporate real estate assets in the Mid-Atlantic and Pennsylvania regions. Since joining the bank in 1995 she has served in various leadership positions. She held

previous positions at Legg Mason and Gulf Oil/Chevron Oil. Allen received a Bachelor of Science in business from the University of Baltimore. She resides in Havre de Grace.



**Abra Bush |  
PEABODY INSTITUTE**

Abra Bush, DMA has joined the leadership of the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University as senior associate dean of institute studies, overseeing faculty and curriculum while helping lead the ongoing development and implementation of a reinvigorated conservatory model that is financially sustainable, supports an increasingly selective professional program, and strengthens the relationship between the conservatory and the preparatory to better serve all students.



**Karen Robertson |  
NEWMARK GRUBB  
KNIGHT FRANK**

Karen Robertson has been named managing director of the Baltimore office of commercial real

estate company Newmark Grubb Knight Frank. Robertson has more than 18 years of experience representing landlords in the office and medical office markets in the greater Baltimore region. She manages all aspects of clients' needs including marketing and property positioning, space inspections, LOI negotiations, market analysis and lease execution. Robertson earned a Bachelor of Science from Pennsylvania State University and is licensed in both Maryland and Pennsylvania.



**Helene Raynaud |  
GUIDEWELL FINANCIAL  
SERVICES**

Helene Raynaud has been named president and CEO at Baltimore-based Guidewell Financial Solutions, a national nonprofit agency offering free credit counseling, debt management, bankruptcy counseling and financial education. For the past 10 years, Raynaud has held several key positions at the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, most recently serving as its chief operating officer.

## Mother, daughter, wife, sister...friend.

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**Morgan Stanley**



A group photo of the Top 100 and Leading Women honorees attending the March 2 Path to Excellence networking event.  
Photos by Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record



From left, Tara Rudo, No More Piles; Kait LeDonne, Le-Donne Branding and Marketing; Wendy Merrill, Strategy Horse; and Windy Deese, United Way of Central Maryland.



Patricia McHugh Lambert, an attorney at Pessin Katz Law, PA, host of the event, offers some remarks with, at right, Daily Record Publisher Suzanne Fischer-Huettner.

# PATH NETWORKING EVENT ATTRACTS STRONG TURNOUT

**T**he Daily Record's Path to Excellence March 2 networking event was held at Pessin Katz Law Café, 901 Dulaney Valley Road in Towson.

The event was the sixth in a series of networking events statewide hosted by The Daily Record and Maryland's Top 100 Women and Leading Women honorees.

At the March 2 event, the hosts were Patricia McHugh Lambert, Kimberly Neal, Donna Wilson, Lisa Hayes, Diana Bell-McKoy, and Pat Stout. More than 100 people attended from different industries and backgrounds, all with passion and energy for helping others and making a difference.

Sponsors for the event included Series Sponsor GBMC and Reception Sponsor The Arc Baltimore

The Daily Record will host free networking events in nine locations across the state annually, giving women the opportunity for networking, professional growth and to give back to a community nonprofit organization. The Path to Excellence events also provide a chance for attendees to build mentoring relationships and learn about each other's businesses.

The co-hosts for the March event identified The Y in Central Maryland, Baltimore County as the nonprofit beneficiary. They requested donations for their preschool and toddler program. Path attendees donated children- and age-appropriate board games and puzzles. Attendees donated more than 60 items to the Y.

This month's Path to Excellence networking event will be on Thursday, April 28, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Business Connection at University Center, 1201 Technology Drive in Aberdeen. Light food, beer, wine and non-alcoholic beverages will be served.

The nonprofit partner will be announced soon.



From left, Ella Pritsker, Ella Pritsker Couture; Kimberly Neal, Pessin Katz, Law; and Oana Brooks, The Junior League of Baltimore.



The collection of toys and games that was donated at the event to the Y of Central Maryland.



# PATH TO EXCELLENCE NETWORKING SERIES

Do not miss this opportunity to network with Maryland's Top 100 and Leading Women. The Daily Record will host free networking events in nine locations across the state annually, giving women the opportunity for networking, professional growth and to give back to a community nonprofit organization.

## **April 2016**

**Publication:** April 1

**Networking Event**

**Harford County**

Thursday, April 28

5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Business Connection at  
University Center

## **May 2016**

**Publication:** May 6

**Networking Event**

**Howard County**

Tuesday, May 17

4:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Howard Bank

## **June 2016**

**Publication:** June 3

**Networking Event**

**Frederick County**

Monday, June 20

5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Hood College

## **August 2016**

**Publication:** Aug. 5

**Networking Event:** TBD

## **September 2016**

**Publication:** Sept. 6

**Networking Event:** TBD

## **October 2016**

**Publication:** Oct. 3

**Networking Event:** TBD

## **November 2016**

**Publication:** Nov. 4

**Networking Event:** TBD

## **BE PART OF THE EXCITEMENT!**

Go to [www.thedailyrecord.com/path-to-excellence](http://www.thedailyrecord.com/path-to-excellence) for details about the new Path to Excellence magazine, dates for networking events and one-of-a-kind content featuring Maryland's top female business and legal leaders.

To register for one of the free networking events, visit  
[www.thedailyrecord.com/path-to-excellence/calendar/](http://www.thedailyrecord.com/path-to-excellence/calendar/)

*For ideas related to content in Path to Excellence, contact Tom Baden at 443-524-8150  
or email [tom.baden@thedailyrecord.com](mailto:tom.baden@thedailyrecord.com)*

# Q & A: WHAT WAS YOUR PATH?

## Betty Buck President Buck Distributing Company



### **When did you know this was the career you wanted? What drew you to the business?**

I always wanted to be the beer girl since I was 4 years old and rode the forklift with a little dress and white socks and shoes every Saturday with my dad, Irwin Buck. My mom didn't think girls should wear pants! My dad started the business with one truck in 1946 and I loved the way it is a one-on-one, personal business. You are friends with your retailers and it is still that way today. It is a very personal business. You sell one case at a time. It is very personal with your employees. I always loved driving the trucks and forklifts, too. I just liked being with my dad!

### **What are some of the challenges you had to overcome to be successful?**

The biggest was there were absolutely NO women in the

beer business. Still very few. When my dad decided to retire in 1985 I had to be approved by Miller; in our industry our breweries have to approve the manager. I flew to Milwaukee to be told I had six months to take all of their classes, including how to build a draft system, and then they would decide. During the six months my dad had a massive heart attack. I was finally approved after a not very lady-like conversation in Milwaukee, where I think they just wanted me out of the boardroom.

### **What's your proudest accomplishment?**

I was on the board of the National Beer Wholesalers Association and then in 2008 I became the first and so far only female chair of the NBWA and its 2,500 beer distributors from across the United States. In 2009 I was the first female chair of the Maryland Chamber of Commerce.

# BETTY BUCK

**Title:** President

**Organization:** Buck Distributing Company

**Family Details:** Husband is Mark W. Howes, an attorney. Daughter Erin (sales manager) and her husband Steve Palmer both work at Buck Distributing Company; Son Tim Buck, Daughter Kelly Ingbretson, two stepchildren, John and Victoria Howes; three granddaughters, MacKenzie (5), Alison (3), Penelope (1) and two grandsons, Jackson (8) and Logan (6)

**Education:** Two years at University of Maryland; All Management, Sales and Strategic Planning at the Miller

**Brewing Training Center:** certified as a trainer for Training for Intervention Procedures by Servers Of Alcohol.

**Career Details:** I have been at Buck for 40 years full time. I came here to computerize the company. We used to do everything with paper, pencil and lots of erasers. In 1985 my dad, who started this company in 1946, told me that “you are hungry and I am not, you need to take over the

business.” I have been known ever since as the shark, and I think my dad was behind that!

**Favorite Book:** I don’t have a favorite. I have a passion for reading, just not enough time. I love to read a great romance novel where good always wins with a twist in the middle, usually from medieval time to 1800s. But I also love anything written by Mitch Albom. I fell in love with his books after reading “First Phone Call from Heaven.” I also loved “Doing What Matters” by James M. Kilts. So you see my 800 books on my Kindle are wide reaching.

**Top Vacation Destination:** Any Windstar Cruise. Last year we went on a three-week Middle East cruise with Windstar. But favorite is every summer I take my whole family for two weeks somewhere. We unplug and just enjoy each other.

**Hobbies:** I love what I do but when my grandbabies were born they changed my world. I don’t do breakfast meetings anymore. I cook them breakfast and a couple of mornings a week I get to take them to pre-school. I ride Harley’s. I have two. I love doing anything I can that is sharing time with my family and friends, like cooking for them.

## What’s the biggest lesson you learned along the way?

The biggest lesson I have learned is to always believe in yourself and listen to yourself and your body. Sometimes we push ourselves to hard and too far because so much more is expected. We are only human and need to remember that. But as women the one thing we don’t do well is reach back and help younger women step up. I have been helped mostly by me, and that is sad.

## You’re at the top of your profession. Are there any other mountains to climb? Are there other goals you are still striving to reach?

I don’t ever think you reach the top, or you need to retire and my daughter says she is not ready for that yet! I am still striving to build our company bigger with more brands and areas. Of course, there is also getting the next generation ready to take over.

## What advice would you share with younger women hoping to follow your career path?

I as a single mother of four young children was blessed with a saint for a housekeeper/other mother for my kids because I HAD to be at Buck because of my dad’s death and taking over

the business. The unfortunate lesson I learned, although I had no choice, is that when that time is gone it is gone. Be careful with the choices you make. You won’t get that time back with your children. But don’t be afraid to reach out and ask for advice and help. I was told by a great mentor once who was president of Verizon that if you called he would always answer. Well I didn’t believe, so I tried, he did. So if you need help, reach out to someone, you will be surprised they will help. I answer all phone calls. I may not give you the advice you want, but I answer all calls.

Don’t ever give up your dreams. Who would think a little girl from Upper Marlboro could celebrate a company’s 70th Anniversary selling beer but we did this weekend with our governor!

**AS WOMEN THE ONE THING WE DON’T DO WELL IS REACH BACK AND HELP YOUNGER WOMEN STEP UP. I have been helped mostly by me, and that is sad.**

# DRESS TO IMPRESS

Each month, Path to Excellence will feature a column on business fashion and trends. If you have a question or topic you would like to see addressed, or if you would like to share your expertise on this topic, please email Tom Baden at [tom.baden@thedailyrecord.com](mailto:tom.baden@thedailyrecord.com).



## NOW IS THE TIME TO SPRING CLEAN YOUR CLOSET

**D**o you ever stand in front of an overstuffed closet and wail, “I don’t have a thing to wear!”? If so, it is time to spring clean your closet. You should not have to spend valuable time each morning sorting through clothes you don’t LOVE wearing. Clearing out your closet can be challenging but really worth the effort.

Now is the time to schedule a date with your closet/wardrobe. Here is a five-step plan to help you use your time wisely and get a lot done.



**1. SET A GOAL.** Decide what you want to accomplish in the time you have. Do you want to focus on just one portion of your wardrobe, such as pants or your professional attire? Maybe you want to clear out all of your fall and winter items and be ready for spring and summer.

**2. THE END OF THE SEASON** is a great time to weed out/ get rid of clothes that are not “worthy” of being cleaned and stored for fall.

**3. “INTERVIEW” EACH ITEM** as you take it out of the closet.

- Do you love it? When you wear it do you feel confident, secure, and attractive?
- Does it look great on you, or does it only need minor alterations to make you look fabulous?
- Does it reflect who you are/where you are in your life/career?
- Sort your clothes in three groups – YES, NO and MAYBE.
- Hang the YES group back in your closet. Donate or give away the NO clothes. Put the MAYBE items aside until you do step No. 5.

**4. IF THERE ARE CLOTHES YOU HAVEN’T WORN** yet this past fall and winter season, why not?

Should they be stored for next fall or donated/given away? Take the time to analyze why you are not wearing each item. Is it the color, style, fabric, fit, or the quality? Learn from this exercise so you can do a better job shopping next time.

**5. TRY ON ALL CLOTHES** you’re not sure about.

Notice how it feels against your skin, pay attention to your expression as you look in the mirror, then think about where and when you would wear this item.

**WHEN IN DOUBT, DO WITHOUT!**

Many women only wear 20 percent of the garments in their closets. You will find that if you pare your wardrobe down to what looks great on you and is of the best quality you can afford, you will be able to get dressed so much more quickly. If everything in your wardrobe reflects where you are now in your life and career, it will be so

much easier to choose what you will wear each day. You will be able to see what is in your closet and then have fun mixing and matching items to create new outfits.

Now that you have a cleared-out and clean closet, well done! As a reward, you can now consider what new fashions you will add to your wardrobe.

As one client said recently, “Now I feel like I can breathe in my closet!”

Salli Ward, a 2015 Top 100 Woman, is a wardrobe stylist and president of Wonderful Wardrobes. She has built her personal stylist business to help hundreds of women look and feel wonderful about how they look and dress. She also has taught many women how to present a polished and professional image. Feel free to contact her and ask her your fashion questions at [sallijward@aol.com](mailto:sallijward@aol.com) or call her at 410-654-2459 or 410-428-5566. Visit her website at [www.sallijward-doncaster.com](http://www.sallijward-doncaster.com).



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# What worked in the past may not work in the future



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