



# W<sup>TOP</sup> OMEN IN FINANCE

# Legacy of Leadership

MidCountry Bank proudly celebrates all of the financial services professionals and our own Amy Burma, Branch Operations and Sales Support Manger, recognized as this year's Top Women in Finance honorees.



Each day you show others the positive difference female leadership can make in our profession and in our communities.

TO ALL THE DISTINGUISHED HONOREES,  
CONGRATULATIONS FROM MIDCOUNTRY BANK.

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**Amy Burma**  
Branch Operations &  
Sales Support Manger  
2017 Honoree

# Opening doors. Leading the way.



We congratulate Julie Kimble,  
2017 Top Women In Finance Honoree.

Julie's deep and diverse experience has earned the trust of business and real estate professionals around the globe. As peers in the industry we congratulate her on this award, for her impactful contributions to the community and for her continuing support to diversify the commercial real estate industry.

Julie is president of KimbleCo, providing commercial real estate consulting, leasing and corporate advisory services to businesses and communities.





# From the editor:

**F**inance & Commerce is pleased to honor the Top Women in Finance for the 17th year. While editing these profiles, it was clear to me that this year's class is certainly worthy of praise. I've been impressed with the professional accomplishments and community involvement of these women, and by the variety of paths they took to make it to the top of their fields.

This year's class of honorees includes a chief executive officer, chief financial officers and other high-ranking executives as well as entrepreneurs, accountants, lawyers and financial advisers.

Several honorees have leadership positions at banks and credit unions. Some work in real estate, for companies like CBRE, Cushman & Wakefield and Wells Fargo Home Mortgage. And some work in government or with nonprofits. Many mentor women in their fields and volunteer for community causes.

An outside panel of experts reviewed the nominations and helped to select the honorees.

The honorees were feted Nov. 16 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Minneapolis at an annual event that draws hundreds of attendees. Please join me in celebrating these talented women.

— DAVID BOHLANDER

**On the cover:** Top Women in Finance award is displayed at the 2016 event at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Minneapolis. Cover photo by Sharolyn B. Hagen Photography.

**Profile photos:** The honorees were photographed at the Mansion at Uptown in Minneapolis.

## CONGRATULATIONS

**Sonja Simonsen and her fellow 2017 honorees for the Top Women in Finance Award**

We know that each of the honorees has a sincere commitment to personal and professional excellence. We are proud to recognize Sonja and applaud all of the honorees for their many accomplishments and successes.

**SONJA SIMONSEN**  
Vice President  
Nonprofit & Commercial Banking  
952.841.9357

**Top Women in Finance 2017 honoree Sonja Simonsen**

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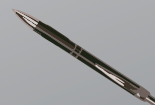
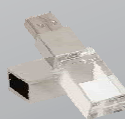
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Brenda Brannan

# Congratulations, Brenda!

Finance & Commerce *Top Women in Finance* Honoree

**Brenda Brannan has been a critical part of North Shore Bank** for over 25 years. She has grown from a part-time retail banker to Chief Wealth Management Officer. Brenda is a strong strategist and leader, driving growth and change at the bank.

From all of us at North Shore Bank, congratulations on this well-deserved honor  
- and thank you for your many years of dedicated service.

North Shore Bank has been a locally-owned community bank for over 100 years, providing the Duluth, MN region with exceptional financial products and services.



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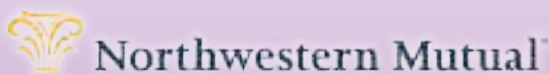
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# Debora Almirall

**Title/Company:** CEO, Minnesota Power Employee Credit Union

**Education:** B.A., economics, University of Minnesota-Duluth; MBA, University of Minnesota

**Family:** Husband, Phil; daughters, Isabella and Anasophia

Debora Almirall has had a rich career and life in Duluth. After working for other banks for a number of years, she took the reins of Minnesota Power Employee Credit Union in 2013 and began adding services and overseeing staff expansion.

The Twin Cities native loves living by the big lake. “I grew up in the Twin Cities, but I fell in love with Lake Superior and Duluth,” she said. “I feel like I’m living my dream.”

**What’s the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

My biggest turning point was going back to school to get my MBA, which opened doors for me to get to a career position.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

It is my responsibility to provide strategic direction for the organization and to ensure its success and that of the individuals who work here both now and into the future.

**What’s your proudest community achievement?**

I am proud of having mentored a young girl for 12 years who was able to become only the second member of her family to graduate from high school. I am also a founding member of Minnesota Credit Union’s Women’s Leadership Network.

**What’s the best advice you received from a mentor, and what’s your best advice to women entering your field?**

A mentor told me volunteering takes the focus off any problems you may be having and makes you focus on serving other people. You also get opportunities you may not get on your job. You’re giving back as you learn and grow.

—FRANK JOSSI



# TOP WOMEN IN FINANCE

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**Kate Gillette**

on Being Named a

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**Congratulations to  
Katherine Forrester Schneewind  
on decades of success.**

**We're so proud of you!**



KPMG congratulates  
all of this year's honorees  
including our own  
Jill Farrington.

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# Sara Ausman

**Title/Company:** Regional president, Twin Cities, Alerus

**Education:** Bachelor of music, University of Wisconsin-Madison; master of music, Michigan State University

**Family:** Husband, Dick; two children, Samantha and Amanda

While studying music throughout college, Sara Ausman kept an eye on finance -- after all, that's the field her first job was in. So as she makes sweet music for her clients at Alerus, she also leads the way for the company's Twin Cities region.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

It's fair to say my career has been shaped by change. I've worked in financial services since I was 16 and the challenges I've faced along the way helped me discover and develop leadership abilities. And having been through seven acquisitions over the years, my approach has been about embracing change and learning when to take risks.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I lead over 100 professionals spread across the metro area. We're a full-service financial company, so much of my work involves developing strategies to help position our company as

one that can meet the diverse needs of people in our communities, whether through banking, retirement, mortgage, wealth management or a combination. I also lead our charitable giving efforts in the Twin Cities, and that is an incredibly fulfilling aspect of my job.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

I'm fortunate to have a great network of people who are passionate about the community, and sometimes the only piece missing is leadership or vision. Quite often I'll be contacted by groups with great ideas and incredible spirit [that] are looking for a leader, and it is humbling and gratifying to be asked to fill that role.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Trust yourself and accept opportunities with eagerness and confidence. Approach things with an executive presence, stay calm and be objective.

I would say that confidence is key in this field, as is the ability to surround yourself with great people. If you are confident in yourself, then you can lead by example, which I've found is often the best way to lead. And having talented people around you keeps you fresh, helps you learn, and makes you more effective.

—DAN HEILMAN



# Anna Berge

**Title/Company:** Vice president of technology, Bridgewater Bank

**Family:** Husband, Phil; daughters, Isabella and Anasophia

Anna Berge came from a background of lots of strong women. She learned early on to take risks, and she advises other women in IT to do the same. “You’ll never regret the risks you took, even if they don’t turn out the way you meant them to,” she said. “It’s only the risks you didn’t take that you regret.”

**What’s the biggest turning point in your career, and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

I took a computer class on a whim. A manufacturing plant in Wausau, Wisconsin, was bringing computers in for the first time and offered me a training position. I trained about 400 people who had never touched a mouse, a computer. It was really life-changing.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I evaluate technological trends, develop multifaceted cyber-

security programs and manage the technology team.

**What’s your proudest community achievement?**

Eight years ago, I started this group for women who had just emigrated from Latin America, to teach some of the subtleties of living in a new country. It was super-rewarding to see the confidence that they carried forward. They each went out and mentored someone else. That’s the best part, when you see that circle keep growing with ripples.

**What’s the best advice you received from a mentor, and what’s your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice given was from my grandmother. She said, “If you really want to learn something, do it for 20 minutes a day, every day. It will make you an expert in anything.” It completely changed my mindset.

To women entering my field, take risks, take chances, try new things. You’ll never regret the risks you took, even if they don’t turn out the way you meant them to. It’s only the risks you didn’t take that you regret.

—NANCY CROTTI







# Brenda Brannan

**Title/Company:** Chief wealth management officer, North Shore Bank of Commerce

**Education:** Started in banking 30 years ago, joined North Shore Bank of Commerce in 1984 and worked her way up through the ranks.

**Family:** Husband, Rob; children, Patrick, Jessica and Angela; five grandchildren

Brenda Brannan knew she wanted a career in banking from the get-go. A passion for learning and a fascination with the industry propelled her to where she is today. She says that 30 years later, building long-term client relationships and helping people realize their dreams is still at the heart of what she does each day.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

Observing the leadership at North Shore Bank and seeing their enthusiasm as bankers took my career in a progressive direction. Early on, I learned that to provide the best customer experience I needed to keep my client's interests at the forefront as well as North Shore Bank's.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I'm responsible for the vision, strategy and profitability of our Investments & Trust and Private Banking divisions. I also support and manage a team of 25 professionals who help their clients choose the best financial strategies to meet their goals.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

My most humbling community experience was being a client interviewer at a local food shelf. Serving on the board of a nonprofit or foundation brings great value to the organization, but interacting at the service level and meeting the clients that the nonprofit serves provided me with a firsthand understanding of that organization's mission and the impact it has in our community.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Be the obvious choice. Whether it's a position you are aiming for or a new business or engaging new staff members, make yourself or your organization the obvious choice. My advice is to be adventurous in your career, think outside the box, have a passion for learning and share what you know.

—JULIE SWILER





# Lisa Buetow

**Title/Company:** Private banking manager, Abbott Downing

**Education:** B.S.B., finance; MBA, Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota

**Family:** Husband, Phil; daughters, Isabella and Anasophia

Lisa Buetow discovered at a young age she had a talent for numbers. Yet when she went to college she initially sought a career in psychology before changing majors to finance. Then came a banking career.

“Numbers is my language but I also have a strong interest in people,” Buetow said. “Banking allows me to combine those two skill sets to serve our clients.”

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

The biggest transition event I experienced in my career was going through a reorganization and job displacement eight years ago when I was nine months pregnant. The combination of circumstances was overwhelming, but Wells Fargo quickly offered me a new role.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I'm responsible for leading a team of bankers to deliver credit and deposit solutions for our clients. I also spend time with our key stakeholders and help develop rising talent.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

In college I began mentoring a girl through Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities and we were matched for six years. We went through many life experiences together and I think about her often.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

My first boss told me some leadership roles require you to marinate a bit before you reach your potential in that position. My advice would be to find good partners in your journey, don't be shy about asking for opportunities, and have fun.

—FRANK JOSSI





# Amy Burma

**Title/Company:** Assistant vice president, branch operations and sales support manager, MidCountry Bank

**Education:** B.S., business administration, Metropolitan State University

**Family:** Husband, Matt; daughter, Addison; son, Brayden

Amy Burma, assistant vice president of branch operations and sales support manager at MidCountry Bank, followed her mother into banking.

Burma saw the opportunities her mother had to develop and grow in the industry, and has achieved similar growth in her own career.

Burma, who joined MidCountry five years ago, was promoted to her present role last year.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

It was the transition — when I started at MidCountry Bank — expanding my role from working on the credit side with small businesses to understanding the many different aspects of branch operations.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I'm responsible for many of the different operational components of the branch network and ensuring that they're all functioning together. I focus on keeping the branch sales team and customer at the forefront of any decisions that I make.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

I began serving on the board of education at Trinity Lone Oak Lutheran School four years ago. It's been an opportunity to set long-term strategy for the school and make decisions supporting that long-term strategy. I help coordinate a large annual fund-raiser. What I enjoy the most is seeing the direct impact that has on the children of the school every single day.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

What resonates with me the most is my mom simply telling me, "You've got this." That ties into the advice I would give others: Be confident in your decisions and build a great network of mentors around you.

The other thing that I would tell women coming in is to learn early on that there is no exact formula for the work-life balance; find what works for you and your family.

—TODD NELSON



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## Do you know a company or individual that is driving business and industrial growth in Minnesota?

The Progress Minnesota awards were established to encourage, promote and honor entrepreneurs and organizations from across the state who, by their investment of time, energy and ideas, are having a significant impact on job creation, business development and the overall economic health of the Twin Cities and the entire state.

**Please nominate for Progress Minnesota 2018 based on one of the following categories:**

- 1. Economic Development**
- 2. Workforce Development**
- 3. Technology**
- 4. Entrepreneur**
- 5. Other**

## Nominations due January 12, 2018

Nominate at [www.finance-commerce.com](http://www.finance-commerce.com), click on "Events"

### Event Details

**When:** Thursday April 5th, 2018  
5:00pm | Registration and dinner  
6:30pm | Awards presentation

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For questions or comments, please contact Event Manager Kelsey Broadwell  
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# Jill Campbell

**Title/Company:** Executive director, Cushman & Wakefield

**Education:** B.S., elementary education, University Wisconsin-Superior

**Family:** Husband, Corey; two children

Both at Cushman & Wakefield and throughout her industry, Jill Campbell is known as an expert adviser of her clients, finding ways to save them money that they often didn't know existed. Campbell also works hard to stay on top of the latest regulatory trends, and she passes that expertise on to each of her clients.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

We had a company reorganization in 2010. A fork in the road forced me to make a choice between supporting internal teams or to continue on with client services. I chose to continue to be a trusted adviser to clients. I enjoyed having the ability to effect positive change with our clients and to establish and maintain those trusted relationship with clients.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

Technology development and implementation to stabilization for new clients in portfolio administration (lease administration). Also, implementation and process mapping to assist clients to be prepared for upcoming lease accounting changes related to new FASB regulations/guidelines; management oversight for ongoing lease abstraction, CAM audits, and rent payment processing; department budgeting; financial reporting; process review; new business development and client relationship management.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

Annual volunteer events, monetary donations and being a part of The Clubhouse Circle. The founders supported the opening ongoing operation of Gilda's Club Twin Cities, which provides cancer care support to entire families.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Stay curious and have the ability to know what questions to ask. Be intentional and genuine.

—DAN HEILMAN





## MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR CLIENTS AND OUR COMMUNITY

*Congratulations to Lisa Buetow for being named a 2017 Finance & Commerce Top Women in Finance Honoree*

We consider it a great honor to celebrate the heartfelt commitment of Lisa Buetow, Managing Director of Private Banking in our Minneapolis office, on making a positive impact in the lives of Abbot Downing clients and those within our community.

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# Melissa Deike

**Title/Company:** Vice president of business development and cash management, Bell Bank

**Education:** B.S., human resource management, Winona State University

**Family:** Husband, Jason; son, Daxton

In her nearly two decades in the banking industry, Melissa Deike has worked in different areas from lending and operations to human resources, sales and marketing. She says some of her greatest professional growth has occurred since she was affected by a corporate reorganization.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

Despite performing at a high level, my position was eliminated in 2013. This event caused me to question my career path. It was one of the best things that happened to me, because I realized my job and what I do daily are second compared to the people and the organization I work with and for. Now I place much more emphasis on aligning my values with my employer's.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I work in new business development. And the second piece of it is cash management where the bank provides various depository solutions for our commercial clients so they can manage their cash flow; keep it safe and not have to go into a bank.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

Bell Bank does a "Pay it Forward" program every year. The bank gives every full-time employee \$1,000 each year to give away wherever they see the greatest need. Last year, I heard about a family who had a 4-year-old daughter battling leukemia. I got together a group of co-workers here and we gave \$13,000 to this family.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice from a mentor is that family is always number one. This was another reason that attracted me to Bell. They place a very high value on families. I recently took a maternity leave. I was encouraged to enjoy that time and assured that the work would be waiting for me when I came back.

The best advice I would have to women entering the field is just be a consistent you. Stay true to who you are.

—SCOTT CARLSON



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# Julie Drewes

**Title/Company:** Shareholder, director and vice president of Briggs and Morgan, P.A.

**Education:** J.D., University of Minnesota Law School; B.S., chemistry, Bradley University

**Family:** Husband, Matt, daughter, Ella, and son, Eli

Julie Drewes strives to give her legal clients the best service while meeting her family's needs. The skills she learned while doing both has boosted her law practice. Drewes advises other women lawyers to seek a work setting that allows them to do the same.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

I transitioned to being a shareholder at the firm at about the same time that we were blessed with our second child. I had to learn how to be a master planner and organizer while growing in leadership roles within the firm and with outside client relationships. Those skills really helped me to grow my own practice at the firm.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I practice commercial real estate and finance law, repre-

senting real estate investment trusts and real estate funds in the acquisition, development, disposition and financing of their assets.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

Our firm's real estate and finance section came together as a team to help to build a Habitat for Humanity house in Minneapolis.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice from a mentor was never to underestimate the value of client service. Many qualified attorneys can do a competent job. We differentiate ourselves by seeking to understand deeply what each client needs and delivering the highest quality product timely and efficiently.

My advice to other women: We need to understand our goals, priorities and limitations. It is important to be present in our children's lives as much as possible while also servicing clients, and this is always a work in progress. Stay as flexible as you can and seek a group of people to work with who will support you in that endeavor.

—NANCY CROTTI







# Sonja Dusil

**Title/Company:** First vice president, Institutional Properties, CBRE

**Education:** B.A., marketing and advertising, University of Northern Iowa

**Family:** Husband, Harlan Rossmann; five children

As an investment professional, Sonja Dusil and her Institutional Properties team at CBRE provide advisory and brokerage services for complex real estate transactions. Since 2005, the team has completed 196 sale assignments totaling \$6.72 billion. Dusil joined CBRE in 2015 after spending 18 years at Cushman & Wakefield/NorthMarq.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

I received a sales job offer that required me to get my real estate license and negotiate the placement of cell towers to operate the Sprint cellphone network. I negotiated with building owners, land owners and municipalities to locate the equipment on water towers and rooftops. That led me into a more traditional [commercial real estate] role where I built my career over the course of 18 years.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I'm a part of the team that specializes in major investment transactions for single- and multi-tenant office and industrial properties. Our team evaluates, values, and implements a specialized disposition strategy for assets here in Minneapolis and across the country.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

I have been very involved in the local NAIOP chapter (National Association of Industrial and Office Properties), serving on several committees, the board and as president of the 650-member Minneapolis chapter.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Work hard, do great work and be good to people and treat all with respect in both business and in your personal life, and it will come back to you tenfold.

As for advice for women entering the field, find the support of a few key senior people in the industry and ask them to be your mentor, meet with them regularly, don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions and don't be afraid to ask for help.

—DAN HEILMAN



# Lesley Farmer

**Title/Company:** Business development, portfolio manager, KLC Financial Inc.

**Education:** B.A., International Business with a focus on Asian studies, College of St. Scholastica

**Family:** Daughter, Kaidence; son, Bennett

Lesley Farmer grew up on a farm with four brothers, an experience she describes as life sculpting. It taught her to work hard and have a positive attitude.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

I was 25 years old, had just had my first child and purchased a new home. I took the plunge and started a new career that was 100 percent commission. Twelve years later, I'm still here. Taking a chance on an opportunity at a time that wasn't ideal turned out to be the best decision I ever made.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I help companies secure financing and leases for capital equipment. It's very relationship-oriented. I act as a consultant for my

customers and become their partner on everything from picking the right equipment to the right financing. Part of my job is to make sure they are growing and successful. I develop mutually beneficial connections by networking in different industries like accounting, software and insurance so I can refer my customers to vendors that meet their needs.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

Giving back to my children's school. I just ended my term as PTA president. We helped with fundraising and other projects. Last year we brought mindfulness learning into the school to help children deal with daily stresses.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

My mentors, Karen Turnquist and Erin Procko, always demonstrate the utmost class and professionalism. I learned from them to be respectful and express confidence.

I respect the women under me. My advice to them is to be classy, courteous and nice. That is the way to grow in your career in this industry and in any industry.

—JULIE SWILERI





# Jill Farrington

**Title/Company:** Partner, KPMG LLP

**Education:** B.S., business administration, Creighton University

**Family:** Husband, Bret; three children, Joey, Ryan and Katie

Jill Farrington has learned when to listen to suggestions and when to let them pass. Some represent opportunities to grow and develop professionally; others would lead you to behave contrary to your true nature. Be open, she advises, and stay true to yourself.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

I had two. First was being admitted to the partnership. The second was taking a national role in our insurance practice. That exposed me to many of the services that we offer across the firm and to many people at a national level. That has really enabled me in my role today as leader of the Minneapolis office's advisory practice. It gave me a better understanding of what I can bring to my clients, and exposure to a lot of leadership styles and ways of working.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I am lead partner for several of the largest accounts in the

Minneapolis marketplace, which includes Iowa. I also manage and oversee our practice of IT and the risk consulting professionals in the Minneapolis office.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

The work that I've done with underprivileged youth through Big Brothers Big Sisters and the KPMG Family for Literacy program, and my volunteer work within the schools.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice I received is to really think about building your teams -- that you can maximize your impact if you enable and empower your team members to operate at their highest potential.

My advice to other women is to take chances, be open to new opportunities, including when those around you ask you to try something new. People see in you things that you might not necessarily see in yourself. Every opportunity is a chance to grow and develop. Stay true to your style. Don't change and compromise because other people think you should. Be yourself.

—NANCY CROTTI



# CONGRATULATIONS JENNIFER!

We proudly congratulate Jennifer Harazin on being selected a Top Women In Finance from *Finance & Commerce*.

Over the years Jennifer has had a tremendous impact on our industry. She is truly an inspiration to all and we are very fortunate to have her as part of the AMEC family.



**JENNIFER HARAZIN**

**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**



# Joan Foley

**Title/Company:** Director of accounting services, U.S. Water

**Education:** B.S., accounting and business administration (minor), Winona State University

**Family:** Fiance, Chris Peterson

Joan Foley came onboard at U.S. Water in June 2016, but she's already made quite a mark. With a staff of 13 at her disposal, she spearheaded a manual-to-automated billing transition; decreased U.S. Water's aged accounts receivable and bad debt allowance by at least 40 percent; reduced billing errors by 15 percent; and dramatically improved the company's enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

When she's not working on U.S. Water's balance sheet, Foley generously donates her time to charities and community organizations like Habitat for Humanity, Feed My Starving Children, and Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

My biggest career turning point was definitely transitioning from public to private accounting. Along the way, I met my mentor, [past Top Women in Finance honoree] Denise Doll-Kiefer. She helped me move out of my comfort zone into new roles and responsibilities that ultimately made me more effective at the core functions of my job.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I oversee all accounts receivable and accounts payable at U.S. Water. I handle all revenue-related functions and I'm the in-house ERP system expert as well. I jokingly refer to myself as the "garbage can of the finance and accounting team." If there's an issue, it comes to me.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

I'm from Green Isle, Minnesota — a tiny town in the south-central part of the state. Over a decade ago, when a high school friend was diagnosed with breast cancer, a group of us started a fund to help with her medical expenses. I served as a board member.

After she passed away, the fund continued in her memory. It's helped 15-plus local families with medical expenses and related costs in the years since.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice I've gotten is: Work hard, play hard. Put in the time necessary to understand and own your responsibilities, but always be ready and willing to celebrate your successes and take time away from work. You've earned it.

I tell young women getting into this business not to lean on preconceived notions or expectations. You're not owed or entitled to anything, but you can achieve anything if you put the time and effort into it.

—BRIAN MARTUCCI



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Northwestern Mutual is proud to recognize Katherine Forrester Schneewind for all she does in her work and in the community. Congratulations in being recognized as one of this year's Top Women in Finance honorees!



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# Kate Gillette

**Title/Company:** Vice president, Avison Young

**Education:** B.S., architecture, University of Minnesota

**Family:** Husband, Justin; son, Preston

Kate Gillette, vice president in the Minneapolis office of Toronto-based Avison Young, dedicates much of her time to working with an underserved group: nonprofit organizations.

Gillette runs a nonprofit practice helping these organizations renew leases, relocate, expand or purchase property.

"I love to show them the possibilities, that they can have a great space on their budget. I joke that my specialty is moving people from the basement to the upper level," Gillette said.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

In 2015 we left our previous company to open the Minnesota office for Avison Young. Later that year I had my first child. This life-changing event plus taking time away from day-to-day business put things in focus. I had worked with several nonprofits and started to feel more and more that my calling was to work with these organizations.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I spend the majority of my time working with clients. A large part of our work is in strategic real estate planning. We start working as early as several years in advance to help them understand the financial implications.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

I have had the opportunity of founding and chairing the Women's Committee at the Minneapolis Club for the last 4½ years. We have brought together women of all ages and backgrounds throughout the community, not just members.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. Whether in my career or when volunteering, I have learned the value of having a great team.

For women entering the field, find a great mentor/champion within your company.

—TODD NELSON





# Lindsay Ginter

**Title/Company:** Senior vice president, JLT Re North America Inc.

**Education:** B.A., economics, Concordia College, Moorhead

**Family:** Husband, Jeremy; sons, Evan, 9, and Edward, 5

Lindsay Ginter worked comfortably for several years in a sales job in reinsurance. Then she moved into reinsurance operations with a new employer. That switch ignited her career and opened the door to other opportunities.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

In 2008 I transitioned to the operations side of reinsurance when I went to Wells Fargo. It was a significant shift for me to finally be in something that I was passionate about. Finding my place in operations led me to be part of a small team that founded a start-up company, StoneHill Reinsurance Partners, in 2012.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

JLT, which is a reinsurance intermediary, did not have a presence in the Minneapolis market. I focus on building our

brand in the Twin Cities.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

It is a grass-roots fundraiser called the Pine Tree Apple Tennis Classic. We have been on the fundraising committee over the last five years. My oldest son, at six months old, was diagnosed with an extremely rare tumor on the lung called pleuropulmonary blastoma. My son now is 9 and is doing great. This local fundraiser is single-handedly funding the research at Children's Hospital of Minnesota for my son's type of cancer. It raises about \$300,000 annually.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

One of the first women I worked with -- when I was particularly stressed out about something -- said to me, "We aren't saving lives here, Lindsay; it's just reinsurance." That phrase is a reminder that while the work we do is significant, we can't take ourselves so seriously that we don't take risks.

There are not many women in reinsurance. My advice is to look into it. There are so many paths you can take and the skills you use are endless.

—SCOTT CARLSON





# Laura Groppoli

**Title/Company:** Firm director, Baker Tilly Virchow Krause LLP

**Education:** BBA double major, finance and accounting, Concordia University, St. Paul

**Family:** Husband, Mark; two children, Alaina, 6, Benjamin, 4

As early as high school, Laura Groppoli imagined she'd end up working with numbers. She had an analytical mind and was good at math. So it was no surprise that she majored in finance and accounting. Her intuitive facility with numbers coupled with her engaging personality prompted at least one client to describe her as "the friendly auditor."

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

It's been an evolution. After graduation, I was at a small firm doing primarily tax. I joined Baker Tilly to work on more complex issues and was hired as a tax senior. But I became involved in audits, and I found out I was good at it. So I switched from tax to audit, with a focus on public companies and technical accounting.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I'm a firm audit director, where I have signing authority on private company audits. I've maintained a strong attachment to

the SEC world, so I'm still involved in the technical aspect of public company work. I'm also involved in the firm's technical assurance practice, where I focus on manufacturing and commercial clients with respect to quality and technical guidance.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

In addition to being involved in my daughter's school, I've been fundraising for the Walk for Animals for more than 10 years. Within Baker Tilly, I'm involved with our GROW committee (growth and retention of women).

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

My mom would always tell me, "Don't borrow trouble." In other words, don't worry about what might happen, because most of it doesn't.

I've been on a reduced work schedule since my daughter was born. Public accounting is a high-stress industry, and people can burn out. When I coach women on how to make their flexible work arrangements successful, I advise them to think long-term. Choose projects and challenges that help move you forward while achieving a better work/life balance.

—LIZ WARD



# April Hamlin

**Title/Company:** Partner, Lindquist & Vennum LLP

**Education:** B.A., English, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; J.D., William Mitchell College of Law (now Mitchell Hamline School of Law)

**Family:** Married with three children, Hazel, 6, Julius, 5, and Beatrix, 3

April Hamlin discovered and, as she says, “fell in love with” the corporate securities practice after someone she considers a mentor asked her to work on a project. Following a second opportunity to work in the same subject area, she became the firm’s expert on it. A self-described nerd about language and words, she says the area of securities is a perfect fit because it’s so focused on communicating.

**What’s the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

After my second year of law school, I worked as a summer associate in a large law firm in the Twin Cities and received a job offer to return after graduation. I was very excited to start my third year of law school with an offer in hand, but while I was studying for the bar exam, I learned the firm was closing. I was shocked — my sure thing had disappeared. Several hundred lawyers with more experience than I flooded the market.

Fortunately, I was hired at Lindquist, where I had been a clerk during my second year of law school.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I’m a corporate and securities lawyer, acting as outside general counsel to public companies, with a focus on securities compliance. Raising capital is a significant part of what I do for private companies, after which I become their outside general counsel.

**What’s your proudest community achievement?**

I’ve been involved in Lindquist’s Winter Closet Foundation, which raises money to buy coats for kids in need. I’m co-chair this year and we are celebrating the foundation’s 25th year.

**What’s the best advice you received from a mentor, and what’s your best advice to women entering your field?**

I’ve been lucky to have several great mentors at Lindquist. The best advice came through watching them work — understanding their work habits and client skills that made them successful. My advice to women is to be tenacious and direct your own course. Be open to learning, to doing things differently, and be coachable, especially in this profession.

—LIZ WARD







# Jennifer Harazin

**Title/Company:** COO, American Mortgage and Equity Consultants

**Family:** Husband, Dale; two children

Jennifer Harazin took the unconventional route of bypassing college and jumping into the business world at age 19. From there, she built American Mortgage and Equity Consultants from a small local mortgage company to a national mortgage lender, taking it into unfamiliar terrain such as construction lending.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

In 1984 I applied for a supervisor position. I was only 23. The manager at the time saw in me a skill with people and gave me a chance. It wasn't a popular decision — there were many people older than I who, truth be told, were probably more qualified. But they went out on a limb, and that opened a lot of doors for me.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I run the day-to-day operations and oversight of the company.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

We are involved in a lot of different charities. I spend a lot of time on those. We sponsor families in need and we do a lot of work with military veterans.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice I've received from a mentor is to be respectful of people — treat your employees with respect, and you'll have their loyalty. That has been the cornerstone of my entire career. I have a lot of loyalty for my staff. They've followed me through a couple of different employers because they know I have their backs.

As for women going into finance, I would say: Know the topic, know your industry and know your audience. And never be afraid to be yourself.

—DAN HEILMAN



# Laura Groppoli

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# Crystal Hatcher

**Title/Company:** Senior vice president, chief information officer and chief risk management officer, Venture Bank

**Education:** B.S., economics, Washburn University

A Kansas native, Crystal Hatcher received a job offer after college from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. and was given the choice of either staying in her home state or heading north.

“My professors encouraged me to select Minneapolis because it had so many Fortune 500s, and I did, without having ever been to Minneapolis,” she said. “That was 1989 and I’ve never left.”

**What’s the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

I was approached by the founders of a then-startup, Venture Bank, in 2000. I said I was all in, but it was scary because they wanted me to manage departments and functions that I had never been involved in before. We opened in 2001.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

As the CIO, I oversee cyber security, information security, business continuity, and vendor management. In the CRMO role I oversee internal audit, compliance and risk management. I also lead strategic planning.

**What’s your proudest community achievement?**

I would say serving on the board of The Link for nine years and as board chair for three of those years. The Link deals with youth and families experiencing poverty, homelessness and other social injustice. When I started, there were around 15 employees; when I left there were over 100. The budget went from \$350,000 to more than \$7 million.

**What’s the best advice you received from a mentor, and what’s your best advice to women entering your field?**

The biggest thing is to be confident, but not overly confident. Also, you can’t be afraid to admit you don’t know the answer — don’t make them up on the fly.

—FRANK JOSSI

# ***Congratulations***

***Top Women in Finance Honoree Melissa Deike***



*Melissa Deike,*  
VP / Cash Management & Business Development

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# Jennifer Hosfeld

**Title/Company:** Senior vice president of community banking, Think Mutual Bank

**Education:** B.S., economics, Washington University; MBA, University of St. Thomas

**Family:** Husband, Michael; son, Austin

Women can be too tough on themselves, Jennifer Hosfeld says. She believes they should have confidence in their skills and their ability to learn and excel in new areas. Hosfeld advises women in her field to take chances and give themselves more credit for what they know and what they can do.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

An ethics and values class in my MBA program led me to think about the importance of a company's values and how they should align with your personal values. That's why I sought this opportunity at Think Mutual Bank. The purpose of work is much more than the day-to-day activities of the job. There has to be a deeper meaning.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I oversee the front-line sales teams for our consumer and

business banking divisions.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

Through the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce and Rochester Area Economic Development Inc., I have been working on the Journey to Growth initiative. It's about how we build and support our economic community. It's about building a stronger community for the business sector, housing needs, arts and culture, and education.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

It's the same. Be true to who you are and have confidence in your abilities. It's so easy to lack confidence or think you don't have all the skill sets to do a job. I think too often women in particular are really tough on themselves and aren't going to raise their hand for an opportunity until they're 110 percent qualified for the job. It's important that we start going for opportunities when we're 50 percent qualified for the job, because we're probably more qualified than we're giving ourselves credit for.

—NANCY CROTTI



# CONGRATULATIONS DOROTHY MOORES

KleinBank is proud to recognize Dorothy for being named a 2017 Top Women in Finance honoree. Her tireless dedication to KleinBank and her community serves as a shining example of the Core Values that we live by each and every day.

**KleinBank**





# Heidi Hukriede

**Title/Company:** Founder and portfolio manager, Stonebridge Capital Advisors

**Education:** B.A., economics, St. Olaf College; chartered financial analyst, CFA Institute

**Family:** Husband, Brian; daughters, Isabelle and Emma

Over the past 20 years, Heidi Hukriede has helped grow the firm she founded from a scrappy, three-person outfit into a 23-person boutique investment advisory firm specializing in customized investment management strategies for individuals, small institutions, endowments, and foundations with between \$1 million and \$10 million in investable assets. (Stonebridge does work with smaller and larger clients.) As of earlier this year, Stonebridge had \$1.1 billion in assets under management.

Every year, Stonebridge partners with a different Minnesota nonprofit. This year, Hukriede helped organize CommonBond Communities' well-attended cookout at the Upper Post Veterans Community development near Fort Snelling.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

I started my career in the trust department at Norwest Bank [which merged with Wells Fargo in 1998]. At a larger corporation, you're in a box, and it's difficult to break out. So, the biggest turning point for me was meeting Dennis Hippen and Bob Kincade, and earning opportunity to found a fledgling company — Stonebridge Capital Advisors — with them. We resolved to work with our clients, not just to manage their assets, but to find investment solutions to fit their needs.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

As an owner, I wear lots of hats — I definitely don't live in a box. We [owners] are all responsible for maintaining and strengthening client relationships — not just managing products for them, but focusing on their unique goals and objectives. [Stonebridge] works together as a team, so even though my expertise is in fixed income securities, I also play a role on the equity team. Our strategies involve blends of fixed-income securities and equities, so it's important to maintain a big-picture view of the market.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

I'm proud that I've been able to teach my kids the value of community service. With two teenage girls, that's not a given. They volunteer through our church, go on mission trips, and our youngest is involved with a volunteer organization through high school. [My husband] Brian and I are very proud of them.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice I've ever received is, don't be intimidated by the finance industry's dominant culture. This industry is very male-dominated. When I first started going to CFA networking events, in the 1990s, I could count the women in the room on one hand.

I worked with two women who became my mentors — Joan Smith and Pat Hovanitz, both of whom managed Norwest Trust's municipal bond mutual funds — who did their own thing fearlessly. They would tell me, "Don't be afraid, you're smarter than them" — meaning the old boys' club.

What I tell women coming up in finance is simple: Be confident, be yourself, and don't let the old boys' club get you down.

—BRIAN MARTUCCI



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# Barb Juelich

**Title/Company:** Chief financial officer, Department of Natural Resources

**Education:** B.A., business administration, University of St. Thomas

**Family:** Husband, Jim; son, Michael; daughter, Mary

Barb Juelich likely wouldn't be chief financial officer of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources if she hadn't taken a leap into the "great unknown."

That leap was to MNSure, where Juelich was the third hire at a state agency getting built from scratch.

She had no idea what she was getting into. But surviving MNSure empowered Juelich, after 25 years in health and human services finance, to take her next leap, to the DNR.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

I learned to overcome a fear of failure and take risks. Six years ago I took the job of CFO for MNSure. I learned to work through the unknown and accept the results as the best outcome because you put your best into it.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I oversee the Office of Management and Budget at the Department of Natural Resources. This includes financial management, procurement, contracts, budget, grant management, financial reporting, and policy and planning activities for the agency. DNR has a \$500 million annual budget, across seven major divisions.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

I sat on my parish finance counsel for six years. We faced reduced revenues and program reductions as well as a fairly large debt. In working with the community, we were able to secure lower finance rates for the loan and pay down two-thirds of the more than \$1 million in debt. We did not have to make additional reductions to programming.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Trust yourself. Let go of your self-doubt and don't be afraid to fail. As mentioned earlier, I had a fear of failure. Now I would say don't be afraid of failing, be afraid of not trying.

—TODD NELSON





# Anne Kiefer

**Title/Company:** Senior vice president and financial adviser, RBC Wealth Management

**Education:** B.S. in business-to-business sales, University of St. Catherine

**Family:** Husband, Rick; children, Kelsey and Richard; one grandson

Angela ‘Anne’ Kiefer has learned the challenges and rewards of taking risks in her professional life.

At age 47, Kiefer returned to school and earned her college degree. The added schooling enabled her to move from being an investment associate to her current role as an executive at RBC Wealth Management. Between those two jobs, Kiefer experienced a “bumpy ride” because “the thing that I chose to transition to initially didn’t work out. Then, I had to come up with a plan B.”

Kiefer has worked a combined 12 years at RBC Wealth Management, interspersed with a six-year stint at Wachovia Securities.

**What’s the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

Making a change from the administrative/support side of the financial services business to getting into an individual,

direct-run practice. I realized I needed to take more risks in my personal career.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

To help the families that I work with reach their financial goals – to create something that is highly customized to get them to the point where they can enjoy life and do the things they want to do. There is a lot that goes into that responsibility: the planning and organization, the investments, the allocations, the discipline, market history, rules and regulations.

**What’s your proudest community achievement?**

Probably being engaged within my church, Minnetonka United Methodist Church, and helping our faith-based community build a legacy fund. It has been going since about 2004.

**What’s the best advice you received from a mentor, and what’s your best advice to women entering your field?**

It was from a college professor who said you really can do all of those things that you are afraid to do. You just have to develop the confidence that you can do it.

My best advice to the women in our field is take the risks when you are younger.

—SCOTT CARLSON





# Julie Kimble

**Title/Company:** Founder and president, KimbleCo

**Education:** Studied business finance at the University of St. Catherine in St. Paul

**Family:** Husband of 33 years; two adult children and a son-in-law who live nearby

Before opening her real estate consulting and brokerage firm in 2014, Julie Kimble rose through the ranks of commercial real estate to become one of the top women executives at Opus Corp., developing numerous office and industrial buildings. As vice president at Johnson Controls, she led a global real estate account based in London. Parlaying her extensive experience in real estate and economic development, her firm is providing development services for and is co-leasing the new 428 Minnesota building in downtown St. Paul.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

It wasn't any one event. I literally stumbled into the real estate field and learned to love it. There was a series of opportunities that provided breadth and depth in our industry. I've worked in commercial real estate, with most of my career in development. I've also been involved in economic development/asset management and facilities outsourcing.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I'm the founder and president of a small, growing company that has been in business for three years. I do everything from vision and strategy to business development and execution. And then I change the copy paper!

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

The first that comes to mind is my nine years serving on the board of Feed My Starving Children. During my tenure, I joined them on a life-changing mission trip to Haiti. The great need there was eye-opening, which is saying a lot because I'd seen poverty in the Philippines when I lived there.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Back when there were few women in the field, I had a great male mentor. A young woman could easily become intimidated, and he addressed it directly, encouraging me to get out there and be involved in the industry, to let go of insecurities. The advice I share is to have integrity no matter what. I'm transparent about my strong faith. It's my compass and the reason for the company's success. It's really not about me.

—LIZ WARD

# Leadership in action



Bremer is proud to congratulate Connie Stein on her recognition as a *Top Woman in Finance*. We applaud her strategic vision and unwavering commitment to her colleagues, our company and the broader community. From strong financial management and identifying growth strategies to collaborating with others to advance the business, Connie consistently models what it takes to be a trusted business partner.

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*Congratulations Connie.*

Thank you for your exceptional leadership and service.





# Merrill King

**Title/Company:** Finance director and treasurer, city of Minnetonka

**Education:** B.A., political science, Princeton University; master's degree, public affairs, University of Texas at Austin

**Family:** Husband, Alan Rauch; two sons

In her 13 years with the city of Minnetonka, Merrill King has helped the city consistently gain a Moody's AAA bond rating -- held by only 6 percent of cities nationwide. During that time, Minnetonka has been annually awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

My career was a progression of experiences. My first job out of college was with the city of Dallas. My first thought was that I would work to become a city manager. I also spent a stint at the state government level. I found that a lot of those skills were transferable, but local government has a lot of its own distinctive qualities. So, being recruited for this job was a big turning point because it was a return to what I kind of wanted to

do all along. Being a finance director is really my niche.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I develop and manage city finances with an annual operating budget of \$32 million, annual capital budget of \$33 million, enterprise annual budgets of \$15 million, and an investment portfolio of \$92 million. I'm responsible for budgeting, accounting, AP, AR, payroll, treasury/investing, debt, comprehensive annual financial report, property assessment, water/sewer utility billing and managing a department of 13 employees.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

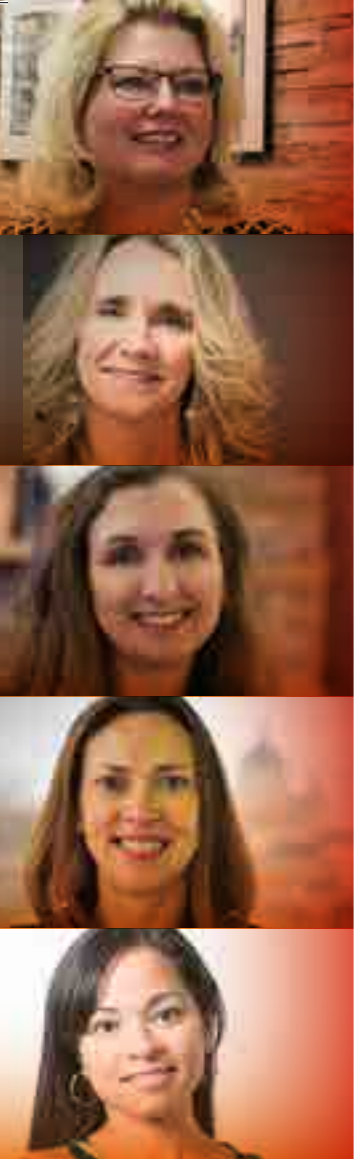
My work with the Boy Scouts of America when my sons were young. That was very meaningful and a lot of fun.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice I've gotten is to do the right thing for the right reason at the right time.

I would tell women going into finance, don't be intimidated. You are competitive, and you bring skills that some men don't have. You'll do great.

—DAN HEILMAN



*Pictured (from top left): Chris Albrecht, SVP, SBA Manager; Terri Banaszewski, VP Business Development; Nichol Beckstrand, President; Amanda Swoverland, SVP, Enterprise Risk Management; Tana Rugel, Director of Risk Relations; Aleesha Webb, SVP, Commercial Officer.*

Welcome to the Club! Aleesha Webb joins five other impactful Sunrise women as a Top Woman in Finance.



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# Nicole Knuckles

**Title/Company:** Regional diverse segments manager, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage; charitable giving manager, Wells Fargo Housing Foundation

**Education:** B.A., interdepartmental studies titled, “Perspectives on Social Inequality and Difference,” University of Minnesota; M.P.A., housing and community development, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

**Family:** Husband, Lance; son, Clifton; blended family of six

Nicole Knuckles comes from a humble background but learned the power of money after entering the world of finance. Focusing on financial education particularly for low- and moderate-income households, she has helped the Wells Fargo Housing Foundation make more than \$11 million in charitable investments and \$24 million in down-payment assistance to home buyers.

**What’s the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

In 2007, the year that I had my son and the housing market and economy started to decline rapidly ... I stepped back into a sales role at Well Fargo Home Mortgage, started graduate school and began to look at the direction of my career. Studying housing and community development while I was in a career transition allowed me to become laser-focused on doing specif-

ic work that I love.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

My primary responsibilities are to facilitate market growth and business development opportunity within diverse segments and to make strategic philanthropy decisions to strengthen diverse communities. I’m responsible for Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota with a team of over 300 people.

**What’s your proudest community achievement?**

“Make Money Work” is a PBS/Twin Cities Public Television documentary series about finance and money within ethnically diverse communities – their experience about how they make money work within their families and communities. I was a project adviser and earned a 2016 Emmy within the business/consumer category.

**What’s the best advice you received from a mentor, and what’s your best advice to women entering your field?**

While I was working for Nordstrom putting myself through college, my manager Michelle said, “Nikki, if you do your very best in your current role, when you move on to future opportunities you’ll have an extremely high level of confidence in a job well done.” I still follow this advice.

—TODD NELSON





# Dorothy Moores

**Title/Company:** Consumer market manager, KleinBank

**Education:** On the job

**Family:** Husband, Steve; two adult daughters

Dorothy Moores began working for Citizens State Bank, which is now KleinBank, in Big Lake in 1977 and never left. Having grown from being a teller to serving in several management positions, she has no regrets. “All my training was on the job,” she said. “That’s really my education history — having great opportunities and learning by doing.”

**What’s the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

When the community bank I was working for was sold, I took time to reflect on my career and decided I wanted to continue working in the community where I lived. I can see now that was a very good decision.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I lead a team of branch managers. I provide support and

guidance, keeping them engaged while ensuring they reach for the values and expectations our company has established.

**What’s your proudest community achievement?**

The relationship I’ve had with the local school district. Over the years we’ve hosted many bank tours, visited classrooms and participated in Math Night by hosting our own money-counting activity. I’ve worked primarily with younger students to provide education on making good spending decisions, understanding finances and the importance of building a relationship with a banker.

**What’s the best advice you received from a mentor, and what’s your best advice to women entering your field?**

My best friend’s parents were instrumental in instilling my desire to be more by working hard and valuing family and friends. My advice is even if you don’t want to spend your career in banking, having a financial-related job will give you great life skills.

—FRANK JOSSI







# Janet Ogden-Brackett

**Title/Company:** Vice president of finance, Propel Nonprofits

**Education:** B.A., business, St. Thomas University

**Family:** Husband, Neil Brackett

Janet Ogden-Brackett believes successful leaders come from diverse career backgrounds. She's a case in point, having grown a small business, worked in a CPA firm and provided financial services to nonprofits.

In her 18 years with the Nonprofits Assistance Fund (which recently merged with MAP for Nonprofits to form Propel Nonprofits), she has helped grow the organization and helped nonprofits around the state create sound balance sheets. Achieving growth, for both Propel Nonprofits and the nonprofits it serves, is in her spirit.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

My first job in finance was at a popular Twin Cities nightclub, where I was promoted to manager after implementing cost-saving measures that significantly increased the bottom line. My next step was at a CPA firm where I practiced the rigor of financial accountability, but also learned that it wasn't the right environment for me. After working with a number of nonprofits on their financial issues, the big turning point came when the newly formed Nonprofit Assistance Fund created a

lender job. All my experience came together for a perfect fit.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

As a lender, we underwrite nonprofits. We look at their business model and find ways they can modify it for better cash flow and a stronger balance sheet. Many nonprofits don't have a dedicated financial position, so a big part of my job is teaching staff and board members about their financial situation. With this knowledge, they can make smart decisions and better tend to their mission.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

We make 150 loans a year, train around 3,000 people statewide and help start social enterprises. Propel Nonprofits offers free technical assistance — supported by the return on our investments — to any nonprofit. These organizations make our communities great and I help them have strong futures.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice I've received is "always take the high road, there is never any traffic." I pass this along to everyone with whom I work. When you elevate your conversation and expectations you get great things done.

—LIZ WARD



# Mary Quist-Newins

**Title/Company:** President and founder of Moneyweave LLC, Minneapolis

**Education:** MBA from Arizona State University; M.S. from American College of Financial Services; certified financial planner

**Family:** Husband, two children, three dogs and a cat

Women business owners in the boomer generation didn't have a lot of mentors, says Mary Quist-Newins. Those working in finance in particular made it up as they went along. Now Quist-Newins is president of the Minnesota chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners, which is bringing its conference -- and 1,000 women business owners -- to Minneapolis this year. She couldn't be prouder.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

In 1990, I was senior marketing manager for E. & J. Gallo Winery in Modesto, California. It was very patriarchal, and made me want to do something that had meaning and purpose, that helped people make their lives better -- especially women.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I affiliate with Box Financial Advisors, a financial planning group that does all the back-end work for me and my clients. That enables me to focus on the front end, mostly writing, teaching and speaking.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

Being president of the National Association of Women Business Owners, Minnesota chapter. It's our chapter's 40th anniversary. We've grown by 50 percent this year.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Never confuse tactics and execution with strategy. You have to look at the big picture first. For women entering this field, you have to at least become a certified financial planner. Two-thirds of the nation's wealth is going to be in the hands of women by 2030. There's such an opportunity for women coming into financial services.

—NANCY CROTTI





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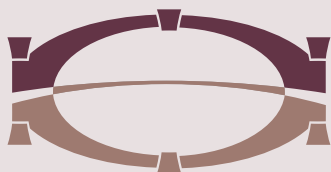
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# Teri Richardson

**Title/Company:** Senior investment consultant, Advanced Capital Group

**Education:** B.A. in mathematics, University of Minnesota; MBA, University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management

When Teri Richardson completed her MBA, she was able to switch careers in the financial services industry. Today, Richardson is actively supporting her local CFA (Chartered Financial Analysts) Society's initiative to attract more women into the field.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

When I completed my MBA, I was able to make the transition (from an actuarial job) to investments. With the MBA, I was able to make a career shift.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I am a senior investment consultant. We provide investment advice to corporate retirement plans and endowment clients. I also have a handful of tribal nations as clients. I advise on asset allocation and on the ongoing monitoring, selecting and replacing of investment managers.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

Being part of the "Changing Perceptions" initiative of the CFA Society of Minnesota. We have seen a decline in the number of young women entering investments and finance careers. We track the number of women who are members of the local CFA Society and less than 14 percent are women. We do not understand what is behind this decline in interest. The goal of the initiative is to increase the diversity in our industry, and ultimately attract more women to consider the CFA track by providing awareness of the variety the opportunities.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Every project looks like a disaster when you are in the middle of it. You have to learn to keep going. That's a great reminder of the importance of persistence.

My advice to women: Do not let anyone stop you from pursuing your passion. Take some risks along the way and work hard to acquire and improve your skills and knowledge.

—SCOTT CARLSON

# *Congratulations Julie Drewes*

## **TOP WOMEN IN FINANCE**



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# Amy Ronneberg

**Title/Company:** Chief financial officer, National Marrow Donor Program/Be The Match

**Education:** B.S., accounting, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; MBA, Capella University

**Family:** Husband, Kevin; children, Isabelle, 7, and Hadley, 5

When Amy Ronneberg was diagnosed with cancer three years ago, the small things at work began to bother her less.

“I was not going to let something ruin a great night with my family,” she says. “I’m fine now, but the experience made me a much stronger leader and better decision-maker.”

**What’s the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

When I worked at Capella University I made a proposal to change our reporting structure and bring it into better alignment, a move that could save money. The CEO said, “I love it, and I want you to be the leader.” Although it made me uncomfortable, I said yes, and that decision eventually made me a much better CFO.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

As chief financial officer [at Be The Match], I do accounting, financial planning and analysis and risk management. I also oversee facilities and manage the Enterprise Project Management Office, Be The Match Therapies, and our new international office.

**What’s your proudest community achievement?**

When I was chair of the board of Twin Cities in Motion for four years, we doubled our number of participants for our five events. We got thousands more people involved in the experience of running and being outdoors.

**What’s the best advice you received from a mentor, and what’s your best advice to women entering your field?**

Don’t be afraid to have people significantly smarter than you on your staff. As a leader you don’t have to be the smartest person in the room.

—FRANK JOSSI



# Cathy Sedacca

**Title/Company:** Principal and executive vice president, Sage Business Credit, LLC

**Education:** B.A., management and French, Luther College (Decorah, Iowa); certificate, international business, Luther College Management, University of Minnesota

**Family:** Husband, Al; daughters, Sadie and Carly; dogs, Biscuit and Daisy

After nearly two decades working for other business credit providers, Cathy Sedacca founded Sage Business Credit in 2013 with partner Karen Turnquist. Since then, the company has averaged 54 percent annual portfolio growth in loans and accounts receivable, and 57 percent annual revenue growth.

By necessity, Sedacca wears many hats at her boutique firm, but she still manages to find time to give back to her community. She serves on the board of Shobi's Table, a St. Paul nonprofit that supports homeless and housing-insecure individuals, and on the finance committee at St. Paul's Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

I've always been willing to take risks in my career. Usually it has worked out. Occasionally it hasn't, but I've always learned a lot along the way. My journey ultimately led to the opportunity to partner with Karen Turnquist and launch Sage Business Credit.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

As the lead for sales and marketing, much of my time is devoted to business development — keeping the company in the public eye and top of mind for referral sources and prospective clients.

I'm also our designated brand ambassador. It's my job to make sure that our brand is clear, and clearly differentiated.

Beyond that, my job revolves around working with prospects to develop flexible and creative financing options.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

Raising kids who really care about their community and the world around them. The service work we've done across the country as a family has inspired them to be grateful for what we have and compassionate toward those who have less. They look beyond their own lives and out into the world to realize that we have so much more than so many others.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice I've ever received is: Be yourself, because no one is as good at being you as you are. Hard as it is to maintain, authenticity is actually an amazing way to build trust and strengthen relationships.

My advice to women is: Step up, be brave, take chances. Don't spend your time trying not to stand out.

—BRIAN MARTUCCI







# Sonja Simonsen

**Title/Company:** Vice president - nonprofit banking leader, Minnesota Bank and Trust

**Education:** B.A., MBA, Hamline University

**Family:** One godson

The world of nonprofit lending can be tricky. Sonja Simonsen expertly navigates that field by working closely with organizational leaders and finding just the right financial tools to allow for stability and growth.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

One was transitioning from an individual contributor role to a manager role with direct reports. I had to retool nearly from scratch the way we worked, the focus shifting from building the business to also building our organization in the process, which included adjusting what we were doing, and how we were going to do it.

Another was moving into a management leadership role building on my management skills. Now the focus was vision and to set direction for the whole business, and allowing for a loss of full control (sometimes also visibility) of the basic tasks that get the work done.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

Leadership, coaching, mentoring and overall strategic

growth by leading the bank's nonprofit group; developing cross-functional teams; managing ongoing financial performance and growth of a nonprofit portfolio consisting of \$45 million in loans and \$20 million in deposits; originating, structuring and coordinating \$10 million in loans, \$3 million in deposits, \$150,000 in fees regarding nonprofit business lines; and providing credit and loan structure approvals as a senior relationship manager to ensure accurate evaluation of debt and financial risk.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

My work with National Alliance for Mental Illness as a family support facilitator to offer a safe environment for families in crisis.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice I received from my mentor, Al Walburn, and the advice I would share with women entering my field is to be purposeful. Set a thoughtful pace to create opportunities, approach them with a mix of preparation and courage, confidence. Then, go all out, take on extra tasks to learn and develop as many skills as you can and use them as a springboard for both personal and professional advancement.

—DAN HEILMAN



# Katie Simpson

**Title/Company:** Market president for Minneapolis/St. Paul, Bank of America; Market executive for Global Commercial Banking, Bank of America Merrill Lynch

**Education:** B.A., political science, Trinity College; MBA, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Katie Simpson describes her career as “anything but linear.” Instead of becoming an attorney, she became a banker who learned a variety of skills in different cities while working for Bank of America. Earlier this year she landed in Minneapolis with a big job managing a three-state region.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

After working in a law firm for five years, I decided against law school and went for an MBA. After graduation, I was accepted into a leadership program at Bank of America.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I manage a team of middle-market commercial bankers

working with clients with assets from \$50 million to \$2 billion. They offer clients a wide variety of products. But all of our leaders in the region, including those at Merrill Lynch, have a dotted line to me.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

I've worked with the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago on children with burn and spinal cord injuries, for example, and now I'm getting into volunteering here, where Bank of America's employees provided 5,500 hours of community service to local nonprofits last year.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Don't think in terms of what you want from your next role; think in terms of what skills you want to build up and use. The next role should use your strengths but give you a chance to work on areas where you have weaknesses. And be fearless.

—FRANK JOSSI





# Kate Speed

**Title/Company:** Program officer for lending and capital building, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

**Education:** B.A., economics, Washington University in St. Louis

**Family:** Partner, Chris; children, Nova and River

Kate Speed is responsible for financing more than \$30 million in community-development projects across the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul region, particularly along St. Paul's booming Green Line Light Rail Transit corridor. Among her latest projects is a \$1.78 million mezzanine loan for Thor Construction's new headquarters, currently under construction in north Minneapolis.

When she's not structuring loans for transformative community-development projects, Speed gives back in a big way. She's on the board of African Economic Development Solutions (AEDS), which provides business development services to businesses predominantly owned by African immigrants. She mentors emerging leaders through the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers. And she sits on the Livable Communities Advisory Committee of the Metropolitan Council.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

Early on in my tenure at LISC, I worked on grant management and fundraising. My mentor encouraged me to move to the lending side of the organization, where my work would really have a long-term impact in reducing racial and economic disparities around the region. That was in 2006 or 2007; I haven't looked back.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I provide technical assistance and financing to developers of catalytic projects, particularly in historically disinvested areas. Transit-oriented development is a major focus for LISC, as is affordable housing in mixed-use developments that incorporate healthy food, small businesses, and other community amenities. We serve as the bridge between community-driven initiatives (and communities themselves) and public-private funding partners.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

At African Economic Development Solutions, we're working on a cultural creative placemaking project in the Little Africa district, around the Snelling Avenue LRT stop in St. Paul. Dozens of AEDS client businesses locate there; we have a real opportunity to create community ownership an equitable platform for development in the shadow of the future [Minnesota United] soccer stadium.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice I've gotten is: Don't be afraid to assert yourself. Trust your instincts. Be persistent. Community-driven development projects can take a long time.

I tell women getting into this field: Build a network of mentors and trusted advisers. Know whom to call in any given situation.

—BRIAN MARTUCCI





# Connie Stein

**Title/Company:** Division CFO, Bremer Bank

**Education:** B.A., financial economics, Gustavus Adolphus College

**Family:** Husband, Aaron; son, Colin; daughter, Molly

Connie Stein, division CFO at Bremer Bank, goes beyond numbers to think strategically to help business leaders identify growth opportunities.

"I take the numbers and analyze them to identify where we have opportunities to help grow Bremer and help our community," Stein said.

Stein oversees financial activities for Bremer Trust, Bremer Investments and Bremer Insurance, which have seen double-digit growth for the past five years.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

I've been with Bremer for 19 years. I started with Bremer Trust. However, as Bremer began to consolidate its accounting and financial reporting, I showed the willingness to learn and was given the opportunity to work with other business lines.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

As division CFO, I'm responsible for the day-to-day financial needs for the trust, brokerage and insurance business lines. What I enjoy most is working with executive teams for those business lines including mortgage to evaluate the strategic opportunities to drive growth.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

It's multiple little moments. For example, when I see a girl I mentored a few years ago at church now being a role model for others. The human acts of kindness that I see in others make me proud.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Outside of work my mom is still my mentor. She passed on her love of math and problem solving. She also taught me to work hard and be the best I can be, "Don't expect rewards and acknowledgement for your accomplishments; do it for self-satisfaction."

My advice is be a good partner. Make relationships with those that you work with. Be a good listener. When you listen and partner, you learn.

—TODD NELSON







# Jill Walker

**Title/Company:** Assurance partner, PwC

**Education:** B.A., accounting, University of St. Thomas

**Family:** Husband, Matt; sons, Michael and James; daughter, Julia

Two years at PwC's national office continue to pay off for assurance partner Jill Walker as she launches a new practice in the firm's Minneapolis office.

Walker, while still in PwC's assurance practice, is putting together the firm's local capital markets accounting advisory services (CMAAS) practice, an offering that's been available nationally.

Walker in 2010 created PwC's annual Continuing Professional Education Day, where clients and practitioners discuss accounting and other issues.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

The biggest turning point was when I went to our national office in New Jersey (in 2007), consulting with teams around the nation on SEC rules and accounting and auditing items. It built my network within the firm and deepened my technical

knowledge and expertise. That led to today where I'm starting our new CMAAS practice. That deepening of my technical knowledge really set me up for this new role.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

As an assurance partner I have audit responsibilities and am building the local CMAAS team and practice to help both audit and non-audit clients in accounting and financial reporting matters.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

One most recently was joining the board of the Science Museum (of Minnesota). As a child and a parent now bringing my kids, I've always loved the things it teaches you through play.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Continue to be direct and candid was some vital advice I learned from one of my mentors.

The advice I would give women entering the field is to network. It's going to help you in the long run in how you can help others and how they can help you.

—TODD NELSON



**Jenny Hosfeld**

Senior Vice President - Community Banking

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# Aleesha Webb

**Title/Company:** Senior vice president, private commercial officer, Sunrise Banks

**Education:** B.A., business and communication studies, University of St. Thomas; MBA, finance and management, University of St. Thomas; MBA, University of Wisconsin – Madison Graduate School of Banking

**Family:** Children, Aurora, Angelina, Gabe and Lauren

Aleesha Webb has come a long way since her first banking job as the self-described “worst teller ever” at a small St. Francis bank. She says she spent more time building relationships with clients and pushing the bank’s products than balancing her drawer.

**What’s the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

When I first started out in banking, I was sensitive to the fact that most bankers didn’t look or talk like me. It was a very male-dominated business.

That started to change when I met other women bankers who were very good at just being themselves. So I stopped trying to be what I wasn’t and followed their lead – I embraced being a woman, embraced being part of a team with common goals, embraced playing the same role in a new way. Although we’re not necessarily celebrating on the golf course, my team is just as effective at connecting with our clients and their networks.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

My job is to keep our clients extremely happy while growing revenue in a way that’s safe and sound for our ownership. That involves meeting lots of new people, recognizing and seizing opportunities, and always adhering to our mission statement: “compassion, empower and achieve.”

**What’s your proudest community achievement?**

A past [banking] client of mine, now deceased, gave a donation in my name to fund a community college scholarship for women. ... That someone thought of me in that way is overwhelming and truly humbling.

**What’s the best advice you received from a mentor, and what’s your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice I received from my mentors is always to remember that you’re replaceable. Banking is not brain surgery; someone smart and fresh can come in and learn your job pretty quickly. You stay relevant by tirelessly learning, expanding your network and following up on leads.

I tell women going into finance to be true to themselves. Have a personal brand. Know what you stand for, what you’re good at and what else you bring to the table. Clearly communicate your passion.

—BRIAN MARTUCCI



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IDEAS INTO ACTION







# Jennifer Wolf

**Title/Company:** Vice president and chief legal officer, Advantus Capital Management Inc.

**Education:** B.A., English literature, honors program, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; J.D., Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Specializing as a commercial real estate and finance attorney made all the difference for Jennifer Wolf, vice president and chief legal officer for Advantus Capital Management.

That specialization, as mortgage loan originations were increasing, led to an opportunity with Advantus and last year's promotion to her current role.

As chief legal officer, Wolf leads the Advantus legal department of four attorneys and four paralegals.

**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

In the beginning of my legal career I was having a hard time with not being good at everything right away and the amount of time it took to gain deep expertise. A mentor told me, "Keep doing exactly what you are doing. Keep coming into work every day, working hard and things will eventually fall into place." They did, and I have always remembered that advice.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

I lead the legal department at Advantus, a subsidiary of Securian Financial Group. We work on investment transactions for our clients, mostly commercial real estate loans, private placement bond loans, private equity limited partnership investments and other finance-related work. I am also in charge of all legal matters and contracts.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

I've served on the board of Como Friends, the nonprofit fundraising organization supporting the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory for the past nine years (the maximum term). Next year, I'm starting a new chapter, with Friends of the St. Paul Public Library.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

Persevere. Sometimes persistence and determination can do more than anything else.

For women entering the field: Do something you are a little afraid of, or not ready to do. That's how you grow. And remember that growth and comfort do not co-exist.

—TODD NELSON

# Fox Rothschild congratulates the **2017 Top Women in Finance**



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# Katherine Forrester Schneewind

**Title, Employer:** Wealth management adviser, Forrester & Associates (Northwestern Mutual)

**Education:** B.A., music therapy, University of Minnesota

**Family:** Husband, Randy; one son, two stepdaughters

Katherine Forrester Schneewind has a complex mission that she makes sound simple: “Be one of the most successful and well-respected businesswomen in the Twin Cities secondary to being the best person that I can possibly be.” She lives those words not only with her skill at wealth management, but also by spreading her wisdom via motivational speeches and seminars.

She was previously recognized as one of the Top Women in Finance in 2011.



**What's the biggest turning point in your career and how did that lead you to what you are doing today?**

When I had my son nine years ago, I went from working 60-hour weeks to working 30-hour weeks — and I doubled my business. A life coach helped me learn the real meaning of working smarter, not harder.

**What are your job responsibilities today?**

With my brother Michael, who's also my business partner, we do wealth management and help clients achieve financial success by identifying their blind spots and seeing their greatest opportunities.

**What's your proudest community achievement?**

My husband and I have the Schneewind Family Foundation, which we use to give to charitable organizations. We involve all three of our children in it, too. We want to raise giving kids.

**What's the best advice you received from a mentor, and what's your best advice to women entering your field?**

The best advice I've gotten was from Gene Storms, the former managing partner at Northwestern Mutual of Minneapolis. He said, “You can't save all the sinners. Not everyone is going to agree with you or even like you. You're not the right fit for everyone.”

I would tell women going into finance to keep a file folder in your desk or nearby with the names of people who can pick you up on your worst day, and encourage others to create a similar folder with your name in it.

— DAN HEILMAN



# KLC Financial

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We proudly congratulate Lesley Farmer on being selected a **TOP WOMAN IN FINANCE** from *Finance & Commerce*. Thank you for your outstanding service to KLC Financial and the Minnesota community.

Lesley has been a member of the KLC Sales Team for over 12 years and is a shining example of the leadership and expertise the many women of KLC Financial bring to our clients and employees every day.

**Lesley Farmer, CLFP, Business Development**

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All of us at Be The Match® want to congratulate this year's *Finance and Commerce's* **"Top Women in Finance"** honorees, especially recognizing our own Amy Ronneberg. Amy leads by living our mission of saving lives through cellular therapy each day, and we truly value her skills and the insights she brings to her role as Chief Financial Officer.

## CONGRATULATIONS AMY!



Learn more about our life-saving mission by going to **BeTheMatch.org**

# *Honoring inspiration*

We are proud to congratulate Jill Walker and all the other Top Women in Finance honorees. Your contributions and achievements are an inspiration.

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# Congratulations Anne Kiefer!



Congratulations to RBC Wealth Management financial advisor Anne Kiefer on being selected as a 2017 Top Woman in Finance by Finance & Commerce\*.

We are proud of your accomplishments and your personalized approach to helping each of your clients meet their unique goals.

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\*An outside panel of experts reviewed the nominations and selected the honorees.

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## **DORSEY CONGRATULATES ALL OF THE 2017 TOP WOMEN IN FINANCE.**

Thank you for your contributions and dedication to the profession, community, and society at large.