

**+ Our People of the Year: Beth Ford, Greg Cunningham, and Dr. Andrew Badley**



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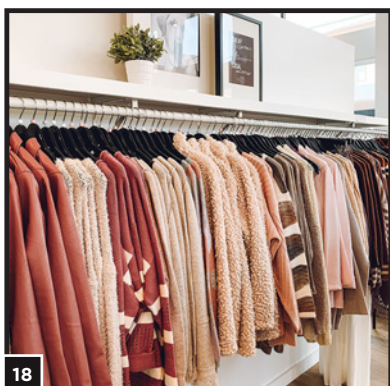




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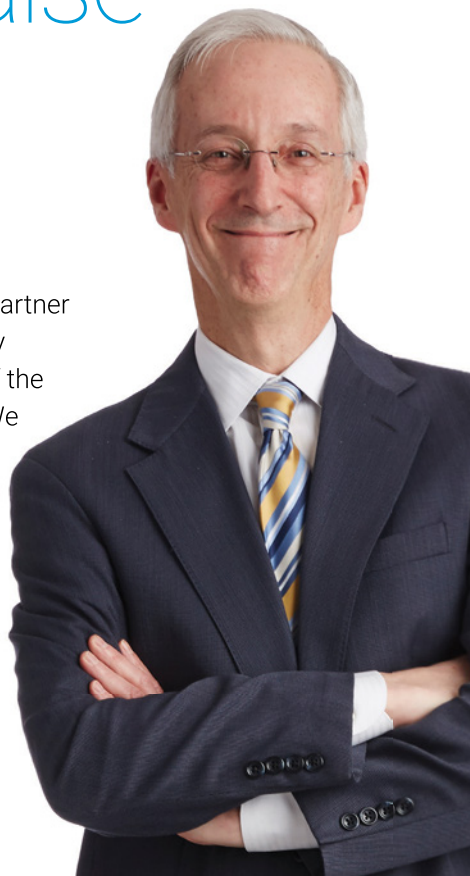
# high praise

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for being named one of the  
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We are proud that Managing Partner  
Bill Stoeri has been selected by  
Twin Cities Business as one of the  
100 People to know in 2021. We  
thank Bill for his commitment  
to diversity and inclusion, his  
leadership, and his dedication  
to clients and the community.



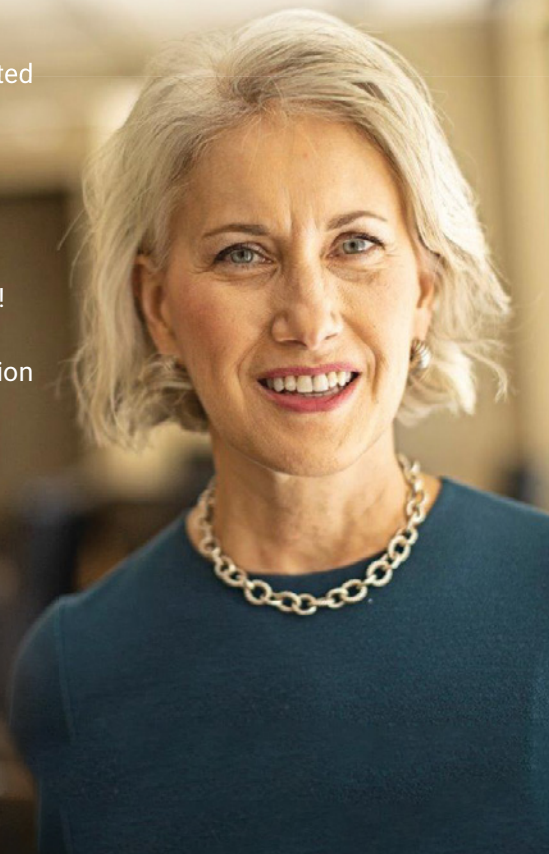
## Congratulations, Jeanne!

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**Jeanne Crain** on being  
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## BEYOND THE PAGES [tcbmag.com](http://tcbmag.com)

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### Outstanding Directors Awards

"The role of the board is a little bit like being a grandparent. You're interested in shaping this next generation, advising management. But you're not in charge of operations."

—Sri Zaheer, Federal Reserve Bank of

Minneapolis board member. Zaheer and fellow 2020 Outstanding Directors **Dorothy Bridges**, **Deb Hopp**, **Greg Page**, and **Bob Rinek** share insights and advice on board service. Watch a recording of the virtual event at [tcbmag.com](http://tcbmag.com) ([click Leadership](#)).

### TCB Talks: Women in Leadership

Leading with empathy and vulnerability has been "the most amazing and refreshing change" to running a Fortune 100 company in the midst of a pandemic, economic downturn, and social unrest," says Best Buy CEO **Corie Barry**, who was joined by Ecolab senior vice president of global marketing and communications **Gail Peterson**, Allte president and CEO **Bethany Owen**, and Cargill president of business services **Kim Skanson** for a conversation about gender parity, diversity and inclusion, and the future of work. Watch a recording of the virtual event at [tcbmag.com](http://tcbmag.com) ([click Leadership](#)).



### Podcast [tcbmag.com/byallmeans](http://tcbmag.com/byallmeans)

"What the pandemic has done is accelerate this movement of people understanding that investing proactively and managing their own health pays dividends when it comes to their immunity."

—**Rita Katona** and husband/co-founder **Eric Hall** discuss the growth of their juice shot business, So Good So You, on *By All Means*. Available on most podcast platforms and at [tcbmag.com/byallmeans](http://tcbmag.com/byallmeans).



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A large, stylized graphic of the letter 'X' is located on the left side of the page. It is composed of two thick, dark green chevron-like shapes that intersect in the center, creating a white 'X' shape. The chevrons point towards the center from the left and right edges of the page.

# Congratulations to the Top 100 People to Know Nominees.

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## Congratulations to Minnesota Public Radio President Dukesne Drew on this well-deserved honor.

In a year that has challenged the media industry and connection across our communities, your leadership has helped Minnesotans feel seen, informed, connected, inspired, prepared and engaged.

You inspire us with your commitment to building community and bringing Minnesotans together through information, storytelling and music.

We look forward to what 2021 has in store.

– Your colleagues at MPR

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**CONGRATULATIONS, KATIE,**  
on being named one of the 100 People to Know in 2021 by Twin Cities Business Magazine! Get to know Katie – and the work she plans to do at Bell – at [bell.bank/Katie](https://bell.bank/Katie).





# Multiply the Good

Approaching 2021 with resolve and a spirit of collaboration.

By Allison Kaplan



**O**n December 8, the night before this issue hit mailboxes and newsstands, we gathered online for a virtual celebration to reveal the innovators, change agents, builders, believers, and emerging leaders on this year's TCB100, as well as our picks for People of the Year.

Yes, *people*. For the first time, we chose three: Land O'Lakes president and CEO Beth Ford, for her advocacy for rural communities and cooperative work to shape an equitable economy; U.S. Bank chief diversity officer Greg Cunningham, for making inclusion a business imperative and advocating for investment in Black-owned enterprises; and the chair of Mayo Clinic's Covid-19 research task force, Dr. Andrew Badley, for coordinating a mass effort to understand the virus, identify the best course of treatment, and set implementation protocol.

Any one of these impressive leaders would have deserved a solo cover most years—but, of course, 2020 was not your average year. So as it came time to make our final selections for this hefty issue, we decided more is better: We need as many bold, thoughtful leaders as we can get working on a healthier, more equitable, more prosperous 2021.

We choose collaboration. We choose optimism. We choose to believe in everything our business community can accomplish in the months ahead.

"One of the things I love about the Twin Cities," says Ford, who has lived and worked in several cities over the course of her career, "[is] there's a desire and a willingness to come together and say, 'We want to work together to solve these issues.'"

What could be more 2020 than interviewing the Land O'Lakes boss via Zoom from her home office (where, she warns, teenagers have been known to crawl past her desk to grab something in the middle of her video calls, despite the "on camera!" note she tapes to the door)? She joined her fellow People of

the Year—the "Big 3," as we've been calling them in our virtual newsroom—for a conversation that ranged from the pandemic economy to diversity goals to the promise of a Covid-19 vaccine. Despite the gravity of the work, they kept bringing it back to people.

"There's been a great leveling," Ford says of remote work. "When you're a CEO, people often don't see you as a full person. But there's an intimacy in the way we see each other now. We have to give each other moments of grace." She's realistic enough to know that even though the way we work may be forever changed by this pandemic, travel will resume, and we'll eventually step out of our sweatpants (sigh) and get back to offices and events. But this time at home won't soon be forgotten. "I hope we hold on to the stuff that is good, to the things we've learned about ourselves."

While the pandemic and the year's racial reckoning have been especially hard on people of color, the fact that white people are seeing their Black colleagues as humans first has the potential to accelerate the work of inclusion, Cunningham says. "We're starting to become first names, not titles." And, of course, Badley's work is all about humanity. Says the doctor, "We're seeing each other's vulnerabilities and strengths."

What an honor it was to spend

an hour discussing some of the biggest challenges of our generation with three leaders who are as thoughtful as they are influential. You can watch the conversation, part of our TCB100 virtual event, at [tcbmag.com/TCB100event-2020](https://tcbmag.com/TCB100event-2020).

No, it's not the same as clinking glasses under the holiday lights at Orchestra Hall, where we gathered last December. But in that spirit of personal connections, the virtual format allowed us to do something new this year: feature video messages from all the individuals on our TCB100 list. When we asked this elite group to turn their smartphones on themselves and share a 20-second message, something magical happened: They dared to look forward. They talked about acquisitions, innovations, and expansions. They pledged funding for BIPOC entrepreneurs. They shared goals of improving health insurance, creating new arts experiences, recruiting talent to our region, and nurturing a diverse professional community.

I asked Cunningham, in particular, what single thing he suggests we do to move forward together. "Get to know someone on a first-name basis who sees the world differently than you do," he says. "Learn something about someone else who doesn't just validate your worldview but might expand it."

Let this issue be a place to start.



Watch a recording of our People of the Year conversation with Dr. Andrew Badley, Greg Cunningham, and Beth Ford at [tcbmag.com](https://tcbmag.com).



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Edited by Adam Platt

## MEDIA

# No Huddle Sundays

Did WCCO Radio's signature sports show die with Sid Hartman?

One Sunday morning in the late 1970s, Dave Mona performed a live audition of sorts for a 25-minute radio show built around sports columnist Sid Hartman, because 'CCO farm director Chuck Lilligren was tired of working Sundays. The show aired before the taped Mormon Tabernacle Choir hour from Salt Lake City.

"Sid told me after that it wasn't going to work out and he was going to quit so they'd have to cancel the show," Mona recalls. Hartman did quit the show—by dying in October, 40-plus years later.

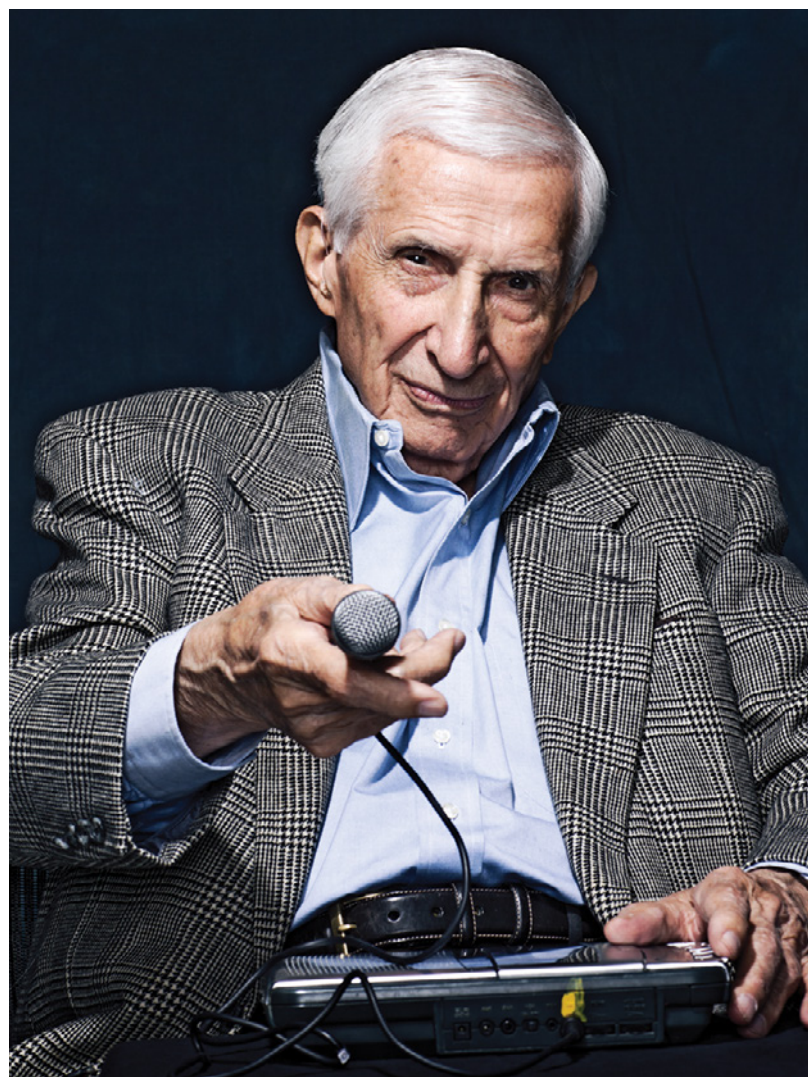
*The Sports Huddle* became WCCO's longest-running and signature sports program and eventually displaced the Tabernacle Choir into off-hours. The March 15 show, celebrating Hartman's 100th birthday, was about the last program broadcast entirely from 'CCO's

downtown Minneapolis studios. In the pandemic, hosts broadcast from their homes, which was impossible for Hartman, due to his marginal hearing.

"We basically functioned with Sid by passing notes and lip reading" in later years, says Mona. They felt trying to broadcast from separate quarters would expose Sid to embarrassment, and anyway, sports were shut down.

"Sid thought we would be back," Mona says. "He always said he'd give up his column before the radio show."

But when sports returned in August, *Sports Huddle* did not, and station management never acknowledged the situation publicly, perhaps out of deference to the legend, who was still locked down, or perhaps to finesse weekend staffing cuts. Mona was told the station would reevaluate in 2021.



Above: Sid posed for a 2018 *Mpls.St.Paul Magazine* profile. Bottom: Hartman interviewed Miguel Sano of the Twins.

With Hartman's death, the show's future is murkier. The outpouring of goodwill after Hartman's passing left Mona encouraged that the station might not walk away from the show that easily. But 'CCO is not broadcasting any local sports on Sundays right now.

WCCO program director John Hansen told *TCB* in an email that it was too soon to know *TSH's* fate

but did not reply to other questions. Weekends are not big listening times for personality radio, and station owner Entercom is rumored to be facing millions in losses locally this year.

"My gut feeling says it should continue," says Chad Hartman, Sid's son and 'CCO afternoon host. "I know it's hard to replace an iconic broadcaster, but this is still a sports-crazed town."

Even if it is the end for the *Huddle*, Mona is surprised at the durability of its run. "Every five years I attended meetings to discuss *Sports Huddle* after Sid," he says. But Sid never retired, and no station exec had the audacity to put an end to the program—until a pandemic did the dirty work for them.

—Adam Platt

**"My gut feeling says it should continue. I know it's hard to replace an iconic broadcaster, but this is still a sports-crazed town."**

—CHAD HARTMAN



# Married to the Mall?

The few retailers looking for space now want flexible terms and more support from landlords.

**T**he 10-year retail lease—a shopping center staple for decades—was already on shaky ground pre-pandemic, but Covid-19 disposed of what shreds remained.

“We are noticing a new trend of tenants requesting shorter-term leases for new deals and renewals, typically a three- or five-year term instead of a traditional 10-year term,” says Heather Brechbill Swiley, Mall of America’s senior vice president of leasing. But, she adds, even that’s too much of a commitment for many new retailers, who prefer to test the waters with a temporary pop-up before leasing, such as gun-maker Beretta currently showcasing its apparel line at an MOA temporary store.

That means more work and less stability for shopping centers that long relied on big monthly checks from prominent retailers like Brooks Brothers, Sur La Table, and True Religion—just a few of the bankrupt brands whose doors have closed in the Twin Cities during the pandemic. Burnsville Center went into foreclosure in October.

“There’s a lot of space out there,” says Stefanie Meyer, senior vice president and principal of Mid-America Real Estate-Minnesota. “Activity is down across the board—retailers are concerned about winter and they just want to wait.”

The brands that are out looking for space—mainly local startups or well-funded nationals like Orange Theory and lululemon—want smaller footprints than they did even a year ago, and they expect a break on rent, Meyer says. “But construction is no cheaper. In some cases, it’s more difficult to get supplies now. Landlords can’t get more [flexible] on rent—lenders won’t let them.”

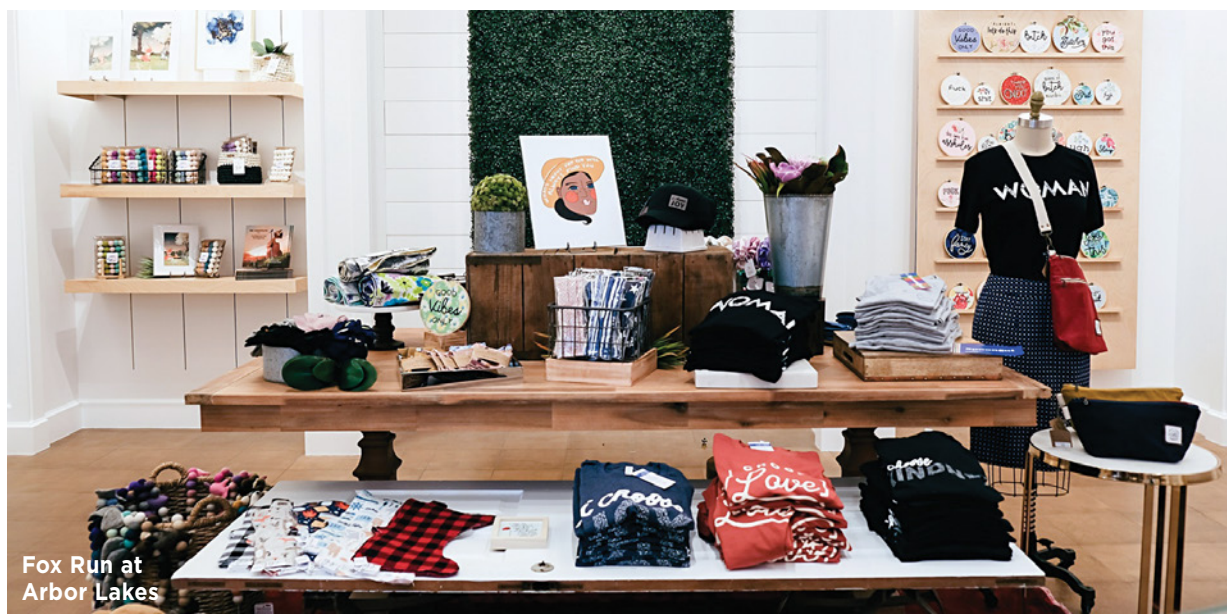
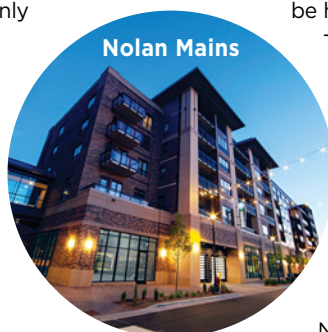
Rosedale Center leads the pack in adaptability. Locally owned, Southern-inspired Adam’s Soul is the latest restaurant arrival. For Halloween, Rosedale turned the old Herberger’s loading dock into a Covid-safe “Deadly Drive-In” and sold more than 1,000 tickets at \$75 a pop.

“We threw out the old ways of doing leasing two years ago and came up with non-traditional leasing efforts,” Rosedale senior general manager Lisa Crain says. “We are reaping the rewards now.”

Touting fresh air and temporary leases, lifestyle centers seem to be having some success.

The Shoppes at Arbor Lakes in Maple Grove filled the former Pottery Barn Kids store with Fox Run, an occasional shop featuring 25 makers. At 50th & France, the new Nolan Mains mixed-use development lured downtown stalwart Hubert White for a holiday pop-up.

“Attracting the consumer today is predicated on a sense of discovery, experience,” says Peter Deanovic, principal of Buhl Investors, which leases the retail portion of Nolan Mains. “That can’t be achieved with a bunch of 10-year leases and national brands doing five stores in the Twin Cities.” —Allison Kaplan



Fox Run at Arbor Lakes



**Work Like a Boss: A Kick in the Pants Guide to Finding (and Using) Your Power at Work** by Nancy Lyons, co-founder and CEO of Clockwork digital agency in Minneapolis

“Too many leaders keep the glorious collaborative aspect of ‘starting’ to a small group. Great ideas come from surprising places. I wish I’d been more open to tapping into that really good thinking and collaborative energy earlier.”

—Nancy Lyons

Read more of our conversation with Lyons about leadership, remote work, and equity and inclusion at [tcbmag.com](http://tcbmag.com).



## COMPENSATION

# Compensatory Dreams

Has Covid scotched your year-end bonus?

**T**he coronavirus forced people to give up vacation travel and large celebrations, and some Minnesotans fear Covid-19 will rob them of year-end bonuses as well.

In a national survey conducted for Robert Half, 46 percent of white-collar workers said they don't expect bonuses. Locally, the outlook was even more pessimistic. A whopping 69 percent of Minneapolis-area office employees surveyed don't think they'll get a bonus.

"The data tells us that work-

ers in Minneapolis do not feel as optimistic," says Elizabeth Hang, a Robert Half senior vice president based in the Twin Cities. But since the survey was conducted in July and August, Hang says companies and workers now have a clearer picture of how they will fare.

"Every company has been impacted differently," she says. "I talked to some people and they had a record year. You've had other companies where they've had salary reductions, furloughs, and layoffs."

Hang is a big advocate of

paying bonuses, if companies can afford to. "It's such a great way to pay for performance," she says, and "it also retains top talent."

"The war [for] talent is just as strong now as it was pre-Covid," Hang says. She cites Minnesota's 6 percent unemployment rate as evidence that a lot of companies have rebounded from the early months of the virus.

If businesses can't afford to pay bonuses, Hang recommends other actions to show appreciation to employees who've worked hard

under considerable stress. She suggests providing more paid time off or special recognition to teams.

Scott Grausnick, president and CEO of Harbinger Partners, an IT staffing firm, says his sales, recruiting, and administrative employees can earn monthly bonuses for strong performances: "During the holiday season, we'll still continue to pay out some kind of incentive or bonus, even though this year won't be a profitable year."

Grausnick founded the business in 1999, and he believes in encouraging staff continuity. This year, two of his administrative employees are getting \$20,000 bonuses for working for the company for 20 years. "They deserve a really nice bonus," he says. —Liz Fedor



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# Betting on Better Angels

Minnesota's angel tax credit is back. Will investors take interest?



Minnesota's angel tax credit has, generally, been a popular program since it launched a decade ago. The program allows initial investors to claim a 25 percent tax credit on investments in tech-focused startups in the state.

It's been funded sporadically. In 2020 it was absent, but there's \$10 million in credits for 2021. Is there demand in a pandemic?

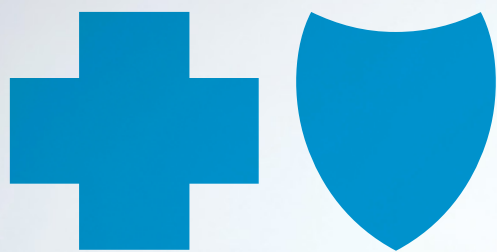
Reed Robinson, co-founder of nonprofit advocacy group BETA, says there's a huge number of would-be investors in the state who lack a background in tech and don't realize angel investing is an option.

In 2021, Robinson's new "pre-seed" investment fund, Groove Capital, will launch. It will be targeted at newer entrepreneurs who aren't ready for bigger-ticket investments. He's also planning to recruit more

angel investors.

It's worth noting that, for many investors, the tax credit likely isn't the main motivation for pouring capital into a startup. Joe Fittante, a lawyer and shareholder with Minneapolis law firm Larkin Hoffman, says his firm has had a handful of clients who have looked into the credit in the past. The program is a "noble pursuit" in his view, but it's likely not the primary reason people invest in startups.

Even Robinson admits that the program is "icing on the cake" for investors. "The activity still exists with or without it," he says. Still, he's anticipating the program will be heavily—and quickly—taken up in the new year. "The pent-up demand on the startup side of things is very strong," Robinson says. "And I think it's the same on the investor side, too." —Dan Niepow



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## DEVELOPMENT

# The 40th Season

Housing is set to replace a long-vacant Plymouth retail center.

**T**he abandoned Four Seasons Mall in Plymouth looks like it would make a good backdrop for a zombie movie. But zombie time is running out. It will be razed for housing in 2021.

The strip mall has been empty for 10 years—a good run for a zombie mall—and much of the old signage is still up for Fresh & Natural Foods and a Curves. Pull up to the site and you'll draw the attention of a security guard.

Arkansas-based Walmart paid \$10.6 million for the land near the

intersection of Highway 169 and Rockford Road in 2010 with hopes of building a SuperCenter. But the city didn't like the idea of a big box. Walmart put it up for sale in 2015.

"The traffic would have been problematic in that area," says Jim Barnes, manager for Plymouth's Housing and Redevelopment Authority. There's a fair amount of retail anchored by a Cub Foods on the other side of Rockford Road.

In 2016, Maple Grove-based Rock Hill Management surfaced with a mixed-use plan calling for

two hotels, senior housing, and a mix of retail and office space.

"They could never get it financed," says Barnes.

Now Plymouth-based Dominion has the green light from the city to develop a \$130 million affordable housing project. It will include one senior housing building with 268 units and two buildings with 162 family-sized units. Dominion would sell part of the site to the city, which plans a park-and-ride ramp and other parcels for small retail projects. Dominion's financing depends on

the state awarding housing revenue bonds.

"Just with the timing of the financing we'll likely be able to break ground and close in March," says Logan Schmidt, development associate with Dominion. "The city wants to see something happen with that site. It's kind of the front door of Plymouth."

The site, which has soil issues and a wetland, has been a tough sell. Besides Walmart and Rock Hill, the city saw no other concrete proposals over the years. —*Burl Gilyard*



## SANITATION

# Flush with Opportunity

Covid be damned. The portable sanitation industry is far from in the dumps.

**F**or many industries it's been a crappy year. And for the portable sanitation industry, with potties so ubiquitous at events and gatherings, a pandemic would have intuitively portended lots of toilets with no place to go.

Instead, though, the year has been flush with business. The industry supplies and services portable bathrooms, sinks, and sanitizer stations, and it is generally depen-

dent on four main revenue drivers: special events, construction, agriculture, and disaster relief.

Biffs Inc. has seen a 90 percent decrease in events-related rentals this year, says vice president Ben Schnackenberg. Annual gatherings typically necessitating thousands of rentals were zeroed out. But the rest of its market has seen enough growth to counter the losses. Both agriculture and construction are operating normally, so business in

those areas is still booming.

North Branch portable sanitation company Jimmy's Johnnys has been renting portable toilets to manufacturers so truckers don't have to enter buildings, says Rich Anderson, president/CEO.

Correctional and care facilities are renting units too. And almost all customers are renting more sinks and sanitizer stations. Jimmy's supply of 180 sinks has been rented out for months.



Plus there are 300 Covid-19 testing sites around the state, the majority of which rent portable toilets, sinks, and hand sanitizer dispensers, says Karleen Kos, executive director of Bloomington-based Portable Sanitation Association International. —*Tess Allen*

VERIFIED

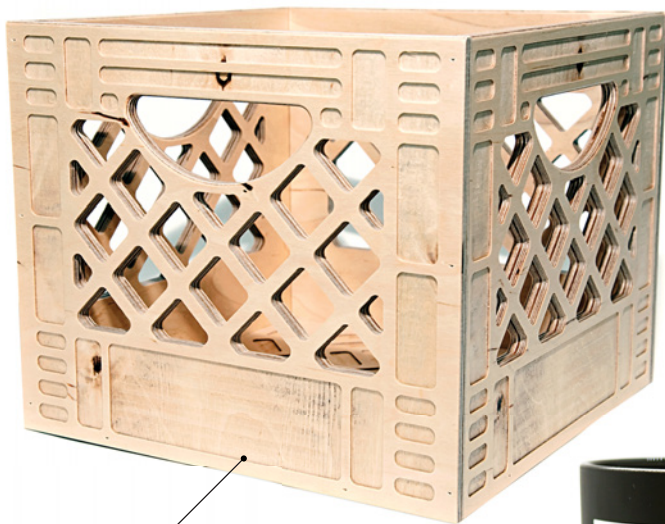
## What Gift Makers Give

Just because your company manufactures blankets or jewelry or gourmet foods doesn't mean you pass on holiday shopping. The owners of some popular local brands share their go-to Minnesota-made gift ideas.

### Bucket List Adventure Journal | Woodchuck

"More than ever, the pandemic has made us all appreciate the fullness of life, memorable experiences, and family and friendships. 'Adventure,' as it says on the cover of this book by local woodcut artisans, is something to look forward to these days." \$30.99, [woodchuckusa.com](http://woodchuckusa.com)

—Paul Grangaard, chairman/  
CEO, Faribault Woolen Mill Co.,  
[faribaultmill.com](http://faribaultmill.com)



### Milk Crate | WAAM Industries

"It's a great gift for the cool friend who collects records or a design-conscious mama who wants kid storage bins that are more than basic. Made in Princeton, Minnesota, by a husband-and-wife team." From \$60, [waamindustries.com](http://waamindustries.com)

—Larissa Loden, founder/owner,  
[larissaloden.com](http://larissaloden.com)



### Boreal Spruce Gin | Vikre Distillery

Made in Duluth and infused with piney herbs like lavender, rosemary, and sage. "This, paired with some nice tonic and lime, is a great crowd pleaser." \$34, [vikredistillery.com](http://vikredistillery.com)

—John Waller, co-founder/CEO,  
Humble Nut Butter,  
[humblenutbutter.com](http://humblenutbutter.com)



### Morning Mint Soap | Siena Soap Co.

"The ground-up peppermint and spearmint leaves provide gentle exfoliation. Made by a mother-daughter small business that gives back a portion of profits to help survivors of sex trafficking." \$7.50, [sienasoap.com](http://sienasoap.com)

—Heidi Mueller, owner,  
[excelsiorcandleco.com](http://excelsiorcandleco.com)



### Candles | Koselig Candle Co.

"The Norwegian word *koselig* translates to 'cozy,' and the product lives up to the name. The candles are hand-poured here in Minnesota and smell incredible. The perfect gift as we hunker down for winter." \$20, [koseligcandleco.com](http://koseligcandleco.com)

—Spencer Barrett, co-founder,  
[greatlakescollection.com](http://greatlakescollection.com)



## OFFICE ENVY

# The Future Is Flexible

How office design evolves after a year of remote work.

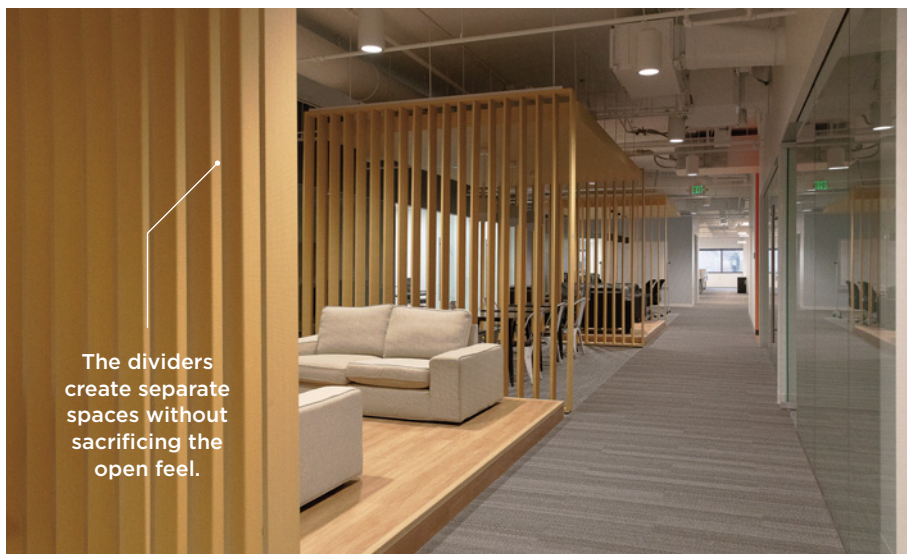
While many office workers have embraced the commute from bedroom to kitchen and the stretchy waistbands of WFH life, it's collaboration we're missing. In a "Return to Work" survey conducted by Minneapolis-based architecture and design firm Nelson Worldwide, 54 percent of remote workers said they miss the sense of teamwork, sociability, and collaborative time with coworkers. "The office of the future must foster this need to connect," says Deanne Erpelding, principal of Nelson's central region. She believes the blurring of work boundaries during the pandemic will have a lasting effect on the role of the office. "These spaces must be a physical manifestation of a company's brand, vision, mission, and values—and their new role will skew heavily toward the desire for employees to collaborate." Here's a look at some emerging office design trends and adaptations.

—Allison Kaplan and Tess Allen



### « Employee-Controlled Tech

Voice-activated rooms. Automatic doors. Expect technology to be implemented anywhere it might reduce touch. The key, Erpelding says, is putting employees in control by using apps on their personal devices to check in, reserve rooms, and monitor seating areas.



The dividers create separate spaces without sacrificing the open feel.

### « Warm Woods

"Wood is making a comeback," says Kar-Keat Chong of Studio KKChong, who designed Nerdery's new Edina office. "Everything had gotten so synthetic and composite."



### « Multipurpose

"The future office will be rooted in flexibility," says Betsy Vohs, founder and CEO of Minneapolis design firm Studio BV. "Walls that can reconfigure, shift, and align to support different uses are key." The Studio BV-designed Minneapolis office of Parameters, a commercial furniture supplier, features movable glass walls that turn a large common area into a meeting room.







Whiteboard walls inspire group brainstorming without adding clutter.

#### ✧ Open Meeting Areas

It's time to flip the old model of designating open spaces for informal gatherings and holding meetings behind closed doors, Vohs says. She points to the collaboration spaces at Flagstone Foods' new Minneapolis office designed by Studio BV. "The office of the future will be centered on space to innovate, mentor, and generate ideas."



An inviting cafeteria creates another gathering spot for collaboration.

#### « Branded Space

If the future purpose of the office is more about building brand identity than housing desks, it's important to be bold. At Vanco's Bloomington office, Studio BV made sure visitors know where they are as soon as they step off the elevator. Says Vohs, "Spaces should be inspirational and connect to the mission and values of the organization."

#### ✧ A Sense of Well-Being

Seventy-eight percent of office workers say a supportive culture for remote working is important to them. Erpelding of Nelson Worldwide says businesses should keep that in mind when designing spaces where employees feel "safe, productive, and supported." Examples include meditation rooms, outdoor seating, and adding plants and calming elements in common areas.





# lessons learned

PRIMP BOUTIQUE OWNER

## Wesley Uthus

**A challenging year pushed this retailer to make difficult decisions that leave the local chain smaller but healthier.**

By Allison Kaplan

Primp wrote the book on the modern clothing boutique experience at fast-fashion prices—and did it a decade ago, when most successful brands were rushing online. In contrast, Primp focused on store experience and community building. The Twin Cities company, founded in St. Paul by Wesley Uthus and Michele Henry with \$16,000 and no outside investors, peaked with nine stores and a focus on secondary markets that took it to places like Mankato and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Now Primp is down to five stores. The downsizing started in 2018, and two more stores closed permanently since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Uthus had to make those unexpected decisions alone, because her partner exited the business nearly two years ago to start a new venture. Still, despite its smaller footprint, Primp is closer to its 2020 sales projections than Uthus could have imagined back in the spring—thanks to a spike in online traffic and to cost cutting. “Covid forced me to make hard decisions I wouldn’t have made otherwise,” says Uthus. “We’re so much better off.”

### 100% furlough

When stores closed March 18 because of Covid-19 (reopening two months later), Uthus furloughed her entire team of more than 50 employees. “I was the only person fulfilling orders in April,” the solo owner says. “It was such a gift: It forced me to learn my business in a whole new way. I realized the process of fulfillment was broken. Our website was really frustrating. It lit a fire to drive changes we need [so we can] grow.”



### A wide-open field

Primp isn’t the only retailer to downsize this year. Uthus says she fields offers to lease space from commercial real estate brokers every day. “There’s so much opportunity right now. I will never say never—my heart is always with brick and mortar. [But] right now, we’re focused on how we grow digitally.”



### Betting on holiday

Unlike many retailers that are scaling back their offerings to get by, Primp bought to its usual volume for winter. “It’s a little risky, but we have longer to sell winter merchandise, and we expect holiday sales to be strong. We’re all looking for something to look forward to.”

### Suburban bounce-back

“Excelsior had a really strong summer—it’s been booming since the day we reopened,” Uthus says. Primp’s other suburban locations, in Woodbury and White Bear Lake, have been quicker to rebound than its original city shop at Selby and Grand in St. Paul.

### Embracing e-commerce

“My heart hasn’t been in e-commerce. Stores have always been the foundation of the business,” Uthus says. But when stores shut down in March, Primp’s online traffic spiked 200 percent overnight, which prompted Uthus to finally begin building out a full-service website. Seeing loyal customers order online showed Uthus that there’s more than one way to deliver service. As store traffic rebounds, online sales remain strong: Heading into 2020, Uthus says online accounted for 10 percent of total sales; now it’s 25 percent, and the fastest-growing part of the business.



### Forced to downsize

In fall 2019, Uthus finally closed Primp’s long-struggling store at Shops at West End. “We tried everything—even converted it to an outlet store—but the foot traffic just wasn’t

there.” Mankato closed for similar reasons. Uthus thought that would be it, until 2020 pushed her to acknowledge that “potential” wasn’t reason enough to stay open in Rochester and at 48th Street and Chicago Avenue in south Minneapolis. In downtown Rochester, a construction project made the store difficult to access. “That store was very slow to rebound [from the temporary Covid closure] and we just couldn’t wait,”

Uthus says. The south Minneapolis store had long been “a little challenging,” but neighborhood charm propelled it until an uptick in violence over the summer caused Uthus to reconsider. “We had several instances of people causing problems in the store and stealing merchandise. It’s such an amazing location, but I didn’t want employees to feel like they couldn’t be alone there.”

“One of the most amazing things about the pandemic is the realization of the power we have to support our local businesses. If that corner store matters to you, you have to shop there.”

# the fine print

## The End of the Apartment Party?

**H**ave we finally built enough apartments? Rental vacancy in the city of Minneapolis has been climbing this year. The third-quarter vacancy rate of 5.5 percent is the highest since 2012, at the end of the hangover from the Great Recession. An apartment vacancy rate of 5 percent is considered equilibrium in the rental market; lower vacancy favors landlords, while higher vacancy favors tenants. Minneapolis's vacancy rate had been above 5 percent from 3Q02 to 4Q12. It stayed below 5 percent from that point through 2Q20. —*Burl Gilyard*

**THE RECENT TREND LINE:**

- 3Q19: 3.9 percent
- 4Q19: 3.9 percent
- 1Q20: 3.9 percent
- 2Q20: 4.5 percent
- 3Q20: 5.5 percent

**LOWEST VACANCY IN TWO DECADES:**  
2nd quarter 2000:  
3.5 percent

**HIGHEST VACANCY IN TWO DECADES:**  
3rd quarter 2006:  
7.8 percent

Source: CoStar Group Inc.



Two new Northeast Minneapolis apartment projects, Rafter (interior shots) and Gibson (exterior) play up amenities including vibrant lobbies, workspaces, and rooftop decks.

PHOTOS BY FARM KIDS STUDIOS COURTESY OF STUDIO BY (RAFTER INTERIORS)



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By Tess Allen

## Lunar Startups Strikes Out on Its Own

**The startup accelerator for historically marginalized entrepreneurs continues its mission, but with added emphasis on tech and consumer packaged goods companies.**

**W**hen Danielle Steer launched Lunar Startups in St. Paul almost three years ago, one of her key goals was to remove barriers and reduce disparities for historically marginalized entrepreneurs. She never imagined that by late 2020, those obstacles would actually have grown.

Initially created as a project of the Knight Foundation and the Glen Nelson Center at American Public Media (APM), Lunar spun off in November as an independent nonprofit under the name Lunar Inc.—in the midst of a contentious presidential election, a global pandemic and resulting recession, and a social reckoning. While the process started months before Covid-19 swept into Minnesota, Steer says the timing couldn't be better.

"We believe that scaled-up, inclusive entrepreneurship is the most important path forward in building community wealth, mitigating race- and gender-based economic gaps, and increasing the number of high-quality jobs available for women, people of color, and other marginalized professionals in the Twin Cities region and beyond," Steer says. (Steer is also a TCB 100 People to Know in 2021.)



**Lunar Startups' cohort members**

Going forward, the organization, which will keep doing business under the name Lunar Startups, will continue to focus on underinvested entrepreneurs—namely, those who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), female, LGBTQ+, and/or non-binary. But it's honing its focus to concentrate on technology and consumer packaged goods companies—industries it has found to be the most lucrative.

"The Knight Foundation and APM provided a critical and supportive launch pad for Lunar," Steer says, "yet, as we grow our ambition, our ability to wholly focus on our own mission of creating economic opportunity and entrepreneurial capabilities is best met as an independent entity." The Knight Foundation and APM have been supportive of Lunar's move to independence, Steer adds.

### Enough support to go around

In Lunar's first 18 months, with the support of the big foundations, it helped its 32 cohort startups create 55 new jobs, hire 180 contractors, earn nearly \$7.8 million in revenue, and raise almost \$3 million dollars.

Educational services company Creatively Focused is one of the local beneficiaries. When founder Elizabeth Orme joined Lunar's accelerator program in March 2019, she only had

six employees and two contractors, and she hadn't raised a dollar in funding. Since then, her St. Paul-based company has created 14 new jobs with benefits, added nine contractors, earned \$1.2 million in annual revenue, received \$400,000 in grants, built the business plan and wireframes for an AI-powered technology platform, created a strategic plan to raise \$1 million in blended capital, and is on track to expand into three new industries nationwide.

"From founders to future employees of their startups, Lunar is creating an ecosystem in which those who are typically underestimated are elevated and celebrated," Orme says. "Lunar moved me from founder to CEO."

### The path forward

As of September, more than 25 percent of U.S. adults surveyed by Pew Research Center said they or someone in their household had lost their job due to Covid-19. Yelp's latest economic impact report published in September shows that 60 percent of pandemic-related business closures are now permanent.

Steer believes that creating new businesses can help fill this gap in job opportunities and that Lunar's focus on historically marginalized entrepreneurs is perhaps more vital than ever.

While Covid-related job losses

have affected all Americans, nonprofit newsroom ProPublica published research showing that Black, Latino, other people of color, and women have seen especially steep employment declines. These groups were already on unequal footing with their white counterparts before the pandemic, but now both the pandemic and the civil uprising that started after George Floyd's death in May have made prosperity gaps between Black and white populations more glaring.

Plus, Minneapolis has one of the worst examples of racial disparity in the U.S. According to research by the American Community Survey published in June, the economic gap between Black and white families is higher in Minneapolis than nearly anywhere else in the country (behind only Milwaukee); a typical Black household in Minneapolis earns only 44 percent of what its white counterpart does.

"But this extreme racial imbalance in Minneapolis is also its biggest opportunity for change," Steer says. "Clearly, by failing to address significant racial- and gender-based economic gaps, our metro and nation are missing out on key drivers of economic growth."

The Center of Global Policy estimates that lack of investment in entrepreneurs of color has cost the

U.S. economy nearly 9 million jobs and \$300 billion. Lunar Inc.'s goal is to recover part of that loss.

To support its spinoff as an independent entity, Lunar launched a fundraising campaign in November that is set to run through 2023 with a goal of \$2 million.

"Lunar has a big ambition in creating a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem while also creating a more sustainable and resilient nonprofit, decreasing our overall dependence on philanthropic support," Steer says. "We think we have a pretty good case for why a new nonprofit like ours is what our community needs."

## Maneuver to Mobile

**Meet three businesses that transformed their operations with the help of mobile business manufacturer Chameleon Concessions.**

**W**hat do you do when a global pandemic rocks your business, causing shutdowns and limiting the number of customers you can serve? You hit the road.

Minneapolis mobile business manufacturer Chameleon Concessions has been building food trucks, concession trailers, and custom mobile enterprises for more than three decades. In the past year, at a time when profits plummeted for many businesses, Chameleon Concessions experienced a 20 percent increase in billable income compared to 2019, says owner Mark Palm.

"People are finding that they can make their businesses much more

**Blue Plate's new Little Blue Food Truck and co-founder Stephanie Shimp**



**(Left to right) John Hingos, Sara Hingos, and Mark Palm inside Crooked Spoon's new ride.**

Covid-friendly this way," Palm says. He and his team are thrilled to help businesses find a new way of operating that fits with the times, he adds.

Check out three of the businesses that sought Chameleon Concessions' expertise this year to help them pivot to mobile operations in a tough year.

### **Blue Plate** *Little Blue Food Truck, opened July 2020*

In recent years, the Minnesota State Fair's food vendors have brought in annual gross sales of around \$40 million. So when the second-largest state fair in the nation was canceled because of Covid-19, the Blue Plate restaurant group, owners of the wildly popular Blue Barn at the fair, went searching for a way to bring their fair menu and experience to their fan base.

Co-founders Stephanie Shimp and David Burley consulted Chameleon Concessions about building out a food truck in early June. By the end of July, the Little Blue Food Truck was fully operational, serving items like bacon-stuffed tots, elote freestyle corn, and its popular Nashville hot chicken-on-a-stick all over the Twin Cities and even as far as Duluth.



Shimp and Burley are considering taking the food truck to Florida or Arizona for the winter.

"Everything is a guess during Covid-19, but we were confident that an outdoor/mobile concept with our food from Blue Barn would be a hit," Shimp says. "We had immediate success scheduling our truck at taprooms and breweries as well as a smattering of neighborhood events and even a small 'Covid-style' wedding."

### **Crooked Spoon** *Food truck set to open late winter/early spring*

Imagine losing your 14-year family restaurant to a fire in April, less than a month after a pandemic disrupted your entire industry. That's exactly what happened to Grand Marais restaurant Crooked Spoon. Instead of rebuilding a restaurant that could only hold very limited numbers of customers because of Covid-19, husband-and-wife owners Sara and Nathan Hingos decided to take to the open road.

They reached out to Chameleon Concessions and started building a food truck from which to sell their "contemporary American food with a twist," as Sara Hingos describes it. They'll pare down the original

restaurant menu, keeping some old favorites, adding some new items, and letting the menu change with the seasons, they say. They plan to keep Grand Marais as the home base for their truck, but they hope to expand operations to other areas of the state within about a year of reopening.

"There are so many unknowns with Covid-19, and our economy and the restaurant industry has taken a hard hit," Sara Hingos says. "Our sales will be hard to beat when we compare to a full-service restaurant in a bustling tourist destination; however, with less overhead, we project to have a sustainable profit margin for a successful business."

### **Lolli•Pup Pets** *Mobile dog-grooming station, opening in spring*

Long before Covid-19 came along, dog groomer Heather Hilla had a dream to open a mobile dog-grooming salon. But she'd never taken the leap.

Finally, in November 2019, fed up with working for others, she left a 20-year career as a pet groomer for a corporate chain. She started her own business, Lolli•Pup Pets, making artisan dog tags and offering grooming house calls. She also worked two days a week for a mobile dog-grooming business called Wash My Paws so she could learn more about running a mobile business, something she was considering.

Then in March, Covid hit, and going into people's homes to groom their pets was no longer a safe option.

"I had always wanted to try mobile grooming, and Covid-19 helped push me into it," Hilla says. "I could provide 'at-home' pet grooming services while better maintaining social distancing guidelines."

She contacted Chameleon Concessions in June, and it got to work outfitting a Nissan NV—a compact van that will allow her to serve the city of Minneapolis and surrounding areas. She plans to hit the road this spring.





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## PLANTING SEEDS

# Opportunity in Chaos

Harnessing the disruption of the pandemic is the entrepreneur's advantage.

By Rajiv Tandon

**A**t the time of another great crisis, the Great Depression, American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote the "Serenity Prayer": "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." To those who have survived this far in 2020 (by our wits and federal help), congratulations!

This black-swan pandemic has exposed so many vulnerabilities in our global systems that it is testing our resolve and resilience. Many of those vulnerabilities are beyond the control of most of us.

Looking at the aftermath of past crises like the Spanish flu of 1918, other pandemics, or World War II, we can confidently anticipate a similar dramatic restructuring of the economic and social order. We will see long-term transformative shifts in the ways we work, shop, relax, educate, manage our health, and maintain relationships with friends and family. There is no organization that is exempt. This is inevitable and something we cannot change. We must accept it.

Take heart in the fact that there is opportunity buried in all this chaos. Many successful startups were born during a crisis. The tech world enjoyed startups such as Airbnb, Pinterest, Uber, Square, and Slack after the 2008 financial crisis. Similar examples of innovation can be found after the Great Depression. As the saying goes, "Investments are made in the downturn and collected in the upmarket."

A shock of this scale has already created a profound shift for all companies, their employees, and their customers. The pandemic has blown all the carefully crafted plans of every organization. Things may never return to the 2019 normal.

A new normal is inevitably around the corner. We see the glimpses of it already. The wisdom is in looking at the present problems that we are encountering as a gateway to conceive of the new order and the courage to act on it now.

Here are a few thoughts for all my entrepreneurial brethren:

- **Prioritize your health.** Heed the pre-flight announcement of air-

them. Dig for the risk factors inherent in those. If you can mitigate most of those risks, you have the kernel of something new to launch.

- **Cast a wide net. Collect, retain, and brainstorm a broad swath of ideas.** Some are defensive moves; others go on offense. Some ideas can be deployed now, while others may be opportune later.

- **Redefine failure. Many of our assumptions will fail.** It is a given. But failure is not defeat; it is something that did not work out. Remove the stigma of failure. Position it as a learning opportunity. Learn and provide support to try again. The single most important

**“ We will see long-term transformative shifts in the ways we work, shop, relax, educate, manage our health, and maintain relationships with friends and family. There is no organization that is exempt.**

lines, "In case of an emergency, put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others." You have to be healthy before you can help others.

- **Take advantage of consumer sentiment for the underdog.** My assessment, based on nothing scientific, is that customers believe that larger companies can take care of themselves and we have to support the little guy. Take advantage of it.

- **Create good customer experiences.** It leaves a lasting impression that won't be forgotten.

- **Use a platform and established methodology for generating ideas.** Generate many ideas and select a few key ones from among

skill at this time is the ability to take a well-calculated risk.

- **Evolve innovation management.** Don't get bogged down by "it hasn't been done before"—that's what innovation is all about! Unlike the corporate model, where a small elite group manages innovation, engage all employees to provide constant real-time information and ideas, and then pay them heed. Such an endeavor is not only a source of innovation, but also dispels a sense of doom.

- **Embrace improvised and unorthodox solutions.** We can learn from the age-old Indian concept called *jugaad*, which has been

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## Gaining “Fin-Fluence:” Financial Literacy In The Age of Social Media

honed under adverse conditions and severe resource constraints. It is a tried-and-true system of seeking opportunity in adversity, doing more with less—thinking and acting flexibly while also serving marginalized customers who are neglected during the crisis.

If we plan to thrive, rather than merely survive, we must muster the courage to position ourselves at the forefront of this crisis. A structural break is the very best time to apply such thinking—when old sources of competitive advantage have weakened and new sources haven’t jelled yet. The window is open wide for some time, until the pandemic risk eventually blows over or is tamed.

*Rajiv Tandon is executive director of the Institute for Innovators and Entrepreneurs and an advocate for the future of entrepreneurship in Minnesota. He facilitates peer groups of Minnesota CEOs. He can be reached at [rajiv@mn-iiie.org](mailto:rajiv@mn-iiie.org).*

Apple Crider has always been an observant person.

He’s had a sharp eye ever since his first day of school. As he tells it, Crider didn’t start playing with his peers right away — he needed to watch them first.

“On the first day of kindergarten, on the playground, I showed up and stood on the sidelines and observed everything,” said Crider. “At the end of the week on week two I knew who I wanted to play with and what I wanted to do.”

Crider’s attentive nature transferred over into many realms – including finance. He took note of his parents’ trips to the grocery store and other errands, along with what they deemed to be cheap or expensive. He developed an interest in how his friends handled their money.

But it wasn’t the dollars and cents, per se, that interested Crider in money. It was the psychology of it. The “people part.”

“Whether people like money or not, it’s going to play a pretty specific role in your life,” Crider said. “So, whether you like to talk about money or think about money or not – it’s an important thing.”

Crider is the 21-year-old host of Young Smart Money, a podcast focused on entrepreneurship and money management for young people. He also has more than 7,000 subscribers to his YouTube channel. Crider’s videos range from tips on investing to resources for young entrepreneurs. His most popular video tells viewers how to open a Roth IRA.

More and more, young people are getting their financial know-how from people like Crider — so much so that there’s been a new genre of social media influencers referred to as “finfluencers.” Similar to the traditional “influencer,” these are social media personalities who create content about personal finance and economics.

Finfluencers use the same channels and methods to gain followers: engaging, yet ephemeral, content in the form of memes and videos. The difference is the content itself: A finfluencer creates a video to explain what escrow is or distinguishes index funds from mutual funds.

On one of Humphrey Yang’s video posts, a viewer comments that he learns more from Yang than he does at school. Yang provides information on personal finance and investing on social media. He has over one million TikTok followers.

A Wall Street Journal survey found that nearly half of millennials prefer to learn about finance online; just a quarter of respondents said they would go to an in-person expert. Gen Z and millennials have grown up not knowing anything but smartphones, fast internet and an app-based existence, so in many ways it’s a no-brainer young people are getting their financial knowledge via social media.

Crider added that there aren’t many other places to get it. He said many of his peers don’t trust traditional platforms.

“Where else are they going to get (financial literacy)?” he asked. “There is so much distrust in the financial industry as a whole.

No 20-something I know is going to go seek out a financial advisor.”

Data from the Council for Economic Education shows just 21 states require high school students to take a course in personal finance.

However, the report also states that there’s been significant progress made on the issue over the last 20 years. For example, 45 states are required to implement personal finance education standards into their K-12 curriculum.

It could be said that financial literacy is especially important for young people right now, given that college debt in the United States is more than \$1 trillion.

Christopher Caltabiano, chief program officer at the Council for Economic Education, said part of the reason financial literacy among K-12 schools isn’t universal is due to an already “crowded curriculum.”

“There are a lot of things teachers are already being asked to teach,” Caltabiano said. “There’s a perception that this is just adding one more thing to the pile.”

Banzai is looking to change that. The organization provides free personal finance software and courses for schools across the country. The offering is made possible thanks to sponsorship from credit unions and banks.

Banzai co-founder and current CEO Morgan Vandagriff helped start the organization right before the 2008 financial crisis. Now, as the country faces another economic downturn due to COVID-19, Banzai subscriptions are up.

“Since the pandemic began, and everybody suddenly switched to remote learning with almost no warning, Banzai has been thrust into the spotlight like never before,” he said.

Thousands of teachers have signed up for the program since the pandemic, said Vandagriff.

Crider said he wasn’t required to take any finance classes in high school, aside from an optional economics course his senior year. One reason young people gravitate towards social media for financial knowledge is its less buttoned-up environment, he said. Crider thinks kids feel less prone to judgement on a news feed than they might in an investment banker’s office.

“They’re not going to feel comfortable going into that environment because they’re going to feel stupid,” he said. “They’re going to think ‘I don’t know enough to even have a conversation.’”

Crider knows that not all social media personalities are in it for the right reasons. It’s easy to be a bad actor, he said, especially now that accounts can obtain paid followers.

Vandagriff agrees – there’s the potential for incorrect information. He also said that influencers who promote a culture of needless consumption aren’t helping. But, when it comes to someone genuinely trying to spread financial knowledge for the right reasons, Vandagriff approves.

“Anyone who’s raising awareness of this issue is going to get a thumbs up from me,” he said.

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# Nonprofits Focus on Financial Empowerment

Financial literacy training helps people with low and unstable incomes chart their own destiny.

By Sarah Lutman

**M**innesota Public Radio launched a new podcast series called *Small Change* in late September. The series is the creation of Chris Farrell, senior economics contributor, and Twila Dang, entrepreneur and podcaster. In each segment, Farrell and Dang talk to people with

low and unstable incomes to learn how they make their way in the world and to help others do the same. The first season of *Small Change* has eight episodes; a second season is planned with eight more.

The podcast's stories are compelling portraits—all Minnesotans—that speak to the tenacity and creativity of low-income people as they navigate ele-

ments of personal finance such as establishing credit, qualifying for a mortgage, and starting a business. Most of the stories have two things in common: They show how financial support comes from community and family members who form a network of interdependence and mutual aid in low-income communities. They also amplify the impact of many nonprofits involved in the financial empowerment of people with low and volatile incomes.

In fact, *Small Change* is as much about nonprofits as it is about the stories of the individuals they serve. One example is Project for Pride in Living (PPL), a nonprofit that's been working on financial literacy for decades.

Most *Twin Cities Business* readers probably were exposed to financial literacy concepts in their youth. Business leaders and professionals are accustomed to holding salaried positions with benefits, having access to credit cards, and owning homes.

But what if you didn't have any of those things? It turns out that nonprofits like PPL can help. "We're not just about helping individuals learn job skills

so they can earn an income," says Paul Williams, PPL president and CEO, "but also about wealth-building. We want our clients to understand how to create wealth for themselves and their families. That means financial literacy and financial empowerment."

Henry Rucker has served as PPL's housing and financial coaching coordinator for the last seven years. Formerly a bank employee, Rucker leads programs such as Home Stretch, an intensive workshop that teaches the basics of qualifying for homeownership. He also oversees PPL's lending circles; these help participants learn the benefits of saving money. "It's expensive to be poor and to have bad credit," Rucker explains. PPL staff members help clients with things like deciphering their credit report, building their first budget, and developing a wealth-building plan that will help them work toward qualifying for a mortgage and homeownership.

Often, clients get rejected for mortgages, have poor credit histories, and feel discouraged. "We don't think of being turned down for a mortgage as a 'no'; it's just a slow 'yes,'" Rucker says. With

PHOTO: PROJECT FOR PRIDE IN LIVING



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The good news is that there's a role each of us can play: volunteering, food and financial donations, SNAP advocacy, and stigma fighting.

**Thank you for this recognition. Let's get to work!**

*Allison O'Toole*

**Allison O'Toole**, CEO  
Second Harvest Heartland





**Project for Pride in Living offers homeownership workshops, oversees lending circles to help people save money, and provides other financial empowerment programs.**

a motto of “Get Ready, Be Ready,” PPL helps clients learn what they have to do to improve their credit scores and get on top of their financial situations, despite low earnings or weak balance sheets.

Lending circles are expanding at

PPL. These are small groups, usually six people, who agree to contribute money into a “kitty” once a month for six months. Then, once during the six-month program, each participant is given the kitty, amounting to around

\$300. Lending circles demonstrate the benefit of putting money away for savings and then having a larger sum to pay accumulated bills or to make the deposit on a new rental or the down payment on an important purchase. Lending circles demonstrate the benefits of mutual aid, since the groups meet monthly to talk about money and support each other’s efforts. The circles aid those who lack access to bank loans.

In analyzing success metrics, PPL tracks numbers such as improvement in an individual’s credit score, increase in net worth, and overall debt reduction.

PPL is among the most prominent organizations providing financial literacy training, but it is not the only one. A number of area nonprofits include financial literacy in their services, with the goal of independence for their clients. Those include Lutheran Social Service’s financial counseling programs focused on achieving financial wellness; CLUES, the Latinx organization that offers financial coaching services, tax preparation, and classes in homeownership; and Powderhorn Residents Group (now called PRG Inc.), which

provides a number of programs for first-time homebuyers.

These services seem even more crucial as people face job losses and income insecurity because of shut-downs and downsizing of businesses and community organizations resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet media stories often highlight people’s need for a handout, not for financial empowerment. An uplifting aspect of the *Small Change* podcast is the stories it tells of the ingenuity and entrepreneurial bent that people with low incomes draw on to make a life.

Financial literacy and empowerment programs rely on contributions and volunteers. If you’re doing well during the pandemic, these organizations and approaches should be on your charitable donations radar. They’re in the business of individual and community empowerment, as well as lasting social change. And now there’s a podcast to share their stories.

*Sarah Lutman is a St. Paul-based independent consultant and writer for clients in the cultural, media, and philanthropic sectors.*



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Thank you for your example and your leadership at Thomson Reuters and in the Twin Cities community. Congratulations to you and all the honorees named to the **Twin Cities Business 100 People to Know in 2021** list.

**PAUL FISCHER**

Interim President, Legal Professionals, Thomson Reuters  
Twin Cities Business 100 People to Know in 2021





# Congratulations, Beth!

Greater Twin Cities United Way congratulates our board member **Beth Ford** on being recognized as the Twin Cities Business Person of the Year—as well as making Fortune’s 2020 list of Most Powerful Women! Thank you for your leadership and dedication as a changemaker in creating a community where all people thrive.



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## Unwrapping Your Brand's True Value

How to strike the right balance between deliverables and messaging.

By Aaron Keller

**W**hat's more important for the holidays, the gift or the gift wrap?

"I often use the metaphor of the gift and the gift wrap when I talk about branding," says Dan Wallace, my co-author on *The Physics of Brand*. "Gift wrap is the communication that signals an expectation. The gift is the experience and social-economic value of the brand," says Wallace, who teaches at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. "When the gift and gift wrap are well matched, the chance of success goes up."

This seems like such a simple, easy get, the kind of knowledge you just high-five, then

move on to the next thing on your list. Yet the metaphor offers so much more to explore when thinking about the investments companies make in marketing. Let's unwrap it.

The "gift" is the offering, and like many offerings today, it isn't as obvious as a widget. It includes an experience and all the complexity that comes with delivering on a promise in a competitive environment. The gift wrapping sets an expectation of what's to come with the actual product or service. And it's harder than ever today to control the gift wrapping once the bows get tied up in social media, earned media,



and the stuff fewer people notice, paid media.

In the 1980s and '90s, advertising tended toward an abundance of overpromising (Reebok "Pump It Up" trainers, Wendy's hamburgers, Guess Jeans, and United Colors of Benetton) —gift wrapping that looked like woven gold was actually just a spot-gloss finish, and it was wrapped around a Pet Rock. Because it often cost too much to improve the gift, funds went into overpromising.

Nowadays, it's easier for the consumer to reject the gift and go buy the next one. It's also easier for lies and puffery to proliferate via social media—even our news

**“ The more intangible the exchange between giver and recipient, the more expertise required to design and refine both the gift and gift wrap.**

is tainted with clear and present political bias. The influential power is transferring from brand handlers (retailers, media, and social platforms) to communities (Facebook groups, hashtags, activist movements, etc). We can hope more power moves into the hands of individuals as we can at least trust our own judgment, because trust in brands and institutions is still declining.

Today we sit on the edge of another decade and look to what will come of this craptastic year—hopefully a reset, with fewer poorly wrapped gifts and a return to a balance of what we design as the offering and what the wrapping does to entice a purchase. Using this metaphor, we have three areas to rethink:

**Marketing investment.** Understanding where you are weak—in the gift or the gift wrapping—requires some precise research. Then, invest in ways

the two can be in balance, with the gift having a slight edge. If your robin's-egg-blue jewelry box rattles when it arrives (not a good signal from the gift or gift wrap), then you might want to design some improvements, because it will affect how people feel about the gift.

**Balancing priorities.** Most customers will say what matters most is the gift, but then they pick your competitor with the better gift wrap. If customers can't see if you have a (gifted) advantage, you need some work to help that feeling come to life for a potential customer. Balancing the offering and the brand is both an art and science; it takes experience and an honest look at the knowledge your customers provide you.

**Level of expertise.** The more intangible the exchange between giver and recipient, the more expertise required to design and refine both the gift and gift wrap. And with more intangibles (patents, trademarks, loyal customers, and secret sauces) comes more margin—just ask 3M (that is, margin and more margin). Commodities lack intangibles, kind of like the chunk of coal you get in your stocking. The more intangible, the more you need to increase the level of expertise to design a better gift and wrap it properly.

Disappointment in a brand can be difficult to overcome. We've all experienced it—when you see the largest gift in the pile with your name on it, only to find Uncle Larry wrapped the Electric Fart Machine in the biggest box. In a year with plenty of unfortunate surprises, it is a good time to reconsider how your gift pairs with the gift wrap.

*Aaron Keller (aaronkeller@capsule.us) is co-founder and managing principal of Capsule (capsule.us), a Minneapolis branding agency. He co-authored The Physics of Brand, physicsofbrand.com.*

# Congratulations

Michael Sullivan Jr., Partner-in-Charge of the Minneapolis office, for being named to the 100 People You Should Know in 2021 by *Twin Cities Business*.

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### WORKING IT



## What's Lost When You Can't Go into the Office?

One lawyer remembers the colleagues who make practicing law fun.

By Linda L. Holstein

In the past 40 years I've worked at a very big California law firm (currently 500-plus lawyers), a large Twin Cities law firm (200-plus lawyers), two mid-sized to smaller law firms (25-50 lawyers), and my own law firm, which employed 10 people.

During the pandemic, I've worked alone, from my home, by Zoom and by phone. My daughter, 32, is an attorney at a global firm in Chicago with more than 1,000 lawyers, the kind known in the profession as "Big Law." She worked from her home in Chicago during April, May, and June, with a fancy white leather desk chair. (I bought the same chair for my home office in Minneapolis.)

But my daughter started going back to her firm's skyscraper office in July. She liked being able to spread out all of her work in a bigger space. She felt she could work more efficiently there than at home, even though the late nights and weekend requirements were the same, no matter where the briefs were drafted.

When I reflect on my career, the highlights always include several jury trials, which of course occurred in courtrooms. Also top of mind are some out-of-town depositions, especially the post-deposition dinners in places like New York or San Francisco. I also recall, for a three-year period in my career, legal work in Billings, Montana (lots of steak).

Yet the most vivid memories are those of the lawyers who

practiced with me: their humor, their dedication, and often their obstinacy. What stays with me is the spontaneity of our interactions: lawyers near tears from exhaustion; lawyers happily and deliriously screaming after a win; lawyers catatonic after learning that a senior partner and three associates were leaving the firm to open a competing one.

It's the same with offices in every profession. Despite early pandemic testimonials about how much work people could get done in less time because they didn't have to tolerate (or look at) co-workers, there is definitely something missing without office life. I worked for one partner who ripped the phone cord out of the wall when the receptionist didn't answer it quickly enough. Yet that same partner could dissect a legal opinion or a client's problem with such alacrity and insight that I was stunned. I wanted to be like that partner, without the temper.

I learned from the "hermit" lawyers too. Those were the ones with the closed doors, where you gently knocked—but always knocked—before entering. These scholars insisted on using a full library of hard-copy "reporters" (bound volumes of published case law) long after electronic legal research became available. Bloviating about trial victories was, to them, distasteful, given their certainty that the real power in the firm lay deep within their own brains—and the law itself—rather than in the mouthy and facile litigators.



The television series *Mad Men* captured the intense relationships and office shenanigans that can be found among colleagues in many workplaces.

Then there were the get-togethers. You didn't really need an occasion to have an office party, just a party in someone's office. People certainly drank, but mostly they talked. The topics rarely centered on legal matters—how boring. Rather, gossip prevailed, and no one was safe unless you were at the party.

These unplanned events encouraged destigmatization because secretaries, file clerks, paralegals, and messengers were often 10 times funnier than the lawyers, and their presence infinitely more appreciated. To say these interactions were good for morale is an understatement; to say they were infinitely more enjoyable (and, actually, safer) than the annual holiday party is also true.

Managers' earnest efforts at camaraderie mouthed at the end of an office Zoom call—"Tell us something about your new hobby of bread baking while your 8-year-old kneads the dough!"—seem, and indeed are, a phony substitute for the social fabric of office life.

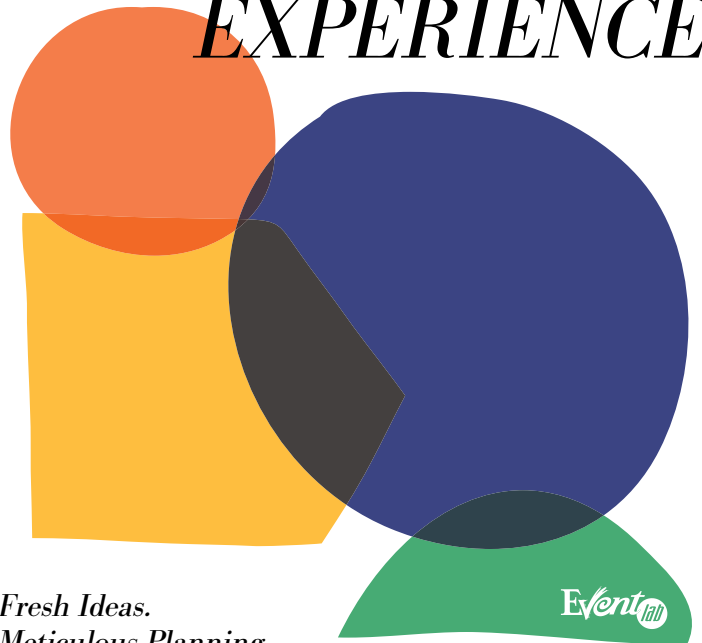
While practicing law—or building tech platforms, or inputting data, or answering sales calls—could feel like sheer drudgery, in the office there was always the possibility that someone could lift your spirits, make you mad, annoy you, or inspire you. That's just because another person was working nearby. I miss that.

My daughter called me recently to recount a frustrating deposition—only her second one—that she'd defended and survived. By the end of the call, she sounded better, even pleased. I rarely hear such detail about her work experiences. It's always, "I'm working! I'll maybe call you this weekend." But this time she talked. By recounting her experience with a much older and truly dastardly opposing counsel, she relived the deposition in a nuanced and helpful way. She gained perspective by talking to another lawyer, even if it was her mother.

What I remember about communal office life, especially during bad times, was the feeling of familiarity and comfort. You felt comforted every morning because you knew these people's proclivities, their habits, and their hot buttons. Sometimes it was quite fun to press their hot buttons. Whether we ever return to office life—and I fully admit I'm awash in nostalgia—my happy memories of those conference rooms and corridors remain sacrosanct. Maybe that's why I liked *Mad Men* so much.

*Linda L. Holstein is a Minneapolis writer, trial lawyer, and veteran employment law attorney. Holstein also mediates employment and business law disputes (holsteinmediation.com).*

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## PLATTITUDES



## In Person?

For attendance-based businesses, game-planning 2021 is more wizardry than accounting.

By Adam Platt

**B**udget season is coming to an end for most of us; it involved a lot more guesswork than usual, I'm sure. 2021 is the ultimate black box of black boxes, and few businesses are struggling with it like attendance-based ones.

Concerts, plays, sports, nightclubs, restaurants: all shuttered. The coming year appears more and more to be when normalcy returns, but how and at what pace we don't know. I checked in with three of Minneapolis' biggest visitor attractions to see how they were planning for 2021.

### Dayna Frank/First Avenue

First Ave. is not just a single venue on Seventh Street; it also operates or schedules multiple music venues around town. Owner/CEO Dayna Frank says 2021 is all about scenario-gaming—but few of them are compelling.

"We are not planning any significant revenue for next year," she says. "Bands have to feel safe touring, and venues have to be open all over the country for them to mount a tour." For now she's got five employees on payroll and continues to advocate for government relief.

A key factor is the interconnectedness of the live entertainment industry. Most U.S. cities have to return to a state of near-normalcy for live entertainment to bounce back. Sports can play to empty houses because of broadcast revenues, but most live entertainment can't.

"We can't project our product into people's homes," says Frank. And if you're wondering about livestreaming concerts, Frank says the revenue potential is nil: "Livestreaming brings in around \$350 a month for venues."

My 22-year-old wants nothing more than to go to concerts again. It is the No. 1 pandemic-related loss for him and for many young people, and the experience is not even remotely substitutable with streaming because it's intensely social and sensory.

Frank says it will take the music industry probably a full quarter to ramp up when the all clear—or something like

**“The coming year appears more and more to be when normalcy returns, but how and at what pace we don't know.”**

it—sounds. Her ace in the hole is that her customer base is younger, and they will be the first to avidly repopulate social spaces.

### Mark Nerenhausen/Hennepin Theatre Trust

The Hennepin theaters' CEO has a bigger boulder to roll up the mountain because his clientele includes a wide mix of ages and risk profiles, but he faces similar challenges to First Ave. in other respects. "Broadway shows need

20 to 30 cities to tour, so we can't open in a vacuum," he says. HTT is hoping to open the doors with *Hamilton* in July—fortunately the beginning of its fiscal year—but Nerenhausen knows it's a calculated risk.

And when traveling productions return, they won't be distanced. "It's an all-or-nothing situation," he says. "The cost is so high that you need to fill your space. You need full capacity."

If traveling shows can't ramp up in time for the city's reopening, Nerenhausen expects musical acts or comedy to fill some nights, as they require less infrastructure and can organize tours faster.

Nerenhausen's subscribers are also thinking about public safety and downtown's ambience. We've all seen the social unrest and read the articles about downtown's devolution. It flowed hand in hand with the pandemic, and it is going to be difficult to be the first to reopen in a deserted downtown. "We're working really closely with the Downtown Council and Chamber to figure out the right way to do this when it's time," he says.

#### Dave St. Peter/ Minnesota Twins

The Twins prez has seen a lot in his decades with the team, but little prepared him for a pandemic. The Twins played in 2020 for two months, and in the process they sustained huge losses. He says MLB teams lost

\$3 billion as a group, an average of \$100 million per team. Those that depend on stadium revenue for a higher percentage of their take, like the Twins, were probably disproportionately affected.

St. Peter says budgeting for 2021 has been challenging. "We're in the midst of scenario planning right now," he said in October. "We recognize there's a lot of ways this could play [but] there is no way 2021 is going to make any economic sense." He anticipates "tens of millions" in losses but says the Pohlad family takes the long view.

"We expect to go to spring training in February and compete," he continues. "We expect to have our full complement of people, while other teams have cut." The big question is attendance. "Our hope is fans are reintroduced at a scalable level."

Because the Twins have maintained their market research, St. Peter knows many fans are as concerned about downtown safety as they are about Covid: "It's a major hurdle for some people right now." He says he expects Target Field to likely be the first large-scale venue in Minneapolis to reintroduce in-person attendance, and "we welcome being part of the solution."

His hope is for a stabilized economic picture in 2022. Amen to that.

*Adam Platt is TCB's executive editor.*

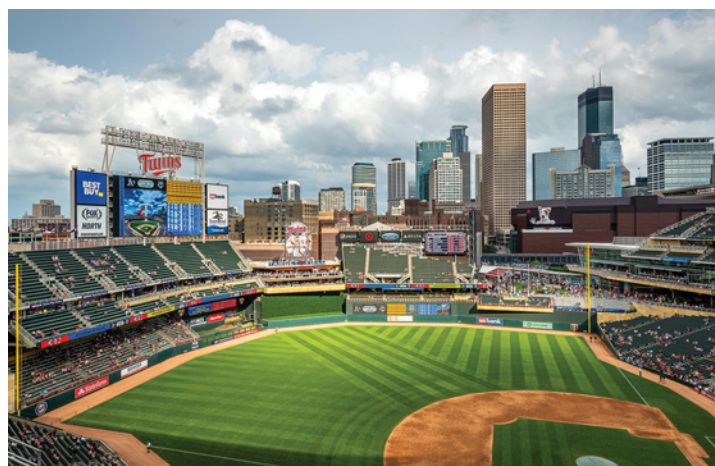


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**Congratulations to Greg and all the awardees!**



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BY TESS ALLEN, KAIT ECKER, LIZ FEDOR, BURL GILYARD, DARA MOSKOWITZ GRUMDAHL, ALLISON KAPLAN,  
SARAH LUTMAN, STEPHANIE MARCH, DAN NIEPOW, ADAM PLATT, GENE REBECK, AND RAJIV TANDON

It's been a year, huh? When we set out in late 2019 to identify the TCB100, we saw a 2020 defined by an election and a booming economy. And for 10 weeks that's what we got. Then Covid hit, then George Floyd, then an election week that revealed how polarized we all are.

So when our editorial team met in a driveway just before Labor Day, the question was how to identify 100 people who will shape 2021 when 2020 threw us nothing but curveballs.

So this TCB100 is a little different. We

have three People of the Year instead of one—from the three “verticals” that defined 2020 in these pages: business, Covid, and equity. As for the 100 who we're suggesting you keep an eye on, they're the usual array of movers and shakers, emerging and vets, but with an extra emphasis on those who will blaze our trail out of a pandemic and into a business universe increasingly defined by its commitment to equity in deeds rather than verbiage.

Here's to a year of healing and prosperity for us all. —Adam Platt

Watch a recording of our  
TCB100 virtual event,  
including a conversation with  
Beth Ford, Greg Cunningham,  
and Dr. Andrew Badley at  
[tcbmag.com/  
tcb100event-2020](https://tcbmag.com/tcb100event-2020).

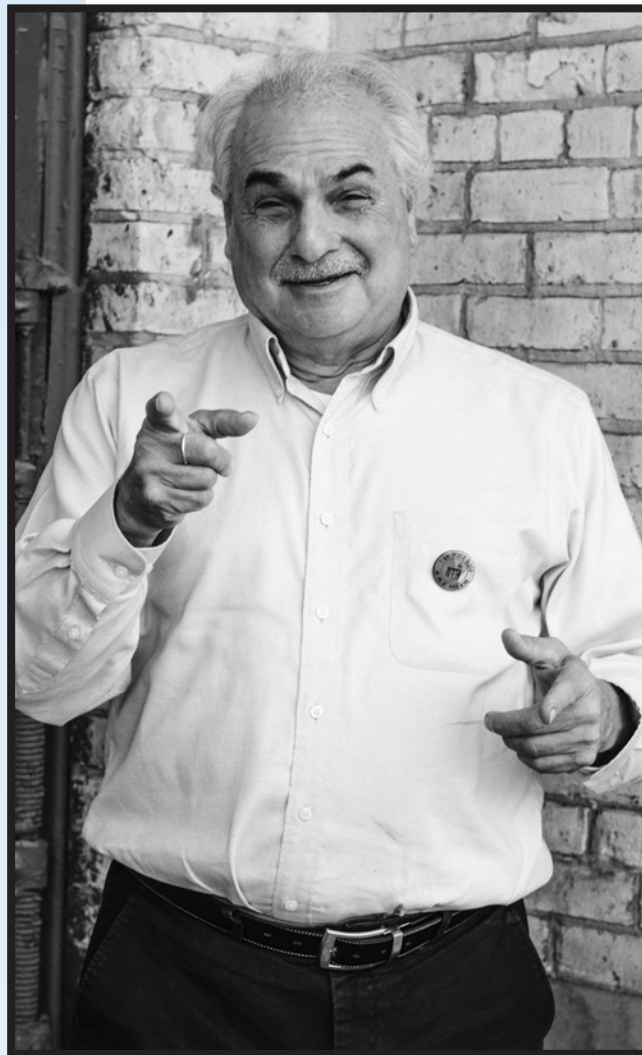




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## CHANGE AGENT

**JACK REULER** | Artistic director, Mixed Blood Theatre

For decades, Jack Reuler has showcased actors of color and tackled social issues. But the trauma of 2020 has rejuvenated Reuler, whose Minneapolis home is 10 blocks from where George Floyd died. "Never underestimate the activist artist," Reuler wrote in a recent column for an industry forum. "Look for us to be referees of racism, calling foul wherever we see it." Through theater, Reuler is working with artists to combat systemic racism. Covid-19 and the racial reckoning have intensified Mixed Blood's community connections. The theater served as a hub to register voters, and Reuler intends to continue distributing food and masks and offering Covid-19 tests.



## BUILDER

**GAYE ADAMS MASSEY** | CEO, YWCA of St. Paul

Five years into her tenure as the St. Paul YWCA's CEO, Harvard-educated Gaye Adams Massey has emerged as a forceful voice for racial equity and social justice, with a focus on empowerment of women and girls. The YWCA answered the Twin Cities' social unrest by offering a 21-day challenge that provided the public with a deeply researched curriculum exploring the history and status of such topics as racism in voter suppression, school segregation, criminal justice, and health equity. Following up with a virtual speaker series and panel discussions exploring racial justice, Massey is establishing the YWCA as an effective convener, educator, and advocate.

## ROOTED

**STEVE RYAN** | Partner-in-charge/Minneapolis, Taft

After graduating from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1994, Steve Ryan joined Briggs & Morgan law firm. On January 1, Briggs merged into Taft, and Ryan serves as partner-in-charge of the 133 attorneys based in Minneapolis. Ryan, who represented the Vikings on the financing and development of U.S. Bank Stadium, says the firm is doing well financially despite the disruptions caused by the coronavirus. Taft has about 600 attorneys total, and Ryan says the firm formed a cross-office Covid-19 task force to address developing client issues. In 2021, Ryan intends to focus on fully integrating the Minneapolis office into Taft.



**EMERGING****SYLVIA STROBEL | President/CEO, Twin Cities PBS (TPT)**

Sylvia Strobel started her new job in February, taking over the role held by Jim Pagliarini for 20 years. She was most recently chief operating officer for Ideastream, a public radio and TV broadcaster serving Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. She was deputy counsel for TPT in the mid-'90s and served as senior vice president and general counsel for St. Paul-based American Public Media Group from 2014 to 2017. "We have really moved aggressively into the education space. ... Certainly the pandemic has opened a door for us working with educators and families in the community," says Strobel. TPT just landed a grant that will fund *Mashopolis*, its third national show aimed at kids. "I see that as a real growth area."

**EMERGING****DENISE PIERATOS | Founder, Harvest Nation**

Denise Pieratos and three fellow members of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa found motivation in Anishinaabe teachings that emphasized food as sacred medicine. To tackle the alarming prevalence of nutrition-deficient diseases that plague the northland and indigenous people, Harvest Nation is building an indoor aeroponic farming system half a mile down in the Soudan Underground Mine. It is land- and water-efficient, will grow over 40 chemical-free fruits and vegetables year-round, and will sell a weekly subscription box using a CSA farm model in Nett Lake, Lake Vermilion, and neighboring Iron Range towns. Plans include expanding the model for B2B sales to public institutions and restaurants, as well as other native communities facing similar deficiencies, such as the Inupiat Tribe in Alaska.

**BUILDER****JULIE SULLIVAN | President, University of St. Thomas**

After marking her seven-year anniversary as president, Julie Sullivan is driving a major growth trajectory. Minnesota's largest private university is on a path to leap from Division III in college athletics. Undeterred by NCAA hurdles, Sullivan is lining up funding so St. Thomas can transition straight to D-I and propel St. Thomas onto the national stage. In 2021, she's also focused on building the Morrison Family College of Health, which got a huge boost with a \$25 million gift from the family of one of its trustees. She's also moving forward with construction of a 160,000-square-foot academic complex on the St. Paul campus.

**INNOVATOR****RICK GOMEZ | Executive vice president/chief marketing, digital, and strategy officer, Target Corp.**

Rick Gomez started at Target in 2013 as senior vice president of brand and category marketing; in 2017 he was named CMO, and in 2019 he was tapped as head of Target's e-commerce business and digital strategy. In the age of Covid-19 and the uncertainty ahead, it's arguably one of the most important jobs at the company. His marketing mindset makes him well-suited to boosting digital sales. "Marketing is responsible for driving business results," Gomez told *Forbes*. It's tough to argue with the results. "So far this year, due to major changes in shopping behavior driven by Covid-19, our digital business is up by well over 150 percent," says Gomez.

**INNOVATOR****PAUL FISCHER | Interim president, legal professionals, Thomson Reuters**

In his current role, Paul Fischer, who joined Thomson Reuters in 1996, continues to help customers better manage their legal needs and facilitate collaboration between legal professionals and clients. Fischer has helped lead Thomson Reuters' initiative to build the business for a more digitally enabled future, using Covid-19 as an inflection point to rethink the way legal work is done.







**BUILDER**

**ROD JOHANSEN | President and CEO, HOM Furniture**

Coon Rapids-based HOM Furniture started in 1973 as a wholesale and retail gift import business. Today HOM is a big regional player as a full-service furniture retailer with 17 stores in the five-state area, including 11 in Minnesota. “Our whole industry’s done well in the pandemic. ... Everybody’s investing in their home right now,” says Rod Johansen. HOM acquired Gabberts Furniture in 2008 and launched the lower-priced Dock 86 brand in 2010. In Little Canada and Bloomington, it has all three under one roof. “We like to grow smart and steady,” says Johansen, adding that the company is “always looking” for new locations.

**ROOTED**

**PATTI SOSKIN | Founder, Yum! Kitchen**

Longtime Twin Cities restaurant vet Patti Soskin had a choice in mid-March: hunker down and close her two west-suburban quick-serve restaurants or lean into the headwind. People who know her knew intuitively what the answer would be—lean in. “We’re in the hospitality business,” Soskin says. “Our employees and customers are an extension of our home. They are family. We are committed.” While other restaurants closed and sought government aid, Yum doubled down on its culture, retaining most of its staff and growing its market share. In early fall, business is just a fraction off normal. In 2021, Soskin and husband Robbie hope to expand to St. Paul and Woodbury, trading on the public’s newfound affinity for takeout.

**BUILDER**

**KENT ROERS | Co-founder and owner, Roers Companies**

Kent Roers was working in corporate America but getting tired of it. He says he was laid off three times in three years during the Great Recession. Founded with his brother Brian in 2012, Minnetonka-based Roers Co. seems to have come out of nowhere since then to become one of the busier metro multifamily housing developers. What makes Roers different? The company raises money from individual investors instead of institutions. To date Roers says they have developed \$850 million worth of projects, anchored by \$250 million from investors. As the company grows, its projects keep getting bigger. In October it broke ground on Northlake Lofts, a 208-unit apartment project in Lakeville. “It takes a good amount of tenacity,” says Roers.



**HEALER**

**ALISSA LIGHT | Executive director, Family Tree Clinic**

When Alissa Light took over Family Tree Clinic 10 years ago, the 49-year-old clinic was something of a secret in a basement near the Macalester College campus in St. Paul. Light has since grown it to serve 22,000 people a year, 60 percent of whom identify as LGBTQ+, 68 percent of whom identify as women, 50 percent of whom are people of color, and 20 percent of whom have recently experienced housing instability. Family Tree Clinic is the leading source of gender-affirming hormone care for queer, trans, and gender-nonconforming folk in a seven-state region. “When I think about what’s special about Family Tree, I think of the words of one of our patients. ‘I’m free in my body for the first time because of the care I got at Family Tree,’” says Light. “And we’re going to do so much more in the coming years.” Like break ground on a new clinic in Minneapolis near Franklin and Nicollet.



**CHANGE AGENT**

**REP. RENA MORAN | Minnesota House of Representatives**

First elected to the Minnesota House in 2010, Rep. Rena Moran has long been active in fighting for racial justice. She chairs the People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) Caucus at the Minnesota Legislature. In the 2021 session, she’ll sponsor a bill to place an education amendment on the 2022 ballot. The amendment, backed by Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank president Neel Kashkari and retired Supreme Court Justice Alan Page, would help parents hold schools accountable for providing a good education for every child. Moran also will carry a bill that prohibits employers from requiring job applicants to disclose their wages from previous jobs.



**BUILDER**

**TIM MULHERE | President, global institutional and specialty group, Ecolab**

Not many people know Ecolab’s business as well as Tim Mulhere. Over 20 years with the company, he has held leadership roles in all its business lines. The institutional group works with clients in health care, hospitality, food service, and food retail on water management and food safety. In the age of Covid, those are front-burner issues. “We help customers solve some pretty big problems,” says Mulhere. “If anything, the opportunity that we’ve built over time and how we’ve positioned ourselves in terms of our mission gives us a bigger opportunity than we’ve ever had in the past.”







#### INNOVATOR

**JOHN KELLY** | Founder/CEO, Nexben

John Kelly is on a mission to fix the health benefit experience. His Minneapolis-based insurance tech startup Nexben simplifies the marketplace by connecting the entire industry—national insurance carriers, independent agents, businesses of all sizes, and individuals—through a comprehensive cloud-based platform. The result is real-time quotes, a broader range of options, and potential savings for employers and users. “We’re the technology for insurance brokers,” Kelly explains. The market is catching on—Nexben, which has raised around \$5 million in capital, experienced “explosive growth” in the last year and is on course to surpass a million users.



We suggested you keep an eye on these TCB100 vets (2018 and 2019) over the past couple years, and their accomplishments and contributions keep piling up. Here are the latest reasons they’re on our radar.



**MARY GROVE**

*Partner,  
Bread & Butter Ventures*

In June, former Google exec and Revolution’s Rise of the Rest Seed Fund partner Mary Grove teamed up with investor Brett Brohl on Bread & Butter Ventures. They plan to invest globally by leveraging Minnesota’s industry expertise in food, ag tech, health care, and enterprise software.



**MICHAEL ROMAN**  
*Chairman/CEO, 3M*

Quick to recognize 3M’s ability to play a key role in combating Covid-19, Michael Roman directed his team to double global production of N95 masks, while expanding production of hand sanitizers, disinfectants, and air purifiers, as well as donating millions in cash and supplies. Roman was quick to partner with medical researchers and manufacturers on innovations in filters, shields, and diagnostic tests. And he’s been a vocal opponent of price gouging by those who tried to exploit demand for 3M products.



#### BUILDER

**RENAVY DOSSMAN** |

**President, Neighborhood Development Center Twin Cities**

When Target made its elevated commitment to the Neighborhood Development Center and established a new partnership with Midtown Global Market (which NDC co-owns) for home delivery via Shipt, it’s likely no coincidence it happened under Renay Dossman’s leadership. A longtime Target executive who led the global trend and design team for grocery, Dossman joined NDC in 2019 and was named president in September. The nonprofit provides business services for more than 400 local entrepreneurs, 90 percent of whom are low-income and people of color. “There’s more urgency now,” Dossman says. “My goal is to remove obstacles.” That meant cutting rent in half to help Midtown Global tenants survive the downturn. In 2021, the market will roll out a website to promote its vendors, many of whom don’t have websites of their own. NDC’s new training center, which will include business incubator space and low-income housing, is set to open in St. Paul in fall 2021.

#### CHANGE AGENT

**LAUREN BENNETT MCGINTY** |

**Executive director, Minnesota Craft Brewers Guild**

Named executive director of the Minnesota Craft Brewers Guild in 2017, Lauren Bennett McGinty has emerged as the leading voice of the state’s microbrewery scene. Her name has popped up in the news time and again since she took the position, often speaking out on Minnesota’s complicated alcohol regulations. In 2021, she’ll start working as the guild’s designated lobbyist at the state Capitol, where she’ll push legislators to give craft breweries more off-sale options. That means allowing brewers of all sizes to sell products in growlers, crowsers, and cans. The end goal, she says, is to give microbrewers another revenue stream and keep them afloat: “It’s time to get out of Prohibition so our breweries can thrive.”





PEOPLE  
of the YEAR  
2020



“

*I was asked to coordinate our activity, what clinical trials we wanted to get, and then lobby to get them.*

”



In 1991, when Canadian med student Andrew Badley arrived at Mayo Clinic as a resident in internal medicine, he had no thought that 30 years later he would still be in Rochester facing the deadliest worldwide pandemic in a century. But in February, when Mayo Clinic first started to grasp that SARS-CoV-2 was going to hit North America hard, leadership designated the 54-year-old Badley to lead the effort.

As chair of Mayo's Covid-19 research task force, Badley coordinates 18 "workstreams" ranging from data management and treatment modalities to remote monitoring, protocols for access to biological material, and vaccine management.

Those workstreams had much to do with the research priorities Mayo set on the fly as the pandemic emerged. "At the beginning, Mayo leadership realized there was no standard of care for treatment, let alone research trials," recalls Badley. "I was asked to coordinate our activity, what clinical trials we wanted to get, and then lobby to get them." For example, Mayo wanted access to limited supplies of the antiviral drug remdesivir. It helped that Mayo is a leading global institution in medical research.

"We wanted a portfolio of treatment options that spanned the breadth of the disease," he says.

And though the pandemic is nearly a year old, there is much yet to do. "Even today, there's no well-defined consensus on what drugs to use, when, where, and why," says Badley. "Because of that, we've put together treatment review panels. Twice a day this group has met to review everyone hospitalized." The panels decide on a course of care in consultation with the attending doctor. This effort spans Mayo campuses in Rochester; Scottsdale, Arizona; and Jacksonville, Florida.

Badley, born in Sydney, at the northern tip of Nova Scotia, returned to Canada for five years after his Mayo training, before being permanently lured back to Olmsted County in 2002. His roots are apparent in his telltale pronunciations of words like "against" and "sorry." He has spent the bulk of his career studying the "immunopathogenesis of HIV and other infectious diseases, which is a natural fit for the study of COVID-19 and its treatment and complications."

Despite the perspective, Badley says there's not much that's familiar in SARS-CoV-2, the technical name for Covid-19. "My belief is it's pretty unique. The diseases it causes we've seen in other viruses. What appears to be unique is the ease of transmission and the lack of seasonality." As a result, "I think we will continue to see cases of it for a number of years in the future."

Badley says Mayo has been providing feedback to a number of states, including Minnesota, and to think tanks. He says part of that work is balancing infection control precautions and the economy. "When asked, we have advised. We, however, are not in a position to create mandates."

Badley believes one underrepresented benefit of the spring lockdowns has been the strategic value of delay. In seven months, "drugs have improved and [Mayo has had] the opportunity to participate in clinical trials globally," he says. "Early isolation measures caused incidence of disease to shift later and outcomes are likely better. And I think our ability to treat Covid will be better in six months than it is today."

One thing many could not have predicted is the lack of consensus on how Covid is spread. Badley points to droplet transmission—"coughing and singing and loud voices." He and most other sources now minimize the significance of surface transmission. But then there's aerosolization, distinguished by tiny particles that float in the air longer than droplets. (Other experts, such as the University of Minnesota's Dr. Michael Osterholm, believe the majority of Covid spread is aerosolized.)

The fact that the public is aware of these alternate theories and the studies that advance them—what Badley calls "the absolute flood of information in the public sphere"—is not making things easier for clinicians.

"Never before do I remember a time when our treatment review team would

say, 'This is our recommendation based on the available science,' and families and patients have strong opinions on that and drugs like remdesivir and dexamethasone. In the past, patients and families would mostly agree [with our recommendations]."

As Badley's team planned Mayo's attack on Covid, he had in his peripheral vision countries like Taiwan, Japan, and Vietnam, which managed their outbreaks with less societal dislocation and loss of life. Badley says the U.S. (and Europe, hit equally hard) did not know less but suffered from an information gap.

He believes the "controversies around the societal benefits and impact on transmission of all the interventions has clearly made a difference." Especially in North America, "the uptake of [best practices] has not been as pervasive as elsewhere. That's likely the biggest difference" accounting for the poorer outcomes.

But he has a sense for how the world will tame Covid-19. "It will require three things," he says. "Enhanced [adherence to] public health and infection control procedures, enhanced therapies, and vaccines."

Despite record levels of spread in Minnesota as this issue of *TCB* goes to press, Badley is bullish on next year and how the world is mobilized for Covid in 2021 compared with HIV in 1981. "We are so much better positioned now," he says. "After years and decades of sustained biomedical research funding infrastructure, when Covid became a problem, we could sequence [a virus] in weeks. We had a portfolio of [existing] drugs that could intervene. [We had] federal funding for a platform to activate clinical trials quickly. It's the consequence of decades of sustained funding," Badley continues. "My hope is that should and will lead to better and more sustained funding [in the future]."

Late 2021 should look very different from late 2020. Badley says it is too soon to know if Covid vaccines will be a home run (see polio), a 50-50 shot (see seasonal influenza), or a complete failure (see HIV/Hepatitis C)—"but we need equipoise in our expectations."

He also asks for realism on medical therapeutics: "It is highly unlikely, given the complexity of Covid's impacts on the body [liver, lung, kidney, vascular, and primary infection], that a single pill will be able to make you better. [But] there are a large number of drugs that we suspect will have a beneficial outcome for patients. Those trials are ongoing. Definitive proof will arrive in months to a year. This is not a game of quick answers."

Still, Badley notes that each key step in conquering HIV—now kept in abeyance by a powerful and expensive combination of drugs—took anywhere from several years to a decade to complete. "Where we have come in Covid in seven months," he says, "is pretty miraculous."

Badley is modest and says it's been an enormous team effort, but now "we have the infrastructure and we're doing well."

His close friend, Mayo transplant surgeon Dr. Patrick Dean, isn't quite so modest about Badley. After all, miracles don't come from eight-hour days. "Early on it was 20-hour days, now it's probably 12- to 16-ish for his whole group," he says. He describes Badley as "extremely intelligent. He has a very good understanding of virology. He's very logical and focused. But he can also build a cabin in Wisconsin and he's totally a friend you can call at 3 a.m. if you have a problem."

Both doctors warn, ironically, about Covid become an overriding national distraction, because of course it already is. Badley says visits for pediatric vaccination, breast cancer screening, and prompt treatment of heart attack and stroke are all well off from the previous year. He urges people to see their doctors as if there were no pandemic. "It will be unfortunate if we finally get on top of Covid," Badley says, "and we have more deaths from heart attack, stroke, or cancer."

# Man vs. Virus

MAYO'S DR. ANDREW BADLEY  
LEADS TEAMS OF CLINICIANS  
AND RESEARCHERS IN THE FIGHT  
AGAINST COVID-19.

By Adam Platt



ROOTED

**MARK NERENHAUSEN** | President/COO, Hennepin Theatre Trust

The Hennepin Theatre Trust venues are an anchor of downtown Minneapolis, brightening hundreds of nights each year and helping to keep downtown vibrant. Attendance-based venues were knocked on their heels by Covid, and HTT was no exception; its absence was among many contributors to downtown's deep 2020 malaise. Mark Nerenhausen's performance calendar may be in flux for months, due to the nature of national traveling shows that require months to organize and stage. Though he still hopes to present *Hamilton* in summer 2021, the immediate post-Covid calendar will likely feature smaller acts and comedy tours that can organize on the fly. He expects to play to packed houses or nothing, though: "The cost of production is so high we can't operate at half-capacity."



CHANGE AGENT

**JASMINE STRINGER** | Founder, #SharetheMicMN

A former General Mills sales manager, Jasmine Stringer reinvented herself as a lifestyle contributor on WCCO-TV. Her platform preaches empowerment, but that took on new meaning in the wake of George Floyd's death. Following a national example, she created #SharetheMicMN to amplify the voice and reach of Brown and Black women in Minnesota by taking over the social media platforms of white allies. A consummate connector, her pairings have included U.S. Sen. Tina Smith and Minneapolis Foundation senior vice president Chanda Smith Baker, as well as radio and TV personality Jason Matheson and TV producer Georgia Fort. "We're changing people's hearts and minds," she says. The campaign, which will continue until at least February, has led Stringer to create and facilitate corporate workshops on allyship, equity, and inclusion.

BUILDER

**JULIE GILBERT** | Senior digital advisor, McKinsey & Co.

Julie Gilbert left Best Buy as a senior vice president of enterprise growth more than a decade ago, but her name is still heralded for her enduring impact, including the creation of the Magnolia Home Theater business, designed to appeal to women. Since then she's worked with Polaris, other Fortune 50 companies, and as a business creation consultant on five continents prior to her new role with McKinsey. It focuses on building consumer, tech, and health care companies around the world, with the goal of elevating gender and racial diversity. She serves on numerous boards, exudes boundless energy, and opens doors for many—particularly women and people of color. "That's the place I can make the biggest difference," she says. "It's a business imperative."



EMERGING

**KIERA FERNANDEZ** | Vice-president human resources/chief diversity and inclusion officer, Target Corp.

Kiera Fernandez stepped into her role in June, when there's never been more attention on race in business. She has big shoes to fill after her high-profile predecessor Caroline Wanga. But Fernandez takes it in stride—"I've been preparing for this for years." A 19-year Target veteran, she climbed the ranks from store management to human resources, supporting the supply chain operations team as well as finance, and working her way into diversity and inclusion efforts over the past five years. "Driving equitable culture has been a core responsibility in every role I've had. I'm standing on a firm foundation to create parity across the enterprise, to activate, advance, [and] enhance priorities we know are important."





#### INNOVATOR

**STEPHEN POLASKY** | Professor of ecological/environmental economics, University of Minnesota

Ebola, HIV, SARS, Nipah virus, Lassa fever, Covid-19—what do they have in common? They're deadly, of course, and economy-wrecking, of course—and all emerged in regions of increasing deforestation. What would the world have paid for Covid-19 alone to have remained dormant and undisturbed in the forest? It may feel cold-blooded to put a dollar value on nature, but without cold hard numbers it's almost impossible to make policy. That's why economist Stephen Polasky has dedicated his life to finding those numbers. Polasky, a pillar of the Stanford University-based Natural Capital Project and InVEST, NCP's open-source calculator for various values of nature, believes you can only save nature—and the world—by literally putting a price on it.

#### BUILDER

**MICHAEL BALLWEBER** | President, Doosan Bobcat North America

Manufacturing giant Doosan Bobcat is committed to growing its presence in Minnesota, and Michael Ballweber is leading the way. He joined the company back in 1998 and was named president of its North American division in 2019. That same year, the division, which is based in West Fargo, North Dakota, announced a \$26 million plan to expand in Litchfield, Minnesota, where the company builds attachments for its loaders, excavators, and tractors. The expansion is expected to wrap up by year's end. Doosan Bobcat also opened a new "global innovation center" in downtown Minneapolis last year.



#### BUILDER

**TD DIXON** | Chief growth officer, Post Consumer Brands

When a company needs to grow fast, TD Dixon is the man they call. So when Lakeville-based Post Consumer Brands (Fruity Pebbles, Honey Bunches of Oats, Grape-Nuts) experienced a few stagnant years, it hired Dixon, who brought experience from Kimberly-Clark, Schwan Foods, Welch's, and Jack Link's. Dixon had to think creatively about how to grow during a pandemic. He is leading Post's e-commerce strategy/business unit. Still, his main goal is to reinvent breakfast. Under Dixon, Post is developing not only new hot and cold cereals, but also breakfast snack products, beverages, heat-and-eat items, and more. It's even partnering with Dunkin' to launch a coffee-infused cereal.



#### CHANGE AGENT

**ALLISON O'TOOLE** | CEO, Second Harvest Heartland

The Covid-19 crisis brought with it another crisis: increased food insecurity. Under Allison O'Toole's leadership, Brooklyn Park-based hunger relief organization Second Harvest Heartland delivered more than 75 million pounds of food between March and October by organizing emergency outdoor grocery pop-ups and drive-throughs and by delivering prepared meals. Going into 2021, O'Toole says Second Harvest Heartland will continue to fight hunger, but with an increased emphasis on distributing "culturally relevant" foods, prioritizing sourcing partnerships with farmers of color, increasing its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) outreach, and distributing to more communities of color.



**STEVE GROVE**  
*Commissioner,  
Minnesota Department of  
Employment and  
Economic Development*

At DEED, the former Google exec has been a bullish advocate for Minnesota's entrepreneurs and startups. In the early weeks of Covid-19, Steve Grove became a household name at the governor's near-daily press conferences. He's taken a leadership role helping both workers and companies rebuild in the wake of the turbulent pandemic economy.



**PING YEH**  
*CEO, StemoniX*

Under Ping Yeh's guidance, stem cell-based research firm and 2016 MN Cup winner StemoniX is currently working out the final details of a major merger with New Jersey-based Cancer Genetics—a deal that would bring Yeh's company into the publicly traded realm.



**JOAN GABEL**  
*President,  
University of Minnesota*

Joan Gabel has had a lot to navigate amid Covid-19 and the disruption to normal class schedules. She's decisive and not afraid to make unpopular calls, such as severing ties with the Minneapolis Police Department in the wake of the George Floyd killing.





**BUILDER**

**MIKE MCMAHAN** | Senior vice president of national health care, Ryan Cos. U.S.

Mike McMahon is the businessperson's health care pro. A 25-year veteran of the health care industry, he started out on the front lines as an exercise physiologist before taking top positions at St. Francis Regional Medical Center and Allina Health. These days, he oversees a team of experts in health care real estate and facilities at Ryan Cos., and he is a member of the state's Covid-19 incident response team. What's more, in 2021, he'll take over as chairman of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

**CHANGE AGENT**

**KATE NORDSTRUM** | Executive director, The Great Northern

A nationally lauded music curator, Kate Nordstrum was a provocative hire by the Great Northern winter festival last December. She sees opportunity to turn the annual event into a national draw—a South by Southwest of the North, mixing pond hockey and ice carvings with performance art and conversations about climate change. As it happens, her first festival at the helm, January 28 to February 7, will be focused on limiting crowds (outdoors, masks required) and creating virtual alternatives for events that would have been indoors. “This year is a wonderful opportunity to share the direction we’re headed,” Nordstrum says. “I see the Great Northern as a necessary cultural stimulant during a weakened time.” Her vision has already drawn financial support from Nature Valley (a General Mills brand), U.S. Bank, and the McKnight Foundation.



**BUILDER**

**SARAH FOSSEN** | Director of marketing and experience, Rosedale Center

Art installations, local food vendors, a drive-through haunted house, and a store and workshop dedicated to Midwestern makers: Rosedale Center has gone to great lengths to distinguish itself from other shopping malls. Fueling that strategy is Sarah Fossen, a new-fashioned marketing director who recognizes that relying on national retailers is not the way to draw crowds today. Fossen has persuaded startup brands built on avoiding malls to give Rosedale a try, and it's working. “I’m going to spend 2021 continuing to reach out to strong, diverse leaders in the community and give them a platform via Rosedale,” Fossen says. “My personal goal is to partner with the most creative, entrepreneurial people in Minnesota and beyond.”



**CHANGE AGENT**

**KARL BENSON** | President/CEO, Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce

Karl Benson is in the business of helping other businesses, particularly Black-owned companies. And after months of nationwide tension over racial inequity, his job's never been more important. An entrepreneur and former Nike Sports Marketing employee, Benson now serves as president and CEO of the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce, a role he began in 2019. Over the last few months, he's been working to support Black-owned businesses through the pandemic, which has included everything from marketing help to technical assistance. In the new year, Benson hopes to bring a “laser focus” to his efforts and help sustain a specific small cohort of Black businesses.





#### CHANGE AGENT

**ANISA HAJIMUMIN** | Assistant commissioner for immigrant and refugee affairs, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Among the many lessons of 2020, the importance of diversity in business has taken on new significance. DEED appointed Anisa Hajimumin to her post in June, a brand-new position at the agency. Hajimumin has founded and led her own businesses in the past. She returned to her native Somalia from 2014 to 2017, where she served as the minister of women, development, and family affairs in the Puntland region of the country. “We know that immigrant business owners are more likely to hire immigrant workers,” Hajimumin recently wrote. “They are job creators.”



#### ROOTED

**FIONA MCCRAE** | Director and publisher, Graywolf Press

Since she took over Graywolf in 1994, Fiona McCrae has turned the press based in Minneapolis’s North Loop into a worldwide cultural powerhouse, its books and authors snagging just about every important literary award in the world—including the Nobel Prize, multiple Pulitzer Prizes, the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Booker Prize, and more. Graywolf has turned books of poetry into *New York Times* bestsellers and redefined lyric essays in our time. In this difficult year, McCrae put Graywolf on a two-year strategic plan to get to the other side, but she didn’t shrink her ambitions. “Defensive mode was necessary,” she says. “The question was, how to be generative and come out stronger?” Her answer: using virtual events to grow Graywolf’s National Council, a group of donors and fans who promote Graywolf titles in their local circles.



#### INNOVATOR

**SARAH BELLAMY** | Artistic director, Penumbra Theatre Co.

Penumbra Theatre Co. recently announced a new strategic vision to transform beyond its much-lauded history as a theater organization into the Penumbra Center for Racial Healing. The center will encompass performing arts and wellness programming and will foster new work, ideas, and strategies for social change, generated and led by artists. Sarah Bellamy has seeded this transformation with powerful writing about the role of the arts in the current moment of racial reckoning. She is leading the creation of “a brave space” where the community is “called in to learn, rejuvenate, and stand up” in support of racial equity. The center is scheduled to open in 2021.

#### BUILDER

**TY MENZIES** | CEO, Lift Brands

Ty Menzies knew he was taking on a tough job when he stepped into the top spot of Chanhassen-based Lift Brands a few months into the coronavirus pandemic. But his vision for the company and dedication to his employees never faltered. Lift, the parent of global fitness chain Snap Fitness, maintained nearly all of its workforce throughout Covid-19, even as scores of peer companies furloughed or laid off staff. Menzies, who started his career in the fitness industry as a personal trainer, chalks that up to his “one team” approach—a strategy that gives all employees a voice. Now, the company is putting money into product development and technology to keep customers engaged even if they’re away from the gym.





**BUILDER**

**JEREMY SEGAL** | CEO, Proozy

As the pandemic has changed how customers shop, Jeremy Segal's St. Paul-based e-commerce retailer has been reaping the benefits with record sales, up 50 percent from 2019. To keep up with the surge in 2020, Proozy has added 30 employees, increased operations to seven days a week, and launched a new website with improved navigation, real-time customer service chat, curated monthly events, and a laundry list of new brands. In 2021, Segal says Proozy will be adding home and kitchen products, online shopping upgrades, in-person shopping opportunities, a 200,000-square-foot state-of-the-art warehouse, 200 new employees, and its first charity golf tournament. He expects to surpass \$120 million in sales.



**CHANGE AGENT**

**NEKIMA LEVY ARMSTRONG** | Director of activism and growth, Wayfinder Foundation

The former University of St. Thomas law professor rose to prominence as president of the Minneapolis NAACP in the mid-2010s and through a competitive run for Minneapolis mayor in 2017. During a tense summer of civil unrest, Nekima Levy Armstrong was regarded by public safety officials as one of the few Black community leaders with the standing to calm tensions. She's made no public statements on the topic, but observers are speculating on her interest in the 2021 Minneapolis mayor's race or for Hennepin County attorney the following year. In her words, "I will continue standing on the front lines, demanding changes to policies and laws and standing up for justice."

**CHANGE AGENT**

**SUSAN BASS ROBERTS** | Vice president/executive director, Pohlad Family Foundation

The Pohlad Family Foundation made headlines in June, after the killing of George Floyd, with a \$25 million commitment to racial justice. The person who will oversee how that money is spent: Susan Bass Roberts. "I feel a tremendous sense of responsibility and urgency to build on this momentum and transform ourselves and our communities in significant and lasting ways," Bass Roberts says. The foundation is planning grants in three phases: rebuilding communities affected by civil unrest, reimagining the role of police in communities, and long-term transformational change. "We are not the experts," Bass Roberts says. "We are very intentional in our efforts to invite a wide range of perspectives on these challenging issues."



**EMERGING**

**MARTIN HARTSHORNE** | CEO, When I Work

As founder Chad Halvorson stepped into a new role, Minneapolis-based When I Work brought on Martin Hartshorne as its new CEO in July. Hartshorne brings experience helping drive the growth of Florida-based Ultimate Software. During his time there, sales grew from \$350 million to \$1.3 billion, and the company was sold to a private equity group for \$11 billion. When I Work, which offers scheduling software for hourly workers, isn't quite that big—yet. "It has so much growth ahead of it," says Hartshorne, who states an initial goal of tripling revenue over five years. Despite the pandemic, Hartshorne says, "we're sitting at an all-time high in revenue."



NEKIMA LEVY ARMSTRONG PHOTO BY ACKERMAN + GRUBER

**EMERGING**

**EMILY DUNNE SURDYK |**

**Catering director, Surdyk's Liquor and Cheese**

Launched in 1934, Surdyk's remains a family-run business that grew to become an iconic liquor, wine, and specialty food store in Northeast Minneapolis. Much like the neighborhood changing around it, the business is being taken in new directions by the next generation. After working hard to reinvigorate and focus its catering division, the newest member of the family, Emily Dunne Surdyk, who married fourth-gen co-owner Taylor Surdyk, pivoted to create the Covid-friendly Surdyk's at Home. The junior Surdyks also demolished part of the liquor store to make room for Sidebar, a full-service 60-seat restaurant and bar. It's Dunne Surdyk's history in hospitality and her vision for bistro dining that's bringing the shop's curated ingredients to the neighborhood in a whole new way.



**BUILDER**

**ERIC J. JOLLY | President/CEO,  
Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation**

When the pandemic unfolded in Minnesota, the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation was one of the first grantmakers out of the gate to announce special funding for affected organizations, especially those serving the east metro's most vulnerable populations. And when social unrest ignited the Twin Cities, the foundation was among the first to respond, not only with funding, but also with advocacy for renewed commitment to racial equity. Eric Jolly is the foundation's indefatigable leader, with a mission to show that philanthropy can act both deliberately and decisively.



**ROOTED**

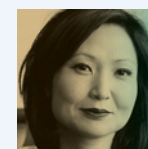
**CHRIS HILGER |  
Chairman/president/CEO,  
Securian Financial**

St. Paul-based Securian Financial returned to the Fortune 500 this year driven by record sales of \$6.6 billion in 2019, a robust 20.1 percent gain. Chris Hilger, who joined the life insurance and financial services company in 2004, became CEO in 2015 and chairman in 2017. Hilger also serves on the board of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and co-chairs the St. Paul Downtown Alliance. Hilger's vision calls for a mix of organic growth and acquisitions to build the company. "In 2019, we saw growth in all of our diverse business lines," says Hilger. "The largest percentage growth area for Securian Financial last year came from [retirement sales]."



**BRIAN CORNELL  
Chairman/CEO, Target**

Brian Cornell remained calm and steady in the face of unprecedented challenges and supply chain shortages, while an agile response to constantly changing conditions drove soaring Q2 profits, particularly online. When stores were damaged during a summer of social unrest, Target delivered supplies to those hardest hit and got to work on repairs. The East Lake Street store in Minneapolis reopened in November.



**ANN KIM  
Chef/partner,  
Vestalia Hospitality**

Raising a middle finger to fear has become one of the James Beard Award-winning chef's signatures, along with genre-bending cuisine. So as other restaurants fell all around her, Ann Kim pivoted to takeout, adding frozen pizzas to the menu at Pizzeria Lola and forging ahead with the buildout of the highly anticipated Sooki & Mimi, which plans a 2021 opening in Uptown. She also signed on to lead culinary design at the new Omni Viking Lakes Hotel in Eagan.



# Seizing the 'Biggest Opportunity'

U.S. BANK CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER  
GREG CUNNINGHAM ADVOCATES  
INVESTMENTS OVER CHARITY TO CLOSE  
THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP.

By Allison Kaplan

Greg Cunningham's cell phone rang early that Tuesday morning, the day after George Floyd died in police custody, a Minneapolis officer's knee pressing on his throat. It was U.S. Bank CEO Andy Cecere on the line, wondering whether his chief diversity officer had seen the news.

Diversity and inclusion work requires bringing your whole self to the job. That late-May day, as shock spread across the nation and protesters began to fill the streets, Cunningham feared for his college-aged children—wondering if he'd done enough to prepare them for a world in which a 6-foot-2 Black man like his son can't walk across campus in a hoodie with his head covered, for fear of raising suspicion. He worried about his community, including minority-owned businesses already hit hard by the pandemic. And he found himself reliving painful childhood memories, growing up in a largely segregated neighborhood of Pittsburgh, where his father's butcher shop burned to the ground in the riots that followed Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. Still, Cunningham was prepared for the call from the bank's top leader.

"We had a very long discussion," Cecere recalls. "He helped me understand the implications—much deeper and wider than I even realized. And he told me what it meant to him."

That's what Cunningham remembers most about the conversa-

tion: Cecere's concern for Greg Cunningham the person.

"I processed first from a cultural perspective, being Black and male in America," Cunningham says. "I was terrified."

But that fear morphed into a realization of opportunity. This summer's uprising was different from the one he lived through in the late 1960s. This time, people of color weren't the only ones in the streets. This time, his children's generation demanded answers from leadership. "What has struck me more than anything," Cunningham says, "is there's a greater sense of responsibility on the part of leaders to lean into it and own it"—that is, the need to work toward racial equity. "None of us are truly free until all of us are."

And so Cunningham became more vocal about closing the trillion-dollar racial wealth gap in this country. He encouraged his company, and others, to move beyond philanthropy and invest in economic inclusion. He advocated for loans for Black entrepreneurs and aspiring homeowners.

"We are sitting on a moment in history when this notion of inclusion is the biggest business opportunity that's ever been in front of us," Cunningham says. A 2019 McKinsey report indicates that closing the racial wealth gap could increase U.S. gross domestic product by 4 to 6 percent in less than a decade.

On July 29, Cecere called

Cunningham again—this time, to promote him to senior executive vice president, which elevates the role of the chief diversity and inclusion officer. It means Cunningham now reports directly to the CEO, making him the first African American to serve on U.S. Bank's management committee. Cunningham thought first about his Black colleagues. "I think about what it means for other employees of the bank to look at that management photo and see an African American man and go, 'It's possible.'"

Cunningham never wanted to be "the Black guy doing DEI work." He didn't have experience in human resources, which is where diversity, equity, and inclusion roles typically land in the corporate hierarchy.

Growing up, his idea of success was Cary Grant playing an ad exec in *North by Northwest*. But he had no role models in Pittsburgh. His father died a year after the MLK riots, when Cunningham was just six. Because he seemed more studious than his older siblings, his mother scraped and sacrificed to send him to a private Catholic school. But after years of working hard to fit in and make good grades, the high school guidance counselor who steered his white classmates to Duke and Notre Dame asked Cunningham, "Are you sure you want to go to college?"

"I was so defeated," Cunningham says. "He didn't see my value." Cunningham attended Clark Atlanta University, a historically Black university, then earned his MBA at Fordham University. Today, he serves as a national board member for the United Negro College Fund. But for years, he downplayed his degrees, worried they lacked the prestige of the Ivy League institutions many of his high school classmates attended.

Cunningham carried around that same psychic shield as a Target Corp. marketing manager—until one day, six years into the job, he decided to share something personal at the Monday-morning staff meeting. Over the weekend, he had taken his kids to see *Akeelah and the Bee*, the movie about a young girl from South Los Angeles who tries to make it to the National Spelling Bee. Cunningham pointed out to his Target colleagues that Starbucks helped fund the movie. "Their CEO said the reason he got in-

involved was because he wanted people to appreciate the fact that Starbucks was in the experience business." Suddenly emboldened, Cunningham issued a challenge. "It's a good question for us to ask ourselves: What business are we in?" He could see the chief marketing officer's eyes light up. "He saw me for the first time." In that moment, Cunningham embraced what he calls his superpower. "From that day forward, I was going to show up and bring my full self."

He developed Target's multicultural marketing team and continued to move up the ladder. Five years ago, U.S. Bank enticed Cunningham with his first official DEI role. What helped him get his head around the work was thinking both internally and externally. "DEI is certainly about your people, but it's also about customers—do we have the right products and services? Do we have the right representation? When people walk into the branch in north Minneapolis, it should look like a mirror and feel like part of the neighborhood."

Cunningham implores corporations to think about low-income communities as more than charity projects. "We need more organizations making a meaningful investment," he says. "The two fundamental things that drive wealth: small businesses and homeownership. Owning a home is a path to self-respect and self-worth, and it's the most efficient way to build wealth and pass it along."

Minneapolis has one of the nation's lowest rates of Black homeownership among U.S. metro areas with more than 1 million residents, according to Minnesota Compass, a nonpartisan resource for data on social indicators. Just 25 percent of Black households own their home in Minnesota, compared with 77 percent of white households.

"Black people have run into the consistency of no," Cunningham says. "There's an incredible trust gap between people of color and the financial services industry." He thinks back to his mother's loan from a small neighborhood banker. "He went to church with us; he knew our family. If my mom's mortgage had been with a large bank, we would have been on the street."

In August, U.S. Bancorp Community Development Corporation and U.S. Bank Foundation gave \$1

million to more than a dozen Black-led Community Development Financial Institution partners and \$150,000 to the African American Alliance of CDFI CEOs. That followed \$50 million in low-interest-rate loans, which U.S. Bank directed to seven CDFIs to support their ability to fund small businesses affected by Covid-19.

“If the Payroll Protection Program taught us anything, it’s that many small businesses didn’t have a bank relationship that worked,” Cunningham says. U.S. Bank committed to doubling the number of Black-owned businesses it contracts with for products and services as part of its supplier diversity program. “We’re focused on meaningful relationships with small businesses that allow those businesses to grow, create jobs, and funnel resources back into the community.”

These efforts have long been a priority at U.S. Bank, but Cecere says promoting Cunningham increases the level of awareness and intensity within the bank and beyond. “It allows diversity, equity, and inclusion to be front and center in our discussions.”

Cunningham knows he’s in the spotlight, but he emphasizes that this moment is larger than any one executive. “I’ve been called to service and I’m here to answer the call,” he says.

He works for the day when the bank no longer needs a diversity officer to push for equity and inclusion, and he’s already got his next job in mind. “The role will be called chief growth officer,” Cunningham says. “That’s my job of the future. I’m going to create it.”



*Black people  
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**BUILDER**

**JODI HUBLER** |

**President, Bind Benefits**

When it came time for health insurance startup Bind Benefits Inc. to begin offering a fully insured health plan, the company looked to health care veteran Jodi Hubler. The company, which functions as a health plan administrator, rolled out its own full health insurance plan in September 2020, not long after Hubler signed on as president.

Having served as a Bind board member since its inception in 2016, she was in a good position to help the company expand. And with 14 years at the helm of health-related venture capital firm Lemhi Ventures,

Hubler has a track record of nurturing successful health startups.



**EMERGING**

**KATHERINE CRAWFORD LUBER** |

**Director/president, Minneapolis Institute of Art**

Katherine Crawford Luber arrived as the new president and director of the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) from San Antonio in January—just in time for winter and, a couple months later, the museum's closure because of Covid-19. Mia has since reopened at a lower state-mandated capacity, and Luber is eager to welcome back the public "to experience the transformative power of art." Navigating the pandemic, creating a safe space for visitors and staff, and using digital platforms to bring the museum's mission into homes and schools are challenges, particularly with expected declines in revenue. Creativity and innovation will be the watchwords of the coming year.



**EMERGING**

**KATIE MATTIS SARVER** |

**Senior vice president/community development officer, Bell Bank**

After George Floyd was killed in May, Bell Bank expedited the creation of a position specifically meant to reach out to members of marginalized communities who regularly can't access capital, small business loans, and general banking opportunities. To fill that position, the Fargo-headquartered, three-state bank hired community development professional Katie Mattis Sarver. Though only in the position since August, she has big plans to expand a program for small businesses owned by people of color, customers' access to home mortgages, Bell's banking with nonprofits, and the company's charitable giving program, as well as deepen the bank's expertise in affordable housing lending.



**INNOVATOR**

**ERIC JACKSON** |

**Founder/chairman, Pipeline Foods**

A career of innovation has led Eric Jackson to pursue several ventures, the latest of which focuses on added nutritional value and nutrient density in organic grains. Before establishing Fridley-based Pipeline Foods in 2017, he cofounded agricultural software company Conservis and spent over 25 years building vertical agriculture value chains with Pillsbury, International Proteins Corp., and Scoular. Pipeline will continue to grow through new acquisitions and partnerships, furthering Jackson's goal of creating a better food system.

**CHANGE AGENT**

**RACHEL HARDEMAN** | Associate professor,  
U of M School of Public Health

Rachel Hardeman has achieved national recognition for her work on racial inequities in health care. The University of Minnesota associate professor and reproductive health equity researcher has highlighted how two public health crises—Covid-19 and police brutality—have disproportionately affected Black Americans. Working with experts across the country, she also researched the impacts of doctors' race on Black infant mortality. According to their research, Black infants are less likely to die when cared for by Black providers. In the new year, she plans to establish a new center for anti-racist research in health care, with the goal of developing evidence-based methods for measuring the impact of racism on health outcomes.



**BUILDER**

**RITA KATONA** | Chief brand and innovation  
officer, So Good So You

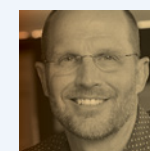
Rita Katona sells immunity, energy, and detoxing in the form of 2-ounce plant-based, probiotic juice shots, but she views her platform in broader terms: "making a positive impact on our body and our planet." Years at Target taught this entrepreneur how to sell wellness to a mass audience. So Good So You, co-founded in 2014 with husband Eric Hall, was gaining traction heading into the pandemic, but heightened health concerns propelled the startup beyond its 2020 projections. The product, now packaged in biodegradable bottles, is sold in more than 4,500 grocery stores nationwide. Expect to see more of this brand in 2021, thanks to a \$14.5 million investment that will be used to accelerate national growth.



**CHANGE AGENT**

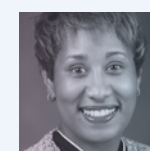
**J. PATRICK COOLICAN** |  
Editor-in-chief, *Minnesota Reformer*

Is there room for one more media outlet in the Twin Cities? Hell yes, says the *Minnesota Reformer*. The politically focused online news site launched in January and soon established a reputation for breaking big stories with a small staff. It doesn't sell subscriptions or ads; it's one of 16 outposts of the well-funded, left-leaning nonprofit States Newsroom network. J. Patrick Coolican, who covered the state Capitol for five years at the *Star Tribune*, says that he's staying away from what he calls "commodity news"—reporting on the same press releases that everyone else receives: "For the most part we're looking for opportunities for investigation, analysis, and storytelling."



**DEAN HAGER**  
CEO, *Jamf Holding Corp.*

Initial public offerings from Minnesota-based companies are few and far between, but the industry-leading enterprise software company went public in July at \$26 per share. A tech industry veteran, Dean Hager has piloted Jamf's strong and steady growth.



**TAWANNA BLACK**  
Founder/CEO, *Center for Economic Inclusion*

Tawanna Black's background in both corporate jobs and philanthropy helps anchor the mission of the St. Paul-based nonprofit. It has a data-driven approach to advocating for expanding business opportunities for people of color. Some big names have stepped up to provide support, including U.S. Bank and JPMorgan Chase.



**CORIE BARRY**  
CEO, *Best Buy*

What a first year. After closing stores and furloughing 51,000 employees, a quick pivot to curbside pickup, e-commerce, and an ongoing "shop your way" strategy produced strong results, Corie Barry announced more Teen Tech Centers to help bridge the opportunity gap and a commitment that 30 percent of its tech team hires over the next two years will be diverse.





EMERGING

**DAMARIS HOLLINGSWORTH** | Owner/principal architect, Design By Melo

This year brought with it the two-year anniversary of Hollingsworth's Minneapolis architectural, urban design, and community development firm, Design By Melo. It survived the pandemic with economic stimulus monies spent by clients to adapt spaces for the Covid-19 era. George Floyd's killing in May caused Hollingsworth to reassess where her work could make a difference. Today, her efforts are focused on projects promoting affordable homeownership and emerging developers of color to support historically oppressed and disinvested communities and encourage unique ownership models that can help boost economic mobility in those communities.



INNOVATOR

**JULIE FITZGERALD** | Managing director, Forecast5 Analytics

Founded in 2012, Minnetonka-based GuideK12 became one of the nation's top developers of geospatial analytics software for the K-12 market. School districts use GuideK12's platform to "map" where their students live to plan staffing, boundaries, and enrollment. In February, GuideK12 was acquired by Illinois-based Forecast5 Analytics, a larger firm operating in the K-12 and municipal analytics sector. Julie Fitzgerald, who joined GuideK12 at its founding, is now part of Forecast5's geospatial analytics team in Minnesota. The combined Forecast5 is launching an enhanced offering combining Forecast5's data analytics with GuideK12's geospatial capabilities, which should help schools continue adjusting to Covid-19.

ROOTED

**MIKE MAX** | Sports director, WCCO-TV; host, WCCO Radio

Until the George Floyd civil uprising, most Minnesotans knew WCCO-TV's Mike Max as the Gaylord, Minnesota, native who had all the best hunting spots in Minnesota and the Dakotas and the home phone numbers of every high school sports coach in Minnesota. His folksy patter, combined with an intriguingly elegant wardrobe, always made for a fascinating contrast. But when the unrest roiled the city, Max was pulled into streetside coverage and showed himself to be an aggressive and ingenious reporter. His knack for talking to just about anyone made his interviews compelling, while his fearlessness in the face of tear gas, bullets, and fire made an indelible impression. He expects 2021 to be more sports-driven, but he notes, "If they riot, I'll be back out there."



INNOVATOR

**SCOTT JAGODZINSKI** | Co-founder and chairman, Alchemy 365; president, Y Scouts

Scott Jagodzinski is used to having his hand in several ventures at once. The co-founder and chairman of Minneapolis-based studio fitness chain Alchemy 365, Jagodzinski has also served for nearly three years as managing director of ventures for digital consulting firm GoKart Labs. In September, he signed as president of Arizona-based executive search firm Y Scouts, which also maintains a presence in Minnesota and Colorado and does business in Nevada and Texas. The company bills itself as a "purpose-driven" search firm. For Jagodzinski, that's a key differentiator in the market, especially as talent acquisition becomes less geographically restricted in the age of remote work.





#### CHANGE AGENT

##### **ABDUL M. OMARI** | Principal/founder, AMO Enterprise

What started as a passion project in 2013 during Abdul Omari's doctorate work grew into what is now a thriving business. AMO Enterprise provides an educational platform for companies to work on leadership development and the connections between equity, inclusion, and diversity. The pandemic pushed operations to go completely virtual but also expanded its reach in helping people connect. AMO and Omari are urging their clients to think long-term and take responsibility for creating an equitable future.



#### EMERGING

##### **ERIC STYLES** | President/CEO, YourSix

YourSix aims to bring physical security into the cloud, and U.S. Army vet Eric Styles is leading the effort. The company's name is a clock-oriented nod to military and law enforcement parlance; "I've got your six" is like saying "I've got your back." The Roseville-based startup, which provides cloud-based services for video and audio surveillance, has been on the fast track since it started in 2015: The company ranked 134th on the *Inc.* 5000 list of fastest-growing companies in 2020. That was the top spot for a Minnesota startup and the top spot for a security firm. Styles says more opportunities are on the horizon, projecting triple-digit growth in 2021.



#### INNOVATOR

##### **G. MIKE MIKAN** | CEO, Bright Health

Minneapolis-based Bright Health has raised more than \$1.5 billion in financing, a staggering statistic for a Minnesota company. The company's health plan is now available in 13 states. G. Mike Mikan was tapped as CEO in April. He had previously served as interim CEO for Best Buy during bumpy times in 2012; most recently he led Shot-Rock Capital, a Minneapolis-based private equity firm. Mikan is looking to expand the company into new markets, but he also wants to add products like the employer-sponsored plan Bright Health rolled out this year: "Right now, we are focused on accelerating our strategic growth and expanding and diversifying our business."



#### ROOTED

##### **BETHANY OWEN** | President and CEO, Allete

Duluth-based Allete's largest subsidiary, Minnesota Power, has been northern Minnesota's electricity utility for more than a century. Under CEO Al Hodnik, the company expanded into wind-energy development, a business it now operates in seven states. Minnesota Power also shed much of its coal-fired generation. In February, Bethany Owen, who joined Allete as an attorney in 2002, succeeded Hodnik. She intends to build on the company's sustainability efforts and clean-energy development. One issue she faces as CEO: Allete's biggest electricity customers are iron mines and paper mills, which were hit hard in 2020 and are coming back slowly.



ROOTED

MIKE SULLIVAN |

Partner-in-charge/Minneapolis, Lathrop GPM

From his office in the IDS Center in downtown Minneapolis, Mike Sullivan began 2020 with a strong desire to smoothly integrate Gray Plant Mooty into the larger Lathrop Gage law firm. Sullivan, who handles complex business transactions in the agribusiness, food, and manufacturing sectors, was thrown a curveball when the pandemic arrived in the spring. He's now leading 98 Minneapolis-based attorneys, who are dealing with employment issues, supply chain disruptions, contract disputes, and other challenges that have surfaced because of coronavirus. In 2021, he's looking for his team of attorneys to build stronger practice relationships with their peers in other firm offices.



INNOVATOR

GINA KASTEL |

Executive partner, Faegre Drinker

Gina Kastel is leading the integration of Faegre Baker Daniels and Drinker Biddle & Reath. The merger, which took effect in February, produced a law firm with 1,300 attorneys. Kastel is the highest-ranking Minnesota attorney in the non-headquartered firm, serving on the board and on the eight-member executive leadership team. A Harvard Law graduate, she says the big merger has added breadth and depth to the firm's legal expertise. Change in the profession is accelerating; at Faegre Drinker, it includes deploying artificial intelligence for contract analytics. Looking ahead, Kastel says the firm is adding key talent, including bankruptcy and restructuring experts.



EMERGING

ROSIE NESTINGEN |

Tech transformation director, Best Buy

Growing up in Fargo, Rosie Nestingen was accustomed to being the only Black person in the room. As the first Black Miss North Dakota, she spent a year traveling the state, talking about diversity and inclusion. "You build a lot of empathy for people and learn to give people grace," she says of her formative experiences. "I got really good at building relationships." Nestingen brings that perspective to Best Buy, where D&I isn't in her title but is fundamental to her approach to internships, recruiting, hiring, and training—particularly with an eye toward getting young people into the pipeline. "Tech and accessibility to tech can be an equalizer," she says.

BUILDER

WARREN MCLEAN | President,  
Northside Economic Opportunity Network (NEON)

Warren McLean has deep experience working with minority entrepreneurs and economically challenged neighborhoods. He led the Metropolitan Economic Development Association (MEDA) for nearly 10 years, and before that he worked at the Minneapolis-based Community Reinvestment Fund for 15 years. McLean joined NEON in 2018, drawn by a chance to focus on building businesses in north Minneapolis. "In any prior year, the most we've dispersed was about \$10,000. At the end of [October] it will be about \$2 million that we've dispersed in grants and loans [this year]," says McLean. That's thanks to funders stepping up and tapping public sources. "North Minneapolis needs a sustained commitment," says McLean. "It's a marathon. It's not a sprint."





**CHANGE AGENT**

**YOHURU WILLIAMS** |  
Distinguished university chair/  
professor/founding director,  
Racial Justice Initiative

Slated to leave the Twin Cities for a prestigious position at St. John's University in New York City this past June, Yohuru Williams instead decided to stay at the University of St. Thomas as the founding director of the school's Racial Justice Initiative. A distinguished scholar of the Black power and civil rights movements, Williams frequently writes and speaks on current affairs. His new role is illuminating and amplifying equity and justice concerns across university departments and beyond the internally facing Office of Diversity. He sees Minneapolis as the "epicenter of a national movement for social change."



**EMERGING**

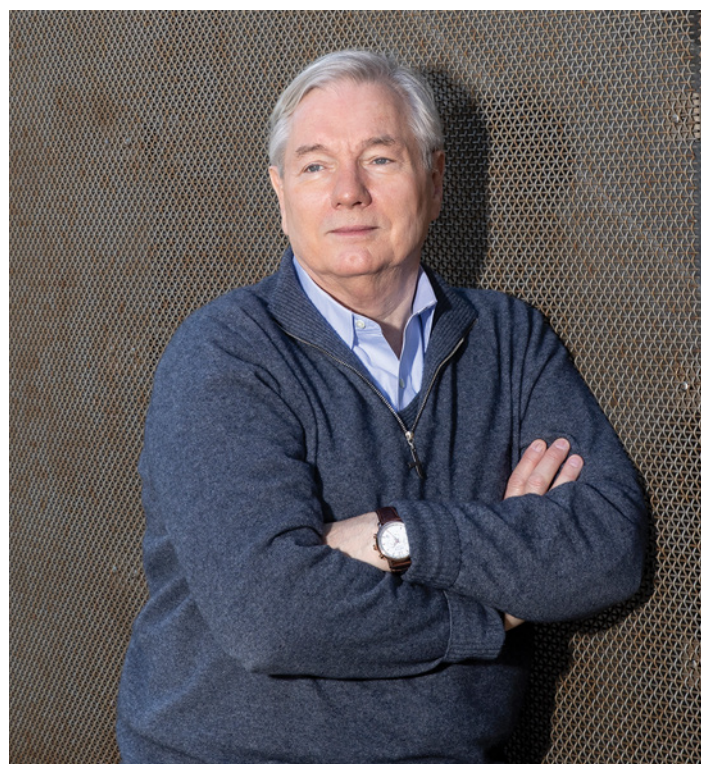
**ANTHONY NIEDWIECKI** |  
President/dean, Mitchell Hamline School of Law

Anthony Niedwiecki, a former law school dean in San Francisco, took the helm at Mitchell Hamline just weeks after George Floyd's killing. One of a few openly gay law school deans, he wants to mold Mitchell Hamline into a diverse and inclusive school that educates lawyers who are particularly interested in public service and social justice work. "I'd love to have a school of activists fighting for what they think is important," he says. The school was well-positioned to handle Covid-19 because it started offering a hybrid online/on-campus law degree in 2015. Niedwiecki wants to spearhead more innovation in online education as law school classes remain virtual through mid-2021.

**INNOVATOR**

**DEBORAH DISANZO** |  
President, Best Buy Health

The pandemic has revolutionized the way many people think about health and wellness. Technology, for one, has emerged as a primary way for folks to interface with doctors. At Best Buy, Deborah DiSanzo is leading the charge to bring health technology into the home and give people more autonomy in their own care. The electronics retailer's health business has exploded in recent years, and it's poised to get even bigger as the United States' senior population grows. In the new year, DiSanzo, who also teaches at Harvard, will remain focused on building tech that better connects people to caregivers, loved ones, and health pros.



**HEALER**

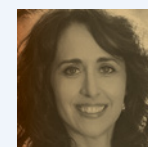
**MICHAEL OSTERHOLM** | Director, Center for Infectious Disease  
Research and Policy (CIDRAP), University of Minnesota

If there is a God, Mike Osterholm would get to spend 2021 on sabbatical on a tropical island without bugs or viruses. Instead, he will spend it like he spent most of 2020, in the public eye, researching, writing books, and perhaps helping coordinate the nation's response to Covid-19. Osterholm was one of the first epidemiologists to recognize Covid's potential to rock the globe, and his thoughtful contrarianism on common wisdom will keep him on the Sunday-morning shows and op-ed pages as long as the pandemic rages. President-Elect Joe Biden recognized Osterholm's unique lifelong contribution, naming him to his Covid-19 task force.



**DAYNA FRANK**  
CEO, First Avenue

Teaming up with YouTube on virtual concerts and hosting private weddings at the iconic First Avenue is but a small part of Dayna Frank's pandemic pivot. Frank has become the voice of her industry, setting up and leading the National Independent Venue Association and lobbying on behalf of small music clubs across the country. She believes the advocacy group will buoy venues long after the threat of Covid has passed.



**LUZ MARÍA FRÍAS**  
Deputy attorney  
general, State of  
Minnesota

Elevating the voices of those who've been marginalized is Luz María Frías' work; in 2020, that mission took the longtime public servant and former CEO of YWCA Minneapolis to the state's top legal office in July, when Attorney General Keith Ellison appointed her deputy attorney general. Her goal, she says, is to build an equitable community that works for everyone.



# Transformative Leadership During Crises

BETH FORD, LAND O'LAKES CEO, IS LEVERAGING HER LEADERSHIP ROLE TO EXPAND BROADBAND ACCESS AND BUILD A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES.

By Liz Fedor

Beth Ford's competitive nature and work ethic were apparent when she was an exceptional student and multi-sport athlete at her high school in Iowa.

After becoming president and CEO of the giant Land O'Lakes cooperative in the summer of 2018, Ford quickly channeled her enormous reserves of energy into becoming a strategic, savvy advocate for rural America.

Whether she's advocating on Capitol Hill for rural broadband access or working alongside the nation's best-known CEOs on income inequality, she's striving to make regional economies more sustainable. She also has been unafraid to talk frankly about systemic racism and commit Land O'Lakes to the ongoing work that's needed to make companies more inclusive.

Ford clearly understands the power of partnerships. She's built them to help K-12 students get WiFi access during the pandemic. She climbed to a board seat on the national Business Roundtable this year, which is allowing her to work cooperatively to shape a more equitable economy. And she forged a partnership this year with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, which will translate into using Microsoft technology to help farmers be better land stewards and operate their farms more cost-effectively.

"The work that Beth is doing is

very germane for her company and for the country, and it's exactly the type of work that CEOs need to be doing," says Doug Baker, Ecolab chairman and CEO.

Ford has a bold agenda—for the nation and her company.

She's pressing for a \$100 billion national investment to extend broadband access to rural areas. She's been urging leaders on both sides of the political aisle to embrace spending on internet technology. The dramatic effect this modern-day infrastructure could have on rural communities would be comparable to the Rural Electrification Act, which President Franklin Roosevelt signed into law in 1936 so all Americans could have electricity.

"Farming is an ecosystem," Ford says. "You have the local retailer. You have the hardware store. You have the town. And you have the farmer, and these farms are still family-owned. You have educational issues. And you have data and analytics that could be used for sustainable production. But that cannot be used without access, and that means we have to have broadband."

Ford has been spotlighting the digital divide during the pandemic, and she took quick action to offer a temporary solution. Land O'Lakes kicked off an effort to provide free WiFi service so students in isolated areas could access high-speed internet service from their family vehicles.

The agricultural cooperative and other businesses are promoting the availability of their free WiFi in about 2,300 U.S. locations.

Land O'Lakes calls this free WiFi outreach a "temporary patch" for a systemic resource deficit that Ford speaks about whenever she gets a platform. Through Land O'Lakes, she launched the American Connection Project, a coalition of more than 120 businesses and organizations that have mobilized to expand access to high-speed internet service. Cargill and Polaris are among the marquee Minnesota companies that have joined the group.

Microsoft also is a member. Not long before the pandemic hit, Ford traveled to Washington state to meet with Microsoft's Nadella. "We needed a transformational partner in the use of technology in modern agriculture," she says.

Ford is excited to work with Nadella because he can help her farmer-cooperative members, but also because he has the capacity to aid the rural economy overall. "What I loved about his approach is that he doesn't see technology for technology's sake," Ford says. "It's technology as an enabler to address multiple issues including climate change—but also agriculture and food production was a central focus for him."

She's working with other prominent CEOs through her board seat on the Business Roundtable, which defines its mission as promoting "a thriving U.S. economy and expanded opportunity for all Americans through sound public policy."

Ford serves on a wealth disparities committee with Jamie Dimon, JP Morgan Chase CEO, and Robert Smith, CEO of Vista Equity Partners. Her extensive involvement in the organization has allowed her to elevate rural issues and work collaboratively to fight Covid-19. Ford says the group amplifies her messages through a "shared voice" of top executives. "It is about having multiple business leaders in an organization saying, 'This is the right investment for the economy, for commerce, and for our national security writ large.'"

Ecolab's Baker isn't surprised that Ford landed a Business Roundtable board position so early in her CEO tenure. "Beth is charismatic, articulate, purpose-driven, and passionate,

and those are attractive qualities," Baker says. And, he says, "she's the same person" whether she's talking with somebody one-on-one, giving a speech or debating an issue on a panel.

"The agriculture business historically has been a man's world, and she has risen to the top. I think she's doing very smart things," Baker says. "Beth really believes if we are going to harness the talent of this country that you ultimately need environments where people are comfortable taking risks, taking stands, being heard, and that all communities need access, including rural communities."

Ensuring that diverse talent is drawn to work at Land O'Lakes is another issue Ford has been addressing since the May death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody spawned a racial reckoning across the country.

At Land O'Lakes, Ford says, she and other leaders engaged in active listening sessions with Black employees. "It was painful, and it was quite startling," Ford says, to hear her employees talk about systemic racism in the community as well as their safety concerns—for their children and for themselves.

"I don't have that lived experience, that fear for my children, other than you want them to be successful, happy people," Ford says. At Land O'Lakes, she adds, the company attracts a "good level of diversity," but like other Twin Cities-based businesses, it struggles with retaining employees of color.

Ford has pledged to continue conversations about diversity and inclusion at Land O'Lakes and in the broader community. "I don't have a magic bullet," she says. "This is going to be a long journey. What I want everybody to understand is we are committed to making sure our employees and the folks in our communities feel safe and are engaged and have the same opportunities as everybody."

Ford leads a company with about 10,000 employees. She is quick to credit them with Land O'Lakes' good financial performance during the pandemic. "I always feel like I'm just the face for this great team that has done phenomenal work in a very challenging environment that is bumpy, and it feels like a marathon," Ford says. Her employees' agility, she says, allowed the company to reach \$2.9 billion in



net sales for the third quarter of 2020, down slightly from \$3 billion a year earlier. Earnings in the third quarter improved by \$54 million compared with 2019.

The dairy business saw strong sales, as did the Purina animal feed product line. “Our cheese business is performing well, because everybody is snacking,” Ford says. “It’s like everybody is nesting and getting back to some of the basics,” she adds, and home cooks are driving record sales of Land O’Lakes butter.

Baker says some may view Ford as operating on two tracks—running a company and advocating for rural constituencies. He perceives her work as intertwined. “You’ve got a responsibility to grow your company, but you also have to understand its growth is in part predicated on strong communities,” Baker says.

Ford is optimistic about Land O’Lakes sales prospects for 2021, but she recognizes much will be outside her control. “We believe we are in a good position for some continued growth in some of our businesses,” Ford says. “But a lot of the variability will be driven by the opening of the economy, the confidence of consumers, and the vaccine.”



*What I want everybody to understand is we are committed to making sure our employees and the folks in our communities feel safe and are engaged and have the same opportunities as everybody.*







EMERGING

**YAO YANG** | Executive director, Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce

Yao Yang listens to businesspeople in the Hmong community and helps them access resources, whether they need expertise in legal, financial, or technology services. In 2020 and 2021, she's helping businesses cope with the pandemic and work on their rebuilding efforts. Many Hmong businesses in St. Paul and Minneapolis were damaged or destroyed in the aftermath of George Floyd's killing. Yang, who also works for the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, is going beyond the private sector to aid Hmong businesses; to deal with the scope of the Hmong community's financial challenges, she's also advocating for funds from public officials and philanthropic leaders.

INNOVATOR

**DESTINEE SHELBY** | Owner, Baked Brand

It's been a busy year for Destinee Shelby, a young Black entrepreneur who has no shortage of energy. Her own Baked Brand is an umbrella for a range of products and services including herbal tea, juice, custom cakes, catering, and more. Earlier this year she had the germ of an idea about selling Fair food since the Minnesota State Fair was canceled. That evolved into the Black Entrepreneur State Fair, which she envisioned as "something to uplift the Black community." In October she debuted the Black Flea Market at Midtown Global Market in Minneapolis. The State Fair event will now be held annually; the flea market will convene monthly. As if that weren't enough, she plans to open a Baked Brand retail outlet at Midtown in 2021.



ROOTED

**JULIE NELSON** | Anchor, KARE-11

Julie Nelson, the veteran local anchor with a calming and earnest presence, stepped into the breach during the protests after George Floyd's killing, among the first local journalists to call Minneapolis and state officials to account for the breakdown of civil order and lack of accessibility or answers. If more disorder erupts as a result of the upcoming March trial of the police officers accused in Floyd's murder, Nelson's tours at the anchor desk will be where many of us turn for hard-nosed questions.



BUILDER

**ALFREDO MARTEL** | President/CEO, Metropolitan Economic Development Association (MEDA)

Alfredo Martel's resume includes corporate gigs at Famous Dave's and Caribou Coffee. He was tapped a year ago to lead the nonprofit Minneapolis-based MEDA with a pledge to bring a business mindset to the organization, which provides loans and business consulting to minority entrepreneurs. Martel's parents are Cuban; they fled to Puerto Rico, where he was born and raised. The double whammy of Covid-19 and social unrest have intensified MEDA's work. "We had to immediately pivot to response mode. We've been knee-deep in PPP [Paycheck Protection Program] work," says Martel. "The challenges of this year have accelerated our strategic plan."



HEALER

**DR. BRADLEY BENSON** | Chief academic officer, M Health Fairview; professor of medicine and pediatrics, U of M

How do you educate the next generation of health care workers during a global health crisis? You call Dr. Bradley Benson. As chief academic officer of M Health Fairview and professor of medicine at the University of Minnesota, he's helping to build a clinical education system that can withstand this pandemic—and the next. In addition to working with teams of researchers to launch over a dozen Covid-19 patient studies, Benson has tapped into telehealth and virtual education to train new doctors through the pandemic. In 2021, he'll help launch the Center for Population Health and Learning Health System Science, which will be housed at the U of M Medical School and work in close partnership with Fairview. The goal of the venture, he says, is to provide a "seamless connection" between the health system and the school.





#### CHANGE AGENT

##### **SHARON KENNEDY VICKERS** | Chief information officer, City of St. Paul

The official to thank for St. Paul's new, intuitive website—"centered around the needs of residents, not departments"—is Sharon Kennedy Vickers, an information technology leader known for her people-first approach to digital services; for example, now residents can click on "garbage pickup" rather than "public works." "My life purpose is to ensure people have access to the resources they need for self-actualization," she says, "utilizing technology for the greater good." Five years ago, Kennedy Vickers co-founded a professional platform called Techquity to increase the visibility of Black tech professionals in Minnesota. "If you don't think the talent is out there, ask what you can do to build it. No excuses."



#### EMERGING

##### **JOE SWANSON** | Co-Owner, Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts

Joe Swanson, a North Shore native, acquired the resort group in July with business partner Pipasu Soni. Covid-19 has devastated large swaths of the hospitality industry, but the three resorts that make up the Bluefin Bay Family in and around Lutsen and Tofte had a busy summer thanks to urban residents desperate to escape pandemic confinement. Bluefin Bay's biggest challenge this winter is meeting guest demand while continuing to double down on service changes and health and safety protocols without normal staffing due to lack of overseas visa workers, says Swanson.



#### INNOVATOR

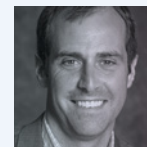
##### **CASEY SHULTZ** | Executive director, Beta

Casey Shultz knew she'd have a lot to learn when she took over as executive director of Minneapolis startup accelerator Beta in January, but like so many others, she couldn't have predicted the complications 2020 would bring. On top of hiring a new team and learning the ropes of a new job, she also had to move all Beta and Twin Cities Startup Week events, including Beta's startup accelerator cohort program, to virtual platforms. Today she's gearing up to lead the organization's launch of a three-year strategy aimed at increasing Beta's impact. She'll also be leading a strategic plan aimed to grow Twin Cities Startup Week into a global destination that showcases the arts, culture, food, and innovative spirit of Minnesota.



##### **PAHOUA YANG HOFFMAN** *Senior vice president of community impact, Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation*

Following George Floyd's death, Pahoua Yang Hoffman is expanding grantmaking to nonprofits serving people of color. With the goal of redistributing power, she's also focused on diversifying the foundation staff and giving grantees more flexible funding. Her impact also is being felt on the boards of HealthPartners, Catholic Charities, and the Constellation Fund.



##### **CHARLIE YOUAKIM** *CEO, Sezzle*

After doubling his fin-tech company's headcount in 2020, Charlie Youakim is looking to bring even more employees on board in the new year. The company, which is based in Minneapolis but publicly traded in Australia, is expanding its workforce to accommodate growing interest in its buy-now, pay-later platform.



CHANGE AGENT

**DUCHESNE DREW** | President, Minnesota Public Radio

The longtime Twin Cities journalist landed one of the more difficult directives of 2020, changing (and healing) the culture at MPR, while rethinking its approach for a new generation of listeners. Repeatedly roiled by internal gender, race, and identity controversies, beginning with Garrison Keillor's ouster, MPR is no longer the cloistered and combative colossus that Bill Kling built, but a content organization that seeks to better reflect and speak to the breadth of Minnesota rather than just a few affluent neighborhoods of south Minneapolis. Duchesne Drew's task is complicated by a remote workforce (Covid) and a shrinking financial base (Covid). Insiders expect his humility and curiosity to be sources of strength in what will be a challenging opening act.



INNOVATOR

**AMY ZAROFF** | Founder/creative director, Amy Zaroff Events + Design

The Covid-19 pandemic halted group gatherings—and Amy Zaroff's entire business revolved around facilitating them. But Zaroff, channeling her experience as a television producer, quickly joined forces with local audio-visual company AVEX, and together they developed a user-friendly platform for corporate, nonprofit, and social event clients. Zaroff is a leader in her field, and others are watching carefully to see how she'll carry events into this new era. She hopes that in 2021 she'll have the chance to team up with other like-minded entrepreneurs, innovators, and thought leaders to develop events that have real community impact.

ROOTED

**ALLISON SHARKEY** | Executive director, Lake Street Council

Allison Sharkey has led the nonprofit Lake Street Council for seven years but has lived along the corridor for more than 15 years. "It's really my community and my home." The social unrest and property destruction of late May pushed the small organization onto a much bigger stage. As of early November, its Lake Street Recovery Fund had raised more than \$11 million. The Council has already allocated \$5.5 million to 325 businesses. Sharkey says that the next phase will focus on entrepreneurs who want to own their own properties and helping businesses with pre-development work. She says that many corporate partners have stepped up to do pro-bono work. "Luckily," says Sharkey, "we have been able to grow a bit to keep up with the demand."





#### BUILDER

**SARAH HARRIS** | Executive vice president: strategy, partnerships, and production, Aeon

Taking on a new role at Aeon right before the pandemic struck has highlighted Sarah Harris' personal mission to make Minneapolis a better place for children. (Prior to Aeon, she helped launch the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District.) The pandemic has made Aeon's role providing stable affordable housing for low- to mid-income Twin Citians even more vital, since many of its residents have faced layoffs, furloughs, and isolation. Harris and Aeon plan to continue to expand affordable housing opportunities and advocate for philanthropic and public funding and policies that make stable housing possible.



#### EMERGING

**ZOË LEVIN** | Founder/CEO, Bim Bam Boo

Zoë Levin calls herself the "TP Queen"—and her sales affirm her rule. Bim Bam Boo, which makes tree-free/toxin-free toilet paper from bamboo, rose to power in 2020 as a multimillion-dollar company. In its first year, Bim Bam Boo expanded to more than 750 stores, donated more than 1,000 rolls of toilet paper during the toilet paper shortage and civil unrest, and built a team of eight employees. As Levin heads into the new year, she has plans to continue expansion into 500 Whole Foods locations, launch lines of paper towels and facial tissues, and triple the company's product donations to the local community.



#### CHANGE AGENT

**VERNA PRICE** | CEO, The Power of People Consulting

After working as a consultant and executive coach in the Twin Cities for two decades, Verna Price looks to 2021 to change corporate cultures around race. Price, one of the few Black women in the Twin Cities who's served as a leadership adviser, wants to leverage the heightened awareness around racism and inequality to move beyond traditional diversity and inclusion programs. Old ways of addressing these issues in corporations have failed to retain and promote many employees of color. By examining norms, she wants to work in partnership with private businesses to create new approaches that yield better results.



#### CHANGE AGENTS

**THE ELLISON FAMILY (KEITH, KIM, AND JEREMIAH)** | Minnesota attorney general; chair, Minneapolis Board of Education; Minneapolis City Council member

Immerse yourself in any metro-area-based public policy challenge and there's likely to be an Ellison. Keith Ellison drew the national spotlight as a congressman but returned home to become the state's chief legal officer. His place at the center of the George Floyd murder prosecution will put him in one of the hottest political seats nationally in 2021.

Ellison's ex-wife, Kim, is the best-known face on the Minneapolis school board, representing the city at-large and among the most outspoken in shepherding the district's massive and controversial equity-based redesign that will be implemented in fall.

Kim and Keith's son Jeremiah is in his first term on the Minneapolis City Council, representing a north Minneapolis ward beset by underinvestment and poverty. His outspoken efforts at police reform may or may not bear fruit in 2021, but they will place him at the center of what is expected to be a tumultuous municipal election season.

#### INNOVATOR

**BILL LENTSCH** | Chief customer experience officer, Delta Air Lines

Few industries have suffered because of the pandemic like airlines. Yet when longtime Delta (and Northwest) vet Bill Lentsch received his marching orders for his new role from CEO Ed Bastian in early March, Covid was but a nightmare on the horizon. And though Lentsch has guided Delta's viral pivot, his long-term mandate is more interesting: innovating Delta's customer experience to make it an iconic consumer brand like Apple, Nike, and Starbucks. The Twin Cities resident (he commutes to Delta headquarters in Atlanta) believes the pandemic has allowed Delta to "deepen customer trust," a key to the airline's long game.







CHANGE AGENT

**TOMME BEEVAS**  
Founder/chief strategic officer,  
Pimento Jamaican Kitchen

After turning his Pimento Jamaican Kitchen into a safe space for protestors during the George Floyd uprising, then into a community food bank in the days following, Tomme Beevas knew the real work would begin when the cameras left. A former Cargill executive who left the corporate world to grow his restaurant beyond the original Food Network reality show-winning location, Beevas speaks the language of organizing. He started by launching Pimento Relief Services, a public benefit corporation providing operational resources to leaders on the front lines of the racial justice movement, and then created the Pimento Foundation. This fall, the Global Summit on Everything Food named him to the top 100 Leaders in the Food Industry.



ROOTED

**BILL STOERI**  
Managing partner, Dorsey & Whitney

Maybe Bill Stoeri's fate was cast when he served as a summer associate for Dorsey in 1981. He joined the firm in 1984 and has been there ever since, taking the helm as managing partner in 2019. In recent years many local law firms have merged with larger regional groups and are no longer based in Minnesota. But Dorsey, founded in 1912, remains Minneapolis-based and independent. "We just added a group in Des Moines, we added an immigration group in Minneapolis, [and] we've grown our Salt Lake City office," says Stoeri. "We've had a decent amount of growth and we still intend to do that, but it hasn't been through a mega-merger."

BUILDER

**DAVID WELLINGTON**  
Executive vice president/shareholder,  
Wellington Management

David Wellington's father, Steve, started St. Paul-based Wellington Management in 1985. David joined in 2014. Now he's all in on the development business. The company has a local property portfolio of 4 million square feet. During the social unrest in south Minneapolis, Wellington's in-progress \$30 million affordable housing project was burned to the ground, and two other company buildings were severely damaged. Wellington wasted little time to start rebuilding. "We've got a lot of property in and around that neighborhood and feel very committed to it," he says.



EMERGING

**KATE CIMINO**  
Executive director, Citizens League

The credo of the Citizens League is "common ground, common good." Kate Cimino became the league's new executive director in September, just weeks before highly partisan election battles were decided. Cimino, who previously ran the policy fellows program at the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs, aims to bring together people with disparate views to find workable solutions to difficult social and economic problems. Public safety, aging, and caregiving are among the topics she plans to address. Rural-urban understanding is a priority area, as is helping young people of color pursue careers in politics and public policy. Despite the recent acrimonious ambience in politics, Cimino says she wants to chart a "more hopeful way forward."

CHANGE AGENT

**DR. RAHUL KORANNE** President/CEO,  
Minnesota Hospital Association

Rahul Koranne approaches his work at the Minnesota Hospital Association with a mix of business acumen and sound medical knowledge. The MBA and M.D. took the reins of the organization in January, just a few months before the coronavirus pandemic tightened its grip on hospitals and clinics across the state. Since that time, he's championed an approach to health care that ensures access to quality care in rural and urban settings alike. But the pandemic has also laid bare how "financially fragile" the state's health delivery system is, Koranne notes. That's why he's using his position to work closely with elected officials and insurers to build a more financially sustainable system.





**INNOVATOR**

**BETSY VOHS** | Founder/CEO, Studio BV

Space matters more than ever. That's why Betsy VoHS' Minneapolis design firm, Studio BV, is heading into 2021 analyzing what to do with clients' existing spaces during Covid-19 and trying to predict what spaces will need post-pandemic. VoHS spent much of the past year working on pro-bono design projects for Design Forward, her new Studio BV division, which works with nonprofit organizations seeking to harness the power of design. "We are beginning new Design Forward projects now and are eager to see how they change neighborhoods and small business owners affected by the economic and social unrest," VoHS says. "I see our design work in the community as an essential need."

**ROOTED**

**MARY LIZ HOLBERG** | Dakota County commissioner

A former Republican member of the Minnesota House, Mary Liz Holberg was enlisted by DFL Gov. Tim Walz to chair a blue-ribbon committee on Metropolitan Council governance. The Met Council operates regional transit and weighs in on numerous planning issues, including affordable housing. Council critics long have argued that the unelected council members wield too much power. Holberg, who had tried to alter the council's operations while in the legislature, is examining the council's structure and service delivery. She says she will "remain optimistic that our collective effort might provide a catalyst for developing reforms."



**MUKHTAR IBRAHIM**

*Executive director/  
editor, Sahan Journal*

*Sahan* means "pioneer" in Somali. The St. Paul-based news nonprofit led by Mukhtar Ibrahim has been drawing national notice for its coverage of immigrant and refugee communities. In October it was selected for Facebook Journalism Project's Sustainability Accelerator Program, a sign of bigger things to come.



**JUDE BRICKER**

*CEO,  
Sun Country Airlines*

Following record operating results in 2019, the world expected more growth and an IPO from Sun Country. Instead, Covid-19 brought the industry to its knees. But between Jude Bricker's strategic partnership with Amazon to fly packages, a market niche focused on leisure travel, and a lean, flexible operating structure, Sun Country is not among the industry's basket cases. And an IPO is not out of the question in '21.

**EMERGING**

**JOE SPENCER** |

**President, Saint Paul Downtown Alliance**

Less than two years after he was hired to lead the Saint Paul Downtown Alliance, Covid-19 arrived, and Joe Spencer shifted into triage mode. The alliance was created to recruit new employers and attract more investment to St. Paul. During the pandemic, it has contacted more than 150 companies to share information. Employees of many St. Paul-based companies are working remotely, and many events at sports and entertainment venues have been cancelled, so Spencer is dealing with economic and public safety concerns downtown. He's also identifying development opportunities that would benefit the city's tax base post-pandemic. A new downtown improvement district, created by the City Council, will generate funds for increased safety and more amenities.







CHANGE AGENT

**SONDRA SAMUELS** | President/CEO, Northside Achievement Zone

Sondra Samuels and other leaders started NAZ in 2008 to address racial and educational inequity in opportunities. The organization focuses on supporting children in north Minneapolis so they can succeed in school and the working world. Following George Floyd's murder and the ensuing uprising, Samuels facilitated healing events throughout the city and continues to work on racial healing and equity. Going forward, she and NAZ are focused on creating a prosperous north Minneapolis, working with policy makers to support systemic change, and supporting residents in areas of housing, careers, health, and education. She and husband Don, a former Minneapolis City Council member, are also co-plaintiffs in a lawsuit seeking to enforce police staffing mandates in north Minneapolis.



ROOTED

**MELVIN TENNANT** | President/CEO, Meet Minneapolis

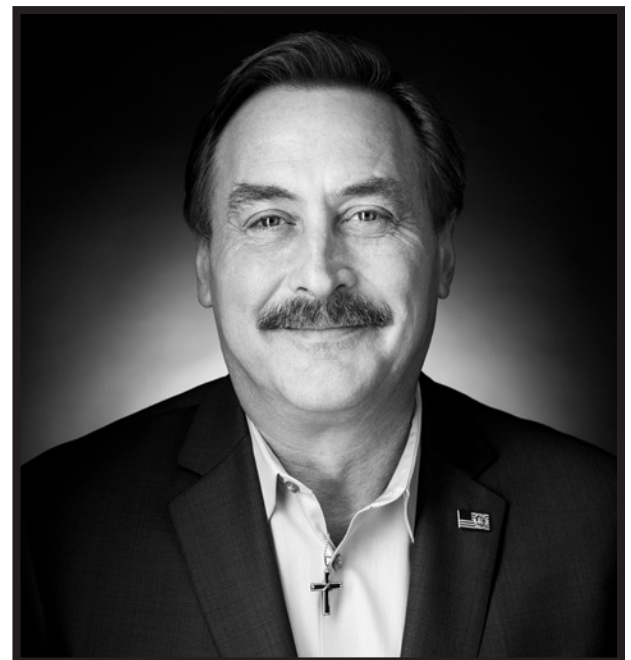
Unfailing in his optimism for the future of Minneapolis, even with stadiums shuttered, conventions canceled, and hotels and office buildings emptied, Melvin Tennant's team at the convention and visitors association shifted to a grassroots approach. Over the summer, they launched "We Need Us!"—a local tourism campaign focused on neighborhoods and small businesses that don't typically get as much attention as downtown does. As an ambassador of Minneapolis who works to bring in major events, Tennant is realistic, acknowledging that the city's reputation has taken a hit this year, but he's bullish on recovery and patient about the time it will take to rebound. "We're booking 10 years into the future," he says—but also eagerly anticipating the NCAA Women's Final Four, coming to Minneapolis in 2022.



BUILDER

**MIKE LINDELL** | CEO, MyPillow

In a handful of years, Chaska-based MyPillow has grown to national prominence, substantially on the shoulders of founder/CEO Mike Lindell's compelling redemption story and ubiquitous infomercials. (He is said to often be Fox News' largest single advertiser.) Lindell is a vehement conservative and Trump supporter. He has made no secret of his interest in following in his political mentor's footsteps by jumping from business to public office, perhaps running for governor in 2022, hoping to spin his hard-earned national profile into Minnesota's own version of the Trump story.



**INNOVATOR****CHAD HETHERINGTON | CEO, The Stable**

Friends describe Chad Hetherington, co-founder of The Stable, as one of the most connected people in retail today, and this year's dramatic swing to online shopping cemented his Minneapolis-based agency's omnichannel approach to launching consumer goods, such as Quip, the direct-to-consumer oral health startup that caught fire in stores at Target. The Stable ended 2020 with two key acquisitions, RichContext, an Arkansas-based e-commerce company with proprietary social commerce technologies, and its local rival, veteran Minneapolis retail agency Jacobs Marketing. Now five years old, The Stable employs 200, with offices in Minneapolis; Seattle; Austin, Texas; and Bentonville, Arkansas.

**EMERGING****GLENN SANDGREN | CEO, Ikonics Corp.**

Allete isn't Duluth's only publicly traded company. Ikonics is small, with annual sales around \$18 million, but it produces some fascinating technology. Its imaging equipment, materials, and processes are used not only in screenprinting but also for abrasive etching of aerospace and electronics components. It's been a rough year for that customer base: Ikonics' 3 percent sales decline last year presaged a 44 percent revenue plunge in 2020's second quarter. In February, Glenn Sandgren succeeded Bill Ulland, who had been CEO for two decades. Sandgren had been president of Pallidus, an Albany, New York-based industrial electronics manufacturer. At Ikonics, he'll be looking for new opportunities in troubled markets.

**EMERGING****JAY AND BOB DILLON | Co-founders, Yardbird**

Jay Dillon and his father, Bob, started New Hope-based Yardbird in 2016 to offer affordable patio and outdoor furniture, buying direct from Asia to keep prices down. It began as an e-commerce venture but is now adding stores including St. Louis Park, Denver, Detroit, and Kansas City. *Fast Company* riffed that Yardbird aspires to be the "Warby Parker of garden furniture." It does not disclose revenue, but, Dillon says, "We did about 280 percent growth this past year." That's driving more growth: Yardbird plans to open three more markets in 2021.

**ROOTED****LISA BENDER | President, Minneapolis City Council**

In a weak mayor system like Minneapolis's, the city council president is powerful. Lisa Bender has been a lightning rod for aggressive advocacy of bike lanes, increased residential density, and defunding the Minneapolis Police. Subsequently her progressive allies were angered when it became clear the department would not be abolished, and her home was targeted by protestors and vandals. She announced in fall that she would not seek reelection. As a transitional figure, she's positioned to forge solutions on budgetary and policing issues that divide Minneapolis, though it remains to be seen whether her final year in office will be one where Bender finds solutions through consensus or merely leads the council's progressive faction.

**CHANGE AGENT****DANIELLE STEER | Executive director, Lunar Startups/Lunar Inc.**

Two years ago, Danielle Steer launched Lunar Startups in St. Paul with the goal of reducing disparities for minority entrepreneurs. Until November, the startup accelerator had been a project of the Knight Foundation and American Public Media, and it had helped its 32 cohort startups create 55 new jobs, hire 180 contractors, post nearly \$7.8 million in revenue, and raise almost \$3 million dollars. But last month, Steer directed Lunar's spinoff as an independent nonprofit and launched a \$2 million fundraising campaign under the name Lunar Inc., a move she believes will provide more opportunity for growth. (To learn more, see "Lunar Startups Strikes Out on Its Own," page 20.)





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Colliers congratulates the Heartland honorees for the EY Entrepreneur of the Year program. You put in long hours to grow your business, and we're here to support you through every step of your real estate process. Whenever and wherever you need us, we want to help.

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**Lisa Breiland**  
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952-837-3022



**Nick Leviton**  
[nick.leviton@colliers.com](mailto:nick.leviton@colliers.com)  
952-897-7843



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PNC is proud to congratulate the 2020 Entrepreneur of the Year Award winners and finalists. We appreciate what you mean to our local community and economy.

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Here's to the impact-makers.  
The future-builders.  
**The entrepreneurs.**

## Congratulations to participants of the 2020 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Competition

As a talent firm that's revolutionizing the way people work, Salo is proud to sponsor a program promoting organizations with extraordinary entrepreneurial spirit for the last 8 years.



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2020

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# Entrepreneur

## OF THE YEAR AWARDS

LEADERS FROM SIX MINNESOTA COMPANIES EARN EY HONORS.

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EY annually recognizes CEOs and regional business leaders for their outstanding entrepreneurial accomplishments and major contributions to their communities.

Eight business innovators from six Minnesota companies were awarded the Entrepreneur Of The Year Heartland Award during a first-ever virtual awards gala on October 8. Seven states in the nation's midsection make up EY's Heartland region. Also receiving the regional award were two business leaders from two companies based in Missouri.

Executives from nine other Minnesota companies were finalists for the award, as were leaders from two businesses in Iowa and one in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

*Twin Cities Business* profiles these accomplished business leaders in this issue, including an up-close look at the Minnesota winners, who were interviewed by *TCB's* Gene Rebeck.

"There are many successful entrepreneurs in this world, but building something of long-term value that improves the way we live, work, and play takes grit, persistence, and a sense of ambition where nothing is impossible," says Dominic Iannazzo, EY's Heartland program co-director.

Nominees were evaluated on the following criteria: overcoming adversity, financial performance, innovation, talent management, and societal impact and commitment to building a values-based company.

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### REGIONAL JUDGES

**Henry Chang,**  
3M Connect

**David Johnson,**  
Maxus Properties, Inc.

**Cindy Koebele,**  
TitleSmart

**Bob Dunn,**  
Thompson Street Capital Partners

**Sri Kantamneni,**  
Cargill Animal Nutrition's  
Digital Insights

**Kari Rihm,**  
Rihm Family Companies

**John Howe,**  
Manna Pro Products LLC

**Joe Keeley,**  
College Nannies, Sitters & Tutors

**Tom Roos,**  
UnitedHealth Group



For more information on the Entrepreneur Of The Year program, contact Jim Kowitz, EY program manager: [Jim.Kowitz@ey.com](mailto:Jim.Kowitz@ey.com), 612-371-8301, or visit the program's website at [ey.com/us/eoy/hl](http://ey.com/us/eoy/hl).



## ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR, MINNESOTA WINNERS

### Atif Siddiqi

President and CEO  
Branch, Minneapolis

**EY elevator pitch:** Branch provides hourly workers with steady access to capital—despite significant variability in their weekly hours resulting in highly volatile paychecks. Employers use it as a benefit to help them attract and retain workers. Employees can receive a zero-fee bank account, free instant access to earned wages, and budgeting tools to help them manage cash flow between paychecks.

**Revenue:** Total undisclosed; grew 400 percent in 2019

**Employees:** About 90

**Business:** Provides financial services for “unbanked” hourly employees

**Interview with Siddiqi:**

#### How did you come up with the idea for Branch?

The mission behind Branch is helping hourly workers get ahead. We initially



homed in on this idea to help employees earn more income by picking up extra shifts at their employers.

We kept digging to find out why these employees were constantly looking for more hours and income. We found that they were dealing with a large number of financial challenges. For instance, volatile income—they’d get

20 hours one week, 30 hours the next. That made it hard for them to manage their cash flow between paychecks. They also had little or no access to credit and no savings. That led us on the path to becoming a challenger bank.

#### What is a “challenger bank”?

It simply refers to a digital bank that has a limited suite of financial products and typically has no physical branch location. The suite of products we focused on includes free checking accounts for people who are underbanked or unbanked and a line of capital they can tap into.

#### You grew up and went to college in southern California. What brought you to Minnesota?

I relocated the company from California to Minnesota in 2016. We were one of the first companies accepted into the first Target + Techstars retail accelerator. We ended up staying here, and we have

been finding great talent locally.

#### Why do employers want to work with your company?

We provide employers a quick, reliable way to move money to employees digitally, including by direct deposit, with no fees to either employer or employee. A second reason: Employees are expecting tips or reimbursements at the end of every shift, but with digital payments there’s no cash at the end of the day. We’re able to move that digitally to employees’ accounts.

#### Are certain sectors particularly attracted to Branch?

Most of the industries that we work with have a very high degree of turnover—anywhere from 50 to 100 percent annually. We’ve been particularly strong in foodservice, retail, and health care. These employers look at Branch as a benefit that will help them retain employees for longer periods of time.

### Chris Smith

President and CEO  
Kipsu, Minneapolis

**EY elevator pitch:** Kipsu has developed and delivers a robust, customizable software platform that enables clients to communicate directly with their customers in real time across an array of digital conversation channels, including text, social messaging, and integrated in-app engagement channels. The company’s clients are primarily service organizations such as hotels, public transit systems, rental car operators, and shopping environments. Kipsu’s solution increases and enhances meaningful human interactions between companies and their customers.

**Revenue:** \$9 million

**Employees:** 55

**Business:** Digital customer-communications platforms for service businesses

**Interview with Smith:**

#### You worked in venture capital in California and Minnesota before launching Kipsu. Why make the

#### move from VC to CEO?

Venture capital is a really fun business, but at the heart of it, it’s sort of a passive business. You support the companies, but you’re not the one driving the car. I was interested in running a business, and I was looking for something that would be a good fit with the assets we have here in Minnesota—something that would provide a competitive advantage over well-funded companies from the coasts. The kernel of the idea was seeing that people aren’t always comfortable saying when something is wrong with the service they’ve received or that they need help.

#### Why was this a problem for the markets you targeted?

People have all sorts of outlets for sharing feedback. An unhappy customer might not tell you during the service experience, but they can go on TripAdvisor and tell the rest of the world. This is frustrating to managers of service organizations, because they don’t get the opportunity to address and fix the problem and to do so in a timely manner.

#### How did you and Kipsu adjust when Covid-19



#### devastated hospitality and public transit—two of your chief markets?

We made the decision upfront that we were going to do everything we could to save our relationships with our customers and at the same time do everything we could to save our team, because we’d invested so much in building them up. Surprisingly, we’ve done well. We provided deep discounts to our customers, and we’re slowly pulling them off of those discounts as we get back to kind

of normal. And our team is all back to work, which is great.

#### What’s next for Kipsu?

We’ve found a lot of people in the health care domain who’ve experienced our solution in hotels and have told us, ‘We think that what you do is really applicable to the complexities and the communications gaps that exist in health care.’ We’re starting to add a lot of work in that sector, too.



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The lower section of the page features a light gray background with a large, stylized illustration on the left. The illustration depicts three stylized human figures interacting with a complex, geometric structure made of white and light blue blocks and planes. One figure stands on a platform, another is climbing a ladder, and a third is reaching towards a floating block. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on geometric shapes and a muted color palette.



## ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR, MINNESOTA WINNERS

**Mark Fritz and Michael Hutchinson**  
Co-CEOs  
Lakeshirts, Detroit Lakes

**EY elevator pitch:** Lakeshirts is a custom, art-driven design apparel and accessory business. The company serves a customer base of more than 4,000 resort town retailers and 1,500 college and campus bookstores. What started in a founder's basement has grown into a 325,000-square-foot production and warehouse facility. Lakeshirts strives to exceed not only its customers' expectations, but also to bring value to all the stakeholders—customers, employees, vendors, owners, and the community.

**Revenue:** More than \$100 million

**Employees:** 500

**Business:** Designs and prints T-shirts and other apparel items for colleges and resorts

**Interview with Fritz and Hutchinson:**  
**Did you imagine Lakeshirts would become as big as it has when you started out?**

**Fritz:** Both Mike and I had a lot of little businesses since we were young—mow-

ing lawns, putting in docks, painting houses, waxing skis. In college, we started printing shirts. It occurred to us that we could sell to bars, restaurants, and resorts in and around Detroit Lakes.

Did we imagine it would become as big? If you saw us back then, you would have thought there was no way we would have made it three weeks, let alone this long. (Laughs.)

**Hutchinson:** We always thought that if you shoot low enough, you'll be sure to hit it, so we might as well aim a little higher. We weren't afraid of change, and we kept resetting our business as it grew.

**How did you get into the college and resort apparel markets?**

**Hutchinson:** We were actually in and out of the college market a few times. In 2008, we acquired the assets of a small collegiate licensing company. That gave us NCAA licensing and college playoffs, and we had a lot of good products that seemed to fit into that market.

**Fritz:** We have 412 lakes in a 20-mile radius. When we were starting, there were probably about three times as many

resorts as there are now. We were local, we turned product around quickly, and we serviced them well. Five or six years after we started, we added sales reps. From there, it took off.

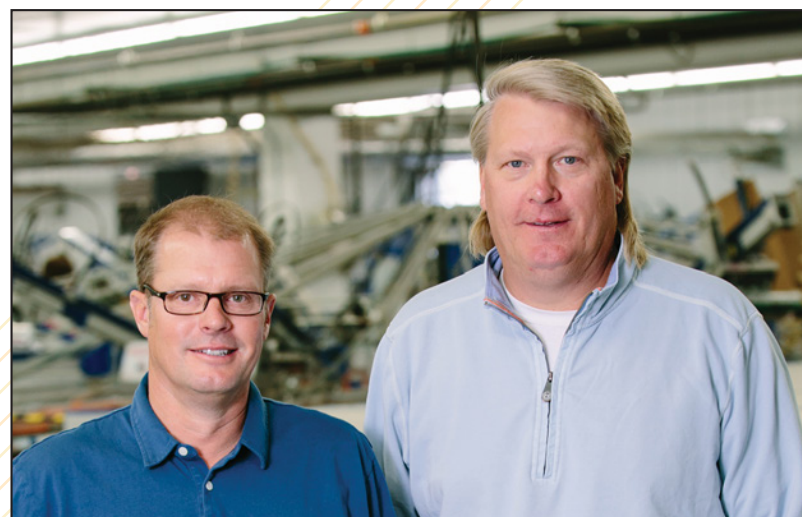
**What is the "added value" you provide customers?**

**Fritz:** Before we had great art, before we had great garments, before we had an exceptional sales force, we turned orders around faster than the other guy. And we've added equipment, people, and

space as we needed it to stay fast.

**Why stay in Detroit Lakes?**

**Fritz:** We grew up here. We love this community, and we have super people working here. And it's somewhat central, since we are a national company. It can be challenging to find enough employees in a small community. But because of our culture and our goal of making Lakeshirts a great place to work, we've been able to make it work.



**Mark Ties**  
CEO  
Perforce Software,  
Minneapolis

**EY elevator pitch:** Perforce provides enterprise-scale software solutions to technology developers and development operations teams during all phases of the development life cycle. Its portfolio includes solutions for API (application programming interfaces) management,

automated mobile and web testing, embeddable analytics, open source support, version control, and many other software development projects. The company's 20,000-plus customers include top tech companies such as Nvidia, Pixar, Ubisoft, and VMware.

**Revenue:** More than \$300 million

**Employees:** About 900

**Business:** Support platforms for software developers

**Interview with Ties:**  
**You have experience in accounting, finance, operations, M&A, and tech; what led you to Perforce?**

Our board chair, Janet Dryer, and I conducted market research in the developer operations space. Through that research, we were lucky enough to find Perforce. It was run by a great entrepreneur; it had a solid customer base in a great market. And we were able to buy the business.

**How would you describe Perforce to non-tech people?**

We provide tools for software developers so that they can plan, manage, store, and test their work. The world's most popular smartphones are developed using our technology; 19 of the top 20 game studios in the world use our technology to design their products. And nine of the top 10 chip manufacturers, nine of the top 10 automotive companies, and most of the large financial institutions in the world use our technology to build or test their products.

**How has your background contributed to Perforce's growth?**

I've done more acquisitions than I can count. We're an organization making acquisitions, so that skill set helps me. I know how to raise capital so that we can grow. Right now, my main role is making sure that the team is pulling in the right direction.

And I have a great team. We check our egos at the door, and whenever we have a conversation, our goal is to solve a problem.

**How many acquisitions has Perforce made since you became CEO?**

We've completed 10 total since we bought Perforce in 2016 and four since I became CEO. That may not sound like a lot in numbers, but those last four acquisitions tripled the size of the company. We went from \$80 million to over \$300 million. The bigger an acquisition is, the more work it requires.

Our industry is in a consolidation phase—and it is required to go to a customer with a suite of products. We have to be mindful that our acquisitions fit what we are becoming, which is an enterprise-scale software company. We want to sell to the enterprises of the world with large development teams and very complicated challenges.

**Kristen Denzer**  
Founder and CEO  
Tierra Encantada,  
Minneapolis

**EY elevator pitch:** Tierra Encantada, Spanish for “enchanted land,” provides education and care for children ages six weeks through six years. It set itself apart from other daycares and preschools through not only its language immersion curriculum but also its day-to-day operations. Tierra Encantada provides a stimulating curriculum of activities for children that encourages well-rounded creative childhood development with a focus on diversity and inclusiveness. And its fresh-cooked meal program is designed to expand young palates.

**Revenue:** \$8.2 million (2019)

**Employees:** 162

**Business:** Daycare featuring a Spanish immersion curriculum

**Interview with Denzer:**  
**You’ve created two businesses besides Tierra Encantada.**

Before Tierra, I owned an event rental company and a dog daycare and boarding facility. Both were profitable the first year they opened. I operated all three companies from 2013 to 2016. It was stressful!

I started the event rental company in 2008 and grew it to booking almost 500 events annually. In 2016, after having 22 weddings in one weekend, I knew I was ready to move on, and I sold the inventory and book of events to a competitor. I also sold my half of the dog daycare in 2016 so I could focus 100 percent on Tierra.

**Why start a daycare business?**

I have kids, and I was amazed by the waitlist for quality daycare. Having started other businesses, I thought,

“I need to do this.” Tierra was really designed around what I wanted for my own children—they were the first students! I didn’t know what I was doing, but I worked hard and taught myself a lot those first years. Knowing more than one language is so important, and I’m proud to offer families this option.

**Your meal program is one of your differentiators.**

Our tuition includes meals that are cooked fresh onsite using organic ingredients. Parents have so much pressure to be perfect these days. With their children attending Tierra, they feel just a little less guilty ordering pizza delivery for dinner knowing their child had spinach and mushroom quiche muffins for breakfast and quinoa with avocado for lunch.

**You’ve grown from 100 children to more than 1,000 children at five locations. Last year, you began fran-**



**chising to cities nationwide. Why the success?**

When parents sacrifice time with their children and spend a significant portion of their income on that care, they want to feel like it is worth it. In our program, they know their children are learning Spanish, eating healthy meals, and most importantly are loved. That resonates deeply not only with families but also with franchisees.

**George Hicks**  
Co-founder and co-CEO  
**Marcia Page**  
Co-founder and executive chair  
Värde Partners, Minneapolis

**EY elevator pitch:** Värde Partners is a global alternative investment firm that focuses on unlocking value. The firm generally seeks opportunities in less efficient markets and pursues assets at a discount to their intrinsic or potential value. Investments span corporate and

sovereign credit, restructurings, real estate, mortgages, private equity, and direct lending. The firm now has 13 offices worldwide, and it currently manages more than \$14 billion in assets.

**Revenue:** Not provided

**Employees:** More than 300

**Business:** Alternative investment firm

**Interview with Hicks and Page:**  
**What inspired you to launch Värde Partners?**

We met working at Cargill and shared

entrepreneurial ambitions to start a firm where we could shape the investing strategies and the culture. We launched Värde 27 years ago in the nascent years of the alternative investment industry, and we believed we could distinguish ourselves by building a platform that could invest across a wide spectrum of asset classes, weathering cycles and markets.

**Has your business changed during those 27 years?**

Värde has grown from a Midwest startup to a leading global alternative investment firm with offices around the world. We have expanded into new strategies and markets, investing more than \$75 billion across 70 countries since inception. But we remain rooted in our credit heritage. At a fundamental level, Värde seeks to create value for our investors. Värde means “value” in Swedish.

**What’s an example of an under-the-radar opportunity you saw that was particularly successful for your firm and your investors?**

A core issue in the 2008 housing crisis was the securitization of low-quality

residential mortgage-backed securities with high rating-agency scores. We identified that certain loans in these portfolios were not only more likely to default than the ratings agencies indicated, but many financial institutions had likely breached their reps and warranties as a result. Yet few were reading the disclosures that held underwriters accountable for buying loans back at par, an arrangement called a “putback.” Värde was one of the first to recognize the potential opportunity in putback claims.

**Any future plans you can share?**

The world is experiencing a major credit cycle resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, and we believe we are well suited to invest through the changing market landscape. We are excited about an increasingly global opportunity set, particularly in Asia, where we have been on the ground for over a decade and opened our most recent office in India.





ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR, MINNESOTA FINALISTS



**Tony Miller**  
Founder and CEO  
Bind  
**Founded:** 2016  
**Headquarters:** Minneapolis  
**Mission:** Make health care affordable by providing a consumer-driven insurance model that offers people cost information prior to making treatment decisions.  
**Major impact:** Miller founded a venture capital fund that was targeted to support disruptive businesses redesigning health care. He wasn't finding the fledgling businesses that he hoped to fund, so he started his own health care insurance company with a staff of eight people. He wanted affordable and equitable health insurance and wanted the company's consumer interfaces to be navigable. Within a few years, employers enrolled in Bind plans are annually saving up to 20 percent on health care costs. The vast majority of the time Bind members are choosing the most efficient, effective treatment.



**Andrea Abbas**  
Founder and managing partner  
BRIGHT Research Partners, Inc.  
**Founded:** 2008  
**Headquarters:** Minneapolis  
**Mission:** The clinical research organization provides clinical and regulatory strategy, study management and execution, study auditing, and inspection preparedness activities.  
**Major impact:** This company was created on the belief that the clinical trials market should do better by its clients. Starting as a solo entrepreneur, Abbas now employs about 25 clinical research and regulatory consultants, biostatisticians, and business operations professionals. They focus on clinical and regulatory strategy and execution for medical devices, in vitro diagnostics, pharmaceuticals, and biologics. The company emphasizes building sustainable relationships with its clients and employing a collaborative approach with the Food and Drug Administration. It aims to improve the quality and speed of clinical trials.

**Nadim Yared**  
President and CEO  
CVRx  
**Founded:** 2001  
**Headquarters:** Brooklyn Park  
**Mission:** Provide implantable technology for the treatment of heart failure and high blood pressure




that is designed to trigger the body's own natural blood flow regulation system.  
**Major impact:** CVRx developed the world's first cardiovascular neuromodulation device, which was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in August 2019. It triggers the nervous system to use the brain to reduce symptoms of heart failure, a condition that often produces

early death, poor quality of life, and high medical costs. CVRx and the FDA used a novel trial design that had two parallel phases, which allowed this product to be placed on the market more quickly. Over nearly two decades, CVRx has raised more than \$340 million from investors.

PERFORCE

EY ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR® 2020 HEARTLAND AWARD WINNER

# Congrats, Mark!



Mark Ties  
CEO, Perforce Software

Unrivalled innovation. Record growth. Amazing company culture. Perforce goes one direction under Mark's leadership: onward and upward.

We're proud to work alongside you, Mark.

-Team Perforce

**Charlie Youakim**

CEO

Sezzle

**Founded:** 2016**Headquarters:** Minneapolis**Mission:** To financially empower the next generation through building a

transparent, inclusive, and seamless payment option for online and in-store purchases.

**Major impact:** Sezzle enables e-commerce businesses to offer installment-based payment plans to their retail customers. Those customers can break up purchases into six inter-

est-free payments, which unlocks their purchasing power while permitting retailers to increase order volumes. Sezzle's chief source of revenue comes from charging a fee to the retailer as a percentage of each transaction. There are more than 10,000 active retail partners on the platform. More than 1 million consumers are using Sezzle, especially people who are in Gen Z or are millennials.

**Sameer Kumar**

CEO and co-founder

**Aneela Idnani**

President and co-founder

HabitAware

**Founded:** 2015**Headquarters:** St. Louis Park**Mission:** To provide a smart bracelet that can help 20 million Americans who deal with body-focused repetitive behaviors.**Major impact:** The gesture detection technology allows people to deal with stress in better ways. This husband-and-wife team, and two other co-founders, patented their invention called Keen. The device tracks wrist movements and vibrates to remind people where their hands are, so they'll stop nail biting and other behaviors. Since the 2017 product launch, Keen has helped tens of thousands of people in more than 50 countries. HabitAware's breakthrough product created a new wearable category for mental health.**Chad Stelzig**

President and CEO

Image Sensing Systems

**Founded:** 1984**Headquarters:** St. Paul**Mission:** To improve public safety and air quality by producing advanced technology sensing platforms for the transportation industry.**Major impact:** The company's products use machine vision, radar signal processing, and artificial intelligence to provide actionable data to cities, counties, and state agencies. Government leaders take that data to help them make decisions and influence driver behavior. The overarching goal of this data application is optimizing safety and efficiency of public roadways. Image Sensing Systems is a small, publicly traded company. It invests in upfront research and development to create a product concept that can be taken into the marketplace to solicit validation by potential customers.

# VÄRDE

Congratulations to Värde Co-Founders  
**George Hicks** and **Marcia Page**,  
2020 Heartland Award winners.

"Marcia and George have created a name for themselves as leading global alternative investment advisors that strive to positively impact the lives of their clients as well as their employees." – EY

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ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR, MINNESOTA FINALISTS



**Chad Hetherington, CEO**  
The Stable Group, LLC  
**Founded:** 2015  
**Headquarters:** Minneapolis  
**Mission:** Serves as a multidiscipline agency to connect consumer product brands to their audiences across all consumer touchpoints.  
**Major impact:** The business was launched out of a conference room at The Minneapolis Club. It had no clients. The Stable was founded to create a fully integrated, cross-platform agency built solely for consumer brands. It brought together brick-and-mortar, e-commerce, creative, and social/digital services under one roof. Within two years, the employee base grew from 16 to 65 people. With staff deployed in offices in Minneapolis, Seattle, and Austin, Texas, it helped to generate nearly \$1 billion in retail sales in 2019.



**Joe Welu, CEO**  
Total Expert  
**Founded:** 2012  
**Headquarters:** Golden Valley  
**Mission:** It provides a software-as-a-service platform that's an enterprise-grade marketing operating system specifically built for regulated financial services organizations.  
**Major impact:** The platform integrates industry-specific data and compliance requirements. The company's marketing operating system allows financial services businesses to create customers and members for life. Mortgage lenders, banks, and credit unions use the Total Expert marketing operating system to stay ahead of how consumers expect to learn about, shop for, and manage their financial lives.  
Eight of the nation's top 15 lenders are Total Expert customers, and they are able to reach their consumers with targeted, automated, and personal communications.



**Michael Jordan, CEO**  
UNRL  
**Founded:** 2013  
**Headquarters:** St. Paul  
**Mission:** To provide high-quality sportswear and accessories at reasonable prices.  
**Major impact:** The company produces activewear tops and bottoms, which can be worn on the athletic field or out in

the community. UNRL emphasizes creating top-of-the-line products from scratch by combining premium, hand-selected materials with expert workmanship. Its business model incorporates a "consumer-value approach." It strives to provide the same level of product quality as high-end sportswear companies, but to deliver those products at prices of 40 percent or less than its competitors. Retailers that carry its products include Scheels and NHL pro shops.

CHAD  
HETTERINGTON  
CEO @  
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Congratulations on being a finalist for  
Ernst and Young's 2020 Entrepreneur of the Year.



## ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR, BEYOND MINNESOTA WINNERS AND FINALISTS

### WINNERS:

#### Mike Black

President and CEO  
Dent Wizard International

**Founded:** 1983

**Headquarters:** Bridgeton, Missouri

**Mission:** To provide automotive reconditioning services—including paint-less dent removal and minor body repair—across North America.

**Major impact:** Dent Wizard International employs more than 1,600 technicians and services more than 4,000 customers, including vehicle dealers, auto body shops, and insurance companies. The company is anchored on four core values—excellence, innovation, integrity, and customer devotion. Among the services that Dent Wizard International provides are bumper repair, wheel restoration, interior repair, appraisal, key origination, and duplication. It offers vehicle protection products under the Evolution brand.



#### John Thomson

Founder and CEO  
PayIt

**Founded:** 2011

**Headquarters:** Kansas City, Missouri

**Mission:** To provide a digital platform that allows citizens and business owners to easily interact with government on financial transactions.

**Major impact:** PayIt allows people to access government services from any device. So instead of standing in lines or mailing in payments, residents can use a digital platform to pay their property taxes or renew a driver's license. In 2019, PayIt received about \$100 million in funding from a New York-based venture capital firm. PayIt is capitalizing on the market opportunity as government agencies are under increasing pressure to modernize and digitize their processes. John Thomson got the idea to found PayIt after he was standing in line to renew his vehicle registration.



### FINALISTS:

#### Troy Vincent

CEO  
Navigate Wellbeing Solutions

**Founded:** 2008

**Headquarters:** West Des Moines, Iowa

**Mission:** Provide employee engagement software that helps businesses enhance the overall well-being of their employees, including their health, financial circumstances, and career development.

Dakota

**Mission:** Offer professional drone services that help businesses make good decisions. Services include optical imaging, surveys and mapping, and data collection through sensors.

#### Thomas Cardella

Founder and President  
TLC & Associates

**Founded:** 2007

**Headquarters:** Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**Mission:** Operate a results-oriented contact center that focuses on delivering high-quality customer service to support long-term relationships.

#### Matthew Dunlevy

President and CEO  
SkySkopes

**Founded:** 2014

**Headquarters:** Grand Forks, North

# Congratulations

to Mark Fritz and Mike Hutchinson of Lakeshirts  
for being named 2020 EY Entrepreneur of the Year®  
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# New frontiers in addiction medicine

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## *Congratulations*

to our Chief Nursing Officer Jill Seward  
on leading with a brave heart and being  
named a 2020 Hero in Health Care.



**Hazelden Betty Ford**  
Foundation

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**[HazeldenBettyFord.org](https://HazeldenBettyFord.org)**

TWIN CITIES  
BUSINESSNOTABLE  
2020

## Best-in-class executives

**N**otable is a new series from *Twin Cities Business* designed to recognize best-in-class executives from a range of industries in Minnesota.

Our goal is to spotlight individuals for exemplary work in their fields and communities. They are leaders, doers, and innovators respected by colleagues and distinguished for going the

extra mile—mentoring, teaching, and volunteering—all while getting the job done at the highest level. Perhaps the best praise we can offer: Notables are nominated by their peers at work and in the community.

This month, we spotlight 47 extraordinary Notable Heroes in Health Care and Notable Women in Technology. —Tess Allen

Coming Up in  
Future Issues

- Notable Women in Commercial Banking
- Notable General Counsel
- Notable Leaders in Finance
- Notable Executives in Marketing
- Notable Women in Manufacturing
- Notable LGBTQA Executives

*We invite you to help us shine a light on some of the most deserving, but perhaps unsung, leaders in our community. To nominate and see the complete list of upcoming categories, visit [tcbmag.com/notable](http://tcbmag.com/notable).*

TWIN CITIES  
BUSINESSNOTABLE  
2020  
HEROES IN HEALTH CARE

TCB's Notable Heroes in Health Care are doctors, nurses, directors, CEOs, diversity officers, and medical advisors, among others. They represent large hospital systems, private practices, insurance and pharmacy care companies, and more. They serve on the front lines and behind the scenes, fighting Covid-19 and working to keep Minnesotans as healthy as possible.

**METHODOLOGY:** The individuals featured did not pay to be included. Their profiles were drawn from nomination materials. This list is not comprehensive. It includes only people who were nominated and accepted after editorial review. To qualify for this list, individuals must be serving in a C-suite or senior-level administrative or clinical role in Minnesota, have at least five years experience in health care, and have shown the ability to create significant, positive, and measurable results in their field.



**CHRISTINE BENT**  
Senior vice president/COO,  
Prime Therapeutics

At Eagan-based Prime Therapeutics, Christine Bent leads an organization of 3,300 employees who manage pharmacy benefits for 30 million members. Thanks to Bent's foresight, Prime was one of the first Minnesota companies to transition to a virtual work environment in mid-March due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Bent organized a team to monitor the drug supply chain for shortages, coordinate with pharmacies to lift early drug refill restrictions to ensure patients had enough medication on hand, staff contact centers to manage calls from concerned members, facilitate the home delivery of medicines, and protect drugs like hydroxychloroquine from hoarding so patients with lupus who depend on it would not go without.



**LESLIE BODELL**  
Senior vice president, client services,  
OptumRx

Leslie Bodell is responsible for ensuring a high-quality end-to-end client experience for OptumRx, the pharmacy care business within Optum, the \$100 billion health services and innovations company. As the leader of account support and operations, Bodell focuses on creating seamless linkages for clients, partnering closely with sales and account management and customer service. Prior to assuming the OptumRx role in 2018, Bodell built and operated a diverse set of Optum enterprise-wide capabilities and operations, enabling business growth.

Bodell is also president of the Women's Health Leadership TRUST.



## NOTABLE HEROES IN HEALTH CARE



**MAREK CIOLKO**  
Co-founder/CEO,  
Gravie

Marek Ciolko is a serial health care entrepreneur with a goal to upend the way traditional health benefits services are offered; in 2013, he co-founded Minneapolis-based Gravie, a health benefits marketplace that flips the traditional model of employer-sponsored health insurance, helping employers and employees navigate the complexities of health benefits with more flexibility, options, and reduced costs. Gravie has served over 900 employers and 62,000 individuals across the U.S. In 2020, Ciolko led Gravie's launch of a zero-copay, zero-deductible health benefits option, which offers 100 percent coverage on most common health care services including physician visits, specialist visits, labs, and generic drugs.



**CONNIE DELANEY**  
Dean/professor,  
University of  
Minnesota School  
of Nursing

Along with her positions at the University of Minnesota nursing school, Connie Delaney is the knowledge generation lead for the National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education. She also serves as an adjunct professor in the faculty of medicine and nursing at the University of Iceland, where she was granted an honorary doctorate degree in 2011. From 2010 to 2015, she served as associate director of UMN's Clinical Translational Science Institute - Biomedical Informatics and acting director of the Institute for Health Informatics in the Academic Health Center. She is an active researcher in data/information technology standards for nursing and health care, big data science, and integrative informatics.



**DR. TIMOTHY FEYMA**  
Associate medical  
director of  
neurology,  
Gillette Children's  
Specialty Healthcare

Dr. Tim Feyma has fostered an environment of teamwork among medical specialists, nurses, and families at Gillette, all with the singular goal of helping young patients overcome difficult neurological challenges. This year, he added deep brain stimulation (DBS) to his department's list of specialties. DBS has long been used for Parkinson's disease and genetic dystonias; use in movement issues related to brain injuries is a developing field.

Feyma is also involved in research at Gillette and UMN on potential treatments for complex conditions like cerebral palsy, epilepsy, dystonia, and Rett syndrome.



**DR. MADELEINE GAGNON**  
Associate medical  
director of  
pediatrics,  
Gillette Children's  
Specialty Healthcare

Dr. Madeleine Gagnon works to incorporate all aspects of her patients' lives into her complex-care clinic model, including coordinating care from specialists, primary care physicians, home care, and food and shelter stability. Amid the ongoing pandemic, Gagnon has led key safety efforts at Gillette to keep patients and staff healthy. She has also expanded her mission to care for vulnerable populations outside of Gillette; she recently co-founded a safe, health care-grade home-care company, Bridge to Home Services LLC, to help meet the needs of people with disabilities and high-risk health conditions during the pandemic.

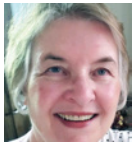
# Exceptional Care in the Air

## CONGRATULATIONS, STEVE STERNER, MD

He's a true life-saving force for Life Link III® and the newest member of Twin Cities Business' Notable Heroes in Health Care.

As CEO of Life Link III, Steve is one of Minnesota's most influential health care leaders — an emergency physician at Hennepin Healthcare, the recipient of many national awards, and a Fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians. Congratulations on your best-in-class contributions to our community and a career that continues to soar.





**SUSAN GEHLSSEN**  
Executive director,  
St. Mary's Health  
Clinics

Sue Gehlsen believes that health care should be available to all, regardless of a patient's ability to pay. She leads St. Mary's Health Clinics' seven neighborhood clinics in St. Paul, which provide free medical services and education to 2,000 uninsured or uninsurable patients. When Covid-19 threatened to disrupt the way St. Mary's interacts with patients, Gehlsen led her staff to imagine new ways to continue essential services and serve patients' other vital needs, such as money for food, rent, and utilities. Under her leadership, St. Mary's received a platinum seal from the National Association of Free Clinics and a 2020 Innovative Covid-19 Response Award from the Many Faces of Community Health Conference.



**CHRISTOPHER GEORGE**  
Senior administrative director for primary care,  
Hennepin Healthcare

Christopher George is responsible for the operations of Hennepin Healthcare's community clinics, which see more than 180,000 patient visits annually. In 2019, he co-led a team to develop and implement tools to improve 10 preventive chronic disease measures across 13 clinic sites. A composite measure of the impact demonstrated 5.2 percent improvement, the first time Hennepin Healthcare hit its target to exceed 4.7 percent annually. This equates to an additional 1,293 patients with a chronic health need met.

George also played an integral role in Hennepin Healthcare's pandemic response.



**DR. GLEN HANSEN**  
Director, Clinical Microbiology and Molecular Diagnostics  
Laboratories,  
Hennepin Healthcare

Under the leadership of Dr. Glen Hansen, Hennepin Healthcare has rapidly implemented molecular (PCR) testing for Covid-19. The Clinical Microbiology and Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory was awarded \$3.8 million by the government to expand PCR testing and was one of the first laboratories in the state to provide onsite testing and support for numerous large and small health care systems, clinics, mobile testing units, and organizations. Hansen also validated saliva Covid-19 testing to test asymptomatic mass populations in a more cost-effective manner.



**JODI HUBLER**  
President,  
Bind

Jodi Hubler has spent the past year overseeing significant company growth for her personalized Minneapolis health insurance company, Bind. Under her leadership, Bind has hired more than 150 new employees, added dozens of new employer customers, and is anticipating its largest membership growth in Bind history by Jan. 1.

Hubler also leads a Bind task force to ensure continuity of coverage for members during the pandemic. "There have been no major disruptions to members since Covid-19 first hit," says Bind's chief marketing officer, Carrie Maurer.

Hubler also plans to help Bind leverage its plan design to meaningfully address structural racism and health disparities.

## WE ARE PROUD TO CELEBRATE Chris George, Glen Hansen and Syl Jones on being named Notable Heroes in Health Care

In the face of a global pandemic, your unwavering commitment and unparalleled contributions are an inspiration to all. Thank you for all that you do on behalf of all of us.

## Congratulations!



Chris George



Glen Hansen



Syl Jones



## NOTABLE HEROES IN HEALTH CARE



**DR. ANNIE IDEKER**

Senior medical advisor for clinician experience/family medicine physician, HealthPartners

Dr. Annie Ideker understands how important relationships are in family medicine, making her the perfect candidate to be Bloomington-based HealthPartners' senior medical advisor for clinician experience. Her first major task in this new role was to establish the practice's telemedicine process. Her team identified a secure platform, trained over 2,000 clinicians for 96 hours, and trained additional staff and patients. In less than three and a half months, more than 300,000 video visits were performed, patient experience scores outperformed pre-Covid levels, and in-office visits and appointment cancellation numbers dropped.



**ROCHELLE JOHNSON**

Director of nursing, Regions Hospital Family Birth Center

Rochelle Johnson has a passion for addressing the disparities that exist for people of color, especially maternal and fetal health outcomes. Largely thanks to Johnson's efforts, the three-story Regions Hospital Family Birth Center that opened in St. Paul in July 2020 saw its highest delivery volumes in more than a decade in its first month. With more than 60 percent of patients coming from African American, Latin American, and Asian American backgrounds, Johnson has worked to build an inclusive environment at the center by training employees around the diverse needs of the patients via year-long equity trainings.



**MICHELLE JONES**

Child life specialist, Shriners Children's Twin Cities

When Covid-19 restrictions began in March 2020, Shriners Children's Twin Cities child life specialist Michelle Jones took it upon herself to find ways to continue to provide support during a pandemic, when patients weren't often being seen face-to-face. She offered services via telehealth and also created a number of videos and handouts about helping children through the pandemic.

Jones has spent her career working with patients from diverse backgrounds, which has offered her opportunities to learn how to creatively adapt interventions to meet the individual needs of patients and families.



**SYLVESTER "SYL" JONES**

Director, equity and inclusion, Hennepin Healthcare

Syl Jones uses unique methods to encourage health equity. He recently produced a play encouraging staff to confront racial and cultural biases. Because Hennepin Healthcare is an essential medical organization in the Twin Cities, serving indigent populations as well as those who want expert care regardless of their illness, it's important that it offers equitable care to all persons. Under Jones' leadership, hundreds of staff have undergone training in historical trauma, implicit bias, and trauma-informed care. Jones also created Hennepin Healthcare's first community advisory board to help the organization listen to the multiple communities it serves.

## Congratulations Susan Morgan, one of our heroes in homecare!

Susan Morgan is dedicated to supporting people with disabilities and older adults in Minnesota and has been an advocate for homecare throughout her career. Since the onset of the pandemic, she has focused on ensuring the safety of all of Accra's clients, caregivers and employees. Susan embodies Accra's mission of improving lives by providing individualized homecare services and support to people living at home.



*Susan Morgan, BSN, RN, PHN  
Accra chief program officer*



*Accra is a nonprofit organization and the largest provider of homecare services in Minnesota, helping people with disabilities and older adults lead fuller lives in their community.*

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**TOM LINDQUIST**  
CEO,  
Allina Health |  
Aetna

Under Tom Lindquist's leadership, Allina Health | Aetna quickly became the largest Medicare Advantage health plan provider in its service area after just two years of operations. Lindquist's goal with Minneapolis-based Aetna is to improve customer satisfaction, remove barriers and inequities in the current health system, and streamline the health care experience by connecting members directly to their payer and provider.

Lindquist also serves as an executive committee member for the Medical Alley Association's board of directors. His work with Medical Alley aligns closely with Aetna's mission to work innovatively to address the public health crisis that is systemic racism.



**TONY MILLER**  
CEO,  
Bind

Tony Miller believes the health insurance industry should deliver a marketplace-like experience—one where consumers can see and compare costs in advance of care so they can make informed treatment choices. That's why he created Bind, a personalized health insurance company designed to give people more control over how their benefits work for them, with the ability to shape and change coverage as health needs change.

Miller previously founded two other health services companies that were sold to UnitedHealth Group and Optum, and he co-founded Lemhi Ventures, a health care services venture capital fund with \$385 million under management.



**SUSAN MORGAN**  
Chief program  
officer,  
Accra

At Minnetonka-based nonprofit Accra, which provides home-care services, Susan Morgan is dedicated to improving the lives of Minnesota's elderly and disabled populations, groups with the highest risks for being severely affected by Covid-19. Since the onset of the pandemic, Morgan has focused on the safety of all of Accra's employees, clients, and caregivers. In 2020, she has championed and implemented pay raises for personal care assistants, as well as telehealth services, an internal Covid-19 high-touch risk assessment team, Covid-19 preparedness plans, and a new program to provide mental health counseling and adult rehabilitative services to residents in northern Minnesota, with plans to expand these services across the state.



**Thank you for your service to  
our patients and communities.**

**Dr. Jane Rudd**

*2020 Notable Hero in Health Care*

Essentia Health congratulates Jane Rudd, M.D. as a Notable Hero in Health Care. Dr. Rudd has made a lasting impact on our patients by accelerating our team's ability to provide care through virtual visits—during the COVID-19 pandemic and into the future. We thank her for her leadership and passion to make a healthy difference in the communities we serve.



**Essentia Health**



**Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare  
congratulates Dr. Timothy Feyma, Dr.  
Madeleine Gagnon and all the other  
Heroes in Health Care who have gone  
above and beyond during the pandemic.**



**Gillette Children's**  
*Specialty Healthcare*

[gillettechildrens.org](http://gillettechildrens.org)



## NOTABLE HEROES IN HEALTH CARE



**SARAH PETERSON**  
Pediatric clinical  
manager,  
Recover Health

Sarah Peterson serves in a variety of roles at Minnetonka-based Recover Health, including as a clinical manager in Recover's complex skilled hourly nursing program and a CPR instructor. She also pioneered Recover Health's Covid-19 swab testing team. Peterson has also made significant contributions to patient care, leadership, educational initiatives, and the mentoring of hundreds of families, nurses, and health care professionals.

In June and July, during the peak of the Covid-19 outbreak in New York City, Peterson flew there to assist the city hospital system. She spent 64 days using her extensive ventilator knowledge on the front lines in the Brooklyn Covid ICU hospital.



**ALVIN ROATH**  
Corporate facilities  
director,  
Ecumen

Some Health Care Heroes don't wear scrubs or lab coats; instead, they're working behind the scenes to create a safe environment for those on the front lines and the people in their care. Alvin Roath is one of them. In addition to his role as facilities director, in which he works to safeguard the residents and team members at each of Ecumen's sites, he assumed an additional role in 2020: incident commander, where he helped the organization prepare for and manage Covid-19. Roath's background in health care emergency preparedness provided a strong foundation, and within days, he had identified all necessary elements and roles and gathered the team twice daily to talk through action plans.



**DR. JANE RUDD**  
Primary care  
division chair,  
Essentia Health;  
primary care section  
chair, Essentia  
Health-West Duluth Clinic

Dr. Jane Rudd is a family medicine physician at Essentia Health-West Duluth who led the successful launch of Essentia Health's telemedicine platform in under three weeks at the start of Covid-19, enabling about 3,000 patients per day safe access to care. Rudd worked to overcome barriers to acceptance of the platform used by more than 1,200 primary care providers, as well as providers in about 60 specialties. She also collaborated with IT experts to expand the platform across Essentia's three-state coverage area. Essentia Health received the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Trailblazer Award for these nation-leading efforts.



**DR. MARK SANNES**  
Senior medical  
director of  
specialty services/  
infectious disease  
specialist, HealthPartners

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck, Dr. Mark Sannes helped lead the HealthPartners team of more than 26,000 in Minnesota and Wisconsin by tracking ever-changing information about Covid-19 from across the globe. He also led weekly virtual conferences in which he shared the latest information, protocols, and safety measures with more than 2,000 physicians caring for patients across the organization.

Sannes has also done over 40 interviews with local news about Covid-19, answering questions, calming fears, and sharing the innovations of his colleagues.

## PRIME THERAPEUTICS CONGRATULATES

**Christine Bent**

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



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## CONGRATULATIONS, LISA

Allina Health is proud to honor Lisa Shannon, President, Chief Operating Officer, as Notable Hero in Health Care.

Allina Health 

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## NOTABLE HEROES IN HEALTH CARE



**DR. DAVID SCHULTZ**  
Founder/CEO,  
Nura Pain Clinics

As the Covid-19 pandemic forced at-risk individuals into isolation in March, Dr. David Schultz determined that Nura Pain Clinics, with locations in Edina and Coon Rapids, would focus its mobile nursing team on providing free in-home care for high-risk patients with implanted pain pumps who lacked in-home health care insurance. Without this option, such patients were at increased risk for contracting Covid by traveling to clinics or, if left untreated, of developing dependency on opioids or ending up in hospital beds the state sought to reserve for pandemic patients. Nura has committed to continue offering this free service for those in need until the crisis has passed.



**JILL SEWARD**  
Executive director  
of nursing/chief  
nursing officer,  
Hazelden Betty  
Ford Foundation

When Covid-19 was looming in February, Jill Seward began coordinating preemptive measures to protect patients and staff. Her decisive leadership at the helm of Center City-based Hazelden Betty Ford's centralized Covid-19 response team helped keep the doors to addiction treatment open throughout the pandemic. Seward directed a group including the CEO, vice presidents, and physicians. "Seward encouraged discussion of opposing perspectives amid rapidly changing national recommendations and findings, always bringing the team back from distractions to determine the critical issues of the moment," says Hazelden Betty Ford president and CEO Mark Mishek.



**LISA SHANNON**  
President/COO,  
Allina Health

Lisa Shannon is responsible for overseeing and integrating Allina Health's care delivery system, including hospitals, primary and specialty care divisions and service lines, safety, quality, information services, improvement systems and strategy, and business development. Under her leadership, Minneapolis-based Allina Health launched tiered escalation huddles to ensure patient and employee safety and improved access to care. The daily huddles held at all sites allowed Allina to transparently share safety lessons, access issues, and resolve barriers quickly and collaboratively.

Shannon is also the founder and president of the Society of Ohio Occupational Health Professionals.



**DR. STEVE STERNER**  
CEO,  
Life Link III

In November 2019, Dr. Steve Sterner transitioned from an emergency room physician at Hennepin Healthcare to CEO at air medical transportation company Life Link III. Though he was well acquainted with the organization from two years serving on its board, he was surprised when he was asked to take over as CEO. Despite the numerous challenges facing the company and industry since that time, Sterner has led Minneapolis-based Life Link III to one of its most successful years while creating a strong and reliable air medical program bringing critical care resources to Minnesota communities. When Covid-19 struck, Sterner also oversaw the implementation of safety equipment for crew and patients.



Sarah Peterson, RN

## CONGRATULATIONS SARAH!

FROM EVERYONE AT RECOVER HEALTH

Your leadership in high-acute Pediatrics and COVID-19 Swab testing throughout Minnesota is inspiring. Thank you for making a meaningful difference.



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## OUR NOTABLE HERO

# Michelle Jones

*Child Life Specialist*

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**PATSY STINCHFIELD**  
CPNP/senior director of infection prevention, Children's Minnesota

As a renowned figure in infection prevention and a liaison representing the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners on the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, Patsy Stinchfield was tasked with establishing a Covid-19 emergency preparedness plan for Children's Minnesota long before the virus reached the state.

Stinchfield helped lead the organization's Covid-19 command center, making decisions on infection prevention guidelines for various hospital operations, including testing, patient care, employee safety, and the use of personal protective equipment.



**DR. TODD STIVLAND**  
Founder/CEO, Bluestone Physician Services

For 26 years, Dr. Todd Stivland has been dedicated to transforming the way patient care is delivered. He is active in state and national health care reform, has served on the governor's health care financing task force, and is an active speaker on clinical practices.

In 2006, Stivland founded Stillwater-based Bluestone Physician Services, now the largest onsite primary care provider for assisted-living communities in the country, serving Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Florida. His leadership not only helped the company grow, says vendor Hyedi Nelson, account director of health strategy at Bellmont Partners, but was also the driving force behind the company's life-saving Covid response strategy.



**ANDREA WALSH**  
President/CEO, HealthPartners

Research shows that about 80 percent of what makes people live healthy lives doesn't happen in a doctor's office, but rather comes from lifestyle choices, healthy environments, and education. To address these social determinants of health, Andrea Walsh is leading multiple community-wide efforts around specific health topics, like the Make It OK campaign seeking to decrease the stigma of mental illnesses, and the Little Moments Count campaign to raise awareness of the importance of early brain development by talking, singing, reading, and playing with babies and toddlers.

After the death of George Floyd, Walsh led a series of sessions for HealthPartners employees designed to address racism.



**STUART WILLIAMS**  
Attorney, Henson Efron

For more than two decades, Stuart Williams has served on numerous Minnesota health licensing boards—including pharmacy, medical practice, and nursing—as a government regulator. Williams' contributions have had an impact on pharmaceutical companies' practices; health care workers, providers, and their patients; and individuals seeking access to life-saving medication. He recently served as plaintiff attorney, winning a lawsuit against an opioid manufacturer for the illegal distribution and marketing of fentanyl products in Minnesota. Williams has also helped secure passage of a change in state law requiring health care licensees who divert drugs at work to be reported to their respective licensing boards.

CONGRATULATIONS!

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our own  
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Susan Gehlsen as one of the



For more information about the great work of the entire St. Mary's Health Clinics staff visit: [stmaryshealthclinics.org](http://stmaryshealthclinics.org)



St. Mary's Health Clinics

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ACG MN Member, Julie T.

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**NOTABLE**  
WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY

Even though women have long fought for gender equality in the technology field, they're still vastly underrepresented. In the U.S. in 2019, women held just 26 percent of professional computing jobs in the workforce and only 18 percent of CIO positions in the top 1,000 companies, according to the National Center for Women & Information Technology. *TCB's* Notable Women in Technology truly stand out. They've worked their way to positions of influence, from IT directors to CIOs, founders to CEOs.

**METHODOLOGY:** The individuals featured did not pay to be included. Their profiles were drawn from nomination materials. This list is not comprehensive; it includes only people who were nominated and accepted after editorial review. To qualify for this list, individuals must be serving in senior-level technology roles in Minnesota, have at least five years of experience in technology, and have shown the ability to effect change in their roles or areas of practice.



**LEEANN BELSKI**

Vice president of talent & culture, When I Work

LeeAnn Belski steered the Minneapolis-based employee scheduling and time clock software company When I Work through the Covid-19 pandemic this year. She oversaw the company's immediate switch to all-remote work and a CEO change, made herself readily available to remaining employees after the company faced layoffs, and personally helped employees who faced layoffs find new jobs.

Following the death of George Floyd in May, she also supported employees through community involvement programs and prioritized employee and client mental health. She also created a talent and performance assessment program and developed new diversifying recruitment strategies.



**JOAN BERNARD**

Information technology faculty member, Hennepin Technical College

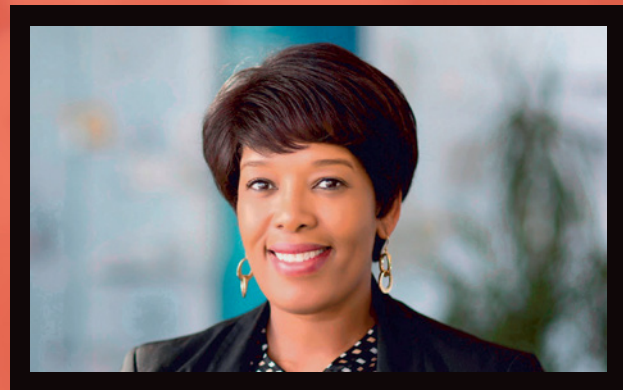
Joan Bernard is committed to educating up-and-coming IT employees at Hennepin Technical College in Brooklyn Park. She serves as IT division chair, championing the college's Higher Learning Commission accreditation work and college-wide assessment initiatives, and on the Academic Affairs and Standards Council, representing her division in discussions of articulation agreements, transfer pathways, and concurrent enrollment opportunities.

For the Summer 2020 term, Bernard partnered with education nonprofit Genesys Works to offer a course in IT to underserved high school students.

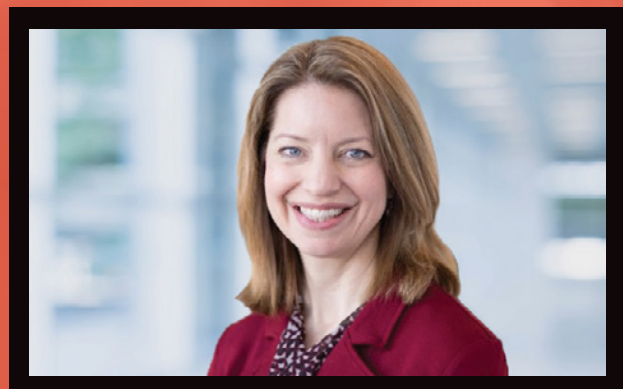
# Great *inspiration* comes from great *leadership*



**Stacia Nelson** | Pivot Strategies



**Virginia Clay-Chism** | Medtronic



**Karin Petty** | Abbott

## **Pivot is thrilled to celebrate our clients and CEO**

In 2015, Stacia began Pivot and discovered a niche in corporate technology. She is known for redefining IT initiatives, using compelling, clear and creative marketing and communications. She developed a passion for working with IT leaders, especially women. As a female business owner, she realizes that representation is more important than ever. Pivot is proud to work alongside Medtronic, Abbott and other corporate clients on global change transformation projects.

## **Pivot Congratulates All Notable Women In Tech Honorees**



[pivotstrategiesconsulting.com](http://pivotstrategiesconsulting.com)

***change makers, strategic communicators***





## NOTABLE WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY



**RUTH BIRKHOLZ**  
Vice president,  
senior data analyst,  
U.S. Bank

Ruth Birkholz has over 23 years of experience in technology across financial services, utilities, health care, and manufacturing. She is the 2020 president-elect for the Project Management Institute Minnesota (PMI-MN) trade association's more than 3,400 members. In 2019, Birkholz was recruited by the then-chapter president to rebuild and lead PMI-MN's chapter committee on Professional Development Days. She not only rebuilt the committee, but she also refreshed the chapter's annual event with high-caliber local speakers.

Birkholz holds multiple certifications in technology including cybersecurity and infrastructure security and risk and information systems control.



**MARGARET CAMP**  
Vice president  
of business unit  
operations,  
Wolters Kluwer,  
Minneapolis office

Margaret Camp is responsible for operational strategy and strategic leadership at Wolters Kluwer Compliance Solutions, a division of the Netherlands-based Wolters Kluwer, a \$300 million risk and regulatory compliance business with 1,150 employees globally.

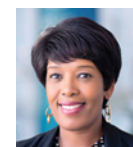
This year, Camp and her team were integral in providing mission-critical support on several major enterprise initiatives amid huge Covid-related disruptions in the marketplace, freeing up BU resources to focus on developing the customized software TSoftPlus, which enabled Wolters Kluwer to scale a 4,000 percent jump in the number of PPP loans its lender clients processed.



**KELLY CAMPBELL**  
Director,  
Enterprise Project  
Management  
Office,  
Be The Match

Kelly Campbell has built processes and systems to ensure Minneapolis-based Be The Match, a non-profit focusing on bone-marrow donations, functions at its best. She has also built strong monitoring processes to enable agile business decision-making and to ensure continuous performance improvement. Campbell is a go-to advisor on cross-functional strategic priorities at the company.

During her eight years with Be The Match, Campbell has supported emerging female talent in the workplace and mentored many women. She founded Be The Match's Bring Your Family to Work Day and its new women's employee resource group.



**VIRGINIA CLAY-CHISM**  
IT director,  
shared services,  
infrastructure, and  
operations,  
Medtronic

Pre-Covid, Virginia Clay-Chism led efforts to simplify Medtronic's technology environment by implementing a core suite of collaboration products. Now, more than 90,000 employees can use mobile devices to securely access tools and data, search calendars, and access information in shared locations. The transformation allowed Medtronic to retire an outdated platform, saving \$125,000.

Clay-Chism's visionary thinking about collaborative and off-premise tools set the company up for success when it had to quickly move to remote working as Covid restrictions hit globally.



***Congratulations to our  
Notable Leader, Linda Johnson***

***We appreciate all you do for our employees,  
our customers and in our community!***



***Celebrating the strength of diversity in leadership since 1972.***



**KRISTIN GEER**  
Co-founder/CEO,  
Bleachr LLC

Under Kristin Geer's leadership, Bleachr, a mobile sports app builder based in Minneapolis, launched its tennis scores and stats app, TennisOne, in January, winning the Tennis Industry Association's 2020 Innovation Challenge Award. It also launched CrowdView Live, an interactive face-to-face mobile watch party platform, in July.

Geer makes it her mission to help grow Minnesota's tech base by hiring individuals within the state rather than outsourcing. She seeks to create a work culture around open communication and giving employees ownership of products they build and the power to shape their career direction. Bleachr was named one of the *Minneapolis-St. Paul Business Journal's* Best Places to Work in 2020.



**ANJALI GANDHI**  
Senior vice president,  
technology and risk,  
Federal Reserve  
Bank of Minneapolis

Anjali Gandhi is currently leading several major initiatives aimed at modernizing the Fed's work, giving its teams the ability to respond quickly to business needs, increasing security and reducing long-term costs. Under her guidance, IT has recalibrated to focus on emerging technologies and protect critical, confidential economic data used to monitor conditions in the Ninth Federal Reserve District and across the nation. Her leadership of the bank's computing services gives its more than 1,100 employees the power to serve the public—even from home during a global pandemic.



**JEAN GUEZMIR**  
Vice president/  
chief information  
officer,  
St. Catherine  
University

Facing Covid-19, Jean Guezmir led her team to accelerate St. Catherine University's technology environment. Her team equipped the faculty with the tools and support to pivot from in-person curriculum at their campus in St. Paul to a fully virtual community in just two weeks.

Guezmir also continues to lead SCU by reinventing physical spaces to enable leading-edge technology to drive student outcomes. She repurposed the SCU ballroom into three state-of-the-art classrooms, securing enhanced technology, temporary walls, and furniture that allows for discussion while abiding by social-distancing mandates.



**LINDA JOHNSON**  
Executive vice president of operations,  
Digi-Key Electronics

Linda Johnson has helped Digi-Key grow as a \$3.16 billion, 4,000-plus employee global electronic components distributor serving technology innovators around the world. This year during Covid-19, she played a key role in moving nearly 2,000 team members across the globe to remote work with essentially no disruption to the company's function.

Johnson serves on the board of Women in Electronics, which helps remove barriers and expose unconscious bias to create more opportunities and advancement for women. She started a chapter of the organization in Thief River Falls, now one of the largest chapters in the country.

**Congratulations to  
Kelly Campbell - our  
Notable Women in  
Technology honoree!**

**BE**  **THE MATCH®**





NOTABLE WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY



**LISA LAVIN**  
Founder/chairman/  
CEO,  
Ōmcare

Lisa Lavin’s health company, Ōmcare, pioneers products that enable remote home care to extend the reach of caregivers, using tools like visual confirmation that clients are taking their medication. Burnsville-based Ōmcare’s mission is to keep people independent at home for as long as possible, while providing relief to caregivers, improving health outcomes, and lowering the cost of care.

Lavin has received numerous awards by virtue of her commitment to the community and improving health through technology. This year, she was named one of the 2020 Women of Technology by *Connected World*, and Ōmcare was listed in *The New York Observer’s* 2020 list of hottest “Flyover Tech” companies in Digital Health.



**NANCY LYONS**  
Co-founder/CEO,  
Clockwork

Nancy Lyons is a veteran in the tech industry and the spearhead behind Minneapolis-based design and technology consultancy Clockwork. She has led employees and clients through thousands of business, team, and work culture challenges, and she often speaks and writes about the crucial role work culture plays in delivering meaningful and effective results.

Lyons also launched Clockwork’s Race Equity In Action plan, which includes an apprenticeship for women of color. After George Floyd’s death, Clockwork published a “race equity roadmap” as an example for other organizations. Lyons is an advocate of values-based business practices and calls on the business community to address systemic issues.



**STACIA NELSON**  
Founder/CEO,  
Pivot Strategies

Stacia Nelson started Minneapolis communications agency Pivot Strategies five years ago and quickly found a niche working on IT transformations. When a global company needs to introduce new technology tools to a population of 100,000-plus employees, it takes more than an all-company email. Nelson digs into these projects and applies her marketing and PR background to make IT communications compelling. She’s grown her team to 15, maintaining year-over-year double-digit revenue growth. Clients include Nike, Cargill, Abbott Laboratories, Medtronic, and nVent.

As a female business owner, she also devotes her energies to elevating the reputation of women IT leaders.



**KARIN PETTY**  
Senior IT director,  
end-user  
experience,  
Abbott

Karin Petty began with Abbott in its Minneapolis office in the midst of the pandemic and immediately went to work rolling out new tools and upgrading bandwidth to the company’s 100,000-person global (and newly remote) workforce. She led critical changes to mobile platforms that secured Abbott’s data while allowing employees to use their phones to access information.

In her 30-year career, Petty has been an advocate for women by breaking ground in traditionally male-dominated spaces such as technology. She is an advocate for inclusive hiring practices and has led increases in the numbers of women employees in organizations she’s worked with.



**TODAY, WE BUILD  
TOMORROW.**

Xcel Energy congratulates all the Twin Cities Business Notable Women in Technology honorees, outstanding women who are dedicated leaders in their roles. We’re proud of our very own Kimberly Randolph for her renewable energy leadership. Her excellent work helped accelerate our wind fleet portfolio, a critical step in support of our clean energy transition. Her commitment extends to encouraging and mentoring women and underrepresented groups to pursue STEM careers. Thanks for making this community a little brighter!



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## CONGRATULATIONS TO **VIRGINIA CLAY-CHISM**

On her inclusion in *Twin Cities Business*'  
2020 Notable Women in Technology.

The award is a well-deserved recognition for her successful career across multiple areas of information technology — including 13 years at Medtronic. Thanks to her expertise, passion, and integrity, Virginia will continue to be a leader in technology for years to come.

**Medtronic**



## Assertively Humble.

**Jean Guezmir, MBA**

**Lead with empathy. Believe in possibility.**

In a year where technology was promoted from supporting player to featured role, the wisdom and leadership of Jean at St. Catherine University was critical in our quick and successful transition to a virtual learning and working community. We are proud to claim her as a Notable Woman.



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## NOTABLE WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY



**KIMBERLY RANDOLPH**  
Vice president,  
energy supply  
projects,  
Xcel Energy

Kimberly Randolph oversees the engineering and construction teams that execute the strategic capital investment plan for Minneapolis-based Xcel Energy's diverse portfolio of 80-plus power generation plants across eight states in the West and Midwest.

She is also leading Xcel Energy's "Steel for Fuel" portfolio, a project that has helped double Xcel's wind fleet in four years with six new wind projects that provide power to roughly 1 million homes; by the end of 2021, Randolph will help complete another seven wind projects. This new wind portfolio is a critical element in achieving the company's commitment to an 80 percent carbon reduction by 2030.



**RITA SHOR**  
Co-leader,  
Innovation  
and Digital  
Transformation  
Institute,  
The Conference Board

Currently, Rita Shor co-leads the Innovation and Digital Transformation Institute for The Conference Board, a New York City-based nonprofit think tank. Though Shor's role is global, she is based in Minneapolis, and her primary focus is working with senior-level executives of Fortune 500 companies to accelerate their innovation strategies and methods through forums and other exchanges.

Prior to joining The Conference Board in 2009, Shor worked for 3M for 34 years; while there, she helped develop advanced infection control products and introduce new approaches to global innovation and commercialization.



**SAMIA TARRAF**  
Managing director,  
Oracle Cloud  
Business, North  
America,  
Accenture

Samia Tarraf is managing director of Accenture's North America Oracle Cloud Business, where she works at the intersection of business and technology. In her 22 years at Accenture, she has built success on being transparent, meeting people where they are, listening, and helping. Her ongoing focus on innovation and business growth was celebrated this year with Oracle's 2020 Best Partner award in North America.

Tarraf also serves on the Oracle Cloud Partner Advisory Board, is a co-author of Accenture's 2020 Technology Vision for Oracle, and co-hosts Accenture's annual celebration of International Women's Day in Minneapolis.



**CAMI ZIMMER**  
Chief business  
officer,  
Glympse

In the last 18 months, Cami Zimmer has tripled sales revenues and increased channel partnerships by 50 percent for Glympse, which creates full-packaged middle and last-mile software solutions for product and service delivery, curbside pickup, and roadside assistance. In the last 14 months, she has led the push to open a Minnesota Glympse office, where over 33 percent of the Glympse Team now reside. She has also been instrumental in doubling the number of female employees at the company.

Zimmer recently won a national M2M/IoT award from *Connected World*, as well as the Mankato West 2019 Hall of Fame award for her career success.



## Equality drives innovation

Equality is a powerful multiplier of innovation and growth. It inspires creativity and a sense of belonging. At Accenture we're committed to championing a culture of equality where our people are empowered to be their best, professionally and personally. Because as equals, anything is possible.  
Learn more at [accenture.com/equality](https://www.accenture.com/equality)



# TCB

## Nonprofit Event Calendar

### Nexus Family Healing

*Barnes & Noble Holiday Book Drive*

**November 1 – December 24, 2020**

Nexus Family Healing is partnering with the Minneapolis Barnes & Noble for its 2020 Holiday Book Drive. Donate a book to support our youth!

**Learn More:** [ow.ly/DTvd50CcNxF](https://ow.ly/DTvd50CcNxF)

### YWCA

*Donation Drive — Resource Hub at YWCA Midtown*

**Saturdays through February; 11 AM - 1 PM**

YWCA Minneapolis is on a mission to ensure our communities have access to essential supplies and vital resources.

**Learn More:** [ywcampis.org/drive](https://ywcampis.org/drive)





# Lending a Hand to Main Street

Community banks and credit unions have proven themselves vital to small businesses during the pandemic.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit last March, small businesses were especially vulnerable to the ensuing financial downturn. Restaurants and hospitality firms, manufacturers, service providers—these were typically the kinds of businesses that cities and towns rely upon. Where would they get the financial help they needed to get them through this anxious, uncertain time?

It turned out that they didn't have to go far. Thousands of small businesses across the country visited their local community banks and credit unions, which helped them access forgivable loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

Financial institutions began by spreading the word about PPP throughout their communities. Local bankers then

helped their small-business clients navigate what could have been a confusing and stressful process to handle on their own. These locally based financial institutions also guided businesses through the complex application process for loan forgiveness.

In sum, community financial institutions provided a sense of caring as well as access to the assistance that local small businesses might not otherwise have had.

On the next ten pages, five Minnesota community financial institutions share their stories of lending a helping hand to neighborhood businesses. Though Covid-19 still rages, the businesses they helped got a fighting chance to survive.





*Amy Dritz (left) and Kelly Winters are both small business owners who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

## Helping Two Creatives Weather a Global Pandemic

**A**my Dritz and Kelly Winters have a lot in common. They both grew up in Canby, a town of less than 2,000 in Southwestern Minnesota, and have known each other since middle school. The two also decided to start their own business in the Twin Cities.

Winters runs Patterson Writing Consulting with her husband Tad Patterson. Dritz created Dritz Design and is also a partner in Humbleweed Creative.

Another common thread between the two? Both have first-hand knowledge of the hardships faced by sole proprietors during the economic downturn caused by COVID-19.

"As a sole proprietor, you're always kind of at the whim of your clients and their work," said Dritz. "There's just so much uncertainty."

Patterson Writing Consulting provides communications services, including grant-writing, to nonprofits. Dritz has a background in sustainability and creates design projects for clean-energy companies.

In March, Winters started getting emails from clients who said they needed to stop using her services. Tight budgets were forcing them to do the work in-house instead of hiring out. Winters said that because nonprofits—her main client base—were hit hard, so was she.

"Two of my clients vanished overnight because their one revenue-generating activity was part of the shutdown," said Winters. "They had to furlough almost all of their employees."

Dritz said her experience has been similar—clients faced economic uncertainty due to COVID-19 and had to suspend their projects. Marketing is often one of the first things to go when budgets are reconfigured, said Dritz.

But for now, both Dritz and Winters are still in business thanks to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), a federal aid program put in place to help businesses negatively affected by the coronavirus.

"The PPP loan was definitely a stopgap to get me through these couple of months so I can pay my bills and office space and utilities," said Dritz.

The funds allowed Winters to offer discounted services for some clients.

"(The loan) is allowing me to meet the needs of the community," said Winters. "Without it, I'm not able to help my clients and my clients can't access the services they need. It has ripple effects."

Sunrise Banks was able to help thousands of small businesses like Patterson Writing Consulting and Humbleweed Creative, processing 1,800 PPP loans for \$219.56 million.

More than 80% of the bank's loans were for \$150,000 or less; Sunrise also made 184 PPP loans, for a total of \$44,257,800, to nonprofits.

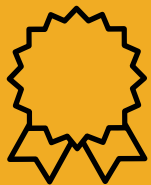
"These are the one-, two-, three-person shops in a lot of cases," said Sunrise Banks CEO David Reiling. "That's really cool to see. It may not mean as much for us in fees, but it means a lot for these small businesses."

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**Chris Albrecht**  
Senior VP, SBA Manager

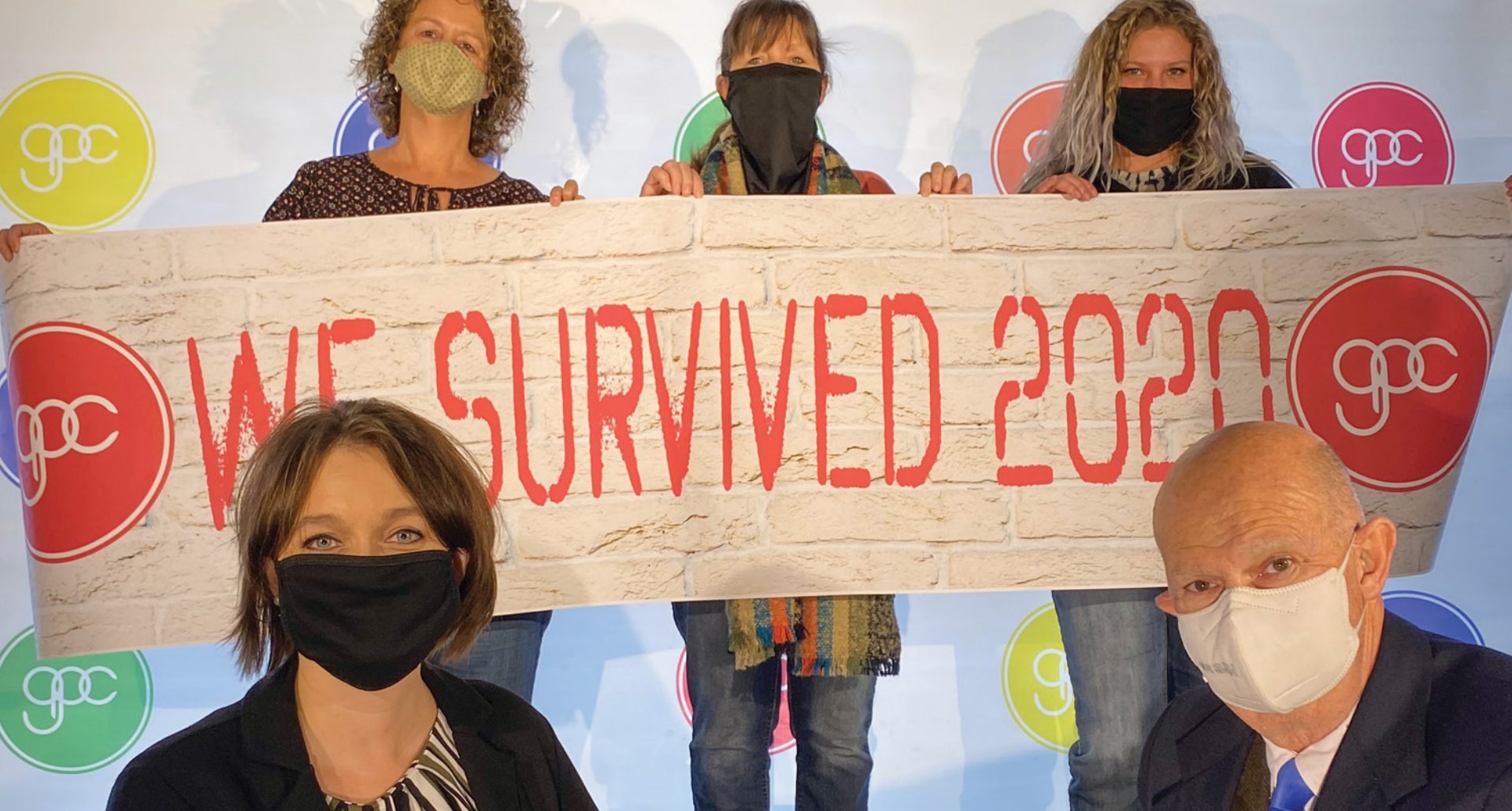
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*General Pattern Company (staff pictured above) turned to Old National Bank for help with their Paycheck Protection Program application. The loan eased some of the burden created by the pandemic and helped them “survive 2020.”*

## Old National Makes Client Success a Priority

**W**hen the pandemic caused challenges for local businesses, some relief looked possible with the Small Business Administration’s Paycheck Protection Program. Its forgivable loans seemed to be a great way to stay afloat during an uncertain time. But the process was cumbersome and confusing, with changes occurring almost daily. A business would need a trustworthy and dedicated financial partner to help them through.

Fortunately, Old National Bank was ready. For some Old National team members—even some executive leaders—that meant long hours walking businesses through the lengthy loan application. For others, it meant taking on new, temporary roles to assist co-workers and clients. Still others were on standby, ready for whatever needs arose during the ever-changing process.

Doing everything they could to ensure businesses filed successful applications, Old National stayed true to its ongoing commitment to the communities it serves. Plus, as an institution named to the World’s Most Ethical™ list every year since 2012, Old National is known for putting the client at the center of every decision and every action—and this was no exception.

### ***A Closer Look: General Pattern***

Denny Reiland, CEO of Minnesota-based General Pattern, knew the storm was coming. In February 2020, he bought

laptops for some employees to work remotely and stocked up on hand sanitizer, masks and other essentials for those on-site. Many of his 150 employees at the plastic injection molding company thought this might be a bit extreme, but soon, companies across the country were doing the same.

General Pattern had made adjustments, but as business slowed, they needed help. The Paycheck Protection Program was a great opportunity, but they had to act quickly, knowing there was only a short window to be able to apply before the funds ran out.

New information was coming out regularly, and forms from the SBA continued to change. Reiland’s team worked with their Old National partners until around 11PM on a Friday night to submit their 80-page application.

“Being able to fund our staff by payroll has meant so much and has allowed me to sleep at night, quite frankly,” Reiland says.

Arleen Sullivan, Old National Chief Commercial Client Services Officer, says business clients mean a lot to the community, and deserve the extra effort.

“We’re so glad we were able to work with Denny and clients like him to secure PPP loans and provide a little relief during a stressful time,” she says.





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**Kevin Anderson**  
*President, Commercial Banking*

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Your business is ready to move forward. And we're ready, too. Let's talk.

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## Helping Our Communities Through the Paycheck Protection Program

**P**eople Helping People. That's who we are at Central Minnesota Credit Union (CMCU), and who we've been since our founding in 1939 in Melrose, Minnesota. In the 81 years since, we've helped our members in ways big and small, and when COVID-19 hit in March 2020, we jumped into high gear and offered assistance with the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

Because we are an SBA-approved lender, we knew we were in a strong position to help as many businesses as we could. We also knew that we'd have to change a few things in order to do so effectively.

While we typically don't provide electronic applications for business loans, this circumstance called for one. We quickly partnered with a third-party vendor to provide an online application specific to the PPP that was integrated with the loan origination platform for efficient application approvals.

And, because the PPP was confusing and stressful, our team members took the time to educate applicants and walk them through the entire process, all in a timely manner.

Word got out that we were providing quality service leading to quick results for members and nonmembers alike in various industries. As such, several credit unions who were not

providing PPP loans sent their members to us. Kris Newcomer, Executive Director of Firefly Sisterhood, was just one.

"As a small nonprofit, our donations had slowed and we were at risk of closing our doors," she said. "I reached out to CMCU who answered all my questions and helped me though the process. With their help, I was able to submit our application within 24 hours and receive notice of funding"

In addition, we helped many people who initially started with a larger bank but came to us after getting no response. "You've been fantastic!" said one applicant. "Compared to my colleagues who are stressed, I feel so calm and grateful because of you!"

In the end, we processed 1,776 PPP loans, which was the most of any credit union in Minnesota. This resulted in the distribution of \$85,479,050 in PPP funds, helping 12,093 employees throughout the region.

We'd love to help you with your banking needs. Contact us today and find out why the SBA recently honored us as the Small Business Lender of the Year for all of Minnesota credit unions.

Call us at **888.330.8482** or learn more at [mycmcu.org](https://mycmcu.org).

*As an SBA-approved lender, CMCU was able to help many businesses with the Paycheck Protection Program. In the end, the credit union processed 1,776 loans—more than any other credit union in Minnesota.*

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# Our business is helping your business.

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Our loyal business team is ready to help you take on your next venture.

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*Husband and wife  
John and Patti  
Prichard operate  
16 Fantastic Sams  
salons across  
the Midwest.*

## Community Roots Payoff in Pandemic

**A**dapting to operate in a pandemic is a challenge all business owners are facing, but those with strong community ties find themselves better positioned to weather the storm.

Founded in 2004 by husband and wife John and Patti Prichard, Kingdom Business, Inc. owns and operates 16 Fantastic Sams salons throughout the Twin Cities and Western Wisconsin. What began as three locations with a handful of staff, has grown to 16 salons and 175 employees.

While a deep focus on guest experience and employee development has played a critical role in their success, a commitment to supporting charitable causes has perhaps proved most impactful. It's a calling rooted in John and Patti's Christian faith, and reflected in the name of their business, 'Kingdom'. Organizations including Feed My Starving Children, Heshima Children's Center, and Hope 4 Youth have benefitted from the generosity of Kingdom's employees and ownership. This approach of reinvesting in the communities they serve, has paid dividends in a year defined by the Coronavirus.

Despite being well-prepared, a mandated two-and-a-half-month shutdown that began in March resulted in a tightening of cashflow and no real clarity on when businesses could

reopen. Fortunately, a strong relationship with Platinum Bank allowed them to move quickly to secure financing through the Paycheck Protection Program.

This funding provided a backstop for Kingdom, which among other things, allowed them to ensure continuity of benefits for employees who were furloughed during the shutdown. Regarding the partnership, John said, 'We've always felt good about our relationship with Platinum Bank, but this scenario is where you truly see the benefit of a community bank. We were able to move quickly through the process to secure funding so we could refocus our attention on operating the business.'

Their loyalty to employees during the shutdown did not go unnoticed, and when Fantastic Sams salons began reopening for business, an overwhelming majority of the team opted to return. While others in the industry have struggled to recapture business, Kingdom is within reach of pre-shutdown levels of patronage, a testament to their model.

Looking forward, John and Patti see opportunity to continue growing their full-service salon business by focusing on guest experience and investing in talent development. Importantly, they remain committed to giving back. In these uncertain times, you can't overstate the value of being a good neighbor.





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PLATINUM BANK





Affinity Plus Federal  
Credit Union Corporate  
Office, St. Paul, MN

# Saving Minnesotan Jobs and Businesses

*“The PPP Loan has saved us, for the time being.”*

**T**hose are the words from Cathy Rucci, who is the Executive Director for MORE in St. Paul, Minnesota. MORE provides refugees and immigrants with the education and support they seek to become fully engaged members of our communities. Rucci, along with many others across the state of Minnesota affected by COVID-19, applied for the Payment Protection Program (PPP) and Loan Forgiveness through Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union.

In total, Affinity Plus helped more than 520 small businesses when the U.S. Treasury and the Small Business Administration (SBA) rolled out the PPP. Out of those small businesses, Affinity Plus helped sustain more than 1,300 jobs, including those who work at MORE. Rucci says PPP was extremely important in not only maintaining those staffing levels, but also helped push financial stability out several months. She says, personally, it saved an incredible amount of anxiety and stress, as with the additional funding, she didn't need to worry about making payroll. Instead, Rucci says she was able to focus her attention on transitioning staff and programs to working remotely. She also recognizes that MORE would be in a very different financial situation right now, if they didn't have the funding.

“During a time that was both professionally and personally chaotic and stressful for all of us, I am so grateful to Affinity Plus for being available to help us with the PPP Loan,” said Rucci. “The Affinity Plus staff has been responsive, knowledgeable and reassuring throughout this entire process. I have heard about many experiences in which applicants never even heard back from their banks. I was already happy to do business with Affinity Plus but now even more so.”

Another business member that has benefitted from PPP and received assistance through Affinity Plus, is Barry Kryshka, Director for Trylon Cinema. He's been an Affinity Plus Member for more than 20 years. He says Affinity Plus worked swiftly to get additional funding.

“With widespread uncertainty about PPP funding running out, our banker came through with the loan we were counting on to keep our nonprofit staffed at 100% through the initial stage of the crisis, as our income dropped more than 85%,” said Kryshka. “They provided excellent communication throughout the process, and we had the funds in less than a week.”

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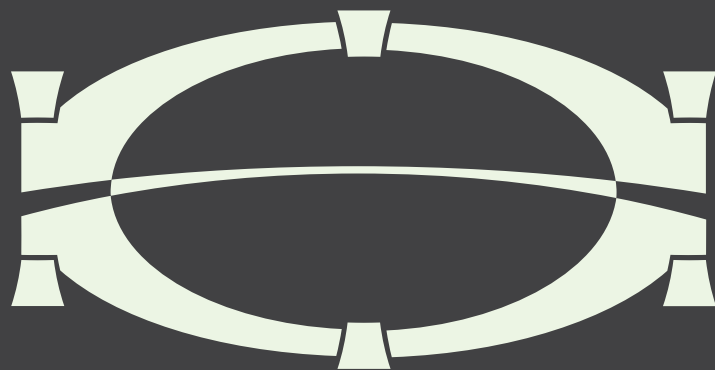
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Opus Group recently broke ground on the Golden Triangle Corporate Center in Eden Prairie.



# Hot Market for Industrial Properties

Despite the pandemic, e-commerce growth is fueling the demand for warehouse spaces in the Twin Cities metro.

By Burl Gilyard

For just about everyone in commercial real estate, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought economic challenges. Many offices are sparsely occupied, and the leasing outlook is uncertain. Many retail tenants are going bankrupt or closing stores. Hotels have seen the worst year that anyone can remember, because travel in the United

States has dropped so much.

But there is one bright shining star: industrial property. Demand just keeps growing. The pandemic has meant that people everywhere are increasingly shopping online and turning to e-commerce. That's good news for industrial properties because e-commerce retailers need space to store all of the

stuff they're selling. Industrial is the rare commercial real estate market that can still support spec (short for "speculative") development, in which a developer starts building a project with no signed leases in hand.

The project pipeline for Minnetonka-based Opus Group reflects the strength of the industrial market.

Earlier this year, the company completed two spec projects—a 204,120-square-foot project in Maple Grove and a 152,000-square-foot project in Eagan, which it expects to lease up quickly. In July, Opus started two build-to-suit projects: 131,000 square feet in Shakopee for Cherne Industries, a subsidiary of Cleveland-based Oatey Co., and 265,630

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## TRENDING COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

square feet in Owatonna for Bosch Automotive Service Solutions, a subsidiary of Germany-based Bosch.

Opus finalized the deals and started construction on both build-to-suit projects in the middle of the pandemic.

The clients moved ahead “without really any second thought,” says Phil Cattanaach, vice president and general manager for Opus Development Co.

Cattanaach says there was a pause in the market in April and May as everyone was assessing the effects of the pandemic. Ultimately, he says, “users still said, ‘We need the space.’”

In late August, Opus kicked off another spec deal, a 130,000-square-foot project in the “Golden Triangle” area of Eden Prairie. Located in the city’s northeast corner, the large office and industrial park is named for the triangular shape created by the highways that serve as its boundaries. Altogether, Opus has more than 880,000 square feet of industrial

projects either recently completed or under construction in the Twin Cities metro area. But given the strength of the demand, the company is still searching for more.

“We are actively looking at additional sites for more industrial,” Cattanaach says. “The metrics do remain strong for industrial.”

### Building spec projects

Cattanaach points to the spec project under construction in Eden Prairie as an example of the confidence in industrial projects in the capital markets.

“Our lenders were right there with us,” he says. “That’s another testament to confidence within the industrial sector.” He reports that loans continue to be secured even on full speculative projects.

It’s a similar story for Minneapolis-based United Properties, another busy developer.

United Properties recently com-

pleted a 302,644-square-foot spec project in Shakopee and is wrapping up work on an 80,000-square-foot build-to-suit project in Inver Grove Heights for Simpson Strong-Tie, a brand of California-based Simpson Manufacturing Co.

Looking ahead, Brandon Champeau, a senior vice president with United Properties, says the company is looking to go spec with industrial projects in Brooklyn Park, Burnsville, and Inver Grove Heights.

“Over the next three years, we’re projecting to build north of 1 million [square] feet” of industrial property, says Champeau. He estimates that half of those will be spec projects, the other half build-to-suit developments.

In Inver Grove Heights, United Properties has additional business park land around the Simpson Strong-Tie project. “We’ve got the ability to do four additional buildings around them,” Champeau says.



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**Over the summer, Opus Group started construction on a 131,000-square-foot project for Cherne Industries in Shakopee.**

The industrial market bounced back in short order after the Covid-19 pandemic began turning most of the economy upside down, he says.

"After that initial shock where all of us were frozen wondering what's going to happen next, it rebounded really quickly," Champeau says. He notes that deals are being driven by e-commerce, manufacturing, and third-party logistics companies.

John Ryden, a veteran industrial broker with the local office of Los Angeles-based CBRE Group Inc., is bullish on the market. Ryden says that CBRE tracks "requirements"—specifics of space sought by tenants—across the market and is seeing 10 million square feet of requirements in the Twin Cities market.

"Those are users in the market looking for space," says Ryden, a senior vice president with CBRE. "It's the

most we've ever recorded."

Ryden says some of the growth is being driven by retailers who want warehouses closer to home. "A lot of companies out there are telling their suppliers that they want to keep more inventory in the U.S. and they're needing more space for that," says Ryden, who cites the home improvement market as an example.

#### **Rental rates rising**

Another sign of the health of the industrial market? Rental rates are going up. Ownership of local industrial property has consolidated in recent years; big players like New York-based Blackstone now own notable chunks of the local market. Those large owners have been pushing rates higher.

"That has had significant impact on rental rate growth. We've definitely seen more rental rate growth in the last

year than we saw in the 20 years prior," Ryden says. "For many years the knock on our market was that the rates never moved."

Then there's the elephant that's not just in the middle of the room but is taking up most of the room all by itself.

"Amazon is just a huge factor," Ryden says.

Seattle-based Amazon.com is in a category unto itself. In October, the Lakeville City Council approved plans for a new 750,000-square-foot Amazon fulfillment center. The building will be 50 feet tall, which would be comparable to a four-story structure. Lakeville Mayor Doug Anderson says the building will be "five football fields long." Indianapolis-based Scannell Properties is building and developing the project.

Montreal-based MWPVL International, a supply chain and logistics



**United Properties recently completed work on the Canterbury Distribution Center, a large speculative industrial project in Shakopee.**



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consulting firm, estimated in early November that Amazon’s fulfillment center network occupied nearly 234 million square feet of industrial space in the U.S., with another 113.4 million square feet planned.

Mammoth footprint

Amazon’s numbers are mind-boggling. *The Real Deal*, a commercial real estate news website, reported in July that Amazon intended to

increase its warehouse space by 50 percent in 2020. The website also reported at the time that Amazon already had leased approximately 11 million square feet of distribution and warehouse center space in the Chicago area this year alone.

Mark Kolsrud, senior vice president with the local office of Toronto-based Colliers International, is a veteran investment sales broker. He says today there is more institutional

Strong Third Quarter for Local Industrial Properties

Different market reports almost always find different vacancy numbers due to different methodologies. But there’s no argument: Industrial property vacancy is low.

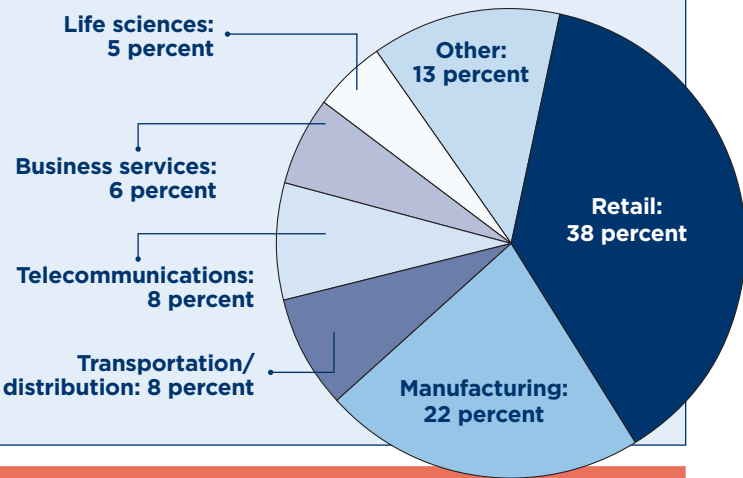
How low? According to the local office of Los Angeles-based CBRE Group Inc., the industrial vacancy rates for the Twin Cities metro stood at 4.6 percent, near historic lows, at the end of the third quarter.

CBRE saw strong leasing activity, with absorption of 1.22 million square feet of space during the third quarter. (“Absorption” is a commercial real estate term that measures the change in occupied space.) CBRE’s stats mean that local industrial space users occupied 1.22 million more square feet of space at the end of the third quarter compared with the end of the second quarter.

CBRE reported year-to-date absorption of 1.69 million square feet in the industrial market for the first three quarters of 2020. The third quarter alone accounted for 72 percent of the space absorbed.

There’s also a strong pipeline of projects in development. CBRE found 2.1 million square feet of industrial space under construction across the metro.

CBRE tracks the industry categories of companies leasing space. Retail and manufacturing together accounted for 60 percent of all third-quarter leasing activity. —B.G.



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*Commercial real estate needs are shifting, presenting investment and expansion opportunities. Every deal is unique, so it is important to partner with a knowledgeable lender who can provide advice and insight before you buy.*

# Is it time to buy?

The coronavirus pandemic has delivered many challenges and changes to businesses and investors. But with change comes opportunity. As commercial real estate (CRE) needs shift and evolve, now may be an ideal time to invest in CRE ownership. Here are a few tips to consider when seeking financing.

## **Position yourself for success.**

Lenders are attracted to borrowers with strong credit fundamentals, equity, and proven CRE experience. To help ensure your ability to obtain funding, maintain low leverage on existing projects and build a strong due diligence team to properly evaluate potential acquisitions. CRE sectors including retail and office space are experiencing disruption and reorganization due to the pandemic. This presents opportunities for acquisition and repurposing, but requires careful evaluation to ensure a solid investment. Multi-family housing and industrial sectors can be more recession proof, but should be examined for recent concessions and economic viability.

## **Utilize available programs.**

The current low interest rate environment is not likely to continue for the long term. For borrowers who want to lock in fixed, long-term low interest rates, many lenders offer back-to-back swap programs. This mechanism essentially allows banks to issue borrowers a variable rate loan and swap it, providing the borrower a fixed interest rate. This type of loan works best for long-term loans greater than \$1 million, which pairs well with many CRE investment opportunities.

The Small Business Administration's 504 Loan program can be a powerful tool for small business owners lacking equity. Borrowers are required to contribute just 10%, while the SBA provides 40% and the lender provides 50%. The program provides long-term, fixed-rate interest rates with no balloon payments. To qualify, borrowers must use funds for fixed assets. Examples may include purchasing a building for your business or an expansion.

## **Partner with the right lender.**

Every CRE loan structure is customized, based on factors including term length, property type, and ownership model. Find a lender with CRE expertise that matches your loan size and project complexity. Since banks manage the amount of CRE loans on their books, it is important to select a lender with capacity to fund your loan. Once you have identified a compatible lending partner, engage them early. Even if you are just considering an acquisition, an Alerus business advisor can provide guidance to help evaluate the opportunity and keep you on track toward achieving your goals.

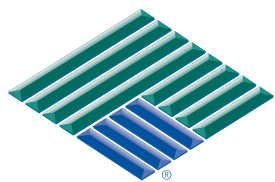




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capital than ever chasing industrial real estate.

Earlier this year Kolsrud's team brokered the reported \$650 million sale of Minneapolis-based CSM Corp.'s industrial portfolio. It stands as the largest investment sale of commercial real estate in Minnesota history. The deal included some property in Colorado, but the bulk of it was in Minnesota: about 55 properties with 5.7 million square feet that accounted for \$600 million of the sale price.

"Large funds have created enormous capital, and that capital is pursuing asset-based investment, and of that, industrial is the best," Kolsrud says.

Some of the underpinning economic changes look to be perma-

nent. Given that, Kolsrud sees a long horizon for the industrial property market.

"It's clear that this is not a short-term trend," Kolsrud says. "Industrial is going to continue to be the darling, so to speak, over the next long period. Manufacturing is obviously a part of industrial, but I would say general warehousing is the predominant part of it."

In the current environment, competition among buyers to acquire industrial properties has gotten fierce.

"The buyers are so aggressive and competitive today," Kolsrud says. "There are more buyers than sellers, that's for sure."

*Burl Gilyard is TCB's senior writer.*

### The Big Picture: Growing Demand, Increasing Construction

A national industrial market overview from Chicago-based Cushman & Wakefield found that the third quarter of 2020 was the best of the year: "Despite the global pandemic causing economic turbulence, the U.S. industrial market, with the continued support of tailwinds like e-commerce, has managed to accelerate through the first three quarters of 2020."

C&W reported that industrial leasing demand had increased in 43 of the 80 U.S. markets that it tracks compared to 2019. "Among the key drivers stimulating this level of activity are digital sales, sparking more e-commerce leasing, as well as third-party logistics providers that occupy warehouse/distribution space. New leasing activity in logistics space accounted for 392.6 million square feet, which represents 86.3 percent of all new leasing activity across all product types in the third quarter."

C&W reports 340.9 million square feet of industrial property in the construction pipeline, which it calls a new record high for the market. Nearly all of that space—319 million square feet (93.6 percent of the total)—is slated to be warehouse/distribution space.

C&W reported a national vacancy rate of 5.3 percent for industrial properties, an enviably low number that owners of office or retail space can only dream about. As demand for space continued to grow, C&W saw industrial rental rates had increased 2 percent year-over-year.

The bottom line? Looking to the horizon in the industrial market, C&W's outlook sees "no letup in demand." —B.G.



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# 2020 TEKNE AWARDS

**The Minnesota Technology Association recognizes companies advancing our community and world through technological innovation.**

**On November 18,** the Minnesota Technology Association hosted its 23rd Annual Tekne Awards celebration, where it honored many of the people and companies driving technology innovation in the state of Minnesota over the past year. Held virtually for the first time, the Tekne Awards highlighted the new and exciting ways technologies developed by Minnesota companies are having an impact on our community and the world. »

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» This year, hundreds of companies competed for Tekne Awards in 16 primary award categories, ranging from Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning to Technology for Good. While only one organization was able to bring home the Tekne Award in each category, the level of innovation among all finalists was impressive. Event attendees were left feeling inspired by the technological breakthroughs being developed in Minnesota and proud of the important role our state plays in global technology innovation.

As 2020 draws to a close, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect our lives and disrupt our economy in ways we couldn't have imagined just 12 months ago. It has also highlighted the important role technology plays in enabling the remote workforce keeping our economy afloat, the distance learning keeping students on track, the telemedicine helping to maintain community health, and the communication tools keeping us all connected.

Minnesota companies and organizations have risen to the challenge and developed innovative solutions to help minimize the impact of the coronavirus on public health and disruptions to our economy, which is why a special Tekne Award for Covid-19 Community Response was created. Ten organizations were selected as finalists with three chosen for Tekne Awards, including 3M, the University of Minnesota's office of Technology Commercialization, and Irondale

High School's KnightKrawler Robotics Team. Congratulations and thank you to all 10 finalists for your impactful contributions to our community.

Individual awards were also presented to both proven and emerging tech leaders. Tekne Awards for Lifetime Achievement were awarded to Rick King of Thomson Reuters and John Santelli of UnitedHealth Group. Rising Star Awards went to Tarah Byers of Target, Michelle Hermanson of Land O'Lakes, and Ja'keh Clark of Best Buy. The Rising Stars of today will be the Lifetime Achievers of tomorrow, and we look forward to all they will accomplish in the years to come.

The Minnesota Technology Association (MnTech) has proudly presented Minnesota's Tekne Awards since 1997. MnTech is a coalition of more than 250 member companies united in building a stronger tech ecosystem and innovation economy in Minnesota. Formerly known as the Minnesota High Tech Association (MHTA), MnTech works to ensure that Minnesota's technology-driven companies have access to exceptional talent and dedicated public policy advocates, and that they are part of an innovative, inclusive technology community.

Congratulations to all Tekne Award winners and finalists.

## The Judges

**Caroline Karanja**  
*26 Letters*

**Jen Simon**  
*Microsoft*

**Scott Singer**  
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**Dan Atkins**  
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## The Award

*Tekne Award recipients are presented with a handmade glass sculpture created by local artist Robert Delutri. Each sculpture incorporates a unique piece of glass that has been hand fractured and mounted behind a steel logo. Delutri has been creating the signature Tekne sculptures for the Minnesota Technology Association since 2000.*



## ◆ LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



### **Rick King**

**THOMSON  
REUTERS**

Managing director,  
operations

Rick King has been leading technology initiatives at Thomson Reuters for more than two decades, but his value extends far beyond the company's walls. In 2019, Gov. Tim Walz named King as chair of the Blue Ribbon Council on IT, which advises the state on how to update and maintain its IT systems and protect government data. The same year, Walz also reappointed him as chair of the Metropolitan Airports Commission, which oversees operations of seven Minnesota airports; he has served on the commission since 2011 after being appointed twice by former Gov. Mark Dayton. Currently, King also serves on the board of trustees of Minnesota Public Radio and the board of directors of TCF Financial Corp., where he also chairs the technology committee.



### **John Santelli**

**UNITEDHEALTH  
GROUP**

CIO

**OPTUM  
TECHNOLOGY**

Executive vice  
president

John Santelli leads the technology delivery division of Optum, responsible for serving the broad customer base of Optum and UnitedHealthcare. Since 2007, he has also been UnitedHealth Group's CIO. He plays a pivotal role in technology growth and development, leading a team of more than 23,000 technologists and engineers who are leveraging the latest technology and digital solutions with the goal of creating a more intelligent, connected, collaborative, and efficient health care system. In addition, he is credited with leading the enterprise architecture and foundational technology capabilities at UnitedHealth Group. He also co-chairs the annual charitable golf tournament put on by UnitedHealth Group, which has raised millions of dollars for nonprofits.

## ■ COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE AWARD



### **3M**

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, many health care institutions have experienced critical shortages of government-recommended filtering face masks, such as N95 respirators. To help, St. Paul technology and manufacturing corporation 3M launched a project to decontaminate used face masks. This past spring, in just two weeks, the team worked tirelessly to form collaborations with other companies, develop a testing protocol, verify respirator filtration and fit performance after decontamination, and provide data to support two of the first FDA Emergency Use Authorizations.



### **University of Minnesota Technology Commercialization**

University of Minnesota Technology Commercialization facilitates the transfer of university technology and ideas to licensee companies, both established and startup, for the development of new products and services that benefit the public good, foster economic growth, and generate revenue to support the university's mission. This year, it has played a key role in facilitating many of the innovations that were part of Minnesota's quick and authoritative response to the coronavirus pandemic by expediting products and services, such as low-cost emergency ventilators and the state's first medication repository, Roundtable Rx.



### **KnightKrawler Robotics, Irondale High School**

New Brighton's Irondale High School robotics team, led by a volunteer coaching staff, and its registered nonprofit have manufactured and delivered about 30,000 complete face shields to critical health care and public safety workers during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, they shared more than 10,000 clear plastic shield parts they manufactured with other organizations that were 3D-printing visors but lacked access to the clear plastic.

**FINALISTS:** Apple Valley High School; Claros Technologies Inc.; Digi-Key Electronics; Ecolab; Graco Inc.; VenueScreen; Zipnosis



## ★ RISING STAR AWARD



**Tarah Beyers**

**TARGET**

Lead product owner

In just a few short years, Tarah Beyers has earned multiple promotions at Target and has made a tremendous impact on Target's Women in Science and Technology organization. Beyers has a passion to generate excitement among younger women and students about roles in technology, and she partners with MnTech, Aspirations in Computing, and other business leaders to develop educational forums. She has also helped create internal boot camps at Target to expose non-engineers to programming and spends a lot of time mentoring up-and-coming engineers.



**Ja'keh (Key) Clark**

**BEST BUY**

Associate digital engineer II

Growing up, Ja'keh (Key) Clark played with Java development kits instead of action figures—foretelling his future career. Today, he's a software engineer at Best Buy, where he helps integrate IoT technology into the company's retail site and connects customers with Geek Squad agents who help them diagnose problems and set up new technology. Clark also serves as a mentor to younger engineers and demonstrates his leadership by representing Best Buy in the community at events such as the Blacks in Tech conference and Silicon North Stars.



**Michelle Hermanson**

**LAND O'LAKES**

Senior IT manager -  
digital enablement

At a time when e-business is more critical than ever, Michelle Hermanson's ability to lead Land O'Lakes' technology teams to execute on business strategy has earned the respect of technology and business leaders alike. She is the company's functional and technical lead on all e-business efforts, including e-commerce, marketing analytics, customer experience, and omni-channel. She also supports development of younger IT talent, actively engaging in the company's Talent Acceleration Program.

### CATEGORY

## AI/MACHINE LEARNING



### Revel Health

*The Minneapolis health care technology company is focused on helping health plans and health care organizations run action programs.*

Revel Health helps health care organizations connect with members and patients

in a personalized way to build better consumer experiences and improve health outcomes. The company's health action platform, Revel Connect, initiates and manages integrated multichannel programs that allow health care consumers to take health actions, such as visiting the doctor for their yearly checkup or getting their flu shot. Since 2006, Revel Health has helped more than 100 million health care consumers.

Revel Connect brings together qualitative and quantitative research to understand members' personal situations, health beliefs, biases, barriers to care, and habits to help personalize messages about health issues. The company uses AI and machine learning to target individuals based on their preferences on outreach channels and timing, ensuring a higher degree of member engagement and thus enabling a better opportunity for taking health action.

[revel-health.com](http://revel-health.com)

**FINALISTS:** 3M; BetterYou; Optum

### CATEGORY

## DATA ANALYTICS



### Hoonuit

*The Minneapolis company developed an end-to-end K-12 education data management solution that includes reporting, analytics, and data visualization.*

Big data is not new to education; districts and schools have long employed numerous data

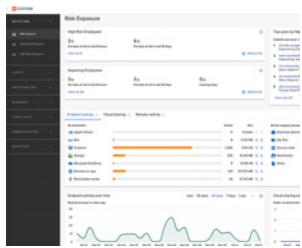
systems. The challenge is figuring out how to turn that data into actionable and meaningful intelligence. Hoonuit created an end-to-end K-12 education data management solution that uses predictive analytics meant to enhance student outcomes and identify at-risk students before they've fallen too far off-track.

Hoonuit provides a true longitudinal view of each student and predicts student outcomes like the risk of falling behind, graduation readiness, college entrance readiness, and more. As a result, educators can leverage insights delivered through reports and dashboards to help make informed decisions and take actions to tailor instruction for the success of individual students. Dashboards are also aligned to common education initiatives and have customizable features designed to serve the unique needs of educational institutions, their data sources, and their users. [hoonuit.com](http://hoonuit.com)

**FINALISTS:** ABILITY | An Inovalon Company; Calabrio

## CATEGORY

# DATA SECURITY



## Code42

*The Minneapolis-based cybersecurity company uses a cloud-native product to mitigate insider data exposure and exfiltration.*

Code42 believes that data security should be defined not by what it can prevent, but by how fast it

can detect and respond to the inevitable risks to data that come from the inside. For more than 20 years, the company has been safeguarding the data of more than 50,000 organizations.

Today, Code42 has a new cloud-based SaaS product called Incydr that is helping customers of all sizes detect and respond to file exfiltration before long-term damage is done to companies' competitive positions, reputations, and bottom lines. Incydr tracks files as they are attached to emails, uploaded to web applications, and moved to cloud accounts, USB sticks, and external hard drives. And it's all done without locking down data. Incydr also features a management functionality so that security teams can quickly and easily compile, document, and disseminate investigation details for formal insider risk incidents. [code42.com](http://code42.com)

**FINALISTS:** Ostra, LLC; Tech Dump

## CATEGORY

# DIGITAL MARKETING



## Tunheim

*The Minneapolis-based public relations and communications agency created a digital campaign to drive mental health awareness in rural Minnesota.*

This past year, the Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) hired public relations and communications agency Tunheim to create a digital campaign to

build awareness and educate the public about mental health needs in rural Minnesota. (Rural areas have the highest suicide rate in the United States.) The campaign also positioned Minnesota's hospitals as a resource for people seeking mental health care. Campaign content included shareable graphics, a social media influencer partnership, radio ads, and a full feature video about Avera Health's partnership with Southwestern Mental Health Center.

The campaign successfully met MHA's objectives and reached its target audience: rural men and rural families in Minnesota. [tunheim.com](http://tunheim.com)

**FINALISTS:** Irish Titan; Sportsdigita

## CATEGORY

# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



## HGA

*Minneapolis multidisciplinary architecture and planning design firm HGA teamed up with Abbott Northwestern Hospital to design a center for neurological excellence.*

Because of their complexity, neurological disorders require a state-of-the-art care environment, with highly specialized

technology systems and infrastructure to support the critical needs of the facility. Allina Health's Abbott Northwestern Hospital (ANWH) wanted to make a transformative leap in patient care and experience through technological innovation, research, and a progressive care model while allowing for future flexibility and modifications.

Multidisciplinary architecture and planning firm HGA was brought on to design ANWH's center for neurological excellence. With ANWH being one of the busiest and most prominent hospitals in Minnesota, the neurological center is poised to become a neuroscience destination.

The project's biggest challenges included integrating multiple technology systems into a single operation that could happen at the push of a button and designing the center to provide flexibility for future modifications, easy accessibility for maintenance/service repairs, minimized patient risk and disruption, and minimized downtime and temporary IP requirements. [hga.com](http://hga.com)

**FINALISTS:** Accenture; Unisys

## CATEGORY

# EDGE COMPUTING & IoT



## Medtronic

*The medical device company's new Teneo Platform allows for faster and easier medical device updates in a variety of environments.*

Medical device giant Medtronic, which has operational headquarters in Fridley, has a new Teneo Platform, which provides a set of services allowing for security-based connectivity to medical devices in challenging environments. The platform allows a patient's medical device to be remotely configured or updated while the patient is at home, and it can also be used to allow updates or servicing of capital equipment deployed in a hospital environment. Teneo is built with the flexibility to support all of Medtronic's device types in various environments and with minimal customization. This flexibility results in cost savings, faster device updates, and less burden on the user (patient or hospital) to update their device. [medtronic.com](http://medtronic.com)

**FINALISTS:** F3 Wireless; Packet Power



## CATEGORY

## ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

**Diversified Plastics, Inc.**

*The Minneapolis precision plastic-injection molding and contract manufacturer's new additive manufacturing service, The Acceleration Station, produces plastic parts faster.*

Employee-owned Diversified Plastics Inc. (DPI) is a custom plastic-injection molder and digital manufacturer of high-precision, close-tolerance parts and components for medical devices, filtration, aerospace, and a variety of other industrial markets. Its new additive manufacturing service,

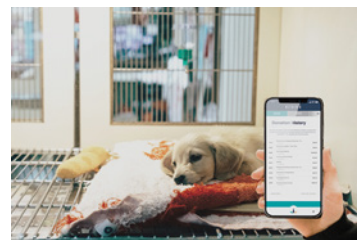
The Acceleration Station, delivers the fastest path to market by producing high-quality plastic parts faster. It can produce production and prototype parts in just days (compared to the usual speed of several weeks), and its Carbon DLS 3D-printing technology is up to 100 times faster than traditional additive methods.

The Acceleration Station protocols adhere precisely to customer specifications, performance, and safety standards, and the company's engineering and production teams work closely with customers to save time and money by optimizing parts for digital manufacturing. [divplast.com](http://divplast.com)

**FINALISTS:** NETZRO; Seagate Technology; Third Wave Systems

## CATEGORY

## FINANCIAL SERVICES TECHNOLOGY

**DNT BLNK**

*The Minneapolis venture studio created a fee-free charitable giving app for credit union members.*

Nonprofits currently lose over 7 percent of every donation made through online giving

platforms. With the ease and proliferation of credit and debit cards, donors pass along an unintended fee to the charities to which we give.

To address this issue, venture studio DNT BLNK recently launched NetGiver, a fee-free charitable giving app available to credit union members and the only one of its kind on the market. NetGiver eliminates credit card, platform, and administrative fees associated with charitable donations to ensure that nonprofits receive 100 percent of credit union members' donations. It is also a unique acquisition-, retention-, and loyalty-building tool for credit union members, delivering a branded, feel-good experience by simply and securely facilitating donations to members' preferred nonprofit organizations. [dntblnk.com](http://dntblnk.com)

**FINALISTS:** Avtex; Certifi; ICP, Inc.

## CATEGORY

## HEALTHCARE INFORMATION SYSTEMS

**Medicom Health**

*The Minneapolis medical technology company's Rx Savings Assistant software works with hospitals to make patient prescriptions more affordable.*

Many patients can't afford to fill their prescriptions, and poor medication adherence leads to diminished outcomes, low patient satisfaction, greater care costs, and increased readmissions and penalties.

Medicom Health's Rx Savings Assistant can instantly increase prescription adherence across an entire health system, alongside existing patient assistance programs, without substantial cost to providers. By leveraging electronic health records (EHR), the software can make prescriptions more affordable for more patients by greatly increasing the availability of pharma-sponsored discounts. The software is invisible and automatic, so there's no impact on workflow or prescribing patterns. Its EHR plug-in monitors every prescription and determines patient eligibility, searches external databases for matching branded and generic manufacturer discounts, and adds appropriate offers to discharge paperwork and patient portals. [medicomhealth.com](http://medicomhealth.com)

**FINALISTS:** Flywheel; Provation Medical

## CATEGORY

## MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY &amp; DEVICES

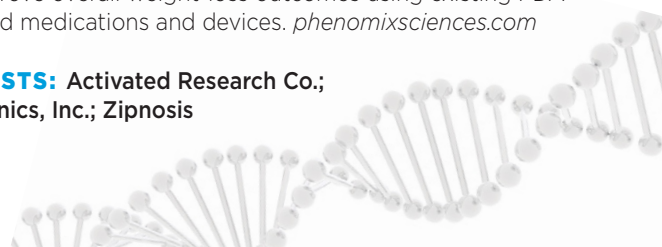
**Phenomix Sciences LLC**

*The St. Paul health care solutions startup created a blood test that determines phenotypes of patients with obesity.*

Obesity is the top chronic disease and one of the top drivers in the rise of health care costs, with an annual impact on health care systems of more than \$550 billion a year. Existing treatments, such as FDA-approved weight-loss medications, help drive meaningful weight loss only about 30 percent of the time.

Established by two leading National Institutes of Health-funded obesity experts from Mayo Clinic looking to bring precision medicine to obesity, Phenomix Sciences' first product is a novel blood test supported by an AI-driven algorithm that classifies the unique pathophysiological phenotype of patients with obesity. Results from the test can then be applied clinically by health care providers to guide selection of more effective interventions for patients and improve overall weight-loss outcomes using existing FDA-approved medications and devices. [phenomixsciences.com](http://phenomixsciences.com)

**FINALISTS:** Activated Research Co.; HistoSonics, Inc.; Zipnosis



## CATEGORY

# RETAIL, SUPPLY CHAIN, & DISTRIBUTION



## Railbox Consulting

*The Minneapolis technology company is simplifying and automating the purchase and rental of shipping containers.*

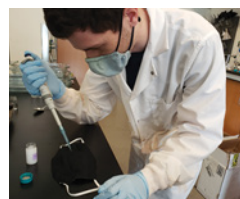
In the United States at any given time, there are tens of thousands of shipping containers available for sale, owned by hundreds of different intermodal companies, located at dozens of different intermodal depots. Each company has different pricing structures, each market has differing supply levels, and containers are constantly moving in and out of the depots. Hauling rates vary by market, and some customers may be serviceable from multiple markets.

A technology company focused on the intermodal shipping container industry, Railbox Consulting exists to simplify the process. Customers can purchase and rent shipping and refrigerated containers in the United States and Canada via an e-commerce experience that allows the customer to get pricing and purchase shipping containers completely online. Additionally, the company's automated processes and customer quoting keep its revenue per employee at a multiple of its largest publicly traded competitors. [railboxconsulting.com](http://railboxconsulting.com)

**FINALISTS:** Digital River; SPS Commerce

## CATEGORY

# SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES



## Claros Technologies Inc.

*The St. Paul advanced materials company created a group of sorbent products aimed at bettering the environment.*

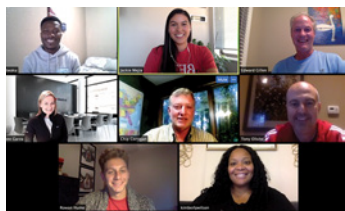
Advanced materials company Claros Technologies Inc. strives to lead the industry toward a holistic approach in material design and innovation to develop more efficient, safe, and sustainable products with zero toxic waste.

Claros created a group of sorbent products—products with reactive materials that chemically bind pollutants from water and air—to be used as innovative environmental remedies. Using its proprietary Crescoating technology platform, the company can directly grow small, reactive nanoparticles within support structures including granular porous materials, foams, and polymers. The resulting “nanocomposite” materials exhibit high stability and function as sorbents for the selective removal of environmental contaminants, including mercury, phosphorus, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, and other heavy metals. Great for a variety of industries including industrial water treatment, watershed management, and air pollution control, sorbents have shown excellent efficiency in capturing and detoxifying harmful contaminants while allowing for reuse and recovery of valuable nutrients, rare earth metals, and precious metals. [clarostechnologies.com](http://clarostechnologies.com)

**FINALISTS:** CounterFlow Technologies Inc.; EarthScout GBC

## CATEGORY

# TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIP



## gener8tor

*The concierge startup accelerator offers a free program to medical device and health care-related software, biotech, and diagnostics startups.*

Concierge startup accelerator gener8tor has launched gBETA Medtech, a free seven-week accelerator that works with medical device and health care-related software, biotech, and diagnostics startups for no fees or equity. Each gBETA Medtech program is capped at five startups to ensure meaningful engagement with sponsors and other resources. Participants receive intensive and individualized coaching and access to gener8tor's national network of mentors, customers, corporate partners, and investors. The program is designed to help startups gain early customer traction with their product or idea and establish metrics that can make them competitive applicants for full-time, equity-based accelerators or investment.

gBETA Medtech is a program of University Enterprise Laboratories and gener8tor and is sponsored by Boston Scientific with additional support from Mayo Clinic, the University of Minnesota, and Medical Alley Association. [gbetamedtech.com](http://gbetamedtech.com)

**FINALISTS:** Structural; ThreeBridge Solutions

## CATEGORY

# TECH TALENT — SOLUTION PROVIDER



## Genesis10

*The St. Paul professional technology services firm's new talent creation program recruits and trains high-potential U.S. citizens for careers in technology.*

Professional technology services firm Genesis10 helps clients through workforce challenges by providing staffing, workforce optimization, and domestic outsourcing solutions. The company's latest talent creation program, Dev10, reskills high-potential U.S. citizens for careers in technology by recruiting, training, and mentoring emerging talent across the U.S.

After a rigorous vetting process, those selected for the Dev10 program become Genesis10 salaried employees with full benefits from the first day of training. Dev10 associates begin their IT careers in Genesis10's three-month coding boot camp.

A key differentiator of Dev10 is its focus on building tech talent within the local community. Instead of requiring recruits to relocate, Dev10 recruits local talent, trains them locally, and deploys graduates to nearby companies to build the local community talent, economic, and tax base. [genesis10.com](http://genesis10.com)

**FINALIST:** New Vision Foundation



CATEGORY

TECH TALENT –  
CORPORATE INITIATIVE



Thomson Reuters

The business information services company with a location in Eagan partnered with the Leadhersh1 program to develop and retain female technologists.

Ten years ago, there were no programmatic, scalable, online coaching programs for mid-career women technologists. Yet the need was clearly there: Research pointed to the alarming attrition of women technologists and the resulting lack of gender diversity among senior leaders in tech. Dr. Susan Davis-Ali, at the time a successful corporate executive in the test publishing industry, created the Leadhersh1 program to develop and retain female technologists. Leadhersh1 was designed to offer an online, virtual curriculum that would be delivered to a large cohort of mid-career women technologists without the expense of travel and time away from work.

Business information services company Thomson Reuters was Leadhersh1's first client, part of the company's continuing commitment to diversity and inclusion as core to its long-term strategy. Throughout the company's 10 years of partnership with Leadhersh1, the initiative has resulted in increased retention and advancement of talented mid-career women technologists at Thomson Reuters and beyond. [thomsonreuters.com](http://thomsonreuters.com)

**FINALISTS:** Software for Good; Target

CATEGORY

TECH FOR GOOD



Tech Dump

The Minneapolis-based organization is a certified electronics recycling and refurbishing social enterprise.

As one of the largest collectors of e-waste in Minnesota, Tech Dump has processed nearly 35 million pounds of electronic waste, all while adhering to the highest data security, employee safety, and environmental standards. Tech Dump's business model also provides training and job opportunities for adults facing barriers to employment, such as previous incarceration, addiction, or homelessness. Since its inception in 2010, the organization has provided more than 300,000 hours of job training and \$1 million dollars in wages each year to trainees, preparing them to be more valuable employees with expanding futures. Tech Dump currently employs 60 people and is on a growth trajectory to reach 200 in the next five years.

Tech Dump addresses several UN Sustainable Development Goals, including poverty, vocational skills, material footprint, sustainable industry, discrimination, urban waste management, hazardous waste, and climate change. [techdump.org](http://techdump.org)

**FINALISTS:** Analytics for Good Institute, Carlson School of Management; GeaCom, Inc.; Land O'Lakes Inc.; We Sparkle Co.



**Congratulations to Rick King,**  
recipient of the 2020 Minnesota Technology Association Lifetime Achievement Award,

and to all of this year's Tekne nominees and winners for your efforts to further advance Minnesota's technology leadership.

[tr.com](http://tr.com)



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HOW CAN WE MAKE THE PROMISE OF  
TECHNOLOGY A REALITY IN HEALTH CARE?

HOW

WE KNOW HOW. WE ARE THE HOW.

At Optum, we're not pursuing technology for its own sake. We're striving to make health care more human. We're a unifying force bringing together deep industry expertise with data, advanced analytics and emerging technology to move health care forward. Across millions of consumer touchpoints, Optum understands how the world of technology connects to the world of health.

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# Fueling the Success of Minnesota's Innovation Economy

We believe Minnesota's technology-driven companies achieve the greatest success when they have access to exceptional talent, dedicated public policy advocates, and are part of an innovative, inclusive technology community. For more than 30 years, the Minnesota Technology Association has nurtured each of these attributes within our state, helping our tech community thrive.

Join us as we work together to accelerate growth, innovation, and the development of a stronger, more inclusive tech ecosystem in Minnesota.

Learn more at [mntech.org](http://mntech.org).



## Connections

Businesses are a lifeline for Minnesota communities. That's why AT&T works with local organizations to help keep business connected.

**AT&T: Linking businesses with customers and the world through the nation's best network\*.**

AT&T is proud to support the Minnesota Technology Association.

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\* GWS OneScore, September 2020

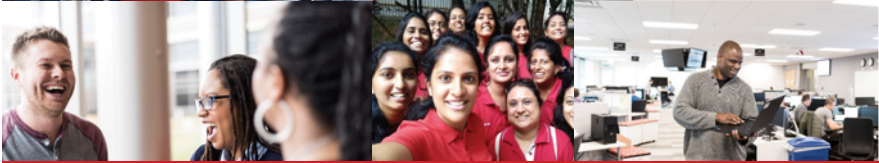


*this isn't just a tag line, it's a **commitment**.*

*Congratulations to this years winners who share our belief in delivering for their customers.*



**work  
somewhere  
you**  
♥



Proud to support the Minnesota Technology Association and our state's tech community.



**To all the honorees pushing science and technology forward in Minnesota: thanks for the great PR.**

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# 2021 TWIN CITIES



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## Five Star Wealth Manager Award Winners

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Featured winners from our  
Five Star Professional section

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# FIVE STAR AWARD WINNERS



These days, it takes a village to manage your financial world. Whether it is managing your assets with a wealth manager, navigating the ever-changing tax landscape, sorting out your estate and succession planning or picking the right life insurance, finding the right team can be a daunting

task. In fact, many consumers have a hard time figuring out where to even begin.

Sometimes, a few simple questions can put you off on the right path. Asking a professional what makes working with them a unique experience can help you understand how they work and if their style meshes with your own.

This is a great place to start! Five Star Professional uses its own proprietary research methodology to name outstanding professionals, then works with publications such as *Twin Cities Business* and *Mpls.St.Paul Magazine* and to spread the word about award winners. Each award candidate undergoes a thorough research process (detailed here) before being considered for the final list of award winners. For the complete list of winners, go to [www.fivestarpromotional.com](http://www.fivestarpromotional.com).

## RESEARCH DISCLOSURES

In order to consider a broad population of high-quality wealth managers and investment professionals, award candidates are identified by one of three sources: firm nomination, peer nomination or prequalification based on industry standing. Self-nominations are not accepted. Twin Cities-area award candidates were identified using internal and external research data. Candidates do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final lists of Five Star Wealth Managers or Five Star Investment Professionals.

- The Five Star award is not indicative of a professional's future performance.
- Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their clients' assets.
- The inclusion of a professional on the Five Star Wealth Manager list or the Five Star Investment Professional list should not be construed as an endorsement of the professional by Five Star Professional or *Twin Cities Business* and *Mpls.St.Paul Magazine*.
- Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager, Five Star Investment Professional or any professional is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected professionals will be awarded this accomplishment by Five Star Professional in the future.
- Five Star Professional is not an advisory firm and the content of this article should not be considered financial advice. For more information on the Five Star Wealth Manager or Five Star Investment Professional award programs, research and selection criteria, go to [fivestarpromotional.com/research](http://fivestarpromotional.com/research).

## FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER

### DETERMINATION OF AWARD WINNERS CRITERIA

Award candidates who satisfied 10 objective eligibility and evaluation criteria were named 2021 Five Star Wealth Managers. **Eligibility Criteria – Required:** 1. Credentialed as a registered investment adviser or a registered investment adviser representative. 2. Actively employed as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of five years. 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review. 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal firm standards. 5. Accepting new clients. **Evaluation Criteria – Considered:** 6. One-year client retention rate. 7. Five-year client retention rate. 8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered. 9. Number of client households served. 10. Education and professional designations. 4,004 award candidates in the Twin Cities-area were considered for the Five Star Wealth Manager award. 630 (approximately 16% of the award candidates) were named 2021 Five Star Wealth Managers.

## FIVE STAR INVESTMENT PROFESSIONAL

### DETERMINATION OF AWARD WINNERS CRITERIA

The investment professional award goes to estate planning attorneys, insurance agents and select others in the financial industry. **Eligibility Criteria – Required:** 1. Credentialed with appropriate state or industry licensures. 2. Actively employed as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of five years. 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review. 4. Accepting new clients. **Evaluation Criteria – Considered:** 5. One-year client retention rate. 6. Five-year client retention rate. 7. Number of client households served. 8. Recent personal production and performance (industry specific criteria). 9. Education and professional designations/industry and board certifications. 10. Pro Bono and community service work. This year, we honored 10 Twin Cities-area investment professionals with the Five Star Investment Professional award.

## FIVE STAR PROFESSIONAL PROPRIETARY RESEARCH PROCESS



### NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES

Three sources of nominations:

- Firm nominations
- Peer nominations
- Prequalification based on industry credentials



### REGULATORY CONSUMER COMPLAINT REVIEW

All candidates must demonstrate a favorable regulatory history.



### CANDIDATE SUBMISSION OF PRACTICE INFORMATION

Candidates must complete either an online or over-the-phone interview.



### EVALUATION OF CANDIDATE PRACTICE

Candidates are evaluated on 10 objective evaluation and eligibility criteria.



### FIRM REVIEW OF AWARD CANDIDATE LIST

All candidates are reviewed by a representative of their firm before final selection.

## FINALIZATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS

★ 2021 ★  
FIVE STAR PROFESSIONAL





Morgan Stanley

## Morgan Stanley

Left to right: Christopher Woo, Wealth Management Associate;  
2012 and 2014 – 2021 winner Marcus R. Waterbury, CIMA®, CPWA®, RMA®,  
Senior Vice President, Wealth Advisor;  
Jeannine Lillard, Client Service Associate

My wealth management practice at Morgan Stanley is a family business founded over 51 years ago. For our clients, wealth is a tool rather than an end. We believe it can and should promote living a life filled with joy and meaning — one that enables our clients to build strong bonds with their family, friends and the communities they have chosen to support.

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## JJ Swanson Advisory Group, Inc.

Left to right: John Bogard, 401(k) and 403(b) Service Manager;  
 Joe Carwardine, Financial Advisor; Ron Lamberton, Financial Advisor;  
 Matt Griffin, Operations; Andy Tighe, Financial Advisor;  
 Allison Bruckner, Operations; 2021 winner Joe Swanson, Financial Advisor

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Joe Swanson has worked with over 100 employers regarding their plans ranging from startup companies to long-established midwestern businesses. His background in business and corporate retirement planning and implementation help employers manage their nonqualified deferred compensation, 401(k), pensions and ESOP plans. Swanson first started in the financial services business with Principal® in the summer of 2003.

Insurance products issued by Principal National Life Insurance Co. (except in NY), Principal Life Insurance Co., and the companies available through the Preferred Product Network, Inc. Securities and advisory products offered through Principal Securities, Inc., (800) 247-1737, Member SIPC. Principal National, Principal Life, the Preferred Product Network and Principal Securities are members of the Principal Financial Group®, Des Moines, IA 50392. Joe Swanson, Principal National and Principal Life Financial Representative, Principal Securities Registered Representative and Financial Advisor. JJ Swanson Advisory Group, Inc is not an affiliate of any company of the Principal Financial Group AIF® (Accredited Investment Fiduciary®) is an educational designation only, obtained by the holder by completing the requisite coursework.

The AIF® Designation does not mean the holder is acting in a fiduciary capacity.

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Ameriprise  
Financial

## Greg Thurin and Chris Thurin

Left to right: Ten-year winners Greg Thurin, Private Wealth Advisor and Chris Thurin, Private Wealth Advisor

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Greg Thurin: 952-841-8125 • Chris Thurin: 952-841-8123

gregory.j.thurin@ampf.com • christopher.m.thurin@ampf.com

Greg Thurin and Chris Thurin of Thurin, Thurin and Associates, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, have more than 49 years of combined experience. They pride themselves on helping their clients prepare for the future and the certainty of uncertainty that has become the new normal in today's economy and investment markets. Greg Thurin and Chris Thurin are 2012 – 2021 Five Star Wealth Managers.

Investors should conduct their own evaluation of a financial professional as working with a financial advisor is not a guarantee of future financial success. Ameriprise Financial and its affiliates do not offer tax or legal advice. Consumers should consult with their tax advisor or attorney regarding their specific situation. Investment advisory services and products are made available through Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, a registered investment adviser. Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, Member FINRA and SIPC.

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## » WEALTH MANAGERS »

All award winners are listed in this publication.

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### Financial Planning

Anne M. Adams · Adams Consulting Group, LLC

**James K. Adams** · Adams Consulting Group, LLC [Page 27](#)

Edwina Yvonna Allee · Wealth Enhancement Group

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Kristi L. Andersen · Kristi L. Andersen Financial Partners, LLC

Ryan Warren Ash · Thrivent

Margaret Beggs Towle · Wealth Enhancement Group

Nicholas C. Beissel · Wealth Enhancement Group

Laura Anne Bereiter · White Oaks Wealth Advisors

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Michael Charles Bishop · Wealth Enhancement Group

Jennifer Elizabeth Boland · Wealth Enhancement Group

David Wayne Boniface · LPL Financial

Rebecca Judith Botzet · Summit Wealth Advocates

Timothy Balfour Brown · Brown Wealth Management

Beverly Mountain Brumbaugh · Oppenheimer & Co.

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Jeff John Hockert · Wealth Enhancement Group

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· Klinkhammer Financial

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Brent Marvin Muller · Wealth Enhancement Group

Shawn Michael Murray · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

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Andrew Stephen Thelander · Wealth Enhancement Group

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David Michael Robert Zack · Executive Financial Services, Inc.

Gregory Anthony Zandlo · North East Asset Management

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Jennifer Beyl-Lee · Thrivent

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**Ryan Coogan** · Wells Fargo Advisors [Page 23](#)

Joshua Ryan Decker · EFS Advisors

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Mark W. Hargis · Woodbury Wealth Management

Michael Duane Haverkamp · MidAmerica Wealth Management

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George William Leistikow · EFS Advisors

Andrew Lucking · NorthStar Financial Partners

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Keith John Van Dell · Waypoint Wealth Group

Mark Anthony Vitelli · Compass Capital Management

Troy Jay Wold · WOLD Financial

Paul Woolfrey · Woolfrey Financial Consulting

Tony Workman · Harbour Investments

### Investment Professionals

#### Estate Planning Attorney

Jennifer L. Athanases · MacMillan & Athanases PLLC

#### Certified Public Accountant

Amanda Giliotti · Giliotti Tax & Legal Services



# Morgan Stanley Rochester



**Left to right: Kathleen Allison, Senior Vice President, Financial Advisor;  
Zen Kuzyk, Financial Advisor; Michelle Backholm, Registered Client Service Associate;  
David Olson, Managing Director – Wealth Management, Financial Advisor; Jana Holst, Wealth Management Associate;  
Paul Peterman, CRPC® Senior Vice President, Financial Advisor;  
Cathy Olson, Senior Client Service Associate**

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

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# We Needed Two Pages To Include What Is Most Important To Our Practice ...

# You.

**Morgan Stanley**

2019 – 2021 winner Kathleen Allison  
2013 – 2021 winners David Olson and Paul Peterman  
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David Olson, NMLS 1390903; Kathleen Allison, NMLS 1380646; Paul Peterman, NMLS 1290418;  
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# Shad Ketcher



Left to right: Grant Lindaman; Nine-year winner Shad Ketcher; Don Warner

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Helping individuals build, protect and grow wealth to achieve long-term goals
- Offering families an array of financial solutions, including asset protection and estate planning
- Adjusting to the constant flux of the markets and financial landscape
- Striving to simplify and strengthen retirees' financial lives
- Developing plan values, protecting employees and ensuring smooth transitions for businesses
- Effectively planning for all financial scenarios across clients' lifetimes

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

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## If You Want To Be Great, You Must Become a Servant

Our economy, culture and industry are in a constant state of evolution. These changes have been, at times, euphoric — at others, tumultuous — and some, painful. Although the world continues to shift, our approach to business remains unchanged. Above all, we believe relationships are crucial to success. While adapting to new technologies and state-of-the-art financial strategies, we remain dedicated to providing the highest level of service to our clients. Prioritizing personal attention allows us to truly understand our clients' unique objectives and offer customized solutions to achieve them. Long-term investing should seamlessly align with the most important lifetime goals of investors and their families. Having an income you don't outlive over a three-decade, dignified, independent retirement or leaving meaningful legacies to your children — delivered in tax-efficient ways — are lifetime financial goals. The ability to be of significant financial help to your children in the education of their children is another example of a lifetime financial goal. As advocates of long-term planning, we believe successful investing is predicated not on timing markets, but on quality time in the markets.

As your advocate, we are committed to working toward your family's financial freedom. By understanding your current situation and identifying your most important financial goals, we strive to grow and protect your wealth through all stages of life. Our carefully constructed financial plans are designed to help you organize your financial life, retire comfortably and give you confidence that your money will last. We understand personal situations and goals can change overnight, and we strive to assure you that we'll be here whenever you need us.

Financial planning provides the means to unify all aspects of your financial life. A financial plan is a simple overview of your big picture; it helps our advisors develop strategies that allow you to make better financial decisions. While using one-size-fits-all strategies may be the common approach of many firms, we specialize in tailoring plans to fit your current situation while laying a foundation for future growth. From providing life, disability and long-term care insurance to developing tax-advantaged college savings plans and assisting families with special needs to building the investment program to carry you through an independent and dignified retirement, our advisors strive to help you achieve the most important goals of your life.



**NEW ERA  
FINANCIAL GROUP, INC.**

Shad R. Ketcher

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shad@newerafinancial.com • www.newerafinancial.com



Left to right: Back row: Brandi Eckstein; Susan Brickzen; Lisa Kasper;  
Front row: Nine-year winner Shad Ketcher; Jackie Jensen

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Continued on FS-31



# Mark D. Cheeley

MBA, CRPC®, CFS™, RFC®, CLTC®, Private Wealth Advisor



Left to right: Steve DeBella; Katie Pennington; 2012 – 2021 winner Mark Cheeley; Kristen Newberg

## Your Success Is a Direct Reflection of Our Advice

- Personalized financial planning and customized advice
- Integrated solutions with your other professionals
- Investment and insurance advice
- 2012 – 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager
- Honest, unbiased advice

Our success is a direct reflection of the advice we provide to our clients. For this reason, we listen intently, train vigorously and never take our relationships for granted. When a client is living exactly as he or she envisioned, we know we're providing solid answers to your tough questions.

Learn more about Mark and his practice at [markcheeley.com](http://markcheeley.com). Contact Mark's office today to schedule your complimentary initial consultation.



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Synergy Wealth Management, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC.

The initial consultation provides an overview of financial planning concepts. You will not receive written analysis and/or recommendations. Investors should conduct their own evaluation of a financial professional as working with a financial advisor is not a guarantee of future financial success. Investment advisory products and services are made available through Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, a registered investment adviser. Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, Member FINRA and SIPC.

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# SilverOak Wealth Management LLC



Left to right: Four-year winner Nicholas Thunker, CFP®, CSA; Two-year winner Kathy Nelson, CPA, CFP®; Ten-year winner Shannon King, CPA, PFS, CFP®, CIMA®, CPWA®, MBT; Seven-year winner Jonathan Scharlau, CFA®, CFP®; Dan Hedegard, CFP®, MBA; Alex Dunne, CPA, CFP®, PFS

## Financial Advice for Life

As a premier financial planning and wealth management company, our desire is to build a solid foundation with our clients — a partnership based on understanding their life's goals and expectations. We are committed to keeping our clients first.

SilverOak Wealth Management excels in providing objective, disciplined investment strategies and advice tailored to each client's specific needs. We firmly believe in a comprehensive approach to portfolio management and investment strategies where we focus on integrating estate, financial and tax planning to create long-term, successful results.

It is our responsibility to be perfectly aligned with our clients' needs — to explore options, develop customized strategies and provide education and guidance that will enable them to make informed decisions. We work with our clients on a fee-only basis; we are not compensated by any form of commissions.

Our mission is to be our clients' financial partner — their trusted advocate and guide — helping them to achieve greater peace of mind.

- **Independent, fee-only registered investment advisory services**
- **Comprehensive financial planning based on our clients' core values**
- **Exceptional service provided by an experienced, accredited team**



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# Lisa Guzek Montagné

Wealth Manager, CFP®



Left to right: Kimberly Famodu; Lindsay Harmon; 2012 – 2021 winner Lisa Guzek Montagné, Wealth Manager, CFP®; Jacob McCue, CFA®; Polly Bjornson Stéphanie, CFP®; Maria Galvez

## Clients First • Objective Advice • Exceptional Service

Lisa has been providing clients with strategies to help them pursue their financial goals for more than 30 years. Along with her team of financial professionals, she is able to offer creative options to address life's complicated issues. They use a total wealth management approach — offering tax-advantaged investment strategies and portfolio analysis, as well as providing comprehensive financial planning services to high net worth individuals and families.



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LPL Registered Administrative Associates: Polly Bjornson Stéphanie, Lindsay Harmon, Kimberly Famodu and Jacob McCue. LPL Administrative Associate: Maria Galvez. Securities offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/ SIPC. Financial Planning offered through Guzek Asset Management, a registered investment advisor. Guzek Asset Management Inc. and LGM Wealth Management are separate entities from LPL Financial.

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# Nathan D. Millerbernd

Private Wealth Manager, AWMA®



**8**  
YEAR  
WINNER

Eight-year winner Nathan D. Millerbernd

## Investment Advice Based on Knowledge, Trust and Integrity

Nate Millerbernd and his firm, Millerbernd Wealth Management, have been serving high net worth individuals, businesses and local families for over 20 years. The firm has evolved and has been carefully structured as an investment management firm designed to manage personal, family and the assets of their closest friends. They have extended that same vision and care and are able to utilize the platform and process created with all Millerbernd Wealth Management clients.

- **Investment management**
- **Retirement planning**
- **Honest, unbiased financial advice**
- **Helping build and preserve wealth**
- **Helping avoid pitfalls that exist in the industry**



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Advisory services offered through MWM Wealth Advisory, LLC, an independently owned Registered Investment Advisor. Securities offered through Harbour Investments, Inc. Member SIPC.

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# Cherry Tree Wealth Management, LLC



Left to right: Three-year winner Conner Kolodge, CFP®, CPA; Six-year winner Keith Tufte, MBA, CFA; Two-year winner Chelsea Tufte, CFP®; Six-year winner John O'Connor, CFA; Kaitlyn Puente; 2021 winner Justin Frys; Erin Buchen

## Independent and Experienced Advice

Cherry Tree Wealth Management provides unique wealth management services to help clients simplify their lives and gain confidence in their financial future. We act as our clients' trusted advisor, providing independent and objective advice. We use a team approach to service clients. Our investment approach is global, disciplined, cost effective and tax efficient. We love helping clients grow, protect, enjoy and distribute their wealth.

Our Five Star Wealth Manager award winners are honored to be selected to this group.

We thank our clients for their continued confidence and trust in us.

- **Independent registered investment advisor**
- **Helping provide security and peace of mind**
- **Focusing on client needs through a team approach**
- **Providing complete wealth management services**
- **Working with business owners, individuals and families**



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# TruCairn Advisors



Left to right: 2021 winner Dan Carlson, CFP®, APMA®, MBA, Financial Advisor; Donna Carpenter, CFP®, Financial Advisor; 2012 – 2021 winner Michael Metzger, CFP®, APMA®, BFA™, Private Wealth Advisor, Managing Partner; 2012 – 2021 winner Steven Kumagai, CFP®, CRPC®, Private Wealth Advisor, Managing Partner; Jenna Dubuc, CFP®, CRPC®, CLTC®, APMA®, Private Wealth Advisor; 2021 winner John Yaeger, BFA™, AWMA®, CRPC®, Financial Advisor; 2021 winner Kathryn Flom, CFP®, Financial Advisor

## Trail Markers on a Path True To Your Goals and Values

### TruCairn Advisors:

- Guide you on a path to your financial goals
- Prepare you for each phase of life
- Provide investment management tailored to you
- Advise on risk, tax and estate strategies
- Assure you benefit from your employer's company plans

TruCairn Advisors, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, is a team whose combined education, experience and training help clients of multiple generations with many different backgrounds. Because every individual or family is unique, we listen to and learn about your goals, priorities and resources.

We identify alternative paths to help you achieve your goals. Because we draw from the cumulative knowledge of the team, we can customize solutions unique to your situation. Our CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ practitioners and entire staff pledge to put our client's interests above our own.



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**FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER**

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# Kyle Kuehner, Timothy Luther, John McFarland and Rachel McDonough



Left to right: 2015 – 2021 winner John McFarland, CMFC®, CRPC®, Financial Advisor; Patrick Sell, CMFC®, CRPC®, APMA®, Financial Advisor; Graham Kuehner, APMA®, Financial Advisor; 2012 – 2021 winner Kyle Kuehner, CFP®, ChFC®, APMA®, Private Wealth Advisor; 2013, 2014, 2016, 2019 – 2021 winner Rachel McDonough, CFP®, CKA®, Financial Advisor; Jonathan Wells, Associate Financial Advisor; 2012 – 2021 winner Timothy Luther, CRPC®, CKA® Private Wealth Advisor

## Be Brilliant.®

- Assisting clients actively manage their resources
- Prioritizing continued, professional education to help inform clients
- Aimed to steward our business with Christian values and beliefs
- Luther, McFarland, Kuehner and Associates, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

With over 97 years of combined financial services industry experience, it has been a pleasure for our advisors to listen, inform and assist in creating detailed strategies for clients. The economy is changing and our response to it is key. We work to gain an understanding of each client's vision for the future in order to work toward providing clear guidance. Through these changes, we aim to steward our business with Christian values and beliefs.



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# JNBA Financial Advisors



Left to right: Nine-year winner John Foster, PPC®, Senior Advisor – Investment Strategist; Seven-year winner Stephanie Rossi, CFP®, Senior Advisor; Kim Brown, President; Seven-year winner Richard S. Brown, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer; Nine-year winner Patrick Moyneur, CFP®, Senior Advisor – Director of Advisory Services; Cärin Viertel, Director of Client Services; Nine-year winner Michael Bilotta, ChFC®, CASL®, RICP®, Senior Advisor – Investment Strategist

## Advice driven by *advocacy*.®

With a four-decade history of acting in our clients' best interests, JNBA Financial Advisors can truly help guide people through life's most important decisions by delivering highly customized financial life planning strategies and solutions that optimize their resources. As a nationally ranked wealth management firm, JNBA's advice driven by *advocacy*® approach is unlike many other financial advisory firms and is delivered by a multigenerational team, all within a conflict-free fiduciary model where the only fees the firm receives are directly from clients and completely transparent. In addition, JNBA is leading the way with a new, contemporary approach to the family office. Our team provides fiduciary oversight and services — from strategy to integrated implementation — for clients seeking to simplify the oversight of their family's wealth, from busy C-level executives and business owners to high net worth families to high-profile professional athletes and more. JNBA Financial Advisors and CEO Richard S. Brown represent the only Minnesota firm on the list of *Barron's* Top 100 Independent Advisors and have been honored by *Barron's* for six consecutive years\*.

- Over 96% client retention rate — our most cherished accolade since we began tracking in 2001
- Celebrating 42 years of independence and the ability to provide conflict-free advice
- The only Minnesota advisor on *Barron's* 2020 Top 100 Independent Advisors list



8500 Normandale Lake Boulevard, Suite 450 • Minneapolis, MN 55437 • Phone: 952-844-0995 • Phone: 218-249-0044 • [info@jnba.com](mailto:info@jnba.com) • [www.jnba.com](http://www.jnba.com) • @JNBAFinancial

\*As seen in the 8/24/15, 8/29/16, 9/18/17, 9/17/18, 9/16/19, & 9/14/20 issues of *Barron's* magazine. *Barron's* is a trademark of Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Please Note: Limitations: Neither rankings and/or recognitions by unaffiliated rating services, publications, media, or other organizations, nor the achievement of any professional designation, certification, degree, or license, or any amount of prior experience or success, should be construed by a client or prospective client as a guarantee that he/she will experience a certain level of results if JNBA is engaged, or continues to be engaged, to provide investment advisory services. Rankings published by magazines, and others, generally base their selections exclusively on information prepared and/or submitted by the recognized adviser. Rankings are generally limited to participating advisers (see link as to participation data/criteria). Unless expressly indicated to the contrary, JNBA did not pay a fee to be included on any such ranking. No ranking or recognition should be construed as a current or past endorsement of JNBA by any of its clients. ANY QUESTIONS: JNBA's Chief Compliance Officer remains available to address any questions regarding rankings and/or recognitions, including the criteria used for any reflected ranking. For complete disclosure information, please visit <https://jnba.com/disclosure>.

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# Nerland–Cummings Group at Morgan Stanley



**Left to right: Josh Rebholz, Wealth Advisor Associate; Charlie Williams, Registered Associate; 2013 – 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021 winner Bruce Nerland, Senior Vice President, Financial Advisor; 2012 – 2021 winner Gregg M. Cummings, CFP® Senior Vice President, Financial Advisor; Donna Klicka, Registered Associate, Portfolio Associate**

## We Help Make Life Easier

At Nerland–Cummings Group at Morgan Stanley, we provide the knowledge, experience and world-class resources to help you make informed, confident decisions about your life, your family and your finances. We use a goals-based investment approach that measures success by how you're progressing toward meeting the goals most important to you. This enables you to stay flexible and proactive in managing your portfolio and identifies ways to help improve your results by either altering saving and spending behaviors or changing strategies. Goals-based investing can empower you to be confident in your decisions. We listen to you, so we understand exactly what you want to accomplish with your investments, taxes, philanthropy, estate planning strategies and other goals. Then, we help you customize a plan that reflects all your financial needs. Gregg is a 2012 – 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager and Bruce is a 2013 – 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager.

## Morgan Stanley

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# Mindful Asset Planning LLC



Left to right: Sylvie Rising, CFP candidate ; Trevor Ausen, CFP®, RICP®; Mark Brice, CFP®; Dan Heiar, CFP®; 2021 winner Steven Zimmerman, CFP®, ChFC®, CLU®; Susan Zimmerman, ChFC®, LMFT; Dan Talmo; Becky Sebastian, CFP®; Nick Augustin, CFP®; Emily Briney, CFP candidate; Lee Ryan, CFP®

## Helping You *Map* a More Prosperous Future

Mindful Asset Planning (MAP) is a fiduciary financial planning firm that has helped its clients make the most of their human and financial assets for more than 33 years. Human assets include your health, important relationships, interests and values.

MAP team members help you find the best path for making the absolute most of your resources at a pace that's comfortable and tailored to you. With an educational and nurturing approach, you gain understanding, clarity and confidence about how your steps will create funding for your important goals. Your plan grows with you throughout your planning experience with MAP.

MAP works with you to determine strategies that help you reach your future financial destinations with greater calm and ease. By creating definable benefits that are clearly outlined, a satisfying and meaningful relationship has enduring value for you.

- **Receive written, comprehensive financial planning and investment analysis**
- **Customized money personality report showing your historic style and preferences**
- **Unbiased advice that integrates your values, important relationships, goals and resources**
- **Wide array of money decisions provided, so you can be confident with your choices**
- **Fiduciary acting in clients' best interest, no commissions or payments from outside sources**



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MAP is a SEC registered RIA and fee-only Firm acting as a fiduciary at all times. MAP is member of NAPFA and never receives sales commissions or third-party fees.

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# Echo Huang

CFA, CFP®, CPA, President and Founder



10  
YEAR  
WINNER

## Confidence To Follow Your Dreams

- In-depth financial planning
- Personalized investment management
- Best-selling author of “Own Your Future, One Woman’s Story of Immigration and Financial Freedom”
- Five Star Wealth Manager, 2012 – 2021

Echo Huang left China at age 20 to cross the ocean with nothing but \$800 and the hope of achieving the American dream. Her courage and dedication fueled her journey through the business world over the next 20 years, gaining experience working in financial planning firms of all sizes before venturing off on her own. Today, as founder and president of Echo Wealth Management (EWM) with multiple designations such as CFP® certification, Certified Public Accountant (CPA) license and Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) charter, Echo helps the country’s top executives and entrepreneurs take the complexity out of their finances, giving them the confidence to follow their dreams and achieve their goals.

EWM offers a simplified approach to investment, retirement and tax planning. It all begins with holistic financial planning for each client, followed by the implementation of in-house investment strategies for a seamless experience from planning to execution. At EWM, we uphold our fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interests of our clients at all times.

We partner with individuals and families who recognize that growing and maintaining wealth is a guided and ongoing process. We believe our expertise is particularly valuable to the people who wish to be purposeful with their wealth to pursue their passions and dreams.

2012 – 2021 winner Echo Huang



WEALTH  
MANAGEMENT

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@EchoHuangCFP • #OwnYourFuture

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# WorkOptional



Left to right: Seven-year winner Jason P. Clark, MBA, CFP®; Margaret A. Leto; Carl S. Bang, MBA, CFA; 2021 winner Jaime L. Langva, CFP®; Nine-year winner Marc D. Langva, CFP®; Susan Bang; Connor Oak, Julie Gunderson

## We Are the Road Less Traveled

I started in Nowhere. Nowhere was near Underwood, Minnesota, a town of 310 and home of one of America's last two-room schools, which I attended. I was in fourth grade when my grandparents lost their farm and in sixth grade when my best friend's parents lost their home and left Underwood forever. Two years later, we had to leave Underwood.

Those events shook me and drove me to spend the next 15 years working toward complete financial freedom with WorkOptional. I worked 19 jobs, earned 243 college credits and started three companies. I hired financial advisors and followed the advice of my professors and other respected peers, yet I still found myself in the same financial situation my loved ones had been in years earlier. I realized I had to take a different road. I spent the next decade collaborating with professionals and affluent families from all walks of life, researching, testing and unlocking the secrets to their success. During my research, I discovered 10 key factors that allowed families to efficiently build their wealth. Ultimately, I was astonished; the public and the entire financial industry focused all of their time and energy on only one of these key factors and were oblivious to the other nine. It's no wonder why I was essentially spinning my wheels, while a select few were relaxing years ahead.

Jaime and I immediately began incorporating these discoveries. Very quickly, we were able to see our clients dramatically increase the amount of WorkOptional days in their lives. WorkOptional was founded on the belief that you can live the life you imagine. You can start in Nowhere and end up in your dream house on the lake — or wherever you dream. You can experience what every person should: health, wealth, happiness and time to enjoy all three. How? Start here. Picture your dream life and we will share with you the road less traveled. And one day soon, you will also find yourself miles from Nowhere and just inches from your dreams.



**WorkOptional**  
Private Wealth Management

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**FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER**

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Seven-year winner Thomas L. Menzel, CFP®, President, Principal Owner;  
2021 winner Laura A. Biermann, CFP®, Vice President, Principal Owner

## LEGACY FINANCIAL ADVISORS

3500 American Boulevard W, Suite 675 • Bloomington, MN 55431  
Phone: 952-893-5555 • [www.lfamn.com](http://www.lfamn.com) • [info@lfamn.com](mailto:info@lfamn.com)

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Thomas L. Menzel Laura A. Biermann

Your Vision, Our Expertise: Your Peace of Mind®

### The Legacy philosophy:

- Teamwork
- Clear communication
- Values-based advice
- A focus on objectives

Legacy Financial Advisors Corporation understands how life-changing events can affect your financial health. We help simplify your transitions and develop a communication link between you and the professionals working to help you achieve your financial goals. Successful financial management means planning for your family and philanthropic interests now and in the future. For over 30 years, we have helped individuals and families develop and realize their financial vision through open communication, honesty and integrity. At Legacy, our goal is to bring you peace of mind through the benefit of our expertise as you navigate life's changes today and tomorrow.

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Left to right: Stephanie Brady, Private Wealth Financial Consultant;  
2012 – 2021 winner Ryan Coogan, CPWA®, Managing Director – Investments, Senior Financial Advisor;  
2015 – 2021 winner Kathryn R. Waters, CFP®, Managing Director – Investments, Private Wealth Financial Advisor



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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Ryan Coogan and Kathryn Waters

### Team-Based Wealth Planning

- Goals-based planning
- Retirement income strategies
- Estate planning strategies

Kathy and Ryan have over 40 combined years of experience in the wealth management industry. Kathy is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional and Ryan is a Certified Private Wealth Advisor®. They have developed a wealth advisory practice built around goal-based planning, tailored investment strategies and a client service model focused on delivering an excellent client experience.

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### Investment and Insurance Products:

**NOT FDIC-Insured | NO Bank Guarantee | MAY Lose Value**

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Left to right: Theresa Corey; Zach Holloway; Three-year winner Andy Schelitzche, CFP®, ChFC®; Krista Peterson; Kevin Florey, RICP®



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schelitzche@wradvisors.com • www.manifestplanning.com

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Manifest Wealth Management

### Your Planning Team

- 2019 — 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager award winner Andy Schelitzche
- CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ practitioner
- Chartered Financial Consultant®

Our team has developed and refined a process to help our clients navigate all aspects of their financial life so they can focus on the things that are most important to them. We deliver advice that is integrated, comprehensive and customized, with each member of our team contributing focused perspectives and experience. We are committed to maintaining high standards of integrity and professionalism in our relationships with our clients. We pride ourselves on developing lifelong relationships with our clients and strive to provide them with the highest levels of advice, service and support.

Andy Schelitzche, Kevin Florey, Zach Holloway and Krista Peterson are Financial Advisors offering Securities and investment products and services through Waddell & Reed, Inc. (WRI), member FINRA/SIPC. Manifest Wealth Management is a separate entity from WRI. Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and federally registered CFP (with flame design) in the U.S.



Left to right: Back row: 2012 — 2021 winner Tom Humphrey, CFP®, Private Wealth Advisor; Anthony Hackenmueller, Financial Advisor; Front row: Jordan Redepenning, Financial Advisor; Dan Roeschlein, CFP®, Financial Advisor; 2012 — 2021 winner Reed Pawelk, Financial Advisor



Humphrey, Pawelk & Associates

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Tom Humphrey Reed Pawelk

### Be Brilliant®

- Focusing on retirement planning strategies
- Developing and maintaining close, meaningful relationships based on honesty and integrity

How will you be brilliant? We can help.

We're not only in the business of helping you pursue your wealth, we're also in the business of helping you grow your financial confidence in the future. We'll help you balance pursuing your dreams for tomorrow with what you want today. We'll use our exclusive Confident Retirement® approach, which begins with a straightforward conversation about your financial goals.

We're here to help you live the life you've earned. When you have the right advisor, life can be brilliant. Tom and Reed are 2012 — 2021 Five Star Wealth Managers.

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## Jacob Ruotsinoja

AIF®, PPC™, President

### Premier, Independent Wealth Management

- Independent, fee-only registered investment advisory services
- Disciplined risk management and state-of-the-art portfolio management technology

ICON Financial is dedicated to enriching the lives of our clients through our individual wealth management program and corporate retirement plan consulting. ICON Financial was formed with the goal of helping companies plan a better retirement for their employees, as well as helping individual investors plan for an independent lifestyle by building a retirement income plan. We envisioned a better way to do the right thing. Whether you are a corporate client or an individual client, we focus our efforts to provide you with strong customer support, priding ourselves on our proactive service model. We invite you to learn about ICON Financial thoughtful and impactful approach.



**ICON Financial**  
www.iconretirement.com

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**5**  
YEAR  
WINNER

Five-year winner Jacob Ruotsinoja

Investment advisory services are offered through CK Financial LLC dba ICON Financial, a Registered Investment Advisor in the state of MN. Insurance products and services are offered through Jacob Ruotsinoja, independent agent. ICON Financial and Jacob Ruotsinoja are affiliated.

**FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER**



## Scott Walsh, Matthew Dornik and Tony Schuster

### Financial Planning Starts With Your Dreams

- Investment planning
- Estate planning strategies
- Retirement planning strategies

As Ameriprise financial advisors, we believe success should be measured not just by your financial well-being, but by how confident you feel about your future. Our mission is to help you reach your financial goals through a personal relationship based on personalized, knowledgeable advice. This focus is designed to help you reach your goals, giving you greater confidence.

TreeLine Wealth Management, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, aims to guide clients toward a successful retirement. Are you prepared for the expected and unexpected in life? It's a big question. No one can predict what tomorrow will bring, but through our exclusive Confident Retirement® approach, we can help you — and those you care about — feel more confident and in control of your future.

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Left to right: 2012, 2014 – 2021 winner Scott Walsh, CFP®, APMA®, Private Wealth Advisor;  
2014 – 2021 winner Matthew Dornik, CFA, CFP®, Financial Advisor;  
2015 – 2021 winner Tony Schuster, CFP®, APMA®, Financial Advisor

**Ameriprise**  
Financial

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Left to right: 2020 winner Christopher Root, CFP®, CRPC®, ChFC®, CLTC®, APMA®, Financial Advisor;  
2020 – 2021 winner Amanda L. Petri, CRPC®, BFA™ Financial Advisor;  
2012 – 2021 winner Michelle Young, CFP®, CDFA®, ChFC®, ADPA®, CRPC®, CLTC®, APMA®, BFA™, MPAS<sup>SM</sup>  
Private Wealth Advisor



A private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC



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2407 109<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Suite 210 • Blaine, MN 55449

Phone: 952-857-1487 • confettiwealth@ampf.com • confettiwealth.com

## Confetti Wealth

### Team Approach With Tailored Advice

- Personalized, comprehensive approach to financial planning
- Customized financial solutions
- Dedicated, client-focused service

At Confetti Wealth, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, we believe in a team approach that combines the skill and experience of multiple advisors to give you more reasons to celebrate your financial life. We strive to build long-term relationships with clients, advising them on the issues that matter to them such as saving for education funding, retirement planning and estate and tax planning strategies.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER



Eight-year winner Frank S. Shimkus Jr.; Kelli Meyer\*;  
(Not pictured: Gertie Simon\*\*\*; Catherine Allred\*\*)

## Frank S. Shimkus Jr.

AIF®, CFS™

### Wealth Management and Tax Planning

- Wealth management integrated with income tax planning and preparation
- Relationship-centered and built on trust and integrity

We are more than just a large, independent Minnesota financial firm — we provide our clients with three important things:

- 1) Clarity: We help our clients organize their needs, concerns and goals.
- 2) Insight: We use our experience and understanding of clients' personal situations to identify the appropriate strategies.
- 3) Partnership: We work with clients and their families through the ages and stages of their lives.

We bring financial and tax knowledge to people in major life transitions, such as retirement, divorce or losing a job or spouse.



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Phone: 952-881-4533

fshimkus@bbfg.com • www.frankshimkus.com

\*Vice President of Branch Operations, \*\*Administrative Assistant, \*\*\*Executive Administrative Assistant. Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a Registered Investment Advisor, Member FINRA/SIPC. Tax services are not provided by LPL Financial.

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**8**  
YEAR  
WINNER

Left to right: Laura E. Adams, Senior Vice President, Client Services, Office Manager;  
Eight-year winner James K. Adams, President/CEO, ChFC®, CLU®, CEBS;  
2021 winner Anne M. Adams, Senior Financial Advisor



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jim.adams@adamsconsultinggroupllc.com • www.adamsconsultinggroupllc.com

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Adams Consulting Group, LLC

### Helping Secure Your Financial Future

- Retirement planning strategies
- Wealth accumulation and preservation strategies
- Qualified retirement plan consulting

Adams Consulting Group, LLC is a financial consulting firm built on a reputation of trust and experience. They help clients pursue their financial goals, accumulate wealth and protect against financial devastation through insurance. They use their knowledge to guide individuals through their financial and retirement planning processes. They also assist corporations in the management of their retirement plans with a focus on providing comprehensive employee education.

Investment Advisor Representative and Registered Representative of, and securities and investment advisory services offered through, Voya Financial Advisors, Inc., member SIPC. Adams Consulting Group, LLC is not a subsidiary of or controlled by Voya Financial Advisors, Inc. CN1407153\_1122.

## Glenn A. Rusler

CFP®, ChFC®, Private Wealth Advisor



**10**  
YEAR  
WINNER



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ameripriseadvisors.com/glenn.a.rusler

Experience Makes the Difference

- 30 years of financial experience
- Experienced advice for uncertain times
- Unique retirement income solutions
- 2012 – 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager award winner

As a private wealth advisor with Ameriprise, I have the experience and tools to provide various income distribution strategies for this low-interest environment. My well-rounded knowledge and experience allow me to provide clients with clear, knowledgeable and personalized retirement income solutions.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Richard C. Hoyt

President



**4**  
YEAR  
WINNER



5710 Ridge Road  
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Phone: 952-470-4714  
rhoyt@analyticsllc.net  
www.analyticsllc.net

Innovative Strategies for Portfolio Management

- Specializes in exchange traded funds
- Wealth and risk management
- Individually managed accounts

Analytics Investment Advisors, LLC is an asset management firm specializing in wealth and risk management. It uses separately managed accounts and exchange traded funds (ETFs) as a means of achieving long-term investment objectives consistent with suitable risk considerations. Richard Hoyt received a Ph.D. in applied economics from the University of Minnesota and has been interviewed and quoted frequently by some of the leading media centers for financial opinion and information, including Bloomberg Radio, CNN Money, MSN Money, Kiplinger and CNBC.

Fee-based investment advisory services. Securities and reporting offered through Fidelity Investments and Schwab Institutional, members FINRA and SIPC.

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## Paul Notermann

CFP®, ChFC®, CLU®, CRPC®, Financial Advisor, Managing Director



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paul.notermann@ampf.com  
ameripriseadvisors.com/paul.notermann

8  
YEAR  
WINNER

Putting Clients First; It's What I Do

- 34 years of experience
- 2012 – 2017, 2020 and 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager
- CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ practitioner
- Burnsville Rotary membership chairperson

I'm proud to be associated with a firm known for its service and how it relates to clients because serving your interests is my priority. Every day I serve clients in big and small ways that help them achieve their goals today and tomorrow. I offer comprehensive financial advice and a broad range of solutions to help you and your loved ones live brilliantly, now and in the future. With the right financial advisor, life can be brilliant.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Mike Leach

Financial Advisor



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Waite Park, MN 56387  
Phone: 320-558-2955  
mikel@efsadvisors.com  
www.efsadvisors.com

Navigating Your Financial Future

- 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager award winner

As a financial advisor with EFS Advisors, Mike caters specifically to each of his client's unique situations and works in partnership with them to navigate life's many financial decisions for each stage of life. With over 30 years of experience in the financial services industry, Mike and his team are prepared to meet the needs of clients wherever they may be on their retirement planning journey and work to build long-standing relationships through hard work and trust.

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Casey A. Larson

Chief Strategy Officer



7300 Metro Boulevard, Suite 135  
Edina, MN 55439  
Phone: 952-641-6740  
casey@larsoninvesting.com  
larsoninvesting.com/team/casey-larson

2  
YEAR  
WINNER

Plan for Tomorrow. Live for Today.

After selling his previous company and starting his practice in 2007, as the markets were beginning their monstrous crash, Casey was able to help many weather the storm of the recession and learned how to build exit strategies into every portfolio developed for his clients. As an independent financial advisor, he also focuses on maximizing return, but doing so in the most efficient or risk-adverse way, with the primary goal of allowing clients more day to day peace-of-mind while staying impartial to company or investment options. Although the professions in the clientele vary, the three most common clients are business owners, medical professionals and engineers. The first due to Casey's knowledge of business succession planning and how to build and protect a business to eventually sell for the highest possible price and the other two mostly because of the pragmatic and educational approach to personal investing, maximization of work place benefits and balancing long-term goals with current post-graduate debt scenarios.

Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a registered investment advisor. Member FINRA/SIPC.

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Wendy Lee Gillespie

MBA, CFP®, BFA™, Private Wealth Advisor



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Plymouth, MN 55447  
Phone: 763-543-5183  
wendy.l.gillespie@ampf.com  
ameripriseadvisors.com/wendy.l.gillespie

10  
YEAR  
WINNER

2012 – 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager

- CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ practitioner
- Behavioral Financial Advisor™
- Over two decades of experience
- Prepares for the expected and unexpected

Putting the needs of clients first is the approach I believe in. As a financial advisor, I work with you to find the right financial solutions to help you plan for your unique goals.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

The Five Star Wealth Manager award, administered by Crescendo Business Services, LLC (dba Five Star Professional), is based on 10 objective criteria. Eligibility criteria – required: 1. Credentialed as a registered investment adviser or a registered investment adviser representative; 2. Actively licensed as a registered investment adviser or as a principal of a registered investment adviser firm for a minimum of 5 years; 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review (As defined by Five Star Professional, the wealth manager has not: A. Been subject to a regulatory action that resulted in a license being suspended or revoked, or payment of a fine; B. Had more than a total of three settled or pending complaints filed against them and/or a total of five settled, pending, dismissed or denied complaints with any regulatory authority or Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process. Unfavorable feedback may have been discovered through a check of complaints registered with a regulatory authority or complaints registered through Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process; feedback may not be representative of any one client's experience; C. Individually contributed to a financial settlement of a customer complaint; D. Filed for personal bankruptcy within the past 11 years; E. Been terminated from a financial services firm within the past 11 years; F. Been convicted of a felony); 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal standards; 5. Accepting new clients. Evaluation criteria – considered: 6. One-year client retention rate; 7. Five-year client retention rate; 8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered; 9. Number of client households served; 10. Education and professional designations. Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final list of Five Star Wealth Managers. Award does not evaluate quality of services provided to clients. Once awarded, wealth managers may purchase additional profile ad space or promotional products. The Five Star award is not indicative of the wealth manager's future performance. Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their client's assets. The inclusion of a wealth manager on the Five Star Wealth Manager list should not be construed as an endorsement of the wealth manager by Five Star Professional or this publication. Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager or any wealth manager is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected wealth managers will be awarded this accomplishment by Five Star Professional in the future. For more information on the Five Star award and the research/selection methodology, go to [fivestarpromotional.com](http://fivestarpromotional.com). 4,004 Twin Cities-area wealth managers were considered for the award; 630 (16% of candidates) were named 2021 Five Star Wealth Managers. 2020: 3,606 considered, 589 winners; 2019: 3,504 considered, 671 winners; 2018: 2,622 considered, 591 winners; 2017: 2,304 considered, 836 winners; 2016: 2,083 considered, 854 winners; 2015: 2,673 considered, 825 winners; 2014: 1,931 considered, 844 winners; 2013: 2,151 considered, 863 winners; 2012: 1,256 considered, 624 winners.



## Dennis Chan

CFP®, Vice President



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Minneapolis, MN 55416  
Phone: 763-923-7527  
dchan@everestfg.us  
www.everestfg.us

**10**  
YEAR  
WINNER

Personalized Wealth  
Management Solutions

- Trustworthy, experienced, knowledgeable
- Proactive strategies, exceptional service
- Independent, fee-based wealth management solutions

Firm believers in comprehensive planning, Dennis Chan's team collaborates with CPAs and estate planning attorneys to provide clients with holistic wealth management solutions. They utilize asset and tax management processes to help clients preserve and grow wealth, achieve financial independence and enhance family wealth transitions. As a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ practitioner, Dennis specializes in retirement income planning to help support clients' lifetime cash flow needs. Dennis and his team work hard to provide outstanding service when helping clients reach their visions and dreams.

Securities offered through Securities America, INC(SAI). Member FINRA/SIPC. Advisory services offered through Everest Financial Group, LLC. Everest Financial Group, LLC is independent of Securities America.

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Beth Wills

CFP®, CFS™, Private Wealth Advisor



715 Old Highway 8 NW  
New Brighton, MN 55112  
Phone: 651-635-1705  
beth.h.wills@ampf.com

**10**  
YEAR  
WINNER

Experienced Advisor Offering  
Comprehensive Advice

- Retirement income strategies
- Comprehensive financial planning

As an Ameriprise Private Wealth Advisor, Beth is driven to help clients plan for their financial dreams. Her passion is centered on a comprehensive approach to financial planning and, along with her dedicated staff, administering excellent service to clients. Beth specializes in ongoing financial planning, incorporating prudent investment strategies with risk management, tax and estate planning strategies to help clients plan for their goals. Beth Wills is a 2012 – 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager award winner.

Ameriprise Financial, Inc. does not offer tax or legal advice. Consult with a tax advisor or attorney. Investment advisory products and services are made available through Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, a registered investment adviser. Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Jason Moehring

Wealth Advisor, CFP®, LUTCF®, FIC



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Blaine, MN 55449  
Phone: 763-862-2885  
jason.moehring@thrivent.com  
connect.thrivent.com/jason-moehring

**10**  
YEAR  
WINNER

Financial Advice That Matches  
How You Live

- Retirement planning strategies based on your goals
- Offering a broad range of investment and financial services
- Helping you find success

Jason helps people live generously while using customized planning for savings and income.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

## Patrick Boria

President



### Boria Wealth Management, Ltd.

Boria Wealth Management, Ltd.  
125 Lake Street W, Suite 213  
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Phone: 952-314-7900  
patrick@boriawealth.com  
www.boriawealth.com

**8**  
YEAR  
WINNER

We Believe Financial Security Is About  
More Than Just Retirement

- Five Star Wealth Manager 2013, 2015 – 2021
- 25 years of investment and retirement planning
- Personalized service focused on your needs and goals

Patrick and his team take the time to find out what is most important to you, then they help you design and implement your personal investment and retirement strategy.

Registered Representative. Securities offered through Cambridge Investment Research, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC. Investment Advisor Representative Cambridge Investment Research Advisors, Inc., a Registered Investment Advisor. Boria Wealth Management, LTD and Cambridge are not affiliated. Third party rankings and recognitions from rating services or publications are not indicative of past or future investment performance.

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

9  
YEAR  
WINNER**Bill Knapp**

CFP®, ChFC®, Private Wealth Advisor, Managing Director



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ameripriseadvisors.com/william.fknapp

I strive to bring integrity, teamwork and extensive experience when helping clients handle the complexities of wealth. We'll explore the opportunities your wealth can bring and ways to preserve your wealth. Five Star Wealth Manager, 2012 – 2017, 2019 – 2021.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

9  
YEAR  
WINNER**James R. Mertz**

CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™



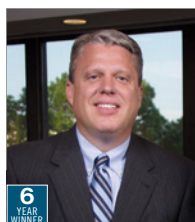
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Phone: 952-831-5660  
Jim@mertzwealth.com  
www.mertzwealth.com

A holistic approach to achieving financial security is best. We look for ways to help protect and grow your wealth.

It's not what you earn — it's what you keep.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

6  
YEAR  
WINNER**Scott Haakenson**

CFP®, AIF®



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- Five Star Wealth Manager, 2016 – 2021

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

Sound Money Group evolved from the radio show "Sound Money," which is hosted by Bob Potter. The firm carries on the program's tradition of straight talk and uncommon wisdom. They offer a personalized, holistic approach to clients' finances and values.

8  
YEAR  
WINNER**Richard Rosati**

CFP®, Senior Financial Advisor



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Bloomington, MN 55420  
Office: 612-316-4339  
fa.wellsfargoadvisors.com/richard-rosati/index.htm

My team and I work for a select group of individuals and families to help them build, manage, preserve and transition wealth. I am a 2014 – 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager. Please contact me for more information.

**Investment and Insurance Products: NOT FDIC Insured / NO Bank Guarantee / MAY Lose Value**

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

2  
YEAR  
WINNER**Robert J. Hanten**

Principal, Financial Advisor, MRFC, LUTC®



A Branch Office of Pilot Capital  
Management Corporation  
14216 23rd Avenue N  
Plymouth, MN 55447  
Office: 763-591-0405

Financial success requires self-knowledge, discipline and a long-term plan that includes not just the management of investment risk, but the mastery of household budgeting. It also requires debt and leverage management, insuring against insurable risks all while maintaining liquidity, use and control of your financial assets. By creating a balanced household financial structure, this can allow our clients to ride out hard times and capitalize on opportunities. We guide our clients to put time and resources towards what really matters and try to help them ignore the noise. This is how we keep our clients on course.

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

10  
YEAR  
WINNER**Amie Burnett**

J.D., CFP®, Financial Advisor



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marie.a.burnett@ampf.com  
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Amie Burnett is a 2012 – 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager award winner.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

9  
YEAR  
WINNER**Jeffrey Allen Myers**

Financial Advisor, AAMS®



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- 2013 – 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager

Investors should conduct their own evaluation of a financial professional as working with a financial advisor is not a guarantee of future financial success. Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC.

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

Retirement, education, caregiving, improving a home or enjoying travel and leisure pursuits — most of us have multiple financial goals. Working together, we can prioritize your needs and develop strategies to help you meet those goals.

10  
YEAR  
WINNER**LeAnn Lenander**

President, Owner, CFP®



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Bloomington, MN 55425  
Phone: 651-365-5000  
leann@lenanderadvisory.com  
lenanderadvisory.com

We are a financial planning and money management firm assisting clients in reaching their goals and objectives. Financial expertise with a human touch is our result.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

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### Mark N. Miller

CEO, Founder, CFP®, MSFS



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Phone: 651-998-9822  
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www.northoaksfs.com

North Oaks Financial Services is a local, family-owned financial management firm serving the Twin Cities area. From estate planning to investment allocations, Mark offers a wide range of wealth management services that can help you gain confidence in your complete financial picture.

Securities offered through LPL Financial. Member FINRA/SIPC.

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER



### Michele L. Martin

President, ChFC®, MBA



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mmartin@luriwealthadvisors.com  
luriwealthadvisors.com

Michele implements the design and delivery of integrated wealth management and financial solutions to clients. With over 25 years of expertise, she offers a unique perspective to help guide investment decisions and planning in coordination with your tax strategies and estate plan.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER



### Max Mittlestaedt

Senior Financial Advisor, Senior Vice President – Investments



Advisors

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- 2020 – 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER



Continued from FS-6

## Wealth Managers

Amy Winsness Aadalen - Morgan Stanley

Brian Joseph Adamek - SBI Wealth Management

Denise Angelic Alemayehu - DA Financial Advisors

Laurence James Altman - Fortune Financial

Dipali Shailesh Amin - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Ryan Hunter Anderson - Fortune Financial

Nicholas John Andresen - 360 Financial

Jeffrey David Angel - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Michael D. Arnold - Arnold Financial Svc.

Christina Elisabeth Asmus  
- Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Benjamin Walter Auckenthaler  
- Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Michael Joseph Bakalars - Wells Fargo Advisors

Tim Wayne Baltzer - Wells Fargo Advisors

Robert David Bayer - Stonebrooke Wealth Management

Joshua John Beck - Thrivent

Jeffrey Howard Bemel - Equitable Advisors

Mary Beth Bennett - Morgan Stanley

David Matthew Benning - Logan Park Wealth Management

Matthew Alan Berhow - All Star Financial

Richard Mark Berquist - Investors Financial Group

Mary Colleen Beseke - Lincoln Investment

Frederick Louis Bester - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Amy L. Bestler - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Timothy William Biekkola  
- Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

James Rudy Biermaier - Biermaier Financial Management

Michael Neil Bilotta - JNBA Financial Advisors

Mary Margret Binger - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Daniel Robert Bishop - Wells Fargo Advisors

Richard J. Bjorklund - Bjorklund Wood Financial

Matthew Michael Borchert  
- Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Bruce A. Bouta - Great Lakes Pension Consultants

James L. Braaten - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Steven N. Brandt - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Charles Edward Braniff - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Timothy Peter Braun - Oakridge Financial

Dana M. Brewer - Birchwood Financial Partners

Anthony Novak Brinda - UnderDog Wealth Management

Natalie Ann Brinkman - Turnkey Financial Mgmt

Chad David Broberg - Thrivent

Matthew M. Brocker - Legacy Wealth

Michael Douglas Brocker - Legacy Wealth

Michael Thomas Brown - Birch Cove Group

Travis L. Buck - Kusske Financial

Joel Michael Budd - Summit Investment Advisors

Natalie N. Burns - Burns Brothers Financial Group

Gregg Kenneth Burrell - LPL Financial

Tim Bush - LPL Financial

Abigail Rhodes Campbell - Wells Fargo Advisors

Stuart James Campbell - Campbell Wealth Advisors

Gregory A. Carlson - Carlson Capital Management

James P. Carlson - Carlson Financial Strategies

Jeffrey R. Carlson - Carlson Capital Management

Ryan Michael Carruth - Shavlik Financial Service

James Casey - Voya Financial Advisors

Michael Douglas Cassidy - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Susan C. Cevette - WatersEdge Wealth Management

Rene Carl Chiriboga - Wells Fargo Advisors

David Scott Chisholm - Morgan Stanley

Theodore Ernst Contag - Parable Wealth Partners

Tyler Stephen Cook - Parable Wealth Partners

Matthew L. Cookson - Cookson Financial

Douglas Dale Cozad - AdvisorNet Financial Partners

Gavin Edward Craig - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

John Edward Crosland - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Kelly P. Cutsforth - Wells Fargo Advisors

Robert Stai Davis - Financial Compass

Dean Clyde Dawson - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Leonard V. Dayton - Cetera Advisor Network

Bernie William De La Rosa  
- Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Patrick John Deeg - Marks Group Wealth Management

Sheri Lynn Deutz - Thrivent

Steve Boyd Dixon - Birchwood Financial Partners

Jeffrey Warren Doppelmann  
- Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Matthew Walter Dobbins - Thrivent

Jay Allen Dobbs - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Randy Gerard Doroff - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Todd Paul Doroff - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Mike Dugan Dorsey - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Christopher Richardson Dougall - CC Dunnavan & Co.

John Alfred Dow Jr. - Morgan Stanley

Paul Donald Drach - Drach Financial

Craig Drake - Principal Securities

Jason Warren Dreger - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Benjamin James Dreon - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Daniel James Dugan - Financial Perspectives

David W. Dugan - Financial Perspectives

Trevor J. Dunn - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Richard Last Dworsky - Legacy Private Wealth Group

Stephen John Dygos - Schwarz Dygos Wheeler Investment Advisors

Ronald Eugene Eckstam - LPL Financial

Braden Charles Ellis - Ely Private Wealth

Jack Lee Elvestrom - Morgan Stanley

James Dean Elvestrom - Thrivent

Joshua Fox Ely - Ely Private Wealth

Bruce Andrew Ensrud - Thrivent

Rick Lee Epple - Aurochs Financial Group

Angela M. Erickson - Berger Financial Group

Johan Lars Eriksson - Morgan Stanley

Blake B. Faust - Wipfli Financial Advisors

Doug John Faust - Next Financial Group

Jack Fay - Oppenheimer & Co.

Sabrina Ann Fay - Thrivent

Kelly David Fellows - Thrivent

Scott T. Fleming - Minnesota Financial Resources

Joel A. Fliegel - Wealth Enhancement Advisory Services

Frederick Theodore Frederickson  
- Wells Fargo Advisors

Richard J. Fromstein - Morgan Stanley

Alexander Mark Gabriel - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Mark Anthony Gabriel - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Michael Joseph Gagnon - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Tim B. Gamrath - Thrivent

Roxane T. Gehle - Merrill Lynch

Steven John Gehrke - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Megan E. Gehrman - Sterling Retirement Resources

William Robert Gesse - NFP

Daniel David Getsch - Flightplan Financial Group

Todd Victor Giere - Giere Investment Services

Marshall William Gifford - Gifford Financial

Todd Sterling Gillingham - Landmark Wealth Management Group

Anthony M. Gleason - Gleason4 Financial

Troy Allen Gourde - Investors Financial Group

Kevin M. Graf - Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

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## » WEALTH MANAGERS »

Daniel Alan Grassman · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Dean Jeffrey Grohs · Wells Fargo Advisors

Tim Charles Gunderson · Tradition Wealth Management

John Paul Gustavson  
· CliftonLarsonAllen

Steve Scott Haagenson · AdvisorNet Financial Partners

Patrick John Hagan · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

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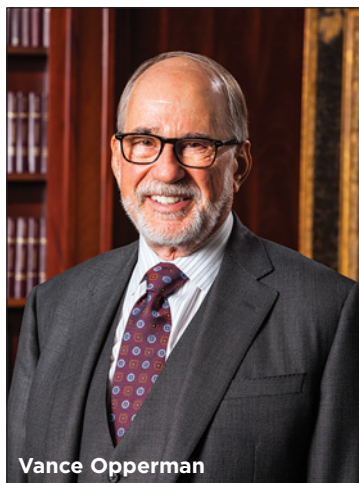
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# Let's Really Vote for President

To: Future presidential voters  
Independence Hall  
520 Chestnut St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19106



Vance Opperman



It is mathematically possible today for a candidate to win the presidency with less than 22 percent of the popular vote.

## Dear future presidential voters:

The election for president of the United States is Dec. 14. You can't vote. Electors in the Electoral College choose our president, not us. The Electoral College is neither electoral nor collegiate. Five times, the winner of the popular vote has failed to be elected president. Elected, you say, by whom? Well, of course, the Electoral College. Ever meet a presidential elector? They are less known than your average watershed conservation district commissioner, who at least is actually elected. Not so the people who actually do vote for president. Electoral College electors are selected by candidate campaigns and nominated by political parties. But at least, you say, they vote as their states voted. Well, actually not. No federal law, nor the law in 17 states, requires electors to vote for the winner (or loser) in their state. In 2016, for example, four electors from the state of Washington voted against their state's winner; one voted for Faith Spotted Eagle.

In 2016, Donald Trump won with a 77,000-vote plurality across three states (Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania). It is mathematically possible today for a candidate to win the presidency with less than 22 percent of the popular vote. Wyoming voters have four times the power of a voter in California. Worse, if the Electoral College votes do not result in a declared winner (announced in Congress on Jan. 6), the selection of president goes to the House of Representatives, with each state getting one vote. The House has actually picked three presidents. According to an analysis by *The Washington Post*, if an election goes to the House today, a candidate could become president with 16 percent of the popular vote.

The Electoral College is

not a carefully thought-out system crafted by deity-inspired Founding Fathers. Rather, it was a political compromise crafted by James Madison to bridge the gap between those who favored direct election and those who wanted Congress to elect.

The "winner take all" system used by the Electoral College means that millions of voters (Trump voters in California, for example) have no voice, and no incentive, to vote for president. Defenders of the Electoral College claim that small states receive presidential candidate attention that would not exist if a direct election system were used; candidates would only visit large urban centers and large states to run up their vote totals. Yet under our current Electoral College system, an analysis of the 2016 election shows that 94 percent of general election campaign stops were concentrated in just 12 states.

Campaigns are not just general election phenomena. Every four years, pundits and editorial writers bemoan the influence of states like Iowa and New Hampshire (and, in 2020, South Carolina) on our presidential election process. This influence is not the result of the 1789-crafted Electoral College compromise; it is the result of (1) party rules and (2) media coverage. Neither of these two factors will be changed by a change in the Electoral College.

Unlike 1789, media is now ubiquitous and social. Voters are influenceable without physical campaign visits. When every vote counts, all media focus (even by Rus-

sians) will be on all voters. We are not a country today defined by state residence or the difficulty of travel. We are as mobile as our phones, and as reachable.

The Founding Fathers had little faith in direct democracy; only the House was elected directly (because taxes are collected directly). The Supreme Court was nominated by an Electoral College-chosen president, confirmed by the Senate (senators were elected by state legislatures until 1912), and never required to face voters because they were appointed for life. The Founding Fathers believed the "wise" Electoral College electors would reject any candidate who was unfit. How has that worked out?

No, the time is now for all of our votes to count. Several ways to accomplish this have been proposed, including the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, adopted by 15 states and the District of Columbia. Under the compact, each state pledges its Electoral College votes to the winner of the national election. Adopting the compact would avoid having to go through the cumbersome process of amending the Constitution.

We have faced amending the Constitution before on other sobering issues. If we can amend the Constitution to abolish Prohibition, surely we can amend it to be rid of this 1789 hangover. Abolish the Electoral College. The time is now for all of our votes to count.

**Sincerely,**  
**Vance K. Opperman**  
**Anxious to vote for president**

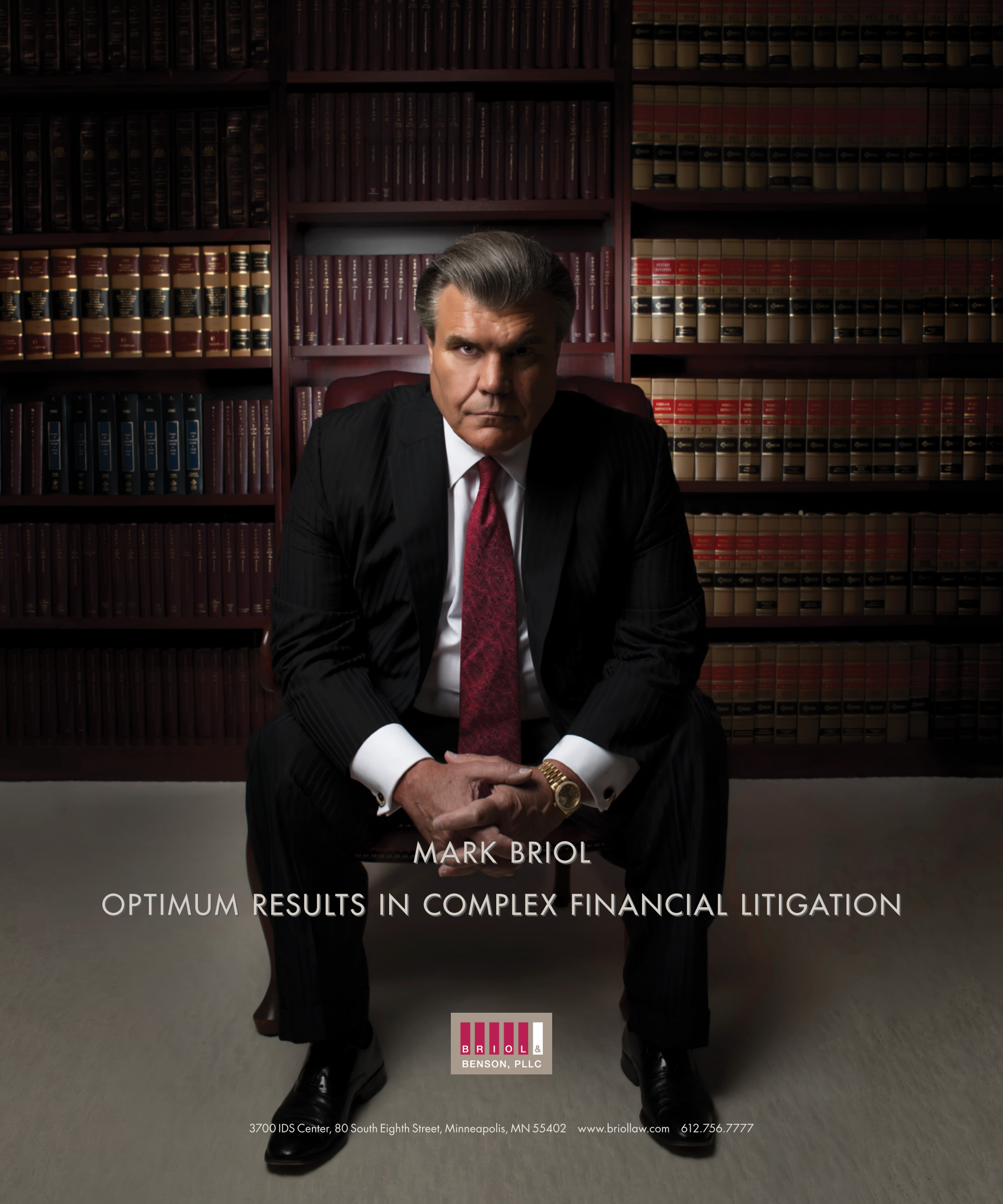
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