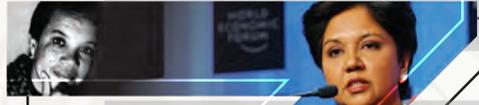




**NAWBO**  
SOUTHERN NEVADA  
National Association of Women Business Owners



# WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS 2018



**Nevada Business**  
THE DECISION MAKER'S MAGAZINE

SPECIAL REPORT



4,200+  
STUDENTS

\$57 Million  
IN NEW  
CAMPUS FACILITIES



3,400+  
ALUMNI



30+  
CLUBS AND  
ORGANIZATIONS



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At Nevada State College, our students are encouraged to forge new paths, develop broad views, and prepare to serve the community and workforce as independent, self-sufficient graduates. We offer an education of exceptional value with more than 45 career-driven majors and minors to choose from. We invite you to explore our dynamic institution that focuses on inclusion, accessibility, and empowerment.



NEVADA STATE  
COLLEGE

**Be bold. Be great. Be State.**





# Women TO WATCH

**Nominations  
Open May 14th**

*Nevada Business Magazine's* August edition will feature Women to Watch in Nevada. Nominate deserving women from May 14 to June 8. For a full list of the rules and to nominate go to [NevadaBusiness.com/WomentoWatch](http://NevadaBusiness.com/WomentoWatch)

**Nevada  
Business**  
THE DECISION MAKER'S magazine

**NEVADABUSINESS.COM**

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## AN ICONIC HISTORY

### NAWBO Southern Nevada



**THE** mission of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) Southern Nevada is to educate, empower and promote women business owners to experience success in all economic, political and social arenas. The organization provides informative and success driven monthly meetings which include time devoted to networking with other women entrepreneurs.



The first meeting of Southern Nevada's chapter of NAWBO was held on February 26, 1990. The inaugural class had 52 members and the meeting was standing-room only. That early-success was contagious and, only two years after forming, the first NAWBO National Conference was held in Las Vegas. The conference had record attendance including nearly 200 walk-ins. In 1995, just five short years after forming, three NAWBO Southern Nevada members were elected to the Nevada delegation for the White House conference on small business.



In 1998 the chapter launched the Women of Distinction Awards, honoring women from all walks of life for their work in improving Southern Nevada's business landscape. This year's Women of Distinction Awards, known as WODA, features remarkable women from a variety of industries and backgrounds. Their strength, poise and success are an inspiration to Southern Nevadans. *Nevada Business Magazine* and NAWBO applaud their hard work and honor their commitment to the Battle Born state.

Congratulations to the 2018 class of WODA finalists.



**SPECIAL THANKS** to the Congressional Delegation of Southern Nevada for providing Certificates of Commendation honoring the Women of Distinction Awards finalists.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES FOR DONATING TO THE EVENT'S SILENT AUCTION** | *50 Shades of Blonde Show Missy Day/Jill Branson, AitaK Solutions LLC, Ben & Jerry's, Beyoutiful Nails & Boutique, Blo Blow Dry Bar, Burdick Law, Carson's Kitchen, Charlie Palmer's Steakhouse, Demi's Gift Baskets, Elite Eye Care, Eyediology, Focus Plumbing, Four Seasons Hotel, Fred Day, Glimpse Medical, Gulden Dye, Homemadebyaja, ImageWords Communications, Inspire by Design, Little Candle Tea Company, Louisa Voisine, Lockdown Escape Rooms, Inc., Magnum Coffee Roastery, Market Right Wines, Max Pawn, McDonald Law Group, Mediation Around the Table, Metro Diner, MJ Christensen Diamonds, Nevada Business Magazines, Office Squad, Paint Party Night, Passion 4 Success, Mimi Peckham, PR Plus Public Relations, Premier Designs Jewelry, Prosperity Uncorked, Red Mountain Resort, Roche Constructors, Inc., Senator Dean Heller, Southwest Airlines, Spiegel Entertainment, Table 34, The Salt Room, Dr. Reeta Thukral, Upside Business Solutions, Wine and Canvas*



SPECIAL REPORT MAY 2018

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## 2018 PROGRAM

### President's Welcome Reception

### Lunch

### Welcoming Remarks

**Sandra Roche**  
*President, NAWBO Southern Nevada and  
Chair of the 2018 Women of Distinction Awards*

### Mistress of Ceremonies

**Sherry Swensk**  
*Anchor, KLAS-TV 8 News Now*

### Program Sponsor

**Connie Brennan**  
*Publisher and CEO, Nevada Business Magazine*

### Main Event Sponsor

**Lora Picini**  
*President of Equity, Strategic Policy  
& Regulatory Affairs, Caesars Entertainment*

### Keynote Speaker

**Eileen Moore**  
*Regional President, The Cromwell  
Flamingo and The LINQ Hotel & Casino*

### Entertainment

**Michelle Johnson**  
*CEO, Diva Las Vegas Productions*  
**Lion Fludd**

### Awards Presentation

**Sherry Swensk**  
*Anchor, KLAS-TV 8 News Now*

### Entrepreneur of the Year Award Sponsor

**Thomas J. Roche**  
*President, Roche Constructors, Inc.*

### Rising Star Award Sponsor

**Bart Patterson**  
*President, Nevada State College*

### Glass Ceiling Award Sponsor

**Magaly Munoz-Mejorado, National Diversity**  
*Relations Manager, MGM Resorts*

### Closing Remarks



She  
knows  
you  
run six miles  
before breakfast.  
That  
you  
are a  
rabid football fan.  
And that  
your goal  
is to go  
international.

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company on solid financial ground,  
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# WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

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### MAIN EVENT SPONSOR



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### RISING STAR AWARD



### GLASS CEILING AWARD



### TABLE DECOR SPONSORS



### CORPORATE GOVERNMENT SERVICES AWARD



### REAL ESTATE CONSTRUCTION AWARD



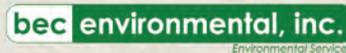
### PHOTOGRAPHY



### ENTERTAINMENT



### SIGNATURE SPONSORS





KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
**Eileen Moore**

Regional President | The Cromwell, Flamingo and The LINQ Hotel & Casino

**EILEEN** Moore is regional president of the Flamingo, the LINQ and the Cromwell casino resorts on the Las Vegas Strip. Her region has over 5,000 employees and contributes over \$500 million in revenues. Caesars Entertainment, Inc. is a casino entertainment company with over 40 casinos, 70,000 employees and \$8.6 billion in annual revenues. Moore also serves as a member of the company’s Capital Committee.

She was previously regional president and general manager of the Horseshoe Casino and Hotel in southern Indiana. Under her leadership, the property won its first-ever designation as a best place to work in the region by the *Courier-Journal*, and was named the top corporate philanthropist in the region by *Business First*. She also had operational oversight for two Illinois casinos and has served as assistant general manager of Harrah’s New Orleans. Eileen has earned Caesars highest honors as a recipient of both the Chairman’s Award and the Excellence in Leadership Award for the first-ever hotel/gaming revenue management system deployment. Before joining Harrah’s in 1999, Moore was the national director of revenue management for Fairmont Hotels in San Francisco. She has also held several revenue management and hotel operations roles with Hilton Hotels at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City.

Eileen served four years as treasurer of the Horseshoe Foundation, an organization awarding millions of dollars in charitable grants and scholarships each year. She is also a past board member for the Muhammad Ali Center, the Dean’s Advisory Board for the Hilton College of Hospitality at the University of Houston, Indiana University Southeast, the Kentucky Science Center and the Louisiana Children’s Museum. She is on the Women’s Leadership Council for United Way and on the steering committee for Global Gaming Women sponsored by the American Gaming Association. She is also a member of the Young Presidents Organization.

Eileen and her twelve year old son Eddie reside in Henderson.



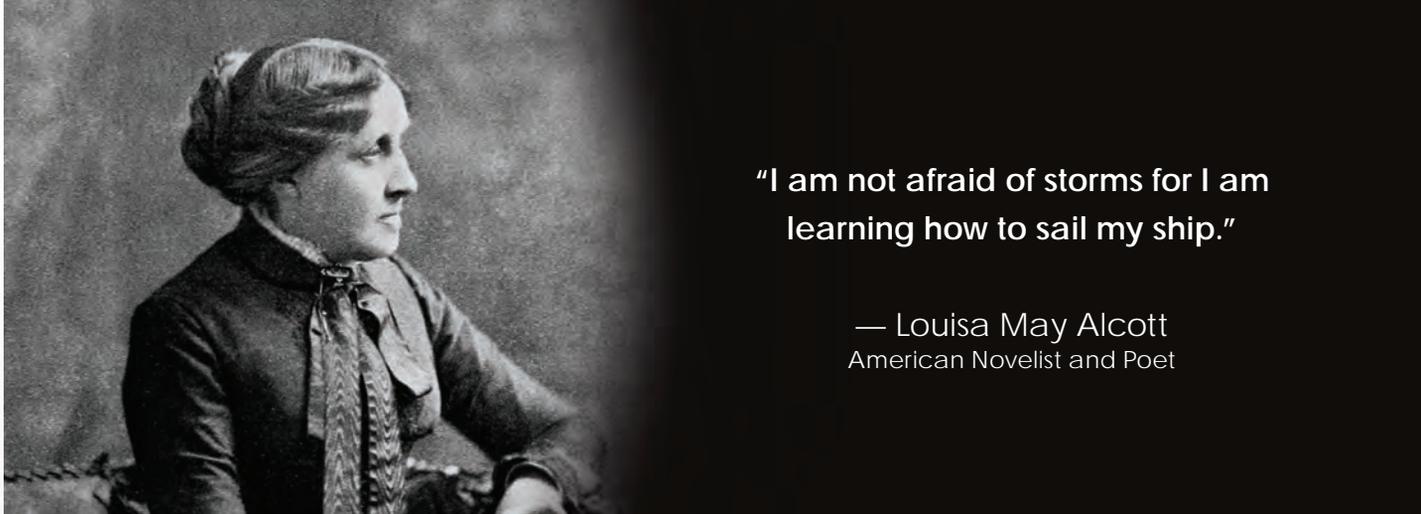
MISTRESS OF CEREMONY  
**Sherry Swensk**

Weather Anchor | 8 News NOW

**SHERRY** Swensk wakes up viewers each morning at o’dark thirty with a sunny smile, no matter what the forecast. As morning weather anchor for 8 News NOW Good Day, Sherry says she has the best TV job in Southern Nevada because everybody loves to talk about our weather! And, it’s a big reason so many people enjoy living here. She started the morning shift at KLAS in 1994 and has seen many changes in Las Vegas. Her own life changes have included her son, Ethan, who is now a teenager, and becoming very involved with the Alzheimer’s Association through her mother’s battle with Lewy Body Dementia.

Born and raised in Texas, the Lone Star state may have Sherry’s heart, but she loves the great wild, west. She started her broadcasting career in Dallas, and then quickly moved on to Los Angeles and San Francisco editing and producing entertainment programs. She began her weather career in Fresno, eventually arriving in Las Vegas the night the Hilton sign blew down during big thunderstorms and knew she was in the right place to be a weather forecaster.

Sherry’s segment, *Living Green in Las Vegas*, is designed to increase awareness about taking care of our fragile desert environment. Sherry says she can really see the wonderful changes taking place to conserve resources and help sustain our fabulous city for visitors and the people who call Southern Nevada home.



“I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship.”

— Louisa May Alcott  
American Novelist and Poet

ARTS | ENTERTAINMENT | MEDIA



**Adriana Arevalo**

Adriana Arevalo Group, LLC  
President and Consultant

Adriana Arévalo is a Colombian journalist with over 24 years of experience in local, national and international media. After serving as a news director with Univision Nevada for more than nine years, she decided to start a new career path. She then founded the Adriana Arevalo Group, a consulting firm.

In her business, she has helped different types of clients in the development and implementation of social media, public relations, content creation and community outreach. Adriana has also been working on different projects as a public speaker and is a journalism and media teacher at SLAM, a Henderson charter school.

She has won 10 Regional Emmy Awards for outstanding performance as a writer, executive producer, and reporter. She has also been honored with congressional recognitions for her contributions to different civic engagement campaigns

Adriana is a wife and mother of two young children.



**Ruth Furman**

ImageWords Communications  
Principal

Ruth Furman is principal of ImageWords Communications, which she launched in Las Vegas in 2001. ImageWords provides marketing, communications, media relations, content and creative services to an increasingly broad range of companies, non-profits and individuals nationwide, with a focus on Southern Nevada.

Ruth has collaborated with many of the nation’s most well regarded corporations and media outlets. She is a sought-after public speaker and podcast guest, frequently speaking about public relations and community outreach.

She is an active member of NAWBO Southern Nevada, the Southern Nevada Association of Women Attorneys and the Nevada Hotel & Lodging Association.

Ruth and her husband reside in the Summerlin area. Her passions include supporting locally owned businesses and arranging collaborations between business owners and non-profits.



**Michelle Johnson**

Diva Las Vegas Productions  
CEO, Performer and Event Producer

Michelle Johnson contracts talent, directs and coordinates entertainment for large scale events. She is known as “Las Vegas’ First Lady of Jazz” and her unique talents as both an entertainer and producer have led her to work with a myriad of well known recording artists, television and film studios, Fortune 500 corporations and destination management companies. In addition to her production skills, she is a vocalist, composer, actress and writer.

Michelle attended and graduated from Yale University, has performed on Broadway and enjoys a successful career backing up icons in the music industry. Today, she is a headliner in Las Vegas, and performs at consistently sold out shows at the Smith Center and performing arts centers across the world.

In her spare time, Michelle is a motivational speaker and mentor to women who are seeking careers in entertainment. She is also a co-author of the book “Power of the Platform”.



**“In order to be irreplaceable,  
one must always be different.”**

— Coco Chanel  
French Fashion Designer and Businesswoman

BUSINESS | RETAIL | MANUFACTURING



**Andrea  
Clark**

Bottom Line Executives, Inc.  
Owner and CEO

Andrea Clark moved to Las Vegas in 2005 while working for Wells Fargo Bank to assist the business banking program in the area. She rapidly built one of the most profitable books of business known to banking, focusing on the medical industry.

In 2015 Andrea took her knowledge from the banking and finance industry and started Bottom Line Executives. She has been successful helping medical and dental practices cut expenses and increase efficiency, saving them thousands of dollars and increasing patient experiences.

Andrea graduated with a bachelor's degree from San Diego State in 2004. Her passion is to help achieve a positive patient experience throughout the medical industry by implementing systems to achieve success. She also hopes to encourage female athletes to utilize their sportsmanship, dedication and heart to become influential women throughout the community.

Andrea is a mother of two and married to an extremely supportive husband.



**Yuan-Fen  
Lai**

New York Life Insurance Company  
Financial Services Professional

Yuan-Fen Lai is an accomplished financial services professional with New York Life. She has over 35 years of experience in the insurance and financial services industries and is a member of the Million Dollar Round Table, the premier association of financial professionals.

Yuan's work focuses on financial planning, risk management, retirement planning and estate conservation. She also provides services for life insurance, long-term care insurance, disability insurance, mutual funds and variable and fixed annuities.

Besides serving clients, Yuan is very active in serving the community. She is the current president for the Global Federation of Chinese Business Women Metro Las Vegas, serves on the board for the Asian American Group and is an ambassador for the Women's Chamber of Commerce, Asian Chamber of Commerce and Henderson Chamber of Commerce.

She and her husband have two adult daughters.



**Leanna  
Jenkins**

Nevada Business Opportunity Fund  
Executive Director

As executive director of Nevada Business Opportunity Fund and the Nevada Women's Business Center, Leanna Jenkins is dedicated to the development, empowerment and success of women and minority entrepreneurs in Nevada.

Leanna has partnered with and counseled businesses for over twenty years in various capacities including business development, marketing, financial projections and business plan development. She has counseled small and mid-size businesses on their strategic planning and has led, trained and facilitated staff development for large teams. A passionate and engaging public speaker, Leanna regularly presents at local and national events.

Leanna sits on the marketing initiative team with the Nevada Department of Business and Industry. On invitation in 2014, Leanna attended the hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship for Empowering Women Entrepreneurs.



**“Where there is discord, may we bring harmony. Where there is error, may we bring truth. Where there is doubt, may we bring faith. And where there is despair, may we bring hope.”**

— Margaret Thatcher  
 Former British Prime Minister

CORPORATE | GOVERNMENT SERVICES



**Irene Bustamante Adams**

Nevada State Assembly

Irene Bustamante Adams was first elected to the Nevada Assembly representing Assembly District 42 in 2010. She quickly rose to leadership roles in the Legislature and the Assembly Democratic Caucus (ADC). Irene currently serves as speaker pro tempore for the Assembly and is the past chair for the ADC. She is also past chair of the Nevada Hispanic Legislative Caucus and is a current member of that organization.

Irene has held a number of other leadership positions including chairperson of the Assembly Commerce and Labor Committee and vice-chair of Assembly Taxation Committee, among others.

Irene became the first in her family to go to college earning a Bachelor’s of Science degree in business management. After college, she embarked on an 18-year executive career with MGM Resorts International. She is married to Army Sergeant Brad Adams. They are proud parents of two daughters, Olivia and Alaina.



**Adleen Stidhum**

Clark County, Nevada  
 Purchasing Manager

Adleen Stidhum serves as purchasing manager for Clark County, Nevada. She has over thirty years of procurement experience in the public and private sectors.

Her work is focused on operational efficiency and helping people understand technical rules and regulations, as well as understanding the thoughts, assumptions and fears that may prohibit individuals from competing at their very best.

Adleen earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Education. She has demonstrated a commitment to improving opportunities for the advancement of all businesses by consistently working to ensure that tools, information, guidance and encouragement is available to help them compete more effectively in the government contracting arena.

Adleen works to collaborate with other local, state and federal purchasing agencies as well as community and professional resource organizations.



**Vjollca Tarjan**

Wells Fargo Bank  
 Senior Vice President

Vjollca Tarjan has previously worked as a managing partner for Z & G Inc., a business advocate banker with Bank of America and a senior vice president business development officer with US Bank.

She currently serves as senior vice president commercial business banking relationship manager with Wells Fargo in Southern Nevada.

Vjollca earned a Bachelor’s of Science in finance at Connecticut State University and a Master’s of Business Administration at the Keller Graduate School of Management.

In addition, she is in the 2018 class of Leadership Henderson and a member of the Financial Executive International’s Southern Nevada chapter.

Vjollca is passionate about community involvement and travelling. She is married with a son and daughter, both of whom are attending the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.



**“Once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open.”**

— Laura Bush  
Former First Lady of the United States

## EDUCATION



### Dr. Carrie Buck

Pinecrest Academy of Nevada  
Principal

Dr. Carrie Buck began her career as an educator in 1996, teaching at Gwendolyn Wooley Elementary in Southern Nevada.

Over the next 10 years, Carrie went from teacher to an assistant principal. She earned the title of principal of C.T. Sewell Elementary school in 2006. She went on to lead the school to become a National Title I Distinguished School.

Carrie made the transition from the Clark County School District to a public charter school in 2014 when she became the principal of Pinecrest Academy. The school’s mission is to unite the community in order to prepare students for college and a career.

Since becoming principal, Carrie has helped lead the school to tremendous growth. Pinecrest has grown from one to four campuses in two years. The school has also become a hub for STEM education. Today Carrie serves as executive director for the schools.



### Patricia Charlton

College of Southern Nevada  
Vice President and Provost

Patty Charlton is the vice president and provost for the Henderson Campus of the College of Southern Nevada (CSN). Patty oversees all operations of the campus, one of three CSN campuses in Southern Nevada. She is also responsible for the operations of the Green Valley Center, Water Street location as well as developing CSN’s presence in the south and south-west parts of the Las Vegas valley.

Patty joined CSN in 1995 and has previously held several important leadership roles at the college, including strategic initiatives, finance and administration. Before joining CSN, she worked for the U.S. Department of Energy where she was responsible for budget development and contract negotiations.

A Henderson resident since 1982, Patty is a proud graduate of CSN, earning her associate degree in business management from the college. She went on to receive a bachelor’s and master’s degree from UNLV.



### Dr. Laura Naumann

Nevada State College  
Associate Professor of Psychology

Dr. Laura Naumann is a tenured psychology professor at Nevada State College (NSC). She was raised in an economically-disadvantaged household in Houston, Texas and attended college at the University of Texas at Austin with the aid of need-based Pell grants and merit scholarships.

Laura majored in psychology to better understand the development of her own personality and ethnic identity as a Mexican-American woman. She went on to complete her Ph.D. in social and personality psychology at the University of California, Berkeley.

Laura moved to Nevada in 2013 to help build the psychology program at NSC where she uses her teaching and mentorship to inspire students to pursue their education and career passions.

She received a Teaching Excellence Award in 2016 and secured a \$2.7 million dollar Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) federal award in 2017. Laura has long-term aspirations to pursue an administrative role in academic or faculty affairs.



**“Leadership is hard to define and good leadership even harder. But if you can get people to follow you to the ends of the earth, you are a great leader.”**

— Indra Nooyi  
Chief Executive Officer of PepsiCo

GAMING | HOSPITALITY | CONVENTION SERVICES



**Dawn Christensen**

MGM Resorts International  
Executive Director

Dawn Christensen serves as executive director of national diversity relations for MGM Resorts International. In her role, Dawn is responsible for building and enhancing MGM Resorts’ relationships with partners at the local, state and national levels as well as development of the company’s external diversity and inclusion strategy. She also serves as the program administrator for the MGM Resorts Foundation’s annual Women’s Leadership Conference.

Prior to joining MGM Resorts, Dawn served as vice president of public affairs for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA). Her career in news, corporate communications and public relations spans more than 20 years.

Dawn is active in supporting community and industry organizations. She attended the University of Southern California, where she earned Bachelor’s of Art degrees in journalism and history with a minor in women’s studies.



**Jaime Goldsmith**

Treasure Island  
Catering Sales Manager

Jaime Goldsmith is a catering sales manager with Treasure Island and a Las Vegas local since 2009. Originally from Jonesboro, AR, Jaime graduated from Missouri State University in 2000, Jaime moved to New Orleans where she built a career at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside.

She later relocated to Sedona, AZ eventually making her way to Las Vegas to graduate from Le Cordon Bleu. Jaime then became a master cook for the opening of Cabo Wabo on the Las Vegas Strip and went on to work for two Iron Chefs, Kerry Simon and Mario Batali.

In her current position, Jaime plans corporate meetings, charity galas and wedding receptions. She is also co-chair for the SOAR program, which honors Las Vegas first responders, and chair of the Wine to Water committee, which raises money for the One Drop Foundation. Jaime believes that you should live every day with an attitude of gratitude and make time to make a difference.



**Lauren Harwell**

Four Seasons Las Vegas  
Catering Manager

Lauren Harwell is a catering manager at the Four Seasons Las Vegas. She has worked with the Four Seasons for five years at a variety of properties including those in Vail, Nevis and Oahu.

Lauren has extensive background in events from working with non-profits, restaurants, private golf clubs and hotels. Hailing from Colorado she received a Bachelor’s of Art in technical journalism (public relations) and communications from Colorado State University.

She is also involved in the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Dress for Success and several other Southern Nevada non-profits.

In her spare time Lauren loves to eat and balances that hobby out with a love of snowboarding and yoga. She hopes to one day step foot on every continent in the world. Her husband, Cory, and step-daughter, Kayla, are her motivation to always be better and a reminder that everyone needs lots of laughter in their lives.



**“Never limit yourself because of others’ limited imagination; never limit others because of your own limited imagination.”**

— Mae Jemison  
 American Engineer, Physician and NASA Astronaut

## MEDICAL | HEALTHCARE SERVICES



**Sasha DeCania**

Destinations  
 Program Director

Sasha DeCania is a long-time resident of Southern Nevada with deep roots in the community. She received her Bachelor’s of Arts and Master’s of Science degrees from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Sasha is a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT) as well as an approved supervisor for marriage and family therapy and clinical professional counselor interns.

Over the past 14 years, she has gained extensive experience providing psychotherapeutic mental healthcare with an emphasis on children, adolescents and families.

In her current position with Destinations’ partial hospitalization and intensive out patient program, Sasha oversees all aspects of daily administrative and clinical operations as they relate to adolescent, family, individual and group therapeutic services.

Sasha enjoys spending her free time with her family and friends, enjoying the great outdoor spaces available in Nevada.



**Dr. Jill Oliver**

Glimpse Medical  
 Physician and Owner

Dr. Jill Oliver was born and raised in Las Vegas and went to Clark High School before heading off to the University of Arizona on an academic scholarship in 1993. She majored in molecular and cellular biology, attaining a Bachelor’s of Science in 1996.

She graduated from the University of Nevada School of Medicine in 2002 and finished her residency training in Scottsdale, AZ. She is board certified in family medicine and has been practicing in Las Vegas since 2005.

Jill opened Glimpse Medical in 2012 in order to better serve patients weight loss, beauty and healthcare needs. The company utilizes blood testing to determine underlying factors that need to be addressed such as hormone imbalance, insulin resistance, thyroid dysfunction and vitamin deficiencies.

Jill is happily married and supports local animal rescue groups. She has also held holiday drives to collect for local shelters.



**LaTricia Perry**

Nevada State College  
 Interim Associate Dean

LaTricia Perry is the interim associate dean and director of nursing for the School of Nursing at Nevada State College (NSC).

A registered nurse of twenty-one years, LaTricia’s career has included work in a variety of clinical settings, including skilled nursing, medical-surgical orthopedics and labor and delivery. In addition, she served eight years as a school nurse in the Clark County School District before transitioning into a faculty role at NSC in 2012.

LaTricia is currently working on a PhD in leadership and gerontology from Concordia University – Chicago.

In 2015, LaTricia was recognized by the National League for Nursing and, in 2017, she was a recipient of the Nevada Nurses Foundation’s “50 under 50” Award. In addition, she has presented at a variety of professional conferences.

LaTricia has been a resident of Las Vegas for over 14 years. She and her husband have three children.



“There is no greater gift you can give or receive than to honor your calling. It’s why you were born.”

— Oprah Winfrey  
American Media Proprietor and Philanthropist

PHILANTHROPY | COMMUNITY SERVICE



**Katia Di Egidio**

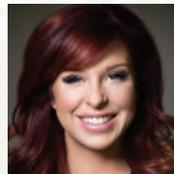
AitaK Solutions, LLC  
Owner and Founder

Katia Di Egidio has over 20 years of experience in consulting services for business and process improvement as well as a strong understanding of various markets throughout North America and Europe. She currently operates a private consulting firm, AitaK Solutions, which she founded in 2016.

Previously serving as general manager for 20+ years at various small and medium-sized enterprises, Katia has worked across an array of industries including information technology, construction, automotive and professional services. She has been at the ground-level of collaborating with both start-ups and publicly traded companies.

Recently Katia worked with Agilysys, a solution provider in the hospitality industry and contributed to the establishment and growth of Quadro Vehicles SA.

Katia is treasurer of the Outlook Foundation Inc., a charity based in Las Vegas that provides computers to those in need.



**Taylor Gardner**

The Garden Foundation  
Founder and CEO

Taylor Gardner is the founder and CEO of the Garden Foundation which serves individuals with special needs and their families. Prior to starting the foundation, Taylor worked as a business development manager for an insurance brokerage firm.

Taylor has served on boards for the Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada as well as the Young Professional Board for Opportunity Village. She also ran the Las Vegas Learning Program, a supplemental educational program for children with Down Syndrome. She hopes to fill the gap of resources for those with disabilities through her work with the Garden Foundation. She is inspired by her younger sister, Lindsay, who has Down Syndrome.

Taylor graduated with honors from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas with a degree in communications and journalism. She enjoys spending her Sundays at family dinners and is currently planning her 2019 wedding in her fiancé’s homeland of Ireland.



**Dr. Reeta Thukral**

Global Charity Foundation  
Founder

With over 35 years of experience, Dr. Reeta Thukral is a physician specializing in nephrology. She has practiced in India, the United States and New Zealand and has served in multiple leadership roles.

Reeta founded the Global Charity Foundation in the U.S. in 2007 and the Man Mohini Kaul Charity Medical Trust in India in 1998. Both organizations provide healthcare and education for at-risk, underprivileged and battered women and children in Las Vegas and in multiple cities in India.

Reeta hopes to continue to grow programs in Las Vegas and is passionate about helping those in need.

She believes that the privileged of society should help those that are less privileged for the good of the whole community.

She has two grown daughters, both of whom have made her proud. Reeta loves golfing, travelling and music.



Courtesy of Lynn Gilbert

“Find something that you are tremendously passionate about and keep tremendously interested in it.”

— Julia Child  
American Chef, Author and Television Personality

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



### Debbie Banko

Link Technologies  
CEO

A driven, dynamic, effective individual with an obsession for running and growing her business, Debbi Banko founded Link Technologies in 2000. Starting from a dining room table, Debbie has grown her business into a multi-million dollar enterprise. The company now has locations nationwide and puts hundreds of people to work every year.

Debbie is a regular volunteer and benefactor for charities and non-profit organizations in Nevada and nationwide. She supports organizations that promote diversity and empowerment of women. In addition, Debbie sits on the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board for the State of Nevada, and chairs that board’s information technology sector council. She is also involved with the UNLV Technology Assessment Committee.

Debbie recently founded CyberSmart-NV, a non-profit that encourages women in IT and curates the latest and best in cybersecurity education for Nevada.



### Aviva Gordon

Gordon Law  
Managing Member

Aviva Y. Gordon, Esq. is the managing member of Gordon Law. She graduated from Boston University in 1990, and with distinction from California Western School of Law in 1993. She is a member of both the Nevada and California Bars.

Aviva has successfully argued before the Nevada Supreme Court and has several reported cases. In 2011, she obtained a multimillion dollar judgment for a local general contractor.

In addition to her private practice, Aviva was general counsel for the Nevada State Democratic Party from 1998 to 2002 and served on the Nevada Judicial Conduct Commission. She has been a featured speaker on Nevada receiverships, both for attorneys and for the judges of the Eighth Judicial District Court.

Aviva has provided seminars for the Nevada Legal Aid Center’s Small Business Project Seminar, SCORE, the Henderson Chamber of Commerce and the Nevada Women’s Chamber of Commerce.



### Galit Ventura-Rozen

Empowering U, LLC  
Professional Speaker and Mentor

Galit Ventura-Rozen is a women empowerment and business mentor with Empowering U. In addition, she has owned and operated Commercial Professionals, a full-service commercial real estate brokerage agency, for over 20 years in Las Vegas.

Galit graduated from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas with a Bachelor’s of Science in business administration in 1995. In 2016, she obtained a master’s degree in marriage and family therapy from Northcentral University.

Most recently, Galit received the 21st Silver State Award for best local motivational speaker/coach, has been an honoree for the Women’s Chamber of Commerce of Nevada Athena Award in Leadership and was inducted into their Hall of Fame.

She volunteers her time as president of Women of Global Change and as a board member for the Women’s Philanthropic Council. She is currently finishing her first book, “The Successful Woman’s Mindset”.



**“There have been few things in my life that have had a more genial effect on my mind than the possession of a piece of land.”**

— Harriet Martineau  
 British Social Theorist and Writer

REAL ESTATE | CONSTRUCTION



**Lelia Friedlander**

TuffSkin Surface Protection, LLC  
 Co-Founder and President

Lelia Friedlander is the co-founder and president of TuffSkin Surface Protection in Southern Nevada, a woman-owned and operated business since 2007. The company is certified by the Women Business Enterprise National Council.

Lelia, along with her husband Frank, has focused on building successful businesses since 1991, creating high quality products and services driven by customer satisfaction.

TuffSkin is a proprietary product designed by Frank and their team in 2005. TuffSkin has become an elite vendor and service provider for stone protection and is now used by national and international hospitality brands and commercial properties, among others.

Lelia's passion is in supporting organizations that make a difference in the lives of people in need. She has been married for 31 years and has 2 adult children. Through TuffSkin Lelia and her husband are realizing their personal and professional dreams.



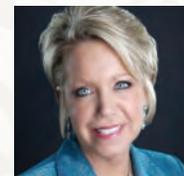
**Natalie Manning**

ABG Builders  
 Vice President

Serving as vice president of ABG Builders, Natalie Manning has brought in several million dollars in construction contracts, trained employees, overseen financials and created advertising and name branding for the business. She also runs a construction service company, Dream Happy.

Natalie started in real estate finance and, after moving to Nevada, opened a commercial mortgage brokerage, Manning Finance. After the start of the recession, Natalie moved into construction with her husband at ABG Builders. During these years she also opened, built, ran and sold a successful retail gardening store, from scratch.

Natalie is involved with many non-profits and has helped raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in the last 10 years for over 25 charities. She is a volunteer, board member, philanthropist and mentor to several organizations including Communities in Schools, Hero School, Be A Shero and Dress for Success, among others.



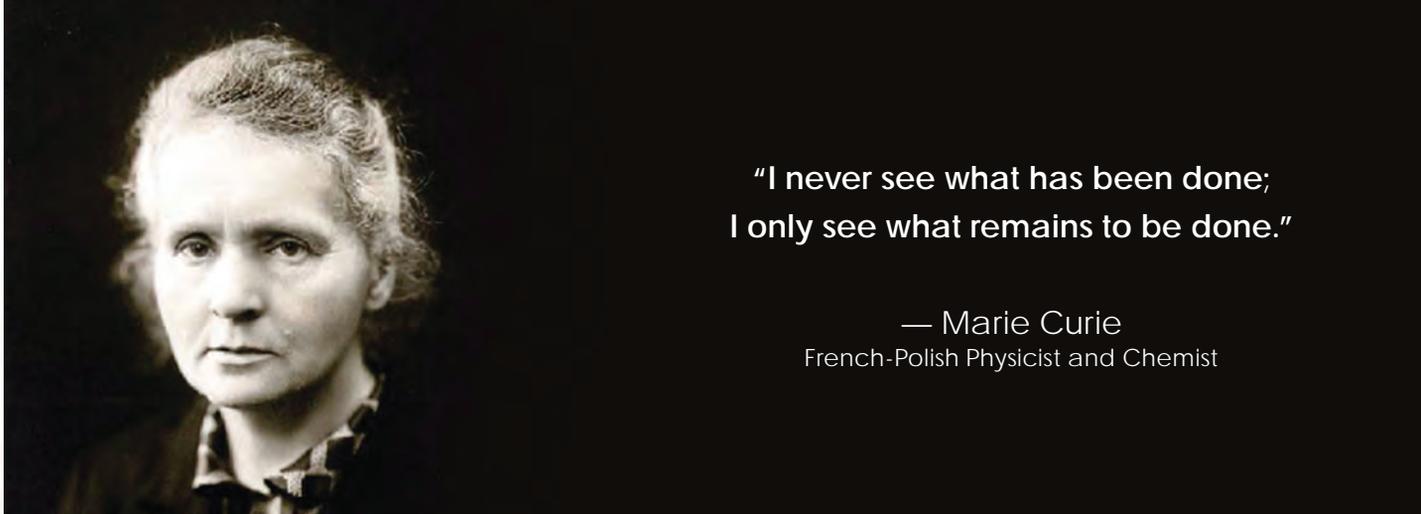
**Trish Nash**

Signature Gallery of Homes  
 President and Corporate Broker

Trish Nash is the president and corporate broker for Signature Gallery of Homes, a certified woman-owned small business. Trish handles the residential side and her husband, Michael Hiltz, handles commercial real estate.

Trish started her career in sales & marketing with a Fortune 500 company selling screws & bolts to predominantly male engineers and learned early on the challenges of being a woman in a male dominated field. She obtained her real estate license in Nevada in 2001 and is consistently ranked among the top 1 percent in the nation for real estate sales.

Trish serves on the executive board for the Henderson Chamber of Commerce and on the Finance Council for St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, the Living Grace Home Advisory Group, the Veteran's Treatment Court Advisory Board and was recently appointed to serve on the City of Henderson Comprehensive Plan Implementation Advisory Committee.



“I never see what has been done;  
I only see what remains to be done.”

— Marie Curie  
French-Polish Physicist and Chemist

STEM (SCIENCE-TECHNOLOGY-ENGINEERING-MATHEMATICS)



**Eileen Christensen**

BEC Environmental, Inc.  
Principal Scientist

Eileen Christensen is the Principal Scientist for BEC Environmental, Inc., which she founded in 2002. She began her career as an emergency responder, cleaning up hazardous materials for the Department of Defense. She taught military personnel at installations throughout the United States and Europe, until she moved to Kenya where she took a position with a British engineering firm.

Upon returning to the states, she worked for two local firms before deciding to start her own business, specializing in assessing, cleaning and redeveloping contaminated properties.

Eileen has served as a member of the Nevada State Office of Energy’s Energy Economy Strike Force and presented at several conferences and symposiums. She is an active associate member of the Nevada Association of Counties, American Council of Engineering Companies, Nevada Contractors Association and the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council.



**Dr. Amber Howerton**

Nevada State College  
Assistant Professor of Chemistry

Dr. Amber Howerton is an assistant professor of chemistry at Nevada State College (NSC) where she teaches biochemistry, medicinal chemistry, molecular biology, medical biochemistry and introduction to chemistry for the health sciences.

Amber was a research scientist for a medical research company for six years before moving to Las Vegas for graduate school. She has been a faculty member at NSC for the last four years. In 2017, Amber was awarded the NSC Excellence in Teaching award, has multiple publications in the fields of biochemistry and microbiology and is a co-inventor on two patents.

She serves on the NSC Faculty Senate, is the Curriculum Committee Chair and is actively involved in chemistry for the community, serving as an executive board member for the Southern Nevada American Chemical Society. Amber is passionate about her involvement in undergraduate research and plans to remain at NSC to continue teaching and mentoring undergraduate researchers.



**Kristina Swallow**

American Society of Civil Engineers  
President

Kristina Swallow is the current president of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), a 165-year old global organization in 177 countries representing over 150,000 members. Kristina has over 20 years of professional practice in water resources, transportation and land development.

She has a diverse professional background that includes serving as a program manager in the capital improvements division for the City of Las Vegas, as a transportation policy advisor for a US Senator in Washington DC and working as a land development consultant in the fastest growing city in the US, including 5 years as a small business owner.

She is passionate about civil engineering and the benefits of infrastructure for communities, especially transportation systems.

In addition to her professional work, Kristina is an active volunteer and has served in leadership roles with several local non-profits.



**"I attribute my success to this, I never gave or took any excuse."**

— Florence Nightingale  
British Social Reformer and Statistician

## ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR



**Cindy Brinker**

Brinker+Co  
Founder and CEO

Cindy Brinker is the founder and CEO of Brinker+Co, a professional services firm that delivers cloud-based accounting and financial solutions for small to mid-size companies. She has previously served as CFO and controller for several companies, and worked with global Fortune 500, C-level executives delivering outsourcing services.

Cindy is a certified management accountant (CMA) and earned an Executive Master's of Business Administration from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and a Bachelor's of Business Administration from the University of Alaska, Anchorage.

She is actively involved in the Las Vegas community and serves on the board of directors of United Way of Southern Nevada, and previously served as co-chair of the Women's Leadership Council of Southern Nevada and on the board of the Financial Executives Institute (FEI).

Cindy's passions include adventure travel, golfing, skiing and hiking.



**Jo Cato**

Periwinkle Group  
Founder and CEO

Jo Cato is the founder and CEO of Periwinkle Group. Over the past 13 years, she has directed advertising, marketing and public relations campaigns for major corporations, public entities and small business owners and has served as advisor for state and local elected officials and corporations.

Her experience, along with her expertise in diversity, makes her widely recognized and highly regarded as a media and public policy expert in Southern Nevada. Jo earned a Master's of Art in economics from George Washington University, an Executive MBA from Arizona State University and a certificate in business strategy from the eCornell University leadership program.

Jo has been honored with the SBA Minority Business Champion award, the NAACP Rising Star award and CBS' Community Spirit award, among others. She currently serves on the Governor's Workforce Development Board and State of Nevada Apprenticeship Council.



**Virginia Toalepai**

World Wide Safety  
President

Virginia Toalepai's career in health and safety began over 10 years ago. Since then, she has been involved in thousands of workplace inspections and hundreds of accident investigations in construction and general industry.

Virginia brings a sense of strategic focus, mature business judgment and expert assistance in identifying, evaluating and resolving safety challenges. She is widely respected as a versatile and trusted leader, with a consistent track record of success and proven ability to turn-around struggling programs, or build them from scratch.

She has worked closely with countless general contractors and specialty trade subcontractors to develop safety training programs and practical hazard controls.

She is also currently an OSHA authorized instructor, who firmly believes that staying proactive regarding safety is the only way to achieve zero accidents in a workplace.



“There is no force more powerful than a woman determined to rise.”

— Dorothy Dandridge  
American Actress, Singer and Dancer

## RISING STAR



### Cassie Catania-Hsu

Sun Commercial Real Estate, Inc.  
Managing Director and Broker

Cassie Catania-Hsu is the managing director and a broker with Sun Commercial Real Estate. There she oversees sales management, recruiting, operations leadership and business development for the company.

Cassie has been involved in various aspects of commercial real estate since 2007 when she graduated from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) LIED Institute with a degree in real estate. She is currently the industry liaison for the UNLV LIED Institute Real Estate Club, an active member of CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) Las Vegas and NAIOP.

Cassie has also been a mentor for the UNLV Real Estate program for the past two years and regularly speaks at the school to inform students about commercial real estate career opportunities and bring awareness to the real estate degree.

When she's not working, Cassie enjoys spending time with her husband and 16 month old daughter.



### Ava Mucikyan

The Salt Room  
Founder

Ava is the true embodiment of the American Dream. She was born and raised in Armenia, a country where the hierarchy of men and women still stands strong. Noticing opportunities for growth overseas inspired her to make a better life for herself and other women.

Ava has a passion for helping women feel empowered and live a wholehearted life. Throughout her career she worked in many international non-profit organizations and helped empower many women and youth through leadership training, building communities and changing hierarchy patterns in rural areas.

After moving to Las Vegas in 2007, Ava began a banking career. She became vice president of business banking before retiring in 2014 to found The Salt Room.

Ava is an advocate of self care and living life to the fullest. She hopes that one day all women will unlock their full potential, live fearlessly and change the world.



### Amber Stidham

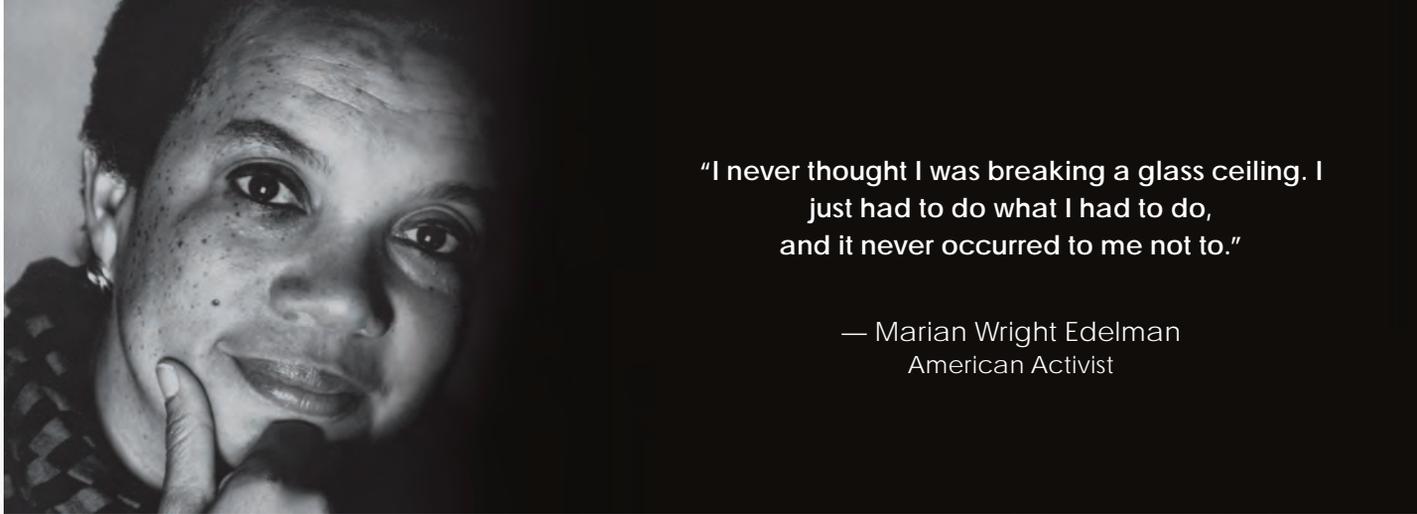
Henderson Chamber of Commerce  
Director of Government Affairs

Amber Stidham serves as the Henderson Chamber of Commerce's director of government affairs. Since 2015, Stidham has led and developed the chamber's rapidly growing government affairs program to advocate on behalf of the organization's nearly 1,300-member businesses.

Under her leadership volunteer participation in the chamber's governmental program has doubled, funding for its political action committee quadrupled and the organization has continued to expand its advocacy presence.

Amber brings the chamber over 20 years of government affairs, marketing and media knowledge. That, coupled with her small business background and knowledge of the local market as a Henderson-native, has allowed Amber to help small businesses have a meaningful voice in government.

She earned a bachelor's degree from University of Nevada, Las Vegas and has volunteered with many local non-profits. Amber is married with one son.



**"I never thought I was breaking a glass ceiling. I just had to do what I had to do, and it never occurred to me not to."**

— Marian Wright Edelman  
American Activist

## GLASS CEILING



### Rebecca Fountain

KOR Building Group, LLC  
Principal and CEO

Rebecca Fountain is the majority owner of KOR Building Group, a certified woman-owned business. The company specializes in facility construction maintenance, tenant improvements, tenant remodels and theming construction.

KOR is an approved vendor for McCarran International Airport, Hudson News, The Venetian Resort & Hotel, The Palazzo and Clark County Facilities. Rebecca leads and oversees all aspects of day-to-day operations.

A native of Las Vegas, Rebecca has been in the construction industry for over 38 years, beginning in residential construction in 1978.

Rebecca is an advocate for the Veterans Village non-profit and a graduate of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas' Small Business Leadership Academy, CEO Space Business Development Group and PSI Leadership Courses. She has been appointed to the Las Vegas Stadium Benefits Oversight Committee, among others.



### Debra March

City of Henderson  
Mayor

Debra March was elected mayor of Henderson in April of last year and assumed office June 20, 2017. She previously served as a councilwoman for Henderson's Ward II. As mayor, Debra's responsibilities include setting policies and making decisions concerning many aspects of local government for Nevada's second largest city.

A Henderson resident for over 25 years, Debra served as chair of Southern Nevada Strong, a collaborative regional effort to plan, create and sustain neighborhoods, and served on the City of Henderson Planning Commission from 2004 to 2009. Debra was on the founding board of the Henderson Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Leadership Henderson program to build and maintain effective community leaders.

The Governing Institute also named her as one of only 25 participants in the 2018 Women in Government Leadership Program Class. She is an avid outdoorswoman and enjoys hiking, whitewater rafting and horseback riding.



### Mary Thompson

Capstone Brokerage  
President

Currently president for Capstone Brokerage, Mary Thompson started her career in New York as an underwriter over 35 years ago. She relocated to Las Vegas over 30 years ago and has experience in sales and executive management for all lines of insurance coverage.

Mary was involved with the Governor's task force to create the workers' compensation laws and regulations when Nevada opened from the monopolistic system in 1997. She is a former instructor, educating Nevada Agents to earn credentials to sell workers' compensation in Nevada. She is also an active member of the insurance community and past president of the Las Vegas Insurance Professionals Association.

Mary believes in giving back to the community and is currently a board member for Olive Crest. She offers her services to many associations to assist with community development through mentoring programs.

JUDGES



**June Beland**  
President & CEO  
Women's Chamber  
of Commerce  
Nevada



**Dolores Campuzano**  
Director of Banquet  
Operations and  
Hospitalities, MGM/  
Mirage (2015 WODA  
Recipient)



**Bart Patterson**  
President  
Nevada State  
College



**Jacqueline Ramirez**  
Past President  
NAWBO Southern  
Nevada



**Sandra Roche**  
President  
NAWBO Southern  
Nevada (2015  
WODA Recipient)



**Ginnie Salazar**  
President-Elect  
NAWBO Southern  
Nevada (2015 WODA  
Recipient)



**Carolyn Stephens**  
Past President  
NAWBO Southern  
Nevada



**Sonny Vinuya**  
President  
Las Vegas Asian  
Chamber of  
Commerce

**Congratulations**  
2018 WODA FINALISTS

*We thank you for inspiring those around  
you with your achievements and  
good works in the community*

**TuffSkin**  
SURFACE PROTECTION

Guaranteed  
**Etch and Stain**  
Protection

[www.TuffSkinProtection.com](http://www.TuffSkinProtection.com)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

BOARD MEMBERS



**Sandra Roche**  
President



**Ginnie Salazar**  
President-Elect



**Nikita Burdick**  
Secretary



**Gayle Stephens**  
Treasurer



**Jacqueline Ramirez**  
Past President



**Katia Di Egidio**  
Vice President of Board Strategy & Development

- Dana Berggren**, Vice President of Advocacy and Public Policy
- Alicia Marasco**, Vice President of Business Development
- Sandra Roche**, Vice President of Communications, Corporate Partner Relations and Special Events / WODA Awards
- Niki Hiott**, Vice President of Community & Affiliate Relations
- Kri Edholm**, Vice President of Professional Development & Leadership
- Katia Di Egidio**, Vice President of Marketing
- Lisa Chastain**, Vice President of Member Services
- Dana Berggren**, Vice President of Programs
- Jill Branson**, Director
- Krista Crotty**, Director / Co-Chair Business Development Committee
- Lelia Friedlander**, Director
- Devyn Hartmann**, Director (Honorary)
- Sandra Hinkelbein**, Director / Co-Chair Corporate Partner Relations Committee
- Danna Jarvis**, Director
- Jennie Kim**, Director
- Taiya Thompson**, Director
- Dr. Reeta Thukral**, Director

NAWBO SOUTHERN NEVADA PAST PRESIDENTS

- |                                     |                                         |                                       |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>1990 - 1991</b> Elizabeth Casey  | <b>1997 - 1999</b> Nancy McRight        | <b>2004 - 2005</b> Betty Mahalik      | <b>2012 - 2014</b> Valerie Parker     |
| <b>1991 - 1992</b> Patricia Brown   | <b>1999 - 2000</b> Jaymie McMullin      | <b>2005 - 2007</b> Renee Ryan-Thraill | <b>2015 - 2016</b> Christy Echols     |
| <b>1992 - 1993</b> Carolyn Stephens | <b>2000 - 2001</b> Bobbi Brooks         | <b>2007 - 2008</b> Toni Jo Artz       | <b>2016 - 2017</b> Jacqueline Ramirez |
| <b>1993 - 1994</b> Anne Seward      | <b>2001 - 2002</b> Carolyn Muse Grant   | <b>2009 - 2010</b> Berna Rhodes-Ford  | <b>2017 - 2019</b> Sandra Roche       |
| <b>1994 - 1996</b> Shelby Keefer    | <b>2002 - 2003</b> Cynthia Throm        | <b>2010 - 2011</b> Kimberly Miles     |                                       |
| <b>1996 - 1997</b> Paula Brown      | <b>2003 - 2004</b> Jeanne Richard Jones | <b>2011 - 2012</b> Elissa Evans       |                                       |

WOMEN LEAN IN AND LEAD ON AT NEVADA STATE COLLEGE

**AS** an innovative and growing institution, Nevada State College is founded on the belief that all students deserve an opportunity to succeed at the highest level. The fulfillment of this goal hinges on providing quality, four-year degree programs to a diverse population of students from largely under-served, first generation, non-traditional and/or financially challenged backgrounds. One of Nevada State's chief aims is to open the door to career success and enhanced quality of life for students who otherwise might face limited opportunities for success in higher education.

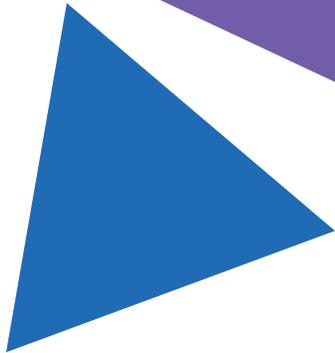


Nevada State College currently has over 4,200 students 75 percent of whom are female. They are aided by the knowledge, skills and integrity they acquire at Nevada State from ethnic and gender diverse tenured and tenure-track faculty who not only teach but mentor as well. Many of these students are majoring in education, nursing, business

administration, biology, psychology and criminal justice.

Women also hold key leadership positions at Nevada State College -- from student government to executive leadership, with Alicia Contreras-Martinez serving as president of the Nevada State Student Alliance and Vickie Shields, Ph.D., as Nevada State's provost and executive vice president. Additionally, Nevada State College values the diversity of qualified vendors who wish to compete in the procurement process and to do business with the institution. Women-owned, minority-owned, physically-challenged and veteran/service-disabled veteran suppliers are encouraged to participate.

"We are proud of building leaders," said Bart Patterson, Nevada State College president. "That is especially true when it comes to the college building women leaders in education, business and healthcare."



# WTL<sup>LAS VEGAS</sup>LC

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**AUGUST 27 & 28, 2018**

MGM GRAND LAS VEGAS

*[mgmresortsfoundation.org/wlc](http://mgmresortsfoundation.org/wlc)*

An inspiring event celebrating inclusion  
and promoting professional development through  
the power of community and connection.



**MGM RESORTS  
FOUNDATION**

# JOIN

# AN ICONIC ORGANIZATION

## NAWBO Southern Nevada Empowers Success

The Southern Nevada Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) is an organization whose purpose is to propel women entrepreneurs into success in professional, political and social arenas.

The time to join is now.

**Corporate Sponsors** Caesars | MGM | *Nevada Business Magazine*  
Sands Corporation | *Las Vegas Woman Magazine* | Bank of America  
Bank of Nevada | Lyft | Nevada State College | Nevada State Bank  
TuffSkin Surface Protection LLC | Well Fargo | Logistical Solutions  
Roche Constructors, Inc. | Women's Chamber of Commerce of Nevada

For more information or to become a member,  
go to [NAWBO.org/Southern-Nevada](http://NAWBO.org/Southern-Nevada)



**NAWBO**  
SOUTHERN NEVADA  
National Association of Women Business Owners