

# SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

# SAN DIEGO





50 MAKING A DIFFERENCE

# Making a Difference

In this issue, the San Diego Business Journal presents its inaugural SD 50. Here you will find 50 of San Diego's most influential leaders who have made a significant difference during these unprecedented times, in a year that has turned out to be far from ordinary.

The SD 50 showcases those executives from businesses and organizations who have made a positive impact during the COVID-19 crisis by leading their companies to adapt quickly to the changing environment as well as those who rose to the occasion to help the community. Many are philanthropy leaders, in charge of nonprofits who took immediate action to serve those most in need.

There are plenty of recognizable names who have made the list and several that you may not recognize who you will now get to know. It was definitely a challenging task in selecting these recipients because so many leaders in our community are making positive contributions.

We are a community of action where we understand what leadership really means and we want to take this opportunity to applaud everyone's efforts. We also want to thank you, the readers, who continue to support the San Diego Business Journal, because of your support we are able to work diligently to provide coverage that gives us hope and optimism as our community continues to rebuild.



*Barb Chodos*  
Barb Chodos, President & Publisher



*J. C. Harn*  
Jay C. Harn, Editor-in-Chief

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### SD 50

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#### Leadership From A to Z

Here are the people that readers will find while paging through the inaugural SD 50:

**John Alessio**, managing partner at **Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch LLP**, approached the COVID-19 pandemic as it hit his office. He protected the health of over 350 attorneys and staff by shifting them to remote work, making the transition look seamless. At the same time, he recognized the economic threat faced by clients and worked to meet their needs.

That stands in contrast to **James (Jamie) Awford**, principal at **BNBuilders, Inc.** Awford had to consider both the office environment and the construction site. He oversaw a senior management team responsible for maintaining operations on nearly all San Diego construction projects during the pandemic, keeping staff employed with minimal disruption.

**Steve Bernstein**, San Diego market executive at **Wells Fargo Commercial Banking**, led an effort to reach out to 100% of Wells Fargo customers to check on their safety. Bernstein also serves as chairman of the board for the **Jacobs & Cushman SD Food Bank** and helped raise money to serve more than 700,000 meals per week.

**Gerry Borja**, diversity and inclusion head of veteran and military spouse programs at Oracle, started thinking differently about his work. He was able to open a military internship program to civilian military spouses and immediately had to switch to a 100 percent virtual program. He added free certification programs and multiple networking opportunities for the interns. At the end, 90% of the interns received offers to remain at Oracle.

Speaking of veterans, **Stephanie Brown**, CEO and founder of **The Rosie Network**, launched a COVID-19 online Small Business Resource Center and provided no-cost business financial management/cash projection software to over 3,000 veteran and military family-owned small businesses.

Finances play a large role in how people are dealing with COVID-19. **Teresa Campbell**, president & CEO of **San Diego County Credit Union**, worked to help people by extending relief to customers on March 20. That included a 90-day deferral option on all consumer loans, including real estate, auto, credit card and personal loans. Business loan and commercial real estate deferment relief was also offered.

**Adela de la Torre**, president, **San Diego State University**, took a leadership stance to close the campus to on-campus classes and moved rapidly to enable faculty to teach virtually. These decisions were costly, but helped to preserve the health of students, faculty, and staff in this critical period in March 2020.

**Paul Downey**, president & CEO, **Serving Seniors** was instrumental in ensuring that hundreds of low-income and homeless seniors continue getting the free meals they need to survive during this pandemic.

One of the more unique relief efforts came from the medical device sector. **Michael "Mick" Farrell**, CEO of **ResMed**,

led his company in quickly responding to the global demand for ventilators and shifted manufacturing resources in January to triple its ventilator output and scale up mask production tenfold.

**Mike Fasulo**, president & COO, **Sony Electronics** was the champion sponsor of an initiative whereby Sony was able to distribute 21,000+ N95 masks to first responders at hospitals in California, New Jersey, New York, and Baja California.

**Bradley Feldmann**, chairman, president and CEO, **Cubic Corporation**, helped Cubic repurpose its manufacturing capabilities to produce face coverings for customers and also donated them to hospitals, employees and their families. In response to a shortage of ventilators, Cubic developed a prototype ventilator and a game-based training program for ventilator operators.

**Jim Floros**, president & CEO, **The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank** has led the San Diego Food Bank and its North County chapter to meet the huge demand from families impacted by the pandemic.

Taking the more scientific approach was **Pradipta Ghosh**, director and professor with the **Center for Network Medicine, UCSD**. She immediately deployed two of the center's assets to conduct research that provides a computational framework to identify targets and human-like lung models for real-time outcomes to validate predicted compounds that can potentially reduce the loss of lives.

**Guy Halgren**, chairman of **Sheppard Mullin** authorized the development of a COVID-19 task force to help clients deal with the many issues created by COVID-19 and he encouraged pro bono service and authorized financial contributions to help battle the pandemic.

**Tony Hall**, founder and CEO, **Torrey Holistics**, has donated over 10,000 N95 face masks and over 20,000 hand sanitizers to various health centers, local organizations, customers and staff since mid-March.

**Vince Hall**, CEO, **Feeding San Diego**, leads the organization in holding emergency drive-through food distributions every Saturday for families affected by COVID-19.

**James T. Harris**, president, University of San Diego collaborated with county leaders to establish USD as a free COVID-19 testing site, an action centered around supporting underserved and underrepresented populations in the local community.

**Rob Henderson**, senior VP of operations, **Westmont Living**, used his leadership skills to adopt all measures by the staff so that the company has had extraordinary results including the fact that both San Diego County Westmont communities of La Mesa and Escondido experienced no COVID-19 infections from residents or staff. Overall, company-wide they experienced cases at two communities but were immediately identified and isolated so to not create any further harm.

**Ingo Hentschel**, VP of field operations, **Cox Communications** helped Cox Communications adapt the Connect2Compete program for families and students by offering free internet and computers

to households while remote learning is in affect during the pandemic.

**Baron Herdelin-Doherty**, president & CEO, **YMCA of San Diego County** led the team to create a "Virtual YMCA" almost overnight which has been serving thousands of San Diegans -with free enriching programs for children, social activities and physical and mental health programs for all ages, and a special focus on engaging the vulnerable senior population.

"Leadership is creating the conditions for others to accomplish great things in the face of uncertainty," said **Kathryn Lembo**, the president and CEO of **South Bay Community Services**. Lembo led her organization in providing emergency COVID response in the South Bay. Notably, she secured hotel rooms to temporarily house families and transition-age youth affected by the virus.

The next several people helped San Diegans and their extended families. They include **Alessandra Lezama**, CEO and founder of **TOOTRiS**. The business is the first and only technology service provider that enables parents to reintegrate into the workforce, particularly after COVID-19, knowing that their child is safe and enjoying high-quality, curriculum-based Child Care in small group settings.

**Betsy Lynch**, CEO, **Lawrence Family JCC | JACOBS FAMILY CAMPUS**, reimagined a new business model, restructuring agency to position for sustainable future. Vision and proactive management lead to expedited receipt of SBA PPP loan. Successful fundraising strategy and implementation helped fully employ staff two additional months.

**Kevin Mattson**, president and CEO, **San Ysidro Health**, transformed its system of care to telehealth visits for all, especially their most vulnerable neighbors.

Helping clients pivot quickly was one of the most pressing jobs for **Neal McFarlane**, president and CEO, **McFarlane Architects, Inc.** He had to expand design and production capabilities to assist several of its clients grow their manufacturing and R&D facilities because they are at the forefront of the scientific fight against the COVID-19 virus. Multiple clients have received FDA approval of their products and McFarlane Architects has had to lead the design efforts at record speed to get these new facilities built.

**Miles McPherson**, lead pastor, **The Rock Church** and The Rock Church mobilized thousands of volunteers to refurbish 300,000 N95 masks, which needed the elastic replaced, for frontline workers. His heart for the frontline workers led to partnerships with restaurants to donate 1,350 meals for law enforcement and nearly 10,000 meals for hospital workers around the city.

**Brian Milton**, head of retail banking and deposits, **Union Bank** and the Union Bank leadership team drove significant fee waivers, mortgage loan forbearance and other assistance for clients in need.

**A.J. Moyer**, president and CEO, **C3bank**, created and led C3bank's CARES team, which was formed to help our local businesses secure pivotal SBA PPP loans. Under A.J.'s leadership, C3bank funded PPP loans for around 500 local businesses.

**Larry Nishnick**, corporate and securities partner at **DLA Piper LLP**, was part of the national DLA task force assigned with assisting clients with the CARES Act programs including advising and counseling on available government programs such as the Main Street lending program and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

**Eric Northbrook**, managing director /partner, **Voit Real Estate Services** helped the local Voit office raise more than \$3,000 to provide more than 250 lunches from Freshii to workers at Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla, Sharp Grossmont Hospital and Sharp Memorial Hospital.

**Keith Olmo**, CEO, **Jan-Pro of San Diego** began supplying the office and independently owned franchisees with Electrostatic sprayers and hospital grade disinfectants. He kept all full time employees on payroll even with a 30% decrease in revenue due to shutdowns.

**Lisa Ordóñez**, dean, **Rady School of Management UCSD**, spearheaded The Rady School Business Recovery Coalition, which provides consultation, education, and insights to local entrepreneurs and helps businesses in the San Diego region navigate the unprecedented challenges faced by COVID-19.

**Mark Payne**, VP, division manager, **Swinerton** hired a full-time employee to clean/sanitize high traffic areas, common spaces, conference rooms, touch points, restrooms, etc. during business hours, 5 days a week. There have also been office protocols in place to keep all employees safe.

**Cheri Pierre**, CEO, **Computers 2 Kids, San Diego** engaged the help of and forged relationships with community leaders and businesses to ensure C2K had the resources to meet the 12,000+ applications from families who need a computer to minimize the educational disruption and facilitate the continuity of learning.

**Victor Ramsauer**, CEO, president, shareholder, **LevitZacks, Certified Public Accountants** has been transparent by starting virtual employee meetings with a "state of the firm" discussion. His leadership has given the staff has strong feelings that the firm is doing right in dealing with the pandemic.

**Robert Robinson**, managing partner, **Hickman Robinson Yaeger LLP** recognized there was a dire need for his firm's assistance among small business owners. He opened up his schedule, largely on a pro bono basis, for small business owners, spending hours each day on the phone counseling small business owners on how to survive, adapt to and/or thrive through the Covid-19 crisis.

**Nathan Rogge**, president and CEO, **Bank of Southern California** saw an opportunity to support local businesses and help get the economy back on track. The bank opened its doors to both customers and non-customers and provided PPP loans for 2,200 businesses.

**Nancy Sasaki**, president & CEO, **United Way of San Diego County** created the Workers' Assistance Initiative for low-wage workers who experienced job loss or wage reduction due to the COVID-19 crisis.

**Jim Schmid**, founder/CEO, **Chelsea** ➔ SD 50 page 39

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**Keith Olmo, CEO**  
Jan-Pro of San Diego

**Keith Olmo** is the CEO at **Jan-Pro of San Diego**, a commercial janitorial franchising company serving 1,000 accounts and 120 franchisees in San Diego County. He is a leader nurturing organizations, developing solutions by visualizing possibilities that are both innovative and ethical, and taking advantage of market trends to better serve San Diego County businesses.

**DAY JOB:** Oversee and support the San Diego office in all aspects from marketing, sales, franchise development, franchise support, customer service, accounting and HR, while building a strong culture and leading the company to new standards of excellence.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** After taking ownership of the office Q4 2019, Olmo began supplying his office and independently owned franchisees with electrostatic sprayers and hospital grade disinfectants. He kept all full-time employees on payroll even with a 30% decrease in revenue due to shutdowns. To help local companies combat the COVID-19 virus, he immediately began building stronger digital presence and advertising to help educate the community on how to combat the virus and maintain clean and healthy work environments.

**NOTABLE:** Jan-Pro has been voted # 1 by Entrepreneur Magazine 12 years in a row, has an A + accredited BBB rating and 4.9 stars on Google. The San Diego office has one of the highest customer retention rates out of the 100 + national Jan-Pro offices.

**QUOTABLE:** “We will not turn panic into profit. We will offer assistance wherever and however we can to help protect San Diego businesses and our residents.”



Award winning independently owned and operated Jan-Pro of San Diego Franchisee **Ricardo and Nayade Canales**.



**Lisa Ordóñez, Dean**, Rady School of Management - UC San Diego

**Lisa Ordóñez** became Dean of the **Rady School of Management** at **UC San Diego** beginning September 2019. As dean of the Rady School, Ordóñez applies her operational skills to lead the school’s growth and further cement the school’s global business research prominence as an innovation-focused, economic engine within the San Diego business community and beyond.

**DAY JOB:** Lisa is dedicated to enacting the school’s strategic planning effort that focuses on preparing the next generation of scientists, doctors and entrepreneurs who will make a social impact. The Rady School of Management is a premiere business school and Lisa guides the institution in supporting San Diego businesses.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Lisa spearheaded The Rady School Business Recovery Coalition, which provides consultation, education, and insights to local entrepreneurs and helps businesses in the San Diego region navigate the unprecedented challenges faced by COVID-19. This new initiative draws on expertise from the UC San Diego community to provide immediate pro bono assistance to businesses, like navigating PPP loan assistance programs, during these extraordinary times. Lisa plans to continue developing the coalition and maintain its support for local businesses well after COVID-19 subsides.

**NOTABLE:** The 17-year-old school has produced 25,000 master’s graduates, helped launch 2,000 start-ups, included 6 IPO’s, and raised \$2B in funding for San Diego-based entrepreneurs. 42% of all University of San Diego students will take a class in the Rady School of Management.

**QUOTABLE:** “The Rady School of Management itself was founded as a response to a need expressed by the San Diego business community. I am so proud that our staff, faculty, students and alumni have focused their creativity and assertion in developing the Rady School Business Recovery Coalition to assist local business during this time of need. It is during times of adversity that we often perform at our best, and I am thankful to all for embracing our core values of innovation and impact.”

“I am a Promise Maker because every child deserves to be safe, feel wanted and loved.”

Tonya Torosian  
Chief Executive Officer



CONGRATULATIONS TO PROMISES2KIDS CEO **TONYA TOROSIAN!**

Tonya has been selected as one of San Diego’s 50 Leaders Making A Difference! As an advocate for foster youth throughout her entire career, Tonya is committed to *creating a brighter future for foster children*®. She is an exceptional visionary leader who inspires community members to join Promises2Kids’ efforts in providing hope, support and opportunities to San Diego foster children, especially during this unprecedented time.



[www.promises2kids.org](http://www.promises2kids.org)

(858) 278-4400 | [info@promises2kids.org](mailto:info@promises2kids.org)



PROMISES2KIDS

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**Deacon Jim Vargas**, President & CEO, Father Joe's Villages

Deacon **Jim Vargas** is the President and CEO of **Father Joe's Villages**. He has over 30 years of management experience. Today, he oversees all facets of Father Joe's Villages, including their array of housing programs serving over 2,000 people each night, the Village Health Center, Therapeutic Childcare Center, and more.

**DAY JOB:** Vargas provides critical leadership to a staff of over 425 working to meet the basic needs of those living on the streets, as well as provide long-term solutions that help neighbors leave homelessness behind for good. He oversees the organization's programs, operations, finances, and community outreach and leadership.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Vargas led the frontline efforts of Father Joe's Villages' staff to provide life-saving care during the pandemic. Father Joe's Villages has provided over 5,000 screenings and tests to people in need, offered a safe place to sleep in its shelter and housing programs, including up to 486 beds in the Convention Center shelter, and helped over 100 neighbors in need move into permanent housing since the COVID-19 crisis began.

**NOTABLE:** Deacon Jim Vargas is a Deacon of the Catholic Church and sees his position at Father Joe's Villages as his ministry.

**QUOTABLE:** "I've seen the community come together in ways that I never expected. The efforts of our staff, community leaders, and supporters have truly saved lives."



At the Convention Center, Father Joe's Villages has collaborated with the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, the San Diego Housing Commission and other service providers to stand up additional shelter beds for the most vulnerable in our community.



**Caitlin Wege**, President Tech Coast Angels - San Diego

**Caitlin Wege** is an experienced angel investor and advisor to several early-stage companies. She is President of **Tech Coast Angels**. Caitlin is passionate about the planet, social causes and fostering entrepreneurial education and learning. She is a board member at Startup San Diego, among other San Diego county boards.

**DAY JOB:** Caitlin is responsible for shaping the mission, vision, operations and governance of Tech Coast Angels - San Diego, in addition to actively managing her investment portfolio.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Caitlin has been a steady and inspiring leader through the COVID crisis. She crafted and implemented TCA's 5-point plan: continuing investing activity, supporting portfolio companies, donating to vendors, advocates for the CARES act nationally, and spreading TCA's message of HOPE - Hold On, Pain Ends. Additionally, she published the highly lauded video to the community: <https://vimeo.com/417426671>

**NOTABLE:** Caitlin is the first woman President of Tech Coast Angels in the organization's 20+ year history!

**QUOTABLE:** From a recent SDBJ article by Fred Grier: "Startups were key to the economic recovery after the great recession of 2008. It is entrepreneurs and nimble thought leaders who don't give up hope that will drive innovation and growth in the coming months and years, effectively replacing lost jobs and birthing new critical technologies."



Caitlin issuing a hopeful message to San Diego's startup community on Vimeo.

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**CONGRATULATIONS KEITH OLMO**  
San Diego's 50 Leaders Making a Difference in 2020

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**UC San Diego**  
RADY SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

**Thank you** to the innovative and caring professionals at the Rady School of Management at UC San Diego for the launch of the Rady School Business Recovery Coalition. This new initiative is designed to provide pro bono assistance to regional businesses to help them respond, recover and innovate during these unprecedented times.

**Lisa Ordóñez**  
Dean, Rady School of Management