
2020

SD500

SPECIAL EDITION • THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN SAN DIEGO

*what's
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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



We are excited to present you with this special, annual edition of the San Diego Business Journal: SD500. This edition focuses on the most influential people in San Diego that are making a significant impact on our business community and the community at large.

Months of research went into selecting the executives featured here. They represent deep knowledge of their industries as well as charisma and leadership. They represent the diverse array of business leaders that define our great city.

We hope you will spend some time with this issue, either in print or online. We are confident the SD500 will inspire, intrigue and spark conversations. Many of the executives we have named you will already know, but you will also be introduced to some new faces.

Thanks to our entire staff for their efforts in creating this issue and a special thank you to all of the businesses who continue to support the San Diego Business Journal. With your support we can continue to invest in producing quality journalism and premier events for our community.

Barb Chodos

President & Publisher

San Diego 500 Icon List Sees New Additions

LEADERSHIP: Business and Organization Leaders Leave Legacy of Lasting Change

■ By JAY HARN

The San Diego community has many people who have contributed so much to its economic story over the years that they have left a legacy of lasting change. These people can only be described as icons.

This year, **The San Diego Business Journal** again honors these individuals whose names have become synonymous with the city and the region.

Several new additions have been added to this year's list of icons, including: **Lidia S. Martinez** who recently retired from **Southwest Airlines** and has been recognized for her giving spirit and deeply rooted sense of community. She is one of five individuals who successfully created the outreach platform for Southwest to invest and engage in communities of color helping her company set the standard for outreach and corporate social

responsibility. She was also honored with a San Diego Business Journal Women in Business Lifetime Achievement Award this past year.

Other new additions include **Stath Karras**, executive director of the Burnham-Moores Center for Real Estate at the **University of San Diego**. Karras was also honored with a lifetime achievement award this past year at the SDBJ Commercial Real Estate Awards. **Tom Karlo**, retiring long-time general manager of **KPBS** also joins our icon list this year as does **Jerry Sanders**, CEO of the **San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce**. Sanders is a former mayor of San Diego and former police chief who has contributed significantly to the history and well-being of the city and region.

Al Baldwin also joins the icon list this year. Baldwin is CEO/chairman of **Baldwin & Sons**, the developer of South County's Otay Ranch. **David and**

Leslie Cohn, co-founders of the **Cohn Restaurant Group** have also joined our icon list this year. The husband and wife team opened their first restaurant in 1982 and since then have amassed an eclectic collection of nearly two dozen restaurants throughout the region, including **The Prado** at Balboa Park, **Indigo Grill**, and **333 Pacific**. They also co-founded the **Garfield School Foundation** in 1996, a culinary arts program for at-risk youths.

Also being added to the icon list this year is **T.W. (Bill) Hoehn III**. As the third generation to work in the car dealership business – he succeeded both his father and grandfather -- the Hoehn name has become synonymous with San Diego new cars. Hoehn has served on the boards of the **San Diego County YMCA**, **Fuller Foundation** and the **Bishop's School**. Also a name connected to automobiles in San Diego is **Stephen Cushman** who joins our icon list this year. Cushman is

a fourth-generation San Diegan whose career includes real estate development, auto dealerships, and he has also been a key advisor to mayors, councils and commissions. He served on more than 70 boards and his family owns the **Grossmont Center** in La Mesa.

Qualcomm CEO **Steve Mollenkopf** joins the icon list this year. He has been CEO of Qualcomm since 2014 and previously served the company as president and COO. He has steered the major San Diego company through several legal battles and this past year won a significant legal battle with the FTC. **Thomas Sudberry Jr.** founded **Sudberry Properties** in 1979. He has developed retail, office, multifamily and mixed use projects throughout the region and he joins our Icon list this year.

Now the question is who will join next year's list of Icons? Detailed profiles of these icons and others begin on page 72.



JEFFREY ESSAKOW
PRESIDENT, PROTEA PROPERTIES LLC

A South Africa native, Jeffrey Essakow heads property development and management companies including La Jolla-based Protea Properties LLC and Protea Holdings LLC. He is teaming with Yehudi Gaffen and Jeff Jacobs in Protea Waterfront Development LLC, which was chosen to redevelop what's now Seaport Village with a \$1.2 billion mixed-use project. His past project involvement includes the popular Flower Hill Promenade retail center in Del Mar and Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa in Rancho Santa Fe.



SCOTT FREE
CEO, LUSARDI CONSTRUCTION CO.

Scott Free got into the construction business with his father and brother, who founded Free Builders Supply in Vista. He began as a laborer and project engineer. He joined Lusardi Construction in 1970 and, as CEO, has grown the San Marcos-based company into one of the largest commercial and industrial builders in San Diego County. Lusardi is responsible for projects such as the Tri-City Wellness Center, 4S Ranch Village, Mission Hills High School and many other secondary schools.



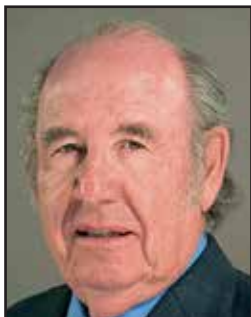
DON FAYE
PRINCIPAL, PRESIDIO RESIDENTIAL CAPITAL

As a principal of Presidio Residential Capital since 2009, Don Faye has brought 30-plus years of residential real estate experience and financial expertise to assembling the team of professionals who perform the underwriting, entitlement processing, asset and monthly capital management needs for the company. Headquartered in San Diego, the firm provides capital in the form of joint ventures for the entitlement, development and build-out of for-sale residential projects throughout the Western United States.



YEHUDI GAFFEN
CEO, GAFCON INC.

Yehudi "Gaf" Gaffen is leading the \$1.2 billion Seaport Village redevelopment, a 70-acre site on the Embarcadero. He is the project manager and co-developer along with Protea Waterfront Properties partners Jeffrey Essakow and Jeff Jacobs. Gafcon also is project manager for portions of a massive waterfront project in Shanghai. Gaffen has been involved in domestic and international construction for over 35 years, working for construction companies, construction managers and real estate developers.



AARON FELDMAN
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, SUNROAD ENTERPRISES

Aaron Feldman in 1977 founded Sunroad Enterprises, which would go on to become a significant local force in real estate development and auto dealerships. The development division has built many projects in the market, ranging from offices and apartments to hotels and marinas. Aaron Feldman is an active member of the Chief Executives Organization and the World Presidents Organization and has been active with organizations affiliated with the University of California San Diego over the years.



MARK GLEIBERMAN
FOUNDER AND CEO, MG PROPERTIES GROUP

Since founding MG Properties Group in 1992, Mark has overseen the acquisition, development, and management of 147 apartment communities totaling over 33,000 units with a value of \$6.9 billion. MG Properties has a current portfolio of 76 properties with over 21,000 apartment homes with a value of \$5 billion in California, Washington, Oregon, Arizona and Nevada. Ernst and Young announced Mark as a winner of the Entrepreneur of The Year 2018 San Diego Awards program.



DELINDA FORSYTHE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND FOUNDER, INNOVATIVE COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENTS (ICE)

As CEO and founder of Innovative Commercial Environments since 2006, Delinda Forsythe has thrived in contract furniture for 34 years. Leading ICE provided an opportunity for her to implement her experience in community philanthropy and practice emerging leadership skills that empower employees. She serves on the boards of the San Diego EDC Foundation, the NAIOP Foundation and TranscendANCE. Her leadership experience fueled her upcoming book, "Inspiring Generational Leadership: Your Guide to Design a Conscious Culture."



SANDRA GRAMLEY
PRESIDENT, PLATT/WHITELAW ARCHITECTS, INC.

As co-owner and President of Platt/Whitelaw Architects and the 2020 President of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) San Diego, Sandra Gramley works tirelessly to further the architecture and design communities. She has dedicated her career to improving communities, collaborating with peers, and training the next generation of leaders. Currently, she is working to establish the Center for Design, a local, public resource for design and development.



JOHN D. FRAGER
EXECUTIVE MANAGING DIRECTOR, CBRE

John D. Frager is regional leader for CBRE's San Diego and North Baja Mexico business. Frager also acts as chief of staff for the Pacific Southwest Division. He has spent over 33 years in commercial real estate. He has been involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Pathfinder Partners, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, University of San Diego Board of Trustees and YPO. He received CBRE's Market Leader of the Year Award for the Americas for 2018.



ROBERT S. GREEN JR.
PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE ROBERT GREEN COMPANY

Founded more than 15 years ago by San Diego native Robert S. Green Jr., The Robert Green Company is a privately held, commercial real estate development company headquartered in Encinitas, specializing in hospitality and mixed-use development throughout the Western United States. Green's nearly 30-year career includes luxury hotel and residential projects, including the Pendry San Diego, the Park Hyatt Resort Aviara in Carlsbad and Four Seasons projects in Jackson Hole and Palo Alto.

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