

# COFFEE CHATS

SHARING PERSONAL PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP



# INTERESTED IN SPEAKING AT A COFFEE CHAT DURING THE 2021-2022 ACADEMIC YEAR?

Email us at [werth.mentorship@uconn.edu](mailto:werth.mentorship@uconn.edu)  
to arrange a time!



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We are so grateful for the time that UConn alum and friends of the Werth Institute lent to the students through Coffee Chats this year. No conversation was the same, though they all seemed to connect back to many of the leadership development skills we hope to instill within UConn students: empathy, resilience, networking and the entrepreneurial mindset.

I am always impressed by the thoughtful questions the students ask during each Chat, engaging with aspects of the speaker's story others may have overlooked. I equally enjoy learning about the connections being maintained between students and the Coffee Chat guest that extend well beyond the one hour discussion- relationships simply unable to be manufactured within the walls of a classroom or confines of textbook. Thank you for being willing to support our Huskies!

*Julie Gehring*

DIRECTOR OF MENTORSHIP  
& STUDENT DEVELOPMENT



The transitory period college is proves rough for many, let alone during the middle of a pandemic. Being able to continue to foster meaningful connections with UConn alumni and friends of the Werth Institute proved invaluable as we learned to navigate the virtual world together.

In creating this magazine, I was able to reflect on each Coffee Chat we held this year, recalling many of the tips, life skills, and advice shared with us, both entrepreneurial and personal. Perhaps most importantly, it became evident the power in being willing to share stories of our journeys to where we are now, even if we, ourselves, may perceive them to be menial, uninteresting, or not important.

Thank you again from everyone at the Werth Institute. We all thoroughly enjoyed the conversations had, lessons learned, and exploration into potential careers Coffee Chats provided. We're looking forward to continuing the Coffee Chat program in the next academic year!

*Zoey England*

COFFEE CHAT COORDINATOR  
CLASS OF 2022 AND 2023

This past year has shown us that connection is an integral part of our personal and professional lives. Students are in need of support and guidance now more than ever. From explaining the ins and outs of a new profession to connecting with experienced workers, mentorship helps students thrive and succeed through any challenge, preparing them for the real world after graduation.

One of the Werth Institute's greatest achievements has been its focus on building alumni networks that enhance opportunities for innovation and growth. Development of the Werth Coffee Chats provide an intimate, virtual opportunity to bring together a diverse group of alumni who have successfully navigated into some of the most sought after companies to provide students with early access to career conversations. The Chats also give students access to a global network of professionals who have valuable knowledge and insight when it comes to life after graduation.

This engagement is part of UConn's commitment to making entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial experiences more accessible for all. Enabling opportunities not yet imagined, the Werth Institute provides students the support and network to achieve what they did not know was possible. The relationship-rich learning experience that mentorship provides is key to helping students become disruption-ready, a sought after skill for thriving in an era of change.

As we prepare to welcome students back to campus and transition from virtual connections to those made in-person, we reflect on our past Coffee Chats. As you flip through the pages, one thing that stands out is the impressive careers these alumni and business leaders have carved out in a relatively short period of time. There is something we all can learn from their journeys to success.

A sincere thank you to all who have contributed to the ongoing growth and success of The Werth Coffee Chats and NetWerx mentoring program. We look forward to continuing to grow the next generation of leaders, together.

GO HUSKIES!



*David Noble*

DIRECTOR, THE WERTH INSTITUTE

# Werth Coffee Chats

## WHAT IS A COFFEE CHAT?

Werth Coffee Chats are informal, small group mentoring conversations between UConn students, alum, and industry leaders, many of whom work in entrepreneurial technology, healthcare, or business industry sectors.

Conversations are often centered around the pathway to leadership, networking, career development, and other life lessons they have learned since graduating. In many cases, there ends up being a specific element in the chat students will hone in on, focusing the discussion.

Any current UConn Student can attend, regardless of major, college, or campus affiliation. Each Coffee Chat was constituted of a diverse group of students, each bringing unique life experiences and educational backgrounds to the conversation.



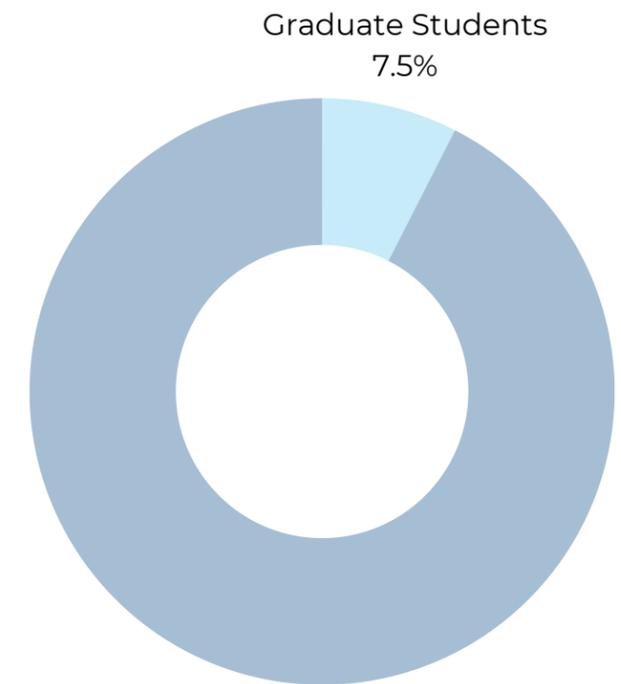
For every 12 of our Coffee Chat speakers, 10 of them held at least one degree from the University of Connecticut.

## WHAT IS NETWERX?

The Werth Institute NetWerx Program builds bridges between current students and UConn alumni through multiple engagement opportunities centering around how to apply an entrepreneurial mindset to career exploration and personal development.

Various time commitment levels range from a single afternoon session with multiple students at the same time to a series of meetings with a single student over several months. Werth Coffee Chats are also a part of the NetWerx program.

Mentors and mentees from all UConn campuses are welcome to participate in the NetWerx program, made possible through virtual opportunities.



Undergraduate Students  
92.5%

Out of the students who attended Coffee Chats this year, 92.5% of them were undergraduates.

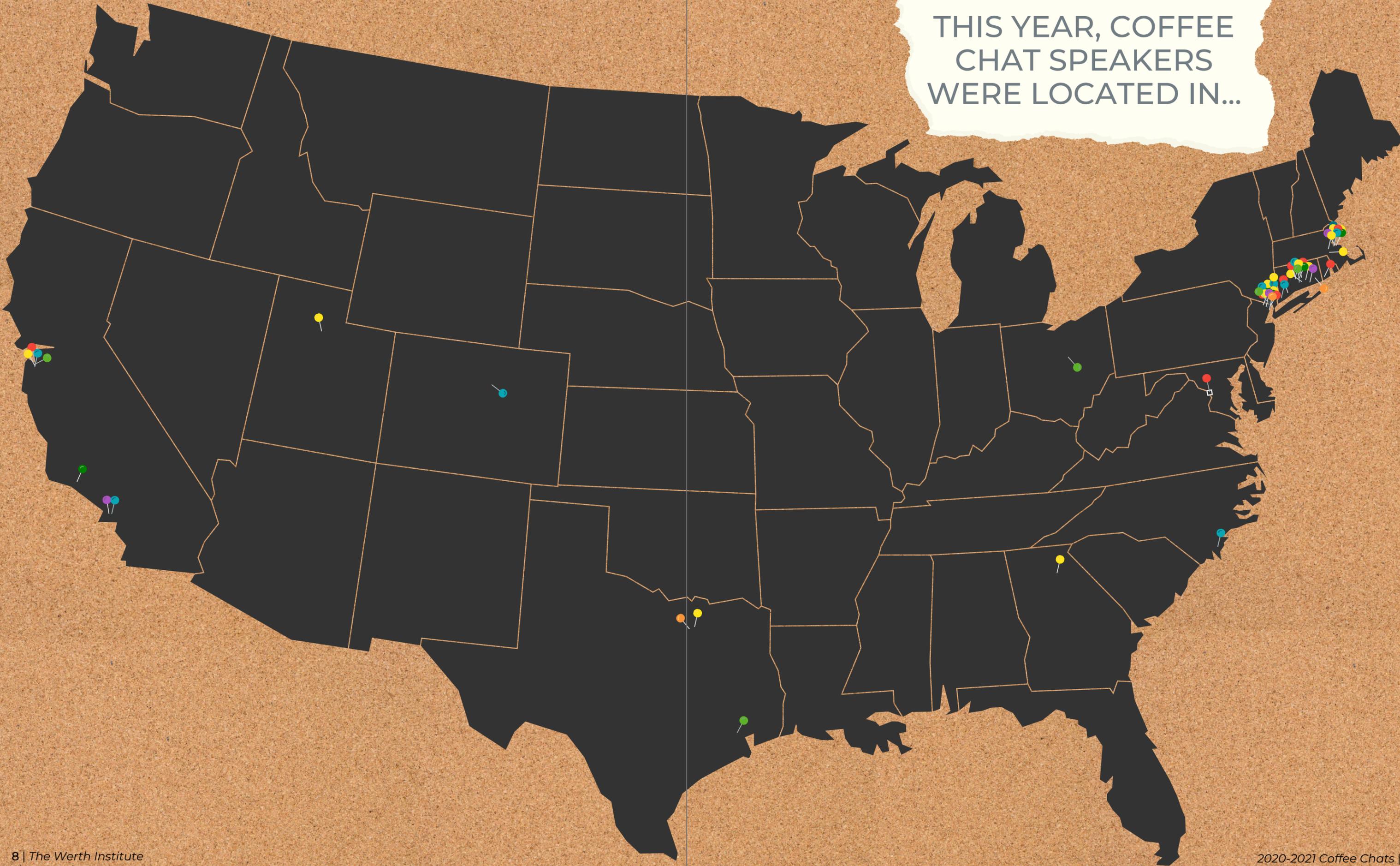
541 STUDENT INTERACTIONS

56 HOURS SPENT MENTORING

11 AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN EACH CHAT

57 SPEAKERS

THIS YEAR, COFFEE  
CHAT SPEAKERS  
WERE LOCATED IN...



# SUMMER 2020



## Lance Baldo '98

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER OF  
ADAPTIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES.

Dr. Lance Baldo, MD, has served as chief medical officer of Adaptive Biotechnologies since May 2019.

From February 2010 to April 2019, Lance served in various roles of ascending responsibility with the Roche Group and its affiliates, including most recently as senior vice president and head of U.S. Medical Affairs of Genentech.

Prior to joining the Roche Group, Lance served as vice president,

Global Medical Science and Affairs at The Medicines Company, a public biopharmaceuticals company, from September 2005 to February 2010.

Lance holds an M.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and a B.A. in Biology from Johns Hopkins University.

# Keith Reynolds

FOUNDER & CEO OF PUBLI.IO, LLC

Keith Reynolds helps clients imagine, plan and produce digital media and marketing solutions. He

developed the "Publisher's M.O.,"™ a unique strategy and development methodology that empowers teams to achieve their business goals.

Keith has worked with category leaders including Apple, IBM, Institutional Investor, Medius Software Inc., Kodak, Rainbow Sports and Vodafone.

He has also founded several technology

start-ups.

Keith's campaigns have generated tens of thousands of leads, put

hundreds of millions of dollars into his clients' sales pipelines and helped raise startup capital. Keith also speaks to groups, presents across a variety of media and moderates or appears as a guest on panels, podcasts and seminars.



# Amy Errett '79

FOUNDER & CEO OF MADISON REED



Amy's multifaceted career has ranged from founding and operating companies, to investing in startups, to volunteer nonprofit leadership. Currently, Amy is founder and CEO of Madison Reed, an omnichannel beauty brand that is challenging industry titans in the hair color space. She is also a partner at True Ventures, focusing on investments in consumer and ecommerce startups.

In 2019, the *San Francisco Business Times* named Amy to its "Forever Influential Hall of Fame" and its "Most Admired CEOs" list; CEW, a prestigious beauty industry association, bestowed upon Amy its inaugural "Female Founders Award;" and *Inc. Magazine* named Amy to its Female Founders 100 list for the second consecutive year. Also in 2019, Amy's alma mater, the Wharton School, bestowed upon her the Penn Wharton Entrepreneurship Alumni Achievement Award. In 2018, Amy was a finalist for Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur Of The Year® Award in the Northern California region, which she won in 2006 for the consumer category.

Amy serves on the boards of the University of Connecticut Foundation, Common Sense Media, The Bay School of San Francisco, Madison Reed Franchise LC and Madison Reed. Amy earned an M.B.A. in Finance from the Wharton School at

the University of Pennsylvania and a B.A. in Liberal Arts from the University of Connecticut. In 2014, UConn inducted Amy into the School of Business' Hall of Fame for her "remarkable and inspiring business career" and leadership in her community.

Amy is a fanatical UConn Huskies fan where she was a student athlete. A New York native, she is inspired by nature and her favorite hobbies are skiing, snowboarding, horseback riding and fly fishing. She and her wife, Clare, live in San Francisco with their daughter, Madison Reed.

# Michael Cocuzza '10

FOUNDER AND CTO OF ENVIRO POWER INC

Michael Cocuzza is the founder and CTO of Enviro Power Inc. He graduated from The University of Connecticut in 2010 with a B.S. in mechanical engineering.

Michael's interest in renewable energy inspired him to develop the SmartWatt boiler. It is a highly efficient heating system that produces electricity and provides backup power resulting in significant cost and energy savings.

Michael's inventions have generated a portfolio of issued and pending patents. Enviro Power was started in 2013 and currently has several active beta test installations. The company has raised over \$4M in venture funding and partnered with several large heating equipment manufacturers that licensed the technology to market the SmartWatt boiler.



# Robby Andrews

EVP, HEAD OF PUBLISHING AT WILDLIFE STUDIOS

Robby Andrews is currently the EVP, Head of Publishing at Wildlife Studios. In this role, he leads product, growth, monetization, community and product marketing.

Prior to joining Wildlife Studios, Robby spent six years at Facebook, where he was recruited to lead growth for Instagram (IG). Under his leadership, the Instagram user base grew nearly 5x, increasing from roughly 250M Monthly Active Users (MAU) to 1.1B MAU. In addition to growing Instagram's user base, Robby helped scale the product and company from about 100 people in Menlo Park to more than 1,500 globally across four offices. While at Facebook (FB), he also built IG Web, IG Lite and lead growth team(s) across all aspects of Instagram, including IG Stories, IG Direct, IG Business and Advertisers. Most recently, Robby led the effort to unify messaging across FB's core products, and shipped the first major milestone, connecting Instagram and the FB network.

Prior to joining FB, Robby worked at Amazon where he was responsible for growth and consumer marketing.



# Jimmy Tang '11

HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AT TWITCH



Jimmy is the head of Strategic Planning at Twitch. Twitch launched in 2011 and is a one-of-a-kind collision of subcultures, games, communities and streamers co-creating content around everything they're into. Jimmy leads a team of strategists, business analysts and pricing

managers who all focus on monetization and driving business decisions.

Previously, Jimmy was the director of Strategy & Finance at Twitch and has done a variety of things from supporting the launch of Twitch's Cheering product that has created a new way to show support for creators and celebrate the great moments with the community, to creating the business case for the Twitch Affiliate Program that brings creators one step closer toward the dream of making a living on Twitch.

Favorite Quote:

Pay attention to what's in front of you- the principle, the task, or what's being portrayed.

-Marcus Aurelius

# Brian Paganini '03

VP AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, QUANTUM BIOPOWER



products such as natural gas, electricity and compost. Paganini has led the creation of Quantum's complimentary service offering for companies and municipalities seeking to divert food waste and achieve their sustainability metrics. He has also created a launch pad for future food waste to energy infrastructure to be deployed in New England with both public and private partners.

Prior to launching Quantum, Paganini worked with Pfizer Global Pharmaceuticals in the Sales Operations function responsible for commercial business in the Primary Care subset of care. He was a graduate of the University of Connecticut School of Business, and is active in alumni affairs with the University. Paganini is an appointed board member of the RecycleCT Foundation, and in 2017 was recognized by the *Hartford Business Journal* as an incoming "40 Under 40" recipient.

Brian Paganini joined Quantum Biopower in 2013 as vice president and managing director of the newly created company. The Quantum team has built and are operating the first food waste to energy plant in New England, diverting food waste from traditional landfilling and creating renewable electricity.

As vice president, he has led the creation of new energy legislation in Connecticut, and has developed food waste recycling infrastructure that recycles food waste into valuable

# Ben Curtis '06

TALENT MANAGER, PRESIDENT OF DAYLIGHT MEDIA

Ben Curtis is a talent manager/entrepreneur, and is the president of Daylight Media, where he manages talent ranging from Oscar-winning actor, Rami Malek ("Bohemian Rhapsody"), to some of the world's largest social media influencers.

After working a season for the New York Yankees, Ben climbed the ranks at William Morris Endeavor talent agency in Los Angeles to become a manager. He created his own firm, Daylight, in the spring of 2018, which focuses on talent management and building businesses around talent.

At Daylight, Ben has co-founded and launched three start ups. Cloak, an apparel brand for the gaming demographic; QCode, a scripted Podcast Company; and the recently announced Players NTWRK. Ben is also a general partner with Tasseo Consumer Ecosystem, a Private Equity firm that uses proprietary data to make investments in early stage



consumer brands in the health and wellness spaces.

Originally from Indianapolis, IN, Ben attended The University of Connecticut. He lives in Santa Barbara, CA with his wife, Shelby, their three year old boy, Reggie, and their eight month old daughter, Vista.

# Zach Gould '06

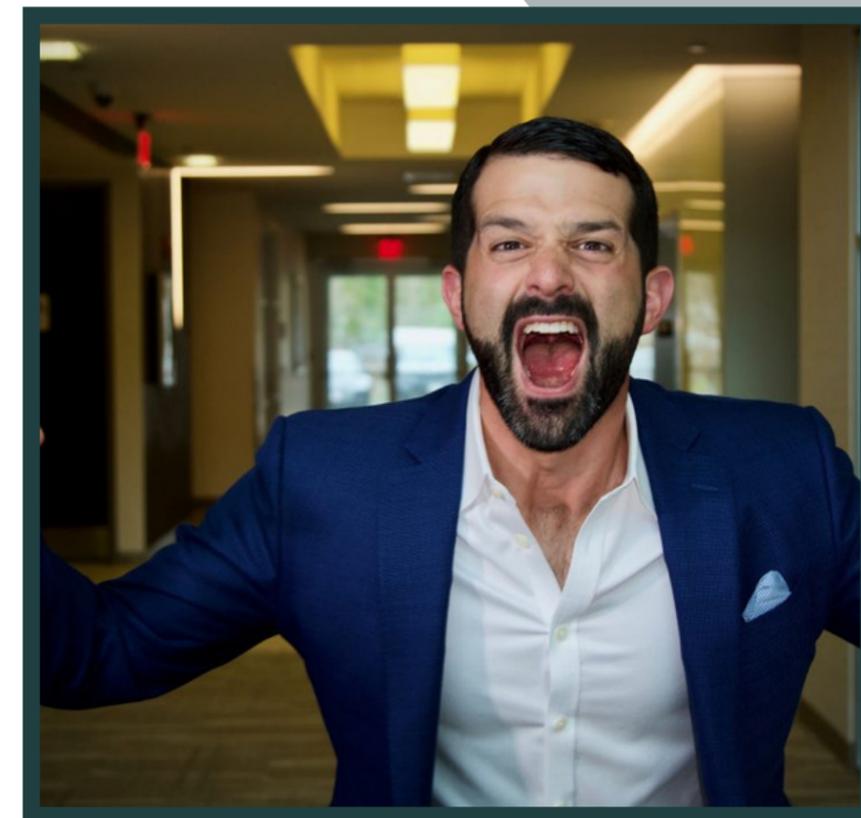
CO-FOUNDER OF G&N INSURANCE AND VLOG BOBBLE ON

In 2005 at the University of Connecticut, Zack was pulled into a meeting with his Risk Management Insurance professor and told to pursue sales instead of a career in underwriting. Thankfully, he listened.

After graduating, Zack began his career at Liberty Mutual in outside sales, and he was awarded the National Rookie of the Year in 2007. Beyond that, the biggest reward from his tenure was meeting his future business partner, Matt Naimoli. Together, they left Liberty Mutual and opened G&N Insurance in 2010.

Fast forward eight years and G&N has grown from a team of two with zero carriers to team of 34, writing for over 25 carriers. In 2017, G&N gained national recognition with their weekly vlog, BOBBLE ON, and with three awards: *Boston Business Journal* Best Place to Work, INC 5000, and PropertyCasualty360 National Insurance Agency of the Year. Zack's primary role at G&N is business development and marketing. He is passionate about growth through social media, referral relationships, and brand strategy.

When Zack isn't networking, branding or implementing strategies, you'll find him with his kids, Mason and Emma, his wife KG and their dog Kenzie.



# Fall 2020

# Sarah Broderick '00 and '02

FOUNDER AND CEO OF FEAT CAPITAL & ADVISORY



financial leadership positions at Endeavor, NBCUniversal, and Deloitte. Sarah is now a frequent speaker and advisor on topics such as financial and operational execution, women's leadership and corporate cultural transformations, in addition to her firm's work in the capital and investing space. In the fall of 2020, FEAT

launched an integrated online platform that will bring together a large network of individuals and organizations committed to changing the way that companies work.

She is the author of *No Small FEAT*, a book released in the fall of 2020 that discusses the hidden workforce of talent that companies now have the opportunity to access as a result of workplace changes stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. She is also the author of a soon-to-be released children's book series *Tiny FEATs*, which brilliantly tells stories intended to inspire a new view toward female leadership for this generation of young children. Sarah holds a master's degree and a B.S. in Accounting from the University of Connecticut, where she was also a four-year member and captain of the UConn Softball Team and is currently involved in fundraising for the athletic department.

Sarah Broderick, '00 and '02, is the founder and CEO of FEAT Capital & Advisory, an advisory firm launched in 2019 aimed at helping companies operationalize changes to the way they work. Sarah was recently appointed to the Executive Advisory Board of Belpointe REIT, Inc. (BELP), a publicly traded Qualified Opportunity Zone fund, and she serves as treasurer and a member of the Board of Girl Scouts of Connecticut.

Prior to founding FEAT Capital & Advisory, Sarah served as a director, senior executive, and financial expert across a range of organizations, and has over 20 years of experience working with both large cap companies, as well as emerging tech and founder-led ventures. Most recently, Sarah served as the chief operating officer, CFO, and member of the Board of Directors of VICE Media.

Prior to her role at VICE Media, Sarah oversaw SEC reporting and global accounting operations for General Electric, and held senior

# Mark Kepner '89

AVP, ELECTRONIC EQUITY  
PRODUCT SPECIALIST FOR  
STATE STREET BANK BOSTON



Mark Kepner is the Electronic Equity Product Specialist for State Street Bank in Boston. He is responsible for the entire electronic equity product including customization, analysis, and coverage.

Mark was recently an equity trader and market structure analyst for Themis Trading in Chatham, NJ. Before that, he spent 19 years at the pioneer of electronic equity trading, Instinet LLC.

He graduated from The University of Connecticut in 1989 with a BS in Finance and received his MBA from NYU's Stern School of Business in 1993.



# Dave Bruno

WERTH INSTITUTE ADVISOR,  
FORMER HEAD OF  
INNOVATION UBS



David Bruno was Head of Innovation at UBS Wealth Management globally, responsible for developing multiple products in the UK, Singapore, Hong Kong, Germany, Switzerland and putting UBS on the map as an industry thought leader. He built the digital and innovation unit for the Swiss Stock Exchange including being head startup coach at its F10 Accelerator with cohorts of 15 startups every six months. He is now a Venture Builder working with startup founders building new

businesses cross-vertical, including NVISO, KEYNO, RIKOR, SIGO SEGUROS.

Dave is the Werth Institute's Venture Builder, helping student founders accelerate and commercialize their first businesses. Dave is also a mentor at various startup programs including StartupBootcamp and Techstars. Dave has experience working across 20 countries in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, and is proud to have visited Morocco and climbed to the summit of Jebel Toubkal.

# Rae Cloud

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AT LOEB.NYC

Rae Cloud currently serves as the Executive Director of People at Loeb.nyc, a venture collective which helps launch startups by pairing capital with the support of experts across a wide range of disciplines. Rae and her team are responsible for all aspects of the human resources function, supporting shared services and providing guidance to portfolio companies.

Rae joined Loeb.nyc in 2017 to manage and build out the company's unique entrepreneurial summer internship program, which has now welcomed more than 100 students across three summers.

more than 100 students across three summers.

Prior to Loeb.nyc, Rae spent two years as a graduate talent program analyst at UBS Global Wealth Management in NYC. Rae graduated from the University of Chicago in 2015 with a B.A. in Law, Letters, and Society an interdisciplinary major, where she was a member of the varsity

softball team. Originally from the Chicago suburbs, Rae now resides in Brooklyn, NY with her rescue cat Fleur.



# Bryan Parker

CEO OF LEGAL INNOVATORS

Bryan is currently the CEO of Legal Innovators in Washington, DC. Prior to this role, he served in various leadership roles in public and private companies, including DaVita and Affinity Media, and also has a background in investment banking. One of his passions is helping clients find innovative solutions to their hiring, pricing, diversity and inclusion challenges in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Bryan started his career with Shearman & Sterling LLC on the M&A team, where Legal Innovators Co-Founder Jonathan Greenblatt was his mentor (during his summer clerkship). This relationship inspired Jon and Bryan to found Legal Innovators. Bryan went on to take leadership roles in investment banking and other businesses. Most recently, Bryan served as the CEO for DoubleDutch (now part of Cvent), a venture-backed, community-based technology company in California.

Outside of the workplace, Bryan is very involved in his community. He has extensive board experience, including serving as a commissioner for the Port of Oakland, California; chair of Oakland's Workforce Investment Board; a member of the Cal Alumni Association Board; a member on the board of trustees for Holy Names University; and a board member of the Bay Area Chapter of 100 Black Men of America, Inc. Since law school, Bryan has actively taken on pro bono legal work. He and Jon continue to give back to the

community in this way and also help Legal Innovators' junior legal talent apply and broaden their skills through pro bono opportunities.

Bryan is a member of the service fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha, and spent several seasons coaching football at an inner-city high school. He is now on the national board of Friends of the Children, an organization seeking to empower children who face a myriad of challenges get through high school and succeed. In his free time, he enjoys reading, sports, and good wine.

Bryan graduated with honors from the University of California, Berkeley with a B.A. in Political Science and Economics and a J.D. from NYU School of Law. He is admitted to practice law in California and New York.



# Christopher Allen

CEO OF iCLEANSE

In August 2020, Christopher Allen acquired iCleanse with a group of investors to address the current pandemic and the need to disinfect phones, tablets, and other electronic devices in large venues, including schools and universities, sports and entertainment arenas, corporate, military, police and fire departments, nursing homes, government buildings, and airports. iCleanse has an extensive IP portfolio of UV-C and other technology that allows the company to grow their product line and licensing opportunities.

In 2009, Chris founded iDevices, the preeminent brand and technology enablement services company in the IoT space where he invented the iGrill, the first app-enabled product that had its debut in Apple stores in November 2010. As CEO, Chris strategically planned the company's product and partnership roadmap, managed strategic relationships, led business development, and helped create the culture resulted in the company being named "One of the Best Places to Work in Connecticut" three times.

In April 2017, Hubbell, Inc. (NYSE: HUBB) acquired the iDevices smart home company. Allen remained with the company as president and a proud

member of the Hubbell family of companies until August 2020.

Prior to iDevices, Christopher came from an investment background working for over 15 years for A.G. Edwards & Sons (now Wells Fargo Investments), Prudential Financial, and Allstate. He serves on the board of many organizations, including CBIA (The Connecticut Business & Industry Association), American School for the Deaf, Farmington Valley Visiting Nurse Association, among others.



“Treat every task like you’re on stage. Regardless of your role, no matter how junior; show up, do your best, and people will notice.”



## Lisa Morgan '04

VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER  
VOYA INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

Lisa Morgan is currently the vice president and business development manager at Voya Investment Management. In this capacity, she is responsible for analytical and relationship management for Voya-affiliated and DCIO business clients.

Previously, Lisa was a hybrid wholesaler in retail distribution. She also worked in the RFP/database group for institutional marketing. Prior to joining the firm, Lisa worked at Forstmann-Leff Associates as a

relationship manager in institutional sales and client service. She began her career as a project manager at the Travelers Insurance Company.

Lisa is a UConn alumna ('04), where she graduated with an MBA in marketing. She also holds a BS in business communication from Bentley University, earned with cum laude distinctions. She is a Certified Investment Management Analyst® and member of the Investments & Wealth Management Institute (formerly IMCA). Lisa holds the FINRA Series 6, 7, 63 and 65 licenses.



Rob Stone, managing director, is SS&C's head of alternative asset sales. Rob manages a group of sales professionals focused on SS&C's outsourced services and technology platform for investment managers as well as oversees strategic sales accounts. In this role, Rob is responsible for establishing, nurturing, and developing commercial relationships with clients, prospects, and influencers in the hedge fund, private equity, and real assets segments.

Since joining in 2010, Rob has been directly involved in the onboarding of some of SS&C's premier clients representing over \$250 billion in under administration. Rob joined

SS&C as an intern while studying at the University of Connecticut where he was responsible for marketing SS&C's risk management platform to insurers and institutional asset managers.

## ROB STONE '10

HEAD OF ALTERNATIVE ASSET SALES, NORTH AMERICA, SS&C TECHNOLOGIES

## & TAMI PIA '08

SALES DIRECTOR AT SS&C



Tami Pia is currently a Sales Director at SS&C GlobeOp, the largest Hedge and Private Equity fund administrator in the world.

She graduated in 2008 from The University of Connecticut, where she earned a Bachelor's in Finance. At UConn, Tami was heavily involved in Delta Gamma, Order of Omega Honor Society, Finance Society, and the American Marketing Society, amongst others.

# Maureen Ahern '87

PARTNER & COO OF momAGENDA



got to sit in the director's viewing room. A career highlight for sure!

Four years later, Maureen started her own business, forming Ahern Consulting to help companies grow their revenue. One of her first clients was momAgenda, an e-commerce company who creates and sells organizational products for mom. The consulting gig was so successful that Maureen joined momAgenda as the chief operating officer and partner. She has been at momAgenda for the past 15 years enjoying a successful entrepreneurial experience.

Maureen has been an adjunct professor of Communications at UConn Stamford teaching Intro to Human Communications and Public Speaking. She has a passion for teaching and coaching people to be their best. She just recently completed a leadership coaching certification at Georgetown University's Transformational Leadership Institute. She is passionate about coaching C-suite executives to level up their leadership presence and performance. Maureen is also a business mentor with CT NEXT. She lives in Cos Cob with her husband, three kids and her black lab, Nino.

Maureen received her bachelor's and master's from the University of Connecticut. She started her career at The Associated Press as a sales executive in the Satellite Networks division. She ended up running that division by the time she left. She joined Standard and Poor's Comstock as director of operations.

She went on to manage many different departments and became VP and managing director of sales for the US and then for Asia and South America, travelling the world. She established and ran Mainstream Data's east coast office. She signed the biggest deal in company history with Technicolor for digital cinema using satellite technology and

“Don't be afraid to raise your hand and volunteer for something you have little experience with... You have no idea how it will turn out.”

# Nicole Wagner '07 and '13

CEO OF LambdaVision

Dr. Nicole Wagner obtained her Ph.D. in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of Connecticut under the advising of Dr. Robert Birge. Nicole entered the graduate program in 2007 and spent the majority of her graduate career working on optimizing retinal-containing proteins for application in devices. During the course of her research, she played a critical role in the proof-of-concept experiments, which helped to found LambdaVision in May 2009.

“Show up!...[You] have no idea where opportunities may arise.”

Through the use of site-directed mutagenesis, site-specific saturation mutagenesis, and directed evolution, Nicole was able to genetically engineer the protein, bacteriorhodopsin, for a variety of device applications, including protein-based holographic and 3-dimensional memories, a chemical detection sensor, and, most recently, a protein-based artificial retina.

Nicole is an accomplished scientist and entrepreneur with numerous peer-reviewed publications, and has presented her research at both National and International meetings. In 2012, Dr. Wagner received the Connecticut Technology Council's Women of Innovation "Collegian Innovation and Leadership Award" for her work with LambdaVision, and was listed as one of *CT Magazine's* "40 under 40" for the class of 2015. Nicole serves on the board of directors of the New England

Women in Science Executive's Club, as well as the CT Technology Council. Nicole has been with LambdaVision since inception, and is LambdaVision's president and CEO. Since assuming the role of CEO, Dr. Wagner has been successful in securing approximately >\$8.65M in local, state, and government funding to accelerate the research, development, and commercialization of LambdaVision's artificial retina.

LambdaVision is developing the first protein-based artificial retina to restore meaningful vision for patients who are blind or have lost significant sight due to advanced retinal degenerative diseases, including retinitis pigmentosa (RP) and age-related macular degeneration (AMD).



# David Evans '99

FOUNDER & CEO, GEODE SOFTWARE, INC.



advises \$25M-100M businesses on leveraging technology to make money, save money, or improve customer experiences. As a serial entrepreneur, David enjoys helping entrepreneurs, at any stage, navigate their path to success.

He is an active mentor and advisor with Capital Factory, MIT Enterprise Forum of Cambridge, RevTech Ventures, Impact Ventures, the United Way Social Innovation Accelerator, and multiple early stage companies. In addition, David is the facilitator of the CometX Accelerator for student entrepreneurs at the University of Texas Dallas.

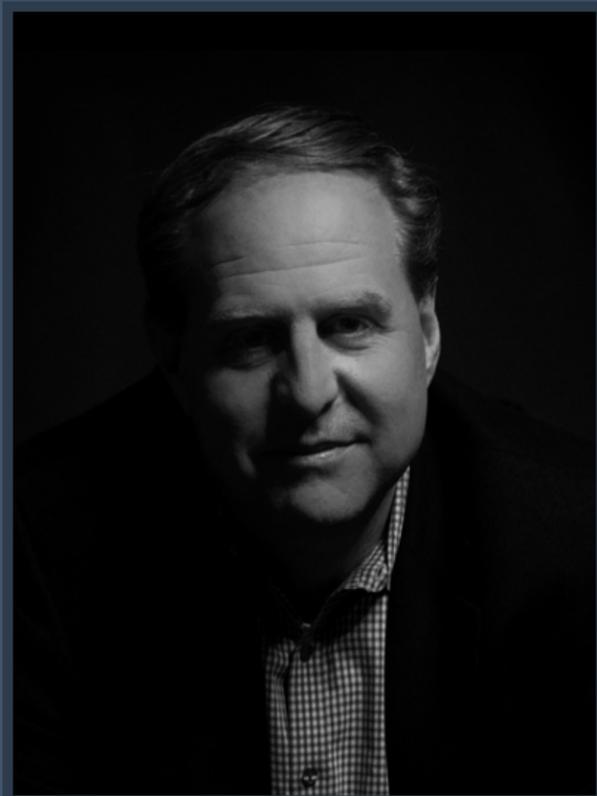
David is a graduate of the University of Connecticut, a former Beneficial Hodson Scholar at Johns Hopkins University, and holds a certificate in Corporate Finance from Harvard University.

David is a serial entrepreneur, technologist, investor, and advisor. He got started early in technology and startups, coding at age 14 and launching his first business at 19. At only 22, he became a serial entrepreneur when he launched Geode Software in the wake of the dot com bubble burst. His third business, EasySeat.com, would ultimately be his most successful, reaching #176 on the Inc 500.

In 2015, David sold EasySeat to a strategic buyer. He still runs Geode as a boutique consulting firm where he

# Bryn Tindall

CEO & OWNER, REBEL INTERACTIVE GROUP



Bryn got started in digital marketing at Modem Media — referred to by some as the “Grandfather of the Digital World.” He then created the award-winning website, homes.com, for Homes and Land Publishing.

In 1998, Bryn founded Horizon Marketing Group and spent 15 years growing the business while simultaneously creating almost a dozen additional entities, paving the way for some of marketing’s biggest names.

The founder and CEO of Rebel Interactive Group, Bryn’s a rule-breaker who literally put the Rebel in his professional rebellion. With an imposing list of startups on his resume and impressive history of clients (Mercedes-Benz and Citigroup, to name a few), Bryn embodies the entrepreneurial spirit and is the very definition of a maverick.

“When developing an idea, determine what the problem is, what can be done to fix it, and how we can capitalize off it.”

# Lauren Goodwin

ASSOCIATE FACULTY MEMBER  
AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



of making a difference and managing risk. Lauren believes in holistic service—devoting herself to driving businesses forward while also planting seeds for the future by promoting STEM education for youth.

Lauren earned a M.S. from Columbia University in New York where she is also associate faculty. She was awarded Columbia University’s Digital Innovation Award for her work on virtual and augmented reality for child cancer treatment.

Lauren is pursuing her doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania focusing her research on educational neuroscience and artificial intelligence to help gain access to education for underserved populations in STEM fields.

Lauren began her career in the space industry, leading systems engineering and integration for NASA on the International Space Station Program. She transitioned into the Energy industry leading a center of excellence for data analytics in support of automated and predictive modelling- artificial intelligence. She went on to serve as vice president of digital transformation and the digital security and risk officer. At SpaceX, Lauren headed the cybersecurity assurance program to secure the autonomous Crew Dragon space vehicle that will be used for human exploration of Mars.

Lauren has a reputation for introducing the possibilities and application of data, analytics, and automation with ethical, secure means

“If you become so focused on reaching to a specific role, you miss the experiences to be had in the journey.”

# Erin Hatzikostas '05

FOUNDER OF bAuthentic inc

Erin Hatzikostas is a former corporate CEO turned founder of b Authentic inc. She's a sought-after career coach, TEDx speaker, nationally-published thought-leader, and podcast co-host of *b Cause with Erin & Nicole*. She also recently released her first book, *You Do You-ish*.

Prior to launching b Authentic inc, Erin spent 22 years working at Aetna, and was the CEO of PayFlex (an Aetna subsidiary) from 2016-2018. In her three years leading the company, she was able to triple their earnings and send employee engagement skyrocketing. How? Authenticity!

Erin has a BBA in Statistics from Western Michigan University and an MBA from the University of Connecticut. She's married to her husband, Manny, who she met while stumbling through (and failing) an early career in the Actuarial field. They have two children - Ella (12) and Mick (9). In Erin's free time, you can find her coaching basketball, running, skiing, or probably dancing wherever you're not supposed to dance.



“In every new job or role you take, you should be 50% uncomfortable... that is where the most growth happens.”

# Tiffany St. Bernard '11

CO-FOUNDER AND CEO OF HairDays

Tiffany is a Cornell University Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering, tech entrepreneur, diversity and inclusion advocate, and mentor.

Currently, Tiffany is the co-founder and CEO of HairDays, a mobile community for women to track their hair journey. Prior to founding HairDays, she served as program manager at the Cornell Blackstone LaunchPad Program, an analyst at Excell Partners Venture Capital Fund, chair of Cornell's Diversity and International Committee, and fund manager at the Cornell Big Red Venture Fund.

In addition to her operational experience, Tiffany has founded and brought to market mobile apps spanning the hair tech, linguistics, non-profit, and social eCommerce markets. In her spare time, she enjoys mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs and helping them realize their dreams.

Tiffany's family is from Grenada W.I. and she grew up in Connecticut where she earned her A.S. in Science from Tunxis Community College and B.A. in Biology from the University of Connecticut.



“Sometimes you have to do something you don't fully enjoy to discover what you are most passionate about.”

# Nova Lorraine '95 & '97

FOUNDER OF RAINE MAGAZINE

A prior Huffington Post contributor, Nova founded *Raine Magazine* to curate the best talents around the globe and through their stories, inspire others to never give up on their dreams. Nova has interviewed many notable talents on their early rise, including Mark Cuban, Priyanka Chopra, Kendall Jenner, and Daymond John to name a few.

Nova is the host of the award nominated *Unleash Your Supernova* podcast. She is also an advisor for Creatives and Founders, seeking to build, refine, or recreate the story for their personal brand, a new product, or the company itself. Nova specializes in using psychology, design, and media for impactful written and visual content. She loves strategizing on how to use storytelling to create new opportunities and revenue streams.

Due to her unique and challenging journey, Nova launched Raine Magazine in 2007 to inspire others to "Never Give



Up on Their Dreams." This has led to her writing *Unleash Your Supernova -A Guide to Successfully Survive Creative Entrepreneurship*. She highlights how to accelerate creativity while beating burnout. She also recently gave a TedX Talk in March 2021.

Nova spends her free time working on novels and screenplays as well as acting in stage plays, along with supporting the busy lives of her four athletic children. Nova's hobbies include reading, running, and seeking out the best restaurants wherever she goes.

“ Whatever the dream, share it with everyone... It is oftentimes our uniqueness and passion people are drawn to. ”

# Katie Tougas '04

DIRECTOR OF DATA ENGINEERING ,  
THE HARTFORD

Katie Tougas is a director of data engineering at The Hartford. Katie is an energetic and passionate IT leader with over 15 years of experience in Information Technology. She is motivated by delivering business value for customers, people development, and continuous learning.

In her current role, she leads an organization that focuses on delivering data solutions for internal and external customers. Katie has had 12 exciting years at The Hartford in various roles, all within IT, and prior to that did IT Consulting with Accenture.

Katie graduated from the UConn School of Business in 2004, with a major in Business Management and a minor in History. She resides in Coventry, CT so still can get back to UConn on the weekends to peek at how much the Storrs campus has evolved and changed over the past 16 years. Katie and her husband have two daughters, 6 and 3, who, fingers crossed, will be future Huskies.



“ If you're not having fun in [your job], don't stick with it... Stay open to opportunities that may arise and trust in the journey. ”

# Private Capital

NOVEMBER 17TH TO DECEMBER 8TH, 2020

## Jeff Noonan '18

ASSOCIATE AT COVE HILL



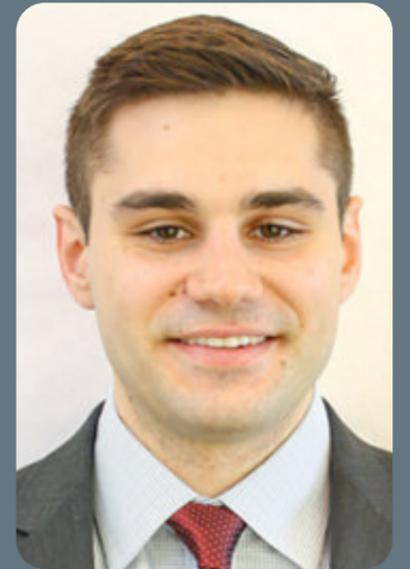
Jeff graduated from UConn in 2018 with a B.S. in Finance. While at UConn, Jeff was actively involved on campus. He served as President of the Honors in Business Association, managing director of the UConn Consulting Group, and co-lead manager in the Student Managed Fund. After graduation, Jeff joined Bain & Company in Boston as a management consultant. During his time at Bain, Jeff served clients across a variety of industries including Consumer Packaged Goods, Information Services, and Private Equity. After two years at Bain Jeff joined Cove Hill Partners, a private equity firm in Boston.

Jeff is currently an Associate at Cove Hill and spends his time working across both Consumer and Technology verticals.

# Student Series

## Justin Lee '15

ASSOCIATE AT PALLADIN CONSUMER RETAIL PARTNERS



Justin is responsible for aiding in the identification and analysis of potential opportunities for platform and add-on acquisitions, the due diligence and execution of new investments and the management of companies in the current portfolio.

Prior to joining Palladin in 2019, Justin worked as an investment banking analyst with Alantra Partners, where he worked on the execution of cross-border middle market mergers and acquisitions across various industries.

Earlier in his career, Justin worked as a valuation advisory analyst with Duff & Phelps, where he supported the valuations of business

enterprises and securities for M&A and financial reporting purposes.

Justin earned a BS in Accounting from the University of Connecticut's School of Business.

## Leah Oppenheimer '14

MBA CANDIDATE & VC FELLOW AT  
COLUMBIA SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



Leah is currently an MBA candidate at Columbia Business School. Prior to starting at CBS, she was a summer associate at LDV Capital and an investment associate at Comcast NBCUniversal LIFT Labs (Techstars). Previously, she spent three years running platform and marketing for UpRamp, the industry accelerator/CVC for the connectivity industry (backed by Comcast, Charter, Cox, and 60 others), and worked in business development for boutique consultancies in London. She is a CBS VC Fellow at NEA, a VC Partner at Contrary, and an InSITE Fellow.

Leah graduated from the Honors Program at the University of Connecticut in 2012 with a double major in Spanish and IMJR (International Relations & Human Rights) and from the University of Cambridge in 2013 with an MPhil in Education. She currently lives on the Upper West Side in New York.

## Noah Sobel-Pressman '21

SERIES MODERATOR



Noah is a senior at UConn studying Management, Data Analytics, and Chinese. He is passionate about VC and entrepreneurship. After graduation, he will be working at a stealth startup in the liquor e-commerce space as a chief of staff/Jack of all trades. While at UConn, Noah was very involved in the formation of venture capital programs, spearheading the raise of a \$1 million student venture fund, Hillside Ventures.

Outside of school/work, Noah enjoys cooking, anything to do with sports, and hanging out with friends.

# SPRING

# 2021



# Andy Goldstrom '87 and '90

MANAGING PARTNER, MIDCOURSE ADVISORS

Andy Goldstrom is a proud alumnus of the University of Connecticut and the founder of Midcourse Advisors, a rapid growth coaching and consulting company for business owners, entrepreneurs and executive leaders.

As a two-time Inc. 500 business owner, Andy has leveraged this experience to create a proven set of tools and methodologies to help small- to medium-sized business leaders focus on the right approach to scale their businesses, grow rapidly and avoid costly mistakes. During the pandemic, this has become especially vital to both sustain and move businesses forward.

In the past four years, Andy has helped leaders deliver over \$90 million in incremental revenue and \$20 million in incremental profit.

Separately, Andy is a professor where he teaches a course in entrepreneurship at Georgia State University. Not taking himself too seriously, he also is an aspiring comedian.



“In order to be a good salesperson, you have to accept rejection... If you never swing at the plate, you aren't able to receive the necessary feedback required to grow.”

”

# Sandy Gibson

CEO & CO-FOUNDER OF BETTER PLACE FORESTS

Sandy Gibson is the founder and CEO of Better Place Forests, the company who created America's first conservation memorial forests.

When Sandy was a young boy, he lost his father to a stroke and his mother to cancer. For most of his life, his parents have been memories to him. After years of visiting their graves in a dreary Toronto cemetery, Sandy began to imagine what a better place to remember his parents might look like. In 2015, he founded Better Place Forests with his two best friends to help families write better endings to their stories.

Sandy graduated from Princeton University in 2006 with an A.B. in History. A lifelong entrepreneur, he headed several companies and worked in finance and software for over 10 years before founding Better Place Forests.



“Most people think entrepreneurship is like building a jet ski. In reality, it's like a surfboard...you have to anticipate a wave to ride on, and even the best surfers can't stand up on all of them.”

”

# Elizabeth Santiago

CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER AT MENTOR NATIONAL,  
FOUNDER OF THE UNTOLD NARRATIVES



experience in working with vulnerable or marginalized youth and the systems and people that serve them. She has taught high school equivalency courses within school districts, community-based organizations and through unions, and managed the GED/high school equivalency program at the Harriet Tubman House in Boston, MA. She has also built a professional development service for teachers and principals designing education programs for first generation college goers.

Elizabeth earned a B.F.A. in Writing, Literature and Publishing from Emerson College, a Master's degree from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, Technology, Innovation and Education Program, and a Ph.D. in Education Studies at Lesley University.

— “ —  
“The more we uplift each other, especially through telling our stories, we heal and grow together.”  
— ” —

Elizabeth Santiago is currently the chief program officer for MENTOR National as well as the founder of The Untold Narratives, a grassroots storytelling initiative. At MENTOR, she is responsible for and actively involved in the management of programs and services for a wide range of stakeholders.

Prior to MENTOR, Elizabeth gained extensive experience in program management and development, instructional design, curriculum development, training and professional development with organizations such as Jobs for the Future, Simmons College, Babson College, Houghton Mifflin and World Education. She has specific

# Tom Gamache '09

PRESIDENT OF SCRYBE DIGITAL

“  
“Like finances, budget your time and it will do what you want... Otherwise, just like money, it will disappear.”  
”

Tom Gamache is a business owner, combat veteran, nerd, writer and father, but not necessarily in that order. He owns and operates Scrybe Digital LLC, a digital marketing agency in downtown Westerly, RI. Scrybe began as a professional network of skilled contractors, and has evolved over time into a full-service brand development agency working with businesses from California, Nashville, Boston, Southeastern Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Tom graduated from UConn in 2009 with bachelor's Degrees in Psychology and English. He credits Professors Gina Barreca and Christopher Dowd as two of the most important influences of his college tenure, as they solidified his passion for writing and impacted him as a person.

He currently enjoys playing basketball, chasing his kids around the house, singing Otis Redding songs with his daughter, making too many puns and being awestruck by his

remarkable wife.

When he isn't developing business brands or promoting musicians, Tom likes to focus on writing projects of his own. His current project focuses on casting a cathartic light on PTSD, particularly its pervasive and personal effect on Veterans. *Not Our Time* is a collection of real-life stories fictionalized to help process trauma, fear and even guilt through a narrative lens. He believes in the power of a story, and that it's the secret to a good book, a successful marketing campaign and a meaningful life.



# Geoff Matous '06

PRESIDENT OF WELLINKS



“[On digital platforms,] people show just the highlight reel... you only see the product of 10 years of effort, not the blood, sweat, tears and scars behind all of that work.”

Following a 12-year career in medical device sales and commercial leadership with Synthes (Johnson & Johnson) and Medtronic, Geoff was drawn to the entrepreneurial start-up world. He currently holds the role of president at Wellinks, a New Haven-based digital health and medical technology innovator focused on transforming respiratory condition care.

Achievements of the Wellinks team under Geoff's leadership include raising a \$14M Series B financing

in 2019, impacting the lives of tens of thousands of customers and being named 2020 Venture of the Year in the Connecticut Entrepreneur Awards.

Geoff serves on the Board of Directors of Launc[H]artford, the American Lung Association in Connecticut and the Medtech Advisory Committee at Hartford Healthcare. He lives in West Hartford with his partner Kim and their energetic German Shepherd Bane. In his remaining free time, Geoff enjoys cycling, golf and exploring the outdoors.

# Kevin Rocco '09

CEO OF BIOREZ



Kevin Rocco is the CEO of Biorez, a medical device company dedicated to improving the outcomes of tendon and ligament injuries. The company has developed a proprietary implant technology called the BioBrace™, which is intended to reinforce tendon and ligament repairs throughout the healing process, while improving soft tissue healing.

Kevin is an experienced entrepreneur, having raised \$7M in seed funding for Biorez, and an expert in the field of tissue engineering with over 20 peer-reviewed publications and

patents. He graduated UConn in 2009 with a B.S. in Biomedical engineering.

“When starting [to build out a company], you should take an honest assessment of what you will and will not do. Then, fill in the gaps with people who've done those sorts of things before.”

# Liz James '08

GLOBAL CONTENT & CREATIVE LEAD, YOUTUBE

Liz James '08 is YouTube's global creative content & curriculum lead, where she brings in large cap companies to partner with the YouTube platform on out-of-the box advertising ideas.

Formerly, she led the multicultural efforts at Google NYC for all movie studios and TV networks, such as Universal Pictures, Hulu and Netflix.

Over the course of eight years, Liz has grown two sales teams and is co-chair of Google's Diversity & Inclusion Board.

Liz is a native of Connecticut, but has lived and worked in six countries, including England and China. She is a graduate of the University of Connecticut, where she



received her B.S. in Marketing and Sales. She also earned an M.B.A. at NYU Stern School of Business.

After graduation, Liz launched her career at the Nielsen Company in their

highly coveted two-year rotational program.

Following the graduation of this program, Liz worked on two

summer Olympic events — Beijing and London.

During her time in London, she carried the

Olympic torch the day prior to the opening

ceremonies. Liz is also a Guinness Book of World Record holder. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling to far flung, remote destinations around the world and has traveled to 136 countries to date!

“.....  
Don't be shy. If you want something, go after it. After all, you are your own best advocate.  
.....”

# Juanita Austin '16

CEO OF CULTURED AF



Juanita Austin is a curator and cultural producer, born and raised in New London, Connecticut. A graduate from the University of Connecticut, with a B.A. in Digital Media & Design, she has served as a leader on many grassroots community arts initiatives and now runs her own arts collective, Cultured AF. Her work centers on supporting underrepresented artists and creating safe and equitable spaces for those artists to thrive.

Cultured AF's headquarters are located at her art lounge, Cultured Studios, in downtown New London which is a gallery, arts boutique and community event space. Juanita has worked in the New London Arts Community for over four years. During this time, she has curated art exhibitions, organized festivals and produced live arts and music events.

Juanita's work has built bridges with arts communities across the state. She's strongly passionate about building community and creating experiences that brings art into everyone's lives.

“  
If you don't see an opportunity, create one. If you don't see a pathway that's already been walked, don't use that as a reason to believe it cannot be done.  
”

# Kaitlin Archambault '11

FOUNDER & PRINCIPLE OF INCENDIARY DESIGNS

Kaitlin Archambault is a designer, creative director and communications strategist with a decade of experience growing and leading creative teams. She started her career in public media, branding and growing the reach and funding of NPR and PBS programs as a part of The Futuro Media Group. In 2013, she went on to found Brooklyn-based creative studio Incendiary Designs, which has built and grown nonprofit and social good brands on five continents. Kaitlin has worked to advance education policy and grown thought leadership programs for placement in outlets like the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *The Hill*.

With experiences that range from designing institutional-grade financial services platforms to leading global organizations through complex rebrands, Kaitlin recognizes that a truly design-driven approach takes into account issues of governance, compliance and ethics. These days, she spends much of her time at the intersection between user experience and behavioral economics to ensure that emerging technologies—like blockchain and artificial intelligence—are thoughtfully constructed for the greater good. She recently founded Open Future Coalition, a global platform for the local exchange of capital, skills and knowledge in service of measurable impact.

Kaitlin’s background is in public art and grassroots movement building: she was part of the initial press push and benefit campaign around the imprisonment of Russian punk band Pussy Riot, and has taught art therapy at the women’s jail on Riker’s Island.



“There comes a time in growing up when you realize there is no ‘them’- the scientists, doctors, bankers and so on- solving important problems. The ‘them’ is us and it’s time we should act.”

# Trip Coyne

CEO OF DOCKATOT



“I don’t know how many handshakes, late nights and [failed] projects it takes, but eventually everything will click into place.”

Trip Coyne is the CEO of DockATot, a global maker of luxury baby goods with a headquarters in Stockholm, Sweden. He lives in Wilmington, NC where he also owns a few coffee shops.

Trip’s first career was as a lawyer, and he litigated commercial cases throughout the country. He regularly serves on non-profit boards, including

a fine art museum and a school for underprivileged children.

Trip received a B.S. in Marketing and Management from Appalachian State University and a J.D. from the Wake Forest University School of Law. His hobbies include collecting art, cooking, traveling and parenting pets.

# Dan Toscano '87

MANAGING DIRECTOR, GLOBAL HEAD OF LEVERAGED & ACQUISITION FINANCE AT MORGAN STANLEY

Daniel Toscano is a managing director of Morgan Stanley and is head of Global Leveraged and Acquisition Finance. He has responsibility for originating and distributing leveraged loan and high yield bond financings around the world and in all industry sectors. Dan joined Morgan Stanley in 2010 with 20 years of prior experience in leveraged finance origination, execution and distribution. He is a member of the Global Capital Markets Operating Committee, the Investment Banking Division Management Committee and is a voting member of the Capital Commitment Committee.

Prior to joining Morgan Stanley, Dan was a managing director and group head at Deutsche Bank Securities and its predecessor, Bankers Trust. At Deutsche Bank for over 15 years, Dan was responsible for the Senior Debt Capital Markets group in North America including the origination, underwriting, distribution and trading of floating rate debt. Dan became Group Head in 2002 and served on the North American Investment



Banking Management Committee, the Global Capital Markets Americas Management Committee and was a voting member of the Capital Commitments Committee.

Dan and his teams have won countless awards and honors over the years, including IFR's Global Leveraged Loan House, U.S. Leveraged Finance House and Global High Yield House.

Morgan Stanley was honored in 2018 and again in 2019 as U.S. High Yield Bond House of the Year. The team also won North America Leveraged Loan in 2019.

Dan is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He is chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University of Connecticut and served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the UConn Foundation, the principal philanthropic

fundraising and investment management organization for UConn.

Dan resides in Darien, CT with his wife Tresa and their three children.

“The best thing you can do is to be willing to do the jobs no one else wants.”

# Michelle Wax '12

FOUNDER OF AMERICAN HAPPINESS PROJECT



Michelle Wax is the founder of American Happiness Project, a movement across 50 states focused on creating more joy, energy and connection in the everyday. Wax works with top companies, organizations and schools across the USA to help teams thrive in uncertainty, use stress to their advantage and create positive mindsets through workshops and accountability programs.

She produced the 50 state American Happiness documentary, and leads the CONNECTION community. Prior to

“Every human is programmed [to be negative] through our primal instincts... start by beginning your day in a positive way and the rest [of the day] will follow that path.”

founding American Happiness Project, Wax founded two companies in the food industry, which she sold in 2019.

# Cassandra Bodzak '09

ON-AIR TALENT AND AUTHOR

Cassandra Bodzak is a thought leader, best-selling author and sought-after speaker in the mindfulness and personal development world. She has been called “an award-winning thought leader and intuitive coach”

in *Forbes* and “a spiritual leader” by Well + Good. Cassandra helps heal women from the fear that’s holding them back so they can live their happiest, most confident lives. She is regularly appearing on TV and digital platforms to share her holistic and mindful living tips.

Cassandra hosts sold-out lectures and is the founder of Divinely Design Your Life, a group coaching experience to help women all over the world bring the vision they have for their life into reality. You may have seen Cassandra

on ABC’s “The Taste” with Anthony Bourdain as the “happy, healthy living guru” or in her work with *SHAPE*, *Eating Well*, *Huffington Post*, *Teen Vogue*, *Thrive*, *Fabletics*, *Lululemon*, *SoulCycle* and many more.



“You never know who you’re talking to. Always be your best self. At the end of the day, [those who provide] opportunities are just people too.”

# Lori Fomenko '16, '18 & '20

PRINCIPAL DATA SCIENTIST,  
MCKINSEY & COMPANY



Lori joined McKinsey & Company in early 2019 as a senior data scientist, focused on utilizing climate and engineering knowledge primarily in the agricultural domain. Later in 2019, she founded the firmwide global Climate Analytics solution and began building out a team of climate scientists and advisors to tackle physical climate risk assessment.

She is currently a technical product manager, principal climate data scientist and solution leader for the Climate Analytics team leading integrated teams of data scientists, engineers and consultants in both public and private sector work across industries to assess climate risk and help clients develop effective strategies to mitigate and adapt to both physical and transition risks related to climate change.

“If you try to [fully] understand what your passion is, you will never find it... that road doesn't have a defined ending.”

# Matt Melander '09

PRESIDENT & CFO OF LEVIA

“ [When building a company,] you are going to be told ‘no’ way more than ‘yes.’ You need to be confident in your product and yourself in order to succeed. ”



Matt Melander is a founding partner and CFO of LEVIA Brands, one of the first cannabis infused seltzer brands in the nation, based in Georgetown, MA.

After graduating from UConn in 2009, Matt moved to San Francisco to take an investment banking analyst role with Keefe, Bruyette & Woods, eventually making a transition into sales and trading with KBW in New York City.

Following the sale of KBW to Stifel Financial, Matt moved home to Boston and took a role with Morgan Stanley... though he always had a yearning to be part of something from the ground

floor! After a good amount of soul searching, Matt left the world of finance, partnered with the two founding families at LEVIA and set off to raise the necessary capital to build a state of the art cannabis beverage factory. LEVIA now sells their three seltzer flavors/effects in over 50 licensed dispensaries in Massachusetts, with plans to grow into other recreational markets over the course of 2021.

Matt believes the true core of a successful entrepreneur is the ability to put on blinders, ignore the haters and believe in yourself.

# Rob Giglietti '92

VICE PRESIDENT, CFO OF GE CAPITAL & COO OF GE TREASURY



company divestitures and includes legal entity restructuring, debt restructuring, TSA and buyer diligence.

From 2014 to 2016, Rob was CFO and global controller for Treasury. Rob’s global team was focused on planning, reporting and accounting for the Company’s debt and derivative portfolio. Rob played a significant role in the sell down of \$400 billion of assets of GE Capital and led the restructuring of the overall GE Capital debt portfolio.

Rob joined GE in 2002 as the controller of the former Infrastructure businesses and went on to hold a series of controller roles across GE, including at GE Water, GE Money (\$200B Consumer Finance portfolio), and GE Capital Real Estate (a \$50B portfolio) as well as serving as deputy controller – financial reporting for GE.

Prior to GE, Rob held controllership leadership roles at PriceWaterhouseCoopers and at Celera Genomics, a public biotech company. He earned a B.S. in Accounting from the University of Connecticut and is a Certified Public Accountant.

Rob is married with two teenage sons and lives in Fairfield, CT. He is active in his local community, participating on the Boards of Junior Achievement of Southwest Connecticut and Cancercare of Connecticut. He currently is a board member for Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County.

Robert (Rob) Giglietti is currently vice president, chief operating officer at GE Treasury. In this role, Rob is responsible for overall Treasury finance and operations, including Controllershship, Financial Planning & Analysis, Consolidated Liquidity, Derivative Operations and cash and banking activity including payments, playing a key role at interfacing with banking partners, as well as driving Treasury transformation initiatives in line with GE strategy.

Rob served as the operational controller for GE from 2017 until early 2019. In this role, he had overall responsibility for accounting operations, controls and governance for the Company. He led a global team of approximately 4,000 employees across the GE businesses and in GE’s Global Operations Center. Rob also led the Separation Management Office, which supported all

“ You need to take risks, but they must be calculated. You should know what you’re getting yourself into. ”

# Joseph Sowin '01

CO-CHIEF INVESTMENT OFFICER & GLOBAL HEAD OF EQUITY TRADING AT HIGHLAND CAPITAL



Joseph R. Sowin is Co-chief Investment officer (co-CIO) and Head of Trading at Highland Capital Management, a Dallas-based asset manager offering a range of alternative investment solutions for retail and institutional investors worldwide.

As co-CIO, Joseph oversees day-to-day operations and investment activities across Highland's multibillion-dollar investment platform and is responsible for driving information flow between investment teams and with counterparties. He manages all aspects of equity, credit, and derivative trading as well as is responsible for enhancing platform-wide processes related to execution venue and trade optimization, including trade technology, analytics, and performance measurement. Joseph operates as Highland's lead broker liaison, serving on compensation, research, pricing, conflicts, and brokerage committees in addition to the implementation of the firm's counterparty management program.

Prior to joining Highland, held various trading positions at New York- and Connecticut-based hedge funds, including Scopus Asset Management and DKR Capital.

“Instead of thinking like an employee, act like you're the employer.”

# Kyle Horvath '15

SOLUTIONS ALLIANCES AT HIGHSPOT



“Don't let a lack of experience stop you from having a conversation. Many times, a bit of research [online] will bring you up to a proficient level and close that gap.”

Kyle is a 2015 graduate of the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (CAHNR). He currently runs the Solutions Alliances business for Highspot, a \$2.3 billion SaaS startup, and spends his time leveraging partnerships with Venture Capital, Private Equity and Management Consulting firms to drive deal flow for Highspot's Sales teams.

Prior to his time at Highspot, Kyle spent several years at InsightSquared where he grew the Partnerships team to account for 25% of InsightSquared's revenue and sourced the company's \$23M Series D financing. Before InsightSquared, Kyle was the third employee at TarDisk, a consumer electronics startup launched out of the

Innovation Lab at Harvard Business School, where he helped grow the business from a \$130K crowdfunding project into a \$1M ecommerce operation that has been featured on *Forbes*, *Tech Crunch* and *Gizmodo*.

Kyle serves as an operational adviser to the portfolio companies of Underscore.VC, a Seed & Series A venture firm in Boston, and is also involved with the alumni advisory board of the UConn Consulting Group. He currently resides in Southport, CT. In his spare time, Kyle enjoys snowboarding, surfing, golf and is always happy to connect with current and former Huskies!

# Joanna Rosenberg '94

FOUNDER OF SIMPLIHERE



companies through global corporations, developing go-to-market strategies, demand generation and awareness, messaging and positioning, and product launches.

Joanna received her B.A. from the University of Connecticut and M.B.A. from the Carroll Graduate School of Management at Boston College.

Joanna Rosenberg is a technology entrepreneur building the next generation community and communication platform for patients and families impacted by ALS and other neurodegenerative diseases.

She bridges her technology marketing background with personal experience with ALS to grow a sustainable, mission-based venture. Her 20 years of experience spans small software companies

“As an entrepreneur, oftentimes, there is not a ‘guru’ to call when you have a problem. [Instead,] find people who will help you talk through your own problems to find a solution.”

# Max Chanoch '09

HEAD OF PRODUCT AT HACKERU

Max is a proven global product executive specializing in product market fit, scale, user journeys and profitability, who collaboratively and strategically innovates with speed, attention to detail and passion.

Most recently, Max was the head of production monetization at Tumblr, where he helped sell the company from Verizon Media to Automattic, drove global strategy, direction and integration into the new parent org, rebuilt Tumblr’s direct sales offering, launched programmatic advertising and helped unify analytics and engagements across the platform.

Prior to Tumblr, Max was the director of product at Kargo, where he generated over \$40M in new gross revenue by designing, launching and scaling Kargo’s programmatic solution, a supply side platform that served rich media and video creatives across 250 publishers on their mobile websites.

Max has over 12 years of experience growing revenue streams and transforming business lines across

digital, mobile, app, video, social and integrated media with the successful release of ad tech stacks, business intelligence solutions, video technologies, digital commerce, enterprise integrations and support for new government regulations or laws.

One of Max’s goals is to cultivate an efficient, fast paced, data-driven work environment where product managers, colleagues, teams and stakeholders are empowered to succeed and receive recognition for their contributions.

Max’s hobbies include exploring, hiking, biking, fly fishing, snowboarding, golfing, swimming, building cabins, great food and hanging with family and friends.



“So much of working with [and leading] people is figuring out what motivates them and then what you can do to empower them to solve problems.”

# Timothy Bussey '14 & '18

FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ACE AND ARO ALLIANCE OF CENTRAL OHIO

Timothy R. Bussey, Ph.D. (they/them) is the associate director for the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, where they support LGBTQ+ inclusivity initiatives across campus and beyond.

In July 2020, Timothy also founded the Ace and Aro Alliance of Central Ohio, which is the state's first and only organization that explicitly focuses upon the needs of the asexual and aromantic community. Additionally, they also serve as the vice president for the Board of Directors of the Newark Ohio Pride Coalition, which is best known for hosting a small town pride festival for roughly 1,500 attendees annually.

Previously, they served both as the acting operational director of the Newark Ohio Pride Coalition and a visiting assistant professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Kenyon College. Timothy's research interests include queer military history, LGBTQ+ educational support, and LGBTQ+ politics and policy. Their most recent work has been published by *BUST Magazine*, *The Conversation*, *The Associated Press*, and *The Gay & Lesbian Review* among others.



“In many circumstances, especially when it comes to the field of advocacy, the ‘work’ is never done. Prioritize time to take care of yourself [as well as] find hobbies you enjoy that are not related to your realm of work.”

# Gay Crowley

SOCIAL IMPACT ENTREPRENEUR AND YOUTH MENTORING PROFESSIONAL

Gay Crowley is presently working with Elevate Youth, in Boston, MA as co-founder of the E.A.T. Program. By expanding extensive outdoor programming to include education around and access to healthy food choices, Elevate Youth has been able to offer a holistic approach to empower youth to lead healthier, happier lives.

Gay is the founder and former director of the Mother Caroline Academy and Education Center Mentoring Program, located in Dorchester, MA, as well as its corresponding annual Girl Power event. Mother Caroline is a non-profit middle school for underrepresented young women living in Boston and surrounding communities. She is also a mentor and collaborator with the Northeastern University Torch Scholars Program, vice chair executive council on the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) Leadership Board, as well as member of the Bowdoin Street Health Center Leadership Council and the BIDMC Neuroscience Advisory Committee. Gay also worked with colleagues to establish the Redefining Emergency Healthcare for Individuals Suffering from Addiction Pilot Program at BIDMC, operating from 2018 to present.

Gay graduated with a B.S. in Human Development and Family Life Studies from the University of Vermont. Her other interests include photography, music, the great outdoors (including biking, hiking and gardening), sustainable living practices, and being a lifetime learner and collaborator.



“Listen to your inner voice. Don't be afraid to explore and try new things!”

# LUNCH WITH AN ALUM

## MBA PROGRAM CHAT SERIES

— FEBRUARY 19, 2021 —



### Lisa Morgan '04, CIMA

VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AT VOYA  
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT DCIO

— MARCH 19, 2021 —



### Scott Roberts '02

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF BANK  
STRATEGY AT AFFIRM

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“EMBRACE EVERY OPPORTUNITY. IT  
MAY NOT BE WHAT YOU HAD IN  
MIND, BUT YOU WILL GAIN  
INVALUABLE LEARNING BUILDING  
BLOCKS FROM WHATEVER YOU DO.”

LISA MORGAN '04

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“GO TO A PLACE [PROFESSIONALLY]  
WHERE YOU CAN GROW. REMEMBER  
THAT EVERY INTERVIEW IS A TWO-WAY  
STREET... NURTURE AND LEARNING IS  
JUST AS, IF NOT MORE, IMPORTANT AS  
THE ACTUAL ROLE YOU HOLD. ”

SCOTT ROBERTS '02

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“AS YOU PROGRESS, IT IS  
IMPORTANT TO FIND EXPERIENCES  
THAT WILL ALLOW YOU TO  
DEVELOP THE [SOFT] SKILLS YOU  
DIDN'T THROUGH SCHOOLING.”

DAVID HOVSTADIUS '90 & '92

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“COMPANY CULTURE IS SO  
IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER [AND  
PRIORITIZE] WHEN LOOKING FOR A  
JOB...DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK  
EMPLOYEES ABOUT THE  
ENVIRONMENT, INTERNAL POLITICS,  
AND THEIR OVERALL EXPERIENCE.”

LAUREN CWIKLA '19

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“FIND THREE HOBBIES YOU LOVE:  
ONE TO MAKE YOU MONEY, ONE  
TO KEEP YOU IN SHAPE, AND ONE  
TO BE CREATIVE.”

LAUREN CWIKLA '19

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“THE PERSON MOST INTERESTED  
IN YOUR CAREER IS YOURSELF...  
BE SURE TO INVEST THE TIME TO  
ENSURE YOU GET TOWARDS A  
GOAL YOU WANT.”

DAVID HOVSTADIUS '90 & '92

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“BUILDING AND MAINTAINING A  
NETWORK IS KEY... DEVELOP YOUR  
ELEVATOR PITCH, FOCUSING ON  
WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ARE  
LOOKING FOR.”

LISA MORGAN '04

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“YOU'VE GOT TO BE ON THE LIST- IT  
DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S THE A LIST,  
THE B LIST, OR EVEN THE C LIST-  
EVENTUALLY YOU WILL BE CALLED  
AND YOU SHOULD PUT YOURSELF  
IN A POSITION TO RESPOND  
ACCORDINGLY.”

SCOTT ROBERTS '02

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— APRIL 9, 2021 —



### David Hovstadius '90 & '92

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,  
FINANCE OPERATIONS AT HEARST

— APRIL 23, 2021 —



### Lauren Cwikla '19

BRAND MANAGER AT  
NEW CHAPTER INC,



Thank you!

We asked some of our top student Coffee Chat participants what their favorite part of attending Coffee Chats were. Here's what they had to say!

## Ilana Goldner

ATTENDED 17 COFFEE CHATS



Ilana is a first-year Ecology and Evolutionary Biology major who is excited to take advantage of all the opportunities UConn and the Werth Institute have to offer! She is from East Meadow, New York, and attended East Meadow High School. Ilana is now a member of the Ecohouse Learning Community and hopes to use entrepreneurship to promote sustainability and stewardship, and create things that are good for people and the planet!

While she does not consider herself an expert in entrepreneurship, she does consider herself an expert in thinking of and talking about ideas- the first step in an entrepreneur's journey. During her free time, she enjoys photography, hiking, biking, dancing, cooking, making stop-motion animations, and having meaningful conversations.

## Raina Jain

ATTENDED 17 COFFEE CHATS



Raina is from Riverside, Connecticut, and attended Greenwich High School before coming to UConn. She is majoring in Computer Science with an anticipated minor in Behavioral Economics and has a passion for entrepreneurship. Raina enjoys the free-thinking and creative mindset that the entrepreneurial career path entails.

Raina is inventor of HiveGuard, a device that works to save beehives, and founder of Queen Bee, an immune support shot infused with honeybee byproducts, where a pollinator tree is planted for every bottle sold. Her work with honeybees has been featured in Forbes Magazine and Bee Culture, a niche magazine for America's beekeepers. Currently, Raina is working on building an immunity-boosting powdered beverage infused with honeybee byproducts called BeeWell.

She is also a long-distance runner, actively engaged in marathons, and enjoys running to the beach and reading in her free time. Some of Raina's favorite books are *The 4-Hour Workweek* by Timothy Ferris and *Zero to One* by Peter Theil.

Engaging in meaningful conversation, removing the dividers between these 'successful' professionals and yourself as a student, and being able to learn something from every person's journey make the Coffee Chats so relevant- even if their end goals may not be the same as your own. I've really enjoyed getting to speak to many people with so many backgrounds. There were so many interesting ideas and even education and career paths that I was introduced to!

-ILANA GOLDNER-

Attending the coffee chats helped carve the direction of my career. Interacting with alumni from diverse fields and learning about their journeys played a critical role in enhancing my student experience. The conversations served as the catalyst I needed to fuel the development of my own career. It was an opportunity to hear great insights while connecting students and alumni. During each session, there was a story to hear and a lesson to learn.

-RASHANA WEERIGNSHEE-



## Zac Will

ATTENDED 12 COFFEE CHATS

Zac is a sophomore at the University of Connecticut and majoring in Business Management with a concentration in Entrepreneurship. He's from Marshfield, MA and has been a lifelong fan of UConn Basketball.

Zac is currently involved in the CCEI's 2020 Summer Fellowship for entrepreneurs, and competed in and won seed money in CCEI's Get Seeded competition in the Fall of 2019. He is a member of UConn's CEO club, and plays intramural soccer and basketball. Zac is working on a start-up business called Kona Brand. Kona Brand creates fun flannel shirts that make you smile and reminds busy people to live a care-filled life. Their motto is "Walk slow, smile more." Kona Brand is set to launch in the fall of 2020 on Kickstarter.

Zac's goal is to make Kona Brand his full time job upon graduating so he doesn't have to go into a corporate job where he believes he will likely walk fast and smile less.



## Rashana Weerignshee

ATTENDED 12 COFFEE CHATS

Rashana is a rising junior studying Business Data Analytics at UConn. Currently, she is the vice president of the Data Analytics Club and the Treasurer for the Financial Management Club. Rashana is an analyst on the newly formed UConn Student Venture Fund, Hillside Ventures. She is also a member of the Business Connections Learning Community, where she served as an Academic Mentor and Committee Chair.

Rashana has a diverse background with experience in healthcare, investment banking, early-stage technology startups, and telecommunications. The common thread between her past experiences and future endeavors lies at the intersection of human behavior, entrepreneurship, and technology.



## Katie Lavigne

ATTENDED 10 COFFEE CHATS

Katie is a sophomore pursuing a degree in Allied Health Science with plans to minor in business. She is a First Year Experience mentor for incoming freshmen as part of the Women in Math, Science, and Engineering (WiMSE) learning community, and is a member of Alpha Lambda Delta, CareCakes, Paws and Claws, and the Ski & Snowboard Club. Katie enjoys baking, cooking, gardening, listening to music, playing sports and spending time with friends and family.

In the future, Katie hopes to work in the medical field, either caring for patients or working on the business side of healthcare. She would also like to pursue her love of baking and dreams of running a small bakery side business so she can share her passion with others.



## Kripa Marvadi

ATTENDED 10 COFFEE CHATS

Kripa Marvadi is a rising sophomore at University of Connecticut-Stamford, where she is majoring in Financial Management with a minor in Accounting.

Kripa is a member of the Business Connections Learning Community and the Honors in Business Association. To promote diversity in the honors program, she proposed the role of a diversity officer and will serve as the diversity engagement coordinator on the Honors Student Leadership Board.

Kripa's passions include exploring new places and learning about different cultures. She is anticipating starting a multicultural club in the fall 2021 semester to turn her passion into action. In her free time, Kripa enjoys reading, watching mystery dramas, trying new food, and surfing real-estate websites.

...the most important lesson I learned from the Coffee Chats was the importance of seeking opportunities and then taking full advantage of them. You never know when the person you meet or the experience you have might lead to something greater.

-KRIPA MARVADI-

# Phoebe Liou

ATTENDED 10 COFFEE CHATS



A homeschool graduate at age 16, Phoebe Liou is an ambitious first-year student studying Biology. She lives in Windsor, Connecticut with her parents, younger sister, and a fluctuating number of chinchillas from their rescue.

Phoebe is currently an intern for the UConn Hartford Voting Power Corps and the UConn Hartford Office of Advocacy and Engagement. She utilizes her love for photography, the arts, and community service to support her local and global community by volunteering as the Social Media Manager for the Connecticut Valley Tobacco Historical Society, MASSHope Children's Programs, the Taiwanese Christian Church of Connecticut Choir, Youth With a Mission (in Ensenada, Mexico), and numerous other church and community service events.

Her most notable awards are the Social Media Manager Award and First Place for the Youth Pitch Competition from URise Ventures. Phoebe's most compelling accomplishments are founding the business concept for Illuminare (a non-profit photography service) and her acceptance to the Mortensen Scholars program.

I loved hearing experiences of all kinds across the board. The speakers were all very down to earth and spoke to more than just where they are at now. It was extremely helpful to get to know their journey, their setbacks, and how they navigated through them. This opportunity is not something I could have gotten in a classroom.

-PHOEBE LIOU-

I learned something new in every one of the Coffee Chats that I have attended. Each speaker's story had something to offer students, no matter what their major or interests were. Some of the lessons that stood out to me include being willing to try new things, keeping an open mind, and putting yourself out there. Don't spend too much time making a bad idea work. Going to Coffee Chats gives students the chance to learn from others experiences and helps them get comfortable with pushing themselves outside of their comfort zone. From these candid conversations, it is clear that everyone has had to force themselves to try new things and take risks. Making mistakes is an integral part of life, but it is essential to learn and grow from mistakes.

-KATIE LAVIGNE-

## OTHER TOP STUDENT ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

### Astou Diallo

SOPHOMORE STUDYING  
MANAGEMENT  
INFORMATION SYSTEMS  
ATTENDED 18 CHATS

### Noah Sobel- Pressman

SENIOR STUDYING  
MANAGEMENT,  
DATA ANALYTICS, AND  
CHINESE  
ATTENDED 16 CHATS

### Philip Dreher

JUNIOR STUDYING  
BUSINESS DATA  
ANALYTICS  
ATTENDED 11 CHATS

### Colin Brigantic

JUNIOR STUDYING  
FINANCIAL  
MANAGEMENT  
ATTENDED 10 CHATS

# RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THE COFFEE CHATS

Measure What Matters: OKRs: The Simple Idea that Drives 10x Growth by John Doerr



**THE 4-HOUR WORKWEEK BY TIM FERRISS**

No Rules Rules: Netflix and the Culture of Reinvention by Erin Meyer and Reed Hastings

**TOGETHER: THE HEALING POWER OF HUMAN CONNECTION IN A SOMETIMES LONELY WORLD BY VIVEK H. MURPHY**

**Shoe Dog: A Memoir by the Creator of Nike by Phil Knight**

*The Intelligent Entrepreneur by Bill Murphy Jr*

**INSECURITY: WHY A FAILURE TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN WOMEN IN CYBERSECURITY IS MAKING US ALL LESS SAFE BY JANE FRANKLAND**

It's Always Personal: Navigating Emotion in the New Workplace by Anne Kreamer

What it Takes: Lessons in the Pursuit of Excellence by Stephen Schwarzman



*Morning Brew*

**START WITH WHY BY SIMON SINEK**

Inspired: How to Create Tech Products Customers Love by Marty Cagan

**VISUAL LEADERSHIP: LEVERAGING THE POWER OF VISUAL THINKING IN LEADERSHIP AND IN LIFE BY TODD CHERCHES**



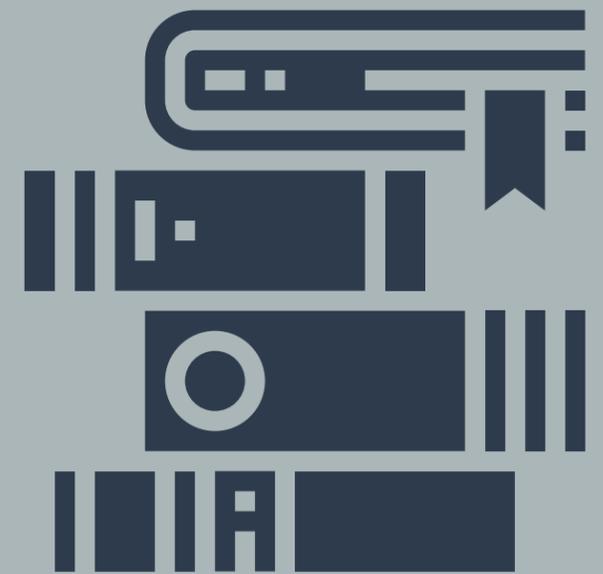
**Capitalism Without Capital: The Rise of the Intangible Economy by Jonathan Haskel and Stian Westlake**

*The Ed Myllett Show*

Getting More: How to Negotiate to Achieve Your Goals in the Real World by Stuart Diamond

**Stratecharey by Ben Thompson**

**UNDERSTANDING MICHAEL PORTER: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO COMPETITION AND STRATEGY BY JOAN MAGRETTA**



*The Lean Startup by Eric Ries*

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