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## SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S 2019 MEN OF INFLUENCE



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# **SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S 2019 MEN OF INFLUENCE**



## **ERIC HEPFER**

Eric Hepfer, as a director of Hines and in charge of Hines' San Diego office, is building a more livable San Diego. He oversees the company's innovative Riverwalk project which reimagines 200 acres of San Diego's Mission Valley. Riverwalk will transform an existing 27-acre golf course into a livable, mixed-use community with a new large public park, residential living, community-oriented retail uses, office space and new mass-transit access. At a time when San Diego faces an enormous shortage of market-rate and affordable housing, the development includes 4,300 apartments, nearly 400 of which will be designated as affordable housing. It also includes 150,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail space, including a pharmacy and grocery store, and 1 million square feet of office space along Friars Road and Hotel Circle. Before joining Hines in 2012, Hepfer served five years as a submarine officer, including 3.5 years on sea duty and five strategic deterrent patrols. He is a two-time Navy achievement winner. He is a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and the Harvard Business School.



## **MIKE FORD**

Mike Ford is the managing director and founding member of PBO Advisory Group (formerly ProBackOffice), one of San Diego's leading outsourcing and business consulting firms. He holds more than 30 years of management consulting, business advisory and outsourcing experience, and has provided services to over 500 clients throughout the West Coast. He is well-versed in management consulting and has founded numerous finance and accounting consulting start-ups that he has seen through to successful exits (IPO, ESOP and sale) including Temecula-based NBS Government Finance Group, which he sold to the company's employees through an ESOP arrangement. PBO's success is largely due to Ford's vision of creating a company that is built on a team environment. His generous nature and passion for charity led him to mentor PBO's philanthropic committee PBO Serves. He volunteers at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Lakeside, is a former planning commissioner for the city of La Mesa, former trustee and board member for the Leukemia Society and has been a guest instructor at San Diego State University. He has also co-authored two books: "Brotherhood of the Pigskin: A Fantasy Football Nov," and "The Blue Bombers: the True Story of the 2009 Little League Champions."



## **GABE P. WRIGHT**

Gabe Wright is a natural leader who serves as the co-chair of the Hahn Loeser's San Diego Litigation Practice Group. He is a member of the firm's finance and strategic planning committees and leads the firm's recruiting efforts. His litigation practice is specifically focused on real estate, class-action and commercial matters in which he zealously advocates for his clients. His client base is broad, ranging from commercial real estate developers and commercial property owners to entrepreneurs and renowned comic book publishers. Wright defeated class certification of a California statewide class action alleging violations of the Rosenthal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act against his client. He therefore eliminated any ability for the remaining plaintiff to obtain an injunction against his client that would have had an adverse impact throughout the client's industry. He actively volunteers and supports Promises2Kids, is a mentor to a Guardian Scholar and a graduate of the Washington & Lee School of Law.



## **NATHAN SCHMIDT**

Nathan Schmidt is one of San Diego's top marketing executives with over 20 years of financial services and management and marketing experience. He is responsible for strategic planning, marketing, digital channels, product development, business development and community and media relations for San Diego County Credit Union, the 15th largest credit union in the country by assets and largest locally-owned financial institution in San Diego. A cornerstone of Schmidt's dynamic leadership is an unwavering focus on continually raising the bar on creativity, services, strategy and execution, resulting in exponential growth for SDCCU and impacting the overall credit union movement. His approach to leadership and marketing materializes into an execution that leverages all resources to maximize results and awareness of the SDCCU brand. He spearheaded the creation of a new 3-D light up billboard to further showcase SDCCU's leading brand and elevate awareness of SDCCU's auto loan program. Schmidt is SDCCU's executive vice president for brand strategy and digital channels, holds a B.A degree from Cal State Sacramento and an MBA from St. Mary's College in Moraga, Calif.



## **NAVEEN WANEY**

Naveen Waney is president and co-owner of Platt/Whitelaw Architects Inc., one of San Diego's oldest architectural firms. Since its founding in 1955, the firm has focused on promoting sustainability within public and community-facing projects, a strong legacy that Waney continues. He is primarily responsible for the firm's infrastructure practice, which includes many water and wastewater treatment projects, arguably some of the most important facilities San Diego municipalities operate. He is responsible for several award-winning building designs for treatment plants. One building won the American Public Works Association competition for the best design in California. Waney started with PWA while attending classes at the New School of Architecture, where he graduated as valedictorian of his class. His design work helped Encina Wastewater Facility in Carlsbad win a Concrete Masonry Association of California and Nevada honor award.



## JASON HARTLEY

Jason Hartley is the founding partner of Hartley LLP and active in many professional and community organizations. For over 20 years he has represented plaintiffs in commercial contingency representation, class actions, antitrust, and unfair competition. Hartley's clients include many Fortune 500 companies in cases alleging breach of contract, sham patent and antitrust claims. He has served as lead counsel and in senior litigation roles in numerous cases that resulted in some of the largest antitrust settlements ever, netting billions of dollars for plaintiffs. Hartley is a long-time board member of Balboa Park's Museum of Man, the Consumer Attorneys of California and the American Association for Justice. His peers have recognized him as a San Diego SuperLawyer for years, he speaks regularly at seminars and serves on the ABA Class Action Institute's Planning Committee. But perhaps his favorite extracurricular activity is serving as chief of his son's YMCA Adventure Guides tribe.



## JOSEPH MARTINEZ

Joseph Martinez is a shareholder at Seltzer Caplan McMahon Vitek practicing in the areas of real estate and business transactions. He has more than 20 years of experience representing real property and business owners, investors and managers as well as developers, landlords, tenants, borrowers and lenders. Fluent in both English and Spanish, he is also the leader of SCMV's Cross Border practice group, practicing in the areas of inbound U.S./Mexico real estate and business transactions. Martinez is a member of the San Diego Padres Hispanic Community Advisory Council (HCAC), a member of the board of directors for Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center, a vice president and member of the board for the Southwestern College Foundation and is active in local professional organizations. He was named one of SD METRO Magazine's Best Attorneys in 2017. He is a graduate of Harvard University with a degree in economics and holds a Juris Doctor degree from the Harvard School of Law.



## ROGER DENNING

Roger Denning, who leads Fish & Richardson's office in San Diego, is a nationally recognized trial lawyer specializing in complex litigation, including patent infringement and other technology-related cases. He has tried patent cases to verdict throughout the country, particularly in the patent-heavy dockets in California, Texas, Delaware, as well as the International Trade Commission. Denning also has tried to verdict a number of complex commercial cases, including in the areas of product liability, unfair competition and the False Claims Act. An engineer by training, Denning's unique background allows him to teach juries and judges about a wide variety of technologies.



## SCOTT JABLOW

Scott Jablow, a tax partner at Lavine, Lofgren, Morris & Engelberg, holds more than 25 years of experience in assisting clients with their tax compliance and planning needs. His wide range of experience includes high net-worth individuals, partnerships and closely held corporations. Much of Jablow's focus is on the taxation of real estate professionals, real estate transactions, like-kind exchanges and tenancy-in-common issues. While Jablow's expertise may lie in tax planning, his business development skills are also impressive. Not only has he brought a record number of clients to the firm, he also played an instrumental role in LLME's acquisition of two small accounting firms this past year.



## REGINALD JONES

Reginald Jones is president and CEO of the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation, a nonprofit with a master plan to revitalize 60 acres of land in City Council District 4. Jones steers all efforts fore real estate and economic development and community engagement. Since 2012, Jones has worked daily with culturally diverse residents, organizations, political leaders and private entities to foster understanding of the organization. Previously, Jones developed the Town Center Master Plan to guide redevelopment work, and true to the mission of Jacobs Center, involved 1,300 residents to provide input on the plan and ensure it reflected community interests and needs.



## ADAM HARRIS

Adam Harris is the co-founder and CEO of Cloudbeds, a hospitality software company that was launched in 2012 and has since raised over \$21 million and acquired two additional companies. To date, he has grown the company to 275 employees in 38 countries and his platform is used by more than 22,000 customers in 152 countries. With Harris at the helm, Cloudbeds has won a variety of awards, such as placing 75th in Inc Magazine's 5000 fastest growing companies in 2018, being named to Forbes Magazine's 15 Technology Companies to Watch in 2018, and being named to Hotel Tech Report's 10 Best Places to Work in Hotel Tech 2018 & 2019.



## JACOB BATES

Jacob Bates is chief executive officer of CommonGrounds Workspace, a collaborative office workspace that serves as an accelerating platform for small businesses to grow. In January 2019, Bates raised \$140 million in Series A funding for expansion and growth plans. And in the first half of this year, he increased staff by 220 percent across the United States with just over 100 employees. Earlier this year CommonGrounds Workspace was named 2019 Business of the Year for Beat the Odds from the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce. The firm transacted over 1,000 commercial real estate properties in more than 70 countries.



## YEHUDI "GAF" GAFFEN

Yehudi "Gaf" Gaffen founded Gafcon Inc. in 1987, a globally respected program/construction management consulting firm. As CEO, Gaffen has worked with owners on hundreds of projects including the \$12 billion Shanghai Zizhu Purple Bay master plan; the \$135 million AltaSea project at the Port of Los Angeles; the \$100 million redevelopment of the Los Angeles Forum; and \$46.25 billion in California education bond programs. Gaffen's ultimate vision is to turn Gafcon over to its employees. He has had many companies approach him to purchase Gafcon, but has always declined, saying, "It would be like giving my kids up for adoption." His son, Josh Gaffen, has been a significant leader in the organization for the past 10 years.




## RYAN HILL

Ryan Hill is owner of Hill Construction Co., recognized as one of the top luxury residential builders on the West Coast. The company has been featured in numerous magazines and has a large and growing collection of industry awards. This year, its project, "The Verge House," a Coronado custom home, received top honors as the Best Custom Home under 4,000 square feet at the 2019 national God Nugget Awards. Hill's outstanding vision and leadership have grown the family company to its top position in the industry today.

**CONGRATULATIONS  
GABE WRIGHT!**

Hahn Loeser congratulates litigation partner Gabe P. Wright for his selection as one of *San Diego Metro's Men of Influence* for 2019. Both in business and in his community endeavors, Gabe is a natural leader who invests in the success of his clients, friends, and colleagues. Congratulations to Gabe and all of the other 2019 honorees!



**Hahn Loeser**  
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Consulting | Accounting | Compliance  
*\*formerly known as Pro Back Office*

Congratulations to our Managing Director and Founding Member  
**Mike Ford**  
on being selected among San Diego's **Men of Influence.**

*We're proud of all the work you do for our clients and community.*



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