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Fearless Females

By Debbie Hall
Photos by Connie Palen



These four dynamic women are living their dreams while guiding others in a variety of careers. One woman serves as vice president in the gaming manufacturing industry, just one of two in her line of work. Another woman created a buzz in the world of corporate public relations and has now opened her own agency. In the world of food and beverage on the Las Vegas Strip, a vice president has worked her way up in this very competitive field. One entrepreneur educates her clients about social media and influences those around her. These women share their stories about becoming a Fearless Female.



Amy Jo Martin



Ana Marie Mormando



Dawn Britt



Tina Kilmer



Ana Marie Mormando

Serving in hospitality while guiding the next generation

Ana Marie Mormando is the vice president of food and beverage at Bellagio Resort & Casino and oversees every aspect of the food and beverage department, including daily operations of Bellagio restaurants, bars and lounges, catering, and banquets. She also volunteers her time as the vice president of Epicurean Charitable Foundation, a nonprofit organization comprised of Las Vegas' top food and beverage professionals who donate their time to awarding students scholarships to attend any accredited four-year university or trade school of their choice to study in the culinary or hospitality fields.

Originally from Bogotá, the capital city of Colombia, Mormando moved to New York City during her early teenage years. While attending New York University, she changed career paths to pursue a business-focused degree and discovered the hospitality industry.

"My hospitality career actually began while working part time as a hostess when I was attending NYU," explained Mormando, "I really enjoyed the job and two months into the position, the assistant manager was promoted to general manager, and I was offered the assistant general manager position. I managed to not fully commit to the industry until I was offered a position as director of food and beverage at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. I fell in love with catering to people who enjoyed the arts, the challenge of running multiple venues and hosting numerous prestigious events. After that job, I couldn't imagine working in a career or industry that would be more satisfying."

In 2013 and 2014, Mormando's role in ECF is to supervise the scholarship and mentorship, fundraising, community outreach, and membership committees. As for her involvement with ECF, Mormando believes to be able to make a difference in someone's life is the ultimate reward. "I appreciate the opportunity to help empower deserving young individuals, through the gift of an education, to follow their passion," she said.

Through the ECF, Mormando mentors several ECF students along with numerous management associates. "This is a great industry and it gives me great pride and pleasure to witness the professional growth of people who reach out to me for support or advice."

She is inspired by her mother and husband. "My mother, in spite of all the hardships that she endured, sees only the positive in every circumstance," said Mormando, "And my husband, who also has endured some challenges, continues to motivate and support me. He is my rock and is always there to keep me grounded."

As for mentors, Mormando credits one of her elementary school teachers. "She was everyone's favorite teacher. I attended a very progressive school that did not have a yearly curriculum; the students were encouraged to go through subjects at their own pace. I became adept at focusing on only completing the academic assignments and failed to actively interact with the other students. She took an interest in me and asked me to be her assistant. She quickly made me realize the importance of being part of a team and that being a lone player wouldn't allow you to win the game. She completely changed me socially at an early age and I have been forever thankful."

As for entering the hospitality field, her advice is to, "Get ready to enjoy one of the most rewarding professions imaginable. Ensure that you take excellent care of your employees and colleagues, so that as a team you can offer extraordinary experiences to your guests, who will in turn become your best promoters." As Fearless Female, Mormando continues to encourage others in their progress while setting the best example.



student is proud to live in America. Johnson Jacobson Wilcox CPAs awarded the school \$5,000 and Garcia received a basket of art supplies. Her artwork was also featured on the CPA firm's Fourth of July card. Photo Credit: Tonya Harvey

Ronna Timpa, founder of Workplace ESL Solutions, has been installed as the English in occupational settings representative for The International Association for Teaching ESL, a world-wide organization with more than 12,000 members. Her role will include fielding questions regarding workplace English as a second language from TESOL members internationally. Timpa will be responsible for knowing all the leading curricula and best practices for the workplace ESL field.



every day. Prior to her career at Sambalatte, Saccucci was a high school youth director at Valley Bible Fellowship. She continues to devote her time volunteering and mentoring the high school students from VBF and is currently enrolled at College of Southern Nevada studying music.



children who have been abandoned, abused or neglected.



Robyn R. Manzini has been elected as incoming president and currently serves as vice president of volunteer relations of the board of directors for Girl Scouts of Southern Nevada.



Manzini is a Lifetime Member of Girl Scouts of the USA and a recipient of the GSUSA Thanks Badge and First Class Award. Manzini also serves on Girl Scouts' Finance, Investment, Property and Fundraising Committees. Manzini is a mother of a local Girl Scout and continues to mentor the original troop her daughter, Sabina, started in as a Daisy.



The Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance announced the appointment of Karey Juencke to the position of economic development coordinator. As economic development coordinator, Juencke serves as a liaison to public, private and nonprofit organizations for business attraction, creation, expansion, and retention activities. She also provides project management and analytical support by conducting research and development for activities and operations involving economic development, redevelopment, land development and business development.

Vegas PBS has announced that former Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada Vice President of Development, Patricia Falvey, has been named the station's new Director of Development—Corporate Support and Philanthropy. In her new position, Falvey is responsible for leading the sponsorship team in developing corporate and institutional support for Vegas PBS. Previously, Falvey served in the United States Air Force and Air Force Reserves for more than 25 years where she rose through the ranks to serve as a regional vice commander, directing operational activities for military forces in Europe and Turkey.



A long-time Las Vegas, Jesika Towbin-Mansour balances her duties as Towbin Automotive's director of operations and Towbin Motorcars' co-owner with philanthropic work and being a new

mother. Towbin-Mansour oversees every aspect of Towbin Motorcars, from buying and selling exotic motorcars and working closely with high-end clientele, to overseeing marketing and advertising. Towbin-Mansour gained experience alongside her father, Daniel, which would lead her to a career in the automotive industry. Towbin-Mansour is also an ambassador for Three Square Food Bank.



Melanie Mackert, curator for Artistic Lifestyles contemporary fine art gallery, is celebrating her anniversary with the Las Vegas gallery and has recently helped to launch its second gallery in San Diego. A former

broadcaster, Mackert manages the gallery, its online presence and is responsible for the events and receptions held at the gallery. She also promotes its artists with showings of their artwork in restaurants and other places of business.

ERA by Ciara in Summerlin's Market LV celebrated its first anniversary as a business offering makeup application, makeovers and products. Ciara Contreras, founder of ERA by Ciara, studied at Aveda Institute Las Vegas and received a Bachelor of Arts in business management from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She gives back to her community through various charitable organizations including the Take Back the Night, Safe Nest, American Heart Association and Spina Bifida Association.



Elizabeth Hunterton will continue to serve as the executive director of the Epicurean Charitable Foundation. She was motivated by the opportunity to work with an organization that combined some of her greatest passions

in life: education, scholarship, mentoring and charitable giving. Hunterton oversees all of the organization's operations, while working collaboratively with the executive committee and board of directors. She remains actively involved in the Las Vegas community and continues advocacy for

Janice Marie Wilson has authored three books: "The Goodness Experience," "Athena, Leadership Skills for the New Millennium," and "The Gift from the Goddess." Wilson is a speaker and



personal advisor, and produced the Las Vegas-based radio show, "The Gift of the Goddess." She is also the general manager of ECCOCI Boca Park, a high-fashion designer clothing store where she produces a number of in-store and community events.

Epicurean Charitable Foundation of Las Vegas has selected four Clark County high school students as scholarship recipients for their 2013 class. This year's class, with a combined average GPA of 4.19, includes Andrea Rocca-Capano, Aily Rodriguez, Daniela Sanchez and Qin Zhou.



Andrea Rocca-Capano has a 3.8 GPA from Valley High School and plans to pursue a degree in hotel management at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Currently, she

serves as vice president of the school's magnet program for Academy of Hospitality and Tourism Council and recently received first place in Hospitality Service Team Decision Making at the Nevada DECA state competition. Rocca-Capano is also a member of the varsity swimming and flag football teams and is the school's German Club Ambassador.



Aily Rodriguez, a senior at Valley High School, serves as vice president of the Robotics Club, treasurer of the German Club and a mentor coordinator in the school's magnet program for Academy of Hospitality

and Tourism Council. Rodriguez competes in both track and pole vaulting while displaying her talents at state-wide events on the Sky Pure Pole Vaulting Club. She was named the school's student of the month in May and holds a 4.06 GPA. Rodriguez plans to pursue a degree in Hotel Management at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.



Daniela Sanchez attends Valley High School and will pursue a degree in Hotel Management at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Along with an impressive 4.66 GPA, she serves as the Nevada

DECA state president and is the student representative to the Nevada State Board of Education. On a local level, she is both the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism Council council president and the student body president and was named Valley High School student of the month for student activities in 2009. Sanchez is a two-time recipient of the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association academic award in leadership, has been a National Honor Society member since 2010 and recently gained hands-on industry experience as a business development intern at VEGAS.com.



Qin Zhou attends Durango High School, holds a 4.3 GPA and will pursue a degree in hotel management at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. A native of southwest China, she is

bilingual in Mandarin and English and also participates in the Spanish club at school. She recently completed five AP courses and earned a perfect attendance record from January 2011 to January 2012.

Janeen Hinden has continued the dreams of her late husband, Michael Hinden, by bringing Dinner in the Sky, the first open-air aerial dining and entertainment experience to Las Vegas. Dinner in the Sky will offer an open-air dining experience for up to 44 guests at 180 feet off the ground. Hinden serves as a board member of the Nevada Blind Children's Foundation and the Michael Hinden Medical Clinic in Liberia, named for her late husband.



The estate planning law firm of Jeffrey Burr has announced Angie Dwinell as their new director of operations and marketing and Sandy Simpson will assume a new position as marketing coordinator, in addition to her continued role as family services representative for the Elder Law Division.



Dwinell brings 10 years of legal administration experience. She has been a member of the Association of Legal Administrators since 2006 and currently serves as the Las Vegas Chapter's President.



Along with her duties for the estate planning law firm of Jeffrey Burr, Simpson is involved with and serves as a committee member for Nathan Adelson Hospice, Aging Services Directors Organization and the Alzheimer's

Association, where she spoke at the Walk to End Alzheimer's event alongside a panel, including Mayor Goodman.

BoardSource has announced that Stacey Wedding has been named a BoardSource Certified Governance Trainer. Wedding is now certified to offer governance training among nonprofit organizations in the western region of the United States using BoardSource-approved curriculum in the following areas: roles and responsibilities of nonprofit boards, board-staff partnership, board structure, board's role in fundraising, the board-building cycle and board performance assessment.



Clark County Credit Union has promoted Terri Kight to mortgage loan officer in the home loan division and Jill Hart to mortgage loan processor.



Kight's first experience CCCU was as a member, now has been an employee for 10 years. Prior to her position, Kight was a financial services representative in the credit lending department.



Hart will be processing loans for the real estate department. With 25 years of banking experience, celebrating her 17th year at CCCU where she began as a teller.

Owners (and mother/daughter)

Cindy Nickerson and Laurie Nickerson of Dewey Street, a place for arts and crafts in Las Vegas, hosted an event to benefit young adults from The Gay and Lesbian Center of Southern Nevada. The crafting lesson which included quilting and decoupage used product donated by The Shu Store, also a Las Vegas-based business. The event was designed as a creative outlet for expression.



Brittney Cobb, executive secretary at Sunset Hotel and Casino, is the owner of Fit for the Women's Hall of Fame. She was inducted into the Women's Chamber of Commerce of Nevada.

Since 2009, Cobb has played a key role in leading and guiding young ladies' women through pageantry. In addition to pageants, Cobb is active in several charitable efforts in Las Vegas.

The Las Vegas Natural History Museum has named Heather Valera to its board of directors. Currently the marketing director for Galleria at Sunset, Valera's experience in marketing and



partnership building will help the museum attract new visitors and expand its reach within the local community. As a board member, Valera will help the museum to meet its mission of inspiring the public to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the natural world through educational exhibits and programs.

To submit a Local Lady for consideration, email debbie@lvwomanmagazine.com