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San Diego's 2023  
**Men of  
Influence &  
Accomplishment**

**PAGE 8**

**Pinnacle's  
Price:**

**Women and  
Professional Success**

**PAGE 22**



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**COVER STORY:**

**Men of Influence & Accomplishment**

Meet the notable men in and around San Diego. Story on page 8



**CAPT. WILLIAMS'S "SUICIDE MISSION"**

Outgunned and outnumbered, retired U.S. Navy Capt. E. Royce Williams single-handedly shot down four Soviet fighter jets during the Korean War in what's described as a suicide mission. President-elect Eisenhower told him to keep it quiet. Story on page 14.



**BOOK REVIEW: PINNACLE'S PEAK: WOMEN AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS**

Books written by two highly successful women – NBA Mavericks President Cynt Marshall and retired IBM CEO Ginni Rometty – are reviewed. Neither had an easy trek up the corporate ladder. Review on page 22.



**INTERVIEW WITH DEEPA PURUSHOTHAMAN**

SD Metro Magazine's interview with Deepa Purushothaman. Deepa is a noted expert on what women experience in the workplace and shares her research and that of others. Interview on page 24.



**HUATULCO'S IMPRINT IN THE SAND**

Award-winning travel writer Marlise Kast-Myers discusses her trip to the Mexican state of Oaxaca and the fishing village of Huatulco, which is home to nine bays, 36 beaches and thousands of baby turtles. Story on page 28.

**Chairman | CEO**

Robert Page  
BobPage@sandiegometro.com

**Publisher**

Rebeca Page  
RebecaPage@sandiegometro.com

**Managing Editor**

Manny Cruz  
Manny@sandiegometro.com

**Associate Editor**

Douglas R. Page  
dpage@sandiegometro.com

**Graphic Designer**

Christopher Baker  
cbaker@sandiegometro.com

**Photography/Illustration**

Benjamin Myers  
Jim Childers

**Contributing Writers**

Marsha Sutton  
Alexi Koseff  
David Rottenberg  
Myrna Marston  
Marlise Kast-Myers

**Advertising**

SALES & MARKETING DIRECTOR  
Rebeca Page

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P.O. BOX 3679  
RANCHO SANTA FE, CA 92067  
858.461.4484

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# Congratulates John David!

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San Diego Metro's 2023 Men  
Of Influence and Accomplishment!





# How Long Will The Lies Persist?

By Thorsteinn Siglaugsson

A while ago, someone I know well told me of an interesting experience he had as a young man. This was in the 1970s, when he lived in Germany for a few months, working in a shop owned by an old lady. The owner had been in her prime during World War II. The night before he returned to Iceland, the old lady took him to dinner. As they sat down in the restaurant, she looked around and said:

“I can see a few of them here. But I guess it’s okay.”

“A few of whom?” he asked.

“A few Jews. One can spot them, you know.”

This was around 30 years after the war. Around 30 years after German society was permeated with the idea that Jewish people were a danger to society. But this old lady hadn’t let go of the lies, even 30 years after the disgrace and hardships brought upon her country as a direct consequence of its willingness to succumb to and participate in spreading Nazi lies. It was okay, she guessed, that they were allowed into restaurants, but still, there was this lingering feeling. She would never be cured.

“Anyway, the lies are not going to stop,” Bill Rice Jr. writes in a brilliant piece, pointing out the long list of lies told by health authorities around the world on the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines. First, we were told they would

stop the spread, that there would be two shots, that they wouldn’t be mandatory. Then that more shots would be needed, that those unvaccinated were responsible for the continued spread, even as it turned out how the vaccines in fact increased the spread. We could go on and on.

Bill’s post was written in response to a new statement from the ICMRA (International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities), claiming how those medications have saved millions of lives, have no severe side effects to speak of and how all evidence to the contrary is “misinformation.” The statement is, of course, being disseminated by the mainstream media.

I do not have the privilege of being able to spend my time dissecting such falsehoods in the way they must be dissected, as I’ve done several times with similar falsehoods, whether official statements, “fact-checks” or similar. I only hope some of those with resources and time will do this. I’ll just point out a single, serious error, which casts doubt on the claim the vaccines saved millions of lives: This claim is based on a study, published in September 2022. A key premise is the assumed effectiveness against viral transmission.

One must download the Appendix to find those assumptions. Not surprisingly,

the authors assume two doses of mRNA provide 86-88 percent protection against infection (Appendix: Table1). This of course flies in the face of the actual data, which in 2021 showed clearly that protection against infection was at best between 30 – 50%, and that’s before the arrival of Omicron, when it started to go negative.

This is just one example of how the ICMRA statement is willfully based on blatant lies. I have little doubt that should someone go through this point-by-point, most of the other claims would be exposed as lies.

Bill Rice concludes “that – especially regarding topics that might involve “life and death” – people, for some surreal reason, simply want to keep believing the liars.”

How many of those who want to believe the liars will look around in a restaurant in 30 years, saying, “There are a few of them here, the unvaccinated, but it’s okay, I guess.”

Thorsteinn Siglaugsson is an Icelandic consultant and contributes regularly to The Daily Sceptic as well as various Icelandic publications. He holds a BA in philosophy and an MBA from INSEAD. This column first appeared on the Brownstone Institute’s website at brownstone.org.

# Newspapers Are Marching Toward a Cliff; The U-T Thought its Owner Would Build a Bridge

**By Scott Lewis,  
CEO/Editor-In-Chief  
Voice of San Diego**

When Patrick Soon-Shiong, Los Angeles' richest man, bought the San Diego Union-Tribune as part of a package with the Los Angeles Times, he came to speak to anxious and excited employees at the U-T's headquarters.

"You now have stability," Soon-Shiong told the 200 people gathered in April 2018. He promised to invest in the U-T "and he said the 150-year-old San Diego publication will not be the ignored stepchild of the Los Angeles Times," as the paper itself reported that day.

That was not exactly true. Soon-Shiong never again seemed to pay much attention to the U-T. He went on a frenzy of investment in the LA Times, though, hiring many new reporters and producers. He bought the LA Times a new headquarters and launched many new products. He and his family faced both the usual drama of running a newsroom at the LA Times (accusations of meddling too much in editorial perspectives) and the unusual (vast painful reckoning about the paper's history and diversity).

But he didn't show any interest in San Diego, its politics, its decisions, its economy – nothing. He soon made it known he would be happy to sell the paper. He discussed handing it over to a nonprofit. He discussed even giving it to a university.

All the while, the paper inched closer to the cliff.

What is the cliff, exactly? I don't have any special access to the U-T's financials, but it is marching toward the same cliff most regional newspapers are approaching because advertisers simply have much more effective platforms on which to put their advertisements, and this has led to now almost 20 years of a relatively reliable collapse of annual revenue. The cliff is the moment when newspaper revenues no

longer justify the vast cost of printing and distributing the paper. They will have to cut that cost and cease printing the paper, at least, cease printing it most weekdays.

The problem, though, is that much of their money comes from advertising in the print product. And people who subscribe to the print paper spend a lot on that. So, a big chunk of revenue will evaporate when they eliminate the print product.

What happens then? Is there enough money to sustain a newsroom that provides a genuine public service? So much of what newspapers have done over the last 20 years is delay the arrival of that moment, primarily by lowering the cost of the printing and distributing the paper and eliminating everything else they can.

The challenge is to build a bridge to the other side of it. That means get enough digital subscribers and digital advertisers to sustain a newsroom.

This is what every publisher of journalism – including me – is trying to do. Google, Facebook and the other towers of Silicon Valley won the advertising battle. There will still be some but, to survive and thrive, individuals who value journalism will have to pay for it. In our case, through donations. In the U-T's, through subscriptions.

The U-T's Publisher and Editor Jeff Light gave a long interview on this challenge to his own paper to mark the first "print holiday" the paper had taken as a way to acclimate readers to the reality that, someday, it would not print a paper every day. He said the paper was profitable "in the right way."

The daily newspaper print version that goes out to homes is high profit but high cost. The future, as Light saw it, is to hit 100,000 digital subscribers. That's the bridge to the other side of the cliff. And he exuded confidence that he could build that bridge, in part because of Soon-Shiong.

"So there are some newspaper companies that are sort of dissolving the franchise as they go forward and harvesting money out

of the business to send profits to their owners. That's not what's going on in San Diego," he said. "We're very fortunate to have a strong staff and really enlightened ownership."

That enlightened ownership has now sold the newspaper to MediaNews Group and its parent corporation, Alden Global Capital, a company The Atlantic called "a secretive hedge fund ... gutting newspapers." It's probably not fair to describe Alden as a "chop shop" as one of the UT's reporters did when reacting to the news of the sale, but if you were compiling a list of companies that are "harvesting money out of the business to send profits to their owners" you would probably put Alden at the top of that list.

And that should be the real concern. It's not that Alden is some kind of special monster. Newspaper owners have been, at times, terrible people. When the Copley family sold the paper to a private equity firm in 2009, Light came aboard as editor-in-chief and ruthless cuts brought the paper stability — enough so that its next steward, developer Doug Manchester, was able to turn a nice profit when he sold it, again, to a faceless corporation.

The real tragedy is that Soon-Shiong had promised to shepherd the paper through this historic transition citing its vital role in local democracy. To avoid plummeting off the cliff, the newspaper would need to create stories people were willing to pay to read online. To make that work, Soon-Shiong promised to "increase the journalistic strength in the newsrooms," he bought.

Perhaps Alden will actually be better at it.

But helping local news transition to online in a way that sustains effective newsrooms focused on excellence in reporting and public service requires investment and patience. We have lost a major reason to hope for both in San Diego.

# Ten Reasons Why Affirmative Action Died



Students and others gather at Harvard University's Science Center Plaza to rally in support of Affirmative Action after the Supreme Court ruling, in Cambridge, Mass., on July 1, 2023. (Scott Eisen/Getty Images)

## By Victor Davis Hanson

The end of affirmative action was inevitable. The only surprise was that such intentions gone terribly wrong lasted so long.

First, supporters of racial preferences always pushed back the goalposts for the program's success. Was institutionalized reverse bias to last 20 years, 60 years, or ad infinitum?

Parity became defined as an absolute equality of result. If "equity" was not obtained, then only institutionalized "racism" explained disparities. And only reverse racism was deemed the cure.

Second, affirmative action was imposed on the back end in adult hiring and college admissions. However, to achieve parity, remediation early at the K-12 school level would have been the only solution. Yet such intervention was made impossible by teachers' unions, the rise of identity politics and government entitlements. All were opposed to school choice, self-help programs, critiques of cultural

impediments, or restrictions on those blanket entitlements.

Third, class, the true barometer of privilege, was rendered meaningless. Surrealism followed. The truly privileged Barack and Michelle Obama and Meghan Markel lectured the country on its unfairness — as if they had it far rougher than the impoverished "deplorables" of East Palestine, Ohio.

Fourth, affirmative action supporters could never square the circle of proving that racial prejudices didn't violate the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the text of the Constitution.

What they were left with was the lame argument that because long ago the 90% white majority had violated their own foundational documents, then such past bad unconstitutional bias could legitimately be rectified by present-day "good" unconstitutional bias.

Fifth, supporters never adequately explained why the sins of prior generations fell on their descendants who grew up in

the post-Civil Rights era.

Nor could they account for why those who had never experienced institutionalized racism, much less Jim Crow apartheid or slavery, were to be compensated collectively for the suffering of long-dead individuals. No wonder 70% of the American people in many polls favored ending affirmative action, including a half of African-Americans.

Sixth, there never was a "rainbow" coalition of shared non-white victimhood — a concept necessary to perpetuate the premise of white privilege. More than a dozen ethnicities earn more per capita than do whites.

Asians have been subject to coerced internment, immigration restrictions and zoning exclusions. Yet on average they do better than whites economically and enjoy lower suicide rates and longer life expectancies.

The arguments for affirmative action never explained why Asians and other minorities who faced discrimination

outperformed the majority white population. As a result, affirmative action ended up discriminating against Asians on the premise they were too successful!

Seventh, no one ever explained when affirmative action was to apply. Blacks, for example, were vastly “overrepresented” in merit-based professional football and basketball. Yet no one demanded “proportional representation” to address such “disparate impact,” despite underrepresentation of all other demographics.

Yet if Blacks were “underrepresented” in baseball, then reparatory measures were supposed to address that fact — even if Latino players were “overrepresented” and whites “underrepresented” as well. No one in our race-obsessed culture, of course, objected that white males died at twice their demographics in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Eighth, in our increasingly intermarried mass-immigration society, few could adjudicate who was what, or much less what standard gave one racial

preference. In lunatic fashion, pink, blond U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) became Harvard’s first “Native American” law professor due to her “high cheekbones.” Light-skinned Latinos were considered marginalized while some darker Italians or Greeks were not.

Ninth, an odious wokism absorbed affirmative action and changed it into something even more abhorrent — as the original spirit of the Civil Rights Movement was trashed. So, Americans were asked to stomach a return to distasteful segregated dorms, “separate but equal” graduation ceremonies and racially exclusive workshops.

Tenth, and finally, affirmative action was insidiously destroying meritocracy. That hallmark American value of tribally blind inclusivity had once explained why the nation outshone the world by discarding the old class prejudices of Europe. But increasingly this value seemed to have been abandoned.

When Stockton Rush, the late captain and inventor of the ill-fated Titan deep-sea

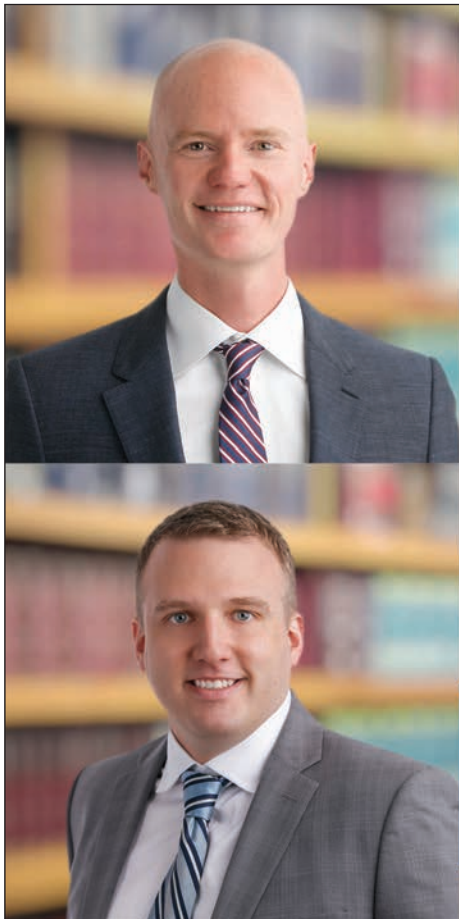
explorer, was quoted postmortem bragging that his company had no need of “old white guys” with long military expertise in submarining, Americans realized that woke racial discrimination was not just repulsive but could get you killed.

A nation whose pilot training, medical-school admissions, and military high command promotions were increasingly adopting racial, gender, or sexual-orientation essentialism was a country headed for the sort of Third World tribalism characteristic of failed states abroad.

In the end, the court finally stepped in to end this unconstitutional aberration, more like the old Soviet commissariat than our ideals of equality under the law.

The American people concurred. And the only regret seemed to be, why not sooner?

Hanson holds a Ph.D. from Stanford University, where he’s a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution.



**HAHN LOESER**  
**CONGRATULATES PARTNERS**  
**BRENT DOUGLAS**  
**& KYLE OVERS**

on their inclusion in *SD Metro* Magazine’s list of 2023 Men of Accomplishment.

This selection is a true reflection of commitment to their profession and community. Congratulations to Brent and Kyle and all of the Men of Accomplishment recognized by *SD Metro* Magazine!

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HAHN LOESER & PARKS LLP | 600 W BROADWAY | SUITE 1500  
 SAN DIEGO, CA 92101 | 619.810.4300 | HAHNLAW.COM

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## **SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S**

# 2023 Men of Influence & Accomplishment



### **JOHN DAVID**

David is an exceptional attorney with remarkable achievements throughout his career as a Managing Trial Attorney. Since joining Shegerian Law in 2017, he consistently demonstrates his expertise in all aspects of litigation, earning him a well-deserved reputation as a highly effective and accomplished legal professional. During his time in law school, he exhibited great dedication by working full time as a certified law clerk. In this role, he gained valuable experience by conducting and defending depositions, drafting, and arguing substantive discovery and dispositive motions, and even trying a case before a jury. As a managing attorney, he has been entrusted with overseeing all aspects of case management. He has obtained several significant verdicts, including a \$5.9 million disability award, a \$4.1 million disability retaliation award, a \$2.7 million disability discrimination award, and a \$1 million disability discrimination award. He is a very effective advocate for his clients' rights. He has proven to be a valuable asset to the firm and a highly respected member of the legal community. He is a graduate of Occidental College and earned his Juris Doctor degree from the Loyola School of Law.



### **SCOTT SABIN**

Sabin is the chief executive officer of Plant with Purpose who recently celebrated 30 years with the firm. Under his direction, the San Diego-based Christian, nonprofit dedicated to reversing global poverty and environmental damage due to climate change has grown. It expanded from a single program in one country to include more than 1,500 communities in nine countries. Plant With Purpose helps thousands of people transform their lives and the environment around them through sustainable agriculture, economic development and environmental reforestation in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Haiti, Malawi, Mexico, Tanzania, and Thailand. He committed his life's work in the service of others. First, he served his country for seven years in the U.S. Navy as a surface warfare officer. He became a program manager for Floresta after reentering civilian life. He joined Plant With Purpose in 1993. The group's holistic model focuses on community-led innovation and leadership that helps global communities reverse structural and environmental causes of rural poverty. It planted its 50 millionth tree this year and anticipates doubling to 100 million trees over the next four years. Sabin also published a book in 2010 titled *Tending to Eden: Environmental Stewardship for God's People*. He is a graduate of Oregon State University and the University of San Diego.





**KYLE OVERS**

Overs, a leader at Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP, is an impactful attorney committed to the San Diego community. As an advocate for his clients, he helps them achieve their business goals to obtain desired results. He mentors young colleagues as they strive to grow their practice, exemplifying a dedication to the future of the firm and a passion for supporting others. He brings a creative legal strategy to the teams of attorneys he collaborates with daily. He specializes in complex business and trust litigation, often dealing with “bet the business” litigation. He takes a focused, deliberate approach to serving clients, achieving the best possible results for his clients by focusing on their litigation, personal and business needs. He earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Arizona, where he was a Dean’s Scholarship Recipient and participated on the ABA Moot Court and Environment Moot Court Team. He earned his BA in Business at Wake Forest University in North Carolina, where he was on the Dean’s List and President of the Mock Trial Team. He is a San Diego Rising Star by Super Lawyers and was a 40 Under 40 award honoree by SD METRO Magazine in 2020. He is a board member of the San Diego County Bar Foundation.



**Congratulations**  
**Steve O’Connell, *President & CEO***  
***of North Island Credit Union***



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## BRENT DOUGLAS

Douglas has the unique ability to translate the maze of California employment laws for San Diego's small business owners as a partner at Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP. More than just technically proficient, he is a strategic master who ensures all legal tactics serve the client's larger business interests. He is a seasoned California litigator with experience providing both compliance and litigation support to businesses statewide. His practice focuses on employment claims, wage and hour class actions, partnerships, disputes and general business litigation. He counsels human resources personnel on terminations, leave of absence issues, and wage and hour compliance. He is corporate counsel on mergers and acquisitions, recapitalizations, and financing for a wide range of industries in the \$2 million - \$25 million range and routinely drafts and negotiates stock option plans, stock grants, and senior, subordinated, and mezzanine debt arrangements. He is a past president of the San Diego County Bar Foundation and currently a board member of the New Children's Museum and the San Diego Century Club. He has coached for the Special Olympics of Southern California. He is a Rising Star, Southern California Super Lawyers. He has a BA degree from Washington University in St. Louis and a JD from the Emory School of Law in Atlanta.



## STEVE O'CONNELL

O'Connell is president and chief executive officer of North Island Credit Union. Under his leadership for the past 11 years, the credit union has achieved outstanding financial performance and introduced numerous innovations to achieve significant transformation, growth, and member service enhancements across every area of operation. Through his guidance, North Island's 2022 financial performance was among the highest in the organization's history, increasing assets by \$271 million to total of \$4.5 billion, ending the year with a net worth ratio of 9.65 % and realized net income of \$23 million. Through his focus on a member-centric approach, North Island achieved a member satisfaction survey score of 96.6% in 2022. North Island contributed more than \$725,000 in 2022 to assist hundreds of local schools, educators, military families, and community-based programs. Over the past five years North Island has invested over \$2 million in local communities. He is a graduate of Cal State Northridge.



## RONSON J. SHAMOUN

Shamoun is San Diego's leading tax attorney. He is a three-time graduate of the University of San Diego, receiving his B.A. in Accounting, his Juris Doctor and his Master of Law in Taxation. He is the founder and CEO of RJS Law. His practice involves federal and state taxation, with an emphasis on criminal tax defense, tax controversy and international tax and estate planning. He has extensive experience representing individuals and businesses before the IRS, FTB, the EDD, and the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration. He recently represented Pricilla Presley in her challenge to the validity of her late daughter, Lisa Marie Presley's will. He hosts a yearly USD School of Law "Big Give Bash" event and one for the USD Business School. He is a mentor to law and business students in his capacity as an adjunct professor at both schools. He is a strong advocate for aiding his community, instilling the same generous and giving spirit in his young daughters by going on weekly homeless crusade missions with them where they supply sleeping bags, personal hygiene items and other essentials to those in need.



### RHETT WHEELER

Wheeler serves as Bill Howe Plumbing’s head of human resources and risk management for the firm’s 260 employees. He has added 41 highly skilled employees to the company since 2021 and has successfully integrated 25 employees from a business acquisition, guaranteeing their satisfaction and commitment to their new professional home. He re-launched Bill Howe’s Safety and Injury Prevention Program, which better conforms with California standards and supports employee health, safety and well-being. He also oversaw the installation of dash cam technology on all Howe’s fleet vehicles as part of an ongoing community and employee safety initiative. He also has reduced turnover company-wide by 23% and implemented cost controls for employee programs such as tool and uniform accounts. He’s also an assistant scoutmaster in a local Boy Scout Troop.



## BRIAN KATUSIAN

Katusian is a partner and shareholder at Seltzer Caplan McMahon Vitek and is among the top tax attorneys whose work greatly impacts San Diego's leading nonprofits, businesses, and governmental agencies. He is a man of influence in the local business, legal and nonprofit sectors. He is among the 5% of California attorneys certified as a specialist in taxation law. His work is critical to ensuring individuals, businesses and nonprofits comply with local, state, federal and international laws. He is a key factor to many San Diego employers' ability to attract and retain top talent with great employee-sponsored benefit and retirement practices. He successfully persuaded the San Diego County Assessor's office to voluntarily reverse its determination that his client did not qualify for age 55+ tax relief. He successfully concluded an IRS Appeal involving Code section 4941 self-dealing excise taxes and Code section 4945 taxable expenditures asserted by the IRS in connection with a Code section 501(c)(e) Private Foundation. He is a graduate of UCSD and the University of San Diego School of Law.



## STEVE LEWANDOWSKI

Lewandowski is a small business owner and a proud Navy veteran who is devoting his life to the service of veterans. His base business is selling life insurance and annuities. He conducts charity auctions and is well known as a nationwide polo announcer for the San Diego Polo Club and ESPN. His primary passion is helping veterans and their families. His current mission is directing the effort to get a Medal of Honor awarded to a retired U.S. Navy fighter pilot and officer, E. Royce Williams, a 98-year-old hero credited with shooting down four Russian Migs in a single dogfight during the Korean War and likely damaging two more. He has helped raise money for Honor Flight, the SEAL Foundation, We thank our Troops, VFW, Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund, Heroes Across the Harbor and Holes for Heroes. He has received 26 certificates of Congressional Recognition from various U.S. House members for his work on behalf of veterans. He was commander of Encinitas American Legion Post 416, turning it from near collapse to being one of the top legion posts in the country. He is the CEO of the Post's 416 Foundation tasked with raising funds for a new building in Encinitas. He is a graduate of Auburn University in Auburn, Ala.



## ZACH MYERS

Myers is a "go to" attorney for Southern California's private and public companies in the technology and life sciences sectors, especially biotechnology and medical device companies involved in complex, high-value transactions. His practice allows him to work with companies from startups to large public clients. He represents private companies in venture capital financing, helping companies raise millions of dollars needed to fund, grow, and expand their businesses. He has assisted numerous clients that have gone public, listing on the New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ markets. He often represents clients in the purchase or sale of their businesses. He has a solid understanding of his clients' businesses and their finances, in particular. He is a known expert in corporate and securities law, and often lectures the UCSD Rady School of Business and the Keck Graduate Institute. He was a 40 Under 40 award honoree in 2020 by SD METRO Magazine and a 2021 Top Attorney by SD METRO Magazine. He is an alumnus of Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, Calif.



**EVAN WAHL**

Wahl is director of project management and site strategy for Catalent Pharma Solutions. The company focuses on early-stage development of small molecule and peptide drug candidates from the bench to the clinic. The facility offers an array of services that support oral and injectable dosage forms that include pre-formulation testing, formulation and analytical development, cGMP manufacturing and clinical packaging. The San Diego location is the home of Spray Dry Dispersion technologies with downstream roller compaction capabilities to support the needs of a client’s most challenging compound. He leads a team of 14 project managers to help clients turn their experimental drug substance into drug products for clinical trials. He is a retired Marine veteran, having flown multiple different aircraft and leaving as a lieutenant colonel. He has degrees from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Penn., and the University of San Diego.

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# Captain Williams’s “Suicide Mission”

Retired U.S. Navy Capt. E. Royce Williams’s Korean War feat – shooting down four Soviet fighter jets, making him a candidate for the nation’s highest military award – was a “suicide mission.”

“As a former Navy fighter pilot, I regard Capt. Williams’s victory off of the coast of Korea as one of the most spectacular in the history of military aviation,” retired Rear Adm. Russ Penniman told SD Metro Magazine. “Contemporaries would consider a fight of one against seven – with your adversaries flying superior aircraft – to be a suicide mission.”

Williams, credited with shooting down four Soviet Union MIG-15 fighter jets on Nov. 18, 1952, was a fighter pilot aboard the U.S.S. Oriskany while it patrolled the Sea of Japan.

After flying that morning, Williams and three other fighter pilots were ordered to fly another combat patrol. After becoming airborne, they learned unknown aircraft were fast approaching, soon discovering they were Soviet MIGs. Upon seeing the Navy planes, the Soviets started shooting.

Due to engine problems, two planes in Williams’s squadron left,

leaving him and his wingman to take on the seven MIGs, considered, at the time, superior to their aircraft, Grumman F9F-2 Panthers.

After shooting at one MIG, Williams’s wingman followed the plane to the ocean, leaving him to take on the remaining six MIGs by himself.

“Royce entered the fight without hesitation and remained engaged for over 30 minutes, until he’d exhausted all of his ammunition and his aircraft had been severely damaged,” Admiral Penniman said. “Only one of seven Soviet airplanes would return home.

“Whether the other two ran out of fuel or couldn’t make it back because they were damaged by Royce is unknown,” he added.

Because the United States wasn’t officially at war with the Soviet Union, he was ordered to keep the dogfight confidential. Even President-elect Dwight Eisenhower, while following up his 1952 campaign promise to visit Korea, explained the issue’s sensitivity to Williams.

He was initially awarded the Silver Star for the exploit. But in January, after a prior visit with Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro, when they discussed the dogfight, he was awarded the Navy’s highest medal for valor, the Navy Cross.

Steve Lewandowski is leading Operation Just Reward, which seeks to have Williams awarded the Medal of Honor, the country’s highest military award for valor. He’s working with U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) and is optimistic the Senate and the House of Representatives will approve it.

“Royce Williams is 98 years young, a Top Gun pilot like no other and an American hero for all time,” said Issa. “That’s why we won’t stop until Royce receives the recognition he has never sought but so richly deserves.

“It is long past time for the Congress to have a real say on who receives the Congressional Medal of Honor, and I can’t think of a more deserving recipient,” he added.



F9F-2 First production version, powered by Pratt & Whitney J42 engine. Marine Corps Air Station Miramar (MCAS Miramar) (IATA: NKX, ICAO: KNXX, FAA LID: NKKX) Photo: Tomás Del Coro Miramar Air Show 2014 October 4, 2014

# San Diego Woman to Premiere Film in Norway



## A Poway Woman's tribute to her father, a film premiering in Norway

Poway's Abby Boretto has added a new skill to her already full resume. Well known as a philanthropist, influential community member, Mrs. California All Star United States 2021 and founding contributor to the Silver Sisters Campaign, serendipity has called her in a new direction.

She is now a filmmaker and is busily planning a premiere in Norway for September. Her unique and fascinating story has been featured internationally, on ABC, as well as locally in the Union-Tribune.

The film tells us the story of her late father, 1st Lieutenant Henry N. "Rick" Pilger. He has long been a mystery to her, having died tragically in 1972 while serving in NATO Operation Strong Express when Abby was just 15 months old. Her family miraculously received his Naval Academy ring from Dr. Hans Krogstad who discovered it while hunting grouse on a remote island when she was 23 years old. After 21 years in a rocky crevice, the ring remained intact and nearly perfect. Even after this spiritually charged gift, she knew very little, says Boretto, who bears a striking resemblance to her father, "There was no real fanfare. I don't believe any of us understood the magnitude of this treasure."

She spoke of her father's ring from time to time, but for the most part it remained in the original brown envelope in a memory box with the two letters that accompanied it on the journey home. "I brought it out on occasion," says Boretto, "only to fantasize about the man's finger who once wore it and that far away land in which it

was discovered." The land she refers to is Norway, more specifically, the island of Grytøya.

Early summer she received a message from her Aunt, Mary Lou Wadsworth, who still resides in Farmington, Connecticut where Abby grew up. "I believe she said 'Oh Abby, I think someone stole your story!'" says Boretto. Things happened fast after that. The story was not stolen but an eerily similar story became known to her. Another Naval Academy ring had been on its own journey and had been told through the film, *The Last Ring Home*.

"I quickly reached out to the storyteller of the film, Minter Dial, and he responded right away! The connection was instant." Not many can connect on a story like this. Boretto knew she wanted to create a film of her own, but until this chance connection, had no idea where to begin. This led to another courageous act, reaching out to that film's director. Joshua Shelov, coincidentally also from Connecticut, returned the message within a day, and the project suddenly took on a life of its own. "52 days later we were in Harstad, memorialized forever. Boretto says, "It has been my sincere honor and privilege to bring this news to those families."

In addition, the story and the mission are now a permanent exhibit at the museum on the island. Boretto's message to all "I am excited to bring this story to a worldwide audience. I hope it inspires others to 'open their envelope', whatever that might be. I could never have imagined this journey when I opened mine!"

The film premieres September 7, 2023 in Harstad, Norway,



having never met in person, to film a documentary about my father's life and tragic end," says Boretto.

The process and the connections made during the creation of the yet unnamed film have taught Boretto more than she could have hoped. Not only did she learn about the life and promise of her 24 year old Marine pilot father and the tragedy that took his life and the souls of four other Marines on board, she found herself overwhelmed with kindness and support.

"The Marines have been extraordinary! I've met men along the way who knew my father and have been generous in sharing their stories about 'those times'. I feel embraced by the Marines as a whole," Boretto says, "I never expected them to rally around me or my father's story after 50 years, but their motto, "No man left behind" is the real deal!"

The film and Boretto's efforts led to the erection of a memorial on the island of Grytøya, which was dedicated in September 2022 on the 50th anniversary of the mission with US and Norwegian Military officials present. Boretto has been able to connect with the next of kin (NOK) of each of the four other Marines that perished alongside her father, bringing comfort to these families with the knowledge that their loved ones have not been forgotten and have been memorialized forever. Boretto says, "It has been my sincere honor and privilege to bring this news to those families."

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The film premieres September 7, 2023 in Harstad, Norway with US premieres planned for both coasts in 2023.

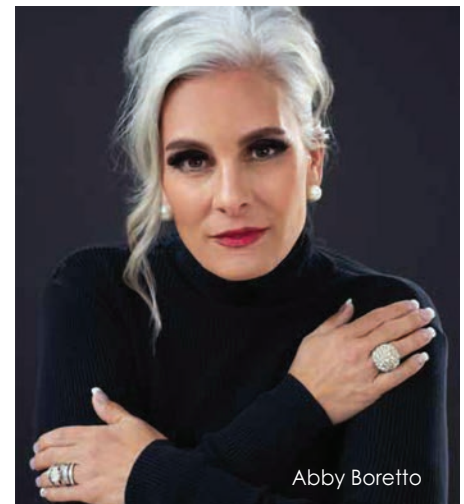
**AN EXCERPT FROM ABBY'S STORY...**

**by Abby Borretto**

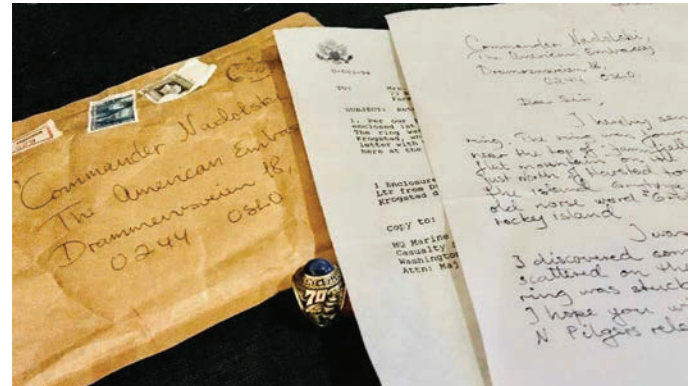
His life was one of full circles in so many ways. He grew up a North Syracuse boy after being born in San Diego. He

flourished as a child and dominated as a teen in the late 60's. Dashing and determined to excel, he was class president and captain of the soccer team; he sat on civic organizations alongside Richard "Dickie" Gere. His dream was to serve, first steps, the Naval Academy. He received his appointment from the Honorable Robert F Kennedy, step one, on track! He was a natural leader as a Naval Academy cadet, graduating with a mathematics degree and dreams of flying. Along the way he fell in love and moved quickly into marital bliss, a beautiful addition to his overarching goal of a life of purpose.

His dreams of flying were momentarily derailed at the Naval level due to an eye injury during a soccer game at the Academy, but true to form, that opened doors to the USMC. Flight school became a reality; he and his beautiful pregnant wife moved to Pensacola Fl. Young pilots and their wives become fast friends as it happens in this world. Family away from family in the military creates a unique family bond. Most would not understand this if they have not been part of the military culture, it is tight and intimate, with a sense of urgency; a group that can easily relate to one another given their circumstances. A baby girl is born as Rick graduates flight school and is assigned to New River joining Squadron HML-167 in Jacksonville NC. He is to fly the newly introduced Bell Twin Engine Huey! One can only imagine the emotions, this young pilot has it all! He's a dashing new helicopter pilot with a stunning young wife and their new baby girl. His time with the new squadron is short lived when a mission is presented. It is understood that Rick was a standout pilot as such, a former USNA grad and former trainer hand picked him to deploy to Norway for NATO mission Exercise Strong Express, 200 miles above the arctic circle. Considering this time of unrest, this assignment was a cakewalk, war games in cold weather in breathtaking Norway with lots of flying time. With her husband deployed, Rick's wife is busy taking care of the baby, their home, and building community with the other pilot wives who became fast friends. As the weeks went by, postcards were exchanged, his, an image of Andenes, a fishing village in Norway, talking



Abby Boretto



about the weather and missing his girls, hers of the Hackensack River Crossing in its “grandness”, letting him know they were low on funds and that they were headed to CT to be with her family. That would be their last correspondence.

On a crisp fall day in September that dreaded knock came to the door. You don’t need to be in the military to understand the image. At 22, suddenly and unexpectedly widowed, a mother of a thriving 15 month old, now what... I am that 15 month old girl, who lost her father on that fateful day in 1972. It was during a time when America still had an expectation of a stiff upper lip so to speak. My mother, silently grieving, began picking up the pieces of her now new reality and carrying on. She was the daughter of a Naval Captain and I’m assuming that was all she knew how to do. Life went on as it does and looking back I lived a charmed life for all intents and purposes. I was embraced by my family, and experienced great adventures that most would probably envy, but there was always a void. I could never put my finger on it, turns out, it was my father. My father was never really discussed except for the occasional anecdotal story or a notice of the similarities we shared. It wasn’t a negative, it was just the way it was.

When I was 23 years old we received my fathers Naval Academy ring that he wore with so much pride in the mail. It had been lost on the fateful night in Sept of 72. As I recall there was no real fanfare about this treasure we had just miraculously acquired, maybe a small discussion might have occurred. None of us truly understood the magnitude of this treasure, it sat for the next 26 years in that same brown envelope with the two letters that accompanied it all those years ago. I spoke of the ring and brought it

out on occasion only to fantasize about the man’s finger who once wore it and that far away land in which it was discovered..

On the cusp of turning 50, I began to reflect on my own life. I pulled out my memory boxes and wondered, who am I? Where have I been? What have I accomplished? Where can I improve and do better moving forward? That quintessential brown envelope presented itself! I pulled it out, opened it up, reread the letters and closely inspected that beautiful class ring. Like a bolt of lightning it hit me, I must find Dr. Hans Krogstad, the man who found the ring all those years ago, and finally thank him!! My journey had begun but to no avail.

Nine months later, I received a message from a writer in Norway asking if I was Abby Pilger and had I received a ring all those years ago. I excitedly wrote back with an enthusiastic YES to his question. I wondered, how did this writer find me and asked that very question. I had been seeking answers as well. I learned that he just heard this fantastic story from Hans himself. I was so confused. You see, unbeknownst to both Hans and I, we were looking for each other at the same time and our worlds had finally collided.

Fast forward 15 months, I travel to Norway to embark on a pilgrimage of discovery. Upon our arrival we were received with much fanfare from strangers who not only embraced me with open arms, but also my fathers story and now his legacy. As you can imagine meeting Hans was simply incredible for me. This man has positively and unequivocally enhanced my life in profound ways! We spent a week together, preparing to ascend the mountain, that fateful place that changed the trajectory of my life. Climbing the ominous and mysterious mountain of Grytoya was a

daunting physical challenge, it was no “Sound of Music ” as some might have envisioned, The trek started at the ocean and ascended nearly 2500 ft straight up. One and a half miles and 3 hours later I crested the mountain and had eyes on the area of my fathers last moments. I have never felt so much freedom in my life!

We had an incredible memorial celebration! It was an EPIC moment in my life as you have probably gathered by now. With new found senses, admiration and with a palpable understanding of the loss and sacrifice, I descended the mountain whole, this time with a new found purpose.

When the story landed in the states and started to circulate I began hearing from people from his life and the holes that I didn’t know existed started to fill; I was becoming full. My life started to make more sense, I do not have words to e xpress this feeling!

Here’s what I know for sure, my father was on a clear path to do great things when his life was abruptly taken from not only himself but the world! He must have had a magic spark because that prestigious Naval Academy ring sat in the Norwegian elements for 22 years like a beacon waiting until Hans saw it glimmering in the grayscape. Is it me or is there a cosmic intersection on the timing of it all!! I like to think that my whole life has been guided to this moment, and upon reflection, it is the only answer I can really come to. All these years and on my 50th birthday the doors slowly began to open to give me the knowledge to map my father’s life because this was a time that I could cherish with dedication. Through artifacts, investigation, and the tremendous amount of people who have reached out to tell me beautiful stories of a man I never knew, until now...

## Education Matters: The controversy over Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging



By Marsha Sutton

**A**lthough Carlsbad Unified School District’s regular agenda item labeled “Moment of Meditation” worried me the first time I read it, thinking it was a prayer of some sort, I was heartened by CUSD Trustee Michele Ward’s turn to deliver the Moment at the start of the June 21 board meeting.

She began by saying “Happy Pride Month” to scattered audience applause. Then she read this, which she said was given to her by a 2023 district graduate:

“I remember a time back in ninth grade when I was sitting at a table during lunch, and the people around me began looking up racial slurs and shouting them at students as they walked by, this being one of my first impressions of this school district.

“I have seen my friends be referred to as monkeys and other animals, obviously meant as a racist comment based on their skin or heritage. I’ve witnessed the abundance of transphobia and homophobia that plagues our campuses as students belittle each other and harass people based on their identity.

“How are we as students meant to learn and perform to the best

of our abilities if we are constantly being confronted with the bigotry and ignorance of our peers?”

“Truly if there’s one thing I ask you to take away from what I have said, it is please don’t ignore the struggles of your students. Choosing to turn a blind eye will only hurt students more. Students should see a board that will stand by them, not one that willfully ignores them.”

A true moment of meditation on those sobering words followed.

Then began the show.

There were 52 speakers who came before the board to address the agenda item on implementation of the district’s proposed Diversity Equity Inclusion Belonging program, called Forward Together.

With board President Ray Pearson absent, the meeting was run by Vice President Kathy Rallings, who asked trustees to delay taking action on the DEIB item until a later board meeting when all five trustees could attend. That motion passed 3-1, with Trustee Michele Ward dissenting, so the item became for information and

discussion only.

The result of that vote to delay taking action is that we all have to suffer through another public meeting on July 19 with more hours of speakers raising the same talking points as before — themes being fear-mongering and alarm over imagined negative consequences on one side, and heartfelt pleas to support student diversity and create inclusive campus climates on the other.

“I am proud to introduce this item tonight,” began CUSD Superintendent Benjamin Churchill bravely.

He said 13 presentations on DEIB have been made to the school board over the past two years, from April 2021 to May 2023, and the administrative team during that time has met with more than 1,000 educational partners, reviewed more than 8,000 online surveys, and held numerous listening and learning sessions and focus groups.

He made a point of stressing that the DEIB plan was “not about taking anything away from anyone,” as some have claimed, and asked the board to approve the plan at the next meeting when all trustees are present.

### Schools under attack

Whether it’s access to books, learning about racism in this country’s history, respecting the gay and trans community, or teaching about the debilitating effects of bullying and harassment — what are people so afraid of?

Objections about DEIB include the idea that schools would be teaching DEIB instead of core subjects. But it’s not a case of either/or. I’m confident that time spent on core subjects in good school districts like Carlsbad will not be sacrificed in order to create a school climate that is accepting and respectful.

In fact, it’s quite the opposite. Many students say that being bullied and harassed makes it impossible to learn — that if they are ridiculed, teased or rejected, school becomes a nightmare environment.

If people are so concerned about improving test scores and educating all children with a focus on core subjects, hateful actions and speech that create impediments to learning have to be addressed.

Robert Nye, CUSD’s assistant superintendent of instructional services, said a key component of the district’s DEIB plan was to work with the Anti-Defamation League, which he called “a widely respected leader in anti-bias training and education for over 100 years,” and adopt its school-based program, No Place For Hate.

Nye said the goal of No Place For Hate — which has been successfully implemented in hundreds of schools in California, including 169 in San Diego County — is to build understanding of the benefits of diversity, eliminate bullying and harassment and bigotry, and create positive school environments that amplify student voices.

The lessons and training benefit both students and staff and can

be tailored to each school’s individual needs and goals as identified by the students and teachers themselves, so that schools can become inclusive, respectful and safe communities.

### What is belonging?

Diversity Equity Inclusion has been discussed in education circles as something that’s needed in today’s environment where hate speech and unfiltered comments seem to have flourished in recent years. But Carlsbad has added the “B” to DEI, for Belonging.

“Inclusion is an action, and Belonging is an outcome,” Churchill explained in an email.

“Inclusion is the act of involving and accommodating diverse individuals or groups in a particular setting, such as a school or workplace. Belonging is the experience of individuals feeling accepted, valued and connected. When inclusion efforts are successful in schools, for example, one result is that students and staff feel a sense of belonging.”

“Inclusion aims to create supportive environments where everyone can thrive; belonging is evidence that it’s working,” he said.

According to the district’s DEIB plan, “Diversity enriches our learning environment, exposing students to different perspectives and fostering empathy and understanding. Equity ensures that every student has equal opportunities for success, regardless of their background. Inclusion creates a sense of community where all individuals are valued and respected. Belonging is the result of our collective efforts to create a welcoming and supportive environment for all.

“When students, families, and staff members feel a sense of belonging, they are more likely to engage actively in their educational journey, take risks, and pursue excellence. Belonging is the glue that holds our community together and inspires us to work collaboratively towards our shared goals.”

In my March 17 North Coast Current column, Churchill told me, “I don’t fully understand why the topic has become so controversial. I believe that schools should be welcoming and safe for every student and staff member.

“For me, it’s about ‘belonging.’ Do our students and staff feel like they belong in our classrooms and schools? Are students able to see themselves reflected in what they learn about, and are they also able to learn about others? Do they feel seen and heard? Do they feel safe? And if not, what are we doing about it?”

### Student-centered

For those who object to DEIB because they say it’s divisive, I might suggest that it has become divisive because of those people raising such a fuss.

Everyone is entitled to their opinions, of course, even if those opinions are based on nothing more than fear of the unknown or some imaginary bad consequence of teaching children to be kind.

But people are not entitled to their own “alternative” facts.

Teaching about racism, antisemitism or other forms of bigotry helps students grow and appreciate our country’s past and present, blemishes and all. If this makes kids feel not guilty but simply uncomfortable, then that’s not necessarily a bad thing. As a friend said so eloquently, “If children are never taught where we have fallen short, then they will never learn what to do to make it better.”

We don’t give our kids enough credit. Give them the chance to learn our country’s history, which is both inspirational and disturbing, and have faith that they can be critical thinkers who can be empowered to participate fully and intelligently in shaping America’s future. Students want this, teachers want this, and communities need this.

It’s time for school board members to stop this nonsense and stand up for their students.

To the critics who raise false alarms — and to those who would use religion to justify discrimination — here’s what I wish trustees would have the courage to say:

We will listen to you respectfully, but in the end, we are here to do what’s best for our students.

So, no. We will proceed with a Diversity Equity Inclusion Belonging plan that staff under our direction has worked so hard these past two years to prepare.

No, we will not ban books you don’t like that deny other students their right to read those books.

No, we will promote acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community and will vigorously push back against anyone who says erroneously that teaching about acceptance is the same as indoctrination.

No, we will not invite so-called faith-based groups to be a part of this process. Our job is to listen to students and support their needs. And we hear them loud and clear that eradicating intolerance in all its forms is a critical need for student health and, as a result, for improved student achievement.

We are elected for two main purposes: to hire and review the

superintendent and to ensure the district’s fiscal solvency. But we are also here for students first. And we stand with our students.

As Trustee Ward read at the start of the June 21 meeting, “Students should see a board that will stand by them.”

Marsha Sutton is a San Diego County education journalist and opinion columnist.

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# Pinnacle's Price: Women and Professional Success

By Douglas Page

Despite one barrier after another being kicked aside so women can advance in their careers, it seems there's a mystery: What do they experience and sacrifice at work, especially as they climb the company's ranks, enter the C-suite, and become the CEO?

Former IBM CEO Ginni Rometty, the first woman to hold the job at Big Blue, and current NBA Dallas Mavericks CEO Cynt Marshall reveal some of what they endured during their careers in their books, but Marshall goes farther, describing the insults and objections.

"Nothing about being a woman in a male-dominated industry, or a Black person in a business dominated by white executives, is easy," she writes in *You've Been Chosen: Thriving Through the Unexpected*. "I've dealt with people who think I'm fundamentally not as smart as them, not as talented as them, or not as worthy as them.

"There were people who couldn't believe that a woman – let alone a Black woman – was capable of being an effective, powerful executive. With every promotion, someone in my circle assumed I would fail," she adds.

Could it be worse?

It was, especially after AT&T's board of directors selected Marshall to be a corporate officer.

With the promotion, her boss offered plenty of unsolicited advice, telling her to cut her hair; wear more white clothes because they would "complement" her skin color; use her full first name, Cynthia; lower the volume of her voice; and stop using the word "blessed" because it was "too churchy."

How did she respond?

She turned down the promotion, with her boss saying, "I agree with your decision ... You're smart, but you don't have what it takes for this."

The boss's ethnicity isn't revealed, but the gender is: It was a woman. The CEO, however, wasn't taking "no" for an answer.

"We selected you to be an officer just the way you are now, Cynt," AT&T CEO Ed Whitacre told Marshall. "You're the person who's getting everything done. I don't want you to change a thing. So let's start over."

With those words, she reversed her decision.

One expert on what women experience at the office says Marshall's story is similar to her findings.

"What has surprised me is that, especially in financial services and technology (industries), we hear more challenging stories (from women)," Deepa Purushothaman told *SD Metro Magazine*. A former Deloitte partner and author of a book, she's also researched and written about women's professional experiences for the *Harvard Business Review* (HBR).

While she doesn't have enough data to suggest it's completely accurate, there are enough examples, she says, showing women have a more challenging time with a boss who's a woman.

"The women who've come before have had to conform, have had to sacrifice to get to the (boss's) seat, so there's an expectation everyone behind them will do the same," Purushothaman said. "So sometimes women are harder on other women."

She noted that she and others she's worked with have interviewed more than 2,000 women in professional and corporate ranks about their

careers and challenges. Why is this important? The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows in a 2021 study that women make up nearly 52% of those in management, professional and related occupations.

Even after a highly successful, 30-plus-year career with AT&T, with the last years as one of its most senior executives at their Dallas headquarters, Marshall took flak upon joining the Mavericks.

“When I got to my current job as CEO of the Dallas Mavericks, there was a person there who openly said, ‘Don’t listen to her. She won’t last ninety days,’” she writes.

Mavericks owner Mark Cuban recruited her while the team was “reeling from a #MeToo scandal ... centered around a toxic work culture for women,” *Worth* magazine reported.

Rometty faced her own challenges, but her career, compared to Marshall’s, seems almost gilded. Rarely does a reader come away from her book, *Good Power: Leading Positive Change in Our Lives, Work and World*, thinking she was insulted or riddled with self-doubt.

According to one published report, written by Purushothaman and two others, Lisen Stromberg and Lisa Kaplowitz, that might not have been what she experienced.

“Study after study has revealed that women are viewed by both men and other women as having lower leadership potential and being less competent than men with similar skills and backgrounds,” they wrote in an article published in *HBR*. “Given the bias against them, the women we interviewed felt they had to be ‘perfect’ to reach their seats.”

Rometty backs that up, writing, “Preparation helped protect me, at least in my own mind, from gender bias, conscious or otherwise. Was it fair? No. But I was and remain a product of the times in which women have to work extra hard to prove themselves – thirty years later this is still true in so many places, including the tech industry as a whole and the ranks of senior management across the board.”

Minority women, the three authors write,

come under even more pressure.

The research “revealed that this tendency toward perfectionism presents more severely for women of color (WOC), who have been told – and who have internalized – that they need to work twice as hard,” the authors wrote. “As the ‘only’ in the room, many women, and particularly WOC, believe their success or failure will serve as a generalization for the success or failure of their entire cohort.”

After graduating from Northwestern University with a bachelor’s degree in computer science, Rometty joined General Motors as a junior programmer in the Chevrolet Information Systems division. After realizing she wasn’t a car aficionado, she joined IBM in Detroit as an assistant systems engineer in 1981.

Rometty details her hazards and victories, including the acquisition of Pricewaterhouse Coopers consulting unit for \$3.5 billion while leading one of the IBM’s largest business units, the Global Services Americas division.

Like Marshall, she had her fair share of challenges and, at one point, describes breaking down emotionally because the stress was nearly unbearable. But she also puts a positive spin on what she faced and defines how she used power to benefit her many colleagues.

As for what happens when women reach their company’s upper echelons, Purushothaman says many undergo a watershed moment.

“Most of them will find themselves in a crisis. And some of it’s an identity crisis, some of it’s a health crisis and then they start to question, is this worth it?” she said.

Purushothaman’s findings shouldn’t be dismissed, but Marshall and Rometty show there are many stories – not one narrative – about how women view their accomplishments. Marshall and Rometty tell engaging stories about the price they paid to reach the top, but Marshall’s is the richer autobiography.

Douglas Page can be reached at [dpage@sandiegometro.com](mailto:dpage@sandiegometro.com).



**Good Power: Leading Positive Change in Our Lives, Work and World by Ginni Rometty**  
(Harvard Business Review Press, 256 pages, \$30)



**You've Been Chosen: Thriving Through the Unexpected, by Cynt Marshall**  
(Ballantine Books, 241 pages, \$28)



## SD METRO Magazine interview with Deepa Purushothaman

By Douglas Page

Editor's Note: This is an edited transcript of SD Metro Magazine's interview with Deepa Purushothaman. It was edited for brevity and conciseness.

### **Despite the advancements, it seems things aren't all that good for working women?**

Coming out of the pandemic, there is more of a conversation about childcare and other challenges that make work more difficult. Most women have been taught to fit into the system and that system was designed for a two-person household. Usually, it was the man that went off to work, and historically, generationally, the

women who stayed home. They took care of the children. And the model, the way we work, the 45-hour work week is all based on that. We've never given it a facelift or an update. Women can rise in the current system. They can fit in, but more of us are asking for a little bit of a larger revolution, so it makes space for more of us to have to adapt less and to really be able to thrive, not just survive.

### **They've got to be somebody else?**

Yes, absolutely.

### **Who do they have to be?**

For a lot of them, they're modeling the white male leaders that have come before them and that's not who they are. And they get to a very senior place and they're questioning, was it worth it? Can I keep being this? What have I sacrificed?

And I want to be super clear because my work is not about "Let's take out all the white male leaders." That's not what I'm saying. We need to make space for more than that because otherwise what you're seeing is a lot of women behaving or adapting or thinking they have to become that white male definition. And then they do it for a couple of years, a decade, and it's



**Some have had to really adapt or really present themselves in a certain way, and that's the challenge of wanting to do it differently. I call it full voice, show up as all of who they are, and they can't do that because they've had to show up in a certain way.**

cost them. It's cost who they are, their identity, their happiness, and they're no longer willing to do it. And they're walking out the door.

**They look at themselves in the mirror and don't like what they see?**

A lot of us have been taught, "Well, get to the seat, get to the senior seat, and then you can do it your way." But once they get to that seat, there's less ability to do it their way because there's even more expectation that they're going to behave and conform and be like the people around them. And that's the dissonance. They're willing to sacrifice or not do it their own way or hold their tongue or modify what they believe in or how they lead because once they get to the seat, then it will change. What we're seeing is when they're the boss, it's hard to change because they've set expectations.

**A woman becomes CEO. What price did she pay to get there?**

Some have had to really adapt or really present themselves in a certain way, and that's the challenge of wanting to do it differently. I call it full voice, show up as all of who they are, and they can't do that because they've had to show up in a certain way.

Some of the women I interviewed told me stories about women CEOs not being able to bring other women with them because they didn't want to be seen as favoring women or if they're women of color, not wanting to favor women of color, people of color. There are extra lenses that we place on women and people of color. It's hard to make change because they're trying to do a good job and because there are so many eyes on them.

**How is the experience different for women of color?**

I think what we would find is there are more microaggressions. There's more racism.

**What would those include?**

A lot of the women of color get their credentials questioned. They're constantly having to prove who they are and their

expertise in a very different way than their colleagues around them.

A lot of Asian women say their names will get confused. For a lot of the Black women, it is credentials. It falls more in that space. It comes down to really having to prove yourself.

**So, hold your personality at the door?**

That's the challenge. We are telling women, "You don't have to do that," but to get ahead, they're having to hide that they are running home and juggling their needs at home or that they have these outside activities, or they would prefer to bring more compassion to the workplace, and they've put that aside and that's really the struggle.

**Describe the differences of what a woman goes through to be CEO and what she's able to do versus what a male CEO, what he's went through and is able to do?**

Male CEOs are more able to focus on the work at hand, meaning the operations or the company strategy, more of the day-to-day sort of what we expect traditionally from a CEO. They're allowed to be more authoritative. They don't have to explain themselves in the same way. We don't put them in the, "Do we like you or are you credible?" And for a lot of women, it's very difficult to be liked and to be credible, whereas for male CEOs, that's an easier path.

For women CEOs, it's not just the job they're doing. We look at how they're dressed and how they present themselves and how they treat their team, the teams around them, and what they care about outside of work? And do they take on women's issues?

When I interview people, men will say, "I mentor 12 mentees." White women will say, "I mentor about 20 to 24 people." When I interview women of color, it can be upwards of 100 or 200 because there's no one else in the company or the industry. We just don't understand how much extra there is for those CEOs or leaders because they're doing jobs that aren't part of the traditional job description.

Interview by SD METRO Associate Editor Douglas Page



How many soldiers of China's People's Liberation Army have slipped into the United States across the southern border? Some estimate 5,000, others 10,000. The concern is that, on the first day of war in Asia they will take down America's power lines, poison water reservoirs, assassinate officials, start wildfires, spread pathogens, and create terror by bombing shopping malls and supermarkets. Pictured: Migrants, headed for the U.S., travel through the jungle in Darien Province, Panama, on October 13, 2022. (Photo by Luis Acosta/AFP via Getty Images)

## China's Saboteurs Are Coming to America By Gordon G. Chang

There is now a Chinese invasion of the U.S. homeland.

"The jungle is filled with Chinese marching to America," said war correspondent Michael Yon to Gatestone.

Chinese migrants are entering the United States on foot at the southern border. Almost all are desperate, seeking a better life for themselves and their children. Some, however, are coming to commit acts of sabotage.

China is in a state of distress; gloom pervades Chinese society. Chinese by the hundreds are now patiently waiting for visas in sweltering heat in lines at U.S. consulates in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou.

Many, however, are short-circuiting the long waits at the consulates. At the southern border, Chinese migrants are entering the United States in unprecedented numbers. U.S. Customs and Border Protection reports that the number of apprehensions of Chinese migrants in the first five months of the current federal fiscal year was more than double that during all of the last fiscal year.

The 8,000 Chinese migrants apprehended this calendar year are more than quadruple the number apprehended in the comparable period a year ago.

Chinese nationals are flying to Ecuador, which permits them to enter visa-free. They then make their way to the southern edge of the Darien Gap, about 66 miles of jungle separating Colombia and Panama. The migrants cross the natural barrier on foot, and once safely on the north side continue the journey to America, often by bus.

Some Chinese migrants are poor. Many, however, are middle-class. They can afford to pay \$35,000 each to Mexican cartels to be smuggled into America.

"It's like an animal stampede before an earthquake," said "Sam," a Chinese migrant who crossed into America first in February at Brownsville, Texas, to Axios.

Some migrants are almost certainly members of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA). Representative Mark Green (R-Tenn.), chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, said at a

press conference on the 14th of this month that a Border Patrol sector chief informed him that some of the Chinese migrants at the southern border have "known ties to the PLA."

"We have no idea who these people are, and it's very likely, using Russia's template of sending military personnel into Ukraine, China is doing the same into the United States," said Green.

These military-linked migrants, despite their affiliations, have been released into America.

There is no question that China's PLA is inserting saboteurs through Mexico. "At the Darien Gap, I have seen countless packs of Chinese males of military age, unattached to family groups, and pretending not to understand English," said Yon, the war correspondent. "They were all headed to the American border."

"Normally in groups of five to fifteen, they typically emerge from the Darien Gap and spend one night in the U.S.-funded San Vicente Camp, or next door in the Tonosi

Hotel, before boarding luxury buses for the trip up Highway 1 toward Costa Rica," Yon reports. "One group of six young men bought a chicken at the Tonosi Hotel, drank its blood from small glasses, then cooked the chicken themselves in the hotel restaurant, according to the hotel manager. Drinking raw chicken blood is a rite among some PLA soldiers."

Once here, the military fighters can link up with China's agents already in place or Chinese diplomats.

How many of the PLA fighters have slipped into the United States this way? Some estimate 5,000, others 10,000. Those numbers sound high, but whatever the actual figure, more are coming.

These are China's shock troops. The concern is that, on the first day of war in Asia they will take down America's power lines, poison water reservoirs, assassinate officials, start wildfires, spread pathogens, and create terror by bombing shopping malls and supermarkets.

The saboteurs will almost certainly attack American military bases. China has already been probing sensitive installations. Chinese agents posing as tourists have, for instance, intruded into bases, including the Army's Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks, Alaska. There, the suspected Chinese agents drove past a base gate and were

later apprehended with a drone inside their car.

"Ancient Chinese strategists prized the use of subterfuge and surprise to achieve victory, and the two PLA colonels who wrote *Unrestricted Warfare* in 1999 were full of praise for the tactics of Osama bin Laden," Richard Fisher of the International Assessment and Strategy Center told this publication. "When the Chinese Communist Party starts its war against Taiwan and the United States, Americans should expect that Chinese sleeper agents now in America will hit targets like gas stations and military-age Chinese now crossing our border will be mobilized for assassination attacks and assaults on U.S. military bases."

Therefore, the next war in Asia will almost certainly be fought on U.S. soil, perhaps on its first day. Unsuspecting Americans will be in the fight.

Immigrants make countries strong, and almost all the Chinese migrants crossing the southern border will contribute to American society. Some, however, are coming to wage war on the United States.

Gordon G. Chang is the author of *The Coming Collapse of China*, a Gatestone Institute distinguished senior fellow, and a member of its Advisory Board.



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**STEVE LEWANDOWSKI**  
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# Huatulco's Imprint in the Sand

## THE WILD COAST OF OAXACA

By Marlise Kast-Myers | Photos by Benjamin Myers

Growing up as the daughter of missionaries, my childhood travels were usually centered around giving back. From South Africa and Hong Kong to Romania and Tanzania, each purposeful journey involved some level of digging ditches, feeding children, raising awareness, and rescuing the lost.

By the time I graduated from college, I went rogue, traveling for the sake of my own benefit, longing for experiences that would seep into my pores for mental stimulation rather than philanthropic impact. Adventure, freedom, culture — nearly every box was checked in my otherwise home-bound soul.

That is, until Huatulco.

Located in the Mexican state of Oaxaca,

the fishing village is home to nine bays, 36 beaches, and thousands of baby turtles that apparently needed me (or was it the other way around?). Whatever the case, I had three open days on my calendar, and a desire to surf some waves and save some turtles. And so, away I went to Huatulco.

A friend of a friend had looped me into a group of champions-for-change who were protecting coastal and marine ecosystems in the U.S. and Mexico. Based out of San Diego, this powerhouse of protectors called themselves WILDCOAST, and low and behold, they were heading to Huatulco.

Small but mighty, they acted out a David and Goliath storyline back in 2001, taking on corporate giants to shut down a Baja factory that would wipe out a breeding

ground for whales. That first environmental success story was the spark igniting an army of advocates that today conserve over 38 million acres of protected areas in Oaxaca, Baja, and beyond.

Needless to say, they have a lot of ground to cover, which is where researchers, fishermen, environmentalists, politicians — and even volunteers like me — come in. The Mexican state of Oaxaca had always been on my bucket list. For years, my husband shared tales of the vibrant city by the same name, known as the state's cultural, historic, artistic, and agricultural hub.

Home to rivers, waterfalls, and beaches, Huatulco wasn't far from Puerto Escondido, boasting massive waves surfed by legendary big-wave riders. On this trip however, it was



about saving turtles on a desolate beach far from tourist attractions.

But first, I wanted to sleep. A painful 5 AM arrival to Cross Border Xpress (CBX) meant that I could park in San Diego and walk across the pedestrian bridge into Tijuana's international airport. Flights to Mexico are generally more affordable and direct when using CBX, but in this case, it meant an unearthly wake-up call.

On the bright side, I was at my hotel by 3 PM, checking into Camino Real Zaashila Huatulco, with its sugar-cube-like buildings stacked around Tangolunda Bay. Built by Mexican architect, Javier Sordo Madaleno, the property had all the creature comforts including a pool longer than a football field.

After a swim and a nap, I dined at the water's edge, sampling local dishes like empanadas with mole, chapulines (deep-fried grasshoppers), and tlayudas—crunchy tortillas layered with beans, meat, cabbage, avocado, and Oaxaca cheese.

Early to bed, early to rise, I hitched a boat to Huatulco National Park where the WILD Coast crew was out inspecting buoys. They had recently installed the system to prevent boats from dropping anchor on coral reefs.

The 29,000-acre national park has been designated a whale-watching zone and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. As our boat cut through water, olive-ridley turtles bobbed at the surface and manta rays leapt toward the sky, smacking their wings like a bellyflop gone right. From Chachacual beach, I snorkeled among angel fish, trumpet fish, and even a zebra moray that looked like a snake on a mission.

The nearby cove of Playa La India was the ideal spot for round two, where I snorkeled (yet again) above Yellowtail Sturgeon fish getting a scrub down by pecking rainbow wrasses. Back onboard, the salt air sprayed my sun-kissed face as I counted barren bays in our wake. With arms folded, I rested my chin on the edge of the boat, lost somewhere between the white noise of wind and waves.

At dreamy Cacaluta Bay, locals prepared a toes-in-the-sand Oaxacan picnic of ceviche, grilled fish, and tlayudas, with a line of salsas to dribble on each bite. Had my trip ended there, I would have been perfectly content. But with just 48 hours still left on the clock, I was determined to make the most of my time in Huatulco.

By late afternoon, I was on the banks of the Copalita River with local outfitter, Rancho Tangolunda. The drive to the launching point was as much as an adventure as the rafting itself. Loading onto a cattle car, I bounced through papaya plantations and pocket-size pueblos where man was absent but butterflies abundant, fluttering between jungle vines and trumpet flowers. Considered one of Mexico's best white-water rafting rivers, the rapids spilled from the Sierra Madre Mountains into the Pacific Ocean.

As a novice rafter, I paddled my heart out along the bubbly Class 2 section, getting tossed around in my inflatable raft like a kid on a trampoline. Dwarfed by the mighty tropical forest, the mountains



Turtle release at Escobilla Beach

nibbled the sun, leaving just enough light to grab tacos in the town of La Crucecita.

Located 10 minutes from my hotel, this sleepy center has a handful of restaurants, shops, and noteworthy attractions including the colonial-style chapel of Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

Unlike adventures in my 20's, this whirlwind trip had me in bed by 9 PM and awake by 5 AM. I was on a mission to save some turtles.

The early wakeup call took me to La Escobilla to experience WILD Coast in action. Just one hour north of Huatulco, this protected beach is where arribada—mass turtle nesting—happens. Translated to “arrival by sea,” the natural phenomenon occurs at 12 beaches around the world, three of which are in Mexico. Lasting just four days during rainy season, literally hundreds of thousands of female sea turtles shimmy their way ashore to lay their eggs.

Between threats of poachers, dogs, vultures, crabs, beetles, development, and oil spills, the hatchlings have the whole world against them. As recently as 2002, turtle poaching was not only a common practice, but an important part of the culture and diet in the Oaxacan communities.



Reflections at Camino Real Zaashila Huatulco

Enter WILDCOAST, stage right, which monitors the two Oaxacan arribada beaches of Escobilla and Morro Ayuta, spanning 22 miles of critical turtle nesting beaches. Their conservation quest unfolded in the heart of the nonprofit's Executive Director, Serge Dedina. In 2002, Serge launched a major campaign to halt the illegal trade of turtle eggs and meat.

In partnership with La Escobilla Beach Sanctuary, the Mexican Turtle Center, and CONANP (National Commission of Protected Areas), WILDCOAST now rescues turtle eggs and recreates habitats by monitoring temperatures and humidity.

Thanks to their efforts, the olive ridley and eastern Pacific green sea turtles have made a major comeback, with now over 72 million turtles being born on the beaches that WILDCOAST protects.

Fortunately, I got to hold 50 of the tiny hatchlings in a Tupperware bowl. No larger than the palm of my hand were these little hockey pucks with legs, ready to take on the world. Each one had hope, stretching their micro-dinosaur heads toward the light, and paddling with all their might within my plastic container.

Pushing the bambinos away from the bowl's rim, I caught eyes with Don Eradio, who smiled at my joy. As a former turtle egg poacher, he now dedicates his life to conserving turtles and protecting local beaches where 80% of the world's ridley turtle population comes to nest.

Despite an average laying clutch of 100 eggs, just one in 1,000 baby turtles will make it to adulthood. Between predators and

dehydration, the survival rate from nest to sea is slim.

Gazing into the bowl, I so badly wanted them to taste the sea and find refuge somewhere deep in the belly of the ocean. Finally, it was time to liberate those little nuggets and set them free. But there was one condition: they couldn't be touched.

Ironically, the struggle is part of their survival journey. Each one leaves an imprint on the sand where they were hatched, hopefully to someday return to nest on that same beach. Not only does human touch interfere with their imprinting process, but the physical pressure could potentially puncture their food sac carrying three-day's worth of food.

As I slowly tipped the bowl, out spilled my mob of hatchlings, some moving full steam ahead while others barely paddled in place. Several crawled in the wrong direction, eventually spinning in circles until they could feel the wet sand beneath their flippers. Literally hundreds of them began to spread out, sprawling across the beach like little polka dots on a blanket. Each one clung to the cues of water—from the spray on their shells to the wetness on their claws.

With each set of waves, we witnessed survival of the fittest, some pushing past the whitewash while others crashed back to shore. Their fight for life—and their draw toward the light—made me want to cry. No one spoke. Everyone watched.

Behind us was a flock of birds ready to dive into the sea for their moving targets. Miniature volcanos erupted from the sand, revealing

hungry crabs scuttling toward the fragile turtle tribe.

“One in 1,000,” I kept thinking. Nature was cruel and compassionate at the same time. After 30 long minutes, the last hatchling made his way to the sea, causing our group of turtle advocates to erupt in spontaneous cheer.

Over breakfast at Lodeli, I thought about that life-giving moment, and wondered how many of my turtles had in fact survived. The bohemian café was packed, located in the nearby hippie town of Mazunte where yoga and dreadlocks prevail. That afternoon, I surfed nearly three hours at Barra de la Cruz, and yet again the following morning before my flight. The indigenous Chontal village east of Huatulco had a right-hand point break that made me want to extend my trip. Had I known all that Huatulco had to offer, I would have planned for spontaneity and turtle bonding. Instead, I talked about what was next with WILD Coast, a group of pioneers-turned-friends.

That last night, we dined together at Clio’s in Huatulco, discussing efforts to save whales and impact communities. Between the restaurant’s French culinary techniques and Mesoamerican roots, I was in awe of the cuisine but somehow lost in my thoughts.

Gazing around the table, I could almost feel their heart for conservation—once top executives who had left the corporate world to help build a better one with WILD Coast. They put mission into action and believed in the “one” regardless of what statistics told them.

Raising my glass, I toasted to the “one” hatchling that would someday return to Escobilla beach, overcoming struggles to manifest survival.

Now well into my 40’s, perhaps I wouldn’t abandon my heart for “the lost” after all, and would instead, return to my roots to leave an imprint in the sand.

Marlise Kast-Myers as is an award winning travel writer



Oaxacan picnic at Cacaluta Bay

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Ronson J. Shamoun, Principal Attorney and CEO of RJS LAW, is an Adjunct Law Professor at the University of San Diego—School of Law where he teaches a Tax Practice and Penalties class. He was recently presented with the following awards:

- San Diego Metro Magazine- Best Attorney 2016
- San Diego Magazine- Top Attorney 2016
- San Diego Business Journal- Best of the Bar 2014, 2015 & 2016
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