



Jeanette Schneider

Philanthropic Solutions

U.S. Trust, Bank of America

As an executive in the largely male-dominated financial-services arena, Jeanette Schneider is an advocate for women in business and a devotee of gender equality.

The Florida native also has an affinity for volunteerism, successfully combining these interests in her current position providing philanthropic solutions for the company.

Schneider recently brought together U.S. Trust, Merrill Lynch and Bank of America to start a local chapter of Women LEAD, a professional and leadership-development organization, and created an external women's advocacy group to support nonprofits that promote female mentorship and equality.

"We're excited about making our ad-

vocacy group more formal this year and are working in the Clark County School District and the Naked City to go after a couple of issues," she said.

Schneider's blog, *Love And Little Things*, focuses on issues relevant to professional women and mothers. Its "Love Letters" features missives from successful women.

"The blog just grew organically, and *Love Letters* inspires viral connectivity and mentorship opportunities for women in the community," said Schneider.

Schneider is also active in the gender lens investing movement, which uses gender and women's empowerment as a basis of analysis for making investment decisions

— Danielle Birkin



Bethany Khan

Director of Communications & Digital Strategy

Culinary Union

Growing up in Minnesota, Bethany Khan saw her parents work jobs without union representation. Her mom, in particular, she recalls, worked as a server for years, with no pension and other benefits. It certainly shaped her career.

After college she spent time working on digital strategies for President Barack Obama's campaign.

She also did similar work with Unite Here! Landing in Nevada four years ago, she turned to the local culinary union to reach out to members, their families and the public about working class issues.

"I'm proud to work for an organization that supports workers with good jobs that help them retire with dignity,

buy homes and stay strong during recessions," she said.

The local culinary union is 57,000 members strong; this year, Khan will focus on informing union members and their families about voter registration. She will also provide information about presidential candidates whose agendas will protect working class jobs, she said.

Khan is also proud of the Culinary Union's citizenship program, which started in 2001 and has helped 11,000 residents become citizens for free.

"It's important that we move legal, permanent residents who are eligible to become citizens through that process," she added.

— Brian Sodoma



Jerrie Merritt

*Senior Vice President
Community Development
Manager*

Bank of Nevada

Jerrie Merritt epitomizes community involvement. Since 2000, she has taken time to mentor several high school students who are at risk of not graduating.

Merritt and her colleagues regularly travel to local schools to help students develop their financial literacy.

She also oversees the involvement of Bank of Nevada as it relates to organizations and nonprofits. Colleagues donate more than a combined 2,000 hours each year to nonprofits. Beyond that, Merritt keeps a running list of nonprofit activities available to all her fellow employees. Also, she conducts seminars at the Urban Chamber for those who are starting small businesses, offering the basics on what to expect.

Merritt's plans for the year ahead are ambitious. "Looking forward to the next 12 months, I want to stay just as involved, not only personally but in my position here at the bank, with the nonprofits to make this community a better place."

One of her continuing focuses will be education. "I feel that here in Clark County we are very challenged when it comes to education," she said. "The only way that our education system can change is by all of us getting involved professionally and personally."

— Howard Riell



Amanda Connor

Partner

**Connor & Connor
PLLC**

Amanda Connor didn't plan to become a major player in helping an emerging industry, but her genuine curiosity and a shift in career focus made that happen.

In 2013, when medical marijuana laws were being established, she began to study the industry and its evolving regulations.

"This area changes almost every day, which is one of the things I love about it. I like to learn and grow as an individual and this is not a simple or straightforward area of law at all," she said.

Connor is also co-chair of the Las Vegas Women Grow chapter, where she advocates for women in leadership roles in the medical marijuana industry. The chapter's 2016 goals include boosting membership and educating community members about the opportunities available to women in the new industry.

"My main goal is to have an impact, to make a difference in a person's life," the one-time school teacher said.

Connor's drive to help children hasn't diminished; she also works with the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada's Children's Attorney Project where she represents children in foster care.

— Brian Sodoma



Paula Lawrence

Executive Director

**Dress for Success
Southern Nevada**

Paula Lawrence wears lots of hats in keeping her nonprofit organization operating smoothly.

Dress for Success Southern Nevada provides interview suits to women looking to restart or begin their careers. It also empowers women with the tools they need to land a job and succeed in their new career, which ultimately enables them to achieve economic independence.

Currently, the organization struggles with limited space for donations in its inaugural boutique, which opened a few years ago. Executives hope to find a solution in 2016.

Lawrence calls it "very satisfying" to look back at last year's strategic plan and see how on target it was. "In 2015, we tripled the number of referral partners we work with and increased the number of women we served since 2013 by 200 percent. We expanded the reach of an operation that is 99 percent run by volunteers."

In this new year, Lawrence has her eyes set on finding the group's boutique operation a suitable and permanent home. "We need a location convenient for our clients, volunteers and donors, as well as a larger space that can accommodate our career center, job training classes, and of course our unique suiting experiences."

— Howard Riell