

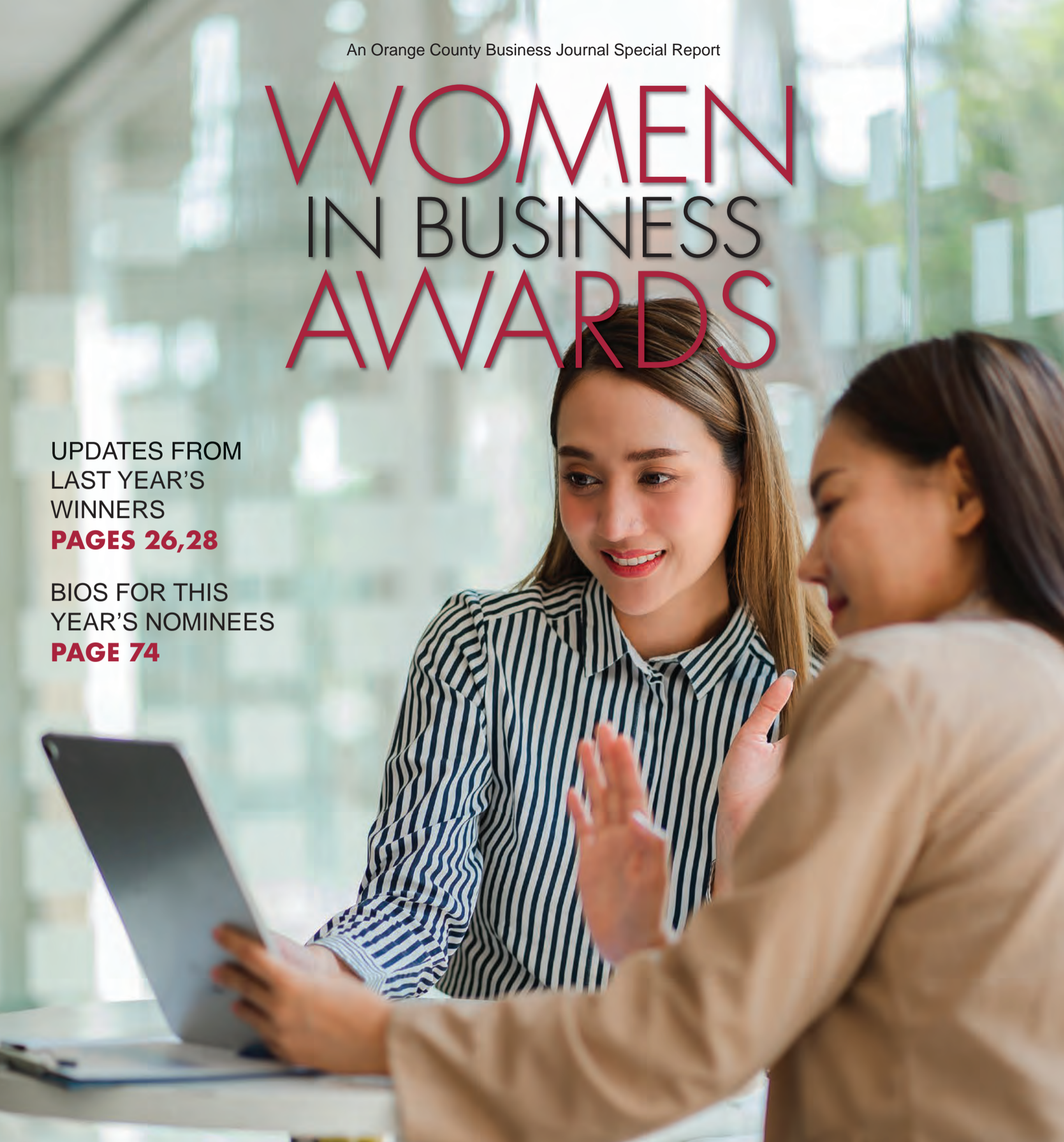
# WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS

UPDATES FROM  
LAST YEAR'S  
WINNERS

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BIOS FOR THIS  
YEAR'S NOMINEES

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## 2024 Women in Business Award Nominees

### JoJo Romeo, Real Estate Agent

*Pacific Sotheby's International Realty, Newport Beach*

JoJo Romeo, a trailblazer in ultra-luxury real estate, has orchestrated nearly \$1 billion in sales since 2011, known for her record-breaking transactions. Recognized as a Dynamic Woman in Orange County and a four-time Orange County Business Journal Women in Business nominee, Romeo's unique "JOJO TRANSFORMATIONS" blend real estate expertise with feng shui and interior design, consistently setting new market benchmarks and yielding impressive returns. As a Top 50 Producer with Pacific Sotheby's International Realty, Romeo leverages global connections to facilitate high-end transactions with discretion. Her exclusive 'Luxury Living' events connect elite clients with financial advisors, venture capitalist, and philanthropists, offering value beyond traditional real estate services. Romeo's tech-forward approach and bespoke white-glove services cater to discerning international investors and local high net worth individuals. Her innovative strategies, integrity, and meticulous attention to detail have solidified her reputation as Orange County's premier luxury real estate expert, consistently delivering exceptional results for her elite clientele.



2021, some of her projects included planning and hosting board retreats for Orange County foundations, hosting grantee convenings across southern California for local foundations, leading strategic planning processes, and project managing fellowship launches for local nonprofits. Her company provides consulting services to philanthropic leaders and institutions such as Orange County Grantmakers, Marisla Foundation, and St. Joseph Fund. Her work is recognized with an international award from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) with its Excellence in Economic Development Award, highlighting the diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

### Michele Sabo Assayag, Partner

*Snell & Wilmer, Costa Mesa*

Michele Sabo Assayag practices in the areas of commercial finance, creditors' rights and bankruptcy litigation, and restructuring, where she has had extensive experience in the representation of secured and unsecured lenders. She has litigated in the state, federal, and bankruptcy courts on behalf of domestic, foreign, and international lending institutions, as well as on behalf of non-bank lenders and Fortune 500 companies. A substantial portion of Sabo Assayag's practice encompasses, on behalf of her financial institution clients, the documentation of commercial, real estate, and asset-based lending transactions. She has also represented the firm's clients in the acquisition and disposition of major real estate assets, including retail centers, apartment buildings, and business parks.



### Skylar Romines, Founder & CEO

*ATW Advisors, Irvine*

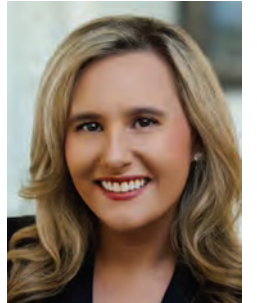
Skylar Romines is the founder & CEO of ATW Advisors. After 17 years in the commercial insurance brokerage industry, she recognized an inherent need for business owners to have stronger representation during the insurance procurement process. ATW was designed to be an owner's insurance rep firm, bridging the knowledge and leverage gap between business owners and their insurance team, while maintaining incentive alignment between ATW and the clients they represent. Romines is also a mother of twin girls and a published author. Her book, *So She Did: Stories, Stats and Strategies to Help Women Win* includes interviews from dozens of female founders and C-suite executives who have created their own paths to success, just as Romines set out to do for herself with ATW, and she continues to strive to help the future generation of women do the same.



### Chelsee Sachs, Managing Partner

*MVP Accident Attorneys, Irvine*

Chelsee Sachs' role at MVP Accident Attorneys involved contributing to the team's success in securing substantial compensation for accident victims in California and Nevada. Her efforts were instrumental in achieving noteworthy settlements, including \$1,125,000, \$1,000,000, and \$750,000 settlements for various automobile accident cases. Beyond her legal accomplishments, Sachs' expertise was recognized when she served as a speaker at the Law-Di-Gras conference. Her participation in this event highlights her standing as a respected figure in the legal community. Through her advocacy and speaking engagements, Sachs has made significant contributions to aiding victims in their recovery journeys while showcasing her leadership and expertise in the field.



### Susan Rounds, Senior Managing Director, Operations

*BKM Capital Partners, Newport Beach*

A seasoned CRE executive, Susan Rounds has served at the helm of BKM's Operations Team since 2021, spearheading initiatives for the company's marketing, technology, property management, property accounting, and office administration teams. Rounds' accomplishments involving BKM's DEI initiatives have been a major triumph during her tenure at the company. As of YE 2023, BKM's total diversity was 72%, with 55% female diversity and 40% BIPOC diversity as a result of Rounds' hiring initiatives. In only three years, she has grown the firm from 85 to 97 working professionals. Rounds has made strides in driving employee wellness through resource groups like the BKM Working Parent's Group and the BKM Women's Network, while maintaining focus on policy development through her leadership on the Compensation and Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility Committees. Rounds' deep commitment to employee development is reflected in BKM's robust employee training program, enlisting 37% of the company's workforce in 2024.



### Bitu Safari, CEO

*GiGO Clean, Santa Ana*

Bitu Safari is an Iranian-American philanthropist and entrepreneur. Serving as president for Simply Crystal Clean, a successful OC-based commercial cleaning company, Safari has gained a deep knowledge within the cleaning industry which has propelled her to launch a new technology platform bringing high quality cleaning to the masses. GiGO Clean is a technology company offering on-demand cleaning services utilizing an easy-to-use phone application to connect customers to cleaners directly. GiGO Clean began servicing the Orange County region in 2023, and has since expanded their reach to Los Angeles and San Diego. The company plans to expand their service statewide and beyond in 2024. Outside of work, Safari is a dedicated board advisor to Moms Against Poverty, a global non-profit organization with the mission to nurture and educate underprivileged children to their fullest potential, so that one day they can contribute and lead within their own communities and break the cycle of poverty.



### Angie Rowe, President & CEO

*Beyond Blindness, Santa Ana*

Since joining Beyond Blindness in 2020, president and CEO Angie Rowe has expanded the organization to meet the growing needs of more than 500 children with visual impairments and other disabilities and over 800 of their family members. She has achieved impressive growth for Beyond Blindness, including launching a five-year strategic plan with a bold goal reaching 2,680 new families in the greater OC area by 2027. In addition to leading the nonprofit through a complete rebranding, she has also elevated the stature of the board with high-quality appointments and is fostering growth through collaboration with her appointment to the boards of several notable California agencies, including First 5 Orange County. Under Rowe's leadership, Beyond Blindness is now the leading accredited organization for children with visual impairments and other disabilities in OC, offering expanded areas services that include Early Intervention, Education + Enrichment, and Family Support.



### Teresa Saldivar, CEO

*Teresa's Jewelers, Santa Ana*

Teresa Saldivar, a two-time graduate of Santa Ana College in nursing and gemology, began her entrepreneurial journey by significantly boosting sales at a jewelry store in East Los Angeles. Finding success, she returned home and in 1985, opened Teresa's Jewelers on Fourth Street and Broadway. Known for its quality and personalized service, Teresa's Jewelers offers fine jewelry at affordable prices, becoming a community cornerstone. Her influence extends statewide through roles like her presidency at the California Jeweler's Association and board of director at Jewelers of America. Beyond business, Saldivar is dedicated to community service and education, earning a bachelor's degree in ethnic studies from California State University Fullerton. Inspired by this, she supports scholarship programs such as the Hispanic Education Endowment Fund and mentors first-generation students. As a trailblazer and founding member of the Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the National Hispanic Business Women Association, Saldivar empowers Latina business owners through mentorship and sponsorship. Her journey from nursing aspirations to esteemed businesswoman reflects her resilience and commitment to enriching Santa Ana.



### Jessica Roy, Executive Chef, Owner & Operator

*608 Dahlia, Corona Del Mar*

Executive Chef and owner-operator Jessica Roy, was born and raised in Orange County, California, and is the creative force behind 608 Dahlia, which opened in 2021. Celebrating fresh, California flavors, Chef Roy's cuisine is deeply influenced by her passion for gardening and cultivating healthy food. At 608 Dahlia, she provides a true garden-to-table experience, often hand-picking garnishes and herbs from her own garden. Committed to sustainability, she supports local purveyors and eco-conscious businesses, earning her restaurant a Level One Certified Green Restaurant status. With over a decade of professional cooking experience, including work in a three Michelin star restaurant, and two national TV show cooking competition wins, Chef Roy shares her culinary passion with her community and beyond.



### Jacqueline Russell, Founder & CEO

*Social Impact Advising Group, Huntington Beach*

Jacqueline Russell founded Social Impact Advising Group to increase philanthropy's impact in the community. As the founder and CEO, she consults family foundations and philanthropic institutions as they startup, create succession plans, and redesign strategy to change systems. Since launching the company in



### Talia Samuels, Founder & President

*Outshine Public Relations, Newport Beach*

Named one of the "Best PR Agencies in America" by Forbes, Outshine Public Relations specializes in restaurant, hospitality, and culinary public relations. Founded by Talia Samuels in 2015, her agency represents an all-star roster including James Beard Award-winning and Michelin-starred chefs, AAA Five Diamond-awarded properties, and new-to-market culinary brands. With deep roots in the hospitality industry, she has a passion for supporting hoteliers, restaurateurs, chefs, and food and beverage brands through her creative storytelling verticals. Recognized for her poise, tenacity, and integrity, Samuels is a force in her field. Her company, Outshine Public Relations, is a full-service agency providing public relations, social media management, photography, videography, and digital marketing.

