

University of Florida's

# 100 GATOR 100

**Honoring the World's Fastest  
Growing Gator Companies**

**Gator100  
Awards Gala**

2016

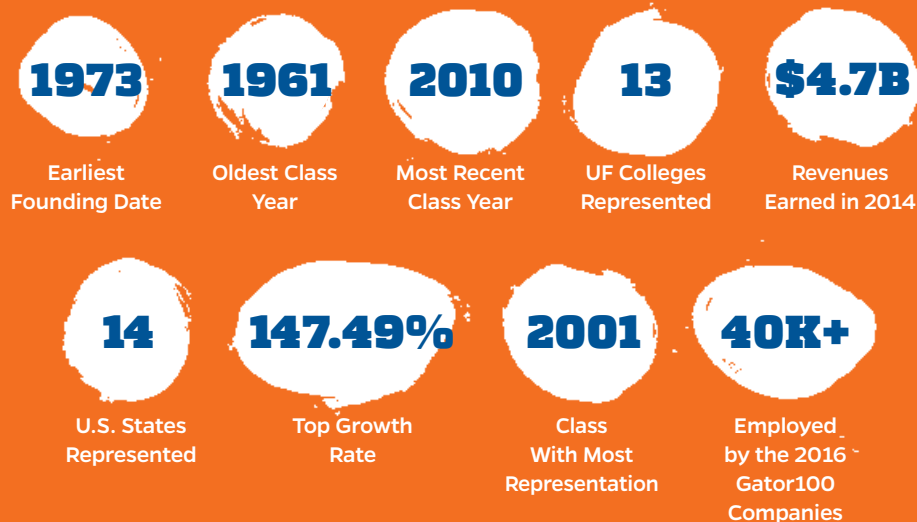
# Celebrating Entrepreneurial Excellence

The University of Florida and The Entrepreneurship & Innovation Center are pleased to present the 2016 Gator100, a celebration of the fastest growing UF alumni-led companies around the world.

Gator entrepreneurs of the global entrepreneurial revolution are on the front lines, keeping America from falling behind. They are transforming markets, business practices, industries, themselves, their families, their communities and our economy. In the process, they are creating the future. Gator entrepreneurs are changing the world.

Gator100 companies must have been in business for at least five years, be Gator-led or Gator-owned and have annual revenues of \$250,000 or more. The Gator100 is ranked by Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR), which is used to determine year-over-year growth over the past three years. CAGR is determined by global accounting firm EY, which ensures confidentiality of financial submissions.

## Gator100 By the Numbers



**GATOR100.UFL.EDU**

**#Gator100**

# Agenda

## Welcome

**Michael H. Morris**, James W. Walter Eminent Scholar Chair, Academic Director, UF Entrepreneurship & Innovation Center

## President's Message

**W. Kent Fuchs**, President, University of Florida

## Keynote

**Bob Graham** (BA '59), Former U.S. Senator and Florida Governor, and Founder of the Bob Graham Center for Public Service

## Lunch

## 2016 Pinnacle Award

Presented by **John Kraft**, Dean, Warrington College of Business

## Certification of Gator100

Presented by **Greg Rosica** (BSAC '86, MACC '88), Tax Partner, EY

**Gator100** - Presentation of Honorees by University of Florida entrepreneurial students

## Acknowledgments

- ▶ **Nola Miyasaki**, Executive Director, Outreach and Incubation, UF Entrepreneurship & Innovation Center
- ▶ **Jamie Kraft** (MBA '98), Director, UF Entrepreneurship & Innovation Center

Entertainment provided by members of the "Pride of the Sunshine" UF Gator Band

# Speakers

## W. Kent Fuchs



Dr. W. Kent Fuchs became the University of Florida's 12th president in January 2015.

Most recently the provost of Cornell University, Dr. Fuchs' experience combines academic leadership as a provost, dean and department chair; a distinguished career as an engineering professor; and graduate education in both engineering and divinity. In accepting the presidency, Dr. Fuchs outlined his overarching goal for UF: to elevate its stature, as measured by quality and comparative excellence, to that of one of the nation's best public universities.

## John Kraft

Dr. John Kraft has served as Dean of the University of Florida's Warrington College of Business since 1990. Under his leadership, Warrington has been routinely ranked as one of the top 20 public business schools in the U.S. Dr. Kraft has been an influential leader in management education through his exemplary service as Chairman of the Board of Directors for AACSB International (The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)—the premier accreditation body for business schools—as well as on the Board of Directors for the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) and Beta Gamma Sigma.



## Michael H. Morris



Dr. Michael H. Morris holds the James W. Walter Eminent Scholar Chair and is the academic director for entrepreneurship in the Warrington College of Business at the University of Florida. He was formerly the N. Malone Mitchell, Jr. Chair at Oklahoma State University, where he launched the first School of Entrepreneurship in the U.S. In

addition to starting three ventures, he has built top-ranked entrepreneurship programs at three major universities. A pioneer in curricular innovation and experiential learning, his entrepreneurial outreach efforts have facilitated the development of hundreds of ventures.

# Keynote Speaker

## Bob Graham



One of the most accomplished politicians in Florida's history, Bob Graham never lost an election for office in more than four decades of public service at the local, state and national level. As first a state legislator, then governor and finally a three-term U.S. Senator, Graham has had a role in nearly every major public policy issue in modern Florida's history.

Having personally witnessed Florida's rise from a predominantly rural Southern backwater to an economic and political juggernaut that is now the nation's third largest state, he created the Bob Graham Center in Public Service to continue his legacy of leadership and train the next generation of Sunshine State leaders.

Graham was raised on a cattle and dairy farm in the deep Everglades of what is now Miami-Dade County. Daniel Robert "Bob" Graham was literally born into Florida politics on November 9, 1936, just a week after his father, Ernest "Cap" Graham, was elected to the Florida Senate as an anti-corruption reformist. A businessman and farmer, Cap Graham took on a criminal gang that had controlled the town of Hialeah — a move that subjected his family to frequent threats.

Graham was a standout student, winning the title of Dade County's "Best All-Around Boy" from the Miami Herald and serving as president of Miami High's student body. At the University of Florida, he was involved in many different clubs and organizations and served as chancellor of the student honor court and president of his fraternity. A political science major, he also won some of the school's most prestigious awards. He was inducted into the University of Florida Hall of Fame (the most prestigious honor at UF) and was a member of the exclusive Florida Blue Key.

After graduating from Harvard Law School, Graham returned to his native Miami Lakes and won a seat in the Florida House of Representatives. In 1978, Graham launched a quixotic bid to become Florida's governor. Still a little-known politician with progressive instincts that simply didn't play well in the more populous conservative areas of Florida, Graham also faced the hard reality that no South Florida candidate had ever made it to the governor's mansion. But Bob Graham ran an exhaustive, state-wide campaign and won the election.

After serving two terms as governor, Graham joined the U.S. Senate in 1987, carving out a career known not only for his grasp of domestic issues like Everglades restoration, immigration and off-shore drilling, but as a leading expert on foreign policy and intelligence.

# Sponsors

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## UF Partner Colleges

- ▶ Agricultural and Life Sciences
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**Gator100 would not be possible without the generous support from our sponsors\*. Special thanks to Bruce (BSBA '84) and Laura (BSBA '84) Gross, whose creativity inspired the unique Gator100 trophy.**

\*Sponsors as of February 10, 2016. To our sponsors not listed, please accept our heartfelt appreciation.

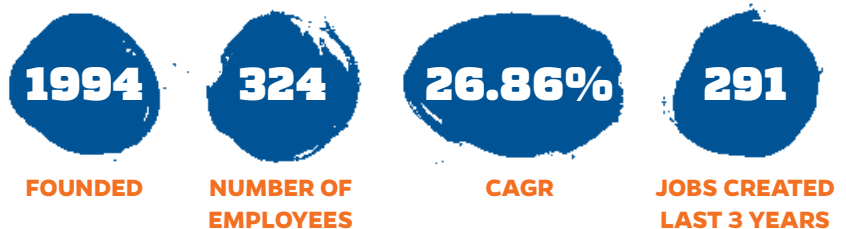
# Pinnacle Award

The Pinnacle Award recognizes established Gator-led businesses that have made a significant impact over time through job creation, revenue generation and innovation in their industries. At the same time the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) for these companies is extraordinarily competitive given their size and maturity, indicating the tremendous achievement of the Gator entrepreneur in sustaining growth of the venture over time.

**Darin Cook, BS '87**

## Infinite Energy

Gainesville, FL



Darin Cook co-founded Infinite Energy in Gainesville, Florida in 1994 in the wake of a deregulated Florida natural gas market. Infinite Energy has emerged as one of the largest companies in Florida, providing energy to customers in five states. Infinite Energy built all of its systems “from the inside out,” and provides award-winning customer service, software development and trading in-house. The company’s keys to growth are investing in quality personnel and quality business partnerships. Darin places significant emphasis on the company’s culture and commitment to the community. The Impact Team, an in-house volunteer organization, supports various community causes, and focuses efforts on education-based initiatives in grades K-12. All employees receive paid volunteer time to devote to educational projects such as tutoring, mentorship programs and even fundraising or administrative work.

Darin graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in statistics.



# Honoring the 2016

# 100 GATOR 100

★ ALSO A 2015 HONOREE

**Robert O. Kincart, BS '72**

## **A-C-T Environmental & Infrastructure**

**Bartow, FL**

A-C-T is a 29-year-old, professional environmental, engineering and field services firm, providing innovative and tried-and-true solutions in the environmental sciences, engineering, industrial services, infrastructure, and waste management markets. An entrepreneur at heart, Robert started and sold Resource Recovery of America before starting A-C-T.

*"What truly makes me happiest is having people come up to me or our folks, when wearing A-C-T-logoed apparel, and say, 'Thank you for what your company does in our community.' It makes our staff feel wonderful, and lets me know we have made a positive impact. It's great for retention of staff and business as well."*

**James M. Kiely, BS '87**

## **AcuteCare Telemedicine ★**

**Atlanta, GA**

AcuteCare Telemedicine is the leading practice-based provider of telemedicine services for hospitals seeking emergency neurological care. At least one patient

in the United States will suffer a stroke in the time it takes to read this paragraph. However, there is a growing shortage of experienced physicians available to provide coverage, and it is critical to address this problem. Founded in 2009, ACT delivers complete on-call emergency neurology coverage, improves patient outcomes, and establishes a sustainable financial model for patient care.

*"The harder you work the luckier you get."*

**Andrew Cottone, III, Ph.D. '00**

## **Adesis**

**New Castle, DE**

Andrew is one of the Founders, and the President of Chemistry for Adesis, a contract research organization supporting the pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical industry, biomaterials, and catalysts industry. Adesis provides clients with organic chemistry services in three areas: Early stage research, scale up and development, and specialty manufacturing.

*"When starting a venture like Adesis, I was committed to success by understanding that the question is not 'will we succeed or fail?' I knew we would succeed. The only questions were: How many hours a day, and how many days a week will I need to work to ensure success?"*

**Dave Park, BBC '82**

## **Advantage Inspection**

**Raleigh, NC**

Advantage Inspection is the standard for home inspections, and was the first home warranty company to offer a "No Denied Claims" home warranty, to computerize the home inspection, and to offer off-site computerized report storage. The company's home inspection process has been the deciding factor for the people they serve: Real estate agents, home inspectors, home owners, buyers and sellers.

*"Fire the bad clients. They are not worth it and they drain your energy."*

**Sue Washer, MBA '92**

## **AGTC**

**Alachua, FL**

Sue is President and CEO of AGTC, a clinical-stage biotechnology company that is developing cures for rare eye diseases, offering hope to patients with unmet medical needs. AGTC uses cutting-edge techniques to develop treatments for patients that have diseases caused by broken genes.

*"We owe thanks to organizations and individuals in the community who were integral in helping us make the most out of the great ongoing research at the University of Florida."*

**Leigh Ann Horton**, BSAC '94, MACC '94

**Vince Horton**, BA '93

## **AIT Life Safety** ★

Orlando, FL

AIT Life Safety, Inc., is a commercial Fire Protection & Life Safety subcontractor that services the Central Florida commercial construction market. Vince serves as Vice President of Operations while his wife, Leigh Ann, is the CEO. The two focus on fulfilling the company's mission: To continuously improve and deploy the best people, products and processes to provide a single-source life safety integration solution to current and future customers.

*"Treat your people better than your customers, but never forget that without your customers you will not have a company."*

**Allison Ables**, BSBA '09

## **Allison Ables Real Estate and Property Management**

Newberry, FL

Allison is a millennial on a mission. At the age of 20, she founded her real estate brokerage with the intent of using technology to provide her customers an experience not available at traditional real estate firms. AllisonAbles.com consistently ranks in the top of all Gainesville real estate Internet searches, and has supported a high percentage of home sales sold directly over the Internet to families relocating to Gainesville.

*"Start a business you're passionate about, and make sure you've clearly articulated that vision to your team. The better you can clarify what you stand for, the faster you'll attract like-minded people that will help you get there."*

**Edouard Rollet**, MAMC '01

## **Alter Eco** ★

San Francisco, CA

Edouard co-founded Alter Eco in 2004 with a vision to change the world and introduce delicious, nutritious and environmentally responsible products. Alter Eco is a pioneer of globally-crafted organic foods, including delicious Swiss-made chocolate bars and truffles, Bolivian Royal heirloom quinoa, heirloom Thai rice and Mascobado cane sugar. All Alter Eco products are USDA Certified Organic, Fair Trade Certified, Carbon Neutral Certified, Non-GMO Project Verified and Certified Gluten-Free.

*"Just do it! The power of naivety is the #1 reason for many entrepreneurs' success stories."*

**Erik Levin**, BSBA '04

## **American Management Group** ★

Pembroke Pines, FL

American Management Group is a full-service residential community association and project management company, offering cutting-edge solutions, technology, veteran property managers and world-class service to exceed the expectations of even the most demanding clients. Erik co-founded American Management Group, and serves as the company's Chief Operating Officer.

*"Prepare a detailed business plan, which will provide a strong foundation for your venture. A well-researched business plan will ensure that you are prepared to address and resolve any issues that may arise."*

**Leah Lytle**, BSPR '94, MAMC '96, MBA '02

## **Artsy Abode**

Middleburg, FL

Leah is not only the owner of the Pandora franchise stores in the Gainesville and Jacksonville area, but doubles as the founder and owner of Artsy Abode, a unique group of 15 gift boutiques with colorful flair and style. The goal is to provide shoppers with personal attention to find that perfect something that brings a smile—to both the shopper and the end recipient.

*"Any failure you go through may seem like a stopping point, but it will probably be one of the most important pieces of information you gain, and you can only learn it through failure."*

**Eddy Benoit, Jr.**, BBC '93

## **The Benoit Group**

Atlanta, GA

Eddy is the President and CEO of The Benoit Group, which is comprised of a commercial development group and a real estate consulting firm. With over 20 years of experience in the commercial development industry totaling over \$1.8 billion in project value, he currently focuses on the firm's business diversification and geographical expansion.

*"Invest in YOU first... then people will invest in you!"*

**Ashley Jackrel**, BSA '07

**Justin Jackrel**, BABA '05

## **Bintelli & citEcar Electric Vehicles** ★

Charleston, SC

Justin is the President and Founder of Bintelli, LLC, a manufacturer and distributor of power sports products, with a focus on electric vehicles, gas powered motor scooters, and racing go karts. With dealerships and customers around the globe, Bintelli's products are quickly becoming a household name in their product categories. Their electric vehicles range from two to 29 passengers, with both retail and commercial applications available in over 40 different chassis configurations.

*"Don't give up just because you hear "no" a few [hundred] times! Keep pressing on, believe in what you're trying to accomplish, and fight through all the negativity to find a way to get it done!"*

**Tim Smith**, BABA '98

## **Blood Company**

Alachua, FL

Founded by Tim in 2006, Blood Company represents well-known artists including Skrillex, Zedd and Boys Noize, as well as younger acts including Blood Diamonds, Boogie, Salva, Mr. Carmack and more. Completely independent, Blood Company differs from other management companies as it is focused strongly on youth culture and community, on real relationships and true synergy between clients and allies.

*"Be prepared to put in the time and not expect an easy payoff."*

**Sheryl Flynn**, MHS '97, PHD '01

## **Blue Marble Game Company** ★

Altadena, CA

A short time after leaving UF, a serendipitous walk through the mall led to Sheryl's new research question: Can video games be the "enriched environment" humans respond to best? After spending five years in academia studying off-the-shelf games and building prototypes, she decided to start a company focused on designing and developing games solely for rehabilitation. So, in 2008, she founded Blue Marble Game Co, a software company that aims to improve brain rehabilitation outcomes through digital games. Sheryl and her team use evidence-based medicine and science to drive design and performance metrics used to determine outcomes.

*"Surround yourself with the most talented, creative, intelligent, passionate, trustworthy people you can find. Together you will be unstoppable."*

**Catherine Bowman**, BSBA '93

## **The Bowman Law Firm** ★

McEwen, TN

Catherine founded The Bowman Law Firm in April 2008. She conducts due diligence on public and private securities offerings ranging in size to over \$4 billion on behalf of independent broker/dealers, registered investment advisor and other clients. Catherine started her law career almost 20 years ago at Gray, Harris & Robinson, P.A., focusing on a corporate and securities law practice for publicly-held and privately-held clients, including mergers and acquisitions. Catherine received her J.D. from Washington & Lee University School of Law.

*"Have a clear plan and goals, but always be flexible and reevaluate your plan often. There are many times where you will find that there are alternative paths to the same destination."*

**Benjamin Gordon**, BSBA '04

**Christopher Larsen**, BDES '04

## **Cabinets.com** ★

Tampa, FL

Cabinets.com is an Internet retailer specializing in semi-custom assembled cabinets Made In The USA. At Cabinets.com, our team strives to build trust over the internet, provide the best quality service and products, as well as care for our community and environment. Our goal is to make buying cabinets online easy and affordable, while offering the most options and styles to choose from on the Internet. We have professional kitchen designers on staff who work one-on-one with our customers to assist them in creating the space of their dreams, whether that's a kitchen, bathroom, home bar, office, or laundry room.

*"Do not be afraid to fail. Failure will happen, and I treasure each failed business or website I created. They were so much more valuable than any business book or class, and the learning experience was invaluable to the success of Cabinets.com."*

**Evan Weiss**, BABA '99

## **Carolina Classic Builders**

Charlotte, NC

Carolina Classic Builders was founded on bringing customer service back to the homebuilding industry. Evan, the company's founder, recognized that there was a lack of builders who could build efficient custom homes in the Charlotte market. With this in mind, the firm was based on balancing all factors of construction—form, function, cost, attainability, look, and feel. Each project is value engineered to ensure each dollar is allotted in the best possible way, maximizing the efficiency.

*"A business plan is just that...a plan. Plans change and you need to move quickly to adjust. Stay the course, but be flexible to adjust to the changes and hurdles you will face."*

**Rebecca Knowles Caldwell, BA '92**

## **Carolina Lift Stations** ★

York, SC

Carolina Lift Stations provides maintenance and repair of pump stations and water/wastewater treatment plants. Rebecca co-owns the business with her husband, James. As Director of Operations, Rebecca has been instrumental in the growth of the company from a garage with two employees and two vehicles, to a 10,000-square-foot shop/office with 17 employees and a fleet of 10 service vehicles. Rebecca remains positive when thinking back on her success.

*"Anything is possible when you have the right team in place."*

**Sean Murphy, BBC '95**

**Tom C. Murphy, BBC '92**

**Dan Whiteman, BBC '69, MBC '92, PHD '02**

## **Coastal Construction Company** ★

Miami, FL

As President of Coastal Construction Company, a business which handles design and construction from commercial buildings to disaster recovery, Dan is responsible for leading the commercial and condominium companies. Having received his bachelor's and master's degrees in building construction, and his Ph.D. in Design, Construction, and Planning, Dan leads one of the top 100 construction management companies in the country.

*"There is one quote that I was taught by my mother almost 60 years ago. It can be found more often now, and is listed as Anonymous, but she had me memorize it from the time I was a small boy. "If a job is one begun, never leave it til it's done. Be the labor great or small, do it well or not at all."*

**Bill White, BSBA '88**

## **Compass Office Solutions**

Miramar, FL

Compass Office Solutions is a full-service, modular interior construction and office furniture dealer, serving the corporate, healthcare, government and educational markets. Compass, established by Bill in 2006, has become a leader in providing office furnishings and working environments. The Compass team believes that a flexible, well designed, well-appointed office space improves productivity, raises morale, allows for change and can improve the performance of a business.

*"Learn as much as you can about business fundamentals before your launch or bring someone on board who has these skills. This will enable profitable growth."*

**C.E. "Rick" Strattan, BS '67, MS '80, MBA '82**

## **CTD Holdings** ★

Gainesville, FL

In 1989, Rick founded CTD Holdings, a developing and marketing business of cyclodextrins and related products for a wide range of industries. CTD Holdings has been the go-to company for over 20 years for anyone in need of high-quality cyclodextrin compounds and expertise, and has the largest catalogue of cyclodextrins in the world.

*"Be sure you can work in this venture 24 hours a day for \$5000/month. All compensation beyond that is a bonus. The other \$15,000/month you deserve comes from having a place you can spend your time on your terms."*

**Jane Jie Sun, BSAC '92**

## **Ctrip.com International**

Shanghai, China

Ctrip.com International, Ltd., is a leading travel service provider of accommodation reservation, transportation ticketing, packaged tours, and corporate travel management in China. It is the largest online consolidator of accommodations and transportation tickets in China in terms of transaction volume. Ctrip enables business and leisure travelers to make informed and cost-effective bookings by aggregating comprehensive travel-related information.

*"The market always has ups and downs. When the company is in a comfortable position, its leader should always be prepared for the next challenge. A crisis could be dangerous to everyone else, but a good opportunity for the well-prepared companies."*

**John Carter, DMD '96**

**William "Trey" Mueller, III, BSA '01, DMD '05**

**Stephen J. "Trey" Walding, III, BSA '92, DMD '96**

## **Dental Associates of Florida** ★

Plant City, FL

For the professionals at Dental Associates of Florida Tampa Office, you are more than just a patient. You are an individual with specific needs. Licensed and certified, these dental professionals provide a wide range of services. They offer a range of advanced services and techniques including dental implants, LANAP laser gum surgery, precision fit cosmetic dentures, TMJ treatments, and a wide range of cosmetic services including dental bridges, crowns and Invisalign.

*"Setting short-term and long-term goals is critical to maintaining focus. In our experience, having those goals gives you a finish line to strive for."*



**Allison Jones, BSR '95**

**Tim Jones, BBC '98**

## **Destinations to Explore** ★

**Jacksonville Beach, FL**

Destinations to Explore is an online travel agency specializing in family travel. The company has expanded to 70 agents and over 800 websites that consider them their official travel agency. Destinations to Explore has received accolades including Universal Orlando Travel Agency of the Year for three years, Disney Destinations Top Sales Performer for two years, Authorized Disney Vacation Planner for 10 years, FunJet 500 Club, and more.

*“RISK! Everything we do as an entrepreneur is risky. You have to be strong enough to take that leap and try it, even if you are scared.”*

**Deborah Garcia-Gratacos, JD '99, MARE '00**

## **DEVAL**

**Vienna, VA**

Debbie is President and CEO of DEVAL LLC. She started her financial, loan servicing and management consulting business out of her home in 2002, and it has grown to a multimillion-dollar operation with four locations and more than 100 staff members, serving such clients as the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), and American Express. Today, DEVAL is the only Hispanic woman owned non-bank loan servicing business in the nation.

*“Pray, believe in yourself, forgive yourself, work hard, work smart, save money for investment opportunities; and always be prepared.”*

**Aleef Adam, BA '90**

## **DirecLogix** ★

**Parkland, FL**

Aleef is Managing Partner and Founder of DirecLogix, a national provider of advanced Information Technology solutions. DirecLogix helps companies of all sizes address complex business requirements while maximizing their return on technology investments. Founded with the mission of assisting companies with their entire Information Technology lifecycle, DirecLogix has been successfully executing this vision since 2005, and adds value in areas of technology consulting, acquisition, planning and implementation.

*“I compare growing a successful business to raising a child. At the onset, you really don't know what to expect, and have to be willing to adapt to the circumstances. You nurture your business with constant dedication and attention to details, and know that you will make mistakes along the way.”*

**Chris Harrelson, BA '79**

## **Drape98 Express**

**Destin, FL**

Chris co-founded Drape98 Express in 2007, starting from scratch with the idea of providing superior product quality and customer service in the window treatment market along the Emerald Coast. Drape98 provides turnkey service on custom window treatments (drapes, Roman shades, blinds, shutters) for interior designers, architects, builders/developers, commercial establishments, and discerning homeowners.

*“Make sure you like and trust your partner(s), and that you can work well together. You won't go any further than they will.”*

**Jon Antevy, BDES '93, MSBC '94**

**Ron Antevy, BSCE '91**

## **e-Builder** ★

**Fort Lauderdale, FL**

e-Builder is the leading provider of cloud-based construction management software for facility owners (e.g., healthcare institutions, universities, state and local governments, etc.). Ron, President and CEO of e-Builder, teamed up with his brother, Jon, in 1998 to lead the company and is the driving force behind its success. In the last three years, the company went from about 50 employees to more than 115. In order to be able to attract top talent, Ron leads the effort to create a team-oriented and highly-engaged culture.

*“I have learned that building a successful company is much more about being fearless and persistent, and less about being smart, especially in the early years when you face many hurdles and challenges.”*

**George D. Pickhardt, BSA '69, MSA '71, MSE '05**

## **Environmental Pest Service**

**Sarasota, FL**

George is Chairman of the Board for Environmental Pest Service, a Sarasota-based pest and termite and lawn care company providing services to customers in Florida since 1958. The company builds on a family tradition established more than 100 years ago, guaranteeing customer satisfaction to the fullest extent.

*“Begin with a clear vision, celebrate your wins and understand that it's not whether you fail that counts, it's what you learn from failure and how you adjust.”*

**Daniel Farrington, BA '94**

## **The Farrington Law Firm**

**Bethesda, MD**

Farrington Law is a dynamic, fast-growing Bethesda, Maryland-based boutique law firm with a national practice. In 2003, Daniel founded the firm, which advises employers of all sizes on the federal, state and local laws governing the employer-employee relationship and represents some of the country's largest employers in employment-related litigation across the United States. The firm prides itself on hiring best-in-class talent in every role and providing outstanding legal representation and equally outstanding customer service to its clients. He has been recognized by the *Washington Business Journal* as one of the Washington, DC area's top attorneys. Prior to founding the firm, Dan practiced employment law in the Washington, D.C. office of O'Melveny & Myers LLP, and served as in-house employment counsel to the United States Senate.

*"Ask for help. Entrepreneurs are, by their nature, eager to help others and you'll be surprised at how receptive and helpful people will be if you just ask."*

**John Fitzpatrick, BA '06**

## **Force Marketing ★**

**Atlanta, GA**

Force Marketing is one of the nation's leading automotive marketing companies, offering technology-driven marketing strategies to dealer groups, Tier II ad associations and auto manufacturers throughout North America. John co-founded the company in 2007, and it has grown to boast a team of more than 100 employees from their headquarters in Atlanta.

*"Always trust your gut-- it's usually correct. Entrepreneurs have a great gut instinct that they rely on and that has likely been a key part of their success."*

**Abhi Lokesh, BS '09**

**Alex Theodore, BSCHE '08**

## **Fracture**

**Gainesville, FL**

Taking pictures is fun. Printing pictures...much less so. Fracture is crafted around a simple idea: There should be a better way to print and display your photos. Co-founded in 2009 by Abhi and Alex, Fracture is the simple and affordable way to turn your most treasured memories into beautiful décor. Instead of printing on paper, images are printed directly on glass and assembled into a frameless, ready-to-hang product that fits any décor theme.

*"Make sure you're starting your venture for the right reasons - because when you're in your darkest moments, you'll need to draw upon the true reason you started your venture for strength."*

**John Adams, Jr., BSEN '93**

## **Gator Dredging**

**Clearwater, FL**

Gator Dredging protects Florida's environment while making its waterways more accessible to boats. The company also performs beach restoration, island creation, shoreline stabilization and more. They handle every assignment from beginning to end, and they are known to complete their projects the fastest.

*"Start as early as you can and don't be afraid to fail because it is never to late to start over and try something else."*

**Robert Diener, BA '78**

## **getaroom.com ★**

**Dallas, TX**

Offering incredibly low rates for hotels and lodging, getaroom.com strives to help customers save money every time they travel. Getaroom provides an easy to use platform for booking your hotel, as it is simple and free of clutter and extraneous information. In 2010, the site was rated as "Best Hotel Booking Site."

**Geoff Frazier, BSBA '89**

## **Global Financial Private Capital**

**Sarasota, FL**

As President and Co-Founder, Geoff is responsible for leading the company's strategy, financial planning operations and business units, and working closely with the CEO to direct the vision of the company. Global Financial Private Capital is an independently owned, SEC Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) whose goal is to restore investor trust and confidence in the financial system through the creation of client relationships based on full fiduciary disclosure and transparency of action.

*"It is not easy, there are no short cuts; hard work + sacrifice = success."*

**Brian Brescia, BSAC '02, MACC '02**

## **Global Trust ★**

**West Palm Beach, FL**

Brian is a Partner, Co-Founder, and the Chief Compliance Officer of Global Trust, an SEC registered investment advisory company. Global Trust was established in 2007, and currently has approximately \$125 million of assets under management.

*"It is very difficult to succeed alone, and an entrepreneur's chance of success is greatly increased if he or she surrounds themselves with good people who have similar goals."*

**Greg Nordone, BSBA '98**

## **Greyson Technologies**

**Fort Lauderdale, FL**

Greg founded Greyson Technologies in 2010 and serves as its President and Chief Executive Officer. Greyson Technologies is one of Florida's fastest-growing technology services companies, providing clients across Florida with Advanced Network, Data Center and Unified Communications Solutions that help build their businesses.

*"Look in the mirror and be honest. Identify what you are good at and what areas you need help with. Then surround yourself with people who are great in the areas you aren't as strong in, so that they can help you succeed."*

**Ricky Caplin, BSAC '05, MACC '05**

## **The HCI Group** ★

**Jacksonville, FL**

As a global leader in healthcare IT consulting, the HCI Group reduces the cost of healthcare by offering cost-effective IT solutions for healthcare companies. In 2014, the company was recognized as the third-fastest growing healthcare company and the 13th-fastest overall in the U.S. by Inc. Magazine. HCI's services include enterprise IT system implementation and training, specialty service lines in optimization, clinical adoption, integration and testing, and activation and advisory services. Richard, CEO of the company, has provided the necessary guidance and experience that allows this company to successfully grow and expand.

*"The most important characteristics that are in your control are your hunger, perseverance and soft skills. If you're weak in any of these areas, work to turn them into strengths."*

**David Heekin, BSBA '97, JD '01, MBA '01**

## **Heekin Law**

**Jacksonville, FL**

Heekin Law is a law firm specializing in real estate, business, and estate planning. It is staffed by six attorneys, including David, its Founder. David holds three degrees from UF, and he is an expert in residential and commercial real estate.

*"Take the time to learn everything you can about your industry or the niche you want to fill before you go out on your own. You may only get one shot to do it right, and the more you can anticipate the roadblocks that you may encounter, the more prepared you will be for them when they show up."*

**Chris Peterson, BSBA '85**

## **Hell's Bay Boatworks** ★

**Titusville, FL**

Hell's Bay Boatworks manufactures high-quality skiffs, a type of flat-bottomed open boat specialized for shallow water. Chris brought years of experience on boats, as well as leading companies, making him a natural choice as the current team lead of Hell's Bay.

*"No matter how hard it seems at the time, always 'do the right thing,' never compromise on quality and be true to the customer."*

**Bob Adams, BSBA '61**

## **Highland Homes** ★

**Lakeland, FL**

Founded in 1996 by father and son, Robert J. and Joel Adams, Highland Homes was established with a foundation of quality, excellence and delivering the most satisfying home buying experience on earth. Dedication, strong leadership and a commitment to our customers have made Highland Homes the largest privately-owned home builder in Central Florida. Highland Homes has built more than 6,000 homes in Florida, and has the knowledge and experience to build quality new homes with customized features and affordable payments.

*"When you start a company from scratch, there is no substitute for hard work. Never underestimate the need and value of a good organization. Good people can help you make it happen."*

**Jay R. Conroy, BABA '00, BSEN '00**

## **Hydro-Dyne Engineering**

**Clearwater, FL**

Jay is President and Founder of Hydro-Dyne Engineering, one of the world's leading manufacturers of custom-engineered screening and grit removal equipment for municipal and industrial water, and wastewater facilities. Hydro-Dyne's continuous product innovation, excellence in engineering, customer service and product value are at the center of the company's core values.

*"It is said that luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity. I hate the word luck. Unless you win the lottery, luck likely will have nothing to do with your success. Work hard, work smart and bring your passion with you every day and success will follow."*

**Geoff Wilson, BSTEEL '01**

**Pete Zimek, BA '01, MSM '02**

## **iLS network**

**Windermere, FL**

iLS network is an award-winning collective of online apartment guides serving renters in six cities across the state of Florida. Helping over a half million renters each year, their websites use cutting-edge technology to match individuals with the apartment community that best fits their lifestyle and budget.

*“Start with ‘Why.’ It’s not just the title of a book.”*

**Darin Cook, BS '87**

## **Infinite Energy**

**Gainesville, FL**

As Co-Founder and Co-CEO of Infinite Energy, Darin has seen his company grow from its original two-man operation into one of the largest privately-held companies in Florida. Infinite Energy provides natural gas in Florida, Georgia, New York and New Jersey, as well as electricity in Texas. The company serves all types of customers, from residential to commercial to industrial.

*“We had two years of rejection from possible credit backers. We used the rejections as a way to find out why we were rejected. In many cases it helped us hone our pitch or it showed us an area of weakness in our plan that we hadn’t fully considered.”*

**Drew Sheahan, BSA '03**

## **InTouch GPS ★**

**Lakeland, FL**

Despite many failed attempts, Drew began a company called Virtual Fleet Supervisor in 2009, which would eventually change its name in late 2014 to InTouch GPS, a commercial GPS Fleet Tracking provider to organizations of all sizes and industries. The success of InTouch GPS has been a culmination of continuous hard work, wonderful timing and offering a solution which was experiencing tremendous market growth.

*“Limit debt... In my opinion, it is often better to stay small and profitable than to become larger, but unable to meet financial obligations.”*

**John Sofarelli, BBC '81**

## **J. Raymond Construction**

**Longwood, FL**

John is the Founder and CEO of J. Raymond, providing commercial construction services in the Southeast U.S., for retail, grocery, office, mixed use, manufacturing,

warehouse/distribution, restaurant, hospitality and healthcare markets. J. Raymond prides itself on operating the “R.I.G.H.T.” way. This involves following the core values of Respect, Integrity, Golden Rule, Humility and Trust.

*“It’s not only important to create a profitable business, it’s also important that you’re happy managing and growing it day in and day out.”*

**Shaun Jackrel, BSA '10**

## **Jaguar Power Sports**

**Jacksonville, FL**

Family-owned and operated Jaguar Power Sports provides the latest and best in powersports products to make outdoor living more enjoyable. From the most recent in ATV technology to the hottest new sport bikes, they help customers find the recreational vehicle for them. With their friendly and knowledgeable staff, Jaguar Power Sports loves serving the Jacksonville market. Shaun, the company’s Founder, started Jaguar Power Sports when he was 15 years old, and continued the business in Jacksonville while getting an education at the University of Florida.

*His piece of advice: “Time is money.”*

**Mark A. Lowery, BSME '90**

## **JAX Refrigeration**

**Jacksonville Beach, FL**

Founded in March 2010, JAX Refrigeration, Inc., specializes in engineering, design, installation, and maintenance of industrial/commercial refrigeration and mechanical systems. There are five divisions: JAX Refrigeration, JAX Mechanical, MEAS Engineering, JAXCamp Industrial, and JAXCool. With the third-largest refrigeration service staff in the nation, JAXCool is now working in 42 states as well as internationally.

*“No one can do it alone, but it can be done—seek advice and listen, listen, listen!!”*

**Paul Holmes, BSBA '80**

## **JK2 Construction and Scenic**

**Apopka, FL**

Paul is the Founder and President of JK2 Construction & Scenic, founded in 1987 with a unique idea to combine two divisions of construction. The Construction Division is a classic general contracting, design-build, and construction management company, and the Scenic Division specializes in architectural millwork, custom props and scenic/theme painting.

*“It will be a financial and emotional roller coaster so hang on, don’t let go of the dream, and enjoy the ride!”*



**Gary Keene, BBC '73**

**Michael “Max” Klimas, BBC '81**

## **Keene Klimas Consultant Group ★**

**Lake Mary, FL**

Michael and Gary are proud to have co-founded Keene Klimas Consultant Group, a full-service consulting company that specializes in the construction industry. Keene Klimas offers various services to the construction industry, including management, cost estimating, delay claim analysis, defect analysis, site observations and inspections.

*“Maintain a consistent level of service to all of your clients.”*

**Randy Stout, BSA '79, MAG '80**

## **Knight Pest Control**

**Port Richey, FL**

Knight Pest Control, Inc., was established in 2007 by its co-founder Randy, a man quite familiar with entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. Prior to his current venture, Randy was Founder of Florahome Pest Control and Florida Residex. Knight Pest Control provides pest control, termite control and lawn care for homes and businesses in the Tampa Bay area.

*“My Yellow Page advertising states that I ‘graduated from the University of Florida.’ One of my first customers stated there might be a problem because she is a Seminole. I told her that is not a problem—we will just charge her \$5 extra. She is still a customer 32 years later.”*

**Michael Walsler, BA '92**

## **Kris Darby Flooring & Interiors**

**Suwanee, GA**

Leveraging the discipline derived from service as a military officer and years of investment and business management experience in diverse industry segments, Michael owns and operates a number of small to mid-size companies throughout the Southeast, including Kris Darby Flooring & Interiors, Inc. A professional residential flooring installation company, Kris Darby Flooring & Interiors services a broad range of customers in Georgia, Florida and Alabama, including the second-largest home improvement retailer in the country.

*“Be the leader, but be willing to invest properly in skilled people and allow them to continually define and refine processes.”*

**Mary Gardner, DVM '08**

**Dani McVety, BSA '04, DVM '09**

## **Lap of Love Veterinary Hospice ★**

**Lutz, FL**

In addition to her role as a hospice veterinarian and Co-Founder of the nation's largest service dedicated to veterinary end of life care, Dani is an international speaker, author, and host for PetCareTV. Mary, also a Co-Founder, is not only a practicing veterinarian, but she is also the company's Chief Technology Officer. Their company is one of the first services of its kind, and is now a nationally-recognized organization. Partnering with over 70 veterinarians around the country, Lap of Love is dedicated to making the most difficult time of a pet owner's life just a little bit easier.

*“Treat failure as a vaccine. Every time you fail, thank yourself for the experience of learning how not to do something, and take the next step forward.”*

**Mike Cottmeyer, BSCEN '93**

## **LeadingAgile**

**Duluth, GA**

In 2010, Mike launched LeadingAgile, a company dedicated to helping larger, more complex organizations achieve better business outcomes through the systematic application of agile delivery methods across the entire enterprise. Based in Atlanta, the company is focused on the transition patterns and intermediate states necessary to safely and pragmatically lead any company through a structured and planned transformation event.

*“I consider myself an accidental entrepreneur. I didn't start out to form a company; I started to be an independent consultant. There is a difference. I became an entrepreneur the day I sold my first six-figure deal that I didn't have any capacity to deliver. I formed a small team of contractors from people I knew in the industry and we made it happen.”*

**Gavin McKenzie, BA '03**

## **McKenzie Construction**

**Miami, FL**

Gavin founded McKenzie Construction in 2005 with the aim of building a boutique construction firm offering design-focused attention to detail, and an emphasis on sustainable construction practices. Over the years, he has led McKenzie Construction in focusing on the delivery of a high-end quality product to both residential and commercial markets in Miami, Miami Beach and the surrounding areas.

*“Don't get caught in the minutia. It's easy to get lost in the weeds, and one needs to continually get a 30,000-foot view in order to see the whole picture clearly.”*

**Earl “Chip” Trefry, Jr., BSBA '72**

**Nicklaus Trefry, BABA '01**

## **Member Benefits**

**Jacksonville, FL**

Member Benefits is a full-service insurance and financial services organization specializing in Third Party Administration of professional affinity group and association member benefit programs. They support association and professional affinity group clients by providing customized insurance products and employee benefit plans to their individual members and small employers. Chip has been in the insurance and financial services industry for more than 40 years. He is currently the owner, President and CEO of Member Benefits Inc., one of the *Jacksonville Business Journal's* 2015 fastest-growing companies in Northeast Florida.

*“Never let anyone tell you no. Keep your mind set on your goals, and do anything to reach those goals.”*

**Helen Stefan Moreau, BS '88**

## **The Midtown Group ★**

**Washington, DC**

The Midtown Group is a diverse enterprise, staffing positions nationwide in lines that include the government, informational systems integrators, professional services, nonprofits and financial and accounting.

*“I fell into my business because the congressman I had been working for lost his election. Jobless and a recent UF graduate, I walked into a staffing firm in hopes of finding a position in public relations. The staffing firm hired me as a staffing consultant. I fell in love with the industry and left that firm six months later to open The Midtown Group, which just celebrated its 25th anniversary!”*

**Harley W. Miller, BCN '69**

**Thomas J. Miller, BBC '65**

## **Miller Construction Company**

**Fort Lauderdale, FL**

South Florida natives Thomas and Harley established Miller Construction Company in 1973. They set out to differentiate themselves with steady, measured growth, achieved by serving discerning clients exceptionally well. The company has developed several highly-successful niche markets for on-time, on-budget delivery of design/build and construction-management-at-risk projects. Miller Construction Company has completed more than 400 commercial projects including office buildings, retail, hospitality, healthcare, higher education, manufacturing, and distribution facilities.

*“Learning when to say ‘no’ is more important (or at least, as important!) than learning when to say ‘yes!’”*

**Scott R. Moss, BBC '96**

## **Moss**

**Fort Lauderdale, FL**

Moss & Associates is a privately-held construction firm headquartered with 10 regional offices from Hawaii to Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Moss focuses on construction management at-risk, general contracting, design-build and public-private partnerships. The award-winning firm is an innovative leader in utility-scale solar projects and justice facilities in the Western Hemisphere. Its employees consistently rank Moss as one of the best places to work for career satisfaction. Scott, the firm's President, graduated from UF with a bachelor's degree in Building Construction, and was the first employee at Moss & Associates. He is a member of the Young President's Organization (YPO) and the Construction Industry Round Table (CIRT). He enjoys the construction process and cherishes the relationship he has built with owners, architects, engineers, and trade contractors.

*“It never hurts to listen to unique ideas and situations. Take time making those decisions and be cognoscente of their consequences to the organization.”*

**William Randle, Jr., Alumnus**

## **Orange and Blue Construction ★**

**Boca Raton, FL**

Orange and Blue Construction was founded in May 2000, and is primarily engaged in the construction of apartment buildings out of poured-in-place concrete. Using a process that incorporates steel forms to support ready mix concrete that rapidly cures, the tunnel form process allows for a structurally-stable shell to be built with a consistent construction schedule. The resulting structure offers speed of construction, fire resistance and hurricane resistance. Orange and Blue is built upon a reputation of quality, integrity and employee safety. The company does work throughout Florida.

*“Above all else, I would suggest that perseverance is the number one lesson... Learning to adapt when times are bad is critical to success.”*

**Dave Long, BHS '00, MSM '01**

## **Orangetheory Fitness**

**Fort Lauderdale, FL**

Orangetheory Fitness is an innovative fitness franchise. Long, the company's Founder, grew his pilot location in Fort Lauderdale before franchising. Orangetheory's claim to fame is its fitness method based around EPOC, or Excess Post-Exercise Oxygen Consumption. Participants are encouraged to push their limits and stay in the “orange zone” to continue burning calories long after their workout is over. When Long built his business, his goal was to keep his stores small, convenient, and inviting to encourage a friendly, team-oriented environment unlike the major fitness gyms.

**Jennifer Englert, JD '99**

## **The Orlando Law Group**

**Orlando, FL**

Jennifer founded The Orlando Law Group in 2009 to fulfill a vision of providing people a voice, top care, and expert legal knowledge. Initially, the team was made up entirely of women, but now includes one male attorney. They service clients in a variety of areas including family, business, bankruptcy, immigration, real estate, personal injury and more. The firm has been successful because of their motivation to “listen, care, and serve.”

**John Oropesa, BBC '94**

## **Orocon Construction**

**Biloxi, MS**

John founded Orocon in 2006 with a vision of delivering quality projects with honesty and integrity, and surpassing customers' expectations. Orocon Construction offers professional construction services as a general contractor, construction manager, or design-builder, seeking to develop a true sense of teamwork through professionalism, open communications and client participation.

*“My company is a reflection of me, and as we continue to grow, it only becomes more challenging to keep that reflection as the one you want.”*

**Bertin Karpinski, Jr., BDES '87, MBC '88**

## **Ovation Construction ★**

**Oviedo, FL**

Bert is a licensed General Contractor and President of Ovation Construction, a full-service commercial construction company located in Central Florida. Started in 2006, it has completed hundreds of projects for high-profile clients and municipalities. Bert quit his other job in 2008 to dedicate himself full-time to the company and its mission: To provide outstanding customer service with attention to detail and quality.

*“While at the University of Florida, I realized the importance of taking business classes even though it was outside my major. This provided a good foundation and exposure to the challenges of running my own business.”*

**Doug Horn, BS '88**

## **Palmer Kent Associates**

**Boca Raton, FL**

Douglas is Co-Managing Director of Palmer Kent Associates, a results-driven executive search firm specializing in the recruitment and placement of attorneys and compliance professionals for leading law firms, specialty boutique firms, and

corporate law departments throughout North America, South America, Europe and Asia. The firm focuses on supporting and advising attorneys and compliance professionals at all levels to enhance their professional careers at prominent law firms, financial institutions and corporations.

*“Be open-minded, and realize that no matter how long you've been around, how smart you may be, others have great wisdom to share and have had experiences you may not have had.”*

**Ryan Schmitt, BA '99**

## **Petticoat-Schmitt Civil Contractors**

**Jacksonville, FL**

Petticoat-Schmitt is a civil contracting firm. Ryan, the company's Founder, is an expert in the civil contracting industry with over 20 years of experience. The company staffs LEED-Accredited professional management, and is pre-qualified with the Florida Department of Transportation. Petticoat-Schmitt works on roadway projects, site development, wastewater management, and water systems in the public and private sectors.

**Craig Meddin, BA '01**

## **The Postal Solutions Companies**

**Orlando, FL**

Craig co-founded US Postal Solutions in 2000 as a junior at the University of Florida, and eventually became its CEO in 2011. Under Craig's leadership, the company grew 125% in under 3.5 years. The company provides daily mail delivery management services for on- & off-campus student housing, conventional apartment communities and mixed-use retail throughout the United States, servicing 65,000+ mail recipients per day.

*“Customer service is your most important tool. Do not take your clients for granted and never stray from continuing to treat them just as you did your first few clients.”*

**William “Glenn” Durie, BSEE '01**

**Michael J. Wright, BSEE '98**

## **Power Grid Engineering**

**Winter Springs, FL**

Power Grid Engineering is an electric utility engineering firm, setting the bar of quality across the nation through people and process. The company was founded in 2007 after Michael and William left their former jobs to specialize a new business in engineering design, field services, and consulting for the power systems industry. With over 180 employees and 21 licensed professional engineers, Power Grid Engineering now supports over 10 Fortune 500 companies' electric utilities.

*“Treat people—employees, clients, and suppliers—like you want to be treated.”*

**Seth Ward**, BSF '03

## **Premier Forestry & Environmental Consulting**

Vanceboro, NC

In late 2009, Seth left his job at a private environmental consulting firm to establish Premier Forestry & Environmental Consulting, a full-service forestry and environmental consulting firm serving all of eastern North Carolina. Premier Forestry provides its clients with forest management and planning, prescribed burning, herbicide application, timber inventory, valuation, sales, research data collection and analysis and more.

*“Reputation is everything. Word of mouth is the best and cheapest marketing available.”*

**Chad Buckmaster**, BSA '02

## **Processing Point** ★

Carlsbad, CA

Chad is CEO of Processing Point, a technology company that delivers cloud connected solutions to small and mid-sized businesses. Since 2005, we have delivered affordable systems to tens of thousands businesses in the United States and abroad, and radically transformed traditional business machine and service marketing and delivery.

*“Very few things impress clients or prospects more than prompt responses to inquiries or fast resolution of issues. Very few things frustrate clients more than incomplete answers or lack of accountability. Rush to give your clients immediate response, but slow down to make sure they get what they need.”*

**Matthew Jaeh**, BS '05

**Jarrold Morgan**, Alumnus

## **ProctorU** ★

Livermore, CA

Jarrold is a Co-Founder of ProctorU and was the company's first proctor, while Matthew brought his experience in management and technology to the pioneering company. ProctorU watches students take exams online using webcams and screen-sharing technology. The service gives students at over 700 universities the convenience of testing at home and instructors the ability to ensure exam security.

*“We have open minds and are able to see things for what they are rather than what we'd like them to be.”*

**Russ Cammack**, BBC '96

**Mark Zaremskas**, BBC '96

## **RB Marks Construction**

Longwood, FL

In 2004, two outstanding construction professionals came together with a common goal: Providing the highest level of service and customer satisfaction while maintaining integrity and honesty with both their customers and their vendors. With this in mind, Mark and Russ founded RB Marks Construction, a Florida-based commercial construction company.

*“An important part of starting a business is understanding that growth can take time. Don't get discouraged if you are not profitable on day one. Calculated growth is the foundation for a long lasting business.”*

**Marc Robertz-Schwartz**, BSTEL '89

## **Red Apples Media**

Leesburg, FL

Originally founded as Hometown Health TV, LLC, Red Apples Media serves as a full-service media, marketing and production agency, enhanced by its multi-media video and print platforms. “Red Apples” is the acronym that spells out the company's core values, but Marc will tell you it's no accident that the first letter represents the most important personal and professional core value; “Respect the Universe.”

*“One of my many “Marc-isms” is: “The climb is always steeper and sometimes your nose bleeds but the view is always better from the high road.”*

**Michael Vorce**, BSA '83

## **Re-Tech**

Gainesville, FL

Re-Tech was founded in 2011 to help consumers get the most out of their mobile electronic devices. Re-Tech provides a wide range of services primarily centered around repairs for mobile electronic devices. Additional services that have proven popular with customers include data recovery, water damage repair, sales of refurbished devices and help with software problems to name a few. Michael, the company's founder, worked in the agriculture industry before pursuing his calling as an entrepreneur. He started a retail video game business called Rhino Video Games, which grew to over 50 locations and was eventually sold to Blockbuster Video in 2004. He founded Re-Tech Smartphone Centers with his partner Tully McQueen, and there are now four retail locations in north Florida.

*“It is important, especially when your business is involved in a rapidly changing industry, to constantly evaluate what is happening in the marketplace and to be open to making adjustments to your business model.”*



**Karen McKenzie**, BFAGR '06  
**Scarlett Rosier**, BSADV '05, MSADV '05

## Rhyme and Reason Design

Atlanta, GA

Rhyme & Reason Design helps build brand champions by creating designs and strategic solutions for clients that successfully reflect their unique company culture. Through dedication to the core values of the business and the belief that the entire design process should be fun, Scarlett and Karen are able to foster collaborative partnerships with their clients that ultimately lead to the creation of beautiful designs and smart ideas.

*"Be cognizant of the company you keep and the people you meet along the way because sometimes when you least expect it they might help you build the business you always dreamed of."*

**Reggie Chandra**, ME '93

## Rhythm Engineering

Lenexa, KS

Reggie is Founder and CEO of seven companies, including Rhythm Engineering LLC, empowering traffic engineers to save lives, save time, and save the environment through cost-effective, innovative traffic solutions. Its flagship product, In|Sync™, is a real-time adaptive traffic control system that enables traffic signals to immediately adapt to traffic demand, reducing accidents up to 30 percent, cutting travel times up to 50 percent and reducing fuel consumption and emissions 20-30 percent.

*"Courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is stepping up to the plate despite the fear."*

**Chris LaFace**, BSBA '05

## Ripa & Associates

Tampa, FL

Chris is President of Ripa & Associates, and joined the company in 2005. Ripa & Associates is a leader in civil and utility construction services in Central Florida. Since being founded in 1998, the company has been consistently ranked in the Top 100 Private Companies in the Tampa Bay area, as well as the State of Florida.

*"Do business with integrity...treat people as you wish to be treated."*

**Kathy Fields**, BS '79

## Rodan + Fields ★

San Francisco, CA

An astute businesswoman, accomplished doctor and successful entrepreneur, Kathy has touched the lives of more than 15 million people with targeted skincare solutions. Since 1989, she has been creating medicated skincare products that provide consumers with effective treatments for everyday dermatologic concerns from acne to aging and sun damage to sensitive skin.

*"My business partner, Dr. Katie Rodan, and I found a need – not a want – to treat acne, and created Proactiv, which addressed the needs of millions of people. After the success we experienced with Proactiv, we felt compelled to give back and created Rodan + Fields to give others the opportunity to build their own successful businesses and experience independence."*

**Doug Wilcox**, BBC '89

## Scherer Construction of North Florida

Gainesville, FL

After starting as a draftsman, superintendent, and project manager at Scherer Construction in St. Petersburg in 1987, Doug went on to open the Gainesville office in 1991—taking what was essentially a one-person satellite office and turning it into the thriving 66-person operation it is today. Scherer Construction is a fully-integrated, design/build commercial construction firm, aiming to take you from "vision to keys" with the same team, reducing cost, time and stress.

*"Go for it and when you are successful, don't forget where you came from. Be humble."*

**Mark Spiecker**, Alumnus

## Sharklet Technologies ★

Aurora, CO

Mark Spiecker leads Sharklet Technologies, Inc., a company that develops surface technologies that are designed to address microorganism growth and make healthier, safer and cleaner environments. He leads a team of scientists, business development professionals and product developers who are focused on Sharklet™ - the world's first and only micro-texture based on the microbe-resistant properties of sharkskin.

*"Be flexible and keep your overhead down with consultants/contractors."*

**Robert Levine, BABA '06**

## **Sixthman**

Atlanta, GA

With its specialty in organizing festivals at sea, Sixthman's company philosophy is to Live Loud. They have had over 14 years and 81 ship charters of experience hosting artists such as KISS, Zac Brown Band, Florida Georgia Line, Diplo, Sister Hazel, Paramore, Alabama, Lynyrd Skynrd, and more. Sixthman has been ranked by Inc. Magazine as America's Fastest Growing Travel Company.

**Kim Wilson, BSTEL '02**

## **Social News Desk**

Gainesville, FL

Kim is the Founder and President of Social News Desk, a technology startup dedicated to providing social media management software to broadcasters and publishers. More than 900 newsrooms use the platform to manage and monetize social media. Social News Desk is uniquely designed to help professional journalists follow best practices, work better as a team, secure valuable social accounts and measure results through actionable analytics.

*"What has made me successful isn't formal knowledge of how to start or run a company. It's the authentic belief in my vision for our products and how they can help solve a problem."*

**Stephanie Hollis, MD '00, HS '04**

## **Solar Stik**

Saint Augustine, FL

Pushing the envelope "to make each day better than the one before" has shaped the way Stephanie leads as Chief Operating Officer of Solar Stik, Inc. The company's mission is this: Using American-made components and constant innovation, Solar Stik creates portable power solutions that enable self-sufficiency for the soldier, the sailor and beyond. In doing so, we save lives, change lives and help revive American Manufacturing.

*"Growth is not a strategy! "Get rich" is not a business plan! While making a profit is necessary to accomplish the MISSION, you must clearly articulate what the MISSION is for your company if you want to be able to survive the challenges of building a company."*

**Skye Perry, BSBA '00**

## **SSP Innovations** ★

Centennial, CO

SSP Innovations provides expertise for core product implementation, gap analysis, product customization and system integration for electric, gas, water and telecommunication verticals. Skye is a Principal Consultant for SSP Innovations, and has provided technical architecture, development, and management solutions for GIS-centered implementations since 2000.

*"Starting a company is as much a life decision as it is a work decision. Building an entrepreneurial idea into a successful business can, and likely will, suck your life away for a period of time. This is likely years, not months. You need to be in it for the long-haul."*

**Chris Lahey, BS '04**

**Chris Olberding, BA '04**

## **Station Four**

Jacksonville, FL

Chris Olberding and Chris Lahey are the Co-Founders at the digital agency Station Four, recently named the sixth-fastest growing company in Northeast Florida by the *Jacksonville Business Journal*. Station Four creates competitive advantages for its clients by utilizing the latest technologies in the generation and execution of marketing strategies. The company is comprised of teams of strategists, designers, and software engineers.

*"Nourish and develop empathy - being able to truly put yourself in the place of your clients, customers, users, partners, and employees is invaluable."*

**Ethan Fieldman, BSBA '03**

## **Study Edge** ★

Gainesville, FL

Ethan began his entrepreneurial career at age 7 selling lemonade to golfers. His ability to see opportunities led him to create Study Edge while at the University of Florida. He has been recognized with many awards, including the inaugural Cade Prize for Innovation and the White House Empact100, naming the country's top 100 entrepreneurs age 30 or younger. He is most proud of the fact that Study Edge has pushed more than a quarter of a million students towards higher academic achievement through in-person and online tutoring.

*"All that matters is finding the right people. With the right people, you can do anything."*

**Nate Bazinet, BSA '03**  
**Sarah Bazinet, BSA '03**

## **Sunshine Plumbing and Gas** ★

**Micanopy, FL**

Nate and Sarah are the Owners and Founders of Sunshine Plumbing and Gas, a full-service customer driven plumbing contracting company serving all of Florida, specializing in residential and commercial service and commercial new construction. Together, they have grown the company to more than 30 employees and a service area reaching across central Florida from multiple regional offices.

*"Finding good employees is the most difficult part of growing your business, but they are also your greatest resource."*

**Luke Kemper, BSBA '05**

## **Swamp Head Brewery** ★

**Gainesville, FL**

Focused on building a brand that encompasses a love for the outdoors as well as a commitment to sustainability and conservation, Swamp Head Brewery is as focused on its culture as it is its beer. The business provides an outdoors feel to customers by customizing the business with "swamp" themed merchandise and lingo, and it also has a large focus on sustainability. Luke, the Owner and Operator, remains heavily involved in the day-to-day operations of the business.

*"Just because you hired a professional or specialist, doesn't mean that you can give the project entirely over to them. There is no substitute for doing your own research and staying involved with the project in some sort of fashion."*

**Dave Grabosky, BBC '04**

## **T&G Constructors** ★

**Orlando, FL**

Since co-founding the company in 1987, Dave has helped T&G successfully complete nearly \$1 billion in construction projects. Dave's strong commitment to customer service has been instrumental in building the company's reputation as an industry leader.

*"Never give up. If you persevere and push through the hard times, it will get better."*

**Mike Lester, BSA '96**

## **Talon Wealth Management** ★

**The Villages, FL**

Over the years, Mike had noticed the market's need for an individualistic approach to investment services. He partnered with INC Financial Partners to bring just that—

an independent investment service to individuals throughout Florida. Talon Wealth Management is a private wealth management firm specializing in investment advisory services, combining personal financial planning and investment advisory in order to best plan a client's financial future.

*"Imagine your worst-case scenario if you fail. If it's acceptable, go for it."*

**W. Stephen Hagenbuckle, BSBA '85**

## **TerraCap Management** ★

**Bonita Springs, FL**

TerraCap Management, a registered investment adviser, provides 60 years of experience to its clients. Steve, Founder of the company, spent 10 years with Corporate America before he was fired for refusing to mislead prospective clients. Steve took this as a push to get moving on his own ventures, and 22 months later, sold his first start-up company for \$16.5 million. He credits his success to three simple approaches to business: Integrity, productivity, and results.

*"Lead by example - focus and hard work pay off, and never forget it is about the team as you can only do so much and accomplish so much on your own."*

**Joe Morse, BA '95**

## **Therigy** ★

**Maitland, FL**

A Therigy co-founder, Joe is the company's President and COO. Therigy is the trusted source for specialty solutions, creating leading web and mobile applications, providing consulting services, and delivering business intelligence for the specialty pharmaceutical market.

*"A startup has a greater chance of success when founded by more than one person. Choose a business partner who possesses complementary abilities and you have a track record of accomplishments, resulting in a mutual trust and respect."*

**Bill Hassel, BBC '99, MBA '09**

**Nate Pardue, BBC '98, MBA '09**

## **Titus Construction Group** ★

**Fort Lauderdale, FL**

Titus is a commercial framing, drywall, insulation, acoustical ceiling and EIFS contractor. Bill started Titus in 2008 when his previous employer went out of business during the financial crisis. Nate joined Titus in 2009 as Vice President & Co-Owner.

*"Drive and ambition. These two key ingredients are vital to success in any industry, and quite often, these are the two ingredients that separate innovative and successful companies from the rest of the pack."*

**Jose Navarro, BSTEM '98**

**Mat Tainow, BSTEM '96**

## **Tunguyi Industries**

**Atlanta, GA**

Jose and Mat partnered to form Tunguyi Industries, operating out of downtown Atlanta. Tunguyi Industries manages bars and restaurants and also owns and manages investment properties in the Metro Atlanta area.

*“Never turn down a new opportunity or be stubborn about things. You never know where the next opportunity will come from.”*

**Edmundo Gonzalez, BSBA '92**

**Ronnie Leinwohl, BSCE '95, MSCE '97**

## **Urban Partners Construction**

**Jacksonville, FL**

Edmundo co-founded Urban Partners to specialize in the development and construction management of urban in-fill projects. Urban Partners aspires to revitalize and improve the urban landscape by targeting underutilized or blighted urban fill-in projects, by using innovative architecture and sound design, and by being sensitive to the environment and to the people that it affects.

*“Most entrepreneurs want to avoid failure at all cost. However, without experiencing and learning from your mistakes and failures it is nearly impossible to gain the experience and perspective needed to lead a successful and sustainable venture.”*

**Scott Sims, BSBA '97**

## **Victory Tailgate ★**

**Orlando, FL**

Scott founded Victory Tailgate in 2008, quickly becoming one of the leading manufacturers and retailers of collegiate licensed goods in the USA. In six years, Scott has taken Victory Tailgate from his garage to over 150,000 square feet of warehouse and office space. In 2014, Victory Tailgate was honored as the fastest-growing non-apparel collegiate licensee in the country.

*“Don't be afraid to go against the norm and shake up an industry.”*

**Joe Walker, BDES '96, MARCH '98**

## **Walker Architects ★**

**Gainesville, FL**

Walker Architects is a full-service architecture firm specializing in new construction and renovations. Joe, President and Principle-in-Charge, participates

in all project planning and design, with his background in architectural acoustics making him a valuable member of the team.

*“Entrepreneurship came as a natural evolution of my career. I never sought out starting my own business.”*

**David Wantman, BSCE '90**

## **Wantman Group**

**West Palm Beach, FL**

David is president of Wantman Group, the firm his father founded in 1972. He easily stepped into the role, having a lifetime of understanding the intricacies of running a multi-discipline engineering and consulting firm built on a strong set of values that call for spearheading the balance between exceeding the expectations of clients while cultivating the talents of WGI's associates. At 13, David was copying blueprints for WGI, and just a year later joined one of its survey crews. He worked for a large national engineering firm in Tampa for 10 years to gain experience outside of the family business before returning to WGI in 1999.

*“Be prepared to work exceptionally hard and long hours. You have to like what you do and be prepared to dedicate a lot of time to it. It can be very rewarding, but it's not easy.”*

**Tom Yianilos, BBC '81**

## **Waterbrook Builders ★**

**Fort Lauderdale, FL**

Thomas is the Owner and general contractor at Waterbrook Builders, which has developed hundreds of single-family and multi-family homes in Broward and Palm Beach Counties. Waterbrook is currently focused on building ultra-high end single family residences. Waterbrook is a family-owned and operated business, and employs a select group of highly talented professionals.

*“It's not easy, but there is little else that is more rewarding. There are tough times and good times; hang in during the tough ones. You will be better because of it.”*

**Philip Visali, Alumnus**

## **WE Insure**

**Jacksonville, FL**

WE Insure provides a faster and easier way for customers to shop for insurance. Philip, CEO and Founder, created WE Insure after being a captive insurance agent in Sarasota. He broke away to become his own boss and to create a better way for selling and shopping for insurance services. His agency has grown to over 50 agencies nationwide.



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# Entrepreneurship at UF

Entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial mindset play important roles in disciplines and programs across the UF campus. With high impact programs such as the Entrepreneurship Faculty Fellows, Engineering Innovation Institute, UF Big Idea Competition, Gator Hatchery, Innovation Academy, and Entrepreneurship and Law initiative, entrepreneurship is being approached from a wide range of perspectives. It is being applied in diverse contexts including new start-ups, technology ventures, social entrepreneurship, family businesses, corporate entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship in the arts and within professions.

## The Entrepreneurship & Innovation Center

The Entrepreneurship & Innovation Center was created to teach, coach and inspire students to be entrepreneurial in their lives. The center provides students the tools and experiences necessary to creatively pursue new opportunities and innovations in the start-up, social, and corporate venture arenas. Through courses, degree programs and complementary activities such as speakers and workshops, the center currently serves more than 2,000 students per year. Partnering with other colleges at the University, the center delivers introductory and specialized courses at both the graduate and undergraduate level, and offers every student at the University of Florida the option to earn an undergraduate or graduate minor in entrepreneurship. In addition, the Center features:

- ▶ **Jeff Gold Experiential Learning Laboratory**, which houses the GatorNest program and the Gator Hatchery.
- ▶ **Entrepreneurship and Empowerment**, co-curricular programs that include consulting to disadvantaged entrepreneurs in South Africa and Haiti.
- ▶ **\$40,000 Big Idea Competition**, where student teams compete for capital by presenting their unique business ideas.
- ▶ **Silicon Valley Study Tour**, which exposes students to the culture of entrepreneurship through visits with Silicon Valley based UF entrepreneurs.







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