

NA  CO National Angel
Capital Organization

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Aileen Agada

Co-Founder & CEO
BeBlended



Biography

Aileen Agada is the Co-Founder & CEO of BeBlended, an online marketplace that connects clients with freelance hairstylists who know how to work on afro-curly hair textures. Previously, Aileen held business and technical positions at the Government of Canada, the Toronto Transit Commission, Manulife Financial, Emerald Technology Ventures, and a startup in Belgium. Her passion for entrepreneurship has led her to become an Entrepreneur-in-Residence at the Black Founders Network, a Startup Coach at LiftOff Incubator, and an Alumni Advisor at NEXT Canada. To date, Aileen has raised over \$70K in non-dilutive funding for BeBlended. She currently holds a BAsC in Environmental Engineering and a Master of Business, Entrepreneurship, and Technology (MBET) from the University of Waterloo.

Alex MacBeath
Managing Partner
Island Capital Partners



Biography

Alex MacBeath received his B.Sc. from UPEI and his MBA from Dalhousie University. A member of the Canadian, Ontario and Prince Edward Island Institutes of Chartered Accountants, he received his C.A. designation in 1979 and was awarded his FCA in 2003. He is a member of the Institute of Corporate Directors and holds his ICD.D designation through the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto.

Mr. MacBeath was with Grant Thornton LLP for 35 years, 26 of those as partner. He was CEO and Executive Partner of Grant Thornton LLP from 2001 – 2008. From 2008 until his retirement in 2012, he was 'Global Leader, Markets' and 'Regional Leader, Asia Pacific' at Grant Thornton International based in London, UK. He has extensive experience in business strategy, risk management, national and international markets and managing change in large and complex organizations.

Mr. MacBeath is currently the Founder and Managing Partner of Island Capital Partners Fund I and Fund II, seed venture capital funds; CEO, AtholBarra Inc; Chair, Island Water Technologies Inc; Board, Aurea TechnExcellence.; Advisory Board, Crosby Molasses Inc; Director, Chair of Audit Committee and member of Executive Committee, MedicAlert Foundation of Canada; Board of Governors, Vice Chair, Executive Committee, Chair Finance Committee, University of Prince Edward Island; Chair UPEI Pension Plan; Trustee, Chair of Audit Committee, Canadian Museum of History; Director, Chair Finance Committee, National Angel Capital Organization; Past Chair, Health PEI; Past Vice-chair, Chair Audit Committee, Confederation Center of the Arts; Founding member and Chair of Steering Committee, Health Innovation Centre of Excellence.

Ali Talakshi

Director
Platform Calgary



Biography

Karam-Ali Talakshi is currently the Director of Growth at Platform Calgary. Previously, Karam-Ali was the Vice President at QuirkLogic, Inc., where they were part of the founding team that developed and brought to market a disruptive digital ecosystem. With experience in different roles at various companies, including Dentons and Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, Karam-Ali has a strong background in corporate law and securities. They also have a diverse educational background, including a mini MBA from Haskayne School of Business.

Alida Burke

Co-Founder & CFO

Growcer



Biography

As Co-Founder and CFO, Alida, who was also born and raised in Ottawa, launched Growcer with her co-founder Corey Ellis when they were both at the University of Ottawa and heavily involved in the student entrepreneurship club Enactus. She fell into her role as an entrepreneur when she saw the impact the company was making, but still enjoys working with numbers, by leading Growcer's operational strategy to support customers growing year-round across the country, as well as managing the company's internal operations, human resources, and financial management. Alida is also currently completing her Masters of Accounting at Carleton University. When Alida is not managing the behind-the-scenes at Growcer you can find her giving back to her local entrepreneurship community or curled up with a good book.

Alison Nankivell
CEO
MaRS Discovery District



Biography

Alison Nankivell, CFA, is the CEO at MaRS Discovery District, North America's largest urban innovation hub and Canada's leading science and technology ecosystem. MaRS-supported ventures have raised \$19 billion in capital, generated \$11.5 billion in net revenues, and contributed \$29.6 billion to the GDP since 2010, now employing 33,000 individuals across diverse sectors.

With more than 25 years of experience in business, investment and fostering innovation, Alison held pivotal roles at institutions like Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan and Export Development Canada. As senior vice president at BDC Capital, Alison provided strategic guidance, overseeing a \$5-billion asset portfolio, and driving initiatives like the Indigenous Growth Fund, attracting \$750 million in private sector capital.

Alison's vision and emphasis on Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) frameworks reshaped Canada's venture capital landscape, propelling tech companies globally. A transformative leader, she fosters collaboration, guiding startups through economic cycles. Fluent in Mandarin and French, Alison's global perspective positions MaRS as an ambassador in energy transition and climate technology.

Beyond her executive duties, Alison served until 2023 as chair and board member at the Institutional Limited Partners Association (ILPA) and currently serves on the board of Toronto Good Shepherd Ministries, which underscores her commitment to excellence and fostering innovation addressing both social and economic objectives.

Anna Sinclair

Founder & CEO

Total Mom Inc.



Biography

Accomplished CEO and Angel Investor recipient of prestigious accolades such as Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100™ and Top 40 under 40. Recipient of the esteemed Anthem Award and a distinguished member of the Forbes Business Council. Founder & President of CWE's Industry Gala, Total Mom Inc. & Sinclair Creative Agency Inc. specializing in Sponsorship & Strategic Partnerships, Community Building, and Event Production with a vast portfolio of 350+ brands.

Award-winning CEO, Angel Investor, Influential Entrepreneur, Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100™, Top 40 under 40, Anthem Award winner, Forbes Business Council Member, | Sponsorship & Strategic Partnerships, Community Building, Event Producer, Content creator & super Mom.

Anne Gaviola

Senior Digital Broadcast Journalist
Global News



Biography

Anne Gaviola is a Senior Digital Broadcast Journalist with Global News, based in Toronto. She is the host of Business Matters and a national network reporter, covering the business beat for more than a decade. Her areas of interest include disruptive technology, housing and the future of work. She worked in the fintech industry in 2018 for one of Canada's leading blockchain and cryptocurrency companies. Anne's previous work as a journalist includes CTV, BNN Bloomberg, VICE, CBC and The Weather Network.

Benjamin Bergen

President

Council of Canadian Innovators



Biography

Benjamin Bergen is the President of the Council of Canadian Innovators, a national, non-partisan business council for the 21st century economy, led by over 150 CEOs of Canada's fastest growing homegrown technology scale-ups. CCI is focused on optimizing the growth of Canada's innovation-based sector, and Benjamin leads the execution of its ambitious economic development agenda.

Brian Whitestone

Advisor

Realize Medical



Biography

Dr. Brian Whitestone is a retired oral/maxillofacial surgeon with a career spanning decades of dedicated service. As a clinician, he garnered respect for his compassionate bedside manner and unwavering dedication to improving patient outcomes. He also held various leadership/teaching positions within the Alberta healthcare system.

Upon retiring from clinical practice, Dr. Whitestone transitioned his focus to early stage investing, particularly in healthcare start-ups with promising potential to revolutionize the industry. As an Angel investor, he brings not only financial support but also invaluable mentorship and strategic guidance to budding entrepreneurs.

In addition to his investment endeavors, Dr. Whitestone serves as the Chair of the Board of the Table CFCC in Perth, ON. He channels his passion for social impact into meaningful initiatives that make a tangible difference in people's lives. He also has developed a large multidisciplinary medical centre in Perth, ON to help improve delivery of healthcare services in the region.

Dr. Whitestone's multifaceted career reflects his unwavering commitment to fostering innovation, improving healthcare delivery, and addressing societal challenges.

Camille Saltman

Co-Founder & General Partner
OKGN WMAN



Biography

Camille Saltman is co-founder and General Partner of OKGN WMAN Angel Fund which comprises 40 accredited women investors across the Okanagan region of British Columbia. She returned to Canada following a 20-year career leading tech companies in San Diego, California. She is co-founder of INCA Renewable Technologies which in 2023 won the global JEC Composites World Start-up Products & Materials Award. She was also recognized in 2023 as one of Canada's Game Changers: Leading Companies. Powered by Women, by Natural Products Canada. Since moving to the Okanagan she also has built the e@UBCO accelerator for the University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus. While in San Diego, Camille served as President of Malama Composites, MD Revolution, and CONNECT, credited with building San Diego's leadership as one of the top tech clusters in the world. She was also a Board member of the San Diego Telecom Council (now EvoNexus), BIOCOM, Wireless Life Science Alliance, CleanTECH San Diego and San Diego Action and Sport Innovators. She is a recipient of the US Department of Commerce Innovation in Economic Development Award for Creation of Regional Innovation Clusters and the national State Science and Technology Institute Excellence in Tech Based Economic Development Award for Building Entrepreneurial Capacity.

Carollynn Schafer

Interim CEO

Accelerate Okanagan



Biography

Carollynn Schafer is an active angel investor with a background in law. She obtained her law degree from the University of Victoria and spent her first 8 years as a lawyer at a corporate firm in Winnipeg, focusing on Technology, IP and Privacy law. From there, she went in-house and worked with LemonFree.com, a start-up venture co-founded by her husband in the automotive marketing space, until their acquisition/merger with LotLinx in 2015. Carollynn is passionate about building ecosystems and is currently acting as the Interim CEO of Accelerate Okanagan, is a General Partner of OKGN WMAN, a past director and Fund Manager of the OKGN Angel Summit and acts as the investor facilitator for their investor discussions. As an angel investor, she invests with early stage women founded ventures and has been a guest speaker with the 51's Financial Feminism Investing Lab on the topic.

Claudia Krywiak

President & CEO

Ontario Centre of Innovation (OCI)



Biography

Claudia Krywiak is the President and CEO at the Ontario Centre of Innovation (OCI), a not-for-profit organization that accelerates the development, commercialization, and adoption of new technologies.

As a champion of innovation in Ontario and across Canada, Claudia has been with OCI since 2011. She has actively promoted innovation as a key driver of competitiveness, productivity, and economic growth. Her leadership covers a broad range of initiatives, including those in artificial intelligence, autonomous and electric vehicles, 5G and next-generation networks, cybersecurity, and clean technologies.

Previously, Dr. Krywiak was the Vice-President of Business Development at Mitacs. She started her career at Bruker Corporation enabling scientists to make breakthrough discoveries.

Claudia also serves on the Board of Directors for the Accelerator Centre in Waterloo.

Claudio Rojas

CEO

National Angel Capital Organization



Biography

Claudio Rojas is a seasoned business leader with 16 years of professional experience. As CEO of the National Angel Capital Organization, he leads 4,200 angel investors that have invested \$1.54 billion into more than 2,000 entrepreneurial companies.

Claudio is a thought leader on founder run companies and their unique governance structures. He brings an entrepreneurial spirit and successful track record investing in high growth companies during periods of uncertainty and holding those investments for the long term.

Claudio is a CFA Charterholder with an MBA from the Ivey Business School, JD from Western University and has completed the ICD-Rotman Directors Education Program at the University of Toronto. He is a member of the Law Society of Ontario, European Corporate Governance Institute and the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD.D).

Dan Herman

CEO

Intellectual Property Ontario



Biography

Dan Herman, Ph.D., is a Toronto-based entrepreneur and policy advisor to government agencies on innovation and growth. He is currently building a content company that highlights the people and places shaping the future of technology and innovation. He has previously held executive roles in both the public and private sectors, including having been the Executive Director of innovation policy for the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development (Canada), vice president of strategy and partnerships for an early-stage consumer hardware/medtech startup, and the co-founder of the Centre for Digital Entrepreneurship and Economic Performance (DEEP Centre).

Along the way, he picked up a Ph.D. focused on the role of sub-national government in the promotion of innovation and industrial transition. He's also travelled through 60+ countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, where he perfected the art of negotiation with border guards in foreign languages. And most importantly, he's a father to two young boys.

Dane Bedward

Angel Investor



Biography

Mr. Dane Bedward is the CEO of NeuroBot Inc., a strategic advisory company focused on assisting Medtech, Digital Medicine and Biopharma companies with their business strategies.

Prior to founding his advisory company, Dane was Senior Vice President International for Genzyme Corporation, one of the top 5 global biotech companies before being acquired by Sanofi-Aventis. His first assignment with Genzyme was as Managing Director and President of the Canadian subsidiary Genzyme Canada Inc. Genzyme Corporation is a pioneer in the development of products for rare genetic diseases. Throughout his career Mr. Bedward has also worked with other organizations such as Nordion International, Johnson and Johnson (in Canada and Europe), Flow Laboratories, and McMaster University.

Dane serves on the Board of Directors of The National Angel Capital Organization (NACO), The Capital Angel Network (CAN), and Panthera Cryosolutions, as well as chairs the Board of Directors for Spiderwort Inc. He is also a member of the L-Spark MedTech Advisory Committee, an Executive Fellow with Mistral Venture Partners, and a Charter Member of TiE. Dane has previously served on the following Boards: the Board of Governors of the University of Ottawa, the Board of Trustees for Bridgewater State University, The National Medical Devices Alliance, The Ottawa Health and Life Sciences Cluster, The New England-Canada Business Council, The Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, The New England-Latin America Business Council, The Ottawa Life Sciences Council, and the Board of Directors for NeuroBiotech Inc.

Dane is a proud graduate of the University of Ottawa Science program. He has participated as a panel member in numerous conferences globally.

Daniel Eberhard

Founder & CEO

KOHO



Biography

Daniel Eberhard has built his career as an entrepreneur by finding ways to create scalable mission-driven companies. In 2010, he co-founded Kineticor Renewables, a wind energy company which developed \$50M dollars in wind projects. The company was acquired by Algonquin Power (AQN:TSX) in 2011. In 2014, Daniel Eberhard founded KOHO, the leading Canadian challenger bank which has raised more than \$300M on the path to democratizing access to the best financial products. Currently, KOHO has over 1 million proud users across Canada.

Danielle Graham

Co-Founder
Firehood



Biography

Danielle Graham is General Partner of Phoenix Fire and Co-Founder of The Firehood, an angel stage fund and network focused on women in technology. She created Fierce Founders Programs — the first women-focused accelerator and bootcamp series in Canada. Previously, she managed Ontario Centres of Innovation’s Market Readiness Fund and Board Member at GTAN , Waterloo’s angel network. Danielle supports underrepresented founders looking to scale their tech businesses as a member of the angel community network, investment officer and advisor to tech incubators. Masters of Business Administration (M.B.A.) from Wilfrid Laurier University, a Masters of Arts (M.A.) from Dalhousie University and a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) from Trinity College, University of Toronto. Executive in Residence for Foresight and ventureLAB’s Capital Investment Program.

David Dufresne

Partner
CMD Capital



Biography

David Dufresne started his career in the Canadian VC industry in the early 2000s at Desjardins Venture Capital and the BlackBerry Partners Fund. David left to pursue entrepreneurial roles and acted as CEO of music tech company Bandzoogle for five years. He then worked with the music platform, Bandcamp as their Head of Strategy and Growth before returning to VC. He joined the 500 Startups Canada team and is now an active angel investor, as well as a founder and venture partner with Panache Ventures, Canada's most active seed-stage fund. David is currently working on launching a new firm and raising its first fund. David is a sought-after speaker and panelist at many venture capital, tech, and entertainment industry events. He acts as a mentor and advisor to many startup accelerators and incubators across Quebec, Canada and the United States (CDL, SXSW, Techstars, FounderFuel, CDL, NextAI, etc.).

David Gauthier

Vice President, Commercialization
Natural Products Canada



Biography

David is a highly experienced authority on product and technology viability and market potential with more than 20 years in both the public and private innovation sectors. With a PhD in biology, David not only understands the science but can translate and mobilize that knowledge into investment opportunity. Before his current role as VP Commercialization, David was responsible for the development and direction of NPC's inaugural investment arm, which resulted in 13 investments, 2 exits, and an enviable track record of additional jobs, revenues and investment attraction for the portfolio companies. As VP Commercialization, David continues this acute attention to detail and rigorous due diligence approach for NPC's non-dilutive Commercialization Programs, helping to identify and develop high-potential opportunities, and acting as an impartial and highly valued liaison between investors and start-ups. Prior to NPC, David was Vice-President, Central Region of Foragen Technologies Management, a \$42MM fund - the first dedicated to agricultural technology in Canada. He also ran a technology commercialization and business financing consultancy, led the Entrepreneurial Foundation of Saskatchewan, and was Regional Director of the National Research Council of Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP).

Debbie Gamble

Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer
Interac



Biography

Debbie is a visionary technology leader with a passion for leveraging digital innovations to improve people's lives. With over 35 years of experience in payment and secure transaction technologies, she has led ground-breaking initiatives in digital ID, crypto currencies, contactless and mobile commerce, AI and micro-finance on an international scale.

Debbie champions collaboration and diversity of thought, inspiring her staff to achieve award-winning success in their fields. Her leadership and expertise have been recognized through numerous industry awards, including Top 50 Canadian Executives, FemTech Leader of the Year, Top 50 Women in FinTech and Most Influential Women in Payments. Through her work, Debbie is driving the success of the digital economy and transforming the way we think about technology leadership.

Dianne Buckner

Host

Dragon's Den



Biography

Dianne Buckner's experience as a journalist spans three decades and three national networks. She played a role in bringing Dragons' Den to Canada, and has been the show's host since its first season. As a correspondent for both The National and CBC's long-running business program, Venture, she travelled internationally as well as across North America, reporting on stories important to Canadians.

In addition to her fieldwork, Dianne has done countless studio interviews, on Canada AM at CTV, and as an anchor on the CBC News Network. She recently hosted a series of sponsored interviews for BNN/Bloomberg.

Dianne's specialty is business coverage, but she has also reported on stories of general interest, speaking with prime ministers, CEOs, and innovators of all types.

Efosa Obano

Program Manager
Black Founders Network



Biography

Efosa Obano started and manages the Black Founders Network (BFN), which supports Black entrepreneurs across Canada with capital, community, and capacity building.

He also started and leads the African Impact Initiative (AII), which enables early African innovators to create solutions to challenges in their communities. He has expertise in using technology to create social impact, invest with impact, and build early-stage ventures. For this work, he has been recognized by the United Nations and the Ontario Minister's Award of Excellence.

Prior to these, he led a team that guided start-ups on their digital transformation journeys with Dell Technologies Canada. He also led community outreach for Dell Canada's Social Impact Team & Dell Canada's Black Networking Alliance. He received Dell's Corporate Social Responsibility Award for this work. He is an alumnus of the University of Toronto, where he specialized in Strategic Management.

Émilie Boutros

Managing Partner
Tandem Launch



Biography

Émilie has over 15 years of experience holding executive positions in public and private companies. Starting her career as a chartered accountant at KPMG, she has led finance functions for technology companies such as CGI, Softimage and Avera Technologies. Émilie then joined TandemLaunch in early 2012. Since joining the company, TandemLaunch has more than doubled every year, raising three funds and more than \$150M in third party financing. Émilie holds a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics from McGill University, a graduate diploma from HEC. In addition to her role at TandemLaunch, Émilie is on the board of the National Angel Capital Organization (NACO) and Axelys, a non-profit organization with a mission to accelerate the development and transfer of inventions resulting from public research in Quebec.

Emily Smiley

Director

Digital Media Zone



Biography

As the Director, Partnerships & Investor Relations, Emily is responsible for the development and execution of DMZ's startup programs. Additionally, Emily connects startup founders with funders where she sees potential opportunities, helps startups with fundraising strategies, and works with investors in the DMZ network as well as connecting with new investors interested in the DMZ. Emily joined the DMZ team in 2017.

As a passionate advocate of the Canadian entrepreneurship ecosystem, Emily has spent a great deal of time throughout her career advising entrepreneurs on early-stage business ideation. She has led business development campaigns, and supported fundraising planning and execution at an early-stage SaaS startup. Emily brings a diverse range of experiences in high growth startups, corporate sector and public sector organizations. Emily studied at Queen's University.

Eric Zimmerman

Co-Founder

Enhanced Medical Nutrition



Biography

Eric Zimmerman is an experienced healthcare professional with a background in medical device sales & marketing. Prior to co-founding EMN, Eric worked across various clinical specialties, commercializing multiple innovative technologies in surgery.

Eric Co-founded EMN in 2016 with the goal of pioneering a better standard of care in surgery and supporting patients with evidence-based nutrition to reduce risk and improve outcomes. As CEO, Eric oversees all activities, focusing on growth and value generation.

Eric graduated from The University of Winnipeg with a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology and Applied Health and has recently completed certificate courses specific to quality improvement in healthcare and clinical nutrition.

Evelyn Allen

Co-Founder & CEO
Evercloak



Biography

Evelyn the CEO of Evercloak, a startup that uses said materials to reduce energy use in heating and air conditioning. She earned a Master of Engineering degree at the University of Guelph specializing in environmental engineering. She got into the business development side of things with an appointment at the University of Guelph to help get research off the shelves and into the hands of end-users. This led her to a partnership with the University of Waterloo to help build demonstration facilities and labs within Ontario universities for accelerating water technology commercialization, and soon after began working for the University of Waterloo building corporate research partnerships.

Evelyn is also a finalist in the million-dollar Women in Cleantech Challenge, using the platform to help her company hire a chief technology officer and secure \$2 million in funding.

Helen Kontozopoulos

Co-Founder

ODAIA Intelligence



Biography

Helen Kontozopoulos co-founded ODAIA Intelligence in 2018 out of the University of Toronto, where Helen continues to teach part-time in the Department of Computer Science, emphasizing entrepreneurship, product development, design, and startup creation. ODAIA is a Series B SaaS startup leading the development of a pioneering cloud solution tailored for pharma sales and marketing teams. Leveraging advanced artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities, ODAIA provides actionable insights and predictive analytics to enhance understanding of physician prescribing patterns and behavioral trends.

Helen co-founded the University of Toronto's Department of Computer Science Innovation Lab in 2014, a startup incubator that supports computer science students and researchers in commercializing their ideas and research. At the lab, she produced over a hundred hackathons and technical and business events, including AI Week, Global Smartweek, UofT Startups in the Valley, and the Funding Innovation Conference, among others. She adores early-stage startup development and is an LP in three venture funds. She has mentored and supported over 500 teams through various stages of their development, from idea to company growth.

Helen is a sought-after lecturer and has participated in over 30+ panels, including prestigious events such as the IEEE Women In Engineering International Leadership Summit, TedxUofT, World AI Summit, The Fields Institute events, and Elevate Toronto.

Isaac Olowolafe

General Partner
BKR Capital



Biography

Isaac Olowolafe Jr. is the Co-founder & General Partner of BKR Capital. Before co-founding BKR, Isaac was acting as General Partner for the Dream Maker Ventures fund (DMV), that primarily focused on early-stage Canadian tech companies and invested in a number of regional success stories.

Isaac is an award-winning real estate entrepreneur, angel investor and philanthropist. Isaac's corporation, Dream Maker Inc., successfully operates multiple divisions including a brokerage, real estate development, wealth management, property management, education, private equity and insurance. Amongst other projects, the development division celebrated the completion of the first major mixed-use development (condos, townhomes, retail) called Dream Residences at Yorkdale, located directly across from Yorkdale Mall, and a boutique hotel called Dream Suites @ YYZ, located near the Toronto international airport. Through his love of sports, Dream Maker Developments became the jersey sponsor of the Canadian Men's and Women's National Basketball Teams from 2017 to 2020.

Isaac received a Bachelor's in Economics from the University of Toronto. He has received numerous awards and recognition, including a Harry Jerome Business Award, an Enterprise Business Award by Planet Africa, an Arbor Award from the University of Toronto, a Business Leadership Award by Leadership and Governance Canada Inc. and a Public Service Award from the Transformation Institute for Leadership & Innovation and Toronto Board of Trade Award. In addition to his membership in the Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) Innovation Circle, Isaac made a generous donation, which named the Isaac Olowolafe Jr. Digital Media Experience Lab in Toronto Metropolitan University's iconic Student Learning Centre and co-created the Black Innovations Programs out of TMU's technology incubator, the DMZ.

Jacopo Losso

Director General
EBAN



Biography

Jacopo joined EBAN in 2015 as the association's Director General. He is responsible for managing the organization and its network of members, expanding the association's reach and influence, tracking issues of strategic importance to the early stage investing ecosystem and representing the association externally. He is knowledgeable on key topics such as: cross border investment, investment syndication, impact investment, public-private co-investment; and startup investment readiness, among others. Jacopo is also an angel investor with startup investments made in Space sector related ventures. Jacopo holds a Bachelor's degree and a Master of Science degree in Business Administration from Bocconi University in Milan, Italy. Thanks to his education and his strong academic background both in marketing and in financial management, Jacopo has a successful track record with international work experiences.

Jean-Simon Venne

Co-Founder & CTO

Brainbox AI



Biography

Jean-Simon Venne is a co-founder and CTO of BrainBox AI. As a technology expert specializing in the fast and efficient migration of technological innovations to commercial applications, Jean-Simon has over 25 years of experience developing and implementing new technology to solve long-standing commercial issues in the fields of telecommunications, biotechnology, and energy-efficiency.

Prior to joining BrainBox AI, he was responsible for the successful integration of M2M technology in over 200 Smart Buildings across North America, Europe, and the Middle East. Jean-Simon holds a B.Eng. in Industrial Engineering from École Polytechnique de Montréal and a Certificate in Logistics from the University of Georgia Tech.

Jeannette Jackson

CEO

Foresight Canada



Biography

Jeanette is an experienced CEO and entrepreneur with broad experience in strategy, innovation, business development, marketing, and operations. As the CEO of Foresight, Jeanette has led rapid growth, transforming a regional organization into Canada's largest cleantech accelerator. Since 2018, under her leadership, Foresight has expanded accelerator programs, built a vibrant Industry Innovation Program, and launched a sectoral approach to accelerate cleantech innovation. Jeanette is a frequent speaker, media guest, and advisor to innovators, industry, investors and government.

Prior to joining Foresight, Jeanette was founding CEO of Light-Based Technologies, which she built into a scaling enterprise with venture capital support and a successful personal exit in 2011. As President of The Brag Company, she oversaw the complete restructuring of the business and sale of the company in just two years. As an Executive in Residence with Foresight, Jeanette advised more than 25 ventures in several markets including bio-energy, electric vehicles, smart buildings, water tech, robotics, and wind.

Jen Cole

Chair

Okanagan Science Centre



Biography

Jen Cole is a seasoned business leader with over 20 years of experience mentoring high-performing business development and customer service teams. Her career has spanned a number of industries including professional services, nonprofit technology, telecommunications, travel, and franchised business ownership. Jen spent 12 years in senior executive roles at KELL Partners and Exponent Partners; two firms specializing in custom implementations of Salesforce, a cloud-based CRM, for nonprofit organizations. Outside of her professional roles, Jen is a board member of The Okanagan Science Centre in Vernon, British Columbia and also actively involved with OKGN WMAN, Okanagan Women's Mentoring and Angel Network. Jen is based in West Kelowna, B.C.

Jennifer Francis

Chair
Capital Angel Network



Biography

Jennifer is a technology mentor, advisor and angel investor. She is a former executive in the information technology and services industry, with experience in Enterprise Software, SaaS, Go-to-market Strategy, Strategic Partnerships. Advocate for girls and women in STEM. Jennifer holds board positions with Invest Ottawa & the Wabano Centre. She is also a Co-Founder of the SheBoot bootcamp program.

Julie St-Pierre

Professor & Associate Vice-President
University of Ottawa



Biography

Dr. St-Pierre received her PhD from the University of Cambridge (UK) and was Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Cambridge (UK), Harvard Medical School (USA), and Université de Montréal (Canada). From 2008-2017, she was Assistant and Associate Professor at McGill University. Currently, she is a Full Professor and Associate Vice-President, Research Support and Infrastructure, at the University of Ottawa. She has received numerous awards for her excellence in research, notably a Canada Research Chair tier 1 in Cancer Metabolism. The central research focus of the St-Pierre laboratory is the understanding of metabolic adaptations in cancer, and she is co-leading a large Terry Fox team grant on oncometabolism. Dr. St-Pierre established and was the founding director of the uOttawa metabolomics core facility. She is a strong champion of the transformational impact of scientific platforms on the research enterprise. In her role as Associate Vice-President, Research Support and Infrastructure, she oversees the core facilities program at the University of Ottawa.

K. Dee Howard

Co-Founder
SootSoap



Biography

Dee is a career marketer and strategist, firewife, mom and the creative mind behind the SOOTSOAP Brand and its products.

Fuelled by lack of solutions for the devastating health effects of firefighter exposure, Dee worked to develop SOOTSOAP, a suite of all-natural, industrial-strength products designed for firefighter decontamination and scientifically proven to reduce toxicants.

Dee is known for her unparalleled passion for personal decontamination and working to safeguard the health and safety of firefighters and anyone exposed to toxins, bad odours and really tough cleanup.

Kate Riley
CEO
eye3concepts



Biography

Kate has extensive experience launching and growing businesses in the cannabis and technology sectors. Prior to her entrepreneurial ventures Kate was a consultant at McKinsey & Company, and a law clerk to Justice Rosalie Abella at the Supreme Court of Canada. Kate holds degrees in Chemical Engineering and Law.

Keshia Chanté

Celebrity Journalist, Singer-Songwriter
& Entrepreneur



Biography

Keshia Chanté is an award-winning singer, television host, and actor. She made history in 2005 when she became the youngest Juno Award winner, winning for R&B/Soul Recording of the Year. Since then, she's had numerous #1 songs, including eight top 10 radio singles, and has won five urban music awards along with multiple Juno Award and Canadian Radio Award nominations. Today, Keshia is the dynamic LA host of ET Canada, for which she won a Canadian Screen Award in 2022. At just 14 years old, Keshia became a teen superstar. During her 20+ years in the industry, she has released four albums, which have earned her numerous accolades and award nominations from the Canadian Urban Music Awards, the Canadian Radio Music Awards, the Juno Awards, and the MuchMusic Video Awards. Keshia was honoured with a star on the Walk of Fame in Brampton for her achievements in Canadian music and film. In 2013, Keshia rose to international prominence as the co-host of 106 & Park, alongside Bow Wow. She joined ET Canada as an LA correspondent in 2018, and has conducted interviews with many high-profile celebrities, including Michelle Obama, Robert De Niro, Jennifer Aniston, Kim Kardashian, Cate Blanchett, Denzel Washington, Mariah Carey, Drake, and many more. Keshia has also served as an international music judge on The World's Best, and has hosted, judged, and appeared on numerous shows including the BET Awards, Big Brother's Aftershow, Battle of the Blades, The Next Star, Top Chef Canada, Chopped Canada, and Match Game. Keshia has also had recurring guest star roles on Jann, Private Eyes, and CBS' Blood & Treasure. In addition, she hosts the YouTube series, Let's Kiki and Paramount+'s Peak of the Week. As a philanthropist and humanitarian, Keshia has supported multiple organizations and causes, including WE Charity, Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research, Joyful Heart Foundation, and World Vision International. She is also a motivational speaker and advocate for mental health awareness.

Kevin Carmichael

The Logic



Biography

Kevin Carmichael is The Logic's economics columnist and editor-at-large. Kevin Carmichael has spent more than two decades writing about economics, business and finance for outlets including Bloomberg News, The Globe and Mail and the Financial Post, where he also served as editor-in-chief. His journalism has been honoured by the Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing and the National Magazine Awards. He has worked as a correspondent in Ottawa, Washington, D.C., and Mumbai, and now lives in Montreal.

Khalid Hansraj

Program Director
InterGen



Biography

Khalid has 15 years of diverse experience in AB's tech ecosystem. He has launched and worked for several deep tech spin-off companies at the U of Alberta and U of Calgary, as well as worked for 3 accelerators and incubators.

His finance background includes helping grow Alberta Deal Generator - one of the first angel groups in the province, as well as financing and advising high growth companies thru Business Development Bank of Canada.

In his current role as Program Director at InterGen, he is designing and delivering programs to both scale-ups and investors.

Kim Furlong

CEO

Canadian Venture Capital and Private
Equity Association (CVCA)



Biography

Kim Furlong is the Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association (CVCA). An influential thought leader and trusted advisor with a proven track record in government and business. She is a respected corporate leader who brings people together, builds teams, mentors, and delivers tangible results. As a senior executive she has established an impressive national and international network, developed trusted relationships and led complex multi-stakeholder groups to consensus views. She is experienced in making her organization the go-to stakeholder and leading voice for their sector. She joined the CVCA in January 2019 after a decade in the corporate world, leading external affairs for Amgen Canada; a world-leading biotechnology company. Prior to Amgen, she held the position of Vice President Federal Government Relations for the Retail Council of Canada. Ms. Furlong has an expansive background in the public sector both as a federal government official and political advisor. She held the position of Director of Communications to the Foreign Affairs Minister and policy advisor to the Canadian International Trade Minister. An active board member, Furlong serves on the board of Carleton University, Spectrum Health Care and Front Row Ventures. A Quebec native, Furlong was born and raised in the picturesque town of Percé on the Gaspé Peninsula. She currently lives in Toronto with her husband Howie and her twin boys, commonly known as the peanuts.

Lance Laking

Managing Director & General Partner
Graphite Ventures



Biography

Lance is Managing Director, General Partner at Graphite Ventures. Lance is also an advisor and manager of investments within the legacy MaRS IAF portfolio. In addition Lance is a member of the Board at Expertfile, an active Board Observer and Angel Investor.

In parallel to MaRS advisory services and venture mentorship, Lance was Executive Chairman at Granite Networks leading up to the sale of the Company to Rogers Communications. He previously served as President and CEO of BTI Systems where he was responsible for securing more than US\$55M in growth capital (BTI acquired by Juniper Networks in January 2016). Prior to BTI, Lance founded and was Managing Director of the Canadian subsidiary of HUBER+SUHNER, a Swiss-based RF and optical component manufacturer.

Laurent Carbonneau

Director
Council of Canadian Innovators



Biography

Laurent Carbonneau is the Director of Policy and Research at CCI. He previously worked in federal politics in legislative, policy and issues management roles for a senior MP and in the NDP leader's office as well as on a national central campaign before working in government relations in the post-secondary education sector. He has master's degrees from Carleton University (political management) and the University of St Andrews (history) and a BA from Mount Allison University. He lives in Ottawa.

Linsay Moran

Co-Founder
Unwrapit



Biography

Linsay Moran is the Co-Founder of Unwrapit, a B Corp certified digital gifting and incentive platform focused on creating a more sustainable approach to gifting at any scale.

Linsay is an operational leader, committed to social impact businesses. Her career has allowed her the opportunity to work in the events industry in the UK and within the charitable sector in Canada. At WXN she championed women in leadership, and led the Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Awards™ and prior to co-founding Unwrapit, she had the unique privilege to work for an incredible engineering company making construction materials from recycled car tires. Linsay is a self-declared “generalist” and is always happy to speak to others who wear that badge proudly.

Last year Linsay and her husband Blake opened a Montessori-inspired cooking school (Little Kitchen Academy) in High Park in Toronto, a passion project allowing children to learn independence and confidence in the kitchen from a young age.

Linsay lives minutes from Lake Ontario with her husband, and two active kids that keep her in hockey arenas, and on the sidelines of baseball diamonds and soccer pitches all year round.

Lisa Zarzeczny

Co-Founder & CEO

Elevate



Biography

Lisa is a passionate advocate of Canada's tech and innovation economy. She is the Co-Founder and CEO of Elevate, a mission-driven not for profit organization at the intersection of technology, arts and social innovation. In 2017, Lisa was instrumental in launching Elevate Festival, growing it from 5,000 attendees to over 20,000 in three short years. Overseeing Festival programming, Lisa worked to welcome speakers including Former First Lady Michelle Obama, VP AI Gore, Eric Schmidt, Martha Stewart and more. Under Lisa's leadership, Elevate launched an innovation arm and flagship accelerator program and several new programs designed to support women-identified and non-binary founders.

Previously, Lisa oversaw marquee events and educational programs at MaRS Discovery District, one of the world's largest urban innovation hubs. She graduated from McGill University with a B.A Honours in History & Political Science and completed a post-graduate diploma for Project Management from Sheridan College.

Maggie Courish

Success Manager
Genesis



Biography

Maggie started with Genesis in 2022 as the Startup Development Coordinator (Pre-Incubation), utilizing the vast skillset in communication, facilitation, and collaboration she developed in her 10 years working in the education system. After two years of bringing our Evolution Program to new heights she has stepped into the role of Success Manager, Belonging. In this role Maggie continues to live our the Genesis core values of communication, collaboration and continuous improvement working with founders through our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives. Maggie looks forward to fostering growth through her people first approach to ensure Genesis founders find a sense of belonging in our startup community.

Manon Boisclair

COO & CCO

Linearis



Biography

Manon Boisclair is COO and CCO of Linearis Ventures is a responsible healthcare and AI investment fund facilitating the creation, improvement, validation of new medicines and health technologies.

She has 20+ years of international experience in executive management roles with NASDAQ-listed BioPharma companies (Merck, Novartis, Celgene and Intercept) in the US, Canada and Europe. She has extensive global operations, go-to-market, medical/marketing strategy expertise, has launched several oncology blockbusters and worked on early pipeline compounds in rare diseases and NASH.

Involved in private equity, Manon is an LP with Accelia Capital and an adviser to VC firms in life sciences. She is also a seasoned angel investor with a solid track record in business development, governance, and Series A & B fundraising. Manon is a board director to PE companies as well as on the governance committee of the Canadian Cancer Society.

Active in the startup ecosystem, she is a mentor to several entrepreneurs affiliated with Creative Destruction Lab, Centech, CTS and District3. Manon fosters trailblazing entrepreneurs who are laser-focused on the rapid scaling of their solutions. She is a healthcare clinician with a master's from University of Montreal and an executive MBA from McGill/HEC Montreal. In addition, Manon is a certified corporate board director from Harvard Business School, the Institute of Corporate Directors and obtained an ESG designation from Competent Boards.

Marianne Hudson

Founder and Executive Director Emeritus
Angel Capital Association (ACA)



Biography

Ms. Hudson founded and led the Angel Capital Association (ACA), the world's leading professional and trade association of angel investors, for 15 years before retiring in 2019. ACA offers education, smart practices, data analysis, public policy advocacy, and significant benefits and resources to its membership of more than 14,000 accredited investors across North America, who invest individually or through its 260 angel groups, accredited platforms, and family offices.

As an angel investor, Ms. Hudson makes her investments through three angel groups and two online platforms for accredited investors. She also sat on the board of the National Angel Capital Organization, ACA's colleague association in Canada and the advisory council of the Center for American Entrepreneurship, and is a national advisor for Pipeline Entrepreneurs, nationally and internationally. She currently serves as an entrepreneur mentor for several programs for VentureWell and Pipeline Entrepreneurs.

Previously Ms. Hudson was a director of entrepreneurship at the Kauffman Foundation, Vice President of the Mid-America Manufacturing Technology Center, and an associate in technology economic development organizations in Ohio and Kansas. She holds a B.A. in Economics and Political Science from the University of Kansas and an M.A. in Public Policy from Rutgers University.

[Angel Capital Association \(ACA\)](https://angelcapitalassociation.org)
angelcapitalassociation.org
[@ACAAngelCapital](https://twitter.com/ACAAngelCapital).

Marie D'loro
President
Deep Tech Canada



Biography

Marie D'loro is President of Deep Tech Canada, a network she founded under the name of NanoCanada in 2015 with a vision to connect the nanotechnology community across the country. Her leadership has supported partnerships and collaborations between academia, industry, and government to translate scientific breakthroughs to the marketplace.

Dr. D'loro is also a Senior Strategy Advisor at the University of Ottawa in the Office of the Vice President, Research. Before joining the University of Ottawa, she led the National Institute for Nanotechnology and the Institute for Microstructural Sciences at the National Research Council of Canada (NRC).

Marie has a Master's and Doctorate in Solid State Physics from the University of Toronto. She established Canada's first very low-temperature, high-magnetic-field laboratory to study quantum semiconductor devices, and later led one of Canada's first research programs on organic light-emitting devices.

Along the way, Marie has witnessed the inspiring depths of research and innovation excellence in Canada. And, she's seen the opportunities that remain untapped. It's what drives her to continue helping others access the resources, people, and support that bring their innovations to life.

Marie's personal passions include spending time with her granddaughter, knitting, and advocacy work for equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Matt He

Investment Associate
Brightspark



Biography

Matt is responsible for expanding Brightspark's deal flow across Canada and supporting the venture decision process.

Prior to joining Brightspark, Matt worked for two years as the Director of Investments for Front Row Ventures, Canada's first student-run venture capital firm, investing in the very best young founders in the Canadian ecosystem.

Matt developed a love for the entrepreneurship ecosystem, both the people in it and the technologies it creates, while building an educational non-profit that brought Blockchain education to university students. He has previously interned at FounderFuel in Montreal and White Star Capital in New York.

He holds a BSc from McGill University, studying Microbiology & Immunology and Computer Science, and has lived across Greece, China, and now Canada.

Nathalie Bélanger

Board Member

Anges Quebec



Biography

Nathalie Bélanger is an accomplished executive who has distinguished herself in e-commerce, loyalty programs, marketing, technology and customer relationship management (CRM). Authentic and passionate, Nathalie has demonstrated visionary leadership, particularly in the retail and loyalty sectors.

In 2016, she began investing in early stage technology start-ups. Despite her passion for new technologies, she now focuses mainly on impact investments including greentech, medtech, and cleantech. Her investments include Polystyvert, Gray Oncology, Dispatch Coffee, Puzzle, Minori, Blaise, Myni, etc. She is determined to invest in female founders and her portfolio companies are 50% women-led. Nathalie sits on the boards of Anges Quebec and La Guilde. She also acts as an advisor with several startups in which she has invested.

Neha Khera

Pre-Seed Investor



Biography

Neha Khera is a General Partner at 2048 Ventures, and has been an early-stage investor for nearly a decade. Prior to 2048 Ventures, Neha was a Partner at 500 Startups and invested in over 40 startups from around the globe. Neha was also co-founder of 500 Startups Canada, and led the fund's investments in Applyboard, Mejuri, Fightcamp and Benchsci. Neha has been immersed in the technology industry throughout her career. She started off as a software developer, and worked in circuitry design and telecommunications before making her way to leading tech innovation at one of Canada's top banks. Neha has published numerous research papers, and is an advisor to the Engineering Dean at the University of Waterloo. She is a strong supporter of women in technology, having launched and run Girls in Tech Toronto and a TEDx Women conference for a number of years. Neha obtained an Electrical Engineering degree from the University of Waterloo and an MBA from the Richard Ivey School of Business.

Nick Quain

Vice President
Invest Ottawa



Biography

As Vice President of Venture Development at Invest Ottawa, Nick leads all programming and support for start-ups, early stage and growth companies alike, while supporting Ottawa's entrepreneurial ecosystem as a whole. Under Nick's leadership, Invest Ottawa launched the IO Accelerator in 2018. Previously at CellWand, Nick was co-founder and CEO, where he drove all development, strategy and execution, while pioneering the use of abbreviated dialing codes in North America with the award winning #TAXI (Pound Taxi) service and subsequently in the mobile transportation space, with The Ride app. Highlights of Nick's accomplishments include raising several million in capital, closing industry first deals with every major wireless carrier in North America and architecting a marketing strategy that has created #TAXI as a national brand was used over 16 million times, while propelling CellWand to millions in revenue and profitability.

CellWand won numerous business and innovation awards, including the 2010 Canada's Top 10 Competition for Technology, Named one of the Hottest Innovation Companies in Canada, and one of the top 10 Wireless Companies to watch by IDC. Nick is currently a CEO in Residence and Executive Mentor at Telfer School of Management and has also served as a guest lecturer, business pitch judge and panel member at various business and entrepreneurial conferences and events. Nick graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Commerce with Honours in Marketing at the University of Ottawa in 1993. In 2009, Nick received the Young Achievers Alumni Award from the Telfer School of Management. In 2003, he was named to the Ottawa Business Journal's Top Forty Under 40 and was a judge for the same award for ten years.

Patricia Nielsen

Head of Startups

AWS



Biography

Patricia Nielsen is the Head of Startups for Amazon Web Services Canada, leading a national team that is working with companies that are using cloud computing and data and AI services from AWS to accelerate their growth into profitable, long-term businesses.

Her mission is to align people, programs, and resources from AWS and the community to support Canadian startups in achieving their full potential. With over two-decades of expertise in the technology sector, working with customers across all industries and sizes, Patricia combines her unique background in sales, marketing, technical enablement and support planning, and consulting, to advise companies on their go-to-market strategy, helping them turn technology into realized business value.

Peter Paul Van Hoeken

Founder & CEO
FrontFundr



Biography

Peter-Paul is Founder and CEO of FrontFundr, a FinTech company focused on supporting start-ups and young ventures in Canada with access to capital through innovative online investment-based funding solutions.

Peter-Paul has over 15 years of experience in finance, investment management and business consultancy. He worked in Vancouver as director business development with a finance & investment company in the renewable energy space and as finance director of a real estate investment fund. Prior to that Peter-Paul held a number of positions with several global banks in the areas of corporate strategy, corporate & investment banking and he worked as a senior management consultant in The Netherlands. Peter-Paul is a director of the National Board of the Private Capital Markets Association, PCMA (Canada).

Peter-Paul holds a masters' degree in Business Economics & Finance from the Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Peter van der Velden

Founder & Managing General Partner
Lumira Ventures



Biography

Peter van der Velden has 28 years of investment and operating experience and has helped build companies from start-up through to expansion in the life sciences, information technology, and consumer sectors. He has expertise in venture and buyout investing, transaction structuring and completion, strategic planning, business development, and operational management and restructuring. Responsible for the overall business operations of Lumira Ventures, Peter is active on the investment-side, focusing primarily on growth equity investments in companies that have made, or are close-to-making, the transition from development to selling and marketing their products. Peter's specific investment expertise includes non-traditional and consumer-oriented medicines, spin-outs of operating businesses, restructurings, and public companies. Peter works closely with both Federal and Provincial governments advising on policy matters related to healthcare innovation and innovation financing. As the Chairman of the CVCA, he worked closely with the Federal government on their Venture Capital Action Plan and was a member of the Government of Ontario's Health Innovation Council, whose mission was to enhance the adoption of Ontario-based innovation by the Ontario healthcare system. Throughout his career, Peter successfully participated on both sides of the value creation equation working both as an entrepreneur and as a partner and mentor to highly successful management teams.

Philippe Telio

Founder
Startupfest



Biography

Phil may have an engineering background, but this seasoned entrepreneur got a taste of the startup world fresh out of university. His journey started in the early 90s pre-internet era when he joined Public Technologies Multimedia—a startup that grew from a handful of people, to hundreds of people in just a few short years. Although he launched his career as a programmer, Phil was quickly drawn into the business side of startups and has pursued this vocation ever since. From PTM he joined Locus Dialogue, a speech technology firm acquired by Nuance Communications. In 2003 Phil decided to start his own business centered on bringing innovation to the enterprise market. Despite his 20+ years of executive experience driving strategic business development, his heart was always in startups so he created a series of events that have now come to be the largest events in Canada for entrepreneurs. Phil is also a board member of the Osmo Foundation, lecturer at McGill University and is the President and Chairman of the Montreal Startup Foundation. Phil is the Founder of Startupfest, the Elevator World Tour, and FWD50.

Pierre Chadi

Angel Investor



Biography

Former VP of Investments at Anges Quebec Capital. Twenty years of Board of Director experience and equity ownership with early stage software companies. Current Chair of the Board for mdf commerce, Keatext, Carré Technologies and RESAAS. Board member and chair of governance committee at National Angel Capital Organization (NACO).

Bilingual senior executive with over 30 years of leadership experience in IT sales and marketing management covering Hardware, Software, Business Solutions, Professional Consulting, SAAS Cloud Offerings and was Director of Eastern Region at Microsoft Canada for 19 years.

Proven board level ability to mentor and support early stage technology companies to grow in new markets. Will roll up the sleeves and dig in to provide operational help when needed.

Randall Howard

General Partner
Verdexus



Biography

Randall Howard is a senior serial technology executive committed to building global, high growth technology organizations using a “Venture 2.0” model. Randall is “hands-on” Executive Chair at VERDEXUS portfolio investments Iotum and Maintenance Assistant and Director at ExpertFile. From its acquisition in May 2004 to April 2006, Randall served as CEO of portfolio company, Coreworx, since acquired by Acorn Energy (NASDAQ: ACFN). Returning to Canada from his first US start up, Coherent, in 1984, he founded MKS one of Canada’s leading enterprise software vendors and whose products optimize internal software development within large corporations. As founder, Chairman and CEO he led growth to \$45 million revenue and 375 employees worldwide, including seven acquisitions. In 2011, MKS was sold to billion dollar Boston-based software company, PTC for US\$304 million. To help jumpstart the Waterloo investment scene, he helped launch Golden Triangle AngelNet where he serves as Board member and chair of the Selection Committee. He is also board member at Innovation Guelph, on the Wireless Advisory Panel at MaRS and Dean’s Advisory Council for Laurier Business. He is a past director and co-founder of Communitech and former CFO of Uniforum Association. As a seasoned board member/advisor, Randall has served a huge array of firms including Gore Mutual Insurance, Iotum, Coreworx, Necho, GoodContacts, Whitehill Technologies, Waterloo Maple Software, ARISE Technologies and Nanodesign many of which were successfully acquired or taken public. Randall holds an Honours B.Math from University of Waterloo. An active social entrepreneur, Randall is Treasurer of Roseneath Theatre Company, Co-founder/director of Elora Environment Centre, Chair of Centre Wellington Community Foundation and Board member of Flush Ink Performing Arts. He was recently invited to be one of a Group of Seven to help animate Governor General David Johnston’s Smart and Caring Nation vision for Canada’s 150th birthday in 2017.

Raymond Chik

Angel Investor



Biography

Raymond is a serial entrepreneur, and has co-founded several semiconductor start-ups in the areas of AI compute, ASIC and Analog/Mixed-Signal IP design services and image sensors.

Beside Kapik, Raymond is also a Co-founder of Untether AI, a fabless AI chip company, where he currently serves as a Consultant.

Before co-founding Kapik, Raymond was at InVisage Inc., where he was a founding member of its chip design team and served as its Director of Mixed-Signal Engineering. Before that, he was the first employee at Snowbush Microelectronics, a premium analog/mixed-signal design services/IP company (acquired by Gennum), Mosaid Semiconductor (acquired by Synopsys) and the Quantum Corporation, where he worked on disk-drive read channel chips.

Raymond holds a PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the University of Toronto and is a Senior Member of IEEE. Raymond was also a founder of the Toronto Chapter of the IEEE Solid State Society. In 2022, Raymond was honored with the ACCE Best Startup Award.

Sam Haffar

Partner
Real Ventures



Biography

After nearly a decade in Silicon Valley, Sam joined the Real Ventures team in 2014 with a great breadth of experience as a founder, strategist and marketer. Having leaped into the startup world barely before he graduated from university, he joined the founding team at Chegg, a leading education technology company that went public in 2013. After Chegg, Sam led growth, marketing and sales teams at some of the top early-stage tech companies in the Valley. Combined, his startups have raised well over \$200M from the world's best VCs. At Real, Sam works with founders on all aspects of their business from organizational development and product strategy to series A fundraising, growth and scale initiatives. After experiencing firsthand the extreme highs and lows of startup life, Sam has found that working with early-stage founders is his natural passion. Some of the companies he has led or co-led with his team at Real include: Mejuri, Paper, Sonder, Mindbridge, Looka and Uvaro.

Sandi Gilbert

Founder and CEO
DealPoint



Biography

Sandi Gilbert is involved with several ventures focused on supporting entrepreneurs as they navigate through start-up to scale-up.

She is the Managing Partner of InterGen Capital, a private venture fund designed to enable high potential companies to seize global opportunities. She leads the InterGen initiative, a not-for-profit that is building a community where ambitious entrepreneurs and emerging companies get connected with the talent and expertise of Alberta's business leaders. Sandi is the founder of DealPoint, a fintech solution that digitizes investor onboarding, investment execution and compliance for private capital markets activities for investment dealers, early-stage companies, angel and venture led financings and syndications.

Sandi Gilbert currently sits on the boards of the National Angel Capital Association and the Angel Capital Association in the USA. She is also a board member of Ocumetics Technology Corp, a member of the advisory board of NRC-IRAP and the New Economy advisory board of the Alberta Securities Commission.

Sandra Ng

Director & Investor
Capital Angel Network



Biography

Sandra Ng is a financial feminist, strategist and early-stage investor. She is passionate about sharing knowledge with women interested in seed stage investing based on her own experience of taking success in the public markets to diversify into the private markets. Sandra enjoys conducting comprehensive research to find the underlying truths behind teams, technology and markets; and synthesizing diverse perspectives to inform her investments.

Sandra has worked in strategy, business development and ESG in Canada, Singapore and the US. She received her B.A. from the University of British Columbia and a M. Sc. from the London School of Economics.

Senia Rapisarda

Managing Director
HarbourVest



Biography

Senia Rapisarda joined HarbourVest in 2014 to focus on partnership and direct co-investments in Canada and to expand HarbourVest's local presence in the market. Senia joined the Firm from BDC Venture Capital, where she was responsible for the establishment of a team focused on direct and indirect investments across Canada. Her previous experience includes positions at Nur Energie in London, London Business School, Nomura International, and Salomon Brothers, among other roles. Senia received a JD (summa cum laude) from LUISS University in Rome in 1987 and a Masters in Law and Economics (Fulbright Scholar) from Columbia University in 1989. An Italian and Canadian citizen, Senia speaks fluent Italian, French, and Spanish.

Shelley Kuipers

Co-CEO & General Partner
The51



Biography

Shelley Kuipers is investing in the world she wants to live in. As an activist in business, entrepreneurship and investment, Shelley likes to take on the status quo, and seek out democratized business models and platforms.

Previous to co-founding The51, Shelley founded crowdsourcing company Chaordix and technology and marketing firm, Stormworks. She was also the co-founder of IOVIA, based in London, UK. Shelley also collaboratively runs her family office Adventure Capital, with her partner and two sons. Shelley has had the opportunity to live and work in Canada, US, Germany and the UK, as well as lead global commercialisation efforts across markets in the US, UK/Europe, SE Asia/Australia and Africa.

Shelley has been early-stage investing for more than 20 years. Her investment experience started in oil and gas, but she quickly diversified her investments into the tech sector with a focus on innovation-driven companies across many sectors. To date their family office has made +30 early-stage investments.

Shelley's most notable investment was Solium, which was acquired by Morgan Stanley in 2019 for \$1.1B. Shelley supports many founders, and ventures as an advisor, board observer and director, including Bobbie Racette Founder and CEO of Virtual Gurus.

Sherri Faloon

Co-Founder and General Partner
OKGN WMAN



Biography

Sherri Faloon is one of the General Partners and founding members of OKGN WMAN Angel Fund (OKGN WMAN). She has enjoyed a long career in the software industry working for IBM and Cognos in several senior roles within the technical support, sales, product development, IT, and finance organizations. Sherri considers herself a strong generalist and adept at operations management, building strong practices and process for the business while remaining agile, efficient, and profitable. Passionate about delivering an exceptional customer experience, she helped shape and expand Cognos' highly regarded Customer Service organization. Since moving to Kelowna in 2018, Sherri became active in the Entrepreneurial ecosystem. She has been a mentor with the University of British Columbia Okanagan's Entrepreneurship program for over four years and mentored with the Kelowna Women in Business organization. In addition to her role with OKGN WMAN, she has also participated as an Angel Investor in the Accelerate Okanagan Angel Summit.

Sonya Shorey

Interim President & CEO
Invest Ottawa



Biography

Sonya Shorey, Interim President and CEO, for Invest Ottawa, Bayview Yards, and Area X.O, is a strategy executive and management consultant with more than 22 years of leadership experience with private and public organizations. With expertise in regional, national, and global technology, entrepreneurial, economic development, and innovation-based organizations, she specializes in corporate and communications strategy development and execution. This includes investment strategies that secure new cash and in-kind contributions from public and private sources. Since 2005, Sonya has led, strategized, authored and/or made a significant contribution to successful multi-year funding proposals and initiatives valued at more than \$203 million from municipal, provincial, federal, and international governments.

Sue Coueslan

Vice President, Strategy and Partnerships
Natural Products Canada



Biography

Natural Products Canada (NPC) is a powerful catalyst for over 1500 early stage, naturally-derived products and technologies. It helps to develop and de-risk these innovations through its highly experienced team, international network of industry and investors, and suite of non-dilutive capital programs that provide up to \$350K to address common challenges such as team, technology and financial models. Sue has spent the last 25 years helping Canadian innovation get on the world stage. She is responsible for NPC's strategic initiatives and key relationships that advance Canada's natural product industries. She is the quarterback behind NPC's special projects including the recent fermentation report, and events that connect NPC clients with investors and industry partners.

Tarek Sadek

Executive Director

TMU Innovation Boost Zone



Biography

Dr. Tarek Sadek is the Executive Director, the Innovation Boost Zone (IBZ) at TMU. Tarek is a passionate leader in innovation and technology with over 18 years of experience in entrepreneurship education and supporting new venture creation. In addition to his engineering background, Tarek received his PhD from McMaster University, where he spent years researching entrepreneurship in universities. Tarek works closely with passionate students as their instructor, advisor, mentor, and cheerleader.

Upasana Sharma

Vice President
TiE Toronto



Biography

Upasana is a true trailblazer and a dynamic entrepreneur. She is the Vice President of TiE Toronto and the Managing Director of TiE Toronto's Startup Visa program. An expert in the Canadian Start-up Visa Program, Upasana has successfully launched several global start-ups in the Canadian market. She is also the co-managing partner at Tangentia Ventures, a Designated Venture Capital group under the Canada Start-up Visa Program. With a wealth of legal experience from her time practicing law with one of Toronto's leading law firms, Lerner LLP, she brings unique insight into the Canadian legal and regulatory system - an invaluable asset backing her expertise in advocacy, negotiating, critical thinking, and problem-solving!

Upasana is an unstoppable force in providing exceptional service, which has positioned her as a trusted advisor to business owners, start-ups, and organizations. With such formidable background knowledge and experience, she is arguably building a best-in-class Startup incubation program in Canada's Start-up ecosystem, helping startups succeed in breaking into Canada's competitive market.

Being an entrepreneur herself, Upasana has the acumen and empathy to aid entrepreneurs through the daunting process of expanding their ventures to Canada. Her exceptional service has earned her numerous accolades, recognition, and affiliations. She sits on the Board of Angel One Network Inc.

Named a MacArthur Foundation Scholar for her dedication and drive, Upasana achieved academic success by obtaining an LLM degree from the University of Toronto.

Wendy Cukier

Academic Director
Diversity Institute



Biography

Dr. Wendy Cukier, Professor of Entrepreneurship and Strategy; Founder and Academic Director, Diversity Institute and Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub; Academic Director, Future Skills Centre

Formerly the Vice-President of Research and Innovation at the Ted Rogers School of Management, Wendy now leads diverse projects at the Diversity Institute, boasting over 100 staff and global partners. Renowned for her expertise in emerging technologies and entrepreneurship, she is co-author of the bestseller “Innovation Nation: Canadian Leadership From Java to Jurassic Park” and authored 200+ articles. Wendy spearheads the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, a Government of Canada-funded \$18-million initiative, as well as the Inclusive Innovation and Entrepreneurship Network. As the Academic Research Director of the Future Skills Centre, she manages a \$360-million portfolio, shaping policy like Bill C-25 through her work on DiversityLeads. She has received many awards including two Harry Jerome Diversity Awards, recognition in WXN’s 100 Most Powerful Women, and the Sara Kirke Award. She holds advanced degrees and honorary doctorates, including Canada’s Meritorious Service Cross. Notably, she founded multiple startups, social enterprises and nonprofits.

Wesley Kosiba

National Programming Lead
Lab2Market



Biography

Wesley Kosiba is the Lab2Market National Programming Lead & Deep Tech Startup Manager at TMU's Innovation Boost Zone. He is a seasoned tech ecosystem builder currently serving as the National Programming Lead for Canada's research commercialization program, Lab2Market. In this capacity, he plays a pivotal role in supporting some of Canada's most promising researchers in translating their ground-breaking research accomplishments into viable and scalable commercial opportunities. To date, Lab2Market has supported 100's of researchers nationwide, disbursing millions in funding, with our alumni actively contributing to a significant transformation in Canada's innovation landscape. Drawing on his experience as a former founder and a graduate of TMU's Master of Engineering Innovation and Entrepreneurship program, he possesses a profound understanding of methodologies and frameworks aimed at mitigating business risks.

Wissam Haroun

Angel Investor



Biography

Wissam is a battle-hardened founder, consultant, and investor with a comprehensive background in sectors ranging from AI and high-performance computing to finance and international business. He excels in identifying viable opportunities, guiding startup founders to prioritize effectively and develop resilient business strategies that drive profitability and impact. His broad expertise enables him to demystify complex challenges, offering actionable insights that foster lean and independent startups.

Known for a grounded, approachable and quick-witted demeanor, Wissam combines deep industry knowledge with a genuine curiosity for learning. He invests substantial time, energy, and resources into each venture, making him a trusted advisor and mentor to founders navigating the unpredictable startup landscape. His leadership not only steers startups towards success but also cultivates environments where innovation thrives.

When unplugging with family, Wissam's curiosity extends to frozen desserts, where he applies AI and mad-science to perfect the art of ice cream making.