



The Wisconsin Lieutenant Governor's  
**SMALL BUSINESS ACADEMY**

**Speaker Biographies** **MAY 5-8, 2026**

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## **Athena Agoudemos**

### **Associate State Director, Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**

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Athena Agoudemos is the associate director for the Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network, providing strategic leadership for the statewide infrastructure that supports entrepreneurs across Wisconsin. She oversees systems and operations that ensure consistent, high-quality advising reaches business owners at every stage of growth, drawing on expertise in business planning, strategy, and finance to strengthen the SBDC's collective impact.

Athena coordinates initiatives across Wisconsin's SBDC centers, developing delivery models that support collaboration, advisor effectiveness, and measurable outcomes. She is a collaborative leader committed to expanding access to capital and improving financial literacy, with a focus on clarifying business financials so entrepreneurs can make informed, data-driven decisions that support sustainable growth.

Previously, Athena served as center director for the SBDC at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and held roles focused on microfinance and economic development. Earlier, she worked in the specialty coffee industry.



## **Kola Alayande**

### **Associate Director, SCORE Wisconsin**

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Kola Alayande, Ph.D., is a seasoned business leader and entrepreneur with nearly three decades of experience in information technology, business consulting, education, and organizational leadership. He specializes in business development, leadership training, IT consulting, and nonprofit management, working closely with entrepreneurs, startups, and small business owners to implement practical, results-driven strategies that strengthen operations, enhance leadership, and drive sustainable growth.

His expertise spans business planning, operational improvement, digital transformation, leadership coaching, and strategic planning—grounded in both academic insight and real-world application. With professional experience at Fortune 500 companies such as IBM and GE HealthCare, along with teaching roles in business and technology at local colleges, he brings a well-rounded, solutions-oriented perspective to every engagement.



## **Stephanie M. Banks** **Strategic Operations Partner, Banks C-Suite**

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Stephanie M. Banks is an entrepreneurial mindset facilitator certified by the Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative, BizStarts Institute graduate, BizStarts Milwaukee Top 20 Influencer, Michael H. Boyce Award recipient, and McKinsey Black Executive Leadership Program alumna.

Stephanie is also the owner of Banks C-Suite, a consulting company focused on implementing thoughtful business strategies and processes designed to increase operational efficiency and wow stakeholders.

She served as a business partner and tax advisor for more than a decade at a publicly traded, U.S. multinational, CPG corporation managing U.S. cross-border transactions and engaging stakeholders across the globe, supporting offices in the U.S. in Colorado and Wisconsin and abroad in the United Kingdom and Czech Republic as part of special assignments.

Stephanie's education and credentials include admission to the Louisiana State Bar, LL.M. in taxation from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, J.D. from Southern University Law Center, and a bachelor's degree in accounting from Louisiana State University.



## **Emily Buchholz** **Associate Dean for Experiential Learning and Director, Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic, University of Wisconsin Law School**

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Emily Buchholz is the associate dean for experiential learning, overseeing the clinics, externships, simulation courses, and legal writing program at the University of Wisconsin Law School. Emily is also a clinical professor with the Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic. Prior to joining the University of Wisconsin Law School, Emily was executive director of the Corporate Institute at the University of Minnesota Law School. Before her career in higher education, Emily was a partner at a law firm in Minneapolis, where she worked with startups, entrepreneurs, and small businesses of all kinds.



## **Anomalous Campbell**

### **Founder and Executive Chef, Anomaly Catering**

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Chef Anomalous Campbell is the award-winning founder and creative force behind Anomaly Catering, a Milwaukee-based culinary company delivering bold, elevated, and unforgettable dining experiences across Wisconsin. A proud Milwaukee native, Chef Campbell's journey began in the 53206 community, where a lifelong passion for hospitality, flavor, and entrepreneurship took root. After more than 14 years of dedicated service with Milwaukee Public Schools, she turned a pursuit of independence and a yearning for better opportunities into a thriving business in 2019, never forgetting her No. 1 rule: to be a mom first. Since its founding, Anomaly Catering has grown from a grassroots backyard concept into a trusted full-service catering partner for weddings, corporate events, and community organizations. Chef Campbell is celebrated for bold comfort cuisine, precision in flavor development, and creating guest experiences that seamlessly blend tradition with innovation. Her leadership and impact have been recognized with multiple honors, including the Michael H. Boyce Award, BizStarts Inspirational Entrepreneur Award, Rising Phoenix Award, Community Leadership Award, and recognition and award from the Black Kitchen Initiative.



## **Blake Campbell**

### **Co-Owner, Anomaly Catering**

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A native of Milwaukee, Chef Blake Campbell was inspired early by his parents, both of whom were chefs. After refining his skills in several premier local restaurants, he joined the acclaimed Bartolotta Restaurant Group, serving as a chef at Mr. B's steakhouse. He later played a key role in launching kitchen operations for luxury hotel properties including The Westin and Stella Van Buren, earning recognition for culinary excellence and contributing to award-winning dining experiences, including Best Steakhouse in Milwaukee during his tenure.

One of the defining highlights of his career came when he was hired as a chef for the Milwaukee Bucks, followed by years of freelance work as a traveling private chef serving prominent individuals across the country. In 2024, Chef Campbell gained major local acclaim after winning both the Crowd Favorite and Judges' Favorite awards for his signature Smack 'N Cheeze. That same year, he expanded his leadership and business development through certified entrepreneur training and cohorts with the BizStarts Midwest Professors Symposium. Other awards include the Rising Phoenix Award and Black Kitchen Initiative award. Today, his long-term vision includes opening a culinary arts studio dedicated to empowering Milwaukee's youth through food, hospitality, and entrepreneurship continuing to build a lasting impact through both community and cuisine.



## **Terese Caro**

### **President and CEO, Legacy Redevelopment Corporation**

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Terese Caro believes that strong, thriving communities are built on opportunity—and that access to capital plays a critical role in making those opportunities possible. This belief guides her work as president and CEO of Legacy Redevelopment Corporation (LRC), a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) serving small businesses, housing developers, and neighborhood revitalization projects.

With more than 25 years of experience in banking and finance, Terese has led initiatives that expand access to funding for underserved communities. Since joining LRC in 2016, she has overseen a \$14 million loan portfolio and plays a vital role in the \$13.8 million redevelopment of Legacy Lofts—a transformative project that converted a historic Milwaukee factory into LRC’s headquarters and 64 mixed-income apartments.

Terese has held leadership roles with the Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation, Seaway Bank and Trust Company, and North Milwaukee State Bank. She serves on the Capital Magnet Fund Loan Committee for the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) and is active on several community boards. She holds both a Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Cardinal Stritch University.



## **Chrishella Roché Carter**

### **Founder, VIBEZ Creative Arts Space**

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Chrishella Roché Carter is a Milwaukee-area artist, educator, and community builder with a passion for making creativity a way of life. She is the founder of VIBEZ Creative Arts Space, a vibrant creative venue in Glendale that has been bringing people together through art for nearly eight years.

At VIBEZ, Chrishella creates immersive experiences—from paint and sip events and hands-on workshops to community gatherings that celebrate culture, connection, and joy. Her programming reflects her deep belief in art as a tool for resilience and belonging.

Holding a bachelor’s degree in elementary education and a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction, Chrishella also serves as an arts educator working with students in grades 1-8, nurturing creativity and self-expression in the next generation of artists.

Even through challenges like the pandemic, she found ways to keep her community connected, launching innovative solutions like Paint-to-Go kits that brought the VIBEZ experience directly to people’s doors.

Chrishella is a storyteller, a space-maker, and a champion of community—one brushstroke at a time.



## **Christopher Castillo**

### **Marketing and Business Consultant, Castillo Consulting Services, and Website Product Manager, Summit Credit Union**

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Christopher M. Castillo is a marketing and digital strategy professional with more than 30 years of experience in marketing, advertising, business development, and communications, supported by an MBA and BBA in business and marketing. He specializes in connecting data-driven strategy, content, user experience, and technology to deliver measurable growth and high-performing digital experiences.

He is deeply committed to helping entrepreneurs and small businesses succeed. Through Castillo Consulting Services, Christopher has supported more than 300 entrepreneurs, and as founder of the Latino Entrepreneurial Network of Southeastern Wisconsin (LEN), he teaches business planning, marketing, and the practical use of artificial intelligence (AI) to drive growth and innovation. He is a lifelong learner who actively explores emerging technologies and applies them to create meaningful impact for both organizations and the community. He also has a strong passion for teaching and sharing knowledge.

Recently, Christopher joined Summit Credit Union as website product manager, leading the strategy, content, and continuous optimization of the organization's digital platform to improve engagement, accessibility, and conversion, partnering cross-functionally to align user needs with business goals.



## **Julie Collins**

### **Owner and Coach, KnotMagic**

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Julie Collins is the owner and coach of KnotMagic, a business growth firm that ties sales, marketing, and talent strategies to leaders' goals by filling resource gaps, providing education, and building accountability. Julie has more than 30 years of experience in the sheet metal fabrication and powder coat finishing industry, leading various teams in talent recruitment and development, operations, and sales and marketing. She successfully led a division of a manufacturer into the medical device market with consistent year-over-year growth of 30%, changing the revenue mix within the organization. She is passionate about change management—connecting teams to revenue growth.



**Frank Demarest**  
**District Director, SBA Wisconsin Office**

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Frank Demarest is the director for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Wisconsin District Office. As the director, he is responsible for the day-to-day management of SBA programs throughout the state. He also is the veteran representative for the district and works with veterans regarding veterans' programs.

Demarest joined the SBA in 2012. He has an international background and program/project management and business development experience.

Prior to coming to the SBA, he worked for the U.S. Army as an Army civilian, Motorola, and other firms in a variety of business-related positions. He is a U.S. Marine veteran.

Demarest graduated from DePaul University in Chicago with a degree in international studies and later obtained a master's in business administration, also from DePaul.



**Gina Ferraro**  
**State Director, Wisconsin Small Business Development Center, and Business Affairs Director, Office of Business and Entrepreneurship**

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The state director of the Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and business affairs director for the Office of Business and Entrepreneurship (OBE), Gina Ferraro has extensive experience with complex budgets, financial analysis, grant management, and effective collaboration. Those who have the pleasure of working with Gina know she is approachable and always ready to talk numbers.

One aspect of her job she really enjoys is working with a great team because she believes you can accomplish so much more when you work together. Projects become especially meaningful to Gina when they help translate abstract numbers into a concrete value.

Outside of work, spending time with family is important to Gina. She particularly enjoys keeping up with her two daughters' activities.



**Katherine Fossler**  
**Director, University of Wisconsin-River Falls Small Business Development Center**

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For the past 10 years, Katherine Fossler has been part of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Small Business Development Center, where she serves as director, leading the center and actively supporting the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. During that time, she has worked with more than 1,000 business owners to help start, grow, and strengthen their businesses. As a business owner herself, Katherine understands both the rewards and challenges of entrepreneurship. Her favorite part of the work is helping turn ideas into reality by connecting clients with the right mix of encouragement, resources, and meaningful relationships.

## **Matthew Frost**

### **Government Contract Specialist, Wisconsin Procurement Institute**

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Matt Frost is a government contract specialist with the Wisconsin Procurement Institute (WPI), Wisconsin's APEX Accelerator, where he assists businesses in understanding and meeting the requirements necessary to pursue federal, state, and local contracting opportunities. Drawing on nearly a decade of experience in cybersecurity, Matt helps companies navigate complex compliance standards, including those related to information security, to strengthen their readiness for government contracting.



## **Joy Goberville**

### **Certified Mentor Coach, SCORE Madison**

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In addition to expertise in leading sales, recruiting, and leadership teams for more than 30 years in the staffing industry, Joy founded Enlighten 360 Degrees LLC in 2017. She has been a certified SCORE mentor for the Madison chapter since 2024. She is also a certified instructor for the ChangeMindset Co.

Joy guides clients to determine when to work "on" their business or when to work "in" their business. She also supports leaders as they develop their internal team--motivating and retaining them, enhancing customer service skills, providing business etiquette training for new hires along with succession planning, creating and consistently implementing a social media outreach campaign to differentiate themselves, and creating effective prospect plans for future growth.

She is also on the SCORE National AI Committee, which expands clients' sales strategies and creates brand awareness. She mentors students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and coaches women business owners. In her spare time, she volunteers for many other nonprofit organizations. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a bachelor's in communications.



## **Kristina Gomez**

### **Library Services Manager for Business and Technology, Milwaukee Public Central Library**

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Kristina Gómez is the library services manager for business and technology at Milwaukee Public Central Library. She leads a team of business librarians dedicated to providing innovative resources and a supportive environment for entrepreneurs to grow and succeed. Kristina is committed to building awareness of libraries as a vital hub of innovation and economic growth. She earned her master's in library and information studies from the University of Wisconsin Information School and is trained as a business and patent and trademark librarian.



## **Ibrahim Harun** **Founder, IH Concepts**

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Ibrahim is a creative leader and founder of IH Concepts, a firm built on the belief that design should solve real problems and strengthen communities. His work centers on helping businesses find clarity in their message and confidence in their brand. He brings a thoughtful, people-first perspective to creativity—one that values adaptability, curiosity, and meaningful impact over trends.



## **Don Hill** **Vice President, Dakonte Product Group Inc.**

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Don Hill is co-owner of Dakonte Product Group, a Wisconsin-based manufacturer serving business customers through brands including TIE Office-Mates and Great Menu Covers. He works across operations, sales, product development, and digital strategy, with a focus on helping his small business compete for larger corporate and institutional opportunities.

His experience comes from the day-to-day reality of running and growing a small company: improving processes, strengthening fulfillment, sharpening product positioning, and building the credibility larger buyers expect from suppliers. Don brings an owner's perspective to the challenge of scaling beyond small orders and earning trust in more demanding contract environments.



## **Stacy Jeffers** **Founder, That's Right, Sweetie**

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Stacy Jeffers founded That's Right, Sweetie, a fast-growing gourmet confection company redefining corporate gifting as a relationship-building strategy. A former educator and school principal, Stacy brings a lifelong passion for cultivating connection into the business world, facilitating the creation of meaningful traditions that turn thoughtful gifting into lasting impressions.

Under her leadership, That's Right, Sweetie has scaled rapidly, producing tens of thousands of handcrafted, chocolate-dipped treats for corporate clients, events, and strategic partnerships. The company specializes in customizable products, including branded fortune cookies, pretzel rods, and curated gift boxes that elevate client experiences, employee recognition, and brand touchpoints.

Stacy's approach blends creativity with business strategy, positioning gifting not as an expense, but as a tool for retention, loyalty, and growth. She works closely with corporations, referral-based businesses, and community organizations to create memorable moments that strengthen relationships and build traditions over time.

Stacy brings a unique perspective on scaling a product-based business, leveraging brand voice, and building a company rooted in connection, consistency, and intentional growth.



## **Artie and Debbie Johnson**

### **President and Vice President, Johnson's One Stop Shopping Service Inc.**

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Artie and Debbie Johnson are third generation owners of Johnson's One Stop Shopping Service in Seneca. Originally opened as a general store in 1937, Johnson's One Stop now serves Crawford and surrounding counties with full-service grocery and fresh meat, hardware, farm supplies, power equipment and tire service as well as full-service lumber, building materials, and architectural design. Artie and Debbie are joined by their three sons—Brandon, Jordan, and Thomas—as well as Artie's brother Brad.

When not minding the store, Artie and Debbie serve on various volunteer boards and committees within the community and enjoy time with grandchildren and family as well as traveling to the family cabin in northern Wisconsin.



## **Michelle Kaczmarowski**

### **Procurement & Supplier Development Manager, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District**

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Michelle Kaczmarowski is the procurement and supplier development manager at the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. Michelle leads strategic procurement initiatives and supplier development efforts that expand access to contracting opportunities. Michelle has more than 15 years of experience in public procurement and supplier development and holds bachelor's degrees in architectural engineering and construction management from Milwaukee School of Engineering.



## **Josh Klemons**

### **Digital Storyteller and Strategist**

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Josh Klemons is an award-winning digital storyteller and strategist and the founder of Reverb Communications, a digital agency that helps progressive campaigns, brands, and organizations win the internet.

He's worked on 100+ political campaigns—from city council to U.S. Senate—and helped just as many brands navigate social media, email, paid ads, and more.

He's also the host of "Hello Merge Tag," a podcast about the intersection of politics and social media.

Learn more at [joshklemons.com](http://joshklemons.com).



**Jennifer Makary**  
**Vice President of Operations, KnotMagic**

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Jennifer Makary is vice president of operations and a marketing coach at KnotMagic, where she partners with business leaders to design and align marketing and sales strategies that accelerate growth and advance organizational goals. With 15 years of experience, Jennifer brings both strategic vision and hands-on leadership to every engagement, helping organizations translate big ideas into measurable results.

Throughout her career, she has led startups and Inc. 5000 fastest-growing companies through high-impact initiatives, including full-scale brand transformations, product launches, and company-wide employee engagement campaigns. Having supported more than 40 brands across a range of industries, Jennifer is known for her ability to unite teams, clarify positioning, and build marketing systems that scale alongside the business.

Jennifer is a trusted advisor and educator for leaders and organizations seeking practical, growth-focused marketing insight. She has shared her expertise through the Independent Business Association of Wisconsin (IBAW), WMEP Manufacturing Solutions, Scale Up Milwaukee, The Water Council, Concordia University Wisconsin, and TEMPO Milwaukee.



**Eugene Manzanet, Ph.D.**  
**Senior Director of Diverse Business Development, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation**

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Eugene Manzanet, Ph.D., is the senior director of diverse business development at the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, where he leads a statewide strategy to support and grow diverse businesses through technical assistance, capacity building, and strategic partnerships. He brings more than 25 years of experience in banking and economic development, including senior leadership roles at PNC Bank and U.S. Bank focused on community development and small business growth. Eugene successfully defended his dissertation in 2022, earning a doctorate in leadership for the advancement of learning and service, with research centered on nonprofit innovation and sustainability through business accelerator models. His work and scholarship reflect a lifelong commitment to inclusive economic development and community impact.



**Mark McCleary**  
**Mentor and Racine, Kenosha, Walworth Branch Leader, SCORE**

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Mark has led a career in executive management, strategic planning, marketing, product management, and sales. His diverse experience spans family business, private equity, consumer and commercial products, retail, health care, and professional services.

As a marketing executive, Mark has managed iconic global brands including Perlick, Beko, Brunswick Bowling & Billiards, Life Fitness, Hammer Strength, Planters nuts, Life Savers candy, Windex glass cleaner, and Glade air fresheners.

He currently splits his time between consulting and being a volunteer mentor with several Midwest nonprofit organizations including: SCORE, Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, BizStarts, gBETA Gener8tor, Racine County Economic Development Corporation, Latino Chamber of Commerce, LGBT Chamber of Commerce, and Robert E. Ellsworth Correctional Center.



**Megan McKinney**  
**Vice President, Federal Growth Strategy, CyberNINES (a ControlCase Company)**

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Megan McKinney is a recognized leader within the Defense Industrial Base and a trusted connector across aerospace, defense, and cybersecurity communities. She is known for bringing together leaders from industry, government, and the cybersecurity ecosystem to strengthen the resilience of the defense supply chain. With deep experience supporting aerospace and defense organizations, she helps contractors navigate complex cybersecurity requirements while enabling growth and innovation.



**Amy Narr, MSP**  
**Business Consultant, Small Business Development Center**

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Amy Narr is a business consultant at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She holds an undergraduate degree in business administration and marketing and a master's in sustainable peacebuilding, both from UW-Milwaukee, and is currently working toward a master's in business administration from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Amy was a Peace Corps volunteer in Peru, where she worked in microfinance and economic development and became fluent in Spanish. These experiences have strengthened her foundation in core business principles and her capacity for complex problem-solving, systems thinking, and research. With six years of running her own restaurant and 10 years in various economic development and lending roles, Amy brings a wealth of knowledge to her clients.



### **Jessica Noth**

#### **Vice President and Regional Manager, Wisconsin/Plains, Community Reinvestment Outreach, BMO**

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Jessica Noth is regional manager for community reinvestment outreach across BMO Bank's Wisconsin and Plains footprints. A community development professional with 20-plus years of experience directing and managing programs in the nonprofit sector both locally and internationally, Jessica brings her expertise to BMO's community reinvestment goals. She works to bring affordable mortgage products, financial wellness, and lending resources to help people and communities build wealth and stability.

Previously she served six years as the program manager and then director of housing initiatives for a Milwaukee neighborhood. Prior to that she served in the Peace Corps after running a youth program at Milwaukee's Eastbrook Church. She is a proud resident of the city of Milwaukee and passionate advocate for empowering thriving communities.



### **Christina Outlay, Ph.D.**

#### **Executive Director, Maydm, and Associate Professor of Information Technology, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater**

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Dr. Christina Outlay has a background in corporate IT, nonprofit leadership, program development, project management, and higher education. She is an associate professor of information technology at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She is also the executive director of Maydm, which provides girls and youths of color with the skills, experiences, and connections to pursue careers in STEM, and was a founding director of a nonprofit prior to joining Maydm. She has a bachelor's in psychology and a master's in information systems from DePaul University and a doctorate in management information systems from the University of Illinois Chicago, along with 12 years of IT corporate experience and 15 years of academic teaching and research experience. Dr. Outlay also holds several project management certifications, including Project Management Professional (PMP), Certified ScrumMaster (CSM), and Professional Scrum Master (PSM). She has four children with her husband, Terrell.



**Maria Perl**  
**Owner, Spark Ops Metalworks**

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Maria Perl is the owner of Spark Ops Metalworks, a woman- and minority-owned metal fabrication company in Fond du Lac that provides end-to-end manufacturing and structural solutions to both local and global clients and world-class events like the Super Bowl and Formula 1.

Prior to her tenure with Spark Ops starting in 2022, Maria worked as chief doctor and chief of medical area in Mexico before moving to the United States in 2018. She has diversified her career into various sectors, including research, management, operations, and human resources.

Maria was selected for the Packers Mentor-Protégé Program and was paired with Jim Filter, executive vice president at Schneider National. In February, Spark Ops Metalworks was recognized with the 2025 Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Spotlight Award for Excellence in Product & Process Innovation.

Maria graduated from Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina in Cuba as a doctor in medicine and is continuing her education with a master's program focused in neuro-linguistic programming.



**Brian Pittelli**  
**Buyer, City of Madison**

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Brian Pittelli has been a buyer with the city of Madison for 11 years. He works across the city to help agencies procure goods and services. In addition, Brian has worked to help streamline and standardize the procurement processes, helping to save time and money.



**Jessica Potter**  
**WisPro Resources and Special Programs Section Chief,  
Wisconsin Department of Administration State Bureau of  
Procurement**

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Jessica Potter is the WisPro Resources and Special Programs section chief for the Wisconsin State Bureau of Procurement. With nearly a decade of experience working for the state and an entire career devoted to helping others, Jessica is known for her excellent customer service. She specializes in supporting the systems, trainings, and resources that make state procurement possible, including working with members of the vendor community to ensure they understand the state's procurement processes.



**Lucie-Anne Radimsky**  
**Supplier Diversity Manager, Michels Corporation**

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Lucie-Anne Radimsky serves as supplier diversity manager at Michels Corporation. Her career spans leadership roles in both the public and private sectors across multiple countries and continents. A California native now based in the Milwaukee area, Lucie-Anne is deeply passionate about nature and her family and is committed to strengthening communities through thoughtful dialogue and strategic resource distribution.



**Myra Renee**  
**CEO and Founder, Anesis Center for Marriage and Family Therapy**

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Myra Renee is the founder, owner, and visionary behind Anesis Therapy. She opened the clinic in 2016 as the sole therapist and through her passion for culturally responsive and accessible mental health care, she has grown the organization into a dynamic team of more than 50 staff members serving individuals, couples, families, and communities.

Myra is known for her empathetic, strength-based therapeutic approach that focuses not on deficits, but on potential, resilience, and generational strengths. Her work is deeply influenced by the concept of Sankofa, a West African principle that emphasizes learning from the past to build a stronger future. This philosophy guides both her clinical work and her leadership, helping clients and clinicians understand their histories while building healthier futures.



**Marjorie Rucker**  
**Executive Director, The Business Council Inc., and Chair and Administrator, Ethnic and Diverse Business Coalition (EDBC)**

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Marjorie Rucker is executive director of The Business Council Inc., an organization that helps existing small businesses grow through strategic connections and technical assistance. Rucker also serves as chair and administrator of the Ethnic and Diverse Business Coalition (EDBC), which consists of 14 chambers of commerce and community development financial institutions that serve ethnic and diverse businesses in starting, growing, and thriving in Wisconsin. The EDBC established the Wisconsin Diverse Enterprise Network (WiDEN), which is a tool that serves all businesses throughout the state. Marjorie has 20 years of experience working in community and economic development.



## **Patrick Snyder** **Founder, BizStarts Institute, and President, BizStarts**

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Patrick Snyder has tremendous experience running social and for-profit ventures. His largest wins are in the area of organizational growth. At age 27, Patrick started, grew, and sold Shoreline Magazine. The publication went from having two to 20 employees in roughly three years with Patrick as founder and CEO. As executive director, he transformed the Illinois Travel and Tourism Association, Visit Illinois, from a 30-member club into a federation of Illinois tourism associations with a membership in the hundreds of thousands while increasing the budget by a factor of six.

Patrick has excellent consulting and operations experience. While working with best-selling author Steve Kaplan, Patrick and Steve focused on “consulting for growth” for small to midsize companies, associations, and chambers of commerce. Patrick also performed big client sales and customer service training events and consulting for companies like Panasonic, AT&T, Frito-Lay, and Oracle.

He is a former adjunct professor at Kendall College and Roosevelt University. As an educator, he is constantly searching for ways to enrich the lives of students. Patrick is also a published contributing author in the highly acclaimed book “The Start-up Student” and has served on the advisory boards of several companies.

Patrick served as executive director of the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship for five years, in which he grew reserves from \$28,000 to more than \$500,000. Currently, Patrick is the president of BizStarts and the founder of BizStarts Institute, a system of learning developed at the University of Notre Dame. BizStarts supports entrepreneurship in underserved communities and provides education, training, one-on-one coaching, and connections to resources. All services are free of charge. Revenues and impact have tripled at BizStarts since Patrick took over.

He has a bachelor’s in communications from Eastern Illinois University, an IOM designation from the U.S. Chamber’s Institute for Organizational Management at the University of Notre Dame, and a graduate certificate in leadership from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



## **Lizz Tsosie Stachura** **Owner, Tootsie’s Tea**

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Lizz Stachura is the founder of Tootsie’s Tea, a leaf tea company based out of Milwaukee. With a passion for tea, a background in art, and a strong connection to community, Lizz’s mission is to create a brand that delivers a full sensory experience through flavor, color, and intention.



**Anna Steinfest**  
**President and CEO, AFF Research LLC**

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Anna Steinfest is an entrepreneur and economic development leader with more than 20 years of experience building programs that support small business growth and community impact. She is best known as the creator of the Green Bay Packers Mentor-Protégé Program, a nationally recognized initiative that connects small businesses with established companies to foster mentorship, expansion, and long-term success.

Since immigrating to the United States in 1998, Anna has focused on advancing entrepreneurship by developing sustainable, partnership-driven programs. With a master's degree in economics, her work emphasizes practical, scalable solutions that drive job creation and long-term economic growth while reducing reliance on public funding.

Anna is the president of AFF Research LLC and has contributed to initiatives at the state, federal, and international levels, including work with the U.S. Department of State and global advisory roles. She remains actively engaged in the business community through organizations such as the Green Bay Chamber of Commerce.

Her work has earned multiple recognitions, including the Woman of Influence award and the Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Award.



**Genia Stevens**  
**CEO, Jumpstart South Central Wisconsin**

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Genia Stevens is a nonprofit executive, entrepreneur, and community leader with more than 25 years of experience in business development and economic empowerment. She is the founder and CEO of Jumpstart South Central Wisconsin, an equity-driven nonprofit focused on strengthening the regional economy by providing underserved entrepreneurs with the training, technology, and support needed to build and grow sustainable businesses that benefit their communities.

Genia also served as a Rock County Board supervisor from 2021 to 2025, demonstrating her deep commitment to public service and community advancement. Her leadership is grounded in a clear focus on creating opportunities, removing barriers, and helping others succeed. Through her work, she continues to support entrepreneurs while advancing equity, fostering innovation, and contributing to long-term community growth.



**Jaci Sulley**  
**North Central Regional Director, Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation**

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Jaci Sulley joined the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) in August 2024 and currently serves as the regional director for the North Central region. In this role, she champions entrepreneurship, small business growth, and economic equity. She works closely with local leaders and partners across the state, ensuring that entrepreneurs have access to the resources, training, and support they need to thrive.



### **Aina Vilumsons**

#### **President and Executive Director, Wisconsin Procurement Institute (WPI)**

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Aina Vilumsons is president and executive director at the Wisconsin Procurement Institute (WPI), Wisconsin's APEX Accelerator. WPI is funded by the Department of Defense Office of Small Business Programs and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to provide no-cost technical assistance to Wisconsin businesses competing in the government marketplace.



### **Erika Villafuerte**

#### **Founder and Director, Salud First**

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Erika Villafuerte is the founder and director of Salud First. She is a speaker and consultant who helps raise awareness regarding how our emotional state can impact our personal well-being and professional success. Erika also addresses barriers to health care and social inequalities with workshops and one-on-one sessions, in addition to assisting people in navigating health insurance and wellness resources so that they feel more informed about the options and support available to help them live healthier lives.



### **Alex Ysquierdo**

#### **Director, Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program**

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Alex Ysquierdo, MSc, leads Wisconsin's Supplier Diversity Program, which helps minority-, women-, and veteran-owned businesses compete for and secure state contracts. With more than 25 years in community development and community banking, he's dedicated to expanding economic opportunities by connecting businesses with resources, relationships, and access to state procurement opportunities. Alex's work centers on building a stronger Wisconsin—where communities grow together and thrive as one.