

GCU ALUMNI

2025 | 30 UNDER 30 LIST





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Jason Bartley Jr.

2017 | Bachelor of Arts in Digital Design with an
Emphasis in Animation, Minor in Digital Film

2019 | Master of Arts in English with an Emphasis in Education

CURRENT POSITION Web Designer at Showit

INDUSTRY Marketing

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

My name is Jason, but friends call me JBJ. I'm an Arizona native and lifelong creative who's happiest when I'm making something, whether that's a website, a short film or a coffee table out of scrap metal. My creative background covers everything from photography and animation to sculpture, welding and woodworking. If it involves a camera, canvas or blowtorch, I've probably tried it at least once. These days, I work as a web designer at Showit, where I'm helping lead a complete rebrand alongside an awesome team of creatives. I also run a freelance business, collaborating with clients to bring their ideas to life through thoughtful design and storytelling. At the core of everything I do is a deep belief that creativity is a gift from the Creator, the original artist and designer. My faith fuels my work and reminds me that making beautiful, meaningful things isn't just a job. It's an act of worship and a reflection of something much bigger. Whether designing a website, capturing a wedding or illustrating just for fun, I see creativity not just as a skill, but as a sacred calling.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

I've found that my career has been less about flashy moments and more about faithful steps: the quiet wins, open doors and unexpected turns that shaped the path I'm on today. It began with an internship at a local design firm, where I got my first real taste of professional creative work. That early opportunity sparked something in me, and not long after, I took a leap of faith into full-time freelance design.

That decision led to my first major client, a downtown Phoenix church called Roosevelt Community Church, where I refined my skills through consistent, mission-driven work. One of the most meaningful milestones came from photographing my first 100 weddings. Being trusted to capture such deeply personal, once-in-a-lifetime moments taught me more than just visual storytelling. It shaped my understanding of empathy, timing and the value of creative work in people's lives.

I've also worked as an art director and production designer on several commercial shoots for Portacool, an international cooling company. And now, at Showit, I get to work with a team of talented creatives to build tools that inspire others to create. I love being part of a company whose mission is to cultivate the creativity inside every person.



Jason Bartley Jr.

**2017 | Bachelor of Arts in Digital Design with an
Emphasis in Animation, Minor in Digital Film**

2019 | Master of Arts in English with an Emphasis in Education

CAREER HISTORY

My professional design career kicked off while I was still at GCU. In 2016, I was headhunted by a local design firm, Boom Digitus, where I started as a paid intern and quickly evolved into a part-time designer role. Around that same time, I began picking up independent design and photography projects, laying the foundation for what would eventually become a thriving freelance business.

After graduation, I returned to GCU to serve as a university counselor while working toward my master's degree. Then in 2019, I took a leap of faith and stepped into freelance design full-time, an endeavor I continue to this day.

Over the last five years, I've had the opportunity to collaborate with a wide range of companies, creatives and entrepreneurs, creating physical and digital designs that are just as strategic as they are beautiful. Through those projects, and a healthy dose of networking, I eventually landed a spot on the marketing team at Showit, a small-but-mighty software-as-a-service company based in Chandler, Arizona. Showit's code-free, drag-and-drop web builder now powers tens of thousands of websites. It's been an incredible place to grow, design and create alongside an amazing team.

IMPACT ON FIELD

I believe creativity is most powerful when it's shared, not hoarded. Over the last eight years, I've had the privilege of mentoring young photographers who've gone on to build successful businesses of their own. Watching their creativity take root and flourish has been one of the most rewarding parts of my journey.

I've also served on the leadership team for the Spark Conference, a multi-day event that brings together design and branding professionals from around the world to grow, connect and elevate their businesses. It's been an incredible space for building community and investing in the future of the design industry.

As a creative professional, I strive to listen well, serve humbly and help clients not just meet their goals, but sometimes discover them along the way. I bring my vision and experience to the table, but my priority is always to put the client first.

One of my greatest joys? Using my design and storytelling skills to serve churches across the Valley. Whether through visuals, media or brand support, I've been honored to help elevate the way the gospel is communicated — with clarity, beauty and creativity. For me, having an impact isn't about going viral. It's about showing up with integrity, doing good work and helping others find their voice along the way.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

My creative journey started early. In 2012, I was the youngest artist ever accepted into the One Man's Treasure Sustainable Art Challenge, where I went on to win Best in Show. Shortly after, I received the first-place Judge's Choice Award in the Young Playwrights Festival for a play I wrote, directed and acted in.

In college, I was honored to receive Best Story in the 2017 48-Hour Film Challenge and earn a spot on GCU's President's List four years in a row before graduating summa cum laude. During my time at GCU, I also served as a head life leader, a role that dramatically shaped my leadership style.

And while those accomplishments look good on paper, my real crowning achievements call me "Dad."



Jason Bartley Jr.

2017 | Bachelor of Arts in Digital Design with an Emphasis in Animation, Minor in Digital Film

2019 | Master of Arts in English with an Emphasis in Education

ORGANIZATIONS

I'm primarily involved with two Phoenix-based churches: Roosevelt Community Church and Open Door Fellowship. At both, I've had the opportunity to serve through creative direction, video production and design, lending a hand in shaping how each community communicates the gospel. Additionally, I have done creative work with Surge Network, a conglomeration of churches across the Valley that serve the advancement of the Kingdom in Arizona.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Though naturally outgoing and gregarious, I've learned that good leadership doesn't always mean being the loudest voice in the room. Over the years, I've shifted from always leading the charge to playing a more flexible, supportive role. I'll step up when needed, but you'll just as often find me behind the scenes, helping the whole team thrive in whatever way I can.

My leadership style is hands-on and rooted in honesty. People often come to me for design critiques or help working through life's many curveballs, and I make it a point to offer feedback that's both real and encouraging. I'll always highlight what's working, but I won't shy away from naming areas of growth. I believe the best leaders help others confront their limitations, not to tear them down, but build them up into something stronger.

That drive to challenge and uplift others comes from my faith. I try to model my leadership after the life of Jesus: serving others, speaking truth with compassion and calling people to their full potential. Whether I'm offering creative feedback or helping a friend find clarity in the chaos, I aim to be both a grounding presence and the impetus for personal growth.

ADVICE

If I could give one piece of advice, it's this: say yes more often. You never know which opportunity, no matter how small, might change everything. My career? It was jump-started by simply saying yes to an internship. Every major milestone since? The direct result of a hundred "yesses" and staying open to where God was leading.

Don't underestimate the power of networking. By that, I mean real, intentional relationship-building. It's not about shaking hands and swapping LinkedIn profiles. It's about showing up, being dependable and investing in people for the long haul.

And don't wait around for someone to teach you. Be curious. Relentless. You're in charge of your own education. Always be learning, experimenting and leveling up, even if no one's assigning the homework.

Success won't always look like you expected it to, and that's okay. Your job isn't to predict the path. It's to walk it with courage, creativity and conviction. The rest will come. Seek Jesus, act with integrity and the rest will sort itself out, seriously. Character will take you farther than talent ever could.



Destiny Bradd

2022 | Bachelor of Science in Applied Entrepreneurship, Minor in Hospitality

OTHER DEGREES Associate of Business Management, Yavapai College, 2020

CURRENT POSITION CEO and Founder of Girl-tivities®

INDUSTRY Entrepreneurship

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

My name is Destiny Bradd, and I am the CEO and founder of Girl-tivities, a social event company for women in Arizona. We create a safe place for women to connect while doing activities such as fitness, crafts, socials and workshops. I started my business while I was a student at GCU as a passion project. Ever since my first test event, I have not stopped hosting events. I am a community leader, public speaker and team manager. I enjoy a challenge and have had so much fulfillment in building up a community of women locally for the past three years.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

Last year, in 2024, Girl-tivities and I accomplished some milestones. We were invited on two news stations, FOX10 and GMAZ Channel 3, for an interview about why I started Girl-tivities and what we are doing in the community for women.^{1,2,3} At the start of the year, we officially became a trademarked brand and started to fully expand all areas of the business, from memberships, partnerships, retreats and the monthly events themselves. We have hosted events monthly of 40-100 women in attendance and even a retreat in Zion National Park with 22 women, half of whom flew in from other states all over America.

CAREER HISTORY

In my younger years, I was always getting involved in the community in my own way; from leadership projects in community college to volunteering in my free time. I knew I wanted to make a real impact in the world. During my youth, I had internships and jobs in many areas, from hospitality to administration to retail. I knew I wanted to start my own business one day, so I attempted to learn aspects of how a business runs from each position I held. I had no professional experience in event planning prior to my company; however, it was a natural gift I had growing up and throwing events in my teenage years for friends and family.

IMPACT ON FIELD

I have impacted the way that others view a “business.” Girl-tivities is such a fun environment. However, from the very beginning, I have always treated it as a professional business instead of just a fun social club. I believe this is part of my success and why I am where I am today. I have also seen many new girl groups pop up around the Valley with similar events, but I do not view them as competition since they cannot recreate who I am and my organization. Rather, I view it as a compliment that I have inspired many others to also create a safe place for women to meet each other.



Destiny Bradd

2022 | Bachelor of Science in Applied Entrepreneurship, Minor in Hospitality

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Online news articles published by various companies

January 2024: FOX10 News feature¹

January 2024: Trademark approval²

July 2024: GMAZ News feature³

ORGANIZATIONS

On a personal level, I get involved with many other communities and groups, from being a member of Arizona Entrepreneurs, women's groups and a social volleyball league with PHX Fray. On a business level, our community is huge. We partner with 10+ businesses for each month's event, including photographers, photobooths, sponsors, vendors, venues, activity leaders and more. We even have a Girl-tivities directory, where local businesses can register to be a partner of ours and our members can get discounts to local businesses for all their needs – health, fitness, fashion, automotive, food, drink and more.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I have built my company from the ground up. Starting it entirely alone, I quickly realized I would need help in this journey. For the past two years, I have had interns (some from GCU) whom I recruited to help with things like social media, community building and partner/sponsor relations. I am currently hiring an operations manager so that I can work on doing more expansive projects as the CEO, rather than day-to-day tasks. Not only do I lead my events team with weekly meetings, but I also lead the entire community through each event. Whether we are doing a fitness class, craft, workshop or social, I am on the microphone making sure everyone is informed on what we are doing and why we are here.

ADVICE

I would advise any current student not to waste their time and their resources while at college. So many students say, "After I graduate, I want to do..." How about now, while you have the mentors and the peers around you? Get that internship, apply for that job or start that business. The best time is now. You don't have to have everything figured out; you can figure it out along the way.

¹ FOX10 Phoenix. Girl-tivities Story. (2024, January 22). YouTube. Retrieved from youtube.com/watch?v=NyPHKJBoKrE&t=1s on July 8, 2025.

² VoyagePhoenix. (2022, April 21). Exploring life and business with Destiny Bradd of Girls Night Out. Local Stories. Retrieved from voyagephoenix.com/interview/exploring-life-business-with-destiny-bradd-of-girls-night-out on July 8, 2025.

³ Arizona's Family GMAZ. Girl-tivities Interview. (2024, Sept. 6) YouTube. Retrieved from youtube.com/watch?v=XHNC28a-j0Q on July 8, 2025.



Connor Brinton

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Marketing,
Honors College

OTHER DEGREES Master of Business Administration, University of Mississippi, 2022

CURRENT POSITION Associate Director of E-Commerce at The Daily Wire

INDUSTRY Marketing

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I'm a builder — of brands, teams and momentum. As associate director of e-commerce at The Daily Wire, I lead digital strategy, drive millions in online revenue and shape the future of one of America's fastest-growing media companies. I thrive where bold ideas meet disciplined execution. Across my career, from launching products and optimizing global supply chains to leading marketing initiatives for nationally recognized brands, I've operated with a simple philosophy: outwork, outthink and outperform expectations.

At GCU, I honed the values that define my leadership today: community, innovation and grit. Whether founding student entrepreneurship clubs, leading residence life teams or serving in the marketing department, I learned that the best way to create change is to take ownership and lift others alongside you. Today, I bring that same spirit to my work — leading with purpose, solving problems with creativity and inspiring teams to think bigger.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

I've been fortunate to achieve milestones that reflect both grit and growth. At The Daily Wire, I have risen from marketing project coordinator to associate director of e-commerce, where I lead multimillion-dollar brands and drive strategies that scale one of America's fastest-growing media companies.

A major milestone was helping to launch and scale Jeremy's Razors, an e-commerce startup that broke into a highly competitive market and built a fiercely loyal customer base. I also helped create and grow The Candle Club and Mayflower Cigars, leading digital strategy, product development and customer experience across these new business lines. Building multiple brands from the ground up taught me how to craft strategy, move fast and lead teams that deliver real impact.

That entrepreneurial spirit has been fundamental to my journey. At Grand Canyon University, I helped launch and lead the IDEA Club, connecting student entrepreneurs with local startups and investors. That early experience in venture creation directly shaped my passion for turning bold ideas into thriving businesses today. Each milestone has fueled my drive to build, to lead and to create lasting impact.



Connor Brinton

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Marketing,
Honors College

CAREER HISTORY

I started my career at The Daily Wire as a marketing project coordinator, where I quickly learned the importance of clear execution and strategic thinking. From there, I moved into operations, optimizing supply chains, building internal systems and supporting live events – always with a focus on scaling impact across departments.

As I grew, I transitioned into e-commerce, where I discovered my passion for building brands. I was promoted to e-commerce manager, then senior manager and now I serve as associate director of e-commerce. In this role, I've helped launch and scale major initiatives like Jeremy's Razors, The Candle Club and Mayflower Cigars – overseeing strategy, product development, digital marketing and customer experience across multiple multimillion-dollar brands.

During this period, I also earned my Master of Business Administration from the University of Mississippi, balancing full-time work with night and weekend studies to sharpen my leadership and business acumen. At every stage, I've prioritized growth, innovation and building lasting businesses.

IMPACT ON FIELD

The political landscape has shifted dramatically in recent years and with it, consumers' expectations for the brands they support. I've had the opportunity to help build a new playbook for how companies navigate this environment.

At The Daily Wire, I helped lead the creation of values-driven consumer brands that succeed not by avoiding controversy but by standing for something. Through e-commerce strategy, product development and customer experience leadership, I've worked to prove that companies can succeed by aligning product excellence with clear cultural convictions.

Our achievements contributed to The Daily Wire's evolution from a media company into a broader consumer brand powerhouse, offering a model for how organizations can grow authentically in a divided market. I'm proud to have been part of this early wave, shaping a new future for mission-driven commerce.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

One of my proudest achievements is earning my Master of Business Administration from the University of Mississippi while working full-time, launching brands and driving strategic growth at The Daily Wire. Balancing a demanding career with a rigorous graduate program taught me discipline and resilience and sharpened my business leadership skills.

My MBA coursework covered key areas essential to building and scaling businesses, including managerial economics, strategic marketing, financial analysis, predictive analytics, supply chain management and entrepreneurship. The program culminated with a capstone in strategic management, bringing together cross-functional leadership skills to solve practical business challenges. Earlier in my academic career, I was honored to serve as president of the IDEA Club and Canyon Angels at GCU, empowering young entrepreneurs to connect with local startups and investors. I was also inducted into Delta Mu Delta, the international honor society for business students and served as president of the Northwest Christian National Honors Society.

Each of these milestones has shaped my approach to leadership, which combines strategy, execution and a commitment to building businesses that create real impact.



Connor Brinton

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Marketing,
Honors College

ORGANIZATIONS

I'm an active member of my local Project Management Institute Chapter, where I stay engaged with leadership development, operational best practices and professional growth alongside peers across industries. Beyond my professional involvement, I host a monthly men's book club focused on personal growth, leadership and accountability. It's a space dedicated to sharpening critical thinking and fostering meaningful community.

I also help lead a weekly Bible study at my local church, creating opportunities for deeper relationships, mentorship and spiritual growth. For me, leadership is not just about professional achievement but about investing in the people and communities around you, and these organizations are a key part of how I continue to grow and contribute outside of work.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I believe leadership is about ownership, clarity and raising the bar for the people around you.

At The Daily Wire, I lead a team responsible for driving the growth and optimization of our e-commerce brands. I work closely with direct reports and cross-functional partners across marketing, product and operations, setting the vision, defining success metrics and empowering my team to execute with excellence. I take pride in building high-trust, high-performance environments where individuals can grow, take risks and win together.

Outside of work, I demonstrate leadership by hosting a monthly men's book club focused on personal growth and by leading a weekly Bible study at my church, where I mentor others and foster community. Whether in business or in life, I strive to lead by example: taking ownership of challenges, communicating with clarity and inspiring others to aim higher, both in the goals they set and the people they become.

ADVICE

My advice to current students and recent graduates is simple: trust God, take ownership of your life and lean into the opportunities happening around you. Don't wait for the perfect moment or force your will onto the world. Instead, step into the spaces where you can contribute, grow and build. Some of the best doors you'll walk through won't be ones you kicked open but ones you recognized at the right time because you were paying attention and willing to act. Invest in reading, especially the classics, to sharpen your mind and deepen your understanding of human nature.

Pursue excellence without losing sight of joy. Build the future you want to see, not just by dreaming about it, but by doing the small, meaningful work that moves you and others forward.

Above all, remember that real leadership isn't about being in charge. It's about taking responsibility, serving others and having the courage to keep showing up when it matters most.



Andrea Cliscagne

2024 | Master of Science in Mental Health and Wellness with an Emphasis in Integrated Health

OTHER DEGREES Bachelor of Music in Music Therapy, Minor in Speech-Language Pathology, University of the Pacific, 2020

CURRENT POSITION Quality of Life Engagement Specialist and Board-Certified Music Therapist at Sage Eldercare Solutions

INDUSTRY Health Care

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I am a Board-Certified Music Therapist (MT-BC) based in the East Bay Area of Northern California. I specialize in mental health, multiple disabilities and dementia. Currently, I work as a quality-of-life engagement specialist with Sage Eldercare's Hummingbird Project, where I provide music therapy and engage in therapeutic activities with older adults in one-on-one sessions. I also work as a private practice music therapist with local clients, mainly children and adults with intellectual, developmental, neurological and/or physical disabilities and older adults with dementia, such as Alzheimer's. I hold a Master of Science in Mental Health and Wellness with an Emphasis in Integrated Health from GCU. Additionally, I have completed a Bachelor of Music in Music Therapy at the University of the Pacific with a Minor in Speech-Language Pathology.

In my field, I provide care and support from a person-centered perspective and value helping my clients feel seen, heard and understood. I provide a dynamic and personalized approach during my sessions and adapt in the moment to best support client needs. Mental health and wellness are multidimensional and personal. This remains at the core of how I view and connect with the people I help. Diagnoses and other quantifiable details are important to understanding and helping clients. However, they never tell the whole story. I love working in the realms of music therapy and therapeutic activities because there is space for clinical treatment, creative expression, personal growth, authentic connection and quality-of-life engagement.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

My first career milestone was deciding to study music therapy for my undergraduate degree. Once I learned this career existed, it felt like a calling to my passions for music and helping and connecting with others. In 2020, I graduated with a Bachelor of Music in Music Therapy and a Minor in Speech-Language Pathology. After completing my required clinical hours, I passed the national board certification exam and became a MT-BC that same year!

The COVID-19 pandemic made starting out in a music therapy career difficult, but through collaboration with music therapists and other professionals, I learned how to use telehealth services to reach our patients. For a while, I worked part-time as a music therapist and taught music and preschool. Another milestone was deciding to continue my education with a graduate program focusing on mental health at GCU. Eventually, the insight and skills I was gaining from my studies helped me confirm that I wanted to focus on providing music therapy and other types of therapeutic support full-time. My new clients took the place of supplemental teaching jobs.

In Fall 2024, I graduated with my Master of Science in Mental Health and Wellness with an Emphasis in Integrated Health. This degree equipped me with the knowledge and strategies to support my clients holistically. It contributes to my understanding of how feeling socially and emotionally supported can drastically improve one's health and quality of life, which informs my current practice in music therapy and therapeutic activities.



Andrea Cliscagne

2024 | Master of Science in Mental Health and Wellness with an
Emphasis in Integrated Health

CAREER HISTORY

In high school, I knew I wanted to be a music therapist someday, so I started a club called Music Is Medicine, where I led my fellow classmates in performing musical variety shows for senior living homes, hospitals and charity/advocacy events (including Guide Dogs for the Blind). While I studied music therapy during undergraduate school, I worked as a children's gymnastics coach and a pianist for our campus' Catholic mass, always drawn to connect with and serve the community.

Once I became a MT-BC, I worked for Power of Music, LLC, a contracting music therapy company, where I provided music therapy to adults with varying disabilities and older adults with dementia. Through local and personal connections, I began to serve my own private clients and taught private music lessons (voice, piano, ukulele). While I worked on my master's degree, I cut back to working with only a couple of music therapy clients and full-time as a preschool teacher. Working in early childhood education offered me first-hand insight into child development, social-emotional learning and learning through play – which I later found to be valuable for both children and adults. Eventually, I decided to focus my career on providing therapeutic services full-time and accepted a position as a quality-of-life engagement specialist with Sage Eldercare's Hummingbird Project while continuing to see private clients. This is how I came to work with older adults with dementia and individuals with disabilities.

IMPACT ON FIELD

My professional field is newer than other mental health and health care professions, and its presence in overall health care is steadily growing due to increased research, knowledge and awareness of its effectiveness. I am one of the very few music therapists in the far East Bay Area. I impact my field by providing these services to my community, which has not had much access to them due to financial and geographical barriers. One of my major career goals is to make creative arts and recreational therapies more accessible, and one main way of doing this is through collaboration. For example, I collaborate with the Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB), an organization that funds many kinds of services for individuals with disabilities and their families, including music therapy. I write letters of recommendation and progress notes for the RCEB so that my clients who work with them can continue to receive services without a financial burden. Additionally, I contract with local organizations that serve persons with disabilities, and I provide individualized music therapy services for our shared clients.

I impact my field through advocacy and educating others about it, such as through professional presentations, workshops for my colleagues and authentic discussions. I love learning from professionals in other fields just as much as I love sharing my impact. My favorite form of advocacy is allowing people to experience or witness music therapy's effectiveness on themselves or loved ones and having open conversations about it.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2024, I was inducted into Alpha Chi, a national collegiate honor society that recognizes the use of academic excellence and scholarship to promote service, leadership and collaboration.

In 2019, I was honored with induction into Pi Kappa Lambda, which was awarded in recognition of outstanding musical and intellectual work done at the Conservatory of Music at the University of the Pacific. The Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society was founded in 1918, with the goal of providing recognition for outstanding accomplishments in music.¹

In 2015, I was awarded the Louis Armstrong Award. This plaque and scholarship recognize outstanding achievements in jazz, as demonstrated through superior musicianship, character and individual creativity.



Andrea Cliscagne

2024 | Master of Science in Mental Health and Wellness with an
Emphasis in Integrated Health

ORGANIZATIONS

I am proud to work with Futures Explored (FE), a nonprofit organization that creates equitable access to relevant programs by supporting and advocating for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They strive to cultivate a world “where individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have equal opportunities, are included and are empowered to make their own decisions.”² I provide music therapy services for our clients and enjoy it when our FE family runs into each other out in the community!

I also love being involved with Respite Inn, a nonprofit organization in Concord, California, that provides out-of-home respite and emergency services to adults with developmental disabilities. Respite Inn also supports the families of their guests and patients by offering regular breaks from caretaking. In weekly music therapy sessions, I foster space for guests to express themselves uniquely, connect with each other and practice social skills and emotional processing.

Additionally, I play piano and percussion and sing for the Pittsburg Community Jazz Band, based in Pittsburg, California. We perform for community events, including the annual tree lighting, senior living homes, farmers markets and charity events.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Leadership involves guiding and collaborating with others toward a common goal. Important leadership skills include effective communication, problem-solving, building and maintaining relationships, adaptability and self-awareness.

I use these skills daily as I get to help others heal, grow and thrive using unique combinations of music therapy, therapeutic activities and authentic connection. I build and maintain therapeutic relationships with my clients so they feel safe, validated in their experiences and free to be creative and express themselves. I adapt my approach in the moment based on client needs and responses. I use collaborative problem-solving to help clients gain confidence in themselves, work toward their clinical goals or learn to communicate and connect with loved ones in their own way. Through compassionate connection, I get to help others feel supported and renewed hope for life, experience joy in dire circumstances and true connection while bearing difficult emotions and sensations.

I am honored to remind others that they are not alone in a hands-on way, even though they may feel isolated. I communicate with my clients and their loved ones by presenting ideas and recommendations in an accessible way, leaving space for responses and flexibility. The more I guide others in these ways, the more I learn from those I guide. Maintaining self-awareness helps me to return my compassion inward and understand that I am a human with strengths, limits and needs, too. This helps me value and take care of myself and show up more authentically with others.

ADVICE

Graduating is a huge milestone that should be celebrated! You worked so hard and gained a lot of knowledge, skills and expertise in your field. At the same time, it’s a new beginning, so don’t feel bad if you make mistakes or run into things you don’t know or situations you’re unsure how to handle in your career after graduating. Seek help from your mentors, colleagues and anyone else you feel has wisdom for the situation. There is always much to learn and grow in any field. You belong where you want to be!

¹ Pi Kappa Lambda. (n.d.). About Us. Society of Pi Kappa Lambda. Retrieved from pikappalambda.org/about on June 26, 2025.

² Futures Explored. Parents Helping Parents. (Nov. 30, 2023). Retrieved from php.com/directory/futures-explored on June 26, 2025.



Devin Colenburg

2024 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology

CURRENT POSITION Digital Operations Specialist at Fox Sports

INDUSTRY Engineering

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I am a U.S. Army Veteran with over a decade of experience in IT and leadership. I have developed strong skills in troubleshooting, project management and cybersecurity. I currently work as a digital operations specialist at Fox Sports, where I manage digital workflows, troubleshoot technical issues and analyze platform performance to drive engagement strategies.

Throughout my career, I have been passionate about building secure, efficient systems and leading teams to success. From my time overseeing network deployments across Europe and Asia, to developing cybersecurity standards for the U.S. Army Cyber Command, I bring a results-driven and adaptable approach to every role. I also hold multiple technical certifications and pride myself on staying at the forefront of emerging technologies.

I am committed to combining technical expertise with strong communication and leadership skills to create meaningful impact. Looking ahead, I aim to continue bridging the gap between technology and business strategy, helping organizations stay agile and secure in an ever-evolving digital world.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

One of my most significant career milestones was leading the management and deployment of network systems across six organizations in Germany, Poland and Romania during my time with the U.S. Army. Coordinating operations across different countries challenged me to adapt quickly, lead diverse teams and maintain high standards of cybersecurity and connectivity under dynamic conditions.

Another major milestone was contributing to U.S. Army Cyber Command by developing and implementing standardized procedures and regulations, which improved the overall security posture for multiple units. Additionally, my transition to the civilian sector marked a critical step; joining Fox Sports as a digital operations specialist allowed me to apply my technical and leadership skills in a high-paced media environment, ensuring digital content delivery and operational efficiency for live sports broadcasts.

Receiving the Army Commendation Medal for exceptional IT support during a six-month deployment to Eastern Europe was also a proud achievement. These experiences have not only shaped my technical abilities but have also strengthened my leadership, adaptability and commitment to operational excellence in complex environments.



Devin Colenburg

2024 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology

CAREER HISTORY

I began my career serving in the U.S. Army, where I spent several years managing complex IT systems and network infrastructures across global environments, including Germany, Poland, Romania and South Korea. As an information systems project manager and systems administrator, I was responsible for overseeing secure communications, implementing cybersecurity protocols and leading teams through major technology deployments.

During my service, I had the opportunity to work directly with the Army Cyber Command, developing and implementing critical cybersecurity procedures that enhanced network security across multiple organizations. These experiences allowed me to hone my skills in systems administration, Active Directory management, Cisco networking and IT project management.

After transitioning out of the military, I joined Fox Sports as a digital operations specialist. In this role, I manage digital workflows for live sports broadcasts, troubleshoot complex technical issues and integrate CRM data to optimize customer engagement strategies. My career has been a dynamic journey of leadership, innovation and continuous growth within the technology sector.

IMPACT ON FIELD

Throughout my career, I have focused on not only mastering technology but also shaping its future. In the Army, I helped modernize and secure global network systems across Europe and Asia, directly contributing to operational advancements and cybersecurity initiatives that influenced Army Cyber Command standards.

Today, as a digital operations specialist at Fox Sports, I continue to drive innovation by streamlining digital content workflows, integrating CRM strategies and troubleshooting complex system issues to keep up with the media industry's fast-evolving demands. My passion lies in finding new ways to blend traditional IT practices with forward-looking digital solutions, ensuring organizations remain agile and competitive.

Outside of my technical roles, I am committed to influencing future generations of technology leaders. I had the honor of speaking at the Arizona State University Veterans Panel, where I shared my experiences transitioning from military to civilian tech careers, inspiring others to embrace change and continuous learning.

By combining hands-on technical expertise with mentorship and public speaking, I strive to leave a lasting impact on the IT community and to help shape a future where technology drives innovation, security and growth.



Devin Colenburg

2024 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the course of my career, I have been fortunate to earn several awards and achievements that reflect my commitment to excellence in the field of technology. While serving in the U.S. Army, I was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for exceptional performance in setting up and maintaining critical satellite communication systems during a six-month deployment to Eastern Europe. This deployment required rapid problem-solving under pressure and helped strengthen operational communications across multiple allied forces.

I also received the Army Achievement Medal for my leadership and technical expertise while assigned to the Network Enterprise Center in South Korea, where I played a key role in improving cybersecurity and network reliability across the organization.

Outside of formal awards, one of my proudest achievements was being selected to speak at the ASU Veterans Panel, where I shared my journey transitioning from military service into the technology sector. It was an honor to inspire and guide fellow Veterans toward careers in emerging tech industries.

Additionally, I have led initiatives that developed new cybersecurity procedures adopted by Army Cyber Command and successfully managed network deployments across Germany, Poland and Romania. Each deployment was a critical milestone that has shaped my career and fueled my passion for influencing the future of technology.

ORGANIZATIONS

I have been actively involved with several organizations that support professional development, community engagement and Veteran advocacy. Currently, I am connected with the ASU Veteran community, where I had the opportunity to serve as a speaker on their panel of Veterans. Through this involvement, I help fellow Veterans navigate their transitions into civilian careers, particularly in the technology sector, by sharing personal experiences and offering mentorship.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I demonstrate leadership by focusing on building trust, empowering others and leading by example. Throughout my career in the U.S. Army and now in the private sector, I have found that leadership is about more than giving direction – it's about setting a standard, being approachable and helping others grow.

While managing network systems across multiple countries, I led teams through complex deployments by clearly communicating goals, encouraging collaboration and making sure every team member understood the impact of their role. I also prioritized mentoring, taking time to train peers and junior personnel on both technical skills and leadership principles to prepare them for future challenges. In my current role at Fox Sports, I continue to lead by streamlining processes, improving digital operations and fostering the culture.



Devin Colenburg

2024 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology

ADVICE

My advice to current students and recent graduates is to stay adaptable, be relentless in learning and never underestimate the value of building strong relationships. The technology field – and really any career today – is constantly evolving. What you know today might be different tomorrow, so always stay curious and seek out new skills, even if they are outside of your immediate comfort zone.

Another piece of advice is not to fear failure. Some of the best lessons I've learned in my career came from situations that didn't go as planned. Use those experiences to grow rather than letting them hold you back.

Finally, invest time in building your professional network. Many opportunities I've had, from transitioning out of the military to advancing in the tech industry, came through relationships I cultivated over time. Stay humble, stay hungry and trust that consistent effort will open doors you might not even see yet.



Samantha Estenson

2022 | Master of Business Administration

2026 (PROJECTED) | Doctor of Business Administration

OTHER DEGREES Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies, Arizona State University, 2020
Minor in Sports Business, University of North Dakota, 2018

CURRENT POSITION Stage Manager for the Arizona Diamondbacks

INDUSTRY Business

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I'm a seasoned sports and entertainment professional currently serving as stage manager for the Arizona Diamondbacks. With extensive experience in live event operations, I excel in coordinating in-game entertainment, managing complex logistics and creating memorable fan experiences. Before joining the Diamondbacks, I contributed to the Phoenix Suns and Mercury as a game entertainment assistant, where I honed my skills in event management, leadership and fan engagement across NBA and WNBA platforms.

I'm currently pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree from GCU, where I also earned my Master of Business Administration (MBA) in 2022. I completed my Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies at Arizona State University in 2020, concentrating in business management and organizational leadership, and gained an additional Minor in Sports Business at the University of North Dakota.

Throughout my career, I have demonstrated a passion for leadership, teamwork and operational excellence. My background includes experience in athletic marketing, team management and administrative roles, allowing me to bring a diverse, well-rounded perspective to the fast-paced environment of professional sports.

My commitment to service extends into my volunteer work, where I have contributed to organizations like National Charity League, Samaritan's Feet and the Cinderella Affair. My dedication to strategic execution, creative problem-solving and audience engagement continues to drive my professional growth in the sports and entertainment industries.



Samantha Estenson

2022 | Master of Business Administration

2026 (PROJECTED) | Doctor of Business Administration

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

Throughout my career, I have achieved significant milestones that reflect my passion for leadership, entertainment operations and organizational management. Beginning with my early experiences at the University of North Dakota Athletics Department, I developed foundational skills in team management, event logistics and marketing operations while balancing roles as a men's basketball manager and athletic marketing intern. These roles taught me the value of collaboration, attention to detail and leadership under pressure.

Transitioning into the professional sports industry, I spent several seasons with the Phoenix Suns and Mercury as a game entertainment assistant, starting at age 17. In this position, I honed my skills in game-day logistics, fan engagement, live entertainment coordination and promotions management. I was often trusted to lead promotions, manage logistics under high-pressure conditions and step into managerial responsibilities when needed, further demonstrating my reliability and leadership abilities.

Currently, as a stage manager for the Arizona Diamondbacks, I have expanded my expertise to managing complex live productions in a Major League Baseball environment. This role demands excellence in operations management, coordination across multiple entertainment groups and ensuring flawless execution of live programming for large-scale audiences.

Simultaneously, I have pursued academic growth, earning my MBA in 2022 and progressing toward a DBA with a focus on management. Each role I've undertaken has built upon the last, solidifying my ability to lead teams, execute large events and drive operational success with creativity, flexibility and strategic vision.

CAREER HISTORY

I have built my career around live event management, fan engagement and operational excellence across some of the nation's top sports organizations. My journey began with the University of North Dakota Athletics, where I served as a men's basketball manager and athletic marketing intern, gaining early experience in team logistics, game operations and marketing strategies. After graduating, I transitioned into the professional sports industry, joining the Phoenix Suns and Mercury game entertainment team. Over several seasons, I grew into a leadership role, managing promotions, supporting live entertainment logistics and leading activation teams during high-pressure NBA and WNBA games.

My passion for live entertainment and operational management led me to my current position as a stage manager for the Arizona Diamondbacks. In this role, I oversee critical elements of game day production, working closely with entertainment teams to deliver seamless fan experiences. My background in leadership, organization and strategic planning has allowed me to thrive in this fast-paced environment, where adaptability and attention to detail are key.

Along the way, I have continued to invest in my education, earning an MBA and now pursuing a DBA. My academic background, combined with years of experience, has shaped me into a leader who sees the big picture while mastering the small details that make events successful. I am passionate about creating memorable experiences, building strong operational systems and leading teams to execute at the highest level.



Samantha Estenson

2022 | Master of Business Administration

2026 (PROJECTED) | Doctor of Business Administration

IMPACT ON FIELD

Throughout my career in sports entertainment and game operations, I have been dedicated to enhancing live event experiences and improving operational efficiency behind the scenes. In my current role as a stage manager for the Arizona Diamondbacks, I have helped elevate the fan experience by ensuring seamless execution of in-game entertainment, promotional activations and live performances. I bring strong leadership, organization and communication skills to every event, creating a reliable environment for performers and production teams to excel.

My background with organizations like the Phoenix Suns and Mercury taught me the importance of maximizing both creativity and operational precision. Whether coordinating giveaway promotions, troubleshooting live event logistics or managing entertainment schedules, I consistently work to deliver memorable moments for fans while supporting larger brand initiatives. By building strong relationships across teams and maintaining a focus on efficiency and detail, I contribute to a high-quality entertainment product that supports the overall success of the organization.

I am passionate about the live sports industry and take pride in the work that happens behind the scenes to drive fan engagement. My impact has been grounded in operational excellence, leadership and a genuine passion for creating outstanding event experiences.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout my career in sports entertainment and operations, I have been fortunate to earn leadership opportunities and recognition for my dedication, professionalism and strong work ethic. As a stage manager for the Arizona Diamondbacks, I play a critical role in live event execution, ensuring smooth coordination between entertainment teams, mascots and in-game promotions to deliver an outstanding fan experience.

Previously, while working for the Phoenix Suns and Mercury, I served as lead of promotions during home games, a role that entrusted me with overseeing giveaway distributions and troubleshooting live event logistics. I was consistently recognized for my ability to maintain professionalism under pressure, stepping in to cover managerial responsibilities when needed.

Academically, I successfully completed my MBA in December 2022 and am currently pursuing my DBA, demonstrating my commitment to ongoing leadership development.

Additionally, I have held officer roles in volunteer organizations such as the National Charity League, where I served as historian and publicist. These experiences, combined with my leadership positions across collegiate athletics and nonprofit work, have shaped my ability to lead teams, build relationships and deliver results in dynamic environments.



Samantha Estenson

2022 | Master of Business Administration

2026 (PROJECTED) | Doctor of Business Administration

ORGANIZATIONS

I am currently involved with several organizations that have shaped both my professional growth and personal values. In my current role as stage manager for the Arizona Diamondbacks, I work closely with the game entertainment team to deliver a high-quality fan experience at every home game.

Before this, I spent several years with the Phoenix Suns and Mercury as a game entertainment assistant, where I managed logistics for live NBA and WNBA games and led promotional activities. These experiences allowed me to develop leadership skills in fast-paced, high-pressure environments.

Beyond professional sports, I have a strong commitment to community service. I was an active member of the National Charity League for seven years, participating in philanthropies such as Feed My Starving Children, The Humane Society and Saint Mary's Food Bank. I also volunteer with organizations like Samaritan's Feet and The Cinderella Affair, which support underprivileged communities by providing essentials like shoes and formal wear. These opportunities have taught me the importance of teamwork, adaptability and giving back to the community; all of which continue to influence the way I lead and work today.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

As a stage manager for the Arizona Diamondbacks, I demonstrate leadership by ensuring that all live game-day entertainment elements run smoothly and professionally. I lead a team of performers, coordinate logistics and adapt quickly to the live environment, where timing, communication and collaboration are critical to success. I focus on maintaining a calm, solutions-focused presence, even under pressure, to ensure that both the fan experience and our internal operations stay seamless.

My leadership style is built around preparation, clear communication and adaptability. Whether I am troubleshooting issues during live events, guiding performers through complex timing cues or collaborating with other departments, I prioritize setting clear expectations and creating a supportive, efficient environment. I draw from my past leadership experiences with the Phoenix Suns and University of North Dakota Athletics, where I managed team logistics and mentored new interns, to help others perform at their best. Above all, I lead by example, showing strong attention to detail, flexibility and a commitment to delivering excellence. To me, leadership means not only managing responsibilities but also lifting up the people around me to succeed together as a team.

ADVICE

If I could offer advice to current students or recent graduates, it would be to stay open to every opportunity, even if it's outside your original plan. Every role, no matter how small it may seem, teaches you something valuable. Working across game entertainment for the Phoenix Suns and now as a stage manager for the Arizona Diamondbacks, I have learned that showing up prepared, being flexible and maintaining a strong work ethic will set you apart. I would also tell students to focus on building relationships early. Many opportunities in sports, entertainment or business happen because someone remembers your attitude and your work ethic, not just your resume. Networking is just as important as technical skills, especially in industries built around collaboration. Finally, don't be afraid to start at the bottom and work your way up. Every internship, part-time role and volunteer event I participated in helped prepare me for the next step. Stay humble, be willing to learn and never underestimate the value of hard work. You never know who's watching and what doors that effort might open for you later on.



Aaron Fox

2018 | Bachelor of Arts in Digital Design with an Emphasis in Web Design

CURRENT POSITION Senior Product Designer at Postscript

INDUSTRY Business

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I am a senior product designer at Postscript, focusing on product design, user-centered design and feature planning. Previously, I worked at Eventbrite and SmartRent, where I also had the chance to improve user experiences and drive growth with design. My previous agency experience includes Madison Ave., Collective and ELM Learning, where I worked on branding, web design and interactive learning experiences. I'm passionate about design and helping others, and I previously had the chance to teach UX and web design online and in person at GCU. I love solving complex problems and creating intuitive, impactful digital products that help users and drive business success.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

One of the most significant milestones in my career was transitioning from a graphic web and branding designer to a product designer specializing in UX/UI. This shift was driven by my desire to use my skill set in a more fitting industry. I embraced every opportunity to learn about product design, eventually taking on a part-time UX design role at a startup. Juggling this role alongside my full-time job required many late nights of learning and growth. The experience and connections I gained from this part-time role were instrumental in securing my first full-time position as a product designer.

I'm proud of my work as both a graphic and product designer. In product design, I've interviewed many users and built features that directly benefit them. In branding, I had the chance to design a new brand for a large local real estate agency, and it's rewarding to see my work in action. Another milestone of my career was teaching at GCU, which was a fulfilling experience that also taught me a lot.

CAREER HISTORY

I began my career as a graphic and branding designer, working at ELM Learning, an e-learning agency, and later at Madison Ave. I also worked at Collective, a full-service design agency. Over time, I transitioned into product design, driven by a passion for UX/UI and creating user-centered, data-driven solutions. I took on a part-time role to gain experience, eventually securing a full-time position as a product designer at SmartRent. My growth in this role led me to Eventbrite, where I took on more responsibility. I am now a senior product designer at Postscript, an SMS marketing startup, and I thrive in this fast-paced industry that is constantly pushing the boundaries of AI tools and features.

Throughout my career, I've had the opportunity to work on a wide range of impactful projects, from accessibility-compliant app features to real estate branding. During some of these roles, one of the more rewarding experiences was teaching at GCU, which further shaped my development as a designer and my aspirations for design management in the future.



Aaron Fox

2018 | Bachelor of Arts in Digital Design with an Emphasis in Web Design

IMPACT ON FIELD

Being a product designer makes measuring impact a true numbers game. I've made an impact in product design by driving user engagement, improving usability and enhancing conversion rates. For example, at Eventbrite, my work on the browser experience significantly increased traffic and substantially boosted orders.

Beyond driving metric-focused impact, I've had the opportunity to lead cross-functional design initiatives, creating workflows that enhance collaboration across teams. I've also contributed to the field through mentorship and education. As an adjunct professor, I taught UX/UI, branding and app design, helping shape the next generation of designers. I've been a guest speaker at a design event for GCU and have had the privilege of advising aspiring product designers who are looking to make similar career transitions as I did.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

2020 American Graphic Design Award Recipient for Logo Design

ORGANIZATIONS

I've had the privilege of taking on more serving opportunities at my local church, including teaching in the kids' ministry and assisting in other areas. I've truly enjoyed the experience of teaching on a smaller scale, especially when the subject matter is as meaningful as God's Word.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I believe leadership is often demonstrated in small, everyday moments. I strive to lead by bringing positivity to routine tasks, uplifting those around me and setting aside my own preferences to support others through their challenges.

To me, Jesus embodies the ultimate example of leadership: leading with selfless love. While I'm far from perfect, I aim to reflect this in both my work and personal life by showing love and care to others in every interaction.

ADVICE

My advice would be to take on every opportunity you can, especially if it interests you and can teach you something. Push your comfortability and get out of your bubble. Being an introvert myself, I have found that when I say yes to opportunities, even if I am anxious about them, I learn so much.

More importantly, remember Colossians 3:23: that all your work is for the Lord, not for man. Adopting this practice will bring you greater fulfillment than anything the world can offer.



Keenan Franklin

2017 | Bachelor of Science in Nursing

OTHER DEGREES Master of Science in Nursing Informatics, Chamberlain University, 2023

CURRENT POSITION Clinical Support Analyst at Banner Health

INDUSTRY Health Care

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I'm Keenan Franklin from Surprise, Arizona. I am currently a Registered Nurse (RN) with a Master of Science in Nursing Informatics. I currently serve as a clinical support analyst as part of the IT integrated health solutions team at Banner Health, where I provide end-user support for Cerner Electronic Health Record (EHR) functionality, facilitate project implementation and deliver education on EHR workflows. My combined clinical nursing experience and informatics education have positioned me well to leverage technical expertise in health care information systems to improve operational efficiency and support data-driven decision making.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

I believe furthering my education by completing my BSN and MSN is a significant career milestone. This has opened so many doors and opportunities for a more niche nursing career path, where I have found my purpose in working with interdisciplinary end users and helping implement technology to make their work lives better. These degrees have equipped me with the advanced knowledge and skills needed to bridge the gap between clinical nursing practice and health care information technology, positioning me perfectly in IT clinical informatics, where I can apply both my clinical expertise and computer science knowledge.

CAREER HISTORY

I began my professional journey as a volunteer at Honor Health John C. Lincoln Medical Center in Phoenix, from August 2013 to May 2014, where I assisted with supply management and patient transport. After completing my nursing education, I joined the Mayo Clinic GCU Residency Program in Scottsdale, Arizona, gaining valuable experience in an intermediate transplant unit. I then advanced to a clinical nurse position at Banner Boswell in Sun City, Arizona (October 2018 to April 2020), specializing in medical-surgical and oncology care with a focus on gastrointestinal, nephrology and urology. There, I served as a floor leader/charge nurse and developed proficiency with clinical patient care skills. My career continued at The Meadows Behavioral Health in Wickenburg, Arizona (September 2020 to July 2023) as a clinical nurse providing direct care to behavioral health patients, while also contributing to EHR improvements and creating user instructions, which opened interest in the field of informatics.

Currently, I serve as a clinical support analyst at Banner Health in Phoenix (since July 2023), where I support end users with Cerner EHR functionality, provide facility support for implementations, deliver education on workflows and perform troubleshooting of incidents. My career demonstrates a progression from direct patient care to specialized roles in health care informatics, which I found a passion for.



Keenan Franklin

2017 | Bachelor of Science in Nursing

IMPACT ON FIELD

As a nurse before, during and after COVID, I've had a profound impact on communities promoting a holistic approach to well-being, addressing physical, mental and social needs to enhance quality of life in a variety of populations. I've always strived to build therapeutic relationships with patients and families, offering crucial emotional support during vulnerable moments, hopefully touching their lives as much as they have mine. I've also used my nursing knowledge and personable skills to impact my current role in IT clinical informatics across Banner's Arizona west division. I've served as a lead and support in my role across multiple company projects, including transitioning oncology from paper orders to electronic, supporting a newly designed discharge process and integration of equipment measurements into the EHR system, just to name a few. My contributions have directly transformed clinical workflows, enhanced documentation practices and improved daily routines for Banner's clinical teams.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout my professional journey, I have earned several notable distinctions that reflect my commitment to excellence. I graduated with high honors (magna cum laude), demonstrating exceptional academic achievement and received recognition from the National Society of Collegiate Scholars for outstanding scholastic accomplishment. My dedication to compassionate patient care was acknowledged through a nomination for the prestigious DAISY Award, which celebrates extraordinary nurses who make meaningful differences in patients' lives. Additionally, I earned my Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt Certification, equipping me with valuable process improvement methodologies to enhance health care efficiency and quality outcomes. Now my focus has been on completing the Nursing Informatics-Board Certification (NI-BC) through the American Nurses Association (ANA). This combination of academic excellence, professional recognition and quality improvement expertise highlights my dedication to advancing both patient care and operational effectiveness.

ORGANIZATIONS

I am a member of the ANA (June 2024 to present) and was previously affiliated with the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and Student Nurses Organization (January 2015 to December 2017) while at GCU. These professional organizations have helped me network with fellow health care professionals and supported my academic and professional development in the nursing field.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

As a health care professional, I demonstrate leadership through my roles as a clinical support analyst at Banner Health and my previous experience as a floor leader and charge nurse at Banner Boswell. In the charge nurse position, I managed staffing, coordinated patient placement, handled scheduling, led quality improvement initiatives, mentored staff and facilitated communication among employees, physicians, patients and families. I've also shown initiative by helping with EHR changes and creating user instructions during my time at The Meadows Behavioral Health, demonstrating my ability to identify needs when none were recognized and implement solutions that benefit the entire team. In my current role at Banner Health, I provide support and education to all health care disciplines on EHR workflows and lead troubleshooting efforts for system issues. I'm looked up to as a system matter expert in my field and have become a go-to source for Banner facility leadership and admin on EHR functionality.



Keenan Franklin

2017 | Bachelor of Science in Nursing

ADVICE

As a nursing student who has walked this challenging yet rewarding path, I want to share some heartfelt advice. Embrace the journey with both determination and self-compassion. Nursing school will test your limits, academically, physically and emotionally, but remember why you started. Build strong study groups; they'll become your lifeline during difficult courses and clinical rotations. Remember it's okay to not know everything. Knowledge comes with time and experience. Practice self-care religiously, not as a luxury but as a necessity. The skills of time management and prioritization you develop now will serve you throughout your career. Don't be afraid to ask questions or seek help from instructors and preceptors; their experience is an invaluable resource. Most importantly, celebrate small victories along the way, whether it's mastering a difficult skill or making a meaningful connection with a patient. Remember that nursing is an art as much as it is a science. You have to truly love and understand the art to find purpose and make a difference. The path to becoming a nurse isn't easy, but I promise you, the privilege of making a difference in people's lives during their most vulnerable moments makes every challenge worthwhile.



Justin Gamble

2018 | Bachelor of Science in Accounting

2020 | Master of Science in Accounting

CURRENT POSITION Assurance Senior at Ernst & Young LLP

INDUSTRY Finance

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I am a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) currently serving as an assurance senior at Ernst & Young LLP (EY), where I specialize in auditing. My experience spans a diverse array of client engagements, from small startup companies to large Fortune 250 firms. I take pride in assisting organizations with their financial reporting requirements, SOX compliance and innovation initiatives, ensuring they meet their regulatory obligations while fostering growth.

My passion for numbers and commitment to excellence drive me to deliver high-quality service to my clients and teams. I thrive in environments where I can leverage my skills to help businesses navigate complex financial landscapes.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending my free time hiking with my dog, Luna, catching up on movies and learning about classic foreign cars. These activities not only provide me with relaxation but also inspire my professional journey by reminding me of the importance of balance and continuous learning. I believe that my diverse interests contribute to my well-rounded perspective, enabling me to approach challenges with creativity and enthusiasm.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

One of my most significant career milestones was obtaining my CPA Certification, a challenging achievement that required immense persistence and commitment but was pivotal for gaining new professional opportunities.

Additionally, I had the privilege of participating in my firm's digital innovation initiatives, which have been implemented across our U.S. practice. This experience not only showcased my commitment to embracing technological advancements in the accounting field but also allowed me to share insights and collaborate with colleagues across the country. These milestones have been instrumental in shaping my career, reinforcing my dedication to continuous learning and innovation in the ever-evolving landscape of accounting.

CAREER HISTORY

I've worked odd jobs since I was in high school, until I found a passion for finance and accounting. While at GCU, I was blessed to obtain multiple internships in the banking, consulting and professional services industries. I began my tenure with EY as an intern in January after my senior year of undergraduate. This led me to become a full-time associate at the firm after finishing my master's degree at GCU.



Justin Gamble

2018 | Bachelor of Science in Accounting

2020 | Master of Science in Accounting

IMPACT ON FIELD

Through dedicated mentorship and regular visits to my alma mater, GCU, I hope I have made a meaningful impact on my professional field by inspiring the next generation of leaders. By sharing insights and experiences with students, I try to bridge the gap between academic learning and professional practice. My hope is that my commitment to guiding emerging talent results in individuals feeling empowered to pursue their passions with confidence.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Obtaining my CPA license has been one of my biggest achievements so far. In addition, I am also very grateful to have been selected by leadership at my firm to participate in national communication, showcasing EY's continued commitment to digital innovation.

ORGANIZATIONS

I've recently begun volunteering for Royal Family Kids Camp, a network of week-long summer camps designed to support children in the foster care system aged six to 12.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I demonstrate leadership by setting a clear vision, leading by example and empowering others to succeed. I take initiative in challenging situations, make thoughtful decisions and foster a collaborative environment where everyone feels heard and valued.

ADVICE

My best advice to current students and recent graduates is to never underestimate the power of relationships. Network with professors, alumni and working professionals as often as you can. These connections can open doors you never imagined. Ask questions, be curious and don't be afraid to reach out. Most importantly, always be kind and respectful to everyone you meet; that kind of character not only builds trust, but it can also take you further in life and your career than you might expect. People remember how you make them feel, so make that impression count.



Jaden Guilford

2021 | Bachelor of Arts in Advertising and Graphic Design

CURRENT POSITION Designer at Teamworks

INDUSTRY Marketing

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I am a graphic designer at Teamworks, a rapidly growing sports tech company aiming to become the operating system for athletic organizations worldwide. In my role, I create strategic, audience-focused visuals that support brand storytelling and business growth across the sports and tech industries.

After earning my advertising and graphic design degree from GCU, I built my early career through creative roles with CBS Sports and the Phoenix Suns before stepping into the lead graphic designer position with the Phoenix Mercury. During my time with the Mercury, I had the opportunity to complete several bucket-list projects, including designing the first-ever season-long alternate court in WNBA history, developing the visual brand campaign for Diana Taurasi's 10,000 career point milestone (a WNBA record) and leading the design for the league's first specially designed WNBA All-Star Court.¹

Throughout my career, I've focused on blending creative storytelling with strategic design execution, producing work that feels clean, purposeful and built to endure. I'm passionate about creating visual experiences that build loyalty, inspire pride and leave a lasting impact.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

Beyond milestone projects like the visual campaign for Diana Taurasi's 10,000th point, the WNBA All-Star Court and the Mercury's Rebel Edition Court, one of the highlights of my career has been working directly with athletes to bring their stories to life through fan merchandise.² Through the Valley Threads initiative, I interviewed and collaborated with Natasha Cloud and Sophie Cunningham to design custom apparel pieces inspired by their journeys, allowing fans to connect with the athletes on a deeper level. My work also expanded into shaping team environments, including leading a full brand overhaul of the Mercury locker room to reflect a modern, unified team identity.

Earlier in my career, I helped CBS Sports promote the UEFA Champions League to a growing American audience, building digital content for a startup social presence. More recently, I contributed to the Phoenix Suns' marketing efforts surrounding the acquisition of Kevin Durant.³ It was a high-intensity project requiring immediate action, early mornings and sustained creative execution to match the scale of one of the biggest moments in franchise history.

Each of these experiences reinforced my belief that design is not just about visuals. It's about storytelling, impact and helping brands connect meaningfully with the people they serve.



Jaden Guilford

2021 | Bachelor of Arts in Advertising and Graphic Design

CAREER HISTORY

I started my design career focused on creating fast, high-impact visuals for national sports audiences, learning early on how to blend strategy and creativity under tight timelines. From supporting international campaigns at CBS Sports to designing for a global fanbase with the Phoenix Suns, I gained a deep understanding of how design shapes connection at scale.

At the Phoenix Mercury, I stepped into a lead creative role, where I helped redefine team storytelling through brand campaigns, merchandise collaborations and environmental design. Each experience pushed me to think bigger about how design can influence loyalty, pride and engagement.

Today at Teamworks, I apply those lessons by designing solutions that support athletic organizations and their staff, helping optimize operations, communication and engagement across the sports industry.

IMPACT ON FIELD

Throughout my career, I've viewed design as more than just an aesthetic tool: it's a way to amplify stories that deserve to be heard. I've made it a priority to use my platform to help represent communities that have historically been underrepresented in professional sports.

While with the Phoenix Mercury, I had the opportunity to work on campaigns that actively celebrated and advocated for minority groups, including women, LGBTQ+ athletes and broader communities fighting for visibility and equality within the league. Being part of a WNBA organization that championed inclusion allowed me to see firsthand how thoughtful, creative work can reflect and elevate the values of an entire movement, not just a brand.

At the Phoenix Suns, I contributed to the Originativ campaign, the franchise's first celebration of Native American heritage through a dedicated uniform design. I collaborated directly with members of local tribes to ensure the creative work honored their stories authentically and respectfully.

Whether through jersey campaigns, visual environments or digital storytelling, I strive to create work that respects, empowers and inspires. My goal is to turn design into a platform for connection, advocacy and lasting cultural impact.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

During my time with the Phoenix Suns, I was honored to receive Rookie of the Year across the broader organization, awarded to first-year employees who make a significant impact, and Creator of the Year, recognizing outstanding creative contribution specifically within the Mercury franchise.

Beyond internal recognition, I was proud to contribute to two historic firsts in the WNBA: designing the league's first-ever season-long alternate court (the Mercury's Rebel Edition Court) and the first specially designed WNBA All-Star Court. Both projects helped push creative boundaries within professional basketball and opened the door for future innovations in sports design.

Each of these achievements reflects my commitment to not just executing creative work, but to finding ways to tell bigger stories, inspire connection and help move the industry forward through thoughtful, intentional design.



Jaden Guilford

2021 | Bachelor of Arts in Advertising and Graphic Design

ORGANIZATIONS

During my time with the Phoenix Mercury, I had the opportunity to collaborate with several nonprofit organizations through creative partnerships tied to our theme nights and community initiatives. Some of the organizations we partnered with include Everytown for Gun Safety, Moms Demand Action and Mind 24/7, supporting causes such as gun violence prevention, mental health awareness and community safety.

While my role was primarily creative, I viewed these partnerships as a way to use design and storytelling to drive awareness and create a real connection between fans and the causes we spotlighted. It was important to me that the work we produced honored the missions of these organizations and helped amplify their voices to a broader audience. I continue to stay connected to projects and opportunities that use creative work as a bridge between communities and important social issues.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I try to lead by example rather than words. For me, leadership looks like taking pride in the details, doing the extra work even when it's not expected and approaching every project with the goal of leaving it better than I found it.

I believe that setting a high standard for myself helps create an environment where others feel encouraged to do the same, not through pressure, but through a shared pride in the work. Whether it's double-checking a design, thinking through the user experience a little deeper, or simply staying present and consistent, I try to show that the small things matter. To me, leadership is about showing up every day with care, consistency and respect for the work and the people you're working alongside.

ADVICE

If I could give one piece of advice to current students or recent graduates, it would be this: take every project seriously, no matter how small it feels at the time. Especially in your upper-level courses, the work you're creating now will likely form the foundation of your first professional portfolio. Treat it with pride and intention because the habits you build now will carry forward into your career.

I'd also encourage you not to get too locked into one narrow vision of what your path has to look like. Some of the best opportunities I've had didn't look exactly like what I thought I was chasing, but they opened doors I couldn't have imagined at the time. Be open to new experiences, different industries and unexpected creative challenges. Every opportunity, even the ones that feel a little out of left field, can help shape your skills, your network and your career in ways you won't always see right away. Growth doesn't always come in a straight line, but showing up, caring about the work and being willing to learn will always take you forward.

¹ Weinfuss, J. (2023, August). Diana Taurasi, 10,000 points and the shot that made WNBA scoring history. ESPN. Retrieved from espn.com/espn/feature/story/_/id/37825466/diana-taurasi-10000-points-wnba-all-scoring-leader on July 8, 2025.

² Phoenix Mercury unveil Nike rebel edition uniform and first-ever matching court. Phoenix Mercury. (2024, April 18). Retrieved from mercury.wnba.com/news/phoenix-mercury-unveil-nike-rebel-edition-uniform-and-first-ever-matching-court on July 14, 2025.

³ NBA. Kevin Durant Is One of the Best Scorers In NBA History | 30,000 Career Points. (2025, Feb. 12) YouTube. Retrieved from youtube.com/watch?v=LyBry64i1IQ on July 14, 2025.



Judith Hemler

2020 | Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction

OTHER DEGREES Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education, Stevenson University, 2016

CURRENT POSITION Team Leader and First-Grade Teacher at Carroll County Public Schools

INDUSTRY Education

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I'm a passionate first-grade teacher with almost a decade of experience fostering a love of learning in young children. As the team leader at my school, I collaborate closely with fellow educators to design engaging curricula, support instructional goals and create a positive, consistent learning environment for our students.

In addition to my classroom responsibilities, I mentor college students who are pursuing careers in education. Guiding aspiring teachers through their field experiences is one of the most rewarding parts of my work. I strive to model effective instructional strategies, classroom management techniques and the importance of building strong relationships with students and families.

My teaching philosophy is rooted in the belief that every child can thrive with the right support and encouragement. I take pride in creating a classroom community where students feel safe, valued and excited to learn. Whether I'm planning lessons, leading my team or mentoring future educators, my goal is always to inspire growth, curiosity and confidence in everyone I work with.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

My most significant career milestones combine personal achievements and contributions to the educational community, each of which has shaped my journey. These milestones reflect my dedication to personal and professional growth. I focus on making a lasting impact on my students, colleagues and the broader educational community.

Earning my Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction from Grand Canyon University was a pivotal milestone. The advanced skills and knowledge I gained have enhanced my teaching practices, enabled me to take on leadership roles and allowed me to better serve my students and school community.

For the past five years, I've been honored to be nominated as Carroll County's Outstanding Teacher of the Year. This recognition has affirmed my dedication to education and commitment to student success. Two years ago, I was selected as one of the top eight finalists for Teacher of the Year, allowing me to represent early childhood educators across the district.

After my first year at my current school, I was selected as team leader for my grade level. This role allows me to collaborate with colleagues, guide curriculum development and lead initiatives that promote student achievement and teacher growth.

I was also selected to serve as the extended learning coordinator for several years. In this capacity, I led after-school and summer enrichment programs, collaborating with educators and community partners to provide additional learning opportunities for students.



Judith Hemler

2020 | Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction

CAREER HISTORY

I am currently in my ninth year of teaching, having started my career in Baltimore County, Maryland. During my four years there, I taught first grade while also earning a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction from Grand Canyon University. Upon completing my degree, I had the opportunity to transfer to a school in Carroll County, Maryland.

At my current school, I was honored to be selected as team leader after my first year. I am now fortunate to serve in my dream position, teaching first grade while leading a dedicated team of educators and mentoring college interns. This role allows me to combine my passion for teaching with my commitment to supporting the growth of both current and future educators.

IMPACT ON FIELD

Through my work as a first-grade teacher, team leader and mentor to future educators, I have had a meaningful impact on my professional field in several ways. First and foremost, I've fostered a learning environment that prioritizes both academic growth and emotional development. By creating a classroom where students feel safe, respected and excited to learn, I've witnessed firsthand how nurturing a positive culture can spark curiosity and a lifelong love of learning in young children.

As a team leader, I've collaborated with my colleagues to refine our curriculum and instructional practices, ensuring that we consistently meet the needs of our students. I've also facilitated professional development sessions to share best practices and encourage reflective teaching, creating a more cohesive and innovative teaching team.

Mentoring future teachers has been another key area where I've made an impact. I help guide college students as they transition from theory to practice, providing them with the tools and confidence they need to succeed in the classroom. Watching these aspiring educators grow into skilled teachers is incredibly rewarding, and it strengthens the overall quality of education in our community.

Through these combined efforts, I've contributed not only to the success of my own students but also to the development of future educators who will continue to shape the field for years to come. Whether through leadership, mentorship or teaching, my focus remains on creating an environment where all students and teachers can thrive.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

For the past five years, I have had the distinct honor of being nominated as Carroll County's Outstanding Teacher of the Year.¹ It has been an incredibly rewarding experience to stand alongside other exceptional educators in a field I am deeply passionate about. Two years ago, I was selected as one of the top eight finalists for Teacher of the Year, an achievement that I was awarded after competing among over 900 educators who were nominated across the county.¹ This recognition not only represented my own school but also served as a testament to the dedication of early childhood educators throughout the district. Being selected as a finalist was a profound honor, and I greatly valued the opportunity to reflect on my passion for teaching and share this milestone with my friends, family and most importantly, my classroom of enthusiastic students who continue to be my greatest supporters.



Judith Hemler

2020 | Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction

ORGANIZATIONS

I am actively involved with several organizations that support and enhance the field of education, both locally and nationally. I enjoy continuing to grow professionally and contribute to shaping the future of education in both my community and beyond. Here are a few that have been integral to my professional growth:

National Education Association (NEA): As a member of the NEA, I stay connected to a broader network of educators and participate in advocacy efforts that promote equitable education policies and support for teachers. The NEA provides invaluable resources, professional development opportunities and a platform for educators to voice their concerns and share best practices.

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE): I am a proud member of MSDE, an organization focused on advancing educators' knowledge and skills in curriculum development, instruction and leadership. MSDE offers a wealth of research-based strategies and frameworks that help shape my approach to teaching and team leadership.

Local Teacher Mentorship Programs: I collaborate with local universities to mentor future educators through formal mentorship programs. These partnerships not only help shape the next generation of teachers but also keep me engaged with current educational research and best practices in teacher preparation.

State and Local Teacher Unions: Through my involvement with state and local teacher unions, I advocate for policies that ensure teachers are supported and that classrooms are well-equipped to meet the needs of all students. I believe in the power of collective bargaining to improve working conditions and educational equity.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I demonstrate leadership through a blend of collaboration, mentorship and fostering a positive learning environment. As a team leader, I guide my colleagues in curriculum planning, provide resources and ensure that we meet the unique needs of our students. I create a space for open communication, where everyone's ideas are valued and help us work toward common goals with clarity and purpose.

For several years, I also served as an extended learning coordinator for the county, where I led after-school and summer enrichment programs. This role allowed me to collaborate with other educators and community partners to provide students with additional learning opportunities outside the classroom. I developed and implemented programs that focused on academic enrichment, social-emotional growth and skill building, all while ensuring that we addressed the needs of all students, particularly those who required extra support.

Mentoring future teachers has been another key aspect of my leadership. I guide college students through their field experiences, helping them refine their teaching practices and classroom management skills. I offer constructive feedback, share my own experiences and help them build the confidence they need to succeed in their careers.

In all my roles, I lead by example, fostering a welcoming, respectful and growth-oriented environment. Whether in the classroom, through mentorship or in program coordination, my leadership is about collaboration, empowerment and creating spaces where both students and educators can thrive.



Judith Hemler

2020 | Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction

ADVICE

To current students or recent graduates, my biggest piece of advice is to embrace the journey of continuous learning. Whether you're entering education or any other field, the world is always evolving, and it's important to stay curious and adaptable. Don't be afraid to make mistakes along the way; those are the moments that will help you grow and refine your skills. The key is to learn from them and keep moving forward.

Another important piece of advice is to build a strong support network. Surround yourself with mentors, colleagues and peers who can offer guidance, share experiences and give constructive feedback. Relationships are crucial, and collaboration with others will help you navigate challenges and find new opportunities.

Remember that success is not always linear. It's okay to take unexpected paths or change direction along the way. What matters is your ability to stay resilient, keep learning and align your work with your passions and values. Trust that the experiences you have, whether inside or outside of your job, will shape your journey in ways you might not yet see.

Lastly, stay patient with yourself. It can be easy to feel pressure to have it all figured out right away, but personal and professional growth takes time. Keep pushing forward with purpose, and remember that every step, no matter how small, is progress. Your future is shaped by the choices you make today, and the impact you have in whatever you do will matter more than you can imagine.

¹ Baltimore Sun. (2023, March 30). 2023 Carroll County Chamber of Commerce outstanding teacher awards: Photos. baltimoresun.com/2023/03/30/2023-carroll-county-chamber-of-commerce-outstanding-teacher-awards-photos



Dominic Hinton

2021 | Bachelor of Arts in Digital Film with an Emphasis in Production

CURRENT POSITION Videographer and Editor at Turning Point USA

INDUSTRY Marketing

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I am a seasoned videographer and editor with nearly a decade of experience in multimedia production. Currently serving as a lead videographer and editor at Turning Point USA, I have spent the past four years producing high-impact visual content, including several high-profile documentaries and award-winning podcasts that have reached national audiences.^{1,2} My work is driven by a commitment to storytelling, technical precision and a passion for capturing compelling narratives that inform and inspire.

As a credentialed member of the White House Press Association, I regularly travel to Washington, D.C., to document key political events and provide in-depth visual coverage of national developments. This role has further deepened my expertise in live event production, rapid content turnaround and high-stakes media environments.

Before joining Turning Point USA, I honed my craft at GCU, where I worked all four years for GCUTV. There, I gained hands-on experience in live sports broadcasting, studio production and on-campus media initiatives. I also spent three seasons with the Sacramento River Cats, the Triple-A affiliate of the San Francisco Giants, contributing to their in-game production and helping elevate the fan experience through dynamic visual content.

With a strong background in both live and post-production environments, I bring creativity, professionalism and a deep understanding of the media landscape to every project I undertake.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

One of the biggest milestones in my career was being part of the Sacramento River Cats' production team during their 2019 Triple-A National Championship season. Working behind the scenes during that run and helping deliver a top-tier game-day experience was an unforgettable start to my professional journey.

Since then, I've had the opportunity to work on several major projects as a lead videographer at Turning Point USA. Over the past four years, I've filmed several high-profile documentaries that have reached wide audiences and sparked important conversations. I've also been part of creating award-winning podcasts that continue to grow in impact and reach.^{1,2}

Another proud moment was being invited to cover Donald Trump's presidential inauguration in January 2025. It was an incredible honor to capture such a historic and nationally significant event. Shortly after, I was accepted into the White House Press Corps, which has allowed me to travel frequently to Washington, D.C. and provide visual coverage of some of the most important developments in our country.

Each of these milestones has shaped me professionally and personally, giving me the chance to grow as a storyteller, sharpen my technical skills and be part of moments that truly matter. I'm grateful for every step and excited for what's ahead.



Dominic Hinton

2021 | Bachelor of Arts in Digital Film with an Emphasis in Production

CAREER HISTORY

My career in video production really began at Christian Brothers High School in Sacramento, where I was part of the school's four-year video production program. That's where I first discovered my passion for storytelling through the lens and developed a strong foundation in editing, shooting and producing live content. It gave me the tools, confidence and vision to pursue media professionally.

From there, I attended GCU, where I worked all four years for GCUTV. During my time there, I gained hands-on experience in live broadcasting, studio production and content creation for athletics and university events. It was also during college that I spent three seasons with the Sacramento River Cats, the Triple-A affiliate of the San Francisco Giants. Being part of their production team, especially during their 2019 AAA National Championship season, was an amazing opportunity to work in professional sports and contribute to a high-energy fan experience.

After graduation, I joined Turning Point USA, where I currently serve as a lead videographer and an editor. Over the past four years, I've had the chance to film several high-profile documentaries, help launch and grow award-winning podcasts and travel the country creating content that reaches millions. I've also been honored to cover major political events, including President Trump's 2025 inauguration and was accepted into the White House Press Corps, allowing me to regularly cover developments in Washington D.C.

Each stage of my journey has built on the last, and I'm proud of how far it has taken me.

IMPACT ON FIELD

Throughout my career, I've focused on using video to inform, engage and inspire — whether through storytelling, live production or on-the-ground reporting. At every stage, I've aimed to raise the standard of visual content, blending creativity with professionalism to make meaningful work that resonates.

At Turning Point USA, I've helped the organization's visual voice by participating in the production of several high-profile documentaries and award-winning podcasts. These projects have reached millions, sparking national conversations and helping to drive cultural engagement through high-quality storytelling. I take pride in not just capturing footage but crafting narratives that connect people to the issues that matter most.

As a member of the White House Press Corps, I've also brought a sharp, independent visual perspective to some of the most significant events in American politics, including the 2025 presidential inauguration. My ability to deliver fast, reliable and compelling footage has made me a trusted source for coverage in fast-paced, high-stakes environments.

Even in earlier roles — whether with GCUTV or the Sacramento River Cats — I worked to elevate production quality and help teams tell their stories more effectively. I believe visual media is one of the most powerful tools we have to communicate ideas, document history and drive change. I've always aimed to use my skills to contribute to that bigger purpose.



Dominic Hinton

2021 | Bachelor of Arts in Digital Film with an Emphasis in Production

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the course of my career, I've been fortunate to contribute to several projects that have gone on to receive recognition. A number of the documentaries and podcasts I've worked on at Turning Point USA have earned Telly Awards, which honor excellence in video and television across all screens.^{1,2} While many of these awards weren't given to me individually, being part of the creative and production teams behind them is something I take great pride in. Each one represents countless hours of collaboration, storytelling and dedication to producing content that stands out.

This past award season, I had the privilege of serving as the lead camera operator for the short documentary "Farm Like A Lunatic: Polyface Farm Tour," which was honored with a Bronze Telly Award for General Documentary - Short Form.³ Being credited on an award-winning project like this was a deeply meaningful milestone. It marked a moment where my contribution was recognized within a broader team effort.

Another meaningful accolade was receiving the "Warrior Spirit Award" within our company. This internal honor is given to team members who go above and beyond, demonstrate exceptional dedication and embody the mission and values of the organization. Being recognized by my peers and leadership in that way was both humbling and motivating. It reminded me that impact isn't just measured in view counts or public recognition, but also in the way you show up for your team and lead by example.

These awards not only affirm the quality of the work I've been part of, but also push me to keep raising the bar, telling stories that matter and delivering work that makes a difference. I see every accolade as a reflection of a team effort and I'm grateful to be surrounded by people who challenge and inspire me every day.

ORGANIZATIONS

At Turning Point USA, where I've served as a videographer and an editor for nearly four years, I've had the opportunity to create impactful visual content that reaches millions of viewers. Turning Point USA is dedicated to educating and mobilizing young Americans around the principles of freedom, free markets and limited government.⁴ My role allows me to bring that mission to life through documentaries, podcasts and live event coverage. It's a fast-paced, creative environment where I get to collaborate with talented storytellers and make content that sparks meaningful conversations across the country.

In addition to my work with TPUSA, I'm a credentialed member of the White House Press Corps. This role gives me unique access to political events and briefings in Washington, D.C. and allows me to document some of the most important moments happening in our nation's capital. Whether it's covering press conferences, major speeches or historic events like the presidential inauguration, I take seriously the responsibility of capturing accurate, compelling visual content that informs the public.

Being part of both organizations has not only expanded my technical and creative skills but also deepened my understanding of the media's role in shaping public discourse. I'm proud to contribute to platforms that value truth, transparency and impactful storytelling.



Dominic Hinton

2021 | Bachelor of Arts in Digital Film with an Emphasis in Production

LEADERSHIP STYLE

To me, leadership is about setting the standard, both in work ethic and attitude, and helping others reach their potential along the way. As a lead videographer and editor at Turning Point USA, I've had the opportunity to guide creative teams through high-pressure projects, from pre-production planning to final delivery. I lead by example, staying calm under deadlines, making decisions quickly and ensuring every project reflects a high level of professionalism and purpose.

I've also found that good leadership is about listening. Whether I'm collaborating with producers, directing on-set crews or mentoring newer team members, I always strive to create an environment where everyone feels heard and supported. I've learned that empowering others not only builds trust but also brings out the best in a team creatively.

During my time with GCUTV and the Sacramento River Cats, I often took on informal leadership roles – helping newer teammates learn the ropes, stepping up to troubleshoot technical issues in live environments and keeping teams organized during busy production days. Those early experiences taught me that leadership isn't tied to a title; it's shown in how you show up for others and take ownership when it matters most.

Above all, I take pride in being dependable, driven and collaborative. Whether I'm leading a shoot or managing edits in post, I focus on delivering quality work while lifting the team around me.

ADVICE

If I could give one piece of advice to current GCU students and recent graduates, it would be this: say yes to every opportunity you can, especially the ones that stretch you outside your comfort zone. When I was at GCU, working for GCUTV all four years, I didn't always feel 100% ready for every role or responsibility, but those were the moments that helped me grow the most.

Don't wait until you feel perfectly qualified to step into a position, take on a new project or apply for a job. So much of success is about showing up, working hard, staying humble and being open to learning. The more you immerse yourself in practical experiences – internships, campus productions, side projects – the more confident and capable you'll become.

Also, build genuine relationships. Some of my most valuable career moments have come through connections I have made by being reliable, respectful and curious. People remember how you work with them, not just what you do.

Finally, stay grounded in your purpose. The media and creative industries can move fast and change quickly. Knowing why you do what you do will help you stay focused, keep your integrity and find fulfillment beyond just a title or paycheck. Your time at GCU is a launchpad – take advantage of every resource, lean into your passions and trust that your hard work will open doors you never saw coming.

¹ Telly Awards. (2025, May 20). America's best kept secret: The crisis at the northern border - 2025 gold winner. Telly Awards. Retrieved from tellyawards.com/winners/2025/social-video/general-video-journalism/americas-best-kept-secret-the-crisis-at-the-northern-border/338910 on July 8, 2025.

² Azen, V. (2025, May 20). 46th Annual Telly Award Winners Announced. Telly Awards. Retrieved from tellyawards.com/press-release/46th-annual-telly-award-winners-announced on July 8, 2025.

³ Farm Like a Lunatic: Polyface Farm Tour - Full Documentary. The Telly Awards, 2025. tellyawards.com/winners/2025/social-video/general-documentary-short-form-under-40-minutes/farm-like-a-lunatic-polyface-farm-tour-full-documentary/339490/

⁴ Meet the founder. Turning Point USA. (2025). Retrieved from tpusa.com/meetthefounder on June 25, 2025.



Addison Huss

2024 | Master of Science in Nursing with an Emphasis in Nursing Leadership

OTHER DEGREES Bachelor of Science in Nursing, University of Nebraska Medical Center, 2022

CURRENT POSITION Associate Director at Mosaic
Adjunct Professor at Southeast Community College

INDUSTRY Health Care

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

My personal and professional efforts are focused on delivering exceptional care, underpinned by a solid educational background in nursing from GCU. With expertise in autism care, I strive to implement strategies that enhance operational efficiency and quality care, leveraging my Six Sigma Black Belt Certification. As an educator at Southeast Community College, I instill critical thinking and organizational excellence in future health care professionals.

My commitment to the field of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities/Developmental Disabilities (IDD/DD) is unwavering, driving me to continually advance nursing management and practices in this specialized area.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

Over the course of more than seven years with Mosaic, I've progressed through multiple leadership and clinical roles, beginning as a direct support professional and advancing to associate director. This journey reflects a deep commitment to compassionate care, operational excellence and team development within the health care sector. Along the way, I earned my Registered Nurse (RN) license in 2021, allowing me to expand clinical impact and lead teams with both medical expertise and empathy.

My academic contributions as an adjunct professor at Southeast Community College further highlight my dedication to developing the next generation of health care professionals. Committed to continuous improvement, I obtained a Six Sigma Black Belt Certification in early 2024, enhancing my ability to lead quality initiatives and optimize health care delivery. I further expanded my leadership competencies through a Certified Scrum Master (CSM) credential (January 2025), reinforcing my agility in cross-functional leadership and team collaboration. Additionally, I hold an Autism Certificate (2023 - 2025) from the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES), underscoring my dedication to person-centered care. These milestones collectively represent a career defined by growth, service and strategic leadership in health care and education.



Addison Huss

2024 | Master of Science in Nursing with an Emphasis in Nursing Leadership

CAREER HISTORY

With over seven years of progressive experience at Mosaic in Beatrice, Nebraska, I have advanced from a direct support professional to associate director, demonstrating strong leadership and expertise in health care operations. My journey includes roles as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), RN and director of nursing, where I consistently applied my skills in the nursing process, electronic medical records (EMR) and written communication to enhance patient care and operational efficiency. Currently serving as associate director, I oversee key health care initiatives and contribute to organizational strategy and compliance.

In parallel, I have been an adjunct professor at Southeast Community College since 2021, where I educate and mentor future health care professionals, integrating practical EMR experience and communication skills into the academic environment. My dual roles in health care management and education reflect a deep commitment to improving care standards and fostering professional growth in others.

IMPACT ON FIELD

Throughout my career, I've made a significant impact in health care and education by fostering both operational excellence and compassionate, person-centered care. At Mosaic, I have progressively taken on leadership roles, starting as a direct support professional and advancing to associate director, where I have been able to influence strategic initiatives that improve patient care, operational efficiency and team performance. My clinical expertise, combined with a deep commitment to leadership, has allowed me to mentor health care teams, streamline processes and implement evidence-based practices that enhance patient outcomes.

I've also made a notable contribution to the development of future health care professionals as an adjunct professor at Southeast Community College, where I integrate lived experience with academic learning. In addition to my nursing credentials, I've pursued the Six Sigma Black Belt Certification (2024), allowing me to lead quality improvement initiatives and create equitable health care environments. As a CSM (2025), I've also brought agile principles to health care management, promoting collaboration and adaptive leadership.

Further, my Autism Certificate (2023) has deepened my ability to provide specialized care for individuals with autism, ensuring a more supportive environment for all patients. Together, these efforts reflect my dedication to improving both health care delivery and the training of health care professionals, with an emphasis on quality, inclusion and continuous improvement.



Addison Huss

2024 | Master of Science in Nursing with an Emphasis in Nursing Leadership

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout my career, I have been honored with several achievements that reflect my commitment to excellence in health care and education. Notably, I earned my Six Sigma Black Belt Certification (2024), which has enabled me to lead process improvement initiatives that have streamlined operations and enhanced patient care at Mosaic. This aligns with my broader goal of promoting quality assurance and efficiency in health care settings.

I also achieved the Autism Certificate in 2023 from the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards, underscoring my dedication to providing specialized care for individuals with autism and further enhancing the services I oversee. Additionally, my commitment to fostering equitable environments led to earning an Inclusion Certification (2024).

In terms of leadership and team collaboration, I received my CSM credential in January 2025, which allows me to introduce agile methodologies that improve team dynamics and adaptability within health care management. Moreover, I have contributed to the development of future health care professionals as an adjunct professor at Southeast Community College, a role that has allowed me to mentor and shape the next generation of leaders in the field.

These accolades represent my continuous pursuit of professional growth, my dedication to improving health care delivery and my passion for mentoring others to excel in their careers.

ORGANIZATIONS

I am actively involved in several organizations that support both my professional growth and community impact. At Mosaic, I hold leadership positions, including my current role as associate director, where I contribute to strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing patient care, operational efficiency and team development. Additionally, I serve as an adjunct professor at Southeast Community College, where I mentor future health care professionals, applying my practical experiences to the curriculum.

Beyond my health care roles, I am a volunteer director for the Pinnacle Bank Championship, presented by Woodhouse, as part of the Korn Ferry Tour (PGA). In this capacity, I help oversee key event operations, working with a team of volunteers to ensure the success of the tournament, which raises funds for local charities and promotes community engagement. This role allows me to apply my leadership and organizational skills in a different context, while supporting a meaningful cause.

I am also involved in professional organizations such as the IBCCES and Six Sigma Global Institute, which help me stay updated on industry best practices and continue my personal development. Through my involvement in the Council for Six Sigma Certification, I focus on quality assurance and process improvement, ensuring that I bring cutting-edge knowledge and leadership strategies to my work in health care and education.



Addison Huss

2024 | Master of Science in Nursing with an Emphasis in Nursing Leadership

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I demonstrate leadership through a combination of strategic thinking, empathy and a commitment to fostering growth within my teams. At Mosaic, I lead by example, ensuring that I maintain high standards of care, communication and operational efficiency. Whether as director of nursing or associate director, I prioritize creating a supportive environment where team members feel valued and empowered to contribute their best work. I focus on mentoring, encouraging continuous learning and providing clear, actionable feedback to help individuals advance in their roles.

As an adjunct professor at Southeast Community College, my leadership extends to the classroom, where I integrate hands-on experience with academic learning to inspire students. I encourage open dialogue and collaboration, fostering a growth mindset among my students and pushing them to challenge themselves and develop the skills necessary for success in health care.

As a volunteer director for the Pinnacle Bank Championship, I lead volunteer teams with an emphasis on teamwork, accountability and community engagement. My leadership involves creating a culture of cooperation and ensuring that everyone, regardless of their role, feels connected to the event's larger mission. Whether in health care or community service, I lead by empowering others, focusing on continuous improvement and ensuring that every team member has the support they need to succeed.

ADVICE

My advice to current students and recent graduates is to embrace continuous learning, remain adaptable and build meaningful relationships. The journey after graduation may not always follow a straight path, and that's okay. Be open to exploring different roles and industries, as each experience will add value to your skill set and help you discover your true passion.

In addition to technical knowledge, invest in your interpersonal skills. Empathy, communication and collaboration are just as important as expertise. These qualities will set you apart, whether you're in health care, education or any other field. Seek out mentors who can guide you, but also take the time to learn from your peers and those with diverse experiences.

Take initiative in your professional development. Certifications, internships and volunteer opportunities can all help you expand your expertise and network. Lastly, don't be afraid to take risks and make mistakes. These are essential parts of personal and professional growth. Stay curious, stay resilient and remember that every challenge is an opportunity to learn and improve.



Joseph Knight

2017 | Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an Emphasis in Business Intelligence

2019 | Master of Science in Business Analytics

2020 | Master of Science in Cybersecurity

CURRENT POSITION Senior Account Director at CISO Global, Inc.

INDUSTRY Business

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I'm a results-driven cybersecurity professional with a passion for building strong client relationships and delivering impactful, tailored solutions. As senior account director at CISO Global, I lead strategic engagements with enterprise clients, focusing on risk management, managed services and long-term security success.

Since joining CISO Global in 2021, I've progressed from sales development specialist to senior account executive and ultimately to my current leadership role. Along the way, I've developed a deep understanding of how to align technical capabilities with client needs, helping drive retention, satisfaction and consistent growth. I take pride in bringing strategic thinking, clear communication and a collaborative approach to every project I'm involved in.

Before stepping into the cybersecurity space, I spent over four years with Grand Canyon Education. There, I led high-performing teams and supported students through academic advising and enrollment strategy, an experience that sharpened my leadership and coaching skills.

Outside of my day-to-day work, I have a strong passion for team building and sports. I founded the Club Golf program at Grand Canyon University and previously served as a brand ambassador for golf and lifestyle brands like Srixon, Cleveland Golf and Johnnie-O.

I thrive at the intersection of people, technology and growth, and I'm always looking for new ways to bring value, solve problems and build something meaningful with the teams and clients I work alongside.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

I joined CISO Global in 2021 and quickly advanced through three roles in under four years – from sales development specialist to account executive and now senior account director. This progression reflects my ability to master complex sales processes, build strategic relationships and deliver value in the cybersecurity industry. Throughout my time at CISO Global, I've consistently demonstrated strong leadership skills, an aptitude for identifying client needs and a deep understanding of cybersecurity solutions. My ability to lead cross-functional teams, align technology offerings with business objectives and drive growth for key accounts has been central to my success. I've cultivated a client-first approach, focusing on long-term partnerships and delivering results that exceed expectations. Each step in my journey has honed my skills in project management, strategic planning and delivering high-quality services, positioning me as a trusted advisor and leader in the cybersecurity space.



Joseph Knight

2017 | Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an Emphasis in Business Intelligence

2019 | Master of Science in Business Analytics

2020 | Master of Science in Cybersecurity

CAREER HISTORY

I began my career at GCU as a full-time university admissions counselor, where I quickly advanced to the fourth level of the role, demonstrating my ability to excel in a fast-paced, client-focused environment. During this time, I also pursued and completed two separate master's degrees, which provided me with a strong academic foundation and prepared me for the transition into the field of cybersecurity. By the age of 23, I had earned three college degrees from GCU, a significant accomplishment that reflects my commitment to learning continuously and personal growth.

This academic achievement, combined with my professional experience at GCU, gave me the skills to navigate complex challenges, manage relationships and develop strategic solutions. With a passion for technology and security, I made the leap into cybersecurity, where I quickly applied my knowledge and skills to excel in this rapidly evolving industry. My ability to integrate both academic theory and hands-on experience has allowed me to make an immediate impact in the field, positioning me as a driven and accomplished professional at the intersection of technology, security and client success.

IMPACT ON FIELD

I've made a significant impact in my professional field by continuously combining academic knowledge with hands-on experience to drive success and innovation, all starting with a strong educational foundation. This dedication to learning allowed me to build a robust understanding of both higher education counseling and cybersecurity.

In my current role in cybersecurity, I've leveraged my strategic thinking and relationship-building skills to successfully drive account growth and client satisfaction. By deeply understanding client needs, presenting tailored cybersecurity solutions and fostering long-term partnerships, I've consistently delivered value to organizations while maintaining the highest standards of service.

My rapid progression from sales development specialist to senior account director at CISO Global highlights my ability to adapt to and excel in new fields. I've introduced streamlined processes and fostered a collaborative environment that has led to measurable growth within my accounts and within the organization. I've also played an integral role in educating clients about the importance of cybersecurity culture, helping businesses align their strategies with robust security practices.

Through this blend of education, leadership and practical expertise, I've helped shape a more informed, security-conscious approach within the cybersecurity space. I contribute to the industry's growth while ensuring organizations are better equipped to handle evolving threats.



Joseph Knight

2017 | Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an Emphasis in Business Intelligence

2019 | Master of Science in Business Analytics

2020 | Master of Science in Cybersecurity

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the course of my career, I have received several noteworthy awards and accolades that reflect my dedication, leadership and accomplishments. Most recently, I was honored with the President's Award over the past four years, recognizing my exceptional performance, commitment and contributions to the organization. This prestigious award highlights my ability to consistently exceed expectations and deliver outstanding results across multiple roles.

In addition to this recognition, I advanced quickly at CISO Global, advancing from sales development specialist to account executive and ultimately to senior account director in just under four years. This swift career growth underscores my expertise in building client relationships, driving sales revenue and leading strategic initiatives within the cybersecurity industry.

During my time at GCU, I also led the Club Golf program, which achieved national championship status in Spring 2018.¹ This accomplishment reflects my leadership abilities, organizational skills and drive to succeed in competitive environments.

These milestones, along with my academic achievements, illustrate my commitment to both professional and personal growth and my drive to continuously contribute at a high level in every role I undertake.

ORGANIZATIONS

Arizona Technology Council

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I demonstrate leadership through a combination of strategic vision, team collaboration and a strong focus on delivering results, which I believe are essential qualities for effective leadership. From my early roles to my current position as senior account director at CISO Global, I have always sought to lead with a clear sense of purpose while empowering others to achieve shared goals. By combining strategic vision, collaboration and a relentless focus on results, I aim to inspire my team, strengthen relationships with clients and contribute to the growth and success of the organizations I work with. My leadership is defined by the ability to inspire others to reach their full potential while ensuring that we collectively achieve excellence.

ADVICE

To current students or recent graduates, my advice would be rooted in the importance of continuous learning, building relationships and embracing challenges with a proactive mindset. Keep pushing forward, stay curious and be ready to seize the opportunities that come your way.

¹ PGA. (n.d.). Grand Canyon University Club Golf. NCCGA.org. Retrieved from nccga.org/app/teams/grand-canyon-university-club-golf on June 26, 2025.



Andrew Lee

2022 | Bachelor of Science in Accounting

2024 | Master of Business Administration

CURRENT POSITION FSO Technology Risk Assurance Senior at Ernst & Young LLP

INDUSTRY Finance

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

Upon graduating from Grand Canyon University in 2022 with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting, I began my professional career in public accounting while also pursuing my MBA at GCU. I started my career as a tax prep intern at a mid-sized accounting firm in San Jose, California, before transitioning to my current role in Phoenix at Ernst & Young. Since joining the company, I have served in the assurance service line; first as a Financial Services Organization (FSO) technology risk assurance staff and now as an FSO technology risk assurance senior. At the same time, I earned my MBA in Fall 2024. Outside of work commitments, I spend my time with my wife and our newborn son, Kayson. We live in a Phoenix suburb and have been fortunate enough to travel the world, visiting 23 different countries. My wife and I both graduated from GCU in April 2022 and got married later that year. We are now starting our family here in Gilbert, Arizona.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

Initially, my first significant professional milestone was graduating from GCU in just three years, at the age of 20. During my time at GCU as both an undergraduate and graduate student, I had the opportunity to learn from professors who not only challenged me daily but also made a lasting impact on my career, all while I was working at the university.

While a junior at GCU, I was able to land an amazing internship with a nationally-ranked accounting firm in their California tax department.¹ Upon graduating, I was able to take the next big step and accepted a job offer with Ernst & Young, the second-largest accounting firm internationally and the second-largest public audit practice in the U.S.² While working for such a reputable firm is a significant career milestone on its own, I have now spent almost three years in the technology risk assurance practice. Beginning initially as staff in the Phoenix office, I've since been promoted to a senior role. Additionally, I've been fortunate enough to be both nominated and a finalist for the Reece Devlin Innovation Leadership Award at my firm, which recognizes individuals who embody welcoming leadership, an innovative mindset and a commitment to quality and driving change. Additionally, I have obtained the Lean Six Sigma White Belt Certification, which provides a foundational understanding of process improvement tools, techniques and principles.

CAREER HISTORY

After I first began my career in the industry of public accounting with a tax prep internship in California, I was fortunate enough to be offered a position with a "Big Four" firm, Ernst & Young, in their downtown Phoenix office. I began my career as a staff member in 2022 and have since been promoted to a senior role. While working in the FSO technology risk assurance practice, I have gained valuable experience serving a variety of FinTech Channel 1 clients from industries like capital markets, banking, finance, insurance and credit cards. I currently serve as a senior for my clients on engagements for their annual SOX 404 audits and SOC 1 audit reports of publicly traded companies, where I manage both staff members and overseas teams working on our various accounts.



Andrew Lee

2022 | Bachelor of Science in Accounting

2024 | Master of Business Administration

IMPACT ON FIELD

I have been able to positively impact my professional field of public accounting and specifically IT audit by understanding the needs and serving each of my clients to the best of my ability every single day. I've been able to help audit clients effectively by taking the time to truly understand their business operations, industry dynamics and strategic goals. This deeper understanding allows me to tailor audit procedures to areas of higher risk and relevance, which not only enhances audit quality but also drives more meaningful insights for the client. By aligning our audit focus with the client's unique environment, I'm able to ask better questions, identify potential issues early and provide value beyond compliance — ultimately strengthening client trust and delivering more impactful results. My colleagues consistently recognize me as a leader who prioritizes understanding clients at a deep level. I take the initiative to learn about their business models, challenges and goals, which enables me to deliver tailored, high-quality audit solutions. Additionally, I actively embrace and promote the use of technology to drive efficiency and enhance the quality of our work. I also take pride in leading our teams in the senior role with a collaborative and supportive approach — fostering growth across our teams, encouraging innovation and maintaining a strong focus on delivering value to both our clients, our people and our firm.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

From an academic perspective, I am very proud of graduating from GCU at the age of 20 in 2022. By working hard to graduate on a fast-track plan, I was able to begin my MBA studies and my professional career very early on. In 2024, I graduated once again from the Colangelo College of Business, earning my MBA at age 22. From a professional perspective, I have been recognized by my colleagues and the firm as a leader in the technology risk assurance practice and was both nominated and selected as a finalist for the Reese Devlin Innovation Leadership Award. I've obtained my Lean Six Sigma White Belt Certification, which is a business improvement methodology certification that strives to enhance both efficiency and quality of work. Additionally, I have been part of Ernst & Young's various recruiting efforts across Arizona. I work with on-campus recruiting teams at different universities, primarily at GCU, where I serve as a member of the core recruiting team. I am also currently a member of the Arizona Information Systems Audit and Controls Association (ISACA), where I earned a major professional certification, Certified in Risk and Information Systems Controls (CRISC).

ORGANIZATIONS

In addition to working for Ernst & Young and being an alum of GCU's Colangelo College of Business, I am also a member of the ISACA, an organization focused on IT governance, training and credentialing. I am also a member of the core recruiting team for GCU at my firm, an internal initiative for on-campus recruiting efforts.



Andrew Lee

2022 | Bachelor of Science in Accounting

2024 | Master of Business Administration

LEADERSHIP STYLE

During my professional career, I have been able to demonstrate leadership in my work with both my client-facing engagements and in various internal initiatives for my firm. In my client-facing work, I have recently been promoted to senior. In my role, I have the privilege of overseeing various full-time staff members, international teams who assist with our audit work and newly hired interns. By stepping into a higher role, I have taken on new and higher-level responsibilities and tasks for our audits. As I transitioned into the senior role, my peers have consistently recognized me as a leader within our IT audit practice, often turning to me for guidance, insight and direction in complex situations. Whether it's navigating evolving compliance requirements, managing high-stakes audit engagements or introducing process improvements, I've built a reputation for being reliable, proactive and solution-oriented.

Colleagues frequently highlight my ability to see both the technical and strategic aspects of our work, bridging communication gaps between stakeholders and ensuring our audit objectives align with broader organizational goals. As a member of the core recruiting team for GCU at Ernst & Young, I've been able to give back and pour into students by assisting with various steps of the recruiting and hiring process. I primarily meet with students and give my time to provide mentorship to prospective candidates and insights into the accounting and audit industry. There is no greater reward than getting to serve others through their professional journeys.

ADVICE

I would advise current GCU students and recent graduates to be bold and take risks while they can. Time is your greatest asset! While in college, there are so many opportunities to get involved, regardless of your industry, degree or interests. College is a great opportunity to take new courses and challenge yourself to find your purpose and career. I found great benefits in applying for challenging internships and jobs and making connections with both peers and faculty. GCU is full of incredibly knowledgeable individuals who are willing to help guide students in their personal and spiritual lives in addition to their professional careers. GCU is a unique place with incredible opportunities that I hope students use to their full advantage.

¹ Armanino LLP. (2020, September 3). Armanino makes the INSIDE Public Accounting's 2020 best of the best firms list. Armanino. Retrieved from armanino.com/press-releases/armanino-inside-public-accounting-2020-best-of-the-best-firms-list on July 8, 2025.

² INSIDE. (2025, July 1). IPA: Rankings of Inside Public Accounting's Top 500 CPA firms. INSIDE Public Accounting. Retrieved from insidepublicaccounting.com/ipa-top-500-firms on July 8, 2025.



Brianna Lewis

2022 | Bachelor of Science in Health Care Administration,
Minor in General Business

OTHER DEGREES Master of Science in Health Care Informatics with a Concentration in Digital Health, University of Denver, 2025

CURRENT POSITION Senior Administrative Professional at Children’s Hospital Colorado

INDUSTRY Health Care

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

My name is Brianna Lewis, and I am a senior administrative professional in the Pediatric Mental Health Institute at Children’s Hospital Colorado. In my current role, I work closely with three directors within the institute. I have the opportunity to learn from them and gain exposure to leadership across patient care, operations and human resources.

I partner with them to manage calendars, organize small and large-scale meetings and events, coordinate catering and create itineraries for visiting executives, speakers and external candidates. I also assist with recruitment efforts, process invoices and develop and distribute internal institute-wide communications.

During my time at Children’s Hospital Colorado, I have been able to pursue my Master of Science in Health Care Informatics with a Concentration in Digital Health from the University of Denver, which I completed in Spring 2025. With this new degree, I hope to further my career in health care administration and informatics and continue to advocate for pediatric mental health awareness.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

During my time at Children’s Hospital Colorado, I’ve had the opportunity to be part of some incredible initiatives. To begin, I partnered with the child and adolescent division director and her team to plan and recruit for the chief of psychology role. This included developing a comprehensive two-day interview itinerary, managing time and breaks, greeting high-level executives and coordinating room reservations. This experience strengthened my skills in coordination, organization and taught me the importance of clear, concise communication.

Another proud career milestone in my current role was partnering with the practice director to facilitate cross-functional meetings with other directors across the organization to complete the 2025 U.S. News and World Report Survey for Behavioral Health. This national survey ranks the top organizations in the country and reinforces the importance of patient-centered care by allowing families to find the best possible care for their needs.

Lastly, one of my favorite career highlights was helping plan and execute team member appreciation events during Mental Health Awareness Month in May. I partnered with the practice director to organize a mental health spirit week, coordinate and distribute snacks during leadership treat rounding at all our system of care locations, managed a team appreciation T-shirt giveaway and planned two “Days at the Zoo” events, one in Colorado Springs, Colorado and one in Denver. This experience reinforced the value of recognizing and showing appreciation to your staff.



Brianna Lewis

**2022 | Bachelor of Science in Health Care Administration,
Minor in General Business**

CAREER HISTORY

Right after graduating with my bachelor's degree, I received a job offer at Children's Hospital Colorado to work as a patient and family services specialist. In this role, I provided non-clinical support services to both internal and external stakeholders, which included telephone screening and triage, scheduling, registration, patient reception and check-in/check-out. I also performed data entry and supported health insurance management functions by entering patient demographic updates into the medical records system, collecting insurance information and processing copays. After nine months, I transitioned into my current role as a senior administrative professional.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

While attending GCU, I served on the Canyon Activities Board (CAB), working alongside a seven-person team to organize events that promoted student engagement and celebrated campus diversity and multiculturalism. In this role, I helped design, budget and execute both large and small-scale themed university events.

I graduated summa cum laude in April 2022 with a Bachelor of Science in Health Care Administration and a Minor in General Business. I later earned my Master of Science in Health Care Informatics with a Concentration in Digital Health from the University of Denver, graduating summa cum laude in March 2025.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Working closely with the three directors in my current role has deeply shaped my perspective on leadership. They've taught me to lead with empathy, recognizing that life happens to everyone and that flexibility is key. They've shown me the importance of collaboration. No one can take on everything alone and differing opinions only strengthen our work. They've also instilled the value of initiative and to never be afraid to be a strong voice and engage in crucial conversations. Most of all, they've demonstrated the powerful impact of strong, successful women leaders within an organization. I hope to carry these principles with me as I continue to grow in my career and step into future leadership roles.

ADVICE

My advice to current students is to take in every moment that college has to offer. It goes by so fast. Get involved in everything, go to all the CAB events and basketball games, spend time with your favorite people and trust that everything will work out in the end.



Harrison Martin

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics

2021 | Master of Science in Business Analytics

CURRENT POSITION District Leader of Southern Nevada at COUNTRY Financial

INDUSTRY Finance

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

As the district leader of Southern Nevada for COUNTRY Financial, I oversee the entire region and lead a team of about 35 insurance and financial advisors. My role is centered on recruiting top talent, coaching and developing my team and supporting advisors in delivering exceptional service to their clients.

I'm passionate about helping people grow, whether that's guiding advisors to reach their full potential or working directly with clients on larger, more complex insurance and financial planning cases. I frequently join advisors in client meetings to offer strategic insight and help design customized solutions that meet each client's unique goals.

To me, leadership means more than just management. It's about creating a culture of integrity, accountability and continuous improvement. I strive to build a team that's not only high-performing but also truly aligned with COUNTRY Financial's mission to help people protect what they have and plan for what's next.

I take pride in the work we do here in Southern Nevada, and I'm committed to making a lasting impact for our clients, our advisors and the communities we serve.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

After graduating, I began my career with COUNTRY Financial as a scratch representative, starting with no existing book of business. While building my book from the ground up during the day, I also attended school at night to earn my master's degree. It was challenging to balance both, but it taught me discipline, time management and the value of long-term commitment. Through persistence and a client-first approach, I built our business in the financial planning, commercial, life, home and auto insurance areas, eventually bringing on six staff members to support the business.

During this time, I was honored to receive several of COUNTRY Financial's top awards, including Rookie Representative of the Year, Representative of the Year and multiple Life and Property and Casualty Honor Roll recognitions. I have also consistently been recognized over multiple years, receiving company awards that highlight top-tier producers.

Beyond personal production, I actively served my local business community. I was proud to be chairman of the board for the North Phoenix Chamber of Commerce and served as president of my Business Network International chapter for three years, helping foster professional growth and networking opportunities.

A year ago, I was given the opportunity to lead the Southern Nevada district as district leader. It's been an incredible journey of growth, leadership and impact.



Harrison Martin

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics

2021 | Master of Science in Business Analytics

CAREER HISTORY

My career in insurance began during college, when I took an internship that opened my eyes to how important proper financial and insurance planning is for both families and businesses. I quickly realized this industry needs people who can communicate clearly, provide trustworthy advice and guide others through difficult scenarios. That experience inspired me to complete the rest of my licensing while still in school.

After graduation, I set out to find a company whose values aligned with mine and gave me the opportunity to build something meaningful. That led me to COUNTRY Financial, where I spent five years as a financial representative building my book of business from scratch. I specialized in commercial, life, home and auto insurance, earning several of the company's highest awards.

As much as I loved serving clients directly, I felt called to do more. I transitioned into the role of district leader in Southern Nevada so I could support and mentor other advisors. In this role, I'm able to help others succeed in the same way I once strived to, by making a positive, lasting impact in their communities. Leading a team of 35 allows me to extend my influence beyond just my own book and help shape the future of financial guidance in our region.

IMPACT ON FIELD

Throughout my career, I've been focused on making a meaningful difference in the insurance and financial services industry – not just in production numbers, but in how we approach and serve our clients. One of the ways I've worked to shift the industry standard is by moving away from phone-based or virtual meetings whenever possible. I encourage and model a return to in-person conversations at clients' homes or businesses, where we can better understand their lives, goals and risks. That kind of connection builds trust and leads to better outcomes.

In addition to changing how we meet with clients, I've helped create multiple scripts and meeting structures that guide advisors through more effective conversations. These tools help ensure that policy presentations are clear, honest and tailored to each individual or business. I believe that process and empathy go hand in hand, and I work to equip advisors with both.

What I'm most proud of, though, is helping to reinforce why we do this work. It is not about chasing commissions. It's about protecting people and providing peace of mind. I've worked to bring that mission back to the forefront for the advisors I lead and collaborate with. When we focus on truly serving others, the impact we make lasts far beyond a policy sale. That is the legacy I want to leave in this field.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout my career at COUNTRY Financial, I've been honored to receive several of the company's highest awards. These include the Fast Start Award, Rookie Representative of the Year, Representative of the Year and multiple placements on both the Life and Property and Casualty Honor Rolls. I'm especially proud of earning the All-Star and All-American Awards six years in a row, which recognize the top five percent of producers company-wide each year.

In addition to my work with COUNTRY Financial, I was also named BNI Member of the Year twice, reflecting my commitment to building strong professional relationships and supporting the success of others in my network. These honors represent not only performance but a lasting dedication to service, leadership and community impact.



Harrison Martin

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics

2021 | Master of Science in Business Analytics

ORGANIZATIONS

Being involved in both professional and community organizations has been a central part of my growth and impact throughout my career. I've always believed in showing up, giving back and helping others develop personally and professionally.

In my time in Arizona, I had the privilege of chairing the North Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, where I worked alongside local business leaders to support economic development and create meaningful connections. I also helped launch a BNI networking group, serving as education coordinator, vice president and president for three years, helping to build a strong, growth-focused community of professionals.

Outside of work, I spent a year as an assistant coach for the men's lacrosse team at Arizona Christian University, where I combined my love for sports with leadership and mentorship. I'm especially proud of my eight years as a volunteer leader with Central Phoenix Young Life, where I invested in the lives of young people through consistent, relational ministry. That experience continues to shape how I lead today.

After moving to Henderson, Nevada a year ago, I've continued my commitment to local involvement by joining the Henderson Chamber of Commerce. It's been a great opportunity to connect with new professionals, support local business growth and continue contributing to the community I now call home.

Each of these roles has helped me grow in perspective and purpose and they remain a core part of how I define success by the impact I make in the lives of others.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

To me, leadership is not about authority or titles, it's about collaboration, trust and bringing out the best in others. I strive to lead from a position of unity, focusing on the idea that we're in this together. Whether I'm working with advisors, staff or community partners, I believe the most effective leadership starts with listening and ends with empowering.

I prioritize creating an environment where every team member feels valued, heard and respected. Everyone brings unique strengths and perspectives to the table, and I see my role as helping uncover and elevate those strengths. By building a culture of open communication and mutual respect, we're able to make better decisions and drive better outcomes for our team and for the clients we serve.

I also encourage collaboration over competition. Success is always more meaningful when it's shared, and I've found that teams are at their strongest when everyone is working toward a common purpose with clear support and accountability. I consistently work to align our goals, celebrate individual contributions and create space for new ideas.

My goal as a leader is to be approachable, dependable and supportive. I want people to know they don't work for me; they work with me. Together, we can create a culture that not only drives results but also brings out the very best in each person along the way.



Harrison Martin

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics

2021 | Master of Science in Business Analytics

ADVICE

To those who are just graduating or starting out, I want to encourage you to be open to every opportunity and stay rooted in your purpose. One of the most powerful things you can do early in your career is take on an internship. Internships give you the chance to truly experience an industry often showing you not only what you might want to do, but just as importantly, what you don't want to do. They help shape your path through exposure, not just classroom theory.

As you begin your professional journey, remember that success isn't just measured in titles, income or awards. It's about the impact you make on others. Every day, we have the opportunity to help, lead and serve. When we keep that in focus, the work becomes so much more meaningful.

For me, it's also about faith. As Christians, we are called to something greater than just building a career. We're called to serve with integrity, to love others well and to use our gifts to make a difference. Whatever field you go into, carry that mindset with you.

Chase purpose over prestige, and don't be afraid to take a few detours along the way. Stay humble, stay hungry and always remember why you do what you do. You are capable of so much more than you can see right now, and the world needs the difference only you can make.



Miyu Oda-Deshotles

2025 | Master of Public Administration with an Emphasis in Government and Policy

OTHER DEGREES Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, San Diego State University, 2023

CURRENT POSITION Constituent Affairs Director and Policy Aide for the County of San Diego

INDUSTRY Public Service

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I am a dedicated professional with a Master of Public Administration with an Emphasis in Government and Policy, specializing in making government work for citizens. As the constituent affairs director for the County of San Diego, I manage over 45,000 cases annually, coordinating outreach, resolving issues and ensuring that community members receive the support they need. My role involves navigating complex systems to provide effective solutions and build strong relationships with constituents. In addition to my government work, I serve as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) with Voices for Children Nonprofit and a Tailored Day program coordinator at Creel Industries Inc., where I support high-functioning autistic adults. I am passionate about driving policy solutions in housing, mental health and child welfare, always focused on achieving measurable results for those I serve.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

Some of my most significant career milestones include graduating with my Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from San Diego State University (SDSU) in just three years during the challenges of COVID-19. This achievement not only demonstrated my resilience but also laid the foundation for my passion for public service.

Another key milestone was becoming the president of the Black Student Science Organization at SDSU, where I led initiatives to support underrepresented students in the sciences. This leadership experience further fueled my desire to create inclusive spaces and advocate for diverse communities.

I also began my public service career at 21 years old, making me one of San Diego County's youngest employees. Since then, I've managed over 45,000 cases annually as the constituent affairs director under Supervisor Joel Anderson, ensuring government services reach those who need them most.

A recent highlight was being named to the 40 Under 40 list by the National Association of Asian Pacifics in Politics and Public Affairs in May 2024. This recognition affirmed my commitment to public service and encouraged me to continue striving for meaningful change in my community.

These milestones have shaped my journey and inspire me to keep making a difference in the lives of others.



Miyu Oda-Deshotles

2025 | Master of Public Administration with an Emphasis in Government and Policy

CAREER HISTORY

My career began at 21 years old when I joined the County of San Diego as one of its youngest employees. I started as a constituent affairs director, where I've managed over 45,000 cases annually, working to resolve issues and ensure that government services are accessible to the community. This role has given me the opportunity to advocate for constituents, navigate complex systems and develop strong relationships with the public. Before this, I was deeply involved in leadership at SDSU, where I served as the president of the Black Student Science Organization. In this role, I focused on supporting underrepresented students in the sciences and creating opportunities for academic and professional growth.

In addition to my work in government, I serve as a CASA with Voices for Children, advocating for children in the foster care system. This role has further expanded my commitment to public service, focusing on child welfare and social justice. Throughout my career, I've focused on creating positive change in my community, with a particular interest in housing, mental health and child welfare policy.

IMPACT ON FIELD

I have had a significant impact on my professional field, particularly in managing cases that focus on the senior community. Through policy efforts related to affordable housing and rental assistance programs, I have worked to ensure seniors receive the support they need to remain housed. I've helped seniors apply for benefits and served as a liaison to connect them with the right people, ensuring they have expedited access to services that prevent homelessness and protect their safety.

One of my key contributions has been conducting outreach to seniors who have been connected to our office in previous years. I single-handedly reached out to these individuals to ensure they were aware of and enrolled in additional programs that better fit their evolving needs. This proactive outreach has not only improved their access to services but also strengthened the relationships our office maintains with the senior community. By focusing on providing tailored solutions, I've been able to make a tangible difference in the lives of vulnerable seniors, helping them navigate complex systems and secure vital resources. My work has empowered many seniors to maintain stable housing and financial security, positively impacting their quality of life.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

40 Under 40 National Association of Asian Pacifics in Politics and Public Affairs

ORGANIZATIONS

I serve as a CASA for Voices for Children, Inc., where I advocate for foster youth, ensuring they have the resources and support needed to succeed.



Miyu Oda-Deshotles

2025 | Master of Public Administration with an Emphasis in Government and Policy

LEADERSHIP STYLE

My approach to leadership is rooted in transparency and communication. I make sure constituents feel heard and valued by promptly addressing their needs and ensuring they have the information they need to navigate complex systems. Whether it's resolving case issues, providing updates or helping individuals access services, I lead by example, showing the importance of follow-through and reliability. I demonstrate leadership by connecting people to good government and ensuring they receive the support they need in a timely manner. I prioritize responsiveness, consistently following up within 24 hours to address any concerns and provide clear guidance. By doing this, I set the tone for how government should work: efficient, accessible and accountable to the people it serves.

In my role as constituent affairs director, I work to foster an environment where people feel confident in the government's ability to support them. This approach builds trust and encourages collaboration, ensuring that the services we provide are not only effective but also meet the unique needs of those we serve. Through my leadership, I aim to make the government feel more accessible and responsive to the community.

ADVICE

My best advice to current students or recent graduates is to get an internship in the field you're interested in as early as possible. Don't just study the subject. Immerse yourself in it. Take the time to interview people who are already doing the work you hope to do one day. Ask them what a typical day looks like, what challenges they face and what they wish they knew when they were starting out. This insight is invaluable in helping you decide whether that path is truly the right one for you before investing your time, money and energy.

I also strongly recommend reaching out to your local government representatives to ask if they offer internships. Government may not always be the first thing people think of when planning their careers, but it plays a powerful role in nearly every field, from health care to education to housing. An internship in a government office can give you hands-on experience, help you build connections and open your eyes to how public service can align with your personal and professional goals. It definitely did for me.



Sophia Pexa

2023 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics, Honors College

CURRENT POSITION Associate at The Myers, Thrivent Financial

INDUSTRY Finance

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I'm a financial associate with the Myers Team at Thrivent Financial, where I support and lead advisors in client follow-up, meeting documentation and implementing tax-efficient strategies. After graduating from GCU in April 2023, I earned my Securities Industry Essentials (SIE), Series 7 and Series 66 licenses, which allowed me to step confidently into my role.

Our team primarily serves retirees and pre-retirees, and I've helped pilot new tax planning platforms while supporting the implementation of strategies that align with our clients' long-term goals. I'm passionate about making financial concepts approachable and empowering clients to steward their resources with purpose.

What I value most about working at Thrivent is its foundation in generosity. It's fulfilling to help clients align their finances with what matters most to them, including giving back. I'm excited to continue growing in this field and making a meaningful impact through the work I do each day.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

A key milestone in my career was earning all of my securities licenses (the SIE, Series 7 and Series 66) on the first attempt, shortly after graduating from GCU in April 2023. This achievement gave me the foundation to step confidently into my role as a financial associate at Thrivent and begin making meaningful contributions right away.

As our team has experienced transitions, I've taken on additional responsibilities to ensure our operations continue to run smoothly. Stepping up during those times has helped me grow in adaptability and problem-solving, while also strengthening my commitment to supporting the team.

Another exciting milestone on the horizon is beginning my coursework toward the Certified Financial Planner® (CFP) designation this fall. I'm eager to continue expanding my expertise and making a greater impact in the years ahead. Each step so far has confirmed that I'm in the right place and just getting started.



Sophia Pexa

2023 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics, Honors College

CAREER HISTORY

My career in financial services began early. At age 16, I started working as a bank teller and continued in that role throughout high school. That experience sparked my interest in the financial industry and gave me a solid foundation in client service and day-to-day banking operations.

During college, I interned in human resources, where I gained exposure to organizational structure and internal operations. In my second year at GCU, I began remotely interning with the Myers Team at Thrivent, assisting with miscellaneous projects and getting firsthand experience in a client-focused financial practice. That internship ultimately led to a full-time position with the team after graduation.

In addition to my professional roles, I also privately tutored students during college, many of whom struggled with learning challenges after the pandemic. That experience strengthened my communication skills and taught me how to explain complex concepts clearly, which I now carry into my work with clients.

IMPACT ON FIELD

Even early in my career, I've had the opportunity to make a meaningful impact in the financial services field. I've brought a proactive mindset to our team, often looking for ways to improve systems and create a smoother experience for both clients and coworkers.

I've supported our team through multiple transitions, taking on additional responsibilities to ensure smooth operations and consistent client service. That adaptability has helped create a sense of stability during times of change. I've also helped pilot new tax planning tools and contributed to streamlining workflows within our practice, bringing fresh ideas and a mindset of innovation to how we serve clients.

Above all, I'm proud to be building meaningful relationships with clients early in my career. In a field where experience often builds trust, I've worked hard to establish that trust through reliability, clear communication and consistently showing up with care and excellence.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

One of my proudest achievements has been becoming fully licensed, earning my SIE, Series 7 and Series 66 soon after graduating. This milestone allowed me to step into my role with confidence and contribute meaningfully to the team right from the start.

Additionally, I've been recognized for my leadership and commitment to our clients, particularly for the meaningful work we do as a team. This recognition has been incredibly motivating and reaffirms my dedication to delivering excellent service and building lasting relationships with clients.

Another highlight has been the opportunity to mentor a new team member, guiding them through their transition into the role and seeing them thrive within our practice. It's been incredibly rewarding, especially in a small business setting where every contribution matters.

While I'm proud of these accomplishments, I'm equally motivated by the potential for growth and excited about the challenges ahead as I continue to develop in my career.



Sophia Pexa

2023 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics, Honors College

ORGANIZATIONS

At Thrivent, generosity is at the heart of everything we do. I take pride in helping our clients align their financial goals with their values, empowering them to live more generously. Recently, our team was recognized for our efforts in 2024, as we supported clients in making a meaningful impact through their financial generosity. This accomplishment is a testament to the impact of our work and the generosity of the clients we serve.

I'm also an active member of my hometown church, where I contribute to upcoming events and support the community in meaningful ways. In addition, since graduation, I've had the privilege of coaching my little sister's community education volleyball team. It was a rewarding experience that allowed me to give back to my community while fostering teamwork and sportsmanship in young athletes.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I demonstrate leadership by actively stepping up to support my team and clients, even when the tasks are behind the scenes. Whether it's mentoring a new team member or taking on additional responsibilities during transitions, I focus on leading by example, maintaining a strong work ethic and fostering a collaborative environment.

In my role at Thrivent, leadership is not just about directing others but also about empowering clients to make informed decisions that align with their values. I take pride in simplifying complex financial concepts and ensuring that clients feel confident and understood, especially as they navigate important life decisions. Moreover, I continually seek opportunities for personal growth and development, such as preparing to pursue my CFP designation, so I can better serve my clients and my team as a leader.

ADVICE

To recent graduates, I would encourage you to stay involved and connected. Build relationships with your professors, fellow students and mentors. They can offer invaluable insights and guidance. Don't hesitate to ask for help when you need it; reaching out for support can make all the difference.

Advocate for yourself and take ownership of your career path. Embrace the opportunities that come your way, but also be proactive in seeking out new experiences and challenges. Above all, stay grounded in your faith. Trust that God has a plan for you and remember that faith is the foundation of everything you do.



McKenzie Richards

2018 | Bachelor of Science in Business Management

CURRENT POSITION Senior Program Manager at Grubhub Inc.

INDUSTRY Business

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I'm a strategy-driven program manager with a passion for solving complex problems, driving growth and building great cross-functional partnerships. At Grubhub, I support our largest enterprise clients by leading strategic initiatives that improve customer experience, increase revenue and scale internal operations. From launching programs that drove a substantial increase in order volume to building a Voice of the Customer (VoC) engine that reduced cancellations and support tickets, I love turning insights into action.

I work best at the intersection of strategy, operations and customer experience, whether that's enabling sales teams with tools that drive results, aligning executives around go-to-market plans or translating customer feedback into product improvements. Before Grubhub, I helped drive sales strategy at Vital Farms and ran business-to-business and business-to-consumer marketing programs across several properties at Red Development.

My background combines business acumen, technical skills (SQL, Tableau, Salesforce) and a deep understanding of customer behavior. I'm always looking for new ways to optimize processes, connect dots across teams and make a real impact.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

One of the most significant milestones in my career was building the corporate large order program at Grubhub from the ground up. What started as a scrappy concept grew into a high-impact initiative that significantly boosted both active diners and overall order volume over the course of the year. I developed the program framework, built cross-functional alignment and worked closely with executive stakeholders, often pushing back on C-level leaders to get the initiative prioritized. That experience not only sharpened my strategic and execution skills but also taught me how to influence at the highest levels of an organization.

Another formative milestone was at Red Development, where I managed marketing and events across several commercial properties. I led flagship programs like the CityScape Holiday Ice Rink, downtown fashion shows and pop-up water parks, overseeing everything from creative direction to vendor management and KPI tracking. It was a crash course in stakeholder alignment, operational agility and customer engagement. These skills continue to serve me today.

Each role has deepened my ability to lead high-stakes programs, connect strategy to execution and advocate for the customer across teams.



McKenzie Richards

2018 | Bachelor of Science in Business Management

CAREER HISTORY

I've built my career around connecting strategy to execution, with a focus on customer experience, operational excellence and cross-functional collaboration. At Grubhub, I currently serve as a senior program manager supporting our top enterprise accounts. One of my proudest milestones was creating the corporate large order program from the ground up, navigating complex stakeholder dynamics and advocating at the executive level to get it prioritized. This resulted in significantly boosting active diners and overall order volume. I also led the launch of a company-wide VoC program, integrating multiple feedback channels to drive product and operational improvements that protected over \$100 million in enterprise spend.

Before Grubhub, I was a business development analyst at Vital Farms, where I supported sales and operations through daily, data driven insights. I built reporting tools, supported territory planning and used SQL and BI platforms to optimize performance and improve forecasting accuracy. It was a fast-paced environment that sharpened my analytical skills and taught me how to support decision-making with clear, actionable data.

Earlier, at Red Development, I managed marketing and events across 18 commercial properties. I led major public events like the CityScape Ice Rink, downtown fashion shows and urban water parks — overseeing everything from creative development to vendor coordination and performance tracking. It was in that role that I learned how to lead programs end-to-end while keeping customers at the center of every touchpoint.

Each chapter has helped shape me into a strategic, customer-obsessed operator who thrives in dynamic, cross-functional environments.

IMPACT ON FIELD

I've impacted my field by focusing on connecting strategy to execution, always with the customer in mind. At Grubhub, I built a successful corporate large order program, turning an initial idea into a major revenue driver. It wasn't just about launching a program; it was about navigating complex stakeholder dynamics, aligning teams and creating systems that could support long-term growth.

I also spearheaded several merchant initiatives aimed at bringing corporate diners the restaurant options they truly want, improving order volume and boosting business for our restaurant partners. By working closely with our restaurant partners and aligning them with corporate client needs, I was able to help improve their offerings and ensure a better dining experience for our corporate customers.

Earlier in my career at Red Development, I worked on marketing and large-scale events, creating memorable experiences in downtown spaces. I learned how to bring different teams together, manage budgets and vendors and keep the focus on creating experiences that really resonated with people.

No matter where I've worked, my goal has always been the same, to make a real difference by championing the customer.



McKenzie Richards

2018 | Bachelor of Science in Business Management

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of earning multiple promotions that reflect both my growth and my impact. I started as a marketing specialist and was promoted to marketing manager at Red Development, where I led high-profile programs and events. My ability to drive customer-focused strategies and work cross-functionally contributed to this progression.

After transitioning to Vital Farms as a business analyst, I quickly advanced to senior program manager at Grubhub. This role allowed me to broaden my skill set, from managing complex corporate initiatives to optimizing customer experiences and driving significant business outcomes. These promotions highlight my ability to adapt, learn and take on increasingly impactful responsibilities.

Additionally, I earned a Six Sigma Black Belt Certification, which has been instrumental in honing my process optimization skills. This certification not only strengthened my analytical approach but also allowed me to implement efficiencies that resulted in measurable business improvements.

Along the way, I've been recognized with an Outstanding Employee Award for my contributions, particularly in driving key programs and collaborating across teams. These milestones are a testament to my commitment to delivering results, continuously improving and growing in my career.

ORGANIZATIONS

I actively give back to my community and the next generation of business leaders in various ways. I've served as a judge and mentor for DECA, where I help guide high school and college students in business competitions and offer advice on developing their careers. I also guest speak at schools, sharing insights about getting into business and offering a glimpse into what it's like working in the field. These opportunities allow me to connect with young people and inspire them to pursue their passions.

On a more personal level, I'm involved in my child's school as a room parent, where I assist with organizing events and supporting teachers. Additionally, I dedicate time to volunteering at my church, contributing to various community outreach programs and helping where needed.

These experiences have been incredibly rewarding, allowing me to stay connected to my community and contribute in meaningful ways, while also sharpening my leadership and mentoring skills.



McKenzie Richards

2018 | Bachelor of Science in Business Management

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I demonstrate leadership by fostering collaboration, driving results and empowering others. In my role as senior program manager at Grubhub, I lead cross-functional teams to execute high-impact initiatives, which required influencing senior leaders and aligning diverse teams to achieve business goals. I lead by fostering strong relationships, making sure everyone is aligned with the vision and providing the guidance needed to execute strategies effectively.

I also demonstrate leadership through mentorship and involvement in my community. As a judge and mentor for DECA, I help guide students in business competitions, offering insights into navigating the business world. I'm also a guest speaker at schools, where I share my career experiences and advice on getting into business, empowering the next generation of leaders.

In my personal life, I lead by example as a room parent at my child's school and through volunteering at my church. Whether in the workplace or outside of it, I aim to inspire others through action, by staying grounded in the values of teamwork, integrity and accountability.

To me, leadership is about creating an environment where people feel supported, encouraged and empowered to contribute their best work while working toward shared objectives. I'm committed to continuous learning, growing from each leadership experience and helping those around me achieve success.

ADVICE

My advice to current students and recent graduates is to stay curious, embrace challenges and focus on building relationships. The transition from school to the workforce can feel overwhelming, but it's a time to learn and grow. Don't be afraid to ask questions, seek mentorship and take on opportunities that stretch your skills. Early in your career, it's not just about knowing the answers — it's about showing a willingness to learn, adapt and solve problems.

Take time to understand the value of networking. Relationships are key in any industry, so invest in building meaningful connections with colleagues, mentors and others in your field. Whether it's through internships, volunteering or professional groups, these connections can open doors and help you gain insights that textbooks can't teach.

Also, be open to new paths and be patient with your career trajectory. Don't get discouraged if things don't go exactly as planned. Sometimes the best opportunities come from unexpected directions.

Lastly, remember to be kind to yourself. Success is a journey, not a destination, and there will be setbacks along the way. Keep pushing forward, stay adaptable and keep building your skills and network. You'll find your way.



Amanda Riffe

2022 | Bachelor of Arts in Worship Arts and Christian Studies

OTHER DEGREES Master of Divinity with an Emphasis in Leadership, Liberty University (Projected November 2025)

CURRENT POSITION Worship and Production Director at Fixate Phoenix

INDUSTRY Ministry

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

Since graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Worship Arts and Christian Studies from GCU, I have had the pleasure of serving the local church of Phoenix in many capacities. I have helped develop and implement audition processes, songwriting initiatives and internship programs for several worship ministries across the Valley as well as in my current role as the worship and production director at Fixate Phoenix. As a current Master of Divinity with an Emphasis in Leadership student, I am passionate about discipling the next generation of worship leaders and learning new ways to implement leadership techniques into worship ministry. I currently help oversee all worship and tech operations at my church as well as at the venue The Woodland PHX. Most weeks, I volunteer with other churches to help support their worship ministries and also mentor worship leaders across the Valley.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

In September 2022, I joined a couple in planting the Fixate Phoenix church in downtown Phoenix, serving as the worship and production director. In this role, I have been able to build and shepherd a group of over 40 volunteers as well as facilitate prayer rooms, midweek discipleship classes and Sunday services. I have helped executive produce and creatively direct four releases for our worship team in the past year. These projects have reached across the country and have garnered profound testimonies. Embarking on the journey of church planting right after college was not something I set out to do, but it has become the ride of my life and one of the most significant things I have ever been a part of.

In my songwriting career, I have been able to participate in multiple songwriting groups for churches across the country. A highlight of my career so far has been my time with Bethel Music at their songwriting practicum in Nashville. There, I was able to write with leading industry professionals and learn more about how to implement some of their songwriting techniques into my church context. Additionally, in the past several years, I have released six songs with Canyon Worship, a personal studio album and several other singles as an independent and featured artist.



Amanda Riffe

2022 | Bachelor of Arts in Worship Arts and Christian Studies

CAREER HISTORY

While I was a student at GCU, I worked as a program development specialist for the College of Theology, as well as served as a student leader on the Chapel team. Following graduation, I worked at Church for the Nations as a worship coordinator after completing their internship program. In July 2022, I moved to work in the event services department as an event coordinator in order to have the flexibility to help plant Fixate Phoenix. This time at GCU holds many of the most powerful experiences of my career. Working under high pressure with tight turnarounds, coordinating with multiple different departments, responding to attendee medical emergencies, adapting to different client planning styles and maintaining an attitude of service were experiences I count as highlights and honors. During this time at GCU, I was also working as the volunteer worship director at Fixate Phoenix. A year and a half into planting the church, I was able to come on full-time as the worship and production director in September 2023. Since then, I have continued to contract at other churches and organizations for songwriting projects and events.

IMPACT ON FIELD

One of my favorite passages of scripture is Matthew 21:12-13, where Jesus clears the temple and defines His house as a “house of prayer.” In my field, I see it as my responsibility not to reinvent the wheel, but to consistently follow Jesus and remain grounded in how He defines His church. My church’s initiative of prayer rooms is not a new concept, but this priority has led us to impact those around us in the professional field in Phoenix. These times are open to the community. Members of other churches, both congregants and staff members, often come to pray for their church or to receive from our ministry. Our recorded and released prayer room sets have been able to minister to the world and to those in our community as we have prioritized Jesus’ call for His house to be a house of prayer. My work in the field of prayer rooms as well as songwriting has led to many opportunities to bridge denominational gaps as a leader centered around unity.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Over 1,000,000 combined streams with songs “Be Alright” and “Take Up My Cross”
Released solo album “The Journey” in 2018
Bethel Music Nashville Practicum
PEO Star Scholarship Recipient
Summa Cum Laude, GCU Spring 2022

ORGANIZATIONS

I am heavily involved with my church’s community initiatives, including our homeless outreach and spiritual formation retreats. I also volunteer at multiple churches to provide worship support for midweek gatherings and participate in worship leader support networks such as Likewise Worship.



Amanda Riffe

2022 | Bachelor of Arts in Worship Arts and Christian Studies

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Purity, authenticity, humility and servanthood are the words I would use to describe my leadership approach. I care deeply about the people I am leading and the integrity of our work as a team. Leading at a church plant has required a significant amount of personal awareness and leadership skills while working to identify and shepherd team members from the ground up. My time at GCU was filled with opportunities to demonstrate leadership among my peers, as I served as a worship leader for the Chapel band for three years. This position placed me as a leader on campus and with my fellow Chapel teammates, which greatly prepared me to lead a largely young demographic today. Leading my peers has taught me the art of leading humbly, not lording my title or position over those I lead, but serving them, hearing them out, giving them space to take ownership and getting out of the way. Watching others grow in their own leadership is a greatly rewarding experience.

ADVICE

Be humble, be hungry and be aware of ways to serve those around you. If you can learn how to steward your ego, ambition and preferences, you will be successful in whatever path you decide to take. Maintaining character is a beautiful way to minister the gospel both inside and outside of a Christian context.



Isabelle Roethe

2020 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics, Minor in Entrepreneurial Studies

CURRENT POSITION Financial Advisor at Desert Wealth Management

INDUSTRY Finance

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I serve as the lead financial advisor at Desert Wealth Management. We provide personalized financial planning and investment management to families and individuals to help guide them as they work toward their life goals and dreams. For several years, I worked alongside my father, Robert Clausen, as his partner and successor. After dedicating over 40 years to the financial services industry, he sadly passed away in 2024. I purchased the business at that time, and it is my goal to carry forward his legacy of helping families build a confident future. My educational background includes a Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics from GCU and the Certified Financial Planner® (CFP) Certification. At our firm, we help clients define their financial and life goals, build a clear action plan on how they can work toward these goals and walk alongside our clients in each of their major financial decisions. Desert Wealth Management is a family-focused firm with a deep commitment to guiding families in planning for their futures and living purpose-filled lives. This goal continues to be at the heart of our work. We prioritize understanding each family's unique goals and creating personalized financial plans that reflect their vision and values. When I'm not working, I enjoy spending time with my husband, cooking, working out and cherishing time with loved ones.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

My first significant career milestone is earning my CFP Certification. This involved completing comprehensive education requirements, passing a rigorous exam and earning 6,000 hours of experiences in the industry. This certification has guided me in offering my clients holistic and strategic financial planning to help them work toward their life goals. My second significant career milestone was successfully transitioning into a succession plan early in my career. My father was an amazing mentor and business partner. He taught me necessary and valuable tools to prepare me to transition into becoming the owner of Desert Wealth Management. It was such an honor and joy to get to work with my father each day, helping clients and creating financial plans and investment portfolios together. With the help of LPL Financial, my broker dealer and our amazing office team, we had a smooth transition into the succession plan. I will always value the incredible advice and mentorship my father gave me, and I will continue to uphold his values of excellent customer service with my team and our clients.

CAREER HISTORY

I graduated GCU in three years in Spring 2020. After graduation, I completed a series of financial exams including the Securities Industry Essentials (SIE), Series 7 and Series 66. I began the CFP Certification process in Fall 2020 and earned my marks in August 2023. Today, my career involves building and implementing financial plans, creating and monitoring investment portfolios and guiding clients through their financial chapters.



Isabelle Roethe

2020 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics, Minor in Entrepreneurial Studies

IMPACT ON FIELD

I believe I've made a meaningful impact in my field by being part of a successful succession plan between a father and daughter—an experience that now allows me to support and guide other women navigating financial advisor succession plans. I also believe I have impacted my field of endeavor through my passion for financial literacy. Through my podcast and public speaking engagements, I educate individuals about financial topics so they can feel more involved and equipped in their own financial lives. It is my goal to help people make wise financial decisions and be good stewards of their money.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2023, I earned the LPL Financial Rising Star Award. This award is given to emerging women financial advisors at LPL who are next-generation leaders and have accelerated business growth. It was an honor to receive this award and learn from many other amazing women at the 2023 LPL Achieve Women's Conference. Recipients exemplify a steadfast commitment to serving clients and growing a thriving business while pursuing a vision to advance in their financial advising career. To be eligible for the Rising Star Program, nominees must have three to 10 years of experience in the industry, be affiliated with LPL for at least one year and be nominated by a manager or designated member of their firm.

I also received the Rotarian of the Year Award in 2022 from the Four Peaks Rotary Club. This Rotary Club has made such an impact in my life, and it is an honor to serve the community alongside such phenomenal friends and mentors.

ORGANIZATIONS

The primary organization I am involved with is the Four Peaks Rotary Club. I have been involved with Rotary since I was in middle school when I was part of Interact, a Rotary Club for middle school and high school students. I then co-founded the GCU Rotaract Club and proceeded to join the Four Peaks Rotary Club after college. In the Four Peaks Rotary Club, I have served as the membership chair, treasurer and secretary. This club is part of Rotary International, a worldwide community service organization. I am honored to be a Rotarian. It is my goal to live out the value of "service above self" each day.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

One way I demonstrate leadership is through the committees and officer positions I have held at the Four Peaks Rotary Club. We all work together as a team, using each of our unique skill sets to help serve the community. I also believe I demonstrate leadership in my relationships with clients as I give them advice and direction in their financial plans.



Isabelle Roethe

2020 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics, Minor in Entrepreneurial Studies

ADVICE

My advice to current students and recent graduates is to first and foremost, surrender your plan and path to God. Looking back on my last five years, my life has changed in many ways that I never expected. There were times when the path was easy, but most of the time, the path was difficult and filled with worry about the unknown. In all parts of my journey, God has given me strength and courage. As a Christian, I truly believe that if God wants you to accomplish His plan, He will equip you with wisdom and strength to carry out His plan for your life. Full surrender to God and full faith in His power help me every day.

My second piece of advice is to pursue excellence, not perfection. Especially when you first begin your career, there will be moments when you will mess up because you have never done this new job before. Learning from your mistakes instead of dwelling on them is crucial in any job, but especially in the financial services industry. I believe that to be excellent, you need to do the right thing and work hard each day. God has an amazing plan for your life. He will equip you to serve others by using the gifts and skills that He gave you.



Harrison Russell

2019 | Bachelor of Arts in Worship Arts

CURRENT POSITION Worship Pastor at Dream City Church

INDUSTRY Ministry

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I serve as the worship pastor at Dream City Church in Phoenix. I'm a husband to Lauren Russell and a dad to identical twin girls, Willow and Oakley. I live to serve my family and the family of God. The mission of my life is to connect people to the presence of Jesus through worship, where healing, hope and restoration are found.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

Through my role at Dream City, I have gotten the opportunity to serve as music director for the Celebration of Christmas, our annual production that serves over 50,000 people each year. It is a massive creative undertaking, working with a 30-piece orchestra and around 50 vocalists. I get to be part of the creative process, selecting music, creating arrangements and working with our orchestrators and music producers to bring the music of the show to life. It is so amazing to see the finished product.

I also have the honor of being the worship pastor at our central location, supporting each campus worship team at Dream City, managing a leadership team and forming systems and processes to bring musical excellence to each of our services. I get to speak to the ministry's vision. Aside from Dream City, I also released a live worship album in 2023 that reached No. 2 on the Christian iTunes charts! It is amazing to hear churches around the Valley singing some of the songs on that record.

CAREER HISTORY

I started on staff at Dream City when I was a junior at GCU. I was full-time, working 30 hours a week before moving to 40 hours when I graduated. I worked at our Glendale Campus, a satellite campus in the Valley. Last year, I had the pleasure of moving to our central location.

IMPACT ON FIELD

Ministry is so interesting because there are millions of churches with all different types of people and worship teams. I believe I have been able to positively affect my local church culture. I lead worship from a place of joy and enthusiasm, which is infused into everything we do. I believe I have been able to raise awareness for mental health in the church and lead in a way that creates the best possible situation for everyone involved. One of my favorite things I have done is spread the workload among members of our worship leadership team, so no one is carrying an unbalanced burden. One of my strengths is productivity and administration, and I believe I have implemented systems that have improved efficiency within our ministry between campuses.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Dream City Worship Pastor, Celebration of Christmas Music Director
Live Worship Album "Sound of Heaven" No. 2 on Christian iTunes Chart



Harrison Russell

2019 | Bachelor of Arts in Worship Arts

ORGANIZATIONS

I bleed Dream City through and through. We have connections with the Los Angeles and Phoenix Dream Centers and support outreach ministries such as the Mom's Pantry food bank, Thrive AZ foster care organization and Dream Life pro-life civics ministry. I also serve as the worship practicum director for students attending SEU Arizona at Dream City Church. I have been part of several alumni-related things at GCU, including the upcoming Canyon Worship project.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I am able to demonstrate leadership each and every day. I am responsible for taking my senior pastor's vision and making it come alive in each weekend service, collaborating with each campus. I lead an internal team of seven including a music director, administrative assistant and student workers that resource our worship team, coordinate details and execute services. Our worship team at my campus is comprised of 40 people, with over 100 volunteers across all of our valley campuses.

ADVICE

Cherish the time you have at GCU! The relationships you make are life-long and will be there wherever your journey may take you. Commit to doing everything with excellence, but don't forget to take a few moments to take it all in.



Enrico Sanchez

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics

CURRENT POSITION Senior Manager of Corporate Finance at PetSmart

INDUSTRY Finance

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I'm a finance professional based in Phoenix, with expertise in Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A), investment analysis and strategic reporting. I currently serve as senior manager of Corporate Finance at PetSmart, overseeing PetSmart's consolidation of its financial statements. I develop board-level materials, lead cash flow forecasting and drive major reporting efficiencies across the organization.

I supported PetSmart's marketing finance division, overseeing a large budget and leading efforts in planning, forecasting and financial close processes. Earlier in my career, I worked at CrowdStreet and CIM Group, where I focused on investment performance analysis, client advisory and capital raising.

I earned my Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics from GCU. As an expert in Excel, SAP, BPC, Power BI, Tableau and MicroStrategy, I combine technical strength with strategic insight to deliver high-impact results. I have also volunteered with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, 1Mission, Christ's Church of the Valley (CCV) and Saint Vincent De Paul.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

One of my most significant career milestones has been leading the financial consolidation and reporting for PetSmart, a company with billions of dollars in revenue. In this role, I redesigned and streamlined complex reporting processes, saving over 1,000 minutes per month for the team and improving the accuracy and speed of our financial outputs to senior leadership and ownership groups.

Another milestone was overhauling PetSmart's Financing Adjusted Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA). Reengineering the underlying models and financial statements, ensuring consistency and comparability across the organization, was critical in supporting strategic decision-making.

Earlier in my career, at CrowdStreet, I led performance analysis efforts across a large portfolio of real estate investments, driving improvements in reporting and communication to a broad investor base. Each of these experiences has sharpened my ability to drive process improvements, manage complex financial systems and provide meaningful insights to leadership.

I take great pride in delivering high-quality work that makes a measurable impact and in building strong relationships across departments to help organizations reach their strategic goals.



Enrico Sanchez

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics

CAREER HISTORY

I began my career in real estate investments at a local private equity firm, where I supported acquisitions, fundraising and investor reporting. I then moved to CIM Group, advising pension funds, endowments and sovereign wealth funds across the Middle East and U.S. This role allowed me to gain valuable experience in institutional client management and deepening my analysis skills.

From there, I joined CrowdStreet as a portfolio analyst, where I was responsible for analyzing financial statements and tracking the performance of a large number of real estate investments in my portfolio.

I then transitioned into FP&A and joined PetSmart, where I first supported marketing FP&A by managing a large budget and streamlined financial reporting processes. After one year, I was promoted to manager of corporate FP&A, leading the consolidation and reporting for PetSmart's finances and its own critical forecasting, planning and board-level reporting initiatives. Throughout my career, I have developed expertise in financial modeling, reporting automation and strategic planning, always with a focus on delivering actionable insights to leadership.

IMPACT ON FIELD

Throughout my career, I have focused on improving financial reporting, driving operational efficiency and delivering strategic insights that help organizations make better decisions. At PetSmart, I streamlined complex financial reporting processes, saving over 1,000 minutes monthly and significantly improving the speed and accuracy of board-level financial communications.

In my previous roles at CrowdStreet, I enhanced investment reporting practices and developed models that improved transparency and performance tracking across hundreds of assets. By consistently seeking ways to optimize processes, introduce new reporting tools and bridge communication gaps between finance and business units, I have helped elevate the standards of financial analysis and reporting within my organizations.

I am passionate about creating systems and insights that not only meet immediate needs but also position teams for long-term success.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

While I have been fortunate to achieve professional success throughout my career, my most meaningful accomplishment has been meeting my wife, Paige, at GCU. Building a family together has been the greatest blessings in my life. We have a wonderful daughter, Aubrianna, who is two and a half years old. We are also excited to be welcoming a baby boy, Elijah, into our family.

Family is at the core of everything I do, and it motivates me to pursue excellence both personally and professionally. My experiences have taught me the importance of balance, gratitude and working hard to create a strong foundation for the future – values that carry over into every aspect of my career.



Enrico Sanchez

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Finance and Economics

ORGANIZATIONS

I have been most involved with CCV, where I have had the opportunity to lead a small group, coach a youth soccer team and serve as a life coach for high school students. Through these roles, I've been able to mentor young people, support their personal growth and help build a strong sense of community.

In addition to my involvement at CCV, I have participated in service trips with 1Mission, traveling to Mexico to help build homes for families in need. These experiences have been incredibly rewarding and have reinforced my commitment to serving others, both locally and internationally.

Being part of organizations that focus on leadership, mentorship and community service has been a meaningful part of my life and has helped shape who I am both personally and professionally.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I believe leadership is about serving others, creating clarity and setting an example through action. I work to demonstrate leadership by consistently stepping up to solve complex problems, communicating openly and empowering others to succeed. You have to be willing to roll up your sleeves! This leads me to one of my favorite quotes by John B. Maxwell, who recently came to my church, "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way."

At PetSmart, I lead critical financial reporting processes that support executive decision-making, while mentoring my team and peers to improve their technical and analytical skills. Outside of work, I have led small groups and coached youth at CCV, where I mentored students to build confidence, resilience and a strong sense of purpose. Whether in a corporate or volunteer setting, I focus on listening first, building trust and encouraging others to achieve their best.

I strive to lead with integrity, humility and a commitment to continuous improvement, creating environments where people feel supported, valued and motivated to reach their full potential.

ADVICE

First, always show humility. You will make many mistakes in your career because no one is perfect. Having the humility to own a mistake and grow from it has been the most helpful thing in my career, which I learned from playing soccer competitively.

Second, always ask! You will likely not get what you want out of your career if you don't ask. Many promotions and opportunities have come my way simply because I asked.

Third, the small day-to-day traits matter most. The habits you build early — attention to detail, reliability and a willingness to go the extra mile — will set you apart over time.

Finally, stay true to your values. Character, consistency and a positive attitude will carry you further than any technical skill alone. Opportunities have a way of finding people who are dependable, humble and hungry to grow.



Mario Talavera Jr.

2023 | Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction

CURRENT POSITION First-Grade Dual-Language Teacher at Clara Love Elementary

INDUSTRY Education

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I'm Mario A. Talavera Jr., a first-grade dual-language teacher in the Northwest Independent School District (Northwest ISD) with over five years of experience in education. I'm passionate about creating a classroom environment where young learners feel empowered, valued and excited to grow academically and linguistically.

My work goes beyond the classroom. I've taught summer school and have served as their summer school campus principal for both general and bilingual education. I have also served on several district committees focused on supporting educational initiatives that impact students and teachers across our community. Whether it's contributing to curriculum development or collaborating on programs that support bilingual education during professional development days, I'm always looking for ways to make a positive impact.

I believe that learning should be engaging, meaningful and inclusive. I'm committed to helping every student reach their full potential "en dos idiomas" (in two languages).

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

Throughout my career, I've been fortunate to grow through a variety of roles and challenges that have shaped me both personally and professionally. One of my proudest accomplishments was becoming Bilingual Certified. This was a tough exam, especially as a native-Spanish speaker. It pushed me to deepen my understanding of both languages and their instruction, and it reaffirmed my commitment to dual-language education.

I also had the opportunity to serve as a summer school principal, where I learned firsthand what it takes to manage a campus, from building schedules to supporting staff and students in a short but impactful window of time. That experience gave me valuable insight into leadership and operations.

As the first-grade team lead, I've learned how to support my colleagues, advocate for their needs and foster collaboration to help our students succeed. I take pride in leading with empathy and purpose. Additionally, I've served on several district-level committees where I've had the chance to represent my campus in important conversations, whether it's helping to shape school calendars, providing feedback on curriculum or contributing to initiatives that support our broader community.

Each milestone has helped me grow as an educator and leader, and I look forward to continuing to serve and learn.



Mario Talavera Jr.

2023 | Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction

CAREER HISTORY

I began my journey in education as an English Language Learner (ELL) paraprofessional in November 2019, where I supported students in building language skills and confidence. That role sparked my passion for working with young learners and set the foundation for my path as a teacher. In August 2020, I stepped into the classroom as a first-grade teacher at Seven Hills Elementary in the Northwest ISD. It was a meaningful start, especially as a new educator during a challenging school year. I continued growing in my practice and, in August 2021, transitioned to Rann Elementary in the Decatur Independent School District (Decatur ISD) as a first-grade bilingual teacher. Over three years at Rann, I deepened my experience in bilingual education and worked closely with families and students to foster academic and language development both in and out of the classroom.

In the summer of 2023, I had the opportunity to serve as the elementary summer school principal, where I learned valuable leadership skills from managing campus operations to supporting teachers and students in a short-term setting. Today, I have the pleasure of serving as a first-grade bilingual teacher at Clara Love Elementary in the Northwest ISD, the very district I attended from kindergarten through 12th grade. Returning as an educator in my home district has been both an honor and a full-circle moment in my journey.

IMPACT ON FIELD

One of the most meaningful ways I've impacted my professional field is by prioritizing relationships, with students, families and my colleagues. In every school I've worked in, I've made it a point to build strong, authentic connections that create a sense of trust, belonging and joy. These relationships are the foundation of a positive learning environment, and they've allowed me to support student growth far beyond academics.

It's not just about teaching. It's about choosing to teach with heart. I believe that when educators lead with passion and positivity, it sets the tone for the entire school culture. I've worked hard to create a classroom and team environment where we enjoy being together, support one another and take pride in what we do.

I've been humbled by the kind words of my colleagues who have said, "Your laughter and bright smile have such an impact. You pour your heart into your classroom day in and day out, showing your dedication and commitment, and that's exactly why we value you so much." That kind of feedback reminds me that joy and dedication go hand in hand, and that choosing to teach is both a responsibility and a privilege I'm proud to carry.



Mario Talavera Jr.

2023 | Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

I'm incredibly proud of the leadership roles and recognitions I've received throughout my career, each one marking a meaningful step in my journey as an educator.

Most recently, I was nominated for Campus Exemplar Educator of the Year 2025, an honor that deeply reflects the work and heart I pour into my students and school community. In October 2024, I was selected to be featured in the district's "Inside the Classroom" blog series, highlighting my work during Hispanic Heritage Month.¹ Being recognized for celebrating culture and identity in the classroom was a full-circle moment.

During the 2023-24 school year, I served as summer school principal, first-grade team lead and new teacher cohort mentor, where I supported campus operations, led grade-level collaboration and helped guide new educators. In the summer of 2023, I also served as the summer school principal for both general and bilingual education in Decatur ISD, further strengthening my leadership experience. That same year, I was honored to serve as a judge for our bilingual spelling bee.

From 2021 to 2022, I coached the fourth-grade bilingual spelling bee team. Since 2021, I've coached the fourth and fifth-grade Number Sense University Interscholastic League (UIL) teams, fostering academic excellence through competition. I also served as a district improvement plan committee member from 2021 to 2024, contributing to long-term planning and student success initiatives.

Each role has helped shape my voice, values and commitment as a bilingual educator and leader.

ORGANIZATIONS

One organization that holds a special place in my heart is the Spanish National Honor Society (SNHS). I was a proud member during high school, where I earned a place in the society through my academic performance, program participation, integrity and by passing the AP Spanish exam. Being part of this group helped me embrace my bilingual identity and develop a deeper appreciation for language and culture. Now, as an educator back in the same district where I grew up, it's been incredibly rewarding to reconnect with the organization from a new perspective. I reached out to the current sponsor of SNHS at my former high school, and we've worked together to support the next generation of bilingual leaders.

I've had the opportunity to collaborate on student activities and even return to the classroom to give presentations on the value of speaking Spanish, both professionally and personally. It's powerful to come full circle, from a student in the program to now someone who can inspire and guide others in it. Being involved with SNHS again reminds me why I chose education: to give back, to uplift and to be part of something bigger than myself.



Mario Talavera Jr.

2023 | Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I've had the opportunity to demonstrate leadership in several roles that have shaped my growth as an educator. During the 2023-24 school year, I served as a team lead for first grade, where I supported my colleagues by fostering collaboration, advocating for our team's needs and helping create a positive, productive environment. Leading a team allowed me to grow in my ability to listen, communicate clearly and lead with empathy. In the summer of 2023, I stepped into a new challenge as the elementary summer school principal for Decatur ISD, overseeing both general education and bilingual programs. This role expanded my perspective on what leadership in education can look like and opened my eyes to future possibilities within the field.

Both experiences deepened my understanding of what it means to lead, not just through titles, but through presence, trust and a shared vision for student success. I'm excited to continue growing as a leader while staying grounded in my purpose as a teacher.

ADVICE

My biggest piece of advice to current students or recent graduates is to always give it your all, but also to remember that you don't have to do it alone. Build a strong support system, lean on your mentors and don't be afraid to ask for help. Grace and determination will carry you far, especially when things get tough.

For those stepping into education, remember that we chose this field because of our passion for teaching, leading and making a difference. Keep that passion close. Remember your why. There will be days when the spark feels dim and when the challenges feel heavy, but those are the moments when your purpose matters most. My grandmother Petra always told me, "Querer es poder" (if you want to, you can). It's a phrase I carry with me and share with my students every day. It reminds me, and them, that with heart and effort, we're capable of anything.

Find your own phrase or mantra, something that grounds and motivates you, and repeat it before starting something new. Let it guide you as you grow. You're more capable than you think, and this journey is just beginning.

¹ Inside the Classroom. (2024, October 11). Inside the classroom: Mario Talavera - Love Elementary. Northwest Independent School District. Retrieved from nisdtx.org/news-events/newsroom/details/~board/homepage-news/post/inside-the-classroom-mario-talavera-love-elementary on June 26, 2025.



Christian Tailon

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, Minor in Cybersecurity

CURRENT POSITION Director of Threat Intelligence at Arizona Cyber Threat Response Alliance

INDUSTRY Engineering

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I am a cybersecurity professional with a focus on threat intelligence and community building. As the director of threat intelligence at Arizona Cyber Threat Response Alliance (ACTRA) and founder of Dark Roast Cyber, I provide security services while supporting intelligence operations to help protect companies and people across multiple industries. I also serve as a threat response engineer at Grand Canyon Education (GCE), reporting to the chief information security officer, where I work on security solutions and innovative research. My community involvement extends to serving on the board for the Information Systems Security Association Phoenix Chapter (Phoenix ISSA), contributing to the Cyber Resilience Institute and participating in the Atlantic Council's DFRLab. Guided by my faith and supported by my amazing family, I work to help organizations address cyber threats through open-source solutions, community sharing, collaboration and education.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

A pivotal milestone for me was establishing and leading GCE's Security Operations Center, where I designed alert logic, trained student workers and integrated threat intelligence to detect and respond to intrusion attempts. As I grew in my skills, capabilities and understanding of threats and our tools to stop them, I moved into designing, building and deploying solutions as a security engineer.

My involvement with ACTRA evolved from volunteer to being appointed director of threat intelligence in 2025, allowing me to coordinate intelligence sharing across Arizona's cybersecurity communities. This appointment highlights my passion for collaborative security. Launching Dark Roast Cyber represented my entry into entrepreneurship, allowing me to offer specialized security consulting while continuing my impact through other roles.

Throughout these milestones, I've maintained my connection to GCU by guest lecturing, mentoring students and co-founding the Threat Intelligence Support Unit. Being part of the collaborative effort that led to GCU receiving ISSA's Organization of the Year recognition in 2025 stands as a particularly meaningful achievement that bridges my educational roots with my professional growth. I've spoken to hundreds of industry professionals at nearly a dozen conferences and events, trained dozens of professionals through the ACTRA community and taught hundreds of students both before and after graduation.



Christian Taillon

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, Minor in Cybersecurity

CAREER HISTORY

My cybersecurity journey began at GCU's help desk in 2015 while pursuing my IT degree. I progressed to the security team in 2017, where I helped establish and lead our Security Operations Center by 2018.

After advancing to information security engineer in 2019, I took on broader responsibilities implementing security tools and improving response processes. Since 2020, I've served as threat response engineer, focusing on enterprise security architecture and cloud security initiatives.

In March 2025, I was appointed director of threat intelligence at ACTRA while also launching Dark Roast Cyber, my security consulting firm. Throughout my career, I've remained active in professional organizations, including serving on the Phoenix ISSA board and contributing to security research communities. I've trained individuals virtually all around the country and presented every year since 2020 at cybersecurity events with thousands of attendees.

IMPACT ON FIELD

I've advanced cybersecurity through knowledge sharing and tool development. Since 2020, I've presented annually at industry conferences, reaching thousands of professionals. My volunteer work with ACTRA has strengthened Arizona's cyber resilience through collaborative threat intelligence sharing.

In education, I guest lecture at GCU each semester, mentor students through the GCU and ACTRA Threat Intelligence Support Unit and guide emerging professionals via the Cyber Mentor Dojo, bridging academic theory with industry practice. My recent research focuses on emerging threats, particularly in generative AI security and trojanized LLM models. I've developed and published open-source tools addressing data sovereignty concerns related to generative AI consumption, helping organizations protect sensitive information while leveraging AI capabilities.

Previously, I shared and presented research tracking specific adversaries' operations and malware groups and open-sourced guides on hunting for these threats in various environments.

Through GitHub projects, I've created freely available tools for cybersecurity, data analysis and threat intelligence. My website (christiant.io), blog on Medium and GitHub-hosted, open-source tools serve as resources for security practitioners, offering curated training materials, cheat sheets and analysis of current threats and trends.

By combining technical contributions with education and community engagement, I work to make cybersecurity knowledge more accessible and actionable for professionals at all levels.



Christian Tailon

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, Minor in Cybersecurity

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

I've been honored to receive recognition for my contributions to cybersecurity and community service. ACTRA awarded me the Digital Citizenship Award in 2019 for demonstrating exceptional leadership and creating a culture of mutual support within Arizona's cybersecurity community. This was followed by their Cyber Leadership Award in 2021, acknowledging my continued commitment to threat intelligence sharing and community defense.

As a student at GCU, I maintained a 4.0 GPA while serving as president of both GCU's ISACA Student Chapter and GCU Innovative Computing. I was selected for membership in the Alpha Chi National Honors Society and represented the university as GCU's "face of cybersecurity."

My professional achievements include being appointed director of threat intelligence at ACTRA in 2025 and founding Dark Roast Cyber, expanding my impact through consulting services. I've been selected to present at major cybersecurity conferences, contributed to publications including ISC2's InfoSecurity Professional Magazine and been a guest on multiple IT and cybersecurity podcasts.

I'm particularly grateful for the opportunity to help establish the GCU and ACTRA Threat Intelligence Support Unit, which creates pathways for students to gain practical experience. This initiative, along with other collaborative efforts with GCU faculty and industry partners, contributed to the university being named Organization of the Year by ISSA in 2025.

These recognitions reflect not just personal accomplishments but the collective impact of collaborative efforts to strengthen our cybersecurity community and develop the next generation of security professionals.

ORGANIZATIONS

I've actively contributed to several key cybersecurity organizations. At ACTRA, I progressed from volunteer to director of threat intelligence; as a board member of the Phoenix ISSA Chapter, I served as director of education during its recognition as Medium Chapter of the Year; and with the Cyber Resilience Institute, I worked as a threat hunter supporting Olympic security efforts through the Overseas Security Advisory Council.

I've participated in the Atlantic Council's DFRLab as a "digital Sherlock," developing Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) and digital forensics skills to combat disinformation. At GCU, I've maintained connections through the alumni network while supporting the Cyber Center for Excellence, Threat Intelligence Support Unit (TISU) and Cyber Mentor Dojo. These affiliations have provided platforms for knowledge-sharing and collaborative security initiatives beyond individual institutions.



Christian Tailon

2019 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, Minor in Cybersecurity

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I demonstrate leadership by focusing on service, knowledge sharing and building collaborative environments where others can succeed. Rather than directing from above, I work alongside team members, offering guidance while encouraging their growth and autonomy.

My leadership philosophy centers on the belief that in cybersecurity, we don't have the luxury of time. We must work together efficiently. As I often say, "You don't need to work at the same company to be on the same team." This perspective has guided my approach to building communities of practice across organizational boundaries.

At ACTRA, I've led threat intelligence initiatives by creating frameworks that enable effective information sharing while respecting each organization's unique constraints. When leading GCE's Security Operations Center, I focused on developing team members' skills and creating systems that empowered them to make confident decisions during incidents.

I believe effective leadership includes making technical expertise accessible. Whether presenting complex security concepts to executives, mentoring students or training analysts, I believe empowering others with knowledge and skills is crucial in fighting against the world of cybercrime and cyberwarfare.

My leadership extends to community building, where I've organized events, competitions and training programs that bring together professionals and students. By creating these opportunities, I help develop future leaders while strengthening our collective security posture.

True leadership in cybersecurity means taking responsibility for not just your organization's security but contributing to the broader ecosystem's resilience through collaboration, education and shared resources.

ADVICE

Engage with the industry community beyond your coursework. Stay connected with your collegiate cohort; they are an important part of your network. Your network, practical demonstrated experience and role in your community can differentiate you more than your resume alone.

Seek out local chapters of organizations like ISSA, ISACA or InfraGard. Attend their meetings, volunteer and connect with professionals who can provide mentorship and potential job opportunities. These connections often lead to positions that aren't publicly advertised. Look for communities with a good culture, humble motives and strong contributors like ACTRA. These organizations allow a rising tide to raise all ships across common objectives, such as lessons learned from success or failure, and can expand your organization's impact and benefit beyond what its employees alone can generate.

Build a portfolio through personal projects, professional competitions and open-source contributions. Document your work on GitHub and LinkedIn to demonstrate practical skills to employers. Develop communication abilities alongside technical expertise. The most effective professionals can translate complex concepts into business impact for different audiences.

Establish habits for continuous learning through blogs, podcasts and research papers. When facing technical challenges, develop the resilience to work through them methodically.

Give back early in your career by mentoring others and contributing to community defense efforts. My field thrives on collaboration, and your contributions will strengthen our collective security.



Vincent Trujillo

2025 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology

2026 (PROJECTED) | Master of Science in Cybersecurity Management

CURRENT POSITION Systems Architect at Pueblo of Jemez

INDUSTRY Public Service

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I'm Vincent Trujillo, a U.S. Air Force Veteran and IT professional with a strong background in systems architecture, cybersecurity and network operations. I currently serve as a systems architect for the Pueblo of Jemez, where I design secure, scalable infrastructures and lead cybersecurity initiatives that protect critical data and support our tribal community.

Throughout my career, I've earned certifications including CompTIA A+, Security+ and Microsoft Azure Fundamentals (AZ-900), and I'm currently pursuing a Master of Science in Cybersecurity Management. I've led major projects like an enterprise-wide Windows 11 upgrade and developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to streamline IT resource use. I also write a bi-weekly cybersecurity newsletter to help non-technical staff understand and stay ahead of digital threats.

My military service taught me discipline, resilience and leadership. I was proud to achieve the rank of Staff Sergeant (SSgt/E-5) while completing my degree and raising two children, and I received the Air and Space Commendation Medal for my contributions.

Outside of my full-time role, I run my own business, Vincent's PC Repair & More, and volunteer my time by offering no-cost Microsoft software training to members of my community. My goal is to continue making a positive impact through technology, helping others stay secure, informed and empowered in a digital world.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

One of my proudest milestones was achieving the rank of SSgt/E-5 in the U.S. Air Force while completing my college degree. Balancing 12-hour shifts, raising two kids and staying on top of my coursework taught me resilience and time management. I was honored to receive the Air and Space Commendation Medal for my service.

After transitioning to civilian life, I led an enterprise-wide Windows 11 upgrade for the Pueblo of Jemez, ensuring minimal disruption and improved system efficiency. I also developed a standard operating procedure to streamline how we manage and use our resources across departments.

Another significant achievement has been launching a cybersecurity initiative, which includes a bi-weekly newsletter designed to help non-technical staff understand key threats and best practices in simple terms. I believe cybersecurity should be accessible to everyone and this project reflects that belief.

Outside of work, I run my own business and offer no-cost Microsoft software training to my local community. I deeply value giving back and sharing knowledge and I'm proud of the positive impact I've made through both professional and volunteer efforts.



Vincent Trujillo

2025 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology

2026 (PROJECTED) | Master of Science in Cybersecurity Management

CAREER HISTORY

I began my career in the U.S. Air Force, where I served nearly a decade in security forces and air defense operations, ultimately earning the rank of Staff Sergeant (E-5). During my service, I gained leadership experience, technical skills and the discipline that continues to guide my professional path today. I was honored with the Air and Space Commendation Medal and completed my bachelor's degree while working 12-hour shifts and raising a family.

After transitioning to civilian life, I shifted into IT and currently work as a systems architect for the Pueblo of Jemez. In this role, I've led an enterprise-wide Windows 11 upgrade, developed standard operating procedures for IT resource management and initiated a cybersecurity awareness program that includes a bi-weekly newsletter designed to educate non-technical staff.

I hold certifications including CompTIA A+, Security+ and AZ-900, and I'm currently pursuing a Master of Science in Cybersecurity Management. I also run a small business, Vincent's PC Repair & More, and volunteer by offering no-cost Microsoft software training to my local community.

My career has been shaped by a commitment to service, continuous learning and a drive to make technology more accessible and secure for everyone I support.

IMPACT ON FIELD

I've made a meaningful impact in my field by bridging the gap between technical solutions and practical applications, especially for communities and individuals who may not have access to high-level IT support. As a systems architect for the Pueblo of Jemez, I have led a successful Windows 11 enterprise upgrade and created standardized procedures that improved IT resource management across the organization.

One of my most rewarding contributions has been launching a cybersecurity awareness initiative, including a bi-weekly newsletter designed to educate non-technical staff on staying safe online. By breaking down complex topics into clear, relatable information, I've helped build a more security-conscious culture within my organization.

Additionally, I've impacted my local community by offering no-cost Microsoft software training through my small business. This outreach has empowered individuals to become more confident and capable with essential technology, which is especially important in underserved areas.

Whether in the military, government or civilian sector, I've focused on practical leadership, clear communication and accessible solutions to create safer and more efficient environments. I'm proud of the work I've done and look forward to continuing to drive positive change in the cybersecurity and IT landscape.



Vincent Trujillo

2025 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology

2026 (PROJECTED) | Master of Science in Cybersecurity Management

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout my career, I've been honored to receive several awards and achieve milestones that reflect both my dedication and impact. During my time in the U.S. Air Force, I earned the Air and Space Commendation Medal, recognizing my leadership and excellence in mission-critical operations. I also achieved the rank of SSgt/E-5 balancing demanding 12-hour shifts while completing my degree and raising two children, an accomplishment I take great pride in.

In my civilian career, one of my most significant achievements has been leading an enterprise-wide Windows 11 upgrade for the Pueblo of Jemez. This included developing standard operating procedures to improve the efficiency and security of IT operations across departments. I also launched a bi-weekly cybersecurity awareness newsletter tailored to non-technical staff, which has significantly improved organizational security awareness.

I'm proud to hold industry-recognized certifications such as CompTIA A+, Security+ and AZ-900. Additionally, I started my own business, Vincent's PC Repair & More, through which I provide affordable IT support and offer no-cost Microsoft software training to underserved members of my community. These achievements reflect my commitment to leadership, technical excellence and giving back, values that continue to guide me in every role I take on.

ORGANIZATIONS

I'm actively involved in several professional organizations that support continuous learning, collaboration and advancement in the IT and cybersecurity fields. I'm a member of the International Information System Security Certification Consortium (ISC2), which helps me stay current with cybersecurity best practices, industry trends and ongoing professional development as I pursue my long-term goal of earning the Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) Certification.

I'm also part of TribalNet, which has been instrumental in connecting me with other IT professionals working in tribal communities. Through this network, I've gained valuable insights into how technology can be applied to support sovereignty, data protection and service delivery within tribal nations. It's helped me better align my work as a systems architect with the needs and values of the Pueblo of Jemez. Additionally, I'm involved with the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), where I find inspiration and community among other Latino technology professionals. It's a space that encourages mentorship, leadership and academic achievement and I'm proud to be part of that mission.

These organizations play an important role in expanding my knowledge, strengthening my network and ensuring I bring informed and forward-thinking perspectives to my work.



Vincent Trujillo

2025 | Bachelor of Science in Information Technology

2026 (PROJECTED) | Master of Science in Cybersecurity Management

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I demonstrate leadership by focusing on service, communication and accountability. During my time in the U.S. Air Force, I learned to lead by example, whether that meant stepping up during high-pressure operations or mentoring junior airmen. Those values carried over into my civilian career, where I continue to lead with integrity and purpose.

In my current role as a systems architect, I led an enterprise-wide Windows 11 upgrade for the Pueblo of Jemez, coordinating with multiple departments to ensure a smooth transition. I also took the initiative to develop standard operating procedures that improved IT operations and resource management across the organization.

Leadership, to me, also means making complex topics more accessible. That's why I launched a bi-weekly cybersecurity newsletter to help non-technical staff understand digital threats and best practices. I believe true leadership is measured by how well you empower others to succeed. I strive to do that every day, whether I'm managing projects, training users or supporting community members.

Outside of work, I lead by giving back. I run a small business where I provide no-cost Microsoft software training to underserved individuals in my community. My goal is to lead with impact, helping people grow, feel confident and stay secure in a digital world.

ADVICE

My advice to current students and recent graduates is to stay consistent, stay curious and never underestimate the power of perseverance. When I was pursuing my degree, I worked 12-hour military shifts and raised two kids — it wasn't easy, but I learned that showing up every day, even when it's hard, is what leads to success.

Don't be afraid to take initiative or step into unfamiliar territory. Some of my greatest growth came from saying "yes" to challenges I didn't feel 100% ready for. Real learning happens outside of your comfort zone.

I also encourage you to seek out mentors, join professional organizations and surround yourself with people who inspire you. Groups like the International ISC2, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) and TribalNet have opened doors for me that I couldn't have accessed alone.

Finally, remember that your journey is your own. Whether you're balancing school, work or personal responsibilities, progress — no matter how slow — is still progress. Keep going, stay humble and invest in your growth. The effort you put in now will absolutely pay off later.



Luke Unverferth

2022 | Bachelor of Science in Sports Management

CURRENT POSITION Corporate Partnerships Marketing Coordinator for the Dallas Cowboys

INDUSTRY Business

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I'm a proud 2022 GCU graduate, where I earned my Bachelor of Science in Sports Management. Originally from Peoria, Arizona, I landed my dream role during college with my hometown team, the Phoenix Suns, spending over three years in the ticket sales and service department. It was the perfect start for a native Arizonan and aspiring sports business professional. Breaking into the sponsorship side of the industry has been a major aspiration of mine. That pursuit led me to a new chapter — moving out of Arizona for the first time to join the Dallas Cowboys corporate partnerships team. It's been incredibly rewarding to take that next step with one of the most influential organizations in professional sports, especially in the sponsorship space, where the club pioneered practices that still shape the industry today.

From selling premium hospitality to bringing dynamic partnerships with blue-chip brands to life, I'm grateful to grow in a space I've always been passionate about, building on the foundation I gained at GCU. Beyond my professional activities, I have a heart for mentoring and giving back through hosting small groups, typically rooted in faith and connection. I also love to travel, combining it with my passion for photography and videography to capture moments with friends and create lasting memories.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

Significant milestones in my career include progressing from an intern within the Phoenix Suns' ticket sales and service department to an account executive in the premium sales team, the most senior group of sellers focused on the highest-ticket products. I achieved this in less than four years and was regularly a top performer as a young professional. I'm proud to have contributed about \$2 million in revenue to the Suns organization across my various roles in my tenure. Another major milestone was joining the Dallas Cowboys' corporate partnerships department in February of 2025. This move allowed me to step into a role with one of the most respected and influential teams in professional sports, a group many consider the standard across the industry. Being a part of both organizations has shaped my career in ways that continuously inspire me to grow and pursue excellence in sports business.



Luke Unverferth

2022 | Bachelor of Science in Sports Management

CAREER HISTORY

My career history starts with a series of part-time roles I held while at GCU. Thanks to a networking event hosted by the Sports and Entertainment Business Club my freshman year, I made a connection with the Surprise Stadium, spring training home of the Texas Rangers and Kansas City Royals. I served as a marketing and promotions assistant for two seasons, gaining experience in sports partnerships, activations and sponsor relations. From there, I spent a season as a guest experience specialist with the Arizona Cardinals, sharpening my skills in guest services.

Rather than let limited internship opportunities coming out of the pandemic hinder my growth, I took a unique role as a door-to-door sales representative for a local solar company. While unconventional, it gave me measurable sales results and a strong foundation for my career in ticket sales. That experience, along with others, helped me earn a ticket sales and service internship with the Phoenix Suns during my senior year. I was fortunate to be hired full-time shortly after graduation and progressed through roles as a sales associate, business development account executive and premium sales account executive.

Across those roles, I gained experience in season ticket sales, group and event sales and premium/corporate hospitality sales. I worked with a wide range of organizations and strengthened my ability to connect with people through the power of sport. Most recently, I made the jump to the Dallas Cowboys as a corporate partnership marketing coordinator, stepping fully into the world of sports sponsorships, a longtime career goal of mine.

IMPACT ON FIELD

I've impacted the sports business world most prominently at the local level in Phoenix. I'm proud of the events and initiatives I helped launch during my time with the Phoenix Suns, many driven by my personal passions and professional network. One example is establishing a GCU Alumni Night at the Suns in partnership with GCU's Alumni Relations team. I also created the annual Women of the Valley Conference alongside leaders of local organizations, which brings together local nonprofits, businesses and college clubs for a powerful day of learning and connection hosted by the Suns. The event has welcomed hundreds of young women from across Arizona to hear from C-suite executives and inspiring female leaders in the Phoenix Metro.

Another project I'm especially proud of was leading the inaugural Southwest Sports Combine, hosted by the Suns. This event drew students from over a dozen universities nationwide for a dynamic ticket and sponsorship sales role-play competition, offering winners scholarship funding. The Combine also featured a career fair and industry panel discussions, ultimately becoming a platform that connected aspiring professionals with insights and invaluable relationships.

Finally, I am proud to have led an annual Suns group outing for the GCU Sports and Entertainment Business Club, coordinating guest speakers from the Suns and Mercury teams to share their insights with the next generation of sports business professionals. Each of these initiatives not only made a local impact but also reflected my commitment to using sports as a vehicle for growth, access and meaningful connection.



Luke Unverferth

2022 | Bachelor of Science in Sports Management

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Phoenix Suns Playmakers Program Member, 2024-25
Phoenix Suns President's Club Member, 2023-24
Uncommon Sports Group Uncommon Award Recipient, 2023
GCU Summa Cum Laude Graduate, April 2022
Phoenix Suns Ticket Sales and Service Intern Revenue Record, 2021-22
GCU Head Life Leader, 2021-22
GCU Sports and Entertainment Leadership Club Member, 2021-22
GCU Sports and Entertainment Business Club Chief Operations Officer, 2020-21

ORGANIZATIONS

As someone actively involved with YoungLife, a Christian ministry that reaches out to middle school, high school and college students in all 50 states and in more than 100 countries, I currently provide my time and resources at the college level. Most recently, I co-hosted a men's small group for freshmen at GCU to foster strong relationships among those in the group and to act as a mentor. I have also been a member of Uncommon Sports Group (USG), a nonprofit that fosters a community of Christians working in college and professional sports, since 2020. I've contributed to USG speaking engagements, recently appeared on their podcast sharing my testimony and experiences as a follower of Jesus working in the sports industry and formerly led an annual tour of Phoenix Suns facilities for young professionals who travel from across the country to visit Phoenix on a networking trip facilitated by USG.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I practice leadership in the servant leadership style and by exemplifying excellence in my work. Although I'm not currently in a management role, I believe leadership comes from being a positive influence on those around me. Keeping this in mind, I prioritize peer-to-peer accountability, always striving to lead by example and offering support to my colleagues when needed. I believe in never asking someone to do something I wouldn't do myself or haven't already done in the past. This mindset helps build trust, respect and contributes towards a culture of collaboration. I work to motivate others by being hands-on, approachable and committed to the same high standards I expect from myself.

ADVICE

My advice to current students or recent graduates is this: God has you exactly where you are for a reason. It's easy to compare your journey to others or feel pressure to have everything figured out, but your path is uniquely yours. You've been equipped with a specific set of skills, passions and talents not by accident, but by design. Lean into those gifts, and trust that God wants to see you glorify Him through them. When you do, you'll flourish in ways you never expected. Stay faithful, keep working hard and be open to doors for which you didn't plan. Sometimes the detours lead to the most meaningful parts of the journey.



Thomas Wahl

2020 | Bachelor of Science in Marketing, Minor in Management, Honors College

CURRENT POSITION Vice President and National Training Sales Manager at PennyMac Financial Services

INDUSTRY Finance

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I am a dedicated professional with a passion for service, integrity, intentional living, leadership and solution sales production. Currently serving as the vice president and national training sales manager at PennyMac in Nashville, I have a proven track record of success, including being the number one producer and funder as a senior mortgage loan officer in 2023 and leading training manager companywide. My career is marked by training loan officers on the ins and outs of mortgage sales and giving them a solid foundation to thrive at PennyMac. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Marketing and a Minor in Management from GCU (Lopes Up!) and am currently applying for a master's degree in theology to further my understanding of biblical literacy, outside of my regular work duties.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

A significant career milestone for me has been the opportunity to lead and mentor others. This role organically emerged from my consistent dedication and deeply held service-oriented approach. This transition into leadership allowed me to leverage my experience and insights to empower my colleagues. Witnessing their subsequent professional growth and personal fulfillment, fueled in part by the training, guidance and ongoing support I've provided, has been deeply rewarding. Their hard work, noticeable growth in sales effectiveness, achievements within the company, dedication to exceptional client service and ultimately, their increased ability to provide abundantly for their families, stand out as some of the most satisfying and meaningful outcomes of my contributions.

CAREER HISTORY

Early in my career, while in college, I was a digital marketing associate at Market MindShift, where I developed content strategies, managed campaigns and generated analytics for clients under the mentorship of Dr. Mindy Weinstein (GCU faculty/alum). My work focused on optimizing client websites through content and audience engagement. This formative experience provided valuable foundational skills for me, and I am very grateful to Dr. Weinstein for her time and mentorship.

Subsequently, I moved into a business development representative role at Investis Digital, focusing on proactive outbound lead generation via email, cold outreach and events. I also managed territory plans and identified new clients, collaborating with senior sales to present solutions. This role marked a natural progression into direct sales.

Since joining PennyMac in late 2020 as a loan officer, I have managed a significant mortgage loan pipeline, utilizing Salesforce and Excel for client education on refinance options. I also support the team with reporting, training and call monitoring.

Currently, I serve as vice president of sales, onboarding and training at PennyMac, where I equip new loan officers with the essential knowledge and skills for successful mortgage sales careers.



Thomas Wahl

2020 | Bachelor of Science in Marketing, Minor in Management, Honors College

IMPACT ON FIELD

On a personal level, my aim is to positively influence others by ultimately pointing them to Christ through my deeds and words. God has gifted us with the capacity for trust, communication, hard work and service, so I enjoy approaching life with gratitude, acknowledging its fleeting nature. Through dedication, hard work and prioritizing others through education, I've found the principle of giving over receiving (Acts 20:35) to be a fundamental and deeply rewarding aspect of my life and work. I hope to share the burden-lifting joy of Christ with those around me. It's not what we do that saves us from life's challenges but what Christ has done for us. That truth frees us to work hard for others, knowing that our work is not, and should not be, our ultimate identity.

My broader goal is to motivate others to perform thorough, high-impact work with a customer-centric approach. This is achieved by exceeding expectations through proactive and clear product explanations, grounded in strong product knowledge and the ability to simplify complex information. When we explain things in an accessible way, customers can make well-informed choices tailored to their unique circumstances. In turn, this will help promote long-term sustainability and positive contribution to the marketplace and our shareholders (the pulse of the Colangelo College of Business as influenced by Dr. Randy Gibb and the concept of conscious capitalism).

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

GCU Honors College Outstanding Freshman of the Year Award Nominee, 2017
GCU Honors College Inspirational Leader Nominee, 2020
4x's Circle of Champions Runner Up, 2020 - 2022
PennyMac Senior Mortgage Loan Officer Promotion, 2022
PennyMac Circle of Champions (Three-Time Recipient), 2023
PennyMac \$100,000,000 Mortgage Fundings, 2021 - 2023
PennyMac Nashville Top Funder, 2023
PennyMac VP, National Training Sales Manager Promotion, 2024

ORGANIZATIONS

My wife and I are members of Immanuel Nashville, located in West Nashville. In addition to our church involvement, I volunteer at The Branch of Nashville, a local Christian food drive. We also actively participate in PennyMac's annual philanthropy programs and food drives.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

My approach to leadership is rooted in the belief that it goes beyond simply directing tasks. As Peter Drucker wisely stated, "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things." For me, this means that the core of leadership lies in the ability to discern and navigate the right path forward, constantly adapting to the prevailing environment. It's about serving as a catalyst for others' success by ensuring their efforts are purposeful, timely and aligned with meaningful objectives. Ultimately, my aim as a leader is to cultivate a mindset of growth and service within my team, empowering individuals with principles that will guide them throughout their careers.



Thomas Wahl

2020 | Bachelor of Science in Marketing, Minor in Management, Honors College

ADVICE

College is a prime time for exploration and growth, so embrace opportunities to step outside your comfort zone (without financial recklessness). Dedicate yourself to building a strong network by connecting with classmates, professors and adjunct instructors. Actively explore different industries and gain practical experience through as many internships and part-time jobs as you can manage. While doing so, practice financial prudence by living within your means. Cultivate a questioning mind – challenge assumptions and seek deeper understanding. Don't shy away from difficult tasks; embrace the learning inherent in the "fail fast, fail often, fail forward" philosophy. Above all, take time for introspection: consider the gift of life you've been given from our Creator, earnestly pursue truth and as J.I. Packer wisely advises, "Live slowly enough to think deeply about God." In summary, reflect on the very essence of wisdom, as illuminated in Proverbs 9:10.



Anna Yost

2022 | Bachelor of Science in Biology, Honors College

CURRENT POSITION Teacher and Program Coordinator at Harvard Medical School MEDscience
Adjunct Professor at Grand Canyon University

INDUSTRY Education

PROFESSIONAL BIO:

I am currently a teacher and program coordinator at Harvard Medical School's MEDscience program. I educate and oversee high school students in STEM education and simulation. I love sharing my love for science and inspiring students to not just pursue STEM, but also to enjoy the journey of learning itself. I fell in love with teaching when I graduated from GCU and became a fifth-grade science teacher. I came to truly love the "behind the scenes" of education by developing curriculum and prioritizing hands-on learning.

My experience in medical simulation at the University of Arizona's medical school and teaching as an adjunct professor at GCU gave me the tools I needed to be where I am today. I am truly passionate about supporting students of all ages in their educational journey and inspiring them to be lifelong learners. I am honored to grow and learn alongside both my students and my team.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAREER MILESTONES

My most significant career milestone has been working for Harvard Medical MEDscience as a teacher and program coordinator. My experience as an adjunct professor at GCU in their College of Natural Sciences, being a coordinator for the University of Arizona Medical School Simulation and Innovation Department and being an elementary school science teacher have all contributed to my ability and success.

CAREER HISTORY

My career journey started when I became a fifth-grade science teacher. I learned so much about what it meant to run a classroom, support STEM learning and build wonderful relationships with students from all different backgrounds. Wanting to learn more about how curriculum development works, I moved into a program coordinator position at the University of Arizona Medical School Simulation and Innovation Department. Here, I learned what it meant to bring learning to life for students and put them in scenarios where they can apply their knowledge and gain field skills. I then moved across the country and have been blessed with the opportunity to work for Harvard Medical School MEDscience Department. My passions for STEM and health care, education and simulation have all come together in the role I'm in today. As a teacher and program coordinator at MEDscience, I get to educate, support and inspire high school students with hands-on and immersive learning. Through all of this, I have also loved teaching as an adjunct professor for GCU's College of Natural Sciences.

AWARDS, ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Graduating from the GCU Honors College



Anna Yost

2022 | Bachelor of Science in Biology, Honors College

ORGANIZATIONS

Harvard Medical School's MEDscience Clinical, Lab and Moonshot Programs
Boston Museum of Science
Boston Public School System

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I demonstrate leadership by leading as an example and mentoring hundreds of high school students. I lead classrooms with a hands-on teaching pedagogy and supportive classroom management. I lead coworkers, interns and volunteers in day-to-day work, projects and within the classroom.

ADVICE

The advice I would give to students or recent graduates is to be patient with the process. I never thought that I would be in education or be working for Harvard Medical School. I graduated feeling a little lost and unsure about what I was meant to do. I am still not sure what is in store for me, but taking advantage of opportunities and being patient with the process is all part of the journey. Be comfortable with being uncomfortable in the unknown.



Grand Canyon University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLCommission.org), an institutional accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Approved and verified accurate by the Advancement Marketing and Communications Specialist on Sept. 26, 2025.

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