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SAN DIEGO'S TOP ATTORNEYS 2021



Deborah Dixon, managing partner at Gomez Trial Attorneys, and Genevieve Ruch, trial attorney with Noonan Lance Boyer & Banach, are representative of our crop of Top Attorneys for 2021, talented legal practitioners working the legal field in San Diego. Read about them and the other Top Attorneys beginning on **PAGE 8**.

Encinitas American Legion Post Seeks Medal of Honor for a 'Forgotten Navy Hero' **SEE PAGE 6**

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**COVER STORY:
San Diego's Top Attorneys 2021**

Deborah Dixon, managing partner at Gomez Trial Attorneys, and Genevieve Ruch, trial attorney with Noonan Lance Boyer & Banach, are representative of our crop of Top Attorneys for 2021, talented legal practitioners working the legal field in San Diego. Read about them and the other Top Attorneys beginning on Page 8..



**Honoring a Forgotten Hero
in a Forgotten War**

U.S. Navy pilot E. Royce Williams (Ret.) survived what is perhaps the longest aerial dogfight in U.S. military history. He would face seven Soviet MiG-15 fighter jets during one 35-minute battle. After the engagement, military leaders were concerned the incident might mark a devastating increase of tensions between the U.S. and Soviet Union. Williams was ordered to keep silent about the events of Nov. 18, 1952. Today, members of Encinitas American Legion Post 416 are working to obtain a Medal of Honor for Williams.



Facilitating the Big Gifts Philanthropic donations like Dianne Bashor's \$15 million Aztec Stadium commitment are carefully crafted, with the help of trusted advisers like David Malcolm, a Chula Vista native who loves fixing things, from repairing and flipping houses to finding ways to help businesses remain solvent. Malcolm helped negotiate Bashor's gift after working for years with Bashor and her late husband Jim.

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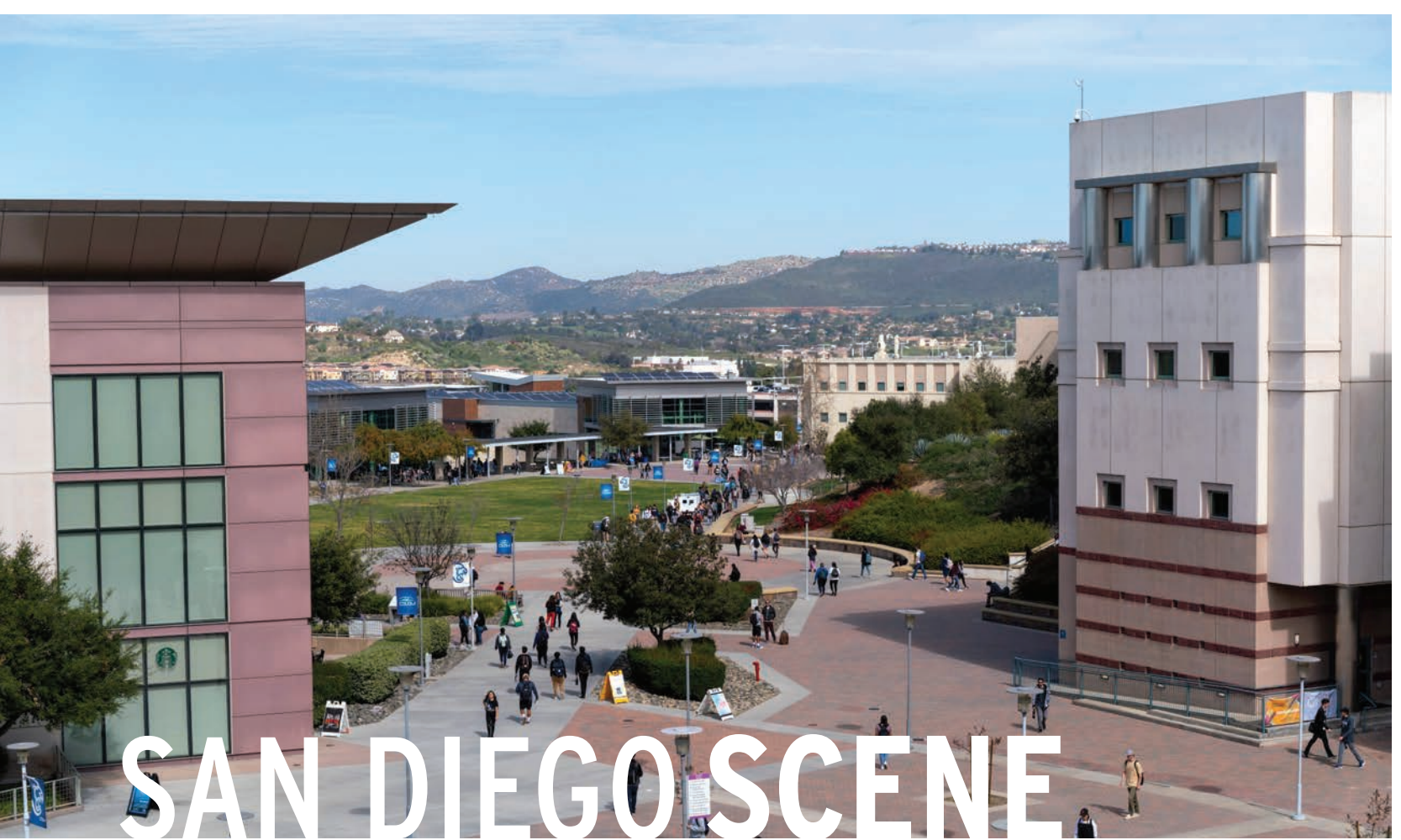
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Rendering of USD's Knauss Center for Business Education

University of San Diego begins construction of the Knauss Center for Business Education

The University of San Diego announced the start of construction of a facility that represents the future of business education — the 72,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Knauss Center for Business Education.

When completed alongside a renovation of the existing Olin Hall, the complex will total 120,000 square feet and will unify all of the USD School of Business' academic programs, centers and institutes

under one roof. The complex will include instructional spaces, collaboration spaces, data analytics and financial labs and is planned to open for classes in fall 2022.

The building is named for the chair of USD's Board of Trustees, Don Knauss, the former CEO of Clorox, and his wife, Ellie Knauss. The Knauss's \$20 million gift in 2017 helped solidify the final planning and construction of the complex.

DreamStart Labs awarded innovation grant to support women's groups

DreamStart Labs, an award-winning provider of digital banking technology for emerging markets, announced it has been named a recipient of the Women Saving for Resilience Innovation Fund.

The SEEP Network's Women Saving for Resilience program, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, seeks to help underserved women in the developing world who have been disproportionately impacted by the global pandemic. The successful proposal from DreamStart Labs was one of five selected from nearly 300 submissions.

DreamStart Labs will use funding from this grant to develop two new technologies that build financial and social resilience for underserved women. The first innovation will provide personal credit scores to millions of unbanked people in the developing world, while the second will make it easy to deliver messages, trainings, and surveys to vulnerable, hard-to-reach communities.

ETHA Natural Botanicals launches Kratom tablet access product

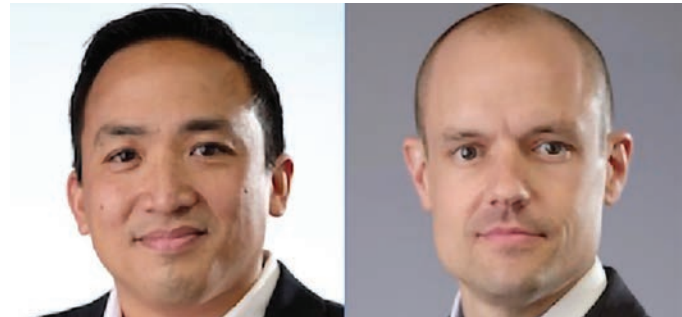
ETHA Natural Botanicals (ETHA) has announced the launch of Original Brand Manufacturing, a product, labeling and distribution development that enables Kratom retailers across the U.S. to access its proprietary best-selling Kratom tablets with wrap-around solutions.

ETHA tablets are considered the gold standard of Kratom manufacturing due to the company's high-quality products and labeling transparency. Through OBM, ETHA uses its R & D and testing methods to deliver tailored products and packaging solutions to help small businesses expedite time to market with the highest quality products and labeling.

"The team at ETHA offers a depth of knowledge to help smaller players move forward into the mainstream rather than smoke shops. The transparency and tablet quality we provide help combat misinformation and further legitimize the industry with consumers and retailers, Alex Karp, one of ETHA's co-founders, said.

Co-founder Victor Chung added that since "establishing our OBM model and beta testing with a few choice clients, we realized we're helping small businesses in the Kratom industry re-emerge from the pandemic with an improved marketing strategy, better product selection and better packaging that is a better fit for higher tier retail outlets.

"We're also helping to educate the public about misinformation



ETHA co-founders Victor Chung, left, and Alexander Karp

distributed by politicians and large pharmaceutical lobbyists, who see Kratom as disruptive to their business. We will continue to advocate on policy and improving self-regulation within the industry to make Kratom more readily available as a natural remedy for pain and self care."

ETHA is a San Diego-based business with a mission to deliver an extraordinary all-natural botanical product and extraordinary experience to its customers. It can be reached via email at: support@ethalivelyfully.com, or by phone at (800) 862-0341.

Bonita family known for charity work start business in plant-based sauces

A Bonita family known for making thousands of Christmas gift bags for foster youth and children in Tijuana are starting a new business.

Sisters Darlene and Diane Zoura and Daphne Khairo love food, but finding a meal they could all eat was hard.

"I can't even have a little drop of milk or I'll have an upset stomach," Darlene said. Diane has a gluten allergy and both Daphne's daughters have an egg allergy as well."

So they went to work in the kitchen. "It was a lot of trial and error, a lot of brainstorming of trying to work around it," Darlene said.

They came up with plant based sauces that not only everyone could eat, but Daphne's kids were asking for more. "Every time they have something to eat, they're asking me do you have the sauce? I'm like what sauce? Ketchup? They say no no! The sauce!" Daphne said laughing with her sisters.

They created Ranch, Chili Chipotle and Jalepeño Cilantro sauces under the brand Sistry Foods.

The sisters created a Kickstarter campaign and have raised more than \$14,000. Their goal is \$50,000.



The Khairo sisters: Daphne, Darlene, and Diane.

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Ronson J. Shamoun, Principal Attorney and CEO of RJS LAW, is an Adjunct Law Professor at the University of San Diego-School of Law where he teaches a Tax Practice and Penalties class. He was recently presented with the following awards:

- San Diego Metro Magazine- Best Attorney 2016
- San Diego Magazine- Top Attorney 2016
- San Diego Business Journal- Best of the Bar 2014, 2015 & 2016
- Martindale Hubbell's- AC Preeminent Rated 2014, 2015 & 2016
- San Diego Daily Transcript- Top Attorney 2014 & 2015
- San Diego Metro Magazine- 40 Under 40 - 2015



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Encinitas American Legion Post Seeks Medal of Honor for a 'Forgotten Navy Hero'

By Steve Lewandowski

E. Royce Williams was a South Dakota farm boy and Eagle scout when he joined the Navy as a seaman in 1942.

Today, the Escondido resident at 96 and a retired Navy captain, is the subject of a major campaign launched by his pals in the Encinitas American Legion Post 416 to get him a richly deserved Medal of Honor.

The Medal of Honor is the highest and most prestigious military decoration that the government can bestow on America's military heroes who have distinguished themselves by acts of valor.

The campaign, spearheaded by retired Navy Adm. Don Shelton, 99, and a resident of Del Mar, has been endorsed by over 110 flag and other Navy officers, Congressman Darrel Issa and Sen. Mike Rounds, R-SD.

Williams served 37 years as a Navy pilot, logging over 4,500 flight hours and had over 509 carrier landings, but what merits the effort to win the Medal of Honor for him was an unimaginably heroic 38-minute aerial engagement with seven Soviet MiG-15s on Nov. 18, 1952.

This David versus Goliath story began early that morning when Williams and his squadron mates flying F9F Panthers took part in an attack in northeastern North Korea near the Soviet border. Later that afternoon, after flying back to the carrier Oriskany, they took off again on a four-plane combat air patrol to protect the Oriskany Battle Group.

Early in the patrol they were told to intercept a formation of seven Soviet MiG-15s. The Soviet MiG-15 was considered the most formidable fighting aircraft in the world at the time. In combat over Korea, it easily outclassed straight-winged jet day fighters like the F9F Panther, which was largely assigned to ground attack roles.

A seven-on-four scenario is not an optimal aerial engagement, especially when you're not flying the better aircraft. One of Williams' squadron mates developed a fuel pump problem and was told to return to the Oriskany with his wingman. Williams was given an order not to engage the Soviets as the United States was not fighting the Soviets in Korea, only the Chinese and the North Koreans.

One of the MiG-15s fired first. Williams had never been in a dogfight before. The statistical odds of him surviving the encounter were not good. Williams returned fire as one of the MiG-15s was barreling after him. The MiG was shot down and Williams' wing man followed the plane down to record the kill.



From left: Steve Lewandowski, former commander, Encinitas American Legion, Navy Capt. E. Royce Williams (Ret.), and Mike Kerr, commander, California DAV.

There were still six MiG-15s to Williams, now in the fight by himself. He got off another lethal burst, downing another MiG, and continued to dodge the remaining MiGs.

Williams said he was fighting by the seat of his pants, at full power, juking left, right, up and down, firing at the remaining MiGs. Two more were shot down. Then another. His Panther aircraft had been hit 260 times in the fight, some of them coming within an inch of Williams. By the time Williams returned to the Oriskany, he was nearly out of fuel and completely out of ammunition.

The Panther was outclassed by the MiG-15 in speed, altitude and rate of climb. The MiG's rate of climb was almost double that of the Panther.

The dogfight lasted 35 minutes, yet is one of the longest dogfights in history.

A seventh MiG-15 tailed Williams back to the Oriskany, but

Williams' wing man cut him off and the MIG chose not to attack.

Williams told Distinguished Flying Cross Society Magazine (DFCS) that "two of the kills were head-on and the others from the rear. They went past too fast to permit deflection shots, so I concentrated on getting on their tails."

It was an unbelievable day for Williams, an incredible achievement in Naval aviation.

Dwight Eisenhower had become president in 1952, and on a visit to Korea, he asked to meet with Williams, who told DFCS that Eisenhower told him never to speak of it to anyone, not his squadron mates nor his wife.

For nearly 50 years only Williams, a few in the Pentagon the National Security Agency (NSA), the White House and the Soviet Union knew what had happened in the dogfight between Williams and the MiGs.

The effort to upgrade Williams' Silver Star to the Medal of Honor is an ongoing effort of love by the Legionnaires in Post 416 in Encinitas, Issa, Rounds and the over 100 flag and other retired Navy offices who are diligently working their way through the Washington bureaucracy to get Williams the Medal of Honor.



Navy Capt. E. Royce Williams (Ret.) at an Escondido DAV meeting.



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William Eigner is a top mergers and acquisition attorney in San Diego often called “the go to guy” for M & A and emerging companies in San Diego. He is an authority on forming, utilizing, showcasing and providing compensation for boards of advisers, and is listed among the best lawyers in America for mergers and acquisitions. He is on the board of advisers for ClearWaterAir International, Encore Semi Inc., eSUB Inc., and Greenbutts LLC. He is a trustee emeritus of the San Diego Police Foundation, La Jolla Country School and the La Jolla Town Council. He is a partner at Procopio and a graduate of Stanford University.



Ronson Shamoun is the founder and CEO of RLS Law, a tax law firm. His practice involves federal and state taxation, with an emphasis on criminal tax defense, tax controversy, international tax and estate planning. In 2016, he co-founded the annual USD School of Law – RJS Law Tax Controversy Institute, which brings together the entire tax community to discuss the latest changes in the law. He is a native San Diegan, a three-time graduate of the University of San Diego, receiving a B.A. in Accountancy, his Juris Doctor and his Master of Laws in Taxation. He has supported many charitable organizations such as Girl Scouts, Susan G Komen, United Way San Diego, American Diabetes Association, Rady’s Children Hospital Foundation, St. Theresa Academy, St. Peter Chaldean Catholic Cathedral. He has been recognized as one of USD School of Law’s Distinguished Alumni. He is also an adjunct professor at the USD School of Law and the USD School of Business.



Zachary Myers is the “go to” attorney for San Diego’s private and public companies in the technology and life sciences sectors, especially biotechnology and medical device companies, in complex high-value transactions. His practice allows him to work with companies ranging from startups to large public companies. He represents private companies in venture capital financings, helping companies raise millions of dollars needed to fund, grow and expand their businesses. He has assisted numerous clients that have gone public, listing them on the NYSE and NASDAQ. He often represents clients in the purchase and sale of their business. As a former CPA he appreciates clients’ business cycles and interacts seamlessly with them. He is a fixture in the San Diego entrepreneurial community and actively volunteers his time to support the local startup community. He is a graduate of Claremont McKenna College with a B.A. in economics and holds a J.D. degree from the University of San Diego.



Gabe Wright Gabe Wright is a natural leader, serving as chair of the Hahn Loeser’s San Diego Litigation Practices Group, as well as the firm’s finance committee, diversity, equity and a inclusion committee, and leading the San Diego office’s recruiting effort. His legal skills have earned him the prestigious AV preeminent rating from Martindale Hubbell, an award that recognizes an attorney’s excellence in legal ability and ethical practice. His litigation practice focuses on commercial/business matters, real estate, consumer litigation and class action litigation. His skill-set and ability to effectively develop strategies to meet his clients’ objectives has resulted In a broad client base. As a result of his successes, he is often called upon to provide legal strategy to clients across the country. He has defeated a number of class action certification cases. He volunteers and supports Promises2Kids, acting as a mentor to a Guardian Scholar. He is a graduate of the Washington and Lee University School of Law.



Deborah Dixon is the managing partner of the Complex Department at Gomez Trial Attorneys. The Complex Department litigates class actions and mass torts. The firm’s action practice focuses on defective products, consumer claims and statutory violations. In one year she co-tried a multi-week federal class action jury trial and a state class action jury trial, a rare occurrence in class action cases. She has been approved as lead counsel by federal and state courts across California. She has been named a Super Lawyer by Super Lawyers every year since 2016 and was a Super Lawyer Rising Star in 2014 and 2015. She is a former 40 Under 40 award winner by SD METRO Magazine. She has also been named a Woman of Influence. She is a board member of the San Diego County Bar Foundation and San Diego Inns of Court. She is a past president of the Lawyers Club of San Diego, and dedicates her time to raising awareness and educating about issues affecting gender equality. She has litigated hundreds of complex cases and completed several trials and arbitrations . She is a graduate of California Western School of Law and remains active in mentoring young lawyers and law students, and serves as an adjunct professor at California Western.



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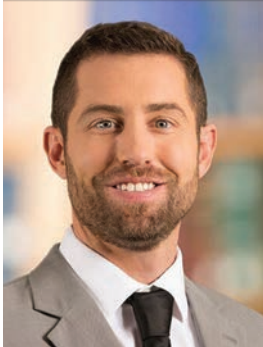
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Jim Heffner has a passion for learning, is hard working and is a strong and supportive mentor to the colleagues who surround him. He was recruited to work at Hahn Loeser as one of two attorneys to help establish an office in San Diego. He quickly jumped at the entrepreneurial opportunity and helped grow the office to now, including over 20 professionals who carry on the firm's reputation for excellence, committed to client service and dedication to the community. In his legal practice he has gained recognition for winning case strategies. Notably, he successfully defended a major class action brought by a formidable former San Diego city attorney in both Superior Court and the Court of Appeals resulting in an award of defense fees of over \$1 million. He currently serves as president of the La Jolla Bar Association. He has earned Martindale Hubbell's top peer review rating of AV Preeminent for legal ability and professional ethics. He is a graduate of the University of San Francisco School of Law, magna cum laude, 2006.



Michael Kalt a partner at Wilson Turner Kosmo, is at the forefront of shaping California's cutting-edge employment laws, working to ensure that the rights of employers and employees are equally covered. California is the nationwide leader in employment law. Joining WTK in 1996, Kalt quickly rose to the top of the field, representing local businesses and Fortune 500 companies in high-stakes employment disputes across a myriad of state and federal courts. Today, he is one of the most highly regarded litigation and employment law practice attorneys in California. Kalt has represented businesses of all sizes across most industry sectors against wrongful termination, harassment and discrimination claims in state and federal courts. He provides training to clients on employment discipline and investigations, employment policies and procedures. He holds a B.A. in political science, magna cum laude, from UCLA and his law degree is also from UCLA.



Gayle M. Blatt is a tenacious and dedicated attorney with a practice focused on complex and class action litigation. She is head of CaseyGerry's complex litigation practices group. She plays a pivotal role, handling high profile, multi-million dollar cases and earning a reputation nationwide for her expertise. She currently concentrates her practice on consumer class action, data breach cases and serious personal injury cases. She has held multiple leadership positions in data breach class action cases such as the Sony Gaming Networks and YAHOO! Data Breach class action litigation. She worked with CaseyGerry managing partner David Casey Jr. on many high-profile cases, among them the Volkswagen diesel emissions scandal litigation which settled for a historic \$14.7 billion, and the Wells Fargo Collateral Protection Insurance Class Action which settled favorably. She is the outgoing president of the San Diego County Bar Foundation. Super Lawyers has named her a top 25 Women Lawyers in San Diego in 2019 and 2020. Her B.A. degree was earned at Hofstra University and her Juris Doctor at California Western School of Law.



Genevieve M. Ruch has a stellar track record of securing impressive victories for her clients in business, civil and major securities litigation, establishing a reputation for success in high-impact cases less than a decade into her career. She recently defended with partner James Lance CrossFit vs. NSCA case and ultimately achieved a settlement after six and a half years of contentious litigation. She was responsible for managing eDiscovery, including overseeing a team of 30 contract attorneys performing a review of over 1.2 million documents, as well as management of outside discovery vendors. In 2019 she assisted Lance and Ethan Boyce in securing the dismissal of a federal lawsuit seeking more than \$30 million in damages. The suit brought in 2016 by the federal government related to the 2013 Mountain Fire in Mountain Center, California. She also represented the San Diego City Employees Retirement System in a case in which former employees sued over SDCERS’ efforts to recoup pension overpayments. She also secured a \$3 million settlement for a 90-year-old client who suffered significant injuries that required 24-hour care as the result of a car accident. She is a graduate of San Diego State University and graduated cum laude from the University of San Diego Law School.



John Gomez As the founder of Gomez Trial Attorneys, John Gomez is one of the nation’s leading trial lawyers. Among his significant trial results are a \$106 million wrongful death jury verdict arising out of San Diego’s infamous “American Beauty Murder,” a \$16.5 million verdict against El Pollo Loco for a slip and fall, a \$10 million jury verdict against Pizza Hut for the conduct of one of its delivery drivers, an \$8.5 million verdict against DePuy and Johnson & Johnson for a defective hip implant, and a \$6.5 million verdict against Omni Hotels for a coffee burn. He also represented the surviving members of CHP Officer Mark Saylor in their wrongful death case against Toyota, and the parents of San Diego legend Junior Seau in their wrongful death case against the NFL. He is a graduate of the University of San Diego where he was an All American football player, and the Yale University Law School.

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Facilitating the big gifts

Philanthropic donations like Dianne L. Bashor's \$15 million Aztec Stadium commitment are carefully crafted. Trusted advisers like David Malcolm help make them happen

By Tobin Vaughn

While still in high school, David Malcolm earned his real estate license. At 18 he was already selling properties. Through almost five ensuing decades he has been a businessman, board member, and officeholder of both elected and appointed positions.

Still active in real estate, Malcolm today manages large estates and family trusts, working to bring clarity and order to a sometimes confusing, chaotic process.

The common thread throughout his career has been Malcolm's love of fixing things. From repairing and flipping houses to finding ways to help businesses remain solvent, he has always been a problem solver, a deal maker.

"I love coming into a difficult situation and figuring a way out," Malcolm said. "That's my passion."

Identifying opportunities

Not that he pretends to have all the answers. Malcolm excels at identifying people with the proper skill sets for a particular challenge, then assembling a team to find a solution.

"I'm not usually the right person to get a job done," he said. "I am the right person to see the opportunity."

It's a talent he brings to philanthropists looking to fund projects that fuel their passions. One such donor is Dianne L.



David Malcolm and Dianne L. Bashor

Bashor, who in December 2019 announced a \$15 million donation to the San Diego State University Mission Valley Aztec Stadium project.

Malcolm helped negotiate the gift after working for years with Bashor and her late husband Jim. The couple were known for their generous contributions to such institutions as UCLA and USC, and for their support of military causes and the San Diego Zoo.

Malcolm helped Mrs. Bashor appreciate the vision for Mission Valley laid out by the university. "To me, creating jobs that give people real, livable wages was what this project was about," he said.

"This wasn't just a football stadium. This was about giving our kids a great education and an opportunity to get a great job here in San Diego."

A new face

Having grown up in Chula Vista, Malcolm knows what SDSU represents to the San Diego community. He served on the board of the university's Corky McMillin Center for Real Estate and was part of the group that formed the Compact for Success, an initiative that helped better prepare South Bay students for entry to the university.

"A whole lot of factors make SDSU our school, our standard bearer," Malcolm said. "But when people drive down I-8, you can't really see San Diego State buildings.

"You are going to be able to see it now. For generations to come SDSU Mission Valley is going to be the face that everyone will see along with all the opportunities built around that campus."

Bashor, a football fan, was enticed by the naming of the new stadium's playing surface Bashor Field. But as a civic champion, Malcolm said, she also considered how her gift might help move San Diego forward.

"We have an obligation to create a vibrant, balanced, great opportunity for our kids on a vacant property in the core of America's Finest City that we will never have again," Malcolm said. "The team at San Diego State put this unique opportunity of what we are creating for San Diego into words and visuals, and that's what really sold it."

A great future

Malcolm mastered the ins and outs of securing large gifts by fundraising for more than 30 years with Father Joe Carroll, the famed Catholic priest long associated with San Diego's St. Vincent de Paul Center and Father Joe's Villages. "I learned from the best," Malcolm said.

A longtime philanthropist in his own right, Malcolm and his wife Annie recently made a donation from their family trust through The San Diego Foundation to its Community Scholars Initiative. Their \$100,000 gift will help 38 first-generation, low-income and underrepresented students with college scholarships and services that bolster academic achievement.

It's the type of investment in the future. That's how he sees in SDSU Mission Valley.

"San Diego State has such a great future," Malcolm said. "And it's not just about big gifts, it's about community where everyone, every dollar makes a difference and hopefully other people can share the vision."

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