

## **MY START STORIES – OCTOBER 2021**

10-1-21

Kimberly Moore- President, KDM Engineering

Growing up, Kimberly Moore was always good at math and science, but didn't know about engineering until she got to college. Now, as president of an engineering consulting firm that specializes in utilities, Moore is passionate about bringing women and minorities into the industry and letting them know there are options available to them in the field.

10-2-21

Rebeca Nieves Huffman- Executive Director of City Year Chicago

When Rebeca Nieves Huffman served as executive director of City Year Chicago, she worked to reduce the high school drop out rate by deploying a corps of tutors, mentors and role models in high need partner schools. Nieves Huffman is the first in her family to graduate from college and believes education leads to opportunity and choice. In January of 2020, Nieves Huffman started her own consultancy firm, Juneteenth Strategic Partners.

10-3-21

Kathryn Frazier- Founder & Owner, Biz 3 Publicity

Kathryn Frazier's dream was to always work in music. That dream became a reality when she opened her own PR company in 1996. Frazier's clients include rappers, bands, authors and filmmakers. She recently became a certified personal and executive life coach after realizing so many of her clients were not happy and were struggling with mental illness and addiction.

10-4-21

Sandy Goldberg- Clinical Nutritionist

After losing 183 pounds, Sandy Goldberg wanted to help others have a similar experience. She went back to school and studied nutrition, got her degree and opened her own practice. Goldberg is a regular on NBC5 in Chicago and has even started a foundation, A Silver Lining, which provides women with respectful and equal access to cost-free breast health testing.

10-5-21

Phyllis Lockett- Founder & CEO, Leap Innovations

Phyllis Lockett is committed to championing personalized learning through her company Leap Innovations. As the daughter of two public school teachers and a product of Chicago Public Schools herself, the company now partners with more than 120 public schools in Chicago.

10-6-21

Juanita Silva- Chicago Fire Marshal

Juanita Silva works in fire investigations, working to find the cause of a blaze. After working her way up the ranks, Silva is now the only female fire marshal in her fire department.

10-7-21

Ponni Arunkumar- Chief Medical Examiner, Cook County, IL

Dr. Ponni Arunkumar knew at a young age that she wanted to be a forensic pathologist. After becoming a board-certified anatomic and clinical pathologist with specialization in forensic

pathology, she joined the Cook County medical examiner's office in 2004. Arunkumar was appointed the Chief Medical Examiner in July 2016.

10-8-21

Tai Duncan- Attorney, Coach, ConsultantAs an attorney, basketball coach and consultant, Tai Duncan epitomizes the notion of giving it your all.

10-9-21

Jamie Zelermeyer- President NYWIFT

Jamie is the Program Manager of Made In New York: Pilot Competition. Zelermeyer works with the mayor's office to improve gender diversity in television.

10-10-21

Brenda Robinson- Entertainment Attorney & Film Financier

Brenda Robinson transitioned from practicing law to becoming a partner at Gamechanger Films. Throughout her career, Brenda has provided counsel to musicians, actors, production companies, athletes and authors. She is an advocate for creative artists and her philanthropy work focuses on the arts and education.

10-11-21

Andrea Serrano- Managing Director, Individual Giving at Teach for America

Andrea Serrano was born in Mexico and came to the U.S. when she was 6 years old. She joined AmeriCorps, and it pushed her to work in education, helping others with similar backgrounds to find the success she's had. Currently, she serves as Managing Director of Individual Giving for Teach for America.

10-12-21

Katie Colegrove- Veterinary Pathologist

Katie Colegrove loved the ocean and marine life as a young girl, and knew early on she wanted to work with marine animals. She was recruited by the Zoological Pathology Program at the College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Illinois, housed at the Chicago Zoological Society's Brookfield Zoo.

10-13-21

Nancy Schreiber- Cinematographer

Nancy Schreiber started as a production assistant and worked her way up. Schreiber was the fourth woman ever voted into membership in the prestigious American Society of Cinematographers. Her credits include November and My America...Or Honk If You Love Buddah.

10-14-21

Marsha Warfield- Comedian & Actress

Having a smart mouth has always served Marsha Warfield well. She became one of Hollywood's best known stand-up comedians, working with Richard Pryor and later, began an acting career. Best known for her role as bailiff Roz Russell on Night Court.



10-15-21

May Lee- Broadcast Journalist

May Lee joined CNN in Tokyo as the first Korean-American correspondent in 1995. By 1997, she became the main anchor for CNN International in Hong Kong. Upon returning to the U.S. in 1999, Lee hosted her own talk show on the Oxygen Network. In 2003, she was an anchor at CNBC Asia in Singapore. While in Singapore, she started her own media production and consulting company, Lotus Media House, and in 2007, she launched The May Lee Show, a talk show aimed at Asian women. Lee is currently a correspondent for CGTN America, the news network for CCTV of China.

10-16-21

Janine Franklin- Director of Student Culture and Support , Noble Network of Charter Schools

As the new Director of Student Culture and Support at the Noble Network of Charter Schools, Janine Franklin's goals are ensuring that her students are viewed through a lens of equity and giving them a safe environment in which to thrive. She does this by using all resources to ensure those students are supported.

10-17-21

Michelle Mbekeani- Juvenile Policy Advisor, Cook County State's Attorney's Office

Michelle Mbekeani knew growing up she wanted to be an attorney and earned her law degree from the University of Chicago. Her passion has always been social justice and advocacy for those in need, especially juveniles and those with disabilities. Mbekeani founded a nonprofit, Then Just Feed One, Inc., as an undergraduate, and has done various service projects in her native country of Malawi.

10-18-21

Helen Sun- Chief Technology Officer, STATS

Helen Sun is the Chief Technology Officer at STATS, a sports data, technology, statistics, and content company. Before coming to the U.S. to pursue a Ph.D., Sun was an English teacher in Shanghai, China.

10-19-21 Yvonne Huff-Lee- Actress

Yvonne Huff Lee is an actor, producer and founding member of the Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble in LA. She has appeared in many films and TV shows including NCIS: Los Angeles, Rake, Parenthood, Bones, The Young and The Restless, Monk and Boston Legal. She is also the co-founder of the Lagralane Group a company dedicated to storytelling and offering artists a place to express themselves and to bring their stories to life.

10-20-21

Jennifer Junk- Executive Director, Recovery on Water

When it came to starting her nonprofit, Recovery on Water, former executive director Jenn Junk explained that it was hard to do, but also incredibly rewarding. She says rowing gives breast cancer survivors the opportunity to not only get active while recovering, but also to get support from people who are going through similar experiences.

10-21-21

Melody Spann Cooper- Chairwoman & CEO, Midway Broadcasting Corp.

As Chairwoman and CEO of Midway Broadcasting, Melody Spann Cooper owns and operates WVON, the oldest African American radio station in Chicago. She began at WVON as an intern for her father's radio show and since then has held a position in all departments.

10-22-21

Avi Sic -Open Format Disc Jockey

Avi Sic turned her childhood passion for music into a full-time career as an open format DJ. Under the mentorship of Lady Gaga's Grammy-winning producer, she quickly worked her way up through the industry. She has headlined festivals, performed at concerts and top-tier clubs, entertained at high-profile media events and shared the stage with some of the world's greatest talent. Most recently, she became an official Chicago Bulls DJ.

10-23-21

Hoda Katebi- Fashion Creative, Community Organizer

Hoda Katebi is the creator of the body positive fashion blog at JooJoo Azad. She is also the author of Tehran Streetstyle, which documents and celebrates the illegal fashion in Iran. Katebi also launched #BecauseWeveRead, an international Instagram book club that works to celebrate the stories of people whose voices are systemically silenced.

10-24-21

Janice Wilson- Chicago Police Sergeant

"It's one thing to be a police officer and then to be a female as well is a different set of challenges. Sometimes we have to work 10 times harder just to kind of find our way on the job." says Janice Wilson. Wilson was recently promoted to sergeant with the Chicago Police Department

10-25-21

Dunya Djordjevic- Actor, Director, Producer & Program Director, Camp Reel Stories

A former pre-med student, Dunya Djordjevic fell in love with acting and never looked back. The actress, producer and director, who is also a cancer survivor – or cancer thriver, as she calls herself – helps run Camp Reel Stories, a camp for girls to learn all aspects of filmmaking.

10-26-21

Iliana Regan- Chef, Elizabeth Restaurant

Having started as a dish washer Iliana Regan is a self-taught chef who opened Elizabeth Restaurant in Chicago in 2012 and was awarded a Michelin Star in 2014. She is a James Beard Best Chef nominee and winner of Food and Wine Best New Chef in 2016. She has gone on to open Kitsune Restaurant, Bunny Bakery and Milkweed Inn. In September 2019, Regan's memoir *Burn the Place* was awarded a spot on the 2019 National Book Award Longlist for nonfiction.

10-27-21

April Sutton- Fitness Trainer, Professional Stunt Woman



Getting her start on the set of the 2014 blockbuster Divergent, stuntwoman April Sutton started off as a fitness enthusiast and a bodybuilder. When she decided to pursue her love of stunt work, she didn't let any setbacks get her down.

10-28-21

Karen Nowicki- Engineering Division Manager, Enova International

Karen Nowicki is currently the Manager of the Engineering Division at Enova International, a financial technology multinational that develops innovative financial products and services for individuals and businesses that might not otherwise have access to them.

10-29-21

Vallorie O'Neil-- Locomotive Engineer

Vallorie O'Neil became the first female engineer for the Burlington Northern Railroad in 1977. She later joined Metra Commuter Rail in Chicago, where she became their first female engineer and eventually the first female Senior Train Master – a supervisor position. Her decades-long career was filled with both racism and sexism and is detailed in her book The Climb Up.

10-30-21

Crista Samaras- CEO & Founder, Brave Enterprises

Crista Samaras is the CEO and Founder of Brave Enterprises, an organization inspiring teen girls and teaching them the skills necessary to be resilient and brave. With Samaras' help, girls can learn an important lesson about overcoming fear.

10-31-21

Siobhan Johnson- Special Agent, FBI

Siobhan Johnson is a Special Agent with the FBI, who has investigated counterterrorism matters across four continents. Special Agent Johnson is also the Chicago Division Recruitment Coordinator at the FBI, and it's her special mission to help more women realize their potential as an FBI agent.

## **MY START STORIES – NOVEMBER 2021**

11-1-21- Margo Wolf O'Donnell, Partner, Benesch

Margo Wolf O'Donnell's father and grandfather were both lawyers, so her fascination with the courtroom started early. Now she's a partner in the law firm Benesch in Chicago. In addition to being a partner at Benesch, Wolf O'Donnell is on the boards of Women's Initiatives in Law, Yale Chicago, the Woman's Athletic Club of Chicago and the Auxiliary Board of the Art Institute of Chicago.

11-2-21 Mimi LeClaire, President and CEO of Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago

Mimi LeClair is President and CEO of Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago, where she oversees 23 clubs serving 18,000 children each year through after-school programs. LeClair knows firsthand that it takes more than inspiration to rise as a female leader.

11-3-21 Kimberly Anyadike, Youngest Black Woman to Complete Flight Across the U.S.

Kimberly Anyadike dreamed of flying as a young girl. When she was 15, she became the youngest Nigerian-American woman to complete a transcontinental flight from California to Virginia, honoring the Tuskegee Airmen along her journey. In 2015, they honored her with the first Young Aviator's Award.

11-4-21

Kelly Cervantes , Advocate

Kelly Cervantes is an epilepsy advocate and board member of the nonprofit, Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy (CURE). Kelly, her husband Miguel (who starred as Alexander Hamilton in Hamilton and will take over the title role on Broadway) and their son Jackson lost their daughter and sister in October of 2019 after an almost 4-year battle with infantile spasms, a severe form of childhood epilepsy.

11-5-21

Nani Cholakians Coroner Lieutenant, LA County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner  
Nani Cholakians has always had a fascination with the human body and bones. At the age of 22, she was hired as a death investigator. She was recently promoted to Coroner Lieutenant in the Investigations Division of the Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office. Cholakians has conducted over 2,000 death investigation cases.

11-6-21

Jill Thompson, Comic Book Creator

Jill Thompson always knew she wanted to work in comics. As one of the top female comic book artists today, she's won numerous awards for her work, which includes "Wonder Woman" and "The Sandman." Thompson's own creation, "Scary Godmother," is a series of children's books and comics that combines her love of Halloween and comedy. And if the scary godmother character happens to resemble Thompson herself – well, it's no coincidence.

11-7-21

Tammera Holmes Founder, AeroStar Avion Institute



Tammera Holmes grew up in a crime ridden suburb of Chicago but a chance opportunity taking an airplane ride with the Tuskegee airmen Inc, Young Eagles Program opened up her eyes to a career in aviation. She graduated college with an aviation management degree and started her own company in 2008. In 2016, she established the AeroStar Avion Institute, a non-profit organization designed to promote aviation careers for at-risk, minority youth.

11-8-21

Kathy LaSauce, former Air Force Pilot

Lasauce made history when she was chosen to be trained as an Air Force pilot. La Sauce became the first female aircraft commander at Norton Air Force Base. She was also the first woman to fly a C- 141 Starlifter, the first female officer to fly training aircraft, and serve as a wing flight simulator instructor and flight examiner pilot. She closed out her flying career by breaking yet another barrier, becoming the first woman in a very prestigious group - flying presidential support missions on the VC- 135 aircraft for the 89th Airlift Wing.

11-9-21

Vernice Armour, Former Captain, U.S. Marine Corps

Upon graduating flight school, Vernice became the Marine Corps' first African-American female pilot. She served two combat tours in Operation Iraqi Freedom; making her the nation's first African- American female combat pilot. She is the author of "Zero to Breakthrough" and now works as a motivational speaker.

11-10-21

Phyllis Wilson, Chief Warrant Officer 5, U.S. Army (retired)

Phyllis joined the Army in 1981. Wilson began in the Military Intelligence community as a German linguist Voice Intercept Operator and went on to serve in many other areas from tactical to strategic. She also served as a senior intelligence analyst, deployed to Iraq. She now serves as the President of the Women In Military Service For America (WIMSA) Memorial Foundation, Inc.

11-11-21

Zeita Merchant, Deputy Sector Commander at U.S. Coast Guard Sector New York

With more than 20 years of military experience, Zeita currently serves as the Deputy Sector Commander at U.S. Coast Guard Sector New York. From 2016 to 2019, she served as the first Commanding Officer of Marine Safety Unit Chicago and was the first African American female to command a marine safety unit in the Coast Guard before serving as a National Security Fellow at Harvard University.

11-12-21

Darlene Iskra Commander, U.S. Navy (retired)

Darlene Iskra joined the Navy in 1979. After a year of training, Iskra became a Diving Officer, one of the first three female officers to do so. In 1990, Iskra was selected for Commanding Officer afloat, the first woman to command a commissioned vessel of the U.S. Navy. She reported for duty on the USS Opportune on December 27, 1990 in Naples, Italy. Seventeen days later, she and her crew were underway in support of Operation Desert Storm.

11-13-21

Avis Brodess, Dystonia Warrior

Avis Brodess was a nationally ranked tennis player as a teenager, and the first female arbitrager on Wall Street in her 20s. But her most grueling challenge came in her 30s when she was diagnosed with cervical dystonia, a rare and incurable neurological disease where the brain can't control the neck muscles. Brodess discovered a medical breakthrough, a procedure that involved implanting electrodes in her brain and a rechargeable battery-powered stimulator in her chest wall.

11-14-21

Josephine Lee, President & Artistic Director, Chicago Children's Choir

Josephine Lee serves as the President and Artistic Director of Chicago Children's Choir (CCC), where she has revolutionized the field of youth choral music. She has led the CCC in collaborations with well-known artists, as well as performing for many dignitaries, including former President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama and the Dalai Lama.

11-15-21

Heidi Stevens, Former Columnist Chicago Tribune

Heidi Stevens began her career at the Chicago Tribune as an editor, then was named a founding editor for the feature "On the Town." In 2012, she began writing her daily "Balancing Act" column, focusing on work-life balance, relationships and parenting.

11-16-21

Annie Nocenti, Former Writer, Marvel & DC Comics

Annie Nocenti is a comic book writer, journalist and filmmaker. Her work includes Marvel's Daredevil, Typhoid Mary and DC's Catwoman. She's written for and edited numerous magazines and taught filmmaking in Haiti.

11-17-21

Susan Axelrod, Founder CURE

As a mother of a child with epilepsy, Susan Axelrod founded CURE in 1998 with a group of other parents who were frustrated that they could not protect their children from seizures or from the side effects of medications. Since 1998, CURE has raised more than \$70 million to fund epilepsy research.

11-18-21

Alina Moran, President of Dignity Health California Hospital Medical Center

After working as a mechanical engineer for years Alina went back to school pursuing her master's degree in public administration. Alina began working in a variety of finance positions in New York's hospital system before becoming the CEO at NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan. Alina was named president of Dignity Health – California Hospital Medical Center (CHMC) in February of 2020 and leads the overall direction, strategy, and operation of the hospital.

11-19-21

Tracy Baim, Publisher, The Chicago Reader



Award-winning journalist Tracy Baim is currently the publisher for The Chicago Reader newspaper. In 1985, Baim co-founded the Windy City Times, a Chicago newspaper serving the gay and lesbian community, and in 1987, Outlines newspaper. Baim is also the author of several books on LGBT history.

11-20-21

Linda Frankenbach, Former HBO Executive

After business school, Linda Frankenbach began working at the start-up company we now call HBO. Frankenbach's entrepreneurial spirit eventually led her to start her own company. These days, she sits on a board of "She Should Run," a company that encourages and helps women run for office.

11-21-21

Helen Zia, Writer, Activist

The daughter of Chinese immigrants, Helen Zia published her first book, Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People, in 2000. She is the former Executive Editor of Ms. Magazine. Zia is also featured in the Academy Award-nominated documentary Who Killed Vincent Chin? Her latest book The Last Boat Out of Shanghai chronicles the mass exodus from China following the 1949 Communist revolution.

11-22-21

Aimee Eubanks Davis, Former Teacher/CEO, Braven

After several years with Teach for America, Aimée Eubanks Davis realized that many of her former students were struggling to find jobs out of college. So, inspired to narrow that gap, she launched Braven in 2013, with the goal of helping underrepresented minorities land strong first jobs out of college. She was also named a 2019 Obama Foundation Fellow — one of just 20 people in the world.

11-23-21

Julia Storm, Founder ReConnect

Julia Storm is a Digital Media Parenting Educator and founder of ReConnect, a program that helps parents and kids prepare for and navigate life in the digital age. Prior to launching ReConnect, Storm served as Director of Production for The Mother Company, a production company dedicated to creating media for young children. During her tenure there, she produced award-winning children's media content for Netflix, Amazon, iTunes and PBS in conjunction with top child development specialists around the country.

11-24-21

Annie Torsiglieri, Actor, Playwright & Performer

Annie Torsiglieri has appeared on Broadway in Miss Saigon Top Girls, Parade and Blood Brothers and has starred in the National Tour of Les Misérables. She has also performed in several Off-Broadway productions and at regional theaters nationwide. TV appearances include Law & Order, Kidnapped, and Gossip Girl. Her autobiographical play "A" TRAIN, about raising a son with autism, was awarded "Best Production" at the United Solo Festival in 2017 and "Best Encore" there in 2018.

11-25-21

Namrata Yadav, SR.VP & Global Head of Inclusion Strategy, Bank of America

Namrata Yadav grew up in India and says she learned about the U.S. from TV shows like Oprah and Friends. After receiving her master's degree in industrial/organizational psychology she decided to "cold call" Bank of America and she's been there ever since. She currently leads the bank's company-wide initiative to promote cultural acceptance, diversity and inclusion among its employees.

11-26-21

Kathryn Morris, Actress, "Lilly Rush", Cold Case

Kathryn Morris played Detective Lilly Rush, which originally ran on CBS from 2003-2010, a role that changed everything for her. Kathryn leapt from a kid in her family's gospel choir to a household name – a journey that rapidly accelerated when she caught Steven Spielberg's eye in The Contender and he cast her in his 2002 neo-noir sci-fi film Minority Report. Her other movies include Mindhunters, Paycheck and Resurrecting the Champ.

11-27-21

Holly McGuire, Editor-in-Chief, Chase's Calendar of Events

Holly McGuire is the Senior Editor of the acclaimed reference book Chase's Calendar of Events. She leads the team in researching and deciding which national events and holidays are worth knowing about each year. As a publisher she acquired the autobiographies of Academy Award-winner Bill Hanna of Hanna-Barbera and Walter Koenig of Star Trek fame.

11-28-21

Catie Holoubek, EVP Media, Pinnacle Advertising & Marketing

Catie Holoubek planned to go to law school until radio became her passion. That's where she got involved in digital advertising and marketing, where the self-described "nerdy" EVP of media didn't let the fact that she's female stop her from reaching her goals.

11-29-21

Andrea Zopp, President & CEO, World Business Chicago

Andrea Zopp is not afraid of challenges. Not when she was practicing law, not when she worked in the mayor's office in Chicago and not currently, as the president & CEO of World Business Chicago, where she runs the city's economic development organization. Zopp is a fierce advocate and passionate about making sure people have opportunities. She believes that she's been given a lot and has an obligation to give back.

11-30-21

Laura Desmond, CEO & Founder, Eagle Vista Partners

Laura Desmond has consistently been called an industry game changer and innovator, instrumental in reinventing the ways in which media companies grow their digital content and media strategy. She has worked with some of the most successful marketers worldwide, including Samsung, Coca-Cola and Visa, as well as online consumer brands like Twitter, Airbnb and Spotify. In 2016, she founded her own company, Eagle Vista Partners, a marketing and digital transformation consulting and advisory firm.



## **MY START STORIES – DECEMBER 2021**

12-1-21 Michele Martinez, Paramedic Chicago Fire Department

Michele Martinez was managing life as a single parent when she responded to a lifelong calling to save lives. 16 years later, she is still working as a paramedic at the Chicago Fire Department. In her line of work, Martinez also contributes to NBCUniversal's Chicago Fire as a consultant to writers, directors and actors about paramedic skills, procedures and policies

12-2-21 Erica Gimpel, Actress

Erica Gimpel is best known for her role as Angel Brown on Profiler. She also starred as Coco Hernandez on the TV show Fame about New York's High School of Performing Arts, the same school she actually graduated from. She also appeared on the CBS show God Friended Me.

12-3-21 Genevieve Thiers, Founder, Sittercity.com

As the founder of Sittercity and a former babysitter, Genevieve Thiers took the online dating concept and applied it to caregiving to establish a centralized place for parents and caregivers to meet. She is also a trained opera singer who's sung at Carnegie Hall.

12-4-21 Deb Amos, International Correspondent, NPR

Deborah Amos is an international correspondent for National Public Radio (NPR) and has been for decades. From Beirut and Baghdad to Amman and Cairo, Amos has reported on nearly every major story in the Middle East since 1982.

12-5-21 Mary Nguyen, Founder & CEO, Saigon Sisters Restaurant Group

Mary Nguyen Aregoni was still a child when her family was forced to flee their native Laos during the Vietnam War. They arrived on foot in Thailand, where they lived in a refugee camp immigrating to the United States. Aregoni later spent 20 years in marketing and IT at Procter and Gamble. After living through 9/11 as a New York City resident, she decided it was time to follow her dream: to open a Vietnamese restaurant. With the help of her sister Theresa, Saigon Sisters was born. The brand now includes three locations in Chicago, as well as Thai restaurant Bang Chop Thai.

12-6-21 Carroll Bogert, President, Marshall Project

Carroll Bogert started her career as a foreign correspondent for Newsweek magazine, covering stories in China, Southeast Asia and Russia. She then joined Human Rights Watch, running their global media operations. Carroll now serves as President of The Marshall Project, a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization reporting on the U.S. criminal justice system.

12-7-21 Sarah Kostuk, Brooklyn Nets TV Analyst

Sarah Kustok's passion for sports developed early on. She grew up playing a variety of sports with her brother, and later landed a scholarship to DePaul University in Chicago. She went from starring in basketball games for the Blue Demons to calling them for the NBA, as the league's first solo female analyst for the Brooklyn Nets.

12-8-21 Maria Woltjen, Executive Director and founder of the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

Maria Woltjen always knew she wanted to work in human rights and found that her calling was working with children. When she began working for immigrant children's rights 15 years ago, she found a mission in reforming the immigration system to ensure the best interest of the child.

#### 12-9-21 Jeni Britton, Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams

Jeni Britton Bauer is an ice cream maker, entrepreneur and author. She is a pioneer of the artisan ice cream movement. Jeni opened her first ice cream shop, Scream, in 1996. In 2002 she founded Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams. Bauer has approximately 50 "Scoop Shop" locations around the country. Her first cookbook, Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams at Home, won a James Beard Award in 2012.

#### 12-10-21 Minky Worden, Director of Global Initiatives, Human Rights Watch

As Human Rights Watch's Director of Global Initiatives, Minky Worden develops and implements international outreach and advocacy campaigns, focusing especially on how sport can advance human rights. She started at HRW in 1998 as Media Director, working with the world's journalists to help them cover human rights abuses in more than 90 countries.

#### 12-11-21 Margot McMahon, Sculptor

Margot McMahon began sculpting at a young age. She earned an MFA from Yale University then taught sculpture and drawing at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Public sculpture commissions and museum and gallery exhibitions have been the core of McMahon's work as an artist. Her sculptures and drawings are also included in private collections in Chicago, New York, Florida, London, Paris, and Tokyo.

#### 12-12-21 Natalie Shmulik, CEO, The Hatchery

Natalie earned an M.L.A. in Gastronomy from Boston University. She opened her own restaurant in Toronto and went on to become a specialty consultant for one of Ontario's largest supermarket chains. After discovering her passion for innovation, she was hired as a brand strategist for the first cold brew tea company in Chicago. She went on to head The Hatchery, one of the largest food incubators in the country.

#### 12-13-21 Nahiris Bahamon, Pediatrician at Esperanza Health Centers

After coming to the U.S. as a refugee from Columbia at age 18, she continued her studies. Today, Nahiris Bahamon is a Board Registered Pediatrician at Esperanza Health Centers, a group of community healthcare providers in Chicago. She is also a board advisor for Physicians for a National Health Program, and an advocate for children and families as a member of the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

#### 12-14-21 Hiba Bhatti, Architect, Valerio Dewalt Train Associates

Hiba Bhatti knew from a young age that she wanted to be an architect. Having a brother with cerebral palsy, she realized that buildings can be designed to enable and empower people. She trained at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Yale University. As a Pakistani-American woman, she had few role models to advise her on her path.

#### 12-15-21 Camilla Webster, bestselling author and visual artist



Camilla Webster is a bestselling author and visual artist, Webster has exhibited her paintings at prestigious international art shows like Art Basel. Her portraits and abstracts are also housed in private collections around the world.

12-16-21 Vicky Hernandez, Paramedic Field Chief, Chicago Fire Department

Being a paramedic field chief in the city of Chicago isn't an easy job, Hernandez loves being a part of the action. Hernandez is noticing that more and more women are taking on roles with the fire department and quickly working their ways up through the ranks.

12-17-21 Simone Elkeles, Young Adult Author

After picking up a romance novel while at the library with her young daughter, Simone Elkeles was hooked. She read more than 100 before trying her hand at writing the genre, and quickly became a New York Times bestselling young adult author. She is best known for her teen romance Perfect Chemistry.

12-18-21 May Tsupros, Co-Founder, Gardeneers

As a teacher, May Tsupros quickly learned that her students lacked the knowledge and accessibility to healthy, nutritious food. That led her to co-founding Gardeneers, a food education program that offers students the support and opportunity to grow school gardens. Tsupros believes food equity is a foundational element to achieving educational equity.

12-19-21 Ivy Kagan Bierman, entertainment labor attorney and partner

Before Ivy Kagan Bierman became an entertainment labor attorney and partner at Loeb & Loeb in Los Angeles, she was an actress seeking her start on Broadway. Today, she counsels entertainment and advertising companies in guild and union matters.

12-20-21 Karen Herold, Restaurant & Hospitality Designer, Studio K

Karen Herold may have earned her degree in fashion design, but she quickly realized it was hospitality design for which she was truly passionate. Herold received a number of awards for her accomplishments. In 2014, Herold opened her own multidisciplinary creative house, Studio K, where she has continued to design restaurants, bars and residences. She has worked with some of Chicago's biggest powerhouses including BOKA Restaurant Group, Sterling Bay and the Chicago Cubs.

12-21-21 Emily Barr, President & CEO, Graham Media Group

As President and CEO of Graham Media Group, Emily Barr oversees local TV stations around the country. Prior to joining Graham Media, Barr was the President and General Manager of ABC 7 Chicago. She also served in the same position in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, and early in her career, she worked at TV stations in Baltimore, Houston, Washington D.C. and St. Paul, Minnesota.

12-22-21 Janine DiGiovanni, War Correspondent, Author

Janine di Giovanni is a foreign correspondent best known for covering major violent global conflicts, including disputes in Palestine, Syria and Kosovo. She is also an active writer on global social crises.

12-23-21 Dolores Huerta, President, Dolores Huerta Foundation

Dolores Huerta is a feminist, activist, and lobbyist who has spent her life advocating for farm workers and women's rights, becoming one of the most influential labor leaders in American history. Huerta remains active to this day, continuing her life's work as President of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, advocating for the working poor, women, and children.

12-24-21 Nancy Rotering, Mayor, Highland Park, IL

Nancy Rotering is currently the Mayor of Highland Park, Illinois. Before becoming mayor, Rotering served as a Council Member for Highland Park. She was also a candidate in the 2018 race for Illinois Attorney General.

12-25-21 Dorri McWhorter, CEO, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

Dorri McWhorter wrote a letter to Santa Claus when she was 11 years old, outlining her three primary wishes: (1) to make sure everyone alive was okay, (2) to prove Santa was real by sending a picture and (3) to help her be an accountant. Since writing that letter, she has worked in the accounting world for 20 years, and currently is the CEO of the YWCA.

12-26-21 Laura McNally, Attorney Loeb & Loeb Chicago

As a litigation partner at Loeb & Loeb, Laura McNally focuses on breaking down complex cases and resolving commercial legal disputes. She is an impressive legal expert whose achievements include representing the Chamber of Commerce while filing amicus briefs in the Supreme Court and features in Bloomberg News.

12-27-21 Claire Quinn, Golden Gloves Boxer

When an injury left Claire Quinn searching for a new form of exercise, her dad recommended one of his favorite sports - boxing. She went on to become a Golden Gloves boxer, winning most of her fights by TKO, and losing only once in her first seven match. While she hopes to one day become a professional boxer, she currently works as a personal trainer and boxing coach, specializing in training kids with special needs and people with Parkinson's Disease.

12-28-21 Roma Maffia, Actress

Roma Maffia first began acting in off-Broadway productions. Soon after being cast in Ron Howard's film The Paper she landed a role on the TV series Chicago Hope. Following that series, she played Grace Alvarez, the forensic pathologist for the Violent Crimes Task Force for four seasons on NBC's Profiler.

12-29-21 Pilar Ortega, Emergency Room Physician Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center

Dr. Pilar Ortega is an emergency room physician at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center. She is also an Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Illinois Chicago, where she teaches the Medical Spanish program. Her expertise is in Hispanic Healthcare, and her dedication to it led her to found and lead the Medical Organization for Latino Advancement (MOLA), a nonprofit outreach organization.

12-30-21 Olivia Clare, Associate Professor of English University of Southern Mississippi

Olivia is currently an Assistant Professor of English, Creative Writing, in the Center



for Writers at the University of Southern Mississippi. She is also a published fiction writer and poet having received several awards. Olivia began her career as an actress on *Any Day Now*. A series which first aired in 1998 explored issues on racism and the recurrence over the years. She played the part of Kelly Sims Williams.

12-31-21 Paula Haney, Founder, Hoosier Mama Pie Company

After college, Paula Haney moved to Chicago and worked as a pastry chef at the Hilton Chicago before spending years as a head pastry chef at some of Chicago's finest dining establishments. Dedicated to preserving the tradition of the American pie, Haney decided to open her own company on March 14 ("pi" day), 2009. Having grown up in Indianapolis, it seemed only fitting to name her company Hoosier Mama Pie Company. She is also the author of *The Hoosier Mama Book of Pie*.