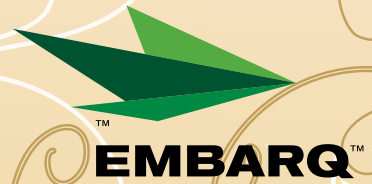


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# Women to Watch 2008



## From the Editor

Welcome to the New Year. We barely had time to clean up the confetti and put away the party favors before the first special publication of 2008 was upon us.

This wasn't just any special section; it was a new one for the In Business team. "Women to Watch" was a culmination of months of discussion on finding a new and innovative way to highlight aspiring businesswomen in the Las Vegas Valley.

In this inaugural section, we honor 15 women whom we expect will make a mark on our community in a variety of ways. They range from attorneys to bank presidents to engineers to CEOs. These are women you better pay attention to '08.

The women were chosen after we fielded nominations where we posed the question: How will your nominee have an

impact during the coming year? The response was overwhelming – we received nearly 120 nominations in all – creating an extremely difficult time for our panel to make these selections. Read through this section and you'll certainly find an extraordinary group of women.

I would also like to thank our presenting sponsor, Embarrq, for helping us honor the inaugural class of Women to Watch. Kudos to you for seeing the vision and importance of such a program and jumping on board right from the beginning.

**Rob Langrell**

**Editor of Special Publications**

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## From the Presenter

I'm often asked about our brand promise of Practical Ingenuity. Simply put, Practical Ingenuity represents the balance we strive to achieve in all we do — driving not only the types of products and services we offer, but also the way in which we develop and deliver them to our customers. And, I might add, it differentiates us from our competitors.

It also describes our 1,200 local Embarrq employees, including one of today's honorees. Our success in Southern Nevada can be traced directly to employees such as Raquel Butler. Her friends and I call her Rocky. As some of the most highly trained and certified employees in the industry, Rocky and her fellow team members exemplify the spirit of Embarrq both on and off the job. In addition to delivering superior results for the customer, they also volunteer thousands of hours of their own time to organizations and local charities in an effort to make our community a better place.

Every time we deliver Practical Ingenuity to our customers, we help make Southern Nevada a better place to work, live and play. So on behalf of Rocky, and her 1,200 Nevada teammates, congratulations to all of those who were recognized today as "Women to Watch."

**Kristin McMillan**  
Vice President & General Manager  
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**Patrick Wisman**  
Chief Executive Officer  
SouthwestUSA Bank



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“In 2008, I want to become more fully engaged in helping improve the quality of life for citizens in our community. I believe this can be accomplished through community participation encouraged by my employer and through my own personal pursuits, such as mentoring youth.”

## The Mentor

In recent years, MGM MIRAGE has become a nationally-recognized leader in corporate diversity initiatives, due in large part to the ongoing efforts of Debra Nelson. Her commitment to promoting opportunities for women and minority-owned businesses has extended into areas including supply contractors, education and outreach opportunities. Not only has she worked to further the reach and impact of numerous programs within her company, she has woven her professional pursuits into personal endeavors as well, donating her time and expertise to a number of community organizations.

In the summer of 2007, Nelson was instrumental in creating the Inaugural Women of Color Conference, an event that attracted more than 500 participants to its workshops on topics ranging from health and wellness to personal finance, career development and leadership skills. In addition, she recently became a founding board member of the Chief Diversity Officers Roundtable at Cornell University. The roundtable is comprised of senior diversity officers representing America's Fortune 500 companies. The group is charged with helping advance diversity within corporate America and using practical experiences to help drive academic research relative to diversity. In Nevada, Nelson is the founder of the Diversity Professionals Network. Comprised of diversity officers, the group meets quarterly to network, share best practices and explore ways to enhance the reputation of the diversity profession.

The sizable list of awards and recognitions Nelson and the MGM MIRAGE have garnered for efforts in recent years is impressive. The company was recognized by DiversityBusiness.com as one of the Top Corporations in the U.S. for multicultural businesses, was awarded Supplier Diversity Program of the Year by the Nevada Minority Business Development Council, ranked among the Top 50 Companies for Diversity by DiversityInc magazine, named one of America's Most Admired Companies by Fortune magazine and named one of the 40 Best Companies for Diversity by Black Enterprise magazine.

Nelson is the recipient of numerous awards for corporate and community service. She was named among the Top 100 Blacks in Corporate America by Black Professionals Magazine, was recognized by the Las Vegas City Council for her outstanding contributions to the city and received the Golden Eagle Feather Award from the American Indian Chamber of Commerce and the Women in Business Award from the National Coalition of 100 Black Women. Nelson's board service includes William Patterson University Foundation in Wayne, New Jersey; Community College Foundation of Southern Nevada; Black Women in Sisterhood for Action (BISA), Washington, DC; The Boys and Girls Clubs of Las Vegas; Nevada Hand; and the executive advisory board of the I Have a Dream Foundation.

– By Lisa McQuerrey



*Debra Nelson*

Vice President of Corporate Diversity,  
Community Affairs  
& Communications,  
MGM MIRAGE



*Sandra Murdock*

President and CEO,  
Nevada Cancer Institute

“In 2008, I will continue the fast pace of recruitment of scientists and clinicians, along with completion of the new campus buildings to house them, so that we can continue to make an increasing difference in the fight against cancer for Nevada.”

## The Recruiter

Establishing a world-class cancer research and care facility is no small task. But Sandra Murdock, president and CEO of the Nevada Cancer Institute, has seen this all before. And that's more than enough reason for her to be the force behind building NCI into a comprehensive care center, a distinction granted by the National Cancer Institute honoring an entity for its research and advancements in care of cancer sufferers.

This year, Murdock, who was recently appointed to the CEO position after spending a year-and-a-half as chief operating officer, will aim her sights on adding to NCI's staff of 26, while overseeing the construction of two building on its Twain Avenue campus. “We're looking at about seven years,” she said of the timetable to gain the ‘comprehensive care center’ designation. “We'll ... add about 10 faculty [members] per year for the next five years. Our research programs will require us to build additional buildings and additional labs.”

In 2007, the center broke ground on its support services building, which will open this November. Murdock also expects to break ground on a new research laboratory in 2008. The site will take 18 months to build.

Having spent five years helping develop the Emory University Winship Cancer Institute in Atlanta, Georgia into a comprehensive care center, Murdock is also committed to helping strengthen the medical

academic community within the state. NCI will eventually have a building on site at UNR's Reno campus and its current outreach efforts span the state, including Las Vegas, Reno, Fallon and Elko. Murdock is also a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Nevada School of Medicine, and is an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Health Care Administration and Policy at the University of Nevada School of Public Health. She believes that her current and future staff's involvement with the state's academic community is key to improving education, overall, while enhancing the Nevada medical community's image. “It raises the academic profile for those involved and can even help to retain more doctors in the state as well,” she said.

Murdock was recruited to NCI in the summer of 2006, and said the vision of NCI's founders and the opportunity to create a world-class center were the primary reasons for her coming to the Silver State. “I really got sold on the idea of coming to Nevada and helping to build a program that would make a difference,” she said, while also discussing her own passion for research. “You're working on discoveries that will essentially change the way cancer patients are cared for and you see it about ten years before the market gets involved.”

– By Brian Sodoma



“In 2008, I will continue to encourage those around me to achieve their maximum potential in concert with seeking my maximum potential.”

## The Leader

Throughout her 20 years in the banking industry, Diane Fearon has progressively worked her way through challenging leadership roles, leaving successful tenures in her wake.

She launched her career as a loan adjustment department manager for Continental National Bank in early 1987, then went on to become southwest regional president and executive vice president for Bank of Nevada, where she was responsible for managing deposits of \$280 million and loans of \$247 million. Overseeing a staff of 26, Fearon also sat on numerous internal committees, ranging from human resources to strategic planning. Later serving as regional president of BankWest of Nevada, during her six-year tenure, the institution's southwest regional office grew \$157 million in deposits and \$98 million in loans with loan losses of less than \$35,000.

Poised to continue her rein as a leader in the state's banking industry, Fearon was recently named founding president/CEO and a board of director member of Bank of George, which opened for business in September 2007. The bank's namesake, George Washington, was selected to convey the institution's commitment to “strong leadership, integrity and dedication to commu-

nity.” The bank launched with 18 employees and \$21 million in capital. After only two months in operation under Fearon's direction, the institution attained \$20 million in deposits and \$8 million in loans.

Fearon is a woman to be watched, not only for her professional accomplishments, but for her ongoing community commitment as well. She donates time and talent to numerous local organizations, including the Shade Tree Endowment Board, the State Bar of Nevada and Habitat for Humanity, Las Vegas, where she has served as vice president since 2004. Fearon has also supported United Way, the American Diabetes Association and Opportunity Village.

While Fearon prides herself on her goal of remaining a guiding force in creating a significant community bank that is dedicated to serving customers, employees and shareholders, she pairs that ambition with a person goal of serving as an example of professional integrity in her industry while working to maintain an all-important work/life balance with family and friends.

– By Lisa McQuerrey



*Diane Fearon*

President and CEO,  
Bank of George




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"In 2008, I will continue to help make Miracle Mile better than it already is, to finish the renovations this year and bring in more strong tenants, while working with existing merchants to help them succeed."

## The Organizer

Wendy Albert will spend 2008 in much the same way she's spent the last few years — helping drive traffic to the 'new' Miracle Mile Shops at the Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino. On board since 2002 as Aladdin's Desert Passage marketing director, Albert helped oversee a rebranding effort far beyond trading in rustic lamps and desert motifs. Miracle Mile Shops now aim for slicker stylings.

With the new Miracle Mile image fully on display at the entrance to the Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino, Albert has been courting new tenants to the revamped shopping destination. In the past year, the center opened Trader Vic's, Hawaiian Tropic Zone, H&M, Ben Sherman and True Religion (a denim shop), all



first forays for these businesses in the Las Vegas market. "This has really been an exciting transition," she said. "It's a big task ... and our leasing team has done a great job attracting great tenants."

For the past two years, Miracle Mile has posted double-digit monthly traffic increases despite going through a complete renovation and retheming. With the dust settling on the renovation in 2008 and the opening of MGM Mirage's CityCenter across the street in 2009, Albert sees greater opportunities for Miracle Mile in the near future. "We have nowhere to go but up. We have a great new look and roster of tenants. Our location couldn't be better — on the fifty-yard line of the Strip. With CityCenter opening, there's a whole new audience for us," she added.

In the meantime, Albert pays close attention to small, but important details — like helping guide new and existing merchants with marketing efforts. "We meet with every single merchant and help them outline some marketing opportunities," she said. "A lot of people come here and think there are so many people [visitors] coming to town that they are

automatically going to succeed. In other traditional shopping centers, you're competing with other retailers. Here, you're competing with other retailers, the entertainment, dining and gambling. A lot of us are going after the same dollar."

While constantly advertising in tourism-related media, Albert also focuses her team's efforts on educating the tourism industry workforce on the changes and offerings at Miracle Mile in order to help bring added exposure and traffic to the shopping center. "Word of mouth is still the best advertising. Taxi cab drivers, hotel concierges, those are the best salespeople we have," she said.

With some new tenants, like Foot Locker, coming on board, and others sure to follow, Albert doesn't see herself leaving the shopping center industry, which she has been a part of for 16 years, any time soon. "We have a great group of owners who believe in the property, which makes all the difference," she said. "In 2008, I will continue to help make Miracle Mile better than it already is, to finish the renovations this year and bring in more strong tenants, while working with existing merchants to help them succeed."

— By Brian Sodoma



“In 2008, I will return to school to continue my master’s degree. I want to start a community-enrichment program to aid our veterans in obtaining a higher standard for their daily living. I will take a well-earned family vacation.”

## The Engineer

**R**aquel Butler is a problem solver, an organizer and difference maker — for the community she lives in, the company she works for, her church and family. She’s a Woman to Watch, but only if you can catch her: She rarely sits down.

As a network engineer for communications giant EMBARQ, Butler is the primary engineer for the MGM Mirage’s massive CityCenter project on the Las Vegas Strip, working to determine present and future communication needs. She also co-engineered the recent Russell Road relocation project, making room for a new terminal at McCarran International Airport.

Butler also is vice president of EMBARQ’s employee resource group, The Emerald Alliance (TEA), which helps build an employee volunteer base and community presence while coordinating personal and professional development courses. “This year, one of our professional goals is to ensure new membership and strengthen employee awareness of services provided through [the group],” Butler said. TEA recently sponsored the Fill 500 program, providing backpacks filled with back-to-school supplies for local underprivileged children. “Right now, we’re taking all the gently-used binders throughout the company and giving them to the schools as a recycling initiative for EMBARQ and to help teachers and schools,” Butler said. The Emerald Alliance members also mentor students at two local schools, Robert O. Gibson and 100 Academy of Excellence.

Butler also has lofty personal goals for

the new year, including completing her master’s degree in engineering.

Butler, a veteran herself, spent seven years in active duty as a communications cable installer and instructor for the U.S. Army, then worked for seven years as a civil affairs sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserve and as a cable splicer for Sprint. “My role as a CA sergeant was to assist my team leader in the planning and support of civil-military missions. This included coordinating military and civilian resources in the construction of water wells and buildings (schools, clinics and community facilities) that would assist in a community’s sustainment.

Rob McCoy, director of external affairs for EMBARQ, said Butler has “continually broken down perceived barriers for women. She has come up through the ranks at EMBARQ and continues to garner attention and admiration for both her work ethic and her extensive community involvement,” McCoy said.

At Calvary Southern Baptist Church in North Las Vegas, where Butler is active in youth ministry, her goals for 2008 include helping the church. “I will be attending summer camp with my church youth program as well as helping to organize our annual community outreach event, where the church works with the immediate community surrounding it with anything they need — whether that’s enrolling their children in school or [obtaining] food. We act as a liaison with community service organizations,” she said.

— By Deborah Roush



*Raquel Butler*  
Network Engineer,  
EMBARQ

## WE CONGRATULATE RITA BRANDIN

for being named one of Las Vegas’  
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With over 20 years’ experience in real estate development, Rita is directing the development team of Union Park, the 61-acre, mixed-use planned urban community that is reshaping downtown Las Vegas.

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Rita Brandin, Senior Vice President  
and Development Director



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*Maria Marinch*

President,  
Language Sources

## The Bridge Builder

A native of Mexico City, Maria Marinch is sensitive to the cultural differences that can stymie communications. As president of Language Sources, Marinch is dedicated to bridging that culture gap by providing language, diversity outreach, specialty marketing and public relations services. She also strives to impart the importance of Hispanic representation in various fields. Through the translation component of Language Sources, Marinch also works on documents and other materials for government entities that wish to get their message across to individuals who do not speak English.

Previously employed at Brown & Partners, where she worked as an account manager, Marinch had a translational interpretation side business, and founded Language Sources to better meet the growing needs of her client base. "One of the things I am happy we have helped do is bridge the cultural gap and [help eliminate] cultural misunderstandings," Marinch said. "For example, the concept of time is very different in different cultures. Time is very precise and linear in some cultures, and more of a wave pattern in others. If somebody says they'll be there at 10, and they show up at 10:20, you might think 'how rude.' But when you explain that to both cultures it helps relieve a lot of stress when people from different cultures interact. The learning part is very important for me, and to connect people — that gives me great pleasure."

In the fall of 2007, Marinch began working with the Nevada State Democratic Party to encourage Hispanic-Americans to get involved in local and national elections. With Marinch's assistance, the party began a political-outreach campaign urging Hispanics to vote and participate in the election process. "The party wanted to increase participation of minorities at large," said Marinch, an active Democrat. "I knew people from the party and they knew one of our specialties was Hispanic outreach and they had seen some of our work. We helped translate some material and it ... evolved from there. We translated the Web site in Spanish and I was hired as a consultant to help with some Spanish language outreach. We also created an entire campaign to inform Hispanics about the caucus process and to increase participation."

The campaign included print, radio, outdoor and also an informational tri-fold, Marinch said, and she anticipates a positive, tangible outcome in the months ahead. "We've had a good track record with the [Democratic] party and with other clients that have expressed measurable results in regard to increased awareness or participation among Hispanics when they work with us," she said. "Hopefully, this will be the case with the party and we will continue working with them and can continue helping them in getting Hispanics involved and educating them about the process and getting them to participate in the 2008 election."

— By Danielle Birkin

"In 2008, I want to finish my master's degree and start looking into a doctoral program, so that is a personal goal. Professionally, I want to grow the company and grow the PR and marketing and outreach side even more. I also want to create effective campaigns for our clients, satisfy our client's needs beyond their expectations and create new relationships with new clients."

"In 2008, I will finish two novels I have in various stages of writing — one of my passions is writing — and will market a script. From a professional perspective, a key focus will be to become more involved in professional organizations and community nonprofit organizations because it's important to give back."

## The Overseer

As senior vice president and director of development for Newland Communities — a privately-held developer of some 41 master-planned communities — Rita Brandin is at the forefront of one of Las Vegas' most dynamic projects, the 61-acre, \$6 billion Union Park, which is among the most significant components of the city's efforts to revitalize downtown Las Vegas.

Newland was retained by the city to oversee development of Union Park, which will include residential, retail, hospitality, entertainment, civic, medical, office and cultural elements, with Brandin serving as the lead on the massive project. "For the Union Park project, Newland was looking for a development person who has a background of mixed-use and vertical development, because they are more of a horizontal master-planner," said Brandin, who has more than 20 years of experience in real estate asset management and development and previously served as senior vice president of retail development for The Howard Hughes Corp. and vice president and senior development director for The Rouse Co., which was later acquired by General Growth Properties. "Union Park will be a city within a city, and we're trying to really emulate a true downtown urban core — a neighborhood of uses."

Since joining Newland in March 2006, Brandin has seen approval of the master plan, as the project comes off the drawing board and comes to

fruition. Infrastructure will begin in early 2008, and is expected to be completed by the end of the year. Meanwhile, there are additional developers to be secured. "Newland will be developing the residential, but I think there are three additional parcels at Union Park that will be marketed so a key focus in 2008 will be to secure developers for those last three parcels and work through site planning and feasibility with Forest City Live/Work for the casino hotel," she said.

A self-described fixer, doer and problem solver, Brandin — who also oversaw the recent expansion and redevelopment of Fashion Show while with The Rouse Co. — said she regularly reminds her team that they are an integral part of one of the most important projects in the valley, and perhaps even the country. "We have the opportunity to influence the emergence of, in essence, a new urban core for Las Vegas and will contribute a new vibrancy," she said. "When I first met with the mayor, he reminded me that Union Park will be a key part of his legacy, and I love the challenge and all the complexities. I love to think strategically about the decisions you make today and how it will affect the years to come. There's concrete evidence at the end of a project of what you have accomplished, and that's what makes me tick every day."

— By Danielle Birkin



*Rita Brandin*

Senior Vice President and  
Development Director,  
Newland Communities



“It is important to continue to raise community awareness about domestic violence, homeless youth and the hearing impaired, [as well as] other [deserving] groups.”



*Barb Kruger*

Philanthropist

## The Provider

Philanthropy is the name of Barb Kruger's game. She has the hometown advantage and takes her community philanthropic commitments seriously by dedicating her time and passion as a board member to Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, Safe Nest, a domestic violence shelter organization, and Sertoma (Service to Mankind), an organization serving people with hearing disabilities.

Kruger is a woman to watch in 2008. Pivoting in her roles as philanthropist, mother and wife, Kruger's one determined lady who has no intention of dropping the ball in any of one of her roles, thus serving as a community role model as she champions philanthropic causes. “Las Vegas is a generous and caring community with so many people from all over the country who want to make an impact,” Kruger said. “It isn't the norm [in Las Vegas] to just sit back and not participate to better the quality of life for others.”

Not one to sit on the sidelines, Kruger plays an active role to ensure young people are housed and don't sleep on the streets, victims of domestic violence are given a place of refuge and treated with dignity once away from their abuser in addition to making sure that the needs of the hearing impaired are acknowledged and fulfilled.

The only sidelines you'll see her on are at UNLV basketball games where she stands by her man, UNLV head basketball coach, Lon Kruger, whom she has actively recruited to become a philanthropist himself. Together, they make a dynamic team for basketball-related charity events in Las Vegas. “College basketball has opened the door to many opportunities for us,” she said. “We're fortunate to be able to give back to others. It's a good feeling to witness happiness on faces just knowing someone in the community cares.”

As an agent of change, Kruger ushered in 2008 on the heels of opening three condos for homeless youth. Having a place to call home opened the doors for

change in the lives of several young girls who otherwise would have continued to couch surf (sleep on friend's couches), or worse, sleep in alleys in the desert's winter temperatures. In exchange, the youths agreed to attend school, become working members of society along with promising to keep their new living quarters neat and orderly.

Kruger, a mother of two, a basketball player and a med student, is passionate about her teamwork with Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth and Terrible Herbst. She's proud to help offer endangered homeless youth a safe harbor. Open the door to any Terrible's in the valley and chances are you'll see the “Safe Place” sign. Kruger plays a central role in making sure youth in trouble, especially the homeless, understand the sign's meaning.

“Safe Place literally means a place to feel safe without being judged,” Kruger said. “All Terrible Herbst front-line employees are trained to know exactly what to do, from offering words of encouragement or a hot beverage, to knowing whom to call.”

In addition to providing an immediate refuge from harm, Kruger is even prouder to be a part of providing kids with a strategy for survival. After contact with a Herbst employee, a representative from Nevada Partnership extends a hand to help kids learn self-sufficiency. With community assistance, Kruger believes homeless youths can learn to establish boundaries and learn skills that will allow them to achieve their life goals.

“In 2008, I will continue to work toward the philanthropy goals set for the new year and keep achieving goals into the future,” Kruger said. “It is important to continue to raise community awareness about domestic violence, homeless youth and the hearing impaired, [as well as] other [deserving] groups.”

— By Jeannette Green Davies

## CONGRATULATIONS TO BRETT AXELROD AND ALL THE 2008 WOMEN TO WATCH HONOREES.

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*Brett Axelrod*

Partner,  
Lewis and Roca LLP

## The Partner

With all eyes on Southern Nevada's credit crunch and real estate market slowdown, Brett Axelrod's expertise in real estate and bankruptcy law is being called into play more than ever. With many companies facing tightening credit restrictions and unprecedented cash flow problems, these days, Axelrod frequently finds herself in the courtroom seeking innovative ways to ensure positive outcomes and win-wins for those she represents.

Most recently, Axelrod's work has included Chapter 11 debtors' counsel to RM Precision Swiss Inc. and RM Precision Swiss of Nevada Inc.; Chapter 11 debtors' counsel to North American Deed Co.; unsecured creditors committee counsel to Diversified Trust Fund in the USA Capital cases; Chapter 11 debtors' counsel to US Aggregates and its 19 affiliates; counsel to Perfect Commerce, acquirer of substantially all of the assets of Purchase Pro.; and unsecured creditors committee counsel to Stateline Casino. Axelrod is also working with local real estate home developers in out-of-court workouts with debts exceeding \$300 million. Considering the complex nature of Chapter 11 filings and foreclosures valley wide, Axelrod has shown her mettle in the areas of bankruptcy and creditors' rights.

While Axelrod garners kudos for her

recent work, she owns an impressive track record in the legal arena. She managed the bankruptcy department for McDonald Carano before joining Beckley Singleton (which joined with Lewis and Roca in August 2007). While at McDonald Carano, she represented the unsecured creditors committee for the Washington Group International and related cases. She became a partner with Beckley Singleton after being with the firm for just one year.

Axelrod is admitted to practice with the United States District Court for the District of Nevada and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, as well as the Southern, Northern, Eastern and Central Districts of California. She prides herself in achieving exit strategies for her clients that result in shareholders maintaining their full equity stake and creditors being paid in full. She is also dedicated to cultivating and retaining female associates in her firm and to her community contributions. In addition to her professional endeavors, Axelrod is completing a book drive for Room to Read in Nevada, a nonprofit company that builds schools and libraries in third world countries and has a "special emphasis in educating women as a way to change the world."

— By Lisa McQuerrey

"My goals for 2008 include continuing to assist companies in navigating the fallout of the real estate market and providing greater access to legal assistance to entrepreneurs and start-up companies."

"In 2008, I will work with the board to provide important leadership to the State Bar of Nevada on critical issues, such as lawyer advertising. In addition, I intend to run a determined and vigorous campaign to be elected district court judge for Clark County."

## The Litigator

Watch out for local Attorney Nancy Allf in 2008 as she fulfills her role as the State Bar of Nevada's sixth woman president in 80 years. Until July, that is, when she takes on the Clark County judicial system in her run for a six-year term as district court judge for Department 25, handling civil and criminal cases.

Jumping on the judge-campaign wagon is a goal Allf has been working toward for nearly twenty years. As a partner in the firm of Gonzalez, Saggio and Harlan LLP, Allf's cases involve corporate business litigation and creditor representation in banking issues. She has been with this firm since August 2007 and was with Parsons Behle & Latimer prior.

As State Bar of Nevada President, Allf sets agendas and directs the board to carry out its mission to provide education for attorneys and the public. The organization also admits attorneys and offers an attorney referral program. "We want to make certain that all citizens have access to justice" Allf said. "That's extremely important."

Under Allf's direction, the State Bar of Nevada board revamped the rules regarding advertising for attorneys. A change in language was necessary to clarify what ads in "good taste" meant. The rules of the language now state that ads must be void of "false or misleading" information.

With 9,000 State Bar of Nevada attorneys statewide, the organization and Allf have many people to please. Attorneys submit their advertisements to the State Bar of Nevada for review and receive positive and/or negative feedback. "Lawyers are now pleased to have clear wording so that there are no misunderstandings for themselves and especially the public. We strive to

be sure the rules pass muster," Allf said.

To give back to the community, Allf takes on one tough pro bono case each year. Allf says pro bono work is important to the culture of her law firm and is the right thing to do.

Choose Law is a program Allf fosters to encourage and mentor young people to consider law as a worthy profession. Students observe an attorney at work and ask questions to get an up close and personal look at the career first hand.

Allf considers herself a high achiever who sets her sights on her career and personal goals and strives each day to reach them. Reaching judgeship would be Allf's ultimate lifetime goal that would allow her the opportunity to dispense justice in a fair and even-handed manner. "The public needs to see that justice is served each day to make our community a safer place to live and work," Allf said.

Despite who sits in the judge chair, Allf believes in public service for the betterment of the community and encourages judges to deliver a high standard of quality justice, not just turning out numbers of cases.

Besides her passion for justice, this woman to watch, cooks, travels and enjoys a good horse race when she's away from the office or the court room, which isn't often. Like the horses she watches, Allf uses her legal knowledge and training to reach the finish line in all of her cases.

When not litigating, Allf is most likely to be found at her desk, knee-deep in research with a box of chocolates, somewhere nearby. Chocolate is this tough litigator's weakness.

— By Jeannette Green Davies



*Nancy Allf*

President, State Bar of Nevada  
Partner, Gonzalez, Saggio and Harlan





*Dr. Lesley Ann Di Mare*

Provost,  
Nevada State College

“In 2008, I want to get out into the community here and up north to see what Nevadans want their Nevada State College to evolve into.”

## The Educator

Pleased to be a part of Nevada State College, Dr. Lesley Ann Di Mare's fresh ideas and devotion to education transcend her enthusiasm. As a former teacher, Di Mare has come a long way to fill a provost chair at NSC where she'll help the college celebrate its fifth year in 2008.

Di Mare traded one desert for another, along with educational institutions, when she accepted the position of provost at NSC, in July 2007, leaving behind her educational mark on Arizona State University (ASU). As provost for NSC, Di Mare's role is to lead NSC into the 21st century. The nature of her job is to develop degree and certificate programs for the college and monitor each program's progress, from the instructors who teach it, to the students who digest the information. If anyone can do it, Di Mare, a woman to watch, can.

Di Mare is especially passionate about developing a certificate in autism program for primary and secondary educators who attend NSC. Di Mare's passion stems from observing a close friend's child who lives with the challenges of autism every day. While a provost at ASU, Di Mare witnessed her friend's struggle as a parent to find quality education for the child's special needs. Talking with local educators and parents in Nevada, Di Mare now knows that the need for autism education exists here in Nevada too. Her compassion for the disabled was the impetus behind her insistence that NSC have a disability resource center at NSC's two main locations instead of just on the Henderson College Avenue location. Students can now find the same services at NSC's downtown Henderson Water Street location.

Another passionate goal among Di Mare's list for 2008, is to continue working toward promoting the

need for more quality math instructors and opening NSC's doors to students who want to study business but are waiting to get into the University of Nevada, Las Vegas due to an overflow of students. Thrilling, that's how Di Mare describes her job. “What a thrill it is to have the ability to build education,” she said. “My goals are to develop programs that truly do meet the needs of the community.”

Di Mare explains that a state college's primary role, compared to a university, is to teach, provide in-classroom support and outside support, and while some research goes on, research is more on the university level. Writing centers are an important example of the outside support Di Mare emphasizes. Students can access the writing center to complete writing projects and utilize resources available to help them accomplish assignments.

Di Mare plans to tour the state of Nevada to be sure NSC's presence reaches into the northern part of the state as well. With a focus on the south/north divide in Nevada, Di Mare encourages NSC instructors to work with the University of Nevada, Reno and Western Nevada College.

“I love building educational institutes and developing programs that fulfill the dreams of young people and foster them to be good citizens, especially liberal arts programs,” Di Mare said. “It is like untangling a beautiful necklace and bringing it full circle.”

Di Mare is a recent newlywed who tied the knot in Scottsdale, AZ in December 2007 and splits her time between the Arizona and Nevada deserts as she encourages the importance of education wherever she may be.

— By Jeannette Green Davies

“In 2008, I will continue to work my hardest to achieve my personal and business goals. I want to make a positive difference in this community because it's my home – where my roots are. As a female executive, achieving a healthy work/life balance can be quite challenging, but I'm committed to finding the right fit.”

## The Director

In the last year, Gabrielle Sansone, the top female executive at Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Nevada, a Fortune 35 company, consistently exceeded internal goals, out-sold competitors and played a pivotal role in the company's 23 percent membership growth. But she's already forgotten about all that and is looking to 2008's achievements.

Sansone oversees all new sales for large groups (51 or more employees) for Las Vegas and Reno and manages the retention of existing business for small and large groups for the state of Nevada.

In her position, every day is different, Sansone said. “One of the things I really love about my job is that my days are never the same. I interact quite a bit with our internal business units so I can get information my team needs for use in the field.

“I make sales calls, along with my sales representatives, and visit brokers and consultants to keep lines of communications open and keep relationships strong. I work with my account management team to develop strong renewal strategies. And I do quite a bit of traveling across the state,” she said.

A Las Vegas native, she's constantly focused on doing her part to make Anthem the state's best health insurance provider. “Anthem is known in Nevada as a company with a highly attractive product portfolio, broad provider networks and national bench strength. But that in and of itself is not going to win sales,” she said. “I continue to try to surpass my benchmarks by understanding everything possible about the strengths

and weaknesses of our competitors, continuing to strengthen broker relations and aggressively sharing Anthem's superior value propositions with employers,” she said.

Anthem, Sansone said, is committed to becoming increasingly more visible in the community in 2008. “A key part of our mission is to improve the health of our communities,” she added.

To that end, Sansone said she is considering several nonprofit board opportunities that will help her grow professionally while providing direction to Anthem's charitable giving. “I will also continue to seek out and get to know ‘movers and shakers’ in the business world. We all know this is a key to success in this town.

“Lastly, I'm going to be educating Nevada brokers and employers on some of our exciting new products and programs including a new industry-leading ‘transparency’ tool we'll be launching in early 2008. This tool, called Anthem Care Comparison, will help members become smarter, more informed purchasers of health care,” she said.

Sansone admitted she is often labeled a fireball. “Everyone who meets me seems to have that perception, so I'm thinking it just might be true. I just never stop. I keep going and have a lot of drive and energy. I also have very short legs, so I guess I just walk faster than everyone else,” she said with a laugh. “I also love a challenge, so I challenge myself and my staff to always strive to be bigger and better,” she added.

— By Deborah Roush



*Gabrielle Sansone*

Director of sales for large group  
and account management  
for small and large group,  
Anthem Blue Cross and  
Blue Shield in Nevada



“In 2008, I will do what I can to make everyone — employees, clients and the company — more successful and happy, and be a better person to my family and friends.”

## The Devoted

**L**ynn Donner has big plans for 2008 for herself, the company where she has worked for almost three decades and her favorite football team — the Green Bay Packers.

A native of Wisconsin, Donner has a Christmas gift — a life-sized photo of Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre — pinned to her office wall. “He stays until we win the Super Bowl,” she joked.

But Donner, regional vice president for First American Title Insurance Co. and president of its Nevada division, is serious when she discusses what it will take to guide the company — and the more than 200 employees in multiple offices under her watch — through another tumultuous year in the real estate industry.

“In 2007 from 2006 our orders were down 40 to 50 percent,” she said. “We expect for 2008 it’s probably going to go down a little bit yet, though not a whole lot more,” she predicted.

But First American Title was prepared for the decline, Donner said.

“We started planning a year and a half ago; we could see this coming. In August, 2006, we decided that when people would leave we would not replace them,” she added.

This year, she said, will be spent catching up on important training and education.

“We’ve been so busy in the last several years and people were put into positions quickly. Now we have time so (employees) can be pulled out of their offices for an hour or two. In the last several years we’ve been too busy to do that,” she said.

“We have a lot of classes planned for the first six months of this year. They’ll cover the basics of title and escrow and technology,” she said.

Donner said she, too, plans to take advantage of the

training.

“Our technology, our transaction closing platform, is years ahead of our competition. We’re only using a small portion of it. We will expand that and get people trained and versed on all the systems it has. That includes me,” she said.

Donner has been with First American Title Co. since 1979 when she took a job as a file clerk. Since then, she has worked her way up — through positions including high liability and commercial escrow officer, escrow branch manager and escrow supervisor.

She credits her loyalty and work ethic to her Midwestern roots.

“I guess it was being raised on a farm. I learned you have a responsibility. You stick by things,” she said.

“And working for a company is a relationship. Every relationship has good times and bad times, and just because one thing might go wrong or somebody else offers you something better, you can’t just jump ship,” she said.

“My success is because of First American and their support of me,” Donner added.

“If I need help with anything, there’s someone to answer my questions. I can call the president or chairman of the board. We have wonderful support system. They are there if we need them but aren’t looking over your shoulder telling you what to do,” she said.

On the personal front, Donner hopes 2008 will provide a little time for traveling. “I snow ski and haven’t done that this season, and I go to a Packers game in Green Bay every year.

“There’s nothing like being at a game at Lambeau Field,” she said.

– By Deborah Roush



*Lynn Donner*

Regional Vice President,  
President of Nevada Region,  
First American Title Insurance Co.



*Susan E. Houck*

Vice President of Marketing,  
General Growth Properties

## The Visionary

**A**s vice president of marketing for General Growth Properties, the country’s second largest shopping center owner, manager and developer, Susan Houck has her finger on the pulse of the Southern Nevada retail industry.

She oversees all marketing efforts for nearly 4.5 million square feet of retail space in the valley, including Boulevard and Meadows malls, Fashion Show and The Grand Canal Shoppes at The Venetian. Houck’s myriad responsibilities include advertising, public relations, strategic planning, community relations, and travel and tourism outreach.

Houck also oversees the marketing for Las Vegas’ newest destination luxury retail center, The Shoppes at The Palazzo, which is slated to open this month, in addition to Summerlin Center, which will open in 2009, and the retail component of Echelon, which will be completed in 2010. As these projects come to fruition, Houck is poised to oversee 7 million square feet of retail space in Las Vegas.

“I feel like a kid in a candy store,” said Houck, who considers South Carolina her home state but moved to Las Vegas in 2000. “The year is starting off great with the opening of The Shoppes at The Palazzo, as General Growth’s portfolio continues to expand. The relationships I get to establish with the new powerhouse retailers are of a completely different dimension than I have ever had the opportunity to work with in

my 20-plus years. These are very high-end luxury retailers that are first to the market. They have great marketing teams, so to working with that caliber of marketing and retail has been great.”

With Palazzo set to open, Houck, who enjoyed a 20-year career with The Rouse Co. before it was acquired by General Growth, will focus her efforts in the coming year on the 1.6 million-square-foot Summerlin Center and the 300,000-square-foot retail component of Echelon.

“General Growth has great expansion plans in the city, so I will be busy for awhile—fortunately I don’t need a lot of sleep,” said Houck, who added that Southern Nevada has emerged as a formidable retail mecca. “I think Las Vegas is becoming the world’s destination for shopping. Who would ever imagine there would be two Tiffany’s across the street from each other and five Louis Vuittons within a mile? We used to say we competed with New York, but it’s really the whole world.”

In order to maintain a fresh professional approach, Houck strives to learn something new every day, which she said makes her job more enjoyable. Not that she’s complaining. “I admit I do like my work, and to be honest, I am not an Internet shopper — I am the opposite,” she said. “I like to smell it, touch it, feel it, put it on and take it off. For me, shopping is entertainment, and Las Vegas has some of the best retail.”

– By Danielle Birkin

“In 2008, I want to travel more and spend more time with nieces and nephews. Professionally, my goal is to continue to grow my people because they’re my greatest resource, and also just to enjoy all that I learn from my experiences in the development and leasing of our new projects.”



“In 2008 I will stay involved and active with health policy — with issues such as access to health care, funding for nursing education, among others. I like to stay on top of those things and what’s happening in the industry.”

## The Administrator

**D**ebra Toney is the picture of stability in an ever-changing health care environment. After joining Rainbow Medical Centers 17 years ago, when the independently-owned operation had only one location, Toney has worked her way up from a nursing position to her current chief administrative officer role for Rainbow’s, now, six medical centers and one outpatient diagnostic center. “I don’t like hopping around too much,” Toney said about sticking with one employer for so long.

The executive of the only independently-owned JCAHO (Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) accredited urgent and family care facility group in the state is candid about current health care issues, such as the

ever-present nursing shortage and steady increases in the number of uninsured. She sees her future, while still overseeing Rainbow’s operations, as one that focuses more on advancing better health care policy. “I think we’re all trying to find the happy medium where we can afford to provide the services and the patients have the type of services they need,” she said.

Toney is the current president of the National Black Nurses Association, and also the head of the Las Vegas chapter of the office of minority health, housed under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services division. She is also a Robert Wood Johnson executive nurse fellow, and sees these roles that she has taken on in the past two years as opportunities to have a hand in making positive strides for health care on a state and national level. “A lot of these positions I’ve been appointed to were personal goals I had set for myself. ... Now it’s a matter of getting settled into those positions to be able to help do the things that need to be done,” she said.

The coming year will also bring some changes for Rainbow Medical. Toney will

oversee the move of the company’s current Rampart Road location to a larger nearby building. The nurse executive is also the owner of TLC Health Care Services, a licensed home health agency, specializing in private duty nursing and supportive care services. The 10-year-old company currently employs 30 caregivers. But Toney is in no hurry to expand the operation.

“The market here has really increased for this type of service. Everybody wants to stay in their home as long as possible. [But] I’ve really kept (TLC) to a medium-sized company. I never wanted it to be a huge multi-location operation simply because of the amount of time it takes to go into people’s homes and finding quality staff. I’m really satisfied with [the current size of] that operation,” she said.

While helping Rainbow grow as well as run her own business and also getting involved with health care policy initiatives, Toney still finds time to interact with patients. “It’s always been the most rewarding part of what I do,” she said.

– By Brian Sodoma



*Debra Toney*

Chief Administrative Officer,  
Rainbow Medical Centers



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- Matilda Joslyn Gage



The MGM MIRAGE® family congratulates our friend and colleague Debra Nelson on her selection as a 2008 Woman to Watch by IN BUSINESS Las Vegas. Well Done!

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