



**Sonali Allen** is the Compliance and Community Development Officer for Mercantile Bank of Michigan. In this role, she is responsible for the Bank's compliance with regulatory requirements as well as developing and implementing community economic development programs. Her previous professional experience includes business development, sales management and employee performance development. Sonali's current community involvement includes serving on the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity of Kent County and the Education Investment Council for the Heart of West Michigan United Way.

**Recommended reading list:** "Who Moved my Cheese" by Spencer Johnson M.D.



**Tom Almonte** is the Assistant City Manager for the City of Grand Rapids and serves on the Operations Committee of the Grand Rapids-Kent County Convention/Arena Authority (CAA). He has served on various boards and committees including past President of the West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (WMHCC). During Tom's tenure the Chamber reached two significant milestones, including the hiring of a full-time Executive Director and the establishment of a 501 (c) (3) economic development arm.

**Recommended reading list:** "Emotional Intelligence" by Daniel Goleman; "The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork" by John Maxwell and "Blue Ocean Strategy" by W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne.



**Dr. Damon Arnold** is the Director of the Laker Academic Center (Grand Valley State University) and a highly successful personal coach, mentor and motivational speaker. For the last ten years, he has inspired and empowered teams, companies, organizations and individuals to utilize their greatness within. Dr. D.F. Arnold understands how to motivate others to achieve their dreams and his message is simple "It's not how you start, but how you finish that counts."

**Recommended reading list:** "Who Moved my Cheese" by Spencer Johnson M.D.; "Rich Dad, Poor Dad: What the Rich Teach Their Kids About Money That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not!" by Robert Kiyosaki and Sharon Lechter and "It's not a Secret, It's Just life" by Damon Arnold.



**Brenda Brame** is the Program Manager for the Kent County Tax Credit Coalition (KCTCC). In this role, she develops free Volunteer Income Tax Assistant Sites, recruits and ensures the training/certification of volunteers, as well as raise public awareness of the free services. Through the efforts of Brenda, the Kent County Tax Credit Coalition, and the volunteers, this project has generated more than \$40 million dollars in refunds and credits and served more than 34,000 taxpayers. Whether advocating for senior citizens, increasing social service awareness or bridging the gap between economic classes, Brenda is on a mission to improve the quality of life in our communities.

**Recommended reading list:** Anything by Dr. Maya Angelo and Victoria Christopher Murray.



**Mary J. Brown** is the Principal Consultant and Future Strategist & Creative Prospector for leeAlexander Consulting, LLC. Her work focuses on helping organizations develop and apply creative solutions to present day challenges including prospecting, developing and nurturing their talent. Since 1996 she has been an adjunct instructor at Grand Rapids Community College workforce development and psychology departments. Her passions focus on individual, organizational and community development; future studies, technology, design and innovation.

**Recommended reading list:** “Think and Grow Rich” by Napoleon Hill; The Personal Touch: What You Really Need to Succeed In Today's Fast Paced Business World” by Terrie Williams and “Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery” by Bell Hooks.



**Dr. Steeve Buckridge** is the Director of Area Studies programs at Grand Valley State University. He is also an Associate Professor of African and Caribbean History, and Associate faculty member in African/African American Studies. He has published and lectured widely on dress in the Caribbean. His areas of interests are Pre-Colonial and Colonial Africa, Slavery and early Colonial Caribbean, Gender and Sexuality, and Material Culture. His current research examines the African production of bark-cloth and plant textiles in Cuba, Jamaica and Haiti.

**Recommended reading list:** “The Art of Happiness at Work” by the Dalai Lama; “Love Someone Today” by Delilah and Part of My Soul Went with Him” by Winnie Mandela.



**Gary Cochrane** is the Financial Manager of Credit at Herman Miller, Inc. In this role, Gary is responsible for the collection of receivables from the company’s clients. Gary also has responsibility for customer risk assessment, setting credit limits, reporting results to management and managing a team of analysts. Gary began his professional career at Comerica Bank, where he served as a Commercial Credit analyst. Gary also worked in a similar capacity at Fifth Third Bank.

**Recommended reading list:** “Credit Management, Principles and Practices” by Dr. Charles L. Gahala, CCE, CICP; “The Five Dysfunctions of a Team” by Patrick Lencioni; “The Inclusion Paradox” by Andres T. Tapia and anything by Dan Brown, author of “The DaVinci Code”.



**Joy Fossel** is the Diversity and Inclusion Counsel at Varnum, LLP where she coordinates the firm’s external diversity scholarships, internships, internal diversity committee, community initiatives and donations. Prior to spearheading the firm's diversity and inclusion efforts, Fossel focused her practice on business and commercial litigation. Joy continues to lead the firm in providing pro bono services. Joy is very active in the West Michigan community and has been involved in numerous non-profit organizations and causes. She is also an adjunct professor for pretrial skills at Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

**Recommended reading list:** “Good to Great”; West Michigan Business Journal and MiBiz.com.

**James Hopewell** is currently the Associate General Counsel of Herman Miller, Inc. He provides day-to-day expertise on a variety of legal issues including intellectual property, human resources, acquisition activities and commercial contracts. James provides legal services for the company as well as domestic and international subsidiaries. Additionally, James has significant in-house corporate experience serving as Corporate Counsel to Steelcase Inc. and Senior Counsel to Meijer, Inc.

**Recommended reading list:** “What the Dog Saw: And Other Adventures” by Malcolm Gladwell; “Freefall: America, Free Markets and the Sinking of the World Economy” by Joseph E. Stiglitz and “SuperFreakonomics: Global Cooling, Patriotic Prostitutes and Why Suicide Bombers Should Buy Life Insurance” by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner.



**David Luna** currently serves as the Vice President for Multicultural Affairs for Saint Mary's Health Care. He is seasoned executive and consultant with extensive experience in cultural competence, diversity, leadership development, organizational change and strategic planning. His accomplishments range from designing and implementing an innovative program to develop, retain and attract diverse healthcare talent; to catalyzing a nonprofit that generated \$600 million in new low-income housing subsidies; to guiding a Fortune 200 corporation in a rapid approach to “best in class” diversity rankings.

**Recommended reading list:** “Leadership without Easy Answers” by Ron Heifetz, “Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading” by Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky and “The Practice of Adaptive Leadership” by Heifetz, Linsky and Alex Grashow.



**Richard Ortega** is the President of Alternative Mechanical, a successful mechanical contractor. He started the business in 2004 with his business partner, Kevin Fahl, and Kevin's truck. Over the last seven years, they have grown the business to 35 employees and more than \$5 million in sales. They have received numerous letters of referral for excellent performance on numerous high profile jobs. His minority owned business provides jobs, teaches skills and provides opportunities to workers giving them a chance to earn a sustainable living.

**Recommended reading list:** “Who Moved My Cheese” by Dr. Spencer Johnson; “Juggling Elephants” by Jones Loflin and Todd Musig and “Good To Great” by Jim Collins.



**LeMark Payne** is the Director of Inclusion and Diversity for Spectrum Health. He joined Spectrum Health in February 2011 and is responsible for developing and leading strategic initiatives that support Spectrum Health's commitment to creating an inclusive work environment. His efforts support the development of highly engaged employees in an environment where differences are leveraged to generate innovative ideas.

**Recommended reading list:** “The Inclusion Paradox” by Andres Tapia; “What Got You Here Won't Get You There” by Marshall Goldsmith; “Strengths Finder 2.0” by Tom Rath; “Go Put your Strengths To Work” by Marcus Buckingham and “Becoming The Evidence Based Manager” by Gary P Latham.



**Tina Pietrangelo** is the Human Resources Director at Padnos Iron & Metal Co. where she has worked since 2004. She was the first in her family to pursue higher education and received her Bachelor's degree at Davenport University while balancing family, work and school. Prior to Padnos Iron & Metal Co., Tina joined Johnson Controls Automotive Division (formerly Prince Corporation) in 1994 as an hourly production worker. She worked hard and received many promotional opportunities as a line leader and team leader.

**Recommended reading list:** "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership" and "Developing the Leader Within" by John C. Maxwell and "What Got You Here Won't Get You There...How Successful People Become Even More Successful" by Marshall Goldsmith.



**Faye Richardson-Green** is the Director of Global Learning and Development for Steelcase Inc. She and her team define and globally implement the vision and strategy for organizational and individual performance-based learning solutions. She has more than 25 years of leadership experience with the company giving her unique opportunities to influence Steelcase's culture and processes. Richardson-Green has been with the learning and development group, also known as Steelcase University, since April 2003.

**Recommended reading list:** "The Design of Business" by Roger Martin; "Great Work, Great Career" by Stephen R. Covey and Jennifer Colosimo; "The Last Lecture" by Randy Pausch.



**Diana R. Sieger** is the President of the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, a position she has held for 24 years. In her role, Diana is responsible for the leadership, management, strategic planning and development of this dynamic community foundation. Some professional and community activities include: Council on Foundations, Board of Directors and Executive Committee, Board of the Office of Foundation Liaison, Governor's Office - State of Michigan, Council of Michigan Foundations, former board chair and member of various committees and numerous other committees and projects.

**Recommended reading list:** "Leap of Reason: Managing to Outcomes in an Era of Scarcity" by Mario Morino; "Creating Philanthropic Capital Markets: The Deliberate Evaluation" by Lucy Bernholz.