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# 50

## MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE IN ORLANDO

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**T**hey are the people who make things happen in Orlando—political leaders, university presidents, community activists, business owners, legal minds, philanthropists. They are movers and shakers, who also possess the power to move and inspire others.

The people on our 10th annual 50 Most Powerful list also have interesting backgrounds. This year you'll find extended features on six of them and how they got to where they are. We've also identified 12 individuals not yet on the list who nonetheless bear watching in the coming year.

If there's anything that should be said about power, it's this: More often than not, the people who possess it aren't afraid to take chances, to work for change. As attorney John Morgan, No. 4 on our list, put it: "I don't walk down the middle of the road. There you only find yellow stripes and dead armadillos."

BY BARRY GLENN  
PHOTOS BY ROBERTO GONZALEZ



BUDDY DYER

1

**1 Buddy Dyer**  
**Mayor of Orlando**  
**Age: 54**

Buddy Dyer's strength lies in his ability to literally change the face of Orlando, and that's why the Democratic mayor, first elected in 2003, tops our 2013 Most Powerful list.

"It's about being able to create a vision and bring a lot of people into it, then move forward," Dyer says. Certainly, a lot of projects he has championed are moving forward these days—the performing arts center, SunRail, Creative Village, the renovation of the Citrus Bowl, a \$100 million sports and entertainment complex across from Amway Center, and the likelihood that Orlando will get a Major League Soccer team and a new stadium to go along with it.

Dyer says he prizes a "culture of collaboration" fostered among city, county, state and federal governments, business people, educational institutions and philanthropists on the various efforts. That collaboration has been evident in the past year as relations between the city and Orange County have become less fractious, resulting in agreement on the Citrus Bowl project and more funding for the performing arts center.

That Dyer would push for a pro soccer team here has puzzled some observers—isn't this college football country, after all? While the mayor is confident that residents would support a pro team the way they have backed the current Orlando City Soccer

squad, he's also thinking in terms of marrying the world's largest tourist destination with the world's most popular sport. With Brazilian multimillionaire Flavio Augusto da Silva, a local resident, as a big investor in the team, a tourism/soccer bridge could be established between South America and Orlando, Dyer says.

Thinking outside the box with proposals like pro soccer or Creative Village, the high-tech business-residential mecca that would be a metropolis in itself, goes along with Dyer's vision of having the kind of city that will draw a creative class—"talented young entrepreneurs who are going to come up with the next innovation in emerging media or medical science or things of that nature."

There was much talk about Dyer running for governor next year, and he acknowledges that many encouraged him to do so. But he used his State of the City speech to quash the rumors. For certain, there is unfinished business—including addressing the changing face of homelessness brought on by the 2008 recession, and the revitalization of the Parramore area, where some residents are worrying about the effort turning into a gentrification project.

So will Dyer run for a fourth term in 2016? "I've got two and a half years to think about that," he says, smiling.

Then he adds, with a serious tone: "I have not stopped enjoying this job, I can say that. Every day I get up and it's fun to come to work."





## 2013 50 MOST POWERFUL



### **2 Teresa Jacobs** **Mayor of Orange County** **Age: 56**

Like Buddy Dyer, Teresa Jacobs has made it a goal to draw the best and the brightest to Central Florida. She delivered in April by releasing another \$25 million in county money to go toward building the third and final hall of the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, for the ballet and symphony. How big was that? Former Orlando Mayor Bill Frederick told the *Orlando Sentinel*: “If this gift had not been forthcoming...this phase would not have been completed in my lifetime.”

Yet, part of the reason Jacobs steered that money toward DPAC is in keeping with the perception that she is a champion of the people, and therefore the guardian of their money. Construction of the rest of the center is well underway, so to have waited to build that third hall would have added greatly to the total cost—not a wise use of funds in her view.

For now, the Republican mayor is pushing a county branding initiative so that more people and businesses want to move here. She’s also optimistic about a pro soccer team and stadium—although it’s obvious she wants to see more private money in play.



TERESA  
JACOBS

2

Some see Jacobs as vulnerable in her re-election bid next year—primarily because of the county commission’s blocking of a paid sick-time referendum (Jacobs actually voted to allow the measure before voters), along with a related text-messaging controversy. It would be unwise, however, to underestimate her power: She held a 63 percent favorable rating among voters in a recent local poll. Her campaign slogan: “Smart. Tough. Making a Difference.”

“No question about it,” she says. “I’m a stickler for details.”

2013  
**50 MOST  
POWERFUL**

3



JOHN  
HITT



CRAIG  
USTLER

**3 John Hitt**  
**President, University of**  
**Central Florida**  
**Age: 72**

The man is approaching legendary status: Hitt has been at the helm of UCF for 21 years, nearly half of the school's life. UCF is the country's second largest university and continues to draw tons of research money: In April, it received a \$55 million

grant from NASA to build and launch an upper-atmosphere imaging instrument. Hitt's formula for success includes laying out a clear vision and goals, then using a talented supporting cast of VPs and others to help achieve them. That excellence extends to the UCF police department, whose quickness in responding to a 911 call in March likely prevented a campus massacre

by a former student. The challenge ahead for UCF, which has nearly 60,000 students, may be to not grow too fast: The university has one of the country's highest teacher-student ratios.

**4 John Morgan**  
**Attorney, Businessman,**  
**Philanthropist**  
**Age: 57**

(See profile, page 40)

**5 Bill Nelson**  
**U.S. Senator**  
**Age: 70**

It's a question that won't go away: Will Nelson run for governor? The senator, who has a home in Baldwin Park, has said repeatedly that he has no intention of doing so. And why should he? Starting a third term, he has built up seniority in the Senate, currently chairing a Special Committee on Aging, as well as serving on the Budget, Armed Services, Commerce, and Finance committees. Yet Nelson laments the extreme partisanship on the Hill, so if party leaders called on him to go up against Gov. Rick Scott, it might be difficult to say no. Can we get Vegas odds on this, please?





## GEORGE KALOGRIDIS

### **6 Craig Ustler** **President and Owner,** **Ustler Development Inc.** **Age: 44**

The Orlando native is the thinking man's developer, believing that people and a sense of community, not buildings, create urban renewal. And there's a lot to think about: mainly Creative Village, the 68-acre digital mecca of business, educa-

tion and living space that is poised to change the face of downtown over the next 15 years. Ustler's team is busy putting transit and infrastructure components for the project into place. They're also working on a five-story urban apartment community at Florida Hospital Health Village, targeted at the hospital workforce. The first of the 248 units are projected to open

later this year, with a SunRail stop to follow.

### **7 George Kalogridis** **President, Walt Disney** **World Resort** **Age: 59**

He started his career with The Mouse four decades ago as a busboy at Disney's Contemporary Resort. Now Kalogridis is in charge of all of Walt Disney World, which at 67,000 cast

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## JOHN MORGAN & MARK NEJAME

# EVERYTHING'S COMING UP ROSES

By Jim Leusner

Orlando attorneys John Morgan (right) and Mark NeJame (left) are at the top of their games. Both have successful law practices, are regulars on TV news shows, and are involved in political fundraising, local philanthropy and business ventures.

Not bad for two University of Florida frat brothers who met in 1974, stayed friends despite a battle over selling plants (more on that later), and partnered in two local nightclub ventures. For 39 years, the two have referred cases to each other. Morgan's firm even represents NeJame's mother in ongoing tobacco company litigation.

Morgan is the king of lawyer advertising with his signature "For The People" credo. His Morgan & Morgan law firm

reaches from Florida to New York with 239 lawyers. His business ventures include hotels, a carnival company and the WonderWorks interactive tourist attraction chain. Along with wife Ultima, he has donated millions to charity, including \$2 million to Second Harvest Food Bank. One of the Orlando area's most well-connected power brokers, Morgan is also leading a drive to legalize medical marijuana in Florida.

NeJame, a longtime criminal defense attorney who has branched out as a TV legal analyst on the Casey Anthony and George Zimmerman murder cases, has expanded his 16-attorney law firm to include a civil and commercial business practice. He is working on a venture with former

Disney executive Al Weiss to help consumers refinance mortgages. NeJame and his wife, Josie, also are the driving force behind Runway To Hope, a children's cancer charity that raised a whopping \$700,000 at its recent annual gala.

NeJame, 58, grew up in College Park. Morgan, 57, relocated from Kentucky to Winter Park in 1971 as a 9th grader. Both headed to Gainesville for college in 1972 and 1974.

"We have spent many hours psychoanalyzing ourselves and each other," Morgan says.

They discovered remarkably similar, humble beginnings. Both dealt with absentee fathers and family alcoholism. Both worked newspaper routes as kids;



bagged groceries at Winn-Dixie; and became entrepreneurs at an early age. Both also made a point of standing up to school bullies.

In Orlando, NeJame delivered the *Sentinel Star* (now the *Orlando Sentinel*), earning 3 cents on each 10-cent sale. One month, he earned \$100 and said he had the largest paper route in Orlando.

Morgan delivered the *Lexington Herald-Leader*. "If people didn't pay me, I'd egg their house in the morning," he says matter-of-factly. "That happened a couple of times."

Those experiences helped forge their sometimes-loved, sometimes-hated personas: the tenacious criminal defense attorney and personal injury lawyer eager to take on insurance companies.

"I always had a burning desire to help the underdog," NeJame says.

Morgan decided to become a personal injury lawyer after his brother, Tim, was paralyzed in a lifeguard accident in 1975.

The two met at the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity at the University of Florida. NeJame was a longhaired, 5-foot-4 junior in platform shoes who dressed like every day was *Saturday Night Fever*. Morgan was a preppy type with khakis, white shirts and sweaters. But both considered themselves working-class students in a frat filled with rich kids. NeJame was a junior and Morgan was a freshman who saw him as friendly to pledges. But their friendship was put to the test in 1975.

NeJame had started a successful plant business in high school, selling and shipping ferns. Eventually, he opened a store in Gainesville, The Plant Parlor, and flew to Tallahassee on weekends to sell and rent plants to business clients. Then Morgan arrived at UF, and his girlfriend, a former Miss Apopka whose family was in the nursery business, encouraged him to sell plants, too.

The week before school started was a busy one. Students were buying furnishings for their rooms, including plants. Morgan staked out three corners next to NeJame's store and sold plants out of trucks. Furious, NeJame called police and asked them to check on whether Morgan had a business license.

"I go to the U-Haul and pull out the peddler's permit," Morgan says. "I think I held up a wad of cash at Mark."

The next day, NeJame emptied out his store and staked out the same corners. "I said, 'All right, two can play at this game,'" NeJame recalls. "And he called the authorities on me and I didn't have a peddler's permit. So I had to go back to the store."

Morgan continued his one-week-a-year plant sale throughout college and law school at 20 Southeastern schools, earning \$17,000 in his final year.

Though the plant war tested their friendship, both roar with laughter while reliving their careers over cigars in downtown Orlando. But the rivalry taught them valuable business lessons.

"Get the damned peddler's permit," NeJame laughs.

"Preparation. Preparation. Preparation," Morgan says with a smile.

"And if you're going to shoot at the king," NeJame says, "you better damn well kill him."

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## TO WATCH

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These leaders are also making a mark in our community.

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**George Aguel** – The former Disney exec heads Visit Orlando, the area's tourism bureau, as the number of visitors continues to set records.

**John Burden** – The 37-year-old is CEO of one of the area's fastest-growing community banks, Old Florida National.

**Val Demings** – The former Orlando police chief may challenge incumbent Teresa Jacobs next year for the county mayor's post.

**Maritza Martinez** – The associate VP and director of community relations at UCF is a rising star, having chaired both the Hispanic and Winter Park chambers of commerce.

**Timothy McKinney** – He and his United Global Outreach have brought a school and other improvements to the impoverished east Orange community of Bithlo.

**Harold Mills** – As CEO of ZeroChaos, a staff services firm, he heads up one of the largest African American-owned businesses in the country, and he has President Obama's ear.

**Stephanie Porta** – An outspoken proponent of mandatory sick time in Orange County, the Organize Now activist continues to battle big business.

**Kathy Ramsberger** – The president of the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts will increasingly be in the spotlight as the dazzling venue prepares to open late next year.

**Thad Seymour Jr.** – Lake Nona's VP of Health and Life Sciences oversees strategic planning and business development for the burgeoning Medical City complex.

**Darren Soto** – The 35-year-old state senator from Orlando is an up-and-coming Democrat and has a reputation for across-the-aisle cooperation.

**David Uth** – The pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando has taken a leadership role in the fights against human trafficking and homelessness.

**Carol Wick** – The head of Harbor House of Central Florida provides a safe haven for battered women and serves on a special county commission on domestic violence.

2013  
**50 MOST  
POWERFUL**



LARS  
**HOUMANN**

8



ALEX  
**MARTINS**

9

**8 Lars Houmann**  
**President and CEO,**  
**Florida Hospital**  
**Age: 55**

Houmann is at the forefront of the 23-hospital chain's eye-popping growth, with the Orlando campus about to be transformed by the addition of housing targeted at employees, and the accompanying SunRail stop. The hospital added a children's bone marrow transplant center last fall, a \$55 million bioresearch center is in the works, and its Florida Hospital Medical Group continues to grow (more than 300 doctors in 120 offices). Houmann is a big player outside the hospital too: He is chairman of the Florida Chamber of Commerce and heads up bioOrlando, a group that works to build momentum in the life sciences sector of the local economy.

**9 Alex Martins**  
**CEO, Orlando Magic**  
**Age: 49**

The Dwight Howard saga was a no-win situation. Or so we thought. Although many fans lit into Martins and Magic GM

members is the area's largest private employer. He says getting news of his appointment in January was "a true pinch-me-am-I-dreaming moment." And why not? It's all good right now, with theme park attendance up—the Magic Kingdom set a one-day attendance record around Easter—and the New Fantasyland and Art of Animation Resort packing them

in. Next up is the conversion of Downtown Disney into the livelier Disney Springs, and the launch of the My Magic+ vacation-planning system, complete with high-tech wristband. Expect Kalogridis to be as involved as predecessor Meg Crofton on various boards and in funneling Disney donations of cash and volunteers into the community.





ANDY  
GARDINER

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Rob Hennigan for trading Howard, the self-absorbed center proved to be a big problem child in L.A. And the Magic actually got some promising prospects out of the deal. Now, after a season in which the team owned the NBA's worst record, the Magic are rebuilding with the draft. In a letter to season ticket-holders, Martins emphasized the importance of "maintaining

a long-term vision." Another vision: a proposed Magic-led \$100 million sports and entertainment complex across from Amway Center. As if all of this weren't a full-time job, Martins continues to immerse himself in Orlando's business and philanthropic community, serving on numerous boards ranging from the Coalition for the Homeless to the performing arts center.

**10 John Mica**  
**U.S. Representative**  
**Age: 70**

As one local political observer put it: "This guy has transportation in his veins." That the SunRail commuter train will be up and running next year is due in large part to the power that Mica has wielded with transportation projects. These days the Winter Park Republican, elected last year

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DEBORAH  
GERMAN

## A HEAD AND HEART FOR MEDICINE

By Susan Jenks



Inside her spacious, book-lined office, Dr. Deborah German makes one concession to whimsy—a metallic lime-green frog perched on the edge of her desk. But, within minutes of meeting the founding dean of the University of Central Florida’s medical school, it’s clear she’s far too busy to expend much energy on anything quaint or frivolous.

Warm, yet intense, German, 62, has spent the past seven years building from scratch the new UCF medical school and turning it, she hopes, into a top-tier academic choice on par with Harvard, where she earned her own medical degree on a full scholarship in the 1970s. With the graduation of UCF’s charter class on May 17, it seems she’s well on her way toward meeting that goal.

All but one of the 36 students who graduated have been accepted into residencies across the country. While they’re encouraged to come back to Florida to practice medicine, she says, even if they go elsewhere, they’ll help spread UCF’s reputation. “Excellence attracts excellence,” says German who helped raise more than \$6 million—\$160,000 per student—so that the inaugural class could graduate debt-free. “By attracting this type of quality” from 4,000 applicants for just 41 slots, she says, “we created the environment we wanted to have.”

Although tuition is no longer free, the incoming class in the fall will be nearly four times the original size, all with the same head and heart for medicine that German views as one of the school’s core values. During orientation, she underscores what she means in her annual “good doctor” talk. She asks incoming students to envision the person they love most as ill and waiting for medical

care. Invariably, the students list the qualities they look for in a treating physician as kindness, skill and compassion, she says, so she tells them, “your job is to become this physician. This is the task ahead.”

A second generation Italian-American who grew up in a working class family near Providence, Rhode Island, German isn’t quite sure how she came to medicine, but she always knew she wanted to help others, to make a difference. She also suggests with a laugh how the “wires got crossed” in her brain at a young age, engendering in her a love of work, not play. She still loves washing her car by hand, she says.

Even so, increasing career demands over the years created struggles and guilt as she juggled family and work. Her two children always came first, German says, but finding time to exercise proved difficult until she decided to train as an aerobics instructor, then took her preschoolers along to Duke, where she taught low-impact aerobics. At the time, she also ran the Duke gout clinic as its director and worked as an associate dean of medical education. “My kids knew all the routines,” she says. “They danced at the back of the class. But I always wondered if I was doing the right thing.”

The answer came about a decade ago when her youngest daughter, Julia, home from college, began rummaging through old music tapes. Suddenly, loud music blared from upstairs, German says, and when she went to investigate, there was Julia “with this big smile on her face, playing the old aerobics tapes and saying we should dance together again.”



# 2013 50 MOST POWERFUL

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TOM  
WILLIAMS

to an 11th term, is using his influence to push for money for the massive Interstate 4 revamp and development of a rail hub at Orlando International Airport. He is a major Transportation Security Administration critic and has vowed to replace agency airport screeners with private contractors. Mica also is a big backer of the local simulation industry and considers finishing the stalled Veterans Hospital at Medical City a priority.

**11 Andy Gardiner**  
**State Senator**  
**Age: 44**

The soft-spoken Republican has served in the state Legislature—as either a representative or senator—for 13 years and is about to assume the ultimate power post: Senate president. Ask those who have been around Gardiner about the keys to his success and you hear things like “hard-working,” “solid” and “likable.” He’s a conservative, but his laid-back, get-things-done style appeals to moderates, both in the Legislature and at the polls. Gardiner was

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the go-to lawmaker for a tax-break package to help build a soccer stadium in Orlando; he got it through the Senate, but it died in the House. Gardiner also serves as Orlando Health’s vice president of external affairs and community relations.

**12 Deborah German**  
**UCF Vice President for**  
**Medical Affairs;**

**Dean, College of Medicine**  
**Age: 62**

See profile, opposite page.

**13 Tom Williams**  
**Chairman and CEO, Universal Parks and Resorts**  
**Age: 65**

Muggles aren’t supposed to have magical powers, but apparently nobody told Universal. The company is making the most of the wildly

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2013  
**50 MOST  
POWERFUL**

KELLY  
**COHEN**

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BILL  
**SUBLETTE**



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successful Wizarding World of Harry Potter attraction in Orlando with the addition of the London-themed Diagon Alley next year (complete with a Hogwarts train to transport guests). Meanwhile, Transformers: The Ride—3D is set to open this summer. Williams, a Universal veteran who's a perennial presence on our list, is at the parks helm here and across the world. The compa-

ny's expansion shows no signs of letting up: Next stops for Pottermania are Universal's parks in Hollywood and Japan.

**14 Jim Pugh**  
**Developer,**  
**Board Chairman, Dr. Phillips**  
**Center for the**  
**Performing Arts**  
**Age: 76**

Many said the \$500 million arts center would never fly,

especially after the economic downturn in 2008. But Pugh didn't listen, pledging millions to ensure that construction started—and he persuaded others with deep pockets to do so, too. More than \$100 million in private pledges have been made. Now, the center is set to open next year and fundraising for a third hall, to showcase the symphony and ballet, is in the home stretch. Pugh has been a driving force through it all, convincing leaders and residents alike that an arts center is a vital component of a world-class city.

**15 Harris Rosen**  
**Hotelier, Philanthropist**  
**Age: 73**

Over the years, his positions on using the tourist tax for downtown venues (against) and allowing casino gambling (something worth studying) have put him at odds with local leaders. But the self-made hotel magnate remains a power in the community, both because of the reach of his business—seven hotels and more than 6,300 rooms—and the breadth of his generosity.





SHERRIE  
SITARIK

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He has pumped \$10 million into the low-income Tangelo Park neighborhood over the past two decades, providing free daycare to youngsters ages 2 to 4 and scholarships to every student accepted to a Florida state university. Rosen also recently contributed \$1 million to help Give Kids the World Village expand its mission of giving vacations to children with life-threatening illnesses.

**16 Kelly Cohen**  
**Lobbyist/Managing Partner,**  
**Southern Strategy Group**  
**Age: 39**

Cohen is a master at connecting with people and connecting them with one another, which means that politicians and business leaders seek her advice and always return her calls. The Democratic adviser and fundraiser is a big player in almost any project downtown, includ-

ing the coming Creative Village, and has close ties to many on this list, including Buddy Dyer (she worked on his campaigns for attorney general and Orlando mayor). Cohen serves on the boards of the Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission and Wells Fargo's community advisory panel. She also has taken an active role in getting the word out about Clean the World, the

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A portrait of Sandy Shugart, a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a light grey suit, white shirt, and a pink patterned tie. He is standing outdoors with green foliage in the background, smiling slightly with his arms crossed.

SANDY SHUGART

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local group that recycles discarded soap from hotels and distributes it worldwide to prevent illness and disease.

**17 Bill Sublette**  
**Chairman, Orange County School Board**  
**Age: 50**

Sublette projects a genuine commitment to his task and is moving forward with an aggressive agenda for the district—in

particular a philanthropic plan where businesses are being asked to provide financial support for eight initiatives. They include computers and Internet access for poor students, mentoring programs, literacy tutoring and a licensed nurse at every school. Other priorities: Making digital literacy an essential part of learning and renovating 30 schools. Funding shortfalls are hampering those

efforts so expect Sublette and School Superintendent Barbara Jenkins to campaign aggressively for extending the half-cent sales tax for schools that was approved in 2010 but expires next year.

**18 Sherrie Sitarik**  
**President and CEO, Orlando Health**  
**Age: 56**

A new patient tower is under





JERRY DEMINGS

2013  
**50 MOST**  
POWERFUL

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construction, renovations are progressing (including a new emergency department), and the Winnie Palmer Hospital plans a 30-bed expansion. Sitarik, who rose from the nursing ranks, oversees the ever-changing complex on South Orange Avenue. Yet there are challenges: Orlando Health recently implemented the first staff cuts in its 100-year history. On the plus side of the ledger, however, the nonprofit giant completed its purchase of the Physicians Associates doctors group. Orlando Health also took the bold step of not hiring new employees who are tobacco users. And guess whose sponsor logo is on the jerseys of the increasingly popular Orlando City Soccer team?

**19 Sandy Shugart**  
**President, Valencia College**  
**Age: 56**

He's a Renaissance man for sure: Shugart writes poems and songs, as well as treatises on leadership. The renaissance at Valencia continues under his watch, with the school now boasting 60,000 students and still basking in the glow of



FRANK  
KRUPPENBACHER

23

winning the prestigious Aspen Prize as the nation's best community college in 2011. It's hard to argue with that success, although the chair of Valencia's board of trustees chose to clash recently with the president over how the college was being run; the state Senate promptly declined to reappoint her. Shugart also serves on several prominent boards, including the Ameri-

can Council on Education, Workforce Central Florida and Orlando Health.

**20 Clarence Otis**  
**Chairman and CEO,**  
**Darden Restaurants**  
**Age: 57**

It's been a challenging year for the world's largest casual-dining company as its flagship Olive Garden and Red Lobster brands deal

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# 2013 50 MOST POWERFUL



**RASESH  
THAKKAR**



**KAREN  
DEE**

25

with serious competition from fast-casual chains like Chipotle and Panera Bread. But Darden remains Orlando's only Fortune 500 company—No. 328 for 2013. And it continues to rank highly on *Fortune* magazine's list of Best 100 Companies to Work For—an honor that Otis is particularly proud of—having jumped from 99th to 65th in the past year. The company also handed out \$1.9 million

in grants this year to more than 850 nonprofits in the U.S. and Canada. Otis is a board member of the Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission, connecting with CEOs of companies considering relocating to Orlando.

**21 Daniel Webster**  
**U.S. Representative**  
**Age: 64**

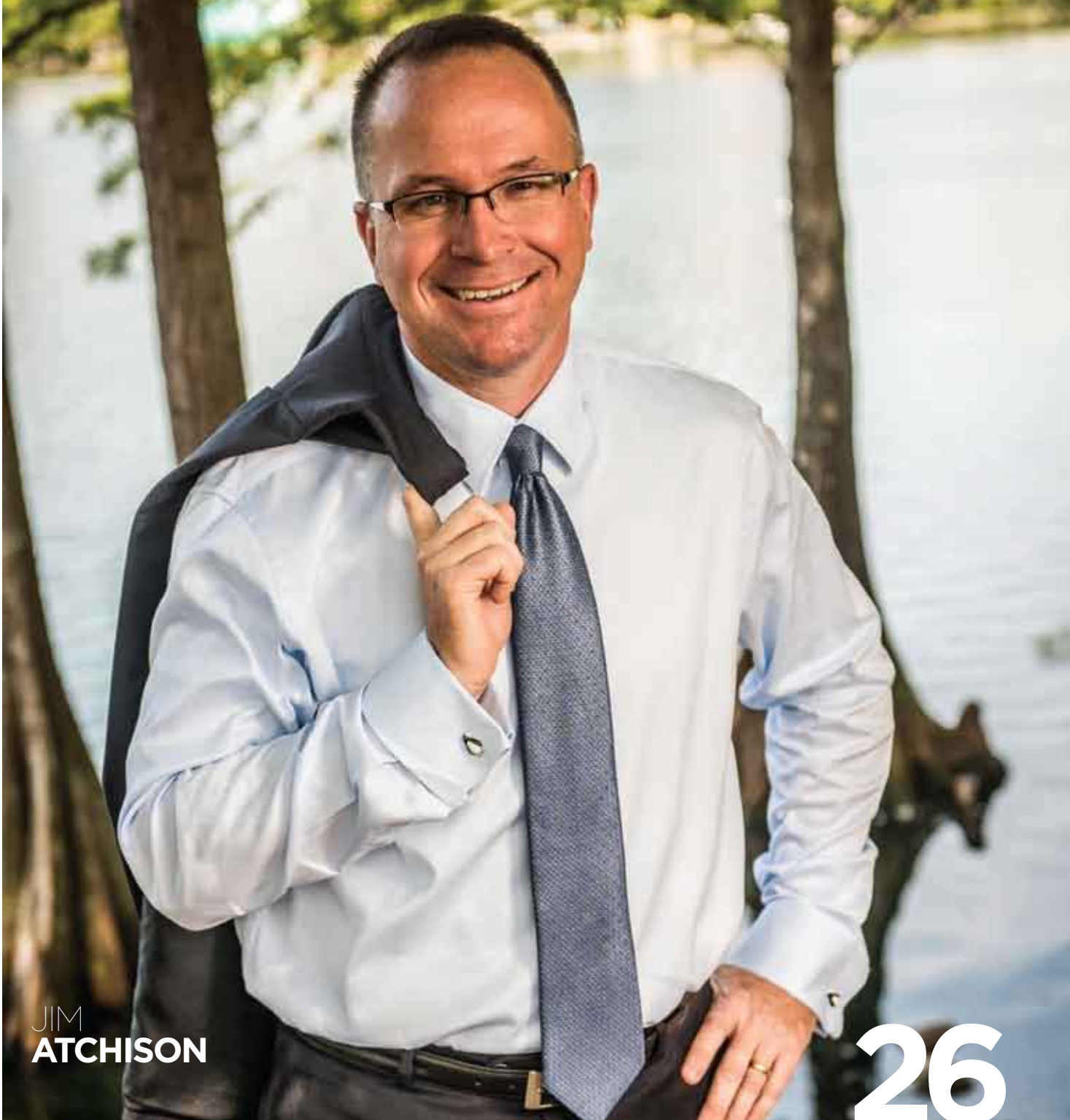
He's a political pragmatist,

more a follower than a leader. "I'm a plodder. I move along and reach a goal," Webster, a Winter Garden Republican, told us in an interview last year. But that low-key style belies a substantial undercurrent of political strength: He turned Democratic firebrand Alan Grayson out of the House in 2010, then fought off a challenge from former Orlando Police Chief Val Demings last November. Webster, who served in the Florida Legislature for 28 years, is now focusing on transit issues, pushing for a train that would connect South Florida and Orlando International Airport, as well as a commuter line linking Lake County and Orlando.

**22 Jerry Demings**  
**Orange County Sheriff**  
**Age: 54**

The lifelong Orlando-area resident was elected to a second four-year term by a wide margin last November, so it's obvious that Demings' straightforward, low-key style goes over well. So does this: During his first four years, serious crime in Orange County declined by 20 percent, while overall





JIM  
ATCHISON

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crime dipped 27 percent. Law enforcement definitely runs in the family: Both Demings and his wife, Val, have served as Orlando's police chief. She is weighing her political options, including a possible run for county mayor next year as a Democrat. Sheriff Demings made news earlier this year when he proposed that the sheriff's department use drones to keep an eye on

lawbreakers, but the Legislature passed a law severely restricting their use.

**23 Frank Kruppenbacher**  
**Attorney, Chairman of the**  
**Greater Orlando Aviation**  
**Authority**  
**Age: 60**

He heads the board that runs the country's 13th busiest airport, is a big Republican fundraiser and pretty much has a

direct line to Gov. Rick Scott. Kruppenbacher, a member of John Morgan's powerhouse legal firm, is gung-ho on airport expansion, from terminals to parking to building a depot for a proposed light rail train that would link Orlando International Airport and South Florida. He also serves as general counsel of the Florida Virtual School and as Apopka city attorney. Krup-

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FLORA MARIA  
**GARCIA**

**GETTING  
HARD WORK  
DOWN TO A  
FINE ART**

By Darlyn Finch Kuhn



Flora Maria Garcia took the reins as president and CEO of United Arts of Central Florida a little more than a year ago but has worked in the nonprofit art sector for over 30 years. With degrees in fine arts and modern languages, she spent the first decade of her career working with business people and trying to foster relationships and broker deals. But she realized that she needed to be able to better speak their language. Despite having two small children under the age of 5, she went back to school for an intensive double degree—Master’s in business administration and arts administration. She took 18 credit hours plus an internship for three consecutive semesters.

“It was hard, but really worth it,” Garcia says. “It gave me the knowledge base and the confidence to be able to address the business of the arts and how art ties to business and economic development. My job is to present arts and culture as something important to the community that touches so many facets of our lives: economic development, tourism, education and even self-esteem in children. By being able to connect the dots of how the arts tie into other aspects of society that are important to a lot of people, it really helps move the arts agenda forward.”

That agenda got a big boost recently with the news that United Arts raised about \$2 million in its annual fundraising campaign, exceeding the goal by nearly \$400,000. Garcia also

led the organization to create a web-based giving program, which she says should help draw younger donors.

Garcia, 57, credits her father with giving her the self-esteem she needed to excel in life. Her family emigrated from Cuba when she was 7. Her father was an international auditor, traditional in many ways, and her mother was a housewife. But Garcia says he treated her the same way he treated her brothers, and always talked to her about what she wanted to do when she grew up. “He didn’t make me feel that I was less than them or that I had to go and be a wife to someone. He emphasized education and my career goals, and I think that was very grounding for me,” she says. “Looking back, that was probably the biggest gift he could give me. And that focus on education is something I also instilled in my children.”

Despite the strong support from her family, Garcia has faced challenges. But she meets each one head-on. “I’ve had a lot of challenges in the leadership positions that I’ve held, some political, some funding, especially where my goal has been to access the large dollars that come through the public sector,” she says. “I always see it as an opportunity, because I love looking at a challenge as a puzzle, to figure out how to make it work. I am also the eternal optimist. I believe that there’s always a solution, and you can look at something from many different angles. If one thing doesn’t work, you try something else.”



## 2013 50 MOST POWERFUL

# 27

MAYANNE DOWNS

penbacher is active in child welfare issues and charitable causes: He and wife Patsy recently chaired the American Heart Association's annual Heart Ball gala.

**24 Rasesh Thakkar**  
**Senior Managing Director,**  
**Tavistock Group**  
**Age: 51**

Thakkar is the point person for British billionaire Joe Lewis' investments in Central Florida, including Isleworth and the burgeoning Lake Nona, with its Medical City complex. Thakkar's current big project at Lake Nona is Laureate Park, a community that will eventually boast 2,700 homes; Tavistock teamed up with GE to make the development ultra energy-efficient, and the neighborhood is wired to deliver Internet speeds 10 times faster than a typical link. Thakkar sponsored last year's first annual Lake Nona Impact Forum, a health innovation conference that included heavy hitters like Johnson & Johnson and Harvard Medical School. He also serves on the Florida Council of 100, a group of business leaders that advises the governor.

ROGER  
OXENDALE

# 28

**25 Karen Dee**  
**President, Florida and Mid-**  
**South Regions,**  
**Fifth Third Bank**  
**Age: 52**

Fifth Third expanded Dee's role last fall beyond Florida to include four other Southern states so that she now oversees 2,800 employees and nearly \$16 billion in assets. Her base, however, is Orlando and that's where Dee has made a big

mark in philanthropic efforts, including chairing the Women's Leadership Council of the local United Way. The group recently raised more than \$100,000 for programs that address health and social service issues of women and children. Dee also started Fifth Third's Summer of Dreams program, which provides summer camps for homeless students in Central Florida. Now in its third year,

(continued on page 54)

2013  
50 MOST  
POWERFUL



BELVIN  
PERRY JR.

29



FRED  
LEONHARDT

31

it has served more than 4,000 children in three counties, providing hundreds of thousands of meals as well as supplies for the start of school in the fall.

**26 Jim Atchison**  
**CEO and President,**  
**SeaWorld Parks &**  
**Entertainment**  
**Age: 47**

It's been a whirlwind few months for Atchison and Sea-

World. In April, the company launched an initial public stock offering of \$700 million (complete with Atchison bringing penguins to the New York Stock Exchange). Then in May, the park opened its biggest attraction ever, "Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin," a 4-acre version of the icy continent that it hopes will chip away at Disney's domination of the local theme park

scene. Atchison, who worked his way up from parking lot attendant at Busch Gardens, is a visible presence in the community, serving on the UCF Board of Trustees.

**27 Mayanne Downs**  
**City Attorney; Shareholder,**  
**GrayRobinson**  
**Age: 56**

Orlando's city attorney since 2007, Downs is a strong presence at city hall. She's a confidante of Mayor Buddy Dyer—they were law school classmates at the University of Florida, she worked on his first mayoral campaign and their families have vacationed together. So as the mayor tries to figure out how to finance projects to fit his vision of a world-class city, you can bet that he seeks a lot of input from Downs. Widely regarded as one of the area's sharpest legal minds, Downs, a former president of The Florida Bar, was just appointed to a six-year term on the Judicial Qualifications Commission, and her name regularly appears on numerous top lawyer lists.





JEFF  
ASHTON

32

**28 Roger Oxendale**  
**CEO, Nemours Children's**  
**Hospital**

**Age: 59**

With the opening of its dazzling 137-bed hospital—"designed by families, for families"—Nemours and Oxendale have become major players on the health-care scene. Nemours has assembled an impressive

array of cutting-edge specialists, with the prestigious Lake Nona location—next to UCF's medical school and the Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute—being an obvious draw. Oxendale also is focusing on initiatives outside the hospital walls, including a program that will send teams into child-care settings to train providers on

how to inspire healthier eating among youngsters.

**29 Belvin Perry Jr.**  
**Chief Judge,**  
**9th Judicial Circuit**  
**Age: 63**

After a surprise *Today* show interview in May on the Casey Anthony case he oversaw two years ago, some speculated Belvin Perry was preparing to

(continued on page 56)



ALAN GRAYSON

step down. But the longtime chief judge has no immediate plans to leave before his 2019 term expires. He's been busy lobbying the Legislature on court matters, and serving on a state Supreme Court committee streamlining Death Row appeals. Last year he wrapped up his Florida Innocence Commission chairmanship. Locally, he's been busy

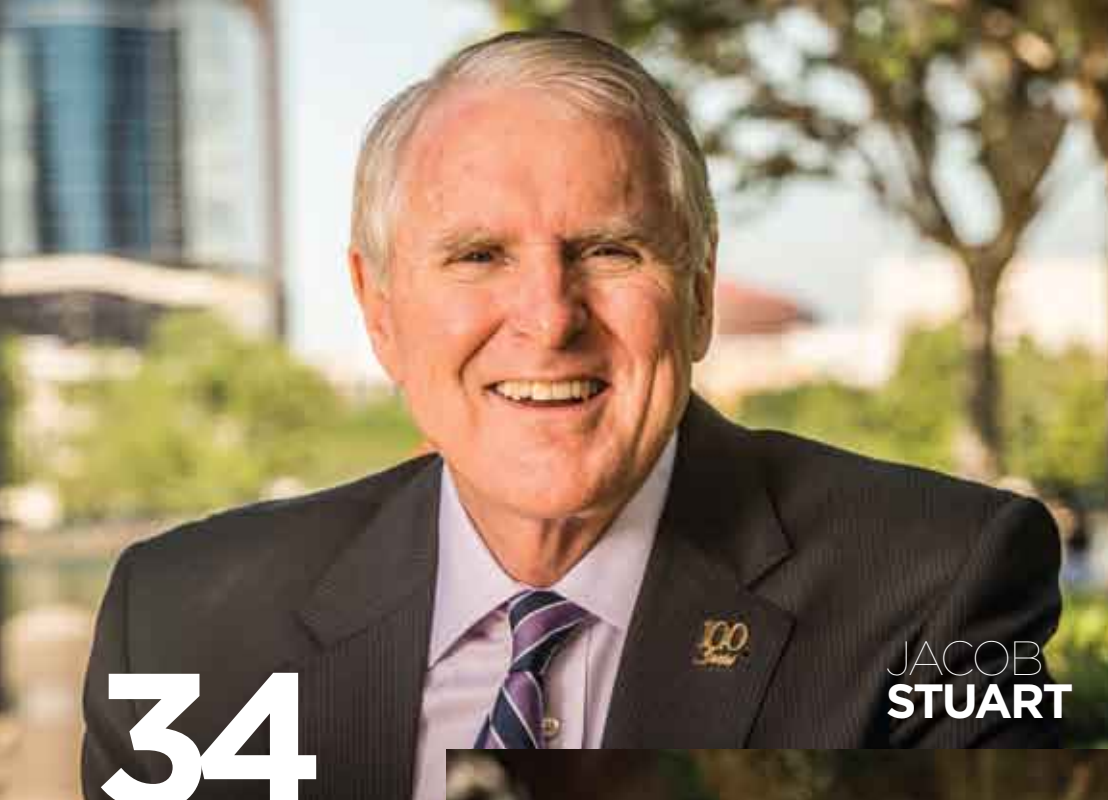
probing—and suspending—the troubled GPS monitoring and home confinement defendant programs. Perry's service has won him professionalism awards from the Florida and Orange County Bar associations. Off the bench, he chairs 100 Black Men's Project Success, a life-skills mentoring program at his alma mater, Jones High School.

**30 Mark NeJame**  
**Attorney, Philanthropist**  
**Age: 58**  
(See profile, page 40)

**31 Frederick Leonhardt**  
**Attorney/Shareholder,**  
**GrayRobinson**  
**Age: 63**

Leonhardt's lobbying, political and business connections keep him plugged into key Orlando





JACOB  
STUART

2013  
**50 MOST  
POWERFUL**

and Tallahassee issues for powerhouse law firm GrayRobinson. His clients include the University of Central Florida, Darden Restaurants and Orlando City Soccer. A well-known Republican fundraiser, he serves on prominent statewide boards including Enterprise Florida; the Florida Chamber of Commerce; and the private, nonprofit Florida Council of 100, which advises the governor on improving the state. Leonhardt also is a board member at the nonpartisan James Madison Institute, a Tallahassee-based policy think tank. His goal: to improve the economy with business-friendly laws and policies.

**32 Jeff Ashton**  
**State Attorney**  
**Age: 55**

Some labeled Ashton's 2012 election victory over six-term incumbent Lawson Lamar an upset, but Ashton was hardly an unknown. The longtime homicide prosecutor became a national figure during the Casey Anthony trial two years ago and wrote a book about the case. Now the 30-year veteran of the state attorney's office has the top job and has



TED  
MAINES

cleared out many Lamar hires and cut the number of management positions. He also installed his co-counsel in the Anthony case, Linda Drane Burdick, as chief assistant state attorney.

**33 Alan Grayson**  
**U.S. Representative**  
**Age: 55**

The outspoken Democrat is back in Congress after a

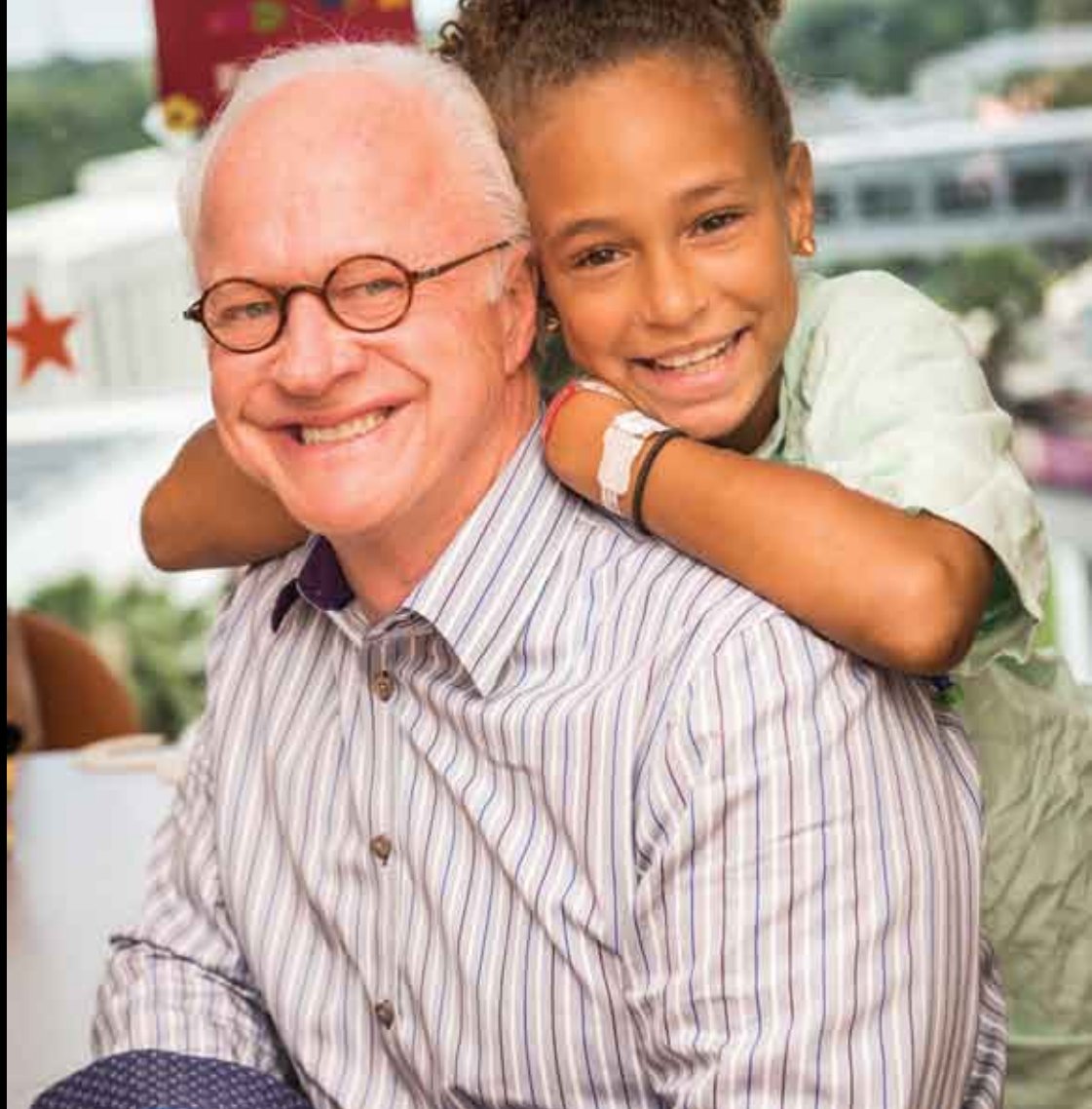
two-year hiatus, and it's a kinder, gentler Grayson this time around. Well, sort of. Although we haven't heard a peep about "K Street whores," he did accuse GOP Sen. Paul Ryan of wishing that poor, sick people would simply die. Grayson's 43-point swing from his 2010 loss was the biggest comeback in House history, and he likely has a solid hold on the 9th

*(continued on page 59)*

# DICK BACHELOR

## NO STRANGER TO **MAKING FRIENDS COUNT**

By Brad Kuhn



Dick Batchelor, like Blanche DuBois, has always relied on the kindness of strangers, but anyone who knows him will tell you that, with Batchelor, no one remains a stranger for long.

Artists paint. Writers write. Batchelor makes friends. And he persuades those friends to open their hearts—and wallets—for the politicians and causes he supports.

The third of seven children born to a North Carolina tobacco tenant farmer, Batchelor, 65, moved to Orlando at age five and lived in the Reeves Terrace public housing project, and later Orlo Vista. His family never had much money, but he worked odd jobs to buy the stylish clothes that earned him the yearbook senior superlative “Best Dressed” at Evans High School in Pine Hills.

With no plans after high school, he enlisted in the Marines and served in a maintenance battalion near the Vietnamese port city of Da Nang.

“That was during the Tet Offensive,” he recalls. “The Vietnam experience forced me to take a sober look at policy.”

Returning home, Batchelor attended Valencia Community College (now Valencia College) and Florida Technological University (now the University of Central Florida) on the GI Bill and fell in love . . . with politics. He launched the Young Democrats Club at Valencia and quickly gained a reputation for his ability to corral and deploy massive numbers of volunteers for Democratic causes.

He also discovered a talent for matching politicians and causes with money. He took a leadership role in Hubert Humphrey’s

second presidential campaign in 1972 and later became one of the youngest people ever elected to the state Legislature (1974-1982). In 1991, he organized the first Florida fundraiser for presidential candidate Bill Clinton, who would later appoint Batchelor to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, an organization that examines trafficking of women and children, child prostitution and use of children as soldiers.

He has always advocated for the “under-represented.” That includes children in need. Since 1981, Batchelor has served as honorary chairman of the “Dick Batchelor Run for the Children,” a charity race that has raised more than a million dollars for children’s groups throughout Central Florida. He continues to advocate for children and other groups, while advising companies, governments and politicians on public policy through the Dick Batchelor Management Group.

“Dick has amazing energy and heart,” says former Orange County Commissioner Linda Chapin. “He remains as committed to his causes and to improving life in our community as when he was a freshman legislator.”

While Batchelor has done much for children and families in Central Florida—he currently is co-chair of a county panel developing strategies to battle domestic violence—he says his greatest accomplishment is his family: wife Andrea and sons Richard, David and Matt. “Coming out of the environment I came from,” he said, “my biggest motivation is having my family be proud of what I do.”





JEFFREY  
MILLER

2013  
**50 MOST  
POWERFUL**

36

Congressional District for years to come. The media-savvy congressman touts his ability to deliver for constituents: Recently he fought successfully against budget-cutters' threats to close Kissimmee Gateway Airport's control tower.

**34 Jacob Stuart**  
**President, Central Florida Partnership**  
**Age: 64**

The Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce is celebrating its 100th anniversary and the gentlemanly Stuart has been its leader in one position or another for more than 30 of those years (the Chamber is one of four groups that make up the seven-county Central Florida Partnership). No surprise, then, that the Orlando native has been unabashedly pro-business in helping steer the area's future, and he acts accordingly: Stuart was a key SunRail supporter and he was one of the leaders against the proposed Orange County sick-time ballot initiative.



HELEN  
DONEGAN

37

**35-36 Ted Maines**  
**Interior Designer and Activist**  
**Age: 55**  
**Jeffrey Miller**  
**Lawyer, Activist**  
**Age: 61**

The longtime partners give their time and money to a wide array of causes but are particularly invested in the battle against bullying. Through the local Holocaust Center's UpStander anti-bullying pro-

gram, Maines and Miller have worked to increase awareness of the problem through partnerships with groups ranging from the Orange County Library System to the Florida Athletic Association. They are big Obama supporters and have held numerous fundraisers in their home for Democratic candidates (Val Demings, Bill Nelson, Joe Saunders, Linda Stewart) as well as community

(continued on page 60)



BARBARA  
**JENKINS**

38

and arts groups (Planned Parenthood, Orlando Ballet). Helping elect candidates who support marriage equality is important to them: The couple celebrated their 30th anniversary in May.

**37 Helen Donegan**  
**UCF Vice President of**  
**Community Relations**  
**Age: 66**

Donegan was in charge of

the university's landmark 50th anniversary gala in June, and it's little wonder—she's one of Orlando's most well-connected people, not to mention a savvy fundraiser and organizer. Her past and present résumé of service—from bank boards to charity event chair—is beyond impressive. She is the founding chair of the local United Way's Leadership Council,

and her "Friends of Helen" luncheons provide valuable networking opportunities for local businesswomen.

**38 Barbara Jenkins**  
**Orange County School**  
**Superintendent**  
**Age: 52**

Jenkins was hired a year ago to replace the retiring Ron Blocker as head of the nation's 11th largest school



2013  
**50 MOST  
POWERFUL**

39

SCOTT MAXWELL

district and has been a visible presence. She knows the local school system well: A graduate of Winter Park High and UCF, she started out as an Orange district teacher in 1983 and worked her way up to deputy superintendent before getting the top job. Along with school board chairman Bill Sublette, Jenkins is focusing on implementing a digital curriculum and garnering business donors for the system's philanthropic plan, among other goals. Another priority is school safety: Jenkins ordered random metal-detector screenings in May after a loaded gun was found in a high-school student's backpack.

**39 Scott Maxwell**  
**Columnist, *Orlando Sentinel***  
**Age: 41**

Maxwell is the fearless headmaster of the old school of watchdog journalism, always keeping an eye on the movers and shakers (including some on this list). A major coup in the past year: pointing out the ethical lapses, unpaid bills and questionable partnerships of state



40

RICH  
MALADECKI

Rep. Chris Dorworth, who was in line to become House speaker. Voters responded by sending Dorworth to a shocking defeat in the GOP primary. Maxwell also has been a major voice in getting state rules changed to make FCAT testing less rigid for the profoundly disabled; helping head off the closing of a regional commission on homelessness; and exposing

the tragedy of human trafficking in Central Florida.

**40 Rich Maladecki**  
**President and CEO,**  
**Central Florida Hotel &**  
**Lodging Association**  
**Age: 59**

Visitors to the nation's top tourist destination need places to stay—so it's a no-brainer why Maladecki's organization is critical to the area.

(continued on page 62)

2013  
**50 MOST  
POWERFUL**

SCOTT  
**RANDOLPH**



42

SUSANNAH  
**RANDOLPH**



43

A grassroots liberal power couple on the rise. Many expected Scott Randolph, a former state legislator and a honcho in the local Democratic Party, to run for state party chair. Instead, he opted for the local tax collector post, run for decades by the late Earl K. Wood. One of Randolph's first acts was to offer a health benefit stipend to office employees with same-sex partners who were adversely affected by federal tax rules. Look for Randolph to make a bid for county mayor sometime down the road. Susannah Randolph, meanwhile, is an outspoken advocate of women's issues, serving on the board of Planned Parenthood. She also is the former head of the progressive group Florida Watch Action, where she organized a "Pink Slip Rick" campaign against Gov. Rick Scott.

He has headed the CFHLA for 14 years, which makes him an automatic power player in the region's economic growth. But it isn't just about the number of beds: CFHLA also invests in the future by raising money for scholarships for young people trying to gain a foothold in the hospitality industry. Maladecki also has been a strong voice in the push to renovate the Citrus Bowl.

**41 Flora Maria Garcia**  
**President, United Arts of**  
**Central Florida**  
**Age: 57**  
(See profile, page 52)

**42-43 Scott Randolph**  
**Orange County Tax Collector**  
**Age: 39**  
**Susannah Randolph**  
**District Director for U.S.**  
**Rep. Alan Grayson**  
**Age: 38**

**44 Dick Batchelor**  
**Business and Political**  
**Consultant, Advocate for**  
**Children's Causes**  
**Age: 65**  
(see profile, page 58)



A full-page portrait of Marcos Marchena, a middle-aged man with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a dark navy suit, white shirt, and a maroon tie. He is standing outdoors with a blurred background of green trees and a building. The name 'MARCOS MARCHENA' is printed in white in the upper right corner.

MARCOS  
MARCHENA

45

**45 Marcos Marchena**  
**Attorney, Marchena and**  
**Graham**  
**Age: 53**

As general counsel for the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority, Marchena is in a position to influence what happens at the airport, whether it's building a new terminal or garage, or establishing a rail line hub. Like GOAA chairman Frank

Kruppenbacher, he's a major figure in Republican Party circles. Marchena also serves on the University of Central Florida's Board of Trustees (he's a 1982 grad) and has chaired the Florida Transportation Commission, as well as the panel that nominates federal judges for the Middle District of Florida.

**46 Doug Taylor**  
**Downtown Business Owner**  
**Age: 47**

As co-owner of six downtown nightclubs and restaurants on or near Church Street, Taylor is a player in the effort to draw more people into the heart of Orlando. The key, he says, is to tap into the multitude of tourists/conventioners in the I-Drive and attractions area and devise

*(continued on page 65)*

A photograph of Gary Cain, a man with short grey hair wearing a white button-down shirt, smiling and standing in the center. He is surrounded by a group of diverse young people, mostly Black and Hispanic, who are also smiling. Several of the youth are wearing bright yellow t-shirts with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida logo. One boy in the foreground on the left is wearing a teal t-shirt with the same logo. The background is slightly blurred, showing more people and what appears to be an indoor setting with colorful decorations.

GARY CAIN

## GIVING BACK TO THE GROUP THAT SAVED HIM

By Mark I. Pinsky

Sometimes in a community, the greatest influence is the least apparent—or immediate. It worked that way for Gary Cain. As an 11-year-old in a troubled home in Panama City, Cain says, “the wheels were coming off my family.”

His father was an alcoholic, and his mother, the daughter of a prostitute, had spent much of her youth in a Baptist orphanage. One of his brothers was in prison and one sister was pregnant at 15. When his parents’ marriage broke up, the family had to move from its modest cinder block home—“where I saw a knife come out more than one time”—to a trailer. “I was ripping and running—a shoplifter.”

Apart from the county library, he had no refuge—until he walked into the Boys Club of Panama City, located in an old armory. He was greeted by the club’s director, Errol Sewell, with the words “Gary Cain, I’m glad you’re here,” words that would be etched in his memory. At the club, he says, “I could be a kid.”

“We got him at the perfect age,” recalls Sewell, who would later rise to become senior vice president of Boys & Girls Clubs of America. “They were his formative years when he was thirsting for doing things and learning things, meeting people. He was unusual. This kid had an enormous, incredible resilience. He was one of those kids who had greatness bottled up inside. All he needed was to have someone help him find that goodness inside.

“Gary right away was expressive with a voracious appetite for involvement. His was the first name on a sign-up sheet,” says Sewell. “He was the first one to show up. He loved the

club and what was going on there. He’d almost rather be anywhere than home.”

Sewell became Cain’s mentor, giving him books on success and motivation and his first paying job. He was named the club’s Boy of the Year for 1966, and later Sewell arranged a full scholarship for him at Tuculm College in Tennessee.

After graduating, Cain began repaying his debt, climbing the youth organization’s ladder from Bristol, Virginia, to Lafayette, Louisiana, to the Pacific region, where he established 23 new clubs serving thousands of young people.

For the past 19 years, Cain, 58, has served as president and chief professional officer of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida, supervising 80 full-time and 360 part-time employees from a new headquarters in downtown Orlando. Along the way he raised a family and found time to earn a Rollins MBA.

More importantly, he has had a growing impact on 29 growing clubs, serving an estimated 13,000 young people in the four Central Florida counties—Orange, Seminole, Osceola and Brevard—he oversees. The organization reports that last year, of club members who were high school seniors, 99 percent graduated and less than one-tenth of 1 percent were arrested.

Cain says that after 35 years serving the organization, he still has “grand plans and grand visions,” including new clubs in Orlando’s Parramore neighborhood and in Cocoa. “It’s great to have a purpose in life,” he says. “I’ve never lacked for purpose. Every day is a new opportunity with a kid.”



A portrait of Doug Taylor, a man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red patterned tie. He is standing outdoors with a blurred background of trees and a building.

DOUG TAYLOR

46

a form of transportation to get them downtown. Taylor, a member of the Downtown Development Board and chairman of the Church Street District Merchants Association, has been instrumental in staging an increasing number of festivals, including numerous Latin jazz events, to draw audiences downtown. He also has led fundraising for the Nap Ford Charter School Foundation; the group brought in a record \$200,000 during the past year.

**47 Gary Cain**  
**President/Chief Professional Officer,**  
**Boys & Girls Clubs of**  
**Central Florida**

**Age: 58**  
(see profile, opposite page)

**48 Harriett Lake**  
**Philanthropist**  
**Age: 91**

One of the most generous people you'll ever meet has doled out more than \$10 million to good causes over the last seven years, from Orlando Health's Level One Trauma Center to Florida Hospital Cancer Institute's Eden Spa. But Lake is especially appreciated in the

A portrait of Harriett Lake, an older woman with short blonde hair, wearing large black-rimmed glasses, a bright pink jacket, and a large pink hat decorated with many pink flowers. She is smiling broadly and looking towards the camera.

HARRIETT  
LAKE

48

arts community, where she has made it her mission to ensure that Orlando Ballet remains in stable financial health. She doesn't seek attention, but she deserves every bit of it.

**49 Phil Rawlins**  
**President, Orlando City**  
**Soccer Club**  
**Age: 54**

His is the club that roared. About to complete its third season,

Rawlins' team of Lions has shattered the notion that soccer would never catch on in Orlando, setting attendance records for the USL Pro League (the Lions drew a record 9,589 to the Citrus Bowl for an April game). Now Rawlins is teaming up with Mayor Buddy Dyer in the drive to get a Major League Soccer franchise for the city. But MSL requires commitment for a soccer-specific stadium to be built, and we all

2013  
**50 MOST**  
POWERFUL

(continued on page 66)

49

2013  
**50 MOST  
POWERFUL**



PHIL  
**RAWLINS**



RICK  
**WEDDLE**

50

know how touchy those venue—funding issues are with local governments. Don't be surprised to see Rawlins and his financial backers shoulder more of the cost of the venue if that's what it takes.

**50 Rick Weddle**  
**President and CEO,**  
**Metro Orlando Economic**  
**Development Commission**  
**Age: 61**

Weddle is beginning his third year at the helm of the organization whose mission is helping businesses relocate to or expand in the Orlando area. As such, he pushes policies designed to create, retain and grow jobs. His group is busy creating a stronger business brand for the area, and Weddle helped organize a task force to protect the region's military defense industry

sector in the wake of budget cuts. He has some heavy hitters to help get the EDC message out: The group's board includes notables like Florida Hospital's Lars Houmann, lobbyist Kelly Cohen and UCF's John Hitt.