

# PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

## PBN HONORS THE 2015 WOMEN WHO MEAN BUSINESS

Meet the for-profit and nonprofit winners and finalists  
as well as our Women to Watch **SPECIAL SECTION • B**

### THE LIST

Top 25 women-owned businesses **B31**

#### HOW I ...

### MADE MY PASSIONS MY BUSINESS

Daynin Dashefsky has built a career on things she loves to do: public speaking, jiu jitsu and developing young entrepreneurs.

**JASON UBAY, 14**



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Here's what seven top executives of Hawaii's publicly traded companies took home last year.

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## WOMEN TO WATCH

### SARA HILL

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**My plans for the next year:** It will be a busy year at Handcrafted Restaurants. Under the sage oversight of Bill Terry and Peter Merriman, I'll shepherd two restaurant opening processes from lease negotiation, through architectural design, to management structuring, through to construction, staffing and opening. These next two restaurants will almost double our current volume and position us in Hawaii's strongest markets. In 2015/2016, we are also focusing on solidifying plans for expansion of the Monkeypod Kitchen by Merriman to the Mainland.

**The woman who has helped my career the most:** I have been extremely lucky to be surrounded by strong female role models since I was young. My mom is a physician ... and she inspires me with the way that she uses her profession to give back to her community as well. However, the two women who have helped my career the most are my current colleagues, Laura Blaho and Christie Snopko.

**One thing that most people don't know about me:** I'm the proud older sister to three very impressive and unique siblings. Being the leader of our little "tribe" of four shaped a lot about who I am today.

*Sara's immediate rise to the vice president position in our company was somewhat shocking and impressive to both Peter Merriman and me. There is no doubt in my mind that she will eventually hold the president or CEO title in our company if she stays with us for another five years.*

**BILL TERRY**, President and CEO, Handcrafted Restaurants

PHOTO COURTESY SARA HILL

### LEIGH ITO

Vice President of Development,  
Alan Wong's Restaurants

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**The woman who has helped my career the most:** Nicole Ng, whom I helped groom, is my right hand and wind beneath my wings. Nicole is now our marketing manager. She has developed into a confident woman and mother, and successfully balances a career and family. She can read my mind, multitasks with aplomb, and can artfully manage the 'two-headed dragon' supporting Alan and me in every activity and project we develop. She acts as an extension of me and continues to be the one I rely on. Nicole has been at my side for eight years, and is invaluable to me and to our organization.

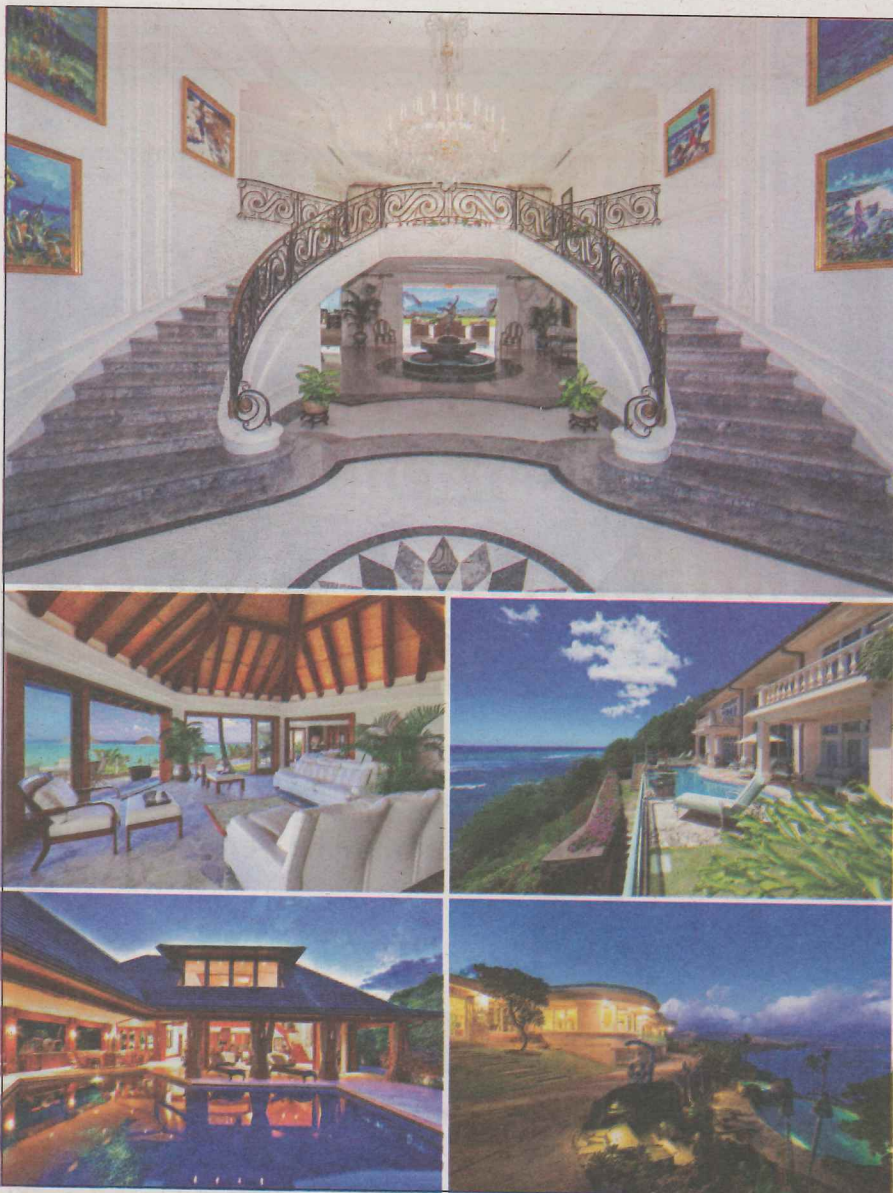
**The most important piece of business advice I've received:** For decision-making in ambiguity and taking a risk, always ask yourself what is the worst thing that could happen as a result of your decision. Always have the end in mind. If you can envision your goal, you can define it and develop your path to reach it. Have an exit clause. And don't hire anyone you can't fire.

**One thing that most people don't know about me:** I was voted as "most average" in my high school senior class election. This is probably one of the underlying reasons why I strive to excel and give my best effort.

*I don't know what I would do without her, and I cannot justify in words what she means to all of us here. Leigh represents the ideal that if you have the right attitude and take care of your people and be the leader, you can accomplish great things. She simply is my right-hand person.*

**ALAN WONG**, President and Owner, Alan Wong's Restaurants

PHOTO COURTESY LEIGH ITO



## UNFORGETTABLE PROPERTIES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE LEGENDARY EXPERTISE

Aloha,

It is a privilege and an honor to be working alongside so many successful businesswomen across various industries, truly showing the diversity and strength we bring to the modern workplace. For me, I'm living my dream everyday, assisting new and old friends and family in a service-based industry I fell in love with 25 years ago. As we continue to strive toward excellence in every facet of our personal and business lives, let's reflect back on our journey which has brought us here. Congratulations nominees and awardees for Pacific Business News Women Who Mean Business!

*Sachi*



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## NONPROFIT FINALISTS

**BECKY HARRISON**

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Becky, right, in a photo illustration.

**The biggest issue facing nonprofits in Hawaii, and how my organization is addressing it:** Acquiring the funding required to operate and help people. Habilitat addresses this by striving for self sufficiency through its vocational training departments. These programs have a twofold benefit. They empower residents by allowing them to gain confidence while gaining an employable skill. They also bring in funding, which helps with operating needs and provides scholarships for people in need.

**The most important piece of business advice I've received:** Work hard, learn hard, play hard. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance allows me to focus, flourish at work, and enjoy life.

**One thing that most people don't know about me:** I can make a cocktail dress out of a trash bag. I went to a dinner event where there was a contest for "most eco-friendly" wearable item, and won.

*Becky goes far beyond her title and job description as an exceptional woman leader of many hats, who's worth far more than money could pay her.*

JOSEPH TEIPEL, Surferjoe the Auctioneer

**KARISSA JONAS**

Chief Financial Officer,  
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Karissa, middle, with her husband, Paul, and C. Laamea Almeida.

**The biggest issue facing nonprofits in Hawaii, and how my organization is addressing it:** One of the biggest issues is cost control. With the depressed economy over the past few years and the high cost of living in Hawaii, nonprofits must be vigilant in keeping their controllable costs down. The public can't afford to continue to contribute more and more for the nonprofit's services. Kauai Island Utility Cooperative has addressed cost control methodically and proactively by implementing these key practices: Re-evaluate the necessity for every position that becomes vacant to determine whether some or all of that position's functions can be better performed by another position or through automation, keep controllable cost increases at or below the level of inflation by scrutinizing the necessity of every item in the annual budget, and — this is a long-term process specific to the electric industry — aggressively pursue renewable-energy sources in order to lower energy costs, diversify our energy supply, and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

**One thing that most people don't know about me:** My love for dance, especially hula. Something about hula touches my very soul.

*Her ability to look through and beyond the storm to see the silver lining has always inspired me.*

C. LAAMEA ALMEIDA,

Kumu Hula, The Ladies of Halau Ka Waikae Lani Malie

PHOTO COURTESY BECKY HARRISON

PHOTO COURTESY KARISSA JONAS

# Congratulations Leigh!

Your Alan Wong's ohana is so proud of you.

Niece Kelly  
Dier Brian  
Kung hana  
Auntie Monica  
Mia  
Austin



Alan Wong's  
HONOLULU

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