


## A Conversation With the Unanue Brothers







# THE NETWORK THAT PERFORMS THE MOST HEART PROCEDURES IN NJ.

## WHEN EXPERIENCE MATTERS, WE'RE READY.

At Hackensack Meridian *Health*, we ensure that each heart doesn't miss a beat. Our experts perform the most total cardiovascular procedures\* in New Jersey. From award-winning cardiac and vascular surgeons and care teams to advanced preventive screenings, we're ready for every heart.

To find a physician, visit [HackensackMeridianHealth.org/heartcare](https://HackensackMeridianHealth.org/heartcare), scan the QR code, or call 844-HMH-WELL.



**Hackensack  
Meridian *Health***

\*2022 NJ Cardiac Data Registries.



CONTENTS

MANUFACTURING

Goya Foods Celebrates 50 Years in NJ: . . . . .6

HIGHER EDUCATION

New Stockton Degree Preps Students for Cannabis Industry . . . . .10

EVENTS

CIANJ Members Meet to Talk  
Real Estate and Energy. . . . . 14

MEMBER NOTES

NJ Hispanic Community Anticipates Film Screening  
and Fundraiser. . . . . 15

LAW

How Technology and Client Expectations Influence Services . . . . .16

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Guardian Sale Showcases Power of the CIANJ Network . . . . .20

MEMBER MOVES

Appointments at DDNJCT, Trinitas Regional Medical Center,  
Felician University, and State Board of Agriculture. . . . . 22

COLUMNS

Advertisers' Directory . . . . . 1  
CIANJ Officers & Board of Directors . . . . . 2  
Upcoming . . . . . 3  
President's View . . . . . 4  
Lessons in Leadership . . . . . 12  
Effective Management. . . . . 24

Advertisers' Directory

AmeriHealth New Jersey . . . . . 5

Amy Delman Public Relations . . . . . 4

Caucus NJ . . . . . 21

COMMERCE . . . . . 9

Crystal Springs Resort . . . . . BC

Delta Dental of New Jersey . . . . . 13

EAI, Inc. . . . . 7

Gibbons P.C. . . . . 17

Hackensack Meridian Health . . . . . IFC, IBC

Lessons in Leadership . . . . . 12

Saint Peter's Healthcare System . . . . . 11

Taplnto . . . . . 8, 18

TRC Companies . . . . . 18

United Airlines . . . . . 1

Valley Health Systems . . . . . 19

Cover Photo: Don Prudencio Unanue founded Goya Foods in 1936, when he was almost 50. Pictured here, his grandchildren, Goya Foods' EVP Peter Unanue and President and CEO Robert (Bob) Unanue.

Cover Photo: Russ DeSantis Photography and Video

COMMERCE (SSN 0745-077X) is published 11 times a year for a subscription price of \$35.00 per year by the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey, 365 West Passaic Street, Suite 490, Rochelle Park, New Jersey 07662, (201) 368-2100, Web site: [www.commercemagnj.com](http://www.commercemagnj.com). Postage Paid at South Hackensack, New Jersey and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to above address.







## CHAIRWOMAN OF THE BOARD

**AUDREY C. MURPHY, ESQ, MSN, RN**  
Executive Vice President,  
Co-Chief Legal Officer Chief Officer,  
Team Member Health & Safety  
Hackensack Meridian Health

## VICE CHAIRMAN

**DAX STROHMEYER**  
President,  
Triangle Manufacturing

## TREASURER

**KATHLEEN ALEXANDER**  
Partner,  
Sax, LLP

## SECRETARY

**JOSEPH IMPERATO, JR.**  
Partner,  
XSolutions Consulting Services, LLC

## COUNSEL

**LANNY S. KURZWEIL**  
Partner,  
McCarter & English, LLP

## PRESIDENT

**ANTHONY RUSSO**

## AT LARGE MEMBERS

**PAIGE DWORAK**  
President & CEO,  
CareWell Health Medical Center

**PAUL HARENCAK**  
Vice President, Operations  
LPS Industries

**DREW R. MALDONADO**  
Managing Director,  
Private Client Advisor  
Bank of America

**DEL MCLENNON**  
Director of Business Development/Sales  
Safari Solutions

**KIM VIERHEILIG**  
President of Buildings and Facilities,  
STV

## PAST CHAIRMEN

**RICHARD W. ABRAMSON**  
Member,  
Cole Schotz P.C.

**NORMAN ALWORTH**  
Chief Operating Officer,  
Perfect Snax, LLC

**JAMES D'AGOSTINO**  
President,  
JD Companies

**WILLIAM J. HELLER**  
Senior VP And General Counsel,  
New York Football Giants

**MARTIN W. KAFAFIAN, ESQ.**  
Managing Partner,  
Beattie Padovano, LLC

**THOMAS MCNABOLA**  
Senior Advisor,  
Sax LLP

**B. FRANKLIN REINAUER III**  
President,  
Reinauer Realty Corporation

**ANDREW SILVERSTEIN**  
Partner,  
Dorfman, Abrams, Music LLC

**TRACY STRAKA**  
Executive Vice President,  
Creamer Environmental, Inc.

**LOUIS WEISS**  
CEO,  
WFM Project & Construction, Inc.

## Mission

"The mission of the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey is to be the leader in free enterprise advocacy for the purpose of providing, through education, legislative vigilance, and membership interaction, an economic climate that enhances business potential and makes New Jersey a better state in which to live, work and conduct business."

## Directors

**RICHARD W. ABRAMSON**  
Member  
Cole Schotz P.C.

**RON ANDERSEN**  
Senior Managing Director,  
Commercial Private Banker  
Peapack-Gladstone Bank

**AGNES ANTONIAN**  
Chair of Environmental Law Practice Group  
Connell Foley

**ROBERT "TOBY" BABEUF**  
Regional Manager, Commercial Banking  
Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

**WENDY BLACHER**  
Market Executive, Northern NJ Middle Market  
J P Morgan Chase

**DR. KELLY BLUNDY, DC**  
Co-owner  
The Spine & Health Center of New Jersey

**JOHN BRENNAN**  
Senior Vice President  
J.H. Held LLC

**PHILIP I. BRILLIANT**  
Founder and Owner  
Brilliant Environmental Service

**DONALD F. BUCKLEY**  
Market President  
TD Bank North Jersey

**DAVID CAPODANNO**  
Member of the Firm  
CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP)

**BRIAN JOHN CLARK**  
Administrative VP, Group Manager  
Commercial Banking Division  
M&T Bank

**CONRAD COLON**  
Vice President, Sales & Marketing  
Goya Foods, Inc.

**JOHN J. CORCORAN**  
Managing Director  
Merritt Walsh Associates, LLC

**JAMES D'AGOSTINO**  
President  
JD Companies

**GUILLERMO DE VEYGA**  
Vice President  
William Paterson University

**PATRICIA DIAZ**  
CPA, Partner  
Dorfman, Abrams, Music LLC

**ULISES DIAZ**  
Director, Government Affairs  
Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield of NJ

**JACQUELINE ESPINOZA**  
Vice President  
Jersey Central Power & Light

**ROBERT P. EVANS**  
Consultant

**DANIEL FOWLER**  
Vice President of Corporate Services  
and Special Projects  
J. Fletcher Creamer & Sons, Inc.

**ERIC M. FRIEDMAN**  
President  
Bergen Community College

**TODD GALANTE**  
Principal/Partner  
Piro, Zinna, Cifelli, Paris & Genitempo, LLC

**SARABETH GAVER**  
Partner  
White and Williams LLP

**SALLY GLICK**  
Business Development Advisor  
CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP)

**BOB GORDON**  
Vice President  
Stevens & Lee Public Affairs

**RICHARD M. GOLDBERG**  
President & CEO  
Ultra Artists LLC.

**WILLIAM C. HANSON**  
President,  
NAI James E. Hanson

**PAUL HARENCAK**  
Vice President, Operations  
LPS Industries

**TODD HAY**  
Regional VP, Office Director  
Pennoni Associates, Inc.

**ROBERT IACULLO**  
Consultant

**LAWRENCE INSERRA, JR.**  
President  
Inserra Supermarkets, Inc.

**AIYSHA (AJ) JOHNSON**  
CEO & Executive Director  
New Jersey Society of CPAs

**KEVIN JOYCE**  
VP, Insurance Networks  
Atlantic Health System

**MARTIN W. KAFAFIAN, ESQ.**  
Managing Partner  
Beattie Padovano, LLC

**ALADAR G. KOMJATHY**  
Owner  
Komjathy & Kean, LLC

**JAMES A. KOSCH**  
Partner  
McCarter & English, LLP

**PAUL KRIEGER**  
Managing Partner  
Deloitte LLP

**RICHARD J. LAMBERT**  
Founding Partner  
Dunn Lambert LLC

**ANTHONY J. LEE**  
President  
The Cardinal Hill Group, Inc.

**DANIEL M. LESKO, SVP,**  
Business Banking Sales Manager  
PNC Bank, N.A.

**KEVIN LUING**  
Chairman of the Board  
Berkeley College

**PAUL B. MAIDE**  
Senior Executive  
Pace Analytical

**JOHN MARCHIONI**  
President and COO  
Selective Insurance Company of America

**PAUL MARDEN**  
CEO  
UnitedHealthcare of New Jersey

**MICHAEL A. MARON**  
President & CEO  
Holy Name Medical Center

**BOB MARTIN**  
Managing Director  
Christie 55 Solutions

**MILDRED MIHLON**  
President  
Felician University

**DENNIS MIKULA, JR.**  
President  
Mikula Contracting, Inc.

**MICHAEL MURPHY**  
Vice President of Sales  
AmeriHealth

**WILLIAM MURRAY**  
Executive Vice President, Public Affairs  
MWWRP

**CINDY MYER**  
President  
Ridgewood Moving Services

**STEVEN NAPOLITANO**  
Principal  
SNS Architects & Engineers

**CORETHIA V.E. OATES**  
VP, Portfolio Manager  
Morgan Stanley

**KEVIN O'CONNOR**  
VP External Affairs  
Veolia North America

**TERRIE O'CONNOR**  
President/Broker  
Terrie O'Connor Realtors

**BRENDAN O'DONNELL**  
GM, Newark Brewery  
Anheuser-Busch

**ROBERT M. PIGNATELLO**  
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs,  
Community Engagement &  
Strategic Initiatives  
Fairleigh Dickinson University

**GIANFRANCO A. PIETRAFESA**  
Partner  
Archer & Greiner P.C.

**BARRY PETRUZZI**  
Vice President  
Delta Dental

**JASON POURAKIS**  
Partner,  
Mazars USA LLP

**B. FRANKLIN REINAUER III**  
President,  
Reinauer Realty Corporation

**DAVID REPETTO**  
Co-Managing Partner  
Harwood Lloyd, LLC

**STEVEN C. SCHINELLA, CPA**  
Roseland Office Managing Partner  
CohnReznick, LLP

**THOMAS J. SHARA**  
President & CEO  
Lakeland Bank

**NISHA M. SIKDER**  
VP of Payer Strategies  
Valley Health System

**MICHAEL SMILOVITCH**  
SVP, Market President  
Commercial Banking  
Valley National Bank

**AUGUST SODORA**  
President  
Swift Electrical Supply Co., Inc.

**JENNIFER SOLEWSKI**  
VP Business & Technical Development  
Bayshore Family of Companies

**TRACY STRAKA**  
Executive Vice President  
Creamer Environmental, Inc.

**JIM TROUWBORST**  
SVP, Senior Credit Officer  
ConnectOne Bank

**LEONARD VAN DAM**  
First Senior Vice President  
Columbia Bank

**DEBORAH D. VISCONI**  
President & CEO  
Bergen New Bridge Medical Center

**PETER WEBSTER**  
Resident Managing Director  
AON Insurance

**LOUIS WEISS**  
CEO  
WFM Project & Construction, Inc.

Information gathered and presented in this publication is presumed to be accurate. However, because of the extensive number of sources used, Commerce Enterprises, Inc. and the CIANJ cannot guarantee accuracy or be responsible for any omissions in fact or credit.



## UPCOMING



### **CIANJ's Young Professionals Retreat**

**September 18 – 19**

11:00 a.m. start – 12:30 p.m. end

Crystal Springs Resort

Hamburg, NJ



Photo: Getty Images/stockphoto/Andrii Lyenko

### **"What's Keeping Marketers Up at Night?"**

**September 24**

8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Galloping Hill Golf Course

Kenilworth, NJ



### **CIANJ Fall Golf Outing and Networking Reception**

**September 26th**

10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

New Jersey National Golf Club

Basking Ridge, NJ



### **CIANJ's 97th Annual Meeting & Luncheon**

**October 24**

11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Hilton Meadowlands Hotel

East Rutherford, NJ

*Register and stay up to date on all [CIANJ](https://web.cianj.org/events) and [COMMERCE](https://web.cianj.org/events) events at: <https://web.cianj.org/events>*

### **24/7 COMMERCE**

Stay in the know on all the top business news across NJ.  
Find COMMERCE Magazine online @ [www.commercemagazinenj.com](http://www.commercemagazinenj.com)





# CIANJ and COMMERCE Honor Enterprising Women in Commerce

By Anthony Russo  
*President, CIANJ*

**T**his month's issue celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month, including a conversation with Goya Foods' Unanue brothers; a community event; and a significant appointment. But before September celebrations, I'd like to look back at the uplifting enthusiasm found at the 4th annual Enterprising Women in Commerce Awards Reception last month.

The event kicked off with a Keynote from Lt. Governor Tahesha Way, who shared highlights of her personal journey, reminded the crowd of the powerful role women play in elections, and closed with a pearl of wisdom: be present, take up space in the room, and be a thoughtful listener.

The Keynote was followed by an equally engaging panel of female leaders (learn more [here](#)), and the bestowing of "2024 Enterprising Women of the Year" award, which went to Wanda Bryant Hope, Johnson & Johnson's Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer – stayed tuned for more on her remarkable career later this fall.

Finally, I'd like to thank each of you who attended. Your support of women driving change

in New Jersey left a packed room strengthened to continue innovating, leading, and inspiring. 📈



"2024 Enterprising Women of the Year" Wanda Bryant Hope, pictured with fellow Enterprising Women winners.

### COMMERCE MAGAZINE

#### PUBLISHER/CEO

ANTHONY RUSSO

[arusso@cianj.org](mailto:arusso@cianj.org)

#### EDITOR

JAMIE GRILL-GOODMAN

[jgoodman@cianj.org](mailto:jgoodman@cianj.org)

#### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JULIA PANGBURN

LARRY FELD

#### ADVERTISING SALES

RICH WALTMAN (646) 808-5114

[rwaltman@cianj.org](mailto:rwaltman@cianj.org)

TOM WORLEY (917)-733-5135

[tworley@cianj.org](mailto:tworley@cianj.org)

#### LAYOUT AND DESIGN

MARJORIE CAMPOLONGO

Art Director,

[mjcampolongo@gmail.com](mailto:mjcampolongo@gmail.com)



## AMY DELMAN PUBLIC RELATIONS LLC

"KEEPING YOU IN THE NEWS"

Everybody in business has a story to tell. A public relations professional is an objective set of eyes who knows how to drill down and find the thread of what makes your company, service or product unique.

### What Exactly Is Public Relations?

It is an invaluable tool in creating favorable public opinion. It differs from advertising in that it is an unpaid endorsement of a company, a person, a product or a service, and that fact alone, lends tremendous credibility.

### How Does Public Relations Pay Back Big?

Your uniqueness, your story is what differentiates you from everyone else in your field. Being quoted in newspaper and business publications as well as appearing on broadcast media brands you as an 'expert'. This type of credibility creates a 'buzz' or publicity that associates you and your firm with excellence. Publicity builds on itself and opens doors where entrée was never previously anticipated or envisioned.

*Make sure your story is told.*

Contact **Amy Delman**  
[amydelmanpr@verizon.net](mailto:amydelmanpr@verizon.net) or 201.563.4614

[www.amydelmanpr.com](http://www.amydelmanpr.com)



# A health plan for every business.



Take control of you and your employees' health care with access to one of the largest networks of doctors and hospitals, free 24/7 virtual care, and a range of affordable health plans.

**Learn more at [amerihealth.com](https://amerihealth.com)**





# Celebrating 50 Years in New Jersey: A Conversation With Goya Foods' Unanue Brothers

By Larry Feld  
Contributing Editor

**D**espite its impressive size and multinational reach, Goya Foods is still a privately held family business; fiercely devoted to family, quality, and its Hispanic roots.

"My first day with the company was in 1964," recalls Robert (Bob) Unanue, President and CEO of Goya Foods. "Our factory was in Brooklyn. It was Christmas break and I was about 10 years old. On my first day, I worked putting customer calendars together. They had to be glued onto cardboard backing and then inserted into envelopes. I remember coming home that night with all these papercuts," he smiles, finding some humor through the lens of time about his temporary pain.

Younger brother Peter Unanue serves as Executive Vice President of Goya Foods, overseeing logistics, facilities, and operations. He shared a similar early work experience.

"My first job was when I was 14, working in the factory," recalls Peter. "What I remember most were the smells. Even today, every time I enter the factory floor, those smells bring memories back of those early days." Like his brother Bob, Peter also worked during the summers, doing various jobs, loading trucks, in the factory, and the office. Later, Peter also went to college and graduate school, where he studied operations research.

Unlike his older brother, Peter didn't immediately join the family business. "I worked outside the company for about five years," Peter explains. "I wanted to get more experience in what I studied. I also had a desire to make it on my own."

Peter moved to Illinois, but strong East Coast ties eventually called him home. "After I started a family, the offer came up to move back to the area, where my extended family and friends are located, so I returned. That was about 27 years ago," Peter explains.

The two brothers have been at the helm of leadership for the last quarter century, methodically fueling a growth cycle that is the envy of all family-owned businesses. The company's long-time slogan, "If it's Goya, it has to be good," was coined by the company founder, Grandfather Don Prudencio Unanue decades ago. Along with quality, a strong work ethic is an evident ingredient in the company's success, starting with their grandparents. His grandfather emigrated from Spain in 1904 at the tender age of 17.

"Don Prudencio was a demanding guy, but he was also friendly. He didn't start Goya until

1936, when he was almost 50. He was very hands-on. I remember he would always quiz the salesmen. He knew everything that was going on. You couldn't get things past Don Prudencio. He always said he loved writing big commission checks and presenting them to the salesmen. It gave them pride. He taught us about the value of hard work. Years later, during COVID, the government told us we could keep working because we were essential. But my grandfather taught us to believe that all work is essential. You need a reason to get up in the morning," Bob opines.

## Goya Foods Today

Headquartered in Jersey City, NJ, Goya Foods is the largest Hispanic-owned business in the United States. Its global headquarters, a massive 642,000-square-foot multipurpose building in the Meadowlands area, is one of 26 facilities Goya maintains across the U.S., Spain, Puerto

---

*"...during COVID, the government told us we could keep working because we were essential. But my grandfather taught us to believe that all work is essential. You need a reason to get up in the morning."*

---

Rico, and the Dominican Republic. Known for its expansive line of quality foods catering to Hispanic and Latino tastes, the Goya brand is brought to life by the company's 4,500 employees, who manufacture and distribute over 2,500 products, including beans, rice, and coconut water, as well as a wide variety of frozen foods.

## Celebrating 50 Years In New Jersey

Established 88 years ago as a storefront in lower Manhattan, the company relocated to a multistory building in Brooklyn in 1958, until the promise of open space lured the family to the Meadowlands in 1974.

"We are located at a crossroads," Peter notes. "We have the NJ Turnpike, Route 3, plus the rails. We are very close to the city. Logistically, we have the ports here, too. We import a large volume of products via the ports."

In 2005, Goya launched a 10-year strategic plan and invested \$500 million in a global expansion, designed to reach new consumers and strengthen the Goya brand worldwide. From 2014 to 2016, Goya opened five new state-of-the-art manufacturing and distribution centers in Texas, California, Georgia, and New Jersey.

The company also invests in green technologies, including over a million square feet of solar panels installed to date at several of its facilities.

Ten years ago, Goya reaffirmed its commitment to New Jersey, moving to its current 642,000-square-foot headquarters on County Road on the outskirts of Jersey City.

"This year we are celebrating 50 years in New Jersey. It is a special milestone for our company," declares Peter Unanue. "In New Jersey, we have the proximity to everything here at a reasonable cost."

## Goya and The Hispanic Community

"We see our role in the Hispanic community as a big responsibility," says Peter, adding "We

*Continued*



Celebrating 50 years in NJ, the current Goya Foods headquarters resides in Jersey City.

Photo: Russ Desantis Photography and Video





CETCO'S #1 Preferred  
Liquid Boot Installer  
on the East Coast



## About EAI INC

EAI is a **service-based** specialty contractor striving to provide cost effective turnkey solutions. Our diverse team of professionals, including engineers, scientists, PMs, applicators and technicians, address each job anew while bringing over **30 years of experience** to the table. Through deliberate action to ensure safety and a wide network, EAI has seen it all and continues to be a **leader** in the growing field of vapor intrusion mitigation. Our long list of repeat clients testifies to our experience, knowledge, customer service and our ability to meet deadlines and budgets.

## Discover Our Services

- ✓ Gas Vapor Barriers
- ✓ Sub-Slab Depressurization/Venting Systems
- ✓ Gas Monitoring Systems
- ✓ Design/Build Services
- ✓ Waterproofing
- ✓ Specialty Contracting

## Contact Us Today!

☎ (201) 395-0010

✉ [inforequest@eaienviro.com](mailto:inforequest@eaienviro.com)



50 Prescott Street  
Jersey City, NJ 07304

[WWW.EAIENVIRO.COM](http://WWW.EAIENVIRO.COM)





## ■ Manufacturing

weren't always a large company. We struggled to get our products on the shelves. When we made it, the Hispanic community got recognized, at the same time. That created a tremendous bond with the community. Now we are synonymous with the Hispanic community. It's a tremendous responsibility to keep making quality products and to support the communities we serve," he confides.

According to CEO Bob Unanue, Goya has always been committed to combating food insecurity, particularly during times of crisis. "During COVID-19, we gave away 4.5 million pounds of food. Every year, we continue to give away hundreds of thousands of pounds of food. We've been giving since day one, but we decided to put this effort under one banner, and that is how Goya Gives was established."

Another important company initiative is Goya Cares, an awareness program dedicated to shining a light on mental health among children and teens and to protecting children from exploitation, trafficking, and abuse.

*As they celebrate their first fifty years as a New Jersey-headquartered company, COMMERCE and the CIANJ congratulate Goya Foods and the Unanue family for creating a brand that reflects the growing success of the Hispanic community and its strong values and culture.*

**Editors Note:** This is an excerpt from a longer interview available in full on [Commercemagazinenj.com](http://Commercemagazinenj.com).



Goya Foods' President and CEO Robert (Bob) Unanue and EVP Peter Unanue.

Photo: Russ DeSantis Photography and Video

## Local news is more important **than ever**



TAPINTO PROVIDES ORIGINAL LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE  
EVERY DAY IN MORE THAN 125 NJ TOWNS

Proud Partner of Commerce Magazine  
Find Commerce online at [www.commercemagazinenj.com](http://www.commercemagazinenj.com)

Objective Local News  
Coverage

No Editorial  
Page

No Comments/  
Anonymous Comments

No Paywall

To Advertise:  
[TAPintoMarketing.net](http://TAPintoMarketing.net)

Franchising Information:  
[StartTAP.net](http://StartTAP.net)

Sign Up for Our Free Newsletter:





# ADVERTISE

**Engage Thousands of  
Decision Makers Monthly**



**Rich Waltman**  
[rwaltman@cianj.org](mailto:rwaltman@cianj.org)  
(646) 808-5114

**Tom Worley**  
[tworley@cianj.org](mailto:tworley@cianj.org)  
(917) 733-5135





# New Stockton Degree Preps Students for Cannabis Industry

By Jamie Grill-Goodman

In response to ballooning jobs in New Jersey's cannabis industry, Stockton University is rolling out a new undergraduate degree program this fall aimed at providing educated graduates to fill future industry roles.

The University's Bachelor of Science in Hemp and Cannabis Business Management degree (HACM) is a first in New Jersey, Rob Mejia told COMMERCE Magazine in a recent interview.

Mejia, Adjunct Professor, Cannabis Studies, Stockton, said the University began offering a Minor in Cannabis Studies in the fall of 2018 with an enrollment of 24 students. Enrollment grew quickly and to date over 70 students have graduated with the Minor, according to Mejia. Based on this success and seeing a need to provide educated graduates to work in the hemp and cannabis industries, Stockton added the HACM undergraduate degree. The University, located in Galloway Township, NJ, expects to see up to two dozen students enroll in the first year – and the first potential graduates of the program in spring 2028.

"Stockton University is leading the way in cannabis education, offering the first Bachelor of Science in Hemp and Cannabis Business Management in New Jersey to meet the

booming demand for educated professionals in this rapidly growing industry," said Mejia.

Full time cannabis jobs in New Jersey saw a 66% spike this year, growing by 4,870 positions to a total of 12,237 in March 2024, according to Vangst's Cannabis "Jobs Report 2024." And these figures don't include "support" businesses

***"Stockton University is leading the way in cannabis education, offering the first Bachelor of Science in Hemp and Cannabis Business Management in New Jersey..."***

required to make cannabis businesses successful, Mejia noted, such as marketing companies and webpage developers. According to the report, with a little more than 100 stores, New Jersey added nearly 5,000 jobs but has captured less than one-third of the state's full cannabis demand.

*Continued*



Rob Mejia, Adjunct Professor, Cannabis Studies, Stockton University

Photo courtesy of Rob Mejia



Photo: Stockton University

Student interns help grow about 150 hemp plants per year on the campus farm. They learn to weed, trim, and water the plants; identify male and female plants; and collect seeds near the end of the growing cycle.



Photo: Stockton University

This year Stockton is growing three different strains/types of hemp on the campus farm. At the end of the growing cycle, we harvest and then compost the plants, said Mejia.





# Connecting advanced pediatric medicine with being human.

At The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital, we offer comprehensive pediatric medical and surgical services, never losing sight of what matters most — treating your child with compassion, every step of the way.

Because at Saint Peter's, we care for your precious one with skilled hands and warm hearts for the highest level of quality care.

To learn more, call 732.745.8600 or visit [saintpetershcs.com/childrenshospital](https://saintpetershcs.com/childrenshospital)



*That's treating you better...for life.*

Sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Metuchen.

Saint Peter's is a state-designated acute care children's hospital and has advanced certification in perinatal care and verification as a Level IV Maternal Care Facility from The Joint Commission.



## Higher Education

“With New Jersey’s cannabis industry on track to exceed 12,000 jobs this year, Stockton University’s new degree program is crucial in supplying the knowledgeable and skilled workforce needed to sustain this growth,” said Mejia.

### Degree Details

The HACM degree from Stockton University, located in Galloway Township, NJ,



Photo: Stockton University

The campus farm take cuttings from a mature plant and then grows the clones to maturity.

is multifaceted with an emphasis on experiential learning grounded by rigorous business courses, such as Macroeconomics, Financial Accounting, Statistics, and Marketing.

As a required part of the cannabis curriculum, students must complete a paid internship, which will help them gain practical experience in cultivation, processing, product creation, inventory management, marketing, and regulatory compliance. Past students have interned in cultivation, processing labs, at dispensaries, with consultants, conducting market research, assisting in product development, and tracking down sales leads, said Mejia. Stockton works with the employer to ensure that valuable learning takes place and that students bring value to the business’ operations. The internships last for one semester and most require about 5-10 hours of time per week.

“Internships are a cornerstone of our cannabis curriculum, providing students with hands-on experience in everything from cultivation to market research, preparing them to bring immediate value to their future employers,” said Mejia.

Stockton University’s innovative approach to cannabis education positions it at the forefront of a burgeoning industry. When students graduate, they are expected to have an excellent grasp of how businesses, especially hemp and cannabis businesses, operate.

“Our graduates will be equipped for diverse roles within the hemp and cannabis sectors, from compliance officers to marketing directors, ensuring they can contribute significantly to the industry’s expansion,” he said. 📌

### Career Pathways

Graduates from the HACM program will be equipped for diverse roles in the hemp and cannabis industry, such as:

- Accountants
- Compliance Officers
- Inventory Control Managers
- Logistics Providers
- Lab Managers
- Shift Managers
- Farm Managers
- Regulators
- Consultants
- Marketing Directors
- Consumption Lounge Managers
- General Managers

If your business would like to offer an internship to students enrolled in Stockton’s HACM degree program, contact Adjunct Professor Rob Mejia at [robert.mejia@stockton.edu](mailto:robert.mejia@stockton.edu) to discuss details. Professor Mejia has placed dozens of students in internships, is well versed in the field, and welcomes your outreach.

## LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

# Positive Thinking and Leadership



By Steve Aduato, PhD  
Freelance Contributor

“Why don’t you just stop being so argumentative...?” “If I could only get that raise, everything would be great.” It’s natural for all of us to see the problems and challenges in our lives

more often than focusing on what is going right. Consider the following tips to having a more positive outlook that will help you become a more effective leader and communicator:

- Celebrate the “wins.” For that guy who complains about not getting a raise, but finally *does* get it, look what happens just a few months after. He is complaining about something else like, “Why does Jim get the corner office and not me?” It is more beneficial to focus on what is good around us rather than continually looking for something to complain about.

- Check your mood. Spend energy focusing on your mood and remaining upbeat, which will help you stay in a healthier frame of mind. Attitude is a choice, so it is essential to be present, grateful, and aware of the greatness in the world around us.
- Focus on what you CAN control. There is so much outside of our control, yet we waste precious time and energy pushing and pulling in so many directions. We must work to lead change; however, we must also have the self-awareness of what we cannot control so that we can let those items go.
- Reframe your self-talk. The conversations we have with ourselves are often more powerful than those we have with others. Instead of thinking, “I’ll never get this done.” Reframe it to, “I must break this down into manageable action items.”
- Surround yourself with positive people. Negative individuals increase your stress level. Positivity, and negativity for that matter, are contagious. Therefore, be

intentional about surrounding yourself with co-workers with positive attitudes. 📌

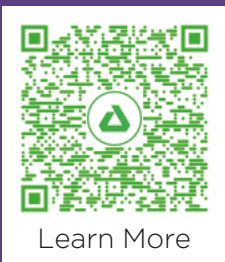


Steve Aduato, PhD, is the author of five books including, “Lessons in Leadership.” His sixth book, “Lessons in Leadership 2.0: The Tough Stuff,” will be released in summer 2023. He is an Emmy® Award-winning anchor with programs airing on Thirteen/WNET (PBS) and NJ PBS. He has also appeared on CNN, NPR and NBC’s Today Show. Steve Aduato’s “Lessons in Leadership” video podcast with co-host Mary Gamba airs Sundays at 10:00 a.m. on News 12+. For more information visit [www.Stand-Deliver.com](http://www.Stand-Deliver.com)





## Expanding access to dental care for children & adults with special needs.



Delta Dental of New Jersey is expanding dental care access by introducing an enhanced special health care needs benefit for group-covered children and adults with qualifying special health care conditions. Effective January 1, 2024.

[deltadentalnj.com/SHCN](https://deltadentalnj.com/SHCN)



# CIANJ Members Meet to Talk Real Estate and Energy

By Jamie Grill-Goodman

**T**he Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey (CIANJ) hosted a discussion on the latest real estate trends and the impacts of New Jersey's energy policies at [Bergen Community College](#) on July 16.

The event, "Building the Future: Real Estate Trends & Energy Policy Impacts," opened up with a panel session including John Obeid, Senior Research Manager, [Cushman & Wakefield](#), and Ryan Sanzari, President, [Alfred Sanzari Enterprises](#). CIANJ President Anthony Russo moderated the discussion, which he kicked off by asking about the state of office space in real estate. Sanzari noted that tenants are returning to work and looking for landlords to assist with return-to-work initiatives. "That means programing, community space, and of course amenities," said Sanzari. "We're certainly seeing a lot of that."

Obeid noted the problem in the office market is while there's too much supply, there's also an "undersupply of top-tier, trophy-quality space." To this end he sees a lot of office buildings being repurposed or redeveloped.

Sanzari noted building amenities he's seeing include gyms, cafes, outdoor space, game rooms, bars, and restaurants. He also noted tenants are seeking stability. They want the landlord to be the same landlord when renewal comes up in five-to-ten years. Tenants want to know, "what are the long-term plans for this asset, and will the landlord continue to invest in that before I move X amount of people here for X amount of years, and invest a lot of faith and money in the landlord?"

Obeid added that tenants are looking for collaborative space and convenient locations at the intersection of two highways for quick commutes. Sanzari later added that his company recently signed an agreement with Tesla to add Supercharger stations. Obeid agreed, "people are using them, it's definitely a good amenity to have."

Russo then turned the conversation to warehouses and pushbacks – he noted he counted 33 pieces of legislation dealing with warehousing – asking the panelists if we'll continue to see warehousing development.

"We're pretty land constrained here, so finding land to build the warehouse on is difficult," said Obeid. Additionally, the amount of space under construction has started to dwindle for multiple reasons. "Right now we're at about 6.5 million square feet of space under construction, a lot less than we had last year," he said. However, he noted, while some towns like Franklin Township have been against warehouses, the port market – Kearny, Newark, Jersey City – has a lot of development.

"In terms of redevelopments – and this goes back to what we were saying about office buildings – I think there needs to be a lot more proactive measures taken by municipalities on their master planning and their long-term goals' objectives," said Sanzari. "Not just for industrials, for multi-family, for any redevelopments."

In the event's second session, Henry Gajda, Deputy Chief of Staff, [Board of Public Utilities \(BPU\)](#), kicked off with an overview of what the State is working on, including securing as much federal funding as possible. "It's been priority

number one for about two years now," he said. To date the BPU has applied for over \$800 million dollars in funding, he said, which includes clean energy initiatives. He gave an overview of how New Jersey was selected to receive \$156.1 million in federal funding, awarded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through its Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: Solar for All program. New Jersey's Solar for All award is anticipated to enable the State to deploy more than 175 MW of solar energy to benefit 22,000 overburdened households within the first five years of funding.

"We are remaining steadfast in our clean energy transition," said Gajda. "Our solar industry has been in place and thriving for nearly 20 years."

Next, Stephen Milgrom, Manager, Office of Business Advocacy, [New Jersey Business Action Center \(NJBAC\)](#), pulled back the curtain on how the NJBAC can help connect New Jersey businesses with people and grants to help their businesses thrive.

"My job is solely to assist business and help navigate government, help try to find these programs [we covered earlier] and actually bring them to you," said Milgrom. "I'm the manifestation of these great policies and my goal is to help the business."

He shared that, while there are a lot of agencies that have grants available, the real money is in the energy sector. His team can help businesses figure out where and how they can benefit from the programs available. He gave examples of companies that used money from available

*Continued*



With the backdrop of American Dream Meadowlands, John Obeid of Cushman & Wakefield and Ryan Sanzari of Alfred Sanzari Enterprises kicked off with a panel on real estate trends.



(Left to right) Stephen Milgrom, Manager, Office of Business Advocacy, New Jersey Business Action Center; Kyle Tafuri, Vice-President, Sustainability, Hackensack Meridian Health; Corey Lewis, Managing Director, AON Insurance; Henry Gajda, Deputy Chief of Staff, Board of Public Utilities; and Anthony Russo, Publisher/CEO, [COMMERCE Magazine](#).



programs to rehab their space and urged tenant attendees, “Don’t move. Rehab your space. The money is there now to upgrade your facility.”

Kyle Tafuri, Vice-President, Sustainability, Hackensack Meridian Health, spoke of how Hackensack has invested “\$116 million in energy efficiency work,” but “solar was one of the last pillars we were struggling with getting over the finish line.”

Typically, it was tough to utilize incentive programs as a not-for-profit, he noted, but through a \$134 million investment in infrastructure improvements, Hackensack plans to install 50,000 solar panels in each of its 18 hospitals. Around \$50 million of the cost will come from tax credits from the Inflation Reduction Act. Additionally, the solar panels being installed were all manufactured in the U.S.

“These are jobs throughout the communities,” said Tafuri. “Without the Inflation Reduction Act we would not have done this project.”

“Literally every rooftop we could we’re putting panels on,” he added. “We’re working with engineering companies from New Jersey throughout the state and it has been really an exciting project to be a part of. Though the lifetime of it, 30 years, we’ll save \$402 million. All of these savings we reinvest back into patient care.”

Corey Lewis, Managing Director, AON Insurance, then gave details on tax credits and tax credit insurance. “The Inflation Reduction Act was definitely a game changer in the energy

space, definitely led to a turbo charge of the use of tax credit insurance,” said Lewis. “One of the big aspects of the Inflation Reduction Act is its concept of transferability.”

Transferability allows entities that can’t use elective pay but do qualify for an eligible tax credit to transfer all or a portion of the credit to a third-party buyer in exchange for cash. The buyer and seller would negotiate and agree to the terms and pricing, according to the IRS.

The conversation then turned to audience questions and a lively discussion around

energy projects and opportunities for small businesses, to which Gajda noted, “If you’re a small business owner there are utility programs you pay into that you can qualify for. There’s a saying I like that goes, ‘what’s the point of having a good program if nobody knows about it.’”

The engaging event was made possible by the following sponsors: [Aon](#); [Electronic Office Systems](#); [Bergen Community College](#); and [NAI James E. Hanson](#). For information on all upcoming CIANJ events visit: <https://web.cianj.org/events>.



A packed room attended “Building the Future: Real Estate Trends & Energy Policy Impacts” at Bergen Community College on July 16.

## MEMBER NOTES

# NJ Hispanic Community Anticipates Film Screening and Fundraiser

In honor of the 125th anniversary of the 65th Infantry Regiment, the New Jersey Hispanic community is set to host a film screening and Q&A session with filmmaker Noemi Figueroa Soulet for the PBS award-winning documentary, “The Borinqueneers,” as part of Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations.

The event will take place at the Barrymore Film Center and Museum in Fort Lee, NJ, on September 21. Attendees can look forward to a VIP reception at Ventanas Restaurant starting at 5:30 p.m., followed by the film screening from 7-8 p.m.

Narrated by actor Hector Elizondo, “The Borinqueneers” explores the remarkable stories of valor, triumph, and challenges faced by the 65th Infantry Regiment – the only Hispanic-segregated unit in U.S. Army history. Utilizing rare archival footage and interviews with veterans, commanding officers, and historians, the film showcases the courage and determination of Puerto Rican soldiers who faced significant discrimination during the Korean War.

Established in 1899 by the U.S. Congress as a segregated unit predominantly composed of Puerto Ricans, this year marks the 125th anniversary of the regiment. Celebrated for their service in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War, the regiment was affectionately nicknamed “Borinquen” after the indigenous Taíno name for Puerto Rico, meaning “land of the brave lord.”

In the Korean War, the 65th Infantry Regiment notably held the line against Chinese forces and aided U.S. Marines following the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir, earning commendations from General Douglas MacArthur for their exemplary performance.

Sam Delgado, chairman of the Borinqueneers Park Education Alliance – a New Jersey non-profit corporation – and key event supporter, stated that the aim of the event is to “honor and educate the public about the regiment’s heroic actions during the Korean War, for which they were awarded a Congressional Gold Medal.”

Highlighting the event, actor David Zayas, renowned for his roles in “Dexter” and “The Bear,” will receive the prestigious “Caballero Award.” This award honors individuals who demonstrate extraordinary dedication, kindness and service to the community. Acclaimed actor and Air Force veteran, Zayas is celebrated for his unwavering commitment to giving back.

The event also kicks off a three-year, \$5 million capital campaign to build a memorial for the 65th Infantry veterans at the proposed Borinqueneers Park in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, which is currently a six-acre site under remediation by the EPA.

Partners for this event include the Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey and the New Jersey Statewide Veterans Chamber of Commerce and United Food and Commercial Workers 360.

For event, ticket, and sponsorship information contact:

Sam Delgado 201-704-8953

Email: [sdelg@bpealliance.org](mailto:sdelg@bpealliance.org)

Visit website at: [www.bpealliance.org](http://www.bpealliance.org)



# How Technology and Client Expectations Influence Services

Compiled by Jamie Grill-Goodman

**T**echnology impacts every industry, including legal professionals. As client expectations change alongside the rapid advancement of tech like artificial intelligence (AI), law firms must continuously innovate and adapt.

Communication, data security, and the development of AI policies and procedures are just a few topics that came up when *COMMERCE Magazine* talked to leaders in New Jersey's legal community. We asked, "how are evolving client expectations influencing the services you offer?" and this is what we learned:



**Gibbons P.C.**  
Peter J. Torricollo  
*Managing Director*

Our clients are sophisticated purchasers of legal services, and – not surprisingly – the expectations they have for their outside counsel have increased significantly over time. In our experience, clients want real specialization, with attorneys not only being knowledgeable in specific areas of the law, but also having real-world experience actually performing the type of work for which they are being engaged.

Clients are also looking for increased efficiency, particularly with the advent of some of the generative artificial intelligence platforms being able to provide assistance in various areas of legal practice. We are seeing clients specifically ask, as part of the RFP process, how responding

law firms envision using generative AI to aid in the provision of the services being performed.

As a result of these realities, our firm has continued to provide opportunities for our attorneys to develop proficiency in a broad variety of highly specialized areas. We also launched an internal Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies Committee, which has been responsible for developing AI policies and procedures, evaluating additional AI tools for use by our firm on behalf of our clients, and guiding the firm's attorneys and paraprofessionals toward the efficient, safe, and ethical use of generative AI in a manner that is consistent with each client's needs and guidelines, where applicable.



**Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis LLP**

W. Raymond Felton  
*Managing Partner/  
Chair, Corporate Department*

Like any service profession, a law firm must always be responsive to the expectations of its clients. The entire team at our firm strives constantly to be responsive to the ever-evolving expectations of our clients as well as those of the legal profession as a whole.

Naturally, advances in technology are the most visible areas of change. Communications were once limited to letters, phone calls and in-person meetings. It is now a world of emails, text messages, Zoom and Teams meetings and other virtual techniques. These means of communication have great benefits, but also present

considerable risks when it comes to security. We must also have the capacity to obtain, store and transfer very large quantities of documents and data efficiently. Our clients expect us not only to utilize this modern technology, but also to implement requisite security measures to maintain the confidentiality that is a bedrock of the attorney-client relationship.

A big driver of expectations now is artificial intelligence, which creates both opportunities and risks as that technology becomes more prevalent. We need to understand the limits of AI in the practice of law and communicate the benefits and risks to our clients.

Very often, one element of meeting client expectations involves managing those expectations. Clients are understandably concerned about the time a matter might take to resolve and push for a quick completion. It's not always possible to get the best answer or result without the extra time and effort. By explaining to clients at the outset what is realistic, we can better satisfy their expectations. So perhaps the one-word answer to client expectations is simply "communication."



**Nachman, Phulwani,  
Zimovcak (NPZ)  
Law Group, P.C.**  
David H. Nachman, Esq.  
*Managing Attorney*

In today's rapidly changing legal landscape, evolving client expectations significantly shape the services we offer at NPZ Law Group. Clients now demand not only expertise but also efficiency, transparency, and personalized service. As immigration laws become more complex, our clients expect us to navigate these intricacies swiftly and effectively.

To meet these demands, we have integrated advanced technology into our practice, utilizing AI-driven tools and secure client portals to enhance communication and streamline case management. This technology enables us to provide real-time updates and faster response times, which are crucial for our clients' peace of mind.

Moreover, we understand that each client's situation is unique. Therefore, we offer tailored solutions that address specific needs and circumstances, ensuring a more personalized approach. Our diverse team of attorneys, fluent in multiple languages and culturally attuned, allows us to connect deeply with our clients and understand their distinct challenges.

Additionally, we place a strong emphasis on education and empowerment. By offering webi-

*Continued*



Gibbons P.C. launched an internal Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies Committee responsible for developing AI policies, evaluating tools, and guiding ethical use.

Photo: Getty Images/Stockphoto



# Making Our Mark.



GIBBONS

Impacting businesses when it matters most.  
Your legal partner since 1926.

---

[gibbonslaw.com](http://gibbonslaw.com)

NJ NY PA DE DC FL

Gibbons P.C. is headquartered at One Gateway Center, Newark, New Jersey 07102. Prior results do not guarantee similar outcomes.  
No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.



nars, informative blogs, and regular updates on immigration policy changes, we empower our clients with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions.

In essence, the evolving expectations of our clients drive us to continuously innovate and adapt, ensuring we provide the highest level of service and maintain our commitment to excellence in immigration law.



**Norris McLaughlin, P.A.**  
David C. Roberts  
Chair of the Firm

At Norris McLaughlin, P.A., we pride ourselves on being client-centric, often relying on our intergenerational clients and nurturing close relationships as matters and our firm evolve. The client-attorney communication both during and after the matter is a testament to these relationships. In a full-service law firm such as ours, winning or losing is not often the outcome, but rather deals with submitting applications, registering, obtaining permits, or following local, state, and federal regulations, among others. Establishing long-term relationships begins with our diligent and meticulous lawyers guiding our clients through multiple steps in a transaction.

As a mid-sized firm, we recognize that “full-service” is a hazy term, but our attorneys strive to

keep up with new industries. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, several industries were affected, including labor and employment, business law, estate planning, immigration, and niche areas. As changes evolved, our lawyers and staff worked with clients to ease their burdens. For services or locations that our firm cannot represent, we refer our clients to trusted law firms and lawyers through Meritas, a global law firm alliance.

Four years after the pandemic began, our firm has not stagnated. To bring a variety of perspectives to our areas, we continue to hire a variety of candidates, from established partners to recent graduates. As we are aware that some clients may be unable to deliver checks or are wary of mailing or wiring large sums, we are digitizing our payment options, keeping our clients in mind when altering our operations. 📱



Photo: Getty Images/Stockphoto/pixelfit

“Clients now demand not only expertise but also efficiency, transparency, and personalized service,” said David H. Nachman, Esq. of NPZ.

## WALK THE PATH TO A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Are you planning a new building?  
Is your building using energy efficiently?

Energy efficiency can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by **50% by 2050**

ENERGY STAR®

New Jersey's Clean Energy Program offers incentives, programs, and services that help save energy, money, and the environment.

- Local Government Energy Audit
- Large Energy Users Program
- New Construction & Gut Rehab
- Combined Heat & Power-Fuel Cell

www.NJCleanEnergy.com  
Outreach@NJCleanEnergy.com  
866-NJSMART

New Jersey's **cleanenergy** program™

## Local news is more important **than ever**

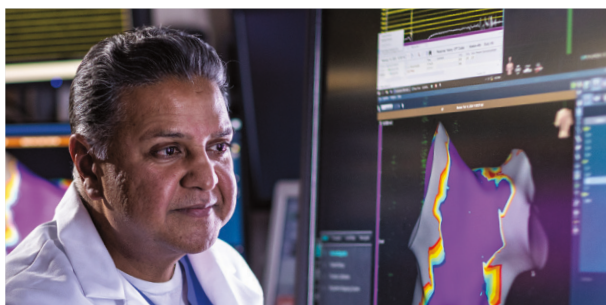
TAPinto PROVIDES ORIGINAL LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE EVERY DAY IN MORE THAN 125 NJ TOWNS

Proud Partner of Commerce Magazine  
Find Commerce online at [www.commercemagazinenj.com](http://www.commercemagazinenj.com)

Objective Local News Coverage	No Editorial Page
No Comments/Anonymous Comments	No Paywall

To Advertise: TAPintoMarketing.net	Franchising Information: StartTAP.net	Sign Up for Our Free Newsletter:
---------------------------------------	--	----------------------------------





**Renowned care  
for your irregular  
heartbeat.**



**Just a  
heartbeat  
away.**



**Everything medicine can do. A few things medicine can't.**

A multidisciplinary, total-health approach. Access to the latest treatments and clinical trials. Support groups and wellness services. At Valley's Snyder Center for Comprehensive Atrial Fibrillation, our acclaimed AFib experts do everything possible to treat our patients like we would our own family, making you feel at home, while staying close to home.

**To learn more, call 201-432-7837 or visit  
[ValleyHealth.com/SnyderCenter](http://ValleyHealth.com/SnyderCenter)**



In alliance with





# Guardian Sale Showcases Power of the CIANJ Network

Aside from its advocacy mission, the Commerce & Industry Association of New Jersey (CIANJ) is a vibrant network of business leaders who share ideas, learn from each other, and drive their businesses forward. The recent sale of Guardian Data Destruction, a South Hackensack, New Jersey-based company and long-time member of CIANJ, underscores the benefits of being part of this influential network.

The transaction, announced in early May 2024, transfers control ownership of Guardian to San Francisco private equity firm, Housatonic Partners, thereby allowing Glenn Laga, Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Guardian, to retire, while his partner, Michael Sirota, remains as the company's Chief Operating Officer in partnership with Housatonic and new Guardian CEO, Rob Alston. For a decade and a half, Laga and Sirota built Guardian into a highly successful business through incredible growth, innovation, and a best-in-class reputation in the marketplace. With Guardian well positioned for the future under Housatonic, Laga and Sirota can now enjoy the value they have created for themselves, their customers, and their employees.

Selling a business like Guardian requires a well-rounded and coordinated team of experts. All parties that supported Guardian and its shareholders in this transaction are CIANJ members, who came together through the shared networking opportunities provided by the CIANJ.

It started in the Summer of 2022, when Drew Maldonado – a CIANJ Executive Committee



Glenn Laga (Founder), Guardian Data Destruction



Rob Alston, New CEO, Guardian Data Destruction

member and Private Client Advisor with Bank of America (BoFA) Private Bank – introduced Laga to a fellow CIANJ member, Anthony Moretti, the Head of Investment Banking at Brooks, Houghton & Company, Inc. (BHC). By the Spring of 2023, after several discussions about the various aspects and challenges of a sale process, Guardian had engaged BHC to serve as its sell-side advisor.

According to Laga, “BHC ran the ideal process for us and identified the perfect investors in Housatonic and Alston to help build on our company’s long history of success, while advising our team every step of the way, from initial discussions all the way through to closing.”

The involvement of BHC was only the first step in the sale process. From there, CIANJ member

*Continued on page 23*



(Left to right) Kathleen Alexander, Partner at SAX, LLP, and husband John; new Guardian CEO Rob Alston; and Eric Seidman of SAX and his wife attend Glenn Laga's retirement party.



Friends, colleagues, and CIANJ members, raise a glass at Laga's retirement party.



# THINK TANK WITH STEVE ADUBATO

THIRTEEN NJ PBS  
WHYY YouTube news12+  
nj.com  
True Jersey.  
[nj.com/SteveAdubato](http://nj.com/SteveAdubato)

EMMY®  
AWARD  
WINNING  
ANCHOR





# Appointments at DDNJCT, Trinitas, Felician, and Agriculture Board

By Jamie Grill-Goodman

### Delta Dental of NJ and CT: Wilson to Retire, Di Maio Takes Reins

After 11 years as a transformative leader, Dennis G. Wilson, President and CEO of Delta Dental of New Jersey and Connecticut (DDNJCT), will retire from the company effective December 31, 2024. Paul Di Maio, currently Senior Vice President, General Counsel, and Chief Administrative Officer, will succeed Wilson as President and CEO, effective January 1, 2025.

Wilson joined DDNJCT as President and CEO in 2013 and under his guidance, DDNJCT has achieved impressive growth and become substantially more outwardly focused. Wilson created and launched a new corporate social responsibility program in his first year at the company, engaging with business, community, and charitable organizations at the board and executive team level throughout New Jersey and Connecticut.

Wilson also launched crucial strategic company initiatives, including a focus on individual and small group sales, establishing DDCT as a separate entity, and the addition of vision insurance to the DDNJCT portfolio. He also initiated the company's unique small business and individual products, as well as the first Special Health Care Needs program in the market in support of individuals and families with disabilities. He will continue to be a part of the organization as a Special Advisor through June 30, 2025.

"Leading DDNJCT has been a true privilege, and I am thankful for the hard work and cooperation of the Board and our associates in positioning the company for growth and continued success into the future," said Wilson.

Di Maio joined DDNJ in 2016 as Senior Vice President and General Counsel, providing guidance to the Board and management across all aspects of operations. In 2022, he was appointed Chief Administrative Officer, where he successfully led the Legal, Compliance, Human Resources, Audit, and Special Investigations departments.

"I look forward to working with our Board of Trustees, senior leadership, and our associates to build upon the success DDNJCT has achieved to this point. I especially thank Dennis for his leadership and the Board for its confidence in appointing me to this role," said Di Maio.

---

***"I'm honored to further my work with RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute in this new role"***

---

### Trinitas Regional Medical Center Names First Hispanic Medical Director

RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute have named Gerardo Capo, MD as the Medical Director of Trinitas Comprehensive Cancer Center (TCCC) at Trinitas Regional Medical Center, an RWJBarnabas Health facility.

Dr. Capo is a medical oncologist treating all types of tumors with a particular interest in breast and gastrointestinal tumors. He will provide leadership and direction to enhance the quality, image and future growth of the oncology program.

Dr. Capo is also the first Hispanic medical director for the hospital, a significant factor as the hospital sits in a predominantly Hispanic and immigrant born area, allowing for a more comprehensive approach which properly meets the needs of the community.

"I'm honored to further my work with RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute in this new role," said Dr. Capo. "It is my hope to create an exceptional and cohesive experience for our patients as well as for the medical professionals who care for them. I believe in making patients feel like family, while working with my team to offer the most advanced treatment plans tailored to each patient."

Prior to joining Trinitas Regional Medical Center, Dr. Capo completed a Fellowship in Hematology/Oncology at St. Vincent's Hospital in New York City, and a Fellowship in Pain and Palliative Care at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. He has collaborated on many significant research papers and is currently principal investigator or co-investigator on several cancer clinical trials. Dr. Capo recently published an article in JAMA (The Journal of the American Medical Association) on the treatment of COVID patients, and is board-certified in medical oncology, hematology, palliative medicine and internal medicine.

### Felician University Appoints Dean of Arts and Sciences

Felician University has appointed Dr. Tara E. Kent as the new Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. Bringing over 25 years of experience in higher education to the position, she will

*Continued*



Dennis G. Wilson of DDNJCT will retire.



Paul Di Maio of DDNJCT will succeed Wilson as President and CEO.



Gerardo Capo, MD, was named Medical Director of TCCC.



Tara E. Kent, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Felician University.



## Member Moves

enhance academic programs and seek to increase student engagement through innovative curricula and experiential learning opportunities.

"With a strong commitment to educational access and opportunity, I feel an alignment with the mission and value of the university; there is no greater means to transform lives than through quality education," said Dr. Kent. "Having served in academic administration for over two decades, I'm excited to dedicate my skills and experiences to advance the university and to support the growth and development of our students."

Before coming to Felician, Dr. Kent served as the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Thomas Edison State University, where she acted as the chief academic officer for programs in liberal arts, sciences, and education. She



Joel Viereck being sworn into his term on the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture during the Board's monthly meeting.

holds a PhD and MS in sociology and cultural anthropology from Purdue University and a BS in psychology from the University of Delaware.

She has held many significant positions, including Provost, Associate Provost, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the Keystone Honors Academy, and Executive Associate to the President at Cheyney University of Pennsylvania. In these positions, she oversaw university operations and provided leadership for strategic planning and assessment processes.

### Joel Viereck Takes Seat on NJ State Board of Agriculture

Gloucester County farm operator Joel Viereck was sworn into his term on the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture during the Board's monthly meeting. The session also included an officer reorganization where Cumberland County's Bob Blew was elected President and Burlington County's Lisa Specca as Vice President.

Viereck, who is representing the vegetable industry, has served as President of the Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey, Vice President of the Gloucester County Board of Agriculture, and the Gloucester County Director for the New Jersey Farm Bureau. Viereck has worked 23 years as the fourth generation of a farm that spans 600 acres in Woolwich and Logan Townships.

Incoming President Blew has served on the board since 2023 and has been an owner/

manager of Centerton Nursery for 19 years. His primary responsibilities have been product development, marketing, and digital content. Centerton Nursery is a third-generation operation that delivers more than 1,600 plant varieties to more than 900 dealers in 32 states.

Likewise, Specca has served on the board since 2021, and owns and operates Specca Farms with her husband Dave Specca. It is a fourth-generation, family-owned vegetable farm, which markets directly to the public through a pick-your-own operation and seasonal farmers markets. Lisa Specca's primary responsibilities include being manager of retail sales and marketing, manager of human resources, greenhouse production manager, chief financial officer, and coordinator of farm safety.

The State Board of Agriculture comprises eight members who serve for four years. By law, at least four of its members must represent the top commodity groups in the state, which are nursery, vegetable, fruit, and grain. Other board members and the commodity groups they represent are Kurt Alstede, of Morris County, fruit; David DeFrang II, Hunterdon County, nursery; John Hart, Mercer County, hay and grain; Stephen V. Lee IV, Burlington County, fruit; Holly Sytsema, Sussex County, dairy.

**Editor's Note:** Want to be featured in the next Member Moves? Contact Jamie Grill-Goodman @ [JGoodman@CIANJ.org](mailto:JGoodman@CIANJ.org).

## Member Spotlight



Glenn's wife Barbara Laga reading her speech at his retirement party.

*Continued from page 20*

Ed Stevenson – Member Chair, Corporate & Securities at Chiesa Shahanian & Giantomasi PC (CSG Law) – was brought in to serve as Guardian's legal counsel on the transaction. Moretti/BHC worked closely with Stevenson/CSG Law, as well as with other deal team members, to help guide the company to the finish line.

"I am proud of Guardian's reputation and excited about continued growth with Housatonic and Alston at the helm," Laga commented. "I can assure our customers that their needs will continue to be met and exceeded."

The power of the CIANJ network extended beyond the closing as well. In addition to providing presale planning strategies to help maximize net sale proceeds, Maldonado and his team of internal professionals at BofA Private Bank stepped up to offer wealth and estate planning strategies to the selling shareholders once the transaction closed. Additionally, CIANJ Treasurer Kathleen Alexander – also a Partner at SAX, LLP – played a role in the deal's accounting and 401k management.

"Without CIANJ, these parties would not have met each other or produced such a great outcome by themselves for all involved," noted Anthony Russo, CIANJ President and CEO/Publisher of COMMERCE Magazine.

Founded in 2010, Guardian is a North American leader in onsite e-media data

destruction. Its services include data destruction processes, enterprise and data center relocations and decommissioning, secure IT packing and logistics, and customized solutions for end-of-life IT assets. The company has grown significantly over the years and now boasts a fleet of mobile trucks strategically distributed at 23 service hubs throughout the continental U.S. Each Guardian mobile data destruction truck can be dispatched to shred up to 5,000 hard drives or wipe 300 computers in a single day onsite, according to the company.

"Glenn and Mike grew Guardian into a great company," noted Russo. "As the primary organization focused on promoting businesses within the state of New Jersey, CIANJ takes pride in our instrumental support of Guardian's growth."

Plans for Guardian's continued growth include creating deeper relationships with the company's existing network of channel partners, expanding its geographic reach, and bolstering its service offerings. Guardian remains headquartered in South Hackensack, New Jersey.

"Our whole deal team is thrilled to have delivered an outstanding outcome for everyone at Guardian, and we're confident that, under the stewardship of Housatonic, Alston, and Sirote, greater things still lie ahead for this amazing company, its customers and its employees," said Moretti. "This transaction serves as a wonderful blueprint for other CIANJ companies."



# What's on Your Desk?



By Joseph P. Truncale, Ph.D.  
Contributing Editor

**A**mong the issues that consistently perplex organizational leaders is delegation of responsibility and authority. Many have developed leadership teams yet, day in and day out, task items seem to land on their desk. Items that, as a practical matter, should be handled by others. What's going on here?

There are many factors at work. For entrepreneurial leaders, being in control means knowing what is going on in every facet of the business and making decisions at each level of the enterprise. This has served them well as the organization grows and develops. However, there comes a time when it is no longer effective. In fact, it can begin to take the business in the wrong direction.

Generally, organizations move through four levels of growth: *owner/operator*, *owner/manager*,

*management organization*, *leadership organization*. In phase one, the organization is extremely lean, and the owner takes on most if not all the decision-making responsibility. There is simply no one else to whom they can delegate. As the enterprise moves to the next two levels, more structure takes shape as managers are brought on board. While management organizations aspire to become leadership organizations, their efforts are thwarted as the CEO continues to operate in level two or even level one mode. Over time, this frustrates both the leader and their managers who can be made to feel their competency is in question and their growth and development is thwarted.

Part of the challenge lies in the fact that there is no clearly defined time or method for formalizing transitions of *responsibility* and *authority* (the two go hand in hand). Changes in titles and reporting lines are a starting point. However, without a thorough understanding of and commitment to a transfer of authority and decision-making responsibility, these changes can seem superficial and hollow.

When planning, taking a structured approach to what the business will look like

(and what it will need) at certain levels of growth is a staple part of the process. Utilizing a technique called Future Business History™ we look five, three and one year out. Setting broad goals for each interval is a start but we don't stop there. We ask questions like “*what will the organization look like at this level of revenue? What will our customers need from us? Which skills, abilities, experience, and attributes will our employees need? How will customer acquisition and retention be done and how will it be different from what it is now? What will be required of the leadership team, and of our managers and supervisors? How will responsibilities be defined, accountability dispersed and the role of the CEO change?*”

A highly effective tool for bringing structure to this process is the Dynamic Performance Management System™. A simple three step approach, it brings clarity and confidence to members of the senior management team while eliminating the “role ambiguity” that bedevils so many organizations, especially at the senior level.

Planning has never been more essential. For more information on getting your organizational strategy and planning on track, contact me at [joe@ajstrategy.com](mailto:joe@ajstrategy.com). 📌

*Joseph P. Truncale, Ph.D., CAE, is the Founder & Principal of Alexander Joseph Associates, a privately held consultancy specializing in executive business advisory services.*

*He is the former CEO of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the world's largest public relations organization. Prior to joining PRSA, Joe was President & CEO of NAPL, a business management association representing leading companies in the printing, graphic communications, mailing, fulfillment and marketing services industry.*

*Joe specializes in strategy, customer analysis and organizational effectiveness.*

*He is a graduate of Monmouth University and he holds a Masters' Degree from Rutgers University. In 2011, he earned his Ph.D. in Media, Culture and Communications at New York University and was the recipient of the Prism Award for Academic Achievement. His dissertation was a ground-breaking study of the leadership styles of highly successful entrepreneurial business executives in the graphic communications industry.*

*Joe served as Co-Chair of the New York University Board of Advisors and is an adjunct faculty member at NYU teaching graduate courses in Executive Leadership, Financial Management and Analysis, Finance for Marketing Decisions, and Leadership: The C Suite Perspective. He resides in Colts Neck, NJ.*



Photo: Getty Images/Stockphoto/fzikes

Organizational leadership requires delegation of responsibility and authority.



# THE BEST IN NEW JERSEY, ONCE AGAIN.

TWO TOP 4 HOSPITALS IN NEW JERSEY, INCLUDING  
THE #1 ADULT AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS.

**BEST  
HOSPITALS**

**U.S. News** & WORLD REPORT

RANKED IN  
8 SPECIALTIES  
2024-2025

**HACKENSACK  
UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER**

**BEST  
CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITALS**

**U.S. News** & WORLD REPORT

RANKED IN  
4 SPECIALTIES  
2023-2024

**JOSEPH M. SANZARI &  
K. HOVNANIAN  
CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS**

**BEST  
REGIONAL HOSPITALS**

**U.S. News** & WORLD REPORT

NEW YORK METRO  
RECOGNIZED IN 16 TYPES OF CARE  
2024-2025

**JERSEY SHORE  
UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER**

**BEST  
HOSPITALS**

**U.S. News** & WORLD REPORT

REHABILITATION  
2024-2025

**JFK JOHNSON  
REHABILITATION  
INSTITUTE**

**BEST  
HOSPITALS**

**U.S. News** & WORLD REPORT

CANCER  
2024-2025

**JOHN THEURER  
CANCER CENTER**

At Hackensack Meridian Health, we're proud to have two hospitals ranked in New Jersey's top four, according to *U.S. News & World Report* 2024-2025. Hackensack University Medical Center is the #1 adult and children's hospitals in New Jersey, with the best cancer care in the state at John Theurer Cancer Center and top 50 nationally ranked programs in Pulmonology & Lung Surgery, Geriatrics, Cardiology, Heart & Vascular Surgery, Urology, Neurology & Neurosurgery, Diabetes & Endocrinology, and Orthopedics. Jersey Shore University Medical Center is ranked #4 in the state for adult and #1 children's, with a nationally ranked best-in-state Obstetrics & Gynecology program, and High Performing programs in Orthopedics, Cardiology, Heart & Vascular Surgery, Geriatrics, and Pulmonology & Lung Surgery. And JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute has once again been ranked among the nation's best rehabilitation hospitals. It's proof that here, no matter what, or when, we're ready to care for you.

To learn more, visit [HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Rankings](https://HackensackMeridianHealth.org/Rankings).



**Hackensack  
Meridian  
Health**

**KEEP GETTING BETTER**



# END THE YEAR WITH A MOUNTAIN MEETING

Gather your team to reward, inspire  
or plan at #NJ'sFavoriteResort.



Scan to learn about  
Resort meetings and  
November & December  
booking incentives.

*Crystal*  
SPRINGS  
RESORT

Restrictions apply. Not valid for previously contracted groups. Minimum of 25 rooms per night booked.  
Valid for Sunday-Thursday November 1 – December 19, 2024.