



WOMEN

in

BUSINESS

Photography by Martin Boling

According to the National Association of Women Business Owners, more than 9.1 million firms and businesses are owned by women in the United States, employing nearly 7.9 million people and generating \$1.5 trillion in sales.

The 20 women here, representing 14 area businesses, are part of that trend. While not all of these businesses are owned by women, all of them do recognize the valuable contributions women make to the economic vitality of our community.





(l-r) Ilene Schaeffer and Mona Mellinger.

Ilene Schaeffer & Mona Mellinger

Private Bankers, German American Bank

Ilene Schaeffer and Mona Mellinger traveled similar journeys to eventually find each other, but their partnership as private bankers for German American Bank is built on mutual respect and admiration, strong female mentors, and experience in all facets of the financial services industry.

Mellinger was recruited by Mark Franklin, German American Bank regional president, to spearhead the bank's Private Banking department. Mellinger has 34 years in the industry with expertise in investments, mortgage lending, business development, insurance, leadership, and private banking. Due to the success of the new department under Mellinger's tutelage, Schaeffer was recruited in early 2018 to further expand the program. Schaeffer has worked in banking for 26 years and has held many different roles including consumer lender, business development officer, investment advisor, district manager, and private banker.

Mellinger and Schaeffer say they are passionate about giving back to the community and have served on many boards and committees throughout their careers, adding that they have made significant contributions in improving the lives of others.

"Everything we've done in our careers has brought us here," Mellinger says, explaining how she and Schaeffer provide the highest level of service to their clients with a boutique banking approach—an exclusive and uniquely personal way of banking for clients with

sophisticated and complex financial needs. They work one-on-one to determine the best strategy for a customer's financial future, and operate as quarterbacks to a team of specialists in wealth management, personal banking, commercial services, and insurance, which allows them to provide sound advice, exemplary service, quick responses, knowledgeable support, and tailored financial strategies and solutions.

"We take care of the financial health of our clients and give them the white-glove treatment," Mellinger says, adding that the duo get to know their clients, their needs, their families and the best way to serve them. "With technology what it is, we are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

Both Mellinger and Schaeffer credit part of their success to having strong female mentors. "I had a great mentor, Tanya Sullivan, who had a great work ethic and always put the needs of the customer first, which was inspiring," Mellinger says. Schaeffer explains that a friend approached her about a banking position, and then mentored her at the start of her career. "I knew very little about banking," Schaeffer says, "but I quickly realized the positive impact I could make in guiding customers with their financial decisions."

Schaeffer adds, "Banking has changed a lot. It's a very favorable career path for women as the leadership dynamic continues to evolve." For information, visit germanamerican.com.

Dr. Beatriz Sanchez

Inject & Rewind, Owner

Dr. Beatriz Sanchez, the only female physician at IU Health Southern Indiana Pathologists, attributes her mother's influence for giving her the self-confidence to open her own business, Inject & Rewind, last year. "I've had the interest for a while, but my kids are a little older now so I feel I can do a little something for me," she says.

With Inject & Rewind, Dr. Sanchez offers cosmetic injections, hyaluronic acid fillers, and platelet-rich plasma facials. She says her career as a pathologist helps her view beauty as a form of art, with a keen eye for both detail and precision. That, in turn, helps her determine where wrinkles are forming and where to inject for the most dramatic results.

Dr. Sanchez encourages other women to step out and try new ventures, just as her mother taught her. "Follow what you want to do—whether that's open a business or go to school or get your dream job. You should strive for it," Dr. Sanchez says. "Don't be afraid to pursue what you love. Then, tap into the resources available to you and work hard to pursue those dreams." She emphasizes, though, "It's okay to fail in work and life, as long as you learn to keep going." For more information, visit injectrewind.com.



Dr. Beatriz Sanchez.



(l-r) Kelly Jennings and Amanda Forgas.

Amanda Forgas and Kelly Jennings Mirth, Owners

Amanda Forgas and Kelly Jennings met among the fine fashions of Relish, where Forgas had worked for five years and Jennings was a loyal customer. When the owners of that store retired, Forgas and Jennings saw a vision for their futures—Mirth—which means joy and laughter and is what they hope customers will feel when they enter their shop in Fountain Square Mall.

They both were interested in carrying the torch for the clothing lines that the women of this community had fallen in love with, so a partnership was formed and Mirth was created. The collection ranges from casual, everyday pieces to contemporary business wear and special occasion dresses. “We try to offer something unique, but still wearable in the Bloomington community,” Forgas says.

Being downtown is as important to Jennings and Forgas as providing unique clothing options for women. “A downtown without its retail would be lacking,” Jennings says. “We want to make Bloomington stronger for visitors and for people who live here.” That’s why the women strive for Mirth to be a comfortable, welcoming experience for all. “We have customer service woven into our DNA,” she says. “Being able to engage with the people of the community while surrounded by beautiful clothes is truly a dream come true.” For information, visit mirthmarket.com.

Margaret Fette The Tailored Fit, Owner

Margaret Fette credits a 10-year stint of quilting—starting when she was pregnant and on bedrest—for honing her sewing skills and providing a foundation for her business, The Tailored Fit. “There’s so much in quilting that teaches you to be very precise, but very creative at the same time,” she says while pulling out a seam on a pair of pants.

Fette opened her shop 18 years ago after realizing she didn’t want to continue as a costume designer on Broadway. “I really like to sew,” she explains. “I’ve designed quilts, but I found with clothing, I was better at taking someone else’s design and improving upon it. This is my dream job.”

Her love of sewing drives all her decisions at The Tailored Fit, where she offers fabrics from around the world, unique patterns from independent companies, a sewing machine brand she believes in—Bernina—and classes for beginners to experts. “I always wanted to teach sewing in small locations,” she says, adding that she hopes to soon increase her class offerings. “I carry items here that customers can’t get elsewhere. With that, I am trying to bring everything to the table that will help people be successful. I don’t want someone to be so frustrated they quit.”

For information, visit thetailoredfit.com.



Margaret Fette.



(l-r) Cheyenne Kollum and Mariah Lane.

Mariah Lane and Cheyenne Kollum

Moon Stones, Co-Owners

Long before they were owners of Moon Stones—which offers handcrafted necklaces and bracelets, eclectic rings, crystals, and exotic rocks—Mariah Lane and Cheyenne Kollum were best friends. “We’ve been friends for a very long time,” says Kollum, while Lane adds, “We trust teach other more than anything.” That trust brought them to working together five years ago when the shop was owned by Mary Beth Kelsey, a beloved mentor to them both.

“Mary Beth’s creation and inspiration were endless,” says Kollum, who started working at Moon Stones 11 years ago when she was 16. “She has been a huge role model to us.” Kelsey retired three years ago, and Lane and Kollum eagerly bought the shop. “We travel everywhere for the stones, everywhere from Bedford to Tuscon to California,” Kollum adds. “We don’t order anything. Our collection is based off of our instinct, and we think the customers share that intuitive spark.”

With their friendship and Kelsey’s mentorship providing a strong foundation, Lane and Kollum have branched out as opportunities have arisen. “We have a lot of room to try new things,” Lane says, explaining the shop has a storefront on Etsy and also provides stones to a local holistic collective and an Indianapolis venue. Visit Moon Stones at 322 E. Kirkwood.



Diana Paxton.

Diana Paxton DianaBe LLC, Owner

Diana Paxton, owner of DianaBe LLC, walks through The Crazy Horse Tavern, a recent redesign project, pointing out its rebranded features alongside nostalgic fixtures like nameplates of longtime patrons and the one-of-a-kind carved mahogany bar. She explains how adding custom artwork of local landmarks and replacing a wood-and-copper bar with one of engineered stone were the boldest investments for owner Ron Stanhouse, creating a functional, maintenance-friendly, and welcoming environment.

She says the project pulled together all areas of her life. Working in college with Stanhouse's wife—Liz Stanhouse waited tables while Paxton bartended—Paxton had a behind-the-scenes view the importance of function to design. Standing behind the bar reminded her that all of life's experiences are valuable—graduating from Indiana University with a degree in finance, working at IBM, being a single mother and entrepreneur, and redesigning people's homes.

A phone call from Ellie Mallory, wife of the late former IU football coach Bill Mallory, became pivotal to her career. Years before, as owner of Chameleon Interiors, Paxton had designed the couple's home using Bill's football memorabilia and Ellie's historical collections so they could view them as art, and now they wanted her to do the same to their

new condominium. Paxton had stepped back from her business for her four children, but made an exception for Ellie. One day, she overheard Bill say he needed to sell his truck—an iconic, red 1996 model with IU Football plates—because it wouldn't fit in the garage. "I just said, 'I'll buy it,' and then I realized I'd have to go back to work to justify buying it," she says. "The truck really facilitated my career. I'm very hands-on, so the only time I needed help was to move stuff, and with the truck, I could do that, too."

Now focusing on commercial projects and staging real estate properties for sale, Paxton says women need to pull from all areas of life that are important to them. "To be a woman in business, you don't have to become a man," she explains. "I may use power tools, but the only thing that makes it feel masculine is the stories I was told when growing up. Looking back, nothing has been wasted, not one lesson I learned as a mother, not one lesson I learned as a young business person, as a student, as a bartender. I've spent nearly 20 years helping people redesign their homes, but until I bought that truck, I couldn't see that what was powerful was how I had always been willing to reimagine myself."

Email diana@rockyourbluedot.com for more information.

Nancy Hiller NR Hiller Design Inc., Owner

Nancy Hiller, of NR Hiller Design Inc., prefers to focus on her furniture and cabinetry work rather than on being a woman in a male-dominated field. "The most important thing is being visible and doing good work and getting, hopefully, to the point where people stop noticing your gender—but paradoxically, you can't do that without focusing on your gender," Hiller says.

Since 1980, Hiller has created custom woodwork that is grounded in traditional furniture training and includes features ranging from hand-cut joinery to specialized finishes and hardware. She uses a scholarly approach, drawing as much—or more—on her philosophical and historical readings as on professional and trade publications. "I used to call it period work, but it's more context sensitive, which all truly custom work is," Hiller says, explaining that she specializes in working on old houses, though not exclusively. "I love historic architecture. I pay very careful attention to any original architectural detail that my clients are interested in incorporating into what I'm designing."

A four-time book author who also writes for *Fine Woodworking* and related publications, Hiller enjoys teaching customers how to look at their homes to find often-overlooked features. "That's fun for me, because I wanted to go into teaching at one point," she explains. For more information, visit nrhillerdesign.com.



Nancy Hiller. Courtesy photo



(l-r) Kala Ratcliff, Melissa Nettleton, and Beth Gray.

Kala Ratcliff, Melissa Nettleton, Beth Gray Harrell-Fish Incorporated, Dispatchers

The daily hubbub starts early in Harrell-Fish Incorporated's all-female dispatch center, where all commercial and residential emergency and routine service calls are navigated. Kala Ratcliff, Melissa Nettleton, and Beth Gray tap away on keyboards and keep watch on a bank of monitors tracking calls, staff, trucks, and weather. One by one, field technicians enter the room or lean through a glassless window—"Where am I going?" "Who's going with me?" "I can't get my iPad to update."

In the midst of sharing morning pleasantries and updating tablets—each technicians' mobile command center—the women successfully send out the first wave of assignments by 7:30 a.m. and prepare for the next round. By the end of the morning, they will have dispatched 40 of the 55 technicians on staff.

HFI is a mechanical contracting and services firm that serves the construction, industrial, health care, food service equipment, commercial, and residential industries. And although it is a primarily male-dominated industry, HFI has women succeeding at all levels in field, office, and leadership roles, according to Nancy Baldwin, public relations coordinator. "There were definitely some growing pains when dispatching went from men to women," Baldwin says. "But our dispatchers rock, and have earned the respect of our technicians and our clients." The industry is transitioning so much that the Mecha-

cal Contractors of America Association is focusing on women in the industry this year, she adds.

The morning unfolds smoothly and Ratcliff says that happens because she and her fellow dispatchers have gotten to know each technician by talking to them about their families, engaging them in conversations, and learning how best to utilize their expertise. "We needed to make them realize, 'Hey, we are here for you. We are here to make your day a little bit easier,'" she explains, adding that she even went in the field with technicians to gain a better understanding of their work.

"The hardest part is gaining respect from the technicians," Nettleton says. "There had always been males in the dispatch center, but now we have a one-on-one relationship with all of the technicians. We had to learn everyone and their personalities and how they want to be communicated with." She stresses the technicians liked them, but were uncomfortable with their lack of field experience and knowledge of assigning and recording service calls.

Gray, the newest member of the dispatch team, adds, "It's definitely important to have women in leadership positions like this in a male-dominated environment. Gender shouldn't affect how the job is performed. It's about building relationships, organization, communication, and knowledge of technician skills." For information, visit harrell-fish.com.

Sherry Susnick Independent Realtor

Eleven years ago, a friend approached Sherry Susnick and commented on how she knew so many people in town. "She asked if I wanted to come work for her, and she would even pay for real estate school," Susnick says. At the time, Susnick was a single mom, raising two daughters, and working a full-time job. The offer seemed like a flexible way to supplement her income, but what it became was a passion to help people find the perfect home.

"I won't press someone to buy a home—no pressure," Susnick says, explaining she will spend as much time as necessary to help find the right house. "I want you to have the home you love." When her daughters grew up, she decided to expand her business and change realty offices to work with Rod Figg, who passed away last year. "I needed to move forward," she says. "Rod was a great mentor. He taught me so much." She now works with Millican Realty and is excited about her future. "Jason [Millican] is a good guy who has been nothing but supportive," she adds.

For women considering a real estate career, Susnick advises, "Don't underestimate yourself. Real estate is a great, flexible job, and you can do it."

For more information, contact Susnick at sherry.susnick@homefinder.org or 812-361-9926.



Sherry Susnick.

Dr. Karen Reid-Renner

Rejuv Aesthetics, Owner

Karen Reid-Renner, M.D., a family medicine specialist at Southern Indiana Family Practice Center, wants to help people beyond their medical needs, so she added a new venture to her practice. Rejuv Aesthetics provides beauty-enhancing laser and acne treatments, Botox, bioidentical hormone replacement, and more by focusing on the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. “People are beautiful, but they don’t always realize they’re beautiful,” she says. “You have to be comfortable with your body and believe in yourself. I want my guests to walk out feeling awesome about themselves.”

Dr. Reid-Renner was born in a small Jamaican village and moved to the United States at age 12. No stranger to struggles, Dr. Reid-Renner gained confidence as she overcame each of life’s obstacles. “I believed I was going to come to this country and see streets paved in gold—and I landed in Brooklyn,” she laughs, explaining how she was often bullied on the playground until the day she fought back. “The bully was shocked and I was shocked,” she says, “but no one bothered me again.”

The eighth of nine children, Dr. Reid-Renner learned the persistence to follow her dreams from her mother, who came to the U.S. alone and worked as a housekeeper, sending money home until her

entire family could join her. When she doubted her abilities—like going to medical school—Dr. Reid-Renner remembered just how far she had already come.

“I always wanted to be a nurse, but then I realized I was in America and I could be anything I wanted to be, so I said, ‘I am going to be a doctor,’” she says. In high school, she participated in track and field, which kept her motivated. “It gave me confidence that if I focus my mind on anything, I could achieve it.” And she did. Dr. Reid-Renner earned her medical degree from the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry. Her initial specialty was in obstetrics and gynecology, and then family medicine. She also has a master’s in public health from Harvard School of Public Health.

After practicing in New York, she moved to Bedford, Indiana, to build her own practice. “We should all follow our dreams, and sometimes those dreams may end up being on the shelf for a bit. But never give up on those dreams,” she says. “Even if you’re 70 years old, you can still achieve your dreams. Those dreams are what help us make a difference in the world, and we’re all here to make a difference.” Visit Rejuv Aesthetics at 1403 E. Atwater Ave. in Bloomington or call 812-822-3727.



Dr. Karen Reid-Renner.



Jaime Sweany. Photo by Ransom Haile

Jaime Sweany

Juniper Art Gallery, Owner

Jaime Sweany says much has transpired since she lived in Owen County 25 years ago. She owned and operated two successful Bloomington businesses—Wild Birds Unlimited and Wandering Turtle Art Gallery—and Spencer has transformed its previously shuttered downtown storefronts into colorful, renovated shops and eateries, bustling with energy and new life.

Impressed by Spencer’s rebirth and potential, Sweany says she turned to Owen County to combine her passions for art and nature into a world-class gallery and creative hub. Juniper Art Gallery features artwork by the Midwest’s finest regional artists in the Paul & Margaret Sweany Legacy Room, and visitors enjoy a nature-themed artisan/gift shop, monthly music, a book club, and community room, she explains.

“Spencer has a friendly, small-town feel, with the oldest state park in Indiana nearby, and the meandering White River at the end of Main Street,” Sweany says. “It is gratifying to help Spencer become a destination for art and shopping. With Indiana University and Bloomington only 20 minutes away, and McCormick’s Creek four miles from the Square, a drive to Spencer is a perfect daytrip.”

In addition to Juniper Art Gallery, Dragonfly Gallery, and the Owen County Art Guild, attractions include Owen Valley Winery, Tivoli Theater, the LGBTQ CommUnity Center, coffee shops, a Thai bistro, and the Civilian Brewing Corps.

Visit juniperartgallery.com.



Samantha McGranahan

UNVEILED, Owner

Samantha McGranahan says she knew she wanted to focus on boudoir and glamour photography when she founded UNVEILED in 2014. “I realized I could use my photography to help women feel empowered and confident, and to renew their self-love,” she says, adding that sometimes women spend more time focusing on others than giving attention to themselves. “I want women to do something like this for themselves more than for someone else.”

McGranahan says she wants women to overcome negative thinking and create an impactful mindset reboot and confidence boost. “Just like negativity is contagious, so is positive thinking,” she adds. For women who want an educational, uplifting, and fun event, McGranahan has just the thing—Spark Weekend on July 27 at the FAR Center for Contemporary Arts. She says the event will offer women from all walks of life the chance to attend a dynamic lineup of presentations and discovery sessions followed by an immersive evening of body-positive celebration.

McGranahan says the purpose of Spark Weekend—and everything else she does—is to focus on empowering women to celebrate their bodies. “I want to give women the tools and the power to be what they want to be,” she says. “Being beautiful and confident is far more than skin-deep.” For information, go to unveiled-photo.com/spark.

Sally Walker Owner;

Hayley Foltzer

Manager and Buyer,

Argentum Jewelry

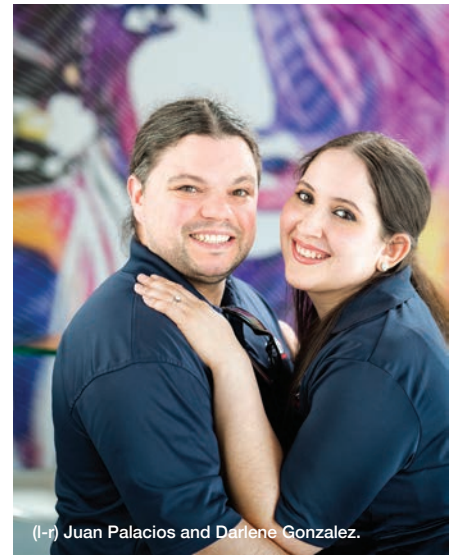
Argentum Jewelry has been a downtown Bloomington staple since Gene Foltzer founded it in 1973. One year later, after graduating from Indiana University, Sally Walker joined the staff, and in 1978 the two were married. Since 2002, when Foltzer died, Walker has carried on the store’s tradition of offering customers elegant gold and silver jewelry known for its high quality and unique designs.

Walker says she takes the time to seek out designers from around the country who have a flair for the unusual. “We have a reputation for designing custom and one-of-a-kind pieces,” she says, adding that she is a graduate gemologist of the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) and enjoys hand-selecting fine-quality diamonds and colored gems for the store. Her daughter, Hayley Foltzer, grew up in the business and worked in fine jewelry stores in California—including Tiffany & Co.—before returning to Bloomington in 2013. Now 29, Hayley is the store manager and buyer, and enjoys meeting the generations of customers to create custom jewelry. She has completed jewelry repair and stone-setting courses and recently received a scholarship through GIA.

Argentum provides repair, alteration, and restoration of jewelry, as well as jewelry appraisals. Visit Argentum in the Graham Plaza at the corner of North College and 6th Street or online at argentum-jewelry.com.



(l-r) Sally Walker and Hayley Foltzer. Photo by Naama Levy



(l-r) Juan Palacios and Darlene Gonzalez.

Darlene Gonzalez

Arepas Veneuelan

Gastropub, Co-Owner

Puerto Rico native Darlene Gonzalez knows hard work and determination can lead to fulfilled dreams. She came to the United States to attend the University of Iowa as an undergraduate and got a job in food service. “My very first job in college was in the university cafeteria,” she says. After graduation, she moved to Bloomington, met her husband, Juan Palacios, and completed master’s degrees from the Indiana University Kelley School of Business and the IU School for Public and Environmental Affairs.

Shortly after meeting, Gonzalez helped Palacios launch his dream to bring authentic Venezuelan cuisine to Bloomington. Their first step into the culinary world was to start a food truck, Juancho’s Munchies, which evolved into the brick-and-mortar Arepas Veneuelan Gastropub earlier this spring. The restaurant features a full menu of native fare throughout the day and evening, but after 10 p.m., it takes on a club feel with a full bar, upbeat music, and dimmed lights.

“A big challenge after starting the food truck in 2014 was having our first child in 2016,” Gonzalez says. “It was a challenge balancing everything.” They now have breathed life into their dream restaurant and have stayed busy since opening the doors. “We wanted to make something different here in Bloomington,” she adds. Visit Arepas at 254 N. Walnut.



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