

# FORTY UNDER 40

## CLASS OF 2023



A SUPPLEMENT TO  
**Oil and Gas  
Investor**

HARTENERGY.COM





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**Shannon continuously finds ways to create value for Noble's partnership with Apollo Global Management, and is quickly becoming a pillar in the Industry. We are proud to be the beneficiary of her many talents and on behalf of the entire Team, Congratulations!**



# Oil and Gas Investor

by HART ENERGY

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## LISTEN UP: THEY HAVE A LOT TO SAY

**A**s you might imagine, the members of *Oil and Gas Investor's* Forty Under 40 Class of 2023 have a lot on their minds and don't mind sharing what they think. Which is great for anyone interested in the outlook for the energy industry. The future is in their hands and what they express on these pages tells us what is in their heads.

This is a thoughtful group of leaders. Their responses to our questionnaire reveal that they understand the importance of work/life balance. They want what they do in the energy industry to be a source of pride for their colleagues, for their children and for a world that benefits from their efforts.

I read what they had to say, and was able to meet a number of the honorees during their video interviews. One response that struck me came from Yogashri Pradhan of Coterra Energy. A mentor pointed out to her that "to generate trust with others, I needed to develop empathy."

Sometimes, it's not enough to be the smartest one in the room.

Pradhan was not alone among her colleagues on the fast track to have taken that lesson to heart. Empathy is key to working with others and enabling the success of a team. Some noted that the energy industry is relatively small, despite its global reach. Getting along with people is critical because you'll likely be encountering them again and again.

Good advice for anyone in any industry? Perhaps, but

these young leaders are taking the reins of the sector that fuels those other industries. And they'll be doing so in a complex era laden with immense technological, geopolitical, environmental and economic challenges. A little bit of cooperation will be helpful.

"The jobs worth doing are the hardest ones to do," James Liu of Wincoram Asset Management wrote in his advice to other young professionals. "There's a world of difference between working with a great team where everyone is pulling in the same direction versus one without strong leadership and culture."

Janice Tran of Kanin Energy expressed confidence that her generation has what it takes.

Those under 40 "are experienced enough to be dangerous but not too experienced to be jaded," she wrote. "This balance can help drive change in the industry and pave the path for those after us."

And they're ready for what comes next.

"I ... wanted to be a part of an industry that is essential to the global economy and that has the potential to make a real difference in the world," wrote Siddharth Misra of Texas A&M University.

Read what the young leaders of the energy industry have to say and watch their video interviews on HartEnergy.com. They've learned a lot in their careers so far and they don't mind sharing those lessons. ■



**Joseph Markman**  
Senior Managing Editor

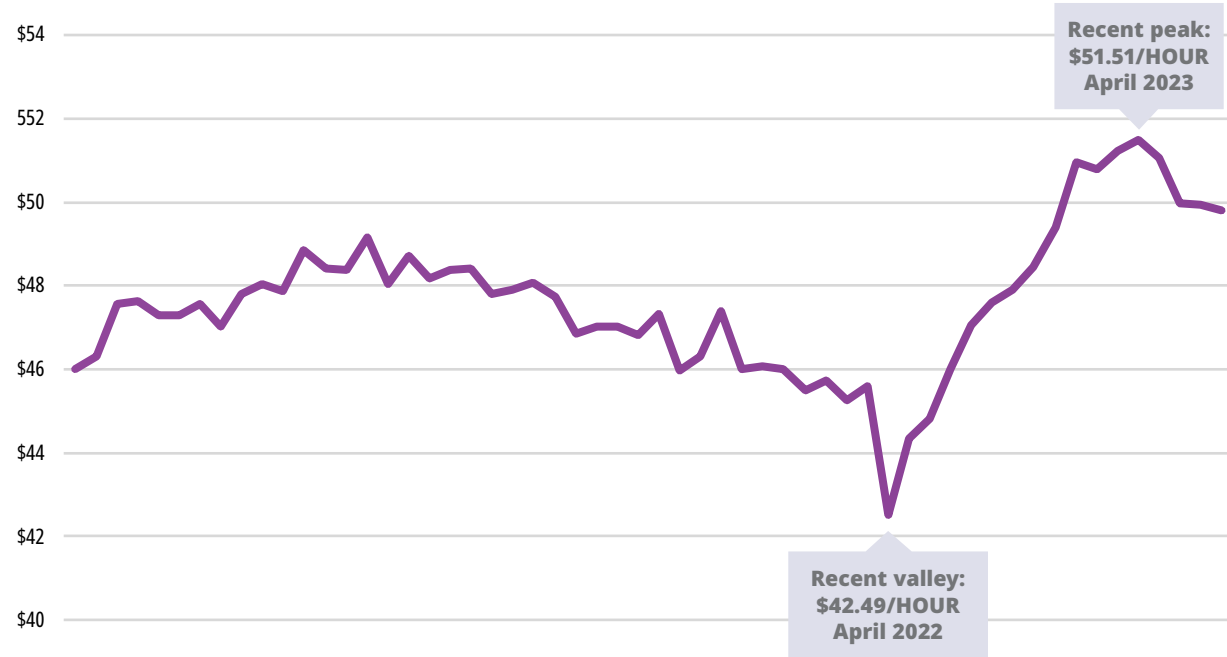


# The Workforce They Lead

Both the number of workers in the U.S. oil and gas industry and the wages they received slumped leading up the COVID-19 pandemic. But both are also on their way up.

## U.S. oil and gas pay

(hourly, January 2019-September 2023)



## U.S. oil and gas employment

(thousands, January 2019-September 2023)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

# ‘We Need the Young Talent’

The global energy executive search firm, Preng & Associates, is a proud sponsor of the Forty Under 40 program. Hart Energy spoke with Laura Preng, a partner at the firm, about the imperative to attract more high-quality, young leaders to the energy space.



**Hart Energy:**  
Can you elaborate on why

**Forty Under 40 programs are important?**

**Laura Preng:** We’re energy specialists and longtime sponsors of Forty Under 40 with Hart Energy. It’s a program that we think is important to honor and recognize young talent coming up in the industry.

**HE: So, what are the biggest challenges in recruiting young people into the energy sector right now?**

**LP:** I think one of the biggest challenges is the narrative that is out there about the energy industry, and the fact is, there are a lot of good things that we’re doing. There’s a lot of innovation going on. That word needs to get out. The bottom line is, energy is necessary and, while it’s not just oil and gas, there are other avenues that young talent can go into. I think it’s a challenge to spread the word to them that it’s an industry that’s going to be around for a long time, and that’s not always the message that’s getting out there. And so, that can be a challenge, and we’re seeing fewer and fewer young people come into the industry, which is going to be a challenge for the industry for years to come. I think that we need the young talent, we need the fresh minds, innovators to come into the industry and realize that there’s a lot of work to be done, a lot of good things to be done.

**HE: In that vein, what are the biggest difficulties associated with the “Great Crew change” with the older generation retiring, and what can be done about it?**

**LP:** It’s the knowledge that’s leaving the sector. There are large numbers of folks who are retiring, and there is a big gap in the talent, and there are fewer people going into the industry, too, to fill those shoes. And so, we need to encourage more people to go into energy. We need to have that transfer of knowledge



so that the folks who have been in the industry for years, who’ve seen the ups and downs, who’ve seen the different rocks and the different plays, are able to teach the younger generations that are coming in. I think that a lot of it is going to be our story, and how we tell what the energy industry is doing and the positive effect it’s having on our planet. That word needs to get out. We could be in a lot of trouble if we don’t recruit some good talent into the sector.

**HE: You just touched on it a little bit, but on the other side of the coin, what are the biggest draws to the energy sector and how do you and the industry inspire passionate young people to want to join?**

**LP:** One of the biggest draws to coming into the industry is the technology and the innovation and the impact that young people can have on our planet. The fact that we need energy, not just oil and gas, but all different sources of energy, should be a real attraction to young people who have that curiosity and want to come in and really make a difference.

**HE: What are some of the most important traits you and the industry are looking for in younger people, in young up-and-comers in the industry?**

**LP:** I think some of the most important traits, obviously, are curiosity, intellect, drive and wanting to have that impact on our environment and the globe and really be able to make a difference. But a lot of it goes back to somebody who has curiosity and is really wanting to find things out and innovate.

**HE: What is your hope for the next generation of energy professionals?**

**LP:** That they’ll continue to innovate and improve technologies. We see it time after time. It’s made a huge difference and brought us to where we are today, and who knows where we’re going to be in the next five, 10, 15, 25 years. So, I think it’ll be exciting to watch. ■



HARTENERGY  LIVE

# 2024 EVENT CALENDAR ANNOUNCED!



## The Industry's Comprehensive Resource for Live Content, Data and Analysis

The 2024 event schedule is designed to focus on the topics you want to hear about and to make scheduling your year even easier. We've decreased the number of events and pumped up the amount of content to make them larger, more informative and more engaging.

Save these dates and start planning your 2024 event schedule now!

**AWARDS**



INFLUENTIAL  
**WOMEN**  
IN ENERGY

**March 8**  
Houston, TX

**GAS**



**DUG**  
GAS+

CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

**March 27-28**  
Shreveport, LA

**SHALE**



**SUPER**  
**DUG**

CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

**May 15-17**  
Fort Worth, TX

**TECHNOLOGY**



**ENERGY**  
**EVOLUTION**

CONFERENCE  
& EXHIBITION

**June 2024**  
TBD

**INVESTMENT**



**ENERGY**  
**CAPITAL**

**A&D**  
STRATEGIES &  
OPPORTUNITIES

**September 2024**  
Dallas, TX

**AWARDS**



**FORTY**  
**UNDER**  
**40**

**Sept. 2024**  
Houston, TX

**LEADERSHIP**



**DUG**  
**EXECUTIVE**  
**OIL**

CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

**Oct. 2024**  
Midland, TX

**TECHNOLOGY**



**DUG**  
**TECH**

CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

**Nov. 2024**  
Houston, TX

**AWARDS**



HARTENERGY  
**HALL OF FAME**

**Nov. 2024**  
Houston, TX



**2024**  
CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION  
BROCHURE DOWNLOAD



**2024**  
CONFERENCE BROCHURE  
DOWNLOAD



## SHELLY ALBRECHT

Vice President of Land, Avant Natural Resources, Denver  
**AGE:** 39

*Shelly Albrecht gives credit to those who have pushed her to grow throughout her career because they saw potential she may have not yet recognized in herself. “These are the people who asked unapologetically to complete a project within an unrealistic timeframe and with limited resources and brought on experiences that forced me to tap into my resilience, creativity and problem-solving skills,” she says. “Without them, I wouldn’t have the same appreciation for innovation and adaptation both in my leadership style and the way I recognize team efforts.”*

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had planned?

“Finding a dream team like I have in Avant. We’re small and privately funded, not to be confused with private equity, which allows us a unique advantage to make decisions quickly and move with unbelievable speed. Running a successful ground game acquisition program amidst the cutthroat competition of the Permian Basin is full of headwinds. However, due to our team’s distinctive experience, competitive drive and commitment to networking, we’ve been able to realize significant success on the A&D front. We put ourselves on the map by cobbling together a significant royalty position in the Midland basin, a position which we sold to Brigham Minerals in October of last year for a successful exit. Additionally, while divesting those assets in the Midland Basin, we stood up an operating company in the Delaware Basin where we have also realized great results both operationally and on the A&D front. Pursuing multiple opportunities in multiple basins with a small team is challenging. Being part of a team that shares my passion and entrepreneurial drive is not only special but feels like a significant milestone.”

### What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?

“I attribute significant credit to developing my leadership abilities to my mom. As a single parent raising my brothers and me, she exemplified

the power of leading by example. Her insistence on our participation in sports, such as soccer and cross country running, served as a formative experience where I embraced essential leadership fundamentals that have proven invaluable throughout my career—namely discipline, perseverance, teamwork and competition.”

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

“Constantly surround yourself with people who inspire you to stretch for greatness—greatness beyond your own imagination. If you don’t already know folks like this, networking is a great tool to find them. Also, be authentic and embrace your unique style. It’s easy to be swayed by those who seem to have everything figured out, but rarely anyone does.”

### Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?

“The oil and gas industry needs to shift from short-term profit-driven strategies to long-term planning and vision. This includes considering the impacts of the decisions we make today on future generations, the environment and society. Recruiting new, young talent is key to making this shift, as they will bear more of the consequences of today’s decisions and bring fresh perspectives to technological advances and ensure industry sustainability and responsible growth.” ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- My family is No. 1 in my life. Being a great role model to my three young daughters is a big part of my “Why.” My husband is also in the industry. Despite having a big job at Raisa Energy, he’s an extremely committed father and husband. I couldn’t ask for a better partner in life.
- I want to own and operate a farm someday. Having a deeper connection with the land and growing my own food would be deeply satisfying.
- I’m a firm believer in the symbiotic relationship between a healthy lifestyle, fitness and mental well-being. If you move your body, you can open your mind in the most therapeutic way.





## BAILEY DONOVAN ALLEN

Vice President, Strategic Marketing, Chemical Technologies, ChampionX, Houston

**AGE:** 39

*One of Bailey Allen's most significant professional achievements began with failure. At a first meeting, a customer complained about her team's past performance. She thanked the customer and promised to provide a "less terrible" performance in the future. "I kept my word," the Houston native and mother of four says. "With intense focus and effort from the team, in the span of six months, we turned that relationship around and became a trusted and valued provider to their organization."*

### Describe a memorable professional experience.

"When I started in the industry, both my husband and I worked for the same organization but in different capacities. He worked as an engineer on a well site, and I supported the refinery business. There was one December when we were both traveling the same week. However, he was headed to Fort McMurray, Canada, and I was headed to St. Croix. I still remember his face as he said, 'HOW do we work for the same company???' It served as a good reminder of the variety of opportunities and experiences within this industry."

### What has been your most challenging project to date, and how did you meet the challenge and accomplish your goal?

"In Q1 2023, ChampionX held its first investor day event as a standalone company. During the event, senior management presented the company's value proposition to analysts and prospective investors, and I was one of the two leads for content development. This presentation highlighted the growth achieved since ChampionX's spinoff from former parent company, Ecolab, and subsequent merge with Apergy Corp. in 2020, as well as the strategic pathways identified across the business portfolio to develop and expand the company. This was an opportunity to craft the story of who we are as the newly combined company, and who we aim to be, which is a difficult task to begin."

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"The biggest piece of advice I can give a young professional is to really know

what you want out of life and what makes you happy. The metrics of success for your life, and your career path, are yours alone to determine. Really give some deep thought into what you want most out of life, and what you are willing and not willing to sacrifice to get there."

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

"There are really three things. One, the people. It cannot be said enough how intelligent, creative and driven the individuals in this industry are. Two, there is never a dull moment. As the industry and the global environment changes, there are new challenges and opportunities that arise each day. Three, oil and gas provides a huge value to society."

### What do you think young industry members have to offer that is unique to them?

"Young industry members have lived their whole lives in a digitally enabled and connected world. I think this changes the expectation of how things are done and what is possible. The brain power and thought leadership this generation can provide will provide unimaginable advances to an already great industry."

### Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?

"I think there is an opportunity for an image overhaul in the industry. Society often only hears about oil and gas when there are problems. They do not hear about the value and opportunities this industry provides to both individuals and general society." ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- When I asked my six-year-old to tell me something interesting about me, his response was, "You are good at buying snacks." So, I guess if you need some fruit snack recommendations, I'm your girl.
- I ran my first (and likely, last) half-marathon in 2022.
- My maiden name is Bailey Donovan. In the '90s, there was a famous runner named Donovan Bailey and I consistently confused people by showing up the wrong gender, nationality and speed than they expected.



## MATTHEW B. AUTRY

President, Oil & Gas, Valor, Fort Worth, Texas

**AGE:** 40

*Matthew Autry and wife Mandi have made a point of giving back to their community. They support military-based foundations such as Folds of Honor and the Shamrock Run, benefiting The Adam Brown Legacy Fund. "At Valor, I lead our team in donating over \$3,000 worth of toys, clothes and other items to a children's foster care during the Christmas holidays."*

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

"The relationship I have created with our team and clients at Valor is my favorite professional experience. Our clients trust us to help manage their generational assets, and I have had multiple clients tell me, 'I sleep better at night knowing Valor is involved.' It's what drives me to show up and provide excellent service for them on a daily basis."

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than expected?

"Each new role that I have accepted throughout my career is a milestone achievement that happened sooner than it ever should have. I didn't go to school to be a landman in the oil and gas industry. It was a bone thrown to me in a time of need. I have accepted the opportunity since day one and never looked back."

### What has been your most challenging project to date?

"I have had to start from scratch more than once in the oil and gas industry but each time I have been able to come back better and stronger than before. Sometimes you see it coming and other times you do not. How you react is what will be remembered. Each time I made it a point to put myself in a better situation and get back to work. I did just that in 2015 and haven't looked back since."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"The willingness and ability to adapt to new environments and situations. Change is inevitable and team members rely on their leaders through the ups and downs of our industry."

### How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?

"My leadership style is to lead by example. I am ready, willing and able to take on any task that is presented to our company. When team members see that type of commitment and effort put in to the work that we do, it is contagious."

### What are your long- and short-term career goals?

"Short-term goal is to get better every single day. Long-term goal is to help grow and lead the best specialty asset management company in the world."

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

"The world revolves around our industry. Countries go to war over control of the asset we manage on a daily basis. I get to help individuals, companies, banks and universities manage oil and gas properties all over the country." ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- From 6th grade through 9th grade I was in band and during 8th and 9th grade I marched in the Olney High School Band. I was last position trombone and it was probably best that I just march along and not actually make any sounds with my instrument.
- I am a third-generation oil man and wouldn't change that for anything in the world. I grew up checking leases with my father but was more worried about if I would get to drive down the dirt roads that day over learning what was actually going on. I have a lot of memories of those times and still have conversations with my father today about his experiences and challenges in the industry. Great resource to have when meeting with potential clients.
- Hometown is Olney, Texas—home of the One Arm Dove Hunt.





## JILLIAN BOLDIN (VANZELFDEN)

Director of Marketing and Optimization, DT Midstream, Canonsburg, Pa.

**AGE:** 40

*During her first year of work at El Paso Corp., Jillian Boldin was interviewed for an in-house video. Asked about her future plans, she responded, "Perhaps be the next CEO! Watch out, Doug (Foshee)!" To her surprise, the boss reached out and encouraged her to pursue her career aspirations. "I was inspired by Doug's leadership and ability to connect with employees," she says. "The interaction influenced my aspirations of leadership."*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

"I had the opportunity to create a pipeline system model during my senior year of engineering school, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Weeks prior to graduation, an alumnus shared an opportunity to model pipelines for TGP (El Paso Corp./Kinder Morgan). It was a job I knew I could do and do well—that summer I started my career in Houston."

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

"Taking the leap to move to Detroit for a role with DT Midstream to manage the NEXUS pipeline JV with Enbridge. Having spent nearly 10 years in Houston, moving back to my hometown to 'start over' at a new company was quite daunting. However, the professional growth which stemmed from the transition was well worth it. I had the opportunity to work alongside many talented engineers and managers from both DTM and Enbridge to oversee the project from concept to in-service."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"A leader is only as good as the team they have to support them. That said, effective management requires a leader to understand the motivations and limitations of their team to achieve excellence. Stylistically, there are many brands of leadership out there; I believe trust via delegation, connectivity, communication and vision all feed the strongest leaders in our industry."

### What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?

"Although we are in 2023, women in oil and gas are still a minority. I recognize that my actions may set the tone and inspire future female leaders—this sense of responsibility has influenced me in many ways."

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"Be open to change. Our industry is constantly evolving, and, as such, we must, too."

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

"My customers and colleagues! I thrive in collaborative settings and believe in the power of positive, transparent, open communication."

### What do you think young industry members (those under 40) as a group have to offer that is unique to them?

"2023 marked the end of the pandemic, a period which brought to light the ability for unconventional productive

work practice. Work/life balance is now a necessity to the workforce. As we move forward, I believe this group will continue to build the tools and structure to afford employees such a balance."

### Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?

"We must continue to think both locally and globally as we tackle clean energy initiatives. I am in strong agreement with the vision of my current employer, DT Midstream. We have a responsibility to address climate change and must make consistent, effective environmental policies a priority." ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I've been an active volunteer with Sofar (songs from a room) promoting local musicians in both Houston and Pittsburgh.
- I've climbed to Everest base camp, was stuck on the mountain due to fog for days, and had quite an adventurous hike on the way down the mountain!
- My first job was working at a bakery in Franklin, Tenn. Some of my favorite customers were the early risers.



## JEFF COOK

Vice President of Exploration, Continental Resources, Oklahoma City

**AGE:** 38

*"I absolutely love this business!" says Jeff Cook. "I am fired up every day to come to work. In fact, this job is not work for me—it is my passion." The youngest of five kids, Cook grew up in Edmond, Okla., and is a second-generation oil and gas professional and petroleum geologist. He credits his father, Greg Cook, as the inspiration for pursuing this career.*

**Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?**

"The professional achievement I am most proud of is my current role as Vice President of Exploration. I am honored at the opportunity to carry on Continental's long history as an industry leading exploration company. I am truly standing on the shoulders of exploration giants before me."

**What has been your most challenging project to date, and how did you meet the challenge and accomplish your goal?**

"The most challenging project I was ever a part of was my time as New Ventures Manager from 2019 through early 2022. My team and I had a vision and strategy around positioning Continental to enter and build scale in the prolific Permian Basin in a low-cost, efficient way. We worked diligently and stayed focused through the difficult COVID era.

"Through all the fear and uncertainty in our business and the world during this time, we stayed focused on our vision and built a set of premier assets in the Permian Basin—a lot of it under the radar."

**What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?**

"Ramiro Rangel, a past Senior Vice President of Marketing at Continental Resources, has committed a significant amount of his time over the past five years mentoring me on leadership and navigating how to continue to grow my influence across the company.

"He really focuses on servant leadership, and helped me develop

a deeper understanding on what drives me as a person and how to leverage those characteristics to maximize my leadership. He preaches the importance of intentionality and awareness when it comes to leadership and every single interaction you have with people. He has shaped me beyond my professional career and has helped me become a better husband, father and friend."

**What advice would you give other young professionals in the industry?**

"First off, make sure you are passionate about this business and career. I would also encourage young professionals to focus on building strong technical anchor skills across their entire discipline of choice. Find great mentors and put maximum effort on developing strong leadership and strategic thinking skills. When you are given an opportunity, seize it."

**Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?**

"We still have an immense amount of resource in this country and I believe technologies such as automation, machine learning and big data are critical for this business to continually improve our operational efficiencies to lower the cost of supply and competitiveness of this future resource.

"There are more technological breakthroughs that will happen, driven by the new and younger generations, and it will be fun to be part of them throughout my career." ■

**THREE MORE THINGS**

- My favorite thing in life is my wife Ashton and my three sons. Watching those three boys grow up is my biggest joy in life. I am also very fortunate to have my immediate family. My mother and father built an incredibly close family of five kids that I am grateful to have in my life.
- I love riding anything on two wheels, especially mountain biking down some pretty intense downhill trails in Colorado.
- Playing the guitar and bass is a huge passion of mine—nothing frees my mind more than going upstairs and learning new songs and coming up with new grooves.



*“There are more technological breakthroughs that will happen, driven by the new and younger generations, and it will be fun to be part of them throughout my career.”*

—Jeff Cook, *Continental Resources*

*Congratulations,  
Jeff Cook!*



Jeff is a dynamic member of the Continental Team. As Vice President of Exploration, Jeff is carrying on Continental's longstanding history as an industry-leading exploration company.

Thank you, Jeff, for your tireless dedication to providing the energy our world needs. You exemplify Continental's Culture of the Possible!







## ZACH DAVIS

Executive Vice President and CFO, Cheniere Energy, Houston

**AGE:** 39

*Zach Davis doesn't mind taking the road less traveled. Starting his career at New York City banks, he worked on financing for wind and solar projects (even climbing a wind turbine or two) before landing at Credit Suisse. There, he was assigned the Cheniere account, which was "one of the biggest (and at the time farfetched) project financings ever at the onset of the LNG export story," he says. Two years later, he turned down a job at a large energy company to take a chance on joining Cheniere.*

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

"All the hypothetical downside cases came to bear at the same time in 2020 (no margins to be made, customers not needing LNG, pandemic slowing down construction and operations, hurricanes, and financial markets effectively shut down for a period of time).

"Through that time, I led our efforts to pull off one of the first energy bonds of \$2 billion, as well as raise a highly strategic bank deal at our parent company that really solidified Cheniere's financial footing for the future."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"Must appreciate that volatility is a constant in the energy markets so one must never expect things to ever remain as good or as bad as they may seem at any given time. One should expect the inevitable ups and downs and have the stomach for it!"

### Who are your mentors?

"My parents were not just always supportive, but instilled in me a work ethic and desire to do well academically at a very young age that helped me progress through school and the early years of my career.

"Then from Tom Emmons

and Gerry Di Popolo at HSH Nordbank to Ted Brandt at Marathon Capital to Jamie Welch at CS to Michael Wortley (previous Cheniere CFO) and Jack Fusco (Cheniere's CEO) ... I'm likely not in this position today without these folks and a host of others encouraging or pushing me along the way."

### THREE MORE THINGS

- By the time of this publication, my wife and I will have 3 little Texan daughters aged 8, 6 and a couple months.

Being from the Northeast, neither my wife nor I thought our future would be in Houston but it has been an amazing place to live and raise our family.

- Only a couple weeks after starting at Credit Suisse, I was by chance staffed on Cheniere at a time in 2011 when no one else wanted to touch it as it seemed destined to not work out.

After a few first-of-kind LNG contracts and some CS-led equity deals later, Cheniere was off and running and I was asked in late 2013 to leave banking and join Cheniere full time.

- When I was told I was going to be promoted to CFO, I was also informed that I had to start the morning of our Q2 earnings call in August 2020.

### What professional and/or personal advice would you give other young professionals in the industry and/or in your sector.

"Pace yourself; nothing happens overnight. It was a long and winding journey to get to today for me in my career but now it feels like it went by in a flash. Your career will last decades and nobody ends up defined by their first or second job experience right out of school. No need to peak too soon!"

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

"The scale and impact we can make is sometimes mind boggling. One LNG cargo can provide enough energy for at least 2 million people for a month. Cheniere alone exports approximately two cargoes a day. I also loved that what we work on can turn into something as tangible and important as these large export terminals." ■



## SYED FAHIM

Global ESG Lead, SLB, Houston

**AGE:** 39

*A friend told Syed Fahim that he could expect “a lot of learning and a lot of adventure” in the oil and gas industry. He looked into it and was smitten. The native of Chichawatni, Pakistan, has established himself as an influencer in the industry, one who was promoting sustainability before it was cool.*

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had planned, and what helped you reach it earlier than expected?

“I wanted to pursue a career in sustainability ever since my MBA in 2019. I volunteered for one of the first positions in 2020 and landed a dedicated sustainability-focused role in 2022. I did not expect this transition to happen so fast in an industry still trying to find its narrative on this subject. Working with corporate leaders in an enterprise-wide influencing role was something I had not envisioned at this stage of my career.”

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

“Willingness to learn and update your knowledge continuously; being agile and able to read the pulse of the industry and its stakeholders; willingness to sacrifice short-term gains for long-term benefit; and, most importantly, being able to bridge gaps and get a seat at the table for all discussions that impact the future of this industry.”

### How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?

“I have been a co-leader of a SLB leadership employee resource group (ERG) that boasts a membership of 3,500+ employees. Using the platform, I and my co-leaders have been able to promote topics like sustainability and DE&I way before they entered the popular parlance. We also set up mentoring circles, provide quick leadership tips, hold leadership webinars, in-person sessions, book clubs and a host of other engagements

at a global level.”

### What advice would you give other young professionals in the industry?

“It is a time of a great transition. Learn more, know how to contribute, lead the change that you wish to take place in the industry. It is easy to feel bad or point the finger to ourselves and others and blame—the hard bit and the real challenge is to bring change and be part of the solution to the problem of environmental damage that will affect our future generation. Shying away from the problem or being apologetic without taking concrete action will get us nowhere.”

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I ran my first half-marathon in 2020, and since then have run a full marathon, another half and a sprint triathlon. I am planning to run the NYC marathon later this year as part of an energy advocacy group.
- I am a Fundamental of Sustainability Accounting (FSA) credential holder from IFRS and a Sustainability and Climate Risk (SCR) credential holder from GARP, as well as a co-author of an SPE paper on quantification of carbon footprint while drilling.
- In the annual off-site gathering of our global sustainability team, we were asked to identify the most memorable attribute of every team member. Mine was identified as, “He’s so funny!”

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

“I believe this industry has the potential to solve the problem of energy transition. It has a century-long history of project management, technology adoption, safety, economically beneficial decision making, job creation and transformation. With the tide turning in favor of sustainability, I feel that industry is not fighting against it but instead trying to move faster towards it. This keeps me hopeful about the industry.”

### What are your future goals?

“I wish to continue being a change maker, an impact person in any capacity. If it means being a business leader, or a thought leader, or a foot soldier—so be it. I hope to be an influencer to bridge the misunderstanding between the modern energy industry and the people who despise it due to its past and current polluting practices. I want to become that business person who can prove the case of sustainability.” ■



## SEAN FITZGERALD

Partner, Boomtown Oil, Houston

**AGE:** 39

*Sean Fitzgerald's father worked in the oil and gas industry, but it was not until Sean attended the University of Texas that the Katy, Texas native realized how technologically advanced the industry had become. "From that point forward, I was hooked," he says.*

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you expected?

"I started my own company earlier than I anticipated (2011). I was getting married at the time and my wife was very encouraging. She was still working on her Ph.D., so it was a good time to take a risk as our cost of living was very low. My business partner and I formed a professional engineering firm and quickly found clients and private equity sponsors. Then, as the size of the private equity assets we managed grew, we eventually shut down the consulting side."

### Describe a memorable professional experience.

"I remember the first private equity deal where we controlled the accounting. At signing, the sponsor transferred \$12 million into the corporate account that I controlled. This was the first time we were truly in charge of everything—land, drilling, completions, production, regulatory and accounting. I remember the excitement we had to get the project going and start building the company. I don't think we left the office for a week! It was a dream come true. Looking back, of course, I chuckle, as our projects now are 20 times that size."

### What has been your most challenging project to date?

"Hiring the right people has by far been the most challenging project to date. When the team is small, it is easy to find someone who fits the corporate culture, as you normally know someone. As the team grows, it becomes harder as you have to do a proper interview and judge potential employees on very little interaction. I can tell you, in the

past we didn't do a great job of this and had to let people go because they overinflated their resume and were unable to do the tasks that were assigned to them. However, I got better at the hiring process and Boomtown is now at 16 employees who I'm very proud of as they do an excellent job."

### Who is your mentor?

"My father is my biggest mentor. He was in the industry for his entire career. His most valuable piece of advice, of course, was that 'all things tend towards the center.' While not 100% accurate, generally speaking, it is safe to say that your company will experience ups and down, with both good and bad periods."

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"The oil and gas industry is a small place. You will be surprised how often you run into the same folks over and over in your career. To that end, make friends and learn from those around you. If something isn't working for you, politely take a different route, but don't burn bridges."

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I am a professional engineer in the State of Texas with a B.S. in Petroleum Engineering from the University of Texas.
- I started my career with Shell, then moved to Rosetta Resources before stepping out on my own in 2011.
- We have worked with multiple private equity providers in the past and are actively working with Juniper Capital.

### What do you think young industry members have to offer that is unique to them?

"One of the most common things that those under 40 do in the industry is ask questions. This is both unique and important. While the group is always trying to learn more about the industry, their questions are also reminding everyone in older generations that not everything is set in stone and sometimes deploying a new technology or strategy can be helpful." ■





*“The oil and gas industry is a small place. You will be surprised how often you run into the same folks over and over in your career.”*

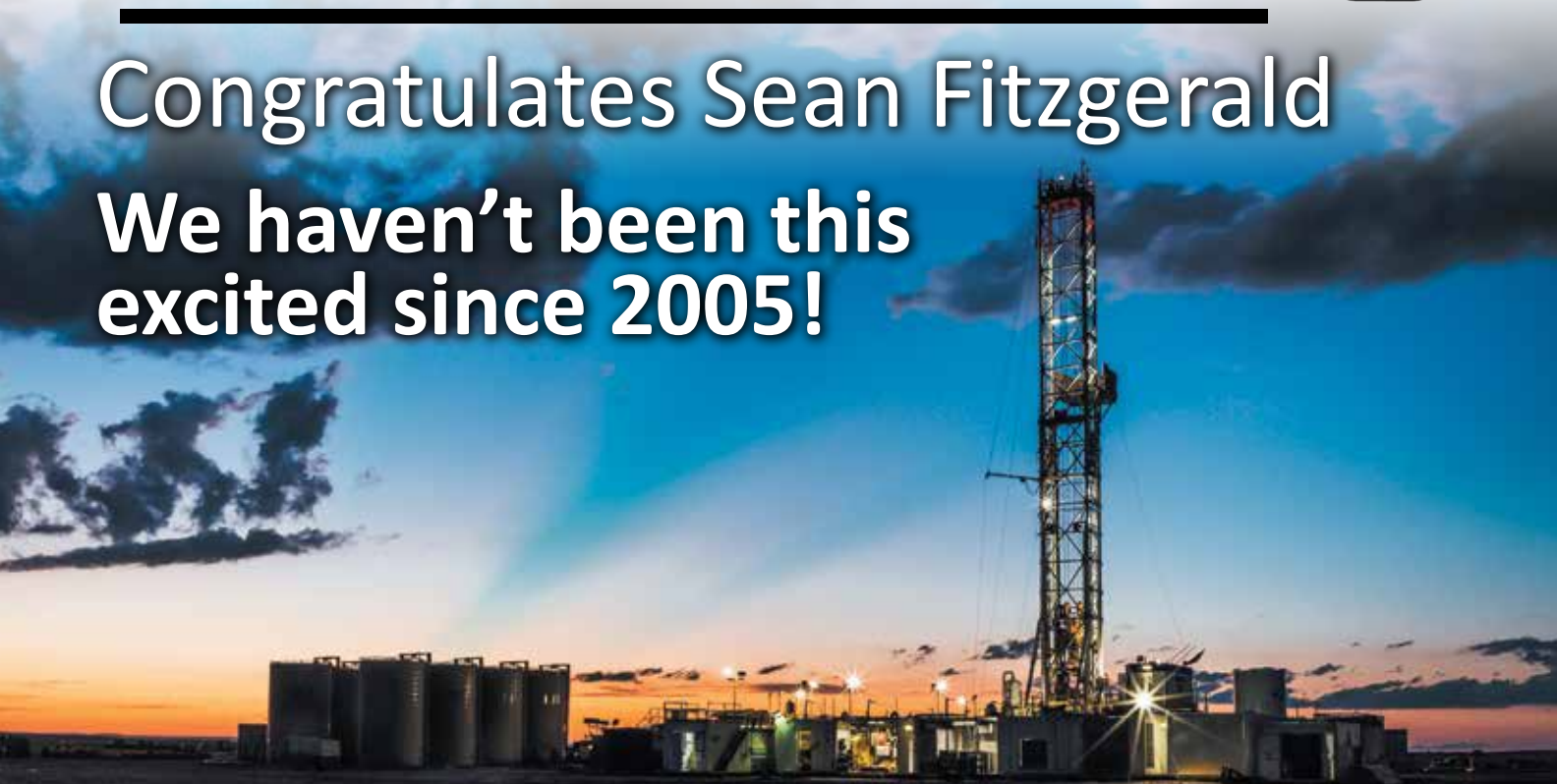
—Sean Fitzgerald, *Boomtown Oil*



# Boomtown Oil



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## LEHNE GEORGE

Geoscience Manager, Marcellus Business Unit, Chesapeake Energy, Oklahoma City

**AGE:** 38

*An Atlanta native, Lehne George didn't consider a career in oil and gas until her application to graduate school attracted the attention of a professor who convinced her to consider organic petrology. At Chesapeake since her graduation, she has worked in a variety of basins and formations. A mom of three, she is happy to share her love of geology, whether it's at STEM demonstrations at her kids' schools, or with interns she's mentored and guided in their careers.*

### **Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?**

"I was very honored to be recognized as one of CERAWeek's 2023 Future Energy Leaders. I was able to participate in a week-long program focused on developing young leaders. I am also very proud of being asked to join the Chesapeake Diversity Equity and Inclusion Board (DEI). This is my first experience serving on a board and I am enjoying working with this meaningful and impactful group within my company."

### **What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?**

"I think an important quality for a good leader in the oil and gas industry is someone who, no matter how difficult the situation, displays optimism and a positive attitude. There is power in staying positive and finding the good in every situation. Additionally, I think a good oil and gas leader is someone who can communicate effectively, no matter the subject matter or discipline. Geoscience leaders who interact and communicate effectively with engineering, finance and land team members can create better projects and stronger teams."

### **What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?**

"I credit most of my leadership skills development to my experiences working on a multidisciplinary team in a business unit. Being a peer leader and bringing together a team of geoscientists, engineers, landmen and more to work towards

a common goal was essential to my growth and development. Learning how to effectively communicate, to pitch ideas to a management team, and to solve a difficult technical problem as a team were all valuable skills to hone in my leadership journey."

### **What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?**

"As a geoscientist in the oil and gas industry, every day I get to experience the truest form of science in action. As we drill wells, there is a constant influx of data and therefore a seemingly endless flow of things to be curious about. That's the motivation and passion of being in this industry to me: there's always a new project to face, a new challenge to uncover, and new questions to ask. Every day is an opportunity to problem solve, work together as a team and tackle the next big project."

### **THREE MORE THINGS**

- I'm a huge Swiftly—I've seen Taylor Swift in concert five times and even high-fived her during one of her shows!
- I am very tall—just under 6'1". I think it helps with my confidence—I stand out in a crowd no matter what, so I just own it. Also, having two young daughters who are also very tall, I like to set a good example for them of body positivity.
- I am a homebody and really enjoy spending my time at home reading, hanging out with my family and swimming in our pool.

### **Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?**

"I think fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion is essential to the future of this industry. Solving difficult problems requires an 'all hands on deck' approach, so the more we accept differing perspectives and backgrounds, the more likely we are to succeed. Additionally, innovation is important for this industry to survive. I am so encouraged by the exciting new technologies and creative solutions to difficult problems that young professionals in oil and gas are generating." ■



*“There is power in staying positive and finding the good in every situation.”*

—Lehne George, *Chesapeake Energy*



**CHESAPEAKE**  
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**Chesapeake is proud to join Hart Energy in celebrating the 2023 40 under 40 honorees.**

We congratulate Lehne George, Chesapeake’s Geoscience Manager for the Marcellus Business Unit. Lehne embodies the work ethic and vision that is helping our company answer the call for affordable, reliable, lower carbon energy.





## JACQUELINE GERST

Vice President of Storage, Carbonvert, Columbus, Ohio

**AGE:** 40

*In 2021, Buffalo, N.Y., native Jacqueline Gerst was just the fourth employee to join Carbonvert. "Joining a startup, especially one that was truly just starting, felt a bit like jumping off a cliff while assembling your parachute," she says. "However, it's been one of the best things I've ever done."*

**Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had expected?**

"I was in my early 30s when I started having direct reports, which was much sooner than I had thought. My department manager was a huge part of that, not only giving me the opportunity to try my hand with people management through managing our interns, but also signed me up for 'soft skills' classes to help prepare me. This quickly escalated and before I knew it, I was running a team of over 50 people."

**Describe a memorable professional experience.**

"Very early in my career, we had Japanese clients and I was part of the team that went to Tokyo to present our findings. I was the only technical woman in the room and was terrified to present my seismic interpretation of their data, but it was my work and my boss said it was mine to present. In the end, our clients were happy with what I had shown. It was one of the first times that I truly felt like I had the confidence to explain my technical work."

**What has been your most challenging project to date?**

"The most challenging thing I've done is being part of the shift from research to commercial applications that CCS [carbon capture and sequestration] is currently going through. As an early career scientist, most of my work was focused on the basic technical questions, things like how do we track injection reservoir quality rock across an interval that no one ever logged, to

which wireline tools would give us the presence of CO<sub>2</sub> near the wellbore, to how do we permit these wells. In the last five years, CCS has really moved to a commercial business, albeit one in its infancy. Those of us that have done this for a long time have had to refocus away from pure science and towards economically viable projects."

**What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?**

"One of the most important characteristics is the ability to remove obstacles. I have been blessed in my career to work with a lot of people way smarter than I am and I've found that I can help them be their best by making things as easy as possible."

**THREE MORE THINGS**

- I decided I wanted to be a scientist when I was 12 and was fascinated with 7th grade science.
- I am a classically trained pianist and violinist. I do keep up with the piano, but rarely play violin anymore. That being said, my biggest fear going to college was I wouldn't pass my audition for the school orchestra.
- I love being a mom and have turned into quite the sports mama! My daughter plays catcher for a travel softball team and my son is a competitive gymnast. You can almost always find me at a kids sports event.

**What advice would you give other young professionals?**

"For professionals looking to get into CCS, I would recommend a subtle shift in thinking. The questions you need to answer for a CO<sub>2</sub> project aren't different than more traditional E&P, they just require you to keep at it. Don't be afraid to get it wrong and don't be afraid to admit as such."

**What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?**

"I love working in energy. Our carbon emissions, as an entire society, are so great that it really needs to be 'all hands on deck.' All the technologies are needed all of the time to make a real difference. I enjoy getting to work in carbon reduction, but with a focus on getting things done in a way that only raises quality of life." ■



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## TRAVIS HANCOCK

Co-Founder and Partner, Octagon Energy Partners;  
CFO, EnerVest, Houston

**AGE:** 35

*After working on a congressional campaign, Travis Hancock moved to Washington, D.C., where he learned he preferred energy finance over lobbying. Now in private equity, Hancock finds himself drawn back to politics, but on a more limited basis. "When given the opportunity, I enjoy talking with both Republican and Democratic members of Congress, explaining the oil and gas sector," he says. "It is nice to be an advocate for the U.S. energy sector and help policy makers understand that we need all forms of energy—traditional and renewable."*

**Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had planned, and what helped you reach it earlier than expected?**

"Co-founding a new energy-focused private equity firm is an exciting challenge. This is not necessarily something that I had ever planned to do. It is more of an opportunity that I am fortunate to pursue, even in a tough market. Having this opportunity has a lot to do with investor trust, which only comes from the right experiences."

**Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?**

"Partnering with TPG to turn their Special Purpose Acquisition Company (SPAC) into Magnolia Oil & Gas in 2018 is one of the most interesting deals I have completed in my career, thus far. It was a tough eight months from the start of the negotiations to MGY trading publicly. Both teams at EnerVest and MGY have done an excellent job over the past five years with that business, and it is a privilege to have seen MGY's success from the beginning."

**What has been your most challenging project to date?**

"Many firms in energy private equity had a tough time during 2016 and 2017, including EnerVest. When starting as EnerVest's CFO in the fall of 2020, one of its private equity funds was still being restructured out of court.

"It was a challenge to conclude that process after such a long period of time, but I am proud to have brought a new, pragmatic view to the situation that helped

our team close that chapter of the firm's history."

**What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?**

"Being able to build relationships is key. I believe the oil and gas sector is one of the last sectors in the U.S. where relationships can make a big difference in the growth trajectory of a firm."

**What advice would you give other young professionals?**

"Don't leave. The U.S. energy sector is changing. It will take some time for the dust to settle, but keep an open mind about both traditional and renewable energy. Also, ask a lot of questions."

**What do you think young industry members as a group have to offer that is unique to them?**

"Continuity. Whether those in the sector agree or not, attracting talent is going to be tough. I am optimistic that this will change over time.

"We need those in the sector today to stick around, keep innovating and be the foundation for providing energy to the U.S. and world."

**Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?**

"I believe many people in the sector are still reluctant to recognize that traditional and renewable energies need to coexist. I think being perceived as 'traditional only' or 'renewable only' will hurt team member recruitment and retention over the long term." ■

**THREE MORE THINGS**

- I am a first-generation college graduate.
- I was briefly detained in the Moscow airport while returning from my honeymoon.
- One item toward the top of my bucket list is to visit all seven continents before and after I turn 70.





## RYAN HANNEMANN

Portfolio Manager, Oklahoma & Permian, Marathon Oil, Houston

**AGE:** 37

*Ryan Hannemann is one of three brothers, all of whom are combat veterans of the U.S. Army. "I joined the oil and gas industry because I was captivated by the challenge that unconventional oil and gas presented," he says. "The prospect of discovering, accessing and economically producing hydrocarbons from incredibly tight and highly variable petroleum systems, buried miles beneath the surface, felt both daunting and promising."*

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had expected?

"Surpassing my own expectations, I achieved the milestone of becoming subsurface manager for the Bakken in just five years, a feat I hadn't anticipated. This accelerated growth was made possible through a combination of factors, including what I consider a lucky run-in with some of the best leaders I've seen; invaluable guidance from mentors; having a diverse background, including the experiences from prior service; and a willingness to make personal sacrifices for continuous development."

### Describe a memorable professional experience.

"Amidst the unprecedented COVID pandemic, I transitioned from an A&D-focused role covering North Dakota and Oklahoma to managing subsurface and production specifically for Oklahoma, a region hit hard by negative oil prices. The remarkable aspect was witnessing the team's exceptional maturity and focus despite the challenges. The tough conditions seemed to galvanize us, fostering resilience and determination to bounce back."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"To excel as a leader in the oil and gas industry, several qualities are crucial. A good leader should be able to think strategically and adapt non-linear approaches to problem-solving. Effective communication, combined with active listening, fosters strong team collaboration and trust-building. Leading with empathy, while inspiring

and challenging the team, creates an environment where individuals aspire to excel. This involves allowing flexibility in achieving the mission to adapt to the team's strengths and capabilities."

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"For young professionals, my advice is to pursue what truly excites you and to seek out mentors and peers who challenge and inspire your growth. Listen intently, learn from every experience and don't be afraid to take calculated risks. Remember, your journey is about embracing opportunities, learning from failures and crafting your unique path to success."

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I served in the U.S. Army and was deployed to Iraq under Operation Iraqi Freedom twice (2006-2008 and 2009-2010). Interestingly, both deployments overlapped with either older or younger brothers, making it a unique experience for our family.
- Prior to delving into the energy industry, I mistakenly believed that the future of U.S. oil and gas had a narrow runway. Discovering the vast potential within the industry was a significant revelation and I'm glad that I took the leap of faith.
- When I encounter challenging obstacles at work, I find solace in woodworking, specifically furniture building. This not only offers me a space to unravel complex problems but also earns some brownie points with my wife, Vanessa.

### What transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?

"For the industry to thrive in the future, we must continue to adapt on several levels and improve with the changing times. This includes harnessing AI and innovative technologies to increase efficiency, drive down costs, optimize operations and minimize environmental impacts. From a financial perspective, the industry needs to make disciplined decisions and engage in sustainable behaviors that balance near-term priorities and long-term prosperity. Additionally, fostering a culture of transparency, sustainability and community engagement will be paramount in reshaping the industry's reputation and emphasizing the true value we contribute. By aligning these changes, we can create a more prosperous and balanced future for both the industry and the communities we serve." ■



## CLAYTON JAMES HEWETT

COO, Cardinal Midstream Partners, Dallas

**AGE:** 40

*Early in Clayton Hewett's career, he was working to bring a facility online in North Texas when he learned the value of teamwork. "I stood by with my team and watched equipment failure after equipment failure," he says. Despite the frustrations of the night, the only thing they could do in the moment was laugh at the situation. "Sometimes, no matter how well planned, things just don't work out the way you want them to. The camaraderie our team felt and the enthusiasm to solve problems, even when not experiencing the outcome we had worked so hard for, made me proud to be apart of the team."*

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

"I am fortunate to have a professional network of friends, mentors, managers, co-workers and service providers that will drop everything to support any project or task that I am working on, knowing that I would do the same for them."

### What has been your most challenging project to date?

"Starting Cardinal Midstream with my partners, and the subsequent asset purchase and transition, has been the most challenging and satisfying project to date. Working together to build a team and lead the effort to successfully execute our business strategy is the main focus of my day."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"Passion, experience, transparency and the ability to organize and align the people around you to execute a strategic plan or vision."

### How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?

"Knowing when and what tools to use to motivate and manage people can be tricky, so knowing your employees is key to understanding how to get the most from your people. Also, being a good listener and fostering a collaborative environment where an individual can have input in the decision-making process is something I try

to facilitate at my current organization and in previous leadership roles."

### What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?

"God, my parents, coaches and mentors have all molded me as a person and my ability to make good and right decisions. I have been fortunate to have worked for and around some incredibly wise individuals that helped me understand how to conduct myself in high-pressure situations and to also understand the functions and roles within a midstream company."

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"Take advantage of and be responsible with the opportunities presented to you. Meet with and get to know your co-workers and those people that your personal and company success depends on. Also, pay attention and learn to recognize what success looks like and what it does not."

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

"I like the challenge that each day brings and the opportunity to solve problems with people that are motivated by the same. I want my children to see the success that can come from hard work and appreciate the importance of cheap, reliable energy; something that many take for granted." ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I am a big TCU football fan and have had season tickets for over 10 years. I (of course) went to the national championship game this past year, which didn't go exactly as I had hoped.
- I met my wife at a karaoke bar on Bourbon Street. She is an oil and gas attorney, and 10 years later, we have three kids.
- I enjoy the outdoors through golf, fishing, hunting and shooting sports; I have even taken a tactical instructional course alongside local, state and federal agents where I gained a profound respect for how incredibly difficult their jobs can be at times.



*“Knowing when and what tools to use to motivate and manage people can be tricky, so knowing your employees is key to understanding how to get the most from your people.”*

—Clayton James Hewett, *Cardinal Midstream Partners*



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Chief Operating Officer  
**Clayton Hewett**





## CHRISTOPHER HOGAN

Founding partner, Hogan Thompson Schuelke LLP, Houston

**AGE:** 38

*Chris Hogan didn't give the energy industry much thought until his first year of law school when he studied Pierson v. Post, a property law case that applies to oil and gas. "When I graduated and started working as an attorney in Texas, I was exposed to cutting-edge oil and gas case law," he says. "While I've had occasion to dabble in other areas of the law, I've always found that oil and gas law is what I enjoy the most."*

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

"My biggest professional accomplishment was opening my own firm. Most new firms that open tend to have older, established lawyers in their 50s or 60s lead the firm. But my colleague Samantha [Thompson] and I started Hogan Thompson Schuelke in our 30s. We also opened the firm in February 2020, and immediately found ourselves in a tough environment for an energy-focused law firm (negative oil prices!), but were able to grow our firm and succeed to the point where we now have eight attorneys. I'm very proud of what we built.

"Also, I first-chaired a major oil and gas trial in South Texas against some of the top lawyers in Texas. The trial was hard-fought and we ultimately prevailed in the lawsuit, securing a jury verdict for over \$17 million for our client. First-chairing such a major case and securing this victory was a major accomplishment for me."

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than expected?

"In 2018, I was appointed by the Texas State Bar to the Pattern Jury Charge committee for Oil & Gas. This committee contains some of the foremost leaders of oil and gas law in the state and I was proud to get appointed at such a young age. I think my big help was having the support of the lawyers at my firm to sponsor me for this position and the respect of my fellow attorneys in the state."

### How have you exercised leadership

### to help shape your company?

"Since founding Hogan Thompson Schuelke with my colleague Samantha, I've worked hard to ensure that every member of our firm fits our mold. We pick every member of our firm to enhance the firm culture. We want to represent our clients as best as possible, but also ensure that everyone at the firm treats others with dignity and respect."

### Who is your mentor?

"Judge Jerry E. Smith of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. My first job out of law school was clerking for Judge Smith and I learned more during my year working for him than I have in any other job before or since. Judge Smith is one of the smartest people I know, a great legal mind, and genuinely a good person."

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I'm an Eagle Scout and to this day can still tie many (but not all...) of the knots I learned during my time in scouting.
- My mom and dad are both from the Pittsburgh area. So, even though I grew up in California and now live in Texas (got here as soon as I could), I have a special place in my heart for the Pittsburgh Steelers. You can usually find my son and me at one or more Steelers home games each year.
- I love collecting oil and gas coffee cups. When I am leaving a client's office, I often awkwardly ask for a coffee mug to add to my collection. If you ever come to Hogan Thompson Schuelke's office, they make up the majority of our coffee cup collection.

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"Oil and gas is a small world and you need to keep that in mind when dealing with people. The people that you work with today will be the same people that you see for the rest of your professional life. If you burn bridges now, you will feel the effects of those decisions for decades to come. In the oil and gas field, there are a handful of lawyers that get tagged early on in their careers as untrustworthy. That is a tough stigma to overcome. I work hard to stay respectful and considerate in all of my dealings, and this has proven very helpful in my career development." ■



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## JOSHUA HOLT

Co-Founder/CTO, WellDatabase, The Woodlands, Texas

**AGE:** 39

*Joshua Holt actually had his eye on a career in the automotive industry when he was a mechanical engineering student. An internship at a software consulting company exposed him to its oil and gas clientele. "I ended up enjoying both software, and oil and gas," he says. "So, I stuck around!"*

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had planned, and what helped you reach it earlier than expected?

"I always wanted to start my own company after moving to full-time employment from consulting, but the timing just never felt right. Eventually, I started working on what would become WellDatabase on nights and weekends, and the stars aligned, enabling me to go full-time on it sooner than I ever imagined. (I later learned there really is never a perfect time—you just have to do it.)"

### What was a uniquely memorable experience in your career?

"I remember sitting at dinner with my family, after we launched WellDatabase, and getting that first email about someone signing up. It was such an amazing feeling, that we had built something people were willing to pay for. I am excited for all of our customers, but that first one really lit a fire inside to keep going."

### How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?

"Early on, John [Ferrell] and I fell into the typical overwork cycle while building out WellDatabase. I realized quickly once we started hiring that we needed to make sure our employees never felt that toxic pull to overwork. It's important to me that our employees have a great work-life balance and feel free to take care of the important things in their life. It's easy for a company to say that, but these days we try to lead by example, so that employees know we mean it. I do my best to listen and be available to help anyway I can. My goal is to remove obstacles and enable our employees to succeed."

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I studied Japanese for six semesters. I love the culture and would love to live there one day.
- I've done about 60 skydives and absolutely love the sport. I took a break when my youngest kids were born, but plan to get back in the sky soon.
- I am mostly an introvert, but I try to hide it as best as I can!

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"Learn all you can from the older professionals in the industry while you can. They have so much knowledge to offer about the how and why of things today. That said, try to see it through the lens of the current technology landscape and don't be afraid to challenge the status quo. This will help you uncover places where you might be able to drive innovation or increase efficiency."

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

"The industry is constantly evolving. For a long time, oil and gas was slow to adopt new technologies, and it wasn't as interesting of a place to work. In the past few years, the oil and gas industry has jumped to the forefront of technology adoption, which makes it an exciting time to be in the industry."

### What do you think young industry members as a group have to offer that is unique to them?

"At this point, young industry members have all had modern technology available to them since the day they were born. Using computers and software is second nature to them. I think they can really help drive the future innovations required to move our industry forward to a cleaner, more efficient future."

### Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?

"Create a data-driven culture. Drive efficiency through the diligent use of technology. Empower teams to try things leveraging new techniques, and support failures. Not everything will be successful, but innovation can't happen if people are afraid of failure." ■





## MATHEW JARVIS

CEO, Dark Horse Metals and Apex Capital Resources, Houston

**AGE:** 36

*Matthew Jarvis is a U.S. Army veteran who started a nonprofit to help provide veterans with access to regenerative medical treatments, including stem cell therapy. "Our mission is to improve the quality of life for veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country by helping them regain their mobility, independence and overall well-being," he says. "We strive to achieve our mission by raising funds to cover the cost of stem cell treatments and by promoting public awareness of the benefits of regenerative medicine for veterans."*

**Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had planned, and what helped you reach it earlier than expected?**

"I wanted to become a VP within 10 years of starting in oil. I reached it at year five. I think what helped me was not being scared to take risks and taking on big projects to work hand-and-hand with my senior leaders at that time."

**What has been your most challenging project to date?**

"I would say launching 22 new casing connections in a falling market in 2019 and then during COVID in 2020. I think the biggest reason for our success was grit. We just pushed hard day after day until we made it. I think it was a volume game; if 20 companies said no, then we called 150 more. Once we got a few strings in the ground, it kind of snowballed from there. We set up hundreds of meetings and got very aggressive."

**What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?**

"For me, I think it's about setting the standard by your actions and holding yourself and team accountable. You empower your team to lead and support them with what they need. But you must also hold yourself and your team to a standard. Make sure everyone understands the goal and remove any obstacles that you can. I like to remind myself that hard and impossible are not the same."

**How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?**

"I have developed a go-to-market strategy on over 22 new products and

implemented an aligned strategy utilizing cascading KPIs and a balanced scorecard approach, resulting in variable cost reductions and increased margins.

I put a team in place and empowered my leaders to drive change while making sure all departments were rowing the boat in the same direction. Resistance to change is one of the biggest obstacles in business, in my opinion. I brought the team together and made them all a part of the plan and worked with them on strategy development for each of their departments. This made all team members buy into the plan because they helped create it. It's a powerful thing when everyone is working together to hit a common goal."

**What advice would you give other young professionals?**

"Set a goal and push hard to hit. Hold yourself to a standard and work hard. Think hard before you set the goal because once you write it down, that's it, no matter what."

**What are your long- and short-term career goals?**

"Short-term goals—to grow Dark Horse Metals and create good jobs that will help our team members push forward in their careers. Long-term goal: Retire by the age of 40 and focus on my non-profit organization, Apex Warrior Foundation, and spend more time bow hunting."

**What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?**

"The life-changing opportunities this industry creates for so many entrepreneurs." ■

**THREE MORE THINGS**

- Bow hunting is my real job. I only work to have the ability to hunt.
- I love to do Jiu Jitsu—I roll five days a week.
- I grew up very poor in a small town and lived in a run-down trailer park. This pushes me to work hard every day so my kids never go without and can have experiences that I did not have.



## PATRICK JOHNSON

Partner, Bracewell LLP, Houston

**AGE:** 39

*Patrick Johnson's most challenging project was also one of the first major U.S. offshore wind M&A transactions. Patrick represented Equinor in the sale of its stake in two projects to BP. "The bulk of the work on this deal happened in the summer and fall of 2020, i.e., the height of the COVID era," he says. "And the deal teams were spread across time zones on both sides of the Atlantic. We spent countless hours on video conferencing platforms like Microsoft Teams working to pull the deal together."*

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

"Most recently, I am proud of my role in our firm's market-leading work in the renewables, carbon capture and energy transition space. This work includes representing Navigator CO<sub>2</sub> Ventures in connection with transactions and agreements necessary to develop its Heartland Greenway carbon capture, transportation and sequestration system, and a number of other clients in CCS projects under development.

"I am also proud of my work advising clients like Equinor in the development of potential U.S. offshore wind projects. Deal-making in these projects frequently relies on a mix of tried and true commercial legal concepts from traditional oil and gas, and novel ideas."

### Describe a memorable professional experience.

"During my time as an in-house lawyer at Exxon Mobil, I worked on a gas project under development in the Black Sea offshore Romania. I frequently visited Bucharest, the capital city of Romania, for project meetings.

"On one trip, a few of us hopped in a van and traveled a few hours east to the Black Sea coast. We visited the development site for the shore crossing where the gas pipeline would come out of the water, connect to a processing plant, and, ultimately, the grid.

"The visit gave me a distinct

sense of the sheer scale of the project and the technical challenges involved."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"A good leader in the energy industry must be intellectually curious, collaborative, flexible and persistent.

"The industry is constantly evolving—it is important for a leader to understand both the history of the industry and where it may be headed.

"And energy is most certainly a team sport. Success requires input and perspective from a number of different disciplines."

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

"In a sense, energy is what makes the world go 'round. There is nothing more important to the successful functioning of our society than being able to meet our energy needs.

"As we continue to do so by traditional means and embark on the energy transition, this era in the industry will require patience, creativity, collaboration and foresight. I am excited to be a part of sorting through the many issues that will have to be tackled as we do so." ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I come from a family of lawyers and was born and raised in Houston. Both my parents are lawyers, as are a number of aunts and uncles, and as was my maternal grandfather. Suffice it to say, I encountered the Socratic method early on!
- I am fascinated by World War II. I recently read Erik Larson's "The Splendid and the Vile," an incredible account of the Blitz, the Battle of Britain and Churchill's leadership of the UK through those events.
- I was a high school quarterback and walk-on wide receiver at Vanderbilt University. A broken leg at practice during my freshmen year at Vanderbilt prompted me to hang up my cleats.



*“There is nothing more important to the successful functioning of our society than being able to meet our energy needs.”*

—Patrick Johnson, *Bracewell LLP*

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## JODY JORDAN

Vice President Business Development, Brazos Midstream, Fort Worth, Texas

**AGE:** 40

*About 10 years ago, Jody Jordan found himself offered a position that he was reluctant to accept. "My main reason for not wanting to take it was because it required a fairly large pay cut," he says. Two of his mentors convinced him to take the job, advising him to think long term, particularly because it was early in his career. "Sometimes you can make a lateral move or take a step back that will put you 10 steps ahead later in your career."*

### **Describe a memorable professional experience.**

"Early on at Parsley, we hit 10,000 net Boe/d and, at the time, it was a big deal. I remember our C-suite executives going by each office, high-fiving and gathering everyone up in the main conference room. They wheeled in beverage carts for a celebratory toast, spoke about everyone's impact and gave us the rest of the day off.

"That was the first of many moments at Parsley that ingrained the importance and value of company culture."

### **What has been your most challenging project to date?**

"In March 2020, when crude prices began to collapse and the Mid/Cush differential blew out, we were faced with decisions to shut in/curtail all our production or risk selling below breakevens, or worse, for potentially negative pricing.

"Our goal was to try and keep all our production online and ensure that we were able to sell at a certain margin above breakevens. The term agreements we had in place would not enable us to do that, as they were tied to monthly averages.

"It took an incredible team effort and great business partners to negotiate, draft and execute all the agreements necessary to keep the production online."

### **What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?**

"Lift up/empower others and give credit to team members for successes. When you genuinely care, build relationships and gain trust, people want to go the extra mile for

you. The best leaders are great communicators who let actions and not just words guide them."

### **Who are your mentors?**

"My parents, Rick Watkins and Paul Treadwell are always at the top of my mind. My parents instilled the importance of character, reputation, building relationships and networking from an early age. 'MMFI' is a saying my dad would repeat all the time when talking about meeting someone or developing relationships; which meant, 'make me feel important.'

"It was his way of reminding me to be mindful, take interest, and show that you care. One of my other favorite quotes was said often by Paul: 'People often don't care what you think until they know that you care.'"

### **Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?**

"We need to continuously strive to find better, more efficient and prudent ways to operate. Without the right culture, there are challenges in getting and/or keeping top talent. The modern way of working has rapidly changed and the ability to adapt and improve upon historic norms is necessary. Technology has and will continue to allow us to improve production, reduce costs and increase access. We also need to do a better job of messaging and educating the public on the good that our industry does, the monumental benefits of oil and gas, and how it makes our current daily lives possible." ■

### **THREE MORE THINGS**

- People that I didn't grow up with are always surprised to find out that I rode bulls, roped calves and raced dirt bikes growing up.
- My wife Vanessa and I recently celebrated our 15th wedding anniversary. Our daughter Callan is 10 years old.
- I also love being outdoors and try to take advantage of any chances I get to golf, fish, surf, or ski/snowboard.



*“When you genuinely care, build relationships and gain trust, people want to go the extra mile for you.”*

—Jody Jordan, *Brazos Midstream*



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CONGRATULATIONS  
**Jody Jordan**

on your achievement of being named one of 40 under 40 in the oil and gas industry





## BASAK KURTOGLU

Managing Director & Head of Technical, Quantum Capital Group, Houston

**AGE:** 39

*Basak Kurtoglu began pursuing her doctorate while working full-time at Marathon. "My academic research, combined with my field experience, provided early insight to the opportunities and hurdles the industry was facing," she says. Her team proved the technical feasibility of increasing oil recovery through gas injection in unconventional wells and characterized well performance faster, with only days of production, to guide well completion and spacing design, rig pace and, eventually, capital allocation decisions. "This invaluable experience and time in my career shaped who I am today."*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

"My reason for pursuing a career in the oil and gas industry is different from many others. I am from Turkey and was not familiar with the industry because it was not a major economic driver for the country. As I was researching industries for my career, my great uncle gave me advice that planted the seed for my long career in the energy sector. He said, given the global demand of energy and water, there will always be jobs to meet these needs. As I continued my research on the industry, I found my passion growing for the sector due to the global impact, market dynamics and potential for technological innovation."

### What has been your most challenging project to date?

"Several years ago, we made a strategic decision to invest in our digital transformation, recognizing that it is essential for our firm and portfolio companies to remain competitive in today's ever-changing technological landscape. Developing, aligning and implementing our digital strategy across the entire firm and portfolio has been quite a journey where we evolve and innovate every day. I developed a sincere appreciation for 'fail fast, learn faster.'"

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in

### the oil and gas industry?

"There are several core values and characteristics I have embraced throughout my career that define my leadership style, and I believe these qualities

exist well beyond the oil and gas industry. It starts with 'being there and having done it' to be able to understand and empathize what it takes to do one's work and relate to their career goals. Fostering a culture where our team is aligned to the firm's vision creates an understanding that we are part of something bigger than ourselves—what we do every day makes a difference. I also believe that it is the role of a leader to develop a strategic vision for the group and provide clear guidance to achieve individual and team goals, as well as taking ownership for what is happening or what has happened."

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"Start your career by developing a strong foundation without being worried about promotions or titles—focus more on the experiences and opportunities. Be great at what you do and broaden yourself personally and professionally. And remember, technical competencies are important but personal skills such as communication, empathy, collaboration, and teamwork are critical if you want to lead people in your career." ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I am married to the best geologist I know, without whom I could not be here today. We have two beautiful kids, Evren and Aylin. I love being a mom and spending quality time with my family. It can get exhausting at times, but it is the most rewarding job I have ever had.
- I am from Turkey and my family is still there except my younger sister, who works in New Hampshire. I left home when I was 23 right after college and looking back, I still cannot believe my parents let me go at the time. But without their wisdom and belief in me, I would not be here to share my story today. So, I am very thankful to them! I am also fortunate to grow up with two strong sisters whom I admire and learn from every day.
- I love practicing yoga and walking, which both gives me a little time for myself and makes me feel stronger and healthier both in body and mind.





*“Developing, aligning and implementing our digital strategy across the entire firm and portfolio has been quite a journey where we evolve and innovate every day. I developed a sincere appreciation for ‘fail fast, learn faster.’”*

—Basak Kurtoglu, *Quantum Capital Group*



# CONGRATULATIONS

TO OUR MANAGING DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF TECHNICAL

# BASAK KURTOGLU!

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## ROBERT M. LEE

CEO and Co-Founder, Dragos, Hanover, Md.

**AGE:** 35

*Robert M. Lee was introduced to oil and gas during his time as a cyberweapons operations officer in the U.S. Air Force. While serving at the National Security Agency (NSA), he led a mission identifying and analyzing cyberthreats to industrial control systems (ICS) and operational technology (OT) environments. During that time, he spent a considerable amount of time finding and tracking threats that targeted oil and gas sites globally. Since founding Dragos, he has testified before Congress three times on cybersecurity matters.*

### Of which professional achievements are you the most proud?

"I'm most proud of growing Dragos into a successful team that safeguards industrial infrastructure around the globe. Dragos protects hundreds of industrial organizations, including seven of the 10 largest oil and gas companies in the world and nine of the 10 largest electric utilities in the U.S. Another of my biggest professional accomplishments was launching and securing a patent for Neighborhood Keeper, a free opt-in for the Dragos Platform that allows all the insights happening inside ICS networks to be shared in real-time across the private and public sectors without revealing any sensitive data and with full anonymity of its participants."

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had planned?

"Becoming CEO and Co-Founder of Dragos. I wasn't looking to start a company but after leading the investigation into the 2015 Ukraine power grid attacks, I decided that an OT-specific technology approach was needed in the community. I founded Dragos with my two colleagues from the NSA and then it took off."

### What advice would you give other young professionals in the industry?

"Focus on things that are of interest to you. There may be more lucrative or attractive career options at any given point, but you can never go wrong with being happy. Find the

things that interest and inspire you and you will be far better at those things and contribute far more."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"Passion and commitment are two of them. Expertise is another. It's crucial that leaders realize the dire consequences of cyberattacks and have the passion, dedication, and specialized knowledge—knowledge and skills specific to ICS and OT—to safeguard the critical infrastructure we rely on every day."

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I wrote three children's books: "SCADA and Me," "Threat Intelligence and Me," and "Santa and Me."
- I am an introvert. No matter how many people see me on the global stage or how interactive I may come across, it is always draining. I do it because I love our community but I'm very often collapsing in the hotel room immediately after.
- As much as I loved my time and service in the U.S. military, I hold the view that no one should be in anyone's civilian infrastructure. There are no "good guys" and "bad guys," only uninvited guests and invited. And if they're uninvited, I don't care who they are, I'd happily kick them out.

### Who is your mentor?

"Michael Assante was my mentor and while he was here with us, he always focused me on the mission, the importance of what we are doing. It wasn't and never has been about fame, fortune or any other cliché—it's always been about protecting our communities. He told me, 'Rob, we're not ready yet' for the things to come, before he passed. It was a call to action for all of us and one I think about daily."

### Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?

"The oil and gas industry is going through a rapid technological transformation as well as energy source transformation. This is all underpinned by digitization. To ensure those efforts are successful it will be absolutely necessary to invest seriously in ICS/OT cybersecurity." ■



*“It’s crucial that leaders realize the dire consequences of cyberattacks and have the passion, dedication, and specialized knowledge... to safeguard the critical infrastructure we rely on every day.”*

—Robert M. Lee, *Dragos*



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## JAMES LIU

Managing Director, Wincoram Asset Management, Houston

**AGE:** 38

*Though his father worked as a geologist for Exxon Mobil, James Liu did not follow him into the oil and gas industry at first. He started his career in a non-energy finance role in Dallas but was surrounded by friends who entered the industry in engineering and finance. "I could feel the energy and excitement for the early shale boom and I was eager to get in the game," he says.*

**Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?**

"I am most proud of the first acquisition completed by Wincoram in 2021. The group had collectively spent years refining our thesis on improving capital deployment in the E&P space, and we had finally set up an investment vehicle to execute on the idea. It was a long process requiring collaboration, flexibility, and resiliency from many different parties to push through many potential deal derailments, and it established a great foundation for our continued success."

**What has been your most challenging project to date?**

"The most recent deal [Wincoram] completed was the acquisition of PureWest Energy with a consortium of family offices and other investors, while retaining the existing management team. With so many different constituencies, it was imperative for open lines of communication to be utilized and for all parties to be present in key negotiations to maintain alignment. Every party was required to maintain flexibility and weather all the volatilities of a drawn-out deal process."

**What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?**

"Leaders need to strike a balance between having generalized knowledge and understanding of applicable aspects while still being able to trust and delegate responsibility and expertise to others."

**What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?**

"I greatly admire all of the partners

at Wincoram who have come from a myriad of different backgrounds and created a truly unique and inclusive working environment. Even with the firm's growing successes, they stay constant with principled governance and attention to detail. I typically do not read much from the self-help genre, but I was referred to Don Miguel Ruiz's 'The Four Agreements' which resonated so well with my own ethos. It was an easy read yet the explanations and applications of simple principles were illuminating."

**What advice would you give other young professionals?**

"Find your tribe (personally and professionally). The jobs worth doing are the hardest ones to do. There's a world of difference between working with a great team where everyone is pulling in the same direction versus one without strong leadership and culture. The industry is tough enough externally without internal conflict. Your career is a marathon, and I can't imagine succeeding in the long run without being true to yourself and your values."

**THREE MORE THINGS**

- I was born in Beijing and immigrated to the U.S. when I was 3 years old while my dad pursued his Ph.D. at Rutgers University.
- I played poker online semi-professionally for several months shortly after college graduation. I'm glad I tried something unconventional, but it did not take long for me to realize it wasn't for me.
- I've visited almost 40 different countries and over 40 U.S. states.

**Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?**

"I think the industry needs to revamp its approach to PR and adopt a less combative stance against outsider perceptions. It is too easy to turn insular and take an 'us against them' approach outside the industry. Oil and gas will play a crucial role in solving global energy needs for decades to come, and we would as an industry be better served working collaboratively with interested parties to come up with win-win-win ways to utilize hydrocarbons." ■



*“Leaders need to strike a balance between having generalized knowledge and understanding of applicable aspects while still being able to trust and delegate responsibility and expertise to others.”*

—James Liu, *Wincoram Asset Management*

Congratulations to  
**James Liu**

from the entire Wincoram Asset Management team for being named as one of *Oil and Gas Investor's* Forty Under 40!



**WINCORAM**  
ASSET MANAGEMENT



## DANIEL LOPUS

Senior Vice President, Acquisitions & Divestitures, Hilcorp Energy Co., Houston

**AGE:** 39

*While at ConocoPhillips, Daniel Lopus taught an Excel modeling course for three years. One of his students in Qatar struggled with one particular exercise, even after one-on-one tutoring. "And then, on the third day, an hour into class, she just got it!" he says. "Seeing that sparkle in her eye, and being a small part of that ... I'll never forget that feeling."*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

"My journey to enter oil and gas began with my father's legacy. While he encouraged me to explore other interests and opportunities, seeing what the industry meant to him and my family had a significant impact on me. My calling became clearer during my first internship with Newfield Exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. Flying in on a helicopter, the sight of a bustling drilling rig dwarfing the production platform was breathtaking. The marvel of drilling miles under the ocean floor, with a dedicated army of brilliant minds and relentless workers, sparked a passion in me. Realizing I could have the opportunity to lead such engineering feats, coupled with the prospect of working internationally, was an irresistible combination for my younger self."

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

"Earning a spot as a drilling engineer on a semi-submersible in Western Australia right before my 25th birthday is an achievement I'll never forget. I worked hard for two years to make it happen, often doing work co-workers weren't willing to do. [Originally], I had been told I didn't receive the job, finishing second to another candidate who had eight years more experience. I went home to visit my family in Pittsburgh and watch the Steelers in the Super Bowl. Thirty minutes before the game started, I received the call from my boss, saying, 'something's fallen through with the other candidate, how soon could you board a plane to Australia?' I was elated! Celebrating two victories that night on the south side of Pittsburgh was unforgettable!"

### What has been your most challenging project to date?

"The difficult task of acquiring a major company's Alaska assets stands out. While I wasn't leading the deal, I led the creation of the reserve report. This challenge saw me relying heavily on three invaluable teammates: Keith Elliot, expert oil and gas finder; Christine Stewart, a true data wizard; and Matt Scholin, our in-house financial expert. The fruit of our collective labor? An audited database with a value greater than what we needed for conventional financing."

### What are your long- and short-term career goals?

"When applying for my MBA at Rice, I established a goal of becoming a senior executive of an independent energy company. At the time, I couldn't imagine working at a place like Hilcorp. I feel truly blessed to be asked to be a leader of such a great company. Now, my personal career goals are aligned with our mission, vision and values at Hilcorp. I look forward to growing my relationships with our industry partners and working on mutually beneficial transactions."

### THREE MORE THINGS

- Before starting my full-time career with ConocoPhillips, I had the opportunity to work as a volunteer in a hospital in Guatemala for a year. The experience had a profound impact on me.
- Having lived on four different continents, I love to travel and learn from people of diverse cultures and backgrounds.
- I'm happy to now spend a portion of my time working in the stunning state of Alaska. The opportunities both below and above ground are truly world-class.

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"There are two areas I'm consistently asked for advice on by young professionals: Is an MBA worth it? Absolutely. There are endless ways it can be extremely valuable professionally, personally and socially. Considering a role in investment banking as a technical professional? It can be rewarding. Be aware of two things: First, it's hard work and long hours—have an aligned support system in place. Second, the leadership track in IB prioritizes client origination and seniority, not technical skills." ■





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## SHANNON MANNER

Vice President, Business Development, Noble Royalties, Dallas

**AGE:** 34

*Shannon Manner is nothing if not versatile. Her athletic endeavors include half-marathons and trail runs, mountain biking, skiing, and surfing. On the job, “being able to serve as a Swiss Army knife and willingness to take on any scale of role has been the key to enjoying my career path, and being useful to companies in various stages,” she says.*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

“I entered the oil and gas industry influenced by a family legacy of ingenuity. My grandfather was never a degreed engineer, but to this day, the men he worked with say his mind worked in ways they never saw again for the remainder of their careers. He contributed to several patents, including one related to the nitrogen tank design used on frac sites; and, my uncle was an early entrant in hydrogen station design. During my time at UT, I developed strong connections with the ConocoPhillips team, and thankfully, the Department Head at McCombs was a vocal advocate of mine. I double majored in Government & Business and had been flirting with the idea of law school for years, but when the time came to make a decision on my next move, I accepted the full-time with COP and never looked back.”

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

“One of the most rewarding is undoubtedly co-founding Women in Minerals & Non-Op. This idea emerged from years of working in the industry, and a simple desire to be part of an incremental change. In early '22, Cori Willett and I decided to test out a theory and see what kind of response we would receive. The Tier 1 goal was to promote increased business transactions among women, and do so in a way that appeals to professional females. The community would be unified by a common interest in energy mineral and non-operated acquisitions, and we'd build a network keeping in mind a belief that we shared—that by cultivating genuine relationships across all career stages, celebrating the wins of one another and better

preparing our members to lead in the industry, we'll achieve our goals and more. The rapid growth we've experienced as an organization has been particularly validating. So many of these female leaders continue to engage in business with one another, and the network around us has continued to champion the organization in a number of ways. We are continuing to find ways to collaborate across the industry to promote and connect our members; and in time, we will aid in increasing the pipeline of female dealmakers in our business. We have a lot in store for the future of WIM—stay tuned.”

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

“An effective leader is committed to pushing boundaries, has the ability to drive tangible results and, perhaps most importantly, the capacity to earn respect. Respect can be earned by practicing simple behaviors such as being actively engaged, listening attentively and demonstrating genuine appreciation for the value that each team member contributes.”

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I love languages. I have an appreciation for the Latin culture inherited from my mom's side, and a strong Greek heritage that we are very proud of.
- I have a genuine interest in learning. I value useless knowledge, and I picked up magic and the piano during COVID.
- You won't have to ask me twice to go to karaoke or a comedy show.

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

“The success stories and being immersed in innovation keep me moving at a fast pace. People outside of the business don't recognize that the entrepreneurial spirit in this industry extends far beyond Spindletop or infamous wildcatting stories. There's a foreseeable demand, a barrier to entry and a history of strong economics that makes the space ripe for creativity, advancement and investment within many niches of this business.” ■



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## JONATHON W. McCARTNEY

Senior Vice President, Land and Legal, Double Eagle, Fort Worth, Texas

**AGE:** 37

*Oklahoma City native Jon McCartney represents the fourth generation of his family to work in oil and gas. “My dad was a career company landman and, growing up, I enjoyed hearing what he was working on,” he says. “My parents, having been through the booms and busts, wanted me to have a backup plan, but by law school graduation I knew what I wanted to do.”*

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had planned?

“When I joined Double Eagle, many told me I was taking a big risk leaving an established law firm to join such a young company. So, when I started, I just hoped we could successfully monetize our first deal at some point. We reached that milestone in roughly 18 months, which served to validate the decision I made to join Double Eagle.”

### What is a unique aspect of your career?

“Working with much of the same team for 10 years. I’ve seen many of the members of the team grow in their professional and personal lives. I lost my mother in May and, at the funeral, I looked up to see a large section of Double Eagle folks, almost the entire company. That made me proud of who of I work for and with.”

### How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?

“I subscribe to the servant leadership theory and enjoy helping others reach their full potential. Our team continually rises to heightened expectations. I also try to lead by example. Double Eagle’s success comes in part from making that extra effort—you cannot ask others to do so if you are not willing to do so yourself. I also believe that everything can be made into a process. The maturation of Double Eagle has been to implement processes that allow expediency and accuracy. There has to be room for deviation, but baseline processes are key.”

### What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?

“I would credit Cody Campbell. His

door was always open and his efforts to grow as a leader and person of influence were always evident.

“I could also credit the entire team—specific colleagues have supported me and encouraged (pushed) me to elevate professionally and personally. I also read regularly on the subject.”

### Who are your mentors?

“I don’t have a traditional mentor, but I’m always observing and learning from those around me. My dad has been a major influence, specifically in terms of loyalty and work ethic. John Sellers is someone I’ve learned from professionally and personally. He showed me the value of relationships and, more recently, priorities. Honestly, there’s too many individuals in this industry to name that have taught me something along the way.”

### What advice would you give other young professionals in the industry?

“The oil and gas business is constantly evolving, but I think it will always be very relational and results driven. So, you have to be able to work with others; that sounds much simpler than it is. In the transaction space you must listen and understand your counterparty’s position to find acceptable middle ground with your own group’s needs. The win-win is typically possible and often necessary.”

### THREE MORE THINGS

- A lot of folks call me “LJ.”
- I studied at Oxford.
- I had a number of roommates through college and law school, and all of them work in some capacity in the oil and gas industry.

### What are your career goals?

“Near term, the team and I will continue to build this latest Double Eagle company.

“Looking further ahead, I’ll always try to keep growing in my abilities, but I’m going to try to achieve a better work-life balance to also grow as husband and father.” ■



*“The oil and gas business is constantly evolving, but I think it will always be very relational and results driven. So, you have to be able to work with others; that sounds much simpler than it is.”*

—Jonathon McCartney, *Double Eagle*

A background image of an oil drilling rig against a cloudy sky.

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A circular black and white portrait of Jonathon McCartney, a man in a suit and tie.

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## SIDDHARTH MISRA

Associate Professor, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas

**AGE:** 38

*Siddharth Misra's first encounter with an oil field was as a child living in northeast India. "The vast expanse of machinery and gas flares was a spectacle that forever imprinted in my mind, sparking an interest in the mechanics of the oil industry that remains with me to this day," he says. But it's not just oil that sparks his interest. He is a coffee connoisseur who savors diverse flavors and has a passion for crafting electronic music.*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

"The oil and gas industry drew my attention because it offers the challenge and reward of working in a dynamic and ever-changing industry, and I knew that I would never be bored. I also wanted to be a part of an industry that is essential to the global economy and that has the potential to make a real difference in the world."

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

"In 2018, I was recognized as the U.S. Department of Energy's Early Career Scientist, a prestigious award bestowed upon a select group of 40 scientists nationwide. This honor also came with funding for a five-year research project focused on advancing machine learning for fracture characterization."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"Firstly, a profound understanding of the latest technologies is a necessity, particularly in their application to address industry challenges. As a leader, you should consistently challenge the status quo, innovatively enhancing existing products and services. Excellent communication skills are indispensable. Patience and perseverance are equally critical. Embodying transformational leadership is vital."

### Who are your mentors?

"Professor Carlos Torres-Verdin instilled in me the essence of hard work and the prioritization of quality in all endeavors. Dr. Dean Homan's commitment to applied research greatly influenced my career trajectory. He exemplified how to tenaciously pursue a vision, transforming it into something real for global use in the oil and gas industry. The

mentorship of Dr. Chandra Rai, Dr. Carl Sondergeld and Dr. Jeff Spath was instrumental in mastering the nuances of thriving in academia while maintaining strong industry collaborations. Dr. Akhil Datta-Gupta's tutelage has not only honed my technical prowess but also enriched my perspective towards solution-oriented research. In the realm of industry collaborations, Dr. Ashraf Al-Tahini has been indispensable, offering invaluable guidance, unwavering support, and fostering key connections to groundbreaking research within the sector."

### What are your long- and short-term career goals?

"In the short term, I aim to finalize and publish a technical book on the convergence of energy, AI and decarbonization. This project has been a couple of years in the making, with diligent material collection and now, it's time for the writing phase. Looking further into the future, my goal is to channel my expertise to serve as an adviser to diverse E&P companies and governmental bodies. I aspire to guide them on the effective utilization of cutting-edge tools and technologies from AI to decarbonization, helping to balance energy security with environmental stewardship."

### What do you think young industry members have to offer that is unique to them?

"[Young] industry members offer a unique set of skills and perspectives that are inherently shaped by their experiences with rapid technological advancements and evolving societal values. Coupled with their digital proficiency is their strong inclination towards teamwork. Furthermore, they tend to be driven by purpose and values, committing their best efforts to organizations that resonate with their personal ethos." ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- As an undergraduate, I was deeply immersed in music, dance and various extracurricular activities.
- Authoring technical books is a passion of mine, and I have already written two.
- As an 8-year-old, I was intrigued by the concept of teleportation. So much so that I drafted a plan for a teleporting device and submitted it to a scientific magazine in hopes of securing funding. That dream remains unrealized. I need to work on it soon.





## JACKIE STRANGE PALMER

CEO, GeoVision;  
 President, Geological Services, Houston

**AGE:** 35

*Starting a business was just an idea in the back of Jackie Palmer's mind until it was pushed to the front when she was laid off (on her honeymoon, no less). Now, as a geologist who employs geologists, she derives the most pride from job creation and providing career paths for her staff. "My short- and long-term goals are the same— to try to stop the devaluing of geologists in the industry."*

**Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?**

"I entered the oil and gas industry completely accidentally.

"My resume was found by a mud logging company on Monster.com (this may be 40 under 40, but I still feel old typing that sentence!) and a couple weeks later I drove from Gainesville, Fla., to Waynesburg, Pa., to work my first night shift."

**Describe a memorable professional experience:**

"The best days I've had are not really mine to share—they've been when one of the employees have succeeded and I just got to shine next to them."

**What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?**

"There is only one way to earn the respect of others—by out-working them. If you work harder than everyone on your team, then even if they don't like you, they will respect you as a leader."

**How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?**

"I really try to just make the space for my employees to showcase their talents.

"Think of it like this: what if, instead of posting for a job, you built a position around a person's talents? That's what we try to do at DataLog and GeoVision."

**Who is your mentor?**

"I wouldn't be who I am without Ernest Fuhrmann. I don't just mean GeoVision wouldn't be where it is without his business acumen—I genuinely mean who I am as a person. He is not that much older than me, but if you ask me who I want to be when I grow up, my answer is Ernie."

**What advice would you give other young professionals in the industry?**

"Don't just pitch an idea—do the idea. In this industry, words matter less than actions."

**What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?**

"Oil and gas to me is all about the hustle. It's one of the only industries where hard work directly correlates to results.

"In the public sector and many private industries, it's so difficult to enact change. I feel like I'm effective and able to innovate at DataLog and GeoVision—and I also think that would be stifled anywhere else."

**What do you think young industry members have to offer that is unique to them?**

"Young industry members have been through more downturns at the beginning of their careers than a lot of our predecessors. Instead of being bitter about being numbers on a layoff spreadsheet, we've celebrated the freedom that comes from it. We are a very dynamic workforce that has perfected the art of pivoting."

**Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?**

"I would like to speak to the transformation needed for geologists in the industry. We know more about the reservoir, about the rocks, about the field than most other professions; but we have pigeonholed ourselves to exploration. We must become more active in all aspects of the process—predrilling, drilling and post-drilling (completions) to thrive in the future." ■

**THREE MORE THINGS**

- I'm mostly busy at DataLog and GeoVision.
- I moderate Taylor Swift fan chat rooms.
- I enjoy my collection of humorous taxidermy.



## YOGASHRI PRADHAN

Reservoir Engineer, Coterra Energy, Midland, Texas

**AGE:** 30

*Yogashri Pradhan is a product of a Women in STEM initiative. She fell in love with petroleum engineering while attending a University of Houston engineering camp for high school students, and that experience encouraged her to pursue a career in the industry. She has developed a large online following through her YouTube videos and podcasts on oil and gas topics. Yogashri understands that the heart of the industry is the people. "A mentor sat me down and told me how to work with people and ... that to generate trust with others, I needed to develop empathy," she said. "This is a people business, after all."*

### **Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?**

"I am most proud of the [SPE International] Young Professional Service Award in 2018, where my contributions in SPE—technical and professional—are recognized. I've volunteered in SPE regionally, locally and internationally, and published 15 technical papers to date. My next accomplishment is the Distinguished Alumni Award, Rising Star, through the UT Department of Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering."

### **What has been your most challenging project to date, and how did you meet the challenge and accomplish your goal?**

"My most challenging project to date has been field development planning in the Delaware Basin. You have faults, different structures, reservoir properties, everything under the sun to take into consideration. Every project has its own set of unique initial conditions."

### **How have you exercised leadership to help shape your department and/or company?**

"I've been able to share my experiences with others from various companies I've worked for and the mentors I've had that have set me straight, to say the least. For instance, when I worked in the Texas Oil and Gas Institute, I conducted an internship program for graduate students from UT and Texas A&M, and applied my internship experiences to make their experiences as productive and fruitful as possible. As a result, many of the interns were placed with other internships or full-time positions after their experiences. All 16 of them."

### **What or whom do you credit for**

### **helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?**

"I credit two mentors—Susan Howes, who saw something in me in the oil and gas industry and identified my passion when I was awarded a scholarship through the Gulf Coast Section of SPE. She continues to emphasize the importance of soft skills in the oil and gas industry for career advancement. Another mentor I'd like to thank is Yvonne Scherz, who really gave me direct feedback in what I needed to do better in working with other people."

### **What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?**

"What keeps me motivated and passionate about the industry are the ever-changing problems in the industry that are left to be solved in order to provide energy for the community. People who are passionate about the industry are also what keep me going."

### **What do you think young industry members have to offer that is unique to them?**

"With the majority being millennial or Generation Z, this group offers a perspective of experiencing the energy transition conversations, unconventional reservoir work and financial planning (shale revolution), and are left to be the experts of these topics and perspectives for the foreseeable future because they started this work once they were out of school."

### **Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake to thrive in the future?**

"[The industry must undertake] a culture transformation to have more crucial conversations with each other and emphasize the importance of understanding different people's perspectives." ■

### **THREE MORE THINGS**

- I am a member of MENSA.
- I love to do Orangetheory and Crossfit.
- I am a proud mother of two cats.



## SHAUN PRESTRIDGE

Vice President, Planning & Budgeting, LLOG Exploration Offshore, Covington, La.

**AGE:** 38

*A native of southern Louisiana, Shaun Prestridge grew up surrounded by the oil and gas industry and culture and was acutely aware from an early age of the way it touched nearly everything produced or consumed. That interest, and his innate ambition, resulted in his eventual promotion to the senior leadership team at LLOG.*

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

“First, I would have to say is reaching Final Investment Decision (FID) for our Salamanca project last April. This was and is a highly complex project with many stakeholders, a creative capital structure and an innovative approach to development that consumed the better part of two years of my life. Second, I am most proud of developing a new budgeting and forecasting tool for LLOG which we call our ‘Working Capital Forecast.’ This forecasting tool is utilized nearly every day to aid our executive team in making major strategic decisions for our organization.”

### What has been your most challenging project to date, and how did you meet the challenge and accomplish your goal?

“The process of reaching FID for the Salamanca project has to be my most challenging project to date. I became involved in some way in nearly every aspect of the project, finding ways to create value and move towards the goal of FID. This project required me to make personal sacrifices for many weeks. To meet this challenge, I spent countless hours reading and evaluating legal documents we had from similar precedent transactions, honing my modeling and presentation skills, analyzing and evaluating key drivers of value, strategizing a path forward in all identified scenarios all while staying in constant communication with all project stakeholders both within and outside my organization.”

### How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?

“I have significantly increased communication and cross-functional collaboration within the organization

through building relationships with individuals all throughout my organization. Also, hiring, training and developing my team while also providing a path for individual creativity has led to value creation.”

### What advice would you give other young professionals in the industry?

“Continuously evaluate opportunities to improve. Build a reasonable level of flexibility into all financial models produced. Without fail, a flex will be requested. Know the purpose of what you are doing. Ensure outputs developed achieve this identified purpose. Know the end-user and develop communications and financial models tailored to them. Take pride in and care of your work product as it is an extension of yourself. Anticipate questions before they are asked and answer them ahead of time. Clear, concise and accurate information is key.”

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

“Although I feel I have a breadth of knowledge of my industry, there is always so much more than can be learned. I pick specific disciplines within the industry to seek a depth of knowledge and work hard exhausting

all resources available until I am proficient. With so many disciplines and so much complexity within each discipline, I have no lack of work ahead to be proficient in all areas.”

### What do you think young industry members have to offer that is unique to them?

“Young industry members bring new creative ideas on either how to improve or replace existing systems and processes. This allows for the ability to continue to improve not only the industry, but the lives and wellbeing of all stakeholders for the better.” ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- Achieving a high level of personal productivity is important to me.
- I have a passion for sports cars and used to own a car detailing business, so I am quite a fanatic when it comes to keeping my cars well maintained.
- I have performed strength training across multiple disciplines for over two decades.





## BRITTANY RAIFORD

Vice President, Investor Relations, Southwestern Energy, Spring, Texas

**AGE:** 37

*Houston native Brittany Raiford began her career in public accounting but was drawn to oil and gas and joined Southwestern Energy in 2011. Her role in investor relations gives her a chance to help shape the company's strategy while engaging with external stakeholders.*

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had expected?

“Leading the investor relations team. I started my career in accounting, and many of my roles at Southwestern focused on the drivers of results and how that understanding could inform management’s decision-making. That skillset translated to my current role, delivering Southwestern Energy’s message and results to an external audience.”

### What has been your most challenging project to date?

“The Montage Resources acquisition in 2020 was challenging in many aspects. We announced this value-enhancing merger about a week after I became head of our IR department, in the middle of COVID. To finance the acquisition, Southwestern Energy had a stock and bond offering.

“Needless to say, there was a lot going on! The experience accelerated my learning curve and, importantly, prepared our whole team for the acquisitions of Indigo Natural Resources and GEP Haynesville that we completed in 2021. Together, these acquisitions established Southwestern as the second-largest natural gas producer in the U.S.”

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

“The best leaders in the oil and gas industry are willing to adapt and evolve, but also have confidence in their strategy. Thanks to this kind of strong, forward-looking leadership, Southwestern Energy has transformed itself in recent years, and today the company is well positioned for rapidly increasing global demand for natural gas.”

### How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?

“I want my team to bring their ideas to the table. They are welcome to have a different opinion—in fact, I encourage us to challenge one another. When I think about my work on a daily basis, much of it is external-facing, where trust and transparency are key. I have an amazing role and get to work alongside insightful people both inside and outside of our company. If our message isn’t clear to investors, I want that feedback. If we could be more helpful with our disclosures, I want to hear from our analysts. I strive to create an environment where feedback is welcome and all good ideas are considered.”

### Who is your mentor?

“I’ve been fortunate to work with many great leaders. I really appreciate Carl Giesler, Southwestern Energy’s CFO. He gives honest feedback and is a great advocate for his people. He wants to understand what drives each of his employees and our career ambitions. But most importantly, he is a great mentor because he takes the time to help employees advance in their careers—identifying gaps and opportunities, additional experience necessary, and next steps. That sort of feedback is invaluable.”

### What advice would you give other young professionals in the industry?

“Say yes! The best opportunities for growth and development are often outside your comfort zone.”

### THREE MORE THINGS

- Both my husband and I were on the swim team at Texas A&M. We have three kids (ages 9, 6 and 5).
- Weekends are filled with family—soccer games, tennis tournaments, catching a movie, eating out or going to church.
- My grandparents and father worked in the oil and gas industry.

### Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?

“At Southwestern Energy, we were early movers on responsibly developing our assets, and over the last few years the entire industry has progressed in that space. Those that embrace and find opportunity in the energy transition will provide the most sustainable investment opportunities.” ■

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## BRETT SCHELLENBERG

Vice President - Digital Solutions, Nabors Industries, Houston

**AGE:** 37

*Brett Schellenberg has enjoyed an illustrious career, but an earlier promotion had him wondering if he was up to the task. "I was young and worried that I wouldn't be able to fill the shoes of my predecessor," he says, "but by working with the team already in place, I made measurable improvements on all fronts: HSE, financial and operational."*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

"My first exposure to the oil and gas industry was through my dad and his career. He drew me to the profession. After having the opportunity to intern on a couple of drilling rigs, I really began to fall in love with the confluence of the size, impact, technology and grit of the operations. Also, I enjoyed being around and learning the business from so many great people."

### What has been your most challenging project to date?

"Definitely deploying the world's first fully robotic land drilling rigs. When I first joined the automation team, Nabors was nearly eight years into this automation journey and had made significant progress in going from concept to reality. However, the finishing touches are some of the most challenging parts of a project because that's when all priorities, interests and efforts have to be aligned. Any misalignment can cause delays and overruns. By working across departments, key vendors and operations, and unifying under a common goal, I'm happy to say we were able to push these technologies across the finish line and successfully deploy these fully robotic land rigs to the field."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"Leaders need empathy and the ability to communicate clearly and honestly with colleagues and potential hires about the risks associated with our industry (that could be related to its cyclical nature, or negative industry perception). They need to set clear goals and expectations, expect accountability (both for yourself and others), and be willing to take risks, adapt to change and challenge the

norm. Leaders also need to know how to foster a positive, fun and rewarding culture. If no one wants to be around you or doesn't enjoy coming to work, the team suffers. I work very hard to strike the right balance of this for my teams."

### What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?

"It is equally important to use bad bosses as examples to understand what NOT to do as it is following a good boss on what to do. A book that has helped me navigate new roles is, 'The First 90 Days' by Michael D. Watkins. I keep copies handy to share with others who transition into new roles. I would recommend for anyone that they find opportunities at some point in their career (the earlier the better) to get close to the action."

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"1. Say yes more often. 2. Execute on your commitments. 3. Volunteer and find ways of being visible throughout the industry and your company. 4. Be pleasant and someone people want to be around (don't be a jerk)."

### Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?

"Approach, culture and technology are all important to this industry's future. Historically, we have done a poor job of collaborating across companies and across the industry. To innovate technology and provide energy globally, it will require a new approach and a shift in culture. Rivals will need to work together. We will need to find complementary products and services. Everyone should not be trying to solve the same problems on their own." ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I don't have an engineering degree.
- I love to cook. I'm the two-time Nabors Barbecue Champion (I've got the trophies to prove it!)
- I have run three marathons. I'll be running the New York Marathon in November!



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## MARYAM SCHELLSTEDE

COO, University Lands

**AGE:** 37

*Early in her career as a production engineer in Houston, Maryam Schellstede was assigned to a work field on the west side of the city. "Oftentimes as an engineer, your field area is far from your office desk and it can make it challenging to see the ins and outs of working in the field," she says. "I was able to see a high volume of the 'big and small' of operating gas wells and could simultaneously gain exposure to the corporate and business sides of the business."*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

"I grew up in Katy, Texas, with the energy industry all around me, and my dad worked offshore major projects. Even with that influence, I didn't know I wanted to be in the industry or an engineer early on. After getting accepted into UT-Austin, I was drawn towards engineering because I was good at math and thought it would be a unique undergraduate degree for a law school hopeful. At orientation, I worked with the engineering school to switch to petroleum engineering. I was selected for an engineering internship after my freshman year and, after that summer, I was hooked on the problem-solving nature of engineering and the global impact and diversity of the energy industry."

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

"One professional achievement I am particularly proud of is the transformation of the natural resource development team at University Lands. University Lands is an institution with a one-of-a-kind mission which makes working at UL unique, challenging and rewarding. I felt this potently in my work conceiving and implementing the transformation of the natural resource development team at UL to a truly best-in-class group of professionals."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"Resilience, empathy, integrity and authenticity. These qualities build a servant leader mindset that is integral to leadership in our industry and allow a leader to build and empower teams of high performing experts in their fields."

They foster trust and accountability for teams, which in turn allows for clear communication and the ability to challenge each other, and you as a leader, respectfully."

### How have you exercised leadership to help shape your department?

"I endeavor for the employees on the teams I lead, and the employees on teams I don't lead, to know that I am available to them for everything from mentorship and guidance to voicing concerns or ideas. I find it very rewarding to mentor eager learners on topics ranging from technical work, managing across disciplines, how to lead indirectly, asking (or responding to) difficult questions, and generally supporting colleagues through changes and hard work."

### What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?

"I value the advice and research from Brene Brown and find her philosophy of 'clear is kind—unclear is unkind' to be very impactful. I think it is important to be direct and clear, and that having the courage to do so as a leader is critical to building trust and empowering high-performing teams."

### Who are your mentors?

"Early in my career, I got the good advice to build a 'board of directors' of mentors. I didn't do it methodically or in a calculated way, but I learned quickly that I didn't have all the answers and valued seeing others' perspectives. I have organically formed strong relationships with trusted and experienced mentors that I respect highly." ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I'm not a fan of bugs and critters, but my kids are big animal enthusiasts. I'm often helping nurse strays or injured animals, housing multiple critters and helping catch and pin insects.
- I understand spoken Farsi fluently.
- I like having creative outlets and enjoy pursuing hobbies like painting and baking.



*“Early in my career, I got the good advice to build a ‘board of directors’ of mentors.”*

—Maryam Schellstede, *University Lands*

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## ETHAN SHOEMAKER

Investment Partner & Head of Infrastructure Credit, OIC (Orion Infrastructure Capital), Houston

**AGE:** 38

*Ethan Shoemaker's coffee mug reads, "No one cares. Work harder." It was a gift from his wife. "It was funny but it also has helped reframe things amidst all the ups and downs of starting our business over the last eight years," he says.*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

"Mix of luck, familiarity (my father has been in the natural gas industry for ~40 years) and interest (I wrote my thesis in college on 'Oil in Africa'). When I had to select my first internship rotation at Goldman Sachs, I knew nothing about equities or fixed income, so I chose the commodities division (J. Aron & Co.) and the rest is history."

### Of Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

"Leaving a 'good' job at Goldman to start OIC as the first employee. We had a very small team, limited track record, and no capital and have grown the platform to 33 investments, 40 people and ~\$4 billion in [assets under management] in six years. It's been a very challenging but very fun and rewarding ride so far."

### Starting with such a small company must've had some unique experiences. Can you share one of those with us?

"We spent a year looking for options to best open up a Houston office (our first outside of New York) and who would lead it. None of the choices felt ideal—hiring a new senior person in a small and growing firm felt like a big risk with potential to disrupt the culture, camaraderie and connectivity we were building. I volunteered to do it and one week later I was on a plane down to Houston to 'figure it out' and my family joined soon after my daughter was born. Five years later, we have ~15 people in the Houston office and it's been a huge part of OIC's success. Our family is also really happy in Texas."

### What has been your most challenging project to date?

"All deals have their challenges and I agree with two quotes about investing:

'Most great investments begin in discomfort' and 'anyone who thinks this is easy is stupid.' Deals are constantly undergoing challenges—people challenges, market challenges, financial challenges, competitive challenges, regulatory challenges—and we try to be supportive and flexible so the companies we partner with have the space and the resources to be successful."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"1. Courage; 2. Humility; 3. Sense of Humor; 4. Grit; 5. Empathy."

### How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?

"Working with my partners and teammates to build an investment culture that prioritizes self-improvement and growth, willingness to take risk and look wrong/stupid, delivering returns for our LPs."

### What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?

"My colleagues and our team at OIC ... and Ted Lasso."

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"1) Some of the biggest professional opportunities came when least expected and where I tried to do exceptional work on something that seemed pointless at the time. It's happened enough times during market downturns or other challenging periods to where I no longer worry as much about a long-term plan and just try to keep working hard and have fun. 2) Bet on yourself. 3) Find the right partner/wife/significant other. 4) Read a lot." ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I have a twin brother that was also until recently in the oil and gas industry in Houston (as a corporate lawyer).
- I'm on a mission to work through all of the best taco places in Houston.
- I have multiple hometowns: Houston, Connecticut, Kansas City and New York.



## CAROLINA SIERRA

Director, Technical, First Reserve, Houston

**AGE:** 39

*Early in her career, the native of Medellín, Colombia, worked as a field engineer on a male-dominated rig site environment. “This required me to live on remote rig site locations for weeks at a time, work long hours and get my hands dirty,” she says, “but it provided me the valuable opportunity to experience and understand the drilling and completions process first hand.”*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

“What initially attracted me to the industry was the global nature of the business. While the University of Michigan did not offer a Petroleum Engineering undergraduate degree, I sought out an internship with Schlumberger in 2006. I found this experience compelling and fulfilling and so I decided to join as a full-time field engineer after graduation.”

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had planned?

“I joined the board of a First Reserve portfolio company in 2021. It had been a goal of mine to be able to contribute to an organization at a strategic board level and I believe I reached this milestone earlier than I had planned as I had been able to demonstrate the value of my technical perspective and insights on other First Reserve investments.”

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

“I view adaptability as a key quality for oil and gas leaders. The industry is continually changing and evolving, i.e., the proliferation of unconventional fields and the potential impact of AI technologies, so it is critical for a leader to be able to adapt to these changes and influence others, as well.”

### What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?

“I’ve had the opportunity to work for and with various colleagues with very different leadership styles, and I’ve endeavored to absorb the positives of each style. During my time at BP, Chris Born (my supervisor at the time)

instilled in me how leadership is made much easier through clear, thorough and timely communication within a team.”

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

“Be willing to take on new roles to broaden your experience. Be proactive to develop knowledge and skills that you lack.”

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

“The availability of oil and gas to the global population has been one of the most critical factors in improving quality of life and reducing poverty. The acceleration of the U.S. onshore resources over the past ~15 years has been nothing but overwhelming, and the technology and innovation needed to develop those resources has

been a testament to the adaptability of the industry. As we progress, this same ingenuity and entrepreneurship will be needed to tackle challenges such as lowering emissions, using AI as a complementary tool to the knowledge base and energizing the next generation of subsurface professionals. I could not be more excited to experience and drive our industry through these challenges.”

### Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?

“I believe the industry needs to better understand, recognize and embrace the role it plays in supplying the world with cost-effective, reliable energy that improves standards of living across the world, but that we need to do this in the most responsible and transparent way possible.” ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I came to the United States as an 18-year-old student-athlete with very little English knowledge. I swam for the University of Michigan.
- In 2009, I moved to the Netherlands to pursue my master’s degree in petroleum engineering and I lived there for three years, deciding to become a Mother during the last few months of my research thesis.
- I ran my first marathon in 2019 and currently love running with a local running club in Houston. I’m also an avid Formula One fan and have traveled the world following the Grands Prix.



## AARON PATRICK SMITH

Vice President of Engineering, Circle-S Energy, McKinney, Texas

**AGE:** 36

*One of Aaron Smith's proudest professional achievements also brought on mixed feelings. As asset lead, he was heavily involved with the divestiture of Newfield Exploration's onshore Gulf Coast assets. "I began my career working those assets with some of Newfield's finest people," he says. "While it was difficult parting with a business unit that was a core part of Newfield Exploration for so long, I was proud to play a role in successfully monetizing it for the better of the company's future."*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

"A summer internship in Dallas with Headington Oil Co. was my first real exposure to the industry, and I quickly came to understand how essential it is to our everyday lives, as well as how surprisingly diverse it can be from an engineering perspective. It was during that internship that I decided to pursue a career in oil and gas."

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than expected?

"Prior to my fifth anniversary at Newfield Exploration, where I began my career, I was promoted to Asset Lead, supervising reservoir engineering efforts for our Onshore Gulf Coast Assets. At that time, it was rare to reach the Asset Lead level at such a young age, and while my aspirations were always to progress into a management position, I did not expect to start that path so soon."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"To be a good leader requires an effective combination of many skills that enable motivation and coordination of a team. The ability to recognize and optimally deploy the strengths of that team to efficiently accomplish company goals is essential, as is clear communication of a vision that inspires collaborative work towards common objectives. A healthy balance of empathy and accountability is required, along with an open-minded approach that welcomes different ways of thinking. And a willingness to lead by example, to put in the long hours in the trenches with your team and show them you won't ask anything of

them you are not ready to do yourself."

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"This is a very small industry. We are all told that as we enter it and begin our careers, but it really shows after a few years when you take note of the frequency with which you randomly cross paths with an acquaintance. Be careful not to burn any bridges, and place emphasis on fostering relationships with your peers."

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

"There is a lot to love about working this industry, and it's not hard for me to maintain a high level of motivation. First, I set out to spend my career in an industry that positively impacts society. Despite prudent efforts to explore alternative sources of energy, I believe we will still see a persistent demand for oil and gas, and optimal development of our resources is paramount. While we as an industry recognize this and have shown a willingness to collaborate for a greater collective understanding, our business is extremely competitive. I love that competitive aspect and enjoy stacking up the results of our team against our peers, especially when we compare favorably."

### THREE MORE THINGS

- My favorite vacation is a ski trip.
- I try my best to appreciate the little joys in life. One of my favorite things is to enjoy an ice-cold beer after mowing the yard.
- Every night I fall asleep with the TV on watching "Friends" reruns.

### What do you think young industry members as a group have to offer that is unique to them?

"I believe this class of industry members that are currently approaching 40 is unique in that we present a blend of 'old-school' wisdom and work ethic with new schools of thought and implementation of recent technological innovation." ■





## BRENDAN SMITH

Chief Technology Officer and Co-Founder, SeekOps Inc., Austin, Texas

**AGE:** 33

*Brendan Smith's career ambitions soared above and beyond what NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory could offer, so he spun out the hyper-accurate methane emissions measurement technology he was working on as a doctoral candidate and co-founded a company. "I had aspirations to start something related to science and technology, but I didn't think it would happen in 2017 when I was 27," he says. Now, the Southern California native works with oil and gas companies worldwide to help them meet their methane reduction goals.*

**Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had planned, and what helped you reach it earlier than expected?**

"Starting up a company. So many people and things came together to make it a reality, from the support of those at JPL and those before me who enabled the technology. My wife was really the biggest factor—she supported us while she was pregnant and working full-time."

**What has been your most challenging project to date, and how did you meet the challenge and accomplish your goal?**

"Building and maintaining a rock star team that's dedicated to meeting the industry needs for methane emissions monitoring. I don't know if it's anything that you 'accomplish,' but it's a challenge I meet head on every day."

**How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?**

"Being at a small company with limited (but growing) resources, it can be really tempting to micro-manage every aspect. One thing I learned through my career is to empower individuals to make important decisions for themselves, but be clear when the decision needs to be made by someone above them."

**What or whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?**

"I've had the privilege of having many good role models throughout every stage of my life. In university, I had my graduate adviser, the dean of engineering and the vice chancellor.

In my early professional career, I had my uncle, who's an executive at a large, global manufacturing company. When we were growing as a company, our CFO, Angela Smoller, provided lots of good advice and offered guidance through leadership books. More recently, our CEO, Iain Cooper, has helped me continue develop my leadership abilities."

**Who are your mentors? What is the most valuable advice they have given you?**

"My uncle, Ted Dubbs. In so many words, 'go after it.' Just being supportive and truly interested in what I have to say or where I want to go in my career. Simon Bittleston taught me to implement processes that enable innovation, not stifle it."

**What advice would you give other young professionals in the industry?**

"Loyalty is worth its weight in gold, so vet the companies you plan to work for before jumping on board. Staying with a company for more than two years shows your future employers that they can confidently invest in you. And, perfect is the enemy of good!"

**What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?**

"The consistent increase in energy diversity and commitment to net zero. Regardless of your outlook on global warming, I think we can all agree that being good stewards of our resources is important and wasting resources is unnecessary with today's technology." ■

**THREE MORE THINGS**

- Our technology has now been deployed on six continents. My personal goal is to take our sensor to Antarctica. Maybe sniff some methane while I'm down there!
- I'm a Ph.D. dropout. I had the opportunity to work at NASA JPL full time while I was supposed to be working on my dissertation. Much to the chagrin of my Ph.D. adviser, I decided to spin out the technology instead.
- I lived in Shenzhen, China, for three months for an internship while I was an undergraduate student.



## RYAN SPRINGMEYER

CFO, Tap Rock Resources, Golden, Colo.

**AGE:** 40

*Houston native Ryan Springmeyer married his high school sweetheart, also a graduate of the Stanford Graduate School of Business. "Courtney is an excellent problem solver!" he says. "Most importantly, she has also been my greatest supporter and cheerleader as we have pursued riskier career choices, including start-ups and entrepreneurial endeavors."*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

"I grew up in the oil and gas business. My father started his seismic business (Geophysical Pursuit) one year after my twin brother Reid and I were born. The oil and gas industry is fascinating to me because of its global impact and the ingenuity and rapid pace of change."

### Describe a memorable professional experience.

"When I was early in my career and an associate at NGP, I went to Oklahoma City with an NGP deal team to meet with Aubrey McClendon at Chesapeake. It was in the middle of the financial crisis in 2008 and Aubrey was very publicly dealing with some margin calls. It had to have been a stressful time. I was by far the youngest and least experienced person in the room but Aubrey made a point to engage me and ask where I was from and where I went to school, etc. He was very charismatic and sincere. I was surprised he cared at all about me; it was a great lesson on how quickly you can have an impact on those around you."

### What has been your most challenging project to date?

"Successful bond offering in 2021. The challenge was industry headwinds, we were experiencing a lot of growth and couldn't point to a long history of high production. It was also a debut offering for Tap Rock and part of the use of proceeds was a distribution to equity, which debt investors didn't love. We had to convey to bond investors that we were responsible managers that would execute and

deliver on a business that would get them their money back plus a solid high yield return. We had to build trust through a lot of 20-30 minute conversations. We won that trust and ultimately upsized our \$400 million offering to \$500 million and priced the bonds at a 7% coupon which ultimately became cheaper cost of debt than our credit facility when the fed started raising interest rates significantly in 2023. Concurrent with our sale to Civitas we redeemed our bonds and our bond investors made a great return in just two years."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"Tenacity: if you don't want it badly enough, the hard times will prove that out and you likely will not make it through a cycle successfully. Maintain a team mindset, no matter your title. Give credit where credit is due. Be confident and trust your intuition, but remain humble and willing to get your hands dirty. People are inspired by leaders who lead by example—those who are in the trenches with you doing the work."

### What are your long- and short-term career goals?

"My career goals are to work with the best people. I have been fortunate to work with some really outstanding individuals and whether you are in good times or bad it's fun to work with great people." ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- Many people in the industry that I have worked with don't know I have an identical twin brother. Some years when I don't make it down to NAPE I'll get a text: "Just saw you across the floor." Nope, must be my brother.
- In 2012, I was diagnosed with a very rare cancer. It was a type of sarcoma called a malignant solitary fibrous tumor. It was in my forearm and I was fortunate that it had not metastasized. After radiation and a couple surgeries, I was in remission and have been since 2013.
- Outside of work, I love to golf and ski. Luckily for me, my kids also like to golf and ski!

# W INFLUENTIAL WOMEN IN ENERGY

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**March 8, 2024**

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## ANDRZEJ (ANDREW) STOPKA

Director, Engineering and Rig Construction, Patterson-UTI Energy, Houston

**AGE:** 35

*Growing up in upstate New York, Andrzej (Andrew) Stopka had little exposure to oil and gas. His first taste came when he enrolled at Texas A&M University and his enthusiasm for the industry grew when he interviewed for a job modifying and designing offshore platforms. “Not only did flying on a helicopter to work sound fun,” he says, “but my boss at the time was from New York, as well.”*

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

“Completing the entire design of a four-leg fixed offshore platform in the Gulf of Mexico at the age of 25. I worked at a small company at the time and was given the opportunity to be the lead engineer on the project. Offshore platforms are very complex to design and the underwater structure made completely of steel is designed to float during installation.

“This type of project is every structural engineer’s dream and some never get this kind of opportunity.”

### Describe a memorable professional experience.

“Seeing one of the first rigs I helped build at Patterson-UTI in a Yahoo news article. I came in midway through the project and we spent about three years building and rebuilding this rig.

“There are always good and bad days on projects of this length. Seeing the rig with the Rocky Mountains in the background as it went to Colorado on a common news outlet finally made it feel like a success.

“Since then, my team and I have refined the design two times and it has become one of our most sought-after rig type.”

### Who is your mentor?

“My father has been my biggest mentor over the years. The most valuable lesson he drilled into me was: whatever you do, do it to the best

of your ability or don’t do it at all. I apply this to every part of life, whether it be my personal or professional life—anything from sweeping the floor to leading my team.”

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

“Work harder than anyone else around you, volunteer for everything and treat everyone how you would like to be treated. Success is always right around the corner even though you might be tired, it’s late, you’re at work and almost ready to give up—don’t, because it will come.”

### Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?

“I believe we cannot be afraid of change and need to always be pushing new technology.

“The big thing today is reducing the impact to the environment, which is somewhat like what we experienced during the Industrial Revolution. We will need to adapt with the times and preserve the world we live in.” ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I was born in a small ski town in Zakopane, Poland, and moved to upstate New York when I was 5. My parents put me on a 45-minute school bus my second week in the country without knowing a single word of English. The first day was a bit tough and a blur but, when I got back on the bus, I knew home was not far away. The first English words I learned were “open window” as it was hot. Before long, I was one of few 6-8-year-olds setting up my parents’ home phone, car insurance and TV services.
- I helped my Polish-speaking father start up a small construction company while in middle school. We went from a 1.25-man show (dad + me) to building multi-million-dollar ski vacation homes.
- My most challenging success in life is my relationship with my wife Morgan. We started dating in high school almost 20 years ago when we were still kids and have been together since. I would not be where I am today without her. This relationship has been more rewarding and important than any degree, work accomplishment or promotion.

# Congratulations, Andrew!



**Andrew Stopka**

Director, Engineering  
and Rig Construction  
Patterson-UTI Drilling

**FORTY  
UNDER 40**



## JANICE TRAN

Co-founder and CEO, Kanin Energy, Houston

**AGE:** 36

*“Be brave,” Janice Tran advises young professionals. “Go after what you want and don’t let anyone tell you that you cannot do something.” She follows her own advice. The daughter of refugees from Vietnam who immigrated to Canada, Tran helped launch Kanin Energy during the pandemic and is inspired by the idea that her company can accelerate a sustainable energy solution (waste heat to power) that has historically been overlooked and underfunded.*

**Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?**

“Growing up in Alberta helped me appreciate the sacredness of our natural environment but also an appreciation for the energy industry and the economic prosperity it can bring to a city. My life mission has been dedicated to bridging these two worlds and building an energy future that is energy abundant and environmentally sustainable.”

**Describe a memorable professional experience.**

“Meeting female senior executives in the oil and gas space is uncommon. So, I get excited when this happens. I find it happening more regularly now, which is a great thing.”

**What has been your most challenging project to date?**

“As an entrepreneur, you are always tested. When you think that you’ve really reached your limit, something happens the next week that pushes you to push yourself. Being a young leader of a high-growth startup is by far the most challenging but rewarding experience I’ve had. I wouldn’t change it for anything.”

**What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?**

“We are going through a very interesting time, where energy transition and geopolitics are serious considerations in the long-term outlook for the sector. I think now, more than ever, adaptability and openness to innovation are qualities that will make one successful over the next decade as the industry evolves.”

**How have you exercised leadership to help shape**

**your company?**

“As a startup CEO who is also a female minority, I recognize that I am paving the way for many others. So, not only am I mindful of my leadership internally at Kanin Energy, I’m also aware that how I represent myself also influences people’s perception of women and people of color. This does shape how I make decisions, but at the end of the day, I still stay true to myself and the mission of the company.”

**To whom do you credit for helping you develop leadership abilities during your career?**

“My mother is my biggest influence. She grew up in a war, immigrated to Canada without understanding English, and worked to raise my two brothers and me. That perseverance and grit is something that I admire in her and are leadership attributes that I try to bring into my life every day. No matter how hard things are, I always think about the journey my mom went through and how she ended up thriving as a result.”

**What do you think young industry members as a group have to offer that is unique to them?**

“The under-40 demographic is experienced enough to be dangerous but not too experienced to be jaded. This balance can help drive change in the industry and pave the path for those after us.”

**Which transformations do you think the industry must undertake for it to thrive in the future?**

“The industry will need to embrace energy transition as one of the most significant wealth-creation opportunities of our generation. It’s a catalyst to review how we currently create energy and then reimagine what is possible.” ■

**THREE MORE THINGS**

- Dancing is my favorite pastime.
- I can play the drums.
- I have a dog grooming certificate because I had dreams of being a dog groomer one day, but that career hasn’t really panned out.





## MATT VINING

CEO, Navigator CO<sub>2</sub>, Omaha, Neb.;  
Navigator Energy Services, Dallas

**AGE:** 39

*Matt Vining once picked up the phone and Jamie Dimon, the CEO of JP Morgan, was on the line. Dimon was interested in hearing about the challenges faced by a young entrepreneur with a growing startup company. "The conversation left an indelible mark on my journey, imparting lessons and insights that continue to resonate with me today," Vining says.*

### Of which of your professional achievements are you the most proud?

"One of my proudest professional achievements is establishing a company that has not only grown substantially but also maintains a high employee satisfaction rate. Building a team of over 100 individuals while achieving a turnover rate of less than 2% illustrates my commitment to fostering a positive work environment. This accomplishment is a testament to the company's strong values, employee-focused policies and collaborative culture that not only attracts top talent but also retains it. By prioritizing employee well-being, professional development, and providing opportunities for growth, we've created an organization that thrives on mutual respect and a shared commitment to succeed for one another."

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

"The first is unlimited integrity and building trust. In the oil and gas industry, where relationships and trust are paramount, possessing unlimited integrity is not just a desirable trait, it's a fundamental necessity. The other is consistency and resilient leadership. The oil and gas industry is marked by its cyclical nature, with periods of boom and bust. Leaders who can maintain consistency across these cycles and seize opportunities during both prosperous and challenging times are truly invaluable."

### How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?

"I reshaped our leadership approach by elevating key team members and delegating greater leadership responsibilities. This shift empowered my team and freed me to focus on strategic initiatives. Capable team members now oversee day-to-day

operations and administrative tasks. By doing this, I saw enhanced efficiency, as they proactively streamlined workflows, resolved challenges and allowed me to concentrate on strategic planning."

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

"When it comes to making career choices, embrace calculated risks. The road to success often involves stepping out of your comfort zone. However, there's a clear line between calculated risks and impulsive gambles. Seek out opportunities that align with your goals and skillset. This approach not only propels your career but also minimizes unnecessary setbacks."

### What are your long- and short-term career goals?

"In the near future, I aim to lead a company where employees thrive, investing in their success while generating solid returns for investors. A balance between growth and a positive workplace will be central to my approach. Looking ahead, my goal is to solidify a corporate culture and leadership team that outlasts my personal involvement. I want to establish an enduring legacy of purpose, ethics, and innovation, ensuring the company's success for generations to come."

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I'm a diehard Seattle Seahawks fan, and I'm not sorry, Dallas. That said, The Ticket w/fake Jerry Jones is the best Monday morning radio show in the U.S.
- I've lived most of my adult life in Omaha and love rural living.
- While never having dogs growing up, my brother and I, and without notifying the other, adopted golden retrievers and are now addicted to the breed.

### What keeps you motivated and passionate about working in the oil and gas industry?

"Competition: The dynamic competition in the oil and gas industry fuels my passion. The constant need to innovate and excel keeps me engaged and driven. Connection with people: The diverse and collaborative community in the industry is a huge motivator. Building relationships and working alongside like-minded individuals energizes my commitment to the sector." ■



## CALEB WEATHERL

CEO, Garrison Energy, Midland, Texas

**AGE:** 36

*Midland, Texas, native Caleb Weatherl counts being able to work with his father to start, build and then sell two companies as a special part of his life and career. “To have the opportunity to work with someone who you love and look up to so much has been tremendous,” he says. “I’m really grateful for the chance I’ve had to work with my dad.”*

### Why did you enter the oil and gas industry?

“Growing up in Midland and Corpus Christi, I have been around oil and gas my entire life. My dad is a geologist and most of my friends’ parents were a part of the industry in some way, but I don’t think I truly appreciated the oil and gas industry until I actually became a part of it. Billions of dollars are being invested in the Permian, but handshake-deals still happen in Midland every day—sometimes the handshake is with your neighbor! Those features make it a fun and fulfilling industry to be a part of.”

### Which career milestone did you reach sooner than you had expected?

“I don’t think I ever imagined becoming a CEO by the time I was 36, and it’s a milestone that others helped me achieve. Oil and gas is a team sport and it’s hard to achieve good results without every discipline firing on all cylinders. The reason that I am in the position that I am in is only because I have been fortunate enough to work with a tremendous team of high performers.”

### What qualities do you think are necessary to be a good leader in the oil and gas industry?

“I have had the privilege of working with some incredible leaders, and I have found that those leaders are hungry, humble, clear and responsive. They are hungry in that they are inherently driven and persistent in accomplishing their goals. They are humble in that they hire people who are better and smarter than they are in various ways, and then listen to what those people have to say instead of being threatened by what those people

might accomplish one day. They are crystal clear about goals and expectations to make sure everyone is pulling in the same direction. And, finally, they are responsive by putting themselves in others’ shoes and making it a priority to get back to their teammates and others with feedback or a response when it’s asked for.”

### How have you exercised leadership to help shape your company?

“Heading up the recruitment process for Stronghold II and Garrison has been one of the ways I have seen my leadership be the most impactful. Everything we have been able to accomplish we’ve accomplished as a team where everyone’s contributions have played a major role, so being able to get the right people to join the team was vital. I’ve also been able to contribute in helping to ensure everyone is focused on the right things—that we are all ‘rowing’ in the same direction in a coordinated manner, pursuing the opportunities that create the most value for the company.”

### What advice would you give other young professionals?

“My dad likes to say, ‘everyone has a boss,’ meaning everyone is accountable to someone, regardless of the position, pay or power they appear to have. Therefore, it’s important to be thinking about the information and answers they may need to have in order to take their next step. This advice has been helpful to me when communicating with our team, partners and investors, and it’s advice that I would pass on to others.” ■

### THREE MORE THINGS

- I have a very deep voice, but I am not a very good singer. I did do a little voiceover work before college for fun for a few local commercials. Thankfully, they just asked me to speak, because if I would have had to sing, they probably would have lost more customers than they gained from those commercials.
- I took a semester off from college to work for Karl Rove after he left the White House.
- I may be the biggest fan of gourmet sandwiches you’ve ever met.

Southwestern Energy Congratulates

# Brittany Raiford

Vice President Investor Relations

on being named one of Oil and Gas Investor  
magazine's 2023 Forty Under 40.



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