



Women of The Year



MONIQUE LIMÓN
CALIFORNIA STATE SENATOR



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*Santa
Barbara
County*



Gina M. Gonzales-Carbajal

Chief Programs Officer | Scholarship
Foundation of Santa Barbara

Gina Carbajal has over 36 years of senior management experience working in Santa Barbara County's non-profit sector. She has served in various capacities and led teams in early childhood education, health promotion education, sports/health programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities, and serving Santa Barbara County students to obtain their goals of higher education.

She is currently volunteering for the Congressional Club's First Lady's Luncheon. She currently serves as the chair of the invitation/program committee. The fundraising for the Congressional Club's luncheon donates a percentage of the proceeds to selected non-profits. Besides her volunteerism with the Congressional Club, she plans on volunteering with the Special Olympics Southern California Santa Barbara sports and fundraising events.

During her time working with various non-profits, she has made valuable lifetime relationships with volunteers, community partners and program participants. Some of the lasting relationships that she built was with the many Special Olympic Athletes while at Special Olympics.



Ashley Costa

Executive Director | Lompoc Valley
Community Healthcare Organization

Ashley Costa is a proud third-generation native of the Lompoc Valley. After graduating from Lompoc schools, she earned a degree in Political Science with a minor in Portuguese from UCLA. Committed to public service, she was elected to the Lompoc City Council at the age of 22.

During her term, she joined the Lompoc Valley Community Healthcare Organization (LVCHO), where she has served as Executive Director for over a decade, leading initiatives that promote health and well-being. Ashley is an active board member for several nonprofit organizations and is currently pursuing a law degree at the Colleges of Law.

She finds great joy in giving back to her hometown and is especially grateful to be raising her two-year-old daughter, Olive, in Lompoc alongside her husband, Jimmy.



Lori Lander Goodman

Executive Director | LEAP: Learn. Engage.
Advocate. Partner

Lori Lander Goodman, Executive Director of LEAP (Learn. Engage. Advocate. Partner), has dedicated her career to lifting up the voices of women and children in Santa Barbara County. Under her leadership, LEAP has expanded its reach, most recently opening a new Children's Center in Lompoc.

She founded the Goleta Valley Community Partnership network to build relationships among those who care for the community. The GV Network leapt into action during the COVID pandemic. Known for her quick mind and passion for learning, Lori is also a Jeopardy! champion and competitive trivia player.

She brings warmth and intellectual curiosity to her mission of building more equitable, trauma-informed communities while sustaining vital support for vulnerable families. Lori is married to Rabbi Evan Goodman and is the parent of two grown sons, Ilan and Noah.



Roberta M. Jaffe

Farmer Activist | Condor's Hope Vineyard,
Cuyama Valley Small Farmer & Rancher
Network, Cuyama Valley Community
Association

Roberta (Robbie) Jaffe has been engaged in developing healthy and just food systems since the 1970's. For the past 32 years Robbie and her husband, Steve Gliessman, have developed their organic, dry farmed vineyard and olive orchard, Condor's Hope, in the Cuyama Valley, one of California's 21 critically overdrafted groundwater basins.

As a farmer activist Robbie is a voice for small pumpers, the community and local ecosystems in the development of Cuyama's Groundwater Sustainability Plan. She has served on the Standing Advisory Committee to the Cuyama Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency since 2017.

Through collaboration with the community, she has been a local leader in Cuyama Valley groundwater issues including: successfully opposing basin boundary modifications to DWR; successfully opposing county permitting of large reservoirs to be filled with groundwater; and building networks in the Cuyama Valley to develop a sustainable groundwater basin and a local food system.



Katrina B. Mitchell, MD

Breast surgeon, lactation consultant, and
perinatal mental health provider |
Sansum/Sutter Health

Katrina B. Mitchell, MD, IBCLC, PMH-C is a breast surgeon, lactation consultant, and perinatal mental health provider at Sutter Health in Santa Barbara, CA.

She was born and raised in California's agricultural central valley, then graduated Phi Beta Cappa with highest honors in history from Bowdoin College in coastal Maine. She received the most outstanding honors thesis award for her investigation into the forced sterilization of Native American women in the 1970s.

After college, she worked at reproductive health clinic in urban Philadelphia and fell in love with women's health. She subsequently graduated from Dartmouth Medical School and began general surgery residency at Cornell-New York Presbyterian Hospital in New York, New York. During this time, she was a global health scholar and worked with several surgical and infectious disease projects at Cornell's partner hospital in Mwanza, Tanzania-East Africa, most notably female urogenital schistosomiasis. Locally, she is an advocate for improving women's healthcare throughout the central coast.



Wendy Sims-Moten

Executive Director | First 5 Santa Barbara County

Wendy Sims-Moten has been a pillar of the County of Santa Barbara for 29 years. Her journey began with two years in General Services, and she now holds the position of Executive Director of First 5 Santa Barbara County -focus on children prenatal to 5 and serves as Vice President of the First 5 ED Association Executive Board. Her academic credentials include a bachelor's degree from Pacific Oaks College.

Wendy's passion extends beyond her professional life, a 40-year resident of Santa Barbara County she is deeply invested in the growth and prosperity of her community and its residents.

Her civic engagements are diverse and numerous, ranging from the President of Board of Trustees of Santa Barbara Unified School District, Organizer and Chair for the African American Women Luncheon of Santa Barbara County, Board Member of CAUSE Action Fund, Board Chair of Gateway Educational Services, Board Member of the McCune Foundation, Board Member of SBWPC, Alumni of Emerging Leaders, and trustee of St. Paul AME Church.



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Ventura County



Marlyss Munguia Auster

President & CEO | Visit Ventura

Passion, purpose, and place led Marlyss Auster back to Ventura in 2012 after nearly 20 years away, where she joined Visit Ventura.

Under her leadership, Visit Ventura has gained national and global recognition, winning five consecutive "Best Place to Work on the Central Coast" awards, the 2024 U.S. Travel Association ESTO Destiny Award, and Visit California's Best Strategic Partnership Award for its collaboration with the community, stakeholders, and the X Games—reaching 9.3 billion impressions globally. Visit Ventura was also a City Nation Place Best Branding Finalist—the only U.S. finalist.

Auster's love for Ventura began with a postcard her mother received while living in Houston. Now, she shares that passion by inspiring others to discover Ventura.

Outside of work, she enjoys time with her family and beach walks with Roxy, her four-legged companion.



Pattie Braga

Executive Director | Ventura County
Leadership Academy

Pattie Braga began her tenure at Ventura County Leadership Academy (VCLA) in August of 2019, bringing her passion for building a stronger, more engaged community with her.

Pattie is a deeply involved connector within the community, which is perfectly suited for her role at VCLA. Whether it's someone wanting to volunteer locally but not knowing where to start or finding ways for new connections across the county to happen, Pattie has an open ear and always tries to find a way to bring people and issues together.

Pattie has been a longtime advocate for her community, serving on the board of many local nonprofits. One of her most rewarding engagements was serving as a “Big” with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program for many years. She was named the 2019 Alumni of the Year by VCLA and received the Ventura Poinsettia Award as the Volunteer of the Year in 2012.



Tammy I. Glenn

Executive Director | National Volunteer
Caregiving Network; Ventura County
CAREGIVERS: Volunteers Assisting the Elderly

Executive Director Tammy Glenn has served Ventura County CAREGIVERS and the National Volunteer Caregiving Network since 2012 and brings close to 20 years of experience in public relations, management, strategy, major gift fundraising, planned giving, and business operations. She has been recognized since 2014 by the Pacific Coast Business Times in "Who's Who in Healthcare?" and in 2024 as a Champion in Healthcare.

Her experience as an informal caregiver for 17 years informs her contributions as an author and professional fundraiser, and counselor to numerous family members and friends in short and long-term care issues. She earned a Master of Business Administration from Pepperdine University's George L. Graziadio School of Business at the same time she was honored for "People Who Make a Difference" by Disabled Dealer Magazine.



LaRita Joice Montgomery

Chair | Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee of
Ventura County

Born in Lubbock, Texas LaRita Joice (Ayers) Montgomery came to Oxnard with her family at the age of 12.

As an entrepreneur, LaRita established, and was the Director & Coordinator for the Evangelistic Missionary Baptist Church, Family Resource Center First 5 Neighborhoods For Learning (NFL) program. First 5 NFL was designed to assist families in preparing their children, ages 0-5, for school. This preparation included conducting workshops on nutrition, healthcare, childcare referral programs, housing, and more.

LaRita also spent many years employed with the Southern California Edison Company. While with the company, she was a Customer Service Supervisor, Accounting Supervisor, Energy Conservation Specialist, Multicultural Event Coordinator and Electrical Engineering Service Planner. She was a member of the companies 'Speakers Task Force' and "Women in Non-Traditional Roles". She also received certification in Accounting, Computer Programs, and Energy Conservation as well as Electrical Engineering from the California Department of Energy.



Vanessa Rauschenberger

General Manager | Gold Coast Transit District

Vanessa Rauschenberger is the General Manager for Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD). In this role, she leads a talented team who work to plan, innovate, and operate public transit service for western Ventura County.

Prior to joining GCTD, she worked for the New York City Department of Transportation where she developed safer street designs and helped transform underused roadways into more inviting pedestrian space. She has over 20 years in the transportation industry, which includes public, private and non-profit experience.

In all her roles, she strives to keep encouraging others to ‘think outside the car’. Vanessa has a Bachelor of Science in City and Regional Planning from Cal Poly State University in San Luis Obispo and a Master of Urban Planning from CUNY’s Hunter College in NYC. She lives in Oxnard with her husband Justin and rescue chihuahuas Jackson and Jersey.