

# 40

under 40



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## Honoring a new class of up-and-coming leaders

I'm delighted to present the 2014 class of 40 Under 40.

From some fairly humble beginnings in 2001, 40 Under 40 has come to symbolize the new generation of dynamic, diverse and talented leaders who are rapidly taking their places among the leadership ranks of Tri-County businesses and nonprofits.

This year our total nominations again exceeded 200, making the selection process extremely difficult. Even after consolidating multiple nominations, we had more than 100 individuals up for consideration.

Choosing this year's class was an extraordinarily difficult process as we try to achieve the right balance among our three counties, industry clusters and achieve as diverse a group as possible.

Our efforts to be rigorous in our selections are one reason why 40 Under 40 turned into the only region-wide recognition event of its kind in the Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo county region.

A few words about our process. We solicited nominations at our events, on our website and social media platforms, and through advertising and email announcements.

We have three mandatory requirements for to be considered for this section. You must be under 40 years of age at the time the nominations close. You must be a resident of or a person whose business is based in the Tri-Counties. And finally, you can only be honored once.

That's the easy part. The hard part is sort-

ing through the many worthy nominees and picking each year's winners. We consider professional accomplishments, outside recognition of those accomplishments and community involvement, among other factors. We look for people who have gone above and beyond by taking leadership roles in their organizations or starting their own companies.

We also look for geographic diversity among our region, we take into account the quality of nominations, and we take extra care when a candidate is in his or her last year of eligibility, based on age.

**HENRY DUBROFF**

Editor

40 Under 40 was produced by Special Reports Editor Erika Martin with contributions from our news team. The cover was produced by Graphic Designer Cory Pironti.

Finally, I would like to thank our gold sponsors, Wells Fargo, United Way of Santa Barbara County and CSU Channel Islands, and our silver sponsors Rabobank, CoastHills Credit Union, LightGabler, Cottage Health System, Montecito Bank & Trust, Santa Barbara Zoo and Ventura Investment Co.

We will be celebrating the 2014 class of 40 Under 40 at a very special reception and dinner at the Topa Tower Club in Oxnard on Monday, Oct. 20. Honorees can purchase a limited number of additional tickets by contacting Director of Marketing Jennifer Carusa at [jcarusa@pacbiztimes.com](mailto:jcarusa@pacbiztimes.com).

• Contact editor Henry Dubroff at [hdubroff@pacbiztimes.com](mailto:hdubroff@pacbiztimes.com)

### About the Business Times



Pacific Coast Business Times is the weekly business journal serving Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. We have an award-winning news team and an experienced advertising staff. Subscriptions cost \$49.99 per year and include a copy of our Book of Lists.

#### UPCOMING SPECIAL SECTIONS

- **Fall Economic Forecast:** Oct. 10
- **Who's Who in Professional Services:** Oct. 24
- **Who's Who in Health Care, Insurance & Biomedicine:** Nov. 7
- **2014 Tax & Financial Planning Guide:** Nov. 21
- **Who's Who in Nonprofits & Foundations:** Dec. 5
- **2015 Book of Lists:** Dec. 26

#### GET INVOLVED

- Nominations are still open for our final two Who's Who reports, featuring leaders in medicine and community organizations. To nominate someone, visit [www.pacbiztimes.com/special-sections](http://www.pacbiztimes.com/special-sections)
- To discuss working with our editorial staff to publish an informational piece in the Tax Guide, contact Special Reports Editor Erika Martin at (805) 560-6950 ext. 225 or [emartin@pacbiztimes.com](mailto:emartin@pacbiztimes.com)
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## UNITED WAY'S YOUNG LEADERS SOCIETY RECOGNIZES

# Sarkes Khachek

## 2014 YOUNG LEADER OF THE YEAR



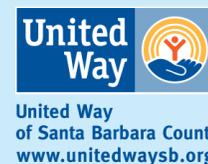
YLS 5 Year Anniversary Cruise

Volunteering at Fun in the Sun

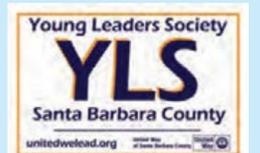
*Because of you, our community is a better place.  
Thank you for your involvement & dedication!*

The goal of United Way's Young Leaders Society is to promote and encourage advocacy, philanthropy, and volunteerism among Santa Barbara's young professionals. YLS members become involved through participation in a variety of social, educational, volunteer, and network opportunities.

For more information about YLS, please contact:



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## Anderson paves the way for AmeriFlex growth

As a recent UC Santa Barbara graduate in 2002, Justin Anderson began working for the same financial planning firm that he would become president of just 10 years later.

With a freshly minted degree in business and economics, Anderson began working at AmeriFlex Financial Services and earned his financial planning certification from the American College three years later in 2005.

Anderson has since risen through the ranks of the company yet has found time to participate in other activities, such as teaching finance at Santa Barbara City College and acting as a member of the Santa Barbara Estate Planning Council and UCSB Alumni Association.

tion.

His role at AmeriFlex has grown to overseeing and mentoring a team of 14 professionals because he simply loves doing what he's doing. "Innately, it was something I had a passion for, so because of that, I was willing to put in extra work to improve at the craft, whether it was relating to people or building knowledge," he said.

More recently, Anderson served on the panel of the Santa Barbara Executive Roundtable Economic Forecast in 2013 and 2014, and he is a board member for First Tee Central Coast, which aids youth development through golf. He has an 18-month-old daughter with



**Justin Anderson**

Age 36

Title President

Company AmeriFlex Financial Services, Arroyo Grande

his wife, Jaime, and a son on the way.

• **What was your first job?** I worked at Nordstrom's selling men's shoes when I was 17. I also did that during the summers and winter breaks through college.

• **If you weren't working in personal**

finance, what would you be doing? I guess I would probably want to be a sports agent. You represent athletes and help them sign contracts to play and get them endorsement deals.

• **Who inspires you?** I would choose my parents. They have always been there for me in any situation and sacrificed a lot in order to enable me to grow throughout my life, both personally and professionally.

• **What was the last book you read?**

I'm currently reading a book called "Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters." It's about the importance of being a father and just the things to do and not to do. I don't have any sisters so I'm just learning on the fly.

## Auto exec on fast track



**Don Asdell**

Age 34

Title President, CEO

Company Global Auto Processing Services, Port Hueneme

As CEO of Global Auto Processing, Don Asdell oversees 1,500 employees in four locations across the U.S.

The company provides services such as quality inspections and transportation damage repair for imported and exported vehicles. Asdell started working for GAP in 2010, serving as chief operating officer until 2013, when he was promoted to CEO.

Although he had been working toward the executive position with the aid of other company leaders, Asdell said his rise in ranks still came rather quickly. "I thought it would probably take four or five years, but it just happened much faster than expected," he said.

Asdell previously managed vehicle operations at General Motors in Detroit, holding positions including logistics supervisor and global logistics specialist. GAP was one of the suppliers for the company, which allowed Asdell to work with some of GAP's top executives.

GAP has locations at ocean ports in Port Hueneme and Philadelphia and at factories in Montgomery, Alabama and West Point, Georgia. Today Asdell strives to bring a sense of quality and professionalism that makes the company one of the best in the auto industry.

• **What was your first job?** I was a valet driver at a golf course when I was 16 years old. Cash, golf, driving cars — it was a good first job.

• **Who is your inspiration?** My mentor is a guy named Ruhi Guven. He was my old boss here, but I've known him in the industry for over 10 years now. And part of the reason I wanted to come out here from Detroit is to work for him.

• **What was the last book you read?** "Car Guys versus Bean Counters" by Bob Lutz, who's the old vice chairman of GM.

## Riding high from billboards to surfboards

Although it took a six-month trip through South America to crystallize the idea, Alec Avedissian always knew he wanted to have a business.

Avedissian started his career in investment banking and renewable energy but could tell the path wasn't for him. For a time he kept his day job in marketing at Camarillo-based SolarWorld, developing Rareform in his spare time.

Then he took a triple-plunge. He got married, walked away from his job and embarked on a surf trip spanning six South American countries.

Experiencing the variety of lifestyles and cultures opened Avedissian's eyes to the relationship between poverty, environmental degradation and the outdoor industry. After learning that 600,000 tons of billboard banner vinyl is tossed out annually, a light bulb went off. He returned to his hometown of Ventura, recruited two

friends as business partners and launched Rareform.

The tough texture of the advertising matte lent itself perfectly to creating durable bags that would wear well through a day at the beach or a hike in the mountains.

"I wanted to make something that was different from everything out there," Avedissian said. "Growing up around here, I've always been a big surfer. So, I made a great surf bag."

Starting at around \$40 for a duffle bag, the Rareform line spans small items such as wallets and laptop sleeves all the way up to surfboard and paddle bags. Avedissian plans to expand next into snow-proof gear.

Rareform products are sold across 150 retailers across the U.S., including at big-name chains such as REI and Sports Chalet. But much of the manufacturing is



**Alec Avedissian**

Age 28

Title Founder

Company Rareform, Ventura

done at the company's two Ventura County facilities, although to keep the wares in a millennial-friendly price range some parts are made overseas.

"The things we can make here, we make here," Avedissian said.

• **What was your first job?** A lifeguard.

• **If you didn't start Rareform, what would you be doing?** Probably surfing a lot more.

• **What was the last book you read?** "Don't Fire Them, Fire Them Up" by Frank Pacetta.

## Health data startup counts on Bellante

Justin Bellante is the CEO of Santa Barbara-based health technology startup BioIQ. Using an online platform and at-home test kits, the company helps people collect health screening metrics, such as whether they are at risk for diabetes, and put together an action plan.

Employers and big health plans also use BioIQ. When a large number of employees take the screening tests, BioIQ can generate a pool of anonymous data about the health of the group. Employers can use that data to help their employees improve their health — and save money on insurance premiums when they do so.

But even though BioIQ has hundreds of big clients, from Jack in the Box to Tenet Healthcare, starting a health technology company wasn't Bellante's original plan. He was a doctoral student in the materials science program at UC Santa Barbara.

"Then a good family friend and mentor of mine had a stroke, and one of the

contributing factors was that he had had a case of diabetes for a long time he didn't know about," Bellante said. "We took a step back and looked at how challenging it was to engage the health care system back in 2005 and how Netflix was displacing Blockbuster. We thought, if people can't be bothered to walk into Blockbuster and take five minutes to do something they want to do, how are they going to spend hours and hours to go to the doctor?"

Bellante speaks frequently at regional universities on the topics of entrepreneurship and health care technology. When he's not at BioIQ, he enjoys soccer, surfing or traveling to Argentina to visit his wife's family. But he engages with the Santa Barbara startup community as often as possible.

"It's a very rich environment for starting a business," he said.



**Justin Bellante**

Age 36

Title President, CEO and co-founder

Company BioIQ, Santa Barbara

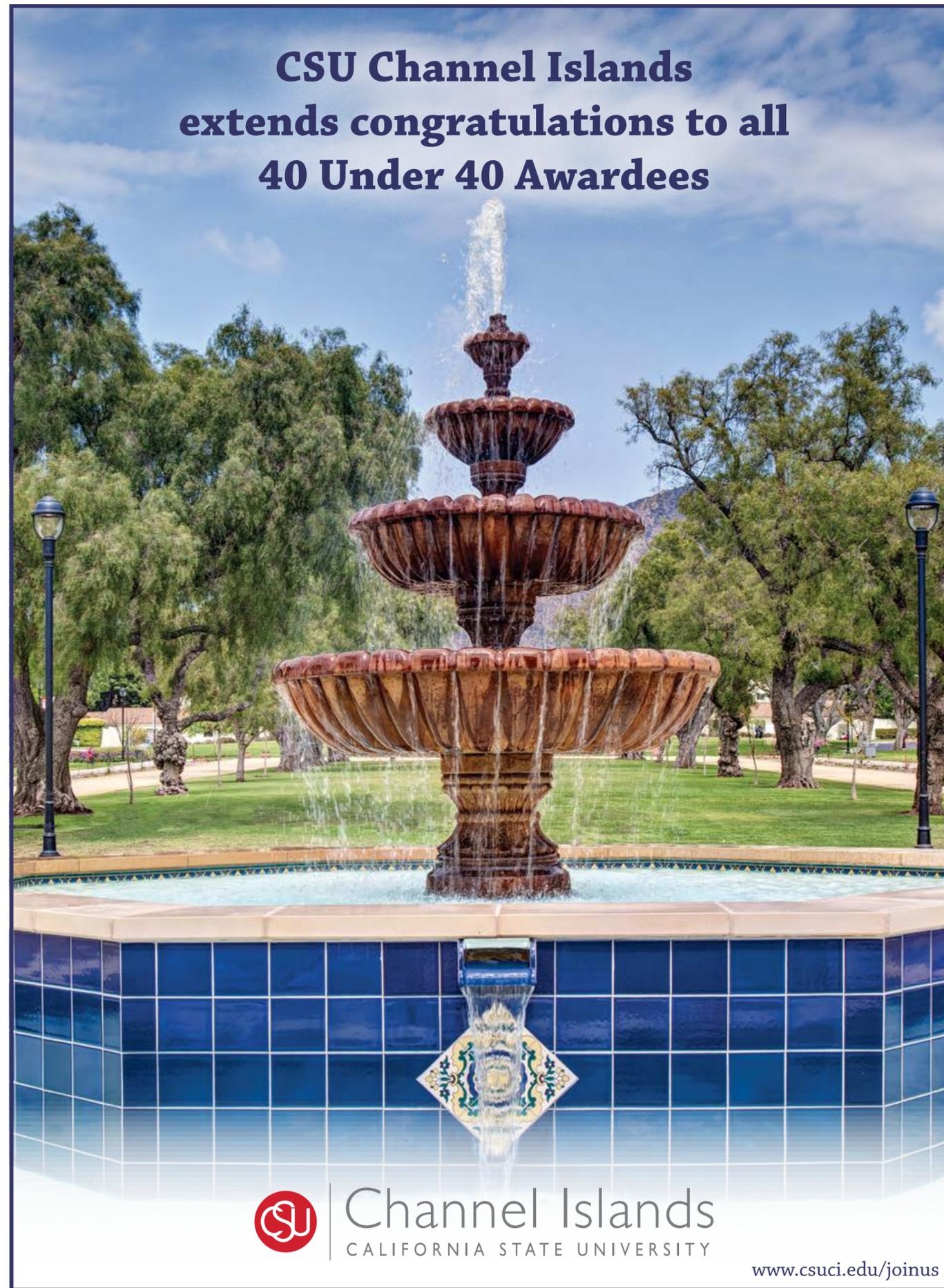
• **What was your first job?** Paper route.

• **If you weren't working in health care technology, what would you be doing?** Solving other challenges in health care.

• **Who is your hero/inspiration?** Giuseppe Garibaldi. [A 19th century general and one of the fathers of modern Italy]

• **What was the last book you read?** "Organizational Physics: The Science of Growing a Business" by Lex Sisney.

## CSU Channel Islands extends congratulations to all 40 Under 40 Awardees



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