Insurance Businessamerica

IBAMAG.COM ISSUE 7.06 | \$12.95



Meet 68 women who are changing the face of leadership in the insurance industry



How ongoing volatility is affecting the sector's insurance market

SHOULD YOU SELL OR JOIN A NETWORK?

How to decide which option is right for the future of your agency

CYBERSECURITY PLANNING

Are your clients missing a crucial piece of the puzzle?

ELITE WOMEN 2019



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Insurance Business America celebrates 68 of the industry's foremost female leaders

WOMEN ACCOUNTED for 61% of the insurance industry workforce from 2006 to 2015, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics – and their presence continues to grow as companies become more dedicated to fostering diverse and inclusive workspaces. Yet despite growing numbers in the field, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions.

This year's class of Elite Women challenges that notion – 35% of this year's list is composed of C-level executives, in addition to a wide range of directors and vice presidents. From insurtech leaders and specialty program experts to entrepreneurs and analytical masterminds, these women have proved that they're more than capable of achieving any goal, even in an industry that is still largely helmed by men. In doing so, they're forging a path for future generations of women – and men – to follow.

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ELIZABETH DAVIES

President

Stonemark

As head of Stonemark, Elizabeth Davies has overseen the firm's growth of more than 550% over the past five years, leading Stonemark to be become one of the largest independently owned premium finance companies in the US. With more than 35 years of experience, Davies' leadership skills have resulted in significant and consistent year-over-year growth – a true testament to the strong foundation she has built at Stonemark.

Last year, she led the company to merge with Royal Premium, a subsidiary of H.W. Kaufman Group, and now leads the combined organization, continuing to operate and integrate the business with specialists deployed throughout the family of companies. She received the Dale Carnegie Leadership Training for Managers' Innovation Award in 2012, and she also serves as a board member for the National Premium Finance Association.

ELITE WOMEN 2019



CHRISTINE VANABEL

Chief operating officer and chief financial officer

VAST

This year is Chris VanAbel's 50th in the insurance industry – and with the same agency. After starting her career at VAST in 1969, VanAbel held a variety of positions before taking on the roles of COO and CFO in 1997. She has helped cultivate VAST's growth and has turned it into an award-winning workplace by adapting to meet the needs of young mothers through job-sharing positions, remote work sites and flexible scheduling. VAST has been recognized as an IIABA Best Practices Agency

for 11 consecutive years and was an IBA Top Insurance Workplace in 2018.

Outside of VAST, VanAbel is dedicated to giving back to her community through numerous charitable organizations, including the United Way and the YMCA. In 2018, the Rotary Club of Marquette named her Community Citizen of the Year, and this year, she was awarded the Hildebrand Award from the Michigan Association of Independent Agents and will be inducted into the Michigan Insurance Hall of Fame. She also serves as chair of the Independent Insurance Agents' national council for best practices.



JANELLE HAZELL

P&C client services manager

AHT Insurance

Since starting her insurance

career in 1998, Janelle Hazell has worked in nearly every function of the industry, from commercial underwriter and account executive to commercial lines manager and controller/ops manager. Today, Hazell is the P&C client services manager at Virginia-based AHT Insurance, where she is responsible for maintaining focus on achieving bottom-line results, while formulating and implementing practical business solutions. She also leads the P&C service staff and all workflows and processes, and works to ensure the service team is working effectively and efficiently and delivering desirable results for clients.

Outside of AHT, Hazell is a member of the National African American Insurance Association and membership chair for its National Capital Central Maryland chapter.



JACKIE PENA

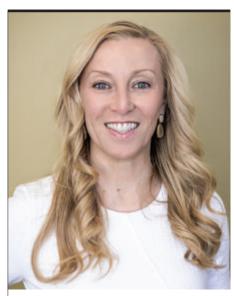
Vice president

Acentria Insurance

Before partnering with Acentria Insurance in 2018, Jackie Pena was the president and founding

partner of ASI Florida. With more than 15 years of insurance experience, Pena developed her book of business organically from zero to more than 1,100 client policies, including over 500 condominium association policies, with a client retention rate of more than 95%.

Pena is a Certified Professional Insurance Account Manager and Certified Professional Insurance Agent, as well as an active member of the Latin American Association of Insurance Agents, serving as the organization's legislative fly-in.



MARYA PROPIS

Senior vice president, distribution and broker partnerships

All Risks Ltd.

As SVP of distribution and broker partnerships at All Risks, Marya Propis supports field distribution and sales initiatives and leads the execution of national growth, broker engagement, compensation and strategic partnerships. Propis is a frequent speaker at industry events on the topics of emerging leadership, education and talent development, and she is a fierce advocate of women in leadership. She was honored by the New York City Association of Insurance Women as Professional of the Year in 2019, was named to IBA's 2019 Hot 100 list and was awarded the 2017 IICF Global Inclusion Champion Award, which recognizes insurance professionals who advance diversity while demonstrating an inspiring level of personal commitment to community service.

Outside of insurance, Propis has been on the Spencer Educational Foundation board of directors since 2012 and currently serves as chairperson. She is also part of the industry advisory council for the risk insurance and healthcare management department at Temple University's Fox School of Business, sits on the board of trustees for Canisius College and is a board member at large for Disabled Sports.