



Press Clippings

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Print

TRANSFORMATIONS

THE FUTURE TRANSFORMERS

These 10 transformers are on their way up. Maybe it's the first time you've heard their names, but it's likely not the last.



RYAN BUCHERT

About 10 years ago, Drexel graduate Ryan Buchert bootstrapped BuLogics, a company that specializes in wireless technology development. It has since spun out two companies: residential home automation platform Zonoff, which in 2011 became completely independent from BuLogics, and most recently StratS EMS, which is concurrently managed by BuLogics. Felicite Moorman, CEO of BuLogics, described her work partner best: "The combination of his ability to analyze the true root of a problem without the bias or desire to merely iterate... enables Ryan to literally invent groundbreaking solutions to our most complex societal challenges."



ORI FEIBUSH

Ori Feibush is a feisty developer who has a focus on an area as hardscrabble as himself: The South Philadelphia neighborhood of Point Breeze. There he has constructed new houses, opened up retail storefronts and breathed new life into the embattled neighborhood. Feibush became well-known for his gentrification efforts that drew the ire of city officials and made national news when he cleaned up a vacant lot he didn't own and the city took him to task for it. Now, Feibush, a tell-it-like-it-is developer with a neighborhood activist bent, has decided to take matters into his own hands and is running for city council.



ERIC GOLDSTEIN

Eric Goldstein came to the King of Prussia Business Improvement District unintimidated by the community's concrete and asphalt, clogged roads and lack of cohesiveness. Backed by mostly commercial property owners, Goldstein, executive director of the organization, has landscaped parts of King of Prussia's major thoroughfares in an attempt to soften its hardened exterior, helped design an ordinance that was adopted by Upper Merion that allows mixed-use development in the outdated King of Prussia Business Park, is one of the forces behind extending rail from Norristown into King of Prussia, and is spearheading the design and development of a linear park on First Avenue. But for Goldstein's leadership and vision, these changes and the ones he is shepherding would have been even slower to come if they would have come at all.



JAMES J. MERGIOTTI

James J. Mergiotti is one of those personable college presidents everyone can appreciate. He's the kind that stands in the lobby and greets students after a weekend break, and always has his door open. Mergiotti has been president of Peirce College, which caters mostly to working adults, since July 2009. He's played an integral role in the development of Peirce Online, which provides even more flexible options for the school's students, while also enhancing academic programs. For instance, the school recently launched its first master's program and is regularly adding more degree options. Mergiotti's mission every day is to improve Peirce — a college that "is in the business of transforming lives" of those non-traditional college students of all ages and backgrounds.



ANDREA MICHALEK

In Andrea Michalek's Twitter bio, she describes herself simply: "Entrepreneur, technologist, mom. Co-founder of Plum Analytics." If space allowed, it should also include "person that inspires." For the past 15 years, she's persevered through the bias and pushed her way to the top in a field that's been mostly dominated by men. Now, she's making it her mission to "be out there as a female senior technologist ... just to be an example," she said. These visible roles allow girls and women alike to think about the possibilities tech careers bring. Considering Plum Analytics was recently acquired by EBSCO, Michalek's talent and innovative spirit give a noticeable boost to transform Philadelphia's tech scene, too.



TOM OLENZAK

Last February, Independence Blue Cross — seeking to help make the region into a hub for health care technology breakthroughs established a "strategic innovation portfolio" with a goal of investing up to \$50 million in health-related venture funds and early-stage companies. The person named to serve as managing director of the portfolio was Tom Olenzak, who is also director of innovation and corporate development for IBC. Olenzak, a Princeton graduate and former venture partner at Safeguard Scientifics, is also the health insurer's point man for its partnership with the University of Pennsylvania Health System and Dreamit Ventures on their Dreamit Health Philadelphia program. The partnership helps startups that are using technology to address areas of interest for health insurers and providers.



AMBER RACINE

There has been much said in the legal press about the lack of diversity among trial lawyers. Amber Racine could be in the forefront of a new generation of African American trial lawyers looking to change that perception. Born and raised in Harlem, Racine came to Philadelphia to attend Drexel University and worked as a paralegal at plaintiffs personal injury law firm Anapol Schwartz while attending Temple University's Beasley School of Law at night before graduating in 2008. Racine then followed in the footsteps of mentor Bernard Smalley and became a lawyer at Anapol Schwartz, where she stayed until joining Raynes McCarty in 2012. Racine spent last year as president of the Barristers' Association of Philadelphia and now serves as co-chair of the Philadelphia Bar Association's Women in the Profession committee.



JEFF SCHWEITZER

Souderton-based Univest Corp. of Pennsylvania has focused on serving suburban and rural areas of Montgomery and Bucks counties for more than a century while quietly building strong financials outside the glare of analyst coverage. Jeff Schweitzer, who at 40 years old succeeded longtime Univest CEO William Aichele a year ago, has made some changes at the \$2.7 billion-asset bank. It started this year by closing its acquisition of Mount Airy-based Valley Green Bank, perhaps the top performing community bank in the region. Univest gains its first three branches (Mount Airy, Chestnut Hill and South Philadelphia) in Philadelphia as well as two commercial loan offices in Center City and Radnor. Schweitzer realized the bank's 31 branches have not seen much deposit growth and felt entering the city would help spur growth.



MICHAEL J. SOFIA

Michael J. Sofia invented the drug Sovaldi, which is used to cure hepatitis C. He has now turned his attention to finding a cure for hepatitis B — an infectious liver disease that afflicts about 400 million people worldwide. Sofia has brought together some of his former colleagues from Princeton-based Pharmasset, which was sold to Gilead Sciences for \$11.5 billion in 2012, at OnCore Biopharma, a biopharmaceutical startup operating out of the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center of Bucks County in Doylestown. "We have identified some technologies that we are ready to hit the laboratory with," said Sofia, the company's chief scientific officer, in an interview with the Philadelphia Business Journal last year.



PAUL STEINKE

Paul Steinke, former general manager of the Reading Terminal Market, is running for an at-large seat on City Council. Prior to serving as general manager for the market, Steinke was the finance director for Center City District and the founding executive director of the University City District. With more than 25 years of experience in economic and community development and small business growth, Steinke could serve as a liaison between the city and its small businesses and entrepreneurs. He will advocate for tax policy, regulatory reform and job growth strategies as well as equal treatment.