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Adapting to the new times

Top 40 alumni share the lessons in leadership and, of equal importance, adaptability, that COVID-19 has thrust upon them. See p. 3-4.



NATIONAL POST, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2021



CANADA'S TOP 40 UNDER 40 2021

Premier emerging leaders helped steer a new course

MARY TERESA BITTI  
Postmedia Content Works

It feels like a different world since the relaunch five years ago of Canada's Top 40 Under 40, the country's premier emerging leaders awards program. Well before the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, the macro trends of digitization, ongoing innovation and the prioritization of ESG (environmental, social, governance) were reshaping how we live and work.

During the last 18 months, these trends have accelerated, highlighting the urgent need to build sustainable, healthy organizations and communities.

Top 40 honorees are at the forefront of helping Canada and Canadians come through the other side of this global health and economic crisis. Now they are advancing a better tomorrow.

"The pandemic has high-

lighted the importance and impact of great leaders and why it's important to celebrate them," says Jeff Freeborough, managing partner for Toronto at Caldwell Partners, Top 40's founding partner. "This year was a record year for nominations. It tells us there is a lot to celebrate."

Matthew Wetmore, national managing partner, Industries & Regions, PwC Canada, Top 40's new presenting partner, agrees. "Our purpose at PwC is to build trust in society and solve important problems. In order to solve important problems, you have to look to future leaders. Partnering with Caldwell on Top 40 was a good opportunity to shine a spotlight on these folks who have done so much to make a big impact and to help them be more successful and make an even bigger difference going forward."

The 2021 cohort of honorees join more than 800

outstanding Canadians recognized by Top 40 since it was created in 1995. These leaders continue to raise the bar when it comes to making a difference for their organizations, communities and the country. They drive performance and create impact across industries and sectors both here in Canada and globally.

"These folks are making contributions in all aspects of their lives. They are role models for the next generation who can see what impact can look like and who's making it," says Freeborough. "This is particularly true for communities that are under-represented in leadership."

One of the overarching themes of this year's submissions was just how diverse this year's nominees and honorees are in every context: gender, cultural background, sexual orientation, geography and industry. The

numbers tell the story: 43 per cent of this year's nominees are women and 40 per cent self-identify as LGBTQ+ and/or diverse based on ethnicity. They work in the consumer, technology, energy, financial services, health care, education and not-for-profit sectors across the country.

One key attribute this year's honorees share: they lead with their values. When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, Jonathan Davey, vice-president, Indigenous financial services at Scotiabank, immediately reached out to Indigenous Services Canada, competing financial institutions and non-profit organizations such as the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business and Indigenous Works to find out the needs and challenges for First Nations and how to best help.

Davey, who is of mixed Indigenous and non-Indigen-

ous heritage, has made an outside impact throughout his inspiring career. He is a captain in the Canadian Armed Forces, enlisting after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. He practised Aboriginal law for more than 10 years as crown counsel with the Department of Justice Canada before being appointed as the special advisor and counsel to the assistant deputy-minister of Aboriginal Affairs. He joined Scotiabank in 2018 to ensure Indigenous communities across Canada have what they need in a banking partner.

"No matter the situation — but particularly in times of crisis — Top 40 honorees are the folks who stand up, lead and focus on how they can help," says Freeborough. "The pandemic offered the opportunity for them to step up and do what they do. Adjust, pivot, innovate."

Continued on FP8



# Honourees share sense of purpose

Continued from FP7

Sarah Joyce, senior vice-president, E-commerce at Sobey's, did just that. During the pandemic, the grocery chain's cutting-edge online home-delivery service, Voilà, was a lifesaver for many people living in the Greater Toronto Area, says Wetmore. "The platform was in the works before the pandemic, but the projections they were hoping to achieve were three to four years out. Suddenly they had to be ready to go and scale. Sarah was able to execute and make a huge impact."

Another key quality of this year's honourees: they have a clear sense of purpose and believe in what they do. Amelia Warren, a global leader in the production of wholesome, minimally processed meal solutions is CEO of Epicure, Canada's largest direct sales company. Her commitment to advancing healthy eating led her to launch Good Food. Real Fast, a global movement to give every person the knowledge, skills and tools to cook and eat well.

Warren believes that if we change what is on our plates, we can change our lives — and the world. She has been recognized as one of Profit magazine Top 100 entrepreneurs, a Vancouver Island Top 20 Under 40, and one of B.C.'s Top 40 under 40 business leaders.

The 2021 Top 40 honourees were selected from 1,200 nominations, an increase of almost 20 per cent over last year. These nominations resulted in 500 written submissions that led to 100 individuals selected for

an interview. Caldwell Partners and PwC conducted the interviews over the summer and then created a shortlist of 65 candidates for the independent advisory board to consider.

The board includes industry and professional leaders from across Canada as well as past Top 40 recipients. On October 5, 2021, the advisory board, along with representatives from Caldwell Partners who were on hand to answer questions, met via video-conference to select this year's Top 40. Board members used the Slido polling app to cast their votes.

Each honouree was selected based on their achievements in each of four selection criteria:

- Vision and Innovation
- Leadership
- Impact and Influence
- Social Responsibility.

"You can't help but be optimistic about the future because of these leaders," says Wetmore. "Their passion to serve and make a difference stands out. To think about the impact they've already had, the trajectory they're on, and what's possible is exciting. We have a lot going for us as a country."

This is why the mission of Canada's Top 40 — to celebrate and support young leaders — is so important. By sharing these stories and supporting these difference makers, Canada wins. "We are committed to Top 40 and continuing to share these stories," says Freeborough. "PwC embraced their role as presenting partner and we look forward to many more years celebrating young leaders."



Top: Matthew Wetmore, national managing partner, Industries & Regions, PwC Canada, Top 40's new presenting partner. Above: Jeff Freeborough, managing partner for Toronto at Caldwell Partners, Top 40's founding partner. SUPPLIED

## Canada's Top 40 2021

**Jason Abbate** Senior Vice-President, Development & Production, Cenovus Energy

**Michael Acko** President & CEO, EnviroBore Directional Drilling - Scott Hydro-Vac

**Guy Amini** President, dentalcorp

**Dr. Meghan Azad** Co-director, Manitoba Interdisciplinary Lactation Centre (MILC) & Associate Professor, Pediatrics and Child Health, University of MB

**Mark Boots/Louis Dorval** Co-founder & CTO/Co-Founder & COO, Viamo

**Candace A. Borland** Partner & President, Anomaly Inc.

**Janice Ciavaglia** Chief Executive Officer, Assembly of First Nations

**Jacqueline Cook** Chief Operating Officer, Vendasta

**Jonathan Davey** Vice-President, Indigenous Financial Services, Scotiabank

**Joshua Davis / Daryl Ee** Co-Founders & Co-CEOs, Speedee Transport & Stark TMS

**Ryan Dunfield** Chief Executive Officer, SAF Group

**Derrick Emsley** Co-Founder & CEO, tentree & veritree

**Brittany Forsyth** Founding Partner, Backbone Angels

**Vincent Giove** Vice-President & COO, Rustica Foods Inc.

**Jesse Guth** Chief Executive Officer, Avid Apparel

**Dr. Siba Haykal** Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon/Scientist, University Health Network, University of Toronto

**Sarah Joyce** Senior Vice-President, E-Commerce, Sobeys Inc.

**Andrew Joyner** Managing Director, Tricon Residential

**Dr. Jean-Philippe Julien** Senior Scientist, Molecular Medicine Program, The Hospital for Sick Children

**Yash Karia** President & CEO, Agrocrop Exports Ltd.

**Michael Ladha** Vice-President, Chief Legal Officer & Corporate Secretary, Newfoundland & Labrador Hydro

**Dr. Alika Lafontaine** President-Elect, Canadian Medical Association

**Seema Lakhani** Chief Product Officer, Wattpad

**Isaac Langleben** CEO & Co-Founder, Open Farm

**Rob Marsh** President, Liberty Mutual Canada

**Mathew Mehrotra** Chief Digital Officer, BMO

**Leon Ng** Founder & CEO, LNG Studios

**Jessica Nordlander** Chief Operating Officer, ThoughtExchange

**Lekan Olawoye** Founder and CEO, Black Professionals in Tech Network Inc.

**Dr. Teresa Purzner** Neurosurgeon/Entrepreneur, KHSC/Cerebello

**Salima Remtulla** VP, Operations & Corporate Strategy, Leith Wheeler

**Investment Counsel Ltd. Tyler Robson** CEO, Co-Founder & Chair, The Valens Company

**Adam Segal** President & CEO, Stork Craft Manufacturing Inc.

**Sonia Sennik** Executive Director, Creative Destruction Lab, Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto

**Carolyn Stewart** Executive Director, Feed Ontario

**Angela Thompson** VP, Project Services & Director, Environmental Services, FLINT, a division of ClearStream

**Amelia Warren** Chief Executive Officer, Epicure

**Dr. Vikramaditya Yadav** Professor, University of BC

**Maayan Ziv** Founder & CEO, AccessNow

**Dr. Jennifer Zwicker** Director, Health Policy and Associate Professor, University of Calgary, DSO Kids Brain Health Network



**CONGRATULATIONS**  
to the remarkable young leaders in the  
2021 Canada's Top 40 Under 40 class!

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**JONATHAN DAVEY**  
VICE PRESIDENT, INDIGENOUS  
FINANCIAL SERVICES

Top 40 in Canada  
for outstanding  
business leadership.

**Scotiabank congratulates Jonathan Davey on being named one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40.**

We'd like to thank and congratulate Jonathan for his leadership in delivering impact for our clients and for driving economic prosperity for Indigenous businesses, communities and peoples in Canada. The Scotiabank team is very proud of your achievement.



**Scotiabank**



# NEW-WORLD NAVIGATION

## Top 40 alumni share their lessons in adaptability

MARY TERESA BITTI  
Postmedia Content Works

The term “unprecedented change” has been used a lot through the pandemic. Today, as the world enters into recovery, National Post turned to Top 40 alumni to learn how they navigated the pandemic and what it takes to adapt.\*

**Reetu Gupta, ambassador & principal, The Gupta Group, 2017 Top 40 honouree**

Through the pandemic, Reetu Gupta was CEO of The Easton's Hotel Group, the hospitality arm of The Gupta Group. The industry was one of the hardest-hit during the pandemic, but while many hotels decided to close their doors, Gupta kept 80 per cent of the Group's hotels open.

**BRING ALL OF YOUR STARS TOGETHER**

I'm a big fan of President Obama. In an interview, he spoke about his Situation Room and how he would sit with all the higher-ups to deal with emergencies. As soon as we knew there was going to be a state of emergency, I wanted to make sure my executive team was empowered and it wasn't one person calling the shots. We came together every day over Zoom because things were changing so quickly. No one person has every solution but when you have all of your all-stars in one room, it's amazing the magic that can happen.

**STAY TRUE TO YOUR VALUES**

When I was thinking about how to adapt, I wasn't thinking about maximizing rev-



Reetu Gupta, left, and Dr. Vipan Nikore. SUPPLIED

enues. I was thinking about maximizing the safety and happiness of our team and guests. When travel stopped and hotel occupancies dropped from 70 per cent to six per cent, we decided to do everything we could to keep our hotels open. We refocused our strategy to find domestic business. I also started Project Kindness. We donated all the food the hotels could no longer use to Second Harvest, which donated it to shelters and people in need in the GTA.

We also helped procure masks for the University Health Network, seniors

homes and retirement communities. It gave people hope.

**GET CREATIVE**

When the provinces listed all the industries deemed essential, we used it to figure out which would need hotels. Construction was deemed essential; maybe some of the workers can't return home, how can we help? We partnered with embassies that wanted to fly their people back home and needed hotels until they could. We were able to find business, which allowed us to keep our doors open.



Everyone's mind is open to the fact there is not just one way to do business.

**Dr. Vipan Nikore, CEO & co-founder, Homecare Hub, chief medical director, TD Bank, internist, Trillium Health Partners, 2018 Top 40 honouree**

Dr. Vipan Nikore, a software developer turned medical doctor, and his co-founders launched HomeCare Hub in February 2020. The tech startup includes a platform to help patients find home-care services, and shared care/shared living solutions that allow people to share

the cost of health services. Almost overnight, the initial traction for its services disappeared.

**CONNECT THE NEED TO CHANGE TO YOUR MISSION AND VISION**

We thought home care would be the initial main focus but that's not what society needed. Supporting the home care agencies on our platform was always part of our mission. So we started helping procure PPE for our partner agencies. We built a telehealth platform so we could care for patients re-

motely and started helping long-term care facilities staff up. These were in the plan for the future, but we ended up accelerating these projects because they were huge areas of need. We could have made a lot of money doing COVID testing, but that wasn't our mission. We used our strengths to do good for society and also prove the power of what we had built but in a different way than we had expected. We had to be flexible but we also knew the problems around finding high-quality affordable home care, and the growing number of seniors who want to age at home were not going to go away after the pandemic.

**KNOW YOUR PURPOSE**

We [the founders] are purpose-driven people and anyone who joins the team has to be purpose-driven. Knowing that we were fulfilling our mission and helping patients during a once-in-a-lifetime crisis helped us find the pure adrenaline and inspiration to put the extra hours in to do that work.

**ADAPTABILITY IS A MINDSET**

There are some people who say, 'This is the way things are. We've always done it this way.' We see that often in health care. Bringing the right people on board who are adaptable and aligned in terms of values and mission will allow the whole organization to move together. The resilience we've built and the impact we've had have made us stronger.

Continued on FP10

**CONGRATULATIONS!**  
**VINCENT W. GIOVE**  
VP & COO, RUSTICA FOODS

**YOUR PASSION AND LEADERSHIP INSPIRE US TO CONTINUE OFFERING THE BEST OF NORTH AMERICA'S FAVOURITE FOOD TO MILLIONS OF PIZZA LOVERS ACROSS THE CONTINENT.**

The Rustica family is proud of your recognition as one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40. Congratulations on this remarkable achievement and contribution to our business and local community.

Congratulations to CMA President-Elect

**Dr. Alika Lafontaine**

on being named one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40.

Anesthesiologist.  
Indigenous health advocate.  
Changemaker.

Your health innovations — including SafeSpace Networks — build trust within communities, help marginalized patients navigate health systems and proactively reduce patient harm.

The CMA is grateful for your passion, dedication and expertise.



# BUILDING A FUTURE

Continued from FP9

**Dennis Campbell, CEO, Ambassadors Gray Line, 1998 Top 40 honouree**

Ambassadors, a leading tourism and hospitality business, was well-capitalized and in growth mode when the pandemic changed everything.

## FOCUS ON YOUR CORE STRENGTHS

We operate tours for cruise ships throughout Atlantic Canada, as well as daily sightseeing tours for the public in Halifax and Niagara Falls. Just before the pandemic, we purchased two new machines to add to our existing six to expand our Harbour Hopper Amphibious Tour, Nova Scotia's most popular sightseeing tour. Each of these machines cost about \$750,000. We had to park them.

We went from preparing to grow to dramatically changing to ensure survival. We started by preserving cash in every way possible. We also began to sell off all non-core assets, including our beloved Theodore Too [a lifesize replica of Theodore Tugboat, a beloved character from CBC's 1990s children's television show Theodore Tugboat]. We also arranged for a total refinance of our company and now have the company secure for the long term.

## LEAN INTO YOUR CORPORATE CULTURE

We had lots of meetings

and soul-searching discussions. How far and deep do we need to cut? We'd come up with a plan, and then have to change with the next COVID development. It made us think about what we are really about. One of our core values is 'Do the right thing always'. That was our guiding principle. We have a caring culture. We work hard and take care of our people. We are responsible to our internal and external stakeholders. When we had to lay people off, we looked at each individual and tried to do the right thing for them. A strong culture drives a business forward and stabilizes it in uncertain times. It's what allows you to adapt and build resilience.

## THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP IS CRITICAL

These lessons have us (me especially) realizing that we must always ensure we have smart, experienced, open-minded 'A' players leading the company. Our president and VP finance are CPAs who come from the 'big firm' world and worked in corporate restructuring. Having that financial acumen internally was critical.

**Allison Wolfe, executive vice-president, chief financial officer and global head of portfolio management, Oxford Properties Group, 2018 Top 40 honouree**

In early 2020, global real estate investor, asset manager and developer Oxford Properties had recently en-

tered a new market in Asia, and was moving its portfolio into new areas ripe for long-term growth: residential, logistics and life sciences. The pandemic accelerated the growth in these sectors and the need for investment.

## DECISIONS CAN HAPPEN FAST – EVEN IN LARGE ORGANIZATIONS

There was a lot of uncertainty and thousands of frontline decisions had to be made fast. We set a clear strategy and guiding principles so the team understood key priorities, had the support they needed and were in a position to digest and respond to what was happening. We had daily touchpoints: What's most important now? What do you need? How do we need to iterate and respond in a much faster way?

We set up SWAT teams around key priorities so we didn't duplicate efforts or have any gaps. The teams knew we trusted their decisions so they could execute. Getting comfortable making decisions when you don't have all the information and being able to pivot when you need to is an important skill-set and something we will carry forward.

## BUILD RELATIONSHIPS FOR THE LONG TERM

We have always taken a long-term approach to relationships with our employees, customers, co-investors and lenders. The benefit of



investing in relationships and creating strategic partnerships really helped us navigate the pandemic. For example, we were able to successfully close the loan for St. John's Terminal development in New York when other deals were falling apart.

## ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO SPEAK UP – AND DON'T JUDGE

When there is psychological safety and trust and people are encouraged and supported in putting issues on the table for discussion, then we can put our heads together and solve them. During the pandemic, making sure everyone felt comfortable saying 'here's what we're dealing with today,' was important.

Asking for help is a sign of confidence and strength, not weakness. Encouraging that environment allowed us to get past the noise and focus on the things we really needed to.

\*Conversations have been edited for space.



Dennis Campbell, top, Allison Wolfe, above. SUPPLIED

Wattpad congratulates **Seema Lakhani** for being recognized as one of **Canada's top 40 under 40**

An innovative Product leader. A strategic problem-solver. And a champion for diversity, equity, and inclusion in technology. Wattpad is proud to have you leading us into our bright future.

**Seema Lakhani,**  
Chief Product Officer at  
Wattpad and General  
Manager of Wattpad Labs



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# FIRST JOBS AND THEIR IMPACT

**DENISE DEVEAU & KATHRYN BOOTHBY**  
Postmedia Content Works

*Five of Canada's Top 40 Under 40 alumni recall their first jobs, and how they helped shape their futures.*

**Dr. Alika Lafontaine**, president-elect, Canadian Medical Association, a national, voluntary association of physicians and medical learners that advocates on national health matters; facility chief for anaesthesia at Grande Prairie, Alta.

## FIRST JOB

My first job was when I was seven years old. I was a member of a family musical group called Fifth Generation that toured mainly western Canada's Indigenous communities. Performing taught me two very important lessons: First, when people show up for an event, it's often because they are looking for an emotional experience. Second, when you're part of a team you can do amazing things.

Being in a group taught me more about human behaviour than anything I ever learned in school.

## CAREER CATALYST

In high school I worked at the Hotel Saskatchewan in Regina, starting on switchboard, working up to the

front desk. That taught me a lot of things, such as: there are a lot of jobs within jobs, and the importance of being there for each other.

Working in a service industry influenced my decision to go to medical school. Both are professions where you interact with a lot of people and work long hours. It also taught me how hard you have to work to get things done. Even if it's not in your job description, it doesn't matter. If you won't get on with it, it won't get done.

## LEADERSHIP

I consider myself to be servant leader. I really focus on communication, which has been especially important as we move through the pandemic. It's important to communicate with people when working through challenges to ensure that they really understand the specifics behind what you are trying to accomplish and that everyone is speaking the same language.

When working with people in the front line, you need to get a real feel for what they are going through so you can lead them to where they need to go.

I think one part where I have a lot of success is in story-telling. There are a lot of narratives around what people believe about themselves, and what the systems they work in are like, that stop us from changing. Al-

tering those stories unlocks potential and hopefully triggers the changes that are needed. It's really clear we're not engaging health-care workers enough. There's a lot of hopelessness we have to confront. We need to really understand the importance of story-telling and write new narratives about what we are doing.

## TOP 40 IMPACT

Obviously this is an incredibly prestigious honour from something that has become an institution in Canada. It helps to raise the ability for me to go out and have credibility when interacting with colleagues and advocating for patients.

Being part of the Top 40 network opens up links I otherwise wouldn't have naturally. I work with doctors, nurses and health professionals as part of what I do. But being able to learn about how change works from the point of view of business leaders, or a private sector professional managing a huge portfolio the same way medicine is done, helps me understand things I wouldn't have been exposed to otherwise.

One message I want to get out there is that what is going on in the health system is not readily apparent to everyone. Being on this list helps me bridge that so that health care becomes a part of what people are thinking about from day to day rather



Dr. Alika Lafontaine. CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION PHOTOGRAPH

er than only when they need it. In 1999 I received the Inspired Youth Award at the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation awards. Dave Tuccaro, who won the Business and Commerce Award, is a past honouree of Top 40. I remember back then how amazing it was to see a successful Indigenous businessman on that list. Now it seems to have come full circle.

**Lekan Olawe**, founder and CEO, Black Professionals in Tech Network Inc. (BPTN), a platform designed to support the advancement of Black professionals in the Technology Industry.

## FIRST JOB

My first job was when I was 14 and in grade 9. I was a line cook at Lick's Home-burgers. My friends used to get a kick out of coming there to make fun of me because we used to have to sing while we were cooking. Of course, they also liked the burgers.

I worked there for about four months over the sum-

mer. It was a humbling and interesting experience. I learned that I was able to do what I needed to do to make an honest living and do the right thing. I was never scared to work hard. I also learned how to make a mean burger. My three kids still enjoy my grilling skills. The interesting part was that you saw all types of people coming in from all walks of life. Almost everyone was so gracious to the employees working there.

## CAREER CATALYST

The next job I had for about three years was a busboy at Dave & Buster's in Vaughan. It was my first proper job that taught me people skills and the principles of customer service. Customer service and the way you make people feel matter.

That's what I have taken to my company. Whether dealing with the biggest companies in Canada and the U.S. or with entrepreneurs, they still want to be treated well. It's also important to the way I treat our

35,000 members. That's why they stay with us.

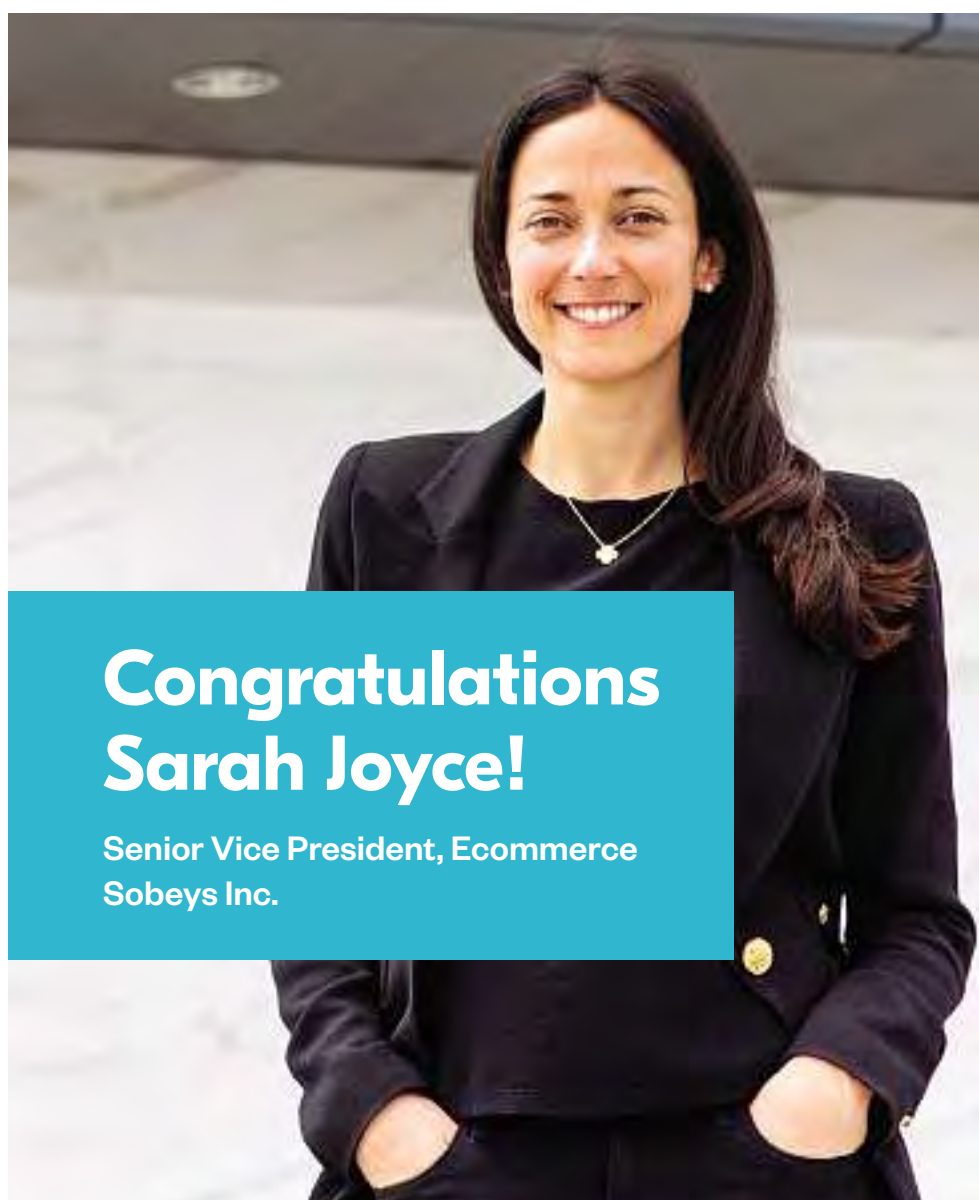
## LEADERSHIP

I am very results-driven. Because I come from a low-income community I didn't get to where I am because of my name or my network. People gave me opportunities because they saw what I can do. I don't take that for granted. As a leader, I am relentlessly focused on showing value to our clients and members.

In saying that, I realize more and more that results come by providing servant leadership as I continue to grow in my career. The best results that last the longest are from people you serve and report to you. My role is to unblock them, remove obstacles, work with and coach them, give them the support they need to succeed, and provide feedback when they need it.

Those who have done incredibly well are intrinsically motivated and thrive under that type of leadership.

**Continued on next page**



**Congratulations Sarah Joyce!**

Senior Vice President, Ecommerce  
Sobeys Inc.

**Empire Company Limited and Sobeys Inc. congratulate Sarah Joyce on being named one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40!**

Under Sarah's visionary leadership and through cutting-edge technology, Voilà has revolutionized online grocery home delivery in Canada.

[voila.ca](http://voila.ca)



**Leadership is ageless.**

Liberty Mutual Canada is proud to congratulate our President, Rob Marsh, on being recognized as one of *Canada's Top 40 Under 40*.

Rob's leadership, professional contributions, commitment to the community, and passion for building highly engaged teams and a market-leading culture has inspired our organization — and the entire industry.

**Well done, Rob, from your friends and colleagues.**



**Liberty Mutual.**  
INSURANCE



# Recognition can help serve others

Continued from previous page

## TOP 40 IMPACT

I did not see myself as one of Canada's Top 40. But a colleague I've known for 10 years nominated me. I'm incredibly humbled because people who grew up in the community I did don't get recognized for things like this.

Generally speaking, people in under-served communities don't get awards, even though they work multiple jobs to take care of their families on a lower income. They simply don't have the networks or the connections. I hope these people will be seen as a result of this award. I hope it provides the impact to recognize them and talk about them, and that they are doing what they need to do to move up. I hope that more companies will hire from those communities and realize those skills are important.

I'm thankful for this recognition, but also hoping they get recognition as well. I've met amazing mentors and coaches over the last 10 to 15 years and am incredibly thankful for them.

Finally, for Black professionals, it offers me the opportunity to recognize them for their awesomeness in helping tech companies grow. The more Black professionals are recognized for excellence, the more incredible the outcomes.

**Sarah Joyce**, senior vice-president E-Commerce, Sobeys Inc., the second-largest food retailer in Canada

with over 1,500 stores operating across the country under a variety of banners.

## FIRST JOB

I've had a hard-work mentality from a young age. As soon as I was legally able to work, I got my first job at Burger King when I was 14. I also began working at Roots at a local mall. I was always interested in paving my own way and getting a job as soon as possible so I could be independent. I've learned from those jobs that my connection with retail comes down to designing exceptional experiences. Whether you're a cashier at Burger King or an associate at Roots, you are always in touch with your customers. That has helped in the project I am working on today at Sobeys.

## CAREER CATALYST

When I began working as an associate at Roots, I had no idea at the time that would kick-start my professional career in retail. Through that experience I learned very early on the importance of front-line teammates. It gave me direct insight into how the front line connects with customers.

An important lesson was that in a customer-facing industry like ours, those people are the face of the brand. After doing my undergraduate degree in business, I did a lot of management consulting for consumer-facing industries, helping them with their marketing strategies. But I realized I really wanted to work inside an organization, driv-



Lekan Olawe, left, and Sarah Joyce. SUPPLIED



ing change from within rather than just being an advisory service. That ultimately led me to Sobeys, where I am working on their new robotic warehouse operation.

## LEADERSHIP

As a leader I want everyone to be inspired by Sobeys' vision to be the No. 1 e-commerce business in Canada. I understand and value the role our people play in getting us there. No matter what the function or team members, we have a collaborative and inclusive team environment, including weekly huddles at all levels and functions. We connect and celebrate wins.

I'm also a big believer in people-powered innovation. We talk a lot about robots, but the real magic is our teammates who are delivering exceptional exper-

iences for our customers. That's why I make sure that the team understands and feels valued for the work they do and the role they play in reaching our goal.

I've always been interested in this human side of the business. Organizations are a collection of people. I'm my best self at work when I'm creating an environment that allows others to be their best selves. That's always been part of my style. Helping other people learn and grow is what matters the most to me. You can have whatever robotic technology you want, but it's the people who make the difference. You can't underestimate their importance in a digital world. I grew up in a very supportive and loving environment that helped me learn and grow. That makes me want to pay it forward in the corporate world.

## TOP 40 IMPACT

It's a real honour and privilege, because this nomination represents all of what we've accomplished on this project. Everything we have done over the last year we did as a team. Being in the named to Canada's Top 40 Under 40 represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. But it's not the only first for me this past year. I've also been given the opportunity to build a new one-of-a-kind business from scratch, bringing game-changing technology to Canada. And I welcomed my first daughter, which was both rewarding and humbling. I feel there's so much to be thankful for.

**Michael Ladha**, vice-president, general counsel, corporate secretary & commercial, Newfoundland & Labrador Hydro, gener-

ator of 80 per cent of the power used by industrial, utility, and over 37,000 direct retail customers throughout the province every day.

## FIRST JOB

Other than being a lawyer or law clerk, my only other job was as a sailing instructor during summers as a teenager.

The sailing school program was run out of the Royal Newfoundland Yacht Club almost like a day camp for about 40 children, some as young as five years old. Children arrived at 8 a.m. and I, along with other program leaders, taught them the theory of sailing before taking them out on a boat into the ocean to put into practise what they had learned. Sailing has always been a huge part of my life.

Continued on next page

Celebrating leaders who make a difference.

Congratulations to Mathew Mehrotra for being honoured as one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40 for 2021. We're proud of the impact you make at BMO and the work you do in the community.

## Congratulations Candace Borland

PARTNER | PRESIDENT | ANOMALY

What an awesome accomplishment being named one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40. Everyone across the Anomaly family is proud of your outstanding achievement. Thank you for your inspiration, commitment and dedication to Anomaly: our values, our people, our clients and our community. You truly are an Anomaly. Keep raising the bar.



# FIRST JOB'S LESSONS

**Continued from previous page**

My grandfather was very involved and my family always had a boat. As children, my brother and I spent summers boating and entering competitions. I am now helping to bring on the next generation by teaching my nieces to sail.

I learned some valuable lessons from that first job, including responsibility. I was tasked with the care and safety of half a dozen children, all day long, in what some might consider a dangerous situation out on the water.

The job also taught me about working with different personalities. Some of the children were brave, while others were terrified and didn't want to go anywhere near the water. In my work today, as much as my job is about dealing with the subject matter at hand, it is also about building and managing relationships both inside and outside of the organization.

**CAREER CATALYST**

I can confidently say that as a child I never entered my mind that I might go to law school. My parents are both accomplished physicians. I did feel some measure of pressure to go into medical school and started my undergraduate studies in the sciences. That didn't last, however, as I didn't enjoy the practical work. I remember one biochemistry lab where we were separating milk into its trace elements. I couldn't see why I would need to know this type of thing going forward, so I switched into business.

Toward the end of my studies, I moved into law, where I quickly became interested in the corporate side of things. I will say that the introduction to the sciences has proven valuable in my current role, as I supervise a number of technical people.

**LEADERSHIP**

I am a fairly informal leader and enjoy working with different people and personalities. I want people to be happy here despite there sometimes being conflict in the type of work we do. Collaborative is my preferred style. I definitely value input from everyone on the team, as I know I'm not always the most knowledgeable in the room.



Michael Ladha, left, and Salima Remtulla. SUPPLIED



**LEADERSHIP**

I am adaptable. Leading in a variety of environments has helped me appreciate that to excel, different teams and organizational cultures require different types of leadership. While I endeavour to delegate as much as possible, I am willing and capable of getting into the weeds to get things done.

In the past, I was disproportionately focused on performance, but over time I have learned how bring to more balance to my leadership style with a more wholesome and holistic appreciation for people. Not everyone is at the same level. It is important to tailor leadership to the wide variety of styles, personalities and people at the table.

My overall value-proposition is in being a really strong generalist. I have had a lot of jobs requiring different skills and knowledge bases. You could say I am a plug-and-play leader — I can step into anything, figure it out, and get it running smoothly in short order. I very much enjoy a varied and dynamic workload with learning along the way. Each new tool added to the box gives me more to work with for the next opportunity or challenge.

**TOP 40 IMPACT**

**TOP 40 IMPACT**

I'm very honoured to have been considered for this award and thank my nominator, the referees and Top 40 board. To have won is certainly a morale boost that will provide a profile not only for me but for the organization and the important work we do for the province. The recognition will help me to bring my passion for volunteering and serving as a board member to the national level.

I look forward to learning from others who have won this award and sharing my knowledge with them. This achievement also serves as a reminder to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that if you do good work and step up, you will be recognized.

**Salima Remtulla**, vice-president operations and corporate strategy, Leith Wheeler Investment Counsel Ltd, an independent investment manager with over \$23 billion of assets under management

**FIRST JOB**

I was a dishwasher in a university biology lab, cleaning Petrie dishes full of agar and bacterial culture. I began my studies at Yale in biomedical engineering. My financial aid package required that I work at the university. I thought working in the lab would be a natural way to learn about the field. What I didn't realize was that, rather than having access to the university's great biomedical minds, 99 per cent of the time the work would be rather disgusting.

The job taught me a couple of good lessons: First, sometimes you simply have to do what is necessary to get things done; and second, a little diligence goes a long way. If I had been more resourceful and thought more creatively about how to fulfill the work requirement, I may have found a better fit.

**CAREER CATALYST**

I came to the financial sector almost by accident. I had already accepted a product

manager role with a direct marketing company when a recruiter suggested I apply for a job with an investment company in New York. I had no idea what the company did and had never worked in finance.

During the interview process I met about eight people. There was something about the smart way they asked questions, engaged in the conversation, and presented a down-to-

earth atmosphere full of curiosity. I really wanted to be a part of their team and what was happening there, so when I got a job offer, I accepted and determined to figure it out later. I was with the company a full two weeks before I did an online search for 'what is a hedge fund'. Since that time, I have always chosen my workplace based on energy, gut feel, and a sense of fit. It's why I joined Leith six years ago.

I was both surprised and pleased with the focus that was placed on community contributions in this year's the selection process. For me, the individual recognition being offered is secondary to the celebration of work being done to build a future for Canada where all people and communities can thrive. Those of us with the privilege to be able to do this work have a responsibility to make sure it is done.

## Top 40 advisory board

- Moya Cahill** Chief Executive Officer, Pangeo Subsea Inc.
- Sharon Driscoll** Chief Financial Officer, Ritchie Bros.
- Grant Ellis** Managing Editor, Digital and Multi Media, Toronto Star
- David Garofalo** Chairman & CEO, Marshall Precious Metals Fund
- Dr. David Granville** Executive Director, Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute & Professor and Associate Dean, Research, Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia
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- Geeta Sankappanavar** Founder & CEO, Akira Impact
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- Paul Soubry** President & Chief Executive Officer, NFI Group Inc.
- Sandra Stuart** Corporate Director and Former CEO, HSBC Canada
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- Vianne Timmons** President and Vice-Chancellor, Memorial University of Newfoundland
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CONGRATULATIONS  
RYAN DUNFIELD  
CEO, SAF GROUP

On behalf of the SAF Team, congratulations on being named one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40. Thank you for the leadership, dedication, and passion you bring to the organization daily. We are so proud of this outstanding achievement.





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CANADA'S  
TOP 40  
UNDER 40

THE TOP 40 OF 2021!



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**Michael Acko**  
President,  
Scott Hydro-Vac  
and CEO EnviroBore  
Directional Drilling



**Guy Amini**  
President  
dentalcorp



**Dr. Meghan Azad**  
Co-Director, Manitoba  
Interdisciplinary Lactation Centre  
(MILC) & Associate Professor,  
Pediatrics and Child Health  
University of Manitoba



**Mark Boots/  
Louis Dorval**  
Co-founder & CTO/  
Co-Founder & COO  
Viamo



**Candace A. Borland**  
Partner, President  
Anomaly Inc.



**Janice Ciavaglia**  
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**Jacqueline Cook**  
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**Joshua Davis/  
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The Hospital for  
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**Michael Ladha**  
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Officer & Corporate Secretary  
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**Dr. Teresa Purzner**  
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KHSC / Cerebely



**Salima Remtulla**  
VP, Operations &  
Corporate Strategy  
Leith Wheeler Investment  
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Learn more about them in the March 2022 edition of Financial Post Magazine

