

## Young leaders have lots to offer

The Business Journal of Phoenix - January 19, 2007

by [Don Henninger](#), The Business Journal



Inspirational Diva Allison Bell accepting her award at the Business Journal's Forty Under 40 Award's Banquet.

I'm feeling a little extra inspiration this week. And maybe a little perspiration, too, which comes from wondering if I'm not something of an underachiever. Finally, I'm feeling confident that when it comes to young leaders, our community is blessed with an abundant supply.

I have had these feelings before. In fact, this is the seventh time. That's how many years we've been doing our Forty Under 40 program, which recognizes people under 40 years old who are, and will be, providing the dynamic leadership needed to build our community into the proverbial world-class status, no matter whose definition you use.

Like the six years before it, this new class brought lots of nominations -- more than 130 -- and our judges had to whittle it down to the top 40.

They're all stars, all 130 of them. If you figure that I've now judged 130 (or so) nominations each year for seven years, I've seen the inside story of nearly 1,000 young leaders in the Valley. I call that a privilege. This year's class was typical in many ways: strong in diversity, embedded in their community and willing to give back.

I also noticed four trends emerging more strongly with this year's class:

- Balance: Members of this year's class clearly make home life as important as work life. Families were more front and center -- and that's a good thing. Long-term, sustainable



Allison Bell and Business Journal Publisher Don Henninger.

leadership can't be one dimensional.

- Technology: Nothing against all of the techies I've known in the past, but community involvement has not been on the top of their list. Before the dot-com bubble burst, they said they were too busy trying to keep up with the frenetic pace of growth. After the bubble burst, they were too busy trying to keep their businesses alive. Now, with the tech sector on a solid comeback, young leaders in tech seem more involved in the community. And I don't think it's a coincidence.
- Nonprofits. All seven classes were supportive of community causes and charitable endeavors. But there seemed to be more executives who either make their living running nonprofit groups or whose business is directly engaged in supporting them. Perhaps that says more about how important a role nonprofits play in the overall mix of our business community.
- Entrepreneurship. Arizona is No. 1 when it comes to its entrepreneurial spirit. And it really rang true in this year's class, which ranged from people just starting new companies, to founders of companies now in their second stage, to those who are looking to sell and move on to the next challenge. All of this from a group of people who didn't even start school until well into the 1970s.

I'm not going to reveal who's on this year's Forty Under 40 roster. They're getting letters from me this week. We'll share their stories with you in a special supplement March 15. Until then, I leave you with two thoughts:

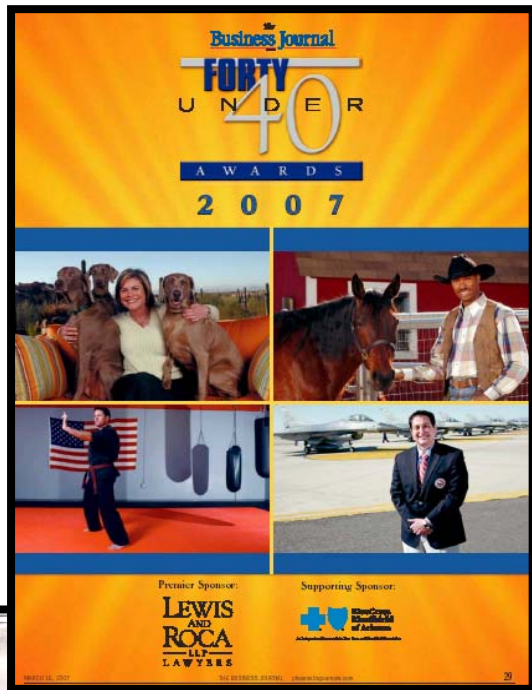
1. Be confident in our leadership pipeline. It's plenty full.
2. Remember to recognize and nurture good leadership every time you see it. Do it enough and you just might see it in the mirror.

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>>Scroll down to see the Business Journal article featuring Allison Bell

President of Embrace Today Concepts & Forty Under 40 Award winner, Allison Bell, was featured in the March 16<sup>th</sup> issue of the Phoenix Business Journal.

Bell was one of only two honorees selected in their twenties.



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*The Business Journal*  
**FORTY UNDER 40 AWARDS**



**Allison Bell**  
**DOB:** Aug. 1, 1981  
**Title:** President  
**Company:** Embrace Today Concepts Inc.  
**E-mail:** allison@embrace.todayconcepts.com

**Career highlights:** I started my career at the Loreto Bay Co., a \$3 billion resort/real estate development in Mexico. After a year of learning the ins and outs of real estate, I completed my real estate exams in Arizona and California and began selling high-end real estate in Loreto, Mexico, for another year. I took a leap of faith and started my own company, Embrace Today Concepts Inc. in January 2006. I left a six-figure income in real estate with a mission to follow my passion to help others. Embrace Today is an inspirational guidance company that helps others embrace their purpose in life.

**Community Involvement:** Nursery school teacher, Christ's Church of the Valley; board manager, South Mountain YMCA; volunteer, Junior Achievement; member, Junior League of Phoenix; certi-

**Greater accomplishment:** One of Embrace Today's greatest accomplishments would include a partnership with the city of Phoenix for the Young Entrepreneur Showcase, a conference that blended students, young business owners and active professionals in one setting to achieve practical advice on how to build a successful company. With more than 80 attendees and 12 exhibitors, the event was a huge success.



**Lori Berke**  
**DOB:** March 19, 1968  
**Title:** Attorney and shareholder  
**Company:** Shughart, Thompson & Kilroy PC  
**E-mail:** lberke@stklaw.com

**Career highlights:** I have successfully defended numerous cities, counties and school districts in litigation and at trial. In 2004, I, along with several other attorneys in my firm and co-counsel from other firms, achieved the largest consumer antitrust settlement in Arizona history. We represented a class of consumers who sued Microsoft for unlawfully overcharging them and attempting to maintain a monopoly in markets. The settlement was \$104.6 million. In addition to benefiting consumers, the settlement resulted in an additional \$56 million for Arizona's poorest schools.

**Community involvement:** Past and present board memberships: Youth Evaluation and Treatment Centers, Arizona Association of Defense Counsel, Phoenix chapter of the Federal Bar Association, FBA Foundation, Defense Research Institute.



**Mike Campi**  
**DOB:** March 11  
**Title:** Chief shade officer  
**Company:** Killer Shade  
**E-mail:** mikec@killershade.com

**Career highlights:** In 1996, at age 22, I started my professional career by chasing a ServiceMaster franchise in Grand Junction, Colo. While I was in charge, sales increased by more than 300 percent. We started with a handful of employees and expanded to 20 two years. In 1999, my wife and I moved to Phoenix and I purchased Del Riko fabric company. It went from \$500,000 in annual sales to \$1 million. In 2001, I closed Del Riko to start Killer Shade, a commercial shade manufacturer. In a few years, we've grown to 20 employees and doubled in sales.

**Community involvement:** Board member, directors, Young Entrepreneurs Organization; member, Phoenix Chamber of Commerce; product donations to faith-based organizations in the Valley.

**Greater accomplishment:** My 6-year-old son is my greatest accomplishment and proudest moment. Professionally, my company has experienced a g

Visit <http://phoenix.bizjournals.com> for more information on the Business Journal and visit [www.InspirationalDiva.com](http://www.InspirationalDiva.com) for more information on Allison Bell.