

STEVEN P. DINKIN A Path Forward

# WORKPLACES SET SIGHTS ON BUILDING CULTURE OF BELONGING

Thirty years ago, the Ms. Foundation launched Take Our Daughters to Work Day to shine a light on career possibilities for young girls. Before long, it was decided that boys would benefit, too.

Now, Take Our Children to Work Day happens once a year, on the fourth Thursday in April.

There's another movement afoot in workplaces across the country: Take yourself to work — your whole self — every day. It's rooted in the idea of belonging.

The thinking goes, according to a recent article in *The New York Times*, that if you have the flexibility to choose where you work and the freedom to speak your mind on social and political issues, you shouldn't have to check yourself at the door — you belong.

Belonging is the latest addition to the human resources toolkit. In the wake of George Floyd's murder in 2020, consciousness about systemic racism was (re)awakened in our country. Many companies responded by implementing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies and programs.

Some established dedicated DEI teams as part of their HR function and hired their first-ever diversity leader.

One idea that took hold was Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), which bring together traditionally underrepresented segments of workers to help boost feelings of connection. The first official ERG in the U.S. actually dates back to 1970 — created by Xerox as a forum for Black employees to advocate for inclusion and change within the company. Today, 90 percent of Fortune 500 companies have ERGs.

Research has shown that DEI efforts matter to the majority of workers, regardless of age. A company's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion influences workers' decision to take a new job — or to stay in one.

But corporate commitment to DEI appears to be stalling. Research by Glassdoor found that in 2021, 43 percent of employees had access to DEI initiatives, a 14-point jump from 2019. The number dipped last year to 41 percent.

That may not sound like a big shift. But several major companies parted ways with their heads of DEI and never replaced them. Sixty percent of chief diversity officers at S&P 500 companies left their positions between 2018 and 2021. Their average tenure is just 1.8 years.

On Tuesday, the National Conflict Resolution Center hosted a conversation about the current state of DEI efforts with Alicia Moore, senior program manager for DEI at Columbia Sportswear.

It was part of our "Uncharted Workplace" webinar series. Moore shared her thoughts about DEI "backtracking." It's happening, she said, because companies don't really understand how to develop and run a successful DEI program. There's a lack of support from company leaders. Some are blaming the economic downturn (but, as Moore noted, they would find the dollars if DEI really mattered).

The bigger problem is that empathy has been politicized and is now considered woke. There is a

growing concern that DEI pays too much attention to "othering" — how populations like employees of color or women or women of color are being treated in the workplace, and how it makes them feel. To some, ideas like ERGs exacerbate divides.

Karith Foster is chief executive of Iniversity Solutions, a diversity consultancy. Foster told *The Times* that as a practical matter, there will be no equity if the people in power (straight, White males) feel excluded from the conversation. Foster said, "The people traditional DEI practitioners most want to enroll are the people they're isolating and honestly ostracizing."

It's the precise reason that belonging has landed in the HR toolkit. While DEI has become divisive, everyone needs to belong.

That was the message delivered at a recent talk I attended, sponsored by The Conrad Prebys Foundation. The speaker was John A. Powell, director of the Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley. He

told the audience, "We need each other. That's not a bad thing."

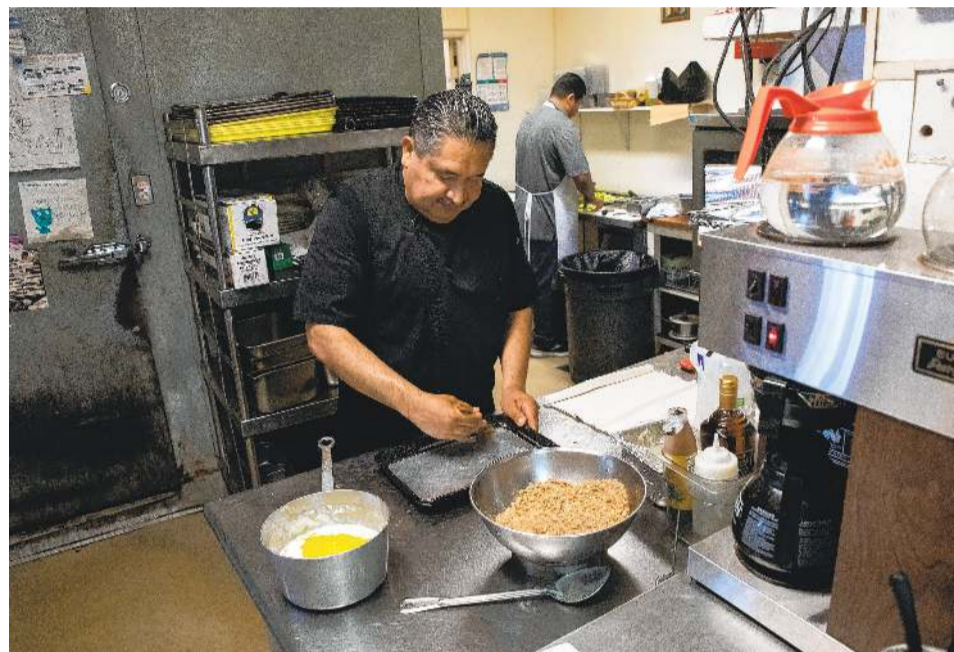
A Black man, Powell talked about an idea he calls "targeted universalism." In our efforts to achieve equity, we oftentimes focus on disparities, paying most attention to traditionally excluded groups. We forget about the group at the top — which has the potential to make them opponents, rather than supporters.

But not everyone is situated the same, Powell suggested, so we have to be targeted, if the goal is to achieve a universal outcome.

He calls this the "belonging frame" — an imagined future where we move together, care about each other, and see each other without becoming each other.

It's a future where I belong.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCR's programming, visit [ncrconline.com](http://ncrconline.com)



ADRIANA HELDIZ U-T PHOTOS

**Chef Jesus Yaguez Aguilar makes baklava in the kitchen at Athens Market, where he's worked for nearly 40 years. Many on staff are longtime employees.**



**The restaurant, at the corner of F Street and First Avenue, is walking distance from the state and federal courthouses downtown.**

## LEGACY Pappas at restaurant every day

FROM B1  
across the street change from an open plaza to a famous, colorful shopping mall that declined, was shuttered, sold, and is now being rebuilt as an office complex. She has been there long enough to witness three courthouses built and one torn down. And she is still in

the restaurant every day, taking a turn through the dining room and greeting newcomers and remembering the regulars, many of whom have been coming for decades.

One of those regulars is U.S. District Judge Larry A. Burns, a former federal prosecutor with the U.S. Attorney's Office in San Diego for years before he became a judge. Burns has known Pappas since the 1980s and was the one who came up with the idea of recognizing her now.

Burns said the restaurant might be the oldest woman-owned business downtown. But more than

that, he said Pappas has been a stalwart for the legal community. Bar associations for both state and federal court meet regularly there and are always welcome. "She has always been willing and always available to help," he said.

While the restaurant is also popular with downtown office workers who don't work in law firms and now a growing number of residents, it is the connection with the legal community that is strongest and runs deepest.

Pappas was an aspiring lawyer when she got into the restaurant business, she recalled.

In 1974, she was a law school student in San Diego. At the time, an aunt owned the business but was trying to sell it because she wanted to visit her son stationed in Japan on the Midway battleship, Pappas recalled. Months earlier Pappas had attended a Greek heritage festival where organizers were raffling off a car as a grand prize. Tickets were \$50, and on the spur of the moment Pappas bought a ticket.

She won. But instead of taking the car, she took the money.

And months later, as her aunt searched for a buyer, Pappas decided that she

would do it. She used the winnings from the raffle to purchase the business. She said goodbye to law school, and hello to a half-century of serving the law, in her own way.

"I did not become an attorney," she said. "But I ended up feeding them all." The menu features Greek dishes like spanakopita and pastitso. Much of her staff have worked there for years in the kitchen, behind the small bar and in the dining room.

Pappas moved to the United States from a small town in Greece where her father owned the only restaurant.

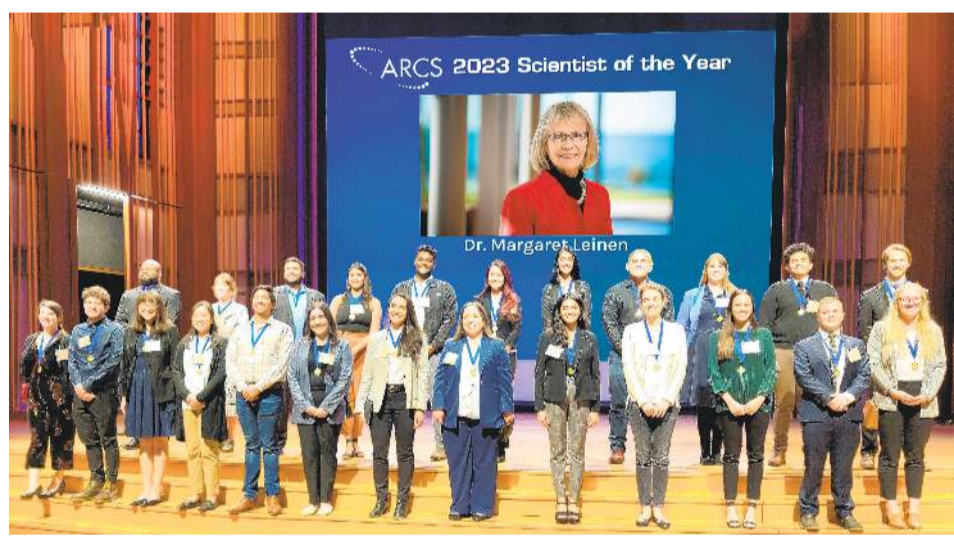
She has four sisters, one of whom operated the popular

Hillcrest restaurant California Cuisine for many years.

In the mid-1980s, Pappas moved Athens Market from E Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues to its current location, buying the building along with the lawyers (she owns half). Iredale, one of the attorneys, said Pappas turning away from being a lawyer worked out well.

"The legal profession's loss was actually the legal profession's gain," he said. "Instead of feeding us arguments, she been feeding us delicious food for many years."

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MICHAEL ROEDER

**This year's scholars: Front, from L: Jessica Griffin, Ruben Elias, Tiffany Luong, Ashley Dang-Nguyen, Sergio Labra, Nathalia Gazaniga, Minerva Contreras, Andrea Correia, Pratibha Jagannatha, Eleonora Rachtman, Nishta Krishnan, Jason Baer, Jennifer Waters. Back, from L: Jerv Vaughn Hunter, Lilith Vasquez, Adrian Rivera, Maricruz Carrillo, Garrett Lindsey, Laura Becerra, Sahana Kuthayar, Jovan San Martin, Laura Sisk-Hackworth, Joshua Mesfin, David McBride**

### SCENE

## Achievement Rewards for College Scientists

Scientist of the Year Celebration also recognizes the organization's young scholars

BY U-T STAFF

The San Diego Chapter of ARCS (Achievement Rewards for College Scientists) hosted the 2023 Scientist of the Year Celebration on May 7 at the Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center in La Jolla.

This year's honoree was the director of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Margaret Leinen, an award-winning oceanographer and distinguished national and international leader in ocean science, global climate and environmental issues.

ARCS San Diego also paid tribute to this year's ARCS scholars, along with distinguished ARCS scholar alumnus Forest Rohwer, a renowned marine micro-

biologist at SDSU.

The event began with hors d'oeuvres and drinks in the Wu Tsai Courtyard, and then moved into the main Baker-Baum Concert Hall, where attendees watched a video collage introducing this year's scholars.

Rohwer and Leinen also gave presentations about the importance of ocean research.

Event co-chairs were ARCS members Kristin Boyd and Gwynn Thomas.

More than \$130,000 was raised at the celebration to benefit future ARCS Scholars. Since its inception in 1985, the San Diego Chapter of ARCS has given more than \$11.8 million to support graduate students at four local institutions: UCSD, SDSU, USD and Scripps

Research.

The ARCS Foundation is a national organization with 15 chapters nationwide. It provides financial awards to graduate students pursuing degrees in science, engineering and medical research.

If your organization has held a philanthropic event, you're welcome to email a high-resolution photo along with information on the event to [society@sduniontribune.com](mailto:society@sduniontribune.com).

Please clearly identify those in the photo, make them aware their image might appear in print and online, include the photographer's name for credit, and be sure to include the who, what, where, when and why information on the event.

## RECORDS County has high rate of jail mortality

FROM B1  
by the sheriff's Critical Incident Review Board in the past 10-plus years. Each of the cases was initiated in the wake of the death or serious injury of somebody incarcerated in a county jail.

County lawyers initially sought a stay during the May 31 court hearing, but the judge declined. Ohta said she would address the county's request in her final ruling, which she has not yet issued.

San Diego County has had the highest jail mortality rate among California's largest counties for more than a decade, with more than 225 people dying in sheriff's custody since 2006.

Six people have died in local jails so far this year. Twenty others died last year, including one man who was compassionately released hours before dying at a nearby hospital.

The incidents are costing taxpayers a lot of money. Deaths and injuries sustained by people in local jails have cost the county some \$60 million in legal settlements and jury awards over the past five years.

Both the California State Auditor and the county Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board have called on Sheriff Kelly Martinez to release records generated by the Critical Incident Review Board.

But the sheriff insists the records are protected by attorney-client privilege and not subject to public release.

The documents turned over Wednesday night will remain sealed while attorneys on both sides of the dispute go through them page by page to determine what information should be with-

held once they are made available to the public.

Ohta said the records are to remain under "attorneys' eyes only" throughout the redaction process, which she directed to conclude within two weeks.

Each side will submit their proposals for whatever redactions they consider would best satisfy personal confidentiality rules but also allow the public to see the sheriff's Critical Incident Review Board findings.

James Davis, one of the lawyers representing the Union-Tribune, Voice of San Diego and Prison Legal News magazine, declined to describe the records received from the county late Wednesday.

"Until the 'attorneys' eyes only' order is no longer in effect, we can't provide descriptions of the documents," Davis said by email.

Former sheriff's Cmdr. David Myers, who spent several years as a member of the Critical Incident Review Board before retiring in 2018, said the sealed material is likely to include detailed evidence of in-custody deaths and other serious incidents. It could include audio recordings, photographs of scenes in question, statements from witnesses and detailed reports on the training and qualifications of any staff involved in whatever incident was reviewed, he said.

"If it was a jail death, you always had statements from medical staff, the number of medical appointments, when a person was booked, medications, if they requested to see a doctor," Myers said. "You very rarely saw actual medical records attached."

The typical review process begins with a presentation to the board by a supervisor of the sworn staff involved in the incident, Myers said.

After that, the Critical Incident Review Board discusses case details, he added. The internal reports also tend to include summaries that reflect questions from the board members and an-

swers from field supervisors.

Finally, the review board documents suggest potential remedies, Myers said.

"If we made mistakes, what are the recommendations of the CIRB board?" said the retired commander, who ran unsuccessfully for sheriff in 2018 and again in 2022. "Do we need additional training, what should that additional training look like?"

Recommendations from the Sheriff's Department's internal review board might also include a decision to refer the case for an internal-affairs investigation in case there was possible wrongdoing by staff, Myers said.

The documents at issue were first provided to attorneys representing Frankie Greer, a former detainee who filed a civil lawsuit against San Diego County after he was gravely injured while in custody.

San Diego attorney Julia Yoo, one of the attorneys who represented Greer, said the internal reports provided under seal helped them secure a \$7.75 million legal settlement from the county earlier this year.

"The supervisory defendants asked the judge to throw out Mr. Greer's case by submitting declarations under oath that they had no knowledge of prior instances of misconduct," Yoo said, referring to department officials originally named in the case.

"In denying their motion, Judge Ohta referred to their participation in CIRB, and the statements they made during CIRB meetings that contradicted their assertion that they had no prior knowledge," she added.

Myers submitted a sworn declaration in the Greer case attesting that members of the Critical Incident Review Board were never told their records were subject to attorney-client privilege and said the documents were regularly left unsecured.

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