

LifeLines

*For the Southern California
Life Science Community*

- 6 We Can Do It: Women Leading Cutting Edge Innovation
- 12 Public Policy Update: Health Care Reform - What it Means to the Life Sciences Industry
- 13 Members in Action: Orange County Open House March Monthly Breakfast Meeting, DeviceFest
- 16 BIOCOM Corporate Relations: Keeping it Real, Keeping it Local



Cover Image: Southern California life science powerhouses (left to right) Karin Eastham, Carin Canale-Theakston, Bente Hansen and Jennifer Cayer

COVER STORY



Kristiina Vuori, President of Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute

WE CAN DO IT: WOMEN LEADING CUTTING EDGE INNOVATION.

A DISCUSSION WITH FEMALE LIFE SCIENCE LEADERS ABOUT THE GROWING ROLE OF WOMEN AS CEOs AND OTHER TOP EXECUTIVES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S LIFE SCIENCES CLUSTER.

Of the scores of chief executives of the biotech companies in Southern California's life sciences cluster, fewer than a dozen are women, and they are all formidable leaders.

When Tina Nova at Genoptix, Laura Shawver at Phenomix, Mary Fisher at SkinMedica, Magda Marquet at AltheaDX, and Donna Janson at Novalar enter a room, they take command. Some of the women who have made it to the top have founded their own companies. Several have transferred here from outside the

BY **TERRI SOMERS,** BIOCOM'S
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

region or from other industries.

Women also shape the biotech arena by serving on the boards of several companies, such as Karin Eastham, the former Chief Operating Officer at the Sanford Burnham Medical Research Institute, and Dr. Christine White, a highly respected clinical researcher and former high-level executive at Biogen-Idec. Legions of women in management and technical ranks are helping advance companies, develop and commercialize life-saving products, and mentor the next generation of workers. And female leaders in the service industries are also raising the bar in recruiting, public

relations, accounting and law.

LifeLines initiated a dialog with a few of Southern California's "women in charge." We asked them to discuss why there are not more female CEOs or board members and what it will take to increase those numbers. Each woman had a unique story to tell. They shared career highlights and lessons learned. They offered advice to workers - especially women - about moving into leadership roles. And, most importantly, all of the women shared their optimism about emerging opportunities for women in the life sciences industry.

Here are excerpts of those

conversations.

Women outnumber men at the nation's best universities and in the overall workforce. According to the Center for Women's Business Research, women own 40 percent of the private businesses in the United States, and research shows that venture-backed start-ups run by women use less capital than companies run by men. So why aren't more female CEOs in charge of cutting edge life science companies?

Phenomix CEO Shawver got her experience leading a company, SUGEN, in the Bay Area. Ten years ago, at SUGEN, she was often the only woman in a meeting. "This is happening less and less frequently, both within pharma as well as biotech," Shawver said. "It was typical to see women in VP positions of HR or communications, but now we are well represented within R&D."

As Phenomix leadership has changed over time, the San Diego company has had a higher percent of women in executive positions than the industry average, Shawver said. Dr. Angela Birchler is VP of Pharmaceutical Development and Manufacturing, and Dr. Marie O'Farrell is VP of Development. Julie Cherrington was President of Phenomix and is now CEO at Pathway Therapeutics.

Shawver said Phenomix would sometimes have only women in a meeting with another company. "I remember that one time, someone commented about only women on the Phenomix side of the table. I asked them if they also commented when there were only men on one side of the table. Obviously not, but it makes a point that we still take notice of 'all girl' bands, so we have a way to go yet,"



Bente Hansen, CEO
of Bente Hansen Inc,
Executive Research Firm



Carin Canale-Theakston, CEO
Canale Communications



Jennifer Cayer,
Co-founder and Senior
Vice President of
Business Development
Conatus Pharmaceuticals

she said.

In San Diego, the top positions at the many research institutes are all men. However, Kristiina Vuori, who is a PhD level scientist and educated in Finland as a lawyer, was recently appointed President of the Sanford Burnham Medical Research Institute. Vuori said that often scientists choose to remain scientists, rather than administrators. As a result, many may not have the training for the top administration positions. She said that she was "roped into" administrative duties early on. "And once you've shown you have some talent in the area, there's no turning back...no one's letting you," she said jokingly.

Carin Canale-Theakston, outgoing president of Porter Novelli Life Sciences and a BIOCOM board member, said, "I think we don't see more female CEOs because of the job requirement to almost constantly be on the road, constantly fund raising ... It's more difficult for women to be on the road away from their kids." Canale-Theakston and her wife, Hillary Theakston, are the parents

of an infant daughter. Wanting more control over her schedule is one of the reasons Canale-Theakston recently announced she was leaving Porter Novelli and launching her own firm, Canale Communications, to serve the life science community.

There are fewer opportunities to become a CEO, said Bente Hansen, who runs a self-named professional recruiting firm. And in San Diego, which is a hotbed for research and development, it is hard to find the executives who have commercialization experience, Hansen said.

Mary Fisher had never been a CEO when she did what Hansen calls "taking the call," and she wound up heading SkinMedica.

Fisher was literally a starving artist when she landed her first life science job: proofreading press sheets for packing engineers at Boehringer Ingelheim. "It was a wonderful place to be because it was where all departments intersected," Fisher said. During her 10-year tenure there, she worked in purchasing, risk management, finance, human resources, production planning

and sales administration.

“I followed my curiosity and grew up across a bigger organization before biotech,” Fisher said. “In biotech, having general experience was all enabling, because you have to be able to do any of a dozen jobs.”

All the women interviewed for this story said that seizing opportunities and having the skills and motivation to succeed at those opportunities is crucial to advancement.

Fisher later worked at publicly-traded Immunex, then Cephalon, and later, Acorda. During these years, “I was often the only girl in the room,” she said. Early on, she saw that men communicated differently. To be heard in discussions, she had to communicate their way, “even down to the little things, such as men like to receive their information in bullet points rather than a narrative.”

She left Acorda to start an independent venture that ultimately did not work out. But along that leg of her journey, Fisher met SkinMedica board members who asked her to “take a look at” that company’s CEO position. She had never worked in dermatology and had never been a CEO.

Fisher doesn’t think the shortage of female CEOs is based on any malevolence. And the field is ripe, she said, for women to get the experience they need to move into leadership positions.

Jennifer Cayer, Co-Founder and Senior Vice President of Business Development at Conatus, is one of those who lead the industry without being in the CEO role. She has moved up through the ranks at a number of life science companies, including Gensia, Isis, and Idun. She has often



Dana DiFerdinando,
*Senior Director of IT,
Arena Pharmaceuticals*



Marcea Bland Lloyd,
*Senior Vice President, Government and Corporate Affairs and General Counsel,
Amylin Pharmaceuticals*



Christine White,
*MD, board member at
Arena Pharmaceuticals
and Genoptix*

had a company leader who believed in her abilities and took a chance on her. When that happens, she said, women must be ready to prove that they are worth the risk.

Cayer was hired at Idun in January 2004, gave birth to her daughter in February, brought in Pfizer for acquisition talks in March. In May, the company announced it had raised a monster series B round of \$66 million. Ultimately, the company was sold to Pfizer and brought a great return to investors.

She would like to lead a company one day. But she thinks she needs more training in the financial side of the business, so her next job will probably be chief business officer or chief operating officer. Cayer said that women should figure out the training they need and go after it.

Toward the end of her five-year stint at Gensia, Cayer wanted to move into business development. At the time, the company had a device being commercialized. She made her pitch for the job and included her plan

of action, what kind of new business she’d be looking for, and how she’d measure her success. Her mentors, David Hale and Dan Burgess, offered her the position but only if she did it in addition to her current job. Burgess said he would manage her and watch what she was doing.

Female board participation also lags behind that of men. Nationwide, only 11 percent of board members for publicly traded companies are women. Christine White, M.D., who sits on the boards of Genoptix (run by a woman) and Arena Pharmaceuticals, thinks the statistic is a testament to the small number of women who were entering medicine, the sciences, and engineering 30 and 40 years ago. In the mid-1970s, White said that only 16 of the 104 people training in her medical school class were women. Not a lot of women had the background to move up into the role of biotech CEO. And since boards historically looked for their members among the CEO ranks, men dominated the director seats.

“Although I’d like to see more women

CEOs and on boards, I think there are more today than 10 years ago, and 10 years ago, there were more than 20 years ago,” she said.

White was head of clinical oncology at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center and Chairman of the Department of Medicine at Scripps. She made the switch from medicine to life sciences management when she was working as a clinician and researcher conducting clinical trials for Idec on its experimental new cancer drug, Rituxan. When the company was filing its application to have the drug approved, it asked White to come aboard.

“Rituxan was exciting, the company was local, and I believe change is good for the soul,” White recalled thinking. “And I was middle-aged, so I took a chance.”

After Rituxan was approved, Idec

was developing another oncology drug, Zevalin. When the company needed someone to head medical affairs, White took the job. After Idec merged with Biogen, she was chosen to head global medical affairs, which ultimately expanded to include oncology, neurology and dermatology.

Karin Eastham sits on five boards, including Illumina, Trius, Genoptix, Geron and Amylin. Her career in finance included stints as Vice President, Finance, at Boehringer Mannheim Corporation, Diversa, where she was chief financial officer, CombiChem, Inc., a computational chemistry company, Cytel Corporation, and the Sanford Burnham Medical Research Institute. She believes it’s difficult to find men or women with the proper qualifications and the time to devote to board service. And director positions

require much more work than before Sarbanes Oxley and other regulations were in place.

“With studies showing that having women on board improves returns to shareholders, boards are making concerted efforts to diversify their membership, Eastham said. Sarbanes Oxley really helped start getting that second level of C-level managers on boards, she said. “I feel our industry is pretty open to women in senior levels,” she said. And, she added, as more women join boards and are promoted to CEO slots, they’ll start to advocate for their own network.

Marcea Lloyd, Amylin’s Senior VP of Government and Corporate Affairs and General Counsel, said life science leaders need to be generalists with experience in many areas of the business. But that’s hard for so many



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Stephanie L. Seidman, Ph.D.
Registered Patent Attorney
Admitted in the District of Columbia only
stephanie.seidman@klgates.com
+1.858.509.7400

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Laura Shawver,
CEO, Phenomix

women because they tend to think of their career pathway as being linear, Lloyd said. Lloyd's career was anything but linear.

Lloyd, the first person in her family to attend college, said, "My ability to conceptualize what I might do was limited by the things that the people I knew did. When I was making my career decisions, I didn't have a clear role model or knowledge of how to get there. But I got there in an unsystematic way that was probably fueled by ambition, and by not knowing what wasn't possible."

The Northwestern University Law School alumna spent the first years of her career doing criminal trial work and anti-trust work for Pillsbury and Montgomery Ward & Co. Then she spent 21 years as acquisition counsel at Medtronic in Minneapolis. When the company acquired a new division, Lloyd became counsel for the division before moving on, finding another acquisition for the company.

Her next job was at VHA, a small Dallas-based company that was a purchasing group for non-profit hospitals. As with many small life science companies, workers at VHA weren't siloed based on education or

expertise because everyone must wear many hats, Lloyd said.

After raising six children, Lloyd thought about retirement. Then Amylin called. The company wanted her to help build its footprint to make it sustainable. The new position would allow her to use all the skills she had acquired and do something that means a lot to her personally - another important job goal.

When asked about the relative lack of diversity in the life sciences, Lloyd, one of the few African Americans working in the regional industry, pointed out that historically, consumer industries did better faster in hiring women and people of color. At her past employers Pillsbury and Montgomery Ward, the workforces reflected the demographics of their customers, she said. In the medical device industry, most of the people using Medtronic's devices were thoracic and cardiovascular surgeons, predominantly a white male group, she said.

Lloyd realizes that she may have gone further if she'd stayed in retail, but she's happy she spent the majority of her career in health care. "This industry recognizes innovation and creativity and is receptive to good ideas wherever they come from," she said. And that means opportunity for women, she added.

"If I wasn't working for Amylin, I wanted to work on health care disparities and develop therapies that truly affect patients, particularly those of color," said Lloyd. "I can't think of something more synchronized with me and what is important to me than Amylin. And I can't wait to get here in the morning."

Such passion is a signature trait of

effective female leaders, according to the women interviewed. Intelligence and the ability to lead a team, said Eastman, means making every member feel comfortable and capable of sharing their individual strengths. Being decisive, learning from mistakes, and communication skills are also essential, she said.

Never underestimate the value of networking, said Dana DiFerdinando, Senior Director of Information Technology at Arena Pharmaceuticals. Find networks in your company and outside, she said. Networking helps you figure out what your next move should be and where your passion could take you, she added.

Both she and Eastham said they thought it was important to be open about your career aspirations and talk about the future, even if it means eventually moving on to another company.

All of the women who spoke to LifeLines were affiliated with organizations related to their careers, as well as civic or patient advocacy groups. Such participation helps put your name on people's radar screens, said DiFerdinando. When she was working for SAIC, DiFerdinando pointed out, she was on BIOCOM's board of directors, which helped her learn about the life sciences industry and meet its leaders.

"Being on the BIOCOM board helped me network with other companies," DiFerdinando said. That's how she met Jack Lief, Arena Pharmaceuticals CEO.