



A celebration of female professionals

Tribute offers insight into careers of 45 honorees

The *Shelby Report of the Southeast* presents its 21st annual tribute to Women of Influence in the food industry. This year's slate of honorees – 45 strong – runs the gamut from presidents and VPs to managers, directors and supervisors.

They are among the leading executives in their respective fields, but their candid responses to questions from the Shelby team also reflect how they handle their other roles – as wives, mothers, sisters and even grandmothers.

Whether they've worked there decades or just a few months, these women

are making an impact at their companies. Some have MBAs or law degrees, while others are pursuing doctorates. Nearly all belong to professional associations and are active in their communities.

In the pages that follow, they share advice for up-and-coming professionals, as well as detail some of the challenges and rewards they've experienced along the way. In addition, you'll learn about the defining moments in their careers.

We found their responses refreshing and inspirational, and hope you will as well. Join us as we celebrate the 2026 Women of Influence.



Susan Abernathy Merchants Distributors (MDI)

Accounting Manager

Susan Abernathy provides the steady financial leadership that helps keep the wholesale operation at Merchants Distributors (MDI) running smoothly each day. Through her oversight of accounts receivable and

payable, she ensures the accuracy, timeliness and strong financial controls that support the company's ability to serve retailers across the network.

Abernathy brings a thoughtful and disciplined approach to her work, consistently delivering reliable results while managing complex financial processes with precision. Her leadership helps maintain the flow of transactions that support vendors, retailers and internal teams, ensuring the business operates efficiently and with accountability.

A long-tenured employee, Abernathy has built a reputation for professionalism, integrity and a calm, solutions-focused leadership style.

She leads her team with respect and clarity, creating an environment where challenges are addressed quickly and service expectations remain high.

Much of Abernathy's work takes place behind the scenes, yet the impact of her leadership is felt across the organization. Colleagues know they can depend on her steady presence, sound judgment and willingness to take ownership when challenges arise.

Through her reliability, financial expertise and commitment to supporting people and process, Abernathy continues to make a lasting contribution to the strength and stability of the wholesale business.



Ruth Bain Merchants Distributors (MDI)

Instructional Design and Employee Development Manager

Ruth Bain's impact on Merchants Distributors (MDI) is best seen in the strength, consistency and scalability of our leadership development efforts.

In her current role, she has played a key role in shaping programs that

build leadership capability across the organization and directly support operational excellence.

Bain has been instrumental in the design and delivery of enterprise programs such as Foundations of Leadership, Manager Accelerator Program and Accelerated Leadership Experience. These programs establish a common leadership language, clarify expectations for leaders at every level and equip managers with practical tools they can apply immediately on the job. Her work ensures that leadership development is not theoretical, but embedded into how teams lead, coach and perform every day.

Beyond individual programs, Bain brings structure and continuity to

MDI's broader talent strategy. She connects learning to business priorities, strengthens manager effectiveness and ensures programs are aligned, repeatable and sustainable as the organization grows. Her ability to translate complex organizational needs into clear, well-designed development experiences has elevated leadership readiness across departments.

Bain's influence extends through the leaders she has developed, the teams they lead and the culture they shape. Her steady leadership, strategic mindset and commitment to employee development have made a difference.



Lindsey Baron Bay Food Brokerage

Senior Account Executive

Lindsey Baron joined Bay Food Brokerage in March 2020 as an account executive. Last year, she advanced to her current role, a promotion earned through measurable impact and exceptional client service.

With more than a decade of experience in food sales and prior distribution experience, she brings deep industry knowledge and strategic insight to her work.

Focused on Publix, Baron consistently drives new account acquisition, expands brand presence and strengthens manufacturer-retailer partnerships. Her efforts have contributed to nearly 16 percent of Bay Food Brokerage's sales growth since she joined, underscoring her ability to translate strategy into tangible results.

Clients regularly praise her responsiveness, attention to detail and proactive communication, noting that she operates as a true extension of

their team.

Beyond performance metrics, Baron is a respected mentor within Bay Food, guiding newer team members to elevate the organization. She leads by example, fostering collaboration and professional growth.

Baron's influence also extends into the community. She volunteers with Feeding Tampa Bay, Metropolitan Ministries and A Kid's Place through company initiatives, supports a local dog shelter and is a member of the Specialty Food Association and the Publix GMR Florida Chapter.



Brittany Benton ECRS

Director of Strategic Initiatives

With more than seven years in the business, Brittany Benton is "all over" the independent grocery industry. She forges relationships with every person she

encounters and is known for her big smile, great laugh and ability to connect people together.

Over the past seven years, she has grown ECRS' Ignite Conference by hundreds of retailers, creating a retail technology event like none other.

In her current role, Benton can be found at many industry conferences, leading sessions on technology, hosting panels, meeting with wholesaler and association partners and driving new relationships and strategic partnerships for ECRS.

Outside of work, she calls the Blue Ridge Mountains home. She enjoys all sorts of outdoor adventures, caring for her dogs and spending time with her partner, Liam.



Taylor Berry

Titan Farms

Director of Packing and Food Safety

Taylor Berry leads Titan Farms' packhouse operations with exceptional skill and dedication. She oversees a team of about 200 packhouse employees, as well as the maintenance, shipping, food safety and sustainability teams.

Berry holds numerous professional certifications, including HACCP, Produce Safety Rule Training and SQF Practitioner. A graduate of the United Fresh Produce Safety Immersion Program, she also has completed extensive food safety and crisis management training and is an alumna of Leadership South Carolina.

Over her eight years with Titan Farms, Berry has consistently demonstrated deep expertise and a strong commitment to advancing food safety and sustainability. Most recently, she played a pivotal role in developing and releasing Titan's first sustainability report, an important

milestone for the organization.

Berry's passion for people truly sets her apart. She leads with enthusiasm, compassion and a genuine commitment to supporting her team. Her ability to empower others and foster a high performing, positive environment is evident to everyone who works with her.



Misty Bryant

Houchens Food Group

Director of Retail Operations

Misty Bryant has enjoyed exceptional success in the grocery industry through her significant contributions to Houchens Food Group's operations team. After moving from merchandising support to operations, she brought

valuable firsthand knowledge of merchandising and pricing to our stores' daily operations.

Under her leadership, Bryant has made a significant impact on HFG's efforts to reduce shrinkage. Her collaborative leadership style and ability to mentor peers and leaders have strengthened operational execution across the organization.

In preparation for her promotion to her current role for HFG's cost-plus format stores, she immersed herself in store operations, spending one-on-one time in a local store to learn every role within the operation.

Today, Bryant oversees six regional managers responsible for 70 stores. What truly sets her apart is her dedication to ongoing growth and community involvement. She is part of the Leadership Bowling Green Class of 2026, a program in partnership with the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce that fosters civic engagement and leadership. Through this program, she continues to explore, connect and give back to the community.

Bryant exemplifies the best of the industry. The influence she has had on the operations team in such a short period underscores her dedication, leadership and motivation.



Lindsay Capozziello

Harris Teeter

Senior Director of Health and Wellness

Lindsay Capozziello's influence, vision and dedication make her a standout in the grocery and health industry.

In her current role, she leads a team driving a critical part of Harris Teeter's grocery and retail business.

She consistently pushes for pharmacy growth, improves processes for internal associates and customers and ensures a seamless experience in accessing medicine and healthcare.

Capozziello pivots quickly to changing guidelines and adapts strategies to meet evolving customer needs, demonstrating agility and innovation.

Her combination of pharmacy expertise, operational leadership and

business insight enables her to develop her team, enhance performance and improve customer outcomes across the organization and the industry.



Jordan Carter

Leger & Son

VP of Sales and Marketing

A dynamic leader and dedicated advocate for the produce industry, Jordan Carter's impact spans business performance, industry leadership and community engagement. In her current role, she has driven growth and strengthened customer relationships through strategic marketing, market

analysis and a deep understanding of the watermelon category.

Rising quickly through the organization – from logistics to leading sales and marketing – she exemplifies results-oriented leadership and a commitment to excellence.

Carter's influence extends far beyond her company. She made history as the first female president of the National Watermelon Promotion Board, serving six years and helping guide national marketing and research efforts for the industry.

Today, she continues to break barriers as just the second female president in the 111-year history of the National Watermelon Association,

where she also contributes through leadership roles on key committees.

A passionate supporter of developing future leaders, Carter helped launch the first Women's Committee for the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and remains engaged across multiple industry boards and advisory groups. Her leadership is grounded in authenticity, purpose and a genuine commitment to agriculture.

Carter represents the very best of the industry – innovative, collaborative and dedicated to strengthening the future of food.



CONGRATULATIONS
to our 2026 Woman of Influence!



Monica Rolon
Regional Sales
Development Manager



Deb Pasternack
Senior Director,
Category Management Lead



Amy Bergeron
Sales Development Manager



Sarah Sheaffer
Sales Development Manager



Jennifer Falzon
HR Manager



Teri-Anne Colurciello
Senior Director of
Business Intelligence



STRONG LEADERS. REAL IMPACT.



KATIE PENNY
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
OF STORE OPERATIONS
KNOXVILLE DIVISION



MISTY DESKINS
SENIOR DIRECTOR
OF MARKETING



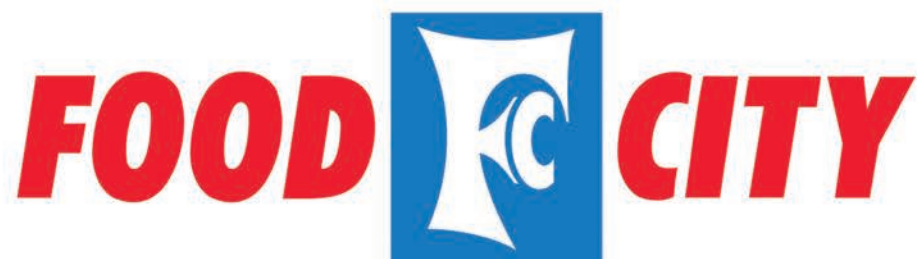
HANNAH SMITH
DIRECTOR OF FRONT
END OPERATIONS



MISTY KERN
DIRECTOR OF TRAINING

INFLUENCE THAT MOVES GROCERY FORWARD.

Every day.





Shannon Clark

Houchens Food Group

Senior Director of Marketing and Communications

Shannon Clark oversees marketing strategies for 400 locations in 15 states, with a focus on grocery, quick-service restaurants and Ace Hardware stores.

Under her leadership, Houchens Food Group streamlined its digital

ecosystem by consolidating multiple platforms into a unified system, improving operational efficiency and enhancing the customer experience.

Clark led the launch of digital incentives and loyalty programs through partnerships with e-commerce vendors, creating a consistent, scalable approach across multiple brands.

She excels at translating strategy into practical solutions that strengthen marketing performance while making programs easier for stores to execute. Her collaboration with store teams and focus on the customer perspective ensures that marketing initiatives translate to the store level and help

Houchens remain competitive in an evolving grocery landscape.

Clark also led the “Add Milk!” campaign in partnership with Auburn University’s Hunger Solutions Institute as part of the Healthy Fluid Milk Incentive program. This initiative enables SNAP participants to buy discounted milk at Houchens’ stores, helping families stretch their grocery budgets while increasing access to nutritious dairy products.

Through her leadership, innovation and commitment to community impact, Clark represents the very best of the grocery industry.



Jan Concannon

Harris Teeter

Director of the Project Management Center of Excellence

Jan Concannon leads the strategy, structure and continuous advancement of project management practices across the Harris Teeter organization. As a respected professional woman in leadership, she brings strength, credibility and a collaborative

mindset to her role, serving as both a strategic driver and a role model for excellence.

Concannon defines and champions a clear vision for project management excellence, ensuring strong alignment between enterprise strategy and project execution. She is responsible for establishing and standardizing methodologies, governance frameworks, tools and templates that create consistency, accountability and transparency across initiatives.

Passionate about developing others, Concannon focuses on building organizational capability by mentoring and coaching project leaders, identifying competency gaps and elevating overall project performance.

She also oversees resource and portfolio management to ensure effective prioritization and execution across complex initiatives.

Through a strong commitment to continuous improvement, performance optimization and best-practice sharing, Concannon drives measurable results while fostering an environment of professionalism, empowerment and high performance.

Beyond her formal leadership responsibilities, she is involved in the THRIVE Resource Group at Harris Teeter, which is dedicated to fostering an inclusive workplace where all associates feel valued.



Anna Cook

Merchants Distributors (MDI)

Buyers Administrative Assistant

Anna Cook represents the type of service-focused leadership that strengthens relationships across the independent grocery community. Through her work at

Merchants Distributors (MDI), she consistently demonstrates a commitment to putting customers at the center of every decision and interaction.

Cook approaches her role with a strong service mindset, focused on practical solutions that support both internal partners and the independent retailers MDI serves. She has built trusted relationships with key customers and her ability to anticipate needs and respond quickly helps reinforce strong partnerships with retailers.

Cook also plays an active role in identifying and resolving issues that

affect operational efficiency and company profitability. She approaches challenges with a sense of ownership and collaborates with teams across departments and external partners to ensure the best outcome for both customers and the business.

Through her service-driven approach, collaborative spirit and dedication to the values that guide the organization, Cook continues to make an impact on her team and the retailers MDI serves.



Henley Coulter

Advantage Solutions

EVP Client Experience for Branded Services

Before being promoted to her current role in 2026, Henley Coulter served as head of business development for Advantage Solutions’ manufacturer-focused branded services – a portfolio spanning HQ sales, retail

merchandising, order to cash, supply chain, AMP Agency and experiential services – while simultaneously overseeing corporate marketing for the entire enterprise.

Managing a 15-person team and reporting to the chief growth officer, Coulter’s impact in 2025 was most powerfully demonstrated through her “New Business is Everyone’s Business” campaign. She restructured the dedicated business development team, built a centralized one-best-way process and equipped teams across the organization with selling tools and training to confidently cross-sell services.

The results speak for themselves: 40 percent year-over-year growth and a 25 percent increase in net new business wins for Advantage Solutions.

Beyond her commercial achievements, Coulter is a connector and culture builder. She is a member of Advantage’s Belonging & Impact Council and participates in two ERGs – WIN, supporting women in the workplace; and PRISM, supporting the LGBTQIA+ community.

She mentors graduates through the READY rotational program and chairs the curriculum for the Ambassador high-potential talent program.



Misty Bryant

Director of Retail Operations



Shannon Clark

Senior Director of Marketing & Communications



Candace Henderson

Merchandising & Operations Support Manager



Courtney Meador

VP of Human Resources



Houchens Food Group proudly congratulates our winners of the **2026 Women of Influence** in the Food Industry award.





Deb Allison
Store Manager



Farah Lavigne
Store Manager



Justine Meader
Store Manager



Brittany Vogel
Store Manager

Congratulations to Deb,
Farah, Justine, and Brittany
for being recognized as
2026 Women of Influence.

*Thank you from all your Hannaford
colleagues.*

*Your commitment to our customers
and our associates serves as a model
and an inspiration to everyone at
Hannaford.*





Rhonda DeMello

Harris Teeter

VP Operations Support

Rhonda DeMello is a leader whose career exemplifies excellence, dedication and a relentless focus on people and customer experience. In her

current role, she oversees support of operations for more than 250 stores and 85-plus fuel centers.

In this role, she recently led teams through back-to-back snowstorms, ensuring uninterrupted service and safety, while continuing to push for operational excellence and superior customer service.

DeMello is proactive in developing her teams, fostering continuous improvement and ensuring associates grow stronger every day.

Her influence extends beyond the workplace. She has served on the

board of directors for USO North Carolina and is a volunteer and fundraiser for St. Jude Research Hospital. She also supports ALS and Breast Cancer research initiatives.



Misty Deskins

K-VA-T Food Stores, dba Food City

Senior Director of Marketing

Misty Deskins joined the Food City team in 2003, serving as operations clerk for the corporate headquarters while attending college full time. She has since served in a number of key roles, including director of loyalty

marketing, e-commerce and outside sales.

Deskins was promoted to her current role in 2025. She is responsible for the oversight of all aspects of marketing, including traditional and creative advertising, sports marketing, loyalty marketing and special events, as well as e-commerce and gift card/certificate outside sales.

Deskins serves on the board of directors for Feeding Southwest Virginia. She also is responsible for Food City's community relations, which provide support for numerous nonprofits, including Food City's School Bucks Program, which has donated more than \$23.7 million to participating

schools; and its annual Charity Golf Tournament, which has raised more than \$19.3 million.

Deskins has been recognized as one of *Tri-Cities Business Journal's* 40 under 40. She is a graduate of The University of Virginia's College at Wise, with a bachelor's degree in business administration and a minor in psychology. She has certifications from Cornell University in retail and brands, executive leadership and omnichannel leadership.



Geri Downing

Harris Teeter

Front End Associate

Geri Downing consistently demonstrates what it means to lead with passion for her work, her team and the customers she serves each day. In her current role, her commitment goes far beyond completing tasks; she builds connections,

fosters trust and ensures every customer feels valued when they walk through the doors.

Downing sets the standard for excellence. Her positive attitude, strong work ethic and compassion inspire those around her to take pride in their roles. She leads not by title but by action, showing up each day with integrity, energy and a heart for service.

Customers shop this store just to see Downing, and she puts a smile on everyone's face, creating an experience that keeps them coming back.

Downing has been recognized multiple times as Associate of the Month,

reflecting her consistent performance and dedication. In the past three years, she was voted Service Hero of the Year twice by peers and customers, a testament to her impact.

Most notably, when she won in 2025, she selflessly passed the recognition to another associate, embodying our "With You and For You" philosophy and her team-first mindset.

At the Rea Farms Harris Teeter, Downing makes community happen and is a true Woman of Influence.



Meghan Edwards

SellEthics Marketing Group

Director of Analytics and Insights

Meghan Edwards leads a high-performing team of 11 analysts, fostering an environment where precision, collaboration and accountability thrive. She sets an exceptional standard for analytical rigor and operational excellence, ensuring data-driven insights are accurate and actionable. Her attention to

detail and commitment to quality have made her a trusted leader.

Beyond her technical expertise, Edwards is known for her strong ethical compass. She approaches every challenge with integrity and transparency, ensuring analytics deliver results in a way that reflects SellEthics' values. Her leadership has helped cultivate a culture where doing the right thing is just as important as doing things well.

Edwards also brings a strong work ethic and resilience to her role.

In high-pressure situations, she remains calm, solutions-focused and determined to move work forward. Her "can-do" mindset inspires those around her and helps her team tackle complex problems with confidence

and creativity.

What truly sets Edwards apart is her humility and hands-on approach. She believes no task is beneath her and is always willing to step in to support her team. This leadership style strengthens team performance while fostering deep respect and trust.

Through her dedication, integrity and commitment to empowering others, Edwards' leadership has made an impact across the organization.

a toast to you & your success

Congratulations to our partner, Beth McGough of Giant Eagle, on being named a 2026 Women of Influence Award recipient.

Proud Partners in Deli



PREMIUM MEATS | ARTISAN CHEESES





WE ARE PROUD TO HONOR OUR 2026

Women of Influence



SYDNEY RUGGIERI



EMMY HUME





Sarah Frey

Frey Farms

Founder and CEO

Sarah Frey oversees the diverse operations of the Frey family of companies, including land acquisition, regenerative agriculture initiatives, raw ingredient manufacturing and a fully integrated beverage business.

Headquartered in South Florida and spanning seven states, Frey Farms

is a leading U.S. grower, shipper and marketer of fresh fruits and vegetables. It is perhaps best known as America's largest producer of fresh watermelons and pumpkins.

As a teenager, Frey expanded her mother's summer produce delivery route from 12 independent grocery stores to more than 150, saving her family's struggling small farm. At age 19, her negotiations with Walmart secured fresh produce contracts and were a turning point that led to expansive growth into national retail. Her business negotiation strategies became the subject of a Harvard Business case study.

Frey's four older brothers returned to the farm and joined her in growing

the business. Today, the family feeds America 200 million servings of fresh produce a year.

Frey serves on the board of FMI – The Food Industry Association. As one of the most influential women in agriculture, she also serves in bipartisan advisory roles for multiple members of the U.S. Congress.

Frey is a skilled and persuasive communicator who has provided congressional testimony on key issues affecting the U.S. food supply, including the ag guest worker program reform.



Lucy Gibbons

Lowes Foods

Store Director

Lucy Gibbons improved the profitability of her store in 2025 by leading her team to have a sales-driven focus. She collaborated with her business

partners to ensure the right items were selected across the departments for maximum benefit to the bottom line.

Along the way, she developed two new department managers – one in deli and the other in the Beef Shoppe – by setting clear expectations, following up and coaching.

Gibbons has been a Girl Scout leader since 2008 and is currently mentoring two troops. She also has been the head volunteer for the Mooresville, North Carolina, area since 2013.



Tracey Gregorski

Piggly Wiggly Alabama Distributing Co.

Manager of IBM Programming

Tracey Gregorski's primary responsibilities center on Piggly Wiggly's core business systems, the foundation that drives enterprise data, operations and transaction processing.

Gregorski leads the information technology core applications development team, overseeing the design, development and delivery of critical enterprise solutions. She's responsible for mentoring and developing software engineers while ensuring strict adherence to development, testing and quality standards.

She also established and governs core system design principles, external integration frameworks, security and compliance requirements and data and

business intelligence integration practices.

Gregorski leads her team with a focus on building high-performing talent, strengthening internal delivery processes and translating technical execution into actionable business insights for executive leadership. Her influence spans team capability growth, operational efficiency and data-driven decision support across the organization.

She promotes the growth and effectiveness of the team through coaching, skill development and process improvement, while ensuring technology initiatives deliver clear business insight to organizational leaders. She also has implemented new technology solutions and innovative development methodologies.

Gregorski established a disciplined execution framework and strategic delivery approach that produced measurable business impact across core grocery operations. She spearheaded the development of internal analytics and reporting capabilities, equipping executive leadership with actionable business intelligence that directly informed strategic and operational

decision-making.

In addition, she led a comprehensive internal IT security review and implemented proactive controls and best practices to strengthen system security, reduce risk and ensure compliance across critical business platforms.

Outside of work, Gregorski is the co-founder of Free State Four Paws low-cost animal spay and neuter program, a nonprofit dog-rescue organization that serves one of the most underserved rural counties in Alabama. Since its inception in 2024, its low-cost spay and neuter program has helped more than 750 pets, reducing overpopulation and improving animal welfare in the community.

Entirely volunteer-run, Free State Four Paws focuses on rescuing the most neglected and abused dogs, providing medical care, rehabilitation and nurturing them back to health. Once recovered, they are transported to northern states, where they are placed in permanent, loving homes.

The Women Moving the Industry Forward

Congratulations to C.A. Fortune's Women of Influence who are recognized for leadership, impact, and raising the bar across our business and beyond.



Darla Deiro
Director,
Conventional
Sales

Alex Hickey
VP, Natural
Strategic
Partnerships

Caitlyn Koriakos
Sr. Director,
Sales Ops

Barb McGlothlin
VP,
E-Commerce

Nicole Teeters
SVP, Strategy,
SRW | C.A.

Nery Vazquez
SVP,
DTH | C.A.

Kate Weidner
Chief Creative
Officer,
SRW | C.A.

Let's build what's next.

CAFORTUNE.COM

THE
Campbell's
COMPANY

CELEBRATING THE
**2026 Women of Influence
Award Winners**



Rachel Bower

Vice President, Category Leadership
& Category Strategy,
Meals & Beverages



Melissa Bucklaw

Vice President,
Sales Execution & Planning



Angie Smith

Head of Commerce
Marketing, Snacks



Sydney Gaston

Customer Vice President,
National Grocery, Meals & Beverages



Kristen Wilson

Customer Vice President,
West Regionals, Snacks



Kim Gustina
Empire Marketing Strategies
Business Development Manager

Kim Gustina stands out for her leadership and 30-plus years of specialized industry experience. In her current role, she serves as a vital link between major

food brands and the retail market, specifically managing sales for Harris Teeter.

Gustina expertly represents a diverse portfolio of 25 clients, ensuring their products achieve maximum visibility and distribution within one of the region's most respected retailers.

With more than 25 years focused on perishable categories, she possesses deep technical knowledge of the meat, seafood, deli, bakery and produce departments.

Gustina is responsible for driving growth across all perishable departments at Harris Teeter, leveraging her expertise in category insights and retail execution to optimize product placement and sales performance.

A native of the Charlotte, North Carolina, area, Gustina is an advocate for her community, specifically supporting the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Charlotte.



Constance Hammond
Lowes Foods Stores
Retail Safety and Casualty Claims Manager

Constance Hammond provides steady and confident leadership in the area of safety and claims administration for retail operations support. She ensures that retail stores are compliant with all regulatory requirements and

overseeing all aspects of safety training and program execution is her major objective.

Hammond oversees a best-in-class retail safety program while also serving as a TPA liaison to ensure any accident claims are properly and promptly administered to control expense.

She volunteers in her community at homeless shelters through her church outreach ministry and has been a board member of a local animal rescue organization. She also is a foster dog mom.



Melissa Harrington
Food Lion
VP, Finance

Melissa Harrington is a results-focused finance executive whose leadership has helped drive growth, stability and purpose at Food Lion. In her current role,

she provides strategic oversight for budgeting, forecasting and financial reporting for more than 1,110 stores across a 10-state footprint, supporting an omnichannel business serving some 11 million customers each week.

Harrington played a key role in helping Food Lion achieve its 53rd consecutive quarter of comparable store sales growth. Her disciplined financial planning supported major strategic investments, including a \$484 million omnichannel remodel initiative in the Charlotte, North Carolina, metro area and the expansion of Food Lion To Go, the company's proprietary

e-commerce platform.

She also partnered with the marketing team to optimize Food Lion's MVP Customer Loyalty Program and Shop & Earn rewards and more than 1 million engaged Shop & Earn customers.

Harrington supports Food Lion's commitment to community impact. In 2025, Food Lion Feeds achieved a goal set in 2019 – providing 1 billion additional meals to neighbors in need. This effort was supported by the Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation, for which Harrington serves as treasurer.



Candace Henderson
Houchens Food Group
Merchandising and Operations Support Manager

Candace Henderson will celebrate her 20th anniversary with Houchens Food Group in July. She began her career after high school as an administrative assistant and quickly stood out through her initiative and dedication to learning every role within the office.

Within two years, she was attending trade shows and supporting promotional and buying activities, beginning a career that would expand across multiple divisions and support the broader food group.

Today, Henderson plays a key role in connecting store operations, merchandising strategy and regional leadership. She has helped streamline processes between regions, including sales reporting, advertising coordination, promotional planning and store communication.

Known for her collaborative leadership style, she often serves as a bridge between store teams, regional leaders and support departments, translating store-level insights into practical strategies that improve efficiency

and execution.

A strong advocate for servant leadership, Henderson regularly spends time working alongside associates and managers in stores to better understand operational needs. In 2022, she assumed responsibility for managing the company's supply category, where her leadership has helped reduce costs year over year, resulting in nearly \$9 million in annual savings.

She also supports community partnerships and fundraising initiatives benefiting organizations such as Children's of Alabama.

We're So Proud



Celebrating Our Women of Influence



Michelle Bernard
 Business Account Manager
 Crossmark



Britney Ekerson
 Customer Business Manager
 Crossmark



Claudia Keyes
 SVP, Operational Excellence
 Acosta



Tina Kubala
 SVP
 Acosta



Maura Levis
 VP, Northeast
 Acosta



Rebekah Steward
 VP, Business Intelligence
 Acosta





We're proud to celebrate Schraad's Women of Influence and all of the 2026 honorees.



NELLIE CARLSON
Senior Director of Retail Strategy



KACY SPRINGER
Creative Development Project Manager



CASEY MARTIN
Senior Client & Customer Support Analyst



EMILEE ALBRIGHT
Category Insights Manager



LISA LAM
Retail & Data Systems Specialist



NICKI ZUBER
Business Development Manager

Congratulations!



Tabitha Henry
Gourmet Foods International

VP of Kroger Sales

Since joining Gourmet Foods International in 2009, Tabitha Henry has become a cornerstone of the company's leadership team. She has spent more than

a decade cultivating one of GFI's most significant retail partnerships, with a focus on innovation and collaborative success.

A veteran of the specialty food industry, Henry is recognized by her peers for her visionary leadership and her ability to navigate the complexities of large-scale retail distribution.

One of the most powerful aspects of that leadership is her dedication to developing the next generation of professionals. Through coaching and hands-on development opportunities, she prepares emerging talent to step

into larger roles with confidence and competence.

A resident of Atlanta, she finds her greatest inspiration at home with her husband, their daughter and three cats.



Elizabeth Hinson
C.A. Fortune

VP, Sales

Elizabeth Hinson consistently delivers results-driven growth while elevating the performance and potential of those around her.

Her strategic leadership has strengthened retailer partnerships throughout the Southeast, where her deep connectivity and credibility with

key accounts have expanded distribution, accelerated brand velocity and driven measurable revenue gains for both emerging and established brands.

Hinson combines sharp commercial acumen with an authentic, people-first leadership style. She builds high-performing teams rooted in accountability, mentorship and collaboration, empowering her sales organization to think strategically and execute flawlessly. Her ability to align retailers, brands and internal stakeholders around shared goals has made her a trusted partner across the industry.

Beyond performance metrics, Hinson is known for cultivating industry relationships that extend far beyond transactions. She supports brand

founders, champions innovation and contributes to a culture of partnership that strengthens the broader food ecosystem. Her influence is reflected not only in sales results, but in the confidence, careers and connections she helps shape.



Karin Humanik
Harris Teeter

Senior Director of Produce Merchandising

Karin Humanik joined Harris Teeter in 1998 as a category manager and worked her way up to her current position. In this role, she organizes and controls an assigned group of categories to optimize profit and meet

marketing, financial and corporate growth objectives.

Humanik aids senior staff in formulating and administering top-level organization plans to support and ensure the success of these initiatives. She leads her team as they question every aspect of the produce department to bring forward ideas and opportunities to make improvements that will resonate with customers and deliver the freshest product in the market.

Humanik leads the End to End Produce Initiative, which is centered on improving the quality of product procured, delivered and sold in-store to be the freshest in the market. The Initiative also focuses on improving the

quality of overall shopping experience, point of differentiation and value for produce as rated by our customers.

Humanik sits on the Harris Teeter Women's Empowerment Group Committee, the International Fresh Produce Association Retail Council and is president of her local Homeowner's Association Board.

She has coordinated and sponsored "In the Cup for Iris- Putting Contest", part of the Sandra Ray Invitational golf fundraiser to support the fight against Alzheimer's.



Jamila Jackson
Harris Teeter

Director of Replenishment

Jamila Jackson is a results-driven leader who consistently delivers strong execution against key merchandising and operational metrics, demonstrating reliability, accountability and a disciplined leadership style.

She drives follow-through on priorities and ensures teams deliver on expectations across multiple initiatives. Her ability to translate strategy into action strengthens performance, supports alignment and reinforces a culture of ownership.

Beyond operational excellence, Jackson helps shape culture and engagement. She serves as co-chair of the Women's Empowerment Group and is a member of the Harris Teeter CORE Team, contributing to associate development, inclusion and community connection.

She leads by example, invests in others' growth and fosters an

environment where associates feel supported and empowered to succeed.

Jackson's impact extends beyond the workplace. She volunteers with the School Improvement Team at Butler High School, served as director of Dream Academy and supported after-school programs and tutoring through Prosper U.

She also participates in Harris Teeter volunteer events, reinforcing the company's commitment to service.



Mary Kellmanson
Merchants Distributors (MDI)

SVP of Marketing

Mary Kellmanson plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of marketing support for independent grocers. Through her leadership at Merchants Distributors, she continues to advance the marketing capabilities that support hundreds of independent retailers across the MDI network.

Kellmanson has helped guide the evolution of how marketing supports retailers in a rapidly changing digital landscape. Her focus is on building solutions that are innovative and practical, ensuring independent grocers have access to tools that strengthen shopper engagement while driving results inside the store.

Working with technology partners and internal teams, Kellmanson has helped expand the digital toolkit available to retailers, including enhanced website and digital circular capabilities that allow stores to maintain a modern digital presence while integrating with existing e-commerce platforms where needed. These capabilities serve as a powerful engine for

connecting retailers with shoppers and translating engagement into store performance.

Known for her strategic perspective and steady leadership style, Kellmanson works with teams across merchandising, operations and technology to ensure marketing efforts align with the needs of the business and the retailers MDI serves.

Through her leadership, she continues to strengthen the marketing ecosystem that supports independent grocers and helps them remain competitive in an evolving grocery environment.



Misty Kern
K-VA-T Food Stores, dba Food City

Director of Training

Misty Kern is a respected leader whose influence is felt across the company and the communities it serves. She began her career on the front-end and advanced through store management before assuming responsibility for oversight of training and food safety operations for Food City's 164 retail

locations and distribution center.

Kern has led leadership and food safety training for hundreds of associates, streamlined learning through more than 70 updated courses and helped ensure company-wide SafeMark Food Protection certification. She strengthened training initiatives by expanding internship programs, adding instructional design expertise and establishing a university partnership providing tuition discounts for associates and their families.

Kern serves on NGA's Women Grocers of America Board, Eastman Chemical's Community Advisory Board, State of Tennessee's Solid Waste Advisory Board and Radford University's Employer Advisory Board,

contributing insight on workforce development, sustainability and community collaboration.

She is a founding member of Food City's EMPOWER women's group and sponsors the company's Eco/Sustainability Committee. Her initiatives have reduced single-use plastic, lowered costs and encouraged community recycling.

Kern also gives back through Habitat for Humanity and the CSX Santa Train. A recipient of the Claude Varney Volunteerism Award, she leads with purpose, integrity and measurable impact.



Claudia Keyes
Acosta Group

SVP, Operational Excellence – Acosta Sales Agency

Claudia Keyes led several enterprise wide initiatives from February 2025 to February 2026 that advanced Acosta Sales' operational capability, strengthened sales enablement and delivered measurable financial impact. She executed key priorities of The Acosta Way strategy, influencing

how more than 1,300 sales and business intelligence associates operate and develop. Her work elevated talent development, operational consistency and data fluency through initiatives such as SuccessFactors talent assessments, The Acosta Way Development Guide, data fluency and storytelling training, an integrated business planning framework, collaborative value creation for priority clients, career pathing guides and a standardized Business Manager Onboarding Guide.

Keyes also played a critical role in the order to cash transformation, partnering with sales and commercial leaders to define strategy, escalate systemic issues and stabilize operations post deployment to ensure business

continuity and field adoption.

Her financial governance efforts delivered tangible results. She enhanced the monthly No Pay Report process and launched a PowerBI dashboard that helped recover more than \$1 million in 120 days. She also led a refined monthly financial management process with sales and operations finance, improving forecasting accuracy, ownership and KPI visibility across multiple channels.

Across all initiatives, Keyes is focused on sustainable change and stronger performance outcomes.



Tina Kubala
Acosta Group

Senior VP

Tina Kubala delivered a transformative impact over the past year, strengthening client partnerships, accelerating financial performance and elevating the culture and capabilities of the grocery and military divisions. She exceeded

all major client KPIs, surpassing sales objectives by more than \$50 million and capturing 100 percent of available bonus incentives.

Through insight led joint business plans, Kubala drove sustainable category share growth and ensured precise execution at key retail moments. A defining achievement was protecting and expanding the P&G partnership.

She launched four new customer teams, representing more than \$200 million in annual sales and hired and onboarded incremental associates without disruption. She also negotiated a margin accretive contract structure that doubled Acosta's bonus opportunity, strengthening the financial model.

In the military channel, her team earned the Coke Main Street Cup Award for superior execution and consistent KPI delivery. Retailers under her leadership outperformed national benchmarks and categories gained share due to disciplined execution and a strong focus on in-store excellence.

Kubala also advanced culture and talent by fostering an inclusive, transparent environment, encouraging healthy debate and embedding a talent obsessed mindset. She elevated team members with deeper industry expertise during transitions, improving client satisfaction and organizational capability.

50
YEARS 

**LEADING WHAT'S NEXT
POWERED BY WOMEN OF INFLUENCE**

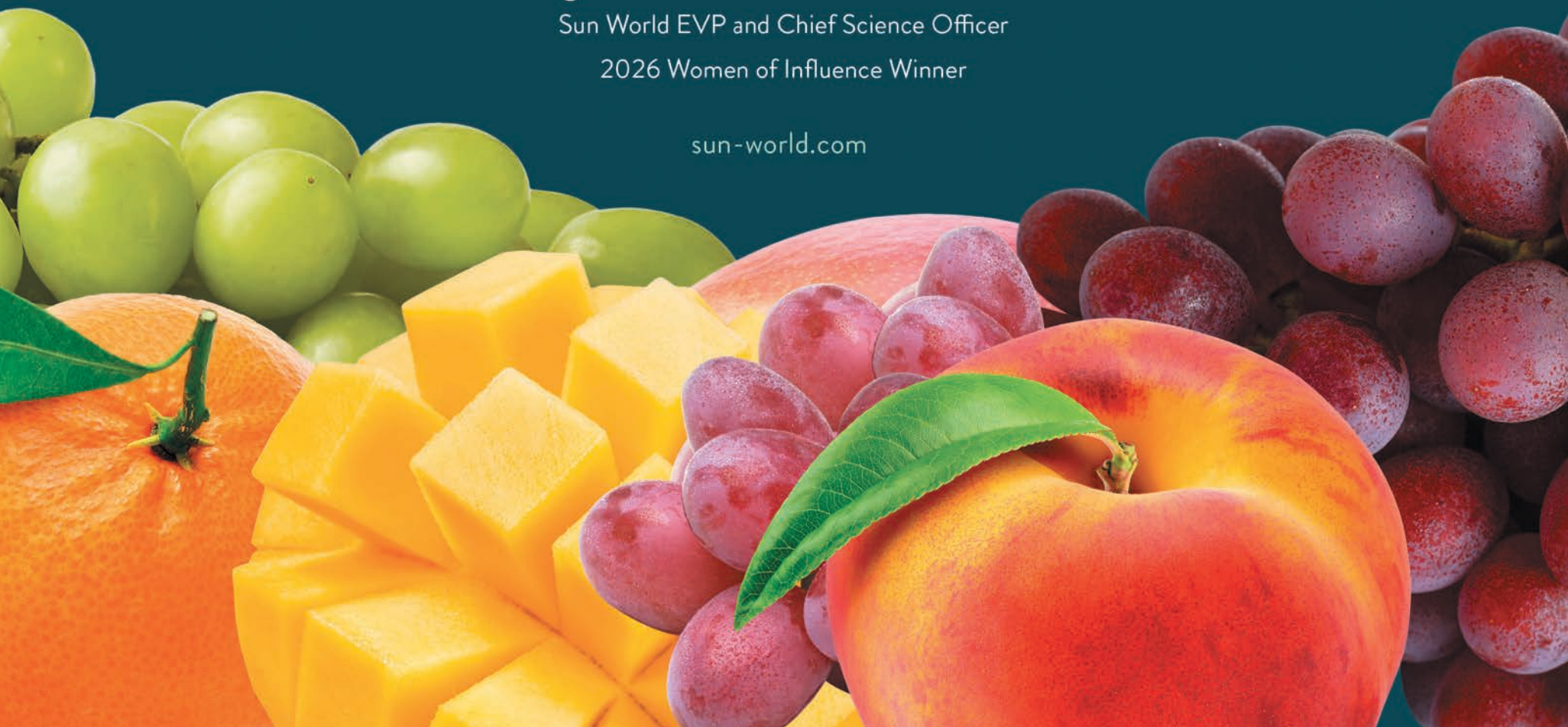


Congratulations Jennifer Petersen

Sun World EVP and Chief Science Officer

2026 Women of Influence Winner

sun-world.com





Hye Suk Makley
Toshiba Global Commerce Solutions

Mechanical Engineer III

Hye Suk Makley exemplifies the powerful impact of results-driven leadership paired with deep personal integrity. As an innovator, she consistently elevates operational performance while empowering teams.

Known for her disciplined, analytical approach, Makley delivers

measurable outcomes that streamline processes, strengthen cross-functional collaboration and drive initiatives that directly improve customer experience, product quality and organizational efficiency.

Her leadership philosophy is rooted in clarity, empathy and accountability, creating an environment where teams feel supported and challenged to excel. This is especially evident in her work on self-checkout systems, where she optimizes end-to-end operational workflows to improve speed, reliability and user experience. She is pivotal in shaping solutions that reduce friction for customers while lowering operational overhead for store teams.

Makley's deep technical expertise and problem-solving mindset earned her the title of Toshiba Master Inventor, with eight issued patents in the retail and food industry space. She is sought after to solve tough engineering problems that top food retailers face on a daily basis, working across teams and disciplines to develop solutions that drive measurable, enterprise-wide impact.

Her ability to mentor emerging talent, develop high-performing teams and foster inclusive dialogue has earned her the respect of colleagues and partners at all levels.



Sarah Matejowsky
Sunkist Growers

Senior Director of Sales

Sarah Matejowsky has dedicated more than 30 years to Sunkist, and her recent promotion is a testament to her exceptional leadership and vision.

In her new role, she leads the company's East Coast sales efforts, bringing strategic clarity, operational excellence and unwavering customer focus to an industry that grows more complex every year.

Matejowsky's ability to guide her team through change, foster collaboration and develop winning strategies has elevated the organization and the people who work alongside her. Her deep commitment to citrus growers fuels her passion and her extraordinary work ethic. Simply put, she does not quit; she sets the standard.

Sunkist is grateful for Matejowsky's decades of service, influence across the industry and the inspiration she brings to everyone she leads. Her impact is lasting, meaningful and worthy of recognition.



Sherry McBride
Lowes Food Stores

Asset Protection Specialist

Sherry McBride provides steady and confident leadership in the area of financial card, e-commerce and front porch fraud and process execution for retail

operations support.

Ensuring retail stores are compliant with all regulatory requirements and overseeing operation support for all aspects of point of sale technology and processes are her major objectives.

McBride oversees a best-in-class retail front porch fraud prevention program and serves as an important liaison to POS IT support to ensure front porch systems are correctly programmed and guest interaction is frictionless.

McBride recently was recognized by the North Carolina Association

of Homicide Investigators for her work on identifying and testifying to POS transactions that became evidence in a murder case. In her free time, she volunteers in the community through the Relay for Life cancer research organization and has been a board member overseeing various fundraising activities for cancer research.



Courtney Meador
Houchens Food Group

VP of Human Resources

Courtney Meador exemplifies principled, visionary leadership in her department at Houchens Food Group. Serving more than 12,000 employees

across 15 states, she provides strategic oversight for all human resources functions supporting four retail formats, a distribution warehouse and the

corporate office.

Meador's leadership reflects operational excellence and a deep commitment to people. She spearheads enterprise-wide talent acquisition and retention strategies, shapes organizational culture and champions employee engagement initiatives that strengthen the company's ability to attract and develop top talent.

Meador also oversees payroll, compliance, employee relations, workers' compensation and crisis response efforts, ensuring consistent, fair and effective workforce practices across a complex, multi-location organization.

Between March 1, 2024-Feb. 28, 2025, she led a transformative culture

initiative anchored in the "One Mission and 5 Rules" framework. She authored the company's new mission statement – "Proudly empowering employee-owners, serving customers and supporting communities" – creating a unifying foundation for accountability and engagement.

Through executive collaboration, enterprise-wide training and innovative communication strategies, Meador ensured the initiative was fully embedded into daily operations. She also launched Houchens Food Group University, a scalable online learning platform that streamlined onboarding.

Sunkist
FARMER OWNED SINCE 1893

**CONGRATULATING
SARAH MATEJOWSKY
ON THE WOMEN OF
INFLUENCE AWARD**

Your dedication sets the standard for excellence.
Thank you for leading with passion, purpose, and unstoppable drive.

21st ANNUAL
Women of Influence
in the food industry

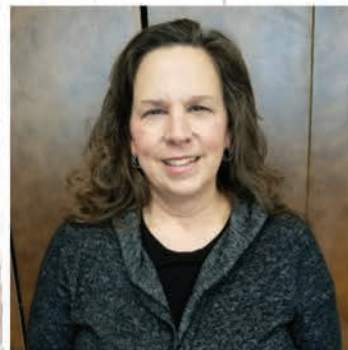
Sunkist is a registered trademark of Sunkist Growers, LLC.
©2026. Produce of U.S.A. All Rights Reserved.



PROUDLY CONGRATULATES OUR
Women of Influence in Food
== 2026 ==



Kara O'Malley
Distribution Manager - MDI



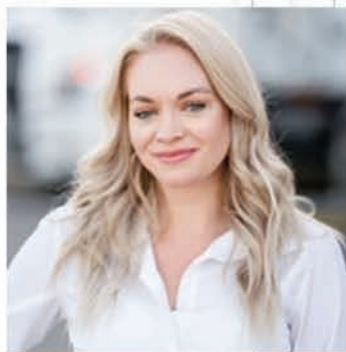
Susan Abernethy
Accounting Manager - MDI



Ruth Bain
Instruct.Design & Emp Dev Manager - MDI



Mary Kellmanson
SVP of Marketing - MDI



Paige Vance
Sr Manager Marketing - MDI



Anna Cook
Buyers Administrative Assisstant - MDI



Shelby Silvia
Deli Merchandiser - Lowes Foods



Lucy Gibbons
Store Director - Lowes Foods



Caroline Short
HR Generalist - Lowes Foods

*Thank you for your
 leadership & dedication!*



Dora Merrick
Toshiba Global Commerce Solutions

Senior Global Product Line Manager

Dora Merrick began at IBM supporting the point-of-sale platform at the world's largest restaurant ecosystem. She learned the demands of quick-service retail and the critical role technology plays in delivering speed, accuracy and seamless customer engagement across millions of global transactions daily.

This early experience shaped her understanding of the intersection between innovation, operations and consumer behavior.

In her current role, she guides the evolution of technologies transforming how consumers interact across the grocery, convenience and hospitality industries. Modern self-checkout extends beyond automation to empower consumers with greater choice while enabling retailers to improve operational efficiency, reduce shrink and scale while maintaining high-quality service.

Alongside her corporate responsibilities, Merrick is committed to making an impact through philanthropic initiatives. She takes pride in

leading Toshiba's volunteer program with the Tunnel to Towers Foundation, organizing hundreds of employees to participate in an annual 5K and donating \$148,374 since 2021. This organization helps injured veterans and first responders, Gold Star families and homeless veterans with mortgage-free homes.

Merrick's journey reflects a passion for intuitive, accessible self-service technologies that thrive in an increasingly digital world while also making an impact in the community.



Tish Mills
Harris Teeter

Senior HR Business Partner

Tish Mills is a proven, high-impact HR leader who elevates people, performance and culture across Harris Teeter's Northern Region, supporting 77-plus locations across Delaware, Maryland, Washington, D.C., Virginia and northeastern North Carolina.

She serves 9,000 associates and leads seven direct reports, providing strategic, hands-on partnership to district managers, regional VPs, operations, legal and HR teams. She aligns staffing, training, succession planning and performance management with business needs while strengthening compliance, consistency and risk mitigation.

With strong field presence and sound judgment, Mills resolves complex associate relations issues with empathy and fairness, fosters inclusion and engagement and supports successful leadership transitions.

Her results are measurable. She co-led the annual associate opinion survey rollout, achieving 80 percent participation and an 82 percent

engagement score, up 1 percent year over year. She helped launch a comprehensive HR analytics report enabling leaders to improve compliance and morale drivers, including youth permits, I-9s, inordinate hours, turnover, missed lunches and unemployment.

Under Mills leadership, fiscal year 2025 Northern Region turnover reached a four-year low of 52.16 percent. She also played a key role in restructuring efforts that streamlined support for associates and store leaders while advancing the company's Employer of Choice strategy.

Beyond work, Mills raised more than \$3,000 for St. Jude and supports the American Heart Association and UVA Breast Cancer Center.



Kara O'Malley
Merchants Distributors (MDI)

Distribution Manager

Kara O'Malley plays an important role in strengthening the operational performance that supports independent grocers across the Merchants Distributors network. Through her leadership in warehouse operations, she

has helped build a culture centered on engagement, accountability and continuous improvement.

O'Malley has been instrumental in improving employee retention by fostering an environment where employees feel supported, valued and connected to the organization's mission. She emphasizes communication, development and recognition so employees understand how their work contributes to serving retailers and their customers.

O'Malley also has helped drive improvements in warehouse efficiency by working with her team to identify opportunities to improve processes and

increase productivity while maintaining a strong focus on safety, reliability and service.

Committed to developing her team, O'Malley encourages employees to expand their skills and pursue opportunities for growth within the organization. Through her focus on engagement, operational discipline and employee development, she continues to strengthen the teams that keep the supply chain moving and support the retailers MDI serves each day.



Katie Penny
K-VA-T Food Stores, dba Food City

Executive VP Store Operations, Knoxville Division

A third-generation grocer, Katie Penny has amassed a lifetime of grocery industry knowledge and experience. She joined the Food City team in 2006, working part time while attending high school and returned full time in 2020, serving as the first human relations coordinator manager.

After completing the management training program, Penny was promoted to store manager in 2021 and district manager in 2022. Two years later, she assumed her current role for the Knoxville division, which encompasses more than 50 stores spanning from Morristown to Cookeville, Tennessee.

Penny is a founding member of Food City's EMPOWER program and is also a member of the company's senior staff executive leadership team. She serves on the board of directors for Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tennessee Valley, Tennessee Grocers & Convenience Store Association and National Grocers Association. She also is involved with Second Harvest Food Bank,

Salvation Army and Wreaths Across Chattanooga.

Penny is the recipient of the Salvation Army Outstanding Corporate Philanthropy Award and *The Knoxville News Sentinel's* 2024 Class of 40 Under 40.

Penny has a bachelor's degree from James Madison University with a focus on hospitality and tourism management. She received an MBA from the University of Miami and completed the NGA Cornell Executive Leadership Development Program. She resides in Knoxville with her husband, two daughters and two Great Danes.



The United Family





Harris Teeter

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET

Harris Teeter would like to congratulate our 2026 Women of Influence in the Food Industry winners



Lindsay Capozziello

Senior Director
Health & Wellness



Jan Concannon

Director
PMCOE • IS



Rhonda DeMello

VP
Operations Support



Geri Downing

Customer Service
Clerk



Jamila Jackson

Director
Replenishment



Tish Mills

Senior
HR Business Partner



Martha Taylor

VP
Human Resources





Tamara Rose

Save A Lot

Store Manager

Tamara Rose is a seasoned and respected manager whose leadership has made the Palm River Road Save A Lot one of the strongest-performing and most

community-focused stores in the Tampa, Florida, market.

Over her tenure, Rose has demonstrated an exceptional ability to understand and respond to the diverse cultural needs of her customers, tailoring merchandising and product assortments to ensure that essential items for multiple backgrounds are consistently in stock. Her thoughtful approach has strengthened customer loyalty and positioned the store as a trusted neighborhood resource.

Tamara's commitment to community impact is equally powerful. She

partners with local food pantries and community organizations to reduce food insecurity, expanding access to nutritious staples for underserved families. These efforts not only support the well-being of the community but also reinforce Save A Lot's reputation as a mission-driven, community-focused retailer.



Caroline Short

Lowes Food Stores

Host Engagement Generalist

Caroline Short is a results driven leader whose impact is felt across two divisions marked by complex host dynamics and persistent staffing challenges.

During periods of uncertainty and change, she has consistently provided

steady guidance, helping teams navigate difficult situations with clarity, confidence and purpose.

Short is known for her transparent and direct communication style, setting clear expectations while remaining approachable and compassionate. She balances accountability with empathy, ensuring the teams feel supported while still driving operational excellence.

Short makes herself available to the teams, fostering trust and engagement through open dialogue and hands-on leadership. Her commitment to long-term workforce stability is evident in her active

involvement in recruitment efforts, including overseeing career fairs and participating in community and university events such as those at UNC Wilmington.

Through these initiatives, she strengthens the talent pipeline while reinforcing the organization's presence and reputation within the community.

An exemplary leader during trying times, Short demonstrates integrity, resilience and a people-first mindset – making her a deserving recipient of this recognition.



Shelby Silvia

Lowes Food Stores

Deli Merchandiser

Shelby Silvia brings a high level of enthusiasm and drive to everything she does, and she consistently demonstrates a "whatever-it-takes" attitude to support

store operations and team success.

Silvia oversees the operations of 10 deli departments, ensuring strong execution, consistency and performance across all locations. Her operational knowledge and attention to detail make her a trusted resource for store teams and leadership alike.

Anytime there is a new store opening, remodel or refresh, she is always among the first people called upon. Her willingness to step in, take ownership and lead during critical moments speaks volumes about her reliability and dedication.

What truly sets Silvia apart is her ability to go above and beyond

expectations every day. She does not just manage tasks – she supports, coaches and motivates teams to perform at their best. Her passion for excellence and positive influence are felt throughout the organization.

In addition to being an exceptional professional, Silvia is also a devoted mother, balancing her personal and professional responsibilities with grace and determination. She is a tremendous asset to Lowes Foods and a role model for leadership, commitment and heart.



Hannah Smith

K-VA-T Food Stores, dba Food City

Director of Front-End Operations

Hannah Smith joined the Food City team in 1995, serving as a part-time courtesy clerk while attending high school. Having served in key positions throughout the company, she was promoted in 2016 to front-end special projects and e-commerce manager for the corporate headquarters.

Smith was promoted in 2019 to her current position, where she oversees all front-end operations, including customer checkout, cash handling and pricing initiatives at store level and for the company's fuel centers. She also collaborates with human relations coordinators on hiring and associate engagement initiatives.

Her understanding of front-end operations, coupled with her leadership skills, drives her commitment to progress and goal achievement. She is passionate about guiding the front-end supervision team she leads, fostering collaboration among various departments and continually exploring ways to enhance customer service efficiency and effectiveness.

Smith is also a member of Food City's EMPOWER Women's Group, which further demonstrates her dedication to networking, mentorship and providing opportunities for growth and advancement within the company.

Her leadership style not only benefits those on her team but also contributes to the overall success of the organization. She sets a great example of how to effectively lead a team in today's diverse and inclusive work environment.

TOSHIBA

CONGRATULATIONS
to our **2026** **WOMEN OF INFLUENCE**
in the **FOOD INDUSTRY**



DORA MERRICK



HYE SUK MAKLEY



FOOD  LION

Congratulations

to our Women of Influence Award Recipient!



Melissa Harrington
Vice President, Finance

You *nourish* our brand, strategy and culture every day,
making Food Lion a great place to *work* and *shop*.

EMPIRE

Kroger partners for 45+ years



**Congratulations to
Empire Marketing Strategies
own Kim Gustina
for winning
“The Women of Influence in
the Food Industry” award!**



Empirefoods.com



Martha Taylor

Harris Teeter

VP Human Resources

Martha Taylor is an accomplished human resources leader whose career exemplifies strategic vision, operational excellence and a dedication to

empowering others. She joined Harris Teeter in her current role in January 2025, bringing more than 30 years of experience across store operations, HR leadership and corporate strategy.

Previously, Taylor led all HR functions for Kroger's Houston Division, supporting more than 14,000 associates and driving initiatives in hiring, talent, retention and associate development.

Her career has been defined by a results-oriented approach and a deep understanding of the business. She began in store roles in 1994 and

progressed through many different positions. Her unique blend of HR and operational expertise allows her to align people strategies with business priorities, drive performance and strengthen culture.

A 2024 Woman of Influence in *The Shelby Report of the Southwest*, she holds her SPHR certification and contributes to her community.



Paige Vance

Merchants Distributors (MDI)

Senior Marketing Manager

Paige Vance is helping redefine what modern marketing support looks like for independent grocers. She has built programs at Merchants Distributors that give hundreds of independent retailers access to data, digital marketing

capabilities and promotional planning tools that help them compete in a demanding grocery environment.

Vance leads MDI's loyalty program, which supports more than 300 independent retail locations. Under her leadership, the program has become a valuable platform for shopper engagement and data informed decision making that helps retailers better understand their customers and strengthen promotions.

She also introduced MealTime Made, a meal solutions program designed to inspire shoppers and simplify dinner planning. The program

features in-store destination displays that help retailers merchandise meal ideas in ways that increase basket size and encourage repeat visits.

Known for her collaborative leadership style, Vance works across merchandising, marketing and retail teams to build programs that deliver practical results for independent grocers. She also invests in developing her team and fostering an environment where creativity, accountability and innovation thrive.



Congratulations to our 2026 Women of Influence!

Thank you for your dedication to our member retailers and the communities they serve.



Lori Turner

Executive Director of Communications, Board and Member Relations



Heather Standifer

Executive Director, Advertising, Marketing & AIM



Shelly Moore

Senior Vice President, Chief Information Officer



CELEBRATING OUR 2026

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

WINNERS!!!



 Giant GROW  CARE  BEL{ }NG

CONGRATULATIONS TO STOP & SHOP'S 2026 WOMEN OF INFLUENCE!



Brandy Coccia
Store Manager



Elsie Martinez
Human Resources
Business Partner



Erin Baez
Director of Operations
Support



Joelle Smith
Manager Distribution
Services



Rachel Razzano
Human Resources
Business Partner



Glacia Afonso
Store Manager



 STOP & SHOP.





Shelby Publishing has expanded its popular Women of Influence section from the Northeast to the other four regions of the nation. Look for the following outstanding female leaders from across the country to be featured in our upcoming May editions...

SOUTHWEST

Angela Ables
Emilee Albright
Liz Bleakley
Sarah Boddy
Jessica Brown
Kaela Canzoneri
Nellie Carlson
Kindle Chapman
Crystal Dominguez
Amanda Emerson
Taylor Escamilla
Sabrina Fair
Marty George
Alexandra Hickey
Amber Hook
Beth Keeton
Lisa Lam
Macaela LeClair
Casey Martin
Chesley Maschhoff
Jennifer O'Malley
Abie Rampy
Becky Schaeffer
Kacy Springer
Kayleigh Swift
Lisa Tiblow
Nery Vazquez

WEST

Catherine Gipe-Stewart
Lorena Aguilar
Kristin Alas
Lisa Ali
Shannon Beasley
Liz Casas
Laura Castro
Patrice Coudray Rubin
Darla Deiro
Gricelda Deluna
Erika Deschodt
Tammy Duff

Christy Dwyer
Britney Ekerson
Jeri Elsasser
Veronica Estrada
Martha Gabriel
Karla Gonzalez
Melissa Gonzalez
Annette Gutierrez
Carla Inama
Teresa Jimenez
Kimberly Johnson
Gretchen Johnson
Kristyn Lawson
Katherine Lunde
Carrie Mack
Barb McGlothlin
Jacqueline Michlitsch
Karol Moorman
Janet Moreno
Rebecca Morgan
Erika Mota
Kirti Mutatkar
Marnie Nemcoff
Stefanie Pandol
Nancy Paredes
Joseph Parpart
Jennifer Petersen
Kori Pierson
Carolina Pinedo
Megan Poppe
LeAnne Romesburg
Sara Rueda Cuartas
Irma Trias
Claudia Velgara
Paige Venable
Catrin Williams
Danielle Wortham

NORTHEAST

Glaucia Afonso
Debbie Allison
Erin Baez

Angela Basnar
Amy Bergeron
Patty Bianco
Rachel Bower
Melissa Bucklaw
Jenna Busby
Michelle Carfagno
Shan Case
Jane Ciccone
Brandy Coccia
Jennie Coleman
Reimi Colson
Tracey Colston
Teri-Anne Colurciello
Stephanie Doherty
Tonya Douglas
Hume Emmy
Jennifer Falzon
Jennifer Frailey-Custer
Sydney Gaston
Angelena Goot
Grace Gruber
Kathy Guertin
Juliana Havriko
Michelle Kalicky
Claire Ko
Caitlyn Koriakos
Farah Lavigne
Maura Levis
Laura Viola Maccarone
Sabrina Malloy
Elsie Martinez
Beth McGough
Rachel McLaughlin
Justine Meader
Chrissy Michaud
Jessica Mosner
Sae Pansare
Deborah Pasternack
Rachel Razzano
Darla Rieg
Monica Rolon

Sydney Ruggieri
Jordan Schenck
Stacey Schultz
Sarah Sheaffer
Joelle Smith
Stevie Smith
Angie Smith
Staci Smith
Meaghan Tetreault
Brittany Vogel
Karen Weinstein
Cathy Williams Owen
Kristen Wilson

MIDWEST

Angel Anderson
Michelle Bernard
Casie Broker
Dea Calkins
Jamie Collins
Tammy Durnan
Azeb Gebrewihot
Jennifer Lambert
Kristi Magnuson Nelson
Tara McDermott
Shelly Moore
Meagan Nelson
Jessica Ringena
Jody Rudh
Carla Rydberg
Natalie Santiago
Heather Standifer
Rebekah Stewart
Anna Stoermer
Jenna Sullivan
Nicole Teeters
Lori Turner
Amy Wadstrom
Kate Weidner
Alyson Woods
Nicki Zuber