The Valley’s Most Powerful Men—2012

Written by Written by Melissa Larsen / Photographed by Cassandra Tomei
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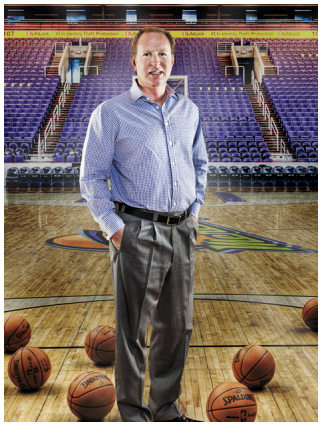
From a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee to a former Frank Lloyd Wright apprentice who is now one of the world’s most respected architects, *AFM* celebrates nine powerful men who the Valley gets to call its own.



Robert Sarver

In addition to being a married father of three, this Arizona native serves as managing partner of the Phoenix Suns and is CEO of Western Alliance Bancorporation. (He actually founded a national bank at the age of 23.) Sarver was also instrumental in building the Children’s Museum of Phoenix and the Sarver Heart Center at the University of Arizona.

What does “power” mean to you?
Having the ability to influence people and make a difference in areas that are important to me.

What impact do you strive to have on the Valley?
I’m fortunate to work with people that share my goals for having a positive impact on Arizona’s economic vitality and community members. The Alliance Bank team strives to be the local leader in providing businesses with credit. The Phoenix Suns strive to provide the best in sports and entertainment in the Valley. The Sarver Heart Center is dedicated to the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease. And, our family strives to make life a little better for those less fortunate.

Who is your mentor?
My mother. She always encouraged me, through good times and bad, to pursue my dreams.

How do you balance kids, career and community?
As best as I can, but my wife deserves a lot of the credit. She is very organized and a huge help.

Why have you chosen to make Arizona your home?
I was born and raised in Arizona and have always loved it here. The constant sunshine helps keep me positive.

What has been your proudest achievement?
Making my mom proud of me.

What are your future goals?
To bring Arizona its first NBA championship and to help my sons develop into good men.

What superpower would you like to possess?
The power to read minds.

Alice Cooper

For 50 years, this rock legend has called Phoenix home. When he’s not selling out shows and playing alongside the likes of Steven Tyler or

Johnny Depp, this husband and father of three is helping troubled kids and teens via his Solid Rock Foundation.

What does "power" mean to you?
Power is influence. You always want to use what power you have to do good things. Using that power for egotistical reasons is not in my vocabulary.

What impact do you strive to have on the Valley?
I've watched Phoenix grow for 50 years. I went to elementary school, high school and college here. The band started here. So I feel that I owe it to the city to do whatever I can do to help kids, which is ironic being that Alice Cooper is a name that parents wanted to keep their kids away from for years. We're never going to run out of kids with gang, drug or family problems. That's why we organized Solid Rock Foundation, to give kids a place to turn when there's nowhere else.

How do you balance kids, career and community?
I look at them all as being connected. Of course, I still do the big show eight months out of every year, and I'm still very capable of scaring you out of your wits. But there's another side to Alice Cooper. I couldn't have my career without my family, and my community keeps me grounded. But I think the big factor is that I don't have any significant source of stress in my life. I have great kids, fans and friends. That makes it easy no matter what the schedule looks like.

What has been your proudest achievement?
Thirty-six years of marriage with my wife, and three great, successful kids who have never shown any disrespect to me or my wife or have ever been in trouble. We're a very tight unit. We are the modern-day Christian Addams Family.

What superpower would you like to possess?
I would be The Diplomat. An unbeatable negotiator. I would be the ultimate problem-solver, able to fix any conflict between people or countries. I would be the person who is able to make all parties see eye to eye, and negotiate peace to eliminate war.

Matt Widdows

As the founder and CEO of HomeSmart, the largest residential real estate company in Arizona (with more than 4,000 realtors), Widdows is not only a success in business but his name is attached to charitable causes for children through the state (like his company's annual Halloween event at Phoenix Children's Hospital) and the world (as a sponsor of children in Africa, for example). Widdows is dad to two young kids and husband to wife, Colleen.

What does "power" mean to you?
The ability to take the successes that I've been blessed with and use them to help the people around me. Power can be a double-edged sword and if you don't handle it wisely, you won't have it very long.

What impact do you strive to have on the Valley?
My biggest weakness is kids. Most of the charities that we focus on personally and as a company involve children in need, with illnesses, or kids that are disadvantaged in some way. Kids haven't had a chance to experience things like adults, and I feel like we have to afford them extra attention and protection.

How do you balance kids, career and community?
It gets tough. I had a scare a few years ago, and I learned how important it was to take time with my family now because it goes by so quickly. Life is tenuous and you never know what tomorrow holds. Obviously, without my career, I'd never be able to provide for my family, so that is very important to me. It also provides for so many other families within HomeSmart and allows us to do things for our community to give back.

What are your future goals?
Watch my kids grow up, graduate and do whatever it is that makes them happy. Hopefully they don't pay me back during the teenage years! Continue to build HomeSmart into the largest, friendliest, most innovative real estate company in the nation. Who knows, maybe in the world?

What superpower would you like to possess?
Invisibility. How cool would that be to be a fly on the wall wherever you go?

Craig DeMarco

This husband and father of two boys is a local restaurant tour de force who brought the likes of Postino (Arcadia, Central and East), Windsor and Churn to the Valley. DeMarco, founder of Upward Projects, is a huge proponent of all things local, working with Local First to encourage Arizona-based business and opening his restaurants in historically relevant buildings.

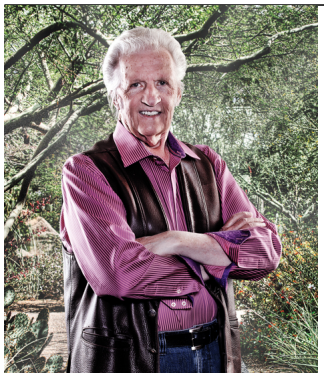
What does "power" mean to you?
The ability to create my own destiny. Creating new restaurants which in turn create new jobs; giving back to the community; being civically minded; and sharing valuable time with my partners who share common visions and goals.

What impact do you strive to have on the Valley?
We want to keep Phoenix unique and help preserve some if its history. We have spent more than 10 years dedicating our business model to working with repurposed, older buildings that have gone through the City of Phoenix's adaptive reuse program, starting in 2001 with Postino Arcadia. We care deeply about the architectural integrity of our projects and work hard to create experiences instead of concepts. Our site-selection process is paramount to executing this, starting with finding the right historically relevant building, and becoming an active part of a vibrant community.

How do you balance kids, career and community?
By staying extremely fit. I need to have consistent energy and be able to work long, hard days. I give it my all at work, but always keep something in the tank so that I can be a present, energetic father and husband.

What are your future goals?
To continue to open new restaurants in the best neighborhoods in Arizona, and eventually become the best restaurant development company in the world. We created a management company called Upward Projects with our long-time partners Lauren and Wyatt Bailey in order to build a strong foundation for our creative talents to thrive. I would also like to train hard year-round and compete in a long-course Ironman race.

What superpower would you like to possess?
Teleportation, for sure. I hate driving.



Vernon Swaback

Architect, planner, managing partner of Swaback Partners, founder/chairman of the Two Worlds Community Foundation and Frank Lloyd Wright apprentice, Swaback has long been heralded as a visionary in the areas of sustainability and design. Swaback also recently celebrated his 30th anniversary with wife, Cille, and is a father of two adult daughters.

What does "power" mean to you?
It combines having a purpose-centered idea worth living for, with an ability to build bridges from things as they are to where that idea can take root and grow.

What impact do you strive to have on the Valley?
Our time and place is far more strategically significant than what we easily recognize. To do anything less than to use this opportunity to, in effect, design the future, is to misunderstand the opportunities before us. My special focus is on designing for the creation of community.

Who is your mentor?
He has long been called 'the world's greatest architect' and more recently, 'our first ecological architect.' He celebrated the special sense of Arizona both in his presence and in his work. His name is Frank Lloyd Wright.

Why have you chosen to make Arizona your home?

Like every other thing in my life, I never so much made a conscious decision as much as the choice seemed made for me. I came here from my native Chicago, with no other reason nor interest than to study with Frank Lloyd Wright, where I remained for 21 years. After that experience, to live anyplace else seemed unthinkable.

What are your future goals?
To design, shape and expand the reach of design until it becomes as basic to our way of life as nature is to our survival.

What superpower would you like to possess?
The power to rid humanity of our self-defeating behaviors coupled with an opportunity to turn the community of the world into our most treasured work of art.

Alfredo Molina

Sponsor of the 2012 Most Powerful Men in the Valley and 2011 honoree, Alfredo Molina of Molina Fine Jewelers discusses a few men who top his most-powerful list—and his interesting take on balancing home and career.

What makes a person powerful?
Being able to change the life of others for the better. The Molina vision is 'Changing the world one jewel at a time.' We believe that every person is a precious jewel, and it is our commitment and social responsibility to help make them brilliant.

What men do you look up to?
Abraham Lincoln for his resilience; Napoleon Hill for his insight on how to live a successful life; and Thomas Edison for his innovation, creativity and persistence.

What do you admire most about the men?
These men helped to change the world for the better.

Why do you think so many powerful men have made Arizona their home?
Quality of life.

As a busy family man and an active member of the community, how do you balance all your obligations?
Balance is an enigma and I don't believe a balance exists. Life is similar to marriage; it is always 90/10. Sometimes it's 90 for her, and sometimes it's 90 for you. Between family, business and charitable giving, they all take turns being 90 percent of your life. Sometimes we have to be out of balance to someday be in balance.

Bob Sikora

This Arizona native and father started as a fry cook at one of the Valley's first franchised McDonald's and eventually opened his own restaurant at the young age of 20. But locals best know Sikora as the owner of Bobby-Q and former-but-not-forgotten establishments, Mr. Lucky's and Bobby McGhee's. Sikora's restaurants have raised funds for diabetes research, the forest service and St. Mary's Food Bank.

What does "power" mean to you?
When I think of power, I think of a person who is quick-witted; someone with a lot of talent and a strong heart. A person with power should always be willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done.

What impact do you strive to have on the Valley?
As a business man, one of my goals for the Valley is to provide jobs. My restaurants and other endeavors have provided jobs to many great people in the Valley throughout the years. It's important to hire people who have the same beliefs as you because when you have happy employees then you have satisfied customers.

Who is your mentor?
That is a tough one. There have been millions of them from over my career. If I had to narrow it down to a couple I would say Bob Wian, the founder and creator of Bob's Big Boy, and Norman Brinker, the creator of Brinker International. Brinker founded the Chili's chain and really

redefined restaurant concepts.

How do you balance kids, career and community?
I spend most of the time in Camp Verde. I have worked long and hard for years, and still do. But now I take time to actually appreciate and enjoy my life. By raising and training our horses at the ranch. The restaurant is currently bringing awareness to diabetes and hosting a summer long special to help preserve our forest in Arizona.

Why have you chosen to make Arizona your home?
Simple. It's the best place to live!

What has been your proudest achievement?
I would have to say the fact that I built a chain of restaurants that are perfect for the whole family. Bobby-Q's is a place where families can spend time together, share stories, and eat some really great steaks and barbecue food.

What are your future goals?
Now that I am up at my ranch quite a bit, my personal goals for the future are to raise my quarter horses and stay happy. For my professional life, my goal will always be to keep Bobby-Q's alive and keep families coming back for more.

What superpower would you like to possess?
Another tough one. It would be to walk on water.

Steve Lopez

As the founder and owner of Clean Air Cab, Lopez is not only making the Valley a greener, cleaner place to live with its fleet of eco-friendly cars, but the business has teamed with local nonprofits to raise money for a variety of causes. (Perhaps you've seen Clean Air Cab's pink Susan G. Komen for the Cure driving around?) At home, three kids under the age of four keep this doting dad and husband busy.

What does "power" mean to you?
Being responsible with the ability to influence positive growth toward a future that all of our citizens, corporations and communities respect and want to constructively contribute.

What impact do you strive to have on the Valley?
I would like to be known as being a positive part of encouraging a solution by taking action—not by using rhetoric.

Who is your mentor?
My grandmother is my mentor. As a boy, I watched her own her own companies and run projects differently from others. Of course she always put her customer and their needs way before her own, but it was done with true compassion. She has always been philanthropic and gives to causes close to her heart and bigger than herself.

How do you balance kids, career and community?
Time is always tricky, and there never seems to be quite enough in a day. My wife and I have had to develop rules to maintain course with striking a balance between all that is important to me. My rules are as follows:
1. Always put gravity to my wife's input in family as well as in business she has my best interests at heart, bar none.
2. Never ever stay late at work. I make sure that I am home by 6 p.m. every single day.
3. I cook dinner; if I don't make it home, people go hungry and get very angry!
4. Brush, read and kiss. With three kids, nighttime could get out of hand, but my wife and I team up and find 20 to 30 minutes to ourselves a night as a result—pure bliss.
5. Time off, I have to take six weeks off a year, four weeks at one time and a two small one-week vacations which are never scheduled. I just have to make myself available. This one is tough!
6. "People, Planet, Profit" is the cadence that I use to run my company, and in that order. These small goals maintain direction and help me to keep balance with my everyday business decisions. I decide what goal(s) need attention and give time to creating a solution, all while keeping in mind my three P's.

Why have you chosen to make Arizona your home?
The majesty and the antiquity of our land and history is the No. 1 thing that draws me here. The contrast between the old west and a metropolitan city is also very intriguing to me. How we attempt to strike a balance between our land and our progress seems like a constant and articulate challenge that we meet with consistent differences on the battlefield of progress. I just love it here.

What has been your proudest achievement?
My proudest achievement is the health and respect of my family. I really enjoy watching my children see there new world and learn all of the things it has to offer. It takes the patina off the same old day in and day out and refreshes the way I look at life and appreciate the things around me. My family keeps me creative and sharp!

What are your future goals?
I would like to be a large contributor both in mind and in action to creating a solution for our economy both locally and nationally. I would like to be creative with problem-solving and empower the people I meet to take action. There is no one answer to solving today's economical and political landscape, but I feel that the answer does lie in the way business interacts with the every person. We need to bridge the gap between profit and responsibility. We need to encourage value and respect with both product as well as patron, at the end of the day we need to all be contributing to the bettering of our community and the strength of our citizens, both with donating our time and resources along with doing our part to shine our one part of the city. The more we are actively doing our part individually, we naturally gain a voice in making the decisions and creating change in the world around us collectively. Change does happen one person at a time.

What superpower would you like to possess?
Invisibility. Oh, I have said too much!

Amen Iseghohi

Paradise Valley resident and father of eight (four sons and four step-children), Iseghohi is making it his personal mission to end childhood obesity. As the founder of Amenzone Fitness and the nonprofit Amenzone Foundation, he strives to make a positive impact on the Valley and the health of its children.

What does "power" mean to you?
I view power as the ultimate privilege to make a difference. The foundation of true power is humility. To acknowledge your power is to accept the responsibility of making a positive difference in your community or life of others. My father often said, "To whom much is given, much is expected." I hold on to this fact in any situation I find that I can make a difference.

What impact do you strive to have on the Valley?
I am intensely passionate about fighting the childhood obesity epidemic that plagues not just the Valley but the nation. By establishing the Amenzone foundation, we are hitting the issue head on, supported by much-needed data as proof that our efforts are changing the lives of thousands and their respective communities. As Amenzone Fitness prepares to launch as a franchise nationwide, we plan to donate a percentage of our revenue to the Amenzone foundation and challenge other businesses and corporations to do the same. Our children are our greatest asset; I began Amenzone with one child, and one tire, at a local park in Scottsdale using the philosophy on self-care adopted from my late grandmother as a child in West Africa. By partnering with outstanding organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, Job Corp of Phoenix, and several Native Indian communities, Amenzone continues to positively change the lives of thousands. It is imperative that every child in the Valley knows that "true healthcare is self-care." As with many other issues, the lack of self-esteem is deeply rooted in the issue of childhood obesity; It is my ultimate goal to empower and encourage every child that participates in our program to live a healthy lifestyle and adopt our philosophy on self-care.

Who is your mentor?
My mentor is my father, Amen Iseghohi Sr. He was educated as an architect but retired early as a successful businessman and now a philanthropist. Most of the lessons I learned as a youth came from my father's failures, not his successes. Ever the optimist, he looked at each set back as an opportunity to do things right a second time round. He often said when truly committed to an outcome, things may go wrong but in most cases you need not change your goal, just the approach. Stay true to the original vision. Working so closely with my father throughout my teenage years shaped the person I am today. As a youth I found him to be tough, as an adult I often wish I could go back in time and take notes. He is my mentor, a trusted counsel and closest friend.

How do you balance kids, career and community?
I have been very fortunate; my career is also my passion. My family is my inspiration and very involved in all that I do. Our kids all take part and even help me design the kids programs. They are often seen at my place of business, usually to support by bringing friends and taking part in the classes. My partner, Valerie Hervieux, is very much involved behind the scenes of the business and an active member of the Amenzone foundation. As a family we make balancing kids, career and community fun, because they are so involved in all that I do. It is also the way I was raised and cannot imagine it any other way. You have to be the change you want in your community. You will often find my entourage (family) at events that Amenzone is involved in around the Valley, all wearing our signature T-shirts and talking up Amenzone to any that would listen.

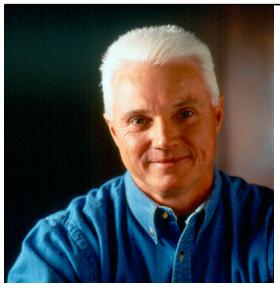
Why have you chosen to make Arizona your home?
Outside of the fact that Arizona is a beautiful place, there is a huge potential for growth here, especially in this economy if you dare to be creative and think outside the box. There couldn't be a better time to take that leap of faith and follow your passion, and there couldn't be a better place to do it in than Arizona. Often we forget that most of the successful people we admire today paved their way up from the depth of despair, and very tough economic situations.

What has been your proudest achievement?
Outside of family, watching the Amenzone movement take hold and grow as I envisioned it.

What are your future goals?

My immediate goal is to successfully launch our first group of Amenzone franchises by September this year and progressively open several Amenzone franchises in other major cities across the country. Amenzone foundation also plans to partner with reputable organizations nationwide that are committed to a long-term solution pertaining to the obesity issue.

What superpower would you like to possess?
The power to see the future and avoid the major pitfalls that often awaits any entrepreneur during the growth stage, but then that would be no fun. One must take the rough with the smooth; it makes life so much more interesting knowing you conquered against the odds!



Tom Lewis

As the CEO, founder and owner of luxury homebuilder, T.W. Lewis, we have Lewis to thank, in part, for making the Valley such a great place to call home. Apart from building upwards of 350 homes in the Valley each year, he also gives back to the community via the T.W. Lewis Foundation that benefits various local organizations and has a focus on higher education and aiding children in need. He and his wife, Jan, are parents to three adult sons.

What does "power" mean to you?
Power is the ability to contribute, impact, influence and be a model for others.

What impact do you strive to have on the Valley?
Through the T.W. Lewis Foundation, I look forward to continuing to provide educational opportunities for students, helping children in need, and supporting cultural institutions such as the Heard Museum, Desert Botanical Gardens and Phoenix Art Museum. For instance, I am pleased that the T.W. Lewis Foundation has been able to award 110 scholarships, to 10 Phoenix students each year for 11 years.

How do you balance kids, career and community?
Family and career have always come first. I take family, career and my health very seriously and with these, I do not compromise. As our kids went away to college, I had more time to give back to community and local nonprofits.

Who is your mentor?
I have had a lot of mentors throughout my career. Two local examples would be Rich Kraemer at UDC, and Jerry Bisgrove for the way he created Stardust Foundation.

What has been your proudest achievement?
I am proud to have a wonderful and close family after 33 years of marriage, with three fine sons who are all doing well. I am also proud to have started and managed T. W. Lewis Company for the past 25 years.

What are your future goals?
Stay healthy, experience life to the fullest, impact others in a positive manner and leave a legacy.

What superpower would you like to possess?
The ability to see into the future. Developing character in our children is a good way to insure a solid future for America. This is why the T.W. Lewis Foundation is helping support a Phoenix Chapter of Positive Coaching Alliance.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

It's been a year since nine respectable gents were honored as the Valley's most powerful. Here's what a few of the 2011 honorees have been up to.

Dr. Rafael Fonseca transitioned to another high-profile role at Mayo Clinic in Arizona. In February, Dr. Fonseca stepped down as Deputy Director of Mayo Clinic's Cancer Center after being named the new Chair of the Department of Internal Medicine. Dr. Fonseca also serves as the Associate Director for Mayo Clinic's Center of Individualized Medicine in his dual role.

Since July 2011, **Sam Fox** has expanded his portfolio of restaurants to include the opening of True Food Kitchen in San Diego and Denver and Culinary Dropout in Las Vegas. In Arizona, locals saw the opening of the third Zinburger, the sixth NoRTH and the debut of Fox Restaurant Concepts at Sky Harbor Airport. In the fall, locals will see the launch of a new fish-house concept.

Shortly after being featured in the July 2011 issue, **Lee Hanley** was diagnosed with late-stage pancreatic cancer. With the assistance of TGen, and its remarkable staff of medical doctors, scientists and researchers, he has been waging a steady, fierce and optimistic fight of the difficult disease. While reigning back his day-to-day activities at Vestar, he is still fully engaged as chairman of the company.

Craig Jackson remains at the forefront of the collector car industry with more than $110 million in sales at the Scottsdale and Palm Beach auctions this year. With numerous charitable endeavors, including record donations to United States armed forces and veteran's organizations, Jackson shows no sign of slowing down as the granddaddy of all auctions just finished the third annual Orange County auction and looks forward to the fifth annual Las Vegas event in September.

Mike Meldman has been working hard to find new opportunities to expand the Discovery Land Company portfolio. As Discovery emerges from the challenging economy of the last several years with its brand intact, Meldman has to be ever more careful about the opportunities that merit his company's attention. "I think the future is bright and the demographics lookpositive for our type of projects. We just need to stick closely to our focus on family, lifestyle and an overall experience that is superior to anything people can find outside of our communities," he says.

F. Francis Najafi donated $2 million to launch the Thunderbird School of Global Management's Najafi Global Mindset Institute. Najafi's leadership was recognized by his alma mater with the 2011 Jonas Mayer Outstanding Alumnus Award. He also received the Ellis Island Medal of Freedom from the National Ethnic Coalition for his outstanding citizenship, individual achievement and encouragement of cultural unity.

Bob Parsons of Go Daddy and Arizona State University's **Dr. Michael Crow** were also honored in 2011.