

AUSTIN BUSINESS JOURNAL

ADVERTISING MAVEN GAY GADDIS TO BE HONORED FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

By Will Anderson
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Eighty-four chief executives and local leaders have been nominated for the 2022 Best CEO Awards, and **Gay Gaddis**, founder and former head of advertising agency T3, has been named this year's Legacy Award recipient.

Gaddis is an advertising and marketing luminary. After stints in communications and consulting, she worked at the William Lacy Agency in Austin in the early 1980s. She famously cashed out her IRA to start T3 in 1989 and grew it into the largest independent, female-owned ad agency in the United States before stepping down as CEO in 2019, when the company was acquired by LRW Group, now known as Material.

In addition to her marketing influence and entrepreneurial renown, **Gaddis** is known for supporting her alma mater, the University of Texas at Austin, where she serves on the board of the Texas Exes alumni group and on the Dean's Advisory Council for the McCombs School of Business. She also runs the Women Who Mean Business program at the McCombs School and was inducted into the McCombs School Hall of Fame in 2020.

Gaddis was the first female chair of the **Texas Business Leadership Council** and remains on the board of the Texas Cultural Trust. In 2020, she won the Liz Carpenter Lifetime Achievement Award from Women Communicators of Austin that "recognizes professional communicators who have reached the highest levels of personal and professional achievement."

An artist and an author, **Gaddis** penned "Cowgirl Power: How to Kick A** in Business & Life" and has been highlighted for her painting by Texas Monthly.

And in 2011, **Gaddis** won an ABJ Best CEO Award in the program's inaugural year.

Gaddis joins past Legacy Award recipients such as Tyson Tuttle, Gary Keller and John Paul DeJoria.

Austin Business Journal will present the awards in a private ceremony on Oct. 6. Winners will be crowned based on size and type of organization. The judging is done by a committee of past winners, based on nominees' track record of innovation" and "outstanding performance," in business as well in philanthropy and other community services.

The awards were open to the CEO or top executive officer of a company, as well as business owners and market leaders — the top local executive of a company based elsewhere. Nominees must live and work in Travis, Williamson, Hays, Burnet, Caldwell or Bastrop counties.

Check out the alphabetical list of nominees below, and look for coverage of the winners in early October in print and online.

2022 Best CEO nominees

- Tamara Atkinson, CEO, Workforce Solutions Capital Area
- **Kyndel Bennett**, CEO, Cayetano Development, LLC
- Eric Bernstein, president, LendFriend Home Loans
- Vinay Bhagat, CEO, TrustRadius
- Bret Biggart, CEO, Freedom Solar
- Bjorn Billhardt, CEO, Abilitie
- Alan Blake, CEO, Nuclein LLC
- Paula Bookidis, CEO, Girl Scouts of Central Texas
- Matthew Briggs, CEO, Four Hands
- Cory Brymer, CEO, BryComm LLC
- Bryan Burkhart, CEO, Worksmith Inc.
- Tabatha Callaway, CEO, MSB School Services
- Stephanie Collins, CEO, Austin Retina Associates
- Mark Cordell Jr., CEO, Environments Plus Inc.
- David Dawson, CEO, Winstead PC
- Jim Donnelly, CEO, Restore Hyper Wellness
- Joyce Durst, CEO, Growth Acceleration Partners
- Nad Elias, CEO, recruitAbility
- Evan Erdberg, CEO, Proximity Learning Inc.
- Jessica Ewing, CEO, Literati
- Stan Finch, CEO, Berry Aviation
- Blake Garrett, CEO, Aceable
- Kendall Garrison, CEO, Amplify Credit Union
- Razat Gaurav, CEO, Planview Inc.
- Jason Giulietti, president, Greater San Marcos Partnership
- Gary Grief, executive director, Texas Lottery Commission
- Craig Haley, president, Smokey Mo's BBQ
- Jeana Harrington, CEO, Mighty Swell Spiked Seltzer
- Steve Hickman, CEO, Clear Measure Inc.
- Kelly Hill, CEO, FriendlyForce Technology Inc.
- Char Hu, CEO, The Helper Bees
- Matthew Iommi, CEO, Fetii
- Ali Khataw, CEO, Encotech Engineering Consultants Inc.
- Alan Knitowski, CEO, Phunware
- Jason Krieg, owner, Alamo Austin Air
- Richard Lebovitz, CEO, LeanDNA
- Robert Lee, CEO, Pearlstone Partners
- Blanca Lesmes, CEO, BB Imaging - TeleScan
- Michael Lezam, CEO, Lezam Insurance
- Kana LiVolsi, CEO, Dos Mundos Creative

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- Kathleen Lucente, CEO, Red Fan Communications
- Brianna McKinney, CEO, Bloom Communications
- Greg Mercer, CEO, Jungle Scout
- Ahmed Moledina, CEO, SOAL Technologies
- Clint Muhlenberg, CEO, Level - Virtual Specialists
- Chelle Neff, CEO, Urban Betty
- Mike Nellis, CEO, Austin Community Foundation
- Jack Nelson, CEO, Skimmer Inc.
- Antti Nivala, CEO, M-Files
- Tom Nolan, CEO, Kendra Scott
- Jon Olsen, CEO, Vaask
- Jenna Oltersdorf, CEO, Snackbox
- Jeffrey Palermo, CEO, ShoWorks Cloud, LLC.
- Wendy Papasan, owner, Her Best Life
- Travis Penfield, CEO, 49 Financial
- Anthony Precourt, owner, Austin FC
- Stephen Raffaele, CEO, American Bank
- Sabari Raja, CEO, Nepris
- Alfredo Ramirez, CEO, Vyopta Inc.
- Ashley Rose, CEO, Living Security
- Ted Ross, CEO, SpyCloud
- Jinous Marie Rouhani, CEO, Austin Area Obstetrics, Gynecology & Fertility
- Neha Sampat, CEO, Contentstack
- Bree Sarlati, CEO, Peak Performers
- Justin Satterfield, owner, Norwood
- James Scherer, owner, Austin Pallet Company
- Chris Seals, CEO, Still Austin Whiskey Co
- Reed Seaton, CEO, Hellas Construction
- Yassin Sibai, CEO, Afia
- Kevin Smartt, CEO, TXB
- Emerson Smith, CEO, Pushnami
- Larry Talley, CEO, Everyware
- Eric Thurston, CEO, TCP Software
- Sherri Turpin, CEO, ZVRS and Purple Communications
- Christa Tuttle, CEO, Launch Marketing
- Paige Velasquez Budde, CEO, Zilker Media
- Jeff Wilkinson, CEO, Keystone Bank
- John Winner, CEO, Kizen
- Matt Wursta, CEO, Wursta
- Barry Wurzel, president, Wurzel Builders
- Robin Wurzel, manager, 1st Home & Commercial Service
- Will Young, CEO, Sana Benefits
- Lamine Zarrad, CEO, StellarFi
- Lourdes Zuniga, executive director, Financial Health Pathways