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Robert Brevelle MBA'02 became the managing director for Startup Evo, which accelerates the development of entrepreneurs and startups. Additionally, he serves on the board of directors for technology companies SD3D and MobiFalcon and on corporate advisory boards for Lumenari and EIE Materials. Robert is a partner in TIG Investments and Tech Wildcatters, as well as a council member and advisor to New York-based firms Gershon Lehrman Group and Coleman Research.



Shahzil "Shaz" Amin BS'11 is the CEO of venture firm Blue Track Media, a Dallas-based global marketing ad-tech platform he founded in 2008. In 2014, he sold the company to Philadelphia-based venture firm Karlani Capital, where he now serves as managing partner. Recently featured in a *Dallas Morning News* [profile](#) for his success as a local entrepreneur, Shaz often credits UT Dallas as "one of the reasons" for that success. He earned his bachelor's degree in finance in 2011.



Courtney Caldwell MBA'06 and her husband, Tye, founded ShearShare and received "Startup of the Year" recognition at Tech.Co's *Innovate! and Celebrate* 2016 conference. The mobile-based business connects salon and barbershop owners to independent stylists to fill unused salon stations. After beta testing the app in six cities, the couple moved ShearShare into more than 200 U.S. cities and eight nations in fewer than four months. Read more about [Courtney's story](#).

Featured in [April 2017 Alumni Link](#). [Browse all issues](#).

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Michael C. Thomas

12/2/2016

Michael Thomas BA'07 has been appointed the new principal for Hamilton Park Pacesetter Magnet School of Richardson Independent School District, topping off ten years with the district. Beginning as a classroom teacher, Michael served as an instructional specialist before becoming the assistant principal of Aikin Elementary, a position he held for two years. Michael earned his bachelor's in early childhood education.

Bryan P. Neal

11/10/2016

Bryan Neal BA'90, a senior partner with Thompson & Knight LLP, was named a "recommended attorney" for his expertise in labor and employment defense law in The Legal 500 US, 2016. Additionally, he has been named among "The Best Lawyers in America" in litigation-labor and employment law from 2012-2017 by Woodward/White Inc. Bryan earned his bachelor's in government and politics.

Tomoyasu Mani

11/4/2016

Dr. Tomoyasu Mani BS'09 has been awarded the Blavatnik Regional Award in Chemistry, receiving \$30,000. Tomoyasu was selected for the award for research he conducted as a Goldhaber Fellow with Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York, where he examined electron transport processes for solar energy capture and conversion. He was selected out of 125 nominations, submitted by 24 academic and research institutions in the New York tri-state area. One winner and two finalists were selected in each of the three award categories: life science, physical sciences and engineering, and chemistry. As a student at UT Dallas, Tomoyasu was an undergraduate researcher in the laboratory of chemistry professor Dr. Dean Sherry. After earning his bachelors in biochemistry, he went on to pursue his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 2013. Today, Tomoyasu is an assistant professor of chemistry at the University of Connecticut, performing pioneering research in physical chemistry.

Christine K. Roberts**10/21/2016**

Christine Roberts BGS'82, an intellectual property law attorney, was named among Los Angeles "Women Leaders in the Law" for the fourth year in a row by The American Lawyer, Martindale Hubbell and other legal resources. Christine earned her degree in interdisciplinary studies, with a focus in pre-med/pre-law disciplines.

Sanderia F. Smith**9/16/2016**

Sanderia Faye MA'16 was nominated for a Hurston/Wright Legacy Award - which recognizes the best books in African American literature - for her debut novel, "Mourner's Bench." Faye earned her degree in humanities and aesthetic studies and is a doctoral candidate in the English program at the University of North Texas, with a focus in creative writing.

Mohammad A. Samana**9/16/2016**

Ali Samana BA'13 was awarded the 2016 Immigrant Entrepreneur Award by legal counsel Scheef & Stone - an honor recognizing immigrant achievements and contributions to the North Texas area. Born in Pakistan, Ali immigrated to Texas in 1997 and graduated from Frisco High School before joining the U.S. Navy. After earning his bachelor's in political science and government, Ali went on to cofound solar energy company 1 Solar Solution, LLC, in Frisco, Texas.

Ilker Aslan**3/22/2016**

Dr. Ilker Aslan BS'03 earned a doctorate degree in economics from the University of Fribourg in Switzerland in 2014 while working as a financial analyst in Zurich, Switzerland, at SIX Securities Services. Previously, he obtained his MSc in EU business and law from Aarhus University in Aarhus, Denmark, in 2006. He earned his bachelors in business administration.

Noemi J. Ayuste**9/16/2016**

Noemi Ayuste BS'10 was crowned Ms. Philippine Independence 2016 during the annual Philippine Republic Day gala dinner in Dallas. Noemi earned her degree in business administration.

James L. Fisher**9/16/2016**

James Fisher MPA'10 was appointed the new city manager for Forney, Texas, after holding the same municipal leadership position in Murphy, Texas, for eight years. James earned his master's in public affairs and has more than 27 years of experience in municipal government.

Paul C. French**8/2/2016**

Paul French BS'93 has joined Allegro Development Corporation, a provider of commodity management software, as its new chief marketing officer - building on more than 20 years'

experience in sales and executive management. Previously, Paul held several leadership positions including vice president of marketing at cyber defense software company Armor, Inc., and vice president of strategy at Axway Software, among others. He earned his degree in business management.

Joseph J. Pytcher**9/16/2016**

Joseph Pytcher BS'12 is the owner Pytcher Homes, a real estate development company he started soon after graduating. Joseph earned his degree in finance.

Grace K. Richards**7/18/2016**

Grace (Bielawski) Richards BA'11 is an assistant United States attorney at the U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington, D.C., where she prosecutes domestic violence cases. Grace previously clerked for the Washington D.C. Court of Appeals. At UT Dallas, Grace served as student government president in 2010. She earned her bachelor's in political science and went on to attend the University of Virginia Law School, graduating in 2014.

Tawanna S. Williams**7/6/2016**

Tawanna Williams MS'14 has been promoted to senior corporal for the Dallas Police Department. Tawanna earned her master's in justice administration and leadership.

Van A. Boyd**7/22/2016**

VJ Boyd BS'02 is a writer and producer, known for the TV series "Justified." This summer, he served on a panel at the 2016 Comic-Con International in San Diego: "Inside the Writers' Room: The Pilot: Part One." VJ earned his degree in business administration.

Joe A. Davis**7/15/2016**

Joe A. Davis BS'82 has been appointed to the board of directors for energy company Matador Resources. Previously, Joe was the executive vice president of EnLink Midstream, LLC. Prior to this, he served on the executive committee of international law firm Hunton & Williams LLP, where he specialized in energy and utilities law. Joe earned his bachelor's in business and public administration.

Scott A. Eberwein**7/12/2016**

Scott Eberwein BS'97 has published a new book titled "Cash Your Investment," intended to inform college students about the tools they need to land their dream jobs after college. Scott earned his degree in economics.

Patricia E. Hill**7/5/2016**

Patricia Evridge Hill MA'84, PhD'90, a professor of history at San Jose State University, received the 2016 Meritorious Service Award from the SJSU College of Social Sciences. The award is given to a faculty member who has provided leadership in advancing the interests of faculty. For the past eight years, Patricia has served as the college's history department chair. She earned her master's and doctorate in humanities, the latter concentrated in the history of ideas.

Hill Johnson**9/6/2016**

Hill Johnson BS'01 has joined HSSK professional services firm as director of business valuation for the Dallas office. Hill has more than a decade of industry experience and has performed more than 300 business valuations to date across a wide range of specialties. In the new role, he will focus on serving business valuation and litigation consulting clients. Hill graduated with his bachelors in business administration and management.

Manohar R. Kesireddy**7/20/2016**

Manohar Kesireddy MSCS'02 was awarded the "CEO with HR Orientation Award" at the 24th World HDR Congress in Mumbai, India. The award recognizes a non-human resources (HR) organization leader who has supported and empowered effective HR strategies and initiatives. Manohar is the CEO of mRoads IT company in Plano, where he leads daily operations, product development and strategy. The computer science alumnus - who holds several patents in technology - founded the company mRoads with former UT Dallas classmates Rahul Kukreti BS'01, MSCS'02 and Prakash Nallagatla MS'98.

Phillip M. McDivitt**9/9/2016**

Phil McDivitt MBA'96 has been promoted to president and chief operating officer at Ascend Performance Materials, bringing nearly three decades of industry experience to the role. Prior to joining Ascend, Phil served in various management positions at Celanese Corp., a global technology and specialty materials company. Phil earned his degree in business administration.

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