

# ACCE\$\$\$ TO MONEY

## Meet the Presenters

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## Ashley Muffitt

Ashley Muffitt is Director of Square One at Mid-Continent Public Library, where she leads small business and workforce development initiatives serving entrepreneurs across the Kansas City region. A lifelong entrepreneur and community connector, Ashley brings experience from media, nonprofits, and her own business to help individuals identify opportunities, access tools, and build sustainable ventures. Her work focuses on early entrepreneurial identity, education, and partnerships that strengthen local economies and expand access to support.



## Blake Lappan

Blake Lappan is Founder and CEO of NoDwell, Inc. and Spot On Logistics, building technology that eliminates wasted dock time and returns productivity to drivers. A product-led operator and SCORE mentor, Blake combines frontline trucking experience with data-driven systems and AI to automate operations, improve margins, and create investor-ready financials. He is known for translating complex technical capability into practical, measurable outcomes for founders and logistics operators.



## Brad Zaun

Brad Zaun is the Great Plains Regional Administrator serving Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. He leverages over two decades of experience as a dedicated small business owner, community leader, and public servant. As former owner/operator of Zaun's Trustworthy Hardware and vice president of R and R Realty Marketing Group, he gained direct insight into the complexities and needs of entrepreneurs. Mr. Zaun's extensive public service includes terms on the City Council of Urbandale, Iowa, and as mayor from 1998 to 2004, followed by 20 years championing small businesses in the Iowa State Senate from 2005 to 2025.



## Brandy Archie

*Dr. Brandy Archie is an occupational therapist who is certified in Living in Place and is the founder of AskSAMIE—a digital platform designed to make daily living safer, easier, and more affordable for older adults and people with disabilities. With over 17 years of experience in home health and elder-focused care, Dr. Archie built AskSAMIE to bridge the gap between clinical guidance and real-world solutions by combining AI-powered recommendations, adaptive equipment, and virtual OT support. Her work is grounded in the belief that accessibility should be a right—instead of a privilege.*



## Chris Kovac

*Chris Kovac is the founder of kovac.ai and co-founder and President of the Kansas City AI Club, one of the largest AI-focused professional communities in the country. Through kovac.ai, Chris helps organizations adopt AI responsibly and effectively through executive and team training, current-state assessments, strategy development, and implementation roadmaps. He has worked with leading brands including Microsoft, 3M, Hallmark, and Sprint, as well as fast-growth challengers. Chris also serves on the UMKC Bloch School's Business Analytics Advisory Board and Marketing Advisory Council, and is known for translating AI potential into practical, business-ready outcomes.*



## Danielle DuPree

*Danielle DuPree is Executive Director of the Ennovation Center, a nonprofit business incubator supporting entrepreneurs in food, technology, science, and service industries. With a background in technology consulting, political consulting, and business development, Danielle strengthens regional ecosystems through partnerships with educators, civic leaders, and local governments. A dedicated community advocate, she champions inclusive entrepreneurship and equitable access to resources that help founders launch, grow, and succeed.*



## Deonne Christensen

*Deonne Christensen is President and CEO of Mazuma Credit Union, bringing more than 30 years of financial services leadership to a people-centered, values-driven organization. Known for her transformational leadership style, Deonne aligns culture, technology, and strategy to drive sustainable growth and meaningful community impact. She is a recognized industry and civic leader dedicated to advancing financial well-being, organizational excellence, and opportunities for individuals, families, and teams to thrive.*



## Jenifer Kwok

*Jenifer Kwok is the Chief People Officer at J29 Creative Group, a boutique marketing agency in Leawood, Kansas. Driven by a "people-first" philosophy, she focuses on fostering meaningful relationships and cultivating a culture where talent feels truly supported. Jenifer leads J29's internship initiatives, partnering with universities like K-State to help young adults transition into the workforce with confidence and real-world experience. Working alongside J29's leadership and board, she navigates the HR complexities of second-stage growth. Jenifer is deeply committed to the Kansas City community, offering mentorship to small business owners and bridging the gap between education and career-ready skills.*



## Jess Adams

*Jess Adams is the Senior Vice President and Commercial Team Lead for UMB Bank, where he leads a premier team of commercial banking professionals in Kansas City. With a career dedicated to managing complex banking relationships for top-tier local companies, Jess is recognized for his commitment to regional business growth and leadership. He holds a degree from Kansas State University and an MBA from Rockhurst University. Beyond his professional role, Jess is deeply involved in the community, notably supporting the Steps of Faith Foundation. A resident of Overland Park, he is an avid hunter, motorcyclist, and dedicated supporter of the Kansas City Chiefs.*



## Jill Hathaway

*Jill Hathaway is Regional Director of the Missouri Small Business Development Center at UMKC and Director of Entrepreneurial Education at the UMKC Innovation Center. A former multi-store retail entrepreneur, Jill brings firsthand business ownership experience to her work advising founders. Known as a connector, she helps entrepreneurs grow through strategic planning, education, and access to resources, while strengthening the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem across the Kansas City region.*



## Joe Adams

*Joe Adams is Founder of Invisyn Solutions, a technology consulting firm helping small businesses work smarter using AI and automation. With over 25 years of experience in enterprise technology, Joe focuses on practical, accessible solutions that save time and drive growth. His work spans digital marketing, workflow automation, and AI-powered research, empowering entrepreneurs to implement technology that delivers real-world results.*



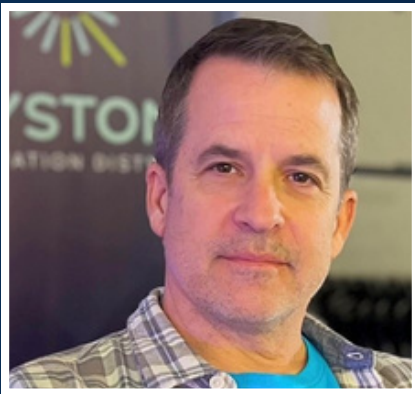
## Karen Squires Foelsch

*Karen Squires Foelsch is Co-Chair of SCORE Kansas City and Regional Director for SCORE's West Region. A former corporate senior vice president, she built and led large-scale business services organizations supporting hundreds of employees and significant revenue. Today, Karen educates entrepreneurs nationwide, specializing in business planning, customer discovery, and translating complex strategy into practical guidance that drives sustainable growth.*



## Karis Harrington

*Karis Harrington is Chief Operating Officer and Executive Board Member of Kansas City G.I.F.T. and Executive Director of The Next Paige Talent Agency. With over 20 years of experience in business development, she is a recognized advocate for economic empowerment, supporting small businesses and underserved communities. Karis is a sought-after speaker known for advising executives, collaborating with civic leaders, and strengthening the Black economic ecosystem through strategic leadership.*



## Kevin McGinnis

*Kevin is the President & CEO of the Keystone Community Corporation, a non-profit organization leading a bi-state regional initiative to plan, develop and operate a thriving innovation community in downtown Kansas City. Kevin is also the founder and president of Keystone Labs, a cross-industry innovation collaborative driving corporate engagement and collaboration across the regional ecosystem and helped co-found the Social Venture Studio, a four-month accelerator program focusing on helping social ventures scale their impact in the community.*



## Kimberly Beer

*Kimberly Beer, known as the Entrepreneurial Wise Woman, helps entrepreneurs create businesses that support the life they want to live. A speaker and advocate for women-owned businesses, Kimberly blends practical strategy with personal clarity. After leaving the corporate world, she dedicated her work to helping founders design sustainable, fulfilling ventures aligned with their values, priorities, and long-term goals.*



## LaTasha Jacobs

*LaTasha Jacobs is Executive Director of Pathway Financial Education, bringing more than a decade of commercial banking and community development experience to expanding access and equity. Raised in Wyandotte County, she is deeply committed to serving under-resourced communities through financial education and technical assistance. Her leadership focuses on breaking cycles of generational poverty and empowering individuals and families to build long-term financial stability.*



## Lauren Conaway

*Lauren Conaway is a multidisciplinary leader and founder and CEO of InnovateHER KC, an inclusive leadership community supporting more than 8,000 women and gender minorities across the Kansas City metro. With a background spanning operations, marketing, sales, and program management, Lauren began her career with global organizations including Hilton Hotels and Boeing before founding Ideative Creative, a boutique digital marketing agency. A former host of the Startup Hustle Podcast, one of Apple's top entrepreneurship podcasts, Lauren is a passionate advocate for ecosystem building, inclusive innovation, and people-centered leadership that removes barriers and drives meaningful community impact.*



## Liley Villazan

*Liley Villazan is Founder and CEO of Magnolia Beauty Academy, the only nail-focused school in the Kansas City metro area. With nearly a decade of teaching experience, she empowers beauty professionals through hands-on training, mentorship, and entrepreneurship support. Liley is passionate about expanding access to education and economic opportunity for women and minority entrepreneurs while strengthening community health and local business development.*



## Maliha Khan

*Maliha Khan is Founder and CEO of Khanect the Dots, a strategy-first marketing consultancy bridging brand clarity and execution. A nationally recognized speaker, she helps organizations navigate marketing strategy, creative design, and AI-driven tools with confidence. Maliha is known for making marketing practical, inspiring leaders to work smarter, design intentionally, and stay authentic in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.*



## Maria Meyers

*Maria Meyers is Executive Director of the UMKC Innovation Center and founder of SourceLink and KCSOURCELINK. A national leader in entrepreneurial ecosystem development, she has helped connect thousands of entrepreneurs to resources that support business growth and innovation. Maria's work transforms fragmented support systems into cohesive networks that accelerate startups, strengthen communities, and create jobs nationwide.*



## Mickey Parker

*Mickey Parker, CPA, is Owner and CEO of Accefund, a company helping aspiring business owners use pre-tax retirement funds to start or buy a business without penalties. With decades of experience as a controller and CFO, Mickey brings deep financial expertise and practical guidance. He is dedicated to making business ownership more accessible through compliant, tax-efficient funding strategies.*



## Regina Sosa

*Regina Sosa Valdovinos is the Director of Keystone Angels, a professionally managed investor network fueling high-growth startups across the Midwest. Since joining in February 2026, Regina has spearheaded investor recruitment and deal sourcing to close the early-stage funding gap for promising founders. A Venture For America fellow, Regina previously served as Capital Access Manager at the Economic Development Corporation of Kansas City. There, she launched the local Kiva program and helped over 100 small businesses secure vital startup capital. With a background in VC due diligence and ecosystem building, she is dedicated to connecting accredited investors with high-potential opportunities to strengthen the regional economy.*



## Steve Rich

*Steve Rich is a seasoned business operator and SCORE Certified Mentor with more than four decades of experience in the automotive aftermarket and small business management. As Chief Operating Officer for a multi-location warehouse distributor, he led growth from \$1 million to over \$25 million in sales, expanding operations nationwide and launching successful private-label products sold internationally. Steve brings deep expertise in operations, finance, sales, and systems implementation. As a SCORE mentor, he has worked with nearly 100 clients, helping entrepreneurs build practical business plans, budgets, and strategies that support sustainable, long-term growth.*