

# Women in Tech North America Awards 2025

## 1. Aspiring Teen Award

Recognizes young girls (13-21) with a passion for technology, celebrating their innovative projects, tech skills, and potential to inspire peers. This award encourages young women to pursue STEM careers and acknowledges their early achievements in tech.

## 2. Best Ally Award

Honors individuals of all genders who actively support and advocate for women in technology. This award highlights efforts in creating inclusive environments, championing gender equity initiatives, and promoting diversity within the tech community through tangible actions and advocacy.

## 3. Most Impactful Initiative Award

Recognizes programs or initiatives that significantly promote diversity and inclusion in tech. This category focuses on measurable impacts, sustainable change, and initiatives that empower women and underrepresented groups in the tech industry.

## 4. Most Disruptive Award

This award recognizes a woman who has made a significant impact in the technology sector through groundbreaking innovation. The recipient has introduced revolutionary ideas, products, or services that challenge the status quo and drive positive change in the industry.

## 5. Woman in Web3 Award

Acknowledges women making notable contributions to Web3 technologies, such as blockchain, decentralized applications, and cryptocurrency. This award celebrates leadership and innovation in the rapidly evolving field of decentralized technologies.

## 6. Start-Up Award

Celebrates women-led technology startups that have demonstrated market viability and growth potential. This award recognizes innovative companies that are actively generating revenue and in the scaling phase of their development. Nominees should showcase sustainable business models, customer traction, and the potential for significant market impact under female leadership.

## 7. Tech Diplomacy Award

This award recognizes a woman who excels in connecting technology with international relations. The recipient demonstrates exceptional skill in fostering global cooperation and partnerships in the tech sector.

## **8. Global Leadership Award**

This award honors a woman who has demonstrated exceptional leadership on a global scale in the technology sector. The recipient has made significant contributions to advancing the role of women in tech worldwide, inspiring and empowering others across cultures and Borders.

## **9. Lifetime Achievement Award**

The most prestigious category, recognizing a woman's lifelong dedication to the tech industry. This award highlights her achievements, influence, and long-term impact on the field, celebrating a career of sustained excellence and leadership in technology.

## ASPIRING TEEN AWARD

*Recognizes young women (13-21) with a passion for technology, celebrating their innovative projects, tech skills, and potential to inspire peers. This award encourages young women to pursue STEM careers and acknowledges their early achievements in tech.*

*Age Requirement: Candidates must be a maximum of 21 years old at the time of application*

### **Name: Jahnavi Kari**

**Organization:** The Draumur Initiative, Virginia Tech, UNC Charlotte, Diphda Medical

**Position:** Founder, Researcher, Advocate

Jahnavi Kari, a 16-year-old innovator, integrates technology, medicine, and education to drive inclusive impact. As Founder of The Draumur Initiative, she combats gender and diversity gaps in cybersecurity, empowering over 1,000 students globally. At Diphda Medical, she co-leads health literacy programs that reached 10,000+ people. Her research spans computational biochemistry at Virginia Tech and AI-driven opioid discourse studies at UNC Charlotte. She also contributes to open science through bioprinting simulations and space multiomics pipelines. Recognized as a National Cybersecurity Scholar, Databricks Scholarship Awardee, and TechGirls Ambassador, she is certified in 10+ programming languages. She also represents North Carolina at the National Youth Science Camp. Jahnavi's work emphasizes ethical innovation, youth mentorship, and community responsibility, creating measurable change across medicine, cybersecurity, and STEM education. Her vision highlights technology's power to connect people and foster inclusive, interdisciplinary innovation for lasting global progress.

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### **Name – Nisa Thomas**

**Organization:** Del Norte High School, Decode Camps, Project 8p Foundation

**Position:** Student, Founder, Intern

Nisa Thomas, a driven student leader, merges technical skill with social impact. She founded Decode Camps to introduce children to coding, expanding into a partnership with the San Diego County Library. As a Global Scratch Advisory Board member, she influenced the platform used by 140 million youth and became the first student to co-host the international Scratch Conference. Her innovations include ProsperTEEN, an AI mental health app featured in a TEDx talk, Cyber Smart Kids for online safety, and EcoHabit for sustainable living. She led an AI-powered robotic flower project at UCSD and contributes research at Project 8p Foundation on rare disorders. Beyond projects, Nisa founded "Brave, Not Perfect," is Vice President of her school's SWE chapter, and serves on the Principal's Advisory Board. Recognized with NCWIT, SWE, Naval Horizons, and science fair awards, she demonstrates visionary leadership, technical depth, and measurable community impact.

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**Name – Toluwakitan (Kitan) Akinsola****Organization:** Digital Harmony**Position:** Founder, Student Technologist, Digital Ethics Advocate

Kitan Akinsola, 17, is a Nigerian-American technologist, digital ethics advocate, and founder of Digital Harmony. Her initiative develops an app to support digital wellness, manage screen time, and protect children from online manipulation. Beyond the app, Digital Harmony is a movement challenging harmful AI use, environmental impacts of supercomputing, and deepfake accountability. Kitan leads workshops for youth and seniors on phishing scams, online safety, and deepfake detection. She is a MITES scholar, Bank of America Student Leader, NCWIT Awardee, and Carnegie Young Leader. At school, she leads Best Buddies, Black Student Union, and mentors younger students while self-teaching Python and SQL. Her advocacy extends to legislative campaigns for ethical AI and protection of creative industries. With aspirations to become Chief of Cybersecurity at the U.S. Department of Defense, Kitan is committed to ensuring technology serves communities ethically and equitably.

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**Name – April Surac****Organization:** NeuraSensa**Position:** Founder & Creative Director

April Surac, Founder of NeuraSensa, creates sensory-responsive designs for individuals with autism, Alzheimer's, and sensory challenges. Inspired by her sister's experiences, she launched NeuraSensa in 2024, building textile installations that respond to touch, sound, and motion through fabrics, sensors, and vibration motors. These installations have been exhibited across Florida and engaged 10,000+ attendees. April also established a statewide Sponsor-a-Kit program distributing sensory kits to underserved families and schools, and led workshops with groups like UCP Central Florida. In parallel, she developed Bookoli, an AI literacy tool identifying reading difficulties such as dyslexia, reaching 150+ students in its pilot. Recognized by NCWIT and featured in national media, April blends design, empathy, and innovation to support inclusion and accessibility. Her mission emphasizes building lasting tools that reflect dignity and need, advancing neurotech and education for marginalized communities.

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**Name – Emily Fetco****Organization:** Ultimate Tech, NeuroRx, McGill University**Position:** Student, Intern, Developer

Emily Fetco, 15, is a rising technologist excelling in AI, biomedical imaging, and software development. As a Front-End JavaScript Developer intern at Ultimate Tech, she builds applications with React and Node.js. Previously, she interned at NeuroRx and McGill University, where she developed deep learning models to reconstruct MRI images, earning recognition at The Neuro's 40th Anniversary Symposium. Her work on a U-Net pipeline for neurological disease detection was praised by senior scientists. Emily also created Avoid Infection, a public health app awarded by Quebec's FEED, and won consecutive Technovation Montreal Hackathons. She earned the Prix Femmes+ en Tech at BrébeufHX

and published research on medical imaging. A top student at Collège Français, she holds certifications in neural networks and is fluent in Python, TensorFlow, and React Native. Beyond achievements, she advocates for women in STEM through workshops at Google, Microsoft, and Technovation programs.

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## **BEST ALLY AWARD**

*Honors individuals of all genders who actively support and advocate for women in technology. This award highlights efforts in creating inclusive environments, championing gender equity initiatives, and promoting diversity within the tech community through tangible actions and advocacy.*

**Name: Geneviève Taurand**

**Organization:** Vooban

**Position:** AI Team Lead

Geneviève Taurand is AI Team Lead at Vooban and a strong advocate for equity in tech. Beginning her career in electrical engineering, she transitioned into AI leadership at Alworx and Bentley Systems, managing global product teams and driving digital twin innovations. At Bentley, she co-founded the Product Management Community of Practice and championed programs like Women at Bentley and OpenAbilities, earning the DE&I Champion Award. Beyond corporate leadership, she has shaped national outreach as a board member of Le Code des Filles, expanding tech literacy and co-developing an inclusion guide now adopted by companies. She frequently delivers STEM workshops, mentors through Women in AI Canada, and partners with organizations like Monday Girl to elevate women in technology. Geneviève's career blends technical expertise with advocacy, creating environments where women are supported, represented, and empowered to succeed. Her consistent allyship focuses on mentorship, accessibility, and systemic inclusion.

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**Name: Mary Killelea**

**Organization:** Founder of 2B Bolder

**Position:** 2B Bolder

Mary Killelea is the founder and host of *2B Bolder*, a top 3% global podcast amplifying women in tech and business. Since 2019, she has interviewed over 125 leaders, offering evergreen resources and mentorship that have reached 22,000+ listeners worldwide. Drawing on 20 years at Intel leading multimillion-dollar marketing campaigns, Mary uses her corporate expertise to guide women navigating male-dominated industries. Her platform highlights women in AI and emerging technologies, including Intel's Ria Cheruvu and Amazon's Parmida Beigi, ensuring diverse voices are heard. Beyond the podcast, Mary mentors through Gotara, Lean In Circles, and the Women at Intel Network. She also speaks at events such as Portland State University and the Digital Marketing Summit, inspiring confidence and resilience. Through candid storytelling, career coaching, and

resource-building, Mary connects authentically with women, encouraging visibility and boldness. Her work transforms allyship into actionable empowerment across technology and business.

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**Name: Mike Amato**

**Organization:** Cimarron Advisory, Barclays, Washington Mutual

**Position:** Executive Coach, Author, Speaker

Mike Amato is an executive coach, author, and speaker with 40+ years of transformational leadership, specializing in advancing women executives. Rising from an entry-level role at Washington Mutual to President of its Retail Division, he drove \$64B in growth and scaled assets from \$10B to \$80B. Later, as Executive Director at Barclays, he led 30,000 employees through one of the largest cultural turnarounds in banking history, raising engagement from 64% to 92% and boosting team output by 244%. Today, through Cimarron Advisory, he coaches mid-to-senior women leaders, addressing systemic barriers in male-dominated industries. His book, *The Better Way to Win*, demonstrates how prioritizing people drives profitability. Mike's allyship goes beyond symbolic gestures: he implements equity-driven frameworks, creates inclusive environments, and mentors women to senior leadership. His record of cultural transformation and focused advocacy makes him a powerful force for sustainable gender equity in business and technology.

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**Name: Allen Lau**

**Organization:** Wattpad,

**Position:** Co-Founder, CEO

Allen Lau, co-founder and CEO of Wattpad, exemplifies male allyship through systemic action in Canadian tech. Under his leadership, Wattpad became one of the world's most gender-diverse tech companies, with women making up the majority of employees and holding leadership roles at every level. His approach emphasizes structural equity: implementing bias-free hiring, conducting annual diversity surveys with 90% staff participation, and dedicating resources to DEI teams. He believes allyship means listening and learning, rather than speaking over women, and embeds this philosophy across Wattpad's culture. Beyond the company, Allen contributes nationally as a member of the 30% Club Canada, advocating for gender parity in corporate leadership. His consistent, decade-long commitment demonstrates that equity requires measurable change, not performative gestures. By prioritizing representation, accountability, and systemic reform, Allen has shown how male allies in leadership can transform tech workplaces into spaces of inclusion and opportunity.

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**Name: Daryl Hammett**

**Organization:** Amazon

**Position:** General Manager, Global Demand ML/AI & Operations

Daryl Hammett, General Manager at Amazon, is recognized for his advocacy in advancing diversity and inclusion in technology leadership. His work emphasizes creating pathways for underrepresented groups in ML/AI and operations at a global scale. Through his leadership, he champions equitable hiring practices, inclusive team-building, and mentorship opportunities for women in technology. While leading operational excellence at Amazon, he has also engaged in community efforts to highlight diversity gaps and drive organizational accountability. His allyship is demonstrated through visible sponsorship of women leaders, helping them secure recognition and advancement in traditionally male-dominated technical roles. As a senior executive, Daryl leverages his influence to challenge biases, encourage diverse representation in leadership pipelines, and promote equitable growth opportunities. His combination of corporate leadership and advocacy highlights the impact of senior allies in shaping more inclusive workplaces within global technology enterprises.

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## **MOST DISRUPTIVE AWARD**

*This award recognizes a woman who has made a significant impact in the technology sector through groundbreaking innovation. The recipient has introduced revolutionary ideas, products, or services that challenge the status quo and drive positive change in the industry. This individual demonstrates exceptional creativity, risk-taking, and leadership in pushing boundaries and reshaping the technological landscape.*

### **Alda Mizaku – United States**

**Organization:** Children's National Hospital

**Position:** VP, Chief Data and AI Officer

Alda Mizaku leads enterprise data, analytics, and AI strategy at Children's National Hospital. She is building an enterprise cloud data platform to unify hospital data and enable research and clinical decision-making. Her focus includes pediatric disease detection, diagnosis, and operational efficiency, such as AI-based ambient listening for clinical notes. Previously, she spent 11 years at Mercy Health System, driving initiatives that reduced hospital stays, improved efficiency, and enhanced patient outcomes. Alda emphasizes ethical AI, having implemented an AI acceptable use policy and governance committees. She also mentors young people in STEM through FIRST Robotics. Her leadership integrates data-driven care, operational improvements, and mentorship, making her a key figure in advancing AI-driven pediatric healthcare.

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### **Maryam Shanechi – United States**

**Organization:** University of Southern California

**Position:** Founding Director, USC Center for Neurotechnology

Maryam Shanechi is a professor at USC in Electrical and Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Biomedical Engineering, and Neuroscience. She directs the USC Center for Neurotechnology, where her lab develops closed-loop neurotechnologies and studies brain

dynamics for applications in neurological and mental health conditions. Her work advances brain-machine interfaces by decoding and controlling neural activity. She has received multiple awards, including the NIH Director's New Innovator Award, NSF CAREER Award, ONR Young Investigator Award, and recognition as a Blavatnik National Awards Finalist in 2023 and 2024. She is an IEEE Fellow and has been named among MIT Technology Review's Top 35 Innovators Under 35 and Popular Science's Brilliant 10. Her research combines engineering, AI, and neuroscience to create technologies with clinical impact.

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### **Erin Bradner – United States**

**Organization:** Autodesk Inc.

**Position:** Director of Strategic Foresight

Erin Bradner directs Strategic Foresight at Autodesk, guiding research on emerging technologies and their impact on organizations. She co-founded Autodesk's Generative Design initiative and previously led the Autodesk Robotics Lab, advancing reinforcement learning and adaptive robotics. Her work includes collaborations with NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab and Lawrence Livermore National Labs. Erin holds patents in adaptive robotic assembly, design optimization, and advanced manufacturing. She also serves as an Adjunct Professor in Strategic Foresight at the California College of the Arts. With a PhD in Information & Computer Science from UC Irvine, she has published widely in human-computer interaction and design. She has been recognized with ACM's Research Impact Award and inducted into UC Irvine's Hall of Fame. Erin also contributes as a board member for Build Change, focusing on disaster-resistant housing.

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### **Kyler Cheatham – United States**

**Organization:** The Confluenial

**Position:** Chief Performance Officer

Kyler Cheatham is Chief Performance Officer at The Confluenial and founder of River.AI, a platform transforming ERP software selection. River.AI provides unbiased, instant ERP shortlists, replacing costly consulting engagements with a transparent, AI-driven approach. The platform's HatchChart Database encapsulates decades of ERP consulting knowledge. Kyler's work disrupts traditional vendor-biased processes by offering free access to insights, saving organizations significant time and cost. She advocates for inclusivity in enterprise tech, coaching women entering the field and serving as a panelist and moderator for global initiatives on AI and executive growth. Recognized as a 40 Under 40 Award winner and 2025 #empowHERaccess Global Prestige Awards Finalist, Kyler emphasizes values-driven innovation. Her efforts challenge entrenched industry models while empowering organizations to focus on implementation quality and cultural alignment.

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### **Linda Yao – United States**

**Organization:** Lenovo

**Position:** Vice President and General Manager, Hybrid Cloud & AI Solutions

Linda Yao leads Lenovo's Hybrid Cloud and AI Solutions within its \$8 billion Solutions and Services Group (SSG). She is driving the company's shift from a hardware-centric model to AI-powered services, advancing Lenovo's Hybrid AI strategy. Since joining Lenovo in 2018, she has held roles in M&A, business development, and served as Chief of Staff for SSG before her current role. Linda established Lenovo's AI Center of Excellence and guides the AI Services practice, focusing on responsible, secure, and impactful AI adoption. Her work includes AI-powered communication solutions for ALS patients developed with the Scott-Morgan Foundation. She has appeared on podcasts and global stages such as Web Summit, highlighting ethical AI and human-centered innovation. Her career spans roles at IBM and Boeing, where she built data science teams and analytics programs. She is recognized for advancing responsible AI and empowering women in technology

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## **MOST IMPACTFUL INITIATIVE AWARD**

*Recognizes programs or initiatives that significantly promote diversity and inclusion in tech. This category focuses on measurable impacts, sustainable change, and initiatives that empower women and underrepresented groups in the tech industry.*

### **CGI Les EssenTielles – Canada**

**Organization:** CGI

**Position:** Les EssenTielles Committee

Founded in 2011 by CGI partners in Montréal, Les EssenTielles fosters inclusion and empowerment for over 3,400 employees. The initiative promotes mentorship, networking, professional growth, and recruitment support for women in tech. Its vision emphasizes equity and representation, while its mission focuses on creativity, innovation, and retention of women talent. The latest edition, themed “*Au-delà des barrières – Inspirer, Oser, Transformer,*” featured diverse storytelling, reconciliation efforts, and bold leadership messages. Post-event evaluations show 64.6% of participants committed to concrete actions like mentoring and inclusion initiatives. Attendees rated event content 4.68/5 for relevance. Continuous feedback integration has expanded interactivity and spotlighted more women role models. The initiative blends personal and collective growth, creating safe spaces for transformation. Les EssenTielles is not just an event but a movement within CGI, inspiring cultural change, driving inclusion, and modeling equity in technology.

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### **Reema Rachel Khithani – Canada**

**Organization:** The Hira Collective

**Position:** Founder, Visionary and CEO

The Hira Collective is a Canadian wellness tech platform founded in 2025 by Reema Rachel Khithani. It connects users with trauma-informed, culturally rooted practitioners while centering equity and ancestral integrity. The initiative has vetted 250+ practitioner

applications with a 17% acceptance rate, onboarding 36+ paid members and facilitating 100+ bookings in its first 12 weeks. Built with input from 900+ participants, Hira's design prioritizes trust, cultural alignment, and inclusion. It has hosted sold-out events, been selected as a Web Summit Impact Startup, and featured in BetaKit and Bold Journey. Its impact includes redistributing wealth, supporting historically excluded practitioners, and replacing exploitative wellness models. By rejecting 83% of applicants through strict vetting, Hira ensures ethical practice and safety. More than a platform, it is a systemic intervention reshaping wellness tech through community-informed standards, ethical infrastructure, and measurable outcomes.

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### **Brenda Okorogba – Canada**

**Organization:** #LearnwithBren Digital Initiative / Momentswithbren Consulting

**Position:** Learning Experience Designer

Brenda Okorogba leads the #LearnwithBren initiative, empowering 15,000+ learners in 30+ countries through digital learning, equity-focused design, and scholarship mobilization. Her platforms have helped secure \$5 billion in scholarships and grants and developed tools like the \$446B Global Scholarship & Funding Directory. She created the College and Career Readiness Program on Telegram for low-bandwidth users, offering adaptive AI-driven career and education support. Brenda has trained over 400 racialized women through federally funded programs, boosting employment readiness by 90% and generating \$700K in community income. She co-designed Ottawa's Social Enterprise Program, doubling enrollment and engaging marginalized youth in tech-driven ventures. Internationally, she advised organizations in Africa on gender-responsive digital solutions through Global Affairs Canada. Brenda's advocacy with YWCA Canada influenced a \$1.25M investment in women's employment programs. Recognized by DMZ, WCT, and RBC, her work demonstrates measurable impact in equity, digital inclusion, and social mobility.

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### **Sue Heilbronner – United States**

**Organization:** MergeLane

**Position:** CEO

Sue Heilbronner leads MergeLane, a venture fund and accelerator investing in startups and VC funds with at least one female leader. Since 2015, MergeLane has invested in 54 companies with a portfolio valued at 2.5x the original investment. Its portfolio boasts an 81% success rate, five major acquisitions, and resilience against industry failure rates. Beyond funding, MergeLane built an ecosystem of 300 mentors and 600 investors, pioneering the "funderator" model—combining investment with conscious leadership training. Its programs have transformed founder development, eliminating gossip cultures and improving innovation in portfolio companies. MergeLane addresses the systemic issue of women receiving less than 3% of VC funding by proving diversity-driven investments deliver superior returns. It also raised a \$20M Highway Fund to scale its mission. By integrating leadership philosophy, ecosystem support, and measurable impact, MergeLane redefined venture capital's approach to women-led startups.

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### **Kirsten Koppang Telford – Canada**

**Organization:** The Forum

**Position:** CEO

The Forum is a national Canadian charity supporting women entrepreneurs with mentorship, education, and community programs. Under CEO Kirsten Koppang Telford's leadership, The Forum serves women, trans-femme, and non-binary entrepreneurs. In the past year, it reached 56,000+ people across 219 communities and directly supported 2,700+ participants in 12 provinces and territories. Since its founding 22 years ago, The Forum has empowered over 18,000 women entrepreneurs through flagship programs like the Odlum Brown Forum Pitch, the Forum Mentor Program, and the Forum E-Series. Its programming fosters entrepreneurship skills, business growth, and network-building for diverse participants across Canada. The Forum's initiatives emphasize accessibility, inclusion, and tailored resources for entrepreneurs at all stages. By creating opportunities for women to pitch, scale, and grow businesses, it contributes to stronger representation and resilience in Canada's innovation ecosystem.

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## **WOMAN IN WEB3 AWARD**

*Acknowledges women making notable contributions to Web3 technologies, such as blockchain, decentralized applications, and cryptocurrency. This award celebrates leadership and innovation in the rapidly evolving field of decentralized technologies.*

### **Emily Ekshian - United States**

**Organization:** Crypto Council for Innovation (CCI)

**Position:** Communications Lead, Global Policy & Crypto Impact Research

Emily Ekshian serves as Communications Lead at the Crypto Council for Innovation, leading global storytelling and advocacy campaigns focused on financial inclusion, climate resilience, and digital asset regulation. She holds a Bachelor's in Political Economy and Media Studies from UC Berkeley and Master of Science in Journalism from Columbia University. Ekshian spearheaded initiatives including "Blockchain for Social Impact" and "Climate Tech Month," driving regulatory education for U.S. lawmakers. She led strategic partnerships with Mercy Corps Ventures on blockchain applications in Kenya and India, and launched The Builders Report amplifying diverse crypto founders. As Professional Fellow at FGV Europe, she researches digital currencies and CBDCs. She founded MediaScope International, co-hosting Global Affairs Briefings with the New York Center for Foreign Policy Affairs. Ekshian serves as WEF Global Shaper, Lead Regional Ambassador for Association for Women in Crypto, and develops GlobaFi, a blockchain remittance platform for migrant communities.

### **Staci Warden - United States**

**Organization:** Algorand Foundation

**Position:** CEO

Staci Warden serves as CEO of the Algorand Foundation, bringing over twenty years of experience across global finance, capital markets, and blockchain innovation. She previously

led Global Market Development Practice at the Milken Institute and held senior positions at J.P. Morgan, Nasdaq, U.S. Treasury Department, and Harvard Institute for International Development. Under her leadership, Algorand achieved carbon-negative status as an energy-efficient, low-cost layer-1 blockchain. The Foundation powers applications including 123Carbon for shipping carbon insets, Wholechain for food supply chain traceability, and digital aid disbursements to disaster-affected communities. Named to Forbes 50 Over 50: Investment list (2023) and Innovate Finance's Standout 45 Women in Fintech Powerlist (2025). She sits on boards of Global Blockchain Business Council and Energy for Growth Hub, chairs Rwandan Capital Market Authority board, and serves on UN Capital Development Fund and European Parliament advisory committees.

### **Anisha Reddy - United States**

**Organization:** Roblox

**Position:** Lead Counsel

Anisha Reddy serves as Lead Counsel at Roblox, focusing on online safety, content moderation, and platform governance. She brings specialized expertise in youth and student privacy issues from her previous role as Policy Counsel at the Future of Privacy Forum, a DC-based non-profit think tank. Her work concentrates on protecting vulnerable populations in digital environments through regulatory compliance and ethical platform development. Reddy's background combines legal expertise with deep understanding of privacy regulations affecting minors and educational settings. Her focus on content moderation and platform governance addresses critical challenges in creating safer online experiences for users, particularly young people. Through her work at Roblox, she contributes to developing responsible policies and practices for one of the world's largest gaming and social platforms used by millions of children and teenagers globally.

### **Denelle Dixon - United States**

**Organization:** Stellar Development Foundation

**Position:** CEO

Denelle Dixon leads the Stellar Development Foundation as CEO, building blockchain technology for global financial inclusion. She previously served as Chief Operating Officer and Corporate Secretary at Mozilla Corporation, spearheading legal, policy, business, and operations for open web advocacy. Dixon orchestrated groundbreaking humanitarian blockchain applications, partnering with UNHCR to create the world's first large-scale blockchain aid distribution system, delivering aid in under 3 minutes and saving \$12 million annually. Under her leadership, Stellar partnered with MoneyGram, Mastercard, Circle, and government entities for CBDCs. She successfully launched Soroban smart contracts with \$3.2 million in community funding. Named to Forbes 50 Over 50 list (2023), she testified before US House Committee on Financial Services and led blockchain discussions at World Economic Forum 2024. Dixon's initiatives directly address the 1.7 billion unbanked globally through cross-border remittances and emerging market access.

### **Elena Sinelnikova - Canada**

**Organization:** Metis and CryptoChicks

**Position:** Co-Founder

Elena Sinelnikova co-founded CryptoChicks, a non-profit making blockchain education accessible for women across 56 countries, and MetisDAO Foundation, creating Ethereum

Layer 2 infrastructure solutions. She holds a Master's in Computer Science from National University of Electronic Technology in Russia, specializing in full-stack programming, cybersecurity, and blockchain technology. CryptoChicks, founded in Toronto in 2017, expanded globally through hackathons, workshops, and educational conferences, helping thousands of women learn blockchain and build careers. As co-founder of Metis Foundation, she led development of fast, secure, low-cost enterprise-grade transaction support. Under her leadership, METIS achieved \$500M TVL within eight weeks of launching their Andromeda Layer 2 network. Winner of Canada's Top Woman in Blockchain Award and Top Women in FinTech recognition, she continues as international speaker and blockchain educator, championing diversity and opportunity for women in Web3 through upcoming appearances at ETHWomen 2025 and Blockchain Futurist Conference.

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## **START-UP AWARD**

*Celebrates women-led technology startups that have demonstrated market viability and growth potential. This award recognizes innovative companies that are actively generating revenue and in the scaling phase of their development. Nominees should showcase sustainable business models, customer traction, and the potential for significant market impact under female leadership.*

### **Navrina Singh**

Organization: Credo AI

Position: Founder + CEO

Navrina Singh is the Founder and CEO of Credo AI, a Governance SaaS platform for Responsible AI in enterprises. She brings 18+ years of experience in Enterprise SaaS, AI and Mobile from leadership roles at Microsoft and Qualcomm. Singh serves on the U.S. Department of Commerce National Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee (NAIAC), advising the President and National AI Initiative Office. She previously served as executive board member of Mozilla Foundation and is a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader, participating in their AI future council for responsible AI policies and regulations. Singh holds a Master's degree and has established herself as a key voice in AI governance and responsible technology implementation across government and enterprise sectors.

### **Amanda Levay**

Organization: Redactable

Position: Founder & CEO

Amanda Levay founded Redactable in 2008, creating an AI-powered platform for permanent data redaction from documents with no recoverable traces. Her inspiration came from personal frustration as a loan consultant handling confidential documents, discovering that traditional redaction methods didn't actually remove sensitive information. Under her

leadership, Redactable has secured significant contracts including with the U.S. Air Force and serves government agencies, law firms, and enterprises in high-stakes environments. The platform transforms tedious, error-prone redaction into fast, accurate, and compliant processes. Levay's technical expertise focuses on explainable AI mechanisms while maintaining ethical technology principles. Her solution reduces compliance risks, protects sensitive data, and streamlines document workflows for thousands of users across various industries.

### **Fiona Bao**

Organization: GENPULSE

Position: Founder + CEO

Fiona Bao is the founder and CEO of GENPULSE, developing clinical-grade AI diagnostics in women's wellness through Lushair, the world's first at-home hair and scalp analyzer. With bioengineering background from Zhejiang University and growth experience at Airwallex, she led GENPULSE to an \$8M post-money pre-seed round. Her team processed 30,000+ dermatological datasets to achieve 90%+ diagnostic accuracy, generating \$500K ARR in enterprise contracts. Lushair delivers insights across sixteen scalp and hair metrics in seconds, serving over 20,000 users across 28 countries with 100,000+ scans completed. The platform includes B2B API services and white-label SaaS offerings for salons, retailers, and beauty brands, backed by partnerships with NUS and Asia-listed companies.

### **Shivangi Khurania**

Organization: Deso Group Inc (Doing Business As - Udeso)

Position: CEO/Founder

Shivangi Khurania is CEO and Founder of Udeso, a compliance technology platform digitizing regulatory processes for small and medium businesses. She addresses the gap where traditional compliance solutions are too complex and expensive for SMBs. Khurania is a member of Forbes Business Council and Fast Company Executive Board, authoring expert articles on compliance technology. She received recognition from California State Senator and Las Vegas Mayor for innovation contributions. Her achievements include Gold Stevie Award for Excellence in Technology - Executive of the Year (2024) and Gold Globe Award for Innovation in Business Information Apps. Featured in Business Insider, MSN, and Hackernoon, she's recognized for pioneering RegTech innovation. Her platform democratizes compliance technology access, removing barriers that limit small business growth and market entry.

### **Lianna Genovese**

Organization: ImaginAble Solutions

Position: CEO & Founder

Lianna Genovese founded ImaginAble Solutions in 2019, a HealthTech startup empowering individuals with disabilities through assistive technology. Inspired by meeting Elissa, a woman with Cerebral Palsy who lost the ability to paint, Genovese developed Guided Hands®, an award-winning patented device that restores independence and creativity to those with limited fine motor function. The device enables individuals with conditions like Cerebral Palsy, arthritis, dystonia, and stroke recovery to write, paint, draw, and interact with digital devices. With accessories including the Adaptations Kit and Joystick Handpiece, Guided Hands® serves users globally across healthcare, education, and recreation settings.

The startup combines engineering, human-centered design, and compassion to bridge accessibility gaps and redefine possibilities for people with disabilities.

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## TECH DIPLOMACY AWARD

*This award recognizes a woman who demonstrates exceptional leadership in tech diplomacy—the practice of international relations and negotiations on global digital policy and emerging technologies. The recipient excels in bridging governments, industry, academia, and civil society to foster coordinated technology governance.*

### **Eileen Donahoe - United States**

**Organization:** Stanford University Global Digital Policy Incubator

**Position:** Executive Director

Eileen Donahoe serves as Executive Director of Stanford University's Global Digital Policy Incubator. Her work focuses on developing frameworks for global digital governance and technology policy. She brings expertise in international relations and digital policy to address challenges at the intersection of technology and diplomacy. Her role involves leading initiatives that shape how technology policy is developed and implemented globally, with particular attention to governance structures and diplomatic approaches to emerging technologies.

### **Nicol Turner Lee - United States**

**Organization:** Brookings Institute

**Position:** Senior Fellow, Center for Technology Innovation

Nicol Turner Lee is a senior fellow and director of the Center for Technology Innovation at Brookings Institute. She founded the AI Equity Lab in 2023, focusing on inclusive and ethical AI development across the U.S. and Global South. Her research examines technology's intersection with social justice, particularly in universal communications access and AI model design. Turner Lee authored "Digitally Invisible" (2024), addressing how internet access gaps create digital inequality. She serves on federal advisory committees including the FCC's Communications Equity and Diversity Council and DHS AI Safety Board, and contributes to major media outlets on technology policy issues.

### **Christina Steinbrecher-Pfandt - United States**

**Organization:** Tech Diplomacy Network

**Position:** CEO

Christina Steinbrecher-Pfandt founded and leads the Tech Diplomacy Network, a Silicon Valley-based initiative connecting diplomats, technologists, and industry leaders to address geopolitical implications of emerging technologies. Born in Kazakhstan with international training in business and art history, she transitioned from cultural platforms to co-founding a blockchain startup in 2019. Her network facilitates industry roundtables and collaborations with organizations including the World Economic Forum and UN. She is a 2025 Aspen

Science & Technology Policy Fellow and pursuing a PhD in Science and Technology Studies, researching hybrid sovereignty and private technology firms' role in governance.

### **Rebecca Finlay - Canada**

**Organization:** Partnership on AI

**Position:** CEO

Rebecca Finlay serves as CEO of the Partnership on AI, overseeing the organization's mission and strategy to ensure AI developments advance positive outcomes for people and society. She works with a global community of partners to guide responsible AI development. Prior to PAI, she was VP of Engagement and Public Policy at CIFAR, where she founded their global knowledge mobilization practice in 2014. She launched CIFAR's AI & Society program in 2017, supporting international working groups on AI's societal implications. Her experience spans bringing together experts from industry, civil society, healthcare, and government to accelerate research impact.

### **Merry Walker - United States**

**Organization:** US Department of State/White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

**Position:** Senior Policy Advisor for International Science and Technology

Merry Walker is a diplomat, engineer, and entrepreneur with two decades of experience across government and private sectors. Currently Senior Policy Advisor at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, she leads international engagement on critical technologies including AI, quantum computing, and biotechnology. She developed strategic frameworks for U.S. international science and technology coordination. Her background includes mechanical engineering work on the Chevy Volt's battery system at General Motors, founding Hatch International nonprofit, and creating DOTS fitness-tech startup. She holds engineering degrees from University of Michigan and has received multiple Superior and Meritorious Honor Awards.

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## **GLOBAL LEADERSHIP WOMEN IN TECH® AWARD**

*This award honors a woman who has demonstrated exceptional leadership on a global scale in the technology sector. The recipient has made significant contributions to advancing the role of women in tech worldwide, inspiring and empowering others across cultures and borders. She exhibits visionary thinking, strategic influence, and a commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion in the international tech community. This leader's impact extends beyond her organization, shaping industry trends and driving positive change on a global level.*

### **Titi Akinsanmi - Canada**

**Organization:** Google

**Position:** Global Policy Team Lead: Gemini & GenAI Safety & Responsibility

Titi Akinsanmi serves as Google's Global AI Policy Team Lead, spearheading policy development for responsible AI while holding regional government affairs and public policy roles. She engages with policymakers on privacy, data governance, and internet policy. With over 20 years of experience, she has initiated and managed ICT & development projects across 35 nations, working with international institutions including AfriNIC, World Bank Institute, UN-GAID, UNECA, and SchoolNet Africa. As a Berkman Klein Fellow at Harvard University, she holds a Master's in Public and Development Management and is pursuing an LLM at Osgoode Law, York University. Akinsanmi specializes in building bridges between governments, private sector, and civil society to harness digital opportunities while mitigating risks. Her expertise focuses on shaping enabling environments for African digital economy innovation and addressing policy gaps in technology adoption globally.

### **Nicole Alexander - United States**

**Organization:** New York University

**Position:** Professor, Author, Board of Directors

Nicole Alexander is a seasoned marketing executive with over 25 years of experience leading global teams at The New York Times, Meta, and Ipsos. She serves on NYU faculty and boards of The Loveland Foundation and Per Scholas, advancing equitable tech education access. Alexander authored "Ethical AI in Marketing: Aligning Growth, Responsibility, and Customer Trust" (Kogan Page, August 2025), based on original research at NYU and University of Cambridge. Her work examines AI transparency, bias mitigation, and automation-consumer trust relationships. She develops practical frameworks for brands implementing AI responsibly, recognizing marketing departments as major AI investment drivers. Alexander has delivered keynotes across U.S., Europe, and Asia, authored scholarly thought leadership, and led multi-stakeholder discussions bridging industry, policy, and academia. She mentors emerging professionals through Monday Girl and previously spent ten years mentoring women through Women in Research, demonstrating commitment to equity and community building.

### **Olanda Sharp-Buckley - United States**

**Organization:** Dell Technologies

**Position:** Vice President Services

Olanda Sharp-Buckley serves as Vice President of Dell Learning, leading a P&L organization with 500+ team members across 30+ countries, delivering 6 million hours of technical training to customers and partners in 186 countries. With over 20 years of global leadership experience, she has transformed Product Engineering, Sales, Field Deployment, Finance, Services, and Learning & Development functions. Sharp-Buckley leads Develop with Dell, a community and college program training thousands of candidates from 50+ universities for IT careers. She completed a four-year expatriate assignment in Penang, Malaysia, building global Engineering organizations and partnering with International Community Groups to develop women technology leaders. In 2024, she earned an MBA in Artificial Intelligence, leading Dell Learning's transformation with industry-first AI certification and winning the 2024 TSIA Award for AI advancement in Corporate Education. Her leadership achieved 25% faster training product releases and 97% customer satisfaction scores.

### **Nidhi Gupta - United States**

**Organization:** Etsy

**Position:** Vice President, Growth & Performance Marketing

Nidhi Gupta joined Etsy in 2024 as Vice President of Growth & Performance Marketing, bringing over two decades of full-stack marketing experience across ecommerce, fintech, and consumer goods. She leads strategic performance marketing initiatives supporting Etsy's seller base of female creators and solopreneurs. Previously, she led global full-funnel paid media at eBay, managing multi-billion dollar budgets across 200 countries and driving highest-ever share of volume and new user acquisition from paid channels. Her career began at Western Union and Nestlé in marketing, digital partnerships, and product roles. Recognized among top '40 under 40' marketers by Brand Innovators and DM News (2016), her teams have won Cannes Lions Award (2024), Partnership Awards (2025), and numerous industry accolades. She serves as Charter Member and Marketing Chair for TiE Silicon Valley, mentors professionals, and champions diversity as a woman of color in marketing, leading diverse global teams across 11 offices while maintaining highest employee satisfaction scores.

### **Saumya Bhatnagar - United States**

**Organization:** involve.ai

**Position:** CPO and Co-founder

Saumya Bhatnagar co-founded involve.ai and serves as Chief Product Officer, developing predictive Early-Warning Systems that process billions of customer-health signals for Fortune 500 companies and SaaS scale-ups. She holds an M.S. in Computer Science with NLP focus from UC Santa Cruz. Her achievements include Forbes 30 Under 30 (Enterprise Technology), Stevie Gold Entrepreneur of the Year, National Diversity Council 50 Most Powerful Women in Tech, and Products That Count 2025 CPO Award Winner. Bhatnagar leads a 60-person product and engineering organization, embedding "Responsible AI by Design" into development processes. Under her leadership, involve.ai raised \$25+ million, achieved seven-fold ARR growth, and maintained 95% customer satisfaction. She founded nonprofit STEM-for-Her, teaching coding skills to 4,000+ girls in India. Bhatnagar speaks at industry conferences, contributes to Forbes and Business Insider, and increased women and underrepresented minority representation on her team from 18% to 45% in two years.

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## **WOMEN IN TECH® LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

*The most prestigious category, recognizing a woman's lifelong dedication to the tech industry. This award highlights her achievements, influence, and long-term impact on the field, celebrating a career of sustained excellence and leadership in technology.*

### **Julie Godin - Canada**

**Organization:** CGI

**Position:** Executive Chair of the Board of Directors

Julie Godin serves as Executive Chair of CGI's Board of Directors, one of the world's largest independent IT and business consulting services firms operating in 400+ metro markets across 40 countries with 93,000 employees and \$14.7B annual revenue (2024). She joined CGI in 2009 through acquisition of her company Oxygen, which she founded in 2004 to manage comprehensive workplace health and well-being programs. Godin guides strategic direction including CGI's rolling three-year strategic plan while maintaining equilibrium among clients, CGI Partners, and shareholders. She previously led enterprise functions spanning human resources, strategic planning, mergers and acquisitions, business consulting, CIO, marketing, communications, security, and procurement. Holding a bachelor's in kinesiology from University of Sherbrooke, she co-founded the Godin Family Foundation in 2000, helping 400+ schools, hospitals, and youth organizations. She actively champions women in STEM through targeted outreach initiatives, panels, workshops, and mentoring sessions.

### **Kathleen Kramer - United States**

**Organization:** IEEE

**Position:** President

Dr. Kathleen A. Kramer serves as 2025 President and CEO of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the world's largest technical professional organization. At University of San Diego, she served as professor and former director of engineering, developing and expanding university engineering programs. Her industry experience includes roles at ViaSat, Hewlett-Packard, and Bell Communications Research. Her research encompasses multisensor data fusion, intelligent systems, and neural and fuzzy systems, contributing to avionics and cybersecurity advancements. As ABET Fellow, she drove development of accreditation criteria for cybersecurity, mechatronics, and robotics. Her IEEE leadership includes Secretary & Director (2019-2021), Chair of Cybersecurity Technical Operations Panel (2017-2022), and various technical committees. She received the 2025 Engineering Honor Award from San Diego County Engineering Council, recognizing her contributions to technology advancement and professional development.

### **Nicole Martel - Canada**

**Organization:** AQT - Quebec Technology Association

**Position:** CEO

Nicole Martel has led the Association québécoise des technologies (AQT) as CEO since 2002, representing 1,200+ executives and 25,000 jobs across 400 companies in Quebec's technology sector. With over 30 years in Quebec's tech ecosystem, she began her entrepreneurial journey co-founding a business in her twenties before joining AQT in 1992. Under her leadership, AQT became one of Canada's largest and most influential tech networks through policy advocacy, peer learning networks, and business intelligence initiatives. She has served on boards including TECHNOCompétences, Université TÉLUQ, and TECNA (Technology Councils of North America), receiving the Spirit of TECNA Award in 2025. Martel has been instrumental in mentoring women in tech and embedding gender equity into programs and governance long before DEI became mainstream. Her three-decade career has shaped policies, empowered leaders, created dialogue platforms, and inspired hundreds of entrepreneurs in Quebec's digital transformation.

### **Lauren Woodman - United States**

**Organization:** DataKind

**Position:** CEO

Lauren Woodman serves as CEO of DataKind, a nonprofit leveraging data science and AI to address social challenges by connecting mission-driven organizations with volunteer data scientists. She brings 25+ years of experience at the intersection of technology, development, and policy. Previously, she was CEO of NetHope (2014-2020), a consortium of 60+ humanitarian organizations where she facilitated transfer of \$100+ million in technology advancements to nonprofits. Her career includes over a decade at Microsoft as General Manager of Education Programs overseeing global education initiatives, executive roles at Software and Information Industry Association, and policy development at the United Nations. A graduate of Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and Smith College, she serves on the World Economic Forum's Board of Stewards for Digital Economy Initiative and Trustworthy Data Collaboration. Based in Seattle with her partner and two daughters, she champions using technology for social good and advancing data equity in the social sector.

### **Michelle Soul - United States**

**Organization:** Aero Athena

**Position:** President

Michelle Soul is an accomplished entrepreneur and executive with 20+ years of regulatory and compliance experience across multiple industries. She founded Projtek Inc. in 2011, established Aviation SecOpts in 2023, and launched Aero Athena in 2024, focusing on helping airlines improve safety through risk assessments, cybersecurity, and log file monitoring. With decades of experience including service with a major Pacific Northwest airline, she brings expertise in aviation safety and complex problem-solving. Soul has enabled wireless technology integration in surgical centers and hospital environments, traveling globally to share expertise with airline professionals. She demonstrates commitment to mentoring women in business and technology, providing career opportunities, internships, and guidance to countless professionals. Her leadership spans multi-division company management, sustainable growth initiatives, cost reduction, operational optimization, and innovative business process re-engineering across both technical and business-focused teams.