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Cona Elder Law



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The Legacy Leaders of Long Island

Three Long Island Leaders Create Lasting Legacies: Their View on What it Takes to Successfully Run a Family Business (Hint: Old-Fashioned Values)

Cona Elder Law has been creating customized trusts, estates, and corporate plans for over two decades. We have been privileged to represent many businesses and families who have become household names and whose organizations create impactful legacies across Long Island. They collectively employ thousands of employees and their businesses have improved our way of life. These companies are aligned

with our firm's core values and vision of making Long Island a great place to live, work, and age with grace.

In this, our third issue, Jennifer Cona, Founder and Managing Partner of Cona Elder Law, Trusts and Estates and Elder Law industry thought leader, philanthropist, and community activist, has interviewed three iconic entrepreneurs who are leaders on Long Island, who have built a legacy from a family

business, and who remain committed to their work and philanthropy: Anne Shybunko-Moore, of GSE Dynamics, manufactures defense equipment and is proud to provide products essential to keep America safe. Merrill Zorn of Zorn's of Bethpage combines old-fashioned values and original recipes to continue the 84 year old traditions of her family's food business. And Vincent Gilmore, of Noce Funeral Home, a 100

year old, 4th generation funeral home in West Babylon, honors his founding great-grandparents and family who preceded him by following their methods to make them proud.

Learn their viewpoint on how their businesses have sustained the test of time and the next generation's perspective on values and priorities. Plus, gain insight on the greatest generational transfer of wealth from Cona Elder Law.

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Melville, Garden City, Port Jeff, NYC

Anne D. Shybunko-Moore, CEO & Owner, GSE Dynamics, Inc.

“I have a very clear perspective that my actions and my purpose for doing things is for the ‘greater good.’”

Anne D. Shybunko-Moore is the CEO and Owner of GSE Dynamics Inc., a Woman Owned Small Business, and a U.S. Defense Manufacturer. GSE was founded in 1971 and has two manufacturing facilities on Long Island, NY. GSE provides complex structural assemblies direct to the United States Air Force, Navy, Army, and Major Aerospace Primes. Anne joined GSE in 2001 and has been strategically growing the company and expanding its capabilities.



Anne, her husband Jamie and 4 boys, James, Danny, Justin and Dylan

Anne's main advocacy is to promote manufacturing and the need for workforce training to help companies grow. In 2023, GSE Dynamics was selected by the Navy to be the NY Talent Pipeline Program (TPP) Local Partner Engagement Coordinator. The TPP helps create and sustain a maritime and defense industrial base pipeline that enables companies to re-capitalize their workforces focusing on training and retention. Anne is the Founder and Chair of Ignite-LI, The Manufacturing Consortium of Long Island, an industry driven organization to promote manufacturing. She

has been an appointed member of the Governor's Long Island Regional Economic Development Council (LIREDC) since inception in 2011. She sits on the Board of Directors of the Hauppauge Industrial Association (HIA), is Co-Chair of the Board of Directors for The Cradle of Aviation Museum and sits on The DeMatteis School of Engineering Advisory Board at Hofstra University.

At the National level, Anne serves on the Executive Committee of the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), the leading governing body of the AIA comprised of senior representatives from the top Defense companies. AIA presented her with the Voice of Industry award in 2022 for her small business advocacy. She also serves on their Board of Governors and Supplier Management Council. Anne was

an appointed member of The National Women's Business Council (NWBC), a federal advisory council created to be a source of advice and counsel to the President of the United States, Congress, and the Small Business Administration.

As a local leader on Long Island, Anne has earned the title of Long Island's Top 50 Women twice by Long Island Business News and the title of one of Long Island's 40 Rising Stars Under the age of 40. Anne served as President of Long Island's National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), and was twice awarded the Top Woman Business Owner award for NAWBO/LI. Long Island Women's Agenda named her as the Business Advocate of the year, recognized for efforts in the small business arena. Enterprising Magazine honored

Anne as Enterprising Woman of the Year for her business and community accomplishments. In 2021, Anne was honored at the Long Island Power Women Awards by Schneps Media and was selected as one of Long Island's 100 Most Influential People by Long Island Press Power list. Anne was inducted into the Long Island Business News Hall of Fame in 2022.

GSE has received numerous performance awards including the honor of the Defense Logistics Agency Outstanding Readiness award, as well as the Corporate Citizenship award for Long Island Business News. Anne and her husband Jamie have four sons, and focus on the importance of family and career, blending and balancing both, proving that women can be successful at both.

How does community relate to your legacy?

I have a very clear perspective that my actions and my purpose for doing things is for the “greater good.” I try to improve situations for people and offer solutions. I enjoy putting people in positions to feel empowered and valued. I am heavily involved in many non-profits and community efforts and enjoy seeing the progress in many areas.

My parents instilled values in me that focus on positivity and helping others. My father, Daniel Shybunko, was the Founder of GSE Dynamics and Mayor of Head



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of the Harbor, and he engrained the value of listening and the How Can I Help You? approach that is part of the culture of both my corporate and personal life. My husband Jamie and I have tried to reflect those same priorities with our four sons as they now develop their purpose in the community as young adults.

Who was the person who helped you get to where you are today?

There is no single person that got me to where I am today. I often tell people that I am fortunate to have special men in my life that have supported me the entire way my father did, including my husband and my 4 sons. When I looked at the path I took, there were many other significant people along the way. The obvious - my parents - my Mom was diagnosed with cancer when I was 12 and passed when I was 17. This created a few lessons - the need to value time and moments with people, and it allowed my dad and I to build a relationship during those years that would translate to us becoming incredible business partners and friends. My dad became my mentor and my best friend - so at 29 years old I did a complete career path change to join my dad at GSE. My husband, Jamie, has been my support and true partner in life from the day we circled back to each



Annamarie Gagliardi, VP of Finance. Tim Karanicolas, Former VP of Operations. Anne Shybunko-Moore, Owner and CEO. Mike Kohler, VP of Business Development

other. We met at 12 years old, went separate ways at 19 years old, and then got back together at 29 years old. Jamie and my dad were the 2 reasons I returned to NY. Jamie has been the strength behind my success; we balanced both of our careers while raising 4 sons - and he has always been an advocate for the advancement of women and entrepreneurship/leadership etc. He offers sound advice and solutions and listens always with the intent to support the broader vision. There were a tremendous number of people that you learn from along the way - both good and bad experiences that helped to direct me. I look at my life

as a tapestry, and everyone has contributed different "threads" that have created the pattern of my life.

What are the secrets to your success?

I am very consistent in terms of character, values and how I approach situations. I believe I have been clear about GSE's vision and mission, and the path to get there and I am able to accept advice from others and act on them. People know what I stand for and I don't flipflop based on the audience I address.

I also have the ability to put a plan together and think strategically which has allowed me to make business decisions with confidence. Of course, there are trusted advisors that I call on for advice and feedback. At the end of the day, my brain, my heart and my gut drive my decisions, and I look for opportunities when all 3 agree. I am driven and I am happy where I am in life - though I am always looking to see where my next steps may take me, and I am grateful for all I have experienced.

Your legacy includes planning for the future of others in your family and community. Tell us about that.

I represent the 2nd generation in leading

GSE Dynamics and now people are looking at my 4 sons to see how the succession planning will play out. I am very clear with them that there is no expectation, and they should each lead their own life. If one or more of them returns to GSE as an option, then we will figure it out. We have a lot of pride in our family and with my employees about manufacturing products that defend our nation's security. My wish is that my legacy, beyond my four sons and family will be defined through our actions and commitment with IgniteLI - our Not For Profit which promotes manufacturing and encourages innovation, technology and R&D across Long Island. It is imperative that Long Island remembers our legacy and role we played in history as a means to motivate the region to remain a leader in manufacturing and advanced technology for the future.

Known as the voice of manufacturing, I want my legacy to be known as the person who raised the volume and awareness, collaborating with others, to create a strategic vision and a new generation of manufacturers that are as passionate as me and my predecessors, my father and grandfather, who both worked at Grumman, and all those who have contributed to the success of this industry.

The Greatest Wealth Transfer in History

Long Island is home to numerous family-owned businesses, many of which are continuing for third and fourth generations. Other businesses are being built up for sale and valued as owners of baby-boomer age prepare to retire with no heir apparent.

According to research conducted by the financial market intelligence firm, Cerulli and Associates, Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation will pass down a whopping \$84 trillion in assets between now and 2045, \$72.6 trillion of which will pass directly to heirs. This is the largest transfer of wealth our nation has ever witnessed.

Which raises the question: how will Boomers handle this lofty responsibility of what some are calling the "greatest transfer of wealth in history"?

If history has taught us anything about this generation, we can expect that Boomers will get educated and avail themselves of the top-notch legal resources at their disposal here on Long Island.

Business owner Boomers will investigate the right form of corporate entity that will be most advantageous to pass

their business to the next generation, being mindful of voting rights, shares amongst family members, valuation discounts, marketability discounts, and more while likely addressing considerations of equitable inheritance for heirs working outside of the business. Business owners preparing to sell their business will similarly need to be sure their corporate structure is appropriate for a contemplated sale, taking into consideration cost basis, capital gains, any real estate held by the business, protection for a spouse, and more.

And alarmingly, as noted above, it is anticipated that Boomers will pass trillions of dollars directly to heirs. Outright transfers of assets are never a good idea for a wide variety of reasons. Instead, money, assets, including business assets, should be left to heirs in a Trust, the terms of which you dictate.

An experienced estate planning attorney can prepare a trust that can greatly reduce, if not eliminate, estate tax exposure. For example, a Trust can be structured to direct a certain portion of your estate to a Credit Shelter Trust; when you pass, your spouse will

have the use and benefit of the funds in the trust and, if properly drafted, the assets in the trust will avoid estate taxation even when passed to your children (or other beneficiaries) when your spouse passes away. For high-net-worth families, there are any number of trusts that can be used to reduce or eliminate estate taxes, from Qualified Personal Residence Trusts, to Spousal Lifetime Access Trusts, to various charitable trusts with lifetime benefits for you or benefits for your heirs.

In addition to estate tax planning, trusts can be a great tool to protect your beneficiaries and the assets you have left them from today's realities and/or the unexpected. For example, assets can be held in a trust for your adult child and that same child can be their own trustee; the benefit is that those assets cannot be co-mingled with other assets and therefore will not be subject to a divorce distribution or settlement. Alternatively, you can leave your estate assets in a trust and appoint a dependable individual to manage the trust assets for your beneficiary. The Trustee will make distributions in the

Trustee's discretion. As the beneficiary does not have direct access, the trust assets will be protected should a drug or gambling problem arise, or if there are creditor claims.

Finally, irrevocable trusts can be used to protect assets for the purposes of Medicaid planning. Given the exorbitant costs of long-term care, an extended stay at a nursing home can significantly deplete an estate. However, by properly and timely establishing an irrevocable trust with an experienced elder law attorney, you can preserve the value of your estate in the event you require nursing home care, home care, or care in an assisted living, thereby keeping your care options open and preserving your assets for your loved ones.

There is no "one size fits all" and getting the right guidance and advice from the knowledgeable and experienced estate planning and corporate succession planning attorneys at Cona Elder Law is critical. Contact us at 631.390.5000; visit us at conaelderlaw.com.

— Jennifer Cona,
Founder and Managing Partner

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Merrill S. Zorn, President & CEO, Zorn's of Bethpage

“My promise to my community and staff is to move into the future while holding on to the values of the past.”

Zorn's, the Long Island Original Skinless Fried Chicken restaurant, is celebrating its 84th Anniversary this year. Zorn's flagship store is on the original site of Zorn's Poultry Farm, established in 1930 by Merrill Zorn's grandfather Peter Zorn. Peter Zorn also opened the retail store in 1940, serving Bethpage and the surrounding communities. Since its establishment, Zorn's opened two locations, each managed separately by Merrill's brothers. Eventually they were both sold, leaving the original flagship store in Merrill's capable hands which she continues to lead in this fourth-generation family tradition. Under Merrill's leadership, Zorn's was voted Best of Long Island in 2024. As Merrill stated: “We still use our original recipe with no preservatives or anything artificial. There are no growth hormones in our poultry! Our southern fried chicken is skinless and delicious, and we are so happy to know it's a Long Island favorite!”

How does community relate to your legacy?

Community embodies our business. For 84 years, we have been a cherished tradition for many families on Long Island. Our loyal customer base values our history and often shares heartfelt stories. We embody a rare sense of nostalgia, which our community genuinely appreciates. Additionally, they recognize our commitment to participating in community events and meaningful causes, knowing they can rely on our support. As a Long Island institution, we have been told many times Zorn's is one of the things in their life that is solid and steady, and our older customers especially have thanked us many times for “sticking it out and not closing.” This is what keeps me going. We celebrate our Seniors with discounts each Wednesday, we provide food weekly to Island Harvest to supplement their food pantry efforts, and Veterans are provided a daily discount as a big Thank You for serving our country and protecting the

**Merrill Zorn's father, Joseph**

American Way. Zorn's philanthropy extends to many not-for-profit organizations across Long Island. Exemplifying the spirit of kindness, I am proud to be a part of a business that gives generously. Zorn's is dedicated to charities and local organizations, and I am an active member of multiple boards and business associations.

Who was the person who helped you get to where you are today?

The foundation of all my endeavors can be traced back to my grandfather, affectionately known as Poppy. His influence, along with the strong work ethic instilled in me by my parents, has been instrumental in my journey. I have harbored a passion for this business since my youth, a passion that continues to drive me today. You can learn more about our history on our website, zornsofbethpage.com/our-story

I have been working in some compacity since I was 7 years old. After graduating college with a Bachelor of Science in business management and minors in biology and psychology, I rejoined the family business. I have loved working in all day-to-day operations, from the cashier to the kitchen, to the counter, and on to office management. This has provided me with the solid foundation needed for my role today as president and CEO. I have been the sole proprietor in our Flagship store since 2014.

We use the same recipes and cooking methods as my grandfather. Our traditions may be looked upon as old-fashioned by today's standards, but this is how we maintain our high quality and consistency. There is always a Zorn in the kitchen making sure that the original recipes passed down from my grandparents, are still prepared with the same quality and pride that they were 84 years ago!

What are the secrets to your success?

The cornerstone of my success is undoubtedly hard work. I was always one of the first to arrive and the last to leave. I hold my staff in high regard and deeply appreciate their dedication. Many of my employees have been with me for over 25 years. A combination of self-motivation and surrounding myself with exceptional individuals has significantly contributed to my achievements.

My promise to our community and staff is to move into the future while holding on to the values of the past. Using my experience and knowledge, I plan to keep the business going strong. I have loved working in all aspects of the business'

day-to-day operations for over 50 years. I am proud of my grandfather's traditional and long-standing recipes that are tried and true, but I am also keenly aware of the need to stay innovative and to reach our customers with new menu

items. I have my eyes on a few different options as well as expansion to satellite locations.

Your legacy includes planning for the future of others in your family and community. Tell us about that.

In 2019, we transitioned into a new home while retaining the same address. We constructed a new building equipped with amenities to carry us into the future while preserving our family traditions. For my community, our Zorn's of Bethpage family, and my grandfather, it was imperative not to let go of the business. Our future is firmly rooted in our past, we strive to continue our success on Long Island. Certainly, real estate may be worth more than the business, but I won't sell for three reasons: Poppy, our staff, and our community.

I believe I'm lucky, I love what I do. I consider my co-workers family, and I adore our customers. Our name stands for family, tradition and quality...and there's no place like Zorn's.

Note: Zorn's of Bethpage has been granted status as a New York State Women Business Enterprise (WBE) as well as listed on the New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry, which honors businesses that have been in operation for at least 50 years and have contributed to their community's history.

**Merrill and her dedicated staff**

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Vincent J. Gilmor, Owner & Licensed Funeral Director, Noce Funeral Home

“We are dedicated to providing personalized care and heartfelt service, ensuring that every farewell is a meaningful tribute to a life well-lived.”



Noce Funeral home in West Babylon

For over a century, Noce Funeral Home, a family-owned and operated funeral home, has been a pillar of trust and compassion in the community. Four generations and a century later, the family continues to help other families through one of the most difficult times that a person can experience. The family’s great grandfather, Giovanni Noce, started the business back in 1923, beginning the legacy of compassion, providing comfort to those grieving, and the ability to connect with every family individually. The tradition has been continued 100 years later through his son, grandchildren and now his great grandchildren. Today, Noce Funeral Home continues the values and traditions passed onto them and the legacy of trust and commitment in honoring lives with dignity and respect continues to guide the family as they support families through their most challenging times.

How does community relate to your legacy?

My 101-year-old funeral home is a trusted pillar in our community, providing reliable and compassionate service across generations. By supporting local events and preserving cultural traditions, my family and I have built a legacy of trust, empathy, and community involvement. But the truth of it all really is that community is everything to us and not just



Vincent and his grandfather, Vincent J. Noce, Sr.

because they’re our clientele but because we genuinely care about every family that walks through our door. Without community, we aren’t able to properly mourn the loss of a loved one by celebrating a life and all its stories, and in the end that’s what I really care about, being able to provide a service and a support system to help people through what could be the most difficult time in their lives. Above all that’s what we should all be striving for in regard to death care.

Who was a person who helped you get to where you are today?

In reality there is not just one person who has helped me get to where I am today but there is a never ending list of people, whether it be my great grandparents Giovanni and Caroline Noce who started it all back in 1923, or my own parents, Tom and Kathy Gilmor, who raised me and molded me into the

man I am today. My sister, Kristina, who is my right-hand person or my wife Joanna who has listened to all the self-doubt and insecurities that come about when being in business. Her love, patience and caring have been a guiding light for me for over a decade. But who really made a huge impact are my grandparents, Vincent and Della Noce; they took what their parents started and grew Noce Funeral Home into a thriving business that was passed down for generations and I’ve continued to honor their legacy using the same methods that they were taught by their parents. I can only hope that they are looking down on me and my family now and I hope with all my heart that I make them proud. They are dearly missed by all of us.

What are the secrets to your success?

In regard to the “secrets to my success” well there really is no “secret”; it takes hard work and perseverance to run any business. The highs are high and the lows are low and the key is to control your expenses, stay humble and steadfast in the face of any problems that may arise. My only secret is what I pride myself on and that’s as simple as just being fair with everyone I meet. I am mindful that our longstanding excellent reputation took 101 years to build and if I do not adhere to the standards we built our reputation on it would take literally no time to destroy. I take immense pride in putting all Noce client family’s needs first. Also, nothing has motivated me more to be honorable than my very own wife and kids. I strive to set the bar very high so they have a “good man” as their husband and father.

Your legacy includes planning for the future of others in your family and community. Tell us about that.

For a long time I was a little naive in terms of planning for the future. I generally handled everything as it came, but after having to handle the loss of our grandparents, the matriarch and patriarch of our family, it made me realize that I could be doing more to provide a comfortable life for my family. So from there with the help of my family friends and accountant (Joseph Chiullie, since deceased) I ventured out and started a florist business thinking that the two businesses would go hand and glove. It wasn’t easy but another opportunity surfaced and we purchased the family owned and operated Bayview Florist in Massapequa Park in 2022. Through networking, a grit and a grind it out mentality and sheer determination we have grown Bayview Florist and Noce funeral home into the household names they are today. Since taking over the role as Owner Operator in 2018, my popularity among the community has also recently risen when I appeared as a guest on a popular podcast called Who are These Guys? and I’m proud to say that it was so well received that I will be having a show of my own called Dead Serious with Vincent Gilmor. It’s a show about life, death and business. We will be interviewing people in the funeral industry and related businesses through my lens and I’m very excited about that. I am genuinely excited for the future and look forward to all the community engagements and help I can provide and hope to take everyone who’s been with me along for a ride.



Cona Elder Law is an award-winning law firm and is recognized as the leading Elder Law and Estate Planning firm on Long Island. In practice for over 25 years, the firm is known for its creative advocacy and cutting-edge strategies in the areas of asset protection, Medicaid planning, estate and tax planning, estate and trust administration, corporate succession planning, guardianships, special needs planning, and estate litigation. Cona Elder Law takes a holistic approach to elder law and estate planning, providing support and resources for older adults and caregivers, and maintaining long-term, partnering relationships with clients to provide the best solutions for multiple generations.





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