

**Makisha Boothe**, is Founder and Head Business Coach of Sistahbiz Global Network, a business hub that offers training, coaching, tools, and a supportive community to Black women entrepreneurs. Sistahbiz works to close the wealth gap and help Black women solopreneurs and microbusinesses build scalable, sellable businesses. As head business coach in the network, Makisha helps micro businesses rethink their revenue models, human capital strategies, brands, systems, and resource allocation. Since its inception in 2018, Sistahbiz's nonprofit entity has facilitated hundreds of free business coaching calls, raised almost \$1,000,000 for the Sistahbiz Loan Fund and has distributed over \$1,200,000 in grants and in-kind services to Black women entrepreneurs.

Makisha has been honored by the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce as one of the Top 25 Women in Business in 2021, the 2009 Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce with the Clara Brown Award, and by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce with the Women in Business Unsung Hero. She is a recipient of the 2007 U.S. Small Business Administration Young Entrepreneur of the Year and the 2022 RVC Business Catapult award by the Rockies Venture Club. She's been featured in Forbes, Ebony, NPR, Black Enterprise, the Denver Business Journal, and other notable media outlets. Makisha was named one of Conscious Company's 43 world-changing women, and one of the top 20 coaches to follow by Talent LMS.

**Lorena Cantarovici**, Chef Founder and CEO, Maria Empanada  
The story of Maria Empanada is the story of the American Dream.

I came to Denver from Argentina in 2006 with \$300 in my pocket, no English, and a backpack full of dreams. First job? Hostess. Then, cocktail waitress, then server. One day I began to make empanadas from my kitchen using recipes passed down through generations in my family. People loved them and word spread and soon the tiny one-rack oven in my kitchen became too small. So I bought a used commercial oven on borrowed money, moved into my garage and set about baking my own American Dream.

In 2011 I opened a tiny restaurant in an area of town where nobody knew what empanadas were and was so desperate for customers that I even danced on the street corner wearing an empanada costume that I made. This first location became the laboratory where I experimented scaling recipes, developing standard operating procedures, and educating customers about this new food called empanadas.

Maria Empanada today has 3 locations and opening 3 more by mid 2023 including a location in Boulder and one at Denver International Airport. Our Maria Empanada family is made up of 60 talented and hard-working people who are driven by "Buena Onda" –the "Good Vibe" that is our secret sauce. We like to think of ourselves as empanada artisans hand-crafting our way to a better life.

As a family we have in only eleven years earned national recognition as the leading brand of artisan empanadas and been credited for developing the highly scalable category of "Craft

Casual” in the restaurant sector. Our accomplishments speak for themselves: The prestigious restaurant rating organization Zagat has named us “One of the 12 Hottest New Bakeries in America;” we’ve been featured four times on The Food Network (in Guy Fieri’s Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives), and in scores of local, national and international media coverage; we’ve been awarded the U.S. Small Business Administration’s “Small Business Person of the Year Award for the State of Colorado;” we’ve been inducted into the City of Denver’s “Gazelle” program –a group of fast-growth companies the City highlights when recruiting corporations to move their operations to Denver; we’ve served twice as a judge in the international empanada competition held in Argentina –not a small feat given that country is the world’s Mecca of empanada culture; we’ve been named “Ambassador of the Argentinian Empanada in the U.S.” by the government of Argentina; we’ve also secured funding from the prestigious Colorado Impact Fund; and in March 2021 we hosted Vice President Kamala Harris on the first stop on her nationwide "Help is Here Listening Tour" promoting the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, and in October 2022 saw her again at her private residence in D.C. along with 50 prominent Latino businesses in celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month.

These accomplishments are not only a validation of the work that the Maria Empanada family has done to position the empanada as the perfect meal for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacking, but also of the love, beauty, and hard work that power the ever-evolving American Dream.

**Sheila King**, VP, Portfolio Co-Manager and Fixed Income Research Analyst, Raymond James

Sheila King co-manages Eagle’s Tax-Advantaged Fixed Income strategies and Eagle ESG Focused Fixed Income suite of products. She joined Eagle in 1987 and has 36 years of investment experience. During her time at Eagle, King has served as a Credit Analyst and Portfolio Co-Manager.

King was named to InvestmentNews' 2022 list of Women to Watch. She also served on the Board of Directors for CASA (Community Action Stops Abuse) for ten years. She is an avid athlete, having completed Half Ironman and Ironman races and hiked to an elevation above 14,000 feet. She earned a Bachelor of Science in business administration from the University of North Carolina and is a CFA charterholder.

**Moderator:**

**Michelle Griego**, News Anchor, CBS Colorado

MICHELLE GRIEGO got her first big break in television at the age of 11. She went on a casting call at a local talent agency and was hired to co-anchor a children’s news show, “Two Bits.” The program was on KWGN-TV and ran for nearly three years, airing in Colorado, Wyoming, Utah and Nebraska.

The news bug stayed with Griego through high school and college at Colorado State University and Metropolitan State University of Denver, where she studied speech communication and technical

journalism and worked on campus television stations. Her first big job was at KCNC-Channel 4, the CBS affiliate, in 2005, working as an online editor, reporter and then anchor.

An opportunity to break into a major market came in 2012 when Griego was hired by KPIX 5, the CBS station in San Francisco, to be its morning anchor. There, she co-hosted weekday mornings and covered everything from tragic events such as mass shootings to sporting events like the Super Bowl. She also hosted a local talk show and won Emmys for her work in 2014, 2016 and 2021.

While living in California was great for her career, Griego and her husband, who also grew up in Colorado, missed the mountains and their families in Denver. They would order a bushel of roasted chiles each fall, and were loyal to their sports teams. “We would dress in Broncos gear and go to 49ers games, and wear Rockies gear to Giants games,” Griego laughs. “I kept a Broncos plaque on my desk.”

When the CBS station in Denver offered Griego a morning anchor spot in 2021, the couple and their three daughters happily moved back. Griego now shares anchoring duties Monday through Friday with Dominic Garcia.