

ROUND I JUDGES

Amy Gryder (1997): Amy is a seasoned people manager, mediator, mentor, kindness practitioner and efficiency advocate outside of the workplace as a working mom of three. She doubles down on all that in the workplace at Mastercard as a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt and Certified Usability Analyst (CUA)™ driving inclusive product design that builds customer loyalty and trust, and company culture that stimulates passion and pride in ownership. She is on the steering committee for the ADAPtability Business Resource Group and a member of the Women's Leadership Network. Prior to Mastercard, she managed the Scottrade trading website serving over three million clients. A testament to her successes, she was celebrated as a 2014 YWCA of Greater St. Louis Leader in the Workplace. Amy has a BA in Psychology from Truman State University.

Dr. Ron Thomas (1965): Dr. Thomas first worked as a dean and then interim president at Rochester Community and Technical College. From there, he served as president of Coffeyville Community College before becoming president of Dakota County Technical College, a position he held from 1999 to 2017. Dr. Thomas has a passion for helping others and developing innovative ideas. In his career, he took great pride in working with students, faculty/staff and the extended communities to create new programs, services and opportunities such as nanotechnology, entrepreneurship, and dozens of others. Dr. Thomas enjoys challenges and has been a fearless advocate for students at every level of education. Dr. Thomas has a BS in Science Education from Truman State University, a master's degree from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and a doctorate degree from Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

ABOUT THE SPONSORS

Mastercard is a technology company in the global payments industry. They operate the world's fastest payments processing network, connecting consumers, financial institutions, merchants, governments and businesses in more than 210 countries and territories. Mastercard products and solutions make everyday commerce activities – such as shopping, traveling, running a business and managing finances – easier, more secure and more efficient for everyone.

Villhard Growth Partners is a St. Louis-based growth buyout firm that invests in, partners with and grows strong, tech-enabled business and health care services companies. They focus on lower market transactions in which they can invest alongside aggressive, entrepreneurial teams that share their passion for growing and building great businesses.



BUSINESS INNOVATION BY TRUMAN ENTREPRENEURS

ELEVATOR
PITCH
COMPETITION

FINALS

Friday, April 7, 2017

sponsored by



ABOUT THE BULLDOG B.I.T.E.

With the financial and professional support of alumni Doug ('94) and Diane ('95) Villhard and Mastercard, Truman State University is proud to present the finals for our elevator pitch competition - Bulldog B.I.T.E. In this type of competition presenters outline a concept or idea for a product, service or project in a short period of time, typically from thirty seconds to three minutes. The length of the pitch mirrors the time spent waiting for and riding an elevator in a high-rise building. The purpose of the pitch is to spur the interest of a potential investor or financial backer.

BULLDOG B.I.T.E. FINALISTS

WILLIAM FRIES

Smithville, MO

Computer Science and Business

NICOLAS POINDEXTER

Kansas City, Missouri

Accounting and Business with an emphasis in Finance

JULIAN FUNG*

Malaysia

Business with an emphasis in Finance

BABIN SHRESTHA**

Kathmandu, Nepal

Business

BASANTA KHADKA**

Kathmandu, Nepal

Accounting

ISAAC SPEED

Monroe City, MO

Computer Science

MICHAEL POINDEXTER

Kansas City, Missouri

Business with an emphasis in Marketing

ZACH WENIG*

Kansas City, MO

Business with an emphasis in Finance and Accounting

* Team members | ** Team members

MEET OUR JUDGES

FINALIST JUDGES

Amanda Gioia (1993): Amanda is a Senior Business Leader/VP for the Worldwide Communications Team at Mastercard in St. Louis. She is responsible for managing and implementing internal communications, leadership communications, philanthropy and community relations, technology-based and local PR efforts for the company's technology organization. Prior to joining Mastercard, Gioia was an account executive with Kupper Parker Communications in Clayton, Mo. She was recognized by the St. Louis Business Journal as one of the Most Influential Women in Business in August 2012, and honored as Outstanding Alumna of the Year in 2013 by Webster University's School of Communications. Amanda has an MA in Media Communications from Webster University and a BA in English from Truman State University.

Marco Ilardi (1999): Marco serves as the President at Adknowledge, Inc. Ilardi is a veteran of the digital space, having worked at InterMix, the parent company of MySpace. He helped facilitate the sale of the social media trailblazer to News Corp. in 2005 and later worked as an Executive Vice President at Fox Interactive Media. Marco has a BS in Business Administration from Truman State University.

Chris LeBeau (2005): Chris works for Enterprise Bank as VP of Entrepreneur Services, a role that has been chartered to answer, "how might a bank better serve its customers of tomorrow?" Preceding this, Chris served as the Director of Operations for Gateway Venture Mentoring Service, connecting early-stage entrepreneurs with mentoring and startup resources to accelerate the growth of their venture. Prior to that, he served as a strategic planning consultant for health care organizations in St. Louis and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In his free time, Chris practices yoga, tutors math, blogs regularly and explores St. Louis city neighborhoods. Chris has a BA in Business Administration from Truman State University.

Cody Sumter (2010): Cody is a product manager for Google and co-founder of Behavio, a mobile sensing company acquired by Google in 2013. He received his Master's from the MIT Media Lab and MIT's Technology Policy Program, where he worked on using cellphones as a sensor platform to study social dynamics and human behavior — in addition to a project for using Minecraft as a tool to allow easy access to 3D Printing. While at Truman, Cody was involved in the astronomy research program, working on and leading several projects at both the Truman Observatory and Lowell Observatory (studying both Near Earth Asteroids and delta Scuti stars in eclipsing binary systems). In addition, he served for 3 years as the student representative on Truman State University's Board of Governors and as part of the legislative staff of a Missouri senator. Oh, and he brought Humans vs. Zombies to Truman. Cody has a BS in Computer Science from Truman State University.

Bryan Witherbee (1994): Bryan joined Adarza in January of 2017 as President to provide leadership during the company's transition from a technology developer to a commercial technology provider. He brings over 20 years of experience and a successful track record of developing and commercializing new technologies. He most recently served as Scientific Leader within the Genomics Division at Becton Dickinson (BD). Prior to that he was CSO at GenCell Biosystems, which was acquired by BD in 2014. Previously he held various R&D leadership roles at Monsanto and Pfizer. Bryan has a BS in Biochemistry from Truman State University.