

The 100 Most Influential People in Boston

April 24, 2018



Who really runs this town? That's the question we asked ourselves—and dozens of insiders—when we sat down to put this delightfully subjective list together. We weren't looking for the richest people in Boston, or even the smartest. Instead, we sought out the businesspeople, tech moguls, politicians, and tastemakers that the rest of us are all watching, the folks who are truly shaping the city. That kind of power—that sticky idea of influence—has always been a hard thing to measure, but these days it's more decentralized, diversified, and democratized than ever. Flagship institutions such as GE, Harvard, UMass, State Street, and the Boston Foundation have or are welcoming new leadership. The region's well-established top industries are suddenly joined by casino gaming, fantasy sports, and marijuana. Gone are the days when a small cadre of city elites gathered to decide Boston's destiny. Influence is sprinkled all over, which means there's bound to be some spirited debate about who wields the most, or who was left off the list. And that's perfectly fine with us.

— 1 —

Linda Pizzuti Henry
Managing Director, The Boston Globe

By Diane Hessian (#50 on the list)

A couple of years ago, I called Linda and said, “Do you have five minutes? I have a really crazy idea.” And her response was: “I’ll give you 15—I love crazy!” A lot of people have ideas, but having the courage to say, “I’m going to drop everything and make this happen,” that’s what makes an entrepreneur. Linda does that.

If you asked her, I think she’d say that her life’s work is to make 21st-century Boston one of the greatest cities in the world. And it’s not just a vision. One part of her brilliance is bringing people together—I would call her a super-convener. She’s always asking, “Who should be working together?” And when those connections result in a crazy idea, she says, “Let’s do it.” (Think HUBweek, or the monthly salons she hosts.)

She has this amazing quality where she doesn’t have that neurotic desire for perfection that holds a lot of people back. She’s willing to put in the time and will ask everybody she can think of for help. And even though she wants to have a great plan, she doesn’t hold off because there’s a chance that it won’t be perfect—it’s always “How do we make things better?” That’s why everybody wants her on their board, as their leader, and in their corner—she is our most extraordinary civic entrepreneur.

Diane Hessian is the chairman of C Space.

— 2 —

Marty Walsh

Mayor of Boston

He won reelection as mayor with nearly two-thirds of the vote—without bothering to run ads or really dip into his multimillion-dollar campaign war chest. It’s his town now. The only thing Walsh hasn’t proven is that he can get allies elected, but he’s putting his influence to the test this year by stumping for congressional hopefuls such as Dan Koh. This is not the year to bet against Boston’s mayor.

— 3 —

Charlie Baker

Governor

Not only is Charlie Baker the country’s most popular governor, but the fiscal conservative has also been winning battles on Beacon Hill—to the point that raising taxes is barely discussed in this supposedly bluest of states. Assuming the man with the perfect head of hair can continue to stay clear of scandal, he’ll likely remain in charge until he heeds the siren song of national politics.

— 4 —

Abigail Johnson

Chairman and CEO, Fidelity Investments

Bloomberg says she’s worth \$11.2 billion; Forbes says \$15.9 billion. Let’s not quibble. Since fully taking the company reins from her legendary father, Ned, in late 2016, Johnson has challenged the stodgy Boston brokerage image by enthusiastically endorsing cryptocurrency. She has also taken a very public lead in combatting sexual harassment. But will the notoriously private heir finally become more involved in local civic life? Insiders expect the answer will be yes.

— 5 —

John Fish

Chairman and CEO, Suffolk Construction

Okay, so the \$60 million expansion of his Roxbury HQ won't include a helipad; he's still getting almost everything he wanted. The construction titan is also staying on the cutting edge of technology with the creation of Smart Labs, and he recently lured former state Senator Linda Dorcena Forry away from public office to serve as his vice president for diversity, inclusion, and community relations.

— 6 —

David Torchiana

President and CEO, Partners HealthCare

When "Torch" took over as CEO of Partners HealthCare three years ago, the company was running an operating loss of \$21 million and the state had legally blocked it from expansion. Today, the behemoth is \$115 million in the black for its latest quarter and has the state's go-ahead to acquire Massachusetts Eye and Ear. In other words, Torchiana is the undisputed biggest player in our most important industry.

— 7 —

Jim Canales

President, Barr Foundation

For years, the Barr Foundation was seen as something of a family plaything for billionaires Amos and Barbara Hostetter. Their 2014 hiring of the nonprofit wizard Canales, though, signaled that they're looking to cement a legacy. Canales has since become the face of the foundation and is leveraging its vast funds to tackle some of Boston's most pressing issues, starting with climate change.

Photograph by Toan Trinh

— 8 —

Bob Rivers

Chairman and CEO, Eastern Bank

By Colette Phillips (#74 on the list)

As an advocate for a more-inclusive local business community, I can say that Bob Rivers is my hero, the moral authority of corporate Boston in 2018. He is a disruptor—but he is a constructive disruptor. He's also a diversity game-changer, an ally to women, people of color, and LGBTQ people. He has the courage to push against the grain, the conviction to stand up for making a difference in people's lives, and the commitment to go out and ask those who think like him to join him.

Among his many efforts, Bob engages corporate Boston to make a commitment to spend dollars with minority-owned firms. He moved the governing body of Eastern Bank from 92 percent white men to 50 percent people of color and women. When he realized he was going to become chairman and CEO in 2017, he went out and recruited an African-American man, Quincy Miller, to become his successor. That speaks volumes. His chief marketing officer is a person of color. His executive VP for human resources, Nancy Stager, is a woman. The person who runs Eastern Bank insurance, Hope Aldrich, is a woman. Bob recognized that this is the smart thing to do and is positioning the bank to grow. Eastern Bank had record net revenues in 2017, with \$11 billion in assets. He has seen the future of Boston, and it is diverse.

Colette Phillips is the president and CEO of Colette Phillips Communications.

— 9 —

Jim Rooney

President and CEO, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce

Some rolled their eyes when the chamber picked a white Irish-American man to replace Paul Guzzi in 2015, but Rooney has proven to be anything but a champion of Old Boston. He created the position of director of economic opportunity and recently launched the Pacesetters Initiative, encouraging members to work with more local minority-owned businesses—evidence he’s all about the next generation.

— 10 —

Maura Healey

Attorney General

Nobody in Boston wants to be on the other side of a fight with Healey. She’s taken on corporate behemoths National Grid, Care.com, and Equifax. She’s launched a fleet of lawsuits against President Donald Trump. And she’s gone into battle with the state legislature. Every conflict seems to make her stronger.

— 11 —

Jack Connors

Chairman Emeritus, Hill Holliday

By now you may have noticed that some of the “old guard” powerbrokers have slipped off the list, but Connors remains as involved as ever. Know why Boston is pushing to rebuild the Long Island Bridge? Because Connors is co-founder and chairman of the island’s Camp Harbor View. Why is Children’s Hospital expanding, at the expense of Prouty Garden? Because Connors, chairman emeritus of Partners HealthCare, still has the juice to make it happen.

— 12 —

Jonathan Kraft

President, the Kraft Group

Not to take anything away from the legendary Bob Kraft, but the true power behind the throne is now his son Jonathan, who’s running the Patriots and spearheading the organization’s efforts to combat opioid addiction and push for juvenile justice reform. Bob still gets plenty of camera time at the Super Bowl, but Jonathan’s cell number is the one you want in your contacts list.

Photograph by Toan Trinh

— 13 —

Jeffrey Leiden

Chairman, President, and CEO, Vertex Pharmaceuticals

By Congressman Joe Kennedy III (#95 on the list)

I got to know Dr. Leiden through the STEM Advisory Council, which he’s cochaired for years under Deval Patrick and Charlie Baker. Vertex is renowned for coming up with drugs that provide extraordinary benefits to people with extremely challenging illnesses. But what sets Jeff apart is how he’s decided to bet on the talent of every single child in our community, and believes that if we provide technology and classes, they can lead our next great companies.

Under Jeff, Vertex has worked with organizations such as the Boston Public Schools to provide access to things like internships, mentorships, and apprenticeships. That's more than saying, Hey, here's a check. (Though Vertex committed last year to spending \$500 million over 10 years on philanthropy.) And he's persuading leaders around the state to do the same.

Jeff understands that the big picture is about the long-term health and viability of economic progress in Massachusetts. But it's also about recognizing that it's awfully hard to maximize your potential if you're not able to at least get a taste of what's out there. For kids who haven't experienced something like a Vertex lab, it's pretty amazing. And Jeff's willing to do that.

Joe Kennedy III is the U.S. representative from Massachusetts' fourth congressional district.

— 14 —

Robert Popeo

Chairman, Mintz Levin

This year marks Popeo's 50th anniversary at the ultra-connected law firm, and there isn't much sign that his influence is waning. He guided House Speaker Robert DeLeo cleanly through the Probation Department patronage scandal, and with the help of Charlie Baker pal and Mintz partner Steve Tocco, Popeo has turned ML Strategies into the state's most influential lobbying firm.

— 15 —

John Barros

Chief of Economic Development, City of Boston

He brought GE to Boston; that alone (despite the company's recent troubles) earns him a spot on this list. Everywhere you look in the city—from the development in Dudley Square to the Seaport—you'll find Barros's fingerprints. You'll also find believers ready to follow his lead. He's the odds-on favorite to be the next mayor of Boston.

— 16 —

Elizabeth Warren

U.S. Senator

Still a first-term senator, Warren has become a national political juggernaut. Speculation about her running for president might be overblown, but don't count her out for VP or a cabinet position in a Democratic administration starting in 2021. She might not have Ted Kennedy's ability to move mountains for Massachusetts, but make no mistake: She has real clout.

Photograph by Toan Trinh

— 17 —

Myechia Minter-Jordan

President and CEO, The Dimock Center

By Bob Rivers (#8 on the list)

Myechia has accomplished an impressive amount in a short period of time; she is a rising star who keeps soaring higher. She moved to the Boston area in 2007 when she joined the Dimock Center as chief medical officer. In 2013, thanks to subject-matter expertise and great leadership abilities, she was the natural pick as its next CEO. And I

can tell you, as chairman of the foundation's board, she has far exceeded anything we would have imagined.

The Dimock Center has a long history as one of the most recognized health centers in the city. But Myechia has completely re-built the board in her time there. This spring, we formally unveiled the new Dr. Lucy Sewell Center for acute treatment services, for which she raised more than \$60 million in just two years. During her time here, she's also become one of the leading voices on various medical issues, not the least of which is the opioid crisis.

Myechia's brilliance and natural charisma have won her many fans, and in a city that really needs more influential people of color in senior roles, she has stepped up in the media, in community activities, and on boards across the city. She has navigated Boston so quickly. As we continue to grow in this new era of healthcare, which requires so many different partnerships with larger organizations across the city, people just gravitate to Myechia—they believe in her work and want to be a part of things that she's part of.

Bob Rivers is the chairman and CEO of Eastern Bank.

— 18 —

Tom Glynn

CEO, Massport

It's easy to forget the power of the state's port authority, but it puts its thumb on the scale with everything from tourism to neighborhood development. The failure to get Glynn on board early helped doom plans for an IndyCar race in South Boston. A politically connected polymath, he quietly gets what he wants, and stops what he doesn't.

— 19 —

David Fialkow

Cofounder and Managing Director, General Catalyst

Tech companies flock to Fialkow in hopes of impressing the renowned venture capitalist, and he only seems to be getting better at picking winners. He also chairs the Pan-Mass Challenge, serves on the board of the antidiscrimination nonprofit Facing History and Ourselves—and in his spare time produced *Icarus*, a documentary about Russian Olympic doping that just won an Academy Award.

— 20 —

Ayanna Pressley

At-Large City Councilor

Pressley's challenge to popular incumbent U.S. Congressman Michael Capuano came as a shock to many, but also confirmed that she's too big for the city council. The fact that some of the most loyal Democrats in the state—including Elizabeth Warren and Maura Healey—are not reflexively endorsing Capuano speaks volumes. Whether Pressley wins this race or not, she'll remain a powerhouse with a devoted grassroots following.

— 21 —

Kevin Tabb

President and CEO, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

It appears almost certain that Tabb will soon be head of the second-largest healthcare system in the region. Beth Israel's pending merger with the Lahey Clinic—which recently received a key approval recommendation from the state—will create a chain of 13 hospitals and other facilities and partnerships with an estimated annual revenue of

\$5.3 billion. If that doesn't spell power, we don't know what does.

— 22 —

Mohamad Ali

President and CEO, Carbonite

Ali, the head of the nation's fast-growing data-protection company and one of the city's major influencers, has recently found his political voice: He gave a powerful keynote speech on immigration at the JFK Presidential Library last year, and his advocacy on net neutrality earned him a seat at Donald Trump's inaugural State of the Union as the guest of Senator Ed Markey.

— 23 —

Ann Klee

Vice President of Environment, Health, & Safety, General Electric

New GE chairman and CEO John Flannery has yet to make his imprint on Boston, but Klee certainly has. She led the team that chose and designed GE's new headquarters in South Boston and has taken over the company's charitable foundation. In a firm that boasts powerhouses such as former U.S. Senator Mo Cowan, Klee is the one making the biggest splash.

— 24 —

Andrew Dreyfus

President and CEO, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

His company insures nearly half of all Bay Staters, which means it largely determines healthcare costs through reimbursement rates. Politically, almost nothing related to healthcare happens on Beacon Hill without Dreyfus's input. Heck, he's even changing the color of Boston's bike-share rides, with a new sponsorship deal that will rechristen them "Blue Bikes."

— 25 —

Robert Reynolds

President and CEO, Putnam Investments

In January, Reynolds was named the chairman of the Massachusetts Competitive Partnership (MACP)—a.k.a. the "New Vault," in reference to the defunct group of business leaders who once plotted the city's future from the basement of the Boston Safe Deposit & Trust Co. One of the best reasons to think that the state will tackle housing affordability is that Reynolds has put the weight of MACP behind the effort.

— 26 —

John Moore

Global President, MullenLowe Mediahub

Moore is Boston's new ad king. His agency "went from underdog to industry heavyweight in 2017," according to Adweek, with offices around the globe, including a new one in India, and contracts with Netflix, Staples, MTV, and plenty of other household brands.

Robert DeLeo

Speaker, State House of Representatives

Having removed the term-limit rule that restricted speakers to eight years in the role, DeLeo has clearly established himself as the unquestioned leader of the lower chamber. It's less clear what he wishes to do with that power, but there's no denying that all lawmaking runs through DeLeo.

Photograph by Toan Trinh

Vanessa Calderón-Rosado

CEO, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción

By Jim Canales (#7 on the list)

To me, Vanessa represents the vanguard of leadership that Boston increasingly needs for us to become the kind of vibrant, inclusive city that we aspire to be. First and foremost, for the past 15 years she's run IBA—a nonprofit that works in the South End on displacement and economic development. But she's also accepted volunteer leadership roles on boards all over the city that take on significant mandates, which, to me, speaks to her ability to think on a strategic level.

In 2010, she was the first Latina to be appointed to the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. She's also been tapped by the Franklin Square House Foundation and Eastern Bank, where she's a trustee. And just this January she was elected to the board of the Boston Foundation. At the Barr Foundation Fellowships, we added her to our selection committee, and the reasons are pretty straightforward: She's really smart, she's very well-connected across many communities, she's a talented leader, and she's fighting to build more diverse, inclusive leadership for this city.

Most important, she's not afraid to use her platform and her credibility to advance that cause. Look at the Globe op-ed she wrote with Cathy Minehan about the all-male state education leadership. Whether you agreed with her on that or not, it was a strong statement—proof that as we address key challenges in Boston, she's committed to ensuring we hear from a broad range of voices.

Jim Canales is the president of the Barr Foundation.

Ralph de la Torre

Chairman and CEO, Steward Health Care System

Under de la Torre's watch, Steward has expanded to become the largest for-profit hospital provider in the state—and, almost overnight, one of the largest in the country. De la Torre's local clout may diminish, however, when Steward relocates some of its executive offices to Texas later this year.

Jonathan Abbott

President and CEO, WGBH

It's hard to remember that just a few years ago, WGBH was mostly known for classical radio and Zoom. Since then, Abbott has reeled in Jim Braude, arguably the most influential media figure around, and built a studio in the Bos-

ton Public Library lobby—possibly the best integration of media into the city that Boston has ever seen.

— 31 —

Michelle Wu

At-Large City Councilor

After two years as council president, Wu received more votes than any other candidate in Boston this past November outside of Marty Walsh. She has strong relationships with the business community and with top elected officials (she was a student of Elizabeth Warren's at Harvard Law School). Ambitious, smart, and just 33 years old, Wu is positioned to be a force in this town for decades to come.

— 32 —

Jody Rose

President, New England Venture Capital Association

Rose took the helm at NEVCA three years ago, and already she's shaken up the city's old finance circles. And as cofounder of Hack.Diversity, which connects black and Latino STEM students with internships at firms such as Carbonite and DataXu, Rose is helping to create the companies that will employ tomorrow's workforce.

— 33 —

Robert Coughlin

President and CEO, Massachusetts Biotechnology Council

Like a matchmaker for the region's biotech industry, Coughlin ensures bright ideas move all the way to patient health. As a former state rep and undersecretary for Governor Deval Patrick, Coughlin is also politically wired, not to mention a charity superstar who was awarded the inaugural Governor Paul Cellucci Fatherhood Award last June.

— 34 —

L. Rafael Reif

President, MIT

Don't know if you caught this, among the many amazing things MIT does, but in March Reif announced plans for the institute to build a nuclear fusion reactor to solve the world's energy problems by generating energy bursts capable of powering an entire city. Which is to say: Reif is important in ways most of us literally can't even comprehend.

Photograph by Toan Trinh

— 35 —

Jeff Bussgang

General Partner, Flybridge Capital Partners

By Mohamad Ali (#22 on the list)

I've met a lot of rich and powerful people, and many of them are philanthropic. Very few of them, though, genuinely care about the people around them. I can assure you that Jeff is one of those people.

When I first met him, for instance, we had this quandary with highly educated immigrants coming to our colleges and universities, because when they're finished school, they can't start a company in this country. It's a Catch-22: They have to go work for those who can sponsor them as immigrant workers. So Jeff worked with the governor and the president of the University of Massachusetts to create the Global Entrepreneur in Residence program to help graduates and local companies.

Then there's the Alliance for Business Leadership. Jeff recognized that while there are a lot of business leaders who feel progressive values are important, we didn't have an organization that promoted those values. What did Jeff do? He went out and formed one.

He did the same thing with Hack.Diversity, which he started with Jody Rose of the New England Venture Capital Association. Carbonite was also involved. It's a small program, but it's scalable and focuses on African-American students, generally community college students, who wouldn't necessarily have a path to lead them into the tech sector. Five companies each enlisted three to five interns, and then after a six-month period offered them jobs. Those workers are now in their second full year at those companies.

To be quite honest, Jeff didn't have to do these things. He did them because he wanted to have a better community here and, by extension, in the world.

Mohamad Ali is the president and CEO of Carbonite.

— 36 —

Jason Robins

CEO, DraftKings

As DraftKings has grown into a billion-dollar company, Robins seems to have realized the importance of building relationships—and influence—in his headquarter city. He joined the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, started lobbying Governor Baker, and recently committed to occupying 100,000 square feet in the Back Bay and increasing DraftKings' workforce to some 600 local employees. He's the head of what's arguably the most important consumer-tech company in town.

— 37 —

Brian Golden

Director, Boston Planning & Development Agency

Boston's economic boom, and its effect on neighborhoods throughout the city, is largely in the hands of Golden. This year alone, he has greenlighted several transit-oriented housing plans, a massive new Harvard campus in Allston, and tax breaks to lure Amazon's second headquarters. His fingerprints are everywhere you look.

— 38 —

Matthew Teitelbaum

Director, Museum of Fine Arts

Malcolm Rogers is a tough act to follow, but in less than three years, Teitelbaum has established himself as a new leader on the local arts and culture scene. Landing a heavily sought-after Dutch and Flemish collection last fall demonstrated his international clout as the MFA embarks on a three-year strategic plan leading up to its 150th anniversary in 2020.

— 39 —

Jeff Bezos

Chairman and CEO, Amazon

He's already created thousands of jobs in Boston and is deciding whether to plop a massive second headquarters here, which would occupy 8 million square feet and employ another 50,000 people. He has the top politicians in the state scrambling to roll out the red carpet. And he holds the power to reshape Boston in his hands.

— 40 —

Jeffrey Sánchez

Chair, House Ways and Means Committee

Speaker Robert DeLeo surprised many on Beacon Hill last July when he picked the Jamaica Plain representative to head the powerful Ways and Means Committee. Not that Sánchez was ever a back-bencher: He was close to becoming state Democratic Party chair a few years back. Now he's one of the most important people on Beacon Hill—and a likely successor to DeLeo.

— 41 —

Sandy Edgerley

Chair, the Boston Foundation

In 2016, Edgerley took over as chair of the extremely influential Boston Foundation, where she and president and CEO Paul Grogan make a formidable pair. A longtime real estate developer in addition to her vast civic and philanthropic work, she also recently made waves by announcing plans to create a millennial social club in the heart of the stuffy old-money Back Bay.

— 42 —

Shirley Leung

Columnist, the Boston Globe

Whether they agree or disagree with Leung, people read her—and what she writes about gets talked about. When she lambasted WEEI's "notoriously offensive" jock talk, companies canceled their ads on the station. Local organizations know that Leung will call them out if they fail to put women in top positions.

— 43 —

Lee Pelton

President, Emerson College

In his seven years at Emerson, Pelton has expanded the school's presence in downtown Boston, forged a partnership to reopen the Colonial Theatre, and spoken up on a range of public policy issues. In a time of turnover at the top of many of Boston's colleges and universities, Pelton has become a veteran leader of the sector.

— 44 —

Travis McCready

President and CEO, Massachusetts Life Sciences Center

With a billion dollars of public and private money to hand out, McCready is shaping the future of the region's most vital industry. The real test of his power, however, comes as he tries to persuade the state legislature to pass Governor Baker's proposed five-year, \$500 million extension of life sciences funding.

— 45 —

Niraj Shah

CEO and Cochairman, Wayfair

The cofounder of the \$4.7 billion online home-goods retailer joined the board of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston last year and eked his way onto the Forbes billionaires list. Through his family foundation, Shah is putting some of that wealth to work, funding programs such as the Hub and Spoke Project, which delivers healthy meals to Boston schoolchildren.

— 46 —

Thomas O'Brien

Managing Director, HYM Investment Group

The former head of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, O'Brien is now shepherding major projects all across the city. He's building much of Boston Landing in Allston-Brighton, among other projects—and if Amazon does build its second headquarters in Boston, there's a good chance it will be on O'Brien's land at the former Suffolk Downs.

— 47 —

Ioannis Miaoulis

President and Director, Museum of Science

He convinced Michael Bloomberg to hand him \$50 million—how much more powerful can you be? Viewed as a leader in Boston's cultural and educational circles, Miaoulis even helped get one of his longtime employees, Yvonne Spicer, elected mayor of Framingham last year.

— 48 —

Pamela Aldsworth

Head of Venture Capital Relationship Management, Silicon Valley Bank

Let's put it this way: You want Aldsworth on your side. She not only connects Boston-area tech entrepreneurs with money, but also walks them through the process of building a successful company. Aldsworth is heavily active in organizations that encourage tech companies to do more charitable work, as well.

— 49 —

Kate Walsh

President and CEO, Boston Medical Center

She runs a teaching hospital in the middle of the city with \$2.8 billion in annual revenue, along with a network of 14 community health centers. She's also at the table wherever local healthcare policy is being discussed, from City Hall to the Massachusetts Hospital Association.

— 50 —

Diane Hessian

Chairman, C Space

“Diane Hessian is everywhere,” the Globe declared last year, and it sure seems like it. She chairs her game-changing market-research company, C Space, invests in Boston’s most innovative startups, and sits on boards of corporations, universities, and charities. Now immersed in voter-attitude research, Hessian is also leading the charge on increasing women’s seats on local corporate boards and giving women-run businesses a leg up.

— 51 —

Andrea Campbell

City Council President

Three years ago, Campbell took on legendary 16-term councilor Charles Yancey and won. Now she has the gavel as president, elected by the council at a time when new, activist members hope to flex some muscle and make the body more relevant. Political insiders expect her to keep rising.

— 52 —

Adam Fine

Partner, Vicente Sederberg

Known as the lawyer to the Massachusetts marijuana industry, he helped write the ballot question that decriminalized the drug, advised the Senate committee that implemented the new law, and represents many of the dispensaries poised to make a fortune. In other words, the great green rush runs through him.

— 53 —

Jim Davis

Chairman, New Balance

Davis’s decision to build a new corporate headquarters and help fast-track a rail station in Brighton is among the most significant neighborhood-redevelopment projects in memory. And while his substantial financial help couldn’t quite get Mitt Romney elected president, his support of Donald Trump and other Republicans has given him substantial pull in Washington. Forbes currently pegs his fortune at more than \$5 billion.

— 54 —

Jocelyn Sargent

Executive Director, the Hyams Foundation

A newcomer to Boston, Sargent is already among the city’s most important philanthropy and racial-justice players. She has refocused the Hyams mission toward devising systemic solutions and put the usually quiet grant-making foundation into the public eye. Case in point: a splashy poll on Bostonians’ attitudes on racial issues released in March.

— 55 —

Herb Chambers

President, the Herb Chambers Companies

In his mid-seventies, the billionaire car dealer is still actively running his mammoth company, which employs more than 2,000 people in Massachusetts. And he plans to keep expanding: A 140,000-square-foot Jaguar/Range Rover dealership, currently awaiting city approval, would transform the look of Comm. Ave. Though he commutes by helicopter between his Connecticut home and the Four Seasons, he remains devoted to local charities, and his trademark tortoiseshell glasses can usually be spotted wherever Boston's A-listers are gathered.

— 56 —

Marty Meehan

President, University of Massachusetts

"What's the difference between God and Marty Meehan?" asked state Representative David Nangle at this year's Lowell St. Patrick's Day Dinner. "God doesn't walk around UMass thinking he's Marty Meehan." The former congressman might not have as much sway in Boston as he does in his home base of Lowell, but heading the UMass system since 2015 has only increased his already considerable clout.

— 57 —

Marcy Reed

President, National Grid, Massachusetts

She's responsible for getting most Bay Staters' lights back on after the latest nor'easter. She's also leading the state's move toward clean energy and sits on some of the most influential boards in town, currently chairing the Massachusetts Business Roundtable. Dorchester native Jim Judge, the top exec at Eversource, is on his way toward making this list, but for now, Reed is the real power player in the power sector.

— 58 —

Roger Brown

President, Berklee College of Music

He's struggling to pull the storied institution through revelations of faculty sexual harassment, but that doesn't diminish the huge presence and prestige of Brown and Berklee, which have only grown since the 2016 merger with the Boston Conservatory. Beyoncé recently funded a "Formation Scholarship" for the school—what more do you need to know?

— 59 —

Joyce Linehan

Chief of Policy, City of Boston

Mayor Marty Walsh's administration has repeatedly been rocked by power struggles—and the supposed political naif Linehan has survived and prospered through it all. She's involved in all of the city's long-range policy discussions, serves as Walsh's progressive conscience, and remains the arts and culture community's go-to person when it needs help.

— 60 —

Brian Lang

President, UNITE HERE Local 26

The rise of former labor boss Marty Walsh has paradoxically diminished the power of many of Boston's labor leaders. Lang, however, has grown in stature and influence. He led the battle of dining-hall workers against Harvard University, which altered the labor landscape on local campuses. And Governor Baker appointed him to the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board.

— 61 —

Ray Hammond

Pastor, Bethel AME Church

If Yawkey Way maintains its name despite Red Sox ownership's attempts to change it, you'll understand the power of Hammond. The Yawkey Foundation is just one of the many local organizations he's part of; meanwhile, he preaches to many of Boston's elites on Sundays and has made Bethel AME the nation's first black church to offer sanctuary against deportation.

— 62 —

Barbara Lee

President, Barbara Lee Family Foundation

Few people can marshal money and resources for politicians the way Lee does for female candidates. Beneficiaries over the years have included Hillary Clinton and Ayanna Pressley. She's also a major cultural and philanthropic powerhouse who's fueled the Institute of Contemporary Art's emergence as one of the city's major organizations.

— 63 —

Kimberly Sherman Stamler

President, Related Beal

You don't see many women at the top levels of Boston's development world, but Stamler joined the club when she took over for Robert Beal two years ago. Since then she's led the innovative residences at the Beverly and restored part of the Harborwalk by remaking Lovejoy Wharf. Oh, and she made the deal to keep the famous Citgo sign shining over Kenmore Square for decades to come.

— 64 —

David Manfredi

Founding Principal, Elkus Manfredi Architects

"Are you even allowed to build in Boston without Manfredi's help?" one insider half-jokes. Nobody is doing more to shape the appearance of Boston, from its campuses to its workplaces to pretty much everywhere else you look. The death of his longtime partner, Howard Elkus, last year clearly has not diminished Manfredi's impact.

— 65 —

Greg Shell

Managing Director, Bain Capital Double Impact

Alongside former Governor Deval Patrick, Shell runs the Double Impact fund that aims to do good with investments. He's also a founding board member of Compass Working Capital, which gives people financial tools to help them overcome poverty. He's sought after all over town by leaders in business, life sciences, tech, philanthropy, and finance.

— 66 —

Ernie Boch Jr.

President and CEO, Boch Enterprises

The hard-rocking, Trump-supporting auto mogul now underwrites much of Boston's arts scene. He has also become something of a roving philanthropic Santa, popping up with money to save Boston University's student newspaper, purchase watercraft for the Aquinnah Fire Department, and even secretly pay off the layaway bills for families' toys before Christmas.

— 67 —

Lydia Lowe

Director, Chinatown Community Land Trust

Lowe spent the past 30 years turning the Chinatown Progressive Association into one of the most unlikely political superpowers in the city. She was instrumental in helping city council candidate Lydia Edwards defeat the Marty Walsh machine last November and in bringing a library branch back to Chinatown after 60 years. Now Lowe is returning full time to the neighborhood's housing issues.

— 68 —

Adam Weiner

Managing Partner, Weiner Ventures

Power may be more spread out and democratized in Boston than in the old days, but let's not kid ourselves: The top developers are still kings of the city. Weiner is undoubtedly among the handful of elite within that regal stratum, and along with another titan, Steve Samuels, appears ready to pull off the seemingly impossible 1000 Boylston project over the Massachusetts Turnpike.

— 69 —

Lawrence Bacow

President, Harvard University

The former head of Tufts University doesn't actually start his new job until July, but he earned a spot on this list the minute he was selected. What he does with the elite perch remains to be seen.

— 70 —

Tom Grilk

CEO, Boston Athletic Association

After years as a well-connected business attorney, Grilk is now fully devoted to the organization in charge of the Boston Marathon—always an important job, but increasingly so since the 2013 bombings.

— 71 —

George Regan

Chairman and President, Regan Communications Group

It's no accident that many of the people and companies on this list (as well as this magazine) turn to Regan for their public relations needs. Politicians, business leaders, celebrities—they all know he's the one who can polish their reputations and connect them with all the right people.

— 72 —

Joseph “Jay” Hooley

Chairman and CEO, State Street Corporation

It's hard to overstate the role that Hooley has played in Boston finance and civic circles—but it's also hard to guess how that role will change as he sheds the CEO role by year's end. Watch for his spot on this list to soon be taken by his successor, Ron O'Hanley—best known for placing the Fearless Girl statue on Wall Street last year.

— 73 —

Liz Walker

Pastor, Roxbury Presbyterian Church

She still carries celebrity power from her years at the anchor desk on WBZ-TV, and she's since added moral authority to her résumé with a Harvard Divinity degree and a calling as a minister. When Walker lends her voice to such issues as gun violence, discrimination, healthcare, and poverty, people pay attention—and things change.

— 74 —

Colette Phillips

President and CEO, Colette Phillips Communications

Phillips has become a one-woman LinkedIn for Boston. Her Get Konnected! networking events, lists of influential minorities, and Diversity Game Changers awards are merely the most visible examples of the many ways she promotes diversity in a city badly in need of it.

— 75 —

Pam Reeve

Chair, the Commonwealth Institute

A successful business and technology leader once tapped by Governor Deval Patrick and Mayor Tom Menino, Reeve now works to bolster female CEOs and women-led businesses across the state. Her expertise and assistance are among the most sought-after in the region.

Steve Tompkins

Sheriff, Suffolk County

Tompkins has quietly become one of the most popular elected officials in Boston, with a network of alliances around the city and a seemingly untouchable strength at the ballot box. His coveted endorsement could swing the upcoming district attorney election, and possibly the Capuano–Pressley congressional showdown.

Kathy Abbott

President and CEO, Boston Harbor Now

When the Boston Harbor Association and Boston Harbor Island Alliance joined forces two years ago, they created one of the most impressively backed nonprofits in the region—how many others have two former governors (Michael Dukakis and William Weld) on their board of trustees? A former Department of Conservation and Recreation commissioner, Abbott was selected to lead the new entity as it tackles transportation, climate change, and waterfront development.

Mark Volpe

Managing Director, Boston Symphony Orchestra

Now 20 years into his leadership of the BSO musical empire, Volpe continues to enhance its status as a local and international gem. Having business and finance superstar Bill Achtmeyer as chairman of the BSO board of trustees for the past few years has clearly helped, as evidenced by the \$40 million Tanglewood expansion currently under way.

Will Keyser

President, Keyser Public Strategies

Proximity to power is still power, and nobody's star has risen as high as that of Keyser, the longtime Democratic strategist who crossed the aisle to forge Charlie Baker's path to victory in 2014 and will try to do it again this year. "He gets a shit-ton of clients," one political bigwig says admiringly.

Aixa Beauchamp

President, Beauchamp & Associates

A longtime philanthropy consultant, Beauchamp helped create the Latino Legacy Fund five years ago to advance the socioeconomic status of Boston's Hispanic residents. Since then, both Governor Baker and Mayor Walsh have recruited her for advisory roles, and her influence continues to grow.

— 81 —

Cardinal Sean O'Malley

Archbishop, Archdiocese of Boston

This is still the most Catholic city in America, and O'Malley's pronouncements hold considerable sway over public officeholders. They didn't win the day on marijuana legalization in 2016, but they did help narrowly defeat a proposal to allow physician-assisted suicide four years earlier—and just blocked similar legislation on Beacon Hill once again.

— 82 —

Deborah Jackson

President, Cambridge College

Just try to find a more impressive résumé of civic leadership than Jackson's: senior VP of Boston Children's Hospital, VP of the Boston Foundation, CEO of American Red Cross of Eastern Massachusetts, and now president of Cambridge College. You'll also find her on the boards of academic, healthcare, philanthropic, and business institutions all over the city.

— 83 —

Jill Medvedow

Director, Institute of Contemporary Art

Nobody builds new museums in Boston anymore—that is, except Medvedow. She created the Seaport-defining ICA on the waterfront and will soon open a \$10 million, 15,000-square-foot satellite space in East Boston. Along the way she has led on arts advocacy, helped to redefine Boston's stodgy image, and sparked occasional controversy—exactly what an arts leader should do.

— 84 —

Kristen Lepore

Chief of Staff for the Governor of Massachusetts

With wide-ranging policy knowledge, experience in and around state government, and intimate familiarity with the state's finances, it's not a surprise that Lepore has become Governor Baker's most trusted staffer. She gets the big problems—including the MBTA—and has the ability to make change.

— 85 —

Nick Varano

Owner and CEO, the Varano Group

His Strega restaurants are already the city's best spots to spy a local or national celeb. Now Varano has his sights on Bostonians seeking coffee and a quick bite: He's opened three Caffé Stregas around town, with a fourth on the way. He even got his meatball cones onto the Fenway Park vendor menu last season.

— 86 —

Katie Rae

CEO and Managing Partner, The Engine

Rae was already the “high-profile ringmaster of Boston’s start-up circus,” as the Boston Globe described her, before MIT grabbed her a year ago to lead its ambitious new accelerator/incubator/investment hybrid. More than 500 entrepreneurs came hat in hand to ask Rae for a piece of her initial \$200 million fund.

— 87 —

Paula Johnson

President, Wellesley College

A year after taking over the college, Johnson won last year’s local commencement-speaker wars by landing alumna Hillary Clinton. Johnson was already a leader in healthcare circles, teaching at Harvard Medical School, chairing the Boston Public Health Commission, and getting a million hits for her TED Talk on health disparities.

— 88 —

Rick Lord

President and CEO, Associated Industries of Massachusetts

In the quarter-century since Lord left a key budget staff position in the State House and joined AIM, it has become arguably the most powerful lobby on Beacon Hill. Having 4,500 member companies helps, but Lord’s relationships and political prowess count for a lot.

— 89 —

Paul English

CEO, Lola

Hoping to shake up business travel with his new booking app, the Kayak.com founder also lends his talents to non-profits tackling education and homelessness. But we’ll learn the extent of his power as he takes on a challenge that even Tom Menino failed to accomplish: creating a memorial statue for Martin Luther King Jr. in Boston, where the civil-rights icon earned his Ph.D.

— 90 —

Catherine D’Amato

President and CEO, Greater Boston Food Bank

As the leader of one of the country’s most impressive and innovative charitable organizations for the past 23 years, D’Amato is involved in nearly every facet of the city’s business, finance, nonprofit, and political activities. Plus, she has the uncanny ability to get almost anybody else on this list to put on an apron and serve food to the needy.

— 91 —

Betty Francisco

General Counsel, Compass Working Capital

A fitness-industry manager and entrepreneur now working for the Compass antipoverty entity, Francisco also cofounded Latina Circle, an organization that aims to increase the number of Hispanic women in leadership positions.

— 92 —

Gerald Chan

Chairman and CEO, Morningside Group

The billionaire head of his real estate, private equity, and venture capital firm, Chan is the local superpower who's somehow remained under the radar. Know how Harvard's public health school is now called the T.H. Chan School of Public Health? That's thanks to Chan's \$350 million gift to the university. A few years ago, he bought scads of properties in and around Harvard Square; now he's doing the same in Savin Hill.

— 93 —

C.A. Webb

President, Kendall Square Association

She reportedly came within inches of landing the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce top job three years ago—which really would have shaken up the chamber's boys' club image. Her crusade for Beacon Hill to ban non-disclosure agreements might be nearing reality. And now the venture capitalist has been chosen to navigate the area's premier tech neighborhood through 21st-century challenges.

— 94 —

Matthew Thompson

Senior Pastor, Jubilee Christian Church

Since taking over one of Boston's largest congregations several years ago, Thompson has made the church more relevant and connected than ever. He also chairs the Economic Development Committee of the Black Ministerial Alliance. His wife and brothers round out a network of influencers across the city.

— 95 —

Joe Kennedy III

Congressman

He's considered a near-lock to become a U.S. senator, he raises money by the wheelbarrow for himself and for others, and he was tapped to give the official Democratic response to President Donald Trump's 2018 State of the Union address. Plus, he's only 37. And did we mention he's a Kennedy?

— 96 —

Andrew Graff

CEO, Allen & Gerritsen

His firm has created leading-edge campaigns for the Boston Celtics, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Beats by Dr. Dre, and Yuengling beer from its Seaport headquarters. Graff is also well liked and well connected in Boston's civic and business circles—for instance, he spearheaded the Boston Foundation's recent rebranding effort.

— 97 —

Diane Paulus

Artistic Director, American Repertory Theater

Paulus brings people into the theater by debuting Broadway-bound fare such as *Waitress* and the upcoming *Jagged Little Pill* while still challenging patrons with timely work like *The White Card*. The question is whether she can keep the A.R.T. and the graduate theater program going at Harvard—she has halted admissions for three years to work on a strategic plan.

— 98 —

Sam Kennedy

President and CEO, Boston Red Sox

Obviously, he holds the happiness and well-being of the entire Sox Nation in his hands; he's also proving to be an involved civic leader, forming partnerships with the Hispanic community. But does he have the power to change the name of the street outside Fenway Park?

— 99 —

Doug Rubin

Founding Partner, Northwind Strategies

After getting Deval Patrick, Elizabeth Warren, Joe Kennedy III, and Marty Walsh elected, political wizard Rubin retired from the campaign life to concentrate on using his extensive contacts, and equally well-connected team, to build up an impressive roster of public relations clients. Now he's un-retired and exerting his influence on behalf of Dan Koh's congressional campaign.

— 100 —

Tom Brady

Quarterback, New England Patriots

Is there anything you wouldn't do for the GOAT?