



Global Entrepreneurship Program Delegation to Portugal

July 14-17, 2014

Delegate Biographies



Paloma Felisberto Bilson **Owner of Protea Group International**

Paloma Bilson is the owner of Protea Group International with offices in Los Angeles and London since 1999. The company offers full service business management and tax advisory to international clients and represents both individuals and corporations on four continents. Her unique international experience, fluency in five different languages, and knowledge of immigration visas, offer to clients an understanding of business and personal issues beyond immigration and tax by adapting to the global and ever changing environment. Over the past 21 years, she has led multiple companies through rapid and continuous growth.

Since 2009 Paloma has produced six feature films and has five more scheduled for production. She recently founded Tigertail Films, a film and television production company. In January 2012, she purchased a business management firm specializing in international entertainers (naming it Protea-IPS), and in the past two years has quadrupled its revenues.

Paloma is a contributor to Communities in School and also donates time and services to the local school district. She recently wrote the screenplay entitled *Discarded* which was shot in 2013 and is therefore enjoying writing this bio in the third person.

She is active in karate (a black belt), skiing and running, is a member of numerous organizations such as Woman in Film; Woman President's Organization; and as a result of hanging out on movie sets, now a member of SAG/AFTRA as well.

In 1990 she came to the United States from Angola and currently resides in Los Angeles with her husband David and their four children.

Paloma Bilson's multifaceted experience and unique talents in international business management and tax advisory give the delegation a dynamic edge in understanding industry both in the United States and the rest of the world.

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<http://protea-group.com/>



Victor DaCruz
President of C&M Screw Machine Products, Inc.

Victor DaCruz co-founded C&M Screw Machine Products, Inc. in 1981 in a small space in an old industrial building after having acquired machining skills while working for The Jacobs Chuck manufacturing plant and serving a State of Connecticut Apprenticeship Program. C&M has since grown to 45 employees and now operates in a modern 33,000 square foot, air conditioned facility in an industrial park in Bristol, Connecticut.

Since its beginnings, C&M has weathered four recessions, the offshoring trend of manufacturing to China, and the successful transition from the original screw machine technology to its current state of the art CNC (Computer Numerical Controls) machines that allow us to produce smaller quantities and tighter tolerances. C&M successfully attained the ISO 9001:2008 certification necessary in today's competitive manufacturing environment to meet or exceed our customer requirements and to continually improve the effectiveness of our quality management systems.

Mr. DaCruz is an active member of the Precision Machine Products Association (PMPA), which is a national organization set up to provide resources and networking opportunities to advance and sustain member companies within the Precision Machining Industry.

As a business owner, Mr. DaCruz is currently serving his second term as Director on the Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce board where he meets with other professionals to discuss the economic and political outlook of the business environment in our state, as well as beyond.

Mr. DaCruz believes in providing opportunities to all who share his value in hard work and perseverance and was recently recognized with a Business Award at the Workforce Stars Hall of Fame by the Capital Workforce Partners, a non-profit organization that is driven by a volunteer board of private sector business professionals and community leaders.

“As a Portuguese American business owner I look forward to meeting with individuals that are interested in starting or growing their businesses and providing support in whatever capacity I can.”

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 www.linkedin.com/pub/victor-dacruz/39/907/910/

 @vdacruz



Michael Freitas Finete International Business Executive & Member of the Portuguese Community in the U.S.A.

As a grandson of Portuguese immigrants who has over 25 years of international business experience, Michael is intimately familiar with entrepreneurship successes from throughout the Portuguese communities.

Michael Freitas Finete was born and raised in San Diego, California. His maternal grandfather, Joao (John) Nunes Freitas came to the United States in 1910 at the age of fourteen and by 1930 had become a pioneer in the nascent U.S. tuna fishing industry, a transformational industry that would become a vital part of California's economy for decades and now spans the globe, providing hundreds of thousands of jobs, and adding tens of billions of dollars to the world economy annually.

Michael currently resides with his family in Miami Florida where he is engaged in the food industry, leading the Latin American and Caribbean regional sales team for one of the world's largest food multi-nationals, General Mills, Inc. This highly successful region is made up of 40 countries, a sales team numbering over 3,000 and an extensive network of customers operating in several distribution channels.

Michael's extensive international business experience includes sales and marketing management for the international trading division of Samsung Company, specializing in apparel, textiles and selling production capacity. He possesses unique experience in understanding the mechanics, and exploiting the opportunities gained through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and other free trade agreements. He has also managed start-ups in both the apparel and seafood industry.

As General Manager of Global Procurement for the H.J. Heinz Company's StarKist Foods Division, Michael led global procurement of 400,000 MT/year (\$1 Billion) of whole round tuna from literally every ocean, supplying eleven processing plants in ten countries, including Portugal. He also led international sales and marketing for the company and was a driving force in the rapid development of Ecuador's tuna fishing fleet, now one of the world's largest.

Michael received a BS in Management Science from the University of California, San Diego focusing on Econometrics and International Trade. He received an International MBA from the University of San Diego and completed executive programs at Columbia Business School (Mergers & Acquisitions, Leader Development) and Wharton (Strategic Management) as well as summer courses in Portugal at the Universidade de Aveiro and the Universidade de Coimbra.

Connect

 www.linkedin.com/pub/michael-freitas-finete/5/b57/31b



Kathleen Healy **Managing Director of Golden Seeds Boston**

Kathleen Healy is an active angel investor, and management consultant. She is a Managing Director of Golden Seeds Boston and a member of Launchpad Ventures, and HBS Alumni Angels investing groups. She is a mentor to entrepreneurs thru the accelerators of Mass Challenge, Learn Launch, Boston University Kindle and Springboard. She has been a judge at several Boston entrepreneur events for Harvard Business School, MIT, Boston University, Babson College and Mass Challenge. She sits on the Advisory Board for Boston University's Office of Technology Development. Over the last five years Kathleen has attended and participated in the annual Angel Capital Association meetings in the US as well as the Australian Angel Capital Association meeting in 2013 and most recently the European Business Angel Network held in Dublin, Ireland in May 2014.

She is also a Trustee of the New England Aquarium, and is on the Board of Overseers for Boston University. Ms. Healy was formerly a McKinsey management consultant in their New York and London offices. After leaving McKinsey, she worked for a variety of nonprofits on the East and West Coasts as an independent consultant, and in partnership with Harvard Business School Community Partners. She served as Executive Director for the World Business Academy, a global membership-based nonprofit supporting business leaders in developing corporate social responsibility. Ms. Healy began her career with Price Waterhouse in their Emerging Business division providing audit, tax and consulting support to clients in the San Francisco Bay area.

Connect

<http://www.goldenseeds.com/>



Kevin Langley **Co-Owner & CEO of Ellis Construction, Inc.**

Kevin Langley is currently the CEO and co-owner of Ellis Construction, Inc., a regional commercial contractor based in New Orleans, LA. He also owns various other companies in real estate, construction, environmental and energy. Mr. Langley and his companies have received numerous awards including: Inc magazine's Inner City 100, New Orleans' City Business magazine's Power Generation award, and the Junior Achievement's Rising Star award.

Mr. Langley is the past Chairman 2011-2012 of the Global Board for the Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO), having been a champion of the organization and its members for many years. In his role as returning EO New Orleans chapter President, he successfully led the recovery of the chapter after Hurricane Katrina, and organized and launched EO's Accelerator program. Accelerator helps grow early-stage entrepreneurial ventures into companies earning more than \$1 million (US) in annual revenue. The program is currently helping hundreds of early stage entrepreneurs grow their businesses in 26 cities in 5 countries. He has also served as chair of EO's Global Student Entrepreneur Awards.

As a founding member of the G20 Youth Entrepreneurship Alliance (YEA) Mr. Langley represented the United States at the 2010 G20 YEA Summit in Ottawa, Canada; Nice, France, November 2011; and Mexico City, Mexico June 2012. He also recently led the U.S. delegation at the Moscow Summit June of 2013 and serves on the G20 YEA Steering Committee.

Mr. Langley is serving on the Global Entrepreneurship Week Advisory Board, Louisiana Board of Commerce and Industry, the Louisiana Innovation Council, the LSU Honors College Advisory Board, the LSU Stephenson Entrepreneurship Institute and the Xavier University Business Advisory Council.

"I would like to identify and work with entrepreneurs, NGOs, government and educational leaders who are helping develop the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Portugal. Collaboratively we can connect high potential and high growth Portuguese entrepreneurs with resources to help them grow. Also, I would like to meet young entrepreneurs."

Connect

 www.linkedin.com/pub/kevin-langley/9/b56/b17

www.ellisconstruction.com/



Natalia Luis Vice President and Owner of M. Luis Construction Co.

Natalia Luis is Vice President and Co-Owner of M. Luis Construction Co., a heavy highway construction and asphalt manufacturing firm with over 25 years of industry excellence. Ms. Luis oversees business development, estimating and project management for the Maryland – based business.

A family, minority and women-owned business, M. Luis Construction owns the only minority and women-owned asphalt manufacturing plant in the region. The company has supported local, city, state, and federal government in a broad range of road reconstruction services including asphalt manufacturing, aggregate distribution, arterial milling and overlay programs, neighborhood rehabilitation programs and urban streetscapes. Along with her professional accomplishments, Natalia has been consistently recognized as a smart, strategic businesswoman and an economic contributor.

Natalia has been featured on the cover of SmartCEO and Enterprising Women magazines as well as other industry leading publications. Natalia earned two bachelor’s degrees from the University of Maryland Smith Business School in Business Administration and International Marketing. She has also attended executive business programs at the University of Pennsylvania, Wharton Business School and Dartmouth University, Tuck Business School.

Along with her academic awards and professional accomplishments, Natalia is involved with various organizations such as Children’s National Medical Center where she currently serves on the Foundation Board. She is a Board member at Beauvoir National Cathedral Elementary School, where she also serves as Chairperson of its Building and Grounds Committee. Natalia also is Vice President of the Latino Student Fund and is a Board Member of the Little Folks School. Natalia also serves on professional boards, such as the Maryland Minority Contractor’s Association. She is a member of the Women’s President’s Organization Zenith Forum. She is committed to leading by example, approaching all tasks with a positive attitude, identifying the strengths of her employees and maximizing their potential.

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 www.linkedin.com/pub/natalia-luis/25/904/b23
www.linkedin.com/company/mluisconstruction

 [@MLuisConstrCo](https://twitter.com/MLuisConstrCo)

www.facebook.com/MLuisConstruction



Cidalia Luis-Akbar **President and Owner of M. Luis Construction Co.**

Cidalia Luis-Akbar oversees the company's \$60 million+ internal management, accounting/ financial and strategies management, in addition to strategy, development and overall growth of a diverse and growing company. Growing up immersed in and working for M. Luis right from its start, she knows the business inside and out. At the same time, she worked in retail which gave her great insights on customer service.

While in graduate school, she worked as a teaching assistant at UCSB and as a Spanish teacher at Santa Barbara Community College. After college she returned to M. Luis, where she was promoted to vice president. In 2000, she left the company to start her own business with Natalia, which they sold in 2008, using its value to acquire a part of M. Luis. Along with her professional accomplishments, she has been widely recognized as a savvy, dedicated business leader and economic contributor.

Cidalia is a Fulbright-Hayes Scholar and holds a double Master's degree in Spanish and Latin American Languages and Literatures, and Portuguese and Brazilian Languages and Literatures from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She earned two Bachelor of Arts degrees in Economics and Spanish/Portuguese from the University of Maryland, College Park. In addition, she has attended executive business programs at Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, Wharton Business School and Dartmouth University, Tuck Business School.

Along with her academic awards and professional accomplishments, Cidalia is involved with various organizations such as CARE International, and Refugees International. She is a board member of Children's National Medical Center Foundation, Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, FBI Washington Field Office Citizens Academy, Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) Metro Washington, School the World, and Ayenda Foundation. She is a member of the Young Presidents Organization, Capital Chapter and the Women's President's Organization where she is a member of the Platinum Forum, and is currently participating in the WPO/Sam's Club Executive Leadership Program. Cidalia leads by example with compassion, integrity and accountability. Her honesty, open communication, and overall positive attitude have cultivated her company, as well others she encounters beyond the workplace.

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 www.linkedin.com/pub/cidalia-luis-akbar/24/2a2/a17
www.linkedin.com/company/mluisconstruction

 [@MLuisConstrCo](https://twitter.com/MLuisConstrCo)

www.facebook.com/MLuisConstruction



Manuel Curado de Sousa Mira Founder and Chairman of TekTone Sound & Signal, Inc.

Manuel Mira is the founder of TekTone Sound & Signal in the USA, and founder of MirTone Communication Systems in Toronto, Canada, now a subsidiary of General Electric.

He holds a B.S. in Information Technology from the Catholic Barry University of Miami, Florida and a Masters of Sciences in Electronic Engineering, major in Telecommunications, degree from the University of North Carolina. His thesis was directed to the progress of obtaining a lead free electronic industry. In the late 60s he pioneered the use of solid state components, for the domestic communications industry, due to safety.

Mr. Mira is an Engineer, author and journalist. He has written three books The Forgotten Portuguese, The Portuguese Making of America, and “Os Portugueses na Formação da America.”

He has lived for extensive periods of time in three continents. This has given him considerable knowledge of the different groups of people with whom the Portuguese have integrated.

In addition to his family business, he has been and continues to be actively involved in the community. His leadership roles include being a co-founder and director of the Portuguese American Leadership Council of the United States, founder and President of the Portuguese-American Historical and Research Foundation, Honorary Member and director at the Melungeon Heritage Association; Honorary Member and Past President of the Portuguese-American Cultural Society of Palm Beach, Florida. Member and past Director of the Portuguese-American Leadership Council of the USA, based in Washington, DC.

Mr. Mira was the Secretary and President of The First Portuguese Canadian Club in Toronto Canada. In recognition of his active involvement in Portuguese communities over the last 50 years, Mr. Mira was the 2000 recipient of the Portuguese Communities Medal of Merit awarded by the Portuguese Government, Foreign Affairs, Secretary of State.

Manuel is married to Lurdes Mira, has two children, Carlos, President of TekTone and Teresa, CFO of Tektone, six grandchildren, two Johnny and Wesley also active in the business. He also has seven Great-Grandchildren.

“I would like to identify and work with men and women that consider quality, safety and are detail oriented in the field of Health Care Communications, more specifically in health clinics and hospitals.”

Connect

www.tektone.com



Phil Meldrum
President of FoodMatch Inc.

Phil Meldrum founded FoodMatch in 1996 to provide the American market with authentic, all-natural, responsibly produced olives and antipasti. Foodmatch has grown into a leading US specialty food company supplying more than 400 items from 15 different countries to a broad trade of Fortune 500 grocers, retail chains, multi-unit foodservice operators, and independent end users. A vertically integrated company, FoodMatch supports biodiversity, traditional farming practices and ecological integrity. The company's deep rooted relationships help support entire agricultural communities and generations of skilled farmers.

Phil Meldrum's role in promoting the Mediterranean heritage of healthy and simple eating can also be felt outside of FoodMatch. Mr. Meldrum is avidly involved with urban food pantries and community outreach centers such as City Harvest and the Sylvia Center. He is also an active member of the Whole Grains Council, California Olive Oil Council and Mediterranean Foods Alliance. Additionally, Phil serves on the Oldways Board of Directors where he works to guide people to good health through heritage diets and nutrition.

Phil is an angel investor in several start up specialty food and beverage companies.

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 www.linkedin.com/pub/phil-meldrum/44/747/43b

www.foodmatch.com/



David Moura Owner and President, ProGroup Contracting

As a graduate of Wesleyan University in 1992, David (Dave) Moura received his Bachelor of Arts in Economics with a minor in Environmental Science. During his time at Wesleyan, Dave was a member of the President's Club and was active on the football, hockey and baseball teams. Along with his studies and extra-curricular activities, he was able to find time to start building his first business venture, CollegePro Painters.

After an early career in Boston, MA working as a Customer Service Representative in Management Training at the Bank of Boston, Dave was approached by CertaPro Painters to be one of the original five franchise pioneers. Over twenty years later and now with over 350 franchises, Dave is the President and Owner of the second largest CertaPro Painters in the entire organization.

During Dave's time as President of his CertaPro franchise, he has been given numerous awards and accolades recognizing his ability to spearhead programs that have been implemented throughout the entire organization. Among those programs is the involvement and growth of national brands as well as developing a National Accounts License, which has allowed Dave's company to service properties throughout the entire country unlike other franchises which are restricted to territories.

Dave is futuristic in his daily strategizing, often looking towards the next few years instead of tomorrow. He is an arranger. When faced with a complex situation involving many factors, he can manage all of the variables, aligning and realigning them until comfortable with knowing he has arranged them in the most productive configuration possible. Dave puts trust in the team and business that he has built. His vision is to see his company as one large extension of his continuous growth and evolution.

"If my knowledge, experiences, and family's story can help to enrich the business community of Portugal, then I will know that my family and I are continuing to give and create opportunities that will be passed on to many more generations."

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 www.linkedin.com/pub/dave-moura/3/60b/lab/

www.progroupcontracting.com



Sheri L. Orlowitz **Founding Partner of Artemis Holdings** **Group, LLC**

Sheri Orlowitz is the Founding Partner of Artemis Holdings Group LLC. Artemis is an international private investment and advisory firm providing individuals, entrepreneurs, and companies with creative strategies and unconventional perspectives to identify and realize their business goals. In total, Artemis has acquired and operated 8 domestic and international manufacturing, sales and services companies ranging in size from \$5 to \$50 million. Ms. Orlowitz is also in the process of creating a private investment fund in conjunction with another firm to invest in Greek businesses.

Previously, Ms. Orlowitz presided over Shan Industries, and developed it into a multi-site manufacturing company through the acquisition of two divisions of Tyco International. Before that, she founded OrloVon, LLC, a real estate development organization that identified and purchased land in a then- “ungentrified” neighborhood of Adams Morgan in Washington, DC. Ms Orlowitz was also the Founder and Chief Executive of DBI, a \$70 million international consortium of manufacturing companies with sales offices throughout Europe, the US and China. In addition to participating in DBI’s acquisition of manufacturing businesses from Applied Magnetics, Quantum Corp., Hewlett-Packard, Eastman Kodak and other Fortune 500 companies, she was actively engaged in the operations of each of the acquired businesses.

Ms. Orlowitz has been the recipient of numerous awards not only for entrepreneurial spirit, innovation and growth but also for significant philanthropic and government service, including establishing the Orlowitz-Lee Center in Miami for abused and trafficked children.

In 2003, Ms. Orlowitz received a Presidential appointment to the National Women’s Business Council and has been a representative of small business for Commerce and State Department Trade and Educational Missions.

“I bring my experience as a seasoned entrepreneur who has a solid record of motivating and teaching and has built companies and created my own as well as invested in start-ups, but I also come prepared to provide local entrepreneurs with resources and access to capital.”

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www.linkedin.com/company/artemis-holdings-group-llc



[@SheriSlo](https://twitter.com/SheriSlo)

www.artemisholdingsgroup.com

U.S. GOVERNMENT DELEGATE



Caron De Mars Global Entrepreneurship Program, Director

Caron De Mars joined Commercial and Business Affairs as the first Foreign Service Officer (FSO) to lead the office's Global Entrepreneurship Program (GEP). GEP's two prior leaders were Franklin Fellows. She is an Economic Officer who entered this two-year FSO position in June 2012.

Ms. De Mars joined the State Department as a Foreign Service Officer in 2001, after years in the private sector as a small business-owner, angel investor, and Director of Midwest Claims Operations at USAA Insurance. Her overseas postings have included Brazil (Consular Officer and Economic Officer), the Philippines (Economic Officer), and Jordan (Regional Environment, Science, Technology, and Health Hub Officer for the Middle East and North Africa). She served in Washington in the Economic Bureau from 2004-2006 in the Office of Aviation Negotiations, with Africa and Asia aviation issues.

Ms. De Mars earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Broadcasting from the University of Wyoming, and an MBA from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. She attended George Washington University for a year of post-graduate coursework at the Center for International Science and Technology Policy as a Diplomat in Residence for the 2009-2010 academic year. She is a Portuguese speaker.

Connect

 [@EntrepCaron](https://twitter.com/EntrepCaron)

 www.linkedin.com/pub/caron-demars/0/948/1a1