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40 UNDER FORTY

New leaders for a new Hartford!

Congratulations to our eighth annual group of 40 Under Forty winners! As you'll see throughout this special issue of the *Hartford Business Journal*, they have accomplished a great deal in a short time.

Sharing their stories with you not only celebrates their achievements, but also may put a mirror up to your own efforts. As you'll see, professional accomplishment is only one measure of what it takes to be on the 2004 40 Under Forty team. Our judges — Anne Evans, Larry Brown and Lou Golden — also look carefully for community service and other “giving back” activities among the people vying to be chosen to receive this award.

It was an easy choice this year to assemble our young business and professional leaders at several of Hartford's new development projects. This is an exciting time for the city, and no publication has carried more words and pictures about Hartford's changing skyline than the *HBJ*.

We know there are many uncertainties about the region's future, including delays on the mixed-use Front Street project and whether it will even be built in its currently planned form.

But we also know that Hartford has badly needed an economic development boost, and that we now have one. Seeing the building cranes in the air, seeing new people moving downtown and seeing new retail businesses crop up to serve them represents the best hope the city will see in a generation to create more prosperity for the people and businesses that are already here.

This window of business opportunity is opening wider as the new levels of construction move higher, and now is the time to seize the moment, to help create a new image for the city and the region.

Seizing the moment is one of the most common attributes of this year's 40 Under Forty winners.

We hope you enjoy their stories, and that you can join us in honoring them at a special breakfast on Friday, Sept. 17 at the Bond Hotel.

Sincerely,
Philip Moeller
Editor



40
UNDER
FORTY

Laurie L. O'Neil

Age: 33

Title: President

Company: Innovative Financial Services LLC

Company Location: Hartford

Residence: Ellington

Career Highlights:

Before starting my own firm, Innovative Financial Services LLC, I maintained a diverse career in accounting and management. My first-hand experiences ranged from accounting work at a small CPA firm to extensive financial work for Laz Parking, where I compiled detailed financial statements. I also worked for the Connecticut Expo Center as the operations manager, and coordinated and supervised all consumer and business events. Rounding out my professional experience, I gained tremendous insight and valuable experience later on as the controller of J. Morrissey & Co. Inc. in Hartford.

Community Volunteerism Highlights:

As diverse as my business background is, so is my community volunteerism. I have been serving as treasurer for the last two years for American Society of Women Accountants. This community group raises scholarship money for women looking to further their accounting education. I am also intensely involved with many of the Harley Davidson charity events, particularly the Toy Run for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Also, I serve as vice president of Connecticut Business Network, a regional business networking group based in Vernon.



Biggest Success:

My biggest accomplishment is growing my company from a home-based business to an established firm in downtown Hartford. Innovative Financial Services LLC provides a number of expert financial management, training and maintenance services for small to medium sized businesses. Here in our office we offer back office accounting support for small growing businesses, and can provide part-time controllers and bookkeepers, which have successfully allowed growing companies to outsource the traditional accounting responsibilities while allowing them to save on staffing expenditures.

Dream Job:

Since the age of 24, I have always had the dream of starting my own book-keeping firm.

Businessperson You Most Admire:

I admire my grandmother, Jane Giarrosso, who passed away last November. Most women in the 1950s did not work outside the home; she held positions such as operations manager and contract analyst for several large corporations. She was attentive to detail, had business sense and was very perceptive. In my opinion, she possessed the essence of what today's businesswoman is all about.