

WINTER 2025

# FEDELI FACTOR

Building Relationships,  
Solving Problems,  
Adding Value & Networking

plus

PLAYHOUSE SQUARE SERVES AS AN ECONOMIC  
CATALYST FOR THE CLEVELAND REGION

JERGENS TAKES CARE OF PEOPLE TO CONTINUE ITS  
GROWTH THROUGH THE GENERATIONS

## THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

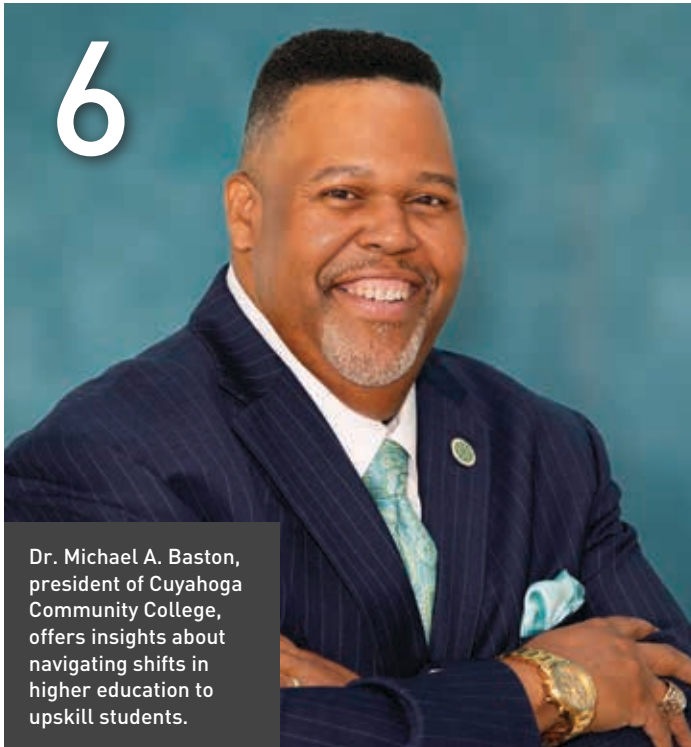
NEW CLEVELAND HEADQUARTERS AND GLOBAL EXPANSION  
POSITION FLEXJET FOR CONTINUED GROWTH



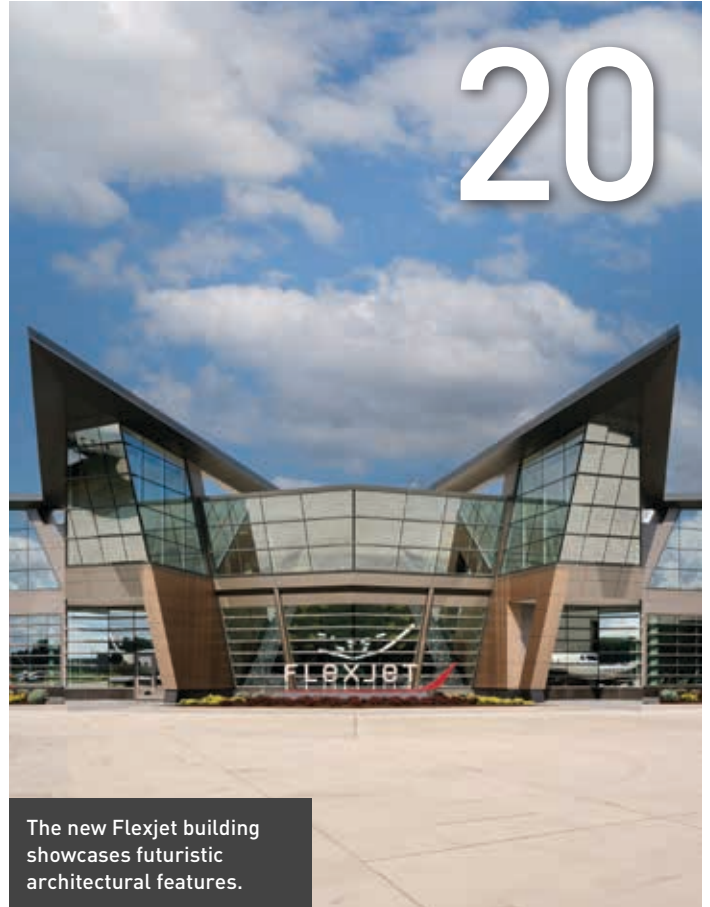
# FEDELI FACTOR

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Building Relationships, Solving Problems, Adding Value & Networking



Dr. Michael A. Baston, president of Cuyahoga Community College, offers insights about navigating shifts in higher education to upskill students.



The new Flexjet building showcases futuristic architectural features.

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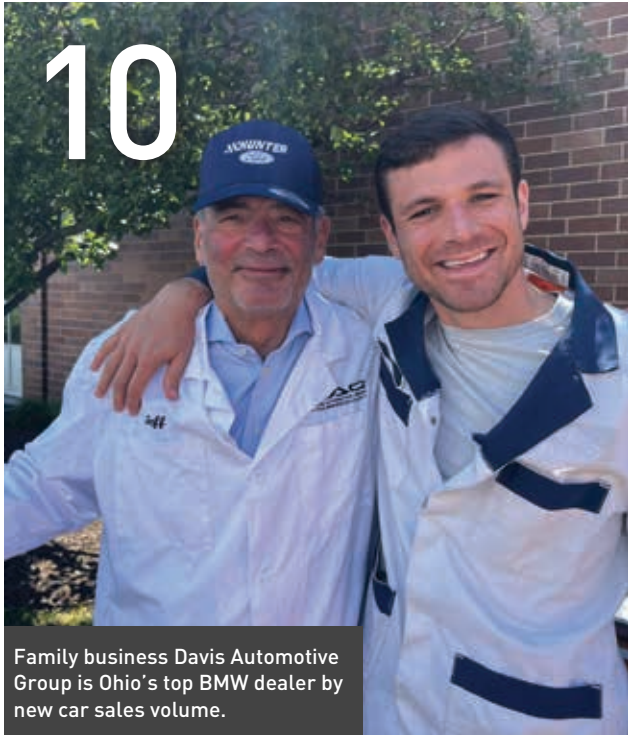
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[www.converoinc.com](http://www.converoinc.com)

**Publisher:** Michael Marzec  
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**Cover Photography:** Courtesy of Flexjet

# Finding happiness in every story



Happiness is often described as an elusive treasure, but at The Fedeli Group, we've found that it's something we can create together — through meaningful relationships, shared successes and a focus on the greater good. In this issue of *Fedeli Factor*, we explore

how happiness shapes the success and impact of individuals and organizations in remarkable ways.

We begin with our cover story on Flexjet (page 20), where innovation and vision soar. Michael J. Silvestro, the charismatic CEO of Flexjet, provides insights into the company's new headquarters, ambitious expansion plans, and the future of private aviation, highlighting how passion and purpose fuel their success. Meanwhile, Kenn Ricci — visionary, entrepreneur and pioneer in private aviation — joins Nicholas Fedeli for an engaging interview (page 18), reflecting on the journey of building an industry leader, breaking barriers and creating opportunities.

In our thought leader feature on page 6, the dynamic Dr. Michael A. Baston, president of Cuyahoga Community College, shares a fresh perspective on equity and education. His inspiring insights remind us that happiness grows when we empower others and create pathways for meaningful success.

We are also excited to showcase several of our outstanding clients whose work brings happiness to life in diverse ways. From the impactful Greater Cleveland Food Bank's tireless fight against hunger (page 8), to compassionate Hattie Larlham's dedication to individuals with disabilities (page 14), their missions demonstrate the profound joy of service. Taylor Davis, president at Davis Automotive (page 10), shows dedication and commitment to quality, and Jergens' legacy of craftsmanship (page 16) highlights the pride that comes from excellence and how caring Jack Schron Jr., president, is for his workers. And the world-famous Playhouse Square (page 12) continues to uplift our spirits through the performing arts.

Through these pages, we celebrate how happiness fuels purpose — whether it's in the office, the classroom or the community.

We are grateful to share this journey with you. Together, we continue to collaborate and build partnerships that reflect the true meaning of happiness: making a positive difference in the lives of others.

We hope these stories inspire you to find and nurture joy in your own journey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'U. Fedeli'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large loop at the end.

*Umberto P. Fedeli*  
*President and CEO of The Fedeli Group*



Harry Brownfield Jr. | 41 years



Mark Mangione | 35 years



Danny Fedeli | 30 years



Dave DeRoma | 25 years

## CELEBRATING MILESTONES: HONORING DEDICATION AND EXCELLENCE



Kelly Zebrowski | 25 years



Rob Snyder | 20 years



Sharon Zuk | 20 years



Janette Pompignano | 20 years

At our annual State of the Company celebration, we proudly recognized the milestones and achievements of our incredible team. This year, we honored 33 team members for milestones from 2022 to 2024, including 12 who have devoted over 20 years to The Fedeli Group — a true testament to their unwavering commitment to our mission and values. Nicholas Fedeli presented each of these team members with a special commemorative plaque.

Highlights included Harry Brownfield's extraordinary 40-year milestone in 2023 and Mark Mangione's impressive 35 years in 2024. These remarkable achievements embody the loyalty, dedication and passion that drive our success, and we are deeply grateful for the invaluable contributions of every team member.

## DR. MICHAEL A. BASTON

President, Cuyahoga Community College

As the fifth president of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C), Dr. Michael A. Baston, Ed.D., J.D., leads Ohio's oldest and largest community college toward a new era of higher education. With nearly 3,000 faculty and staff serving students from ages 12 to 89, Tri-C offers over 1,000 credit courses each semester across more than 200 academic programs.

By constantly evolving the curriculum to incorporate hands-on learning opportunities and partnerships with area businesses and community organizations, Tri-C plays an active role in shaping the region's economic viability.

Here, Dr. Baston shares his insights about navigating shifts in higher education to upskill students while planting the seeds for lifelong learning.

### ON LIFELONG LEARNING

"If we are not lifelong learners, how will we be able to survive in a world that is constantly evolving at a faster pace than ever before?"

"Even as an experienced president, you can still learn, grow, challenge your assumptions and think about the power of the possible."

"Great leaders are great learners, and unless you're listening, you're not learning. As much as you want to talk, you really have to listen to your customers, your employees and the suppliers in your supply chain."

"Today's young people are motivated very differently than previous generations. Companies that want to get the best out of their people have to understand their needs and interests and what motivates them."

"There are two types of people: People who are on the receiving end of what happens to them, and people who make things happen. I want to prepare people to make things happen. If every decision you make is based on the circumstances that you're in, you're being led by circumstance — you're not leading the future."

"I have one of the best jobs in the world. How lucky am I that my whole job is to help people design their destiny?"

# INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE WORKFORCE

## Q&A with Dr. Michael A. Baston

INTERVIEWED BY BROOKE BILYJ

### WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST TRENDS IMPACTING TRI-C'S STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION?

**A.** Gone are the days when people came to college to find themselves. Students today want to find a path to unlock economic opportunity, so they're not going to take academic programs that don't lead to economic opportunities for them.

They also have lots of different responsibilities and life circumstances, so the traditional educational model where you take two 16-week semesters and you have summers off and you go for a certain number of years — that's not how people go to school today. Different terms and modalities are now an expectation, so we've got to be responsive to that.

### Q. HOW IS TRI-C EVOLVING TO UNLOCK ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS?

**A.** We have made education more relevant to the workplace. As we build our academic programs, we build them out with business leaders in the community. We just launched a smart manufacturing bachelor's degree this fall, and we designed the curriculum with Lincoln Electric and other industry partners.

Our goal is to embed more applied learning opportunities within courses so that students aren't just thinking theoretically but doing in a very practical way. They can see the path from this course or academic

program into real career-focused opportunities, so that when they graduate, they will leave us real-world ready.

### Q. WHAT ARE THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES YOU SEE AHEAD FOR HIGHER EDUCATION?

**A.** As more companies recognize the power of skills, they're getting over the hang-ups of the old gatekeeper credentials and realizing that skills and experience are often more valuable than bachelor's degrees. That is an opportunity for places like Tri-C to upskill the future and continue to give people opportunities. The future is very bright as we work with business and industry to engage in the skillification of America as we build out opportunities for entrepreneurship and professional development.

### Q. WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU'D SHARE WITH OTHER LEADERS?

**A.** Believe in your people so they can believe in themselves. Invest in them. Invest in their education. Invest in upskilling. Invest in their retention. How you invest in your people, how you grow your people, is a direct connection to how you grow your business. Businesses that invest in the education of employees are going to have a better employee who's going to stay with you longer, and that's going to meet the talent development challenges of our community.

# FEEDING

The Greater Cleveland Food Bank is boosting its capacity to serve the growing need in the community

# THE NEED

BY BROOKE BILYJ

**A**cross Greater Cleveland, one in seven residents faces food insecurities, meaning they may not be able to afford or have access to their next meal. Struggling with rising costs and the end of pandemic-related benefits, more families are seeking assistance. In response, the Greater Cleveland Food Bank is ramping up its efforts to end hunger by connecting individuals with nutritious meals.

With help from more than 1,000 partner programs and local service providers like The Fedeli Group, the Food Bank served over 424,000 last year — setting new records for the number of neighbors served. Many of these individuals — 25 percent — turned to the Food Bank for the first time, revealing the rising need for this vital service.

“Sadly, the demand for food has only been increasing,” says Kristin Warzocha, president and CEO of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. To meet this growing demand, she says, “We are working to address hunger today, tomorrow and for a lifetime.”

## ADDRESSING HUNGER TODAY

As part of its mission “to ensure that everyone in our communities has the nutritious food they need every day,” the Food Bank’s primary focus is bringing in food donations, then repackaging and preparing meals for distribution to over 1,000 partner agencies in a six-county service area.

“Addressing hunger today is about providing more healthy food to our network



The Food Bank’s 2-year-old Partner Distribution Hub has expanded the group’s capacity.

of partners to support our neighbors in need,” Warzocha says.

To that end, the Food Bank built a new Partner Distribution Hub, opened in November 2022, to increase its capacity for food distribution. The 197,000-square-foot facility features expanded cold storage space and a larger production kitchen, where meals are prepared for more than 100 after-school and summer sites for low-income children, as well as more than 30 senior sites including Meals on Wheels.

“Our new Partner Distribution Hub has really increased our capacity to meet the growing demand for food assistance,” Warzocha says.

In total, the Food Bank distributed

54 million pounds of food in 2024 — running about 2.5 million pounds ahead of last year’s distribution total.

## BRIDGING BARRIERS TOMORROW

Looking beyond meal distribution, the Food Bank is also working to connect people with other benefits and vital resources.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is often the first line of defense, providing food stamps to low-income families to augment their grocery budget.

“Many people are eligible, but not enrolled in the program,” Warzocha says, “so we help them apply.”

Deepening its commitment to long-term food security, the Food Bank is tackling the





The Community Resource Center offers access to healthy food and social services under one roof.



The Food Bank plans to re-create its collaborative model on Cleveland's West Side.



root causes of hunger by connecting people to other resources that address underlying factors such as unemployment, housing and health care — which can all create barriers to food access.

In November 2023, the Food Bank opened a Community Resource Center that offers access to healthy food and various social service agencies all under one roof. The new facility brings together 14 other nonprofit organizations providing services related to housing, job training and legal aid, with an onsite clinic operated by MetroHealth.

“This collaborative model builds the capacity for all of the participating organizations to reduce barriers for people who may have struggled to connect with these resources,” Warzocha says. “This is quickly becoming the national model for not just addressing hunger in the short term, which is critical, but also trying to reduce the number

of people who need us in the long term.”

With plans to re-create this model on Cleveland's West Side, the Food Bank recently purchased a building that will house its second Community Resource Center, slated for completion by 2026.

### VISION FOR THE FUTURE

This transformative expansion will position the Food Bank to feed the need across Greater Cleveland. “There are about 550,000 people in our six-county service area who are income-eligible for help from the Food Bank,” Warzocha notes. “We're serving more than 420,000 of them — but there's a gap.”

She says the Food Bank couldn't meet this growing need without continued support from the community — including corporate donations, individual contributions, the dedication of 14,000 volunteers who gave more than 100,000

hours of their time last year and the commitment of 180 full-time staff.

“We have a passionate, hardworking, determined team, and we want to keep our great talent,” says Warzocha, who has worked at the Food Bank for 24 years. “Having generous, reliable, effective benefits is important to us because our team deserves them. We work to take good care of our hardworking team, and The Fedeli Group helps us do that.”

The Food Bank recently began working with The Fedeli Group to enhance its employee benefits, and the relationship has already proven valuable to the nonprofit and its staff.

“We're so impressed by how responsive and proactive The Fedeli Group has been,” Warzocha says. “They give us the personalized, hands-on care that our employees need.”

# REPUTATION OF EXCELLENCE

How Davis Automotive Group drives growth through the second generation

BY BROOKE BILYJ

**G**rowing up around his dad’s dealership, Taylor Davis quickly developed an obsession with cars. As much as he adored his toy Power Wheels, he really loved sitting in the luxury vehicles in his dad’s showroom.

“One of the rules was that if somebody was looking at a car, I wasn’t allowed to play in it — which was a fair rule, but one that I didn’t like,” Davis recalls. “There was a man taking his time looking at a Jaguar XJS convertible, and I said, ‘Mister, are

you gonna buy this car, or what? Because I wanna play in it.’”

With that, Davis inadvertently made his first sale, decades before he officially joined Davis Automotive Group. So began his lifelong dream to carry on the family dealership that his father, Jeff Davis, purchased in November 1991, just two months after Taylor was born.

Now, as president, Taylor Davis is steering the family business — which encompasses BMW Cleveland, Jaguar Solon and Land

Rover Solon dealerships — toward its second generation of excellence.

## LEARNING THE NUTS AND BOLTS

Davis’ career technically began at age 13, when he spent summers power-washing wheels.

“I’d be the first one in and the last one out, making sure I was the one cleaning the shop floor,” he says. “I knew that everyone was going to look at me and say, ‘Oh, that’s Jeff’s son,’ so it was very important that they saw me working harder than anybody else.”

After starting his accounting career in Chicago, gaining skills and knowledge that would serve the family business well, Davis held onto that work ethic when he officially joined the company in 2020 — adopting the mantra that, “I’d never ask anybody to do something I wouldn’t do myself,” he says. Driven to learn every aspect of the business, he worked his way through parts, service and pre-owned sales.

Then, in July 2021, when the office manager and controller positions opened, Davis’ accounting background prepared him to take over payroll and finance. He added more operational tasks over time, leading to his promotion to president in 2023, a role in which he oversees parts, service and sales for BMW, Jaguar and Land Rover.

Through this transition, Davis’ mantra has shifted. “There’s nothing that I won’t do myself — that’s still true,” he says, “but I’ve had to learn that I can’t do everything myself. Leaders don’t do it all; they empower.”



“There’s nothing that I won’t do myself, but I’ve had to learn that I can’t do everything myself. Leaders don’t do it all; they empower.”

Taylor Davis, president, Davis Automotive Group



Davis Automotive Group prides itself on treating customers fairly.

## DEDICATION TO INTEGRITY

Stepping into a family business, Davis understands the power of a name. Through the years, his father frequently said, “You have one thing in this life, and that’s your name. Don’t mess it up.”

“My dad and grandpa worked hard to make the Davis name mean something, not only in the automotive space, but in the community,” Davis says. “Moving forward, it’s all about maintaining the family name, growing it into the next generation and making sure that name continues to mean something good.”

So, what does D.A.V.I.S. stand for? The company recently redefined its mission, vision and core values into a convenient acronym “where Dedication, Accountability, Versatility, Integrity and Sustainability are more than just words,” as the website says.

If people associate just one word with the Davis name, Taylor Davis hopes they’d say fairness.

“I never want anybody leaving here saying we weren’t fair, or we didn’t treat them the right way,” he says. “It matters to me that our people feel valued, and that anybody who does business with us feels the same way.”

This dedication to integrity sets Davis Automotive apart. “It’s no secret that the dealership industry doesn’t have the cleanest reputation. When many people come to buy a new car or get their car serviced, they think they’re going to get taken advantage of,” Davis says. “Our goal is to change people’s experience — making people love dealerships again.”

## DRIVING GROWTH

Davis Automotive Group secured its spot as Ohio’s top BMW dealer by new car sales volume — not through pedal-to-the-metal growth, but by realizing that slow and steady wins the race.

“You see dealers fail because they try to be too bold,” Davis says. “But my dad and Paul [Yusko, CFO] have been very conservative, putting us in positions where we never make decisions out of fear. That’s allowed us to



Taylor Davis, right, and his dad, Jeff Davis, have maintained their business’s reputation for integrity.

have staying power and stability to weather the storms.”

Although he has the drive — and the room to grow, from a real estate perspective — Davis doesn’t want to expand so big or so quickly that the company loses its personal touch.

“It’s about finding the right opportunity,” he says, “not just growing to grow, but growing strategically.”

Having support along the way will be critical — whether it’s having his dad and Paul Yusko as sounding boards or leaning on trusted advisors like The Fedeli Group.

“The Fedeli Group always has our backs and our best interests in mind,” Davis says. “There’s a high level of trust because we view them as partners. They keep us protected and allow us to grow, knowing they have our back.”

# DESTINATION DISTRICT

Playhouse Square's annual economic impact tops \$359 million

BY BROOKE BILYJ

Craig Hassall, a retired president and CEO of not-for-profit organizations, had never heard of Playhouse Square until recruiters contacted him about leading Cleveland's performing arts center. Hassall, who had decades of experience leading some of the world's most renowned venues in London and Australia, wasn't even sure where Cleveland was. But one visit to the city's arts district convinced him to move across the globe.

"The two things that swung my decision were the attitudes of the trustees, who were so enthusiastic about the future, and just seeing the theaters — they're beautiful and in brilliant condition," Hassall says. "What we have here in Cleveland is quite special."

Since taking the helm of Playhouse Square in 2023, Hassall has embarked on a bold vision to preserve the century-old charm of the theaters while looking to the future. With support from partners like The Fedeli Group, Playhouse Square is being transformed into a vibrant entertainment destination.

## EXPANSION BEYOND THE STAGE

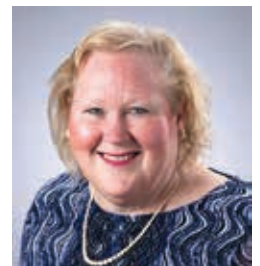
COO and general counsel Patricia Gaul, who planned to retire at the end of 2024 after 40 years at Playhouse Square, has watched the institution evolve from just two theaters into the dynamic district it is today.

She cites strong vision and support from the board of trustees, dating back to the nonprofit's 1973 launch, when volunteers



"Our mission is to not only create entertainment opportunities but to be an economic catalyst for Cleveland and our whole region."

Patricia Gaul, COO and general counsel, Playhouse Square



worked to save and renovate the theaters, built in the 1920s. Other cornerstones of Playhouse Square's success include its leadership stability — exemplified by former president and CEO Art Falco, who devoted nearly 40 years to the organization — along with passionate staff and community pride.

The dedication of these supporters has

grown Playhouse Square into the country's largest unified performing arts center outside of New York City — encompassing 11 theaters and hosting eight resident companies including Cleveland Play House, Cleveland Ballet and the City Club of Cleveland, along with cultural events including The Cleveland International Film Festival.



Mimi Ohio Theatre



Connor Palace

“Our mission is to not only create entertainment opportunities but to be an economic catalyst for Cleveland and our whole region,” Gaul says. Over her 40-year tenure, Playhouse Square has expanded beyond performing arts by building a robust real estate portfolio to augment the district’s growth.

“We realized that it wasn’t good enough to just renovate the theaters and make them beautiful inside; we needed to focus on the neighborhood surrounding Playhouse Square to make it a safe, exciting place to visit,” Gaul says. “Little by little, we started acquiring and developing properties.”

This expansion began with the construction of a parking garage in 1986. The Crowne Plaza Hotel came next, opening in 1995, followed by several office building acquisitions. More recently, Playhouse Square developed The Lumen, a 34-story apartment complex that opened in 2020.

“We thought that if we could be successful in these real estate endeavors, that income could support the theater activity,” says Gaul, who managed the legal and financial aspects of these acquisitions.

Today, Playhouse Square owns about 3.4 million square feet of real estate. Compared with most performing arts centers that operate as isolated “islands,” this diversified, interconnected portfolio “sets us apart from other theater districts around the world,” Hassall says. “Having control of your real estate means you also control the neighborhood, so you have a compelling way to control the visitor experience.”

## INCREASING IMPACT

According to a recently commissioned study, Playhouse Square’s annual economic



Mimi Ohio Theatre

impact tops \$359 million — as much as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Cleveland Orchestra and the Cleveland Museum of Art combined. But Hassall wants more.

“I’d like to build on this notion of Playhouse Square as a district that draws people in,” Hassall says. “The potential is there for us to grow the neighborhood, making it more of a year-round destination.”

Most recently, Playhouse Square purchased the former Greyhound bus station and neighboring office building, “activating the northern side of our campus” where Hassall sees “the biggest area of growth over the next five to 10 years,” he says. The office building will become a dedicated center for educational programming. The organization is also exploring new dance and music programs for people with dementia and Parkinson’s disease, receiving insights from Cleveland Clinic throughout the process. A similar program Hassall coordinated at the English National Ballet in London was so popular that it had a three-year waitlist — and he expects a similar buzz here.



“The potential is there for us to grow the neighborhood, making it more of a year-round destination.”

Craig Hassall, president and CEO,  
Playhouse Square

Ultimately, the people working behind the scenes are as critical to Playhouse Square’s success as the acts on stage.

“All of this growth takes resources, both human and financial,” Gaul says. “Our staff is critical to our success, so it’s important for us to look out for our team by making sure that our compensation package is as strong as it can be.”

Gaul credits The Fedeli Group for maintaining a reliable, affordable benefits program for Playhouse Square’s employees through the decades.

“We have such a strong relationship with The Fedeli Group because they understand the importance of taking care of our employees,” she says.



Hattie Larlham is one of the largest service providers in Ohio for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

# OPPORTUNITIES TO THRIVE

Hattie Larlham is broadening services to better meet the needs of children and adults with disabilities

BY BROOKE BILYJ

The origin story for the Hattie Larlham organization is a humble one. More than 60 years ago, the group's namesake founder took a disabled infant under her care. With a heart much bigger than her Portage County farmhouse, the local nurse ultimately cared for 10 babies in her home, with 100 more children on her waiting list.

"Keep in mind, this was before Medicaid and before the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DoDD)," says Hattie Larlham CEO Stephen Colecchi. "Mrs. Larlham was an early pioneer in

providing services to individuals with disabilities."

Her mission led to not-for-profit incorporation and the formation of the Hattie Larlham Center for Children with Disabilities in 1963. Today, Hattie Larlham is one of the largest service providers in Ohio for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, driven by a service-centered vision and support from sponsors like The Fedeli Group.

"Simply put," Colecchi says, "Hattie Larlham empowers people with disabilities to thrive in their everyday lives."

## MEETING NEEDS

Today, Hattie Larlham's services span a full spectrum of needs. Its Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) locations support children and adults with profound disabilities and complex medical needs. Meanwhile, the organization provides "supported independence" to adults with disabilities who live in community-based group homes or participate in its Adult Day Support and recreation programs, including the Constant Companions and Addventures programs.

As part of its mission to help individuals with disabilities thrive, Hattie Larlham



Hattie Larlham served more than 1,600 people through its programs and services last year.

also offers “a robust employment services program to help people achieve the skills for gainful employment,” Colecchi says. This includes job training opportunities at Hattie’s Doggie Day Care, as well as partnerships with local employers including GOJO Industries, Summa Health System and The Winking Lizard, where participants gain practical experience with the support of a job coach.

“The feedback from employers is always positive because these candidates want to go to work, they enjoy going to work and they add diversity to the workforce,” Colecchi says. “It becomes a win-win scenario.”

## MAKING AN IMPACT

Today, the values that fueled the nonprofit’s founder live on in Hattie Larlham’s 900 employees.

“We always say that our employees are the heart of Hattie Larlham,” Colecchi says. “It takes a special person to do the work we do, and without their compassion, their commitment to excellence and their connection to our mission, our work would not be possible. We need to take time to make sure compassion and empathy jump out at you during the interview process, and



A robust employment services program includes job training opportunities.

then provide as much training and support as possible.”

By aligning its team around a mission to support and empower, Hattie Larlham was able to serve more than 1,600 people through its programs and services last year.

“Hattie Larlham’s impact is far-reaching,” Colecchi says, noting that, in addition to the nonprofit’s presence in Northeast Ohio, about one-third of its services are provided in the Columbus area.

“Our additional impact comes through collaboration and partnership with local businesses, community groups, schools and recreation programs,” he says. “Whether

through volunteerism, donations or event participation, we try to engage as many people as possible, connecting them with our mission and activating them as ambassadors.”

For example, in addition to providing risk management services to Hattie Larlham, The Fedeli Group serves as a corporate sponsor. “They’re supportive of our mission, which is very important because we want more than just a business relationship,” Colecchi says. “The advice and counsel they provide have been invaluable in helping us protect the assets of the organization at a manageable cost. They’re experts in the field, but just as important, they’re great people who are genuinely interested in the work we do.”

## EXPANDING THE MISSION

To meet the growing need for its services, in 2025 Hattie Larlham is embarking on a new capital campaign, Building on a Legacy, to raise funds “for important facility renovations and an addition that will allow us to better meet the needs of the people we serve,” Colecchi says.

The organization plans to increase its footprint at the Center for Children with Disabilities, which is the largest single-site ICF in Ohio. Specifically, the specialized wing that serves ventilator-dependent residents with acute respiratory issues — one of only five such programs in the state — will expand its current 26-bed capacity to support 44 of the ICF’s 124 residents as part of the upcoming capital improvement project.

Additionally, renovations throughout the rest of the residential areas in the facility will refresh the windows, lighting, HVAC systems and other interior finishes, providing much-needed updates. Direct care and medical staff work areas will be reconfigured to optimize access and workflow, and the Center’s Therapy Services program rooms will get an updated layout for efficiency, comfort and accessibility for daily physical, occupational and speech therapy sessions. Colecchi expects the project to break ground in the first quarter of 2025, with construction slated for completion in 2026. “The logistics of this renovation will be very complex,” Colecchi says, “but also very rewarding.”

# FAMILY TRADITION

Jergens continues growing through the generations by taking care of people

BY BROOKE BILYJ

When Jack Schron Jr. took the reins of his family’s manufacturing business, Jergens Inc., in 1987, his father handed him a stack of birthday cards and a pen — passing down a simple yet powerful tradition of celebrating every employee.

“Make sure you include a note in each card to tell them how important they are and how much we appreciate them,” his father instructed, “because people are the core of what we do.”

If you walk into Schron’s office today, there is still a stack of cards sitting on his desk, waiting to be personalized and sent to team members around the world. “I don’t miss a birthday,” he says proudly. “I’ve signed over 15,000 cards over the last three decades.”

This important task illustrates Schron’s primary responsibility as president — and the greatest lesson learned from his father and grandfather, who founded Jergens on the principle of caring for people. The legacy continues to guide Jergens’ expansion as Schron continues to invest in his people, with support from partners including The Fedeli Group.

## GROWING THROUGH THE GENERATIONS

In 1942, at the height of World War II, Jack Schron Sr. and his father, Christy, began making parts to supply the defense industry. With the goal of helping American

manufacturers operate more efficiently, they began manufacturing standard tooling components, vises and other work-holding equipment.

“My father had a vision beyond what small shops ordinarily do,” Schron says. “We’re extremely diversified now because we have not been limited in our vision.”

Essentially, Jergens makes components that hold parts in place during the manufacturing process, but the applications are endless.

“That same device can hold missiles on the underside of an aircraft wing during combat, and it also holds the speakers over your head when you go to a concert,” Schron says. “There’s not really an industry that doesn’t use our product, and no one industry controls more than 10 percent of our sales.”

Early on, Schron’s father traveled the world on trade missions to introduce Ohio products, leading Jergens into the export market before many companies of its size thought to do so. These efforts helped diversify Jergens’ offerings and operations, ushering the company into new markets. Today, the company operates offices in Shanghai, China; Mumbai, India; and Limerick, Ireland; in addition to three U.S. locations.

“Innovation allows you to think beyond where you are and what you’ve done in the past,” Schron says. “It moved us in to markets where we never thought we’d be.”



Jack Schron Jr., president, Jergens Inc.

Schron’s sons Matt and Kurt are also continuing the family tradition of being actively involved in major portions of the company’s manufacturing and distribution. Matt serves as vice president and general manager while Kurt is the firm’s chief financial officer, and the family is working to hand off the business to the next generation when the time comes.

## PITCHING A BIG TENT

When Schron’s father and grandfather founded the company in the early 1940s, “there were no men to work in factories, because they were off at war,” Schron says. His father, who was ineligible for the draft, developed training programs early on to upskill the women who joined the company’s wartime production efforts.

Decades later, in response to widespread labor shortage issues, Schron continued this tradition by launching an online training program in 2001. His son Chad built and grew the Tooling U© platform, which was sold to the Society of Manufacturing





Jack Schron Jr. believes people are Jergens' most important asset.

Engineers in 2011. Now the largest manufacturing-focused online learning tool of its kind, Tooling U has trained approximately 800,000 students per year since the sale.

Jergens' commitment to upskilling the workforce extends beyond the traditional talent pool, creating job opportunities for people with special needs and formerly incarcerated "second chance" individuals. "We don't care what your background is," Schron says. "Everybody is welcome at Jergens."

For example, Jergens partners with the Mayfield School District's Cuyahoga East Vocational Education Consortium

(CEVEC), a vocational training program for students with disabilities. CEVEC places students with mentors at Jergens to learn occupational and behavioral skills on the job. "We are their classroom," Schron says.

Jergens also provides training opportunities for second chance individuals. As a board member of MAGNET, The Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network, Schron sparked a local movement to embrace this nontraditional talent pool. Through MAGNET's workforce sector partnership, 350 second chance individuals have been placed in manufacturing jobs across Northeast Ohio, without a single case of recidivism, Schron notes.

Jergens now has 450 employees at six locations.

"Those of us in manufacturing should have a bigger tent than anybody else, because we can bring somebody in, put them on a machine, and teach them a skill," Schron says. "It's game-changing," for both the hiring company and the individual.

### TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE

As Jergens has expanded, with 450 employees at its six locations, Schron stresses the importance of having reliable guides to manage the risks associated with growth. One of those is The Fedeli Group, which has partnered with Jergens through the generations.

"The Fedeli Group has always been there for us," Schron says. "They've been responsive in providing us the right guidance and asking the right questions to recommend coverage."

While the company continues to expand around the world, Schron values this relationship because The Fedeli Group prioritizes Jergens' most important asset: its people.

"If you care for your people," Schron says, "the business will take care of itself."

# KENN RICCI

The Flexjet chairman on elevating the customer experience

INTERVIEWED BY NICHOLAS U. FEDELI, PRESIDENT, TFG AVIATION

**You built a \$55 million state-of-the-art operation center in Cleveland. What was the initial vision for what you wanted to accomplish?**

Sometimes you measure a company’s success by employee growth. Sometimes you measure it in financial growth. It is seldom that you can also measure it physically. For years, there was an old aircraft hangar that sat in a prominent location on the airfield at our global headquarters at the Cuyahoga County Airport. I always envisioned having that space and making it the anchor, or cornerstone, of our Flexjet campus. Today that is a reality.

When I walked into our new 55,000-square-foot operations center on the first day, I was overcome with emotion to think what we have been able to achieve. But it was not just me. There were so many people who made this happen. It has become a symbol of how this company has grown.

It is designed so that when a Flexjet customer comes to visit us, the airplane can pull right up to the building. The customer can walk right off the aircraft and directly into a meeting space that overlooks our operations center. It is a great showpiece for Cleveland.

**Was there a place you visited that inspired or influenced you?**

Our first operations control center was inspired by NASA’s control room, with its big screen and stadium seating. For our new headquarters, I wanted to keep what was great about that but make it bigger and better. When looking for inspiration for the new control center, I struck gold when watching a science fiction movie, so I sent a text to our architect, and the result is the centerpiece of today’s control center — a 176-foot-wide by 19-foot-high Megatron screen with 1,572 individual LED panels.

Each element of the aircraft journey is represented on the rows. Even better, we built this with growth in mind; we can manage double our company’s fleet size from this center.



Aviation entrepreneur Kennedy “Kenn” Ricci is chairman of Flexjet and principal of Directional Aviation.

**You could have built this anywhere. Why Cleveland?**

Cleveland is where it all began for me, and it is home. I bought my first company here — Corporate Wings, an aircraft management company — and I founded my first company here — Flight Options, a fractional pre-owned aircraft provider.

**Flexjet has almost 300 aircraft, and most are super-mid sized and ultra-long-range jets. However, you created Red Label, which brings a unique experience to your aircraft owner by providing dedicated crews, custom-created interior designs, and an onboard experience that is truly special. From your customers’ perspective, what do you want them to feel about this experience?**

At Flexjet, our job is to constantly elevate the quality of the experience our customers have on board our aircraft. We want them to be personalized experiences — not standard or boring experiences — much like what they would get if they owned their own whole aircraft. That is why, when you get onboard a Flexjet aircraft, you see highly designed, custom interiors that are unique. From aircraft

model to aircraft model, there is something special about each one. No two are alike in our fleet of nearly 300 aircraft.

My favorite element of Red Label is the pilots we assign to a specific aircraft tail number. Owners get to know their flight crew, and the flight crews develop pride in the aircraft they are assigned to.

**Tell us about the Red Label Academy. What inspired you to create this onboard passion for service?**

To be the best, you have to do the things others aren't willing to do. Our Red Label Academy is one-of-a kind in our industry. We host experts in their field who come to our academy and deliver master classes in specific skills, such as mixology, wine serving, floristry and sushi presentation, alongside scenario-based service training and how to prepare and style the cabin to meet Flexjet's exacting standards. The academy is run by Vice President of Customer Experience Francesco Vanerio, who we brought over from the award-winning Villa d'Este in Lake Como, Italy, to impart his five-star hotel experience to private aviation.

**One aspect of culture that makes Flexjet unique is staying close to the pilots. Can you elaborate?**

First and foremost, I am a pilot with over 8,000 hours of flying. So when I travel, not only can I connect with Flexjet pilots on a personal level, I can talk shop about the aircraft, the industry and topics that are important to pilots. In addition to one-on-one interactions, I engage with the pilots through regular town hall-type meetings where I speak to them directly, keeping them abreast of everything happening with the company. The last town hall meeting — in person and over Zoom — we had a record number of pilots log in.

**Sum up your management philosophy.**

I literally wrote a book on my management philosophy, "Management by Trust." Trust is an essential element in management, and it starts by being genuine and honest, immediately followed by empathy. Identifying with those you lead is essential.



From left: Nicholas Fedeli, Pam Ricci and Kenn Ricci in Florence, Italy

**Your father, Chuck, made an everlasting impression on you. What was his best advice?**

My father truly knew how to bring class to every situation. He respected everyone he met and valued his friends. I learned how to be loyal and generous from him. The best advice he gave me was, "Don't miss the five best days of your life." You have to wake up every day thinking this could be the best day of your life, because if you don't, you can sleep right through it.

**What are you impressing on your three children?**

I want them to be passionate about what they do and compassionate about how they do it. I want them to be worldly. They have all skipped a year of school to travel internationally so they could learn, understand and be aware of cultural differences. They have been to diverse locations like India, China, Japan, Bhutan and North Korea. I want them to do the right thing, to be thoughtful and kind to their family, to each other and to those they meet.

Finally, we have shared our philosophies around generosity, and they have been involved in our philanthropic decisions. We have explained that philanthropy makes the most powerful statement about your values and is the ultimate definition of your legacy.

# THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

NEW CLEVELAND HEADQUARTERS AND GLOBAL EXPANSION  
POSITION FLEXJET FOR CONTINUED GROWTH

BY BROOKE BILYJ



Inside Flexjet's futuristic new headquarters at the Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Airport, a high-tech control center tracks the company's ever-growing fleet of private aircraft flying around the globe. Dominated by a massive monitor that measures more than 175 feet long and nearly 20 feet tall — making it the largest seamless LED screen in the country and the third largest in the world — the impressive display provides real-time visibility across Flexjet's global operations, while also coordinating flights for half a dozen other brands owned by the same parent company, Directional Aviation.

As stunning as the new facility is, CEO Michael J. Silvestro emphasizes that it's not the size of the fleet or the number of private terminals around the world that define Flexjet's success. Instead, he credits people as the company's key growth factor.

"There are a number of different things that make Flexjet an industry leader, but first and foremost, it's the passion that we have for our customers, our employees and the business itself," he says. "We really care about our people, employees and customers alike, and we try to exceed their expectations in terms of safety and service."

With more than 4,000 employees around the globe, Silvestro's biggest challenge is keeping the team aligned and inspired to deliver world-class service that redefines the experience of flying. The bold brand promise that "You won't just be flown, you'll be moved," requires employees' shared commitment to meeting the highest standards for every customer, everywhere, every single time.

## HISTORY OF GROWTH

After 18 years in the sporting goods industry, Silvestro launched his aviation career in 2000 when he joined Flight Options, a company founded by his college roommate Kenn Ricci. As vice president of sales and marketing, Silvestro helped pioneer the company's innovative approach to selling fractional shares in pre-owned, refurbished aircraft, growing Flight Options into a top-ranked company with more than 200 aircraft and several thousand customers in just five years.

Silvestro left Flight Options when Raytheon Travel Air acquired majority control in 2005 but returned in 2008 to lead the company after its reacquisition by Ricci's private investment firm, Directional Aviation. As CEO through the 2008-09 recession, Silvestro saw flight activity fall 35 percent in a few months as the private aviation industry contracted.



Flexjet's massive monitor provides real-time visibility across the company's global operations.

Forced to scale back while continuing to provide the exceptional level of service that customers expected, Silvestro led Flight Options to a quick rebound from the financial crisis. By first quarter 2011, fractional jet sales at Flight Options were up 467 percent compared with the same period the previous year, marking four consecutive years of improved financial results under Silvestro's leadership.

By 2013, Flight Options was demonstrating enough steady growth and stability to support a new addition as Directional Aviation acquired Flexjet. Launched in 1995 as a venture of Bombardier Aerospace Group, Flexjet pioneered the model of fractional, or shared, subscription-based jet ownership by an aircraft manufacturer. Taking Flexjet's already stellar reputation to the next level, Silvestro grew the company into the private aviation industry's most refined fractional provider while investing billions to modernize and expand the fleet, with the goal of establishing a luxury brand known for world-class service.

Under Silvestro's leadership, Flexjet has redefined private travel through innovative new offerings, such as adding a helicopter division in 2022. Meanwhile, Flexjet's global footprint has continued to expand, with more than 30 strategic locations spanning multiple operational centers, exclusive private terminals and regional offices across Europe and North America.

## BUILDING A COHESIVE CULTURE

The passion that Silvestro feels for the private aviation industry — and Flexjet's leading role in it — is shared by every employee throughout the company's global operations. The key to building this unified culture, he says, is fostering an environment where people feel valued and trusted to do the right thing.



Michael J. Silvestro, CEO, Flexjet

“We really try to follow the Golden Rule, to treat everybody like you’d like to be treated,” Silvestro says. “Certainly, you have guidelines and HR policies, but there are the things that you just know are the right thing to do.”

For example, if an employee has to leave work for a family emergency, those priorities are more important than the details of the time-off policy.

“In the long run, that’s the right thing to do for that person, and it’s the right thing to do for the business, because when people realize that they are valued and can be trusted, it comes back in spades,” he says.

Most pilots in the aviation industry belong to a labor union, but in 2018, Flexjet pilots voted to forgo union participation in favor of a more direct relationship with company management.

“Completely on their own initiation and action, our pilots chose an at-will relationship with us as opposed to being governed by a labor contract,” Silvestro says. “That speaks to our core value of trust, because they trust us to make the best decisions for them. Being able to offer benefits like the health care plans that The Fedeli Group helps us provide is an enormous advantage — not only in cost containment, but also in the quality of service that we can provide our employees.”

In fact, he notes, “our employees haven’t had an increase in the cost of their health care in well over 15 years, and The Fedeli Group helped us accomplish that. That enhances our ability to acquire and retain quality people to work here.”

## **CRAFTING A PREMIUM EXPERIENCE**

By leveraging the dedication of Flexjet’s committed crews, Silvestro launched Red Label by Flexjet in 2015. This innovative premium program features flight crews and

pilots dedicated to their own aircraft, decked out in the LXi Cabin Collection of finely crafted artisan interiors, with an ultra-modern fleet — ranging from the light Embraer Phenom 300 to the ultra-long-range Gulfstream G650.

“This dedicated crew model creates a tremendous amount of pride,” Silvestro says. “Instead of rotating through a group of aircraft, you’re dedicated to a single aircraft, so there’s a lot of attention paid to the way it’s flown and cared for. It gives the crew a level of empowerment and pride in what they’re doing, and that pride passes down to the customer because they see that.”

Flexjet’s hiring and training processes emphasize the importance of this concierge flight experience. In addition to having the technical skills and qualifications required to fly, Flexjet pilots also hone the service-oriented soft skills needed to charm passengers.

“In contrast to the airlines, where pilots never even see customers, we need our pilots to be social and engaging,” Silvestro says. “They need to embrace the interaction because they are the face of the business to our customers. So, we not only need to screen for competency, but also for social skills and servant heart.”

The same expectations of excellence apply to cabin servers working on larger aircraft in Flexjet’s fleet. To equip these crews with skills to exceed industry standards, Flexjet opened a service training facility, the Red Label Academy, outside of London. New hires spend two weeks in training, learning from wine sommeliers, private dining experts and other professionals in the hospitality industry. Managed by a former executive from a five-star resort in Italy, the academy teaches Flexjet staff the art of luxury service across every aspect of the in-flight experience.





The high-tech Global Operations Control Center was inspired by NASA control centers.



## NAVIGATING CRISES

When Silvestro took the helm of Flight Options in 2008, his first year as CEO was a rocky one as he navigated through the economic downturn, scaling down the business through layoffs to make the company more sustainable long term.

Decades later, when the COVID-19 pandemic halted air travel, Silvestro was determined not to lay off a single employee, while keeping staff safe and healthy. To that end, key decisions were critical to emerging stronger from the crisis.

First, he looked for other ways to trim costs without letting anyone go.

“We weren’t sure whether we were going to survive because no one was flying,” he says. “We were in cash preservation mode, so we instituted a voluntary salary deferment program. Within 10 days, we had an 87 percent adoption rate. People deferred 10 to 100 percent of their salary on the basic tenet that we didn’t want to lay anyone off.”

By pulling together to share the pain and temporarily defer their salaries, Flexjet’s employees sacrificed to keep the company afloat. “In times of duress, you have this sense of shared responsibility and shared burden,” Silvestro says. “It really showed what we were made of.”

The second decision that helped the company survive was Project Lift. Instead of relying on commercial airlines to transport pilots to private flight assignments, Flexjet introduced the industry’s first crew ferry program, using its own fleet to minimize the risk of contagion. “We created an internal airline system, so they never saw a commercial flight for 18 months,” Silvestro says.

The underlying lesson is to keep taking great care of your employees, even in difficult situations.

“You’ve got to be true to your core values, even in hard times,” Silvestro says. “Anybody can be a good person when things are going great, but you don’t find out the true essence of an organization until times get tough.”

“Anybody can be a good person when things are going great, but you don’t find out the true essence of an organization until times get tough.”

Michael J. Silvestro, CEO, Flexjet

## MOVING UP

As Flexjet continued to expand and enhance its operations around the globe to better serve its client base, the company quickly outgrew its old command center, necessitating a state-of-the-art facility big enough to accommodate future growth.

“This is the culmination of many, many decades of thinking through what would be representative of where we are globally, and also where we plan on going,” Silvestro says. “We’re now operating a fleet of well over 300 aircraft traveling to every corner of the globe, and that requires a higher level of sophistication.”

The centerpiece of the new \$50 million, 51,000-square-foot facility is the high-tech Global Operations Control Center, inspired by NASA control centers, that monitors the hundreds of flights coordinated by Flexjet and its sister brands every day.

“We wanted visibility into all the ways we fly across all our different brands, so we could become more effective in how we serve customers and more efficient in how we operate the fleet,” Silvestro says.

Although the building was designed to serve the company’s practical, operational needs, the stunning architectural features were also built to impress. The glass-clad, star-shaped structure has become a silent sales tool that makes a profound first impression on prospective clients, not to mention potential employees.



“We’re proud to be able to reinvest in Cleveland because it’s a great place to be. There’s something very special about the character of the people in this community.”

Michael J. Silvestro, CEO, Flexjet

“It allows us to continue to attract and retain quality people who want to work here,” Silvestro says. “A really great environment and a really familial culture is a powerful combination.”

Even with Flexjet’s rapid global growth, which could have planted the new headquarters anywhere, keeping operations based in Cleveland was critical to the company’s leaders, who grew up in Northeast Ohio.

“We never thought about going anywhere else,” Silvestro says. “This is our home. We’ve built the business here, and we’re proud to be able to reinvest in Cleveland because it’s a great place to be. There’s something very special about the character of the people in this community, and that hard work, honesty, loyalty and commitment create a great workforce that allows us to expand.”

## TAKING FLIGHT

As the demand for fractional jet ownership continues to skyrocket, Silvestro has noticed salient trends that position Flexjet for ongoing growth in this new era of private aviation.

“Coming out of COVID, what we offer is even more desirable,” he says. “There were people who could have flown with us before who just chose not to, but coming out of that once-in-a-century experience, they said, ‘Why am I not doing this?’”

Now, Silvestro says, people are exploring the benefits of fractional jet ownership sooner in life. “People are flying younger,” he says. “They’re not waiting, they’re doing it now.” This trend is pushing the age of Flexjet’s new customers down by 10 years, from their 50s to their 40s.

Customers are also choosing bigger planes for private travel.

“Before, a lot of people would start small, go medium, and then maybe get big,” Silvestro says. “Now, customers are coming in big.”

To keep up with this trend, Flexjet is continually expanding its fleet, particularly super-mid-sized models like the Challenger 350/3500 and the Praetor 600, as well as large models like the Gulfstream G450 and G650. In addition, fractional customers are flying farther on private jets, booking more international destinations. Last summer, Flexjet’s fleet made 550 transatlantic flights — a record for its international traffic.

“We’re not just going to Florida anymore,” Silvestro says. “We’re going to Europe, the UK, Italy, Greece, Asia and the Middle East.”

With people flying younger, bigger and farther, Flexjet is perfectly situated to serve customers’ evolving needs.

“We’re well-positioned for the future,” Silvestro says.

“We offer a tremendously consistent level of service, very much like whole aircraft ownership but without the acquisition costs of buying the whole airplane, or the aggravation of managing staff or keeping up with regulations and maintenance schedules. We provide a perfect combination of benefits without the burdens.”

Increasing the tangible growth metrics — like the size of the fleet, the volume of flights and the number of private terminals — is relatively straightforward, whereas the intangible aspects of Flexjet’s culture are much harder to keep intact as the company continues its global expansion.

“One of the biggest challenges is to maintain this unique differentiator, this intangible of who we are,” Silvestro says. “It’s a lot easier to do with 100 people than 1,000, and with 4,000, you have to work really hard at it.”

Of those 4,000 employees, only 890 of them work in Cleveland. The rest are spread across the globe — pilots and cabin servers traveling the world and maintenance technicians stationed in Dallas; Sanford, Florida; Van Nuys, California; Teterboro, New Jersey; and a sales team that lives in the territories they serve across the country. As Flexjet continues adding employees, who have less direct interaction with the company’s senior-most leaders, instilling this culture consistently around the globe becomes increasingly important.

“It’s incumbent upon us who lead the organization to be accessible and committed to maintaining and enhancing the culture by empowering different layers of leadership, so they feel compelled to continue to spread that feeling around to as many people as possible,” Silvestro says. “It’s everybody’s responsibility to make sure everyone feels that culture when they work here.”



The Fedeli Group and its associates are committed to *impacting the lives of those we serve in business and in life*. During the past year, Umberto P. Fedeli and associates engaged in a range of giving back activities and events.

**2024 CLEVELAND CLINIC CHILDREN’S DERBY DAY SOIRÉE**

*Umberto P. Fedeli:* “My friendship with Eddie DeBartolo Jr. began unexpectedly in 1983, when he kindly helped me carry a wedding gift I had dropped. From that moment, his generosity has been a defining part of our bond. Over the years, Eddie has shown incredible kindness to my family and friends, from welcoming us to 49ers games to supporting causes close to both our hearts.

This year, I had the honor of serving as the honorary chairman for the Cleveland Clinic Children’s Derby Day Soirée, where we celebrated Eddie for his generosity and the positive impact he’s made on so many lives. It was a meaningful evening spent with loved ones, united in support of Cleveland Clinic Children’s and their extraordinary mission.

Eddie’s kindness and generosity over the past four decades continue to inspire me to pay it forward and contribute to communities and organizations that make a difference.”



**TFG IN THE COMMUNITY: MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER**

At The Fedeli Group, giving back is at the heart of what we do. Our team is proud to make a positive impact through various initiatives, including volunteering at the Akron-Canton Food Bank, creating meal kits with The Steak Club’s Feed the Funnel program, walking to end Alzheimer’s in Cleveland, serving meals at St. Herman’s and adopting families during the holidays through A Place 4 Me. These opportunities allow us to connect, serve and contribute to the wellbeing of our community, reflecting our commitment to making a difference where it matters most.

# FINDING SOLUTIONS

Harry Brownfield Jr. celebrates more than 40 years of service

BY BROOKE BILYJ

When Harry Brownfield Jr. started working at The Fedeli Group more than 40 years ago, the business looked quite different than it does today.

“There were no cellphones, no emails, no internet,” says Brownfield, who has served as executive vice president of the Employee Benefits Division since he joined the firm. “Things have changed a lot since then.”

Throughout the decades, Brownfield has watched The Fedeli Group evolve “from being a broker to being a full-service consultant,” he says. Although the breadth of services has expanded over time, the one constant that hasn’t changed is the firm’s commitment to helping clients.

“What I love about our business is interacting with people and helping clients solve problems,” says Brownfield, who served four years of active service and two years in the reserves in the Marine Corps after high school, then got recruited into the insurance industry while working in a steel plant.

After repeatedly running into The Fedeli Group’s CEO Umberto Fedeli in the hall while working for another insurance company, Brownfield came to know and respect the firm’s charismatic leader. When his previous company closed its Cleveland office, Brownfield had the option of moving to Chicago or finding a new job in Northeast Ohio. His relationship with Fedeli made his choice easy — and he’s been with The Fedeli Group ever since.

During his decades-long tenure at the firm, The Fedeli Group has grown dramatically, but Brownfield’s commitment to personal relationships with teammates and clients is stronger than ever.



Harry Brownfield Jr., executive vice president of the Employee Benefits Division

“We have a family culture here, and we all work together,” he says. “I’ve been very happy working with the team, and I’ve never wanted to look (for another job). I love getting up and going to work.”

Outside of the office, Brownfield is also active in the community. He serves on the board of the Mercy Health Foundation and as board chair of the Maryssa’s Mission Foundation, which supports the families of medically fragile children undergoing treatment — a cause close to his heart after the loss of his granddaughter, who was only 24 months old.

Although Brownfield is “slowing down a bit,” taking Fridays off to spend time with his seven grandchildren, he’s not interested in retiring and says he’d love to work, if he could, another 40 years at The Fedeli Group.

“This gives me energy. This gives me focus. This gives me purpose,” he says.



IN THE KITCHEN: **WITH MAMA LUCIA AND LORRY FEDELI**

## CACIO E PEPE PASTA: TRADITIONAL AND SIMPLE

### Ingredients:

6 ounces of spaghetti

2 ounces of pecorino, freshly grated

1 cup of reserved pasta water, cooled a bit, used as needed to achieve an emulsified sauce

½ tablespoon of coarsely ground black peppercorn

### Instructions:

Cook spaghetti (or pasta of choice) in lightly salted water. Two minutes before the pasta is done, reserve 1 cup of pasta water and set it aside to cool slightly — this prevents lumpy cheese when mixing.

In a pan over medium-low heat, toast ½ tablespoon of coarsely ground black peppercorn until fragrant (about 1-2 minutes).

Turn off the heat, add ¾ of the freshly grated pecorino Romano and about ¼ cup of the cooled pasta water.

Stir vigorously to create a loose, emulsified sauce. If it's too thick, add more pasta water a little at a time.

Add the drained pasta to the pan and mix vigorously until the pasta is coated. If needed, adjust the consistency by adding more pasta water and pecorino.

Serve immediately and enjoy! Garnish with additional pecorino and a sprinkle of black pepper, if desired.



**Buon Appetito!**

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IN BUSINESS AND IN LIFE.



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