

# 10 Bad Ass [Girl] Bosses of Brick City

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Since Newark Venture Partners began, one of our goals has been to highlight Newark as a city that celebrates equality and diversity as drivers of disruption. We have been especially proud that our NVP Labs program has become a leader in recognizing female founders and founders of color with incredible business ideas . and that it has encouraged people from all walks of life to visit Newark, start companies, careers, and families here, and to join a community that is as welcoming as it is innovative.

Our last cohort was comprised of 6 female founders, 4 of which were also their company's CEO, and over the past year we've welcomed and promoted several women into our own leadership team. We are always working to celebrate and advance the accomplishments of our team and our great NVP family of founders and startups, but since March is Women's History Month . we wanted to give a shout out to our Top 10 Badass Girl Bosses of Brick City . who are not only making history here in Newark, but making room at the table for women across industry.

## **1. Lieutenant Governor & Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for the State of New Jersey Sheila Oliver .**

Not only is she the first woman of color to serve in statewide elected office, but she's a Newark native and a legislative powerhouse. Her accomplishments in government and public service are too many to list, but she's busted through glass ceilings at every turn, and is a consistent influence in the room where it happens.+She started her career as the Director of the Office of Youth Services and Special Projects for the City of Newark, and The Newark Literacy Campaign . and she's been a Brick City boss ever since.



**2. Aisha Glover, CEO, Newark Alliance .** The right hand of Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, Aisha Glover has become a key voice in all discussions around economic development within and throughout the city. As the President & CEO of Newark Alliance, she is instrumental in leveraging the city's corporate and anchor communities' collective impact for inclusive economic growth.+ Glover has also been a long time champion of the local tech economy, working to grow Newark as a hub for innovators. She made major waves when the city unveiled the LinkNWK network



and its 45 free secure wi-Fi kiosks, and during Newark's bid to get Amazon's HQ2. One thing we know for sure, is that Glover is just getting started, and she'll be making history in Newark for years to come.

**3. Anne Erni, Chief People Officer at Audible** . Anne Erni joined Audible as Chief People Officer in 2016. She most recently served as Head of Human Resources at Bloomberg L.P. Anne spent six years at Bloomberg, during which the global workforce doubled, and where her passion for nurturing talent led to the creation of Bloomberg's Global Leadership Forum. Before Bloomberg, Anne was Managing Director and Chief Diversity Officer at Lehman Brothers, focusing on the recruitment and retention of women and under-represented groups. Anne also spent fifteen years with P&L responsibility in fixed income and equity sales at Lehman Brothers and Bankers Trust. A New Jersey native, Anne has been a rockstar in every position she's had, but we are especially excited about her role as an NVP mentor. Anne regularly joins our NVP roundtables, and offers advice to founders about how to grow and manage their teams and overcome the HR challenges that often come with starting a business.



**4. Nancy Cantor, Chancellor of Rutgers Newark** . It's no secret we have a soft spot for Rutgers University, and a lot of admiration for Nancy Cantor. Newark has found a great champion in her work to enhance the university's traditions of diversity, research and its growing impact on urban entrepreneurship. As neighbor to the Rutgers business school (we live on the 7th floor of the Washington Park building) and regular employers of its student fellows and interns, we see first hand how her leadership has helped Rutgers students set themselves apart, and brand themselves as changemakers in the local and regional business world.



**5. Kathleen Coviello, New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Vice President, Technology & Life Sciences Investments:** Many people have worked their way to the top in the industries of technology, government and finance, but few manage to conquer all three. As the Founding Director of the NJEDA's Technology & Life Sciences Division Kathleen Coviello has done just that. She works to identify, incentivize and manage investments in early stage technology and life science companies. She's been front and center in the NJ entrepreneurial technology community and sits on several advisory and/or valuation boards, including the Edison Venture Fund, NJTC Venture Fund, and the Research and Development Council of New Jersey. Kathleen has been a trailblazer throughout her career, and now she's one of the masterminds behind New Jersey's return to tech innovation.



**6. Barbara Koster, Senior Vice President & Chief Information Officer, Prudential:** As one of our LPs, Prudential's leadership has invested quite a lot in Newark's startup scene. As head of the company's Global Business & Technology Solutions Department, Koster's perspective on information technology, cyber security, technology governance, networks, and technology infrastructure is vital to how the company views technology solutions and the startups we invest in. She's received accolade after accolade from CIO of the Year, to the New Jersey Business Hall of Fame, to being named one of the "Best 50 Women in Business" by NJBIZ. Under Koster's leadership, Prudential has been named one of Computerworld magazine's Best Places to Work in IT for several consecutive years. and, as the CIO of Prudential for the past fifteen-plus years, Barbara is one of, if not the, longest serving C level executives at Fortune 100 firm.



**7. Vlada Lotkina, Founder and CEO of ClassTag .**

Vlada is the personification of a badass girl boss, with a resume that speaks volumes: Wharton grad, former BCG consultant, Sr. Director of Corporate Strategy at DELL, Mom, and now startup founder and CEO. What excites us most Vlada is her attitude toward problem solving. Following an experience at her daughters daycare, she started ClassTag, a technology centered business that updates and streamlines how parents and teachers communicate. During ClassTag's residence with NVP Labs, Vlada responded to headlines about nationwide teacher strikes by expanding ClassTag to include a rewards system and a marketplace where teachers could use the platform to get classroom supplies, instead of reaching into their own pockets. Today, her and her co-founder Jason are managing a team of 20 with a satellite office in Newark, and ClassTag has over 500k users, in over 10,000 classrooms across the country. Earlier this year they announced a \$2 million seed round, led by NVP. and she's about to kickoff a women's entrepreneurship networking group to help strengthen the network of female leaders within the east coast ecosystem. (See below for more on that!)



**8. Shadae McDaniel, City Leader of the All Stars Project of New Jersey .**

If you've been following NVP, you know we have a special place in our hearts for the All Stars Project of New Jersey, which has been on the ground in Newark since 1999, and has touched the lives of over 35,000 young people. The All Stars Project has done outstanding work teaching young adults in New Jersey how to be successful professionals, through engaged learning activities, valuable internships and real word networking. As we continue to grow Newark's ecosystem of tech startups, nurturing young local talent is vital. During her five year tenure with the All Stars, Shadae has become a true champion for Newark's youth, and has helped us connect with some of the programs' All Star+ students, who have grown into interns and employees for our portfolio companies.



**9. Linda Harrison, CEO of the Newark Museum .** As CEO of the Newark Museum, Linda Harrison is both keeper and writer of Newark History. The Museum is one of the city's top cultural institutions and is home to top notch collections of Tibetan art, a enviable natural history collection and the Alice and Leonard Dreyfuss Planetarium. Harrison is the Museum's 8th CEO and its first African American executive in its 100 year history. When we hosted NVP Labs Demo Day there this past January, just days after she took the helm, the Museum grabbed the spotlight as a hidden gem of the city.



**10. Joanne Lin, Principal at NVP and Allison Williams Director of NVP Labs:**

At the risk of sounding a bit self promotional, we couldn't pass up the opportunity to shout out two badass women on our own team. News outlets regularly cover the lack of female founders in tech, but there is also a serious shortage of women in venture capital, and yes, we think the two are related. Joanne Lin was recently promoted to Principal at our firm, where she leads investment deals, and works alongside founders and CEOs to build NVP's profile. Allison Williams has been with us for just under a year, as Director of NVP Labs. She's not only grown the program to be a leading accelerator in the region, but she's grown its value for our participating founders, our LPs and the Newark community. Together, they're not only made an impact in Newark . but they're serving as mentors and expanding opportunities for other female founders and investors.



In honor of our Badass Girl Bosses of Brick City . and Women's history Month . NVP is proud to be starting a new initiative for women founders and investors. **POP256** (named for the number of women billionaires in the world) was founded by Allison Williams and Vlada Lotkina, and will host a small group of women monthly to discuss the challenges and rewards of the founder/VC lifestyle, and how they can continue to grow the ranks of females in leadership roles across industry. If you are interested in learning more, email [Allison@newark.vc](mailto:Allison@newark.vc).