



2024  
**Annual  
Report**



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# A Year of Diversity and Prosperity

## Outgoing President's Letter

My Fellow ACG Cleveland Members,

As my tenure as the President comes to a close, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to serve this wonderful organization and its members. It has been a privilege to work alongside such dedicated professionals who are passionate about driving growth and success in the middle market M&A sector.

Over the past year, we have achieved significant milestones and made strides in advancing our mission to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and professional development within the local M&A community. Together, we have organized informative events, facilitated valuable networking opportunities, and provided resources to support the growth and success of our members.

I am particularly proud of the initiatives we have undertaken to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within our organization and the broader M&A industry. By embracing diverse perspectives and experiences, we have enriched our discussions, expanded our horizons, and strengthened our collective impact.

As I reflect on my time as President, I am grateful for the support and dedication of our members, sponsors and partners who have contributed to the success of our chapter. Your commitment to excellence and collaboration has been instrumental in shaping our chapter's legacy and laying the foundation for future growth and prosperity.

As I pass the torch to Beth Haas and the incoming leadership team, I am confident that the Cleveland Chapter will continue to thrive and serve as a beacon of excellence in the middle market M&A community. I am excited to see the chapter's continued evolution under their guidance and I look forward to staying actively involved.

Wishing you all continued success and prosperity,



### Jay Moroscak

Senior Vice President, AON

ACG Cleveland Outgoing President of the Board, 2023–2024

# Developing the Next Generation of Deal Makers

## Incoming President's Letter

Back when my teenagers were still little kids who let me pick their clothes, my son had a t-shirt emblazoned with the phrase "I liked Cleveland before it was cool."

While Cleveland is now undeniably "cool," it's a sentiment easily appreciated by those of us who have had the privilege to build careers in Northeast Ohio's close-knit deal community. Our region and our chapter are thriving, and I'm thrilled that we get to showcase both this fall as the Great Lakes Capital Connection returns to Cleveland, bringing with it nearly 1,000 attendees from more than 25 states.

Like our city, our chapter is large enough to be impactful and friendly enough to be inclusive. As I step into the role of President this year, my goal is to make membership in ACG Cleveland one of the best value propositions around. We will continue our dedication to offering unique programming to educate and engage, allowing our members to build valuable professional connections.

Specialized groups such as YACG, WiT, Akron and the reinvigorated Strategic Acquirers' Network have been catalysts for driving membership growth and fostering close relationships in smaller cohorts, and these will continue to offer tailored events.

We will also remain focused on developing the next generation of deal makers and increasing access to opportunities through programs such as the ACG Cup Case Competition and Career Fair, YACG mentorship and our DEI Initiative. A number of our Cup participants are interning at member firms this summer, highlighting the power of our community to open doors.

All of these things are possible due to you, our members, and your continued engagement with the chapter. I am grateful to the dedication of outgoing President Jay Moroscak and the tireless efforts of our board and committee members. Let's make 2024/2025 a great year focused on:

- Maintaining a robust membership base of over 500
- Hosting a successful GLCC, as measured by attendance and sponsorship dollars
- Attending events throughout the year to greet old friends and add new ones to our networks
- Paying it forward to the students and young professionals in our community through internships and mentoring

Great things happen when we all come together. I hope to see you soon!



**Beth Haas**

Partner at Cyprium Partners

ACG President-elect

# The 2024 Deal Maker Awards

## Our Signature Networking Event Returned for January 2024...

...and it was one of our greatest years yet!

The Deal Maker Awards is ACG Cleveland's annual hallmark networking event. It's the place to be for Northeast Ohio's M&A corporate growth professionals to kick off the new calendar year in style. Every January, we hold the Deal Maker Awards to recognize the stand-out achievements of companies and financiers who actively participate in acquisitions, divestitures, financings, and other sustainable growth transactions in Northeast Ohio.

This year, the 27th Annual ACG Cleveland Deal Maker Awards took place on January 31, 2024, at the Cleveland Marriott Key Tower. It was an elegant evening filled with remarkable highlights.

Attendees were wined and dined, followed by the much-anticipated awards ceremony, where we celebrated the outstanding accomplishments of our peers. The energy in the room was palpable as professionals from across the M&A spectrum gathered to honor innovation, success, and strategic growth in our region.

We'd like to extend our congratulations once again to [the 2024 Deal Maker Awards winners](#):

**Woman in Transactions** – Cheryl Strom, The Riverside Company

**Corporate Deal Maker of the Year** – Nordson Corporation

**Corporate Deal Maker of the Year** – Olympic Steel

**PE Fund Deal Maker of the Year** – MPE Partners

**Impact Deal Maker of the Year** – Brian E. Hall, 2 Northstar Capital, LLC.



## Event Sponsors

Of course the Deal Maker Awards don't happen without the efforts of our sponsors. A special thank you goes out to all those who helped make this event another success!

### Platinum Sponsors

Benesch

Grant Thornton

Huntington

KeyBanc

Oswald

### Gold Sponsors

AON

Buckingham

Calfee

Deloitte

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### Silver Sponsors

BMF (Bober Markey Fedorovich)

CIBC

CM Wealth

Cyprium Partners

Vorys

# 2023 Deal Maker Award Winners Spotlight



**Cheryl Strom, The Riverside Company** | Cheryl Strom is a former ACG Cleveland President and private equity professional with years of outstanding origination experience behind her. Learn more about the achievements that earned her the 2024 ACG Cleveland Deal Maker Award for Women in Transactions!



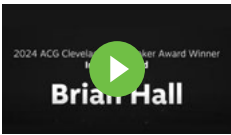
**Nordson Corporation** | Nordson Corporation has been a staple in precision manufacturing and engineering in Cleveland for 70 years. Learn more about this year's Corporate Deal Maker of the Year.



**Olympic Steel** | This year's second recipient of the Corporate Deal Maker of the Year Award goes to Olympic Steel, a provider of business solutions for metal product users since 1954. With a global footprint and a commitment to outstanding service, they are truly a pillar of their industry.



**MPE Partners** | Helping management teams grow and strengthen their business is the mission of MPE Partners. With a focus on lower middle market leveraged buyouts, recapitalizations, and build-up investments, they more than earned the 2024 ACG Cleveland Deal Maker Award for PE Fund Deal Maker of the Year.



**Brian E. Hall** | A lifelong entrepreneur and the founder of 2 Northstar Capital, LLC., Brian is a Cleveland native with a passion for business growth. He's been recognized by Crain's Forty Under 40 List and has made significant contributions to Northeast Cleveland's M&A scene. That's why he was the winner of the 2024 ACG Deal Maker Award for Impact Deal Maker of the Year.



# The Value of an ACG Membership

## Connections, Networking, and Deal Making Abound



Over the last several years, **ACG Cleveland** has honed a reputation for being one of the largest and most active chapters of **ACG Global**. Every year, we strive to up the ante by delivering unrivaled in-person networking events, educational programming, and development opportunities for our members. In doing so, we've been able to cultivate an engaged and growing membership.

With a strong membership base comes increased engagement. Over the last year, we have been able to extend ACG Cleveland's digital presence. **Our LinkedIn page** is up 14% in new followers in this year alone, and we have seen healthy growth on our Instagram and X (Twitter) accounts as well.

Membership in our key special interest groups—such as Young ACG and Women in Transactions—remains strong and fuels the development of a broad array of in-person events and opportunities throughout the year. For instance, in the last seven months alone ACG Cleveland members have enjoyed access to **exclusive events** with presentations from local executives such as:

- An evening with Nic Barlage, CEO of Rocket Entertainment Group, at a Cleveland Cavaliers game
- An NCAA Women's Final Four luncheon, setting up one of the biggest sports events of the year
- A Cleveland Guardians event with team CEO and Chairman Paul Dolan



### What Does ACG Membership Mean?

Want to hear straight from current ACG members and get insight into the programming events we provide every year? Check out this short video.

## ACG Cleveland Membership Benefits

Members of ACG Cleveland enjoy access to a number of high-value benefits. You won't find an offering quite like ours:

- Over 25 local networking and professional development events
- 16 ACG Cleveland committees you can serve on to deepen your connections and gain experience
- Discounted pricing at ACG events worldwide
- A subscription to the official ACG publication, Middle Market Growth®
- ACG JobSource access
- ACG Webinars live and on-demand
- Partner discounts at FoundersCard, CLEAR, Grata, Company.com, and Enterprise Purchasing Group

And that's just the beginning. To get more details on these and the other invaluable perks of an ACG Cleveland membership, you can visit our [ACG Cleveland Member Benefits page](#).





## Stronger Together: DEI Initiative

The ACG Cleveland Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative is integrated as part of our chapter's everyday planning and activities. It's purpose is to:

- Embrace diversity, equity and inclusion as drivers of member satisfaction as well as organizational innovation, value, and growth
- Serve as a DEI thought leader, advocate, and resource for members while tapping into the worldwide collective DEI knowledge and experience of ACG Cleveland members and partners
- Recommend, and help execute on, programs, services, research, approaches, and strategies that will help ACG Cleveland better leverage DEI as a competitive advantage and develop pipelines of leaders and future members

## Looking for More

If you're interested in joining a committee to help plan the details for any of our upcoming or future events, you can fill out our Committee Form [here](#). You can also reach out to Sandy Habecker, ACG Cleveland's Chapter Executive, at (216) 696-8484 or via email at [admin@acgcleveland.org](mailto:admin@acgcleveland.org).



# The 2023 Summer Social at the Shoreby, with DealSource®

## Another Smashing Success For Our Lakeside Sell-Out Event



As is tradition, The Shoreby Club provided a stunning backdrop for our **2023 Summer Social event**. More than 300 M&A professionals from all disciplines came together in this open-format networking affair to share knowledge, forge new connections, and enjoy the jaw-dropping scenery.

The 2024 Summer Social at the Shoreby is set for June 25. Just like last year, it will be **preceded by an invitation-only DealSource®** event during the day for investment bankers and private equity participants. Sponsors for this year's event include **Aon** and **Calfee**.

The 2024 Summer Social will be another premier event. Tickets sold out in record time and we're excited to see everyone for the summer kickoff event of the year!

# 2023 ACG Golf Outing at Firestone

## Summer was in Full Swing at our Annual Golf Event



What's better than a day on the greens? A day on the greens with peers and colleagues!

2023 saw **ACG Cleveland's 19th Annual Golf Outing**, featuring 231 members and guests and 57 foursomes. The event was overseen by Craig Panzica, CIBC. As is tradition, it was held at the beautiful **Firestone Country Club** where attendees were treated to a pre-round lunch and a wine tasting reception afterward.

**The 20th annual golf outing** is set to take place on Sept. 30, 2024, back at Firestone.

## 2023 ACG Golf Outing Winners

### Low Scores

#### North Course 1st Place (-28)

Mike Sabutis  
John Stallings  
Charlie Cooper  
Devin Schaffer

#### Fazio Course 1st Place (-22)

Allan Friedman  
Gary Sharp  
William Elliott  
Brandon Nett

#### South Course 1st Place (-23)

Evan Cottington  
Lance Curtis  
Don Stanovcak  
Mark Heinrich

### Skills Winners

#### Men's Long Distance

Shade McMillen (North Course, Hole 5)  
Shade McMillen (North Course, Hole 12)  
Jeff Brooks (Fazio Course, Hole 6)  
Ryan Wirtz (Fazio Course, Hole 13)  
Mike Metz (South Course, Hole 9)  
Mike Metz (South Course, Hole 10)

#### Women's Long Distance

Cheryl Strom (North Course, Hole 1)  
Carly Levindofske (Fazio Course, Hole 9)

#### Men's Closest-to-the-Pin

Andrew Vento (North Course, Hole 17)  
Rob Cheffins (North Course, Hole 8)  
Mike Waseity (Fazio Course, Hole 14)  
Rudy Bentlage (Fazio Course, Hole 7)  
Dan Urban (South Course, Hole 5)  
Mike Metz (South Course, Hole 15)

#### Women's Closest-to-the-Pin

Liz Roth (North Course, Hole 6)  
Kristen Gable (Fazio Course, Hole 12)

# 2024 ACG Cup®

## Baldwin Wallace University Triumphs at the 2024 Competition



The 2024 ACG Cup® was one of our biggest competitions to date, with a grand total of nine prestigious universities from the region vying for the top spot. The ACG Cup® is organized every year by the Cleveland chapter of the Association for Corporate Growth (ACG).

The ACG Cup® competition offers students a practical experience where they present recommendations on valuation, capital markets, and strategic mergers and acquisitions to a panel of seasoned M&A experts. This event also serves as a prime opportunity for corporate growth professionals to network with emerging talent in the industry.

This year's winning team hailed from **Baldwin Wallace University**. The team from **Walsh University** took 2nd and **Case Western Reserve University** finished 3rd. Teams from Ashland University, John Carroll University, The University of Akron, Ohio State University, Cleveland State University, and Notre Dame College also competed.

Special thanks go out to **BakerHostetler Law**, which hosted **the in-person competition on Jan. 19, 2024**.



### See it for yourself.

Get an inside peek at the ACG Cup® competition and meet the winning teams from 2024.

# Event Spotlights: Free Throws and Home Runs

## ACG Cleveland Provides Tailored Programming for Members Year Round

### Nic Barlage and Rock Entertainment Group

The 2023/2024 year was filled with some incredible events, particularly for our sports fans out there. In December, we invited ACG members and guests to join us for a special presentation from Nic Barlage. Nic is the CEO of **Rock Entertainment Group**, the company behind some of the biggest entertainment and pro-sports events in Cleveland. **Benesch Law** was the event sponsor that helped make this possible.



#### See it for yourself.

Get a sneak peek into this event where attendees learned what it takes to make a positive community-level impact by driving transformative change within the world of pro-sports and big league entertainment.

### Paul Dolan and the Cleveland Guardians

Later, as 2024 tipped towards summer, ACG members and non-members alike had the opportunity to root for the hometown with Cleveland Guardians CEO and Chairman, Paul Dolan. We joined Paul for a special presentation in a reserved portion of The Corner at Progressive Field. Afterward, we all took our seats to cheer on the Cleveland Guardians while they played against the Detroit Tigers. Event sponsor **Oswald** was instrumental in making the event happen.



#### More Than Peanuts and Crackerjacks

Take a look at some of the footage from this exclusive event where attendees got an insider's perspective on the opportunities that abound in professional sports.

# ACG Akron Network

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The **ACG Akron Network** is one of the many special-interest networking groups under the ACG Cleveland umbrella. It is a group focused on serving the needs of M&A professionals, business owners, commercial bankers, and others in the Akron area. Under the leadership of **Ryan McGovern**, ACG Akron hosts networking events and professional development opportunities several times a year.

One of their biggest events in the 2023/2024 year highlighted the plentiful M&A opportunities in the food industry. Tickets for the Food Industry Panel event—sponsored by **Buckingham Law**— sold out well in advance, and attendees got the chance to learn about this dynamic and resilient sector.

For the latest ACG Akron programs, be sure to visit the **ACG Cleveland Event Calendar**. For more information about ACG Akron, contact ACG Cleveland at (216) 696-8484 or email [admin@ACGcleveland.org](mailto:admin@ACGcleveland.org).



# Young ACG Cleveland

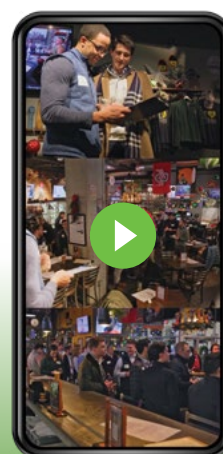
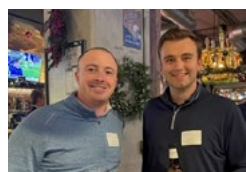
Young ACG Cleveland (YACG) remains the largest young professional cohort across 59 global ACG chapters. It connects young dealmaking professionals under the age of 35 with peers from all areas of M&A, and facilitates career growth and network building.

YACG makes up approximately 35% of the total ACG Cleveland membership. Under the leadership of **committee chair Rob Cheffins of CIBC**, YACG offers opportunities for young professionals to:

- Connect with others in their cohort and across ACG to build their professional networks
- Take on leadership roles through various committees
- **Take part in the YACG Cleveland mentorship program**

Notable YACG events from the 2023/2024 fiscal year include:

- YACG Cleveland Mentorship Panel
- YACG Annual Holiday Social
- YACG Golf Simulator Event
- YACG LAND Moto Event
- Browns Tailgate with YACG



Click to watch the video reel from the YACG Annual Holiday Party



# Women in Transactions Network

The **Women in Transactions (WiT)** networking group includes female professionals from the entire dealmaking ecosystem, including private equity investors, strategic acquirers, lenders, investment bankers, consultants, attorneys, and accountants.

The WiT network has an active committee involved in planning events, member outreach, and social media. To learn more about WiT, join their network, or aid the committee, please contact **Corrie Menary** at [corrie@kirtlandcapital.com](mailto:corrie@kirtlandcapital.com).

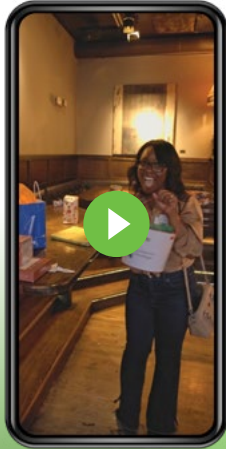
Believed to be the first group of its kind within the ACG network, WiT continues to be a vibrant part of the overall ACG Cleveland membership base and activities. Approximately 25% of the chapter's total enrollment is part of WiT.

Some event highlights from the past year include:

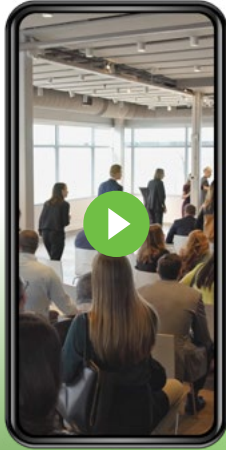
- White Elephant Gift Exchange - Valentine's Day Edition
- WiT Financial Health Seminar
- 2024 Summer Kick-Off Golf Clinic

Cleveland's WiT group is committed to supporting women in all stages of their careers through education, philanthropy, networking and referrals.

Upcoming events include the **Summer Golf Outings**, comprising three games throughout the months of July, August, and September of 2024.



Click to watch the video reel from the WiT White Elephant Gift Exchange Valentine's Day Edition



Click to watch the video reel from the WiT Deal Maker Winners Roundtable



# Sponsorships

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There are a **variety of sponsorship opportunities** through ACG Cleveland. It's an excellent way for Northeast Ohio firms to maximize their exposure on a continuous basis. Sponsors are regularly highlighted at our events, which see thousands of attendees throughout the year. They are also featured prominently in our weekly newsletter that reaches 4,000+ people every Wednesday, and across our social media channels.

Annual sponsorships at the Platinum, Gold, and Silver levels are industry-exclusive. ACG Cleveland is proud to recognize and give special thanks to our Platinum, Gold, and Silver sponsors for their generous support.

## Platinum Sponsors



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## Gold Sponsors



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## Silver Sponsors



# ACG Cleveland 2024-25 Board

## Retiring Board Members

Joe Hatina  
Jones Day

Tom Welsh  
Calfee

Bryan Fialkowski  
JPMorgan Chase

Mike Ferkovic  
Sunvera Group

## New Board Members

Rob Cheffins  
CIBC

Kevin Rozsa  
Transtar

William Parker  
Parker Revenue Growth  
Strategies

David Schindelheim  
Jones Day

Brandon Patton  
Aon

Dawn Southard  
Team NEO

## Executive Officers

### President:

Beth Haas, Cyprium Investment Partners

### President-Elect:

Thomas Libeg, Grant Thornton

### Innovation Executive Chair:

Ryan McGovern, Star Mountain Capital

### Annual Events Executive Chair:

Terry Doyle, Calfee

### Programming Executive Chair:

John Allotta, BakerHostetler  
Nicholas House, Vorys

### Branding Executive Chair:

Peter Cavrell, Fortress Security Risk  
Management

### Membership Executive Chair:

Dawn Southard, Team NEO

### Governance Executive Chair:

Charles Aquino, Edgepoint

### Treasurer:

Rob Paskert, Fortune Brands Innovations

### Secretary:

Mitch Gecht, Benesch

### Immediate Past President:

Jay Moroscak, Aon

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Charles Aquino, Edgepoint

Tricia Balser, CIBC

Peter Cavrell, Fortress Security Risk Management

Robert Cheffins, CIBC

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Steve Danford, KeyBanc Capital Markets

Terry Doyle, Calfee

Michael Fanous, PwC

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