More than 350 leading investors and promising startups in IT/Web/Software converged at the Largest IT Venture Capital Forum in the Southwest on Nov. 19, 2015 at Rice University.

Promising Information Technology, web, and software start-up companies pitched their companies to venture capitalists, investors, mentors, business & corporate leaders and industry experts. Since 1999, more than 30% of the start-up companies pitching at past Rice Alliance Technology Venture Forums have raised funding, totaling over $3.1 billion.

Feedback from attendees at last year's Forum:

“This is the best run entrepreneurial event I have ever attended. Logistics and quality of attendees were outstanding.”

“I was told by a VC that he thought this was the best event for entrepreneurs in Texas. The event lived up to those expectations.”

“This was such a great event. It was obviously well planned and the quality of the participants was very high. Great networking.”

“I saw plenty of investable companies.”

“I met a lot of other investors I did not know before.”

Why Attend?

• Get a first-look at emerging IT/software startups
• Network with over 100 investors
• Hear from leading venture capitalists and investors
• Meet start-ups one-on-one during the Company Showcase and Reception
• Learn what is required to get outside funding for your start-up company
• Network with over 400 members of the Texas and the Southwest region entrepreneurial ecosystem
• Learn what is included in a successful investor pitch

13th Annual IT and Web Venture Forum
November 19, 2015
8:00 am - 5:00 pm
McNair Hall, Rice University

Event Underwriters

Office Hours Reception Sponsor
**Quick Facts**

Outstanding Entrepreneurial Leadership Award – Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers (GCEC) - 2009

**Recent Speakers**

Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Business
George R. Brown School of Engineering
Wiess School of Natural Sciences

**Company Spotlight**

**Earned Excellence**

Janice and Robert McNair Hall
P.O. Box 2932-MS 531
Houston, Texas 77252-2932
Venture Forum Agenda

Thursday, November 19, 2015

8:00 – 9:00 AM  Registration

9:00 – 9:15 AM  Welcoming Remarks
    Brad Burke, Managing Director, Rice Alliance

9:15 – 9:45 AM  Morning Keynote
    Emily Keeton, Co-Founder and President, Station Houston
    Station Houston: A Diverse Ecosystem for Entrepreneurs, Accelerators, Mentors and Capital Providers

9:45 – 10:30 AM  Introduction by Blair Garrou, Managing Director and Co-Founder, Mercury Fund
    Company Pitches

10:30 – 11:00 AM  Networking Break

11:00 – 11:30 AM  Company Pitches

11:30 - Noon  Venture Capital Panel: New Venture Investors in the Texas Ecosystem
    Blair Garrou, Mercury Fund (Moderator)
    Alex Robart, Unconventional Capital
    Jim Curry, BuildGroup
    Jay Zeldman, Resolute Venture Partners
    Kerry Rupp, True Wealth Innovations

12:00 – 1:00 PM  Lunch and Networking

1:00 – 1:15 PM  Afternoon Remarks and Introductions
    Brad Burke, Managing Director, Rice Alliance

1:15 – 1:45 PM  Angel Investing Panel
    Cody Cupp, Houston Angel Network
    Keith Kreuer, RedHouse Associates
    Andrew Clark Texas Halo Fund
    Kelly Hill, Hill Country Angel Network
    Apurva Sanghavi, START Investor Network

1:45 – 2:45 PM  Company Pitches

2:45 – 3:15 PM  Networking Break

2:45 – 3:15 PM  Company Pitches
3:15 – 4:00 PM  Company Pitches

4:00 – 4:30 PM  Accelerator Panel: Driving Early Stage Startups in Texas
Aziz Gilani, Mercury Fund – Moderator
Molly Cain, Tech Wildcatters
Kirk Coburn, SURGE Ventures
Steve Tinkle, Seed Sumo

4:30 - 5:00 PM  Afternoon Keynote – Mark Schmulen,
Founder & Former CEO, Nutshell Mail (acquired by Constant Contact)
My story in a Nutshell: From Houston to Silicon Valley and Back Again

4:30 – 5:00 PM  Awards Recognition – Most Promising Companies
Brad Burke, Managing Director, Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship
Karen Love, PKF Texas

5:00 – 5:10 PM  Company Showcase and Networking Reception
### Venture Forum Presenting Companies

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<th>Presenting Company</th>
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OnceThere Inc.  http://OnceThere.com
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Qukku  http://www.qukku.com
RedEye Pty Ltd  http://redeye.co
Renovate Simply  http://www.renovatesimply.com
Smart Home Hero  http://smarthomehero.com
Stat Innovation (KidsMD)  http://WWW.KidsMDapp.com
Storage Forever Ion Company  http://SFion.com
SureSpot  http://www.surespot.com
TrendKite  http://www.trendkite.com
Uzeeum  http://www.uzeeum.com
VolunteerSpot  http://www.volunteerspot.com
Wytli  http://www.wytli.com
Quick Facts
2009 Ranked # 5 in the U/S. Princeton Review & Entrepreneurship magazine

Recent Speakers
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George R. Brown School of Engineering
Wiess School of Natural Sciences

Company Spotlight

Earned Excellence

Janice and Robert McNair Hall
P.O. Box 2932-MS 531
Houston, Texas 77252-2932

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Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship
Rice University
Testimonials from the 2014 Rice Alliance Information Technology and Venture Capital Forum

What worked well at the 2014 Information Technology and Venture Capital Forum?

"Excellent, valuable forum. This is a great opportunity for entrepreneurs and investors to learn, network and make deals."
"The organization and insertion of the panels in between the various pitches was great. Investor Hours was also excellent. Probably the best part for entrepreneurs."
"The quality of the panel was excellent. They provided great insight, information and how to."  
"The Venture Capitalist Panel was the best ever. Great guys that actually do early stage deals and gave great advice. Well done and the final question session with your word relationship was superb."
"Time management was very good."  
"Carefully executed and seamless on the logistics side. Also, I thought Jan's keynote was one of the best entrepreneurship talks I've seen. He was well-prepared and had a fantastic story."
"Company Presentations were on time!"
"Everything (was good)!"
"Good mix of people and voices."
"Good organization of events and tracks."
"Good overall pace and content."
"Great engagement between investors and entrepreneurs."
"Great job as always. Well organized."
"Great logistics, diverse crowd."
"I enjoyed it all. Nice networking breaks."
"The Rice Alliance staff always do a great job."
"Brad did an amazing job as the MC for the event. The venue, food, setup and professionalism by everyone hosting the event was top-notch."
"It was great!"
"Great experience all around, and getting an award didn't hurt either. It was a vindication for us."
"Great job."
"I love the 30 minute break concept, perfect chance to get to network and hit the head. Or grab a drink."
"One of the best parts of the Rice ecosystem."
"Overall a great event, and I will attend next year!"
"Thank you so much!"
"The host was a pro!"
"The keynote speakers were great and their talks were aimed at the entrepreneurs who made up the majority of the audience, so that was very useful."
"Very well done as always. Outstanding performance."
"Very well done. I really enjoyed the event."
"Investor Office hours were really great. It was great to have 1:1 and get some feedback and responsiveness to our business—albeit short."
"Investor panels and keynote speakers were great."
"Just about everything worked well."
"Keynote speakers were great."
"Loved the different presentation styles."
"Office Hours provides a unique opportunity for companies to get face to face feedback which is incredibly useful."
What Value did you gain from attending the forum?

“A lot. All around, from investors and from other entrepreneurs---it was good exposure and learning experience.”

“Insight about the Houston temperature for venture capital and energy level innovation wise.”

“Connections and networking to the Houston and nearby VC, Angel and Accelerator community.”

“Contacts with potential funding sources.”

“Contacts, ideas, “don’ts”, reinvigorated.”

“Contacts, knowledge, financing leads.”

“Current market snapshot.”

“Excellent coverage of investing temperature.”

“Excitement about connecting to others in Houston in startup space!”

“Got to learn about companies.”

“Great networking!”

“Great schools of thought and good networking.”

“Greater awareness of deal stream.”

“Helpful connections for potential mentors for Village Capital and TMCo - thank you!”

“I brought a client who gained a lot of information from listening to the events speakers, watching other companies present, but even more so, got a chance to speak to two VC guys from your panel. They were great and he now has an opportunity to follow up with them.”

“I got to easily meet quite a few companies/investors/partners that would have been more difficult, given everyone’s schedule.”

“Information on what VC’s are looking for, as we are strategizing our Series A round.”

“Introduction to VC process, and how the presentations should go.”

“Learning more than my pea brain could absorb, digest and remember from the investor panels and key note speakers.”

“Learned some new IT systems and capabilities.”

“Learned tips on doing start-ups and using accelerators.”

“Lots of great follow up contacts, perhaps leading to funding round.”

“Lots of networking.”

“Made some great connections with people, learned a lot from other folks’ experiences.”

“More market insight.”

“Networking”

“Networking and a better understanding of the process to get venture capital.”

“Networking opportunities.”

“Networking, office hours.”

“New ideas and grew network, and saw old friends.”

“Our company was included in the 10 most promising companies awards, and this is validated decisions we have made regarding our pitch and helps us with our credibility in future pitch opportunities. Thank you!”

“Saw some interesting new companies and the panels + Jan were very informative. The accelerator panel was great.”

“Saw new companies and receive updates on those I have talked with in the past. Networking with other professionals.”

“Insight on current state of early stage investors,”

“Understand the rapidly changing landscape.”

“Updates on the incubator, angel and VC networks.”

“Valuable network contacts, insight into emerging trends, and more info re: the VC/Angel process.”

“Vision and fundraising opportunities. Encouraging. Increased my motivation to succeed.”
Keynote Speakers

Emily Keeton
Co-founder
Station Houston

Emily Keeton is the co-founder of Station Houston, a startup hub which will be opening in Houston in 2016. Previously, she was the Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of Flavour, a curated restaurant discovery mobile app backed by Scripps Networks Interactive and Aspect Ventures. The company was sold to Tasting Table, a leading digital property for food and drink enthusiasts.

Ms. Keeton was SVP of corporate development for Scripps Networks Interactive where she was responsible for the company’s M&A initiatives, partnerships and international strategic development. Prior to joining Scripps, Ms. Keeton was with Ascent Media Group, a leading global media services provider, where she led the company’s corporate development activities.

Ms. Keeton started her career as an investment banker at Donaldson, Lufkin and Jenrette, and then at Credit Suisse as Managing Director. She has worked with and advised media companies for more than a decade. Ms. Keeton has an MBA from Harvard Business School and a BA from Columbia University. She is a Senior Advisor to the Mercury Fund and serves on the technology council of Springboard Enterprises, an accelerator focused on enabling technology-oriented companies run by women.

Mark Schmulen
Founder & Former CEO
Nutshell Mail

Mark Schmulen is an entrepreneur, investor and advisor to both early-stage and middle-market companies. Mark co-founded and served as CEO of NutshellMail, a social media monitoring solution that was acquired by Constant Contact, Inc.. At Constant Contact, Mark served as General Manager of Social Media, where he was responsible for guiding Constant Contact’s social media product and go-to-market strategies.

Mark holds a Master of Science in Management from The Stanford Graduate School of Business and B.A. from The University of Pennsylvania.

Speakers

WELCOMING REMARKS

Brad Burke
Managing Director
Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship
Brad Burke is the Managing Director of the Rice Alliance. Most recently, he founded and managed the local office of Viant Corporation, a premier internet consulting firm, delivering internet strategy, creative design, and web technology implementation. Viant went public through an IPO in 1999. Prior to Viant, Brad was a Principal with CSC Index, the management consulting division of Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC). Before consulting, Brad held management positions with Exxon Corporation. He received his M.B.A. from Northwestern University’s Kellogg Graduate School of Management and his B.S. from Vanderbilt University.

The Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship (Rice Alliance) is Rice University’s flagship initiative devoted to the support of entrepreneurship. The mission of the Rice Alliance is to provide entrepreneurship education and to support the commercialization of technology innovations and the creation of new companies in the Texas and Houston region. Since inception in 1999, the Rice Alliance has assisted in the launch of over 225 new technology companies, which have raised more than $350 million in early stage funding. Of these, approximately 25 companies have been launched based on technology developed by Rice faculty and researchers and licensed from the Rice Office of Technology Transfer. Unique among many entrepreneurship centers, the Rice Alliance was formed as a strategic alliance of three schools at Rice University: the George R. Brown School of Engineering, the Wiess School of Natural Sciences, and the Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Management. In 2012, Rice University was recognized as #4 of the best graduate entrepreneurship programs in the U.S. by The Princeton Review and Entrepreneur magazine.

VENTURE CAPITAL PANEL: NEW VENTURE INVESTORS IN THE TEXAS ECOSYSTEM

Blair Garrou
Mercury Fund

Blair Garrou has significant experience in operating, investing in and advising startup companies, particularly in the software industry. Prior to co-founding Mercury Fund, Blair was the CEO of Internat, a leader in product information management software (acq. by IHS). Prior to Internat, Blair was a Principal of Genesis Park, a Houston-based venture capital and private equity firm, where he focused on the firm’s software investments, including Internat, FuelQuest (acq. by Saracen Energy), and SAT Corporation (acq. by Invensys). Prior to Genesis Park, Blair helped launch and was the Director of Operations for the Houston Technology Center (HTC), the largest technology incubator in the state of Texas, and he led the formation of the Houston Angel Network, one of the largest and most active angel investment organizations in the U.S. Previously, Blair was an investment banker with BMO Nesbitt Burns, and an auditor with Deloitte & Touche. He received a B.S. in Management with special attainments in Commerce from Washington & Lee University. Blair is also a co-founder and advisor of SURGE Accelerator (Houston, TX), a mentor-driven seed accelerator focused on entrepreneurs seeking to solve the world’s energy problems using software. Blair is also a mentor with seed accelerators The Brandry (Cincinnati, OH) and TechStars (Austin, Chicago). Outside of Mercury, Blair serves in board and/or advisory roles for UTHealth, the Post Oak School, the Rice Alliance for Technology & Entrepreneurship, and YPO – Gulf States Chapter. Blair is an Adjunct Professor at the Jones Graduate School of Business at Rice University where he teaches a course on venture capital. Blair also was named to the Houston Business Journal’s inaugural “40 under 40,” a recognition of outstanding business and community leaders under the age of 40.

Mercury Fund is a seed and early-stage venture capital firm. With over $200 million under management, Mercury invests in compelling and novel software and science-based startup opportunities, focusing on technology innovation originating in the U.S. Midcontinent. Since inception in 2005, Mercury has become one of the most active venture firms in the middle of the U.S., becoming a “go-to” fund for entrepreneurs at the earliest stages of idea generation, company formation, and market execution.

Jim Curry
BuildGroup

Jim Curry has over 15 years of high growth technology leadership experience. Prior to BuildGroup, he spent nearly a decade at Rackspace as the SVP of Strategy and Corporate Development. He focused on the key initiatives and strategic pivots required to maintain the company’s long-term growth, through development of new businesses organically as well as through acquisitions. This included managing Rackspace’s expansion into Asia, its launch into public cloud via acquisition of Slicehost, and the development of the private cloud business. In 2010, Jim founded the OpenStack project, which is now recognized as the leading open source cloud infrastructure project and one of the fastest growing open source projects in history.

Jim Curry has over 15 years of high growth technology leadership experience. Prior to BuildGroup, he spent nearly a decade at Rackspace as the SVP of Strategy and Corporate Development. He focused on the key initiatives and strategic pivots required to maintain the company’s long-term growth, through development of new businesses organically as well as through acquisitions. This included managing Rackspace’s expansion into Asia, its launch into public cloud via acquisition of Slicehost, and the development of the private cloud business. In 2010, Jim founded the OpenStack project, which is now recognized as the leading open source cloud infrastructure project and one of the fastest growing open source projects in history.
He ran the OpenStack project until its transition to a foundation in 2012 at which point he served on the board. In 2013, he was named a Cloud Computing Pioneer by Information Week. Prior to Rackspace Jim had leadership roles at Dell, Bowstreet and Tivoli (both acquired by IBM). Jim earned his MBA at Harvard and his undergraduate degree at the University of Texas.

Founded in 2015, BuildGroup is a growth outfitter that equips entrepreneurs for the long haul. BuildGroup’s principals invest their own time, talent and capital in entrepreneurs whose grit sets them truly apart. BuildGroup was founded by a team of proven operators in Lanham Napier, Jim Curry, Peter Freeland, and Alan Schoenbaum. We love nothing more than helping build and grow extraordinary companies. BuildGroup is based in Austin, Texas.

**Alex Robart**

Unconventional Capital

Alex Robart is an investor, entrepreneur, oil and gas expert, and recovering consultant. He is a Managing Director for Unconventional Capital, an innovation lab and investment fund focused on early-stage digital oilfield opportunities. Together with his twin brother, Chris, he has launched two oil and gas data/research companies that have been successfully acquired by strategic buyers. PacWest Consulting Partners, a boutique strategy consulting and market research/data firm was acquired by IHS in November 2014, while Digital H2O, an oilfield water analytics software platform, was acquired by Genscape in April 2015. Prior to that, Alex was a consultant with Booz & Company (now part of PWC). Alex has an MBA from the University of Michigan and a BS in Engineering from the University of Virginia.

Unconventional Capital is an innovation lab and investment fund focused on early-stage digital oilfield opportunities. We are experienced oil and gas entrepreneurs passionate about partnering with teams to create innovative industry-changing solutions. We rely on a unique hands-on approach to working with domain experts, technologists, and customers to launch and scale digital oilfield solutions that improve industry performance. Our talented team of advisers, domain experts, engineers, designers, and business strategists work together to take concepts from idea to reality and actively collaborate with customers.

**Kerry Rupp**

True Wealth Innovations

For over 20 years, Kerry Rupp has launched, developed and startup companies and new lines of business for established firms. As CEO and General Partner at DreamIt, a Top Ten US startup accelerator and early-stage venture fund, Kerry was directly involved with the launch of over 150 companies. During her 5 year tenure with DreamIt, she grew its programs to five cities, raised a $15+M follow-on fund, and initiated the DreamIt Access (minority entrepreneur), DreamIt Athena (female entrepreneur), and DreamIt Health programs. DreamIt companies in aggregate now have a market value of over $800M. Before DreamIt, Kerry was herself the founder of an online travel service, Holiday Golightly, which organized unique group travel excursions for women. She has also advised senior executives at Allrecipes.com, ReadersDigest, LexisNexis, Payscale, and Taleo on strategy, business development and marketing. Kerry began her career as a consultant with McKinsey and Andersen Consulting (now Accenture). In addition to consulting, Kerry serves as a mentor at Capital Factory and International Accelerator and on the advisory board of Medical Innovation Labs, a platform for commercializing innovations in the medical device field.

Kerry holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and a BA in Biology from Duke University. Kerry volunteers on the leadership teams of Women@Austin, The Angel Forum, and the Austin chapters of Harvard Business School Alumni Club, Harvard Business School Alumni Angels and the DukeGEN Global Entrepreneurship Network. Kerry is also a judge or coach on many local and national start-up competitions (e.g., Athenahealth, Harvard Business School, Rice University Business Plan Competition, TIE Texas, Energizing Health Houston, Texas Venture Labs, AARP Health Innovation). She is also an avid adventurer that has visited over 50 countries and 49 US states. Frost Data Capital is a combined incubator and venture capital firm with a unique approach, designed specifically to capture some of the enormous value that will be created as the “Big Data” revolution unfolds. Based out of Southern California, Frost Data Capital has built an eco-system of innovative startups, with deep expertise in big data, entrepreneurialism, advanced technology, analytics, Security, and the Industrial Internet.

True Wealth Innovations is a unique investment vehicle designed to scale women-led businesses that are making a positive impact, primarily through cleaner, healthier technologies and business models. We use a gender lens strategy and invest in women-led teams proven to be more effective at driving innovation. These diverse teams have also shown to require less capital, achieve higher returns and deliver a positive impact with a positive return. Based in Austin, Texas, we leverage and
encourage the forward-thinking innovation that Austin entrepreneurs offer in green and health-oriented technologies. It is our mission to support more sustainable businesses and deliver true wealth.

Jay Zeidman
Resolute Venture Partners

Jay S. Zeidman is the Managing Director of Resolute Venture Partners, a local health care focused venture capital fund affiliated with Clayton Associates out of Nashville, TN. Mr. Zeidman recently exited a respiratory services company, which he served as President of, that provided valued based solutions to reduce hospital readmission rates and improve patient outcomes. Previously, Mr. Zeidman was the Vice-President at The Zeidman Group, a family office focused on energy and healthcare investments and consulting. Mr. Zeidman graduated from Texas Christian University with a B.S. in Economics and Political Science in 2005. Mr. Zeidman was elected by the student body to serve as the Student Body President, making him the first Jewish student to serve in that position in TCU’s history. Upon graduating from TCU, Mr. Zeidman served in the Administration of President George W. Bush as the Liaison to the Jewish Community and also worked on issues related to the business community. In this capacity, Mr. Zeidman was charged with advocating and communicating the policies of President Bush and his Administration to the greater Jewish and business communities. Following his government service, Mr. Zeidman moved home to Houston, TX and received his M.B.A. with a focus on Energy and Finance from the Jesse Jones Graduate School of Business at Rice University. Upon completing his M.B.A., Mr. Zeidman served as the Director of Business Development for U.S. Capital Advisors, where he oversaw the creation of the firms merchant banking division with a focus on midstream and upstream oil and gas opportunities. Mr. Zeidman was recently appointed by Governor Rick Perry to serve on the Department of State Health Services Board. Previously, Mr. Zeidman was appointed by Governor Perry to serve on the 2011 Texas Inaugural Committee and as a Public Member on the One Call Board of Texas. In addition to his professional background, Mr. Zeidman holds a current leadership position in the following organizations: Board Member of Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital, Board Member of the TCU National Alumni Association, Board Member of NextGen for the Houston Holocaust Museum, Heroes in Health Founding Member for the Memorial Hermann Foundation, Leadership Development Program for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and National Chairman of Maverick PAC, a political action committee with 20 chapters across the country that engages young professionals in the political process. Mr. Zeidman was named to the Houston Business Journal’s 40 Under 40 class in 2014 and was recognized by Red Alert Politics as one of the top 30 Under 30 young conservatives in the country. He was also recently recognized as the Houston Grand Opera’s Young Professional of the Year. Previously, Mr. Zeidman has served on the Steering Committee for the Young Adults Division of the Jewish Federation, Board Member for the TCU Young Alumni Association, and has helped raise funds in support of various local non-profit organizations. This past fall, Mr. Zeidman and his father co-chaired the Children’s Memorial Hermann 2nd annual gala, raising over $460,000 from the Houston community.

Resolute Venture Partners is a Houston-based venture fund started by Clayton Associates in Nashville, TN that focuses on early stage funding for health care IT, digital health, mobile health, and technology enabled services.

VENTURE CAPITAL PANEL: NEW VENTURE INVESTORS IN THE TEXAS ECOSYSTEM

Andrew Clark
Texas Halo Fund

Andrew Clark has a 25 year career spanning many facets of the technology and energy business. Andrew is a founder and principal with The Castell Group, LLC, an investment and advisory firm assisting companies in the technology business while making investments at both ends of the risk curve from short-term arbitrage to long-term venture investing. In addition, Andrew is a former president of the Houston Angel Network, where he has invested in numerous companies spanning across a broad range of industries such as consumer products, internet-enabled businesses, enterprise software, cleantech, and life sciences. In several of these investments he serves on the board, advisory board, or as a board observer. Andrew also currently serves as an Entrepreneur-in-Residence with the Houston Technology Center. Previously, Andrew was an executive at Reliant Energy, where he helped transition the company to a fully deregulated electricity market. While at Reliant, Andrew was responsible for all interactive marketing efforts including online advertising, online customer service, online customer acquisition, and the company’s website. Prior to Reliant, Andrew held various management and executive roles with Compaq Computer, including being a member of the start-up team that ultimately led to the iPAQ PDA. Prior to Compaq, Andrew was a consultant with Coopers & Lybrand, focusing on the telecommunications and computer industries. Andrew holds a B.S. with a concentration in entrepreneurship from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, where he was named both a Benjamin Franklin Scholar and a
University Scholar.

The Texas Halo Fund is a venture capital firm that makes investments in compelling technology and life science startup opportunities. Since its inception in 2012 as a side car investment vehicle for members of the Houston Angel Network as well as other Texas angels, the fund has attracted interest from both investors and companies around the country. Texas Halo Fund looks for the extraordinary entrepreneurs, the underdogs, the outsiders, and the independent thinkers who can take a great idea and a small amount of capital and build a globally competitive business. The Halo Fund typically co-leads investment rounds with other angels and angel groups around the country, with capital commitments ranging from $50,000 to $500,000.

Cody Cupp
Houston Angel Network

Cody has more than two decades of IT engineering and business development experience specializing in helping clients find the right solution to meet their business goals. Early on, he worked in the banking and finance industry helping a large community banking group grow their footprint. From there, he moved in to sales and engineering roles for companies such as ATT, and, for almost a decade, Cisco Systems. Working in a wide range of verticals and with an even wider range of customers such as large government entities and Fortune 100 companies, Cody helped clients leverage technology that lead to real business outcomes (i.e., network infrastructures, NMS, wireless, Unified Communications, virtualization, SaaS, IaaS, and many others). For the past 6 years, Cody has enjoyed leveraging old and new skills to build sustainable companies that return real value to their employees, to their investors, and to their customers through technology incubation, angel investing, and entrepreneurship.

The Houston Angel Network is a non-profit organization that provides its members a forum in which to efficiently evaluate promising early-stage investment opportunities. Its membership consists of active and SEC-accredited angel investors who share the goal of making informed, collaborative investments in promising early stage Texas-based companies. HAN was founded in late 2001 and is the largest and most active angel network in Texas. Since 2001, HAN members have invested over $30M in 82 deals.

Kelly Hill
Hill Country Angel Network

Kelly Hill has founded several for profits and several non profits in Austin. Her most recent projects are Hill Country Angel Network and a new, private life science incubator. Her goal is to connect savvy entrepreneurs with smart Hill Country investors that are seeking deals in innovative tech companies as well as traditional investment opportunities. She judges for Global Business Plan Competitions at U.T., Baylor and Rice University in areas of renewable energy, clean energy, high tech, life science/biotech/medical devices, computer hardware, software, oil and gas, real estate, gaming, entertainment and consumer goods. Member of Austin Technology Council, TeXchange, ACA, Gust, AngelList, Women of Visionary Influence, Lean Start Up. She lives in Austin with her daughter and enjoys bike riding, paddle boarding, scouting out new food and live music venues and volunteering at the Animal Shelter and Lake Hills Church.

Hill Country Angel Network is a group of Texas angel investors that have found financial success in various professional fields and are now looking to finance and advise promising fledgling companies with identified high-growth potential, in high tech, low tech, life science, biopharmaceutical, medical device, education, oil and gas, industrial, clean energy, consumer product, media, sports, gaming and entertainment sectors. Hill Country Investors also looks for investment opportunities where new capital and mentoring will take companies to the next level. Hill Country can help you increase company valuations to result in future capital rounds at increased values and ultimately an attractive exit of our investment. So, whether you are an investor looking to diversify or an entrepreneur with a game-changing idea, we are here to help you get where you want to go.

Keith Kreuer
RedHouse Associates

Keith Kreuer has nearly 30 years of experience in starting and building innovative, customer-oriented information technology companies. As a Principal with RedHouse Associates, Keith specializes in early stage angel investments and currently sits on the Board of Directors and advisory panels for Autonomous Marine Systems, BrixBits, GolfNet, Onit, Assemble Systems and RunTitle. He was an early investor in idera and served on the Board of Directors until it was acquired by TA Associates in 2014. Keith co-founded PentaSafe in 1997 and served as its Director of World-Wide Services & Support until its acquisition by NetIQ in 2002. Prior to that, Keith was co-founder and President of Penta, Inc., a Houston-based software consulting firm which was
acquired by VeriCenter in February 2000. Earlier in his career, Mr. Kreuer served in various positions as Director of Operations for Generator Systems, Consulting Manager for Ernst & Young, and Software Development Project Manager for Exxon, U.S.A.

RedHouse Associates provides strategic guidance to technology startups to help accelerate growth. We build business strategies, develop product roadmaps, coach management teams, and advise clients on raising capital, acquisitions and strategic exits.

Apurva Sanghavi
START Investor Network

START’s cofounder Apurva Sanghavi is a sales leader and manager with experience in team building and growth of small to large sales forces. Apurva has worked in both the Real Estate world and the online space has offered a unique background for building a new age real estate lending company. Apurva has a strong passion for entrepreneurship and has extensive experience in running companies.

Houston’s first technology niche co-working space, START. START provides a professional and yet fun space for designers, developers, freelancers, entrepreneurs, employees or thought leaders to collaborate together in the Tech & Mobile space. START is located in the heart of Houston’s newly developing EaDo district. START is a fantastic place to meet and join Houston’s budding technology community. Quickly filled the occupancy of the building in less than 6 months of opening. We work closely with Houston based start-ups to grow and accelerate their companies. Our core focus is start-ups in the enterprise & mobile sector.

ACCELERATOR PANEL: DRIVING EARLY STAGE STARTUPS IN TEXAS

Aziz Gilani
Mercury Fund

Aziz Gilani has spent the past 15 years focused on software and the internet. Prior to joining Mercury Fund, Aziz was a Senior Engagement Leader with Infosys Consulting, an early executive at ABB Performance Services, a Senior Consultant at Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, and an Analyst at Lotus Development Corp. Aziz received his BBA from the University of Texas where he was a TILF Scholar, and his MBA from Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management where he was an FC Austin Scholar, Kellogg Board Fellow, and Chairman of the Kellogg Private Equity and Venture Capital Conference. In addition, Aziz is a graduate of the Kauffman Fellows Program through the Center for Venture Education, where he completed industry-defining field work in Seed Accelerators. Aziz is a recognized expert in Seed Accelerators, and has been quoted in several national publications including The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, BusinessWeek, ReadWriteWeb, TechCocktail, and The Business Journals. Outside of Mercury, Aziz serves in advisory roles for TechStars, the Kellogg School of Management’s Seed Accelerator Rankings, the Knight Foundation, and TIE Houston. He is also an adjunct professor of entrepreneurship at Rice’s Jones Graduate School of Business where he teaches a course on venture capital.

Mercury Fund is a seed and early-stage venture capital firm. With over $200 million under management, Mercury invests in compelling and novel software and science-based startup opportunities, focusing on technology innovation originating in the U.S. Midwest. Since inception in 2005, Mercury has become one of the most active venture firms in the middle of the U.S., becoming a “go-to” fund for entrepreneurs at the earliest stages of idea generation, company formation, and market execution.

Molly Cain
Tech Wildcatters

Prior to joining Tech Wildcatters, Molly co-founded The Haul Company, a video-focused e-commerce startup that connects social personalities with brands, advertisers and networks for syndication. She is a regular contributor to Forbes, where her leadership column receives nearly half a million views a month, and on GlassHeel.com a career, lifestyle and networking site for professional women, which she founded in 2011. Molly has spent the greater part of her career in Dallas, where in 2012 she was recognized as one of Dallas’ 40 Under 40. Before joining the startup community, Molly managed strategy, communications and content management for Fortune 500 organizations. For more than ten years, she specialized in the development and execution of content management tools and change management initiatives for large and diverse audiences in a number of industries, including telecommunications, financial and media. Molly has an MBA from the University of Texas, Dallas and a bachelor of science from Texas A&M University.

Tech Wildcatters is a mentor-driven seed fund and technology accelerator that invests
money and resources in promising B2B startups. Our world-class mentors are successful entrepreneurs that offer their experience to guide startups as they craft their vision. Companies accepted into our program receive funding and a world-class 12-week program which includes education, mentoring, networking and culminates in a Pitch Day. The first 12 weeks are just the beginning though, because once you're in Tech Wildcatters you're part of the family. We select companies we want to work with longterm, so our network and resources become yours. an active member of the Houston Angels Network.

Kirk Coburn
SURGE Ventures

Kirk Coburn is an entrepreneur and active investor who founded three successful companies before starting SURGE, the world’s leading energy seed fund and mentor-driven accelerator. Under Kirk’s leadership and direction, SURGE has recruited over 150 industry leaders, scientists, investors, policymakers, customers, and entrepreneurs. SURGE has raised three funds and invested in 34 energy technology companies in its first three years. Since inception, SURGE Alumni have raised more than $30 million in funding and landed critical pilots and customers with many of the largest energy companies. Coburn is also personally the most active, early-stage energy investor. Prior to leading SURGE, Coburn created and was CEO of Chief Outsiders (acq. 2010), a Houston-based company with offices in Texas, Florida, Georgia, and New York. Additionally, Coburn launched The PGA TOUR Network on Sirius XM (acq. by SIRI) and founded Pure Golf, a leading provider of golf, tennis, and outdoor programming to the satellite radio industry. Coburn received his MBA and BBA in finance and accounting from the University of Texas at Austin. Outside of work, Coburn serves as an ambassador to the Texas Children’s Hospital and is a supporter of the Rice Alliance. Coburn is an ultra-endurance runner (whom has completed the Leadville Trail 100), open-water swimmer, active standup paddle boarder in both Galveston and Nantucket, competitive golfer, and seventh-generation Texan. He spends his free time indulging in these activities with his wife and children.

SURGE validates companies innovating and exploiting the massive shifts in technology, policy, and expertise in the energy industry. We are stage agnostic. We have invested in companies from early revenue generation stage and market growth. Currently, it takes an energy technology over 14 years to go from idea to market acceptance. At SURGE, we believe that we can reduce that by over 50%. Our portfolio includes disruptive companies targeting traditional energy segments from oil and gas to water. Our core purpose is to enable entrepreneurs to solve the world’s energy problems. We do this by providing entrepreneurs access to world-class & world-leading experts, the largest customers in our industry (that also serve as our investors and partners, the global energy ecosystem, and a variety of capital sources.

Steve Tinkle
Seed Sumo

Steve has worked on projects with NASCAR, several Major League Baseball teams, companies on every continent (except Antarctica), international athletes, startups, and even collaborated on a NY Times bestselling book. He has been “Finding a better way” in technology, business, strategic planning, marketing, and professional development for over 20 years and is also a Lean Startup enthusiast. Five things you need to know about Steve: 1. Ranked competitive gamer - Lead a team from below 50,000 to 8th in the world. 2. Co-Founder of the Hot Pepper Pitch. 3. Functional insomniac - 3 to 4 hours sleep for over 15 years. 4. Expect brutal honesty and honest encouragement regarding your startup. 5. World’s best at giving simple analogies to explain complicated ideas.

Seed Sumo, located in Bryan/College Station, TX is a mentorship driven accelerator that assists young entrepreneurs with turning their early-stage startups into successful businesses. We run a three month long program (near Texas A&M University) once each year. We’re very selective – thousands of companies apply and we only take about ten companies each year. These companies get $50,000 in seed funding, in exchange for around 10% equity. Founders also get great perks such as free hosting, world-class branding services, finance/legal counseling, an amazing place to work, intensive top-notch mentorship, and a massive network of connections. During the 100-day period, which will begin mid-May and conclude in late August, accepted founders ideate, strategize, research, build, test-market, and as the program culminates, fine tune their pitch which each startup shares in front of a large investor audience called “Demo Day”. The 2014 class of 8 startups have raised around 4MM since demo day in September. Founders are exposed to a heavy dose of mentorship designed to provide priceless insights from dozens of highly skilled and successful entrepreneurs, executives and business owners.

CLOSING REMARKS AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF MOST PROMISING COMPANIES

Karen Love
PKF Texas

Karen Love found the accounting marketing world in the mid 90's, when business development was a word rarely heard in our industry. Operating in the 4th largest city in the US with an environment of entrepreneurship and international flavor, Karen has played a tremendous role in the strategic direction of the firm for the past 14 years, and in 2005, became a director/owner. Her innovative practice growth strategies and inside-out approach to practicing what she preaches has enabled the professionals at PKF Texas to gain access to strategically key organizations in international Houston. Karen is a strategic advisor to PKF Texas President, Kenneth Guidry on marketplace initiatives. Karen has mentored and blazed the trail for other accounting marketing professionals in her more than 19 years in the industry, and has been recognized as one of Accounting Today’s 100 Most Influential People, a Marketer of the Year by the Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM), and was inducted into the AAM Hall of Fame in 2009. She was named one of the 2011 Women on the Move by the Texas Executive Women and Houston’s 50 Most Influential Women by Houston Woman Magazine. Her passion for corporate social responsibility began early in her career with her work on the Texas State Board of the American Heart Association, and continues to be an essential element of her leadership at PKF Texas.

Pannell Kerr Forster of Texas, P.C. (PKF Texas) is the CPA firm with a 29 year history focused on assisting entrepreneurial-minded businesses in Houston’s energy economy. With 50% of our clients backed by private equity, we are valued advisors for companies seeking the next stage of funding. Representing cross-section of industries, public and private companies with sophisticated needs seek us out for audit, joint venture consulting, accounting, domestic/international tax, entrepreneurial advisory services, outsource and co-source accountancy services and middle management coaching.
Venture Forum Participating Investors

Invited Investors:
Aggie Angel Network
ATX Seed Ventures
BADR Investments
Bandgap Ventures
Baylor Angel Network
Clear Spring Capital Group
Comerica
Concho Valley Angel Network
Cowtown Angels
Creeris Ventures
CTAN
Cypress Growth Capital
Dallas Venture Partners
DreamIT Ventures
G-51 Capital Management
Hill Country Angel Network
Houston Angel Network
LiveOak Venture Partners
Lubbock Angel Network
Mercury Fund
North Texas Angel Network
Palmetto Partners
Redhouse Associates
S3 Ventures
Seed Sumo
Seedstep Angels
Silver Creek Ventures
Silvertown Partners
South Coast Angel Network
START Investor Network
SURGE Ventures
Tablespoon Ventures
Tech Wildcatters
TechStars Austin
Texas Halo Fund
Texas Ventures
Texoma Angels
TIE Houston
Tyler Texas Angel Network
UH Cougar Venture Fund