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<https://www.bizjournals.com/orlando/news/2018/04/20/2018-topwomen-business-executives-this-president.html>

2018 Top Women Business Executives: This president works hard to ensure the health of Orlando's tiniest residents

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Not even Hurricane Irma could keep Dana Bledsoe from making sure things were running as smoothly as possible at Nemours Children's Hospital.

The hospital president and enterprise vice president of Nemours Children's Health System successfully executed several strategies that resulted in a more than 30 percent increase in patient volume for Nemours last year. Bledsoe led the hospital to a 60 percent average occupancy rate in 2017, up from 46 percent the year prior. She oversaw operations during and after Hurricane Irma blew through Central Florida in September 2017, when many in the area were without power and access to reliable health care was critical.



JIM GARCHIDI

Nemours celebrated its fifth anniversary in Lake Nona last fall and recently introduced several new initiatives with Bledsoe at the helm. Some of those included:

- The opening the Nemours Center for Fetal Care in January
- Getting approval in March to be the first in the region to begin offering lung transplants
- Securing Graduate Medical Education accreditation to grow the next generation of health providers
- Launching a registered nurse residency program
- Winning the 2017 Innovation of the Year Award from the Florida Hospital Association

Last fall, Nemours also announced plans to build out an additional 30 beds, creating 60 full-time positions and preparing for projected explosive growth in the fast-growing Lake Nona area.

Meanwhile, Bledsoe's community involvement includes serving as a board member for Give Kids The World Village and the Orlando Economic Partnership, as well as a trustee for the Florida Hospital Association, and member of both the Medical City Leadership Council and Lake Nona's Impact Forum Chairman's Circle. She also leads a "mentoring matters" group and played an integral role in developing partnerships for Nemours with the U.S. Tennis Association and Ronald McDonald House.

Bledsoe was chosen as one of the top Women Business Executives in *Orlando Business Journal's* 2018 Women Who Mean Business Awards. Here's more from Bledsoe:

My smartest business move: The willingness to take chances and having an open-mind to try new things

Best way to break the ice while networking: Be curious and ask thoughtful questions — you usually will find some commonality.

Must-have travel accessory: Phone and laptop chargers

Little-known fact: I went to school to be a florist.

Biggest mistake women make in the workplace: Being hesitant and overly self-critical

Favorite cause: Children's health and wellness

Dana Bledsoe

Age: 53

Education: Bachelor's in nursing, Loretto Heights College (now [Regis University](#)); master's in nursing administration, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center; MBA, University of Colorado-Denver; doctorate of executive health administration, Medical University of South Carolina

Year organization founded: 1936

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