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GLORY 30X30: Meet the Class of 2023

By Glory Pro Staff Writer



30X30

In a time where society is navigating economic instability, political volatility, and the remnants of a global pandemic, it's easy to feel trepidatious about the future when the present feels so fragile. But if it's one thing we know for sure, it's that Canada is full of leaders who have always been ready to rise up to challenges—to adapt, innovate, and forge ahead. We are a nation full of young pioneers on a quest to redefine the way we work, how we see the world, and the future we want for ourselves.

This year, our sixth annual *Glory Professional* 30X30 guide showcases a group of incredible individuals (<https://www.gloryprofessional.com/category/organisation/print/cover-story/30x30/>) who are redefining the way we do business, championing their communities, and cultivating entirely new industries. From tech and media pioneers to healthcare entrepreneurs and athletic trailblazers, each of this year's inductees is challenging Canadians to think (and work) differently for a brighter future.

Meet the 30X30 Class of 2023.

Written by Tristan Bronca, Erin Nicole Davis, Christopher Metler, and GLORY staff.

Presented by
Hennessy



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BRANDON GONEZ
(GONEZ MEDIA INC.)

Brandon Gonez

Founder and CEO, Gonez Media Inc.

After cutting his teeth in the newsrooms of Canada's legacy media companies, Brandon Gonez embarked on a new adventure by launching his eponymous show (*The Brandon Gonez Show*) and media company (Gonez Media Inc.) during the height of the pandemic. Taking a markedly different approach to online news and entertainment programming, today Gomez has built the foundation of an empire that he hopes will give people a reason to trust the news again.

Read Gonez's full profile here. (<https://www.gloryprofessional.com/30x30-brandon-gonez-media-inc/>)



Kia Nurse

Guard, Seattle Storm; broadcaster, TSN

We've officially entered basketball's age of player empowerment. Not only does this refer to greater flexibility in contract negotiations but also (and perhaps far more importantly) players reclaiming their voices off the court. North of the border, WNBA All-Star Kia Nurse has become the face of this career duality, balancing her role as a TSN analyst with her responsibilities as the Seattle Storm's newest point guard.

"She's a rockstar," says longtime TSN host Kate Beirness when asked about her colleague. "Seriously. We talk about how much work it is to prepare for each game. And yet there she is, more prepared than anyone else in the room, and she has another career going on at the same time. [...] Oh, and that career happens to involve her being one of the best athletes in the world. That's insane. Right?"

Nurse's ability to excel in so many realms and comes from her father's 'earn everything' approach when she was first learning the game.

"Go out there, and take a job," she says, mimicking her father. "That was my mentality in college and that was the first thing he said to me when I got drafted to the WNBA. When I look at my life on the court, in the broadcast world, and my life in general, it's about earning

everything, being competitive, and understanding that even though you're good at something, somebody's chasing you. You can always be better." – DS

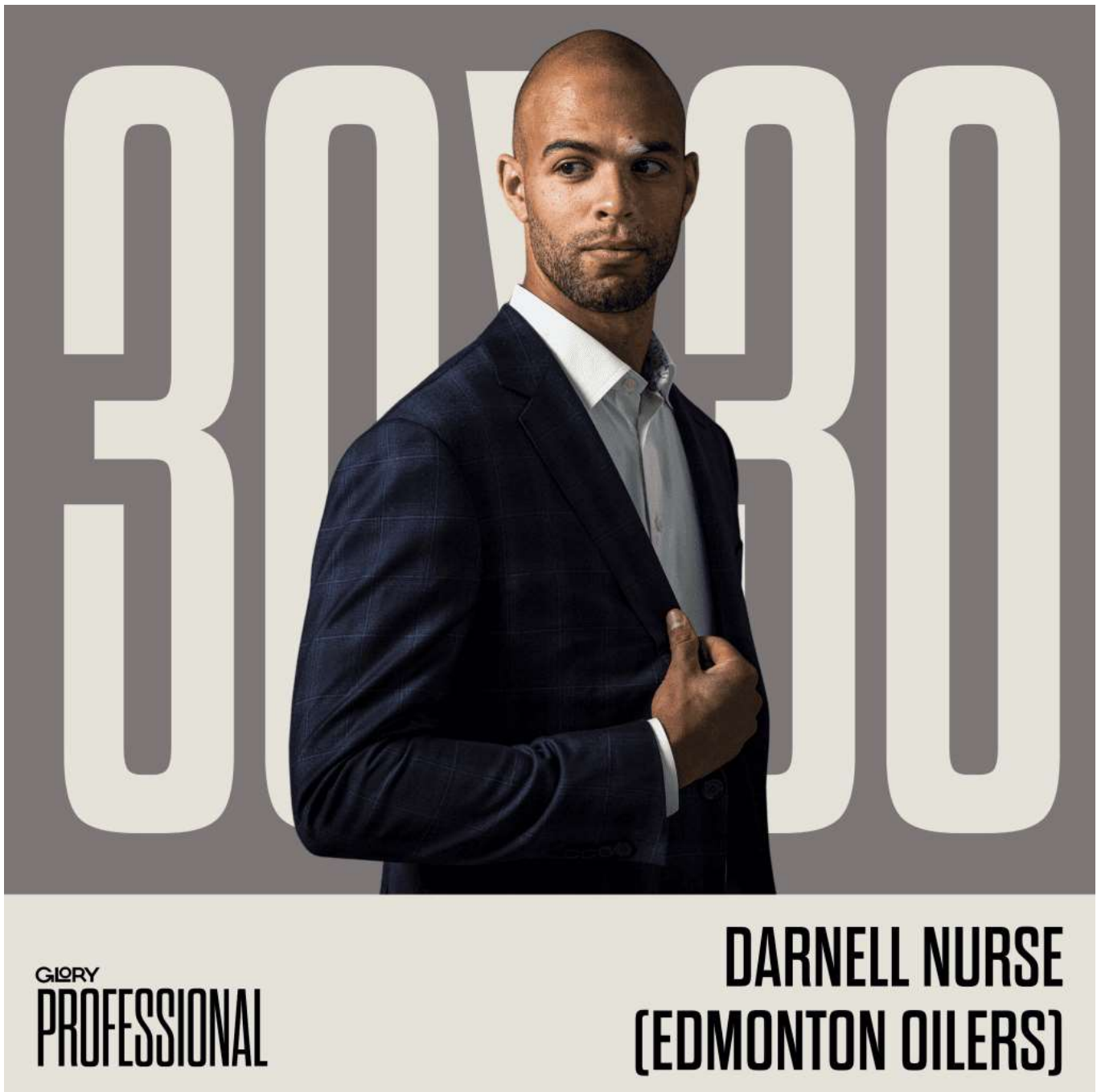
Read Kia Nurse's full interview on [glorysports.ca](https://glorysports.ca/kia-nurse-the-new-face-of-player-empowerment-has-arrived/) (<https://glorysports.ca/kia-nurse-the-new-face-of-player-empowerment-has-arrived/>)



Sarah Nurse

Forward, Canadian Women's National Hockey Team

Professional hockey has long been a realm begging for an injection of personality and authentic expression. Fortunately for the sport, Sarah Nurse has arrived in full force. As a BIPOC athlete, the 28-year-old forward hasn't been shy in championing racial advocacy, a mission that began during her varsity hockey days at the University of Wisconsin, came to a head amidst the George Floyd protests of 2020, and continues today. Such advocacy is further amplified by Nurse's production on the ice. A two-time Olympian, Nurse has earned a gold and silver medal with Team Canada as well as a pair of World Championships on the international stage while balancing a successful professional career. – DS



Darnell Nurse

Defenceman, Edmonton Oilers

Complementing some of the most talented players in the world, Darnell Nurse has quickly established himself as the perfect, steady, consistent figure to help guide the Edmonton Oilers' young stars. But it's not just his on-ice presence that's been a stabilizing locker room presence but also his constant search for personal development. After signing an eight-year, \$74,000,000 contract to stay with the Oilers, Nurse has taken on the mission of spreading financial literacy to the next generation of BIPOC athletes. The 26-year-old took advantage of a business course courtesy a cross-over partnership between the NHLPA and Harvard University. His goal is to create not only generational wealth for himself and his family but to empower tomorrow's athletes hoping to follow his blueprint. – DS



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ALEK MANOAH
(TORONTO BLUE JAYS)

Alek Manoah

Pitcher, Toronto Blue Jays

When we first featured Blue Jays ace, Alek Manoah, on our 2022 summer (<https://glorysports.ca/how-mlb-all-star-alek-manoah-is-fuelling-the-blue-jays-future/>) *Glory Sports* ([_wp_link_placeholder](#)) cover ([_wp_link_placeholder](#)), he was still a budding star and his stock was rising faster than anyone could've imagined. In fact, between our initial interview and the release of the story, Manoah was named an MLB All-Star in just his second season in the league. Months later, he'd be recognized as a finalist for baseball's most prestigious pitching award. This season, he was named Toronto's starter for opening day, a time-honoured distinction given to the pitcher expected to lead their team throughout the gruelling marathon that is the MLB season. It's impossible to tell just how lofty the ceiling is for the 6'6" pitcher; all we know for sure is that, at 25 years old, he's only scratched the surface. – DS



Jonathan Osorio

Midfielder, Toronto FC

Born in Toronto, Jonathan Osorio has come to embody everything that has made this new era of Canada Soccer so promising. Years before helping to lead Canada to their first World Cup appearance since 1986 this past November, Osorio's professional career began in the city he calls home. Signing with SC Toronto in the Canadian Soccer League in 2012, he finished as the club's second highest goal-scorer and Rookie of the Year. Fast forward over a decade and Osorio remains one of Canada's brightest stars and a loyal ambassador. At the end of 2022, after becoming the first player to ever reach 300 games with Toronto FC and leading his country back to the World Cup, the midfielder inked a new deal to stay at home through 2026, ensuring the future of Canadian soccer remains anchored by consistency. – DS



Nakissa Koomalsingh

Founder, HoopQueens

Nakissa Koomalsingh (also known throughout Canada's basketball world as Keesa K.) is drawing her own playbook for the future of professional women's basketball in Canada by launching Toronto-based HoopQueens, the first paid women's basketball league in the country. As the founder of the Toronto-based organization, Koomalsingh's mission is simple: to change the narrative of women's sports by creating her own league centred around inclusion and the development of young girls and women. A former collegiate player herself, Koomalsingh married her love of basketball with a business and finance degree from Nipissing University to conceive a league that has opened the minds and hearts of basketball fans and players in Canada. – DS

Read our Q&A with Keesa (<https://www.gloryprofessional.com/30x30-keesa-k-hoopqueens/>)



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TAYLOR FRANKEL
(NUDESTIX)

Taylor Frankel

Co-founder and Chief Brand Officer; NUDESTIX

These days, it seems like everyone and their mother is starting a beauty brand—and in the case of Nudestix co-founder, Taylor Frankel, that’s the literal truth. But what sets the mother-daughter duo apart from the rest is a pedigree of industry knowledge thanks to Jenny Frankel’s (Taylor’s co-founder and mother) career as a chemical engineer that brought M.A.C Cosmetics and Cover FX to the forefront of the global beauty industry. After noticing a lack of products that focused on “clean, natural, effortless, on-the-go beauty,” Nudestix was conceived as a minimalist “no makeup” makeup and skincare solution that enhances the everyday beauty of women everywhere. As Chief Brand Officer, Taylor’s creative vision has brought the brand to new heights, amassing a digitally-savvy global audience of consumers, influencers, and brand ambassadors, including Hilary Duff, Chelsea Handler, and Sofia Richie.



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JUSTICE & NIA FAITH
(RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE)

Nia & Justice Faith

Co-founders, Révolutionnaire

Growing up as a young Black ballerina, Nia Faith was forced to confront the lack of access to apparel made for her skin tone. It was this experience that ignited the start of Révolutionnaire, an apparel store and social platform founded in 2019 with inclusivity at the heart of its mission. Joined by her sister Justice, Révolutionnaire has expanded to be a digital resource for young activists who want to connect, learn, and make a difference by providing them with the resources and guidance needed to make an impact. Justice has also served as co-chair of the City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee while Nia continues to pursue dance at Howard University, the prestigious Black university in Washington, D.C.



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JOEY GOLLISH
(MR. SATURDAY)

Joey Gollish

Founder and Creative Director, Mr. Saturday

Successfully making a name for yourself in the fashion industry is no small feat. From funding and manufacturing to supply chain and marketing, designers must truly embrace an entrepreneurial mindset in order to make the cut, which is what makes Joey Gollish's story all the more impressive. As the founder and creative force behind the brand Mr. Saturday, Gollish explores historical narratives, subcultures, and movements through the medium of fashion. Since 2019, Gollish has already amassed a global following and some serious bragging rights, including shows at New York Fashion Week, Paris Fashion Week, and Canada's Best Menswear Designer of the Year at the 2022 CAFAs. In 2023, he's entering the next era of his career, joining forces with Canadian heritage brand Roots as their new Creative Director in Residence.



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HYLA NAYERI & ADRIEN BETTIO
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Hyla Nayeri & Adrien Bettio

Co-founders, 437

Not many entrepreneurs can say that they run a multimillion-dollar brand but at age 26, Hyla Nayeri and Adrien Bettio are beating the odds. The two best friends and Queens University grads came up with their business while traveling abroad in Europe, noticing a gap in the market for flattering, body-inclusive swimwear. The result? 437, named after their home address during their final year of university, and bootstrapped with just \$1,000 from each founder. Launched in 2017, the brand boasts a core collection of classic swimwear styles and has also expanded into apparel, amassing a list of loyal customers like Halsey, Winnie Harlow, and Kylie Jenner, thanks to their social media-forward strategy.



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LAURA DOUGLAS
(DOVE, UNILEVER)

Laura Douglas

Dove Masterbrand Lead, Unilever Canada

It takes talent to recognize cultural movements but vision and lightning-fast agility to act and execute on them. A pioneering marketer that has influenced much of our cultural dialogue around beauty and health, Laura Douglas is a captain of industry and leads Dove's marketing efforts in Canada. Thanking healthcare heroes during the pandemic through the 'Courage is Beautiful' campaign (and subsequent one-million-dollar donation)? Her. Challenging ageism in the workplace after Lisa LaFlamme's outrageous ousting? Her. These are just a few of the award-winning campaigns that Douglas has spearheaded in her efforts to empower others through service and impact.



Alexander Sinora

Co-founder, Black Wealth Club

Alexander Sinora sold his first marketing agency while studying at Concordia's John Molson School of Business. He has since made a name for himself as both a McKinsey & Co. management consultant and dedicated researcher, focusing on entrepreneurship and social innovation at McGill University.

Though Sinora somehow also finds time to interview a diverse range of changemakers and host *Les Généralistes*, he is not content to merely pay lip service (literally – it's a podcast) to the idea of inclusion. For him, it's about access. As an advocate for marginalized communities, Sinora understands that access is the key to creating a more equitable society. His work in this area demonstrates an unwavering commitment to opening doors for those who have been historically marginalized.

Consider the Black Wealth Club (BWC), an initiative from Sinora arguably even more impactful than MTLGiveback, his non-profit organization that brings together Montréalers through community projects. The BWC was created with the aim of empowering Canada's Black community to build wealth and invest in their environment. Every year, Sinora personally selects 50 emerging Black leaders to take part in a specialized cohort program that enhances their leadership skills, expands their network, and develops their business acumen. – *CM*



Rakan Al-Shawaf

CEO and co-founder, Makeship

Rakan Al-Shawaf believes big brands tend to only offer sponsorship and product opportunities to the A-listers of social media. So, he created a platform for content creators of all sizes to build their brand and earn a living. Vancouver-based Makeship helps those with smaller followings develop and produce merchandise. It collaborates with creators to design a unique product (typically a stuffed toy) and then supports the creators through a 21-day crowdfunding campaign to finance the production and shipment of their product worldwide. Makeship has empowered over a thousand creators and created over 1,000,000 limited-edition products. Al-Shawaf has also scaled down his company's minimum order quantities, allowing Makeship to work with smaller creators who could not meet the threshold previously. He's levelling the playing field. – *CM*



Alexandra Assouad

Co-founder and CEO, Mind-Easy

Alexandra Assouad immigrated to Toronto from Beirut at 18. Realizing the lack of culturally sensitive mental health resources at the ready for marginalized groups, particularly after the 2020 Beirut explosion, she co-founded Mind-Easy. Using avatars and advanced technology, Assouad's vision for the adaptive health app has the potential to upend the entire field of mental health. Through an asynchronous learning feature, Mind-Easy offers on-demand, clinically-supported self-help mental health resources in over 100 languages, dialects, and accents. Its machine learning system analyzes patient data to identify effective interventions, resulting in improved outcomes and reduced costs by avoiding unnecessary therapy treatments. Mind-Easy has supported 25,000 end-users in 20 countries. Its user-friendly program avoids stigma and labels, enabling individuals to comfortably address their mental health needs. – *CM*



Dolma Tsundu

Founder, Flutter Care

Recognizing that up to 30 percent of stillbirth deaths in Canada can be prevented, Dolma Tsundu set out to change the statistics. Tsundu applied her engineering education to create Flutter Care, a company now listed by the International Stillbirth Alliance that develops new software and hardware stillbirth prevention technologies to help families in over 50 countries with an at-home tool. Tsundu has met with top politicians and the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Canada to advocate for a national stillborn prevention strategy and helped to reform the Public Health Agency of Canada's guidelines on fetal movement monitoring in the third trimester. - *ED*



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JAKE KARLS
(MID-DAY SQUARES)

Jake Karls

Co-founder and CEO, Mid-Day Squares

From its fully automated Canadian factory, where it can pump out upwards of 90,000 bars a day, Mid-Day Squares uses functional ingredients like artichoke powder and pea protein to produce nutritious chocolate with health benefits. The vegan chocolate brand boasts a pre-money valuation of \$35 million and is sold in over 2,400 locations, including Whole Foods and Sprouts. Much kudos can be given to CEO Jake Karls' viral content strategy, which uses social media to emotionally connect with customers and create a "rock band" persona across the entire enterprise. Alongside his sister and brother-in-law (both fellow co-founders), Karls wants to challenge the dominance of established candy companies. Sales for Mid-Day Squares are expected to hit \$17 million in 2023, with the grandiose goal of reaching \$100 million in revenue by 2025. – CM



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SIMRAN DHILLON
[FENTAGONE]

Simran Dhillon

Co-founder, FentaGone

Strides are being made in harm reduction efforts to combat Canada's opioid crisis. British Columbia-born Simran Dhillon and her team at FentaGone have witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of addiction on individuals and their communities, with 94 percent of opioid overdose deaths occurring by accident. To mitigate or outright prevent fatal overdoses, Dhillon and her FentaGone co-founders developed technology that combines a fentanyl-detecting system with a syringe-like design to provide users with feedback on the drug's toxicity level. FentaGone won the top prize of \$30,000 at the 2021 World's Challenge Challenge global final. By integrating FentaGone into current distribution services to reach vulnerable communities, Dhillon hopes to create more equity in the healthcare sphere. -
CM