

Raider Nation

An Interview with Sandra Douglass Morgan, President, Las Vegas Raiders

EDITORS' NOTE Sandra Douglass Morgan is a visionary and trailblazer with more than two decades of leadership experience in the sports, gaming, legal, and corporate sectors. She has served as a chief regulator, director, attorney, and advisor to integrated resorts, casinos, and telecommunications companies. No stranger to historic firsts, Morgan was named President of the Las Vegas Raiders by owner Mark Davis in July 2022, making her the first Black female team president in the National Football League's history.



Sandra Douglass Morgan

Having an adept understanding of the community as a native Las Vegas, she accepted the role with the vision of making the city the sports capital of the world. Prior to joining the Raiders, Morgan served as Chairwoman of the Nevada Gaming Control Board. As the chief regulator for Nevada's dominant billion-dollar gaming industry, she led the passage and implementation of cashless wagering regulations, ensured that gaming licensees adopted policies prohibiting discrimination and harassment, and led a team of 400 employees in five cities across the state of Nevada. The Las Vegas native was the first person of color and the second woman to serve as Chair in the state's history. Morgan also served as a Commissioner on the Nevada State Athletic Commission and was the first Black City Attorney in the State of Nevada when she was the chief legal officer for the City of North Las Vegas, where she served from 2008 to 2016. Morgan was previously Of Counsel with Covington & Burling, LLP and also served as an advisor to the State of Nevada's COVID-19 task force charged with finding solutions for personal protective equipment, virtual education options, and expanding testing capabilities so that the state could re-open the city to tens of millions of visitors from across the globe. Widely recognized for her business acumen, unflappable leadership, and support for local causes focused on children and philanthropic initiatives for women and girls, Morgan is the recipient of the UNLV Boyd School of Law's Distinguished Service Alumni Award and the Corporate to Community Connector Award from the National Urban League Young Professionals. She was honored as one of the most influential "Women in Business and Politics," receiving an award from the Urban Chamber of Commerce in 2015 along

with the Ladies of Distinction Award in 2013 from Olive Crest, a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting abused and neglected children. In 2012, Morgan was named Attorney of the Year by the Las Vegas Chapter of the National Bar Association in recognition of her commitment to serving the local community, especially communities of color. She has chaired a variety of nonprofit boards and is currently the host committee vice chair of Super Bowl LVIII, which will take place at Allegiant Stadium

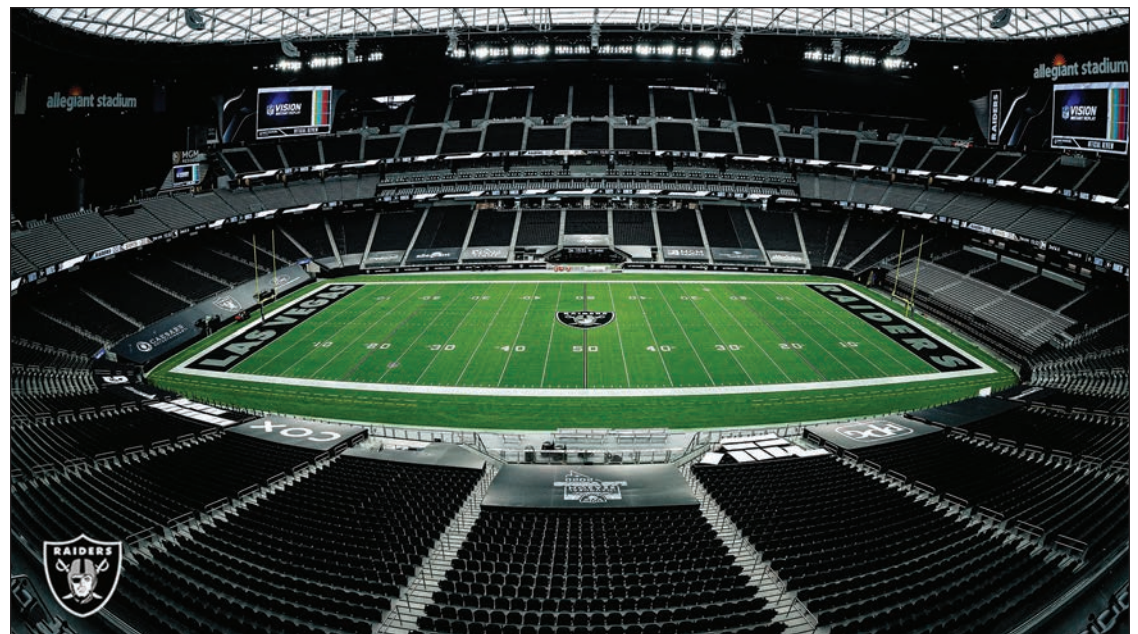
in 2024, marking the first time Las Vegas and the state of Nevada will host one of the most-watched annual sporting events in the world. Additionally, Morgan serves on the Board of Directors of Allegiant Travel Company and Fidelity National Financial. She is a member of the State Bar of Nevada and the District of Columbia Bar. Morgan graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno with a degree in political science and holds a JD from the William S. Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The daughter of a retired U.S. Air Force Veteran and first-generation immigrant, she currently resides in Las Vegas with her husband, Don Morgan, a former NFL safety, and their two children.

Will you provide an overview of your business career and how this experience has helped in your current role as president of the Las Vegas Raiders?

Like many business executives, my career journey has taken a lot of twists and turns, but each and every role that I've held gave me a unique skillset that helped foster the leader I am today and opened many doors along the way. The experience of being from Las Vegas shapes the way that I lead. I grew up in a working-class family, attended Clark County public schools, the University of Nevada, Reno, and the William S. Boyd School of Law at UNLV.

I started with the City of North Las Vegas in 2008, which at the time was one of the top three fastest-growing cities in America. I helped lead the city through the recession, and the municipal bankruptcies that ruptured the city's relationship with key unions – including fire, police, and Teamsters unions. In response to this crisis, I consulted with other cities that had faced municipal bankruptcy and successfully negotiated amendments to our union contracts to ensure critical services continued for the people of North Las Vegas.

Beyond that, I have led the state and institutions through some of the most difficult times in Nevada's history. I guided the entire gaming industry when we closed our doors to our 40 million visitors during the start of the pandemic,



Interior of Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas



Allegiant Stadium

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and then again when we welcomed them back. Each of the roles I’ve held throughout my current career has helped catapult me to the position I’m in now and built a foundation for my leadership style in the process.

What excited you about joining the Las Vegas Raiders and made you feel it was the right fit?

When Mark Davis first contacted me about this opportunity, I was honored, humbled, and curious. I’m an attorney by trade, and I’ve always looked for opportunities that expand my skillset and expose me to new arenas. When I met with him, he shared the organization’s core values of integrity, community, and commitment to excellence – all tenants of the environment I seek to cultivate each and every day now as its leader. Mark has entrusted me with the authority to lead this team and foster an environment that will pave the way for the future of Raider Nation.

I was raised here in Las Vegas and lived here since I was two years old, so I’ve watched the evolution of this city that has ascended to one of the entertainment capitals of the world, visited by millions from across the globe. With this role, I have the opportunity to make this city I love the capital of the sports world as well. Being the President of the Raiders gives me the opportunity to make sure that supporting the Las Vegas community is foundational to the organization’s mission and values.

How do you define the role of president of the Raiders and how do you focus your efforts?

As President, I’m responsible for our success off the field. A key piece of that success means ensuring that our entire team – from our Raider Image store to stadium operations, and hundreds of employees behind the scenes, is supported and able to bring their knowledge and skill set into their work environment each day as they live out the Raiders core values.

I am coming into this role with a new perspective and leadership style and am here to forge a new path forward, taking our team to the

next level – from improving the organizational culture to being a trusted and valued community partner. I am tackling each challenge the same way I would any professional challenge, by rolling up my sleeves and getting to work.

Sports is an industry built around community, fun, and entertainment. But today, sports are undergoing a lot of change. During these times of change, it’s important that I double down on making honest decisions and function as an ethical catalyst to promote, sustain, and maintain accountability within our team and the communities I work with each day.

How do you define the Raiders culture and how critical is culture to the success of the organization?

The Raiders culture of winning, teamwork, and opportunity is a part of everything we do, and how we live out our core values as an organization. Inclusion and opportunity are key tenants of the organization, and I want to make sure

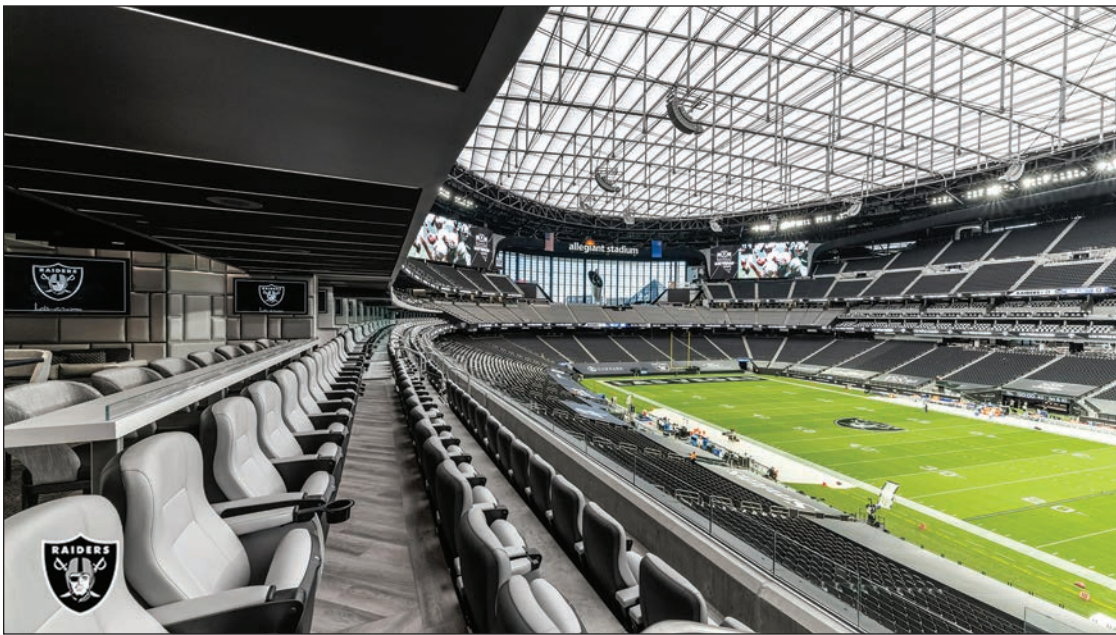
those tenants take root in Nevada so that we can uplift and empower local communities. It is how we continue to fulfill our promise to be a part of the fabric of the southern Nevada community and bring a new generation of fans into Raider Nation while leading this global brand to gains on a national and international scale. There’s an axiom here, “The greatness of the Raiders is in its future.” Our commitment is to maintain the finest organization in the history of sports.

What do you see as the role that professional sports plays in a city’s economy and growth?

Having a franchise in our town is building a sense of community and pulling people together in a uniquely American way. The arrival of this Raiders organization just a few years ago has forever changed the landscape of the Strip and created opportunities for this region we never dreamed were possible. As a team, we each have a role in mentoring and



Modelo Cantina Club at Allegiant Stadium



Interior of Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas

supporting our community, and as an organization, we are committed to making a lasting, positive impact in Las Vegas.

The organization has already provided an economic boost to southern Nevada and the Las Vegas communities, most visibly in the nearly 10,000 jobs the team's move has generated. The team and our owner, Mark Davis, donated \$1 million during our inaugural season to help the coronavirus relief effort in the local community. Allegiant Stadium, one of the biggest success stories of the year, has already seen more than a million people attend events just in the last six months – with more than 400,000 people traveling here from other areas just for stadium events. The stadium alone is expected to generate an economic benefit of \$620 million annually.

Will you discuss your vision of making Las Vegas the sports capital of the world?

To start, I want to ensure that Allegiant Stadium has the best fan experience in the NFL and can be showcased at events beyond the season. Our 65,000-seat venue which opened to fans for the first time in the 2021 season was actually ranked the top stadium in the league last year for “overall game-day satisfaction” by those who took part in the NFL’s “Voice of the Fan” weekly independent survey. This is obviously a massive undertaking and a complete team effort, and I have to also give credit to partners like the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada, which enacted a bus service called the “Raiders Game Day Express” that delivers football fans from five locations across the Las Vegas Valley.

Allegiant Stadium was recently named the number one international stadium for live events, according to Billboard Boxscore’s annual rankings. Our home stadium grossed more than \$180 million in ticket sales, welcomed more than 1 million fans, and held 24 events from November 2021 to October 2022.

In the past few months, it was also announced that Las Vegas and Allegiant Stadium will host its first Super Bowl (LVIII) in 2024 followed by the NCAA’s premier championship for the men’s

college basketball Final Four in 2028. Those are two defining moments for our region and will bring millions in revenue to this region.

What can fans expect from the Super Bowl in 2024 at Allegiant Stadium?

Las Vegas is a city that knows how to entertain and leave visitors with a memorable experience. I can confidently say as the Vice Chair of the Super Bowl Host Committee that we are going to host the best Super Bowl in history. Fans can expect an unprecedented experience, with the entertainment expanding well beyond the game itself to our entire region. Our partners from across industries will be coming together to create a seamless experience and bring world-class talent and partners to the region as we welcome hundreds of thousands into our city across the week.

What do you see as the keys to effective leadership and how do you describe your management style?

As an executive, it’s always been important that my team comes to work understanding what is expected of them and that our organization is supportive of their success. The best way to achieve this is by making sure that my staff knows they have my respect and support.

As I lead the Raiders, I am driven by three core tenants of leadership. Championing inclusion, opportunity, and community. The Raiders have a long legacy of greatness because we have cultivated a place of belonging where fans and players from all walks of life, each with their unique differences and perspectives, are celebrated. We pursue a culture of winning both on and off the field through accountability, respect, and grit. There is an undeniable grit associated with the Raider franchise, and this has produced a culture that is committed to excellence. We hold ourselves, our players, and our entire organization accountable to the same high standards, and as a result, have built an organization that excels on and off the field. We are committed to being a steward for the Las Vegas community through philanthropy, economic empowerment, and a guiding sense of responsibility to others. Raider Nation is one that champions everyone, and we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to be a part of our legacy and celebrate our wins.

How important is it for the Raiders to build a diverse and inclusive workforce to mirror the diversity of its fans and the communities it serves?

At its core, a business’ culture is its people – starting with leadership and bleeding into every other employee. This is why the Raiders franchise has such a uniquely rich culture – because of leaders like Al and Mark Davis, who have championed opportunity, accountability, and respect in their personal and professional endeavors. To me, the Raiders culture is defined by a commitment to equity and social justice – it is at the very core of the Raiders identity, from Al Davis’



Las Vegas Raiders alumnus Roy Hart loads toys into the bus during the Fill the Bus Toy Drive