



# The SWAN Impact Network Story

## The Beginning

The SWAN Impact Network was founded in Austin by Bob Bridge in late 2015 as the Southwest Angel Network. Our first pitch event was in the first quarter of 2016 and at that time we had seven angels. SWAN has grown from a group of largely older, white male angels, to a group that reflects the rich diversity of our communities.



Early meeting

SWAN has become a recognized national leader in impact investing. Bob moderates a monthly, national impact-investor syndication call that allows Angel Capital Association (ACA) angels to share impact investment opportunities with each other. And Bob has organized and led impact sessions at the annual ACA National Summit conferences.

SWAN now has more than 50 angels from across the US, and has two chapters, one in Austin, led by Bob and one in North Texas led by Heather Gilker.



Bob Bridge



Heather Gilker

**Bob** has extensive experience in engineering, marketing, startup company creation and fundraising from angels and venture funds. He enjoys building business, teams, products, revenue streams, and customer relationships. He cut his start-up teeth in the tough semiconductor industry and raised \$60M for the companies that he founded.

After his last start-up company would down, Bob was mentoring a number of startups while thinking about how to get his next startup off the ground. One of the young start-up teams had a social impact mission, namely helping low-income, high school youth get college scholarships. At that point, it clicked with Bob that “social impact was a lot more fun and meaningful than semiconductors!” And so he set about to build an organization rather than a company, an organization to promote the social good, namely the Southwest Angel Network.

As Bob is quick to say, “Taking care of others and being concerned about the underdog has always been part of my DNA”.

**Heather** having spent 25+ years focused in financial services, including working inside a single family office on portfolio management and investments, Heather has developed a deep understanding of the complexities family offices and ultra-wealthy families face. Tokalon Advisors provides consultative services to ultra-high net worth families and non-profit organizations with a focus on sustainability. Services offered for families of wealth include investment allocation and due diligence, family office formation and best practices, succession planning, philanthropic strategy, and next generation education. Services for non-profits included strategic planning and business development.

On a personal note, when she is not working or spending time at her sons’ sporting events or theater performances, she enjoys being active in the community, as a partner at SVP Dallas, and as an advisory board member of the Center for Brain Health at UT Dallas. She also enjoys mentoring at The Capital Factory, traveling, playing tennis, and cooking for her family and friends.

## Support of the Community



The SWAN Impact Network actively gives back to the community through mentoring and education, including working through incubators, universities, and professional angel events.

Since 2017, a highlight of our community outreach work was participating in the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Superstars competition, which was carried out at five Austin Title 1 high schools. Members of our network mentored ten teams at Akins High School and also attended the final city-wide competitions. At the city competition, SWAN selects the impact winning team, presents a scholarship, and has the winning team share their impact startup plan to a quarterly pitch SWAN event.



SWAN Director Juan Thurman  
presenting a scholarship

## Partnerships and Pledges



### ANGEL CAPITAL ASSOCIATION

The North American professional association of active accredited investors provides unparalleled access to trending ideas and professional knowledge to help improve returns and promote effective public policies for angels and startups



A non-profit organization designed to increase the already high level of cooperation between many of the angel investors in Texas.



## Austin Racial Justice Coalition

The SWAN Impact Network has joined a coalition of Austin business leaders uniting to use our privilege and position to advance racial justice in our companies and communities. Together, we are condemning racism. We are standing in solidarity with the Black community.



In support of its social-impact mission, the SWAN Impact Network has pledged to increase diversity and inclusion in the tech community by taking actions outlined in the startup diversity and inclusion pledge.

# TEXGHS

## Texas Global Health Security Innovation Consortium

Organized by the Austin Technology Incubator (ATI) at The University of Texas at Austin, TEXGHS is leading the creation and long-term success of a health security innovation ecosystem in Texas where equitable, inclusive solutions launch locally and grow globally