

do it with **passion** or not at all.

the frieda's story

Here at Frieda's Specialty Produce, we've always been different, just like our products. Genuine, spirited, forward-thinking, family-first people. It's who we are and who we've always been, ever since our trailblazing founder **Dr. Frieda Rapoport Caplan** first introduced the kiwifruit to the U.S. in 1962.

Innovation and authenticity are deeply rooted here at Frieda's. After all, our family's been inspiring new food experiences with oh-so-good-for-you specialty fruits and veggies for more than 50 years.

Frieda's two daughters, **Karen Caplan** and **Jackie Caplan Wiggins**, head up the family company and the third generation, Karen's daughter **Alex Jackson Berkley**, has linked in too. (Why, yes, we are WBENC certified!) We market and distribute an amazing variety of fruits, vegetables, and gourmet items in our ongoing quest to change the way America eats. From sunny, beach-strewn Orange County, California, we distribute to supermarkets, foodservice companies, and wholesalers all across the continent.

We're family and friends with heart, who work hard, play fair, and laugh a lot.

We care about the foods we put in our bodies, and we care about the land and the people who grow our food. We've learned that diversity is nature's way of ensuring a healthy planet, and diversity in fresh fruits and vegetables helps us nourish body and soul. We are committed to delivering the highest quality produce while minimizing our impact on the environment — from the field to the supermarket. If it's good for the earth, it's good for us.

Good food equals joy. We believe that inspiration is only an ingredient away.

And there's always something fresh and new to discover...



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karen caplan

PRESIDENT AND CEO

Karen Caplan knows jack...fruit, among many other exotic fruits and vegetables. After all, produce is in her blood.

Products like cherimoyas, Sunchokes®, and passion fruit may be unfamiliar to the average person, but Karen grew up eating and selling them. As the firstborn daughter of entrepreneur Dr. Frieda Rapoport Caplan, founder of Frieda's Specialty Produce, Karen began working with produce at the age of 10.

After graduating with a degree in Agricultural Economics and Business Management from the University of California-Davis, Karen joined Frieda's full time. Learning the business from the ground up, Karen worked in just about every department at the company, from running the warehouse to sales and marketing. At age 30, Karen was promoted to president and CEO. In 1990 Karen and her sister, Jackie Caplan Wiggins, purchased the company from their mother. With Karen at the helm and Jackie by her side, Frieda's became the nation's leading marketer and distributor of specialty produce.

A well-respected leader in the produce industry, Karen was the first female chair of the United Fresh Produce Association, a national trade organization representing the produce industry. Karen also served as the first female president of the Southern California-based Fresh Produce & Floral Council. She has been chair and vice chair of the USDA Fruit & Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee and a board member of the Federal Reserve Bank, Los Angeles branch, and the Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County. Karen currently serves on the board of the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation, UC Davis Agricultural Issues Center, and CSU-Cal Poly Pomona Dean's Advisory Board. In 2018 she became the president of The Trusteeship, the Southern California chapter of the International Women's Forum.

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Karen is also an innovative visionary. Her insights on the produce industry, leadership, and food trends are featured in publications such as AndNowUKnow.com and the Shelby Report. She is a frequent keynote speaker and panelist, including appearances at Bitten LA, THRIVE AgTech, and the Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit. Her accomplishments have earned her industry recognitions such as the 2015 Women in Produce honoree and the 2016 Jim Hicks Agricultural Achievement Award from CSU-Cal Poly Pomona.

Beyond the industry, Karen serves as a role model for women entrepreneurs, as well as small and family-owned businesses. She has addressed the Los Angeles/Long Beach area of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business program and was the keynote speaker at the University of La Verne CEO Summit and the Las Vegas Food Expo. Karen is a frequent guest speaker at local universities.

Karen is an enthusiastic home cook, loves to entertain, and is a passionate foodie and world traveler. She also writes a weekly blog, "[What's on Karen's Plate?](#)". Connect with Karen on Twitter [@Karen_Kiwi](#) and on [LinkedIn](#).



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jackie caplan wiggins

VICE PRESIDENT AND COO

The youngest daughter of produce trailblazer Dr. Frieda Rapoport Caplan, founder of Frieda's Specialty Produce, **Jackie Caplan Wiggins** started with the family business stuffing envelopes at the age of 10. She spent the summers of her teen years working at her mom's produce stand on the L.A. Wholesale Produce Market. Her extensive knowledge of the produce industry and the company's inner workings paved the way for her success today as the co-owner, vice president, and COO of Frieda's.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from San Diego State University, Jackie traveled the world for three years before returning to the family business.



Beginning in sales, Jackie worked with buyers on the L.A. Wholesale Produce Market and supermarket retail buyers across the country. In 1990 Jackie and sister, Karen Caplan, purchased the company from their mother. Five years later, Jackie was selected for the inaugural class of the United Fresh Produce Association's Produce Industry Leadership Program. The groundbreaking program selected 12 representatives from across the county to develop future leaders for the industry. Jackie was soon conducting sales for the majority of Frieda's key accounts, and in 2004 stepped into the role of retail sales manager. In 2008, Jackie became business development manager, and four years later, chief operations officer.

In 2014 Jackie was the recipient of the Timothy Vaux Outstanding Alumni Leadership Award, which honors individual graduates of the United Fresh leadership program, and in 2017 she was selected as one of the Women of Influence by the Shelby Report and the Packer 25 Profiles in Leadership. Jackie has also participated in the Produce Marketing Association's Produce Leadership Symposium and its Exposition Committee, and has served on the board of the United Fresh Produce Association Educational Foundation. She is currently a board member of the United Fresh Produce Association, and is the chair of its Wholesaler-Distributor Board.

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As a recent breast cancer survivor (2011) and mentor to other women in various stages of their diagnosis, Jackie has found helping others rewarding.

Jackie lives in Long Beach, California, and at her local gym. She can also be found cheering on LA Galaxy soccer with her husband, Doug, or spending time with her adult children Rachel and Franklin.



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frieda rapoport caplan, ph.d.

FOUNDER

“Success came because I never saw obstacles,” said **Dr. Frieda Rapoport Caplan** in the 2015 documentary film “Fear No Fruit” about her life as a produce industry trailblazer. Frieda chose not to see any obstacles in 1962 when she became the first woman in the U.S. to own and operate a produce company on the all-male Los Angeles Wholesale Produce Market. She saw no roadblocks when she began buying and selling then unusual and new-to-market specialties like brown mushrooms, Sunchokes®, and spaghetti squash. She feared no fruit when she brought the first load of fuzzy brown kiwifruit in from New Zealand. That grit and determination earned Frieda the title “Queen of Kiwifruit” for her successful introduction of kiwifruit to the American market in 1962.



The company would go on to inspire new food experiences for chefs and home cooks by introducing more than 200 exotic fruits and vegetables to American consumers over the years, including dragon fruit, habanero peppers, jicama, and Stokes Purple® sweet potatoes.

In 1979 Frieda was the first woman to receive The Packer’s “Produce Man of the Year” award, which she handed back to the organizer. The award was soon renamed “The Produce Marketer of the Year,” and she received a new plaque with that title. She has received numerous awards and honors for her achievements over the years, including an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from CSU-Cal Poly San Luis Obispo for her achievements as one of the nation’s most successful female entrepreneurs.

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Other recognitions include:

- 2019: Recipient of the Center for Growing Talent Catalyst Award presented at the annual Product Marketing Association Convention
- 2015: Frieda's Hometown of Los Alamitos, California, proclaimed October 15th "Frieda Rapoport Caplan Day" to commemorate Frieda's hard work and dedication to the produce industry and the city of Los Alamitos.
- 2013: Gold Stevie® Award for Lifetime Achievement for Women in Business.
- 1990: Los Angeles Times "A Dozen Who Shaped the 80s" article published, in which Frieda's profile appeared alongside Steve Jobs, Michael Eisner, and Jane Fonda.
- 1986: The first recipient of the Harriet Alger Award from Working Woman magazine for being a remarkable entrepreneurial role model for women.

Frieda and her late husband, Al, were founding members of Temple Beth David of Orange County. She had been an active member of the Los Angeles chapter of the International Women's Forum. She served a six-year term on the University of California's Presidential Advisory Commission on Agriculture and Natural Resources. Frieda also served on the Board of Dramatic Results, a nonprofit agency that solves educational challenges by providing integrated arts programs to students and teachers in over 40 public school campuses in California, Oregon, and Alaska.

Frieda's daughters, Karen Caplan and Jackie Caplan Wiggins, bought the company in 1990.

Up until 2019, Frieda still came into the office four days a week. Frieda passed away in her Los Alamitos home on Saturday, January 18, 2020 at the age of 96.



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alex berkley

DIRECTOR OF SALES

The eldest daughter of Frieda's Specialty Produce CEO Karen Caplan, and the granddaughter of founder Dr. Frieda Rapoport Caplan, **Alex Jackson Berkley** attended her first produce trade show at age 2 in a stroller. Naturally, produce is in her blood.

Alex joined the company in 2011 after graduating from George Mason University, making Frieda's a three-generation family-business success story. She started in Frieda's marketing department, then moved into the sales department in 2014 as an account manager.

In 2014 Alex was accepted into the United Fresh Leadership Program Class 20, along with 11 other produce industry leaders. At 24, she was the youngest professional to be accepted into the program. That same year, Alex earned a certificate of Produce Executive Development from Cornell University's Food Industry Management Program.

In 2017, Alex was named one of the "40 Under 40" by Produce Business Magazine for her success and leadership in the produce industry.

Alex served as a member of the Produce Marketing Association's Women's Fresh Perspectives Advisory Committee and was co-chair from 2015 to 2017. She also serves on the Board of Trustees of the Westerly School of Long Beach, a California K-8 non-denominational private school.

A millennial foodie, Alex loves experimenting with new produce at home and traveling the world. She and her husband, Ben, live in Los Angeles.

