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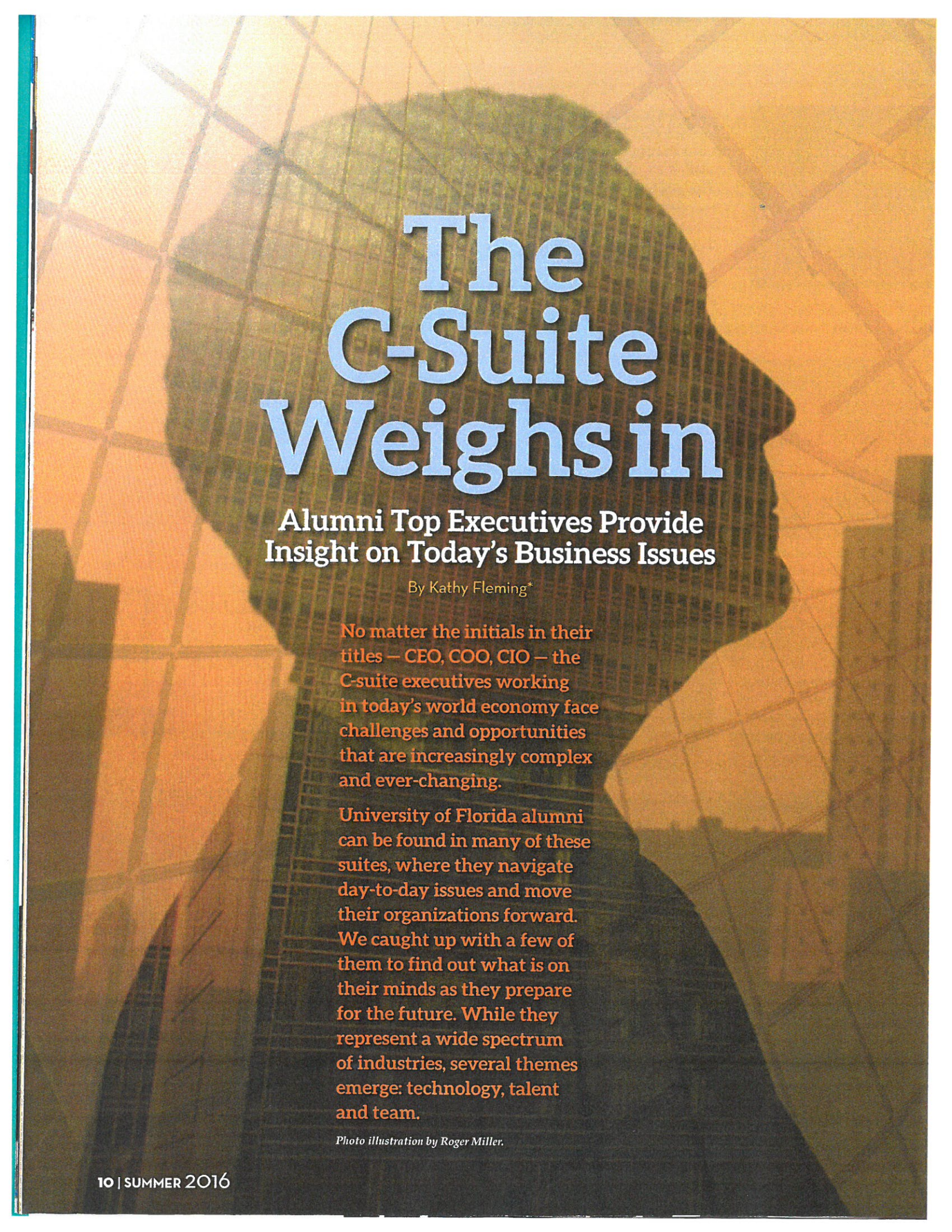
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# The C-Suite Weighs in

**Alumni Top Executives Provide  
Insight on Today's Business Issues**

By Kathy Fleming\*

No matter the initials in their titles — CEO, COO, CIO — the C-suite executives working in today's world economy face challenges and opportunities that are increasingly complex and ever-changing.

University of Florida alumni can be found in many of these suites, where they navigate day-to-day issues and move their organizations forward. We caught up with a few of them to find out what is on their minds as they prepare for the future. While they represent a wide spectrum of industries, several themes emerge: technology, talent and team.

*Photo illustration by Roger Miller.*



## Q: "What are today's pressing issues for CEOs and others in the C-suite?"



"Many CEO's are focused on company growth, expansion and diversification. At times, certain opportunities that may appear to be aligned with your core business model and provide diversification may end up being a distraction to the team due to geographical location, business type, internal learning curve and excessive utilization of corporate resources, both human and capital. The ability to retain tenured employees who are multi-dimensional and who possess a wealth of knowledge about the organization, and the ability to identify, recruit and groom the right key employees to lead the organization."

**Eddy Benoit Jr.\***  
(BSBC '93)  
President and CEO  
The Benoit Group, LLC  
Atlanta, Georgia

The Benoit Group, LLC provides real estate development and advisory services to clients in private, corporate and government sectors in the U.S. and internationally. It offers consulting, advisory and construction management services.

"It is likely that the global economy has entered an era of low growth and low inflation due to high levels of global debt. In a more competitive and interconnected global marketplace, it will be imperative for C-suite executives to develop value-added products and services that can command pricing power in a low inflation world. It will also be necessary to implement productivity measures that will drive efficiencies and protect/enhance the financial strength and profitability of their companies."



**Ronald E. Canakaris**  
(BSBA '66)  
Chairman and chief investment officer  
Montag & Caldwell  
Atlanta, Georgia  
Montag & Caldwell is an investment management services company that serves a wide range of individual and institutional clients through separate accounts and mutual funds.

"Certainly every business has its own industry-specific challenges, but I think we all share a common interest in ensuring that there is a robust, appropriately skilled talent pipeline over the next 10 to 15 years. Due to population shifts, there will be fewer workers available, and businesses need to not only be thinking long term about the kind of skills those potential employees will need, but working with universities and community colleges to develop curricula that will prepare that workforce to meet marketplace demands."



**Susan Cameron\***  
(BSBA '80)  
President and CEO  
Reynolds American Inc.  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina  
Reynolds American is the second-largest tobacco company in the U.S. Its holdings include R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., American Snuff Co., Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Co. and Niconovum AB.