

# THE **Risk Takers**

The entrepreneurial spirit runs deep in these industry vanguards as they carve out new market niches and provide solutions and technologies to improve the healthcare process.

## M. Scott **SALKA**

### A Biotech Bonanza

#### **A SERIAL ENTREPRENEUR IN THE BIOTECH INDUSTRY,**

M. Scott Salka is living proof that biotech leaders are not born, but made by committed individuals who are able to turn problems into opportunities.

Throughout his career, Mr. Salka has proved the value of hard work and perseverance. After dropping out of college and serving in the Army as a private, then ultimately a military advisor to the El Salvador and Honduras governments, Mr. Salka returned to college, earning a B.S. in finance and an MBA.

Working his way up through the ranks, Mr. Salka served as CEO of Arcaris and 454 Corporation and cofounded Sequana (now a part of Celera Genomics), where he and his team pioneered efforts to commercialize the international Human Genome Project. Despite the project's failure to provide immediate answers to life's genetic problems, Mr. Salka recognized the potential in the information it did yield for developing more specifically targeted drugs.

Teaming up with David Lockhart,

Ph.D., Mr. Salka used the insights he had gained in the Human Genome Project to found Ambit Biosciences in 2000, developing a platform technology that enables the discovery and development of more targeted kinase inhibitors, one of the most important drug classes in the pharmaceutical industry.

Under Mr. Salka's guidance, Ambit and its 65 employees raised \$56 million in six years and forged kinase screening partnerships with Roche, Bristol-Myers Squibb, GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson & Johnson, and Pfizer.

With Mr. Salka at the helm, the company has advanced several product candidates into preclinical development and has earned a reputation as a leader in the kinase space.

*M. Scott Salka, CEO of Ambit Biosciences, has forged ahead with information from the Human Genome Project.*



#### **PERSONAL DATA**

Born Jan. 8, 1962, in Florida

#### **EDUCATION**

B.S. in finance from San Diego State University and an MBA from Carnegie Mellon University