

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Entrepreneurs Wiley Cerilli and Patrick Ambron to participate in Blackstone LaunchPad grand opening on April 19**

Two high-profile Syracuse University alumni entrepreneurs will be featured guests at the grand opening of the Blackstone LaunchPad at Syracuse University on April 19. The 1 p.m. event at Bird Library includes a formal ceremony, ribbon cutting, reception, and student venture demos.



As part of the LaunchPad kick-off, Wiley Cerilli, Co-CEO and Founder at Good Uncle, and Patrick Ambron, Co-Founder and CEO of BrandYourself, will join Interim Vice Chancellor and Provost Liz Liddy in awarding \$60,000 in prizes to Syracuse University student winners of the [CompeteCNY](#) business plan competition.



More than three dozen Syracuse University student ventures are pitching their business concepts at the LaunchPad on April 14 at the regional qualifier for the NYS Business Plan Competition, considered the country's premier collegiate contest. Teams are competing in: Information Technology/Software; Energy/Sustainability; Products/Services; and Social Entrepreneurship/Non-Profit Ventures.

Cerilli and Ambron will recognize student teams advancing to the NYS finals and award \$60,000 in CompeteCNY prizes to Syracuse University student ventures to help take their innovations to the next stage. The statewide competition, hosted by Syracuse University, SUNY Polytechnic Institute, and University at Albany's School of Business, will be held April 29 in Albany, with a \$100,000 grand prize.

The CompeteCNY awards are part of student demos following the LaunchPad opening ceremony and ribbon cutting. Cerilli and Ambron will be on hand to meet and mingle, and host an intimate, informal conversation in the LaunchPad with student entrepreneurs on lessons learned as they started and scaled their successful businesses.

Cerilli, who attended the iSchool, founded SinglePlatform in 2010, raising \$4.5 million in two rounds, then selling the two-year old start-up to Constant Contact for \$100 million. Following the sale, he

became Vice President at Constant Contact, then Venture Partner for First Round Capital in New York, and was named a "Top 25 CEO" in New York, and "Top 10 People to Watch" by Crain's.

He recently co-founded Good Uncle, which raised \$2.2 million from institutional investors including First Round, Box Group, and tech law firm Gunderson Dettmer. The founders of hot NYC startups are investors, along with restaurateur Tom Colicchio of Bravo TV's "Top Chef" fame. The new venture is a food delivery service featuring items from the world's most iconic restaurants and chefs, ordered through an immersive, content-rich mobile app. It builds on his experience as an early employee at Seamless, a food ordering site created by Jason Finger. As one of the original employees, Cerilli spent ten years at Seamless, helping it become one of the fastest growing companies in the country before being acquired by ARAMARK.

Ambron '09, a dual major in Advertising (Newhouse School) and Psychology (Arts and Sciences), co-founded BrandYourself with a team of Syracuse University students and went on to become a nationally recognized expert in online reputation management and search engine optimization. He was honored by the White House as one of Empact's 100 Top CEOs under 30, named Young Entrepreneur of the Year by the SBA, and selected as Inc. Magazine's Top 35 Entrepreneurs Under 35. Entrepreneur Magazine picked BrandYourself as a Top 5 Collegiate Startup, PCWorld named the company a Top 5 Hottest Web Apps at SXSW, and the company won the SXSW Accelerator Competition as Best Bootstrapped Startup.

Most recently, Ambron represented BrandYourself on ABC's Shark Tank, where he walked away from a \$2 million offer - one of the highest in the show's history. He has led BrandYourself to raise several rounds of venture capital and grown it from a student start-up to more than 75 full-time employees. His ideas have been featured on ABC News, CBS News, Huffington Post, Fast Company, Mashable, TechCrunch, WSJ, the NY Times, US News & World, and many others. He helped co-develop the new media curriculum at Syracuse University's iSchool.

The Blackstone LaunchPad opening ceremony starts at 1 p.m. in the Peter Graham Scholarly Commons, first floor of Bird Library. It will include remarks by: Kent Syverud, Chancellor, Syracuse University; David Seaman, University Librarian and Dean of Syracuse University Libraries; Liz Liddy, Interim Vice Chancellor and Provost, Syracuse University; Erik Lisher, Managing Director in Blackstone's Investor Relations & Business Development Group, and member of the Blackstone Charitable Foundation Board of Directors; Robert Simpson, President & Chief Executive Officer, CenterState CEO; Judy Mower, Syracuse University Trustee, Chair of the Libraries Advisory Board; Erin Miller '16, Out There Productions; and Linda Dickerson Hartsock, Executive Director, Blackstone LaunchPad at Syracuse University.

Following the 30-minute ceremony, guests are invited to stay for the ribbon cutting, reception, and student venture demos in the LaunchPad from approximately 1:30 to 3:00, with the opportunity to meet and speak with Cerilli and Ambron.

RSVP's are requested to assist with planning: [LaunchPad@syr.edu](mailto:LaunchPad@syr.edu).

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