

# HERE to STAY

**Newcomers to Dallas-Fort Worth, including those who relocate for their work, often are blown away by the region's cultural wealth—from cuisine and museums to concerts and sports—as well as its open, cooperative spirit. Says one: “The whole metroplex is quite cosmopolitan, and it’s so business-friendly.”**

More than 1 million people have moved to Dallas-Fort Worth since 2010, helping push the area's current population well past the 8 million mark.

Many of DFW's new residents—like the executives who've shared their stories here—came for a career move. But they wound up staying for the region's extraordinary quality of life.

Whether they relocated from another state, or another country, here's what's kept these business leaders saying yes to North Texas.



**Silvia Martins Gomes:**  
**Vice President of Human Resources,**  
**Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages**

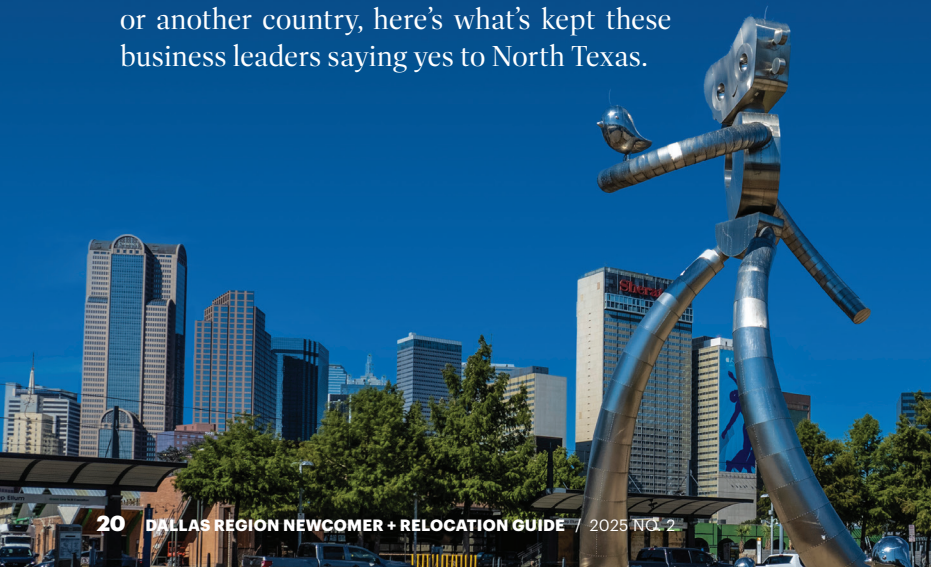
“I really love the DFW area,” declares Silvia Martins Gomes, who hails from Brazil.

It just took her a little while to get here and find that out.

After living in Houston for nearly 10 years, Gomes received a job offer from Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages—the local bottler of Coca-Cola for Texas and Oklahoma—in 2021.

She moved to North Texas with her family the following year.

“But of course, that was towards the end of the pandemic, and everyone was







Silvia Martins Gomes with husband Igor Gomes and kids, Lucas and Julia, at the Dallas World Aquarium

moving to DFW,” she recalls.

That made finding a place to live challenging. “We have two little kids, so we wanted to find a place where the schools are great and within walking distance,” she says.

Then her husband discovered the community of Argyle.

Argyle was a little more rural than she’d pictured—llamas, donkeys, and cows are some of her neighbors—but it turned out to be the perfect fit.

The town is located between Fort Worth and Denton, close to Flower Mound and Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, which is just half an hour away. That’s important for

someone who travels frequently.

“We’re [also] not that far from the American Airlines Center,” Gomes says. “We’ve seen so many good shows and Mavs games there, and I love this mix of being close to a big city but still having those areas of calm.”

Having professional soccer in Dallas also is a win. “We go as a family and watch FC Dallas,” she says.

Her husband works in a fully remote position in information technology. While he travels some for work, the two of them find it easy to make sure at least one can always attend a school function.

“We really want to be present as much as possible,” she says.

That’s also made easier because they have family support. Six months after moving here, Gomes’ parents also relocated to North Texas. In fact, they’re living just a mile away.

Everyone speaks Portuguese at home, but Gomes notes that her children respond in whichever language suits them at the time.

She says growing up in Rio de Janeiro prepared her for the North Texas summers.

And while there isn’t a big Brazilian community here, she adds, Dallas’ friendliness reminds her of home.





**Ettore Mosca:**  
Executive Vice President North  
America Operations, EssilorLuxottica

Ettore Mosca's journey to North Texas began in the rolling hills of Northern Italy, long before his career first sent his family to Mason, Ohio.

When eyewear giants Essilor and Luxottica merged in 2018, leadership selected North Texas as their operational hub—and Ettore as the executive to spearhead the transition.

Since relocating to DFW in 2022, Ettore, his wife, Sara, and their four children have crafted a life that blends their Italian heritage with a Lone Star twist.

"I love the barbecue and steak," Ettore says, smiling. "But at home, we still eat Italian-style as much as possible."

The family has even discovered local *ristorantes*—in the Southlake area and beyond—that meet their discerning standards.

Italian remains the household's primary language for both parents and their two younger children, while the older two are pursuing higher education at the University of Texas at Dallas and

Texas Tech.

Ettore says the family has come a long way in their American—now Texan—journey.

"When we first arrived in the U.S. from Italy, I remember telling my kids, 'Follow the others. Don't get lost,'" he recalls.

The Moscas bridge their two worlds through activities that connect them to their roots.

They frequent a ranch near their Keller home to ride horses, an activity that brings to mind memories of Ettore's grandfather, who taught him to ride.

His adaptation to other aspects of Texas culture, however, remains selective. "No boots and hat for me yet," he admits. "But my wife is all in."

One Texas advantage Ettore especially appreciates is the weather, which allows for an extended time to ride his motorcycle. "Here I can ride eleven months of the year!" he says.

The abundant sunshine also affords plenty of outdoor time as the family explores their new home in North Texas.

For the Moscas, the American dream has an Italian accent—and perhaps now it will add a slight Texas drawl, too.

**Nadine Lee:**  
President & CEO, DART

Sometimes you see a job description that sounds like it was written just for you. That's what happened to Nadine Lee, who moved to Dallas in June of 2021.

"DART was looking for someone who is passionate about changing the way people move through North Texas," says Lee.

Having served at Los Angeles Metro as deputy chief innovation officer and chief of staff, she knew she had the skills and experience to help Dallas Area Rapid Transit.

"My husband and I weren't tied to L.A., and we had already moved a couple of times, so we had gotten rid of all sorts of stuff," Lee says. "Dallas was a pretty easy move."

Lee grew up in Columbia, Missouri, and had moved to Kansas City and then Denver before Los Angeles and, eventually, Dallas.

"I never thought I would move to Texas," she says.

She was a little surprised to find it's not as "cowboy" as some might think.

"This whole metroplex is quite cosmopolitan, and it's so business-friendly," Lee says. "There's a palpable effort to connect executives from various corporations. It's pretty remarkable."

She admires how the business community, nonprofits, and government leaders all work together for Dallas' continued improvement.

"I see how all these groups are dedicated to education, healthcare, energy, transportation—and these are the elements that set people up for success," she says.

But Lee isn't all work, all the time, in her Dallas home.

"One of the first places we discovered was the Botanical Gardens and Arboretum—it's one of the largest and most beautiful in the country," she says.

She is equally stunned by the number of museums and private collections of people who find ways to share.

"Individuals invest in this region in a way you don't see everywhere," she says. "They're not hoarding what they have; they find ways to make their collections accessible for everyone to enjoy. That says more about Dallas-Fort Worth than I could ever put into words."









**Lisa New:**  
CEO, Dallas Zoo

Lisa New wasn't looking for a different job or a new place to live when opportunity knocked. In fact, she was quite happy right where she was.

"I was tenured at Zoo Knoxville and I love that organization dearly, but I was recruited for the CEO position at the Dallas Zoo," she says. "It's a much larger organization and I couldn't say no."

She arrived in North Texas from Tennessee in December of 2023 not knowing much about the area.

"I mean, I had been to the Fort Worth Zoo and the Dallas Zoo numerous times," she says. "I knew the former [zoo] director here in Dallas, but I hadn't really visited the city."

Once here, she was struck by the differences between Dallas and Fort Worth.

"I thought I was going to see a lot of

cowboy hats and cactuses" in Dallas, she says, laughing. "And you can see that—but you'll have to go down the road a bit to Fort Worth. Dallas isn't really the West, it's where the East meets the West."

New settled in Oak Cliff because she wanted to live in a walkable area. But during her first year in DFW, she also got outside the city limits, visiting Glen Rose when it was in full wildflower bloom and Pedernales Falls State Park near Austin.

Back home in Dallas, she attended the Texas State Fair.

"One of the first things I noticed was the friendliness of everyone ... both at the zoo and in the community," she says. "In my first week on the job, leaders from across arts and culture and nonprofit organizations sent me cards and flowers and invited me out to lunch."

You don't find that kind of welcome everywhere, she says.

**Joshua Ridley:**  
Co-Founder and  
Chief Growth Officer, Willow

Joshua Ridley and his family arrived in 2022 from Sydney, Australia, to begin their adventure in Dallas. Ridley had grown up and started his AI-powered digital twin company, Willow, in the land Down Under.

Willow is "an AI and operational intelligence company transforming the way large enterprises manage their buildings and infrastructure, and in 2022 we were doing a deal with an organization headquartered in Dallas," Ridley recalls. "They really wanted me here on the ground in Dallas, to be a part of it day-to-day."

DFW was familiar to him—he traveled frequently and had visited—but he honestly didn't get the attraction.

"I always struggled to understand Dallas because there was no river like the Hudson River in New York, or no large waterfront like the Bay Area, the Sound in Seattle, or the Embarcadero in San Francisco," he says.

For Ridley it was a rough landing—so rough that he began to question his decision to relocate his wife and children (now 14, 11, and 7) to North Texas.

Fortunately, everyone found their footing relatively quickly, and Ridley and his wife now have enjoyed their fair share of



school plays and performances and other activities.

"It has exceeded my expectations in a number of ways," he says of DFW. "The people that we've connected into through the school, and also through our local church—not to mention the business community—have been incredible. And I didn't expect that kind of reception to a new person suddenly appearing in their

circles."

He was also encouraged to connect with Dallas Regional Chamber CEO Dale Petroskey. Today, Ridley serves as vice chair of the chamber's innovation task force.

Hearing how other people found their way to North Texas only added to Ridley's growing feeling that things might work out here. "I'm staggered at how staying put has led to so much," he says.

He credits Dallas with giving his company a national platform.

"If you want to build an enterprise serving Fortune 100 companies and grow in the biggest, most dynamic market in the world, Dallas, Texas is the place to be," Ridley says. "The connectivity across the United States, the amazing caliber of people, the spirit of innovation—it exceeded my expectations. I'm incredibly grateful every day that we made the move."

There also are new experiences around every corner—like Tex-Mex food, something the family was unfamiliar with but since has come to enjoy. And, of course, the barbecue ...

"I didn't know how much went into it," Ridley says. "Smoking ribs or a brisket for eight hours—plus the different spices and rubs. I don't think I really appreciated what a Texas—or American—thing that is, until we were here."