



2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THE OMNI HOTEL AT THE BATTERY ATLANTA | NOVEMBER 10 - 13, 2024



Chanell Autrey currently serves as Director of Government Affairs for Target Corporation. In this role, she leads the government affairs strategy for the Mid-Atlantic Region/Great Lakes, which includes ten states. Prior to joining Target, she served as Senior Manager of Government and Community Affairs at Starbucks, where she managed government relations and curated community activities for their Mid-Atlantic Region. Chanell has also served as Senior Director of Government and Community Affairs for Monumental Sports and Entertainment. In this role, she led and executed the government relations strategy and public policy initiatives for four venues and six sports teams, including the Washington Wizards, Mystics, and Capitals. A dedicated public policy lawyer, Chanell spent five years at the Council of the District of Columbia where she executed the strategic direction of the Committee's 27 agencies and commissions. A graduate of Pennsylvania State University and George Washington University Law School, Chanell began her professional career as an Assistant Public Defender in Baltimore. Chanell is a board member of DC Justice Lab and the DC Appleseed Center.



Dr. John Anderson practices internal medicine and diabetes at the Frist Clinic. He has served as a Past President of the multi-specialty clinic and has served leadership roles at Centennial Medical Center. He has served as Chair of the Department of Medicine for two separate terms and has been a member and Chair of the Board of Trustees of Centennial. Dr. Anderson has served as a long-time volunteer for the American Diabetes Association both locally and nationally. In addition to his primary care practice, Dr. Anderson continues to consult both nationally and internationally, with a focus on improving the care of people with diabetes in the primary care setting.



Senator Tonya Anderson was elected to the State Senate to represent Georgia's 43rd District in 2016 and she serves as the Vice Chair of the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus (GLBC), as well as Secretary of the Retirement Committee. She is, also, a member of the Public Safety, Special Judiciary, and Veterans, Military, and Homeland Security Committees. She holds a degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Management from Alabama State University as well as a Master of Divinity from Luther Rice University. In April 2018, she earned a Humanitarian honorary doctorate degree from The Global International Alliance. Senator Anderson began her elected public service as a City Councilmember for the City of Lithonia from 2006 to 2008 and served as its Mayor from 2008 to 2011. Senator Anderson retired in 2012 from the United States Air Force Reserve after more than 21 honorable years of service and continues to volunteer and advocate for veterans' services. In addition, she volunteers in the community through local Senior Centers, NCNW, the NAACP, NCBW 100 and several non-profit boards.



Michael Barnes serves as Counsel to Aimed Alliance. He is also a Principal Attorney at Sequel Health Law PLLC and Chairman of the Center for U.S. Policy, a nonprofit organization advancing solutions to the nation's substance abuse, mental health, and incarceration crises. Barnes is an advocate for innovative responses to some of the top policy issues in the U.S., including the opioid, heroin, and fentanyl crisis; health care; justice reform; and privacy. Previously, he was a political appointee under President George W. Bush, having served as confidential counsel in the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. He holds a bachelor's degree from Flagler College, a master's degree from La Universidad de Belgrano, and a J.D. from George Mason University School of Law.



Alexis Boss is the Government Affairs Specialist for IHG Hotels & Resorts. Previously, she was the Government Affairs Coordinator for the Metro Atlanta Chamber, and interned with GeorgiaLink Public Affairs Group. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Political Science and Government from the University of Georgia School of Public and International Affairs.



Johnathan Buxton is Senior Director, State Affairs for the Pharmaceutical Care Management Association, the national association representing America's pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). In this role he serves as a fierce advocate for member companies and works to educate legislators and regulators on the value PBMs bring to patient care. Prior to joining the organization, Jonathan was an attorney in private practice and before that he led the Government Affairs team of the State Chamber of Oklahoma from 2014 to 2017. He also served as Research and Policy Analyst for the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives. Jonathan earned his JD from Oklahoma City University School of Law.



Terri Bradley Founder and Principal of Play at Brown Toy Box, believes that Black children should see themselves positively represented in every space they experience regularly, starting with their toybox and the toy aisle. Bradley, an equity in play advocate, is on a mission to disrupt the \$27B toy industry by creating a brand that reflects the world we live in today. Brown Toy Box evolved into a full-scale educational toy company producing and curating STEAM toys, media, and experiences for centering and celebrating Black children in a manner all children can enjoy, learn, and have fun. Prior to starting Brown Toy Box, Bradley led a communications consultancy working with Fortune 500 companies in campaigns designed to connect with the African American community. Prior to that, Bradley served as the VP of Corporate, Crisis, and Public Affairs for the world's largest global PR agency. With over 20 years of experience working in PR and marketing, she crafted out a specialty in marketing to African American moms.



Casey Caldwell is the Associate Director of State Government Affairs for Sarepta Therapeutics, a biopharmaceutical company that develops treatments for rare diseases using genetic medicine. Previously, he was the Associate Director of Government Affairs for CRISPR Therapeutics. He obtained his Bachelor of Science in Political Science and General Business from Florida State University.



Mel Carter is a government affairs professional with a background in communications and public affairs strategy at Georgia Bio. In this role, Melissa provides leadership in developing and implementing a public policy strategy; serves as the liaison for the organization's Patient Advocacy Alliance; and actively works to position Georgia Bio as a strong partner and unifier on issues of importance, working towards enhancing the economic health of Georgia's life sciences community. She joined Georgia Bio after three years of working on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Most recently, Melissa served as the Deputy Communications Director for a senior United States Senator. During her tenure on Capitol Hill, Melissa helped promote several key policy objectives, played a pivotal role in executing comprehensive communication, outreach, and press strategies, and built and maintained several valuable relationships with federal staffers as well as reporters. She has extensive knowledge of both the federal legislative and appropriations processes, which she will use to become a dynamic team member of Georgia Bio. Melissa is an honors graduate of the University of Mississippi and currently resides in Smyrna, GA.



Kristen Casimir is the Government Affairs Manager, covering the Southern U.S. at Salesforce. She is a highly enthusiastic, client-focused individual with a demonstrated history of creating strategic alliances in government and politics. Before joining Salesforce, Kristen was a Lobbyist at Connect South Public Affairs, where she represented multiple companies. Kristen was also the External Affairs Coordinator at the Secretary of State's Office, where she collaborated with high schools across Georgia to ensure student participation in the Student Ambassador Program, having previously served as a Campaign Manager for multiple political campaigns. Throughout her professional career, Kristen has committed herself to developing and maintaining strong relationships with critical stakeholders, agency heads, and both local and state elected officials. Her work in government affairs has given her extensive knowledge of constituent needs and has allowed her to make an impact both in the office and within her community. Kristen received her B.A. in the Andrew Young School of Public Policy from Georgia State University.



Daphne Chan PhD, MHEcon, is Head of Dermatology Medical Affairs for Johnson and Johnson Innovative Medicine and lead researcher for the Johnson & Johnson VISIBLE study. Through her 19 years with Johnson & Johnson, Dr. Chan has worked to change the inequities faced by people of color by better informing clinical practice and improving patient care with broad reach and impact. She and her team's work include conducting clinical research in the post-approval setting to generate additional data that addresses clinical unmet needs that might not have been adequately addressed in pivotal development programs. Severaging clinicians, patient voices and insights to inform the development of new investigational therapies. Dr. Chan and her team, also, work with medical societies and patient advocacy groups to identify unmet needs and communicate data and evidence that can help improve clinical practice and patient care. Most recently, Dr. Chan and her team's work on the VISIBLE study was recognized in the inaugural Fierce 50 Health Equity honoree list



Adelina Cooke is the AI Public Policy Lead at Google Cloud. In this role, she supports Google teams globally to incorporate Responsible AI in external product launches, technology partnerships, and customer engagements. Her role includes promoting regulatory and legislative engagement and understanding of Google's AI Principles and Cloud's Responsible AI governance process. Addie previously held similar roles at Workday and Accenture. Addie has held several public service roles in the Texas Legislature, United States Senate, AmeriCorps Vista, and Peace Corps in El Salvador. She holds a BA from the University of Texas at Austin and MPP from the University of Virginia. Outside of work, she serves as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for abused and neglected children. She resides in Northern Virginia.



Tori Cooper is the Director of Community Engagement for Transgender Justice Initiative, Human Rights Campaign. In this role, her focus includes economic empowerment, capacity building programs, public safety and expanding public education campaigns. A health and equity consultant, community organizer, educator, published author, and leader in the transgender and HIV communities, Tori Cooper has more than 30 years of experience at all levels of HIV service, from volunteer roles to her service as executive director and founder of Advocates for Better Care Atlanta, LLC. In 2021, she was the first Black transgender woman to be appointed to the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA), and that same year Tori was recognized by POZ magazine as one of 100 top Black advocates and The Advocate as one of its Advocates of the Year.



Julie Cox currently serves as Director of Government Affairs for Astellas Pharma. She has more than two decades of government affairs and legislative counsel experience. She began her career in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Julie also served as general counsel, legislative liaison, and spokesperson for the Retailers Association of Massachusetts. She held senior positions in two of Boston's most prestigious law firms with government affairs practices. In this role she is responsible for the Northern Region of the country. Julie is experienced at representing a diverse portfolio of clients spanning multiple industries, as well as adeptly focusing on a more minute set of priorities and business goals as a valued member of an internal team.



Renee Dabbs leads the management, leadership and strategic programs for the National Foundation for Women Legislators. Renee guides all NFWL projects related to strategy and creates the best approach to achieving the organization's goals. She has spent a career working at the highest level to ensure that organizations, like NFWL, drive results. She is the principal at Renee Dabbs, LLC where she provides clients with strategic, operational and sales expertise. Renee has a passion for leading organizations to exceed expectation as well as deliver sustainable results. She brings order to chaos. Renee has spent a lifetime supporting women and is the founder of WEWILL Symposium where she helps women become more engaged in the political process. She also is a board member of Women's Exchange, an organization that works toward getting more women government appointments. Renee's business background includes serving as the COO of a top tier Republican media production firm in Florida. Before that she built a sixteen-year track record of success with Procter and Gamble, rising to a senior management position with oversight of a \$220 million business and a multi-million-dollar marketing client.



Representative Viola Davis is a member of the Georgia House of Representatives representing the citizens of House District 87, which includes portions of DeKalb County. Representative Davis has been appointed to the Georgia House of Representatives Insurance, Interstate Cooperation and Science & Technology committees. Representative Davis, founder of Unhappy Taxpayer & Voter and longtime government watchdog of DeKalb County, has served the public as a community missionary for over 20 years. She joined the Fulton County Taxpayer Foundation to receive training on property tax appeals and to extend property tax appeal services into DeKalb County, especially within the incorporated City of Atlanta in DeKalb and South Fulton as an outreach coordinator. After formal training with the Taxpayer Foundation, Davis moved on to blog for the Patch and Crossroads News on public and tax issues. She is an honor graduate of the Medical College of Georgia with a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing with over 23 years' experience as a critical care nurse, administrator and instructor. She is an honorably discharged Commissioned Officer of the U.S. Army and Airborne. She comes from a family of veterans and works hard to advocate for homeless veterans.



Dee Dawkins-Haigler is an advocate for the Fight Against Human Trafficking and served 8 1/2 years as a Georgia State Representative from June 2008 – January 2017. During her tenure in the Georgia General Assembly, she served as Chair of the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus and Chair of the Georgia Women's Legislative Caucus. She is the author of the bestselling book, "A Message to Our Daughters: Turning Trials into Triumphs." She was appointed to the Juvenile Parole Board for the State of South Carolina where she was the youngest and first African American to serve as Chair of the board. She uses her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science (South Carolina State University), Master of Public Administration (Kentucky State University) Master of Divinity (Turner Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center) degrees to bridge the political, public, and religious communities and help them find solutions to eradicating racism, sexism, and classism. She studied in Political Science at Clark Atlanta University Ph.D. (ABD). She has Honorary Doctorates of Humane Letters (South Carolina State University), Ministry Degree (American Bible University), of Philosophy (Trinity International University of Ambassadors), of Humane Letters (Canadian International Chaplaincy University), and of Christian Leadership (School of the Great Commission Bible College). Dee is an advocate in the fight against human trafficking, domestic violence and teen dating violence which led her to produce the documentary/drama "Black Girls Die Too: The Back Page Murders", which chronicles the death of Fourteen Black Women murdered as a result of using online human/sex trafficking websites such as Back Page.



Alyssa Doom currently serves as Director of Government Affairs for Shipt's in the Northeast, Midwest, and at the federal level. She previously served as the State Policy Director for the Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA), where she represented the interests of small, medium, and large technology firms across the states. Prior to joining CCIA she was a manager at the Pew Charitable Trusts, working to advance the use of data and evidence in decision making by state and local policymakers. Alyssa holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a master's degree from Portland State University.



Anna Doroghazi is an Associate State Director, Advocacy and Outreach at AARP and is responsible for developing and executing state and community advocacy campaigns on behalf of the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization's nearly 600,000 members in Connecticut. Anna previously served as the Director of Public Policy and Communication for Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, the coalition of Connecticut's nine sexual assault crisis services programs, from 2007 to 2013. While there, she led successful efforts to update the state's stalking statutes and improve laws related to sexual violence and people with disabilities. She also managed the organization's media and communications strategies and served on several statewide workgroups related to victim services. She moved from Connecticut in 2013 to take on several roles within New York State government, serving most recently as the Director of Policy and Special Projects for the Executive Chamber's Nonprofit Coordination Team where she worked directly with Governor Cuomo's cabinet-level Interagency Coordinator for Nonprofit Services to develop policies and programs related to the nonprofit human services sector. Anna graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor's of Arts in European Studies and Spanish from Hillsdale College and received a Master's of Science in Human Rights from the London School of Economics and Political Science.



Kimberly Dudik is the CEO and Co-Founder Public Policy Institute of the Rockies, an organization aimed to create transformational change on under addressed issues by conducting research, initiating reforms, and providing legal advocacy to create an equitable Montana. In addition, she works as Health Administration Director for the Missoula City-County Health Department and provides Previously she served as a member of the Montana House of Representatives from 2013 to 2021 and is a former Chair of the National Foundation for Women Legislators. She graduated from John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health with a Master of Public Health, and she obtained her J.D. from The University of Montana School of Law.



Mark Eister is the Vice President, Operations for the Warrior Alliance and is responsible for the operational excellence, strategy, financial, administrative, and technology functions of the organization. He has over 21 years of military service plus 10 years of direct support of veterans and their families. His most recent position was Director of Military and Veteran services at a major university, where his efforts resulted in being ranked the #1 Military and Veteran Friendly School in the Nation. As an E-9/Sergeant Major, Mr. Eister served multiple overseas tours, a deployment to Afghanistan, and 15 family moves in 21 years. As a result, Mr. Eister can relate to the unique challenges that veterans face as they transition from military to civilian life. He graduated from Liberty University with his bachelor's in science degree (summa cum laude) and Trident University International with an MBA (summa cum laude).



Tekisha Dwan Everette, Ph.D., MPA, MPH, CPH is the Executive Vice President for Trust for America's Health. In this role, she works in partnership with TFAH's President and CEO to chart and implement the organization's strategic direction and priorities, provides counsel on current and emerging policy issues, and engages with key organizations, policymakers, and other partners to advance policy priorities to improve public health and promote equity. Prior to Health Equity Solutions, Tekisha was the Managing Director of Federal Government Affairs with the American Diabetes Association, where she provided strategic leadership on policy and advocacy initiatives with the White House, federal agencies, and Congress. She has also worked as a government relations consultant with Drinker, Biddle, and Reath, LLC, where she represented the interests of several non-profit healthcare organizations on issues such as health reform, Medicare, Medicaid, and federal appropriations. Recognized for her achievements in health policy and advocacy, Everette is an alumna of the National Urban Fellows America's Leaders of Change program and is a member of the Association of Black Sociologists. Everette earned a doctorate in Sociology from American University with a concentration in race, gender, and social justice as it relates to social policy. She received a Master of Public Administration from Virginia Tech and holds two Bachelor of Arts degrees in Political Science and Interdisciplinary Studies also from Virginia Tech. She completed a Master of Public Health from Yale University in December 2022.



Stacy Finkbeiner, PhD is a Medical Director at Teva Pharmaceuticals and leads the company's medical education and research efforts within the U.S. focused on the movement disorders of Tardive Dyskinesia and chorea associated with Huntington's Disease. One of her key areas of focus is research to create a better understanding of how the irregular movements associated with Tardive Dyskinesia cause physical, psychological, social, and work impacts on individuals with the condition. She received her PhD in Microbiology from Washington University in St. Louis and went on to complete postdoctoral fellowships at Baylor School of Medicine in Houston and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Prior to joining Teva, Stacy worked in the nonprofit sector to identify ways to increase and ensure access to medicines in low- and middle-income economies and led a variety of biotechnology and business/strategy consulting projects through an academic trainee-run non-profit consulting organization she co-founded.



Toby Goldsmith, MD is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Emory University, Atlanta. From 1996 to 1999, Dr. Goldsmith was the director of the Women's Mental Health Program at the University of Cincinnati and continued in a similar position at the University of Florida from 1999 to 2005. She joined the Emory Women's Mental Health Program in 2006. Dr. Goldsmith was raised and educated in New York, where she attended Cornell University. In 1991, Dr. Goldsmith received her medical degree magna cum laude from the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the State University of New York at Buffalo. At graduation, Dr. Goldsmith was awarded the Gilbert M. Beck Memorial Prize in Psychiatry and the Janet M. Glasgow Award for Women in Medicine. At Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Dr. Goldsmith completed her residency in adult psychiatry. She served as chief resident from 1994-1995. She was the recipient of the 1995 Marc Hollander Award for Outstanding Performance as a Psychiatry Resident. While Dr. Goldsmith has been involved in psychiatric research throughout her career, she is primarily invested in the clinical care of women, as well as educating others about psychiatric illness. She has taught medical students, residents and fellow physicians and was given The Golden Apple for Excellence in Psychiatric Residency Education at the University of Cincinnati. She has also spoken at symposia for women, including Speaking of Women's Health. Dr. Goldsmith's primary clinical interest is in the treatment of mood disorders in pregnant and postpartum women. She has also been active in the care of patients with obesity and Parkinson's disease.



Miriam Goodfriend is the Director of Advocacy for the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia. Miriam is a native of Atlanta. She earned her Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree from Georgia State University, becoming deeply ingrained in the local landscape of Georgia politics. Miriam's career journey includes pivotal roles such as Advocacy and Awareness Manager and Advocacy Coordinator at NAMI Georgia. In these positions, she effectively demonstrated her commitment to positive impact in health policy, program management, and relationship building. Currently, as the Policy and Research Coordinator at the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia, Miriam continues a strong work ethic and a steadfast commitment to equity. She collaborates with communities and individuals to drive positive policy changes that benefit the well-being of mothers, babies, and families throughout Georgia.



Carol Gormley is Vice President of Government Affairs for Independent Living Systems and has more than 35 years of experience in health policy and government relations. Independent Living Systems is a Florida-based health care services company that provides a range of healthcare management services on behalf of health care plans, health systems, providers, and community-based organizations. ILS provides member-centric health and support solutions to millions of America's Medicare, Medicaid, dually eligible, and Special Needs populations including those requiring Long-Term Services and Supports. Previously she worked as Chief of Staff for Jose Oliva, during his term as Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives. In this role, Gormley oversaw the work of staff in all areas, including policy development, process management, communication, and coordination with the Senate and Executive Office of the Governor. Carol, also, served as Deputy Chief of Staff under Governor Jeb Bush where she participated in the development of the Governor's initiatives related to health and human services and functioned as the Governor's liaison with state agencies such as the Agency for Health Care Administration, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Children and Families, Department of Health, Department of Elder Affairs, Department of Corrections, and Department of Juvenile Justice.



Stephanie Gossman is the Electric Transportation Manager at Georgia Power Company where she leads the department responsible for customer offerings to support the buildout of EV charging infrastructure. Prior to this role, she spent 11 years working in the Power Delivery organization including real-time operations in the control center, transmission planning, field maintenance and storm restoration. Prior to her current role, she served as the assistant to the SVP for Power Delivery with Southern Company Services, to support and promote goals throughout Southern Company's electric operating companies and within the industry. She holds a BS in Electrical Engineering from The University of Alabama, an MS in Electrical Engineering from Georgia Tech, an MBA from Southern Polytechnic State University, and is a licensed PE in the state of Georgia.



Deborah Herron serves as Director, Public Affairs and Government relations at Walmart. She is a driven and highly motivated public affairs and media relations strategist with a proven capability of tackling challenges and leading teams to achieve success through innovation, creativity and thoroughness. Before joining the team at Walmart, Deborah served as Vice President for Vox Public Relations Public Affairs, where she provided strategic, advocacy, and grassroots counsel, advocacy and grassroots counsel, policy research and analysis, media relations, and public consultation consulting.



Cynthia Hicks is Director of Public Affairs at PhRMA focusing on polling and opinion research that supports advocacy communications and strategy. Prior to joining PhRMA, Cynthia worked as a consultant, marketer, and head of polling for a civic technology company where her work supported issue advocacy organizations and policy makers on both sides of the aisle. She is an experienced researcher focused on polling, message development and public affairs campaign execution. Her expertise is in various methodologies and analytics across sectors, including public affairs and technology, for both consumer and B2B research. Cynthia is a proud Los Angeles native and outside of the office she enjoys an early morning HIIT workout and spending time with friends and family.



Leslie Hiner is Vice President of Legal Policy for the nonprofit EdChoice. Leslie is an attorney with extensive state legislative and executive branch experience. In Indiana, she was the first woman chief of staff to the speaker of the house, counsel to the senate president pro tempore, and general counsel/elections deputy to the Secretary of State. She is also a former small business owner, and former litigator in private practice. A founding board member of one of Indiana's first charter schools, Leslie served as chairman of the board for the first several years, guiding the school's growth from about 150 to over 1000 students. She was also directly involved in developing Indiana's original charter school law, one of the best in the nation, and Indiana's voucher law, the largest in the country to date. Leslie is a member of the American Enterprise Institute Leadership Network, serves on the Schools That Can National Advisory Council, and is a Policy Advisor for The Heartland Institute. Leslie is a long-time member of the Federalist Society and a Lugar Series Excellence in Public Service alumna. A native of Ohio, she earned her Juris Doctorate from the University of Akron School of Law, her Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of Wooster, and attended Rostad Teachers College as an exchange student in Sweden where she was a student teacher in grades 2 and 3.



Dr. Brad Jordan is the Associate Vice President of Regulatory Policy and Strategy at Eli Lilly, where he is responsible for the regulatory policy strategy for Lilly's cardiometabolic and immunology therapeutic areas. Dr. Jordan joined Lilly from Flatiron Health, an oncology real-world data company, where he spent three years as the head of Regulatory Policy and was responsible for Flatiron's global regulatory policy and government affairs strategy. Prior to his role at Flatiron, he spent 17 years in the Discovery Research and Regulatory Affairs organizations at Amgen, where he led global regulatory policy strategy for biologics and biosimilars and established regulatory policy support for Amgen's oncology therapeutic area. Dr. Jordan has served as a representative to numerous trade associations, including PhRMA, BIO, and IFPMA, and was responsible for initiating and leading numerous engagements with global regulatory bodies (FDA, Health Canada, EMA, MHRA, and WHO). Prior to Amgen, Dr. Jordan received his Ph.D. from the University of Arkansas in 2004 and was a postdoctoral fellow at St. Jude Children's research hospital, where he studied the mechanism of bacterial infections and was a co-developer of a peptide-based meningitis vaccine.



Katie Watson Jordan is a Product Strategy & Governance Manager at Meta where she spearheads the Llama Impact Program, encompassing Grants, Awards, and local technical development initiatives, as well as community building efforts for open-source AI developers who are using technology to drive social and economic value. Prior to joining Meta, Katie was the Director, Public Policy and Technology at the Internet Society where she developed and led engagement on an array of internet policy issues, including privacy, interoperability, content moderation, and broadband access. She also previously worked on related initiatives at Public Knowledge and Next Century Cities. Katie received her BA in Media Studies and Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia



Alpa Khushalani is the Director of Research of Home Health for Rare Diseases Research, LLC, working with CROs and sponsors to provide customized solutions for mobile research nursing services, IP Pharmacy and Central Lab services for hybrid and decentralized clinical trials. She drives RHH operations from recruitment to deployment of mobile research nurses to participants' homes for conducting clinical trial visits across all US states. Additionally, in this role Alpa works with specialized pharmacies to prepare, ship, monitor and deliver Investigational Products (IP) for research home health visits. With significant real-life experience in clinical trials and research home health as a parent to a child with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), she is a driven, innovative and results-oriented rare disease advocate with a passion for making a positive impact in the lives of people with serious medical conditions.



Natalie Knight has over 20 years of experience in the public and private sectors in the agriculture, finance, water, and wastewater industries. Her experience across these industries as they intersected with governments at the local, state, and federal levels has positioned her well for her role as Metro Atlanta Client Service Leader and Government Relations Director for Barge Design Solutions Atlanta Office. Before joining Barge Design Solutions in September 2019, Natalie spent 12 years with the City of Atlanta in the Department of Watershed Management, the Mayor's Office, and the Department of Finance. In addition, with six years of experience in corporate Government Relations with DuPont and CH2M/Jacobs Engineering as Southeast Government Relations Director, Natalie is uniquely prepared to be the Director of State and Local Government Relations at Impact Public Affairs. Natalie earned a Master of Public Administration from Iowa State University in 2005 and a Bachelor of Science in Plant and Soil Science from Tuskegee University in 2001. She is also a certified Project Management Professional and has obtained certifications in Balanced Scorecard Strategy Planning and Lean Six Sigma. Natalie is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Marietta Roswell Alumnae Chapter.



Quinting Lacewell is an External Affairs and Government Relations Professional for Wells Fargo. He previously served as the Senior Associate Director of the Office of Federal and Regional Affairs for the Executive Office of Washington, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser. Additionally, he served as the Communications Director for the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs providing oversight of communications for 13 Mayoral Community Outreach Offices, including oversight for 36 city agencies social media platforms and was the Editor and Chief of the Join Mayor Bowser in Community Newsletter to over 200,000 subscribers. Quinting has served in the administration of three leading Democratic Mayors including former Atlanta Mayor's Kasim Reed and Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms. There he was responsible for providing strategic counsel on message development for the Mayor and the Atlanta City Council. Quinting also served as the Deputy Communications Director for the grand opening of Tyler Perry Studios where he managed public relations strategy and all press logistics for the Grand Opening of Tyler Perry Studios. Quinting is a native of Newark, New Jersey he received his B.A. from Clark Atlanta University in 2013 and obtained a Master of Arts Degree in Public Relations in 2015. Quinting serves as the youngest Co-Chair in the history of the US Conference of Mayor's Business Council, The Black Innovation Alliance Advisory Board, The Board of Directors of the Flake Foundation and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. He lives by the quote "Think Globally, Act Locally".



Sharon Lamberton, MS, RN, FAAN is Deputy Vice President State Policy and External Outreach, at PhRMA. Ms. Lamberton works in health policy and state advocacy as a policy analyst/lobbyist, as well conducting third party outreach with provider groups. Trained as a registered nurse with experience in leading clinical trials at the National Institutes of Health, her clinical knowledge adds to her credibility where she works to improve access and affordability to innovative medicines for patients. Prior to working at PhRMA, Ms. Lamberton worked on Capitol Hill, lobbied for long term care issues and Medicare for a senior's association, and worked on rural health issues at the GAO, as well as the Center for Research, Health Policy and Ethics at George Mason University. She currently teaches a health policy class at Georgetown University as adjunct professor and serves on the College of Health and Human Services Advisory Board for GMU.



Shevondah M. Leslie currently serves as the Director of Governmental Affairs and Communications at the Georgia Department of Driver Services. With a career spanning over two decades, she has exhibited remarkable efficacy in championing initiatives that prioritize public safety and excellence in public service. Her journey with the State of Georgia began in 1998 when she commenced her career with the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles as a Parole Officer. Over the years she's worked for various agencies in state government such as the Georgia Department of Corrections, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), and Georgia Department of Community Supervision (DCS). Shevondah's educational achievements and community involvement are equally impressive, holding a Master's degree in public administration from Columbus State University and a BA in Criminal Justice from Mercer University (Macon, GA). Additionally, she is a P.O.S.T certified instructor and has attended numerous leadership training courses, further enhancing her professional prowess. Shevondah serves her community as a member of the DeKalb County Board for the Boys and Girls Club of Metro Atlanta and Co-Chair of her local Principal Advisory Council.



Nicole Lopez is Global Director of Youth Safety Policy at Meta. An experienced trust and safety executive, she oversees Meta's Youth Safety Policy team, whose job is to ensure the prioritization of youth safety and well-being when it comes to building products and tools, as well as developing policies. Prior to joining Meta, Nicole led Trust & Safety at Outschool, a leading EdTech company. She also worked as a prosecutor for many years, focusing on domestic violence, child safety, and community violence reduction cases. Nicole graduated from Amherst College and University of California, Hastings College of the Law.



Crislyn Lumia is Senior Director, Education and Training at State Government Affairs Council (SGAC), a national association for multi-state government affairs professionals, providing opportunities for networking and professional development. Crislyn obtained her Bachelor of Arts from Syracuse University- Maxwell School in Non-Violence and Change. She previously served as the manager for programs and events for SGAC. Additionally, she was Senior Associate for Education and Training for the National League of Cities.



Rich Marianos is a senior law enforcement consultant, having served more than 27 years at the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives fighting violent crime. He most recently served as Assistant Director in the Office of Public and Governmental Affairs, and as Special Agent in Charge ATF's Washington Field Division. Marianos began his career with ATF in September 1987 in the Chicago Field Division where he worked on complex-gang investigations. and was recognized as a national expert using the continuing criminal enterprise and RICO statutes to dismantle some of the most dangerous street gangs and organized crimes groups in America. In 1997 Marianos was promoted to resident agent in charge of the Colorado Springs Field Office, Phoenix Field Division where he oversaw large-scale investigations into violent crime, to include outlaw motorcycle gangs, ethnic street gangs, and firearms trafficking organizations. In 1998 he was named Incident Commander and led ATF in the shooting investigation at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. During this tour Marianos received two Distinguished Service medals and was ATF employee of the year.



Rebecca McIntosh is the Program Director at Cognitive Neurology, Emory University. Previously she worked as the Project Director for Georgia Memory Net at Emory University Department of Neurology, as well as the Senior Associate Director of the Emory Urban Health Initiative. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Political Science and German Literature from Vanderbilt University and her MA in political science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Erin McKinney is Principal Policy Counsel for AWS State, Local and Education Public Policy. Erin is currently focused on state legislative efforts related to artificial intelligence and other technology policy matters, regularly interacting with internal and external stakeholders and policymakers. Before pivoting to focusing on tech policy, Erin previously worked on the AWS Tax team, and as the State and Local Tax Legal Advisor at IBM. She holds a JD from the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University, and a BA in Gender Studies and Communication from Loyola University Chicago.



Nelly Miles is the Public Affairs Director of Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI). She has been in this position for 8 years and was previously the Public Affairs Deputy Director for the GBI. Additionally, she works as a communications instructor for Julie Parker Communications, a consultancy firm that guides law enforcement, government agencies, universities, and global clients on communicating successfully through crisis or calm.. Nelly obtained her degree in chemistry from Emory University.



Kandice Allen Mitchell is the Vice President of State and Local Government for Ohio River South. She brings a decade of legal and legislative expertise to Ohio River South. She previously served as Southeast Director of State and Local Policy at Enterprise Community Partners, a national housing nonprofit. There she advocated for more investment and equitable access to quality, affordable homes. Prior to that, Kandice worked as an attorney on equitable public policy, efficient internal operating procedures, and employment law defense. Her previous employers include the City of Atlanta (Municipal Court), the Atlanta Board of Education and Greenberg Traurig. In every venue, she built lasting relationships and deep expertise. Kandice earned a bachelor's degree in Economics and Finance from Tennessee State University. She attended John Marshall Law School, where she was an editor of the law journal, authored legal commentary on legislative proposals and was nominated as an outstanding graduate. Kandice is a commissioner for the Atlanta Commission on Women and a member of the Atlanta chapter of the New Leaders Council.



Markela Mitchell is a part of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association. The GTLA is dedicated to protecting the Constitutional promise of justice for all by guaranteeing the right to trial by jury, preserving an independent judiciary, and providing access to the courts for all Georgians, and have been working Since 1956, GTLA has worked tirelessly to ensure that everyday citizens, Georgia families and small businesses



Lynday Moyer is Executive Director of State Government Affairs for Comcast. In her role, she is focused on broadband policy, issues, and initiatives at the State level. Lyndsay joined Comcast in 2009, previously served as Senior Director of Local Government Affairs, and has a unique vantage point into the Company's efforts at the state, local, and community level to ensure our customers are meaningfully connected to high-speed internet. Prior to joining Comcast, Lyndsay worked in Pennsylvania state government and remains active in a number of political and non-profit associations. She resides in the greater Philadelphia area with her family.



Kim Olson is Senior Officer of the Retirement Savings Team at The Pew Charitable Trusts. Her expertise and technical assistance provide state governments studying, legislating, or implementing knowledge into automated savings programs, which provide private sector employees who lack access to workplace retirement savings plans with a simple way to make regular IRA contributions via payroll deduction. Prior to joining Pew, Olson served as policy director to Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Read. In this role, she designed policies, wrote program rules, and advanced legislation to help Oregonians save for the future, most notably through the first-in-the-nation auto-IRA program, OregonSaves. Olson also served as a senior adviser at the Behavioral Insights Team, where she used behavioral science concepts to inform policy and improve public services in state and city governments. She began her career in the U.S. Foreign Service in diplomatic assignments at the U.S. embassies in Bern, Switzerland, and Ankara, Turkey. Olson holds a bachelor's degree in international studies and German from the University of Oregon and a master's degree in German and European studies from Georgetown University.



Craig Orlan is the Director of State and Local Government Relations at the American Honda Motor Company. Craig joined Honda's Government Relations office in 2012 where he oversees the company's legislative affairs, advocacy and public policy efforts before state and local governments. His portfolio includes issues surrounding vehicle safety, zero emission vehicles, consumer privacy, intellectual property, vehicle franchise law and cyber-security. For the past several years Craig has led an industry wide effort to enact legislation in the states to address the proliferation of dangerous counterfeit and nonfunctional airbags. To date, thirty- six states have enacted his model legislation, which has been endorsed by multiple public policy organizations and other industry groups. He is also leading an effort to improve recall completion rates in the states by engaging with motor vehicle commissions and inspection stations. Prior to joining Honda, Craig spent four years at a leading legislative tracking and consulting firm where he supported the state and federal government affairs efforts of multiple corporate, association and non-profit clients. Before entering the private sector, Craig gained legislative experience serving as a Legislative Director in the Maryland House of Delegates for three sessions. Craig holds a Bachelor of Arts degrees in Government and Politics from The University of Maryland, College Park.



Shalamar Parham Shalamar J. Parham, a native of Georgia, is an advocate and award-winning, civic minded attorney and lobbyist. Shalamar obtained her Juris Doctorate degree from Atlanta's John Marshall Law School. Shalamar works as a government relations professional providing lobbying services to clients. Her previous work in state politics includes serving as legal counsel for the Georgia House Democratic Caucus in the Georgia General Assembly and Chief of Staff to a former state representative. Before working at the state capitol, Shalamar founded her own boutique law firm and developed a reputation for her strong advocacy work on behalf of her clients. She is a member of Gate City Bar Association, Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, and the Georgia Asian Pacific American Bar Association. She is an alumna of the 2018 Leadership DeKalb class and the 2012 State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division Leadership Academy class. Shalamar has served the community through a range of other board appointments and leadership roles. Shalamar has been recognized for work by Super Lawyers as a Georgia Rising Star and by James Magazine as a Rising Star Lobbyist. In her free time, Shalamar enjoys traveling and volunteering in the community.



Brandeis Malbrue Parkman, JD is the Chief Executive Officer for the Malbrue Group, where she provides strategic business development guidance to start-ups for state and local government contracts. In this role she has engaged in over 50 contacts to include key decision makers and elected officials to increase C-suite client interaction, and won an estimated \$500k in new business opportunities. She is an experienced Government Relations Strategist with a demonstrated history of managing policy interests. Previously, she worked as the Senior Vice President of State and Local Affairs for Ohio River South. In this role, Drive outcomes for the company's diverse portfolio of clients at the intersection of business, government and community. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English from Spelman College and obtained her J.D. from Georgia State University College of Law.



MaryLea Boatwright Quinn is Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Division of Aging Services for Georgia Department of Human Services. She previously worked as the Director of Government Affairs for the Georgia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. Boatwright Quinn began her career in elder services as a medical social worker. She has worked in a variety of settings, including hospice, long-term care, adult day care, and home health. Boatwright Quinn works to inform community and professional audiences about successful aging in place for Georgia's seniors and has been a strong advocate for senior rights, working to educate legislators on the importance of dementia care. She is on the board of directors for the Georgia Gerontology Society and serves as a member of the Georgia Alzheimer's & Related Dementias (GARD) Advisory Council and the Coalition of Advocates for Georgia's Elderly (CO-AGE). Boatwright Quinn received a bachelor's degree in social work from Auburn University and a master's degree in social work from the University of Denver.



Representative Ellen Read was elected in 2022. She has a bachelor's in molecular biology from Vanderbilt University, and a Masters of Liberal Studies from UNH in Environmental and Socioeconomic Ethics and Policy. Her career experience includes working as a grassroots and field manager with Open Democracy and NH Rebellion, a county coordinator with Public Citizen, and an adjunct professor of American government with Great Bay Community College



Anissa Reed, MPH was named the Director of State and Local Affairs at CTIA in June 2023. Previously, Anissa held key positions at the National Organization for Rare Disorders from September 2020 to June 2023, including Associate Director of State Policy and State Policy Manager for the Eastern Region, focusing on rare disease policy and advocacy efforts. Anissa's background also includes roles such as Arizona Grassroots Manager at the American Cancer Society and Manager of Health Promotions at the American Lung Association. Anissa began her professional journey as a Legislative Health Policy Intern at the Arizona Public Health Association and has experience as a System of Care Coordinator at Mercy Care and Transition Facilitator Team Lead at Valle del Sol. Anissa holds a Master of Public Health degree in Health Policy and Management from the University of New England and a bachelor's degree from the University of Arizona.



Senator Sue Rezin has served as the Deputy Minority Leader of the Illinois State Senate Republican Caucus since 2021 and has served as the Senator for the 38th Senate District in the General Assembly since 2010. Notable accomplishments include Leader Rezin's establishment of the Operations Engineering and Technician (OET) program at Joliet Junior College, the Grundy County Summer Internship Program, and the Illinois Valley Flood Resiliency Alliance (IVFRA). The OET program helps provide a pipeline for high school students seeking to join Illinois' growing energy and manufacturing industries. The summer internship program offers students hands-on experience at high-quality companies within Grundy County. Meanwhile, the IVFRA brings communities, local governments, and emergency personnel together to help them prepare for extreme weather events, especially floods. Additionally, Leader Rezin served on the Education Funding Reform Commission, which helped guide the state's implementation of its historic Evidence-Based Educational Formula. On the national level, Leader Rezin serves as the Chair of the National Foundation for Women Legislators. She is also an active member of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), currently serving as co-chair of the Task Force on Energy Supply. Leader Rezin is a graduate of Augustana College, where she earned a degree in International Business and Political Science with a minor in Hispanic Studies. She is also a graduate of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government's Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program.



DeRetta Rhodes, Ph.D. is the Executive Vice President, Chief Culture Officer of the Atlanta Braves. In her fifth season with the Braves, she joined the organization as Senior Vice President of Human Resources before getting promoted to Executive Vice President, Chief People Capital Officer. Dr. Rhodes oversees communications, community affairs and people capital initiatives for the organization's Major League and The Battery Atlanta operations. Prior to joining the Braves, Dr. Rhodes was the Executive Vice President/Chief Human Resources Officer of the YMCA of Metro Atlanta, Vice President of Human Resources at First Data, Vice President of Human Resources for Turner Broadcasting and held leadership positions at Ernst & Young, ADP, HomeGrocer.com and YUM Brand. Dr. Rhodes received her undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia, her Master's in Business Administration from Clark Atlanta University and her Ph.D. in adult education from the University of Georgia. She is a certified facilitator for the Benchmark 360 assessment by the Center for Creative Leadership, DISC coach and facilitator, qualified facilitator for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), HOGAN Assessment and HOGAN 360. Dr. Rhodes has also served in the Metro Atlanta community, in various board member roles and activities, most recently Woodruff Arts Center, 21st Century Leaders, Goodwill of North Georgia, 21st Century Leaders, and TedX UGA Speaker (March 2018). She was also recognized as 100 Women of Influence by the Atlanta Business League, and also as National Diversity & Leadership Top 100 HR Professionals.



Oneisha Freeman Rojas is a respected leader in the field of technology access, with over two decades of experience in the technology industry. As the Digital Connectivity Manager at the Georgia Technology Authority, she is a part of the state broadband team. In this role, she is responsible for leading digital inclusion efforts that ensure all Georgians' access to the internet and technology, regardless of their zip code or economic status. Oneisha's career began in 1998, where she worked as a Technical Support Analyst for a Fintech company. Since then, she has worked to close the digital divide through various nonprofit organizations, where she developed programs and built partnerships that helped community members build their technology skills, gain access to devices, and connect to the internet. Oneisha holds a Bachelor degree in Marketing and a Certification in Digital Equity, and is currently pursuing an MBA from the University of Georgia. This unique combination of education, certification, and practical experience gives her a valuable perspective on the intersection of technology, policy, and community development. Oneisha is a proud veteran who served in the United States Army Reserves as an Automated Logistical Specialist. She is also a devoted wife and mother of two sons.



Jennifer Rosen is Vice President of State Affairs at the Alzheimer's Association and the Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM), a separately incorporated advocacy affiliate of the Association. She oversees the Association's gubernatorial and legislative engagement strategy for all 50 states, manages state policy development efforts, and leads a team that provides direct support to policy staff in the field to advance the enactment of state legislative and regulatory priorities nationwide. Prior to joining the Alzheimer's Association and AIM, she served as Director of Policy and Communications for the National Foundation for Women Legislators, and she continues to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for Women in Government Relations. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science and history from The George Washington University.



Tracy Sandin is the Senior Vice President of Government Relations at Security Finance. In this role she oversees all legislative, regulatory and public affairs nationally in the US operating territory, and actively participates in state and federal trades on behalf of Security. In addition, is a part of the California Issues Forum Board of Directors, a nonprofit educational forum providing information with regard to how certain segments of business operate and are meeting challenges within the current environment. Tracy obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in business/healthcare management from California State University, Fresno, and completed her masters of science in marriage, family, and child therapy from the University of Phoenix.



Representative Kim Schofield was elected to the Georgia General Assembly in 2017 and serves on the Small Business Development, Interstate Cooperation and Health and Human Service committees. She is an appointed member to the Atlanta Commission on Women. Kim's professional career spans across healthcare, financial, transportation, education and nonprofit agencies. Kim has more than 15 years of experience in consulting, coaching, teaching, training workshops and engagement seminars, bringing alignment within political, corporate, community, law enforcement, healthcare and faith-based organizations. Kim is a small business owner. As a personal development strategist, her coaching practice, Other People's Potential Coaching, works with individuals and organizations to position them for maximizing their capacity. Kim holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in theology and organizational leadership. In 2020, she obtained a doctorate from Oral Roberts University. In her health policy work, Kim was appointed by former Governor Nathan Deal to serve as the chair of the Georgia Council on Lupus Education and Awareness. She holds a federal appointment to the Health IT Policy Committee and crafts legislative policy recommendations to the National Coordinator for Health IT as a framework for the development and adoption of a nationwide health information infrastructure. Kim has also worked as a lupus research specialist at the Emory School of Medicine, and she serves as an advocacy chair for the Georgia Chapter of the Lupus Foundation of America.



Representative Sandra Scott has served in the Georgia House of Representatives since 2010. She joined the United States Army (SSG) in 1984, and served in Seoul, Korea, Ft. Hood, Texas, and Nurnberg, Germany. She earned a B.S. from Florida A&M University School of Business and Industry in Business Management and received her teaching certification from Armstrong State University in 1994. Representative Scott She serves on the following House Committees: Defense and Veterans Affairs, Human Relations and Aging, Science and Technology, Reapportionment, and Special Rules. Scott was the 2013 Georgia Legislative Black Caucus Legislator of the Year and a 2013 NFWL Women of Excellence Winner. She is the incoming Chair of the National Foundation for Women Legislators.



Kimberly Seals is the Executive Director of Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia (HMHBGA). Kimberly began her role on July 16, 2024, and brings a wealth of experience in maternal and child health, having dedicated over 20 years to improving health outcomes for mothers and babies. In her previous roles, Kimberly has successfully led numerous initiatives aimed at reducing maternal and infant mortality, improving prenatal care, and supporting community-based health programs. She is known for her strategic vision, collaborative approach, and dedication to empowering communities.



Christine Sedorook is a dedicated and compassionate school counselor with 10 years of experience in the education field. She holds a Master's Degree in School Counseling and a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology which has equipped her with the knowledge and skills necessary to guide young individuals through the challenges of their academic and personal development. Throughout her decade-long career in education, Christine has developed a strong commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive atmosphere for all students. She believes in the importance of emotional well-being as a fundamental part of learning and strives to create a safe space where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and concerns. Christine Sedorook continues to inspire and empower students, guiding them on their unique paths and encouraging them to reach their full potential.



Jessica Simmons is the Deputy State Chief Information Officer and Executive Director of the Georgia Broadband Program. Ms. Simmons oversees broadband development and other projects as Georgia continues to invest in new infrastructure to bring opportunity to all constituents, no matter their zip code. She came to GTA in July 2021 from the Georgia Department of Revenue, where she served as Deputy Commissioner and oversaw the Legal Affairs and Tax Policy Division, law enforcement divisions, and communications and legislative programs. Ms. Simmons began her career in public service in the Georgia Office of the Secretary of State. After working in Washington, D.C., she returned to Georgia as Assistant Director of the Georgia Elections Division and then Chief of Staff in the Office of the Secretary of State. A native of Marietta, Georgia, Ms. Simmons holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Georgia and was named to UGA's 40 Under 40 Class of 2024. She and her husband, Matt, live with their daughter and son in Sandy Springs, Georgia.



Megan Simmons is the Associate Director of State Government Affairs at Everytown for Gun Safety, the largest gun violence prevention organization in the United States. She is, also, the operations advisor for Student Voice. She obtained her degree in sociology and political science from Barnard College.



Shawn Snyder is a managing director of Deloitte's government and public sector practice with over twenty years of management consulting experience across both commercial organizations and government agencies. Shawn specializes in complex technology-enabled business transformations that allow government organizations to improve their core operations and modernize their IT infrastructure to support future growth and innovation. Shawn has a proven track record of successfully leading transformations (strategy through execution) delivering significant ROI through reduced operating and administrative costs and measurable customer experience improvements. In addition, Shawn also serves as the technology campus champion at Georgia Tech and is very active with recruiting and developing business technology talent.



Nikki Randall Stroud was born and raised in Macon Georgia, the youngest of five children born to the Honorable William C. and Laretta Fults Randall. She attended Bibb County Public Schools and is a graduate of Tennessee State University in Nashville TN, where she received a Bachelors' of Business Administration degree, she also holds a Masters of Public Health from Mercer University School of Medicine. Ms. Randall Stroud, a third generation elected official, made history in 1999 by becoming the first African American female to be elected to the Georgia General Assembly from Middle Georgia. After only 5 years of service she was appointed chair of the Interstate Cooperation committee making her the youngest serving committee chair ever appointed. During her 17-year tenure she was elected by her peers to serve in other leadership positions in the house including: Secretary and Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus, Chair of the Women's Legislative Caucus, Chairwoman of the Bibb County Legislative Delegation, and was named Legislator of the year in 2001. She retired from the Georgia General Assembly in December 2016. She currently serves as the Director of Government Affairs for the Fulton County Superior & Magistrate courts Clerks's office. Ms. Randall Stroud is a distinguished alumnus of Leadership Macon (1998) & Leadership Georgia (2004). She is also an active member of the Democratic Party of Georgia, Healthcare Businesswomen's Association, Macon Chapter of the LINKS, Incorporated, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. Additionally she is the founder of Black Girl Lobby , an organization committed to exposing young black women to the lobbying profession and supporting the advancement of black female lobbyist. Randall Stroud is member of the Beulahland Bible Church, where she works with the, Beulahland Abroad Ministry, Women of Worship ministry and sings in the Women's choir. When she is not working she enjoys spending time and traveling with her amazing husband Rodney, reading, mentoring rising political leaders, and volunteering with senior and youth organizations.



Catherine Tang is the Director of Government Affairs for Everytown for Gun Safety. She joined the non-profit in 2018. Before her current role Catherine worked as the organization's Regional Director and State Legislative Manager. In addition, she previously worked as the American Federation of Teachers National Project Staff Organizer for the Midwest Organizing Project. Catherine obtained a bachelor's degree in Women's Studies and International Studies from Emory University.



Masonia Traylor is a Community Advisory Board Member for The Well Project of Atlanta, Georgia. She received her undergraduate degree at the Andrew Young School of Public Policy Studies at Georgia State University with a concentration in Nonprofit Management and Leadership. She is an internationally recognized Community Champion for HIV/AIDS. She has dedicated herself as a passionate HIV/AIDS activist and advocates focusing on youth, women, and reproductive justice. She has served as a youth representative and volunteer of organizations such as Georgia's Community HIV Prevention Planning Group, In Our Own Voice, Sister Love Inc., AID Atlanta, The Red Pump Project, and the Ryan White Planning Council. With features in *People Magazine*, *Time Magazine*, and *Essence Magazine*, she uses her "She's Positive" campaign to eliminate stigma and bring attention to barriers surrounding life-threatening issues of people living with HIV/AIDS.



Jody Thomas has served as Executive Director of NFWL since December 2013. As such, she is responsible for the leadership and management of NFWL according to the strategic direction set by the Board of Directors. Prior to that, she was National Finance Director of two presidential campaigns, managed numerous issue-oriented groups and a vast array of special events, campaigns and committees. Jody was a partner at a public affairs firm for six years. For eight years she managed all fundraising and political activity for Oklahoma Congressman J.C. Watts. She was then appointed by President George W. Bush as Director of Public Liaison for the Office of Personnel Management. Jody holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Central Oklahoma. She is the 2021 recipient of the Women in Government Relations Lifetime Achievement Award.



Shanise Thomason is the Founder of Khroma Kolors and is the Founder and CEO of Tressed Inc., a technology company that is revolutionizing the beauty industry starting with wigs and hair extensions. With over 20 years of experience in the beauty industry, Shanise is a seasoned and successful entrepreneur, marketer, and strategist. In addition, Shanise is a Board Member of Girls Inc. of Columbus & Phenix-Russell.



Danica Thompson is the Vice President of McGuireWoods. She is experienced in civic engagement with a focus in government relations. She currently serves as a vice president of state government relations where she provides strategic advice and lobbying services to help clients meet their corporate and public affairs objectives. She has extensive experience working with clients in the areas of education, healthcare, diagnostic laboratories, procurement and transportation on both the state and local levels. Prior to joining McGuireWoods Consulting, Danica worked with state elected officials for 13 years at the Atlanta-based Georgia Legislative Black Caucus, Inc. Starting as a legislative intern, she seamlessly rose through the organization's ranks to the position of executive director where she managed the daily operations of the caucus, coordinated legislative conferences, spearheaded the legislative intern program and ensured that the caucus fulfilled its mission to protect the general welfare of people of color, the disadvantaged and the underserved citizens throughout the state of Georgia. Throughout her professional career Danica has committed herself to making a difference at work and within her community. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and the Georgia Women's Policy Institute. Presently, Danica serves as chair of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators Corporate Roundtable Gaming, Sports and Entertainment Policy Committee, serves as a board member for the United Methodist Children's Home, and volunteers as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) to support children in foster care. She is a Council for Quality Growth Emerging Leader and serves as an ambassador with the Grady Ambassador Force, which consists of nearly 100 community leaders creating awareness and community support for the Grady Health System and chairs the Marsy's Law for Georgia Advisory Committee to ensure victims of crime receive their constitutional rights in court proceedings. Danica has been recognized by her peers as a Top and Rising Star lobbyist in the *James* magazine, acknowledged by the *Atlanta Tribune* for providing pro bono services related to changing age requirements in Georgia's child marriage law, and named as Spelman College's *Fierce 40 Under 40* Alumni. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Spelman College and a Juris Doctorate from Birmingham School of Law.

