

THE KENTUCKY GAZETTE'S
2023 NOTABLE WOMEN
IN KENTUCKY POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT



CONGRATULATIONS
**REBECCA
HARTSOUGH**

KENTUCKY
NOTABLE
WOMEN



THE KENTUCKY GAZETTE'S 2023 NOTABLE WOMEN IN KENTUCKY POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

A Note from the Publisher

Dear Readers,

Thank you for reading and participating in this fourth edition of “Notable Women in Kentucky Politics and Government.” This special edition of The Kentucky Gazette celebrates the women who work in public affairs to advance the commonwealth.

The women showcased here may not always align politically or ideologically with each other, they may argue opposite sides of an issue, but they do have a singular goal: To make Kentucky better in whatever way they see possible.

Some of these women work toward that goal by serving in elected office, some by advocating for business and economic growth, others by fulfilling the missions of nonprofits that work closely with government agencies that, too, often are headed by women.

Women are leaders in all three branches of Kentucky government, they are CEOs and executive directors, they are lobbyists and lawyers and engineers. They also are band moms and board members, veterans and farmers.

In short, the women on these pages represent some of

the most powerful and intelligent leaders in their communities, their regions and the commonwealth.

Women make up just over half – 50.3% – of the Kentucky population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, but they generally don’t make up half of the leadership in the public entities or in private business in the commonwealth.

The Kentucky General Assembly is dominated by men. In the Kentucky Senate, nine of 38 members, or 24%, of the senators are women. This is an increase over last year, when six senators were women, then comprising 16% of the upper chamber in 2022.

Things are pretty much status quo in the lower chamber from last year. In the Kentucky House of Representatives, 33 of 100 members are women, an increase of one member and 1% over last year.

In the administration of Gov. Andy Beshear, three of 11 cabinet secretaries (Energy and Environment Cabinet, Finance and Administration Cabinet, and the Personnel Cabinet), the lieutenant governor and Beshear’s chief of staff are women. Last year, four cabinet secretaries were women.

The judicial branch is the most balanced of the three branches. Three of seven members of the Kentucky Su-

preme Court are women, including one featured in these pages, and women make up the majority on the Kentucky Court of Appeals, where eight of 14 judges are women.

In the Fourth Estate, most members of the Capital Press Corps are men.

Earlier this year, The Kentucky Gazette asked its members and social media followers to nominate women who make a difference in Kentucky public affairs. Nominators emailed us names and reasons why these women should be honored. Several of these women were nominated by more than one person.

You’ll also notice a few people this year who have been honored in past years. We deliberated about including people another time and decided we would, since their work in the intervening time warrants new attention.

The women showcased in these pages are leaders in the field of public affairs.

Thank you for reading The Kentucky Gazette.

Laura Cullen Glasscock
Editor and Publisher

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The Kentucky Gazette

Laura Cullen Glasscock *editor, publisher*

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AMY ALVEY

OLDHAM COUNTY

Amy Alvey has been involved in local government for 25 years and most recently became the Oldham County clerk in August 2022.

As county clerk, Alvey oversees an office that is the legal depository for all county records, including deeds, wills, mortgages and many other records, as well as the registration of all the vehicles within the county. She also is charged with overseeing the election process from start to finish each election cycle.

Before becoming clerk, she served as assistant planning director in the planning and zoning office, where she worked with developers to ensure Oldham County moved forward with smart, managed growth.

Alvey began her public service career in 1998 as the finance officer and grants administrator for the Oldham County Fiscal Court before being appointed county treasurer in 2004. She later served as controller, board treasurer and interim director for the Oldham County Sewer District.

She served on the LaGrange Fire Protection District board, starting in 2010, and chaired the board from 2013 to 2022.

As a family advocate for the Brain Injury Alliance of Kentucky, her family meets with the families and loved ones of those who have suffered a traumatic brain injury to give them hope and insight into the road to recovery by sharing her story.

A fourth generation Oldham Countian, she lives in LaGrange with her husband of 25 years, Tim. They have three daughters and two grandchildren.



KIMBERLY HENDERSON BAIRD

FAYETTE COUNTY

Kimberly Henderson Baird serves as the Fayette commonwealth's attorney in Lexington. She began her career as an assistant commonwealth's attorney in 1996 and was promoted to first assistant in 2016. She was appointed by Gov. Andy Beshear to fill the remainder of her predecessor's term, beginning Oct. 1, 2022.

Baird is the first African American woman in Kentucky and the first African American in Fayette County to serve in the role of commonwealth's attorney. She is a member of the office's Special Victim's Unit, focusing on crimes committed against children, facilitating the multi-disciplinary team meetings held at the Children's Advocacy Center, which investigates and prosecutes child sexual abuse cases, and she serves on its board of directors.

She serves on numerous local, state and national boards, and also was inducted as a fellow into the prestigious American College of Trial Lawyers.

She was born and raised in Lexington. She graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1993 and the UK College of Law in 1996.

She is the board treasurer for the Community Action Council and has served as chair of Lexington's Annual Roots and Heritage Festival for the past 18 years. She is an honorary member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. and serves as the Usher Board president at Historic Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church, where she has been a member for over 40 years.



ALLISON BALL

KENTUCKY TREASURER'S OFFICE

Allison Ball is the 38th state treasurer of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. A University of Kentucky College of Law graduate, Ball practiced bankruptcy law and spent time as an assistant Floyd County attorney before serving as state treasurer.

She currently is serving her second term as Kentucky State treasurer. She is a watchdog for taxpayer dollars and a national leader for financial empowerment. She advocated for the creation of Kentucky's financial literacy high-school graduation requirement, established the Kentucky Financial Empowerment Coalition and Database, and successfully championed the creation of the Kentucky Financial Empowerment Commission.

Since taking office, she has returned a record \$171 million in unclaimed property and returned more in a single term than any state treasurer in Kentucky history. She also launched a new transparency website, making it easier for Kentuckians to see how state government is spending their money.

Her office has thwarted millions of dollars in fraud attempts on the commonwealth. Additionally, Ball started a savings and investment program for Kentuckians with disabilities called STABLE Kentucky.

Ball and her husband, Dr. Asa James Swan, have two children, Levi and Marigold.



STEPHANIE BELL

WINDSTREAM

Stephanie Bell is vice president of government affairs at Windstream, a leading provider of advanced network communications and technology solutions. In that role, Bell spearheads policy on state and local levels, and she works closely with communities across the commonwealth.

Prior to her position at Windstream, Bell spent more than 20 years in government, which included serving on the executive staff in the governor's and lieutenant governor's offices as well as serving as deputy executive director of the Kentucky Public Service Commission.

Bell also previously owned and operated a consulting business with a focus on energy, telecommunications and lobbying.

She recently was elected to serve on the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. In addition to her role on the chamber's board, she previously served as the chair of the chamber's Infrastructure and Technology Policy Council.

Bell also serves as chair and trustee for the Kentucky Community and Technical College System Foundation Board. Recently, she was appointed by Gov. Andy Beshear to serve a four-year term on the Tourism Development Authority.

Her past roles include serving as a committee chair of the Kentucky Association of Economic Development and as an executive committee member of the Kentucky Heart Association Annual Gala.

Bell holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky.



ANGELA BILLINGS
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION

Angela Billings is a U.S. Air Force veteran, strategic communicator, entrepreneur and public speaker.

In her role as communication director with the Kentucky Senate majority, Billings and her team handle communication for Republican majority leadership and all Republican state senators.

From press conferences, news releases and public statements to Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, Billings and her team leverage available platforms to promote conservative legislation and Kentucky’s business-friendly environment.

Billings’ active yet measured approach has helped her successfully navigate the most challenging of public relations storms, including the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the Pentagon, airplane crashes, base closures, unit deployments, troops in contact and downed helicopters in combat against the Taliban.

While serving in the Air Force, Billings performed in many high-profile positions including international communication assignments in Germany, Korea and Afghanistan, and as the senior Air Force representative in New York City.

Before coming to the Kentucky Senate, Billings worked with the University of Louisville and Frazier Rehab, Flager Memorial Hospital Foundation, Visually Impaired Preschool Services and the Jefferson County Republican Party.

Billings is completing her first book, “Command the Crisis, Navigate Chaos with Battle-Tested Public Relations and Communication Strategies,” which will be available in 2024.



ANGELA MCCORMICK BISIG
KENTUCKY SUPREME COURT

Angela McCormick Bisig was elected to the Kentucky Supreme Court in November 2022. She serves the Fourth Supreme Court District, which is Jefferson County.

Bisig has been a member of the Kentucky judiciary for 21 years. She has served in both district and circuit courts and as chief judge of both terms. She is also one of two founding circuit judges in the commonwealth who presided over cases on a newly formed business court.

Bisig worked as a juvenile court judge for many years. She was a founding member of a restorative-justice program that serves to rehabilitate juveniles and bring healing to crime victims. She helped establish a special program called the Enhanced Supervision Docket, providing court supervision of domestic violence offenders. She also founded Jefferson County’s only language- and cultural-immersion training for court system partners.

Bisig is on the board of directors of the Volunteers of America. She served for many years on the board of directors of the World Affairs Council and regularly hosts international delegations in her home. She served on many other boards, including Dare to Care, Sister Cities of Louisville and the University of Louisville. Bisig was voted the Judge of the Year by the Louisville Bar Association in 2013 and 2020. She was named Trial Judge of the Year in 2021 by the American Board of Trial Advocates. She was named the Kentucky Justice Association Judge of the Year in 2016. She is a Muhammad Ali Daughter of Greatness.

She is married to Arnold Rivera and has three adult children and two stepchildren.





Run & Switch
PUBLIC RELATIONS

MARY JANE RODES,
KAYLEE PRICE
& ASHLEY BITTERS

2023 NOTABLE WOMEN
IN POLITICS AND
GOVERNMENT

Congratulations!

ASHLEY TRAYLOR BITTERS

RUNSWITCH PR

Ashley Bitters is an account director at RunSwitch PR, the largest public relations and public affairs firm in the commonwealth.

Throughout her tenure at RunSwitch, Bitters has excelled at managing public affairs and health-care communication campaigns on the federal and state levels. She has been at the forefront of numerous statewide issue advocacy campaigns to protect patient access to care, promote life science innovation and bolster Kentucky's signature horse racing industry.

Bitters combines her experience in media with a keen knowledge of public policy and government relations to successfully influence legislative outcomes and deliver award-winning results for many Fortune 500 clients.

Prior to joining RunSwitch, Bitters was an evening news producer for the ABC affiliate in Henderson, Kentucky.

Originally from Birmingham, Alabama, Bitters moved to Kentucky to attend Murray State University. During that time, she served as editor-in-chief of The Murray State News, a role in which she supervised the production of the award-winning weekly campus newspaper.

Outside of work, Bitters enjoys speaking to young professionals about the intersection of communications and government, and volunteering for the Republican Party of Kentucky.

Bitters earned a bachelor's degree in TV production and journalism from Murray State University in 2019. She's also a 2022 graduate of Leadership Kentucky's Elevate Kentucky program.

She and her husband, Ryan, live in Louisville with their goldendoodle, Bourbon.



TRILLE BOTTOM

BOYLE COUNTY

Appointed Boyle County clerk in October 2008, Bottom has run three elections successfully, and she is currently the Boyle County judge executive. As judge executive, her duties include overseeing county departments and working with the department heads in managing employees, preparing the county's \$70 million budget while being fiscally responsible and leading fiscal court meetings.

Bottom began her career with county government in June 1989, working for the Boyle County Sheriff's Department.

She has a passion for helping people in her community through her service with Kiwanis Club of Danville and other organizations. In fact, she has printed her motto on her business cards: "Helping you is what we do." A favorite part of her job is meeting with constituents and listening to their input. She takes her lead from what she hears from her community.

A 1984 graduate of Boyle County High School, Bottom received an associate of science degree in accounting and business administration from Kentucky College of Business in 1986.

She lives with her husband, Mark, on a farm near Perryville where the Bottom family raises beef cattle. Their son Trent and his wife, Lindsey, live in Danville with two children. Son Tatum and his wife, Paige, live in Perryville and have one son.

Bottom is a member of Antioch United Methodist Church, past president of the Kentucky County Clerk's Association, past president and lieutenant governor of Kiwanis. She is a current member of Friends of the Library and serves on numerous boards.



KA'SONDR A BROWN

MENDING COUNSELING AND TRAUMA SERVICES

Ka'Sondra Brown, a parenting educator and targeted case manager at Mended Counseling and Trauma Services, is deeply committed to addressing disparities affecting families, particularly the disproportionate impact of drugs and alcohol on people of color.

With a bachelor of science degree from Kentucky State University and a certificate in family development from Cornell University, Brown contributes to various Kentucky boards and committees. Notably, Brown served as commissioner of the Kentucky Community Volunteerism and Service, which is housed in the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, and is vice chair for Serve Kentucky.

Her advocacy and community involvement extend to her role on the FoodChain Board of Directors since 2019, where she has championed fresh food access and education, focusing on seniors' dietary needs. During the initial COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns, Brown played a pivotal role in developing food distribution services, now known as Nourish Lexington. Nourish has distributed over 801,263 meals since March 2020. One of her proudest achievements is her appointment to the board of directors for Voices of Hope-Lexington, a non-profit organization staffed by individuals in recovery from substance use disorder.

Brown for 10 years has been a foster parent with the Department of Community Based Services and NECCO Foster Care. In 2021, Brown was awarded Transfiguring Adoption's The Best Foster Parent in the United States award.



ADRIENNE BUSH

HOMELESS AND HOUSING COALITION

Since 2017, Adrienne Bush has served as executive director of the Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky in Frankfort.

The statewide coalition values housing as a human right and affirms its mission to eliminate the threat of homelessness and fulfill the promise of affordable housing.

At HHCK, she is responsible for day-to-day organizational management, leading state and federal advocacy efforts and overseeing program staff.

Her current role at HHCK comes after 15 years of direct service provision in the homeless, housing and early childhood education fields in Hazard and Perry County and having served on HHCK's board of directors from 2006 to 2015.

Bush staffs the statutorily authorized Kentucky Interagency Council on Homelessness on behalf of HHCK, has served on the Balance-of-State Continuum of Care Advisory Board since 2012, and currently is serving in appointed positions on the Kentucky Affordable Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee and the Persons Reentering Society Technical Advisory Committee to the Advisory Council on Medical Assistance.

She lives in Frankfort with her family, where she is currently learning how to be a supportive marching band booster mom at Western Hills High School.



JAMIE BEWLEY BYRD
BARREN COUNTY

Jamie Bewley Byrd currently serves as the county judge executive for Barren County. As county judge executive, Byrd is responsible for the administration of the affairs of the county. Those affairs include serving on the Barren County Fiscal Court and executing its ordinances and resolutions, as well as managing all of county government. She first was elected in November of 2022.

She is a fifth-generation Barren County native. She received full-ride scholarships to the dual engineering program of Western Kentucky University and the University of Kentucky. In 2004, she graduated with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering and minor in math and physics from the University of Kentucky.

Byrd has been a licensed professional engineer since 2009, and she worked for the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet in the state highway engineer's office. She managed the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet scholarship program, was the engineer career path coordinator, was a Kentucky Transportation Research Center Program coordinator and was a Transportation Research Board Kentucky state representative.

Since leaving the Transportation Cabinet in 2011, Byrd has focused much of her time on bringing business and economic growth to Barren County and the surrounding areas. She is the founder and CEO of The Cheer Leader Magazine and TCLM. She is the owner of Cheerville Athletics and Extreme Gymnastics. She is married to local businessman, Daniel Byrd, and they have four children: Shelby, Sydney, Saylor and Sawyer.



ANGIE CAIN
KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT
FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Angie Cain is a field representative to Gov. Andy Beshear in the Department for Local Government, where she serves as a liaison for local elected officials and constituents in the northern part of Kentucky. She has held this role since Beshear's term began in 2019. Cain's responsibilities include staffing the governor and lieutenant governor at events, attending meetings with community leaders, and talking with judge executives, mayors and constituents about concerns, helping to keep communication with state government open and accessible.

In the past, she was a political consultant, focusing on campaign finance, compliance and fundraising. She also served six years in former U.S. Rep. Ken Lucas's administration as a legislative aide in Washington D.C. and later as district director.

Balancing a 30-year career while raising children, Cain always prioritized serving her community and being an active parent volunteer, as well as mentoring women in politics and government service. She has served on the KET Authority Board and as a Kentucky Ambassador to Cincinnati Children's Hospital. She was a founding member of Legacy, a young professionals leadership program at the NKY Chamber of Commerce.

Cain grew up in Covington, attended Holy Cross, and is a first-generation college graduate of Northern Kentucky University. She and Charlie live on a small beef cattle farm in Walton and have five children: Ryan, Jack and Aly are students at the University of Kentucky; Dillon is a junior at Covington Catholic; Elizabeth is a 4th grader at St. Timothy in Union.



Congratulations

Jena McNeill

Director of Legislative & Government Relations

Jena is using her knowledge and expertise to help shape public policy and assure reliable, affordable, sustainable energy for the 16 electric cooperatives and 1.1 million Kentucky residents who receive the electricity generated by East Kentucky Power Cooperative.



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COLLEEN CHANEY**EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY**

Best known as a public administrative change agent, Colleen Chaney proudly has worked with federal, state and local governments and higher education. Chaney has more than 20 years of experience serving the citizens of the commonwealth.

In 2021, Chaney joined the president's cabinet at Eastern Kentucky University as chief of staff and chief communications officer. She is involved in the daily operation of the university and is focused on elevating Eastern Kentucky University as the game changer for the region and the state.

Prior to joining higher education, Chaney served as public and member relations manager with the Kentucky League of Cities, the youngest female commissioner of the Governor's Office of Local Development under Gov. Ernie Fletcher, director for the Office of the Secretary of State under Trey Grayson and the first 6th Congressional District director for Congressman Andy Barr.

Serving her home county, she worked as chief deputy clerk in the Madison County Clerk's office and as Madison County deputy judge executive for several years.

Chaney earned two degrees in political science and communications from Indiana University and a master's in public administration from Eastern Kentucky University. She serves as a board member for the Baptist Health Foundation, the Richmond Chamber of Commerce and the Madison County Airport.

She lives in Richmond with her husband, J.D., and their daughters, Adaleen and Evaluen.

**SHARON P. CLARK****KY DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE**

Sharon P. Clark is commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Insurance, where she works with a talented team of 87 employees to provide regulatory oversight of Kentucky's \$33 billion insurance industry. Gov. Andy Beshear appointed her commissioner on Jan. 6, 2020. She previously served as commissioner from July 2008 to January 2016, making her 11-year tenure the longest since the department was established in May 1870.

Clark started her career as an instructor at her alma mater, the University of Kentucky. After a few years, she began her public service in several agencies, including the House of Representatives and the Public Service Commission. She was the first director of DOI's Consumer Protection and Education Division. Under her leadership, the department hired its first ombudsman and added consumer education and outreach.

She is a member of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners executive committee and serves in many positions, including as vice chair of its Financial Regulation Standards and Accreditation Committee and chair of the Regulatory Framework Task Force.

Nominated by staff of DOI, she is this year's recipient of the Cissy Musselman Women's Leadership Award for her role in leading the department in responding to recent natural disasters, including the March 2023 windstorm, the 2022 floods and the December 2021 tornadoes. She is active in civic organizations and her church. Sharon and her husband have two daughters and four grandchildren.

**JULIA BRIGHT CRIGLER****COMMONWEALTH ALLIANCES**

Julia Bright Crigler is an experienced political operative who has served in senior roles in numerous legislative and statewide races where she's built a network across the commonwealth.

In 2012, Crigler served as the political director for the Kentucky House Republican Campaign Caucus Committee. In this role, Crigler managed more than 25 key legislative races in Kentucky. It was during this election cycle that House Republicans made significant gains and grew their membership to the highest in Kentucky history prior to moving into the majority after the 2016 elections.

Crigler spent the next three years in the Koch Network as the Kentucky state director for Americans for Prosperity.

She started her own government relations firm, Bright Strategies, in 2017 and formed a strategic partnership with Commonwealth Alliances in Frankfort.

Crigler graduated from Western Kentucky University with a bachelor of arts degree in political science and psychology.

**TATUM DALE****OFFICE OF U.S. REP. ANDY BARR**

Tatum Dale serves as district director for Sixth District Congressman Andy Barr. As the congressman's top aide in Kentucky, she oversees the district office team and operations in Lexington, including the congressman's best-in-class constituent services.

Dale regularly meets with constituents, elected officials, agencies and community groups to identify their needs and concerns, and she keeps the congressman apprised.

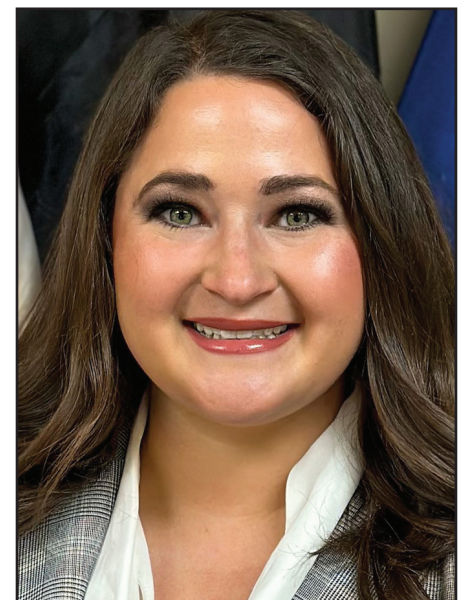
Dale began her career with the Andy Barr for Congress campaign in 2012. Upon Barr's election, she took an operations role in his Washington D.C. office.

In 2015, Dale returned to Kentucky to work as a field representative in Kentucky's Sixth Congressional District. Dale was promoted to deputy district director in 2017 and to district director in 2019.

Dale's passions include serving and assisting the most vulnerable populations. Prior to the pandemic, she regularly traveled to Grand Goave, Haiti as part of an ongoing volunteer effort.

She graduated from the University of Kentucky in 2012. She lives in Lexington and is an active member of Calvary Baptist Church, is a 2020 graduate of Leadership Lexington and currently serves on the Leadership Lexington steering committee. She volunteers regularly with Honor Flight Kentucky and the Room in the Inn ministry.

She is originally from Murray.



MICHELLE DEJOHN
DEPT. OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Michelle DeJohn, the deputy commissioner of the Department of Workforce Development in the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet, has over 20 years of experience in workforce development leadership.

She is a graduate of the State University of New York with a bachelor's degree in psychology and education, and she worked 10 years in the private sector as a human resources and training department manager before beginning her career in the public sector. Her relevant skills in public service include holding positions and duties in business and career services, including executive director, executive staff advisor, manager, analyst and program coordinator.

In her current role, DeJohn oversees the Department of Workforce Development, which provides a variety of programs and services to the Kentucky Career Center system. Under DeJohn's leadership, the Offices of Career Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Employer and Apprenticeship Services, and Unemployment Insurance work together to spark innovative approaches to assisting career seekers and businesses. The objective is to produce a resilient, motivated and future-oriented workforce while serving as a one-stop shop for the system.

As deputy commissioner, DeJohn leads the state's efforts in providing services statewide to help businesses with recruiting, training and hiring incentives. In addition, career seekers can receive assistance with résumé building, interviewing skills and training opportunities, such as registered apprenticeships and soft skills development.



KATE WOOD HALL
COMMONWEALTH ALLIANCES

Kate Wood Hall has worked in Kentucky politics and government for over 17 years and has been a member of the Commonwealth Alliances team for over nine years.

Prior to joining Commonwealth Alliances, she served as former Gov. Steve Beshear's legislative liaison and director of the Governor's Office of Legislative Services. During her time in this position, she was the governor's senior advisor on issues relating to the legislature and state legislation, and worked on key policy achievements, including curbing prescription drug abuse, raising Kentucky's high school drop-out age to 18 and addressing state government's pension crisis. She also actively worked with the governor and other members of his senior staff and cabinet officials on policy development and strategic decision making.



In 2004, Hall began her work in politics, working on a congressional election in Alabama and as PAC director for minority leadership in the Virginia House of Delegates. In 2007, Hall returned to her home state to work as deputy finance director for candidates running for governor of Kentucky.

Hall earned a B.A. in political science from Transylvania University in 2004. In 2013, she completed her MBA at the University of Louisville College of Business.

Hall was raised in Brownsville, Kentucky where her parents and much of her family still live. She and her husband, David, are the proud parents of three beautiful children: Katherine, Truman and Dilly.



Congratulations!

JACQUELINE PITTS

**Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
Senior Vice President of
Communications and Marketing
recognized as a Notable Woman in
Politics and Government in 2023**

JENNIFER HANCOCK**VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA MID-STATES**

Jennifer Hancock is president and CEO of Volunteers of America Mid-States.

She has served in many capacities during her more than 20 years of leadership in the nonprofit sector and in her 16 years advancing the mission of VOA. Under her leadership, VOA has become a nationally recognized expert in providing family-focused and results-oriented solutions for the addiction crisis. Working closely with a range of elected officials and community leaders, the organization has earned consistent recognition for providing best-practice care across nearly 50 programs.

Since becoming CEO in 2015, Hancock has led VOA through unprecedented growth and now oversees a \$55 million budget and a team of more than 650 professionals in four states.

In addition to addiction recovery services, VOA also delivers solutions in veteran services, housing and homelessness, public health and restorative justice.

Hancock is immediate past chair of the Leadership Louisville Center, chair of Impetus for a Better Louisville, and on the boards of the Kentucky Children's Justice Act Task Force and the University of Louisville School of Public Health, among others.

She was recently honored to have her experience in the addictions field featured in Newsweek magazine. Hancock was the recipient of the 2022 and 2023 Business First Power 50 award as well as the 2022 Enterprising Women award. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from the University of Kentucky.

**REBECCA HARTSOUGH****BABBAGE COFOUNDER**

Rebecca Hartsough serves as senior policy advisor for Babbage Cofounder. Her interest in politics and government affairs was honed during her experience as an intern to First Lady Laura Bush.

A native Kentuckian, Hartsough earned her undergraduate, master's and Ph.D. degrees at Emory University in Atlanta.

Between degrees, Hartsough worked as a securities litigation analyst for Rogers & Hardin, a prestigious Atlanta boutique law firm.

She left the firm to begin her doctoral studies in political science and quantitative methods at Emory. She trained rigorously in statistics and predictive analytics as well in substantive political coursework. Her dissertation, "Practical Politics: Explaining Delay in the Federal Judicial Appointment Process," utilized statistical models and qualitative methods to identify previously unknown factors significant to slowing down and speeding up judicial nominations and confirmations.

Upon completing her doctorate, Hartsough was hired as the data science liaison for Em-bold Health, a start-up focused on determining whether services and procedures provided to patients are medically necessary and cost effective.

At Babbage Cofounder, which she joined in 2018, Hartsough lobbies across a variety of industries including finance, health care, education and manufacturing. She specializes in translating complex issues into simple terms, building support for issues among policymakers and leaders to communicate the ideal outcome, its value and importance to Kentucky.

**KAREN KELLY****CORNERSTONE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

Karen Kelly's passion to serve the people of the commonwealth was born in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, where she learned the value of hard work, determination, compassion and loyalty.

In 2022, Kelly joined Cornerstone Government Affairs as a principal of one of Kentucky's most effective consulting firms. Harnessing the power of advocacy and strategic partnerships, she works alongside federal, state and local leaders to benefit all Kentuckians.

Before joining Cornerstone, Kelly led U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers' Kentucky operations for nearly 10 years. As district director, she orchestrated emergency disaster relief efforts and bolstered grassroots advocacy across the 33-county Appalachian region, including the development of Shaping Our Appalachian Region.

In 2012, she cofounded the National Rx and Illicit Drug Summit with Rogers. The summit came to fruition while Kelly was serving as founding president and CEO of Operation UNITE in southeast Kentucky. The Rx Summit is now the largest gathering of its kind, boasting keynotes from four U.S. presidents. Kelly also served as president and CEO of Eastern Kentucky PRIDE, expanding access to water and wastewater service, improving environmental education and rallying thousands of volunteers to help clean up the region.

Kelly received a bachelor's degree in business management from Union College. She and her husband, John, have three children and avidly support organizations, like the Boys and Girls Club of Harlan County, that give hope to young people in the mountains.

**JULIE BABBAGE LAUNGANI****BABBAGE COFOUNDER**

Julie Babbage Laungani is recognized for her transformative leadership, a style that is results-driven and positive. Babbage is making a mark nationally as well as in Kentucky as she heads up association-management services in advocacy at Babbage Cofounder. Associations seeking to make a difference at home and across the country hire Babbage Cofounder, which has offices in Kentucky and Washington D.C.

Babbage manages the Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition, serving as executive director of the initiative. Since she stepped into this role, DPAC has impacted key federal changes with both the Trump and Biden administrations, an impressive bipartisan record.

DPAC also is advancing state initiatives for managing diabetes and obesity, including right here at home with an army of grassroots advocates numbering some 6,000 in Kentucky and nationwide.

During the recent Kentucky legislative session, Babbage supported important causes, ranging from workforce and technology to education and health.

Overall, she leads as a shareholder and partner in Babbage Cofounder, a 26-year-old company carried on by a new generation of leadership.

A Lexington native, Babbage was an intern in the office of U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell while a student at Vanderbilt University, from where she graduated with a degree in international business and development. She also interned in the U.S. Embassy in London.



JANETTE MARSON
SHELBYKY TOURISM

Tourism industry executive Janette Marson is the president and CEO of ShelbyKY Tourism and the Shelbyville Conference Center.

Before her post with ShelbyKY Tourism, Marson was the long-standing executive director of the Lake Cumberland Tourist Commission in Russell County.

With a vast career in marketing, advertising, broadcasting and public relations, Marson also serves on the Kentucky Senate’s Advisory Committee for Tourism and on the Shelby Main Street board, and she is a member of the Kentucky League of Cities board.

Marson currently is president of the Kentucky Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, a statewide association that engages in political advocacy and education to advance the state’s tourism industry.

She previously owned an advertising agency and was director of marketing and public relations for the Indianapolis Art Center. Before moving into public relations, Marson had a three-year stint as a television commercial producer at WISH-TV in Indianapolis.

Marson has a degree in communication and public relations from Butler University in Indianapolis, where she focused on radio and television. She also holds a travel marketing degree from STS Marketing College at the University of North Georgia and an advanced certificate in tourism.

She and her husband, Michael, live in Shelbyville with their three dogs.



JACKIE MCGRANAHAN
ACLU OF KENTUCKY

Jackie McGranahan joined the ACLU of Kentucky as the organization’s first Reproductive Freedom Project field organizer in June 2019.

McGranahan, now a policy strategist, works with people throughout the commonwealth to build a network of grassroots power. That power was on display in November 2022, as she spearheaded the successful Protect Kentucky Access “Vote NO on Amendment 2” campaign.

Her lobbying efforts have led to the passage of several bills, including 2021’s Senate Bill 84, known as the Dignity Bill, which provides care for incarcerated pregnant women.

Historically, the fight for reproductive rights excluded Black and Brown Kentuckians. She established the Breaking Barriers Council in Spring 2020 to train and empower advocates to improve reproductive outcomes for all Kentuckians, particularly those who have been excluded or ignored by policy makers.

The Breaking Barriers Council is comprised of birth workers seeking reproductive justice in Louisville’s West End, doulas in Central Kentucky, medical professionals and others.

McGranahan also was an ACLU of Kentucky Smart Justice advocate, pushing for justice reform and voting rights restoration for Kentuckians with past felony convictions.

Her advocacy is informed by her experiences as a Black woman from Appalachia. She serves on the boards of the Louisville Coalition for Black Maternal Health and the Fairness Campaign, and volunteers with other organizations. She was born and raised in Ashland, and currently resides in Louisville.





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JENA MCNEILL**EAST KENTUCKY POWER COOPERATIVE**

Jena McNeill is the director of government and legislative relations at East Kentucky Power Cooperative, a generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in Winchester.

In this role, she advocates on behalf of EKPC and its 16 owner-member cooperatives at the Kentucky General Assembly and in Washington D.C.

McNeill spent nearly two decades working in national politics and policy. Her most recent role was deputy chief of staff and legislative director to U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst, of Iowa.

She also served as deputy director for Homeland Security on the U.S. Senate Committee for Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, as a lobbyist for U.S. Travel Association, as an aide to Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich and with consulting firms The Chertoff Group and Booz Allen Hamilton. McNeill began her career in homeland security policy as an analyst for The Heritage Foundation. She has been featured on numerous national media outlets and has provided testimony before Congress and state legislatures.

McNeill graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in environmental science and policy. She has a juris doctorate from the University of Arkansas William H. Bowen School of Law, where she clerked for the Senate Judiciary Committee and for former DHS Undersecretary Asa Hutchinson.

She lives in Lexington with her husband, Greg, her son, Nixon, and their Shorkie, C-Span. They are members of Porter Memorial Baptist Church, and she is active in the community.

**LIZ MCQUILLEN****METRO UNITED WAY**

With more than 12 years of public policy experience, Liz McQuillen recently joined Metro United Way as chief policy officer. In this role, McQuillen is responsible for leading Metro United Way's advocacy efforts, with a focus on deepening and demonstrating understanding of issues critical to overcoming wealth and education disparities in the Greater Louisville region. She also will initiate and ensure policy-priority alignment with Metro United Way's programmatic initiatives and investments, driving transformational change efforts.

Prior to joining her current role, McQuillen served as director of government affairs at Greater Louisville Inc., the metro chamber of commerce, where she focused on policies to grow the regional economy and solutions to address workforce barriers. There, she worked collaboratively with partners on policy solutions to increase access to affordable and quality childcare, advocated for land development reform to encourage more affordable and market-rate housing options, and worked to increase re-entry supports for justice-involved individuals. She also gained an extensive knowledge of economic policy and the local legislative process as a legislative aide for nearly 10 years at the Louisville Metro Council.

A Louisville native, McQuillen graduated from Oglethorpe University in Atlanta with a bachelor of arts in communications. She resides in Louisville with her husband and three children.

**KATE MILLER****ACLU OF KENTUCKY**

Kate Miller joined the ACLU of Kentucky in 2008 and currently serves as advocacy director. She is responsible for developing and advocating for the ACLU of Kentucky's legislative agenda.

Miller works in a number of issue areas and is always seeking common ground among organizations and lawmakers. She has built a team of professionals who have been instrumental in advancing a civil liberties agenda with an emphasis on reproductive rights and criminal justice reform.

Miller has played an important role in advancing civil rights policies, including Kentucky's first felony expungement law and the passage of the Kentucky Pregnant Workers Act.

She is a recipient of the Bill of Rights Enforcer Award from the Kentucky Criminal Defense Lawyers Association and the Social Justice Star Award from the Kentucky Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. She also received the Outstanding Field Instructor Award from the Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville, and she was named a 2021 Power Broker by Kentucky Fried Politics. She currently serves on the board of directors for Wilderness Louisville.

Miller earned a bachelor's degree from Western Kentucky University and a master of science degree in Social Work at the University of Louisville.

She lives in Louisville with her husband, Michael Pfaff, daughter, Harriet, and dog, Susie.

**RUTH ANN PALUMBO****KY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Ruth Ann Palumbo was elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives by the people of the 76th District in 1990. She is the longest-serving woman in the history of the Kentucky General Assembly. She chaired the House Economic Development Committee for 20 years, until 2017. She currently sits on the Appropriations and Revenue, Licensing and Occupations, and Transportation committees.

Throughout her tenure, Palumbo has been a champion for issues that help women, children, families, the elderly, consumers and small business, and she stands up for fairness and equal rights for all. She worked with the "Ladies of the House" to guide the Women's Health Act of 1998, which required insurance companies to cover breast reconstruction surgery following a mastectomy.

The National Federation of Independent Business named her a Guardian of Small Business and presented her with a GUTS Award for her support of small business.

Palumbo worked to revitalize Kentucky cities and was instrumental in securing funding for the refurbishment of Rupp Arena and the development of Coldstream Park in Lexington. More than once, she received the Friend of Cities award from the Kentucky League of Cities.

During the 2023 session, she sponsored HB 331, which requires automated external defibrillators in all middle and high schools in Kentucky.

Palumbo is a community volunteer and a member of Calvary Baptist Church, where she sings in the Sanctuary Choir. She and her husband, John, have four sons – John III (deceased), Joe (Jennifer), Jamie and Stephen (Jamie) – and six grandchildren.



JACQUELINE PITTS
KENTUCKY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Jacqueline Pitts is the senior vice president of communications and marketing at the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

Pitts joined the chamber in 2014 when she was hired to launch the first political news site for a chamber of commerce in the nation. Since then, Pitts has continued her role as managing editor of The Bottom Line.

Under her leadership, the communications department oversees all media relations, social media, graphic design, email marketing, print and digital newsletters, website design, advocacy communications, program marketing, photography and more for the chamber and the Kentucky Chamber Foundation.

Pitts currently serves on the boards of United Way of Kentucky and Jobs for Kentucky's Graduates, and earlier this year was named as one of the Top Women in Communications by Ragan Communications and PR Daily.

In 2021, she was recognized as 40 Under 40 by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives, and in 2020, Pitts was part of the American Enterprise Institute's Leadership Network's first Millennial Cohort and graduated from Leadership Kentucky.

The chamber's communications efforts also gained national recognition in 2022 under Pitts' leadership, receiving the ACCE Communications Excellence Award for disaster relief.

Prior to the chamber, Pitts worked as the political producer for "Pure Politics," a nightly public affairs television show on Spectrum News 1. She is a graduate of Western Kentucky University, where she double majored in broadcast journalism and political science.



KAYLEE CARNAHAN PRICE
RUNSWITCH PR

Kaylee Carnahan Price, senior vice president at RunSwitch PR, provides expertise in strategic communications, crisis communications and campaign management. From Fortune 500 companies to members of the U.S. Congress to business associations big and small, clients trust Price to tell their stories.

After beginning her career in key political campaign positions across the country, Price joined RunSwitch PR at its launch. She has helped grow RunSwitch to become the region's largest and most experienced firm while mentoring dozens of teammates along the way. She is relied on for her on-the-spot strategic planning and action-oriented approach that gives clients confidence and equips them with the tools they need to influence outcomes.

Price regularly works in conjunction with the government affairs teams at organizations like Churchill Downs and Kentucky Distillers' Association on some of the state's most prominent issue campaigns.

With every project Price takes on – electing strong leaders to all levels of government, economic development initiatives, education reform, hunger initiatives, volunteering at her church (Our Savior Louisville) and more – she is eager to help make Kentucky better every day.

Originally from Illinois, Price moved to Kentucky in 2005 and earned her B.A. from Western Kentucky University. Price and her husband, Adam, are proud to call St. Regis Park home, along with their dog, Governor.



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JOSIE RAYMOND**KY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Josie Raymond is the state representative for Kentucky's 41st District. Before redistricting, she served as the state representative in the 31st District. She was first elected in 2018.

Raymond is a fierce advocate for reproductive rights, public education, environmental and racial justice, LGBTQ and workers' rights, and pre-kindergarten. She is known for her uncompromising vision for a more inclusive Kentucky, for challenging the GOP supermajority and for centering on women and children.

A former free-lunch recipient in Jefferson County Public Schools, Raymond has dedicated her career to creating opportunities for people in poverty. In past roles, Raymond was a journalist, writing about U.S. poverty and homelessness, a 7th and 8th grade teacher with Teach for America in Indianapolis, a nonprofit director in Oakland, California, and a student success coach at the University of Louisville.

Raymond was the first Kentucky representative to give birth while serving in office, challenging the perception of what an elected official looks like. She also founded a citywide advocacy coalition for early childhood education in Louisville and serves on the Mayor's Early Learning Action Group to design universal access to pre-kindergarten for all 3- and 4-year-olds in her hometown.

She is a graduate of Columbia University and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. She lives in the neighborhood where she grew up with her high-school sweetheart and their three kids.

**MARY PAT REGAN****KY PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

Mary Pat Regan was appointed to the Public Service Commission and designated as commissioner by Gov. Andy Beshear on July 11, 2022. Her term expires June 30, 2027.

Prior to her appointment, Regan was the commonwealth's deputy secretary for the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet.

Her previous professional experience includes key senior executive roles with AT&T, including responsibility as national vice president-regulatory for AT&T and Kentucky state president of AT&T Communications. Regan also held several senior sales executive positions with MCI Telecommunications.

Regan participated in and provided chair leadership for several Louisville-based community and civic programs during the last 10 years, including Greater Louisville Inc., the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Business Leaders for Education and the United Way. She has served as member of the Board of Directors for Kentucky Educational Television, The Kentucky Science Center, the Jefferson County Public Education Foundation and the Louisville Collegiate School.

Regan attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has a life-long interest and participation in sports and competitive athletic activities, including cycling, running and swimming. She has earned completion medals in seven Ironman National Competitions.

Originally from Minneapolis, Regan has resided in the commonwealth for over 12 years and currently lives in St. Matthews.

**HANNAH RIVERA****KCTCS**

Hannah Rivera serves as chief of staff and board and government liaison for the Kentucky Community and Technical College System in Versailles. She works directly with the KCTCS president, who oversees 16 community and technical colleges, works with state and federal policymakers, and the system's governing board.

Prior to joining KCTCS, Rivera served as a legal writer at McBrayer law firm, where she assisted attorneys with client outreach, marketing and communications. She also practiced as a plaintiff's attorney, specializing in product liability and catastrophic personal injury.

Rivera holds a J.D. from the University of Kentucky, and a bachelor's degree in communication and political science from the University of Louisville, where she was a McConnell Scholar, vice president of Kappa Delta Sorority and an SGA senator. Her love of Kentucky politics and policy began during a college internship at the Kentucky Capitol with Kelley Abell and Ronny Pryor, and while working as a constituent liaison for U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell in his Louisville field office.

Rivera is a 2019 Leadership Kentucky graduate, has taught higher education law at Belarmine and U of L, is a member of Southland Christian Church, serves on the Lexington Habitat for Humanity Board and is an ambassador for The Nest in Lexington.

A native of London, Rivera now lives in Lexington with her husband, Joel, and daughter, Andi Beth. Rivera loves to bargain shop, plan parties and try to convince her husband to adopt more dogs from the Lexington Humane Society.

**MARY JANE RODES****RUNSWITCH PR**

Mary Jane Rodes is a vice president at RunSwitch Public Relations, where she has been employed for more than five years.

At RunSwitch, Rodes works with a variety of clients to help enhance their public affairs, public relations and grassroots efforts. She also works in the association management realm, including serving as the chief operations and membership coordinator for the Washington, D.C.-based Senior Care Pharmacy Coalition.

Prior to RunSwitch, Rodes worked for six years in the U.S. Senate in Washington D.C. She moved to Washington in 2009 to be a staff assistant for U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell and was promoted to legislative correspondent.

In 2011, she became the director of special projects for U.S. Sen. John Barrasso, of Wyoming, and worked in that role for four years.

Following her time in D.C., Rodes lived in Atlanta and was a senior grassroots manager for the National Federation of Independent Businesses. In this role, she managed the organization's grassroots efforts in several states across the southeast.

Rodes moved to Louisville in 2017 and is a graduate of the Elevate Kentucky program as well as the Focus Louisville program. She has volunteered for numerous political campaigns and has been involved in a variety of philanthropic organizations and events.

A graduate of Centre College and native Central Kentuckian, Rodes now resides in Lexington with her husband, Nelson, and their three sons. Rodes enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, being outdoors and volunteering at her sons' school.



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LAURA P. RUSSELL**JEFFERSON COUNTY FAMILY COURT**

Judge Laura P. Russell was appointed to the Jefferson County Family Court Bench in May 2023 by Gov. Andy Beshear and took her oath of office on June 9, 2023.

Prior to the appointment, Russell practiced law for over two decades, the majority of which focused primarily on family law cases. She also served as a staff attorney in Jefferson Circuit Court, and as an assistant county attorney for Jefferson County.

Russell is passionate about helping families find solutions to move their lives forward. She believes she makes a daily difference in the lives of families and understands that the decisions she makes affect the lives of real people.

Russell earned her undergraduate degree from Morehead State University, graduating magna cum laude, and her juris doctor degree from the Louis D. Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville.

She formerly served on the board of regents for her alma mater, Morehead State University, where she also served on the audit committee. Russell previously served as co-chair of the Family Law Section and was a former member and board member of the Women Lawyer's Association of Jefferson County. She was a volunteer for the LBA's *pro se* divorce clinic, where she enjoyed working with low-income individuals in family court.

Additionally, Russell has volunteered her time with the Younger Women's Club of Louisville, having served on the board and as president.

She is married to Jason, a dentist, and has a 14-year-old daughter.

**ANETHA SANFORD****HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF KY**

Anetha Sanford is a dedicated professional with over 20 years of experience in association management and government relations, specifically in the real estate industry.

Sanford is the CEO and executive vice president of the Home Builders Association of Kentucky, a statewide trade organization comprised of 4,000 member companies and their 30,000 employees representing the housing, building and construction industry across the commonwealth.

In this role, Sanford serves a pivotal part in shaping housing policies. She is a trusted liaison between the association members and elected officials while carrying out the legislative and regulatory policies of the association.

Previously, Sanford served as the government affairs and professional development director for the Kentucky Realtors, a position she had held since 2004.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Sanford currently serves on the Board of Directors of Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky, previously served on the Board of Directors of The Hearing and Speech Center, and is the Kentucky volunteer family empowerment representative for RettSyndrome.org.

A native of Bowling Green, Sanford earned a bachelor's degree from Western Kentucky University. She resides in Lexington with her husband, Eric, and three girls, Laila, Alivia and Erica.

**LESLIE SAUNDERS****KY REGISTRY OF ELECTION FINANCE**

Leslie Saunders joined the Kentucky Registry of Election Finance as general counsel in January 2020. There, she manages all activities of the registry's legal department, including interpreting Kentucky campaign finance laws for the agency, representing it before state and federal courts, investigating complaints concerning campaign finance violations, drafting and reviewing proposed legislation and administrative regulations, and producing advisory opinions.

Saunders is a southern Jefferson County native who began work for state government in 2002. She's previously served as a clerk for former Kentucky Supreme Court Justice J. William Graves, a civil litigator for the Kentucky Department of Revenue, the head of Revenue's Division of Special Investigations, and as a deputy inspector general for the Kentucky Finance and Administration Cabinet.

Prior to joining the public sector, Saunders worked as a reporter and copy editor in several small daily newspapers, including The Republic in Columbus, Indiana. She graduated summa cum laude with majors in journalism and Spanish from Franklin College of Indiana and magna cum laude with a juris doctorate from the University of Notre Dame.

Saunders has been the vice president of the board of the Unitarian Universalist Community of Frankfort since 2018, a member of Frankfort's Interfaith Council and an avid heirloom tomato gardener who gives away about 300 plants each year from her South Frankfort home to anyone else who would like to share in that obsession.

**JOANNA SHAKE****GREEN RIVER ADD**

Joanna Shake is the executive director of the Green River Area Development District in Owensboro, a position she's held since 2020. While five of Kentucky's 15 area development districts have female directors, Green River ADD is one of the largest, and she is the first female executive director at GRADD.

Shake worked her way through the ranks to attain the executive director's job and is highly respected. She has a staff of 72 and works with planning and administration of millions of dollars for economic, community and health-care projects for seven counties in the Owensboro area – Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union and Webster.

GRADD offers assistance in the fields of aging and social services, community and economic development, transportation planning and workforce development.

In addition, Shake chairs the Economic Development Committee for the Kentucky Association of ADD Directors. In 2017, Gov. Matt Bevin appointed Shake to the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Housing Corp.

Shake has been with the development district for 25 years and began her career in 1994 as a community economic development intern.



PAULA PABON SMITH
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

Paula Pabon Smith is vice president of legal services for Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance Companies.

Appointed in December 2022, she is responsible for the legal services function and ensuring its alignment with the organization’s objectives. Her team provides quality support and delivers on the promise Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance makes to its members.

Smith began her career with Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance in December 2008 as counsel to governmental affairs and was promoted to senior counsel in 2016. As a registered legislative agent and lobbyist of the company, Smith has served as a corporate liaison with regulatory authorities, keeping up with new legislative and regulatory developments on both the state and federal levels. She has worked with the company to develop proactive legislation related to the insurance industry and is responsible for the integration of new legislation and regulations into the organization.

She has served in all three branches of state government, starting her law career as a staff attorney with the Kentucky Court of Appeals and later working with the Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission. She also served as counsel with the Kentucky Board of Nursing in the Consumer Protection Branch.

She currently serves on the board of directors for the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers. Smith graduated from the University of Louisville with a B.A. in 1991 and the U of L School of Law in 1994.



KATIMA SMITH-WILLIS
BREAKING BARRIERS COUNCIL

A Frankfort native, Katima Smith-Willis has a passion for all things Frankfort and Kentucky.

With a love for advocating and as a mother, Smith-Willis knows the challenges parents and young adults face in today’s world to get ahead and follow their dreams. She works closely with advocating for maternal health with the Breaking Barriers Council, a project of the ACLU of Kentucky. The council works to create a Kentucky that encompasses reproductive justice and limits racial disparities within communities that are significantly affected, especially around maternal and infant health.

Smith-Willis spends her free time expanding her knowledge on possible ideas for new legislation and advocating for the voiceless. She believes that Kentucky is filled with opportunity, hope and talent.

Smith-Willis has been recognized for her hard work and dedication in several settings, including an acclamation from the governor of Kentucky, a proclamation from the mayor of Frankfort and mentions in The [Frankfort] State-Journal.

As a community-oriented Frankfort resident, she stays engaged in the city’s events, supports local businesses and helps individuals on a daily basis.

She founded the For the People Coalition and is a member of several local and state organizations, such as the Human Rights Commission-Frankfort, NAACP and the Young Democrats.



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KELLY TAULBEE**KENTUCKY VOICES FOR HEALTH**

Kelly Taulbee is director of communications and development at Kentucky Voices for Health. She engages coalition members and affected Kentuckians in lifting their voices about decisions affecting their health.

Taulbee works closely with the Immunize Kentucky Coalition, Maternal Health Innovation Learning Collaborative, ThriveKY, 9-8-8 Coalition and other organizations.

Prior to joining KVH in 2020, Taulbee found her footing into state government by friendly chance as a switchboard operator.

In 2009, she became a legislative aide for Gov. Steve Beshear, and by 2014 was executive advisor to his chief of staff. She assisted many efforts between 2008-2015, including Kentucky's Business One-Stop Portal Advisory Committee and the 2012 Special Session HB 1 Implementation Oversight Committee.

While at the attorney general's Office of Senior Protection, she assisted in the Western Union Settlement and Remission intake, and reported to the Consumers' Advisory Council.

Taulbee also served as policy advisor for Kentucky's House Democratic Caucus and was the floor leader's surrogate to the 2020 Census task force. She briefly lobbied for Goss Samford and was special advisor to Louisville Metro Government, helping develop Louisville's Civilian Review and Accountability Board.

Taulbee is a Centre College alum, helped establish Frankfort Chamber of Commerce's Young Professional Network and received the John C. Barbour Memorial Award. Taulbee, her husband, John Atha, and their daughters live in Anderson County.

**CHRISTINE THOMPSON****LIVINGSTON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD**

Christine Thompson has over 10 years of professional experience in nonprofit leadership, with her most recent roles as a vice president at Easterseals West Kentucky and executive director of the Paducah-McCracken County Senior Center.

During her time at Easterseals, she rolled out the Teen Summer Program for teens with intellectual/developmental challenges and autism, which enabled them to increase self-confidence, build friendships and develop critical life skills.

At the senior center, she acquired \$1 million in grant funding that allowed the center to construct a new building. She secured additional funding to create a senior-accessible community garden, implement innovative technology to streamline data collection and increase Meals on Wheels, all during a pandemic.

In 2017, Thompson made history as the first Latina elected to public office in Kentucky, when she was elected to the Livingston County Board of Education. She was re-elected in 2021 and is serving her fifth year as board chair. In 2020, Thompson was featured in the Los Angeles Times for her work on the school board.

She is working towards her master's degree in business administration from Murray State University. She holds a B.A. in international affairs from Murray State University.

She was recognized for her academic accomplishments from Murray at the 16th Annual Diversity Achievement Awards in 2022. In August 2022, Gov. Andy Beshear appointed her to the Kentucky Commission on Women. She and her husband, Ben, have two daughters and reside in Livingston County.

**ANGELA WANINGER****CITY OF OWENSBORO**

Angela Waninger is the director of Finance and Support Services for the city of Owensboro, where she oversees the finance, human resource and IT operations. She also oversees and works on projects for the city manager. She has been with Owensboro since 2007 and has served in her current role since 2012.

A certified public accountant and a chartered global management accountant, Waninger is president of the Kentucky Government Finance Officers Association, and, as such, serves on the Kentucky League of Cities Board of Directors. She is a trustee for the Kentucky League of Cities Investment Pool, and she serves on the City Employee Pension Fund Board and the Police and Firefighters' Retirement Fund Board in Owensboro.

Waninger has volunteered as a budget award reviewer for the National Government Finance Officer Association since 2009, reviewing and commenting on city budgets nationwide. She has served on the United Way of the Ohio Valley board since 2013, serving on the executive board for four of those years. She has been a court-appointed special advocate, advocating for children's best interests.

Waninger recently attained the Kentucky League of Cities Level 1-Achievement in City Governance.

She earned a bachelor of science degree in accounting at Indiana State University.

Waninger lives in Owensboro with her husband, Tim, and their three poodles: Bentley, Bella and Beau. Waninger is a proud parent to her son, Evan, and daughter, Ashley. When she's not at city hall, you can find her at the gym, tending her garden or loving on her fur babies.

**ALECIA WEBB-EDGINGTON****LIFE LEARNING CENTER**

Alecia Webb-Edgington is president of Life Learning Center. Formerly, she was a senior police advisor with the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement.

In addition to her role at the U.S. Department of State, Webb-Edgington was employed in the private sector, consulting on public-safety information technology and managing projects.

She had a noteworthy career in public safety, having retired from the Kentucky State Police as chief information officer. While at KSP, Webb-Edgington rose through the ranks from trooper to major.

Upon her retirement from KSP, she served as the executive director of the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security during the Gov. Ernie Fletcher administration. She later was elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives for the 63rd District and served for five years.

Webb-Edgington serves on the boards of several organizations, including Notre Dame Academy and the Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board. In addition, she is an active member of the Covington Business Council Advocacy Committee. She serves on the Certified Recovery Community Task Force, representing the speaker of the Kentucky House.

Webb-Edgington received her B.A. in sociology and criminology from Western Kentucky University, her M.S. in criminal justice from Eastern Kentucky University, and attended the Naval Postgraduate School Executive Leadership program in Monterey, California.

She lives in Covington with her husband, Ted. They have one daughter, Jill.



TAMARRA WIEDER**PLANNED PARENTHOOD ALLIANCE**

Tamarra Wieder has served as the Kentucky state director for Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates since 2015. As co-chair for the Protect Kentucky Access campaign, she worked to successfully defeat Constitutional Amendment 2 in the 2022 election.

As PPAA-KY state director and one of the organization's registered lobbyists, Wieder manages organizing, advocacy and electoral efforts to promote, protect and advance access to sexual health, education and reproductive rights in the commonwealth.

She also currently serves as the board president for the Commonwealth Alliance Voter Engagement Table, intersecting her passions for reproductive health and justice with a more empowered and engaged electorate.

Prior to Planned Parenthood, Wieder worked with the American Civil Liberties Union and the Human Rights Campaign.

Wieder holds a master's degree in diplomacy and international relations with specializations in health policy and law from Seton Hall University, and a bachelor's degree in history and geography from Northern Colorado University.

While not originally from Kentucky, her husband, an Army bandsman, was stationed at Fort Knox in 2012, and they fell in love with the commonwealth and planted roots here with their three cats.

**MAKENZIE WILLIAMS****TOP SHELF LOBBY**

Makenzie Williams, a senior associate, joined the Top Shelf Lobby team in 2021 after serving for six years as the finance director for the Republican Party of Kentucky.

A native of Kentucky, Williams graduated from the University of Kentucky with a bachelor's degree in political science. She got her start in politics working on the ground with U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell's 2014 re-election campaign. Following her time on the campaign, Williams joined McConnell's Lexington office.

As the GOP enjoyed significant electoral success, Williams seized the opportunity to help shift the political landscape of the commonwealth, helping raise millions of dollars for Republican campaigns.

Williams exhibits an exceptional ability to navigate the political process, applying her knowledge of various legislative districts and the issues that matter to elected leaders.

In her first session as a lobbyist, she worked her first successful bill (HB 402), helping a small group of victims pass legislation that holds physicians criminally and civilly accountable for fraudulent activities in fertility treatment. A law prohibiting this did not exist.

In her spare time, Williams serves as treasurer for the Dalton Workman Foundation, which helps those battling cancer with financial assistance as well as offering inspiration in their personal fight against cancer.

She also manages to stay involved in the political process by advising candidates in their campaigns.

**TAMI WILSON****NKY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Tami Wilson is the vice president of public affairs at the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. She leads local, state and federal advocacy efforts and strategies, assisting the chamber's 1,700-plus member companies in various issue areas.

Before assuming her role at the Northern Kentucky Chamber, Wilson served as the volunteer coordinator for Life Learning Center in Covington, where she built and retained a strong volunteer base and collaborated with government, social and business entities.

Wilson is the former district director for retired U.S. Rep. Geoff Davis, where she led all constituent services in Kentucky's 4th Congressional District, bringing a network of relationships and deep community roots to the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

She has a long history of volunteer service in her community, including the Boone County Intellectual Disabilities Tax Advisory Board, the Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission Board, the Site-Based Decision-Making Council at Randell K. Cooper High School in Boone County and the Western and Southern Tennis Open.

Wilson also has served in several leadership roles in the political arena, including vice chair for the Boone County and 4th Congressional District Republican parties, and assisting with the campaigns of several Northern Kentucky legislators.

Wilson is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University and the 2023 Leadership Northern Kentucky program. She resides in Florence, with her husband, Marc Wilson, and is the mother of three adult daughters.

**COLLEEN YOUNGER****JEFFERSON COUNTY PVA**

Colleen Younger was elected Jefferson County property valuation administrator in 2018. Her two main goals are to demystify the PVA office and to offer best-in-class customer service.

During her first year in office, Younger created the popular You Have a Right to Appeal program, which gives property owners greater accessibility and assistance in appealing their property value. Annually, PVA staff set up shop at local libraries for property owners to meet with PVA to begin appeals. As a result of this program, Younger was honored as one of 10 finalists, from a field of 200, in the Route Fifty Awards in the "elected" category. She lost out to the Oregon state treasurer.

Younger previously served as chief of staff to the Jefferson County PVA, where she was the external affairs go-to person.

Younger served as a coordinator with the Department of Neighborhoods and was Mayor Jerry Abramson's liaison to many inner-city neighborhoods.

As a project manager with Operation Brightside, where she designed an award-winning program for at-risk youth, Younger worked alongside community and civic groups, neighborhood leaders and local businesses, partnering on projects like community gardens and the Nature Clubhouse in Louisville neighborhoods. She is a recognized public speaker in the international assessment community, and in 2021, Gov. Andy Beshear appointed her to the Kentucky Commission on Women.

Younger is a graduate of Atherton High School and Spalding University. She has one son, a large extended family and her beloved Black Lab, Sophie, all of whom she adores.





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