

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARIES OF NOMINEES FOR YWCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**The following individuals are nominated to serve their second three-year term as a member of the Board of Directors of the YWCA Central Massachusetts:**

### **Etel Haxhijaj**

Etel is a Clark University graduate and a native of Albania. Since moving to Worcester in 2001, she has worked to make a difference in the lives of others, both professionally and as an active community organizer and activist. She has supported homeless families, single parents, and young people, and protected community residents against harm as a legal advocate for the Attorney General's Office. Currently, as Director of Public Education and Advocacy at Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, she supports efforts to expand housing affordability for homeless families. Most recently, she worked as a community organizer for Mother's Out Front working with mothers to protect children's health against the dangers of unrepaired gas leaks and climate change. She has served on various City Advisory Boards and Commissions, including the City Manager's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, City Manager's Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee, and the City Manager's Citizen's Advisory Council. She co-founded and co-chaired the YWCA's Racial Justice Task Force, and was one of the co-founders of the Worcester chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ), which aims to mobilize white people for racial justice. She is committed to racial and gender equity as part of her daily work and community activism. Etel ran this past year for Worcester City Council at Large in her first bid for public office as a continuation of her community work and activism for the past fifteen years.

### **Susan Lopez, Ed.D**

Susan is the principal of the Swanson Road Intermediate School in Auburn, Massachusetts. As principal, she has successfully led her school in implementing new programs, created innovative initiatives, and introduced health and wellness courses for diverse populations. In 2014 and again in 2015, the school was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a National Blue Ribbon School for its progress in closing achievement gaps — the first school in Central Massachusetts to receive this honor. Susan has strived to create personalized learning environments through the implementation of STEM innovation along with arts integration, which emphasize community-service learning. Susan has a history of being a passionate, strategic leader who is committed to improving the community through her service to women and families, community outreach, and education. She has more than 25 years of experience in public education serving urban and suburban communities, with 14 years focused on district leadership and developing cohesive strategic plans for school success. She mentors young leaders and teaches courses at the collegiate level to develop future administrators. Susan holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University, a Masters in Administration from Worcester State University, a Masters in Elementary Education from Fitchburg State University, and a Bachelor's Degree in the Psycho-Social Development of the Young Child from Lasell College.

### **Jessica Morris**

Jessica is the Senior Associate Dean of Students at MCPHS University Worcester campus. In this role she oversees Student Affairs for over 2,000 professional students in accelerated health science programs. Prior to joining the staff at MCPHS University, Jessica worked at Clark University in Residence Life. Jessica has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Bryant University and a Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration from Boston College. Jessica a member of the YWCA Racial & Gender Equity Committee, Mechanics Hall Board of Trustees member, Worcester Business Journal 40 under Forty award recipient in 2018, member of the Leadership Worcester class of 2017 and Greater Worcester Community Foundation Corporator. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband and son, running, traveling and exploring Worcester.

**The following individuals are nominated to serve a one-year term as a member of the Board of Directors of the YWCA Central Massachusetts:**

**Christienne Bik**

Christie joined Fallon Health in 2011 and currently leads its government relations department. In this role, her focus is on strategic public, community and government relations opportunities support and promote Fallon Health's business objectives and mission. Prior to joining Fallon, Christie spent 8 years in the Worcester County District Attorney's Office as an Assistant District Attorney. Other previous positions Christie has held include legislative assistant for Congressman James P. McGovern and legislative aide for State Representative Robert Spellane. Christie is a graduate of American University and received her Juris Doctor from Suffolk University Law School. She is a member of the Massachusetts Bar Association. In 2007, Christie was a recipient of the Massachusetts District Attorney Association's Spotlight Award, and in 2014, she was honored with Worcester Business Journal's 40 Under Forty award. Christie has served on the YWCA's Board of Directors for eight years as well as on the Boards of the New England Council and the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans and is a Corporator at the EcoTarium. Christie lives in Shrewsbury with her husband, Paul Belsito and their daughter, Isabelle.

**Roberta Brien**

As the vice president of projects for the Worcester Business Development Corporation (WBDC), Roberta brings more than 23 years of experience in real estate and project management to the organization.

As a member of the WBDC's senior management team, Roberta works closely with the CEO and CFO on all aspects of real estate development from strategic planning, managing project personnel to managing project finances. Combining real estate expertise with community development and planning, Roberta provides a comprehensive approach to project management. Her responsibilities have included oversight of the redevelopment of a brownfields site, project management, oversight and direction of financing including strategies such as new market tax credits, historic tax credits, conventional financing, and state and federal grants. Roberta also oversees the ongoing development of WBDC owned properties, assists in creating mixed-use developments, industrial parks and subdivision roads, and the acquisition, expansion, relocation, and asset management of various properties.

Roberta has served on the YWCA's Board of Directors for 8 years with increasing roles of responsibility.

**Mary Feeney**

Mary is an attorney at Bowditch & Dewey in Worcester. Her practice focuses on representing non-profit organizations in a variety of matters, on real estate development and design and construction contracts services, general representation of colleges, universities, and secondary schools; facilities-related regulatory, code and licensing matters; and transactional and governance matters for educational institutions and other nonprofit organizations. Mary has been a member of the YWCA Central Massachusetts board of directors for the past six years. She also serves as a trustee and Treasurer of Applewild School in Fitchburg and is the former chair of the workforce board for the Metro South/West region and former member of the executive committee (and Treasurer) of the Massachusetts Workforce Board Association.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARIES OF NOMINEES FOR NOMINATING/GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**The following individuals are nominated to serve a one-year term as a member of the Nominating/Governance Committee of the YWCA Central Massachusetts:****Amane**

### **AbdelJaber**

Amane works as a paralegal in the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General where she has held several positions with increasing responsibility over the past 14 years. She also co-owns a small business that provides special event tailored material and planning. Amane is actively involved in racial justice work both at work as co-chair of the AG's Office Diversity and Inclusion Committee and in the community. She is a founding board member and secretary of Muslim Community Link (MCL) and is a past member of the City of Worcester Human Rights Commission Hate Crimes Task Force. Amane has received the Attorney General Martha Coakley Award of Excellence twice and the Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson Award of Excellence. She resides in Worcester.

### **Margarete Arndt, D.B.A.**

Margarete served two terms on the board of directors of YWCA Central Massachusetts where she also served on the Executive and Resource Development Committees. At present she is a corporator and serves on the Nominating/Governance Committee and the Finance Committee. Margarete holds a Doctorate in Business Administration from Boston University and was a faculty member in the School of Management at Clark University in Worcester, MA from 1990 - 2015. She now holds an appointment as Professor Emerita. She has authored and co-authored numerous articles on the history of health professions and on management practices in health care. From 2000 - 2010 she was a board member of the VNA Care Network in Worcester, MA. During that time, she served a term as president and was chair or member of various committees.

### **Joyce Augustus**

Joyce is a business professional, a former employee of the YWCA Central Massachusetts, and has served on the board of directors at the YWCA for the past 12 years. She currently serves as President. Joyce is an active community volunteer, serving on the board of directors of the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, United Way Women's Initiative of Central Massachusetts, Thomas S. Green Committee as well as other community initiatives. She is proud to be part of these great organizations, which are contributing to the future of the community by eliminating racism and fostering philanthropic leadership in her home county of Worcester. Her business acumen combined with an MBA from Nichols College has provided her with the knowledge and leadership skills needed to assist in the continuous success and growth of the YWCA.

### **Hazel Berry**

Hazel retired from the Worcester Police Department (WPD) in 2016 as a Detective in the Special Crimes Unit after a 36-year career. She joined the police force in 1980, just two years after the first female officer started to walk foot beats with her male counterparts, and was one of the first women of color to begin her career with the WPD. Hazel currently works part-time for Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in their transportation department. Hazel is an active volunteer serving as a member of the YWCA's Daybreak Standing Committee. She is a member of the Department of Children & Families (DCF) East Board, and is a volunteer for vision impaired people. She is a past member of the board of directors of CASA Project (Court Appointed Special Advocate), Pathways for Change and the YWCA.

### **Robert Brien**

See bio above.

### **Lori Dawson**

Lori Dawson is a full Professor in the Psychology Department at Worcester State University, where she has taught for 18 years. Her scholarly work has focused on physical, sexual and emotional abuse and the intersectionality of discrimination. She is a member of the Association of Women in Psychology, a certified Rape Crisis Counselor and a volunteer youth educator with the O.W.L. program through the Unitarian Universalist Church. She also is a national assessment scholar and serves on the Advisory Board for the Center of Inquiry at Wabash College. She received her doctorate from the University at Albany and her undergraduate degree from Suffolk University. Lori served on the YWCA's board of

directors for six years. During her tenure she served on the Racial Justice Task Force, as a member of the Public Policy Committee and as co-chair of the Daybreak Standing Committee. Lori is a resident of Shrewsbury.

**Etel Haxhijaj**

See bio above.

**Mary Feeney**

See bio above.

**Eve Gilmore**

Eve is the Executive Director of Edward Street Child Services, having worked throughout the past decade to advance awareness, professionalism, and the importance of high-quality early education and care for young children and their families. In her 30 years as a nonprofit professional, she has also held positions at the United Way of Central Massachusetts and the YWCA Central Massachusetts, and has remained active with multiple boards and committees in the field of early education and care. She currently serves on the YWCA Resource Development, Public Policy, and Nominating/Governance Committees. A Worcester resident, she graduated from the College of the Holy Cross, has a master's degree from Boston College School of Social Work, and has raised three children.

**Sheila King-Goodwin**

Sheila King-Goodwin is the senior vice president and chief retail banking officer at Fidelity Bank. She has 31 years of banking experience, including 13 years as senior vice president of retail at PeoplesBank in Holyoke. Sheila leads Fidelity Bank's efforts in retail, client care, and investments and insurance. Sheila also serves on several boards including the YWCA Board of Directors, Yes We Care Board, Women's Initiative Financial Literacy Committee, MAWOCC and Unity Radio Advisory Committee. Sheila received her undergraduate degree from the University of South Carolina, and a MBA from Assumption College. She's also a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Stonier School of Banking. She has lived in Worcester with her family for the past 25 years

**Alexizendria Link**

Zena coordinates a number of coalitions and community-based efforts to reduce inequities and promote inclusion within collaborative leadership spaces. In addition to the YWCA Central MA, Zena sits on a broad range of steering committees and boards, from national education efforts to local grassroots groups including The Episcopal Church, National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) and the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

Throughout her career, Zena has volunteered and worked for education, religious and community-based organizations and non-profits, advocating for diversity and inclusion, human rights and social justice. Additionally, one of her great loves is teaching. She currently is a classroom educator, skilled facilitator and national education advocate with national level experience in consulting, facilitation, coaching, and multicultural and racial equity professional development services.

Zena is an active community volunteer who serves as a senior strategist and steering committee member for youth-led and/or community-centered leadership to challenge racial inequities in education, healthcare, government and public service sectors.