

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARIES OF NOMINEES FOR YWCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Lori Dawson, Ph.D.

Dr. Lori Dawson is a Professor of Psychology and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Worcester State University, where she has also served as the Interim Associate Vice-President for Academic Affairs; Interim Associate Vice-President for Institutional Assessment and Planning; and as the Inaugural Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Her scholarly work focuses on interpersonal violence; gender and sexuality; and prejudice and discrimination.

Her work in institutional assessment led her to become a national Teagle Assessment Scholar and Association of American College & Universities Fellow. These professional experiences, combined with her passion for social justice, led her to become the Director of Evaluation at the Collaborative for Youth and Community Justice. She is currently the co-chair of the YWCA's Domestic Violence Services Committee and a member of Nominating and Governance Committee. Previous volunteer work includes work as a rape crisis counselor, an Our Whole Lives youth sexuality educator, a town council member, and a YWCA board member where she served on its Racial and Gender Equity Task Force and Public Policy committees.

Natalie Anumba, Ph.D.

Dr. Natalie Anumba is a forensic psychologist and assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. She conducts evaluations of adults involved in criminal proceedings, serves as a violence risk consultant to state psychiatric hospitals, provides expert witness testimony, and supervises postdoctoral trainees and new professionals. She is an active member of the American Psychological Association and American Psychology-Law Society; has co-authored articles and book chapters; and has presented at local, national, and international conferences. She engages with her community through her involvement with the YWCA Central Massachusetts Public Policy Committee, the Quinsigamond Community College Mentoring Program and Mentoring Advisory Council, the Greater Worcester Community Foundation's Scholarship Committee, and Leadership Worcester. She is dedicated to serving her community, region, and profession through volunteering, mentorship, and leadership.

Kayanna James

Kayanna James is a Workforce Development Specialist at the United States Department of Labor, and Co-owner of Unique Cafe, a Jamaican and American restaurant. Kayanna is a Worcester native. She graduated from Rhode Island College with a B.A in Psychology and Behavioral Neuroscience. Kayanna seeks to create a pipeline of growth and opportunities to help young women maximize their potential and attain their goals. Currently, she is the Vice Chair of the City of Worcester's Status of Women Advisory Board, is member of the United Way Women's Initiative Leadership Council and their Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Kayanna is a returned Peace Corps volunteer with a desire to serve her community in some capacity, while focusing on improving policies, programs, regulatory guidelines and best practices.

Jennifer Safford

Jennifer Safford is the Director of Operations and Outreach for the Collaborative for Youth and Community Justice (CYCJ), a women-led, Worcester-based organization that partners with Clark University to promote social justice through research. Safford teaches courses in Clark University's Certificate in Youth Work Practice program in the International Development, Community, and Environment Department as well in Worcester State University's Health Sciences Department. She is a project manager for Clark's Local Action Research Partnership grant from the Massachusetts Office of Public Safety and Security, as well as Community Resource Liaison for the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative funded by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. She sits on the operations team for the City of Worcester's Council for Children, Youth and Family Well-Being as the Coordinator of Worcester's Youth Violence Prevention Initiative. Jennifer is co-convenor of the Youth Resource Network and a member of the City Manager's Council on Youth. Jennifer Safford was born and raised in Worcester and is a proud mother of three.

Elizabeth Wambui

Elizabeth Wambui is the Director of Advancement at Nativity School of Worcester. Prior to joining Nativity Worcester, she served as a Major Gifts Officer and the Regional Financial Development Specialist at the American Red Cross of Massachusetts. She has also served as the Development Associate at Easter Seals Massachusetts.

Elizabeth is passionate about engaging with the Worcester community. She currently serves as a Board Member for Bancroft School, Shine Initiative, Women in Development, and the Worcester Historical Museum. Elizabeth is also a Greater Worcester Community Foundation Early Childhood Committee member and a scholarship community reviewer, Mechanics Hall Modern Mechanics Guild Member, and Worcester Art Museum Corporator. Elizabeth holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the College of the Holy Cross. She was part of the Leadership Worcester Class of 2016-2017 and was one of the honorees in the Worcester Business Journal's 40 under 40 Class of 2014. She resides in Worcester.

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:

Kimberly Haddad

Kimberly Haddad, JD/MPH, is a visionary leader with extensive experience in health care strategy, policy, and operations. Kim most recently served as Chief of Staff for Commonwealth Medicine, the health consulting and service delivery division of UMass Medical School (UMMS). Prior to joining UMMS, she served as both Director of Health Care Policy and Deputy General Counsel at the Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration and Finance. She coordinated state and federal health reform implementation across the administration, and provided counsel to the Massachusetts Secretary of Administration and Finance on health policy and legal matters. Kim previously served as General Counsel and Health Policy Advisor to Massachusetts Senator Richard T. Moore. In this position, she played an important role in assisting the senator with the development of Chapter 224 of the Acts of 2012—the Commonwealth's groundbreaking health care cost containment and quality improvement law. Prior to her work at the State House, Kim was as an environmental lawyer at the United States Environmental Protection Agency, an FBI Agent in training, a victim-witness advocate at the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, and a published writer at Harvard Business School. She received her law and public health degrees from Northeastern School of Law and Tufts School of Medicine, and graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree in political science and economics minor from Wellesley College. Prior to graduate school, Kim, who is fluent in Spanish, conducted reproductive health education and clean indoor air projects in Mayan villages in Guatemala.

Eladia Romero

Elaida is a Regional Manager for U.S. Congressman James McGovern. In this capacity she is responsible for the day-to-day office operations of the North Central Massachusetts office located in Leominster. She serves a community liaison to constituents, non-profit organizations, government officials, local businesses, and others. Prior to joining Congressman McGovern's office, she worked as a Caseworker and Outreach Specialist for Congressman John Olver in Fitchburg. Elaida is active in her home community, serving as a board member of the Literacy Volunteers of the Montachusett Area and the Montachusett Opportunity Council. She's also a member of the board of trustees of the Leominster Public Library, and a Committee Member of the United Way of North Central Massachusetts Day of Caring, Minority Coalition, and the Cannabis Control Commission's Citizens Review Committee. Eladia received her Bachelor's degree in legal studies from Mount Ida College.

Elizabeth Tripp

Liz currently serves as the Principal Business Architect for the Specialty division at Hanover Insurance. In this capacity she works on both short and long-term technology strategies, solutioning for major investments, and partnering with business partners to deliver value in an ever changing digital landscape. Prior to this role she was a founding member of Hanover's Innovation and Strategic Integration team, focused on new and emerging technologies. Liz attended Mount Holyoke College, receiving her undergraduate degree in Economics, with a minor in Mathematics. She lives in Worcester with her dog, Romeo, her cat, Darcy, and her fiancé Matt. She can be found outside most often, running, hiking, or riding horses, and working closely with the City to Saddle board of directors.

Leigh Woodruff

Leigh joined Community Legal Aid (CLA) in 2018 as Litigation Director. In that role, she coordinates and supervises state and federal litigation designed to effect positive impacts in the communities served by CLA. Before joining CLA, Leigh defended commercial clients in trials and appeals nationwide. Leigh is trained in mediation and admitted to practice law in numerous state and federal courts, including the United States Supreme Court. She received her undergraduate degree from Allegheny College, a master's degree from the University of Chicago and her law degree from Villanova University School of Law. Leigh serves on Quinsigamond Community College Foundation's board and the YWCA Board of Directors; and her prior volunteer work has included mediating child custody disputes. She resides in Worcester with her husband, daughter, and two rescue dogs.

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 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 with community development and planning, Roberta offers a comprehensive approach to project management. Her responsibilities have included oversight of the redevelopment of a brownfields sites, oversight and direction of financing including the use of 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 the creation of mixed-use developments, industrial parks, and subdivision roads, and the acquisition, expansion, relocation, and asset management of various fee-for-service properties.

Roberta has served on the YWCA's Board of Directors for 8 years before becoming President of the Board of Directors in June 2020.

Alexizendria Link

Alexizendria (Zena) Link is a public school educator who serves on the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) and National Education Association (NEA) board of directors and chairs the NEA Professional Standards and Practice committee. Zena coordinates a number of coalitions and community-based efforts to reduce inequities and promote inclusion within collaborative leadership spaces. Additionally she serves as a senior strategist to a broad range of steering committees and boards, from national to local grassroots groups.

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 Program Manager in the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General where she has held several positions with increasing responsibility over the past 15 years. She is also a small business entrepreneur in the Worcester area. Amane is actively involved in racial justice work both at work as co-chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee at the AG's Office 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 Shrewsbury.

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 and the immediate past President of the YWCA Board of Directors. She is an active community member and volunteer, currently serving on the Board of Directors for the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, Worcester Regional Research Bureau, and the United Way Women's Initiative of Central Massachusetts. She also serves as a member of the Worcester Regional Research Bureau's Thomas S. Green Committee, Women's Initiative Diversity Committee, and other committees at the YWCA to highlight a few. She is honored to be involved with these mission-driven organizations, helping to champion positive change in the Worcester community by working to eliminate racism, foster philanthropic leadership, promote informed public policy, and empower women and girls. Her business acumen combined with an MBA from Nichols College has provided her with the knowledge and leadership skills 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 continues to work full-time as a campus police officer with MCPHS University (Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences). She is an active volunteer serving as a member of the YWCA's Domestic Violence Services 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, Ph.D.

See bio above.

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. She is seeking a second bid for public office this year as a candidate for District 5 Worcester City Council.

Mary Feeney

Mary is an attorney practicing in Winchendon, and formerly practiced at Bowditch & Dewey in Worcester. Her practice focuses on design and construction contracts services and general representation of a wide variety of non-profit organizations including schools and colleges on matters of governance and facilities-related regulatory, code, and licensing matters. Mary has been a member of the YWCA Central Massachusetts board of directors for the past seven years, serving this past year as Clerk of the Board. 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 of the Massachusetts Workforce Board Association.

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, and is a YWCA Katharine F. Erskine recipient. 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 Community Banking Officer at Fidelity Bank. She has 32 years of banking experience, including 13 years as Senior Vice President of Retail at PeoplesBank in Holyoke. Sheila leads Fidelity Bank’s efforts in community banking, client care, and investments and insurance. Sheila also serves on several boards including the Yes We Care Board, Fidelity Bank’s Inclusion & Diversity Advisory Board, the United Way’s Women’s Initiative Financial Literacy and Diversity, Equity and Inclusions Committee, the YWCA’s Resource Development Committee, Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition (MAWOCC) and Unity Radio’s 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 American Bankers Association (ABA) Stonier Graduate School of Banking at the University of Pennsylvania. She has lived in Worcester with her family for the past 26 years.

Alexizendria Link

See bio above.