

Notable Alumni in Leadership Roles Across Multiple Sectors

November 2024



CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY
Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel
School of Applied Social Sciences



Katrice Williams (SAS '16, MNO '16)

Senior Criminal Justice Fellow, **The Cleveland Foundation**

Katrice Williams is a fellow with the American Bar Association's Legal Education Police Practices Consortium, serving as one of 39 individuals across the country doing deep dives into public data related to local and state law enforcement agencies. She has advocated for the rights of women and children through work with the American Civil Liberties Union and in work adjacent to her time at the Cleveland Foundation.



Jazmin Long (SAS '15, MNO '15)

Chief Executive Officer, **Birthing Beautiful Communities**

Jazmin Long is a dedicated community development, birth and fundraising professional with a special interest in maternal-newborn stabilization and lifelong care. A Cleveland transplant, her background includes community development, fundraising, perinatal support, and economic and workforce development.



Ryan Zymler (SAS '15)

Assistant Vice President of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, **OhioGuidestone**

Ryan Zymler's career foundation is in community mental health and he has a rich history of working with youth and young adults. Actively involved in the Cleveland social justice community, Zymler is on the board of directors for Preterm. He was awarded the 2022 LGBTQ Heritage Day Award for Advocacy and Activism by the City of Cleveland and the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland.



Bethany Studenic (SAS '14)

Co-Founder, Managing Director, **Enlightened Solutions**

Bethany Studenic has more than a decade of experience in community change initiatives and has led prominent social and research-based advocacy movements. She has also worked in direct practice with diverse groups, including survivors of domestic violence, communities advocating for police reform and families experiencing poverty.



Sarah R. McNelis (SAS '15)

National Preparedness Directorate,
FEMA, U.S. Department of Homeland Security



Matthew Fieldman (MNO '11)

Senior Advisor for Workforce Development,
American Manufacturing Communities Collaborative



Shoshana Mitzman (MNO '09)
Chief Development Officer, **MAKOM**

Under Shoshana Mitzman's leadership, MAKOM has built a network of 240 diverse communities to improve Israeli residents' lives through education, employment, arts and culture, and more. About one third of the MAKOM communities were founded by women who saw a need and stepped up to fill it. Now, more than half of the next generation's leaders are women. Mitzman turned small, unaffiliated but successful programs into compelling stories to gain presence and support throughout the region.



Oliver L. Gross (SAS '06)
President, **New Urban Development**

Oliver Gross is responsible for the acquisition, development, construction oversight, financing and property management of the myriad commercial and residential housing developments owned by New Urban Development and the Urban League of Greater Miami. He is a firm believer in the concept of "mitigation of gentrification by participation in transformation"—a theme and phrase New Urban Development aims to uphold.



Melody J. Stewart, PhD (GRS '08, social welfare)
Justice, **Supreme Court of Ohio**

Melody Stewart has more than 30 years of combined administrative, legal and academic experience. She was elected in November 2018 to a full term as the 161st justice—and the first African American woman—to serve on the Supreme Court of Ohio. Prior to joining the Supreme Court, Stewart served on the Eighth District Court of Appeals, elected in 2006 and reelected in 2010 and 2016. She also served as the court's administrative judge during that time, while simultaneously pursuing her PhD at the Mandel School.



Hannah Delis (SAS '09)
Chief Human Resources Officer,
Swagelok



Alesha Washington (MNO '07)
President and CEO, **Seattle Foundation**

Prior to her tenure as president and CEO of the Seattle Foundation, Alesha Washington served as program director for Vibrant Neighborhoods and Inclusive Economy at the George Gund Foundation in Cleveland. Washington led collaborative efforts of the senior program team at the Gund Foundation to strengthen democracy-building and civic engagement strategies statewide. She also directed grantmaking strategies to bolster community revitalization, economic growth and resident leadership. Washington was previously vice president of government advocacy for the Greater Cleveland Partnership, one of the largest chambers of commerce in the country. She also held senior government relations roles with Cleveland Neighborhood Progress and the Centers for Families and Children.



Marcella Brown (MNO '07)
Vice President, Development and Communication,
Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry



Thomas Mulloy (SAS '06)
Director of Government Relations,
Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology



Lee Fisher (MNO '05)

Dean and Joseph C. Hostetler-BakerHostetler Chair in Law,
Cleveland-Marshall College of Law at Cleveland State University

Lee Fisher’s diverse career has spanned the private, public, nonprofit and academic sectors. In addition to serving as dean, he is a senior fellow of Cleveland State University’s Levin College of Urban Affairs and an urban scholar of the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs and the Great Cities Institute at University of Illinois at Chicago. Fisher previously held the title of president and CEO of both CEOs for Cities and the Centers for Families and Children. Fisher has decades of experience in legal practice, most extensively with Cleveland-based Hahn Loeser from 1978–1999. He has also served in numerous Ohio government roles, including attorney general, lieutenant governor, state senator and state representative, among others.



Phyllis Harris (MNO '05)

Executive Director, **LGBT Community Center Greater Cleveland**

Phyllis “Seven” Harris has nearly two decades of leadership experience in local nonprofits, including program development and management, fundraising, and senior-level executive positions. She has also played a strong role as an advocate in Cleveland’s LGBT community for many years. Before joining the LGBT Community Center, Harris oversaw youth engagement programming at Planned Parenthood of Northeast Ohio. She served as director of education and advocacy with Cleveland Rape Crisis Center; vice president of programs and interim CEO with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Cleveland; and capital campaign director at Cleveland Sight Center. Her involvement with Cleveland nonprofit leadership includes roles on the governing boards of the LGBT Center, SPACES and Community Shares of Greater Cleveland.



India Pierce Lee (SAS '05)

Executive VP, Chief Strategy Officer, **Cuyahoga Community College**

Awarded Louis Stokes Fellowship in Community Development, to attend Case Western Reserve, India Pierce Lee received the Distinguished Alumna Award in 2014 for outstanding contributions to the social work profession, the community and the Mandel School. She completed a prestigious Loeb Fellowship at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 2009, where she studied neighborhood revitalization with a focus on sustainability. Her prestigious titles include senior vice president, program, for the Cleveland Foundation. Pierce Lee serves on several boards and committees and has received numerous awards for her leadership and service in the community.



Christa Sharpe (SAS '05)

Regional President of Asia Pacific, **International Justice Mission**

Christa Sharpe joined International Justice Mission (IJM) in 2005 as IJM Cambodia’s director of aftercare, where she led a team of social workers to provide crisis care, trial preparation and case management support for more than 250 sex trafficking survivors. Sharpe then served as a director of church mobilization in the U.S. where she engaged thousands in local and global efforts to seek justice and end violence committed against the most vulnerable. Sharpe returned to IJM Cambodia as program office director where her team partnered with Cambodia’s justice and social service systems, as well as a network of civil society partners, to successfully decrease the prevalence of child sex trafficking and increase law protections and trauma-informed support to the most vulnerable communities.



Jennifer Hawkins (MNO '02)

Corporate Secretary and Chief of Staff,
American Red Cross



Benjamin Nichols (MGT '02, CNM '02)

Director of Affordable Operations,
Bellwether Enterprise



Lisa Purdy (MNO '02)

President and CEO,
Council of International Programs USA



Scott Ryan, PhD (GRS '01, social welfare)

Retired Dean and Professor,
University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work

Notable Alumni | 1998–1990



Sonia Minnes, PhD (GRS '98, social welfare)

Verna Houck Motto Professor of Social Work, **Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences** and Research Director, **Schubert Center for Child Studies at Case Western Reserve University**

Sonia Minnes' research interests are in the study of child development, the multiple factors that affect cognitive and mental health outcomes, and the development of problematic substance use. Minnes studies risk and protective factors, both biological and environmental, that interact to affect developmental outcomes.



Diane Elze (SAS '94)

Associate Professor Emerita, **University at Buffalo School of Social Work**

Diane Elze has made enduring contributions in support of LGBTQ+ youth throughout her 45-year career as a clinician, advocate, educator and researcher. Elze's social work practice experience included direct services, administration and community organizing in areas of sexual assault and domestic violence, runaway and unhoused youths, HIV prevention and case management, crisis intervention, disability rights advocacy, and community-based services for LGBTQ+ youths.



Celia Williamson, PhD (SAS '94)

Distinguished Professor of Social Work and Executive Director of the Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute, **University of Toledo**

In addition to her academic work, Celia Williamson is active in advocating for legislation surrounding sex trafficking on a state level, having supported all anti-trafficking bills passed in Ohio. Under the direction of Representative Teresa Fedor and the Ohio attorney general, Williamson became a founding member of the Ohio Human Trafficking Commission and serves as the chair of the commission's Research and Analysis Committee.



Hannah Griswold (MNO '93)

Strategic Development Consultant

A strategic development consultant with more than 20 years of experience in fundraising and brand creation, Hannah Griswold founded the New York Public Library's Young Lions program with a mission of transforming scenesters into philanthropists. In 1999, she worked with writer and actor Ethan Hawke to help turn the library into a center of literary life for New Yorkers in their 20s and 30s. In 2001, Griswold was hired as a consultant for Carnegie Hall, where she reengineered the institution's young donors program—featuring “members only” nights with musicians Lou Reed and RZA—boosting membership by nearly a third. She co-founded the Studio Circle donor program to raise scholarship funds for young dancers to attend the School of American Ballet.



Kimberly J. Strom, PhD (GRS '93, social welfare)

Distinguished Professor of Ethics and Professional Practice, **University of North Carolina Chapel Hill**

Kimberly Strom holds the first—and to-date the only—endowed professorship in ethics in the field of social work. Strom is an internationally recognized educator and scholar who specializes in the interpretation of professional standards in social work and other fields. She is the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) ethics commissioner for North America and an ardent member of National Association of Social Workers (NASW) for more than four decades. Strom conducted a groundbreaking study investigating ethics complaints filed with NASW in the decade preceding a significant expansion of the NASW Code of Ethics. Strom also co-authored the best-selling *Direct Social Work Practice* using case-based videos and practical exercises. In recent years, Strom has been active in international research and consultation.



Flavio Marsiglia, PhD (GRS '91, social welfare)

Regents Professor and Director of the Global Center for Applied Health Research, **Arizona State University School of Social Work**

Flavio Marsiglia is the founder and director of the Global Center for Applied Health Research, which conducts intervention health research in partnership with universities and communities in Burundi, China, Guatemala, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Spain, Taiwan and Uruguay. Marsiglia is principal investigator of the National Institutes of Health Specialized Center (U54) grant on health disparities research at the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center. Marsiglia's research on cultural diversity and youth substance use is widely recognized and credited with a measurable reduction in drug use and other high-risk behaviors among youth in Arizona, across the U.S. and in other countries.



Charles Emler, PhD (GRS '98, social welfare)
Professor Emeritus of Social Work,
University of Washington Tacoma



Ralph Belk (SAS '96)
Deputy Executive Director,
The National Center for Children and Families



Jennifer Madden (MNO '95)
Dean, **Linfield University School of Business**



Suzanne Walsh (SAS '94)
President,
Bennett College



Lucinda Lavelli (MNO '91)
Professor and Dean Emerita,
University of Florida College of the Arts



Lisa Pape (SAS '90)
Senior Advisor, **U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs**



Susan Sternad-Basel (SAS '87)

President, **S&B Solutions**

Susan Sternad-Basel's varied career journey has taken her from social work to the armed forces, previously serving as deputy chief data officer of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency and today the president of S&B Solutions. A devoted volunteer, Sternad-Basel received the Mandel School's 2021 Distinguished Service Award, presented to an individual for outstanding contributions to the social work profession, the community and the Mandel School.



Gautam N. Yadama, PhD (SAS '85; GRS '90, social welfare)

Professor and Dean, **Boston College School of Social Work**

Gautam Yadama's research is focused on poverty and environment dynamics, and interventions to address attendant social, economic, environment and health outcomes. He has implemented a randomized control trial to study the sustainability of new and efficient energy technologies in rural India to reduce household air pollution and improve health and wellbeing. Yadama is using social network analysis and community-based system dynamics to study how interventions to reduce pollution are adopted and sustained by impoverished people in rural India. He is a member of the Implementation Science Network on Clean Cooking at the Fogarty Institute of the National Institutes of Health.



Héctor Luis Díaz, PhD (SAS '81)

Director, **New Mexico State University School of Social Work**

Héctor Luis Díaz has published and presented widely in the areas of socioeconomic development, social welfare policy, cultural issues and international social work education.



Elaine Nichols (SAS '80)

Senior Curator of Culture, **Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture**

Elaine Nichols helped develop the inaugural collections of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. Her responsibilities include curating costumes, textiles and decorative arts at the museum, including the Black Fashion Museum collection founded by Lois Alexander Lane and the Ebony Fashion Fair collection created by Eunice Johnson.



Claudia Coulton, PhD (GRS '78, social work)

Distinguished University Professor and the Lillian F. Harris Professor Emerita, **Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences**

Claudia Coulton is founding director of the Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development. Under her leadership, the center has built a model to provide data for community initiatives and research, including a dynamic neighborhood indicators portal, a parcel-based collaborative action platform and a longitudinal multi-agency record linkage system. Coulton is a founder of the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership and has served as research adviser to many community change programs, including Aspen Institute's Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives, Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections program and the Invest in Children initiative.



Howard M. Guttman (SAS '77)

Founder and Principal, **Guttman Development Strategies**

Howard Guttman is best known for his theories on corporate organizational hierarchies, positing the traditional, top-down model of management is less effective than the horizontal, high-performance organization, where decisions are made by cross-functional teams with equal authority. Guttman's theories have garnered him a following in top management circles, largely due to his books and work with leaders of multinational corporations who have applied his ideas in day-to-day business operations. He also regularly addresses corporate and academic audiences.



Georgia J. Anetzberger, PhD (GRS '71, anthropology; SAS '80; GRS '86, social work)

Consultant

Georgia Anetzberger has authored more than 100 scholarly publications on such subjects as home and community-based services and healthcare innovations. Her special interest and expertise is in elder abuse, where she has spent more than 40 years addressing the problem, initially as an adult protective services worker then administrator and most recently as a researcher and educator, conducting approximately two dozen related research projects.

Notable Alumni | 1987 and prior



Lynn D. Heemstra (SAS '84)
Former Executive Director,
Our Community's Children



Lowell Arye (SAS '82)
President, **Aging and Disability
Policy and Leadership Consulting LLC**



Dorothy Faller (SAS '75)

Former Executive Director, **Cleveland International Program**
Former Secretary General, **CEO, Council of International Programs USA**
Former President, **Faller International Training**

Dorothy Faller's early social work career included serving as a child welfare caseworker in Oregon, a social services consultant in child welfare and programs for the elderly in Indiana, and a regional social services and fiscal supervisor at the Ohio Department of Human Services. Her work as an international social work practitioner, however, is at the core of her pioneering contributions. Just six years after obtaining her master's degree, Faller became executive director of the Cleveland International Program. She served in that capacity until 1999, when she became secretary general and CEO of the Council of International Programs USA until 2002. In those years, Faller worked with more than 150 countries and over 500 individuals, providing long-term internships in a variety of professional careers and training, but mostly in social work, both in the U.S. and overseas. Her training programs include cross-cultural awareness and values, conflict resolution, substance abuse prevention, and fundraising.



Darlene Grant (SAS '82)
Senior Advisor to the Director,
Peace Corps



Amy Main Morgenstern (SAS '80)
President,
Main Stream Enterprises



Wilma Peebles-Wilkins, PhD, DPNAP (SAS '71), CWRU Trailblazer 2019

Dean Emeritus, **Boston University**

Wilma Peebles-Wilkins has more than 40 years of experience as a social work practitioner, administrator and educator. She has worked both in the public and private sectors, including in acute pediatric care. In 2000, she was inducted into the National Academies of Practice as a Distinguished Practitioner because of her healthcare advocacy work. In 2002, she received the Greatest Contributions to Social Work Education Award from the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.



**Mark Singer, PhD
(SAS '79; GRS '85, social welfare)**
Leonard W. Mayo Professor in Family and Child
Welfare, **Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel
School of Applied Social Sciences**



Margaret Kennedy (SAS '78)
Former Provincial Director of Community
Mental Health and Addiction Services,
Prince Edward Island, Department of Health



Geneva B. Johnson (SAS '57), CWRU Trailblazer 2022

Former President and CEO, **Family Service America (1983-1994)**

Geneva Johnson led a long and distinguished career in social work and nonprofit leadership. She started as a program director with the YWCA in Houston, then served United Ways of Pennsylvania, Delaware and New York before joining the United Way of America in 1978 as senior vice president responsible for strategic long-term planning and public policy. She was United Way's first woman and African American senior vice president at a time when there were few visible African American women leaders. Johnson was nominated as a CWRU Trailblazer in 2022, awarded the Grace Longwell Coyle Award in 2021 and was inducted into the school's Hall of Achievement in 2015. Johnson was given the highest alumni honor at her undergraduate alma mater, Albright University, when she was awarded an honorary doctor of humanities. She also received an honorary doctor of humane letters from Alvernia University.



**Richard L. Jones, PhD
(SAS '75; GRS '81, social work)**
Nonprofit Consultant and
Former President and CEO,
Metropolitan Family Services (1998-2011)



**Phyllis Solomon, PhD
(GRS '70, sociology; GRS '78, social work)**
Professor in the School of Social Policy and
Practice and Professor of Social Work in Psychiatry,
University of Pennsylvania



On behalf of our school and university community, thank you to the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation for your ongoing support.

Many segments of society are eager to advance more just and inclusive change. At the Mandel School, our alumni are the catalysts to the transformation our society needs.

Thank you for being one of our most important partners as we continue to advance the fields of social work and nonprofit organizations.

Dexter R. Voisin, PhD, LCSW

Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel
Dean in Applied Social Sciences

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