



## All Land is not Creating Equal: Unleashing Family and Community Wealth through Landownership



**Lillian "Ebonie" Alexander**, Executive Director of the Black Family Land Trust, Inc. (BFLT). The BFLT is a niche land trust and one of the nation's only regional land trust dedicated to the preservation and protection of African-American and other historically underserved landowners land assets. Since joining the BFLT in 2009, Ebonie designed and implemented the African American Land Ethic and Wealth Retention and Asset Protection (WRAP) programs. Together these two programs have assisted landowners to retain family ownership and control of more than \$12.5 million of their land assets and deployed more than \$750,000 USDA-EQIP funding to landowners during the past five years.

Ebonie currently serves on the American Farmland Trust, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the North Farm Stewardship Association. In 2020 Ebonie was awarded the Gerald P. McCarthy Award for Leadership in Environmental Conflict Resolution from The Institute for Engagement & Negotiation at the University of Virginia.

A native of Maryland, Ebonie lives in rural Virginia on land that has been in her family for generations. She is a proud Virginian, avid reader and lover of history and grandmother of two. Ebonie can trace her family's history in Virginia to the mid-1750's.



**Melanie Allen** is Co-Director of Hive Fund for Climate and Gender Justice, a newly-created fund that raises money and makes grants to support networks and organizations led by Black women, Indigenous women, and women of color that are working to address the climate crisis in the U.S. through advocacy, movement- and power-building and narrative shift, with a focus on the Southeast. Melanie has raised millions of dollars for nonprofit organizations and political campaigns and is committed to liberating resources as a means of redistributing power and creating a more just society.

Melanie came to the fund from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation where she helped launch the organization's Energy Equity portfolio and managed relationships and grant making in South Carolina. Melanie is fiercely committed to supporting leadership across the South. With 14 years in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors, Allen has considerable experience facilitating community-based solutions that ensure those most affected by policy are centered in the decision-making process. She also has a strong background with community development projects in many sectors, including conservation, affordable housing and workforce development. Melanie is a native of Greensboro, North Carolina currently residing in Durham. Melanie studied history and African American studies at Columbia University and taught the first Environmental Justice course at Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment. Melanie serves on the boards of the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust (chair), Environmental Grantmakers Association and is a member of the Executive Committee of the Cypress Fund.



**Ann English** is the current NRCS State Conservationist of South Carolina, serving in that capacity since April 26, 2010. She is an Arkansas native, and attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy.

During her 30 plus years of service with the agency, Ann has held many positions, starting her career as a Soil Conservation Technician in Missouri, where she also held the positions of Soil Conservationist and District Conservationist. She then moved to Arkansas, where she held the position of District Conservationist, and later, State Agronomist.

She then served as the Assistance State Conservationist for Field Operations in Minnesota, where she had administrative responsibilities for 14 field offices and 2 RC&D Councils. Ann later assumed the role of Assistant State Conservationist for Operations, and in this capacity developed innovative policies and procedures that reflected partner input and site-specific resource concerns from 82 local work groups.

In her current role as State Conservationist in South Carolina, her leadership helps ensure the efficiency of 125 employees, 38 field offices, and a total budget of nearly \$48 million.

In addition to serving as the permanent State Conservationist in South Carolina, Ann also served as NRCS's Regional Conservationist for the 14-state Northeast Region for 8 months in 2015-2016, as well as the State Conservationist for Hawaii for four months in 2017.



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**Dr. Henry English**, Director of the Small Farm Program at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff works with producers to improve the economic viability of their farm businesses. He and his staff provide much-needed education and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged, small, and limited resource producers in 22 counties in eastern and southwest Arkansas. His expertise focuses on farm financial planning, row crop production and marketing, livestock production, alternative crop production, and alternative crop marketing. Risk management, estate planning, crop insurance, and food safety are additional educational opportunities provided by the Small Farms Program. He also provides assistance to all of the outreach areas within the School of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Human Sciences.

An example of his many accomplishments relates to helping small and socially disadvantaged producers complete USDA loan applications. During the last five years, about 350 operators sought assistance in understanding balance sheets and income/expense projections. About 150 of these submitted applications and received nearly \$25 million in operating funds from USDA. Also, about 100 socially disadvantaged operators were assisted in obtaining \$7.5 million from the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) to install land improvement practices such as irrigation wells, land leveling, fencing, and watering facilities. The Small Farms Program has obtained about \$11 million in external funding from both public and private sources.

Dr. English earned a Ph.D. in crop production and an M.S. in soil fertility, both from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. His B.S. is from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff in agronomy.



**Cassandra Johnson Gaither** is a Research Social Scientist with the Southern Research Station, USDA Forest Service, in Athens, GA ([cassandra.johnson@usda.gov](mailto:cassandra.johnson@usda.gov)). Her research interests address human perceptions and interactions with nature and the environment. She has published research addressing social group visitation to wild land recreation areas, environmental justice as this relates to minority and lower wealth group access to outdoor recreation facilities, and more recently, the intersection of socially vulnerable populations and environmental risk. Her work currently focuses on the intersection of property ownership and social vulnerability in the South and the implications of the same for national forest management.



**Darrin Goss Sr.** is the President & Chief Executive Officer of Coastal Community Foundation, the largest community foundation in South Carolina, serving all nine counties on the coast. With his guidance, the Foundation crafted a Civic Engagement Agenda to communicate the systemic issues and inequities burdening the coastal South Carolina region, and how the Foundation will work as a community leader in areas of housing, education and economic development. He has also been instrumental in establishing the Foundation's first advocacy initiative, the Policy Agenda, as well as the first Place-Based Impact Investing Program to provide capital to emerging enterprises that address social needs.

Before joining Coastal Community Foundation, Darrin worked as President & CEO of Capital Area United Way in Baton Rouge, LA and was previously Vice President of Community Impact at United Way of Greenville County. Darrin participated in The Riley Institute's Diversity Leadership Institute in 2010 and is a Class of 2018 Liberty Fellow. He serves on the board of the Lowcountry's Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative and on the One Region Executive Committee. Darrin is currently serving as Board Chair of MDC, Inc. in Durham, NC. His book *The Leadership Option: Decision Making Essentials* was self-published in 2014 and is available on Amazon. A U.S. Army veteran, Darrin received his undergraduate degree from Wofford College and his masters from North Greenville University.



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**Mavis Gragg** is a seasoned attorney and conservation professional with nearly two decades of experience in real estate, conflict resolution, estate planning, and probate. Mavis serves as the Director of the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Project at the American Forest Foundation. Prior to this role, Mavis founded the Gragg Law Firm, PLLC in which she assisted her clients in estate planning, estate administration, and heirs property matters. Drawing from her experience, in 2020 Mavis co-founded HeirShares, which is developing an app designed to empower landowners to navigate complex heirs property ownership.

Mavis serves on the Board of Directors for Triangle Land Conservancy and is a member of the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Authority. With her sister, Mavis co-founded Black Women Drone and the Gragg Family Fund. A native of Black Mountain, North Carolina, Mavis is an alumna of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (B.A., Industrial Relations) and Pepperdine University School of Law (Juris Doctor and Master of Dispute Resolution).



**Octavia Howell** is an Associate manager for Pew's Philadelphia Research and Policy Initiative whose work focuses on housing and economic well-being for Philadelphia residents. She has authored reports on poverty in the city and is the lead for the Initiative's housing portfolio. Her recent report on housing affordability in the city highlighted the challenge many low-income homeowners face in seeking to maintain their homes and pass those homes to their heirs. Prior to joining Pew, Octavia was an urban planner with the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, where she studied housing conditions and policy, analyzed land utilization strategies, and led a citywide visioning effort.



**Professor Faith Rivers James** is the Assistant Provost for Leadership at The Citadel. She also serves as Department Head and Professor of Leadership Studies. Rivers James received her J.D. at Harvard Law School and her A.B. from Dartmouth College. After law school, Rivers James practiced legislative law in the Washington, D.C. office of Akin Gump Strauss, Hauer & Feld, and served as Counsel and Senior Policy Advisor to the Majority Leader of the United States House of Representatives. Rivers James later served as Executive Director of the South Carolina Bar Foundation. She began her law teaching career on the environmental faculty at Vermont Law School and later served as Associate Dean for Experiential Learning and Leadership and Professor of Law at Elon University School of Law. Rivers James is an expert on preserving African American property ownership in the Lowcountry region of South Carolina. During her tenure as Executive Director of the South Carolina Bar Foundation, Rivers James facilitated several grants to legal services and conservation organizations to work with heirs' property owners. With Ford Foundation support, she produced a community legal education video on heirs' property for statewide broadcast and accepted the National Conference of Bar Foundations Award for Excellence in Programming for the Foundation's work. Rivers James worked in partnership with The Community Foundation to launch the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation in Charleston, S.C. Her scholarship continues to consider legislative and administrative remedies to address the uniquely devastating challenges of heirs' property ownership.



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**Yvonne Cooper Knight-Carter** is a native of Moncks Corner, SC. She began her education at the Historic one-room Cherry Hill Classroom in her community. With a lot of encouragement and tutoring at home, she was able to skip grade 1 and enter R. A. Ready Elementary School in grade 2. She attended Berkeley Training High School and graduated from Berkeley High School where she was one of five seniors to first integrate this high school in her senior year. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Music Education with a minor in Education from North Carolina A&T State University. She earned a Masters in Music Therapy from New York University and a Masters' Degree from City College of New York (CUNY) in Supervision and Administration in Education.

Mrs. Knight-Carter worked in education with the NYC Department of Education for thirty-eight years. During this time she worked with children Pre-K -JHS. She served in many capacities; Music teacher, classroom teacher, Staff Developer, Communications Arts Specialist, Assistant Principal and Principal.

During her tenure as Principal at PS 93 Brooklyn, she was honored as Principal of the Year by the Theta Chapter of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc, honored by the community leaders/officials as a "Warrior for Education" and highlighted in Council of Supervisors News as Principal of an "Exemplary School", a model school for a new Assistant Principal trainees' program. She was also a Recruiter and Counselor with NYC Department of Education, recruiting young people across the country including HBCU schools. After thirty-eight years of service to several school communities Mrs. Knight-Carter retired in 2009.

Mrs. Knight- Carter returned home to South Carolina where she is embracing the challenges of being a minority landowner and an advocate for all who have decided to take this woodland journey. On this journey, she has presented at the Minority Landowners Conference and was highlighted with her sister as Minority Landowners of the year 2017. She presented for Women in Agriculture (NC), participated in the Chuck Leavell documentary on America's Forest and traveled to Washington DC with the Fly-In group to advocate for forest landowners. She is currently Chair of the Board of Directors for the Center for Heir's Property Preservation. Most important is her advocacy with family, friends and community by word and example.



**Chuck Leavell:** America's Forests with Chuck Leavell is a broadcast television documentary series for PBS. Host Chuck Leavell, is one of a kind. Often on tour with The Rolling Stones, he's both acclaimed as a rock-and-roll piano player AND as a conservationist tree farmer. After studying forestry by correspondence and doing much of his homework while riding a tour bus with the Fabulous Thunderbirds in the mid '80s, Chuck and wife Rose Lane White Leavell turned her family's plantation near Macon, GA., into what has become a textbook tree farm. Hugging one of his many trees, Chuck declares he's fortunate to have three real passions in his life: "My family, my trees and my music." He is also the co-founder of The Mother Nature Network the world's leading environmental website. Chuck serves as the on-camera guide for his show, traveling across the country to interview people who are passionate about the gifts we get from our woods.



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**John Littles**- Executive Director of McIntosh Sustainable Environment and Economic Development (McSEED) since 2000. John provides technical assistance to grassroots organizations in management, asset based economic development, food systems, education systems, land preservation and retention, farmer development and capacity building, and urban-rural market development. As Executive Director, John has generated over \$8 million in funding for the organization.

- John serves as Board Chairman for Southern Partners Fund Foundation, which manages over \$10 million in assets and provides funding to organizations in 13 southern states.
- John served on the Advisory Board for GE Capital's Rural Community Investment Fund.
- John has participated on the White House Rural Council and presented during a Senate Briefing on the USDA Community Food Program.
- John works to build agricultural value-chains in the Deep South: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi. Collectively, the value chains have sold over \$2 million in produce to wholesale and retail distributors.
- John works with faith-based leaders on community and economic development.
- John is an Outreach Provider for United States Department of Agriculture



**Tom Martin** is President and CEO of the American Forest Foundation. Formerly, he served as the Executive Vice President of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA, the citizens advocacy group for a superlative National Park system). He also served as President and Member of the Board of Directors of Earth Force, Inc., the nation's largest young people's environmental and citizenship education and action group. Prior to that he was the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the National Audubon Society.

Tom was Deputy Director of Policy, Budget and Administration, Michigan Department of Natural Resources. As the Founding Director, Michigan Offices of the Great Lakes and Water Resources, State Water Administrator, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, he acted as chief advocate on these issues for Michigan before Congress, international and regional bodies.

Tom was a member of the Northland College Board of Trustees. He has served as Board Chair of the Natural Resources Council of America; Chair and Founding Member of the Great Lakes Protection Fund, a \$100M public endowment to fund Great Lakes research and demonstration projects; Chair of the Great Lakes Commission, an 8-state, regional government organization; as a member of the Governor's Commission on a Sustainable South Florida; and as Vice President of the Council of Great Lakes Governors.

Tom holds a B.S. from The American University, Washington DC, a Juris Doctor from the UCLA School of Law, and was admitted to the Michigan Bar in 1979.



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**Bernie Mazyck:** Since November 1, 1998, Bernie Mazyck has served as the first President and Chief Executive Officer of the South Carolina Association for Community Economic Development. SCACED is the state's trade association and funding intermediary for Community Development Corporations, Community Development Financial Institutions, and grassroots economic development organizations. Through its network of members and partner organizations, SCACED strives to improve the quality of life for poor families and communities by providing innovative and sustainable solutions to low-wealth communities in South Carolina. SCACED achieves this through capacity building of community-based organizations, attracting public and private capital to local community economic development organizations, as well as influencing the public policy process that benefits poor and marginalized people in South Carolina.

Since his time with SCACED, Bernie helped sheppard the growth of the community economic development movement in South Carolina from 4 organizations to over 100. Under Bernie's leadership, SCACED and its member organizations developed projects valued at over \$150 million, with an economic impact in South Carolina of over \$350 million. Bernie is a graduate of Charleston Southern University with a BS in Biology, and of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia with a Master of Divinity degree, with a concentration in Ministry with the Poor. In 2000, Bernie completed the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at the John F. Kennedy School at Harvard University.

Currently Bernie serves on the following Boards: Charlotte Branch Board of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond (Richmond, VA), Coastal Community Foundation, Community Champions Committee Chairman of Prosperity Now (Washington, DC), Rural Innovators Learning Group (Washington, DC), Rural Resource Coalition of South Carolina, South Carolina Community Capital Alliance, Center for Heirs Property Preservation, SC Translational Research Advisory Board of MUSC, Connectional Ministries of the United Methodist Church of South Carolina, and Epworth Children Center.

Bernie is the 2004 recipient of the Order of the Silver Crescent from Governor Mark Sanford and the 2014 recipient of the Order of the Palmetto from former Governor Nikki Haley. The Order of the Palmetto is the state's highest civilian honor for service to the state.



**Alan McGregor** has worked at the intersection of philanthropy, rural communities, and social justice for 40 years. Currently, he is a consultant to social justice philanthropy and a recently-retired Vice President of the U. S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities. At the Endowment, he led a number of projects including the Forest Investment Zones initiative and the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Program. Before joining the Endowment in 2012, Mr. McGregor was Executive Director of the Southern Rural Development Initiative. Earlier in his career, he led The Sapelo Foundation as Executive Director and was a founder and first Executive Director of the Fund for Southern Communities. Mr. McGregor lives in Asheville, North Carolina with his wife, Maggie Mead.



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**Professor Thomas W. Mitchell** is a professor at Texas A&M University School of Law where he also served as interim Dean in 2017-2018. At Texas A&M, he co-directs the Program in Real Estate and Community Development Law. Prior to joining Texas A&M, he served on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin Law School as a full professor with a chair in law. He is a national expert on property issues facing disadvantaged families and communities and has published leading scholarly works addressing these matters.

Professor Mitchell also has done extensive law reform and policy work, most prominently serving as the principal drafter for the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act (UPHPA). The UPHPA represents the most substantial law reform effort in modern times to stabilize ownership of certain family-owned properties. Thus far, 18 states/jurisdictions in every region of the country – but with 8 southern states leading the way – have enacted the UPHPA into law. In addition to this work, Professor Mitchell has helped develop federal policy proposals to help disadvantaged farmers and property owners. Recently, he was named 1 of 21 recipients of the MacArthur Fellowship for 2020 in recognition of the substantial impact his overall professional work as a law professor and as a lawyer has had in assisting disadvantage property owners, owners who are disproportionately African American and other people of color.

Professor Mitchell is a graduate of Amherst College, the Howard University School of Law, and the University of Wisconsin Law School where he received an LL.M. (masters of law) and served as a William H. Hastie Fellow. Professor Mitchell also is a member of a number of professional organizations including the American College of Real Estate Lawyers.



**Karama Neal, PhD**, is president of Southern Bancorp Community Partners, a nonprofit community development financial institution promoting economic mobility in rural Arkansas and Mississippi through development lending, public policy advocacy, and asset building. Prior to joining SBCP in 2009, Dr. Neal worked in bioinformatics. Neal serves on the boards of the Little Rock Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, and the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission. In 2013, she started a statewide grassroots organization promoting passage of the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act in Arkansas. The legislation was passed with no dissent in 2015 and her TedX talk focused on that work. Neal graduated from historic Little Rock Central High School, completed a BA in biology at Swarthmore College, an MA in bioethics from Loyola University Chicago, and a PhD in genetics from Emory University. She completed the Impact Investing Programme at the University of Oxford's Saïd Business School and lives in Little Rock with her family.



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**Melvin L. Oliver** is the sixth president of Pitzer College, an award-winning professor, author and a noted expert on racial and urban inequality.

Before joining Pitzer College, President Oliver served as the executive dean at the University of California, Santa Barbara's College of Letters and Science, where he was also the SAGE Sara Miller McCune Dean of Social Sciences and a professor of sociology. During his 12-year tenure as the dean of social sciences at UCSB, he promoted faculty diversity and championed increased access for underrepresented students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Prior to UCSB, Oliver was the vice president of the Asset Building and Community Development Program at the Ford Foundation. Under Oliver's direction, the program developed pioneering grant initiatives, including a \$50 million program to secure home mortgages for 35,000 low-wealth households and change the way banks evaluate applications for home mortgages.

As professor of sociology at University of California, Los Angeles, from 1978-96, he was named California Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and received the Harriet and Charles Luckman Distinguished Teaching Award. In 1989, he was the founding co-director of the UCLA Center for the Study of Urban Poverty, which is a leader in the development of undergraduate and graduate curriculum and world-class research on urban poverty and social welfare policy.

Oliver co-authored *Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality* with Thomas M. Shapiro, which won the Distinguished Scholarly Publication Award from the American Sociological Association, the C. Wright Mills Award from the Society for the Study of Social Problems, and the award for the outstanding book on the subject of human rights from the Gustavus Myers Center for its groundbreaking exploration of race and equality when it was first released in 1995. He is the co-editor of four books, including *Prismatic Metropolis: Inequality in Los Angeles*, and the author of numerous special journal issues and more than 50 scholarly publications. In acknowledgment of the quality and impact of his scholarly contributions, Oliver was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2012.

Oliver earned his BA at William Penn College and his MA and PhD from Washington University in St. Louis. Washington University awarded him the Distinguished Alumni Award, Arts and Sciences in 2002 and the Sesquicentennial Celebration Distinguished Alumni Award in 2003. William Penn honored him with the Distinguished Career Award in 2012. Oliver received a 2016 ASSET Builder Champion award from the Center for Global Policy Solutions.



**Alton Perry** is the Program Manager for Roanoke Electric Cooperative's Sustainable Forestry and Land Retention Project. Alton is retired from the NC Forest Service where he served from 1982 until 2006 based in Wake County, North Carolina. He served as Outreach Coordinator for the NC Forest Service in the state office in Raleigh NC from 2006 until his retirement in 2012. He currently works at Roanoke Electric Cooperative where he assists forest landowners with a focus on assisting African American landowners to use their woodlands as a means of increasing family wealth and legacy in order to meet Roanoke Electric Cooperative's mission of "enhancing the quality of life in the diverse communities they serve. Alton lives in Wendell near Raleigh, NC.





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**Kristopher Pickler** is an in-house attorney on the Legal Real Estate team at Lowe's Companies, Inc. He is also a board member of the Land Trust Alliance (Washington, DC) and an advocate & supporter of the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation (Charleston, SC). Mr. Pickler serves on the SC Bar Association's Diversity & In-House Counsel Committees. He is a former board member of the Davidson Lands Conservancy (Davidson, NC) and the Coastal Land Trust (Wilmington, NC); past volunteer of The Nature Conservancy North Carolina's Charlotte Committee (Charlotte, NC); past council member of the Duke University Nicholas School of the Environment's Alumni Council (Durham, NC); volunteer survey director of the Center for Marine Conservation (Beaufort, NC); former assistant scoutmaster with the Boy Scouts of America (Charleston, SC); National Trails Day Committee Volunteer of the Year - South Carolina in 1995 (Charleston, SC); and, delegate to the Palmetto Boys State at The Citadel (Marion, SC).

Mr. Pickler served as a Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellow for U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (NH) and the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary in Washington, DC. He assisted the Senator, who was Chair of the C/J/S Subcommittee, on all federal appropriations for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other coastal agencies. He was one of ten nationwide recipients of the legislative fellowship to work on national coastal and marine policy issues. During his time in the Senate, Mr. Pickler was selected as a Congressional Fellow at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Woods Hole, MA, where he subsequently spent time in residence.

He graduated from Marion High School (Marion, SC) and earned his Bachelor of Science in Political Science, with minors in Biology and Economics, from Francis Marion University in 1993. He received his Master of Environmental Management, with a concentration in Coastal Environmental Management, from Duke University in 1999, and his law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2002. While in law school, Mr. Pickler served as a research assistant for Prof. Joseph J. Kalo for Ocean & Coastal Law and Property Law. He was admitted to the South Carolina bar in 2002.



**Jim Porter** is president of Business Development and Latin America. In this role, he oversees WestRock's ongoing development of new business opportunities and management responsibility for the company's operations in Latin America. Jim is also responsible for WestRock's fiber procurement including global forest and recycled fiber supply. Previously, he held the role of president, Paper Solutions, and president, Corrugated Packaging, at WestRock. He joined RockTenn in 2008 with the acquisition of Southern Container Corp., where he was president and chief operating officer.

Prior to RockTenn, Jim served as president of Solvay Paperboard – a subsidiary containerboard mill of Southern Container. He joined Solvay in 1993 as vice president with responsibility for building the team and operating the facility which grew into a state-of-the-art, 820,000 ton recycled containerboard mill. WestRock acquired Southern Container and Solvay Paperboard in 2008. Prior to 1993, Jim spent 19 years with Menasha Corporation, beginning in the company's Timberland Division and ultimately becoming general manager of Menasha's Paperboard Division in Otsego, MI.

Jim is the past chairman of the Fibre Box Association; past chairman of the Containerboard Sector of the American Forest & Paper Association; previously on the Board of Directors for Corrugated Packaging Alliance, International Corrugated Case Association, and the World Containerboard Organization. Jim currently serves on the Board of the American Forest Foundation, and the Forest History Society, and was recently inducted into the International Corrugated Packaging Foundation's Circle of Distinguished Leaders. He was also presented the RISI Lifetime Achievement Award in 2018. Jim is a member of the Society of American Foresters, Certified Forester.

Jim earned a bachelor's degree in Forest Management from the University of Missouri, in addition to graduate studies in Business Administration, and completed the Advanced Management Program from Harvard Business School.



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**Daniel R. Porterfield** is President and CEO of the Aspen Institute, a global nonprofit organization committed to realizing a free, just, and equitable society. He has been recognized as a visionary strategist, transformational leader, devoted educator, and passionate advocate for justice and opportunity.

Prior to leading the Aspen Institute, Porterfield served for seven years as the President of Franklin & Marshall College, a national liberal arts college founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1787. Under his leadership, Franklin & Marshall set records for applications, fundraising, and fellowships; developed cutting edge new centers for student wellness, career services, and faculty excellence; and constructed a new athletics stadium and visual arts center.

Before assuming the presidency at Franklin & Marshall, Porterfield served as Senior Vice President for Strategic Development and as an award-winning professor of English at his alma mater, Georgetown University. In this role, he led Georgetown's institutional positioning, strategy formation, communications, government relations, community relations, and intercollegiate athletics. He also spearheaded the University's relationship with Washington, DC Public Schools and founded a number of Georgetown programs for immigrant children, DC students, and marginalized youth.

Prior to coming to Georgetown in 1997, Porterfield served for four years as communications director and chief speechwriter for the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Porterfield has received awards and recognitions from the KIPP Foundation, the "I Have A Dream" Foundation, the Posse Foundation, and the Kaplan Educational Foundation. He serves on the National Board of Directors of Teach For America and on the board of the Education Trust, and is a former trustee of the College Board. He was named a White House Champion of Change in 2016 and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2020.

Porterfield earned B.A. degrees from Georgetown and Oxford—where he was a Rhodes Scholar—and his Ph.D. from The City University of New York Graduate Center, where he was awarded a Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities and wrote his dissertation on the poetry of American prisoners. He has been awarded honorary degrees from Wake Forest University, Miami Dade College, Elizabethtown College, and Mt. Aloysius College.



**Lizzie Presser** is a journalist at ProPublica covering inequality, how social policy is experienced, and health. She was previously a contributing writer for The California Sunday Magazine, and her writing has appeared in The New Yorker, The Guardian, This American Life, Harper's and elsewhere. Her story on heirs' property, *The Dispossessed*, won a George Polk Award for magazine reporting and a John Martin Bartlow Award for public interest journalism.



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**Toni Stanger-McLaughlin, J.D.**, a citizen of the Colville Confederated Tribes, serves as NAAF's Regional Director and Federal Liaison.

For over a decade Ms. Stanger-McLaughlin has compassionately worked in agriculture law and policy, operating in various capacities at both the highest levels of the federal government and in her direct work for many tribes. Prior to joining NAAF, she served as the director of tribal relations for the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative.

After working towards settling millions of dollars in civil rights claims on behalf of American Indian farmers and ranchers and updating sacred sites policy for the U.S. Forest Service, she departed the Department of Agriculture Office of the Secretary to establish a successful consulting business.

She attended the University of North Dakota School of Law to study federal Indian law. In her spare time, Toni enjoys being outdoors with her husband and three children, as well as beading and sewing powwow regalia for her immediate and extended family.



**Jennie L. Stephens** has served as the chief leader of the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation (the Center) since its inception in 2005. At the Center, she is responsible for overseeing the administration, programs, and strategic planning of the organization. She has worked more than 25 years in the nonprofit field in such positions as fiscal director at a community action agency, sponsored programs director at a historically black college, and senior program director at a community foundation. She also has several years of experience in consulting as a program reviewer, strategic planning facilitator, and grants writer. Most recently, Jennie had the pleasure of being a speaker at TedXCharleston with a talk titled, "Heirs Discover Money Does Grow on Trees" <https://youtu.be/TMeaii8csFY> and was selected to be a 2018 BALLE Fellow, a member of 25 brilliant leaders who is building healthy and equitable rural economies across US and Canada ([bit.ly/2FFycyx](http://bit.ly/2FFycyx)).

Jennie received a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the College of Charleston, a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Charleston/the University of SC and earned a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from Regent University in Virginia Beach, VA.

Jennie's passion in life is to help people help themselves.



**Betsy Taylor** is a cultural anthropologist. Over the past 25 years, she has worked for community-driven development in Appalachia and South Asia -- seeking to integrate issues of health, agriculture, forestry, culture and environmental stewardship. In popular and scholarly platforms, she writes about environmental and social justice movements, democratic planning & participatory research, women's issues, the commons, democratic reclamation of academe / professions. She co-authored, with Herbert Reid, the book, *Recovering the Commons: Democracy, Place, and Global Justice* (University of Illinois Press, 2010). At the University of Kentucky, she served as Co-Director of Environmental Studies, Research Director for the Appalachian Center and on the faculty of the Social Theory program. She was a research faculty member in the Appalachian Studies program at Virginia Tech. From 2012-2017, she was appointed to the steering committee of the U.S. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, by the Secretary of the U.S. Dept. of the Interior. She has served as chair of the Human Rights / Social Justice Committee of the Society for Applied Anthropology. Many of her writings can be found on her website.



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**Kellie Terry** is a Senior Program Officer for Sustainable Environments at the Surdna Foundation. Following a strong desire to serve young people from her own community, Kellie began her career at THE POINT CDC in 2002, a non-profit organization dedicated to the revitalization of the South Bronx. In 2004, Kellie became Executive Director, overseeing organizational development, fundraising, environmental justice campaigns and community development projects for the agency for over ten years. During her tenure, she worked on extensive policy and advocacy issues related to fair share, urban food justice, transportation equity, climate resiliency and green infrastructure.

Kellie has completed the Executive Leadership Development Program with Columbia University's Institute for Non-Profit Management, The We Are The Bronx Fellowship Program and has received recognition for her work from institutions such as El Diario la Prensa – New York City's largest and oldest Spanish-language daily newspaper, The Bronx Chamber of Commerce, Congressman E. Serrano's Office and The New York City Council. Kellie serves as The Board Chair of The New York City Environmental Justice Alliance and is a Board Director of The Bronx River Alliance where she recently completed a term as Board Chair.

Kellie graduated cum laude from Holy Cross, as a member of the National Jesuit Honors Society and the National Political Science Honor Society. She is currently a candidate for a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning at Pratt Institute. A proud mother of two, Kellie currently lives in the Bronx with her two sons, Ali and Naim.



**Dale Threatt-Taylor** is the Executive Director of The Nature Conservancy South Carolina Chapter. She received a Bachelor of Science in Conservation from North Carolina State University and a Master of Environmental Management from Duke University in 2011. In 2012, she was selected as one of 30 agriculturalists in North Carolina identified to participate in the Agricultural Leadership Development Program at North Carolina State University.

Her career began as a Soil Conservationist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and later joined the Wake Soil and Water Conservation District. In 2008 she was selected as District Director of Wake SWCD and Wake County Soil and Water Conservation Department. Her new role as Executive Director for TNC SC has provided the opportunity to build new relationships between soil conservationists and environmentalists across the nation.

Dale's conservation and environmental leadership includes service on many national, state and local boards and committees. On August 1, 2020, Dale made history when elected to serve as Chair of the Soil and Water Conservation Society's national Board of Directors. Having received many awards throughout her career, one caught her by surprise, The Order of the Long Leaf Pine from North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper for her dedicated work in conservation. Dale wants everyone to understand that locally led conservation begins with an individual, and together, our conservation work is so important in protecting the land and water on which all life depends.



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**Janet Topolsky:** For 35 years, Janet has helped community leaders, organizations and policymakers across the country find, create and spread development strategies that work. At CSG since 1993, Topolsky has specialized in peer-learning design and facilitation, family asset building, connecting low-wealth rural and urban places and populations to regional economic development and better livelihoods, and community development philanthropy – building the capacity of place-rooted foundations to improve local economies. Before Aspen, Janet worked as a development policy analyst; as communications director for the Corporation for Enterprise Development (recently renamed Prosperity Now) and editor of CFED's Entrepreneurial Economy Review; as special assistant to the Michigan Department of Commerce director; and as a youth organizer and policy advocate. A native of Detroit, Michigan, Janet is a graduate of James Madison College at Michigan State University and holds a Masters of Public Policy from the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan. In her spare time, she unashamedly watches good television, concocts cheesecake on demand, and joyfully sings alto (every week for 30 years!) in the world-renowned St. Augustine Gospel Choir.



**Joshua F. Walden** was born in Mt. Airey, North Carolina but has lived in South Carolina since 1979.

He grew up in Chapin, South Carolina approximately 20 miles outside of Columbia. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from The University of South Carolina in 1996. Mr. Walden earned his Juris Doctorate from The University of South Carolina School of Law and was admitted to practice law in 2000.

Mr. Walden, is a member of the South Carolina Bar and Charleston Bar Associations and has practiced primarily in the fields of real property and estate planning/probate law. He has served as a Guardian Ad Litem in the family court for SC Department of Social Services and SC Department of Juvenile Justice cases and is a South Carolina Board Certified Civil Court Mediator. Mr. Walden joined the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation located in Charleston, SC in September of 2009 as the Supervising Attorney. During his tenure at the Center, he's served as the Director of Legal Services and is currently the Chief Operating Officer.