



# GROWING HOME

## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### LEADERSHIP

#### STEW WEISS | BOARD PRESIDENT

Attorney, Elrod Friedman LLP



Stew Weiss counsels municipalities on land use, government regulations, and contract matters. He has extensive experience in both public contracting and development incentives, and serves as counsel to village boards of trustees, city councils, zoning boards, plan commissions, and electoral boards.

Stew dedicates his pro bono practice to organizations that link the well-being of communities to open space and urban agriculture. He serves as pro bono counsel to NeighborSpace, a not-for-profit landbank that maintains over 115 community gardens in the City of Chicago. Stew is an avid cyclist and gardener. He lives in Chicago's Bowmanville neighborhood with his wife and daughter.

#### MICHEÁL NEWMAN-BROOKS | BOARD VICE PRESIDENT

Project Manager of Urban Agriculture,  
Department of Planning and Development, City of Chicago



Micheál Newman-Brooks serves as the Project Manager of Urban Agriculture for the Sustainable Division of the Department of Planning and Development with the City of Chicago. She is also an instructor of Business and Agriculture courses offered by City Colleges of Chicago in conjunction with Chicago Botanic Gardens Windy City Harvest Programs. Her passion for environmental and food justice lends to her 15+ years' experience in non and for profit businesses include Marketing and Advertising, Project Management, Construction and Escrow, Investments, Finance and Accounting as well as Community Organizing and Engagement not to mention Agriculture and Horticulture.

She also serves as Chief Financial Officer of Canaan Community Redevelopment Corporation in the Englewood Community, Executive Director of 5 Loaves Co-Op and Farm, as well as partnering with several local urban gardens and community organizations in various roles. She sits on the governing boards of Growing Home, LARC (Lead Abatement Resource Centers), and WEROCK for Girls. Micheál earned degrees in Business, Agriculture and Horticulture!

**LYNN SHECK | PAST BOARD PRESIDENT**

Senior Vice President of Strategic Sales, Finicity



Lynn is the SVP of Strategic Sales at Finicity, responsible for enterprise relationships. Finicity provides a proven and trusted open banking platform that puts consumers in control of their financial data, transforming the way we experience money for everything from budgeting and payments to investing and lending.

Lynn's passion for cooking, gardening, and food access all intersect perfectly at Growing Home. After volunteering on the farm one summer, she was hooked! Lynn lives in Roscoe Village with her husband and dog.

**SHAWN BOONE | BOARD TREASURER**

Vice President, Branch Manager PNC Bank



Bio Coming Soon.

## **STEVE STANLEY | BOARD SECRETARY**

Pastor, retired



Steve Stanley has been on the Growing Home board for 8 years. He is a retired minister, having served as a pastor for 24 years downstate in Danville, Illinois. In Chicago, he has served two congregations and worked as a community organizer. He is married to Emmy and they have lived in Chicago for 14 years. They discovered Growing Home shortly after locating to Chicago and are so glad to be a part of the family. They attend Fourth Presbyterian Church where Steve serves on the Racial Equity Council and Emmy is a deacon.

Steve and Emmy have 4 adult children – all of whom work in the education field. They love chances to see their 4 grandchildren: Solomon and Francesca in central Illinois and Nora and Finn in Lancaster, PA.

Besides Growing Home, they rally around global efforts that promote microfinance services, equitable access to quality healthcare, and sustainable climate solutions for grassroots communities. Steve likes walking in the city, hiking in the country, tennis, yoga, and talking theology.

## **MEMBERS**

### **JENNIFER BALLARD CROFT**

Chief of Staff & Chief Diversity Officer, Cook County State's Attorney



Jennifer Ballard Croft serves as Chief of Staff and Chief Diversity Officer for the Cook County State's Attorney Office. As State's Attorney Kimberly M. Foxx's senior advisor, she oversees a \$120 million annual budget and manages an office of more than 750 attorneys and 400 support staff.

Jennifer is the first person to hold the position of Chief Diversity Officer for the Cook County State's Attorney Office. In this capacity, she is responsible for developing and embedding diversity and inclusion best practices throughout the office.



## FOSTER DALE

Principal, Foster Dale Architects, Inc.



Foster grew up in Pittsburgh (Steeler fan) and studied environmental psychology at the University of Michigan. He received his Masters of Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. After working in Philadelphia, Foster made Chicago his home and founded Foster Dale Architects, Inc. (FDA) in 1997.

FDA works on a diverse range of projects including custom residential, institutional and commercial projects. The firm has a focus on sustainable design and making light-filled spaces in which people can maximize their potential.

Foster loves to travel, hike and bike, speaks Italian moderately well and would love to be a better gardener. He and his wife live in Chicago in a rehabbed (mostly) 1880's house. Their two sons were raised in Chicago and are both CPS graduates. Foster is honored to serve on the board of Growing Home and sees Growing Home as a vital way to make Chicago a more equitable city.

## STEPHEN GATES

Senior Manager, Midwest SAP Program Delivery, Accenture



Stephen is a Senior Manager in the Midwest SAP Program Delivery practice of Accenture, responsible for leading large scale, complex, global SAP business transformation programs across Retail, Life Sciences, Automotive, Tolling and Transit, and Consumer Products Industry clients.

He started working with Growing Home in 2015, as a result of his passion for gardening, healthy food access, and job skills development for underserved communities. After volunteering in a few cohort visits in the Accenture office, he found his new home in the relationship, quickly taking on a leadership role and broadening the scope and impact of the relationship between Accenture and Growing Home.

Stephen lives in Lakeview East with his wife and dog.

**DAN KAPLAN**

Marketing Manager, American Library Association



Since moving to Chicago in 1988 after getting a journalism degree at Indiana University, Dan has worked in marketing and technical roles in the publishing industry. First for the Chicago Sun-Times and then the Chicago Reader. He founded a marketing firm focused on Internet strategies for businesses, artists, and arts organizations, then marketed the services of an internet-based book publishing company. Now he's the Periodicals Marketing Manager at Booklist, published by the American Library Association.

Dan is married, lives in Evanston, has a daughter, 22, and son 18, and a cat. This fall Dan and his spouse will become empty nesters -- for a while. He loves playing and listening to music, is a news junkie, reads a lot for fun and as a reviewer, and likes two spending time on two wheels in the warm weather.

**PASCALE KICHLER**

Lecturer, French Department, DePaul University



Pascale is a lifelong student and learner. She has worked at an array of academic institutions including DePaul University, Northwestern University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Specializing in French.

Pascale is the co-founder and co-chair of the Chicago chapter of the French Heritage Society, an AFS liaison and a volunteer with Lakeview Food Pantry and Growing Home's farm. She has also served as a docent for the Chicago Architecture Center, and co-chair of Friends of Lincoln Park High School. She holds triple citizenship between the United States, France, and Switzerland and enjoys travel, arts, and outdoor sports.

## COLETTE PAYNE

Director, Reclamation Project, Women's Justice Initiative



Colette Payne is an organizer, leader, student, mother, and grandmother. Her passion is to educate families to build healthier communities. From 2014 – 2017, Colette was the Coordinator of the Visible Voices program for CLAIM (Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers), a Program of Cabrini Green Legal Aid. Currently, she serves as the Director of the Reclamation Project for the Women's Justice Institute. In her role, she helps engage women directly impacted by the criminal legal system to become agents of change and to create solutions to end the incarceration of women and girls. She frequently speaks at community events on topics ranging from the reunification of children and mothers, reproductive justice, mental health care, the need for increased programming in prison, and barriers to employment for people with criminal records.

In 2015, Colette joined the delegation to assess women's prisons in Illinois, becoming the first formerly incarcerated woman to serve in this role in the entire United States. Colette has appeared on television and spoken at conferences, churches, and universities, and testified before legislative committees. Colette has received numerous awards for her work, including: Claim's JoAnn Archibald Award (2013), Jane Adams Center for Social Policy and Research, Community Leadership Award (2015) and the Safer Foundation's Carre Visionary Award (2018). Most recently, Colette was a recipient of the Chicago Foundation for Women 2020 Impact Award for her dedication to improving the lives of women and girls in the Chicago area.

## KARL RILEY

Vice President, Small Business Community Lender, Fifth Third Bank



Karl serves Fifth Third Bank in Chicago as a Small Business Community Lender. Throughout his 15 year career in banking, he has become widely recognized for his strong relationship based approach to advising business owners and helping his clients achieve their overall objectives. In his role, Karl is a community resource and serves Chicago neighborhoods including however not limited to: Stoney Island, Hyde Park, Morgan Park, Auburn Highland and Clearing. It goes without saying, over the years Karl has helped to quickly forge and exemplify the true vision of his position. Karl exemplifies the core values of Fifth Third through his actions regularly activates the team and the community through his presence and leadership.

Simply put, Karl is an inspiration and leader many choose to follow. Karl regularly amasses over 100 volunteering hours annually and represents Fifth Third in a varying number of community initiatives. Leaving a lasting positive impact on the communities we serve is key to our role as bankers and the utmost commitment of Karl. Karl has further introduced the Accion team to Chicago as one of their top referrers throughout the community. In the community, Karl has served board positions with organizations including however not limited to: Growing Home, Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, Chatham Business Association and the Children's Advocacy Center.

Karl holds himself and those around him to very high expectations. When he's not serving his clients and prospects, Karl is an avid and high performing endurance athlete having swam at the collegiate level. Karl has completed in a number of adventure races as apart of the Spartan Race Series. Born and raised in New York City, Jamaica and Florida, Karl now proudly calls Chicago home. He has two daughters and a son. Karl is a graduate of Florida A&M University where he earned a bachelors in Business Administration and a student in the DePaul MBA program.

Karl has an incredible passion and strong ability to advise business owners and help his clients achieve their overall objectives. Karl's enthusiasm to help is unparalleled and community commitment is unwavering.



**KEVIN SWAN**

General Manager, United Senior Services



Kevin is the General Manager at United Senior Services, a home health care provider serving Chicagoland. He believes building strong communities will make Chicago a greater place to live, and is inspired by Growing Home's commitment to Englewood. Kevin is the co-founder of Growing Home's Associate Board for young professionals, where he served for over 7 years. He joined Growing Home's governing board in September of 2019.

In his spare time, Kevin enjoys watching Chicago High School Basketball, eating strange food and traveling with his wife.

**LAURA TILLY**

Attorney, Miner, Barnhill & Galland



Laura Tilly is Of Counsel to Miner, Barnhill & Galland, a small law firm in Chicago having retired after 36 years of practice with the firm. She focused her practice on nonprofit corporations, affordable housing and real estate development. She served as pro bono counsel to Growing Home almost since its inception and joined its Board of Directors in 2011. She previously served as President of Growing Home.

Laura is a graduate of Carleton College and University of Michigan Law School. She lives in Evanston with her husband, Derek Cottier, and has three adult children. In her free time, she is an avid cook and baker, reader, traveler, swimmer, kayaker and hiker.

## **JAMES THOMPSON**

Physician, Senior Partner & Vice President, Associated Allergists & Asthma Specialists



Dr. Thompson graduated from Washington University School of Medicine and completed his residency training at the University of Illinois Hospitals and Clinics. He served as chief resident of Internal Medicine at University of Illinois Hospital. He is board-certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Dr. Thompson underwent allergy and immunology training at Washington University and is certified by the American Board of Allergy and Immunology. He is a fellow of the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology as well as the Illinois Society of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology. He is also a member of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology. He is a member of the American College of Physicians and the Chicago Medical Society.

Dr. Thompson is a holistic nutrition health coach certified by the Institute for Integrative Nutrition. He is incorporating holistic nutrition concepts into the treatment of asthma and other allergic diseases as a means of achieving better health and to reduce the need for conventional medications. He is a board member of the charitable foundation, "Healthy Living With A Vision." The foundation's mission is to address healthcare disparities that impact black and brown people in Chicago and the greater Chicago area.

He is a senior partner and vice-president of the Associated Allergists and Asthma Specialists Ltd, a group practice he has worked in for thirty-one years.

## **TONI THOMPSON**

Vice President, REIT Regional Closing Manager, U.S. Bank



Since 2000, Toni Thompson has specialized in closing Commercial Real Estate Lending transactions throughout her professional career. Her knowledge, competence and dedication have garnered internal banking honors and countless satisfied customers. Her passion for Commercial Real Estate and compassion for the community continues to enhance her leadership abilities.

Toni currently serves as the REIT Regional Closing Manager for U.S. Bank National Association overseeing a group of professionals who collaborate to serve REIT clients by closing commercial real estate transactions across the United States. Toni's strengths lie in creatively analyzing, negotiating, and problem solving. She and her team meticulously guide clients throughout each step of the loan closing process and proactively addresses concerns and questions.

Toni currently serves as a treasurer on both the Black Heritage and Women's Business Resource Group at U.S. Bank.



## MARNY ZIMMER

Former Special Prosecutor, Crimes Strategy Task Force, Cook County State Attorney's Office



Marny Zimmer is a consultant with the University of Chicago Crime Lab focusing on innovative ways to increase public safety through community partnership and intelligence driven prosecution. Marny worked as the Director of Policy at the Cook County State's Attorney's Office from 2017 to 2020 focusing on criminal justice reform and increased public safety through improved community relationships, violence reduction strategies, and a deepened understanding of the intersection of addiction and mental health issues and crime. Prior to heading the Policy Department, Zimmer created and supervised the Gun Crimes Strategies Unit (GCSU), which placed prosecutors in Chicago's most violent neighborhoods to work side by side with the Chicago Police to better understand the causes and individuals driving crime. Using an Intelligence Driven Prosecution Model, Marny created a system to identify, investigate, and proactively prosecute the drivers of violence. Marny also worked with violence intervention groups and the Illinois Department of Corrections to identify drivers of violence prior to their release from prison to receive specialized services to prevent a re-engagement in violence.

Marny worked with the Department of Justice at the United States London Embassy assisting U.S. and U.K. law enforcement in obtaining evidence in order to advance investigations and researched evidence-based policing strategies for the London Mayor's Office on Policing and Crime and the United Kingdom House of Lords.

Marny began her prosecutorial career as an Assistant United States Attorney in Chicago. Originally interested in white-collar crime as a former accountant and Certified Public Accountant, she quickly found herself drawn to the investigations of violent street gangs on the south and west sides of Chicago. During her tenure as a federal prosecutor, Zimmer focused on identifying violent individuals and building investigations to dismantle drug trafficking organizations involved in violence.

Marny earned a master's degree in Criminal Justice Policy from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2014, a J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School in 2002, and a B.S. from the University of Notre Dame in 1994. She currently serves on the board of Growing Home, Inc., an urban farm in Englewood focused on providing training and sustained career development to those with employment obstacles. She is a Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow, 2020.