

NEW Board Bios

2019-2020

LILA ASANTE- APPIAH – *Chair*

Lila is the CHRO and Executive Consultant for AcuMax Index, Inc. She is an intuitive and results-focused human resources executive, recognized as a strategic business leader and change champion. She has over 25 years of coaching, leadership and consultation experience, driving increased sustainability and performance across diverse for-profit and non-profit organizations by visioning and directing strategic improvement initiatives. She is a trusted coach and advisor to leaders at all levels with the innate ability to motivate and positively influence those within sphere of influence; systematic and forward-thinking in developing plans, maximizing talent, and aligning initiatives and facilitating integration activities across multiple business units.

Lila received her undergraduate degree in Business Administration and a master's degree in Organizational Development, both from Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois. She acquired and has maintained several certifications: Professional Human Resources (PHR) certification from the Human Resources Certification Institute, Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) from the Human Capital Institute, as well as Professional Coaching (CPC) and Career Coaching (CCC) certifications credentialed by the World Coach Institute.

Lila previously served on the Board of Directors as the Vice-Chairperson for Child Care Network agency and has also served on Steering Committees focused in the areas of early child care, secondary education, and health care.

KATHY LAIRD – *Treasurer*

Kathy has a long history of management experience and success in both for-profit and non-profit businesses. From 2005-2017 she served Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit, as Vice President of Automotive Operations and President of Goodwill's Green Works, Inc. Prior to this, she held positions as Executive Vice President at Ingersoll Equipment Co., Inc. and Vice President of Operations/Director of Business Development at Davco Technology. She holds a BS in Small Business Management from Ferris State University and an MBA from Michigan State University. Kathy is a Michigan Licensed Residential Builder, and since her retirement in 2017 has completed her coursework for General Civil Mediator.

YODIT MESFIN JOHNSON – *President and CEO*

Yodit Mesfin Johnson became President and CEO of NEW on January 1, 2020. She stewards the organization's bold vision, strategic direction and overall operations in partnership with NEW's board of directors and staff. She is focused on delivering NEW's promise to improve the impact and performance of fellow nonprofits by working alongside leaders to create high-quality strategic solutions that advance their missions in our communities.

Yodit joined NEW in 2008 as a governance consultant, and from 2016 to 2019 served as the organization's Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of strategy. In that capacity she was instrumental in diversifying and growing NEW's revenue, strengthening partnerships and programming—including a first-of-its-kind fellowship for leaders of color and white allies striving towards social change and equitable outcomes for people in Washtenaw County—and strengthening the organization's overall effectiveness. She also led the development of the organization's current strategic plan, directed overall operations and management of NEW's 11,000 sq. ft.

multi-tenant facility located in Ann Arbor, and led all functional areas of management involving human resources, business development, sales, fund development, finance and marketing.

Before joining NEW, Yodit led a statewide initiative for women entrepreneurs that focused on strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem by providing access to trusted guidance and capital in under-resourced communities throughout Michigan. She has herself started and grown several businesses and organizations and is passionate about economic opportunity as a tool of social justice. She consults public, private, nonprofit, community-based and educational institutions on strategies that create high-performing organizational cultures that ensure that all people feel valued, are treated fairly, and are able to work together productively towards common good.

Yodit proudly serves as Chair of the United Way of Washtenaw County board and as a member of We The People Opportunity Center board. She is an alumna of the prestigious Marshall Memorial Fellowship, and recipient of the 2019 Peace and Justice Honoree awards given by the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice. For her beloved son, Yodit founded Black Men Read, a community literacy initiative that centers on African American men and stories of the African diaspora as teaching and learning opportunities for the beloved children of the Washtenaw County community. She and her family reside in Ypsilanti.

DANIEL FOSS – Trustee

Daniel is a Relationship Manager at Old National Bank. He previously worked with Children’s Orchard as the Vice President of Financial Services. Prior to this, and as part of senior management, Daniel managed the Small Business Lending Department of the Bank of Washtenaw (which merged with Community Bank of Dearborn). Daniel has also served as Chairman of the Board of the Washtenaw United Way as well as on the boards of Washtenaw Camp Placement (Treasurer), Washtenaw Literacy (President and Treasurer) and Perry Nursery School (Treasurer). Daniel also currently serves as the Board President of SOS Community Services in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

DR. KIMBERLY HURNS – Trustee

Dr. Kimberly M. Hurns is the Vice President of Instruction at Washtenaw Community College (WCC). Hurns was dean of the business and technology division for 2 ½ years after 13 years teaching general business, management and marketing courses. Her work at WCC has included a variety of committee work in student retention, faculty professional development and entrepreneurship.

Prior to Hurns’ career change to education, she worked in the technology industry in sales, marketing and project management positions. Hurns has been a part of multiple entrepreneurial endeavors including social media consulting and part ownership of a micro-blog site. She was instrumental in the development of WCC’s Entrepreneurship Center as part of the college’s strategic plan. Hurns participated in the Center for International Business Education Research 14-day program studying business opportunities and economic development in South Africa and Kenya. She was selected in June 2008 to participate in the National Endowment for Humanities summer program studying Henry Ford and American Industrial, Labor and Cultural History.

Hurns worked as a communication and marketing strategist for political campaigns and small businesses and big box retailers. She has also published a variety of curriculum tools for business textbooks, serving as a Digital Consultant for McGraw-Hill’s adaptive learning products. She serves on the board for NEW Solutions for Nonprofits, The Pearls of Service Foundation (treasurer) and Michigan A.C.E. Hurns is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

CURTIS IORIO – *Trustee*

Curtis is a Client Executive at Hylant, one of the largest privately-owned insurance agents in the US. He has been with the local Ann Arbor Hylant team for over 5 years and been in the insurance industry for 12 years. Curtis helps organizations navigate their operational insurance and risk management needs. His focus is property and casualty serving middle market clients. Hylant has 15 offices throughout the US with a variety of industry and practice expertise. Prior to Hylant, Curtis was a Business Development Manager for United States Liability Insurance Group/Berkshire Hathaway in Philadelphia, PA and Chicago, IL. Curtis received his bachelor's degree in Marketing from Cabrini University in Radnor, Pennsylvania.

CHRISTOPHER MYERS – *Trustee*

Chris is a founding partner and current CTO at NewFoundry, a strategy, design, and software engineering firm in Ann Arbor, Michigan. NewFoundry works with startups to Fortune 500 companies to tackle their toughest challenges and forge their biggest ideas with its multidisciplinary team of strategists, designers, and engineers. His experience in production engineering and running software consultancies serving multiple industry verticals give him a unique business and technical perspective. Prior to founding NewFoundry in 2012, Chris was a part of several southeast Michigan firms and startups, where he led engineering teams and designed software products in the automotive and network security industries. He earned his BS and MS in computer science and software engineering from the University of Michigan.

ALOK SHARMA – *Trustee*

Alok Sharma is the Founding Partner of Sharma Analytics, a technology project management consultancy based in Detroit. Sharma Analytics uses data to rationalize, select, plan and manage technology projects for small to mid-size organizations. They have worked with clients in the utility, nonprofit, manufacturing and logistics sectors. Alok studied computer engineering at Michigan State University and moved into consulting after ten years of IT project management experience at Fortune 500 companies.

DIANE KAPLAN VINOKUR – *Trustee*

Diane is an Associate Professor Emerita at the University of Michigan School of Social Work, where she taught courses in nonprofit management for nearly 30 years, and also served as Assistant Dean for Research. She also co-founded and directed the U-M Center for Nonprofit and Public Management, which was a collaboration between the Ross School of Business, the Ford School of Public Policy, and the School of Social Work. Her long-time interest in nonprofit co-locations like NEW Center is shown in her published research, professional articles and presentations, and a book, *Shared Space and the New Nonprofit Workplace* (Oxford University Press, 2019) (as Diane Vinokur-Kaplan).

Diane has previously served on the Board of Directors of Beth Israel Congregation and of the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor, and also on the Board of ARNOVA, the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action, and its journal *Nonprofit and Voluntary Action Quarterly*. She graduated cum laude from Oberlin College, and holds an MSW, MA, and PhD from the University of Michigan.

W. DEWAYNE WELLS – *Trustee*

DeWayne has served as Executive Director of the Economic Justice Alliance of Michigan since January 2018. He brings to this role over 20 years' experience working with Michigan community-based nonprofits as a Board or staff member. As President of Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan from 2008-2013, DeWayne led the organization to its highest levels of emergency food distribution and programmatic outreach. As Project Director for the Detroit Food and Fitness Collaborative from 2013-2017, DeWayne coordinated community engagement and advocacy activities supporting improved food access in Detroit and more equitable local, state and Federal agriculture and nutrition policies. He has also held senior management positions at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen and Starfish Family Services.

DeWayne is a lifelong Detroiter and proud product of Detroit Public Schools. He earned a bachelor's degree in Accounting from Western Michigan University and a MBA from Wayne State University. DeWayne is a graduate of Leadership Detroit, Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders Leadership Program and Harvard University's Strategic Perspective in Nonprofit Management program. DeWayne currently serves as a Board member for Fair Food Network, St. Joseph Oakland Hospital, Detroit Greenways Coalition, Nonprofit Enterprise at Work, Southwest Solutions and the Storehouse of Hope food pantry. In his spare time, he enjoys gardening, traveling to new places, and attending jazz concerts.

KRISTOPHER WILJANEN – *Trustee*

In his current role as Director of Business Development for Renaissance Venture Capital Fund, Kris works with the venture capital firms in their portfolio, and their companies, to identify and develop opportunities with Michigan's major corporations, with the goal of increasing engagement between the two communities in a way that strengthens both. Prior to joining Renaissance Venture Capital, he was a management consultant with Charles River Associates (CRA), based in Boston and Barcelona, Spain. At CRA his work focused on strategy and technology commercialization issues in the energy (power generation) industry. He has worked with many start-ups to help them bring their product to market, and with more established companies to help get existing products into new markets. He has held a variety of positions in Engineering, Product Development, Finance and Marketing as part of the company's management rotation program. Kris has a BS Chemical Engineering and an MBA.