

Leadership Birmingham Proposed New Board Members Bios

Melanie Bridgeforth President and CEO Women's Foundation of Alabama

In 2018, Melanie took her visionary leadership to the only regional women's foundation in the state and in three short years transformed the institution into Women's Foundation of Alabama - the state's leading philanthropic and leadership voice for women. Under Melanie's leadership, the Foundation embedded an equity-informed approach, nearly doubled annual philanthropic investments to community partners, and launched the organization's data-driven policy and grassroots arm yielding several historic legislative wins for women, including passage of the state's first Equal Pay Statute.

Prior to her leadership at Women's Foundation of Alabama, Melanie led VOICES for Alabama's Children, the state's premiere child advocacy organization, directed the Alabama Government Relations department for the American Heart Association, and served as a policy fellow for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Washington D.C.

Melanie serves on the Board of Directors for Alabama Giving and Prosper. She is a proud member of Rotary Birmingham, The Links, Incorporated – Birmingham (AL) Chapter, and the 2020 Class of Leadership Birmingham. Melanie has received numerous professional recognitions as a 2021 CEO of the Year nominee by Birmingham Business Journal, one of thirty Women Who Shape the State of Alabama in 2018 by Birmingham Magazine, and a 2019 Woman of Impact by Yellowhammer News. In 2021, Melanie was appointed by the Lt. Governor of the State of Alabama to serve on the Women's Health Commission and was named an Aspen Institute Ascend Fellow joining a distinguished group of visionary social change agents from across the U.S.

An Athens native, Melanie earned both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from The University of Alabama. She and her husband, attorney D.W. Scott and their beloved French Bulldog, Winston, call Highland Park home.

Dawn Bulgarella, MSHA, CPA Chief Executive Officer UAB Health System UAB-Ascension St. Vincent's Alliance

Dawn Bulgarella is Chief Executive Officer of the UAB Health System and the UAB-Ascension St. Vincent's Alliance, where she is responsible for an 11-hospital system with annual revenues approaching \$8 billion. She has responsibility for one of the largest and most highly respected academic healthcare delivery organizations in the country. Along with the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the UAB Health System is the largest employer in the State of Alabama, exceeding 23,000 employees and recently designated by Forbes as the #1 best large employer.

Bulgarella is an innovative thinker and mentor who serves on numerous health care boards of directors as well as a recent appointment to the board of directors of Protective Life. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Commerce and Business Administration from the University of Alabama and a master's degree in health administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She is a Certified Public Accountant, formerly with Ernst & Young, and is active in multiple professional and community associations.

Dawn is a recognized senior leader in the State of Alabama. She was named as one of the Women Who Shape the State in 2023, one of the Top Birmingham Women in 2021, selected as the Birmingham Large Enterprise CFO of the Year in 2020, and received the Woman of Impact designation in 2019.

Dawn and her husband, Joe, have three adult children and two grandchildren. She enjoys traveling and spending time with family and friends.

Ed Fields
Senior Advisor and Chief Strategist
City of Birmingham

Known as a level-headed diplomat, creative risk taker and inspirational leader, Ed Fields has a breadth of leadership experience as an executive in both for profit and not-for-profit organizations.

Ed served as Campaign Manager for Birmingham Mayor-elect, Randall Woodfin's, run to become Mayor of Birmingham. He currently serves as Senior Advisor and Chief Strategist for the City of Birmingham Mayor's Office.

Previously, Ed co-founded and led Relax, It's Handled, a nationally-recognized, award-winning association and event management company for eight years before selling the company. He has also served as an executive and strategic partner in organizations such as the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce and Alabama Media Group.

A transplant from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Ed received his undergraduate degree in Business Administration from Alabama State University and earned his Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Alabama's Manderson School of Business. He has also received his Institute of Management (IOM) designation, a non-profit management certification, from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Ed has served as a partner in diversity and inclusion for both community-driven and corporate-driven organizations, including his role as:

- Organizing Founder, Birmingham Urban League Young Professionals
- Chairman, Community Investment Network
- Co-Founder, Birmingham Change Fund
- President, INROADS Birmingham Alumni Association
- Producer, Birmingham Diversity Summit
- Producer, NCCJ Brotherhood and Sisterhood Awards Dinner
- Producer, South Region Minority Supplier Diversity Conference
- Producer, MLK Unity Breakfast

- Producer, Birmingham International Business Awards
- Producer, UAB's Minority Health & Research Center Casino Royal
- Board Chairman, Central Alabama Women's Business Center

Ed is an alum of Leadership Birmingham, Leadership Alabama, the Bloomberg-Harvard City Leadership Initiative as well as Harvard's Young American Leadership Program.

Ed has received numerous awards and accolades for his quality efforts from organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Birmingham Business Journal, Birmingham Business Alliance, and Alabama State University College of Business Administration, among others.

Ralph Williams, Jr.
Vice President, Birmingham Division
Alabama Power Company

Ralph Williams is vice president of Alabama Power's Birmingham Division, where he leads the economic and community development initiatives and external affairs activities in the Birmingham metropolitan area. Williams previously served in Birmingham Division as Community Engagement Director and Division Area Manager. He began his career with Alabama Power in 2011 and held positions of increasing responsibility within Corporate Relations and External Affairs before moving to Birmingham Division in 2020. Prior to joining Alabama Power, Williams worked for 16 years in the public and nonprofit sectors. He spent time as a campaign manager, governmental affairs consultant, and lobbyist for renowned entities throughout the Southeast. Williams has served as a national board member for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and also served as co-chair of the National Baptist Convention Labor Roundtable. A Birmingham native, Williams studied political science at Miles College and Alabama A&M University. He and his wife Raquel have two daughters, Kiara and Morgan.