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Senior Advocates
for Generational Equity

SAGE Board of Directors with Biographies

John Daggett, Board Member, Executive Committee

Dr. John Daggett served Oregon's public schools for over thirty years, including twelve of those years as superintendent of the Ashland School District. As a retiree, he remains active in education and has taught or supervised at the University of Washington, Lewis & Clark College, the University of Oregon, and served as an Oregon School Improvement Facilitator. He has studied the scholarship and practice of resiliency with a focus on schools for over twenty years and collaborated with other institutions and individuals to build more resilient families and communities. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Education/English, and a Master's Degree in Education/Psychology from Portland State University and a Ph.D. in Education Policy and Management with a focus on Organization Development from the University of Oregon.

Kristen Grauer, Board Member, Executive Committee

Kristen Grauer is a Donor Stewardship Officer at Health in Harmony, a nonprofit based in Portland that collaborates with rainforest communities in Borneo and Madagascar to improve the health of both people and the planet. She champions the organization's donor stewardship and communications strategies. She holds a B.A. from Carnegie Mellon University and spent a semester studying in Valparaiso, Chile, which deepened her interest in both art and international development. Kristen formerly served as Chair of SAGE's Young Leaders Advisory Board.

Ward Greene, President, Executive Committee

Ward Greene is Senior Counsel at the commercial law firm of Williams Kastner Greene & Markley. He has practiced law for forty years, served as President of the Multnomah Bar Association and Vice President of the Oregon State Bar. In addition to serving on SAGE's Board, Ward served on the Board of Ascent Funding. Ward has a B.S. in business from Florida State University and a J.D. from Duke University.

Leslie Johnson, Board Member

Leslie Johnson is a commercial lawyer at Samuels Yoelin Kantor LLP. She has practiced law for over twenty years and brings to her practice a broad range of pre-law experience, including six years at NIKE, Inc., and in law offices working on complex business transactions and business litigation issues. Leslie also has many years of volunteer experience with Bar committees and programs. Outside of law, she focuses her energy on nonprofits that build civic engagement, community good will and neighborhood involvement. Leslie has also served on the Board of Governors of the City Club of Portland. She has a B.S. from Portland State University and a J.D. from the Northwestern School of Law at Lewis & Clark College.

Danielle Lessler, Board Member, Chair Revenue Committee

Danielle Lessler is an audit senior assistant at the accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, LLP. Originally from the United Kingdom, she is an active member of the Portland State University community and is passionate about helping other students meet their educational and career goals. Danielle holds a B.A. from PSU in Accounting and Supply Chain Management. She formerly served as Vice Chair of SAGE's Young Leaders Advisory Board.

Ben Manny, Board Member

Ben Manny retired after 30 years with Intel and last served as their Director of Wireless Technology research lab in Oregon. After retirement, he helped organize the Intel Retiree Organization and served as was one of their charter board members where he established and still chairs the Intel Retiree Volunteer and Donation Committee. His major focus since retirement has been to inspire students to pursue engineering and technology careers. This has involved mentoring senior engineering projects, reviewing STEM grants for the Oregon Department of Education, and serving as State Head Judge for Oregon's FIRST Lego League middle school robotics program. For the past 3 years, Ben has coached a local neighborhood FIRST Lego League team to help kids hone skills in math and engineering and to learn about problem solving, teamwork and critical thinking. Based on this coaching experience his current interests have expanded to include increasing generation to generation interactions. He graduated from the University of Texas with a B.S. in Physics, a B.A. in Math and a High School teaching certificate.

Neal Naigus, Board Member

Neal Naigus retired after 42 years at Portland Community College. He served as Assistant to the President for the last 6 PCC Presidents and represented the College throughout the community. In doing so, he was part of the creation of the Leaders Roundtable to lower high school dropout rates and he also helped create many partnerships and initiatives including the Pacific NW Public Policy Institute, the PCC Senior Studies Institute, the PCC Senior Volunteer Program, Life by Design, and Fostering Success to help foster youth attend college. Neal served on the Board of the Canadian American Society of Oregon and currently serves on the Board of the Hollywood Senior Center.

Rick Nitti, Board Member

Rick Nitti served as Executive Director of Neighborhood House for 18 years. He is a highly regarded leader in the Oregon nonprofit community, having served as President of the Board of the Nonprofit Association of Oregon, and on the Board of the Southwest Community Health Center. At Neighborhood House, Rick dramatically increased the organization's size and reach of its services and oversaw programs to help low-income, recent-immigrant, and other vulnerable people overcome challenges so they can achieve success, stability, and independence. He holds a B.S. from the University of Illinois and an M.Ed. from Loyola University. Rick received the 2017 Spirit of Portland Award from Mayor Ted Wheeler in recognition of his contributions to the region.

Diane Ponti, Board Member

Diane Ponti is a writer, editor, and storyteller, and has worked as a public-school teacher and bond broker. She has 20 years of volunteer experience focusing on nonprofits that promote writing and literature, including as Board Chair for Literary Arts and as Board Member for Portland Story Theater. She has a B.S. from Oregon State University and an M.S. from Portland State University.

Jeanne Roy, Board Member

Jeanne Roy is the co-founder of the Center for Earth Leadership and currently serves as the President of the Eco-School Network. She is a recognized leader of Oregon's environmental movement and has served as a full-time volunteer for over 35 years. She is the co-founder of numerous organizations including Recycling Advocates, Portland's Master Recycler Program, the Oregon Natural Step Network, and the Northwest Earth Institute. Jeanne serves as a continual advisor to public agencies on environmental policy matters. She has a B.S. in Humanities and Social Science from Oregon State University.

Elizabeth Schellberg, Secretary

Elizabeth (Liz) Schellberg is a retired Certified Public Accountant. She has also worked for nonprofits and religious institutions. She has 20 years of work and volunteer experience with a variety of nonprofits – both in operations and board membership – involved in the environment, peace and justice, the arts, healthcare, and crisis intervention. She has a B.A. in philosophy from Washington State University and a Master of Divinity from San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Randy Sell, Treasurer

Randy Sell is an experienced banker and most recently served as Senior Vice President & Private Banking Manager at Northwest Bank. He has over 25 years of volunteer experience focusing on nonprofits that help children, including serving as Board Chair of the Portland Parks Foundation, Trillium Family Services and Waverly Children's Home. Randy has also served with the Oregon Ethics in Business, YMCA of Columbia-Willamette, St. Andrew Legal Clinic, University Club, and Loaves & Fishes. He has a B.S. in Business from Oregon State University.

Bruce Watts, Board Member

Bruce Watts is retired after having served as Senior Director of TriMet's Diversity and Transit Equity Department. During his time at TriMet, Watts built community involvement in several rail and transit projects, including the north-south light-rail project. In the late 1980s, Bruce moved to Portland, and became an activist for black and minority causes as a member of the Coalition of Black Men, which he helped found in 1988. In retirement, Watts served as a mentor with the Coalition and served as Board President of the Urban League and Ascent Funding and as a member of the Metropolitan Contractor Improvement Partnership. Watts received a football and academic scholarship to attend Ohio State University and served in the U.S. Air Force.

Marcus Wood, Board Member

Marcus Wood is a retired attorney. He spent his legal career at Stoel Rives LLP, where he served on the firm's Executive Committee and led its 11-office energy and renewable energy practice groups. He has served as Chair of the Board of the former Indochinese Cultural and Service Center and Chair of the Board of the Oregon Ballet Theatre, and also was a long-time member of the Outside In Board. He co-founded the non-profit Oregonians to Save the Boat People, an organization that found sponsors to allow immigration for thousands of Indochinese refugees during the "boat people" crisis of the late 1970s. In retirement, he has led math clubs and tutored students in math at a local elementary school. Marcus has a B.A. from Vanderbilt University and a J.D. from Yale Law School.