

# BISHOP GADSDEN



## *2021 Board of Trustees Biographies*

### **Barbara Christie, *Board Chair***

*Marketing/Sales, Retired*

Barbara Christie, although born and raised in New Jersey, spent most of her adult life in the Boston area. After receiving a bachelor's degree in Government from St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York, Barbara began her career as a sales representative in Buffalo, NY for Ortho Pharmaceutical, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson. She then transitioned from pharmaceutical to surgical device sales. After working for Olympus Corporation for a short time, Barbara returned to another Johnson & Johnson subsidiary, Codman and Shurtleff. There she held positions in both sales and marketing, with a strong emphasis in the field of neurosurgery. A new challenge was presented to Barbara when BrainLAB, a German company, approached her to start their U.S. business. Her experience in neurosurgery was invaluable. During her seven-year tenure with BrainLAB, Barbara held several different titles.

While in Boston, Barbara served as a volunteer and a member of the Board of Directors for Dress for Success. She was an active member of Trinity Church, Copley Square. She sang in the choir and had a hand in the capital campaign to raise almost \$50 million for church restoration.

In 2006, Darkness to Light, a Charleston-based nonprofit, was looking for someone with sales and marketing experience to help sell their Stewards of Children training program. After several months of consulting, Barbara became the Director of Marketing and moved to Charleston. Since coming to Charleston, Barbara has become a member of Grace Episcopal Church, sings in their choir, and served on the Saving Grace capital campaign committee, the Strategic Planning Committee, a three-year term on the Vestry, and is involved with the Grace Church Tea Room. She currently serves on the Board of Directors at the Country Club of Charleston. Her other non-profit activities include involvement with One80 Place and serving on the Dean's advisory council for the College of Health Professions at MUSC.

### **Robert Vingi, *Vice-Chair***

*Investment Advisor, Wells Fargo*

For over 28 years, Robert Vingi has worked with the Wells Fargo Advisors and its predecessor firms. Currently, Robert is Managing Director-Investments with Wells Fargo. In 2009, *Barron's Magazine* ranked Robert as the number one advisor in South Carolina and previously was ranked in *Barron's* top five in 2014, when he was named a Top 400 Advisor by *Financial Times*.

Robert, a 1986 graduate of Presbyterian College, is active in the community and civic affairs. He has served as a vestryman and senior warden at Grace Episcopal Church and as a former board member for Wings for Kids, an after-school mentoring program for elementary students. He currently serves on the board for SALTCO, an Alabama-based timber company.

His wife of 26 years, Elizabeth Vingi, serves on the Board of Trustees at Porter-Gaud school, where their youngest son is enrolled. His eldest son works in New York, and his middle son currently attends Wake Forest University. On weekends, Robert can be found fishing the many creeks and rivers of the Lowcountry. Robert and his family reside in Charleston.

## Brian Hussain, *Board Secretary/Treasurer*

*Finance, Retired*

A native of Trinidad in the West Indies, Brian Hussain came to the United States as a teenager. After a four-year stint in the Navy, he took advantage of the GI Bill to attend classes at Trident Technical College, where he earned an Associate Degree in Civil Engineering, and later at the College of Charleston, where he received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting.

Brian practiced public accounting with several accounting firms in the Charleston area before assuming the position of Vice President of Finance for the Coastal Community Foundation. Brian served in that role for many years where he was responsible for the finances and investments of the \$280 million Foundation.

Brian is married to Edith Blakeslee from Buffalo, New York. He and his wife have two children, a son, Shaun, and a daughter, Natalie. Brian and his family reside in West Ashley and attend St. Stephens Episcopal.

---

## David Bennett

*Executive Director, Charleston County Parks and Recreation*

David Bennett has devoted more than 30 years to serving his community and the parks and recreation industry in his native home of Charleston, South Carolina. His professional career started at Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission (CCPRC) as a part-time Recreation Program Specialist in 1987 and within a year and a half became the Assistant Recreation Director. In 1993, David was honored as the South Carolina Recreation Park Association (SCRPA) Young Professional of the Year. He was promoted to the Director of Recreation in 1993, where he created the Lowcountry Cajun Festival that is now celebrating its 27th anniversary. In 2004, David served as SCRPA President and was promoted to Associate Executive Director of CCPRC in 2006. He was appointed by the CCPR Commission as the Executive Director in 2016 and recently honored as the 2017 SCRPA Professional of the Year.

David is responsible for managing a \$32 million operating budget with almost 1,200 employees during high season in an approximately 12,000-acre park system spanning nearly 100 miles. The diverse park system, which serves over 2.7 million visitors annually, consists of six day parks, three beach parks, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, three water parks, 19 boat landings, a climbing wall, an outdoor adventure challenge course, a historical plantation site, an natural historical and cultural interpretive center, an equestrian center, cottages, a campground, a marina, as well as wedding, meeting and event facilities. The park system also offers a wide variety of recreational services – festivals, camps, classes, programs, volunteer opportunities, and more.

Despite his rigorous schedule, David has remained involved in a variety of professional and community organizations while maintaining a national accreditation as a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP). He has served on numerous non-profit boards including the National Recreation and Parks Association, South Carolina Parks and Recreation Association, James Island Charter High School, Charleston Area Children's Garden Project, Charleston Heritage Education Forum, President of the Wallingford Presbyterian Church Trustees, and the Cooper River Bridge Run.

David is a graduate of Middleton High School and holds a bachelor's degree in Park, Recreation, and Tourism Management from Mars Hill College, where he was recruited on a full athletic football scholarship. David and his wife Cheryl are the proud parents of Austin, Dale, Cydney, and two rescue dogs named Jack and Little Bear.

## Margaret Blackmer

*Community Leader/Philanthropist*

Margaret Blackmer was born in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, where she spent some her youth before moving to Hilton Head Island, while it was still in the early days of its development. Margaret's family then relocated to Denver, Colorado, where she graduated high school. After graduation, Margaret attended Pacific Horse Center in Elk Grove, California and looked forward to a career in the equine profession. That experience led her to a warm-blood breeding business in Kalmar, Sweden for a year, but back troubles sidelined her riding career. Margaret moved to the Carolinas, first to Boone, North Carolina, and subsequently to Charleston where she has lived the last 27 years.

A talented photographer, Margaret worked professionally in the field and now frequently shares her skills to the benefit of friends, family, and many Lowcountry non-profit organizations. Margaret recently moved to James Island after 30 years of living in Meggett, where she had been very involved in local politics and conservation efforts. Before starting her non-profit work in the Charleston area, she worked as a professional picture framer for Caroline Sinkler at Frametastic.

Over the last 20 years, Margaret has played instrumental roles in a number of nonprofits in the Charleston area, including Charleston Area Therapeutic Riding (CATR) and the Lowcountry Open Land Trust (LOLT). She served as a volunteer and as board president with CATR, and currently serves as the co-chair of its "Raise the Roof" million-dollar campaign. At LOLT, Margaret has served in several staff positions including volunteering and serving as board president. She was the third recipient to be awarded the Lowcountry Open Land Trust Conservation Award in February 2013.

Margaret's parents, Boswell and Polly Blackmer reserved one of the first cottages built at Bishop Gadsden in 1998. Sadly, Boswell passed away before the cottage was completed. Polly lived there for 12 years before moving to Myers Hall, then finally to Read Cloister where she passed in October of 2015.

From its early involvement, the family has been devoted to the mission of Bishop Gadsden. Margaret has served on the Bishop Gadsden Board of Trustees since 2014.

## T. Heyward Carter, Jr.

*Attorney*

Heyward Carter is a native of Charleston and a graduate of Davidson College, the University of Virginia Law School, and the University of Florida Law School Graduate Tax Program. He has practiced law in Charleston since 1973 and is a Certified Specialist in Estate Planning and Probate Law. He is a principal of the firm Evans, Carter, Kunes & Bennett, P.A.

Heyward is a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel and has served as its South Carolina State Chair. Continually listed in the publication *The Best Lawyers in America* since 1993, Heyward also has a strong philanthropic background. He is past president of Historic Charleston Foundation, the Gibbes Museum of Art, the Carolina Art Association, and the Lowcountry Open Land Trust. He is a member of the Charleston County Greenbelt Bank Board and, in his downtime, enjoys the natural beauty of the Lowcountry.

## Charles C. Geer, MD

*Physician, Roper St. Francis*

Dr. Charles Geer has practiced internal medicine in Charleston, South Carolina since 1974, after graduating from the College of Charleston and the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). Dr. Geer works at

Roper St. Francis Physician Partners and is a member of Island Internal Medicine at 325 Folly Road, an office-based primary care.

Dr. Geer has worked for both St. Francis and Roper hospitals, where he served on various committees and held medical staff offices. Dr. Geer is the current chairman of the Utilization Management Committee. Dr. Geer has served on the vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion, where he is a member, and has served on the vestry of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, as well. He was on the Steering Committee and Diocesan Council of the Episcopal Church of South Carolina. He was appointed to the Mission Advisory Committee and currently serves on the Board of the Episcopal Forum.

Dr. Geer's wife is the former Frances Waring Voigt. They have four married children and three grandchildren.

## Joanne Hill, Ph.D.

### *Investment Consultant*

Joanne Hill has over 30 years of experience in leadership roles at investment banks and as an asset manager in investment and business strategy. In these roles she has specialized in index and quantitative products, derivatives, along with volatility and risk management. She currently serves as Chief Advisor for Research and Strategy at CboeVest, a fund manager specializing in option-based investments and is an Adjunct Professor of Finance at College of Charleston. Prior to these roles, she was Head of Institutional Investment Strategy at ProShares, and also spent 17 years at Goldman Sachs, where she was a Managing Director leading global equity index and derivatives research and advising institutional investors on index and risk management strategies.

She is a recipient of the *William F. Sharpe Indexing Lifetime Achievement Award* and has published extensively on quantitative investment topics, index products, and derivatives. Joanne is a co-author of *A Comprehensive Guide to Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs)* published by the CFA Institute Research Foundation. She was one of the ten inaugural recipients of the Top Women in Asset Management Awards. Her board activities include serving as Executive Vice President for the "Q" Group (Institute for Quantitative Finance) and heading the Research Committee of the board of CFA Institute Research Foundation. She is also a member of the Investment Committee of the Montgomery County Public School Defined Benefit and Defined Contribution Pension Plans. She was a Founding Member and the first Co-President of Women in ETFs, where she currently serves on the board.

Prior to her career on Wall Street, Dr. Hill was on the faculty of the University of Massachusetts (Amherst). She has a Ph.D. in Finance and M.B.A. from Syracuse University, an M.A. in International Affairs from George Washington University, and graduated with honors from American University's School of International Service.

Joanne's mother, Gertrude Hill, is a five-year resident of Bishop Gadsden's Myers Hall. Joanne was most recently a member of Bishop Gadsden's Investment and Finance Committee.

## Melinda Lucka Kelley, Esq.

### *Attorney*

Melinda Kelley, originally from Tampa, Florida, has lived in South Carolina since 1974. After graduation from the University of South Carolina in 1979, Melinda worked in the field of municipal and county planning, in the public and private sectors, until starting law school in 1987. While in law school, Melinda served as expert witness in planning and zoning cases in state and federal courts, and had a judicial internship with Alabama State Supreme Court Justice Richard "Red" Jones. Upon completion of law school, she began practicing law in Charleston, primarily in the administrative and regulatory areas of land use and environmental law, real estate law, wills and estates, and probate administration. Melinda has been a member of the South Carolina Bar since 1992.

Melinda has represented business owners, residential property owners, homeowners' associations, estates, and local government entities in administrative and regulatory cases brought before local Commissions, Boards and Councils, and the Administrative Law Courts, Circuit Courts, Probate Courts, and the Appellate Courts in South Carolina. Melinda has served as municipal attorney for the Town of Lincolnton, SC since 2003, was the past attorney for the Town of James Island from 1993 until 1996, and handled the prosecution of criminal court cases for the City of Charleston from 1997 until 2016.

Melinda has been a member of the adjunct faculty in Urban Studies at the College of Charleston since 1994, primarily teaching Land Use Law and Water Use Law. She has taught many continuing education classes for attorneys, planners, engineers, and real estate professionals. Melinda served on the South Carolina Continuing Legal Education Seminar Committee from 2012 until 2015. Additionally, Melinda has written local government zoning ordinances and has contributed to the drafting and preparation of Comprehensive Plans.

Before joining Finkel Law Firm in 2010, Melinda practiced law with C.C. "Cotton" Harness, III and Jefferson D. Griffith, and Austin & Rogers, LLC firm after being in private practice since 1992.

Melinda is a member of Grace Episcopal Church Cathedral. She has served as a vestry member at Grace, on the Board as a past president of the Episcopal Forum of South Carolina, as an advisor to the Steering Committee for the Reorganization of the Diocese, and on several Diocesan Convention Committees of The Episcopal Church in South Carolina since the reorganization.

Melinda currently serves on the Board of the Wadmalaw Island Land Planning Committee. She was past chair of the Harmony Project Board of Directors, a non-profit organization that focused on neighborhood revitalization and sustainability and served on the Boards for the Old Windermere and Creekside Neighborhood Associations.

Melinda is married to Joe Kelley. They live on Wadmalaw Island where they enjoy farming and being on the water. She has three children who live locally: a daughter, Spencer, son-in-law, Burns Wetmore, a grandbaby, Lola Kate, a son and daughter-in-law, Will and Julia Black, and a son, John Black. Joe has one son and daughter-in-law, Joby and Liz Kelley, and a granddaughter, Jessie, who live in Asheville, North Carolina.

## Patrick J. Kelly, MD

*Attorney*

A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Dr. Patrick J. Kelly is an emergency medicine physician with Roper St. Francis Healthcare in Charleston, South Carolina, and is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area. Dr. Kelly has been in practice for more than 20 years, with specialties in emergency medicine diagnosing and treating patients with life-threatening conditions.

Dr. Kelly is the former chair, and currently a member of the Roper St. Francis Healthcare Foundation Physician Advisory Committee, as well as the Roper St. Francis Healthcare Foundation Finance Committee. He is past member of the Roper Hospital New Physicians Hospital Board and Medical Executive System Board, as well as the Roper St. Francis Healthcare System Board, including the Audit and Compliance Committee, and Roper St. Francis Healthcare Foundation Board, as well as the Medical Society of South Carolina's Board.

In addition to his work with Roper St. Francis Healthcare, Dr. Kelly is a member of the American College of Emergency Physicians, the South Carolina College of Emergency Physicians, the South Carolina Medical Association, the Charleston County Medical Society, has been published in various medical journals, and has been a guest presenter at local and national conferences.

Dr. Kelly was the 2007 Roper St. Francis Foundation Physician Champion Award, and is a graduate of the University of South Carolina, with a BS in Biology, the Medical University of South Carolina, as Doctor of Medicine. He completed his internship at St. Francis Hospital in Evanston, Illinois, and his residency in emergency medicine from the University of Illinois.

Dr. Kelly's father-in-law, Hal Aaronson was a longtime resident of Bishop Gadsden prior to his passing in 2020.

## Nadine Lomax

*Retired*

Nadine and her husband reside in Summerville, SC, and stay very involved in the surrounding community. As a cradle Episcopalian, she joined St. Paul's Episcopal Church and stayed there until moving to St. George's in 2003. Nadine has always been active in the church: vestry, ECW, diocesan delegate, altar guild lay Eucharistic Minister and Lay reader. A graduate of Education for Ministry, she is currently teaching a weekly Bible study that has been ongoing for nine years.

Nadine taught school in Dade County, FL, Montgomery, MD, and at the Charleston Speech and Hearing Kindergarten for the deaf which turned into a full-time job from a Junior League placement.

Nadine owned and operated a small fabric and lace shop "Just Smocking," and a wholesale business "Just Smocking Two". She co-wrote two instructional books for smocking and French hand sewing. Nadine and her husband owned Medicine Wind Farm where she was manager and bookkeeper.

Nadine says her best job has been being grandmother to six wonderful grandchildren.

Nadine's mother was a resident at Bishop Gadsden, and Nadine previously served on the BG board for two terms.

## Kitty Robinson

*Retired*

Kitty Robinson served as President and CEO of Historic Charleston for 17 years, retiring in January 2018. Since her retirement, Kitty has continued her volunteer service in the local Charleston community. Kitty's current involvement includes being a member of the boards of the International African American Museum, the Charleston Parks Conservancy, the Charleston Leadership Foundation, as well as serving as a Trustee Emeritus of Historic Charleston Foundation. Kitty is a member of Grace Episcopal Church and volunteers as a Reading Partners tutor at Memminger School.

Kitty has previously served as the President of the Junior League of Charleston and as a member of the Association of Junior Leagues International Board. Kitty served for six years as a member of Charleston's Board of Architectural Review and chaired the committee that developed Charleston's most recent tourism plan.

Her previous volunteer service includes membership on the boards of the Citadel School of Business, The Fort Sumter, Fort Moultrie Trust, The Charleston Area Visitors Bureau, and The Charleston Heritage Federation among others. Kitty and her husband, Randal, are each recipients of the State of South Carolina Order of the Palmetto.

Kitty and her husband have four daughters and seven grandchildren. Both Kitty's mother and Randal's father were each Bishop Gadsden residents.

## Greg Smith

*Clergy, Retired*

Greg Smith was born and raised in Denver, Colorado, and left the state in 1970 upon graduating from Colorado State University with a Bachelor of Science in Business. In the following 20 plus years, and before moving to Charleston in 1993, Greg called home to ten different cities throughout the United States, while working for a number of corporations. Greg began his professional career in sales assignments in Armstrong World Industries, a floor-covering manufacturer, and then spent over 25 years in senior management positions. Greg served as Southeast Regional Sales Manager, Thomasville Furniture Industries; National Sales Manager, Higdon Furniture Company; Vice President of Marketing, Homes & Land Publishing Company; Director of Marketing, William M. Bird & Company.

In 1999, after completing three years of theological study and two years of discernment, Greg was ordained a Deacon in The Episcopal Church. In the 20 years since, Episcopal Bishops have assigned him to serve as Deacon in four Charleston Episcopal Churches: Old St. Andrew's, St. Francis, St. Peter's, and St. Stephen's. In addition to his Diaconate ministry, Greg served as Executive Director of Crisis Ministries, a Charleston homeless shelter. He has also served as Hospital Chaplain at Roper St. Francis Healthcare System and retired from there as Manager of Pastoral Care in 2011. Greg's wife, Lyn Smith, also retired that year from Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), where she was a Genetic Counselor at Hollings Cancer Center.

Greg was a vestry member at St. John's Episcopal Church, Tallahassee, Florida, and served on the Habitat for Humanity board in Tallahassee, Echo Outreach Ministries board, a homeless shelter in Tallahassee, the Institutional Review Board at MUSC, and Healing Farm Ministries board, a community for people with special needs in Charleston.

Greg serves now as Deacon at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, where he and his wife are members. Greg and Lyn's son, daughter-in-law, and their three children are members of Grace Episcopal Church, their daughter, son-in-law, and their young son live in Asheville, North Carolina.

Church ministry and family are Greg's focus, but he also enjoys golf, running, swimming and hiking.