

Birmingham the World is Watching--How Birmingham set the stage for Civil Rights gains in this country by putting the Children out front.

Barry McNealy

Historical Content Expert

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute



Mr. Barry McNealy was born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama. Barry is a proud product of Birmingham City Schools. He has special insight into the Civil Rights Movement in both the city and surrounding areas. Barry has served in various capacities at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute for most of his professional career. He loves this magnificent city with all its diversity emerging from its industrial past. In addition to introducing visitors to world famous historical sites of Birmingham as a lecturer guide, he leads walking - tours and takes visitors to the city's historical neighborhoods and brings them along on a historical path of the American Civil Rights Movement. Mr. McNealy is also an experienced educator teaching locally in the Birmingham City School System and as an adjunct professor with University of Alabama at Birmingham.

As a historian Barry has been featured on local television and radio stations. Mr. McNealy has also appeared nationally on Lifetime Television's "the Balancing Act" and C-SPAN's American History Television.

Charles Woods

Education Director & Trainer

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute



Charles Woods, III, is originally from San Bernardino, California. He has been living in Alabama for the past 17 years. With a B.A. degree in History from Xavier University of Louisiana, Charles has experience working with children and has even been a middle school teacher. Currently as the Education Director and Trainer for the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Charles is responsible for the organizations after school, early literacy, young adult, general programming, and training. Charles also travels throughout Alabama teaching people of all ages and backgrounds about the lessons learned from the Civil Rights Movement. His hobbies include reading, natural medicine, martial arts, and spending time with family.

"Artivism"

Kisha Freedis



Kisha Freedis is a public speaker and member of Toastmaster's International at the Hi-Noon Club in District 77, TEDx Huntsville speaker in 2014, and has performed original poetry at NASA Marshall Space Flight Center and the City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of International & Immigrant Affairs, UPS Women Export University 2021 Graduation. She is a certified Success Coach, Six Seconds Certified Emotional Intelligence Practitioner, Assessor, and Mindfulness Meditation practitioner and teacher at Unlimited for Life Coaching, LLC. Kisha empowers career professionals and entrepreneurs to be self-directed leaders of heart and mind as catalysts for systemic change in the workplace, businesses and community. Entrepreneurs

and career professionals are the lifeline of our economies. After the disruption of the 2020 pandemic, entrepreneurs and professionals who are able to pivot with self-awareness tools, wellness practices, and who are skilled at processing and navigating emotions will become the resilient leaders of the 21st century. Kisha supports her clients with these tools while promoting self-agency, self-empowerment and leadership in this community of business professionals.

Kisha is also a Six Seconds certified Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Educator. Through her Youth Leadership Inside/Out student platform, Kisha prepares students for college and career success, supporting the development of social emotional learning skills for academic stamina, mental and emotional resilience, and healthy social connection. By building an inner foundation on mindfulness and emotional intelligence practices and creativity, students become ready for self-leadership in their adult lives, and are prepared for shared leadership in the workplace, businesses, and communities.

In 2019, she received the “Making a Difference” Award from the Huntsville Greater Links, Inc. for her work as Creative Director of Word-Xpress, LLC where she published and distributed over 1000 breast cancer anthology books to patients, survivors and caregivers across the US. Thirty-five poets and writers collaborated on the book project and contributors within the Southeast US donated to the project. She was also recognized for her expressive writing initiative and partnerships with community non-profits, providing hiphop and poetry-writing workshops to help youth build the confidence to express their emotions and experiences through an artistic outlet.

Kisha lives in Huntsville, Alabama and has two adult sons, Benjamin and Joseph Tafari, and a two-year old granddaughter, Jaana.

Building Advocates and Transferring Power Across Your State with The Women’s Foundation of Alabama

Kate Messervy

Director of Advocacy and Engagement

The Women’s Foundation of Alabama



Kate is a Huntsville native. She has worked in politics for the better part of her career. Kate worked for Senator Doug Jones on his 2017 campaign and in the Huntsville field office. After her tenure with Senator Jones, Kate joined the prestigious business lobby, The Business Council of Alabama, where she learned from giants such as Senator Katie Britt. Kate believes that working across the aisle is essential to making a lasting impact in Alabama. In her free time, Kate is a member of the Huntsville Rotary Club and enjoys serving the North Alabama community through Leadership Huntsville, where she is a part of the Connect 25 class. Surprisingly, Kate is a reptile lover and the lizard mom to one elderly bearded Dragon named Captian YellowBeard. Kate and her Spouse, William, have two sons, ages 8 and 3.

Kim Holt Cochran

Alliance Development



A native Kentuckian, Kim fell in love with public policy when she was a young teenager. Inspired while attending a political event with her father, Kim quickly developed a deep passion for advocacy and has spent her career in public affairs.

With more than 30 years’ experience, Kim is able to take a vision and help make it a reality through sound strategy development. Kim has a strong background in advocacy development, crisis management, government relations, issue campaigns and media relations which allow her to intuitively see threads of opportunity that bring others together into a coherent ensemble.

While operating her own public affairs practice for more than 16 years, Kim covered a wide-range of issue areas for her clients. Prior to owning her company, Kim worked at a public affairs firm in Birmingham, a large public relations firm in Atlanta and as a Legislative Aide for U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell for six years in Washington, DC. Kim earned her B.A. in Political Science from the University of Alabama.

Kim is married, lives in Birmingham, and has two children at the University of Alabama. Kim enjoys spending her free time with her family.

Centering and Authentically Engaging Parents and Providers with Geaux Far Louisiana

Libbie Sonnier, Ph.D.

Co-Chair

Geaux Far Louisiana



Libbie Sonnier, Ph.D., has served as the Executive Director of the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children since 2019. Recognized for her tenacity and deep commitment to children, Dr. Sonnier has led teams in system-wide initiatives for the betterment of children, families, caregivers, and practitioners for more than two decades. During her time at the Louisiana Policy Institute, she has helped secure and direct more than \$1B for early care and education in Louisiana, including the state's largest new early learning investments in a decade and a 20-year millage that creates one of the nation's largest dedicated funds for infant and toddler care in New Orleans. Since 2019, she also doubled the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children's research and media engagement outputs, tripled its staff, doubled its annual revenues, and secured its first three seven-figure grants. She also helped conceive, launch, and co-chair the Steering Committee of Geaux Far Louisiana, a comprehensive effort that engages parents and early childhood health and education providers in leading the transformation of the state's early childhood systems to better meet the needs of families.

Prior to taking on leadership of the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, she served as a state director of two federal programs, where she managed multi-million-dollar budgets. She developed and implemented pilot programs for children, birth to age five, in four states across multiple agencies and community partners to improve the efficiency and efficacy of direct services for children and their families. Dr. Sonnier's experiences conducting longitudinal and experimental research allow her to translate scientific findings into meaningful and practical policies that support better life outcomes for children. She is coauthor of multiple publications and technical reports, training curricula, and, with Drs. Sharon and Craig Ramey, *The Four Diamonds Checklist* and *The Quality System to Achieve Results for Young Children in all Settings (Q-STAR)*.

Dr. Sonnier is the recipient of the Hulick Serving Spirit Fellowship Award for her commitment to individuals with disabilities across the life course, the Rotary Club's Extraordinary Woman "Rising Star" Award, a New Orleans City Business 2020 & 2022 Women of the Year honoree, a 2020 Leadership Louisiana participant, one of 2021 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana's "16 Women Paving the Way for Louisiana's Future," a St. Charles Magazine 2022 ChangeMaker, and a 2022 Friends of Children award recipient from the Louisiana Early Childhood Association. Dr. Sonnier received a Doctor of Philosophy in human development from Virginia Tech, a Master of Education in early childhood intervention and family support services from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Bachelor of Science in special education with an emphasis in early childhood intervention from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Rochelle Wilcox

Co-Chair

Geaux Far Louisiana



Rochelle Wilcox has been an early childhood education professional for over 23 years. Her advocacy for early learning started in the classroom as a teacher and led her to her current position as the CEO/Executive Director of the Wilcox's Academy of Early Learning, Wilcox's Academy Too and Wilcox Academy Central City [Wilcox Academy](#). She comes super-charged with an educational background including an Associates of Arts Degree in Early Childhood Education and a Bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a Education in Urban Society concentration. She was the first early learning center provider to sit on the Board of Agenda for Children, she currently sit on the boards of The Children's Funding Accelerator [CFA](#) and Drexel Prep Foundation [DPF](#). She also

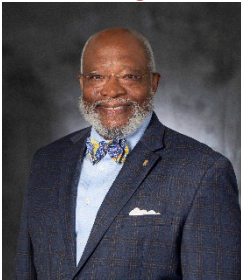
sits the steering committees of the New Orleans Grade Level Reading Campaign [NOLAGLR](#) ,The New Orleans Early Education Network [NOEEN](#) and she is the co-chair of Geaux far Louisiana [GeauxFar](#). In 2021, she co-founded For Providers by Providers [4PXPLA](#) a non-profit that champions Louisiana's Type III predominantly BIPOC and Woman led early learning centers (ELC that accepts public funding) by enhancing the quality of ELC through policy advocacy, professional development, networking and wealth building. She is the 2023 recipient of the Inaugural Early Childhood Leader of the Year award bestowed by Dream teachers and the Louisiana Department of Education. Over her career she has served over 2000 children, families and ECE providers however, she notes her highest honor is being a wife and a mother to 3 sons.

Her Philosophy: I believe that the child who is loved has the confidence to love others, the child who learns to love learning will thirst for knowledge and the child who has been loved and educated will lead his peers and the world.

Her favorite quote: The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any. -Alice Walker

Conversatino with Dale Long

Dale Long



Dale Hawkins Long is a survivor of the September 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL, where four of his friends were tragically killed and twenty-seven people were injured. He and his late brother, Kenneth escaped unscathed. Dale's experience in Birmingham led him to dedicate his life to volunteering. The recipient of numerous awards for volunteer service, for over four decades he has been a mentor with Big Brothers and Big Sisters. In 1989 Dale was honored to be named the National Big Brother of the Year. In 2007 he was the recipient of the Clifford B. Norman, National Local Board Member of the year.

Early last year he was summoned to Birmingham by Roche Productions and renowned French documentary filmmaker, David Korn-Brzoza who specializes in historical and geopolitical documentaries. Dale was interviewed to be part of a two-hour film that captures the history of the Ku Klux Klan from its origin to the present day. The film explores some of the major cases and abuses of the Klan during the Civil Rights era, including the 1963 church bombing. It was broadcast in France and 17 countries on the European cultural TV channel ARTE.

In December 2021 he once again journeyed to Birmingham for an interview by Oxford Films, a London based company as they produced a three-part documentary in celebration of the British Broadcasting Company' (BBC) 100 Year Anniversary. Again, he discussed the 60's era Civil Rights Movement and the tragic, KKK bombing of 16th Street Baptist Church. The three- part documentary narrated by art historian, Simon Schama was broadcast recently on BBC2. Efforts are being made to show it in US markets soon.

Dale is a speaker on the national platform who has shared his role in American History with organizations including the National Urban League, Congressional Black Caucus, the United Methodist Church's General Conference, the University of Michigan, Rutgers University, Texas Wesleyan University, the University of Dallas, Texas Southern University, Southern Methodist University, The Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, The National MENTOR Summit, ONCOR Electric Delivery and the City of Dallas. In 1990 he shared the podium at the White House with President George H. W. Bush as the President announced one of his Youth Engaged in Service initiatives. In 2004 during the 40th anniversary commemoration of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, President George W. Bush included in his White House addresses one of Dale's childhood memories of growing up in Birmingham. For volunteer work Dale has garnered media attention from Forbes, Essence, Time and Ebony Magazines, the Dallas Morning News, PBS, CNN, C-Span, the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Sphinx Magazine, the NBC Nightly News and The 2011 Griot's 100.

Dale was born in Tuskegee, Alabama and reared in Birmingham where he graduated from high school in 1970. He accepted a music scholarship, becoming a member of the famous "Ocean of Soul" Marching Band of Texas Southern University, Houston, TX, where he earned the Bachelor of Science Degree in 1974.

He is a member of the Garland Branch NAACP, the Leadership Dallas Alumni Association, Kappa Kappa Psi National Honorary Band Fraternity, a Life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, a Life member of the Texas Southern University National Alumni Association - Dallas Chapter and Kidsinbirmingham1963.org.

A resident of Garland, Texas he is the former Community Outreach Coordinator/Public Information Officer for the City of Dallas Public Works Department where he retired in April 2018. Previously he worked for a contractor on the NASA Space Shuttle Program, Houston, Texas Instruments in Dallas, The City of Garland, Texas and a contractor with the Dallas Area Rapid Transit Light Rail Design and Construction Project.

Dale and his wife Ellen Scott Long are proud parents of adult daughters Kendra Dale and Amber Nicole and are members of Hamilton Park United Methodist Church in Dallas. In his spare time Dale enjoys reading, music and photography. A retired marathoner, Dale now does "power walking" and practices yoga.

The Political Determinants of Health & How We Can Change Them

Daniel E. Dawes, J.D.

Best-Selling Author, Public Health, Equity and Policy Leader



Daniel E. Dawes, J.D., is a widely respected healthcare and public health leader, health equity & policy expert, educator, and researcher who currently serves as Senior Vice President, Global Health & Executive Director of the Global Health Equity Institute at Meharry Medical College. Dawes is also the future Founding Dean of the School of Global Public Health at Meharry Medical College, which will be the first school of public health at an historically black institution. Prior to that he served as executive director of the Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine and is a professor of health law, policy and management. A

trailblazer and nationally respected voice in the health equity movement, his scholarship and leadership, particularly the innovative political determinants of health framework that he pioneered, have resulted in increased policies and laws prioritizing health equity. By tackling upstream determinants of health, he has ventured into such uncharted territory as the intersection between equity and the social and political determinants of health to change the course of domestic and global policies for the better.

His groundbreaking works, *150 Years of ObamaCare*, which document the health equity movement in America and elevates the health equity-focused provisions of the Affordable Care Act that he led in negotiations and formulation, and *The Political Determinants of Health*, which provides an in-depth lens on the root causes of inequities, both published by Johns Hopkins Press are now nationally and internationally recognized and used as top health policy books. His passion for addressing health inequities is exemplified in his unyielding commitment to building collaboratives, including the HHS grant-funded National COVID-19 Resiliency Network and the Health Equity Leadership & Exchange Network, both exist to leverage evidence-based research and develop actionable solutions to advance health equity.

Professor Dawes' work focuses on health reform, health equity, mental/behavioral health inequities, social and political determinants of health, poverty, and health system transformation. His work bridges research, technology, healthcare, population health and public health – the translation of research discoveries into all communities, including under-resourced, vulnerable, and marginalized communities. Professor Dawes brings a forward-thinking, inclusive, and multidisciplinary approach to address issues impacting diverse populations in urban and rural communities in our progressively complex health system, including a national study examining the health and economic impact of mental health inequities in the United States and a major research project which created the nation's first health equity tracker. Among his many achievements, he was an instrumental

figure in developing and negotiating the Mental Health Parity Act, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act, and an architect of the Affordable Care Act's health equity-focused provisions, among other landmark federal policies.

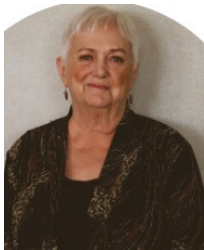
Professor Dawes is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine and an elected fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine. He serves as an advisor to The White House COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, an appointed member of the CDC's Advisory Committee to the Director and co-chair of the CDC's Health Equity Working Group, as well as an appointed member of the NIH's National Advisory Council for Nursing Research. Highly respected for his ability to achieve sound policy changes in a nonpartisan manner; Professor Dawes serves or has served on several boards, commissions and councils focused on improving health outcomes and elevating health equity in the United States and around the world, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Subcommittee on Health Disparities, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights - Health and Human Rights Institute Advisory Committee, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Policies for Action National Advisory Committee, the National Football League/National Football League Players Association's National Committee on the Racial Disparities of COVID-19, the National Medical Fellowships Primary Care Leadership Program's National Advisory Committee, the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health National Advisory Council, the Healthcare Georgia Foundation Board of Directors, the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities Board of Directors, the National League of Cities National Advisory Board, the CDC Foundation's Community COVID Coalition Advisory Group, and the Children's Mental Health Network National Advisory Council. He is an advisor to international, national, regional, state, and municipal policymakers as well as think tanks, foundations, corporations, and nonprofit organizations.

Alabama Arise: Learning from Civic Engagement Experts

Carol Gundlach

Senior Policy Analyst

Alabama Arise



Carol Gundlach has been an Arise policy analyst since 2013. She focuses on issues related to taxes and budgets. Carol previously worked as executive director of the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence and as state coordinator of the Alabama Coalition Against Hunger. She has an M.S.W. degree and has taught social work policy and community organization at Auburn University and the University of Alabama.

Civic Engagement and You! What you can and can't do as a nonprofit

Allen Mattison

Partner

Trister, Ross, Schadler & Gold



Allen Mattison helps nonprofit organizations to mitigate legal risks while maximizing their ability to advocate effectively for their public-policy missions. From establishing corporations and securing I.R.S. tax exemptions, to managing employment matters and understanding options for political activism, he helps nonprofit leaders succeed in all phases of their organizations' lives. For nonprofit leaders who want to influence elections or pass new laws, he explains the available options and works with them to tailor their tactics to the relevant federal or state lobbying and campaign-finance regime. For grant-

funded section 501(c)(3) organizations, Allen teaches managers the line between educational and lobbying activities, so they can stretch their non-lobbying funds strategically to maximize their advocacy impact – saving scarce lobbying dollars for when they will have the biggest bang for the buck.

Before becoming a lawyer, Allen worked in political communications, serving as the Sierra Club’s national media relations director and in communications roles on campaigns and in the U.S. Senate. These experiences give Allen perspective on the challenges nonprofit managers and grantmakers face in developing programs that maximize their advocacy power within the restrictions imposed on section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations and PACs.

Using his communications background, Allen has helped numerous organizations understand how to structure their social media outreach without violating lobbying and campaign-finance restrictions. He wrote *Friends, Tweets, and Links: IRS Treatment of Social Media Activities By Section 501(c)(3) Organizations*, 67 Exempt Org. Tax Rev. 445 (May 2011), one of the first scholarly articles to address charities’ election-related use of Facebook, Twitter and other social networking tools. He also wrote *Influencing Public Policy in the Digital Age: The Law of Online Lobbying and Election-related Activities* (Alliance for Justice, Fall 2011), a plain-language guidebook for nonprofit managers seeking to maximize their social media power without violating relevant laws.