

1Press Release

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United Way of Southeast Alaska Elects Board Members

United Way of Southeast Alaska recently held its annual meeting, at which time the board acknowledged and recognized outgoing board members, elected new board members and elected officers for the coming year.

Current board member Joy Lyon, representing the small Partner Agencies was re-elected to the board for a two year term expiring in January of 2022. Lyon is the Executive Director for the Association of Education for Young Children – Southeast Alaska. Lyon has served on the United Way board since being first elected in January of 2018.

Theresa Belton and Desiree Smith have been elected to the board for a three year term expiring in 2023. Theresa Belton is the Chief Financial Officer of the Central Council Tlingit, Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTLITA).

Theresa Belton, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), has over 17 years of experience working in Tlingit & Haida's Finance department. Prior to accepting the CFO position in 2012, Theresa served as acting CFO, controller (3 years) and lead accountant. She has a thorough knowledge of the Great Plains accounting software and the Tribe's accounting rules and structure.

Theresa also currently serves on the Huna Totem Corporation Board of Directors. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Accounting from the University of Alaska Southeast and a Master's degree in Accounting from St. Joseph's College.

Desiree Smith is a native Arkansan and a veteran broadcaster with over 25 years in the industry. She and her husband Mike managed small market radio stations in Mississippi and Louisiana for eighteen years, where Desiree served on the board of directors for the Brookhaven Humane Society, Natchez Little Theatre, and local chamber. She also served as Honorary Chairperson for the March of Dimes and worked very closely with numerous fund raising events. She was awarded Business Person of the Year for her service to nonprofits and community events by the Vidalia Chamber of Commerce. As a Senior Account Executive for the Juneau Radio Center, Desiree also hosts a weekend show on KTKU radio, Taku 105.

During the Annual Dinner Meeting Chair Warren Russell thanked and welcomed newly elected and re-elected board members for their willingness to serve saying “our board members bring with them great energy and talents that will serve United Way well.”

Karmen Bowman with Accurate Accounting Services stepped down from the Board of Directors after serving for three years was. Ms. Bowman served on the board from January 2017 to January 2020. She served on the Finance Committee from March of 2014 through January of 2020 and as Treasurer January 2017 – 2020. In addition to her service on the Finance Committee, she was an active member of the Events Committee.

Kendri M. M. Cesar, a partner with the law firm of Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Endreson & Perry, LLP was recognized for her four years of service after serving on the board of directors from November 2015 to November 2019. Ms. Cesar was recognized for her service on the Campaign Committee, the Health Committee, and the Education Committee.

Chair Russell acknowledged the contributions of both members and noted “that their service was deeply appreciated and their presence on the board would be truly missed.”

Mark Mesdag stepped down after more than nine years of service to the United Way of Southeast Alaska Board of Directors, having just completed two years of service to the board as Past Chair. Mr. Mesdag, a partner at Elgee, Rehfeld, served on the Board from February 2011 to January 2020 as well as serving on the Finance Committee for all nine of those years. He held the positions of Treasurer for four years, served as Chair of the Board for two years, and the past two years serving as Past Chair.

Chair Russell remarked that the board would miss Mark’s keen insight into our sometimes complex financial reporting system. Russell continued by stating “Mark’s commitment and participation on the board has helped the organization move through a number of transitions. All which have led us to a stronger place and positioned UWSEAK for future growth and development. It’s made my tenure as Chair the past two years very productive.” We genuinely appreciate Mark’s service to United Way.

Jennifer Treadway has been elected to Chair of the Board of Directors for United Way of Southeast Alaska for 2020. She is a graduate of the Leadership Juneau program facilitated by United Way of Southeast Alaska, a former member of the AmeriCorps program, was previously employed by United Way as the Resource Development Director and has served on the board since January of 2018. Ms. Treadway will lead the 11 member board which is the governing body for the United Way of Southeast Alaska

Other elected officers are: Millie Ryan as Secretary, Theresa Belton as Treasurer and Warren Russell as Past Chair, as he has stepped down from the Chair position after serving two terms as Chair of the Board.

One of the first items of business for the new board will be to review the current strategic plan and set direction for the organization for the coming year while maintaining the ongoing programs United Way of Southeast Alaska currently delivers.

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