



New Haven Free Public Library Board of Directors



The Honorable Mayor, Justin Elicker, *ex-officio*

Justin grew up in Connecticut. He attended public school, graduated with a BA from Middlebury College in Vermont, and earned both a Master's in Business Administration from the Yale School of Management and a Masters in Environmental Management from the Yale School of Forestry. Justin speaks Spanish and Chinese. He has been an elementary and high school teacher (for at-risk youth) and served for three years as an adjunct professor of education policy at Southern Connecticut State University.

Justin has a wealth of experience in government. He served for four years on the New Haven Board of Alders where he was a champion for residents across the city who felt unheard, underserved, and unsupported by the City of New Haven. He advocated for renters who lived in sub-standard apartments under absentee landlords, and fought against predatory landlords. With his constituents' support and at their requests, he promoted fostering more positive, community-police interaction in an underserved neighborhood in order to help mitigate neighbors' feelings of mistrust and suspicion of police. He successfully implemented neighborhood and economic development improvements in the Cedar Hill neighborhood to promote more business activity and improve quality of life. He promoted protections for gender identity. On the Board of Alders, Justin was also one of the strongest voices for long-term fiscal responsibility, government transparency, and smart governance. He had both one of the best attendance records on the Board, and the best response rates for constituent service requests. In 2013, Justin ran for Mayor in one of the most exciting and close elections in decades. Justin came in second with 45.3% of the vote.

Justin's government experience started long before his involvement at the Board of Alders. Justin worked for five years as a Foreign Service Officer in the U.S. State Department. He was posted to Washington, D.C., Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Justin had a substantive focus on U.S. economic and environmental policy. While working for the U.S. government abroad was rewarding and challenging, Justin decided to leave the State Department to come to New Haven because he wanted to live near his family, put down roots, and get involved in a local community that he believed in. Justin lives in East Rock with his wife, Natalie, and daughters Molly and April.

Justin is now the 51st Mayor of New Haven, and will work hard so that every resident has the opportunity to thrive, no matter where they live.

PRESIDENT



Lauren Anderson loves working on literacy initiatives with youth, elders and everyone in between. Her work experience prior to founding Possible Futures, a community bookspace in New Haven, includes serving as a co-founder of People Get Ready and as a tenured education professor, teacher educator, department chair, researcher, beginning teacher support provider, and upper elementary teacher. For almost two decades she has taught about the history and politics of education in the US and about what it means to an excellent literacy educator in and for these times. She is a coordinating member of the Anti-Racist Teaching & Learning Collective and the author of numerous journal articles, books, and op-eds about teaching, learning, and schooling.

Whenever she can, Lauren strives to support grassroots' efforts aimed at protecting public education from privatization and advancing educational justice. Her dream day involves being buried in a good book, sitting with her dog, eating spicy vegetarian food, dancing, and hiking or doing just about anything else outdoors.

Lauren holds a B.A. in Political Science from Yale University, an M.S.Ed. in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from Bank Street College, and a Ph.D. in Education from the University of California, Los Angeles.

VICE PRESIDENT



Andrew P. Giering is an attorney with the Federal Defender Office for the District of Connecticut, where he represents defendants unable to afford counsel in federal criminal proceedings. He is passionate about social, economic and racial justice and committed to equalizing the accessibility of arts, culture and knowledge in New Haven.

A current resident of City Point, Andrew was born and raised in the New Haven area and his family has lived here for more than a century. Prior to entering government service, he worked as a litigation associate at Wiggin and Dana in New Haven and Sullivan & Cromwell in New York. Andrew earned a J.D. from Yale Law School and a B.A. in History from Columbia University, and is a proud alumnus of Hopkins School and the West Haven public school system.

In addition to the Library, Andrew serves on the Board of Directors of the ACLU of Connecticut, Connecticut Arts Alliance, CT Folk, and Canal Dock Boathouse, and is an inaugural member of the state Correction Advisory Committee. Andrew is the Secretary of the Knights of St. Patrick, the oldest continuously run Irish-American society in Connecticut, and serves on the Greater New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee.

BOARD MEMBERS



Shana N. Schneider is a consultant in the social impact and education sector at Russell Reynolds Associates (RRA), a global leadership advisory firm. She focuses on educational and cultural institutions and works with clients as a partner in academic and senior leadership recruitment and development.

Her career compasses several leadership positions at Yale University including Deputy Director of the Yale Entrepreneurial Institute, Director of Communications for the Office of International Affairs and the Director of Communications for New Haven and State Affairs, as well as having managed a client portfolio at Technolutions, a software development firm that provides Slate, the leading CRM for higher education admissions offices. Before joining RRA, she founded Fitstyle by Shana, developed a research- and practice- based approach for wellness programs and implemented it for corporations, universities, and individuals.

She is an AFAA certified group fitness instructor and holds a B.A. from Yale University. She is the proud co-founder of a 10+ year old women's book club and can often be found walking her errands and listening to an audio book in her adopted hometown of New Haven.



Lee Cruz is the Outreach Director at The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. Lee connects nonprofits, civic leaders and the business community to create social and economic benefit. Previously he has held the positions: Executive Director of the Ronald McDonald House of Connecticut, Connecticut's home away from home for the families of children in need of hospitalization and Director of Community Development at Mutual Housing Association, a regional not-for-profit affordable housing developer. From the 1986 to 1998 Lee was the Leon Director of the New Haven/León Sister City Project in Leon, Nicaragua. In this position he administered integrated sustainable development

programs in health, education, agriculture, community development and, economic development. Lee is also a Co-founder of the Chatham Square Association, a group of organized residents, nonprofits and small businesses in Fair Haven working together to build and sustain community in their neighborhood. He lives in the Fair Haven with his wife Sarah and two children, Pablo and Mateo.



Dolores Garcia-Blocker, Ed.D., is the Director of College & Career Pathways for New Haven Public Schools and has more than 25 successful years in public education in urban and suburban settings with administrative experience at the elementary school, middle school, secondary school, and central office levels. Dr. Garcia-Blocker came to New Haven as Principal of the Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School in 2004 with previous experience in Irvington and Brooklyn, New York.

A leader with demonstrated success in inspiring and empowering others to advance the goals of the school district, Dr. Garcia-Blocker is the

recipient of numerous honors and awards including the New England Counselors of Color Bridging Access to College Leadership Award, the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. Outstanding Educator Award and Yale University's Seton Elm Ivy Award. Dr. Garcia-Blocker has an Ed.D in Educational Administration from Teachers College, Columbia University, an M.S. in Health/Fitness Management, and a B.A. in Spanish from Spelman College. She participated in George Washington University's Teacher Certification Program in ESL and most recently in the University of Connecticut, Neag School of Education, Executive Leadership Program.



Susan S. Lamar is a Certified Public Accountant. She has worked in public accounting and in industry in the Greater New Haven area for over thirty years. She is currently the controller for Green & Sklarz, LLC located in New Haven. Susan is a member of the Connecticut Society of CPAs and the American Institute of CPAs.

Throughout her career, she has volunteered her time and accounting skills for several New Haven area non-profits, several of which focus on early childhood education. Susan earned her Bachelor of Science in Business and Economics at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Susan is the proud mother of two sons, Luke and Jake. She spends her free time in her backyard garden. She lives in New Haven with her husband, Dennis.



Claudia Merson is the Director of Public School Partnerships for Yale University. She has expressed her passionate concern for young people and their education through innovative programming, skillful coalition building, and strategic visioning for long-term sustainability. Claudia's on point administrative style ensures that logistics never impede true creative process.

Claudia has established a broad array of sustainable programs and partnerships between Yale University and the New Haven Public Schools. She convened and co-chaired the first university-wide K-12 science outreach advisory committee that resulted in the creation of Pathways to Science, Yale's coordinated data-driven STEM outreach initiative. This coordinated infrastructure creates an environment for high impact outreach programming by making it easier and less costly for members of the University community to participate, a critical feature which has supported the sustained growth of both the total number of programs and number of Yale faculty involved in these programs. More importantly, Pathways supports a trajectory of increasingly rigorous STEM experiences for thousands of pre-college public school students and allows for more seamless transitions across critical educational junctures.

Claudia came to Yale with twenty-one years of experience as a teacher, librarian, program and curriculum developer and has worked in schools in Manhattan, Bangladesh and Switzerland. She received a B.A. from Georgia State University and an M.Ed. from Harvard University.



The **Honorable Jeanette Morrison** is the current Alder of Ward 22 representing the Dixwell and Yale communities in New Haven. Her role as local representative is a natural extension of all of her personal and professional experiences which have all related to her passion to bring families together and provide opportunities for children.

A life-long New Havener, born and raised in Newhallville, she is a proud alumna of Hillhouse High School. She was Ms. Hillhouse and captain of the cheerleading Team. After Hillhouse, she took her talents to the historically black college Morgan State University where she received the Alice W. Parham Outstanding Service Award. She then moved on to do higher educational work at Boston University and Southern Connecticut State University in human services, social work and business respectively.

Upon entering the workforce, she served as a social worker at Yale New Haven Hospital and for the State of Connecticut. She taught as a professor at Central Connecticut State University and Gateway Community College, and a teacher/facilitator for the Parent Leadership Training Institute.

Beyond being an elected official, she has held roles in National Association of Black Social Workers, the Elm City Young Adult Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the New Haven Board of Alders Black and Hispanic Caucus. She currently serves as the Aldermanic representative to the New Haven Free Public Library's Board of Directors. All of which she fits in while being the proud mother of her daughter Jaydah and her son Jordan.