

# 1BERKSHIRE

## BERKSHIRE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

### Leadership Session Biographies

May 30, 2019

#### **Mayor Thomas Bernard**

City of North Adams

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Thomas W. Bernard was elected mayor of the City of North Adams in November 2017 and began his term of office in January 2018. In addition to his city leadership role Mayor Bernard serves as chair of the school committee of the North Adams Public Schools.

Mayor Bernard previously served as director of special projects at Smith College; in various administrative roles at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), most notably as executive assistant to the president and clerk to the MCLA board of trustees; and as a development officer at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA).

Mayor Bernard currently serves as a member of the Berkshire Compact for Education; the Berkshire County Education Task Force's governance subcommittee; the Berkshire Blueprint steering committee; and the Impact Council of Berkshire County Leaders.

Prior volunteer experience includes service as a member and chair of the City of North Adams Human Services Commission. He was a founding board member of Develop North Adams and the North Adams Chamber of Commerce. He also has served on the pastoral council of St. Elizabeth of Hungary parish; the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition board of directors; the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) committee of the Berkshire Regional Planning Association (BRPC); and as a participant and steering committee member with the Berkshire Leadership Program.

Mayor Bernard is a graduate of Drury High School, Williams College, and Westfield State University.

## **B. Stephen Boyd**

CEO of Boyd Technologies

(413) 243-2000 x665

B. Stephen Boyd is the CEO of Boyd Technologies in Lee, MA and the Chairman and President of the Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC) in Pittsfield, MA. Mr. Boyd was asked by Mayor Bianchi to create the Berkshire Innovation Center in the WSBP and to lead its design and start-up with \$14.2M in grant funding from MLSC and the City of Pittsfield in 2014. He formed the BIC as a 501c3 charitable organization for the purposes of supporting regional economic development, combating community deterioration, and lessening the burden of government through innovation in the Life Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing. They created and aligned a cross-sector of Board of Directors from Academic & Research Institutions, Industry Associations and Private and Public Sector Businesses ( see Web Site)

<https://www.berkshireinnovationcenter.com/>

As the Board Chair and President, he has actively managed the organization's start-up activities and programming, including its finances, equipment selection, marketing, and building design. With operational oversight and on-going communications between multiple stakeholders, he has been a liaison between the BIC and its syndicate of Financing Partners, Public Officials, Regional Stakeholders and the community of members held. He often references the work to a primordial soup that is the first course of an Innovation Ecosystem being served up in the Berkshires at the intersection of STEAM and the broader economy. At the core of its program, the BIC will offer students and professionals alike with access to a state of the art facility, technical applications, and capabilities that promote discovery and deal flow with the center's labs, classrooms, and collaboration spaces.

As CEO of Boyd Technologies, Mr. Boyd has grown every segment of the company's business in year over year sales and new customer acquisitions. This includes substantial development, most recently, within the single-use medical device and life sciences fields. He was officially named CEO after his father Bronly Boyd retired in 2015 but has been driving the Company's vision and transformation since day one. Prior to joining the company, Stephen was an Associate at Economic Growth Group in New York City and an Associate Editor with Ski Magazine. A graduate of Middlebury College in VT, Mr. Boyd is an avid skier, soccer coach and outdoor enthusiast as well as a Board Trustee at Berkshire Country Day School and a Strategic Steering Committee member of the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and a member of the Berkshire CEO roundtable. He is the first person to offer his time to fellow entrepreneurs and loves to brainstorm about new ideas and ways to create value. He easily and equally is approached as a visionary and a mentor but will drop everything for his wife and kids!

Boyd Technologies has an average of 16 years of service amongst its employees and staff enthusiastically embrace corporate responsibilities, community stewardship and engage in volunteer work. Steve started the BT Internship Program for both high school and college aged

students in 2011 to provide opportunities for the next generation of skill development and exposure to the Berkshire workforce. He started the company's wellness plan - coined the Boyd Tech Outing Club - which has increased employee engagement, promoted smoking cessation and improved morale and energy with a work life balance that keeps his team at peak performance all year long with a work-hard, play hard mentality.

*Words from BIC associate Jim Brosnan "Steve Boyd's incredible leadership enabled the Berkshire Innovation Center to progress from dream to reality. Throughout the BIC development process there was one champion always there to coordinate, inspire, communicate and achieve a multi-agency alliance to ensure his vision of the BIC will be completed. Steve consistently displays leadership traits that serve as an example for colleagues to emulate."*

### **Dennis L. Powell**

President of the Berkshire Chapter of the NAACP  
[dpowell8@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dpowell8@nycap.rr.com) | (617) 501-5159

Dennis L. Powell is a proud Father of Five and Grandfather of Four. He is a community activist and has served as the President of the Berkshire County Chapter of the NAACP since 2015. Dennis is a consultant of Food Service & Hospitality Industry. He currently serves as the Vice Chair of the Clinton Church Restoration Project, Steering Committee of the W.E.B. Du Bois Lecture Series, Member of the Pittsfield Licensing Board, Member of Pittsfield School Committee and Board Member of the Railroad Street Youth Project. Dennis is a retired Culinary Educator, Executive Food Service & Hospitality Industry Management and Food Service Director of Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth.

Dennis has served as a Past Board Member of the following: Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield Economic Revitalization , Berkshire County Regional Employment, Berkshire Center For Families and Children; Past Chair - Advisory Council – MCAD; Past Member Police Citizen Advisory Committee; Past Member Alumni Board Pittsfield Boys Club; I Am MAPP Certified (Massachusetts Approach To Partnerships In Parenting); Established A Multicultural Book Collection For Children and Young Adults At The Berkshire Athenaeum - In Memory Of My Wife, Over 500 Books In The Collection; Prepared Meals For The Homeless At St., Stephen's Church For Over 12 Years.

### **Gwendolyn Hampton-VanSant**

CEO & Founding Director, Multicultural BRIDGE  
(413) 394-4305

Gwendolyn VanSant is an experienced organizational change consultant and coach who works at the intersection of diversity leadership, equity and inclusion, and strategic planning. She is the Founding Director of BRIDGE and the Equity and Inclusion Team Lead at Changemaker Strategies. She has founded several initiatives based in the principles of equity and justice, the inherent dignity and worth of individuals, and our interconnected web of humanity. She serves as the Vice Chair of the Town of Great Barrington W. E. B. Du Bois Legacy Committee, and

she's on the board of the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts and UU Mass Action Network. A skilled community organizer, Gwendolyn is a well-recognized thought leader on gender equity, racial justice, and reparations.

Gwendolyn offers highly customizable cultural competency, multicultural education, and literacy and proficiency training programs for groups of all ages and professional, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds. She works with corporations and financial institutions, secondary and higher education institutions, law enforcement, public health institutions and hospitals, arts organizations, and leadership institutes. Her cultural competency training, strategic work, and capacity building consulting work has been sought out across the country. She's developed programs including Workplace Spanish for Law Enforcement, the first Women of Color in the Workplace Retreat at Amherst College, and most recently, a staff and board leadership training program on equity and financial literacy. Gwendolyn also served on the Great Barrington Citizen's Panel for Police Officer and Sergeant Selection. A certified bilingual interpreter, she designs education curriculums for workplace language classes.

Gwendolyn is a longtime activist. Most recently her work in honoring Dr. W.E. B. Du Bois has taken centerfold as co-curator and co-designer of the Du Bois 150th birthday festival commissioned by the Town of Great Barrington. In spring 2017, Gwendolyn spearheaded the county-wide campaign and coalition "Not in the Berkshires" and, in partnership, stewarded the crafting and passing of her town's Trust Policy, a step towards a statewide Safe Community Act. In 2016, Gwendolyn served as the Founding Director of Equity and Inclusion at Bard College at Simon's Rock, her alma mater. In 2015/2016 she was recognized as a "Berkshire Trendsetter" finalist and was named one of her county's most dedicated and creative social entrepreneurs by Berkshire Magazine. In 2018, Gwendolyn was selected by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women as one of the Commonwealth's "Unsung Heroines" and named a finalist in Executive Leadership in the 2018 Berkshire Nonprofit Awards. Gwendolyn is on the board of UU Mass Action Network and is a reactivation and annual member of the Berkshire County Bank of the NAACP. Most recently, Gwendolyn has been named Berkshire Business and Professional Women's 2019 "Woman of Achievement".

A frequent speaker and panelist, Gwendolyn spoke most recently at the 38th Annual E. F. Schumacher Lectures celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of W. E. B. Du Bois at the Schumacher Center for New Economics, PolicyLink's Equity Summit in Chicago, and the Western Mass Health Equity Summit at UMASS Amherst. She graduated with a certificate in Positive Psychology from the Wholebeing Institute at Kripalu in 2015 studying with Dr. Tal Ben Shahr and Dr. Maria Sirois. In 2015/2016 she was recognized as a "Berkshire Trendsetter" finalist by 1Berkshire in the "Entrepreneur/Visionary of the Year" category. In 2016, Berkshire Magazine named Gwendolyn one of the 25 most creative, talented, and influential leaders in the Berkshires. Governor Deval Patrick, who honored Gwendolyn as an African American of Distinction award in 2010, praised her leadership, calling her a "treasure to Berkshire County and this Commonwealth.