

**Julie Stokes**

**Program Series Moderator**



Julie Stokes is the CEO of Flame Consulting, CFO of Stokes & Associates, Founder and President/CEO of Ellevate Louisiana, and President/CEO of the Survivor's Cancer Action Network (SCAN). She is a CPA, non-partisan policy advocate, civic leader, speaker, and recovering state legislator.

Over her seven years of service in the Louisiana Legislature, Julie Stokes gained a reputation as a passionate advocate for cancer patients and for comprehensive, non-partisan fiscal policy. Since leaving public life behind in 2020, she has opened Flame Consulting to continue supporting projects that she is passionate about.

Through Flame Consulting, Julie founded Ellevate Louisiana. Ellevate Louisiana's purpose is to empower women leaders throughout Louisiana by connecting and educating them on the challenges impacting our State with data-driven, non-partisan solutions to make a better future for Louisiana. Similarly, Julie also founded SCAN whose mission is to unite cancer survivors, doctors, scientists, and philanthropists to improve the patient experience and ultimately drive superior outcomes for cancer care in the State of Louisiana. Julie also advocates to the Louisiana

Legislature on behalf of the Louisiana Oncology Society to collaborate on and pass legislation to bring the most current science for cancer care to the people of Louisiana.

Finally, Julie serves as CFO of Stokes & Associates, where she provides the financial leadership that has grown the company from two employees in 1998 to over forty employees today. She resides in River Ridge with her husband, Larry, and their two children, Brandon and Taylor

### **Women's Health 9/16/24 8:30-10 am**

#### **Dr. Jennifer Avegno**



Dr. Jennifer Avegno is a New Orleans native who received her undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame, a Master of Arts in Sociology from Tulane University and her MD from LSU School of Medicine – New Orleans. She completed her residency at LSU/Charity Hospital Emergency Medicine and joined the faculty at both LSU and Tulane shortly after graduation. As an academic faculty member, Dr. Avegno worked in medical education and established the Division of Social Emergency Medicine at LSU to facilitate innovative programming, interdisciplinary partnerships, and improved population health outcomes. In 2018, she was appointed as the Director of the Health Department for the City of New Orleans, where she leads the City's public health responses to multiple epidemics and emergencies. At NOHD, Dr. Avegno manages a dedicated team of public health professionals in addressing

critical health needs for the community, with an intentional core focus on social drivers of health, equity, and access.

### **Shelina Davis**



Shelina Davis, MPH, MSW serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI) where she oversees the LPHI team and offers strategic direction to ensure health and racial equity; and champion health for people, within systems, and throughout communities. Shelina brings over 15 years of experience in public health, healthcare systems, leadership development, and health equity. Shelina serves on the Boards of the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship – New Orleans, Propeller and CARE: Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity. She was selected as Aspen Ideas Festival Health Scholar, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Office on Smoking and Health Leadership and Sustainability School Fellow, and National Council for Behavioral Health Addressing Health Disparities Leadership Program Participant. In April 2020, Shelina served on Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards’ COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, Louisiana Prisons Sub-Committee and Louisiana Resilient Commission, Manufacturers Sub-Committee to ensure the safety and well-being of all Louisianans during COVID-19. Currently, she serves on the Louisiana Office of Public Health’s COVID-19 Vaccine Action Collaborative to support efforts to identify and define state-specific priority groups within the national guidance framework and prioritize the allocation of the initial doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Prior to joining LPHI, Shelina served as Assistant Vice President of Practice Improvement at the National Council for Behavioral Health based in Washington, DC, where she led the strategic

oversight and development of public health initiatives — supporting community-based organizations as well as federal, state, local and tribal governmental agencies and their workforce in competencies in behavioral health as well as achieving health and racial equity.

Shelina holds dual-Masters in Public Health and Social Work from Tulane University Schools of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and Social Work; and a Bachelors of Science in Psychology from Xavier University of Louisiana.

**Dr. Veronica Gillispie-Bell**



Dr. Veronica Gillispie-Bell is a board-certified obstetrician & gynecologist and associate professor for Ochsner Health in New Orleans. She serves as the senior site lead and section head of Womens Services at Ochsner Kenner and is the director of Quality for Womens Services and the medical director of the Minimally Invasive Center for the Treatment of Uterine Fibroids. She earned her medical degree from Meharry Medical College and completed her residency training at Ochsner Health System. She has a master of applied science in patient safety and healthcare quality from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She has received certification in Diversity and Inclusion from Cornell University. Clinically, in addition to providing obstetric care, Dr. Gillispie-Bell performs advanced laparoscopic and robotic procedures and is known nationally for her expertise in management of heavy menstrual bleeding associated with fibroids. Dr. Gillispie-Bell is also the medical director of the Louisiana Perinatal Quality Collaborative and Pregnancy Associated Mortality Review for the Louisiana Department of Health. In this role, she leads initiatives in the state of Louisiana to improve birth outcomes for all individuals giving birth and eliminate the Black-white disparity gap. Dr.

Gillispie-Bell has testified before Congress to inform on the drivers of maternal mortality and legislative policy to improve maternal outcomes. She was an invited speaker at The White House Maternal Health Day of Action. She has served in several other local and national leadership roles and received many accolades for her clinical, academic and community services contributions. She has also been quoted in and published in several local and national publications, including USA Today and the New York Times. Dr. Gillispie-Bell has been a featured speaker at Essence Festival, Good Morning America, CNBC, Scripps News, and she was featured in the 1619 Project Docuseries.

### **Political Participation 10/2 5:30-7:00 pm**

#### **Cassie Alsfeld**



Mary Caswell “Cassie” Alsfeld is an award-winning copywriter, digital marketing strategist, and online fundraising specialist. She founded Shoreline Strategies LLC—a digital marketing, messaging, and fundraising firm—in 2015 after spending over a decade working in politics at all levels. Cassie has worked with leading presidential, senate, gubernatorial, and congressional campaigns; high-profile non-profit and advocacy organizations; and start-ups venturing into new markets.

Cassie was the first digital copywriter and one of the first digital hires in the GOP when she served on the Romney presidential campaign, at the National Republican Congressional Committee, and at the Republican National Committee. At each, she crafted the public voice and messaging for some of the nation’s top leaders, built the largest email marketing lists in GOP

history, and set fundraising records. Cassie also served as the speechwriter for the NRCC Chairman.

After serving as a legislative staffer for Congressman Anh “Joseph” Cao (LA-02) in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill, she became a lobbyist/consultant at Carmen Group, where she helped get major economic development projects built, such as the Wharf DC and helped get disaster loans for hurricane-affected HBCUs forgiven.

Cassie is passionate about getting more women involved in politics and running for office. She recently served as the Louisiana Chair for Nikki Haley’s presidential campaign and on the Women for Nikki national leadership team. She has consulted the Women’s Public Leadership Network (WPLN), Louisiana Women Lead, Independent Women’s Forum, and Independent Women’s Voice.

Recently, Cassie was honored by the American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC) with the 40 Under 40 Award, a great honor given to the top 40 political leaders in the country under 40. And in 2021, she won an AAPC Pollie Award, considered the “Oscars of politics,” for an advocacy campaign she led. Cassie is a Co-Founder and Co-Chair of Membership and Development for Ellevote Louisiana, and she is a member of the Louisiana Chapter of the International Women’s Forum.

**Rep. Aimee Freeman**



Combining optimism with pragmatism, Aimee Adatto Freeman has dedicated her career to helping individuals and organizations realize their potential. Her passion is brought to life through two major avenues: as the managing consultant of Aimee Freeman Consulting and as the Louisiana State Representative for District 98 in New Orleans.

For over two decades through her business consultancy, Aimee has helped organizations, from early-stage startups to multinational corporations, grow. Her no-nonsense approach to strategic planning yields results beyond increased revenue. Aimee's clients consistently report a significant increase in employee engagement, a renewed sense of purpose and motivation, and a dramatic upswing in key performance indicators.

Aimee applied this eye for strategy to win two competitive races against a total field of seven candidates and become a state legislator in 2019. She took great care in assembling the right team to bring her campaign strategy to fruition. This experience both validated and refined the work she does with her business clients. Aimee's methodical approach, which includes a focus on working collaboratively, has continued to pay dividends as it has empowered her to successfully pass landmark legislation, such as laws that ended the Pink Tax on menstrual products and children and adult diapers, serve survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, and streamline the Pandemic-EBT distribution process, which led to 250,000 more families receiving benefits.

She has also served as an Adjunct Professor of Business at Tulane University for more than two decades and is a member of the board of the A.B. Freeman School Business Council. She has spearheaded neighborhood improvements by founding the Maple Quality of Life Committee and is a member of the Bureau of Governmental Research, where she served on the Board of Directors from 2006-11 and helped manage a successful \$3 million endowment campaign. She is also an active member of both the Association for Corporate Growth Louisiana Chapter and the Women's Professional Council of Greater New Orleans.

With a B.A. from the University of Virginia and an M.B.A. from Tulane University as well as over 25 years of professional experience, Aimee is well qualified to handle any and every challenge that comes her way. Though she takes great pride and satisfaction in her work, she's most proud of the joint venture between herself and her husband, West. Together they raised two

daughters who share Aimee's love of service, two sons who share her natural curiosity, and a fabulous dog named Domino.

### **Helena Moreno**



Helena Moreno represents our City as Councilmember At-Large and President of the New Orleans City Council. On behalf of the people of New Orleans, she has led the fight for a safer, more affordable, more equitable, and more accountable city. As a Councilmember – and a state Legislator before – she's won victories to broaden economic opportunity, reform our criminal justice system, promote gender equality, and protect and uplift the most vulnerable in our society. Among her many accomplishments in just her first year, she's championed laws to shield victims of sexual assault, reduce incarceration by preventing unnecessary arrests, restrict weapons from domestic abuses, transform New Orleans into a renewable energy trailblazer, and rebuild our crumbling infrastructure both above and below our streets.”



## **Economic Security 10/23 5:30-7:00 pm**

### **Charmaine Caccioppi**



Charmaine Caccioppi serves as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for United Way of Southeast Louisiana. Charmaine has a focus on Public Policy, Governmental Affairs, and Community Impact. Her career at United Way of Southeast Louisiana has included the successful advocating for the first ever EITC state match, passage of the Child Care Tax Credits, implementing statewide high-quality Early Child Care Rating System, a fierce champion in the fight against Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking. She has fought tirelessly to secure state funding for Louisiana 2-1-1 Information Referral and Crisis Management Service, Early Care and Education, Safe Schools, Paid Family Leave, and Breast Cancer survivor services.

### **Julie Schwam Harris**



Julie Schwam Harris is a New Orleans native, educated in New Orleans Public Schools and a Summa Cum Laude graduate from Newcomb College of Tulane University. She worked in City Government for 16 years, including the first five post Katrina recovery years, and has led and participated in numerous political campaigns. She does part-time consulting and is a volunteer advocate on women's and human rights issues.

Julie believes that grass roots action and advocacy matter, and that individuals should not only work to elect candidates who support their issues but also communicate with elected officials after they take office. She helped organize the Legislative Agenda for Women (LAW), and is a member and supporter of numerous local, state and national civic, rights and advocacy organizations and coalitions. She has developed expertise in advocating on issues related to women and families, predominantly at the state Legislature. Issues include access to the full range of health care including healthy births, contraception and abortion; economic security policies regarding equal pay for women, raising the minimum wage, affordable quality child care, paid family and medical leave and addressing sexual harassment and violence against women.

Julie is a founding board member of Ellevote Louisiana. It was founded to connect and educate women leaders throughout Louisiana on the state's challenges with a goal to develop data-driven, non-partisan solutions to make a better future for its people.

In honor of her work in government and with organizations that seek to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all, Julie was named the 2015 recipient of the National Council of Jewish Women's Hannah G. Solomon Award and the 2016 recipient of the ACLU Ben Smith Civil Liberties Award. In 2023, Julie was selected as one of St. Charles Avenue Magazine's Activists of the Year. She served as a gubernatorial appointment on the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission from 2016 – 2023. She has also received the Newcomb Alumnae Association Community Service Award, was an honoree of the New Orleans Family Justice Center and the Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. – Epsilon Sigma Chapter, and a YWCA Role Model 2020.

## **Paula Polito**



Paula Polito, Ph.D., MBA, has worked in childcare for over 32 years. She is the owner of Beary Cherry Tree Child Development Center in Metairie and has operated the high-quality early care and education center since 1999. Today, Beary Cherry Tree serves over 200 Jefferson Parish families.

In addition to overseeing everyday operations, Paula currently serves as a contract trainer for Teachstone, the maker of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS). Through implementation of the CLASS tool, Paula understands measures of quality in early care and education, and she ensures teacher-child interactions at BearyCherry Tree meet – and exceed –these standards. Paula is driven by the outcomes and achievements of children at her center. In addition to quantitative success, Paula has received heartfelt stories from Beary Cherry Tree families about their children’s growth and development.

Outside of the classroom, Paula is deeply involved in advocacy efforts at the state and local level. She serves as Advisory Board Chair for the Louisiana Department of Education, advisory board member for Jefferson Ready Start Network, and on the Executive Board, serving as Secretary, for the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce. She previously served as Education Chair for the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce.

In March of 2024, Paula was elected to the Republican Parish Executive Committee for District 5. She prioritizes serving the very community that she was born and raised in, a community in

which she currently operates her business in and raises her three children. Paula is passionate about supporting the growth of Jefferson Parish and the quality of life for all residents.

Paula received a Doctorate in Philosophy with a concentration in Urban Studies at the University of New Orleans, where she previously received her Master of Business Administration. Paula prioritizes respect, kindness, and honesty in all that she does. She and her husband teach these values and the importance of a strong work ethic to their three children. Beyond her ambitious work endeavors, Paula enjoys spending time with family and friends, serving the community, exercising, and advocating on behalf of all children.

**Public Discourse 10/30/24 5:30-7:00 pm**

**Jasmine Brown DeRousselle**



Jasmine Brown DeRousselle currently serves as the Chief External Affairs Officer at GNO, Inc., the economic development firm for the Greater New Orleans region. She is primarily responsible for leading GNO, Inc.'s policy initiatives and governmental relations, both at the state and federal level. Jasmine also provides oversight to a number of GNO, Inc.'s programmatic initiatives, with a specific focus on economic mobility, coastal restoration and resilience, and music business.

Mrs. DeRousselle has worked for a number of corporations, including the corporate headquarters of the National Urban League (New York, NY) and JP Morgan Private Bank (New Orleans, LA). She also worked as a consultant for the global accounting and consulting firm, Deloitte and Touche, LLP (Los Angeles, CA), where she provided strategic compliance counsel to some of this country's largest energy corporations and financial institutions. As an attorney, Mrs. DeRousselle served as a complex litigation attorney at a prominent defense firm in the Greater New Orleans area.

Mrs. DeRousselle is a *cum laude* graduate of Loyola University New Orleans, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, with a concentration in Marketing and obtained a Juris Doctor from the Paul M. Hebert Law Center at Louisiana State University. She also studied comparative law at Université Jean Moulin Lyon III - Lyon Law School in Lyon, France.

For her professional and civic contributions, Mrs. DeRousselle has been awarded the following: CityBusiness 2023 *Women of the Year*, Biz New Orleans 2022 *Top 500 Business Influencers*, Louisiana Super Lawyers *Rising Star*, Louisiana State Bar Association's *Citizen Lawyer Award*, and the Louisiana State Bar Association's *Leah Hipple McKay Award for Outstanding Volunteerism*. She proudly serves on the board of directors for Touro Hospital, the Louisiana Parole Project, Boys Hope Girls Hope, and a number of local business chambers.

## **Kathy Kliebert**



Kathy Kliebert currently provides some healthcare consulting services but primarily does volunteer work in the community. She is on the board of the Lafourche ARC, the Bridge Center for Hope, START Behavioral Health services, and the chair of the Health and Wellness Committee for Ellevate. She is a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer. She previously served as Secretary of the state's Department of Health and Hospitals from March 2013 to January 2016 after a long-term career in public service in Louisiana. She was a leader in the Department for more than 28 years, where she led efforts to promote independent living for individuals with developmental disabilities and transform behavioral health care services for hundreds of thousands of Louisiana residents. Before she was appointed Secretary, Kliebert served as the Department's Deputy Secretary, where she provided leadership to the agency's program offices, including the Offices for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, Behavioral Health, Public Health, and Aging and Adult Services. She has over 30 years of experience as a licensed clinical social worker and has a master's degree in social work.

Ms. Kliebert has been married for 45 years and has three children and nine grandchildren.

## Sandra Lombana Lindquist



Sandra Lombana Lindquist has over 30 years of experience in economic and community development in the New Orleans region. She earned her B.A. in Business & Latin American Affairs from the University of Texas and has a master's degree from Tulane University. She is currently the President & CEO at the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce.

Sandra has a passion for promoting women's networking in the workforce. She is the creator of the first women's collaborative conference, a full day professional development conference for women, which launched in 2019. She is the co-creator of the Chamber's Women's Business Alliance; a co-founder of the original Women & Wine on Wednesday in which she & her colleagues were recognized as "People to Watch - 2007" by New Orleans Magazine.

In 2015, Sandra was chosen as one of five locals to represent the New Orleans business community to visit Japan and discuss the importance of resiliency post disasters like Hurricane Katrina, and she was nominated as one of 50 women for New Orleans CityBusiness' *Women of the Year* in 2015 and again in 2023. In 2016, she represented the New Orleans Chamber in Leadership Louisiana and graduated from Delgado's Goldman Sachs *10,000 Small Businesses* Program, an intensive educational program which teaches techniques for running a successful business. Sandra completed her accreditation as a Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) in 2018 making her the only practicing chamber executive in the State of Louisiana with this accreditation. In 2020, Sandra was named *Top Female Achiever* by New Orleans Magazine and *Women to Watch* by Biz New Orleans in 2022. In 2022 she was nominated by CityBusiness as

one of the *Power 50*, the top fifty professionals who have made an impact in our community with energy and innovative ideas; and by Biz Magazine as one of the *New Orleans 500* which includes influential, involved, and inspiring business leaders. Most recently she was named as a *Women to Watch* by Biz New Orleans.

Sandra is a graduate of the inaugural class of the New Orleans Regional Institute (NORLI) and the Jefferson Chamber Leadership Institute. She has sat on various boards and committees including the Louisiana Industrial Development Executive Association (LIDEA), Louisiana Association of Business & Industry (LABI) the New Orleans Regional Chamber of Commerce. She is currently on the board of the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) and the past president for the Louisiana Chamber of Commerce Executives (LACCE). Sandra is married to Eric Lindquist and has a 13 year old son, Colt Lindquist.