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## Speaker Biographies

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

**Queen N. Stewart, Esq.,** Founder, *Create a Sense of Urgency, LLC*

Through cancer, came urgency. An urgency for Queen to live her life and find joy. Just prior to her Stage 3 breast cancer diagnosis, Queen managed a successful law office out of her Cherry Hill location. She, her husband and 2 daughters live in Voorhees, NJ. This diagnosis has changed her life forever.

From the very beginning, Queen decided that she would make the best out of her cancer journey. She began pursuing interests that she set aside, such as comedy, singing and acting. Her adventures have been documented via film and social media which will lead to the release of a full length documentary entitled Create Urgency.

The documentary follows Queen through chemotherapy, radiation, and life thereafter. In it, there are ups and downs but most importantly the desire to find joy despite her diagnosis.

Queen, who grew up in Monmouth County NJ and later attended Rutgers School of Law, brought viewers along with her via social media as she battled breast cancer. Sharing her journey has been a form of therapy and also a way to bring awareness to her community at large.

SJ Magazine follows Queen's journey by way of monthly updates in the magazine. CBS also highlighted Queen's new found joy in stand-up comedy.

## **PANEL 1 - Women in Philanthropy: How Women are Changing Philanthropy for the Better**

### **MODERATOR:**

#### **Dina Mathews-Laurendeau, Director Of Development, *The Cooper Foundation***

Dina Mathews-Laurendeau is the Director of Development for The Cooper Foundation – the philanthropic arm of Cooper University Health Care.

In this role, Dina is responsible to lead fund development initiatives within The Cooper Foundation, plan and organize Cooper's signature fundraising events, and foster deep organizational relationships with strategic and community partners, corporations, and donors. She also oversees and manages the Foundation's administrative operations, daily functions, and staff.

Prior to this role, Dina held various positions in the Executive Leadership operations at Cooper University Health Care and served as the liaison to the Chairman of the Board and the Cooper Board of Trustees.

Dina has been with Cooper for over 20 years. She grew up in New Jersey where she has been active in local organizations and boards. Aside from spending time with her family, she enjoys entertaining, traveling and spending time at the Jersey shore. Dina lives in Moorestown with her husband.

#### **Lavinia Awosanya, MBA, CFRE, Chief Development Officer, *Food Bank Of South Jersey***

In her role as Chief Development Officer, Lavinia Awosanya advances the Food Bank of South Jersey's mission by leading fundraising, marketing and partnership cultivation strategies for the region's largest hunger-relief organization. She also oversees and directs all aspects of donor relations, implementing key strategies for scaling fundraising operations and maximizing results. As a part of the executive team, Lavinia helps shape the strategic direction of the organization with the core mission of feeding residents remaining central to all decisions.

Awosanya joined the Food Bank of South Jersey in 2014, and most recently served as Director of Strategic Partnerships where she headed up corporate partnerships working with national brands and multinational corporations on key philanthropic initiatives. Awosanya is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) and holds an MBA with Rutgers University; she also graduated Cum Laude with a B.Sc. in Business Administration from DeVry University. Her earlier experience includes working in London and New York City for one of the world's leading beauty and skincare brands as part of the sales and management team.

In 2020, Lavinia received the Outstanding Fundraising Professional award by AFP New Jersey – Southern Chapter and was also named one of Philadelphia Business Journal's 2020 Women of Distinction. She's a Rotarian and is currently the Vice President of the Maple Shade Rotary Club. She's a member of the Feeding America Network Fundraising Advisory Council, and currently serves on the board of AFP New Jersey – Southern Chapter as the Vice President of Education and Ethics. Lavinia has also been a guest instructor for the AFP Fundamentals of Fundraising Course.

#### **Lovepreet K. Buttar, CPA, Managing Director, *Mercadien***

As a Managing Director with Mercadien's Nonprofit and Human Services Group, Lovepreet Buttar has over 10 years of experience performing and overseeing audit engagements for various nonprofit clients, including associations, schools, private foundations, and health and human services organizations. She is passionate about helping these organizations support their constituents and achieve their mission.

Whether supervising her team of staff, servicing her clients, or responding to urgent inquiries from either, Lovepreet is known for being thorough, as well as calm and cool under pressure. Her soothing manner,

collaborative nature and keen insights lend themselves to a favorite aspect of her job – educating and consulting with nonprofit professionals to ensure they understand and are prepared to meet changes affecting their industry and organizations. Not surprisingly, Lovepreet is frequently asked to speak at conferences and events hosted by various organizations, such as the New Jersey Association of Community Providers, the Council of Nonprofits, the Center for Nonprofits of New Jersey, Princeton Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Princeton Community Works, to name a few. She leads numerous internal and external training seminars and regularly writes articles for the firm’s newsletter, Nonprofit Outlook, on financial reporting, tax and compliance topics in which she is highly proficient.

Driven by giving back, Lovepreet commits much of her free time to serving on boards and committees for various organizations, including the Princeton Area Community Foundation, Philadelphia VIP and the Burlington County Women’s Advisory Council.

**Dr. June Deponte Sernak, Statewide Diversity Leadership Officer, Center For Family Services**

June is the Statewide Diversity Consultant for the Center for Family Services providing cultural competency leadership for agencies throughout NJ. Most recently, June was the Dean of Lifelong Learning at Rowan College at Burlington County, Senior Adjunct Professor teaching Marketing and Management and Co-Chair, President’s Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. June also served as the Executive Director for the American Red Cross serving Burlington, Camden and Gloucester Counties and serves on their statewide Diversity & Inclusion Committee after working in corporate telecom for 25 years with MCI and Sprint in sales and marketing.

She currently serves as an Honorary Commander Emeritus for the Joint Base - McGuire-Dix Lakehurst, the Vice President for the 200 Club of Burlington County, Board Chair and Diversity Committee Chair, Alice Paul Institute and Board Member of the Burlington County Military Affairs Committee, BCMAC.

June was voted SJ Biz Magazine Executive of the Year, NAWBO Community Advocate of the Year, SNJBP Magazine Women Executive of the Year, SJ Biz Women to Watch and featured in South Jersey Magazine’s Woman of the Year for Exceptional Women Entrepreneurs & Executives. June studied Marketing at Montclair State College, has an MBA in Management from Strayer University and a Doctorate of Education from Wilmington University in Organizational Leadership and Innovation.

She is a lifelong resident of New Jersey with her husband, Michael and daughter, Alyssa.

**Emily Skyrn, CFP®, CLU®, Vice President, Wealth Strategist & Certified Women’s Business Advocate, Pnc Bank**

As wealth strategist, Emily leads the deep and dynamic discovery process to achieve a mutual understanding of your family, business (if applicable) and financial goals to determine what is truly important to you in achieving peace of mind. She works with you and your advisors to help develop a strategic financial plan which integrates your financial, estate, tax and philanthropic considerations and preferences. Emily identifies and prioritizes your objectives and together with your team develops tailored solutions to help achieve them. She has the high level of technical experience in complex estate, tax and wealth planning issues to help bring about successful outcomes as your trusted advisor.

Emily graduated with a Bachelor of Science in international business and marketing from Grove City College. Emily also holds the Certified Financial Planner TM and Chartered Life Underwriter designations. Emily is a member of the Delaware Estate Planning Council, the PNC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council of Delaware holding the office of Co Chair for the Women in Business Sub Committee, the Philadelphia Chapter of PNC PREP, and an active participant of PNC’s Grow Up Great. Emily is also a PNC Certified Women's Business Advocate.

## **PANEL 2 - Life Lessons: What Would You Tell Your Younger Self?**

### **MODERATOR:**

**Dr. Monika Williams Shealey**, Professor and Senior Vice President; Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Rowan University; Co-Chair, CCSNJ DEI Council

Dr. Monika Williams Shealey joined Rowan in 2013 as the Dean of the College of Education. Dr. Shealey received her BS in Specific Learning Disabilities and MA in Varying Exceptionalities from the University of South Florida, Ed.S. in Reading and Learning Disabilities from the University of Miami, and Ph.D. in Education from the University of Central Florida. Dr. Shealey has held academic appointments at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Florida International University, and University of Missouri at Kansas City.

During her tenure as Dean, Dr. Shealey has led the College in deepening its commitment to social justice and equity. The College developed a Ph.D. program in education with an emphasis on addressing issues of access, success, and equity in P-20 education and launched the Center for Access, Success, and Equity, a technical assistance center for the Rowan University and broader professional community in the areas of research, professional development, and community engagement. The College also developed Project Increasing Male Practitioners and Classroom Teachers (IMPACT), a unique recruitment and retention program for diverse males in education and launched the Educators for Diversity and Social Equity Student Club. The College became a leading voice in the region in diversifying the teacher pipeline through the development of high school teacher academies, the expansion of the Rowan Urban Teacher Academy and the Professional Development Schools Network.

Dr. Shealey's research has focused on examining the experiences of traditionally marginalized groups in special education and Black women in teacher education. Dr. Shealey is the past Co-Editor of Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners, a professional journal for the Division of Diverse Exceptional Learners in the Council for Exceptional Children, the leading professional organization in the field of special education. Dr. Shealey is currently a member of the Board of Directors for the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the Center for Family Services and Board of Trustees Member for the Friends School at Mullica Hill. Dr. Shealey is the President of the National Association of Holmes Scholars Alumni.

As the Inaugural Senior Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and leader of the Division of DEI, Dr. Shealey works closely with the Division's leadership team to facilitate the DEI Council comprised of representation from across Rowan's multiple campuses, launch the DEI Certificate Program for faculty and staff, expand affinity groups for neurodivergent faculty and staff, faculty and staff from underrepresented groups and veterans, offer implicit bias sessions for hiring and search committees, and support the development of DEI unit/department strategic action plans.

**Susan S. Hodges, Esq.** Shareholder & Chair, Employment & Labor, *Parker McCay P.A*

Susan acts as a trusted advisor to both the public and private sectors in all areas of labor and employment law. She regularly counsels clients on matters involving employee discipline, hiring and firing, workplace investigations, workplace harassment, wage payment, exemption and overtime issues, policies and employment manuals as well as compliance with state and federal disability and leave laws. She acts as your counsel and outsourced human resources department so that the decisions you make are the right ones for your business. Susan's goal is to provide strategic advice to corporations, public sector administrators and boards so that they can be confident in the everyday decisions they make.

Susan represents clients in both State and Federal courts, administrative hearings and arbitrations in both the public and private sectors. This includes matters for private sector clients, as well as school districts and

municipalities. She regularly attends public meetings and is ready to provide advice on the Open Public Meetings Act, Open Public Records Act as well as Robert's Rules of Order.

**Karen Phillips, Senior Vice President of Human Resources, SJI**

As senior vice president of human resources for SJI, Karen Phillips builds and strengthens the company's human resources foundations, leading to increased employee engagement, greater individual and organizational performance, and a more diverse and effective workforce for SJI and its subsidiaries.

Ms. Phillips joined SJI in 2015 as senior director of organizational design and leadership development. In 2018, Ms. Phillips was appointed vice president of human resources. In this role, she was responsible for providing strategic leadership across all business partner operations and core human resources activities, including talent acquisition, learning and development, labor relations and diversity and inclusion.

Ms. Phillips assumed her current role as senior vice president of human resources in 2022, where she continues to lead and direct all human resources functions for SJI's +1,100 non-union and union employees. As part of The Senior Leadership Team, she also works alongside SJI's other senior executives to help drive corporate strategy and ensure the company's continued growth.

Prior to joining SJI, Ms. Phillips held several leadership roles in human resources and organizational development across various industries, including retail, finance and healthcare. An alumna of West Chester University, she earned her undergraduate degree in accounting.

**Virginia G. Susini, Senior Vice President & Senior Banking Advisor, PNC Private Bank**

As a senior vice president and a senior banking advisor, Ginny works with you, your family and your team to help deliver insightful banking solutions. Whether complex lending solutions or day to day banking needs, she provides a differentiated experience and executes services seamlessly to assist in delivering financial peace of mind. Ginny has the knowledge, experience and desire to help bring about successful outcomes as your trusted advisor.

Ginny graduated with a Bachelor of Science in financial management and real estate from Clemson University. Ginny is a Member of the Board of Trustees for the Please Touch Museum in Philadelphia. She also currently sits on the Board of Directors for FringeArts in Philadelphia. She has served as a previous Chair of the Board for the Young Professionals Council of the The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia. She had also previously been involved in the Arts + Business Council for Greater Philadelphia. Through PNC she has also been very involved with the United Way. Ginny is a LEADERSHIP Philadelphia Fellow.

**Patricia Tangradi, Manager, Operational Readiness, AmeriHealth New Jersey**

Patricia Tangradi oversees operational strategy and implementation at AmeriHealth New Jersey. She is responsible for driving and maintaining elevated performance and profitability through productivity enhancements and process improvement efforts. Tangradi also manages the company's Wellness programs, Embrace Well-being and Embrace Well-being @Work which provides resources and support to assist members in living healthy lifestyles that reflect well-being for whole-person health.

Tangradi partners with cross functional business leads throughout the organization to reach and exceed key operational goals and objectives. Most recently, she was lead for a companywide business transformation initiative that was completed to optimize member engagement and at the same time reduce unnecessary medical costs. As a result, AmeriHealth New Jersey is even better positioned to provide its members with a more positive customer experience.

In her previous role at AmeriHealth New Jersey, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, Tangradi engaged outside partners, vendors and prospects to identify and negotiate business development opportunities including strategic alliances, joint ventures, acquisitions, and vendor agreements.

Prior to joining AmeriHealth New Jersey, Tangradi was vice president of marketing at HouseMaster Home Inspections. She holds a B.A. in general arts from Villanova University.