

THE SUCCESS FOUNDATION OF VA BOARD MEMBERS



Gary S. Powers, Executive Director

Gary Powers co-founded the Success Foundation of Virginia (TSF), along with Don DeLaney, in October 2018. Gary has served as TSFs Executive Director ever since.

Prior to launching TSF Gary was a Vice President with Aon Hewitt/Aon Consulting for 18 years and a Partner in the Regional Consulting firm of Williams, Thacher and Rand before selling the firm to Aon in August 1999.

Gary attended Benedictine High School (Class of '71), the College of William and Mary (Class of '75) and completed the post graduate program from The Wharton School in 1981.

Gary has a long history of community service prior to co-founding TSF. He served as a Past Board Member and Board Chair for the Virginia Home for Boys and Girls from October 2003-September 2017. He is the past President for the Richmond Chapter of the Certified Employee Benefit Specialists, Past President of the Richmond Area Group on Health and the COO for the William and Mary Lambda Chi Alumni Advisory Board from January 2018-October 2022.

TSF currently partners with Fostering Acadia, an Independent Living program for young adults who have come through the domestic foster care system. In addition, TSF partners with Commonwealth Catholic Charities through their Independent Living program which assists unaccompanied refugees.

Since co-founding TSF in 2018, TSF has grown from just he and Don Delaney providing wrap-around mentor support to 38 mentors/tutors today.



Donald F. Delaney, Board Chair

Don DeLaney co-founded the Success Foundation of Virginia (TSF), along with Gary Powers, in October 2018. Don has served as TSFs Chairman of the Board since 2021. Don has also served as TSF Treasurer since 2018.

Prior to co-founding TSF, Don was a Vice President with Allen Corporation of America for 19 years and a Vice President of Mitel Networks, Inc. for 18 years prior.

Don attended Benedictine High School (Class of '71), the College of William and Mary (Class of '75) and completed his MBA at Virginia Commonwealth University in 1982.

Don has served in a number of volunteer positions. He has served as a Past Board Member and Board Chair for The Steward School in Richmond. He continues to serve on the Steward Foundation Board and as a member of the School's Finance Committee for the Board of Trustees. He previously served on the Virginia State University Business Advisory Board for the School of Business. He has served on the St. Bridget Catholic Church Liturgy Committee since 2007, where he is an active Lay Minister, and a member of the Knights of Columbus. He has served as a member of the W&M Lambda Chi Alpha Alumni Advisory Board from January 2018-today.



J. Gordon Rawles, Jr. MD, Vice Chair

Gordy Rawles is a retired Orthopaedic hand surgeon. After his education and training at The University of Virginia and the University of Rochester, he practiced at OrthoVirginia in Richmond for 34 years.

Since his retirement in 2017, he has devoted time to family, travel, avocational interests (golf, pickleball, fishing, & genealogy) and several charitable causes. He and wife, Marie, have 7 children and 12 grandchildren “and counting”.

His charitable activities include membership in the Western Henrico Rotary Club, serving as volunteer physician at Crossover Ministries, and mentoring post-Foster Care young adults through The Success Foundation of Virginia. Gordy has served on the TSF Board of Directors since 2020 and currently fills the role as Vice Chairman.



Sarah Bane Williams, Director

Sarah Williams is a graduate of the College of William and Mary graduating with a BBA and an MBA.

Her work as a community volunteer and a specialist in access to capital has included leading work in entrepreneurship and in philanthropy. Sarah worked with banking teams across the state to advise business owners on growth capital.

Sarah grew up in Halifax County to parents who instilled values of hard work and giving back.



Sara Mayerdierks Hillgrove, Director

Sara Hillgrove joined TSF in 2020. She focuses on mentoring Young Adult Women from the foster care system, and also writes and designs much of TSF’s marketing material.

Hillgrove was raised in northern NY and earned a BA in drama from Sweet Briar College and an MA in communications from Boston University. She has worked in a variety of fields and locations, including as a Capitol Hill political analyst, running the communications department of the country's second largest business trade association, and as a lobbyist in Washington, DC; as a communication specialist for family-owned Rink Management Services Corporation; and for 15 years as an adjunct professor of Business Communication at the Robins School of Business at the University of Richmond. She is a published business writer and has won numerous awards in the public relations/communications fields. In the late 80's she was elected to that year's YWCA Academy of Women Achievers in New York City.

Hillgrove also serves on the board and performs with the Richmond Choral Society and has a long history of volunteer work with charities and nonprofits, notably Meals on Wheels (Feedmore) , where she has carried on a family tradition started in childhood when she delivered meals with her mother.



Adrienne P. Whitaker, Director

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Leader at Virginia Housing
National President of the Urban Financial Services Coalition Foundation

Adrienne Whitaker is a community leader and philanthropist with over 15 years experience in sales, marketing, community relations, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in various sectors. She is currently the IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) Leader at Virginia Housing, a privately funded financial services authority that provides affordable housing opportunities for Virginians.

Adrienne is also the National President of the Urban Financial Services Coalition Foundation, a nonprofit organization that promotes the professional development and advancement of minorities in the financial services industry. She is also the co-founder of L2L Leadership Institute, a leadership development program for business professionals. She serves on the Advisory Board of C&F Bank, and is a 2023-2024 Woman of Impact Winner of the American Heart Association.

Adrienne is passionate about advocating for social justice, empowering underrepresented communities, and creating positive change through her work. She has a proven record of generating new business, cultivating relationships, developing strategic plans, and leading diverse and high-performing teams. She holds multiple certifications, degrees, and honors in various fields related to her expertise. Adrienne is a graduate of the College of William and Mary, Cornell University, University of Virginia, Boston University, and University of Richmond.



Rachel Mayes Strawn, Ph.D, Director

Coordinator for Inclusivity & Program Director, Great Expectations Program for Foster Youth, Virginia Community College System, Richmond, Virginia

Rachel Mayes Strawn, Ph.D., is passionate about the transformative power of education and sees that power in action every day in her work as the Program Director of Great Expectations, the Virginia Community College System's program for youth who have experienced foster care. Under her tenure, the program has expanded from 14 to all 23 of Virginia's 23 Community Colleges and has gained national recognition.

Dr. Strawn received her Ph.D., Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership, Higher Education Administration from the College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. Dr. Strawn was honored by the National Association of Social Workers - Virginia Chapter earning the Citizen of the Year award in 2016. Under her leadership, the Great Expectations program won the national Aging Out Institute's 2018 Education Award. She co-authored a chapter for the December 2018 New Directions for Community Colleges on housing and food insecurity amongst community college students. She also authored a chapter on rural community colleges as a student choice for the same publication.

In addition to her work with TSF, she is an officer with Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide (FAAN), a national organization that brings together state leaders of programs designed to increase the post-secondary achievement of young people who have experienced foster care.

Dr. Strawn resides in her hometown of Gloucester, Virginia with her husband, Mark, and is a mother of four children.