

Chicago United

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Chicago United

Advancing multiracial leadership in business



For Immediate Release

CHICAGO UNITED ANNUAL MEETING FOCUSES ON ‘LEADING BOLDLY’

Organization honors Chicago Business leaders with Chairman’s Award

CHICAGO, ILL., March 12, 2019 — Chicago United, a corporate membership and advocacy organization whose mission is to achieve parity in economic opportunity for people of color, held its Annual Meeting March 12 at River Roast, 315 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago. Chicago United CEO Council members voted on the [2019/2020 board members and executive committee](#) headed by Chairman of the Board Kip Kelley, Aon plc Chief Executive Officer – Aon Affinity US.

The board also welcomed three incoming directors, Percival Barretto-Ko, President, Astellas Americas, Opella Ernest, M.D., Chief Clinical Officer, Health Care Service Corporation, and Cristy Garcia-Thomas, Chief External Affairs Officer, Advocate Aurora Health Care. John W. Daniels, Jr., Chairman Emeritus, Quarles & Brady LLP, and Secretary, Chicago United Board of Directors, is stepping down from the board after many years of service.

“The work of our board and the organization in 2019 will be exemplified by our new call to action — “Leading Boldly,” said Gloria Castillo, President and CEO of Chicago United. “We will push boundaries to advocate for multiracial leadership — and challenge the Chicago business community — and our members — to do the same. Collectively, we have an awesome power to change the conversation around race, diversity, inclusion and economic parity in this city. Everyone has a role to play.”

At each annual meeting, Chicago United presents awards on behalf of the Chairman of the Board that recognize significant contributions to the organization’s mission.

Charles R. Matthews, President and CEO of Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas, received the CEO Council Champion award for his significant contribution to the advocacy, programs or resources of Chicago United.

Shyrl E. Hoover, Director of Talent Acquisition at Abbott, was named Leaders Council Champion in recognition of her efforts to help develop the future of the organization through the support of CU programs and products; including member programs, research and advocacy.

Paula Conrad, Director of Corporate Relations for Exelon Corporation, was honored as Chicago United Benefactor, for her help with developing the financial and in-kind resources to support Chicago United's programs.

Employees from Astellas received the Championship Team award, which honors a Chicago United member organization team who together has made a significant contribution to the advocacy, programs or resources of Chicago United. Awardees included new board member Barretto-Ko, Eloiza Domingo-Snyder, Executive Director, Diversity & Inclusion; Walter Garcia, Assistant Director, Diversity & Inclusion; Maribeth Landwehr, Executive Director, Corporate Communications; Ashley Lunardini, Associate, Corporate Events; Mary Miller, Miller Communications; Trent Richardson, Senior Manager, Corporate Communications; and Debbie Webber, Director, Corporate Events.

The meeting also included in-depth discussions about two of Chicago United's signature programs: [The Five Forward Initiative™](#), which engages the corporate community to strengthen the local economy and enhance job creation by supporting a stronger minority business community, and; the [Corporate Inclusion Institute](#), which supports young diverse talent that is primarily first to college and first to corporate while developing the cultural fluency of mid- to senior-level managers.

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About Chicago United

Chicago United is a corporate membership and advocacy organization whose mission is to achieve parity in economic opportunity for people of color by advancing multiracial leadership in corporate governance, executive level management, and business diversity. Founded in 1968, the organization is focused on transforming the Chicago region into the most inclusive business ecosystem in the nation by engaging the top publicly and privately held corporations in leading talent management and inclusive diversity practices. Chicago United's signature programs include its Business Leaders of Color publication, which showcases a diverse pool of corporate director candidates, the Five Forward Initiative™, designed to invigorate job creation in communities of color by increasing the scale of large Minority Business Enterprises in the Chicago region, Inside Inclusion featuring the Corporate Diversity Profile, and the Corporate Inclusion Institute, the first-ever citywide business talent development program. www.chicago-united.org