

## 2018-2019 Civic Leadership Academy Presenter Biographies

**Allison Albrecht, BA**, currently serves as the Communications Manager for the Village of Schaumburg, a position she has held since August 2014. Prior to working in Schaumburg, Allison served as a Communications Specialist for the City of Naperville for three years. Allison also spent time as a Communications Analyst for the Illinois House of Representatives where she worked both in Chicago and Springfield with various members of the Illinois legislature to produce their materials and develop their communication plans. Aside from her time spent in the public sector, Allison has communications experience in the private sector having worked as a Public Relations and Account Executive for a boutique strategic communications firm in downtown Chicago. There she created branding strategies and provided copywriting on web, identity, collateral, advertising and marketing projects for a variety of clients. Allison's passion for communications started when she worked as a General Assignment Reporter for Liberty Suburban Chicago Newspapers covering several towns in Cook County. As a journalist, she was a recipient of the NAACP Medal of Freedom for presenting fair and accurate coverage of diverse issues in Chicago communities. Allison holds a Bachelor's Degree in Communications from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She lives in North Aurora with her husband and two greyhounds.

**Cheryl Fayne-dePersio, BS**, is the Communications Manager for the Village of Northbrook. Cheryl has been an active member of the Illinois Chapter and National Chapter of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors, in addition to serving as past-Chairman of the Northwest Municipal Conference Communicators Group and member of 3CMA. Cheryl has a background in cable television and television production as she has worked with a variety of Chicagoland cable companies and production houses. She has spent the last 25 years working in municipal government and is responsible for a variety of duties encompassing cable franchise administration, local programming, and communications, which includes media relations, crisis communications, social media, mass notification call outs and website management. She is the Editor of Northbrook - the Village newsletter and is the Executive Director of Northbrook Community Television. Cheryl holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Communications from Illinois State University and received a certificate in E-Government from UIC College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs. Recently she participated in several table-top and full-scale exercises with the Cook County Department of Homeland Security Emergency Management Division and has a variety of "high-profile" experiences dealing with local media. She is also a past presenter with the Northern Illinois Civic Leadership Academy; Center for Governmental Studies.

**Sam Ferguson, MsEd**, retired Municipal Director of Information Technology: Village of Palatine; Village of Schaumburg; Interim CIO for the City of Joliet has over 33 years of governmental Information Technology experience. Starting in 1983 as an Army Data Processing officer, Sam saw the rise of the PC and the Microsoft genesis along with the shift from "dumb terminals" and main frame systems to the PC on the desktops. He was one of the first IT directors in the Northwest suburbs with his first position being at the Village of Palatine in 1989 and retiring from the Village of Schaumburg in 2012. His experience includes: building IT departmental teams to service municipal customers, and specifically, working on projects dealing with GIS, E911, Asset Management, ERP implementations, phone systems, topology changes, office automation and data security. Sam is an emeritus member of Illinois and International GMIS, an organization of governmental IT leaders from across the globe who share best practices so all can benefit. Sam graduated from Monmouth College in Illinois with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Physical Education and Biology and received his Master's degree in Educational Administration from Southern Illinois University – Carbondale and got the majority of his early IT education from the US Army.

**Timothy J. Gavin, CPA**, Senior Audit Manager, is both an expert auditor and consultant for John Kasperek Co., Inc., with 12 years of experience leading staff and performing audits, accounting services, financial reporting, agreed-upon procedures, and other consulting engagements for a wide range of clients in the Chicagoland area. Tim is responsible for the firm's governmental audits, including municipalities, villages, park districts, school districts, and other special districts. He serves as one of the firm's quality control leaders, ensuring the company is up to date with the most current standards and best practices. He is directly involved in both staff training and final audit review and has highly specialized skills in accounting/auditing software. Apart from working with some of the best and most financially progressive Illinois governments, Tim continues to be an educator and presenter on various topics related to governmental accounting and financial reporting. He has been featured in industry publications such as Accounting Today and CPA Practice Advisor. Additionally, Tim serves on the Social Media Task Force for IGFOA, as a reviewer for GFOA's Financial Reporting Certificate Program, and has helped a large number of clients obtain both GFOA and ASBO certificates for excellence in financial reporting. Tim earned his Master's Degree in Business Administration from Northern Illinois University and his Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from North Central College.

**Melissa Henriksen, MPP**, is a Research Associate at the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University (NIU). Mel has a diverse background including economic and community development, technical assistance, strategic and comprehensive planning, and grant writing. She has provided staff support for several projects including strategic planning facilitation, focus groups, wage and benefit studies and asset/needs assessments. Melissa has co-facilitated strategic planning for elected officials, school districts, boards of directors, municipalities, foundations, and institutes of

higher education. For the past eight and half years, she has managed funded projects for the Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN), the National Association of Development Agencies (NADO), the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Melissa Henriksen, MPP (cont'd), (USDA), as well as state and local organizations focused on economic and community development and health care. Most recently, she has worked on city and countywide economic and community development planning. These projects included coordinating surveys, community focus groups, strategic planning to identify potential challenges and solutions, and distilling themes and findings from a variety of qualitative information to share with key stakeholders. Melissa holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Communication/Public Relations and a Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Northern Iowa. Melissa is a board member for the Illinois Rural Health Association and is the chair of its Research and Education and Conference Committee. In addition, she is a Kettering Foundation Research Fellow and recently received the ICAHN Service Award for her research in rural health care and its economic impact on rural communities.

**Gregory T. Kuhn, PhD**, is Assistant Director for Public Management and Training at the Center for Governmental Studies at NIU. He has over 34 years of combined experience in government administration, consulting, and academics. In addition to serving at CGS for good portions of his career, Greg has also served in city management assignments as Village Manager in Clarendon Hills and Assistant to the Manager in Skokie, both Illinois communities in the Chicago area. Greg has also provided services to governments on a consulting basis as Director of Local Government Management Services at Sikich, LLP., Managing Vice-President of the PAR Group, and Sr. Associate in Governmental Services at Korn-Ferry International. Dr. Kuhn specializes in organizational development, design and training, strategic planning, leadership, urban management and public policy formulation. He serves as a lecturer/adjunct faculty member in NIU's Division of Public Administration and Northwestern University's Graduate Program in Public Policy and Public Administration. He earned a Bachelor's degree in political science from Marquette University and a Master's degree in Public Administration and Ph.D. in Public Administration and Political Science from NIU.

**Robert Marovich, MBA**, is an independent grant writer with 30 years of nonprofit development experience. He has worked with and for organizations representing education, healthcare, animal welfare, youth programs, museums, and public television, and radio. His expertise spans the gamut of giving, from annual and major giving to planned gifts and foundation/corporation relations. During his tenure as vice president with the firm of Ter Molen Watkins & Brandt, Mr. Marovich helped complete the proposal that secured the largest challenge grant ever made by the Kresge Foundation to an Indiana nonprofit. Since 2009, he has focused his nonprofit efforts almost exclusively on grant writing. His current clients represent charter and private schools, an after-school program, animal welfare, youth social services, and a workers' rights advocacy group. He holds a B.A. degree in American Studies from the University of Notre Dame and an MBA degree from the Lake Forest Graduate of Management.

**Judy Santacaterina, MA**, has served as the coach of the award winning NIU Forensics team for the last 37 years. In that time she has coached numerous national and state champions. Santacaterina holds both a BA and MA in Communication Education from Northern Illinois University. She has conducted workshops for student, faculty, and staff on the NIU campus as well as other universities throughout the country and has served as a communication consultant for both public and private businesses and organizations. She is the current Executive Director of the Illinois Intercollegiate Forensics Association as well as a past president of the Illinois Communication and Theater Association. She is the recipient of numerous awards including NIU' College of LA&S Golden Alumni Award, the American Forensics Association's Distinguished Service Award, and the Illinois Communication and Theater's Lifetime Achievement Award. Ms. Santacaterina also serves as the Director of NIU's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences' Bachelor of General Studies baccalaureate degree program.

**Alicia Schatteman, PhD**, is an Associate Professor at Northern Illinois University (NIU) in the Department of Public Administration and the Center for Nonprofit and NGO Studies. She worked in the government and nonprofit sectors for 12 years, including four years as Executive Director of a community nonprofit. Her research and teaching interests include nonprofit resource management and performance measurement. Dr. Schatteman earned a BSSc from the University of Ottawa, an M.A. degree from Trent University, an M.S. degree from Syracuse University, and her PhD from Rutgers University.

**Mindy Schneiderman, PhD**, is an Assistant Director of the Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) and is responsible for the survey research team. Mindy has over 25 years of survey research experience. She has experience managing projects using telephone, mail, Internet, and mixed-mode survey data collection methodologies, as well as focus group and in-person interviewing experience. She has managed numerous community survey projects for municipalities, libraries, school districts, park districts, county health departments, and nonprofit organizations. She was the Associate Director of NIU's Public Opinion Laboratory from 2008-2013. Previously she worked at the American Medical Association for 18 years, the last 11 years as the Director of Survey Research overseeing all health care and strategic issue research. Mindy received her doctorate in Cognitive Psychology from Rutgers University in 1990. She has numerous publications on survey research methodology. Her survey research has been cited in the New York Times and Wall Street Journal and has been used in Congressional testimony.

**Michael T. Shrake, PE**, is President of Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc., a 90-person consulting firm located in Vernon Hills, IL. He joined the firm in 1985 and has over 30 years of engineering experience focusing on municipal services, site design and construction phase services. Mike has served as Village Engineer for Kildeer, Long Grove, Wadsworth, Riverwoods, and Lake Barrington, and as special consultant to numerous other municipalities. He has extensive experience as a site designer/project manager for school districts, park districts and commercial properties. Park districts represented include Glenview, Arlington Heights, Waukegan, Vernon Hills, Gurnee, Grayslake, and Wilmette. School districts include Warren Township District 121, Arlington Heights District 25, Glenview District 34, Kaneland District #302, Woodstock District 200, Gurnee District 56, Special Education District of Lake County (SEDOL), Hawthorn District 73, Evanston Township High School 202, Gurnee Woodland District 50, Grayslake North District 127. Mike has overseen the design, review and construction of over \$450 million dollars of improvements. This blend of clients and responsibilities gives Mike a balanced perspective that fosters successful intergovernmental partnerships, prudent infrastructure planning and management, and responsible site development. Mike earned a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, and a Master's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering, both from the University of Rhode Island.

**Brian Smith, MSW, LCSW**, is currently the Director of the Employee Assistance Program at Northern Illinois University. Brian graduated from Northern Illinois University in 1985 with his Bachelor's degree in Psychology and earned Masters of Social Work from Aurora University in 1993. He brings over 25 years of experience as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker providing a mental health counseling and consultation services to youth, adults, families, and special populations. He has over 15 years of experience administering, coordinating, and supervising Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services to employees and their families. Brian also previously taught as an adjunct faculty member at Sauk Valley Community College and St. Ambrose University.

**Ann Elizabeth Tennes, MPA**, began her tenure as the Village of Skokie's Director of Marketing and Communications in October 1998. For six years prior to that, Ann served as the Assistant Executive Director of the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County. Ann holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Columbia College, Chicago and a Master of Public Administration degree from Roosevelt University, Chicago. In April 2013, Ann was elected to a six-year term on the Board of Trustees of Oakton Community College and currently serves chairman of the board. She has served on Oakton's board since 2007. Ann also serves on the boards of the Chicago's North Shore Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Skokie Festival of Cultures, the Independent Merchants of Downtown Skokie, the Centre East Metropolitan Exposition Authority and the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts Foundation. She is the immediate past-chairman of the Northwest Municipal Conference Local Government Communicators Committee, and previously served on the boards of the City-County Communications and Marketing Association and the Glenview Chamber of Commerce. She is a member of the Skokie Kiwanis Club and a founding board member of the Skokie Tennis Association. From 2002 to 2010, Ann served as chairman of the Park Ridge Zoning Board of Appeals. Ann and her family moved to Skokie in 2010 after more than 30 years of living in Park Ridge. Ann also is a past presenter with the Northern Illinois Civic Leadership Academy, Center for Governmental Studies.

**Roxana M. (Crasovan) Underwood, JD**, is an associate at Clark Baird Smith. She counsels employers regarding traditional labor and employment law matters. She assists clients with collective bargaining, grievance and interest arbitrations, unfair labor practice charges, and representation issues. Roxana also advises and represents employers in matters under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, the Illinois Military Leave of Absence Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act. In addition, Roxana has experience conducting neutral workplace investigations on behalf of public and private sector employers in various industries. Roxana is also a regular contributor to the National Public Employer Labor Relations Association Legal Corner Newsletter and to The Developing Labor Law (BNA). She has also recently authored a chapter on the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments in the Municipal Law Deskbook published by the American Bar Association. Roxana received her law degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law where she earned a certificate from Chicago-Kent's Labor and Employment Law Certificate Program. She was selected as a Student Editor of the Employee Rights and Employment Policy Journal. Roxana was also selected as a member of the Chicago-Kent Labor and Employment Law Trial Team, which competed in the ABA Section of Labor and Employment Law Regional Competition. Roxana earned a CALI Excellence for the Future Award in Legal Writing for receiving the top grade in the class, and was on the Dean's List for several consecutive semesters. Roxana was also a finalist in the Charles Evans Hughes Moot Court Competition.

**Rita Yerkes, EdD**, and Principal of Yerkes Consulting LLC has enjoyed a distinguished career in education and business. She has been a camp counselor, middle school teacher, university professor, wilderness expedition leader, senior staff to a university president, dean and business entrepreneur. During her many and varied professional positions she has always built successful teams, continued life-long learning, mentored others and held the belief that service to others was paramount in doing meaningful work. She has continued this philosophy at Yerkes Consulting, where "customer satisfaction is the guiding principle in everything we do".