

SESSION HOSTS



Julia Bursch

Julia Bursch serves as the Deputy Chief Operating Officer for the City of Chattanooga. Ms. Bursch is a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and has previously worked as the operations director for Metro Ideas Project, a local non-profit urban policy think tank. In addition, Ms. Bursch has worked for Bellhops as the internal operations manager, a project manager for both Lamp Post Group and WayPaver, while also founding the Chattanooga Startup Awards.

During her time as Director of Operations and Special Projects for the River City Company, she oversaw and provided guidance to projects of high importance while being mindful of community impact. Ms. Bursch assisted in the planning and development of company initiatives through the development and use of data analytics. She also acted as a point of

contact for and worked closely with community partners across the public and private sectors, including elected officials, the local entrepreneurial community, foundations, downtown property owners, and other community stakeholders. During her first year and a half at RCC, Julia led the process to establish Chattanooga's first ever business improvement district, now known as the Downtown Chattanooga Alliance.

Ms. Bursch is a problem-solver capable of tackling complex challenges with a big-picture perspective. She remains versatile and thrives in a fast-paced environment where the stakes are high, and is always prepared to face an unexpected obstacle or change of plans.



Brenda Freeman-Short

Brenda is a community and political leader. She ran for the office of U.S. House of Representatives for the Third District of Tennessee in 2010. She was elected as a Charter Commission of her city and served a two-year term. She has served as East Tennessee Vice President for the Tennessee Federation of Democratic Women. Brenda was appointed by former Congresswoman Marilyn Lloyd as a coordinator of a Child Care Task Force.

She is a member of the Chattanooga Women's Leadership Institute, Tennessee Bar Association, and serves as Vice President of Community Bridgebuilders, Inc. She presently serves as co-chair of the Justice Committee of the Mayor's Council for Women.

Brenda is an advocate for women and children, working tirelessly to help develop and introduce policy that will improve the lives of women. She has worked with abused children through the Chambliss Center for Children. She is an advocate for former women inmates, in court as well as teaching in the prison system. Brenda received her law degree from the Nashville School of Law and Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Tennessee.



Virginia W. Harris, MPA, CIA, CGFM

Dynamic, highly respected, public servant and community leader. All these words and more describe Virginia W. Harris. She retired from the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners in July 2006, as County Auditor after 20 years of service. Other professional positions included Accounting Director & Financial Management Analyst, Gwinnett County, Audit Manager, State of Georgia, Comptroller, Governor's Office – Women's Services, State of Louisiana, Accountant, Sears Roebuck and Company, Southeastern Regional Office and Accountant with Arthur Young and Company (currently Ernst & Young (1976 – 1982).

Virginia is the Immediate Past President of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Incorporated (October 2017 – September 2021). She has consistently demonstrated her leadership abilities through successfully serving at both the national and local chapter

levels for the past 30 years.

Virginia serves on the Board of Directors of several organizations. Her stellar work and staunch commitment have earned her many national, regional, state and local awards. Her civic and community memberships include Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated, The Links Incorporated, The Continental Societies Incorporated and Top Ladies of Distinction, Incorporated.

Virginia holds a Master of Public Administration degree, Bachelor of Business Administration degree, is a Certified Internal Auditor and Certified Government Financial Manager. She is a graduate of Georgia's Regional Leadership Institute, Leadership Atlanta, Leadership Gwinnett, and Harvard University's Non-Profit Leadership Program.

Virginia resides in Metropolitan Atlanta; She is the widow of Keith Harris, has two adult children, Mark and Veketa, three grandsons; Joshua, Andrew, and Ethan, and two granddaughters, Hannah, and Ava. Virginia enjoys traveling, reading, tennis and is learning to play golf.



Donna Hobgood, M.D.

Dr. Donna Hobgood is a graduate of the Medical College of Georgia. Following a rotating internship, she completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Erlanger Health System. She has been in private practice in Chattanooga since 1988.

Dr. Hobgood is board-certified by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and is a Fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Dr. Hobgood practices both obstetrics and gynecology.

She is active in family, community and professional leadership.

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Katie King

Katie King moved home to Chattanooga after graduating from Suffolk University Law School in 2005. She got her first job in the legal field through a temp agency. Ten years later, Ms. King rose to the position of Senior Counsel & Privacy Officer for Electric Power Board of Chattanooga and then past president of the Southeast Tennessee Lawyers Association for Women. During this time, she had the chance to work on some amazing projects, including the launch of the world's fastest internet.

Katie grew up inspired by her father - a born salesman who owned and operated several businesses throughout his life (Groucho's Deli, The Swim Center, and Vector Printing). After her daughter was born in 2014, she began to make peace with her entrepreneurial spirit. In 2016, she took a giant leap of faith and started her own company, a boutique law firm offering a full-suite of legal services for entrepreneurs, business owners and artists.

Starting out in private practice, Katie worked almost exclusively in the niche of utilities and communications. Most of her work focused on helping electric utilities and cooperatives bring advanced broadband communications systems to underserved portions of the Southeast. In this role, she has helped with obtaining regulatory approvals and franchise agreements and negotiating contracts with entertainment and technology companies.

In 2017, her father died unexpectedly at the age of 62. As his sole heir and beneficiary, Katie inherited the majority ownership stake in his company Vector Printing. Her experience leading Vector Printing taught her so much about leadership, small business ownership, and the importance of business owners taking the time to create thoughtful and diligent succession and estate planning. Being a dual business owner and a working mother has given Katie a depth of understanding and compassion that few attorneys are able to offer their clients.

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Terri Lee

Terri is an active member of the Mayor's Council for Women (MCW) and is co-chair of the Justice Committee. She oversees marketing and public relations for the 2020 Statewide Policy Conference. Terri has been a business leader in Chattanooga for 20 years, with prior roles as City Treasurer, Finance Director with Unum Group, and most recently Community Relations Director with the Chattanooga Red Wolves Soccer Club. She is a certified Mentor and Coach with a Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt.

Terri has a strong commitment to contribute to her community and is deeply involved in her two children's school PTA and sports clubs. She is a past United Way of Greater Chattanooga Cabinet member and past United Way unit co-chair for the City of Chattanooga.

She lives in Hixson TN with her husband Rusty and children, Landon and Juliet.



Regina McDevitt

Regina McDevitt, M.Ed. is the FJC's Executive Director. She graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga with a Master's degree in Guidance and Education, the Executive Leadership Institute Alliance for Strong Families and Communities and the University of Michigan School of Social Work and Ross School of Business, and Foresight Management Development Program. Regina holds an extensive list of awards and accomplishments including Recipient for Efforts to Reduce Family Violence Award 2002, The Coalition against Domestic and Community Violence Greater Chattanooga recipient of the Advocacy Leadership Award 2006, TennCare Access Network, Recipient of the National Visionary Award 2011, National Sexual Violence Resource Center, Recipient 2021 Champions of and the Victims' Rights Award.

Regina has lived in Chattanooga since college, and her personal goals are to remain grounded in her faith, and to continue to build a healthy work life balance. Professionally, she aspires to make an impact in the community and bring awareness and support about domestic violence, sexual assault and other forms of interpersonal violence. As a lifelong learner Regina, possesses many skills and expertise. She is a part of Community Outreach; Volunteer Management; Program Development; Nonprofit management; Community Collaboration and Partnerships Grant writing; Strategic Planning; Customer Service; Peer Reviewer for the National Council of Accreditation; Leadership; Content expert in Issues of Domestic and Sexual Violence, Community Collaborations. She also prides herself in her skills of public speaking, leadership, and best practices.

In her personal time, Regina enjoys listening to music, reading, and spending time with family and friends. Regina states she chooses to work with survivors because "I believe in the power of Hope and feel that working to keep people, who have experienced abuse and violence safe, is important to creating a safe community. As a trauma survivor, knowing that someone was there to support my goals and to listen to my story free of judgment, created the basis for how I want to serve others."



Beverly McKeldin

Beverly A. McKeldin is an independent Benefits Advisor at the American Family Life Assurance Company (AFLAC), where she coordinates employee supplemental products for businesses across the state of Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and North Carolina. Beverly worked over twenty years for the City of Chattanooga Human Services Department, first implementing the Foster Grandparent program and was later promoted to the Early Childhood Education Manager. She has served as state and local President of the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare, and Southeast Council on Children and Youth.

Beverly is a member of several organizations and boards to include National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Chattanooga Chapter, Inc., where she serves as the Historian, and was recently appointed to the NCBW National Economic Empowerment Committee. She is presently the co-chair of the Mayor's Council for Women Empowerment Committee, Girls Incorporated Advance Committee and Ambassador for the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce and past board member of Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare. She is a past honoree of the UnBought and UnBossed and SECCY Community Service awards. Beverly graduated from Tennessee State University with a Bachelor's degree in Social Welfare/Public Relations.

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Emily O'Donnell

Emily O'Donnell is Chattanooga's first female city attorney and owner of Emily O'Donnell Law. She is a lifelong learner who studies public policy, equity, philanthropy, leadership, and self-improvement. She's also a contract attorney with Jelks Law, PLLC, a boutique firm in Chattanooga, handling a variety of legal cases, including real estate, Fair Housing, discrimination, contract disputes, and other general, civil legal cases.

Ms. O'Donnell spent the first half of her career as an attorney for Legal Aid, providing legal services across the Chattanooga region, from assisting victims of the 2013 Patten Towers fire to litigating in General Sessions, Juvenile, Circuit, and Chancery Courts and the Tennessee Court of Appeals.

As part of her work for Legal Aid of East Tennessee, O'Donnell practiced in Hamilton, Bradley, Sequatchie, Rhea, Meigs, McMinn and Monroe counties, and was involved in a wide range of cases, including housing, domestic relations, employment and consumer issues. She moved on to private practice in 2018, litigating property, contract, probate and business disputes, eventually founding her own firm in 2019 to focus on family law.

Emily has written appellate briefs, legislation that passed unanimously in the TN General Assembly, blog posts, speeches, thousands of thank you notes, and many, many limericks. Public speaking topics include a broad range of professional and personal experience: women's rights, poverty issues, race and gender, human trafficking, legislative process, legal ethics, leadership, working motherhood, and internal motivation.



Kim Shumpert

Kim Shumpert has been the CEO of Chattanooga Women's Leadership Institute since 2018. Her professional experience has been gained across the public, private, nonprofit and education sectors. Utilizing her passion for transformation and teambuilding, she works with a dynamic team to create an ecosystem where women thrive personally and professionally.

Since moving back to her hometown of Chattanooga in 2016, she has wasted no time in getting involved. She currently serves on the board of directors for the Girl Scouts of Southern Appalachians, is a member of the Rotary Club of Chattanooga, is a founding member and Chair of the Chattanooga Nonprofit Alliance, is a Brock Fellow, and is a TN Achieves Mentor. She also serves on the Vestry of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church. Kim recently joined Mayor Tim Kelly's transition team.

Before returning to Chattanooga, she was a board member for Craighead County Community Foundation, Arkansas Community Foundation, Arkansas Nonprofit Alliance, Jonesboro Ecumenical Transit System and Jonesboro Rotary Club. She also worked with the Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Task Force. She and her husband, Brad and their two daughters, are proud to now invest their time, talent and treasure into the Greater Chattanooga community.

Kim earned her undergraduate degree in Public Administration from Harding University and a Master's in Public Administration from Arkansas State University. She believes that affecting change in a community is about building relationships that equip people to improve their lives and the lives of others through offering meaningful experiences. This philosophy drives her personal and professional pursuits.