

Ms. The NGO Committee on Ageing/NY

Slate of Nominees 2023-2025



William (Bill) Smith, Ph.D
Chair

William T. Smith, Ph.D. is President/Chief Executive Officer of Aging in America, Inc. Aging in America is the parent corporation of AIA Supportive Services, Morningside at Home, and Morningside House Nursing Home. All are non-profit, non-sectarian agencies.

Dr. Smith has been in the field of social work since 1971 with the last forty years dedicated to the field of gerontology. He has been recognized locally and nationally as an expert on gerontological issues.

Dr. Smith, whose doctorate in Social Work with a concentration in Gerontology is from Fordham University, has also earned a Master's in Social Work in Administration/Case Work from Hunter College and a Bachelor of Science in Family and Child Welfare Services from the University of Wisconsin.

He is a member of the National Association of Social Workers, the Gerontological Society of America, the American College of Health Care Administrators, and the Academy of Certified Social Workers. He served as a member of the Federal Advisory Committee on the Future of VA Long Term Care. He was a member of the Board of Directors and Past Chair of LeadingAge (formerly the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging) in Washington, D.C. He is a former Chair of LeadingAgeNY (formerly the New York Association of Homes and Services for the Aging). Dr. Smith is a former member of the Board of Directors of

the International Association of Homes and Services for the Aging and serves as liaison to the United Nations. He was a delegate to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging. He received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor 2006 for his dedication to community service, building bridges between ethnic, racial and religious groups, sharing personal and professional gifts with the local, national or international community and contributing distinguished service to humanity in particular for his work on behalf of older persons. Dr. Smith is a licensed nursing home administrator, a certified social worker, and a certified retirement housing professional.

Since 2014, he has been planning the redirection of Aging in America, Inc.'s future, utilizing the proceeds of the sale while developing new lines of products and services and cultivating new streams of revenue. Dr. Smith has served two terms as a member at large of the NGO Committee on Ageing and chairs the Development Subcommittee.



Robin Fenley, PhD, LCSW
Vice-Chair

Robin Fenley, PhD, LCSW, is a social gerontologist with areas of practice and research that include caregiving, dementia care, elder abuse prevention, in-patient psychiatry, and long-term care at the community, institutional, and governmental levels. She retired as Assistant Commissioner from the NYC Department for the Aging. Under her leadership, New York City's initial National Family Caregiver Support Program was implemented, and the first legislated Social Adult Day Ombuds Office in NYC was established. She co-led NYC's first survey of informal caregivers, and oversaw management of twenty-six contracted service providers. Associated activities include program development, presentations, publishing, and advisory board participation.

Robin chairs the Subcommittee on Older Women for the NGO Committee on Ageing/NY and is a member of the International Association of Gerontology & Geriatrics (IAGG) and the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse. She coordinated virtual parallel events for CSW66 and CSW67 for the Subcommittee on Older Women and IAGG, collaborated in shaping NYC's WEAAD 2022 program and chaired the 2022 UN International Day of Older Persons in New York.

A Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Dr. Fenley is an Adjunct Professor of Social Policy at Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service in New York City.



Martha Bial, Ph.D
Corresponding Secretary

Martha C. Bial, Ph.D., is a Faculty Research Scholar at the Ravazzin Center on Aging at the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service in New York, where she teaches social policy and social work practice with older adults and their families. She has represented the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) at the UN for 14 years and currently serves as its main representative. In this role, she has presented at conferences in the US, Latin America, Europe, and Asia. She is also a member of the executive committee of the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York, and chair of its sub-committee on communications.

She was a practitioner, supervisor, and consultant in the field of aging for 25 years and later served as Associate Director of Field Instruction at Fordham (its internship program). Her research and teaching interests include social work in long-term care, use of oral history and reminiscence, and substance abuse in older adults. Dr. Bial has also served as social policy chair for the State Society on Aging of New York. She has served one term as Corresponding Secretary of the NGO Committee on Ageing.



Ariana Elezaj
Recording Secretary

Arjanita (Ariana) Elezaj is a community activist with 30+ years of professional experience on program development and community capacity building. She currently is the Deputy Director of Older Adult Services at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, the oldest settlement house in the US. Ariana's expertise and passions include women's rights, older adults' rights, and nonprofit leadership. She is a pioneer of innovating new programming for New York City senior centers and Albanian-American women's organizations.

Ariana serves on the board of directors for the Albanian-American Women's Organization-Motrat Qiriazhi, which is one of the oldest organizations serving Albanian Women in the United States. She is a former journalist of the People's Voice Newspaper, Tirana, Albania and she continues her freelance writing in the US, highlighting issues that impact the Albanian-American community.

She holds a bachelor's degree from Tirana State University in Economics and Business Reporting and is completing a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. She is currently participating in a fellowship at New York University's Center for Anti-racism, Social Justice & Public Health and holds two certificates in (1) Non-Profit Leadership Certificates from Baruch College and (2) Empowered Aging Certificate from Columbia Law School Advocacy Institute. Ariana is a graduate research assistant at John Jay College, providing substantive support on a groundbreaking study addressing intimate partner relationship experiences amongst Albanian Women in the US. She is co chairing the 2023 UN International Day of Older Persons.



Katie Weiss
Treasurer

Katharine (Katie) Weiss serves as the UN representative of the Global Ageing Network (formerly IAHSA) and is currently serving as Treasurer of the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York. Katie spent twenty years working at Citigroup with extensive experience in product development of technology-based consumer financial services. She managed the team that designed the consumer interface for all global ATMS, online banking, telephone banking, and staff and customer service kiosks. At Citigroup, Katie also had significant experience in consumer research, strategic planning, and financial management. Prior to Citigroup, Katie worked at Time Inc. and Deloitte, Haskins & Sells. Katie is currently Board Chair of Aging in America, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting and inspiring innovation for individuals, families and caregivers faced with the challenges and opportunities of aging. In 2007 she co-chaired a consumer cabinet for Leading Age, the national association of not-for-profit aging services providers. She is a graduate of Wellesley College, and received an MS in Accounting from NYU.

In addition to serving as treasurer, she is chairing the Membership subcommittee.

Members-at-Large



Ramsey Alwin

Ramsey Alwin is the President and CEO at the National Council on Aging.

A seasoned thought leader and policy advocate, Ramsey has changed the way people think about older adult poverty and economic security. She designed a new measure of economic security for older adults that better accounts for out-of-pocket health costs and worked to introduce the Measuring American Poverty Act in Congress to redefine the federal poverty measure for the older population.

Ramsey also led efforts to enact state and local legislation and regulations that use the new measure of economic security when determining eligibility for means-tested programs. She demonstrated a proof of concept of economic casework with over 20 community-based organizations and 5,000 older adults and developed, A Blueprint for Increasing the Economic Security of Older Adults: Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.

Prior to leading NCOA, Ramsey held positions as Director of Global Thought Leadership at AARP, Vice President of Economic Security at NCOA, Director of National Economic Security Programs at Wider Opportunities for Women, and Director of Program Services at the National Association of State and Community Services Programs.

Ms. Alwin has a B.A. from Simmons University and an MBA from Georgetown University. She has been serving on the Executive Committee as an appointee based on a member at large vacancy in 2021.



Bethany Brown

Bethany Brown is a representative of the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse. She was recently International Disability Alliance's Senior Human Rights Advisor, working to uphold the standards of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities across all human rights mechanisms in New York, and ensuring participatory approaches representing the diversity of the disability movement and its constituencies. Previously, she started Human Rights Watch's program of work on older people's human rights in its Disability Rights Division. Before Human Rights Watch, she was HelpAge USA's Policy and Advocacy Director. She is a lawyer, and has been an advocate at the United Nations in the fields of human rights, humanitarian aid, and development since 2010.

Bethany received her bachelor's degree from Barnard College of Columbia University, and her Juris Doctor from American University Washington College of Law.



Christopher Hanway

Since 2014, Christopher Hanway has served as the Executive Director of Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement, a community-based social service organization in Long Island City, Queens that serves thousands of public housing residents and their families per year. Prior to that, he was the organization's Director of Development & Communications for five years. Christopher has over 20 years of professional experience in the not-for-profit sector, most notably at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, the Institute for Classical Architecture, and the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. He received his B.A. from Hunter College of the City University of New York and his Masters in Public Administration from Baruch College, where he now serves as Adjunct Professor. He sits on several boards, including United Neighborhood Houses of New York, the Chhaya Community Development Corporation and the International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers. Christopher has a particular interest in connecting the work of local, place-based non-profits like Riis Settlement with international social justice and solidarity movements.

Christopher is the immediate past Chair of the NGO Committee on Migration, which advocates at the United Nations and other international organizations on behalf of migrants, refugees and asylees worldwide and serves on the Executive Committee of the NGO Committee on Aging in New York as a member at large. He is the 2023 Chair of the UN International Day of Older Persons observance at the UN.



Peter Kaldes

Peter Kaldes, Esq. joined American Society on Aging as President and CEO in March 2020 and at the start of the global pandemic. His visionary and innovative leadership is transforming how ASA unites, empowers and champions everyone working to improve aging. Before joining ASA, Kaldes was President and CEO of the South Florida Institute on Aging (SoFIA) where he led the transformation of a 55-year-old, community-based organization by launching new programming, impactful thought leadership and nearly doubling its budget. Prior to SoFIA, Kaldes led a \$20 million philanthropic economic development portfolio as a senior executive at JP Morgan Chase & Co. He also has a distinguished career in public service including as senior economic policy advisor in the Obama White House, the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Senate. Kaldes began his career as an international litigator at the global firm of Weil Gotshal.

Peter is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and Tufts University.



Magda Kaczmarska, MFA

Magda Kaczmarska is a dance artist, scholar and creative-aging and brain health advocate. She received her MFA in Dance Performance & Choreography and her BS in Biochemistry & Molecular Biophysics from the University of Arizona. She leverages 10 years of neuropharmacology research and 18 years in intergenerational community-based dance education to build bridges between academic, medical and arts sectors. Magda is an Atlantic Fellow for Equity in Brain Health at the Global Brain Health Institute, where she is working to design and expand access to creative aging programs that support brain health across the life course. Current projects include designing community-based brain health education for intergenerational communities and developing co-creative arts programs for people living with dementia in partnership with CaringKind – New York, UCSF Memory and Aging Center and Dementia Action Alliance.

Magda served as co-founder of Evolve Dance~West, a non-profit dance company which brought intergenerational dance programs to diverse communities in southern Arizona, including offering programs for people living with Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease and refugees and survivors of trauma. In New York City, she worked with Dances for a Variable Population (DVP) supporting hundreds of older adults in exploration of strong and creative movement

Magda presents regularly in public and academic forums on the benefits of creative practices on individual and social health across the life course. Credits include Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer's Artfully Aging Conference (2018), Columbia University Teachers College Symposium (2019), National Dance Education Conference (2018-2020). She mentors future leaders in the arts and health sectors as guest lecturer at Fordham Ailey School of Dance in New York City and the Arts in Medicine Fellowship in Lagos, Nigeria. She serves on the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) Dance & Disability Taskforce, for which she received the Executive Director Award in 2021.

She is serving her first term as a member at large of the NGO Committee on Aging.

Immediate Past Chair (Ex-Officio)



Cynthia Stuen

Cynthia Stuen is the Main Representative to the United Nations on behalf of the International Federation on Ageing and she also serves on its Board of Directors. Dr. Stuen became Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing/NY in 2019 and is active in advocacy for the protection of the human rights of older persons with a special interest in older women. She is active in monitoring the inclusion of older persons in the UN's Agenda 2030 and support of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing.

Her professional career of over 40 years as a gerontological social worker has focused on policy, planning and administration to improve the lives of older persons and recognize the lifelong inequities endured. Serving in various capacities at Lighthouse International during her 24 year tenure. She was Director of its National Center for Vision and Aging developing public and professional education on age-related vision and hearing loss for older persons. Her last position was as Senior Vice President, Chief Professional Affairs Officer that involved advocating for policies to support older sensory impaired persons at the national, state and local level while also maintaining involvement and education in international environments to preserve sight and prevent excess disability.

Her graduate degrees are from the University of Chicago (AM) and Columbia University (PhD) in Social Work.