

Our Board Members

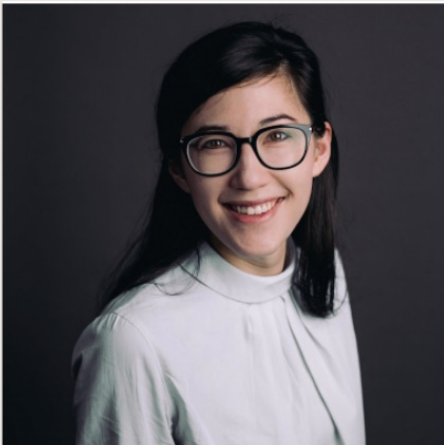


The Porch inspires, educates and connects writers and readers of all ages and stages through classes and literary events.



Jessica Pearson- President

Jessica Pearson started her career in book publishing in the sales department at Random House in New York City. After five years working in the city, Jessica moved overseas to teach kindergarten in Taiwan and then landed in Nashville to pursue a Master's Degree in International Education Policy at Vanderbilt's Peabody College. Post graduate school Jessica worked as the Recruitment Director for KIPP Nashville but is excited to have found her way back into the book publishing industry. Currently, Jessica works for Penguin Random House as the sales manager for the Southeast region, with a focus on independent bookstores. When she's not reading, which is very very rare, Jessica also teaches yoga in the Nashville community.



Tracy Dunn- Treasurer

Tracy Dunn is the co-founder of Hip Hues, an interactive screen printing company. She graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in business and now combines her financial background and creative skills to bring the art of screen printing to events locally and nationwide. Tracy strives to support local organizations, non-profits, and companies through brand activations with Hip Hues. As an avid reader and writer, she enjoys supporting and staying connected to the Nashville literary community through writing groups, the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the Southern Festival of Books, and The Porch.



Karen Hayes- Secretary

Together with novelist Ann Patchett, co-founded Parnassus Books in Nashville, Tennessee. Karen found her way to the owner's desk after a career that included 12 years at Ingram Content Group, the nation's largest book distributor, plus 18 years as a traveling sales rep for Random House. During her time at Random House, she came to love and respect the vibrant community of independent bookstores she worked with, eventually following her dream to open a store of her own. Karen retired from the book business in 2022. She has lived in Nashville since she was 12 years old and is proud to have helped create a bookstore that serves both the neighbors she grew up with and the rapidly growing population of families, artists and businesspeople who have discovered all Nashville has to offer.



Tim Bartlett

Tim Bartlett is a real estate professional with Parks Real Estate. With over a decade in the business, Tim is a Top 1% Nashville Realtor with over \$150 million in total sales. A lover of both New and Old Nashville, Tim revels in the charm of historic Nashville but still feels just at home in a high-rise condo or new construction house. He is most proud of developing real connections with clients that exist long after the transaction has ended.

Before serving on The Porch board, Tim was a member of the Nashville Realtors Affordability Committee, where he headed a legislative task force to increase affordability in Nashville. Tim also served on the Tennessee Realtors Forms Committee, where he wrote and revised the real estate legal documents all agents use. He was also part of the Nation's Planning and Zoning committee where he helped transform 51st Ave into a Complete Street.

Tim, his wife Jamie, and their daughter Lucy live in an historic East Nashville bungalow they renovated in 2021. In his free time, Tim loves to play hockey, hike and travel.



Paul Burch

Paul Burch is a producer, songwriter, and recording artist based in Nashville. Burch's discography includes collaborations with artists from across styles and generations including Mark Knopfler, Waco Brothers, Billy Bragg, R&B legend Candi Staton, Lambchop, Tim O'Brien, and Ralph Stanley. Burch is also a founding DJ at WXNA and a contributor to Hip Hop for Public Health, produced in collaboration with First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move program. His debut novel based on the life of music legend Jimmie Rodgers will be published in 2027.



Pratik Dash

Pratik grew up in Franklin, Tennessee. After graduating from college with a masters in computer science and living with his grandfather in India for 5 years, Pratik returned to the U.S. in 2014. Pratik first learned about the work of TIRRC by attending the annual TIRRC convention where he learned of systemic racism against communities of color, which changed his life. He joined TIRRC in March of 2015 as an organizer and has never looked back. Pratik has organized multiple actions across the state for immigration issues such as DACA, Asian and Pacific Islander justice, and the Muslim Ban. Pratik has also been an integral part of TIRRC's civic engagement campaign, helping register thousands of first and second generation immigrant voters since 2015, as well as building strong, immigrant youth-led, canvassing teams to knock on tens of thousands of doors across the state. His work has led to one of the largest shifts of the rising American electorate in the state, as more immigrants and refugees continue to get engaged in local, state, and federal elections. He has also helped found voter coalitions across the state to create voting blocs of black and brown communities registering to vote and heading to the polls. Pratik is proud to be a part of this movement, and will continue to push forward until equality and justice for communities of color are attained in the state of Tennessee.



Susan Edwards

Susan Edwards served as Executive Director and CEO of the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, Tennessee 2004-2022. During her tenure, the Frist was awarded accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums and has presented over two hundred critically acclaimed and popular exhibitions. Edwards earned BA and MA degrees at the University of South Carolina and a Ph.D. from the City University of New York Graduate Center. She is an acknowledged expert in American art and photography, has organized exhibitions, published and lectured nationally and internationally. She has taught at New York University, Queens College/CUNY, School of Visual Arts, New York, and Vanderbilt University. Dr. Edwards was appointed a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Artes and des Lettres by the French Government in 2011. She was a Founding Fellow at the Liguria Study Center for the Arts & Humanities, Genoa, Italy. She is a member of the Association of Art Museum Directors and past member on the Board. She is also a member of the American Alliance of Museums, International Council of Museums, and the College Art Association. Previously, she served on the advisory boards of the Bogliasco Foundation, Harvard University Art Museums Collections Committee (photography), and the Alfred Stieglitz Advisory Committee, (Crystal Bridges/Fisk University). She is a founding trustee for the Museum of Medicine and Biomedical Discovery.



Trina Frierson

Katrina (Trina) Frierson's story exemplifies redemption. After years of struggling with addiction, Trina experienced life on the streets, periods of homelessness, incarceration, and losing custody of her children. She received the support she needed to establish and maintain her sobriety in order to regain her life. In an effort to pay it forward, Trina felt led to serve women in similar situations. She saw the need for a long-term program that addressed addiction but also offered life-changing support, therapy, and job skills that are crucial to life-long recovery. Trina founded Mending Hearts in 2004. In its infancy, Mending Hearts owned 1 home and treated 7 women. The program has now grown to 15 homes and has served over 5000 women, becoming a critical resource for treating women in Middle Tennessee. It was essential to Trina to not only help individuals but also to transform her community, and she has played an integral part in revitalizing West Nashville. It is Trina's belief that it is her duty to rebuild a community where she was once part of its demise. Trina has turned inhabitable dwellings into homes filled with hope, to bring healing and beautification to her community and the women in it.



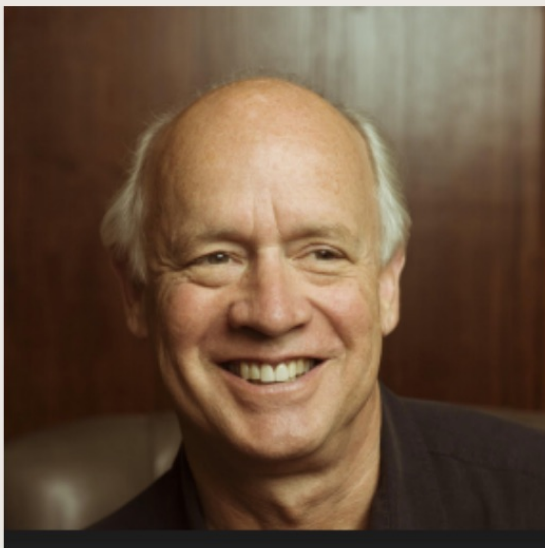
Major Jackson

is the author of five books of poetry, including *The Absurd Man* (2020), *Roll Deep* (2015), *Holding Company* (2010), *Hoops* (2006) and *Leaving Saturn* (2002), which won the Cave Canem Poetry Prize. His edited volumes include: *Best American Poetry 2019*, *Renga for Obama*, and *Library of America's Countee Cullen: Collected Poems*. A recipient of fellowships from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Guggenheim Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, Major Jackson has been awarded a Pushcart Prize, a Whiting Writers' Award, and has been honored by the Pew Fellowship in the Arts and the Witter Bynner Foundation in conjunction with the Library of Congress. He has published poems and essays in *American Poetry Review*, *The New Yorker*, *Paris Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry London*, and included in multiple volumes of *Best American Poetry*. He has held teaching appointments at Bennington College, Columbia University, and New York University. Major Jackson is the Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Chair in the Humanities at Vanderbilt University. He serves as the Poetry Editor of *The Harvard Review*.



Emily Masters

Emily Masters is Development Director for LaunchTN. She began her more than twenty-year career in the nonprofit and public sectors as a Resolution Writer for the Tennessee General Assembly. She then spent eight years as a Program Officer then Director for Humanities Tennessee, the state partner affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 2009 she began working as an independent Development and Fundraising Strategist, going on to help a broad spectrum of organizations and institutions achieve their funding goals and hone their strategic missions. Masters wrote and managed a Broadband Technology Opportunities Program grant for the state of Tennessee, raised the local matching funds for Metro Arts when Nashville hosted the Americans for the Arts Convention, functioned as Development Consultant for NashvilleHealth from the point of its founding through the departure of the inaugural CEO, and most recently wrapped up nearly three years with The Porch, where she more than tripled the organization's annual grant funding. A lifelong Tennessean, Masters holds an MA in English from East Tennessee State University. Her own experience as an entrepreneur (as founder of a Nashville-based dance studio that has been in business since 2008) informs her passion for the mission of LaunchTN. Additionally, Emily serves as the District 3 Representative on the Metro Nashville Board of Education.



Kerry O'Neil

is a founding member of the entertainment consulting and the business firm of O'Neil Hagaman, LLC. Located in Nashville, Tennessee, this practice is focused solely on the entertainment industry and represents many significant artists, producers, independent publishers, writers, and executives. Kerry specializes in strategic planning and negotiating on behalf of artists and entrepreneurs. In 1998, Kerry and Carla Wallace co-founded Big Yellow Dog Music, an independent music publishing and artist-writer development company. Over the company's 21 years of experience, Big Yellow Dog Music's artist-writers have won ten Grammys (and an additional fifteen nominations), four Song of the Year awards (ACM, BMI, and two ASCAP), other accolades include thirty-eight #1 songs, an ASCAP Global Award, five ASCAP/BMI Pop awards, and many more. He recently was named one of Billboard's 2019 Country Power Players and Top Business Managers. Kerry received his B.B.A. from George Washington University and his M.B.A. from Babson College. He is also a CPA and a CFP. Kerry's hobbies include travel, hiking, and creative writing.



Anne Stark Locher

is a founding member of the entertainment consulting and A marketing communications professional for over 30 years, Anne Stark Locher specializes in the institutional advancement of non-profit organizations in the arts and social services. In 2019, Anne founded AscendU to support high school students from under-resourced communities in the college application process. Using the platform of college essays, Anne works with student to build greater self-awareness and self-appreciation to inform their future choices. Her students have been awarded scholarships to some of the country's most prestigious colleges and universities. Anne serves on the Board of Trustees of MacDowell, the nation's first artist residency, and of New York Public Radio. She is a member of the Education Committee of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Council for the Arts at MIT. She was a long-time Board member of Aperture Foundation. Anne holds an M.S. in Strategic Communications from Columbia University and a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. She and her husband Kurt are avid sailors and have five children and one grandchild.



Ben Tran

Is Associate Professor of English and Asian Studies at Vanderbilt University. He came to Nashville by way of the Bay Area, where he received his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at UC Berkeley. He grew up in New Orleans and Atlanta. He has published fictional and nonfictional works in academic and public-facing venues, both in the United States and in Southeast Asia: from Mekong Review and NPR to PMLA and Modern Fiction Studies. He is the author of Post-Mandarin: Masculinity and Aesthetic Modernity in Colonial Vietnam. He teaches courses on racialization and capitalism, land and (dis)possession, blackness and the Asian Century, the history and culture of the Third World movement, and cultural representations of the Vietnam War. He is also serving on Nashville's Metro Human Relations Commission.

