



## UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Westchester Chapter

### UNA-Westchester Board of Directors, 2022-2024 term

#### **OFFICERS:**

**President: Marcia M. Brewster** served as president of UNA-Westchester for seven years from 2011-



2018 and is now taking up the reins again. She has also served on the UNA-USA National Council since 2018. She worked for the UN for over 30 years, both in New York and at the regional UN office for Asia and the Pacific, based in Bangkok, Thailand. She devoted most of her career to United Nations programs related to water, sustainable development and gender. Until 2006 she was Senior Officer for water resources in the Sustainable Development Division at United Nations headquarters in New York. She served as Manager of the UN's Interagency Task Force on Gender and Water and is deeply concerned about gender equality and women's

empowerment. She has undertaken assignments for the Village of Haverstraw, the United Nations Development Program, the Nature Conservancy, the World Water Council and the Global Environment Facility. She has an MSc from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and spent 13 years living and working in Asia. She lives in Hastings on Hudson and has twin sons.

**First Vice President: Demetrios J. Mihailidis** (or Mr. M, as he is known) is a retired educator. He was an Adjunct instructor at Syracuse University in NY from 1988-2018. He spent much of his career teaching in the Mount Vernon School District. He feels his major accomplishments as an educator, were: 1) Establishing the United Nations Club 32 years ago, that has inspired and sparked the interest of many students in global affairs and enabled them to become future ambassadors in this global society; and 2) being recognized by various organizations for his efforts in the area of Human Rights and Teaching. Also, he served on the Executive PTA Committee at UN International School. Mr. M has received the Spirit of Achievement and the Lifetime Service Awards from Junior Achievement and the Champion of Human Rights Award from the Westchester County Human Rights Commission. He was recognized as High School Teacher of the Year from Mount Vernon. His parents were Greek immigrants from Asia Minor. He graduated from New York University with a B.A. and M.A. in History. His future endeavors are to continue his work in the field of human rights, travel, learn and most importantly spend time with his family.



**Second Vice President: Lilli Schindler** has worked for the United Nations in the Department of Public Information (now the Department for Global Communications, DGC) for the past 27 years. She is currently Chief of Group Programmes and Public Inquiries, Visitors Services Section, Outreach Division, DGC. Previously, she worked in the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Section of DPI. She began her career in the Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General. Having grown up in Westchester, she comes from a UN family, as her father, a Brazilian national, and her mother, a Dutch national, both worked for the organization from its inception. She holds a B.A. in International Relations from Brown University and an M.A. from the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) She has three children.





**Secretary: Karen Rockwell El-Badry** was a staff member of the UN Secretariat in New York for 35 years, serving as Recruitment and Administrative Officer for the program of technical cooperation. Her activities past and present have focused on world peace, cooperation and understanding. She has lived in Egypt and takes an active interest in issues relating to the Middle East. She has participated for many years in the Dialogue Project (New York), which engages diverse people in transformative dialogue related to the Middle East. For over ten years she was a Board member of the Center for Jewish-Christian-Muslim Understanding, an organization that promotes conversations among members of the Abrahamic faiths through outreach and educational events. Karen has been a member of the UNA-USA Westchester Board for fifteen years and has served for the same period of time on the Education Committee. She coordinates a program for UNA-USA in the Yonkers public schools that introduces students to the UN and the concept of peace-making. She received a B.A. degree from Mt. Holyoke College and an M.Ed. from Tufts University. She lives in Dobbs Ferry with her daughter.



**Treasurer: Professor Victor Petenkemani** is the Associate Dean of the Mercy College School of Business. He teaches economics, international business and corporate finance courses at the graduate and undergraduate levels. His research interests encompass asset pricing and impact investing, with a focus on risk management. He is an entrepreneur, an investor and an advisor who seeks to help business ventures reach their goals. Prior to Mercy, he held business strategy and finance roles at Fortune 500 companies, primarily in France and the United States. Prof Petenkemani had corporate experience at Delta Air Lines (Atlanta, GA), Houlihan Lokey (New York, NY), BlackRock (Princeton, NJ), Caisse Des Depots et Consignation (Paris, France). He was engaged in various business development initiatives in several frontier markets. He is a graduate of the Wharton School (MBA in Finance) and the Lauder Institute (MA in International Studies) of the University of Pennsylvania, and a graduate of Université du Maine (Le Mans, France) where he earned an MS in Accounting and a BS in Economics. Professor Petenkemani is fluent in English, French, and Spanish. He lives in New Rochelle with his family.

**Chair of the Nominating Committee: Brenda L. Galloway Smith** has served on the UNA-Westchester Board for seven years, as Vice President, Partnerships Chair and Program Chair. She served from 2002 to June 2007 as Superintendent of the Mount Vernon Public Schools, following 39 years in the education system. As superintendent, she oversaw a \$180 million budget and supervised a staff of 1400, with a student body of more than 10,000. Dr. Smith represents the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women to the UN, which enables her to work with other NGOs at the UN. She is the recipient of more than 100 awards for service to youth and the community from clubs, churches, fraternities and foundations. She was named New York State Teacher of the Year, among other awards. Mrs. Smith received a B.S. Degree from Livingstone College in North Carolina, and Masters from Hunter College and Columbia University. She received a Doctorate in Organization and Leadership in Educational Administration from Columbia University and an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Livingstone College. Mrs. Smith is actively involved in the Mount Hope A.M.E. Zion Church, where her husband, Dr. Gregory Robeson Smith, Sr., is senior Pastor. They have three children and four grandchildren.



## ***DIRECTORS:***



**Tricia Baldes** is a middle level educator with two decades of experience working in public schools in New York. Her commitment to social action and peace education was nurtured while working in Somers Central School District, where a human rights education initiative was being pioneered. With colleagues, Tricia developed a comprehensive social action classroom curriculum for their 8th graders which served as the inspiration and the basis for Rock Your World. She continues to serve as Rock Your World's chief program advisor. Tricia's work with Rock Your World has grown over the years, allowing her to collaborate with various organizations such as the Robert F.

Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, Rebelhouse Films, and Speranza Foundation. Tricia earned her bachelor's degree in English from Purchase College and a master's degree in English from Lehman College. She has led multiple professional development courses and has presented at national conferences. She continues to teach eighth grade English in Somers NY—each year inspiring a new group of students to become global citizens.

**Dan Bena** is an award-winning executive who served as PepsiCo's Corporate Water Steward and led the Sustainable Development agenda for PepsiCo Global Operations. Among others, he serves/has served on the Public Health Committee of the Safe Water Network; the Leadership Group of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD); Steering Board of IFC's 2030 Water Resources Group and Steering Committee of the United Nations CEO Water Mandate. Bena currently serves on the Board of the Creative Visions Foundation, a non-profit using media and the arts to develop agents of positive social change. He has spoken at over 100 venues which span the business, government, academic, and non-profit worlds. He keynoted the UN Youth Assembly to youth delegates from over 100 countries. UNA-Westchester recognized him as a "Global Goals, Local Leader" in 2017 for his role in water partnerships which provide safe water to over 22 million people. Dan was invited by the President of the UN General Assembly to participate in a high-level panel on partnerships to advance the post-2015 Development agenda, and was named an Honorary Professor by Glasgow Caledonian University.



**Nicole Grieco Butterfield** is a writer, educator and healthy relationships advocate based in Westchester County, New York. A graduate of Wesleyan University, Sarah Lawrence College and Middlebury College, she has worked with and on behalf of youth for over 30 years. Throughout her 25-year career as a middle and high school teacher and administrator, she devoted herself to student-centered, experiential education, designing and delivering hands-on, interdisciplinary approaches to the study of language and literature. As a high school student in the mid-1980s, she survived intimate partner rape and sexual assault, and in response to this

experience, she became a healthy relationships advocate. In addition to tutoring and guiding students and families through the college and secondary school admissions process, she is engaged in research, writing and speaking about healthy relationships. Her most recent speaking engagements include parent meetings, student assemblies, and professional development for guidance counselors and educators in Westchester and Rockland Counties. In her free time, she enjoys running, birdwatching and collecting sea glass along the New England coast.



**J. Yuhanna Edwards** has served on the Board of UNA-Westchester for several years, as President and Advocacy Chair. He has served as a member of the Mount Vernon City Council and has held other city government posts, including Commissioner of Parks and Recreation and director of Civil Defense and Emergency Services. He is also a New York State licensed insurance consultant. As a combat paramedic in the Vietnam War, Mr. Edwards received a gunshot wound and was honorably discharged in 1968. In addition to the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and Distinguished Service Military Awards, Mr. Edwards has received numerous awards for his dedication to youth and senior citizens and outstanding community service. He holds several leadership positions, board appointments, and organization memberships, including Omega Psi Phi's Omicron Iota Chapter. Mr. Edwards is a graduate of Mercy College. He has recently lost his wife Roslyn of 52 years and has three children and five grandchildren.



**Colleen Gardephe** has been serving as Co-Chair of the Program Committee for UNA-Westchester. She has been a writer and editor for more than 25 years, specializing in health, parenting and education. She is currently the Coordinator of an Emerging Adults Justice Initiative called Opportunity Youth Part (OYP) in New Rochelle City Court. OYP matches teens and young adults with opportunities for education, health and advancement. Colleen served as Director of Communications for Family Services of Westchester, overseeing 50 social service programs, including Big Brothers Big Sisters and AmeriCorps. She is the author of a book on Old Wives' Tales about Pregnancy and Parenting and her articles have appeared in *Parenting*, *Child*, *Woman's Day* and *Scholastic*. Between 2015 and 2020, Colleen was Managing Director of My Brother's Keeper New Rochelle (MBKNewRo), where she created more than 40 programs and activities for boys and young men of color. She received an "Outstanding Community Leader" award from the New Rochelle Council of Community Services in 2017, and she is a graduate of Volunteer New York's Leadership Westchester program. She has a Bachelor's Degree in English from the University of Pennsylvania and a Master's Degree in Journalism from the University of Missouri. Colleen and her husband Paul live in New Rochelle and have four grown children (including triplets).



**Raina Kadavil** currently serves as Communications Director and Young Professionals Co-Chair at UNA-Westchester. She is a dedicated lover of service work, writing and travel. She is a Marketing Analyst at Mastercard and an MBA student at Johns Hopkins University in International Relations. She is Philanthropy Chair of the Women's Leadership Network at Mastercard and Chief Executive Officer of Urban Refuge, a nonprofit that maps aid for refugees and immigrants. She founded and served as Secretary-General of the new Westchester Model UN (WestMUN) in April 2021, after 13 years of Model UN experience. She is the author of a novel called "The Voice of Thunder" and is publishing her second book, "Ignite Your Story," in May 2021.



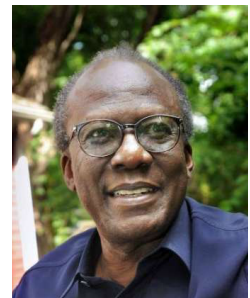
Raina led her first community organization, Global Ambassadors, at the age of ten and engages young people with the Sustainable Development Goals. She founded the Boston University chapter of UNA-USA and was Editor-in-Chief of BU's foreign affairs journal. Her research includes an award-winning study on the impact of climate change on horseshoe crab migration. She has addressed audiences across the U.S., China and at the UN General Assembly Hall. Raina has been recognized for her work by the Coca-Cola Foundation, Zonta International, the Walt Disney Company, and more. She has worked all over the world from London to Beijing to Sydney. In her free time you can find her lost in a good book or on a new hiking trail.



**Ronnie Lichtman** CNM, PhD, FACNM, is a Professor and Chair of the Midwifery Program at the State University of New York (SUNY), Downstate Health Sciences University, in Brooklyn, New York. Prior to this, she was the midwifery Program Director at SUNY Stony Brook and Columbia University. She received both her MS and PhD degrees from Columbia University. Dr. Lichtman has worked in diverse clinical sites including North Central Bronx Hospital, Harlem Hospital, and Planned Parenthood of New York. She currently provides patient services at a state-funded prenatal and family planning center, also in Brooklyn. In

addition to teaching and clinical work, Dr. Lichtman has published and presented widely to both professional and consumer groups on a variety of issues relating to women's health, midwifery, and education. Dr. Lichtman is deeply committed to excellence in health care, equity in health care services, diversity, and cultural humility and respect within the midwifery profession. Her international work includes a midwifery exchange with Nicaragua through the women's group MADRE in the 1980s and currently co-directing the midwifery education component of a Kellogg Foundation funded project in Haiti, Sustainable Villages and Learning Communities. She has been a resident of Westchester for over 20 years.

**Ambassador Francis G. Okelo**, born in Uganda, had a distinguished career serving the United Nations in countries around the world, including as Deputy United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process; the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Sierra Leone and earlier to Afghanistan. Prior to his positions at the UN, he served as Uganda's Ambassador to the European Union and concurrently to Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, and later to Kenya. Ambassador Okelo is now retired and resides in New Rochelle where he continues to be active in a number of charity and volunteer causes in the community. He is a Paul Harris Fellow and served as President of the New Rochelle Rotary Club in 2018-2019. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Westchester Library System, representing New Rochelle. Ambassador Okelo holds an honors degree in economics, history and philosophy, from the then University of East Africa in Makerere, Uganda; and a postgraduate Diploma in Diplomacy and International Relations. He is married to Maliam Abe, and they have four children and four grandchildren.



**Paul Anthony Presendieu** is an accomplished young professional in Westchester County, New York. He is committed to uplifting individuals of all socioeconomic backgrounds, as the son of Colombian and Haitian immigrants. He currently serves as Co-Chair of UNA-Westchester's Young Professionals Program and is a UN Foundation Global Ambassador for Sustainable Development Goal 13 on Climate Action. He is Outreach Manager at Sustainable Westchester, Inc., and was formerly Student Network Coordinator at Federated Conservationists of Westchester County, and Chapter Chair of Vice President Al Gore's Climate Reality

Project. Paul has received numerous accolades throughout his tenure of volunteerism. In 2015 he was named a recipient of the Westchester County Government's Earth Day Award for reestablishing an observance of Earth Day at SUNY Westchester Community College. In 2018 he was named a Top 22 under 30 young professional Wunderkind by Westchester Magazine, and was named a New York State top 40 under 40 Latino Rising Star by the Hispanic Coalition of New York Inc. Paul recently received a BA in Environmental Studies at SUNY Purchase. Paul's long-term goal is to become an Environmental Attorney at PACE University's Elisabeth Haub School of Law in White Plains, NY.