



LEADERSHIP MISSOULA



SESSION DAY PRESENTERS

Government & Politics Session Day

December 14, 2023

Michael Halligan – Executive Director, Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation

Email:

Mike Halligan was raised in Billings, Montana. Mr. Halligan is a Vietnam veteran and later attended the University of Montana in Missoula where he earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Political Science in 1975, a Master's Degree in Public Administration in 1977, and graduated from the University of Montana School of Law in 1984.

Mr. Halligan served in the Montana State Senate for 22 years from 1980 to 2002. Mike served as a deputy Missoula County Attorney from 1985 to 1990, operated a private family law practice from 1990 to 1999 and served as the supervising attorney for the Montana Department of Justice, Child Protection Unit, from 1999 to 2002. He has been Director of Government and Corporate Relations for Washington Corporations and Executive Director of the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation since 2002.

Ellie Boldman-Hill – Senator – State of Montana

Email: Ellie.Boldman@legmt.gov

Representative Ellie Hill, a four term legislator from the State of Montana, a lifelong Rocky Mountain Westerner, and named by Time Magazine as one of the "40 Under 40 Political Rising Stars" in the nation.

Ellie developed an interest in progressive politics at Boise State University where she graduated with her father, a union worker and Vietnam veteran, who had taken one night class a semester for 36 years. After graduating from the University of Idaho, College of Law, with a Juris Doctor, she interned for the Nez Perce tribe and practiced as deputy prosecutor in Boise, thereafter serving for six years as Executive Director of a large nonprofit serving Montana's most critically impoverished and homeless.

She's been voted as "Missoula's Best Activist" for eleven consecutive years (2007-2018) and named by NAMI Montana as their "2013 Hero Award", travelled the Middle East with American Council of Young Political Leaders, visited White House with Young Elected Officials Network, and named by Washington Post as one of the best "Political Tweeters."

Ellie has spoken for thousands as a keynote or panelists for Aspen Institute, Conference on Word Affairs, Netroots Nation, American Women in Politics, amongst many others.

In 2015, Ellie joined the national board of AAUW (American Association of University Women), the nation's leading voice for equity and education for women and girls, representing 170,000 members, 800 colleges and universities.

In 2016, she was elected on the Nation Board of the National Conference of State Legislators, representing all the state legislators and staff throughout the nation. In the position, she was selected to travel to China with a bipartisan delegation representing American democracy.

An attorney and mom, you'll find Ellie on the front lines advocating for underdog and enjoying a Montana made microbrew.

Marilyn Marler, UM Natural Areas Specialist

Email: marilyn.marler@umontana.edu

I manage UM owned natural areas in Missoula County, including M Sentinel and lands at Fort Missoula. The main issues in those areas are 1) invasive plants and 2) high use by recreationists.

My job includes direct management of invasive plants via integrated plant management methods, applied research on restoration approaches, community outreach and education, mentoring undergraduates in work based internships, and development and marketing of this work.

I love teaching botany in a range of settings, including UM classes, work based internships for undergraduates interested in restoration ecology, through Missoula County Life Long Learning Program, or for Montana FWP's Outdoor Woman series.

I have served on the board of directors of many related Montana non-profits including, the Montana Natural History Center, the Montana Native Plant Society, Friends of the UM Herbarium, Montana Weed Control Association and the Northern Rockies Invasive Plant Council.

I served on the Missoula City Council from 2007-2017, and am currently serving my first term in the Montana State Legislature, representing House District 90

Juanita Vero – Partner, County Commissioner

Email: jvero@missoulacounty.us

Fourth generation partner at one of Montana's oldest family-owned and operated dude ranches. Prior to becoming a county commissioner, my volunteer and non-profit focus was on collaborative, landscape scale, community conservation primarily in the Blackfoot watershed.

What speaker(s) inspire you? My fellow commissioners Slotnick and Strohmaier! Brene Brown, Jocko Willink

What Podcasts are you currently listening to? TRT Method, Mountain and Prairie, NYT The Daily, MeatEater, Joe Rogan, This American Life

What book(s) are you currently reading? No Good Men Among The Living: America, The Taliban and the War Through Aghan Eyes (Anand Gopal); Never Split the Difference (Chris Voss), San Fransicko (Michael Shellenberger); On Our Best Behavior: The 7 Deadly Sins and the Price Women Pay To Be Good (Elise Loehnen); Poverty, By America (Matthew Desmond)

What is your 'why' and how does that relate to your leadership style? Joy, wonder, service. Those are my "pillars" and what guides/grounds my leadership style.

Volunteer Opportunities: Check out board and committee opportunities with Missoula County!

Dave Strohmaier – County Commissioner

Email: dstrohmaier@missoulacounty.us

Dave Strohmaier currently serves on the Missoula Board of County Commissioners, and he and his wife, Gretchen, have called Missoula County home since 1997. Prior to being elected as a county commissioner, Dave worked for 18 years with the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service in a variety of roles (primarily as a wild-land firefighter), and 13 years in the private sector as a historian with Historical Research Associates, Inc., where he specialized in environmental and Native American history. Dave holds an undergraduate degree from Seattle Pacific University in religion-philosophy and graduate degrees from Yale Divinity School (M.A.R., 1995, philosophy of religion) and the University of Montana (M.S., 1999, environmental studies).

Dave is a published author, having written two books on the subject of fire in the West: *The Seasons of Fire* (2001, University of Nevada Press) and *Drift Smoke* (2005, University of Nevada Press). With his background in fire management, he remains interested in fire ecology and the challenges of learning to live in landscapes that are adapted to fire.

From 2006 to 2013, Dave represented Ward 1 on the Missoula City Council where he chaired the Parks and Conservation Committee and Public Safety and Health Committee. Some of the initiatives that he advocated for included human rights, energy conservation, passenger rail and sustainable transportation, downtown revitalization, and establishing government-to-government relations between the city of Missoula and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

Outside of serving in local government, Dave enjoys big game hunting, fishing, writing, and spending time in the backcountry with his wife, son, and daughter.

What speaker(s) inspire you? What speaker(s) inspire you? Former Mayor John Engen; my colleagues on the county commission--Josh Slotnick and Juanita Vero

What Podcasts are you currently listening to? Sadly, none. Recording The Agenda (Missoula County commissioner's podcast)

What book(s) are you currently reading? Sadly, nothing! Reading a lot of email and various work-related documents.

What is your 'why' and how does that relate to your leadership style? Life is short, so focus on what is truly important, don't take yourself too seriously, and live every moment as if it is your last. Consequently, when it comes to leadership, I try hard to give others the benefit of the doubt and embrace a sense of gracious space.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Missoula County offers myriad opportunities to serve on volunteer boards and advisory committees.

Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (an initiative of Missoula County) also offers a number of opportunities for citizen volunteers.

Community Councils, for those who live outside of the city of Missoula

Josh Slotnik - County Commissioner

Email: jslotnik@missoulacounty.us

Josh Slotnick moved from Grand Forks, ND., to Missoula as an 18 yr old, to go to college. He got a degree in Philosophy from the University of Montana, served in the US Peace Corps in Thailand, furthered his education at UC Santa Cruz with a certificate in Ecological Horticulture, and in graduate school at Cornell (MPS 95' Agriculture Extension).

Josh has been farming here with his wife on their family farm since 1992. In 1996 he co-founded Garden City Harvest (GCH), and the PEAS Program in the Environmental Studies program at the University of Montana. These entities have grown considerably since, and Josh's work, with many partners, has been well recognized.

Josh has received many awards including:

The Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter Partnership Award, 2004;

Jeanette Rankin Peace Center's Peace Maker of the Year Award, 2006;

The Don Aldrich Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Award in 2010;

and the Alumni Impact Award, from the US State Department, in 2015, for his work in the State Department's Professional Fellows program.

Josh has also received three awards from the University of Montana for service to students.

Josh has spoken at dozens of universities (including UC Berkeley, Harvard, Brown, University of Michigan), more than 50 public events and his TEDx talk has been seen by thousands of people.

In Missoula, he has served on many voluntary boards of directors, including: The Missoula County Weed Board, the Missoula City County Planning Board, Homeward, AERO, and the Missoula Farmers Market. He has written articles, essays, book chapters, and one book.

Josh initially farmed in Missoula at the current River Road farm site, and later began the PEAS Farm. Now both of those sites are preserved for the long-term. In the growth of PEAS and GCH, and everything he has been involved in, Josh has brought partners to the work, and spread both the responsibility and the benefits of these projects. He is a collaborative leader.

His family is his greatest source of pride: his wife, Kim who runs their family farm, Clark Fork Organics in the Orchard Homes area, and their kids, Quinn (25), Sophie (21) and Tasha (18).

What speaker(s) inspire you? Majora Carter, John Engen

What Podcasts are you currently listening to: Prof. G., Pivot, Political Gabfest, The Daily, Hang Up and Listen

What book(s) are you currently reading?: How the Word is Passed, by Clint Smith, One Long River of Song, Brian Doyle

What is your 'why' and how does that relate to your leadership style? Purpose - Communicating why we need to act, and being open and collaborative on how we get there

Volunteer Opportunities: Food Policy Board

Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion board

Animal Control Board

Aquatic Invasive Species Board

Paige Judnich, Senior Consultant Human Resources, Cascadia Management

Email: Paige@cascadiamg.com

Paige joined the Cascadia Management team as a Senior Consultant in 2020 to provide ad hoc HR support in partnership with the rest of the Cascadia team. Paige offers almost a decade in corporate Human Resources and Talent Acquisition. Her specialties include HR leadership training, HR infrastructure development and support, employee relations, and culture building.

Starting with her Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies from the University of Puget Sound, Paige has always had a passion for effective and productive communication in the workplace. She provides expert guidance through difficult situations and offers accessible frameworks for her clients to use for future situations.

Paige has provided HR support to Montana businesses since 2003 and is proud to raise her two daughters with her husband in Missoula.

When Paige isn't supporting clients; she can be found running her two kids around town, substitute teaching, walking her dog around the neighborhood, or coordinating her church's youth group.

Libby Brunell, Senior Consultant, Cascadia Management

Email: libby@cascadiamg.com

Libby joined the Cascadia Management team as a Senior Consultant providing workforce and team development, instructional design, project management, operations management, and technical expertise at the local and state level. She effectively leads clients through operational, organizational, and cultural transformation with an eye to operational efficiencies and team and stakeholder engagement. She facilitates development and advancement of organizations, focusing on decision making that supports long-term sustainability and the ability to pivot and adapt to changes. Libby leads teams to focus on continuous improvement and innovation. Libby has served in interim C-level and executive leadership roles in both the private and public sectors. A Montanan born and raised, with family roots in Butte, Libby values strong work ethic and giving back to the community, and is dedicated to Montana, its people and its economic growth

Gwen Jones – President - City Council

Email: gjones@ci.missoula.mt.us

City Council representative for Ward 3 since January 2016; Rose Park Neighborhood Leadership Council - 2014-2016

What speaker(s) inspire you? What speaker(s) inspire you? I like to listen to the Mahsfield Center Dialogues

What book(s) are you currently reading? George Washington, by Ronald Chernow

What is your 'why' and how does that relate to your leadership style? I believe that effective leaders have to use their personal strengths and personalities to resonate with people, leadership styles vary but must be genuine.

Andrea Davis – Mayor, City of Missoula

Email: bakulah@ci.missoula.mt.us

Mayor Andrea Davis is from Montana and has called Missoula home since 1998 when she transferred from Flathead Valley Community College to the University of Montana, where she studied Organizational Communications and Environmental Studies. For 22 years, Andrea has been building homes Montanans can afford with five (5) of those years at the Missoula Housing Authority as Director of Planning and Development and 17 years at Homeward, 15 of which as the Executive Director. Under her tenure at Homeward, Andrea has overseen the creation of more than 1,500 homes built or restored for Montanans to afford and provided education for tens of thousands of Missoulians to buy their first home and make informed financial decisions.

This work has been headquartered in Missoula while creating homes across the state and focusing on creating state policy to secure permanently affordable homes. Andrea has served on several Board of Directors including Mountain Line, Missoula Economic Partnership, NeighborWorks Montana, Montana Nonprofit Association and the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee for the Federal Home Loan Bank.

Andrea lives in central Missoula with her husband, Denison, husky dog Luka, and loves the recreational and cultural amenities Missoula offers.

What speaker(s) inspire you? What speaker(s) inspire you? Brenne Brown, MLK Jr., President Obama

What Podcasts are you currently listening to? Sadly, none. Recording The Agenda (Missoula County commissioner's podcast)

What book(s) are you currently reading? On the Media, This American Life, Hidden Brain

What is your 'why' and how does that relate to your leadership style? I have a core desire and passion to serve, to help, to connect and bring solutions forward - together.

Volunteer Opportunities: Please contact the mayor's office for Board and Commission opportunities

Kalina Pritchard, Neighborhood Specialist - Office of Neighborhoods, City of Missoula

Email: PritchardK@ci.missoula.mt.us

Kalina Pritchard has worked at the Neighborhoods Office at the City of Missoula for 2 years. Prior to that she received her Masters of Public Administration degree from University of Montana and worked for 5+ years at the Downtown Missoula Partnership working directly with community building and community programming.

What is your 'why' and how does that relate to your leadership style? My why is to make sure everyone in Missoula feels like they are heard in their local government and continually feel like they are welcome in their neighborhood and community while also building up more opportunities for connection.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Being on a Leadership Team for your neighborhood

Volunteer for various events in your neighborhood (Clean-Ups, Block Parties, etc.)

Help get the word out about various projects through door knocking or passing out flyers

Alex Fregerio, Neighborhood Council – Miller Creek

Email: alex.fregerio@gmail.com

Miller Creek Neighborhood Council Leadership Team since 2019

What Podcasts are you currently listening to? This American Life, WTF, The Big Picture

What book(s) are you currently reading? Winter In the Blood – James Welch

What is your 'why' and how does that relate to your leadership style? Looking to make my neighborhood and city a better place for all.

Gretchen Hooker, Visual Science Communication Manager – Biomimicry Institute – Neighborhood Council - Northside/Westside

Email: gretchen.hooker@gmail.com

Gretchen leads visual science communication on the Institute's AskNature.org platform, working to reveal the mechanisms behind nature's strategies with powerful illustrations and diagrams. She also contributes to overall content and product strategy for AskNature, drawing on more than 10 years of experience managing and creating biomimicry educational programs for learners of all ages.

Gretchen also volunteers as a leadership team member on the Northside/Westside Neighborhood Council.

What Podcasts are you currently listening to? 99% Invisible, Threshold

What book(s) are you currently reading? The Ministry for the Future by Ken Robinson

Rachel Calderon-Navarro, Neighborhood Council – Rose Park

Email: gretchen.hooker@gmail.com

Rachel Calderon-Navarro's currently works at DFTBA Records as the Creator Partnerships Art Director. When she is not working at her day job she is working to engage her neighbors of Rose Park by being on the Neighborhood Leadership Team.

Additionally, in her spare time works with the Western Montana Workers Alliance where she is currently Co-Chair.

What book(s) are you currently reading? The Dispossessed by Ursula K Le Guin

What is your 'why' and how does that relate to your leadership style? Leadership can come in many forms. To me, leadership is showing up and being ready to listen. Leadership is also not about one singular person. It is when many voices come together to advocate for things that they want to see happen in their neighborhood, their workplace, their schools. My goal as a leader is to uplift those that want to engage with others about what happens in their community. I choose to lead by building my organizing toolkit and sharing those skills with others so that they can lead within their network as well.

Terri Roach, Co-Chair - Upper Rattlesnake Neighborhood Council Leadership Team

Email: terriroach@hotmail.com

Election Judge, prior chair of gifted and talented program in Plains, MT. Retired career counselor for Disabled Veterans (VA). Enjoys taking care of her grandchildren

What speaker(s) inspire you? UM MOLLI program instructors - they are fabulous.

What book(s) are you currently reading? Born a Crime - Trevor Noah

What is your 'why' and how does that relate to your leadership style? I like working with people and helping them overcome barriers. I love my neighborhood and want to keep it a great place to live.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Our neighborhood council leadership team is comprised of volunteers

Election judges volunteer their time