

# 2022 Nominees For (and Continuing Members of) the NGS Board of Directors

The following are biographical sketches of the nominees for the Board of Directors along with three members who will continue to serve. Two current board members, Andre Kearns of Washington, D.C., and Judy Nimer Muhn of Michigan, have terms that expire in 2024 and are not up for election. Benjamin B. Spratling, JD, will continue to serve as past president.

## Nominees

### President: Kathryn M. Doyle, California

---



**Kathryn Doyle** has been a member of the NGS Board of Directors since 2016 and was elected to the office of president in 2020. She joined the NGS membership committee in 2015 and served as its chair through 2018. Kathryn was the communications director at the California Genealogical Society (CGS) from 2007–2013 where she edited the *CGS e-News* and wrote its award-winning blog.

Doyle has been researching her mother's Japanese, her husband's Greek, and her father's Irish and English ancestry since 1999. Her genealogy education includes Boston University's Online Certificate in Genealogical Research (OL5), ProGen28, Genealogical Institute of Federal Records (Gen-Fed), and several institute courses. She holds a degree in pharmacy from the University of Michigan and pursued a career in hospital pharmacy administration until retirement. She resides with her husband in the San Francisco Bay Area.

### Vice President: Ellen Pinckney Balthazar, MS, Texas

---



**Ellen Pinckney Balthazar** joined the NGS Board of Directors in 2018 and was elected to the office of vice president in 2020. She currently co-chairs the planning committee, focusing on building organizational capacity and strategic planning. In the Austin, Texas, area she leads a collaborative initiative to preserve the collections and advance public access and programming of the local history center. A member of DAR for more than forty years, Balthazar got hooked on family history when she collected stories, pictures, and recipes from descendants of her great-grandparents to produce a cookbook.

A retired marketing and non-profit executive, she honed her consumer research skills at Procter & Gamble, her brand marketing expertise at Frito-Lay, and her public relations acumen in the international division of PepsiCo's restaurant businesses. In 2005, Ellen successfully transitioned this business and marketing experience to the not-for-profit sector, becoming CEO of a leading 501(c) (3) organization in Austin, Texas, focused on children's issues. Under her leadership, the organization doubled the number of families served, as well as the budget. Since retiring in 2012, she has enjoyed being a volunteer mentor and consultant to non-profit organizations. She also has served her local community as a trustee on the school board since 2001. A University of Georgia Bulldog (BSHEJ, MS), she and her husband live in Austin with their children and grandchildren right around the corner.

## Vice President, Society & Organization Management: Cheri Hudson Passey, South Carolina

---



**Cheri Hudson Passey** joined the NGS Board of Directors in 2020 when she was elected as the society's vice president of society and organization management. She is a professional genealogist, instructor, writer, and speaker and the owner of Carolina Girl Genealogy, LLC which provides research services as well as instruction and coaching through her Genealogy 1-on-1 classes. Cheri is the host of the genealogy chat show GenFriends seen on YouTube and is a genealogical researcher, subcontracted by Eagle Investigative Services, Inc., for the US Army Past Conflict Repatriations Branch.

Cheri enjoys volunteering and serving the genealogy community. She is a Past President of The Grand Strand Genealogy Club and currently serves as Program Chair. She served as the secretary of the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) board of directors and is treasurer for the GeneaBloggersTRIBE.

## Secretary: W. Samuel Williams, Virginia

---



**Sam Williams** currently serves as the chair of the NGS Delegate Council. He served as the vice-chair of the NGS Delegate Council from 2020-2021 and was a founding member of its Steering Committee. He is the secretary of the Virginia Beach Genealogical Society and the captain for the Board of Assistants of the Virginia Mayflower Society. As the owner of The Orthodox Genealogist, LLC, he lectures and takes client work especially in Central Virginia, Greek American, and genetic genealogy mysteries. He is an alumnus of ProGen 50, NGS American Genealogical Studies, and several institutes.

Williams studied International Affairs and Spanish at James Madison University and theology at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. He works in full-time ministry as a pastoral assistant in the Greek Orthodox Church and lives in Norfolk, Virginia.

## Treasurer: Douglas Klein, CPA, Ohio

---



**Doug Klein** is a member of NGS, and a professional genealogist and a volunteer Y-DNA surname project co-administrator. He has been actively researching family histories for over a decade, completed the Boston University Certificate in Genealogical Research Program in May 2020, and is currently completing the ProGen Study Group #56 (December 2022). He is also a volunteer with the National Park Service, is transcribing Black Homesteaders Project applications, and plans to apply for a certification credential in 2023 or 2024.

Klein is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in Ohio, recently retiring from public accounting with one of the largest CPA firms where he was a director in the National Tax Office. His career started in public accounting over thirty-five years ago, with eight of those as a revenue agent with the IRS in Cleveland and Cincinnati from which he obtained his Enrolled Agent (EA) license/credential. Like many CPAs, he has substantial experience on nonprofit boards and has served several cycles as the treasurer, Finance and Audit Committee Chairs for a large local nonprofit (over \$25mm).

## Director Region 1: Sara Gredler, CG, AG, Colorado

---



**Sara Gredler** is a member of NGS and is a full-time genealogist researcher with AncestryProGenealogists. She currently lives in Fort Collins, Colorado. Her primary research locations in the US are the South, the Mid-Atlantic, and New England. She also focuses on genetic genealogy. She has a Masters in Historic Preservation and previously worked as an architectural historian and database designer at an architecture and engineering firm in Texas. She began researching over thirty years ago with her parents.

Sara received her Certified Genealogist credential in May 2020 and her Accredited Genealogist credential in December 2021. She serves as a mentor for the "Mastering Genealogical Proof" eight-week study groups, now under the umbrella of the ProGen Study Groups. She has spoken at local, state, regional, and national-level conferences,

with a focus on social history and how it affected our ancestors. She has attended institute courses at the Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP) and Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG) since 2013, ranging from African American research and Law for Genealogists to Russian genealogical methodologies, and will attend the Genealogical Institute on Federal Records (GenFed) in August 2022.

## Director Region 2: Robert Johnson, JD, CG, Minnesota

---



**Bob Johnson** is a member of NGS and a professional genealogist, author, and speaker. He has also worked as an attorney and historic preservationist. He holds a Certified Genealogist® credential and has specialized in Scandinavian genealogical research for over forty years. Bob received a law degree from Boston University, a master's degree in public history from Middle Tennessee State University, and an undergraduate degree (BA) in history and political science from the University of Minnesota where he spent part of his studies in Växjö, Sweden. Bob has been active in many genealogical societies throughout the U.S. and Scandinavia. He currently is secretary of the board of the Minnesota Genealogical Society and is a director on the Board of the Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota. His most recent publication is *Husförhörslängder, Swedish Household Examination Records: Framing the Solutions to Your Swedish Ancestry Puzzles*.

## Director Region 3: Marlis Humphrey, Florida

---



**Marlis Humphrey** was elected to the board in 2020 and currently serves as the director for Region 3 and on the governance and development committees, and served on the marketing and communications team. She is a professional genealogist and a frequent speaker at genealogy conferences. Humphrey serves as president of the Florida State Genealogical Society and past president of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies. She is CEO and co-founder of the L'Dor V'Dor Foundation and its Documentation of Jewish Records Worldwide project.

Humphrey is a senior executive who drives global growth through innovation in the face of disruptive technology in both the commercial and non-profit sectors. She has served on and led national and international non-profit and trade association boards for three decades. She has an MS in Management of Technology, University of Miami, and a BA in Russian Language with a minor in Math and Computer Science from Knox College, Illinois. She is passionate about the discovery of unknown ancestors, teaching others to be successful, and the sharing of family histories.

## Director Region 4: Lisa Fanning, Maryland

---



**Lisa Fanning** is a member of NGS and serves on the Society's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee. She is a genealogist who has extensively researched her family history back to North Carolina and Virginia African and Tri-Racial Isolate communities in the 1600s. Lisa is also a genetic genealogist who volunteers for the DNA Doe Project and DNA Search Squad. For the past twenty-five years, she has worked professionally in the diversity, equity, and inclusion field and is excited about combining her passions to build a stronger diverse, equitable, and inclusive genealogy community.

## Director at Large: Janice Cross-Gilyard, New Jersey

---



**Janice Cross-Gilyard** is a member of NGS, and both a Charter Member and board member of The Sons & Daughters of the United States Middle Passage and a member of the Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society–New Jersey Chapter. She served as vice president (three terms) and currently serves as president (second term) for the New Jersey Chapter. She is the editor of its newsletter, as well as programming coordinator, and provides content for the chapter's Facebook page. She is also a board member of the 313+ Ancestors Speak Project.

Janice has conducted family research for the past twenty-six years documenting her family history to 1720. Her ancestors were farmers, authors, professors (two founded colleges), abolitionists, mariners, midwives, political campaigners, and pastors. She is enthusiastic about history and genealogy and believes that her ancestors chose her to research, document and tell their stories. She has made numerous genealogy presentations at genealogical and lineage societies, churches, libraries, universities, and has presented at RootsTech 2021 and 2022. She is also a Paul E. Sluby African American Scholarship Recipient (2021). Last year Janice became a podcaster with *Speak On It! History & Genealogy Conversations with Janice & Cherekana*.

Janice's professional experience includes over twenty years in public relations. Currently, she manages customer care clients for PANOS Brands.



## Director at Large: Ed Donakey, Utah

---



**Ed Donakey** was elected to the board in 2020 and currently serves as an at-large director. Ed is vice president of strategic relations and deputy chief genealogical officer at FamilySearch International where he manages the Chief Genealogical Office. He works with genealogical societies and others to identify partnerships and fundraising opportunities and to develop solutions to acquire critical genealogical data. A professional strategist and past CEO, he provides business and technology support to genealogical societies, non-profits, and emerging businesses.

His genealogical interests keep him in the Deep South, Ireland, and Scotland as he researches his ancestors daily. As a member of the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) board of directors, he was a past vice president of development, responsible for fundraising and partnerships and he served as national co-chair of the 2014 FGS Conference in San Antonio, Texas. He served five-years on the advisory

board of the Utah IT Symposium and as chair of the Kids On The Move board of directors. Donakey also sits on, or sat on, executive advisory councils or boards at Calera KK, Dell, HP, Oracle, Altiris, and other technology organizations. A happily married father and grandfather, Donakey was elected six straight years to the v|Spring v100, recognizing the top one hundred entrepreneurs in Utah. His undergraduate and graduate studies were in philosophy and political philosophy respectively at BYU.

## Director at Large: Ashley Gonzalez, Florida

---



**Ashley Gonzalez** is a member of NGS and a professional genealogist, researcher, and historian with deep roots in the American South. For Ashley, genealogy has been a lifelong joy. With the advent of DNA, helping adoptees through investigative genetic genealogy, especially those with Cuban heritage, has been a passion project for her. She focuses on genealogical research in the southern US states and Latin America, with a particular focus on Florida, Cuba, and Mexico. She is a member of the Firebird Forensics Group and board director for the Florida State Genealogical Society, Flagler County Historical Society, and Kings Road Historic District.

Gonzalez is the director of digital operations for *401(k) Specialist*, specializing in digital marketing, brand alignment, and advanced web development. She holds an AA and AS in Information Sciences from Daytona State College, and a BA in eCommerce Business from the University of Phoenix. Her genealogy education includes American Genealogical Studies, ProGen (43), IGHR Intermediate and Advanced Genealogical Methods, and other courses. She is currently working toward a Certified Genealogist® credential.

## Director at Large: David E. Rencher, AG, CG, FIGRS, FUGA, Utah

---



**David Rencher** was elected to the NGS board in 2020 and currently serves as the chair of the development committee. David is employed as the Chief Genealogical Officer for FamilySearch. A professional genealogist since 1977, he is one of the rare few who have earned both credentials: Accredited Genealogist® with ICAPGen in Ireland research (1981) and Certified Genealogist® with the Board for Certification of Genealogists (2006). He is the Irish course coordinator and instructor for the Institute of Genealogical and Historical Research (IGHR) in Athens, Georgia, and the Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Rencher graduated from Brigham Young University in 1980 with a BA in Family and Local History. He is a past-president of the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) 1997–2000, a past-president of the Utah Genealogical Association (UGA) 1993–1995, and a fellow of that organization. He is a fellow of the Irish Genealogical Research Society, London. He is the past chair of the joint National Genealogical Society and International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies committee for the Record Preservation and Access Coalition; he also serves as a counselor for the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

## Continuing Directors

### Director at Large: Andre Kearns, Washington, D.C.

---



**Andre Kearns** was elected to the board in 2020 and chairs the society's diversity, equity, and inclusion committee. Andre is a genealogist, public speaker, commentator, and writer with deep roots in the American south and a passion for discovering new ancestors and learning their stories. As an African American, he knew he descended from enslaved persons and likely slave owners which DNA analysis has helped to confirm. Through his research he also discovered ancestors who were free people of color long before the civil war, Native American, and multi-racial persons. Discovering this ancestry has unlocked previously unknown rich aspects of American history. Genealogy has been Andre's hobby for 15 years.

He holds a BA in Business Administration from Morehouse College and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He shares his research findings at [CumboFamily.com](http://CumboFamily.com) and regularly blogs on race, culture, history, and genealogy at [www.medium/@andrekearns](https://www.medium/@andrekearns).

## Director at Large: Judy Nimer Muhn, Michigan

---



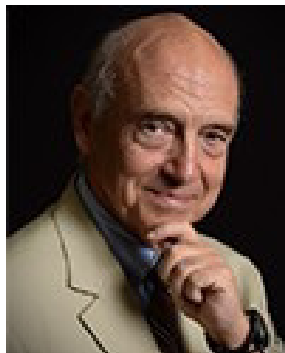
**Judy Nimer Muhn** joined the NGS board in 2021 and serves as the chair of the awards committee. Judy has been researching her family from the age of twelve, specializing in French-Canadian, Acadian, Native American, and Michigan research. Since starting her career as a professional genealogist in Europe in 1993, she has lectured at NGS Family History Conferences, RootsTech, and Federation of Genealogical Societies as well as conferences in Europe and throughout the United States. Traveling extensively around the world, Muhn has visited and researched in the villages and archives of Germany, Scotland, France, Quebec, and Ontario where her or her husband's family lived.

Muhn owns Lineage Journeys and is the president of the Oakland County Genealogical Society, vice-president and social media committee member and blogger for the Michigan Genealogical Council, and serves as secretary for the GeneaBloggers. She is a member of NGS, Ontario and Quebec genealogical societies, Detroit Society for Genealogical Research, French Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan, and many more.

A nonprofit specialist, Muhn is an organizational development consultant for NEW (Nonprofit Enterprise at Work) in Ann Arbor. Previously, she was a member of the executive staff for Girl Scouting, the American Red Cross, and various United Way locations.

## Past President: Benjamin B. Spratling, JD, Alabama

---



**Ben Spratling** has served on the NGS Board of Directors since 2012, including four years as president (2016-2020) and two years as vice president (2014-2016). He is a coordinator and lecturer at the Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research (IGHR) where he has been a member of the faculty since 1992. He is the author of the "Court and Legal Records" chapter of *Printed Sources: A Guide to Published Genealogical Records*.

Spratling is a member of the Birmingham, Alabama, law firm, Haskell Slaughter & Spratling, LLC. He received his law degree (JD) from Vanderbilt University Law School and his undergraduate degree (BS, Economics) from Auburn University. He also received a master's degree (LLM, Taxation) from the University of Alabama School of Law. Spratling is a former adjunct instructor of Business Law at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. For the past twenty years, he has received the highest "Peer Review Rating" (AV Preeminent) from Martindale-Hubbell, a national attorney rating service, and he has been listed in each annual edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*, 2010–2020.