



**Joshua D. Crews , AIA, EDAC | NELSON**  
**Laura Morton, AIA | Stevens & Wilkinson**

May 3, 2019

# Community Engagement & Civic Leadership

**SESSION # 8**

**Herman Miller Showroom**  
916 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd NW #7, Atlanta, GA 30318



# Community Engagement & Civic Leadership

## PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The final session content will focus on how architects can be more outward focused, and become active in their communities both professionally and personally. The afternoon will begin with a group activity, which will allow the scholars creative license to propose solutions to a problem.

The second part of the session will address how we can better engage with the communities in which we work, thus benefitting the residents and the project, by showcasing a project that has successfully done it.

Finally, the role of architects as civic leaders is a growing trend that the AIA promotes, and many firm principals see the benefit as well. We will hear from a local firm manager that pursued a position in city government, and became mayor.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Practice engaging with community members, then learn how to address difficult topics or questions while maintaining professionalism and diplomacy.
2. Hear from a successful team that has a community-focused development underway. Study how to do it, pros/cons, and lessons learned.
3. Learn where young professionals can implement design thinking to have impact on social issues.
4. Discover potential areas of interest to volunteer and contribute, and see the personal and professional advantages of civic involvement.

## PROGRAM ABSTRACT:

Community driven development is becoming more popular as people abandon the suburban sprawl for more close-knit living in town. As architects, we have the responsibility to embrace this direction, and adapt our practice to better engage with the communities in which we build. Architects provide interesting problem solving perspectives that can bridge the worlds between developers and residents, so we should strive to implement community engagement plans when a challenging or impactful project arises, to ensure the most successful outcome for all.

It is also important to portray a strong but understanding image in the face of the public. Perception is key, so if a plan or project is delivered in such a way that the community feels heard, they will then be confident their best interest is being considered.

One of the more dynamic methods to engage the community is to be involved in a civic role; to be invested in the community yourself. By investing time and contributing to non-profit organizations or volunteer opportunities, we can become integral in developing the community from a social platform, not just on a project by project basis. The opportunities to volunteer within organizations, such as the AIA, provide perspectives and insights that allow professionals to better engage the public. While devoting time, attention, and resources to social aspects of the community, we can strengthen our ability to have a positive and lasting impact on the design of those communities.

# Community Engagement & Civic Leadership

**Date:** May 3, 2019

**Location:** Herman Miller Showroom, 916 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd NW #7, Atlanta, GA 30318

**Time:** 12:00 pm – 4:40 pm

## AGENDA

12:00 – 12:15	<b>Lunch Reception</b>
12:15 – 12:20	<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b> by Josh Crews & Laura Morton
12:20 – 1:00	<b>Group Activity Part I - Community Project Presentations</b> by All Scholars
1:00 – 2:00	<b>Presentation I - Media Training</b> by Hank Sforzini, Ashley Nasser, & Eric Keens
2:00 – 2:15	<b>Group Activity Part II - Assessment</b> by Hank Sforzini, Ashley Nasser, Eric Keens, & Volunteers
2:15 – 2:25	Break
2:25 – 3:15	<b>Case Study - Pittsburgh Yards</b> by Natallie Keiser, Chantell Glenn, James Harris, & Ryan Akin
3:15 – 3:25	Break
3:25 – 4:15	<b>Presentation II - Architects as Civic Leaders</b> by R. Eric Clarkson, Mayor of Chamblee
4:15 – 4:40	<b>Conclusion &amp; Housekeeping</b> by Josh Crews, Laura Morton, & the CKLDP Executive Committee
4:40 – 5:00	Transfer to Reception
5:00 – 7:30	<b>Graduation Reception</b> Design Within Reach, 1210 Howell Mill Rd, Atlanta, GA 30318

### III. Speakers & Presentations



Group 1 : Ina Bachmann, Eric Balogh, Josh

Crews, Carmen Evans

Group 2 : Daniel James, Laura Morton,

Jessika Nelson, Kelly Orji

Group 3 : Nicole Seekley, Jared Serwer,

Jereme Smith, Will Stanford

Group 4 : Brian Sudduth, Jessica Thompson,

Brock Tobaban, Robert Woodhurst

## Group Activity Part I

### Community Project Presentation - Exercise in Public Speaking

This activity will allow scholars to practice presentation skills, while exploring creative opportunities and challenges associated with community driven development.

Each scholar will break into their assigned group of four, and present on a “hypothetical” community focused design problem and project. They will pretend as though they are presenting to an invested/ concerned neighborhood community, complete with questions from the “audience”. Presentations should be 3-4 minutes, filmed within the group, and focus on outlining the project and related community engagement efforts.

## Group Activity Part II

### Assessment of Presentations

After Presentation I, volunteer scholars will have their recordings assessed for strength and success in communication skills.

## Presentation I

### Media Training

In today’s landscape, where reporters in every vertical are doing more with less, it’s no longer enough to simply recite talking points or “wing-it” and expect to generate impactful media coverage. Instead, Allison+Partners’ approach to media training teaches spokespeople the power of great storytelling to create sharable and compelling interview content that also aligns with your brand objectives.

At Allison+Partners, we’ve been on both sides of the camera and on all sides of the communications landscape. Using this understanding of the media mindset, we will provide tips on how to prepare for an interview, even if you only have a few minutes. This includes advice on body language, vocal delivery, eye contact and understanding how to perform on-camera. These delivery techniques are combined with messaging tools like bridging, flagging and hand-off that let you take control in the interview and direct the conversation where you want to go.

### Hank Sforzini, Director

Hank leverages his decade-plus marketing experience managing integrated communications campaigns to storytell for a diversity of clients. Over the years, he has worked with brands such as The Coca-Cola Co., Toyota and UL, as well as firms in the A/E/C space and other professional services providers.

As a director at Allison+Partners, Hank works actively with business, broadcast and trade media in Atlanta and across the country to spotlight his clients. He specializes in media relations programs, influencer engagement and creative activations designed to attract earned coverage and conversations.

Hank earned his bachelor’s degree from Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Alabama, and his master’s degree from Vanderbilt University.



Hank Sforzini, Director

Allison + Partners

Hank.Sforzini@allisonpr.com

www.allisonpr.com

**Presentation I**  
**Media Training**  
*-continued*



Ashley Nasser  
Allison + Partners  
AshleyN@allisonpr.com  
www.allisonpr.com

**Ashley Nasser**

Ashley has spent more than a dozen years providing program strategy and account leadership on integrated communications campaigns for consumer and corporate clients, helping brands tell their stories through media relations, influencer engagement, thought leadership, experiential marketing and more.

As SVP of client service and operations for the Allison+Partners Atlanta, Ashley is responsible for day-to-day operations, driving business development efforts within the growing Metro Atlanta and greater Southeast regions and providing strategic counsel for clients including Toyota, UL and Cortland. Most importantly, she works with the diverse and talented team in Atlanta to help them deliver unmatched results for clients and pursue entrepreneurial passions within their individual careers.

Prior to working on the agency side of public relations, Ashley spent seven years in the Los Angeles market developing and managing fundraising campaigns for a major nonprofit and working in television production and publicity at both the network and affiliate levels. She earned a bachelor's in public relations from the University of Florida, where she also competed on the cross country and track and field teams.



Eric Keens  
Stevens & Wilkinson  
ekeens@stevens-wilkinson.com  
<https://stevens-wilkinson.com>

**Eric Keens, CPSM, Director of Marketing & Communications**

Eric is a Certified Professional Services Marketer (CPSM) with over 18 years of demonstrated accomplishments in marketing, including branding, proposal generation, presentations and coaching, communications, client and team development, planning, and research. He currently leads the marketing department for Stevens & Wilkinson, a 100-year-old full-service integrated architecture, engineering and interior design firm.

Eric is an active member of the Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) Atlanta, having served as president in 2017-2018 after serving two years as president-elect and president. He has also held positions as secretary and director of membership.

## Case Study in Community Engagement

### Pittsburgh Yards, Atlanta, GA

The transformation of PITTSBURGH YARDS™, a multi-faceted development project, is an unprecedented opportunity to spur a more equitable distribution of income, wealth, jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities for residents in Neighborhood Planning Unit V and other southwest Atlanta neighborhoods. The 31-acre site is part of an area that is in the midst of significant - and promising - transition. Once complete, the hope is that Pittsburgh Yards™ will be a vibrant space where residents can work, create, shop, and play. Community Update Meetings are held monthly to keep local residents abreast of the development, and several subcommittees were formed to afford residents influence over art, branding, and entrepreneurship opportunities.



Natallie Keiser

Annie E. Casey Foundation

NKeiser@aecf.org

<https://www.aecf.org/>

### Natallie Keiser

Ms. Keiser is a dedicated non-profit executive with more than 25 years of experience creating opportunities for families with low incomes, strengthening communities and working for a more just society. She currently has responsibility for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's community development strategy at its Atlanta Civic Site, which includes community leadership development, community safety, affordable housing and commercial development (current priority project is Pittsburgh Yards -[www.pittsburghyards.com](http://www.pittsburghyards.com)). Previously, she operated a community development consulting practice specializing in strategic planning, project management, fundraising, interim leadership and board governance. Key achievements included assisting 375 people achieve homeownership by coordinating Atlanta's NeighborhoodLIFT downpayment assistance program and successfully guiding the staff and Board of The Center for Working Families through an organizational transition.

Before founding Keiser Consulting, Natallie provided leadership at Resources for Residents and Communities as the Chief of Staff and Interim CEO. RRC was a nationally respected non-profit community development corporation with business lines in housing development, property management, homebuyer and financial education, and community building. Previous roles have included supervising national microenterprise development projects for the Association for Enterprise Opportunity and guiding the United Way of Metro Atlanta's strategy in microenterprise and workforce development. Additional experiences included the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, a New Orleans transitional housing program and the International Fourth World Movement in several countries. Natallie holds a Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Chicago. She is a graduate of the Urban Land Institute's Center for Leadership and has held numerous board and community positions, including current roles with Enterprise Community Partners and Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership advisory boards.



Chantell Glenn

Annie E. Casey Foundation

CGlenn@aecf.org

<https://www.aecf.org/>

### Chantell Glenn, Program Associate

Chantell Glenn is a Program Associate on the Atlanta Civic Site team with the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Chantell supports investments in inclusive economic development and affordable housing development. Chantell has spent most of her career in the community and economic development field. She has worked as Director of Economic Development for the City of Riverdale, GA. She was responsible for implementing strategic plans to revitalize distressed commercial corridors in the city. Chantell has also worked for other local and state agencies and is knowledgeable in federally-funded grant programs. She has performed financial management, grant compliance, and strategic planning for affordable housing, homelessness and small business initiatives.

Chantell also has worked for a commercial real estate firm, Colliers International, in Atlanta. She worked on a brokerage services team and was responsible for coordinating proposals for business development, market research, transaction management, and client interface.

Chantell has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Spelman College and received the designation of Economic Development Finance Professional (EDFP).

## Case Study in Community Engagement

Pittsburgh Yards, Atlanta, GA

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James Harris

Core Ventures Studio

james@thecoreventures.com

<https://www.coreventuresstudio.com/>

### James Harris, Co-Founder & Partner

Harris is the co-founder of Core Venture Studios with the express purpose of creating adaptive reuse real estate projects with an Entrepreneurial focus. Core considers itself an Impact Developer. Along with Anthony Gee, the team created Collider - one of the first “affordable” co-working spaces in Atlanta; located just one block from Ga Tech’s business school. Teams from Ga Tech’s Flashpoint program made up over half the 60 plus companies that were mentored, incubated or housed in Collider.

Inspired by attending the very first Facebook developers conference in 2010, James is co-founded, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Storyteller of N4MD (pronounced “Informed”) to create web robots that would search the Web for content that could be shared by large corporations via Social Media as “recommended Content.” N4MD’s first customer was the Home Depot and was later joined by Nissan North America, Maui Jim sunglasses, and Sears.

James Harris. He has more than 20 years of experience in the startup, angel investing and venture supported co-working space. After co-founding Elemental in 1994, he served as its chief executive officer until the company’s purchase by Grey Global Group in December 1999. In May 2003, Harris repurchased Elemental Interactive from WPP, which retains a minority ownership stake in the new company, Elemental Interactive LLC. Over its 16-year history Elemental’s client list has included AFLAC, Ameritrade, AT&T, Avaya, Center for Black Women’s Wellness, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, Cingular Wireless, Canadian National Railroad, The Coca-Cola Company, Compaq, General Motors, Georgia-Pacific, Holiday Inn, IBM, National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Pfizer, Rayonier, Triarc, Turner Network Television, UPS, Worldspan, and others.

In 1999 Harris was recognized as Tennessee Tech’s Outstanding Young Alumnus. He is working to develop Camp Freedom, a camp for inner-city children that will specialize in teaching environmentalism, mathematics, and technology in the foothills of Tennessee.



Ryan Akin

Columbia Ventures

rakin@columbiaven.com

<http://columbiaven.com/>

### Ryan Akin, Development Manager

To Pittsburgh Yards, Ryan brings an engineering education, a project management and consultancy background, experience as an entrepreneur, and a desire to see people and communities flourish. As part of a larger development team and in an Owner Representative role, he serves as the Project Manager for the first phase of development of Pittsburgh Yards. This includes stewardship of the project in the best interest of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and in accordance with a Development Services Agreement.

He is a graduate of the University of Florida and Georgia Tech where he studied engineering, entrepreneurship, Christianity, and lacrosse. He and his wife, Christin, reside in the O4W, where for several years, on the side of his primary occupation, he owned and operated a small business making skateboards out of reclaimed and forest-free Atlanta wood as a means of employing and mentoring a young man in his neighborhood. He has a passion for thoughtfully contributing to the built environment through real estate development and looks forward to working alongside you all in the industry to do the same. He would be happy to share a meal with you and to take the opportunity to get to know you better as well.

## Presentation II

### Architects as Civic Leaders

Architects have a unique perspective and potential aptitude to provide leadership within multiple areas of the civic arena. With a dual perspective from a civic leadership role as Mayor of Chamblee and a Business Development Manager for Wakefield Beasley, Eric Clarkson will lead us in a discussion to explore the variety of opportunities architects have to engage in civic roles.

How can Architects use design thinking to help solve social problems? We'll discuss leadership roles in non-profit organizations and volunteer efforts for impactful social causes. We will explore examples of positions within the AIA in which to engage as well positions within the design field in general. We'll discuss how to plug into these organizations and where we could potentially provide the biggest impact.



R. Eric Clarkson, Mayor of Chamblee

<http://eclarkson.com/about-eric>

### R. Eric Clarkson, Mayor of Chamblee

Mayor Clarkson has always had a passion for public service. He has lived in the Chamblee area for more than 22 years and began his public service with Chamblee by serving three years on the City's volunteer Architectural Review Board. He then ran for public office and served four years on the City Council before being elected Mayor in 2005.

He has served on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Municipal Association as the President in the District 3 East Region as well as serving on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Planning Association. Mayor Clarkson currently serves as the DeKalb County Mayors appointee to the Board of the Atlanta Regional Commission and is also on the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) Transportation and Air Quality Committee (TAQC). He also currently serves as the Chairman of the Metro Atlanta Mayors Association as well as Chairman and founder of the Peachtree Gateway Partnership.

In 2010 Mayor Clarkson was awarded the Georgia Municipal Association Certificate of Distinction for attending more than 204 hours of training through the University of Georgia and Georgia Municipal Association's Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute for Elected Officials. This includes attending the Leadership Institute for Municipal Elected Officials in 2002. He is a 2012 graduate of the ARC's Regional Leadership Institute and in 2004 was named one of Georgia Trend Magazine's "40 Under 40."

A graduate of Missouri State University with a degree in Marketing Research and Decision Analysis, Mayor Clarkson has more than 28 years of marketing, sales and business management experience.

Mayor Clarkson is married to wife Lynn Clarkson. They have three children; Jenah, Alexa Rae, and Elijah

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## Acknowledgements

We would also like to thank our presenters from Allison + Partners, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Columbia Core Partners, as well as the Mayor of Chamblee for donating time out of their day to share their knowledge and expertise.