



GFOA'S 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles, California — with its vibrancy and incredible diversity of cultures, attractions, hotels, restaurants, museums, beaches, and mountains — welcomed GFOA for its 113th Annual Conference, May 19 to 22, 2019.

In this special section, find out more about GFOA's new board members, the events of the conference, GFOA scholarship winners, and our first Hero Award recipients.

MEET GFOA'S NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Government Finance Officers Association is governed by an 18-member Executive Board, which consists of 15 at-large members, the current president, the past president, and the president-elect. At the association's annual business meeting on May 21, 2019, during the 113th Annual Conference in Los Angeles, California, the following individuals were elected to GFOA's Executive Board.



PRESIDENT-ELECT MARION M. GEE

Director of Finance, Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District,
St. Louis, Missouri

GFOA Member: 18 years

GFOA Board Member: 2016 to 2019

Committees Served

- *Committee on Treasury and Investment Management (2011 to 2019; chair, 2013 to 2014)*
- *Local Conference Committee for GFOA's 112th Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri (co-chair, 2018; coordinated site visit to Maline Tunnel Project for Built by Bonds press conference)*

MARION M. GEE identified his goals as president-elect: continue to educate members on legislative matters and Governmental Accounting Standards Board and Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board pronouncements; communicate initiatives to decision makers, ensuring that they understand the impact those initiatives will have on state and local governments; pursue advocacy efforts such as tax-exemption status on municipal bonds; and work with elected officials to identify opportunities for new legislation that strengthens the communities we serve.

As director of finance for the Metropolitan St. Louis District, Gee oversees the preparation of the district's comprehensive annual financial report, monthly financial statements, statistical reports, and other financial documents for dissemination to the board of trustees, elected officials, bond rating agencies, and the public. He manages the development of the district's annual budget in compliance with its charter, ordinances, and policy requirements; and develops financial forecasts to ensure that district expenditures meet the legal and financial purpose of appropriations and obligations. Gee is responsible for the development of rates, taxes, and financial plans to ensure adequate revenues to fund district operations. As a member of the executive team, he prepares the district's strategic operating plan.

Gee has been on the Special Review Committee for GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Awards Program since 2004 and was a member of the Ethics Taskforce (2018 to 2019). He advocated on behalf of GFOA members during GFOA's Committee Meetings in Washington, D.C., in 2018 and 2019, discussing key priorities with elected officials and federal agencies.

In addition, Gee has served on the boards of the Volunteers of America for the Kentucky/Tennessee chapter (chair, 2010 to 2011), United Way of Kentucky (chair, 2010 to 2011), and the Louisville Science Center (board and finance committee member, 2008 to 2011), Kentucky Minority Suppliers Development Council (former operating board member, 2004 to 2007), and he is a member of the American Water Works Association. Gee is a Certified Public Accountant.



LAURA ALLEN

Town Administrator,
Town of Berlin, Maryland
GFOA Member: 6 years

Committee Served

- Committee on Economic Development and Capital Planning (6 years; vice chair, 2016)

LAURA ALLEN believes that GFOA's TASK is to:

- **Train** — provide guidance through best practices, *Government Finance Review* articles, conference sessions, and web-based training. Our members need access to ongoing professional development in a way that supports transparency and a solid understanding of public finance concepts.
- **Advocate** — protect the interests of state and local governments at the federal level. Most of our members come from small communities that are juggling a number of competing priorities. GFOA needs to keep the broader perspective in mind and work to keep the federal government from limiting our ability to effectively serve the needs of our communities.
- **Support** — continue to provide technical assistance through the Research and Consulting Center. Work with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) to provide technical assistance to their membership, promote best practices, and reinforce the role of the finance officer in municipal operations and policy development.
- **Keep Positive** — identify the reasons to be optimistic in every situation. Our work is challenging. Strong leadership requires the ability to identify the positives in each situation and articulate the reasons to be hopeful.

As Town Administrator for the Town of Berlin, Maryland, Allen is responsible for administering town operations includ-

ing electric, water, sewer, and stormwater utilities, with a budget of \$19.4 million. Allen helped obtain the "America's Coolest Small Town" designation from *Budget Travel* magazine in 2014, leading to a 25 to 30 percent increase in tourism and retail sales. She restructured the town's approach to purchasing power for the electric utility in 2013, resulting in an 8 percent reduction in the cost of purchased power, effectively lowering electric bills for the entire community. Allen lead the process to acquire a 60-acre blighted industrial plant and develop it into multi-use public space. She also completed and implemented the town's first strategic plan; implemented a communitywide emergency notification system; and initiated the use of financial forecasting and budgetary planning tool.

Allen was a member of GFOA's Open Data Task Force; she represented GFOA on the Governmental Accounting Standards Board's Small Government Discussion Committee; and she has been a reviewer for the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award Program for the past 11 years. In 2012, when Allen worked for the Town of Colma, California, she helped the town obtain its first Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. Allen also participated in GFOA's financial sustainability pilot project; made a presentation on the Town of Berlin's participation in the project at the Leading Resilient Communities Conference in Charleston, South Carolina (2018); and made a presentation on the topic for GFOA during the American Society Public Administration Conference in Washington, D.C. (2019).

In addition, Allen is a member of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) (current chair of the Sustainable Communities Committee; current chair of the Legacy Fund; mentor in the Emerging Leaders Program; member of 2018 Annual Conference Host Committee, 100th Anniversary Committee, Government Affairs and Policy Committee, and Conference Evaluation Committee), Maryland GFOA (member since 2013), Maryland City/County Management Association (current board Secretary; representative on ICMA Coaching Program Advisory Board; representative on Maryland Municipal League's Conference Planning Committee), and ABAG Pooled Liability Assurance Network (chair, 2010). Allen traveled to the Philippines as part of the Young South East Asia Leadership Initiative, which was sponsored by ICMA and ICLEI in 2016. She is a Certified Public Finance Officer and an ICMA Credentialed Manager.



CHRIS DANIEL

Chief Investment Officer,
City of Albuquerque, New Mexico
GFOA Member: 13 years

Committee Served

- *Committee on Treasury and Investment Management (since 2015)*

CHRIS DANIEL believes that GFOA should: develop future government municipal finance professionals by encouraging young government employees and college students to pursue careers in municipal government finance; deliver value to GFOA members through committee resources and best practices, and by delivering in-demand training courses and educational sessions at the annual conference; and build integrity and ethics in the profession by creating a strong code of ethics and standards of professional conduct.

Daniel manages the City of Albuquerque's \$700 million cash/investment portfolio and applies GFOA best practices in his roles as fiscal agent liaison, treasury accountant, investment manager, ERP program manager, and chief investment officer. He developed and implemented a strategic asset allocation approach to public funds management that resulted in more than \$7 million in cumulative incremental value added since its inception in August 2014. As the city's ERP Program Manager (2010 to 2014), Daniel led the remediation and full implementation of its PeopleSoft ERP system. He also developed a capital project discernment methodology for ERP projects to estimate and validate (post-implementation) the net present value project benefits. Daniel has led numerous treasury management initiatives over the past 13 years to streamline processing and minimize banking, merchant services, custodial, and other fiscal agent fees for the city.

Daniel is a member of New Mexico GFOA, Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Society New Mexico (immediate past

president, secretary for four years, treasurer for four years), CFA Institute, New Mexico Society of CPAs, Sandoval County, New Mexico Investment Committee, City of Rio Rancho, New Mexico Investment Committee, Government Investment Officers Association (current president), American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Association for Finance Professionals, Stonehenge/Estates Homeowners Association (treasurer), and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church (Finance Council member, 2006 to 2015). He is a Certified Public Accountant, Chartered Financial Analyst, and Certified Treasury Professional.



DAN HUGUE

Public Finance Director, Indiana Finance Authority
Indianapolis, Indiana
GFOA Member: 20 years

Committees Served

- *Committee on Economic Development and Capital Planning (3 years)*
- *Committee on Governmental Debt Management (9 years)*

DAN HUGUE's goal for GFOA is to provide appropriate levels of training for all GFOA members. He will advocate for state and local governments on federal legislative issues and actions by other federal agencies. Hugu will continue to update and present new advisory and best practice documents that are meaningful for all members and will work with GFOA to furnish additional tools and resources for smaller units of government.

As public finance director for the Indiana Finance Authority, Hugu manages an annual operating budget of \$400 million and an investment portfolio of more than \$1 billion. He is responsible for all of the state's new debt issuances and for its outstanding debt portfolio of \$3.8 billion. Hugu maintains the

State of Indiana AAA credit rating by Fitch, S&P, and Moody's. He assists the governor, Office of Management and Budget, legislators, and state agencies with strategic planning, problem solving, and delivery of projects. Huge implemented new fiscal controls, refunding all outstanding debt for significant savings and gaining access to new revenues streams by working with state and local governing bodies. He helped successfully deliver the P3 Bridge Project on the Indiana/Kentucky border two years early and under initial cost estimates, and negotiated unwinding a large interest rate swap transaction, with positive benefits to the state. Huge's prior leadership positions were with the Indianapolis Bond Bank, Indiana Bond Bank, and the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium.

Huge has reviewed GFOA's Awards for Excellence submissions, and he works closely with GFOA's Federal Liaison Center on federal legislation that has the potential to affect GFOA members. He is active in the Indiana Chartered Public Accountant (CPA) Society, American Institute of CPAs, Central Indiana Association of Government Accountants, and State Debt Management Network, and he also serves as Supervisory Committee Chair for FORUM Credit Union. Huge is a Certified Public Accountant.



WILLIAM JONES

City Administrator, City of Mequon, Wisconsin

GFOA Member: 18 years

Committees Served

- Committee on Economic Development and Capital Planning
(current chair)

WILLIAM JONES is committed to implementing GFOA's 2025 Strategic Vision to attract, develop, and retain future public finance professionals. He wants to expand GFOA's public outreach to better educate the citizens who that elect officials

across all levels of government and ensure that GFOA's technical resources are consistent, complimentary, and increasingly geared to a digital audience.

After 23 years in local government management and finance, serving three Midwestern communities, Jones has used GFOA best practices to eliminate structural budget deficit, improve bond ratings, and fortify general fund reserves. He enhanced local infrastructure through a \$17 million extension of a sanitary sewer system, \$9 million renovation of a public works campus, 21 percent expansion of water utility, and 25 percent consolidation of city facilities; implemented merit-based evaluations and completed operational analyses to support data-driven decision making about employee compensation and departmental staffing levels; and negotiated the State of Illinois' first-ever labor agreement for combined public safety officers. Jones established an inter-jurisdictional shared services program to eliminate redundancies and reduce costs, and he formed a special service taxing district to establish a downtown marketing and events association. He also launched the first integrated commercial waste and recycling program in Lake County, Illinois.

Jones was a reviewer for GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards Program (2002 to 2007), and he participated in the Advanced Government Finance Institute (2011). The jurisdictions he's worked with have received all three GFOA awards — Budget, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, and Popular Annual Financial Report — since 2011.

Jones is a member of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Advisory Board on Graduate Education and the Wisconsin City/County Management Association Ethics Committee. He is a Certified Public Finance Officer and an ICMA Credentialed Manager.



MATTHEW M. LENTZ

Business Manager, Upper Moreland School District
Willow Grove, Pennsylvania
GFOA Member: 12 years

Committees Served

- Committee on Retirement and Benefits Administration (2 years)

MATTHEW M. LENTZ believes that the primary objective of GFOA should be to develop and execute a strategic plan that supports the needs of the members and allows GFOA to remain the leading resource supporting finance and operational administrators of municipalities, schools, intergovernmental agencies, and other authorities. In the ongoing development and execution of the strategic plan, GFOA should continue responding to changing demographics, economic situations, and the needs of members.

As the chief person in charge of budget and fiscal management, investments, transportation, operations, facility maintenance, and food service program for the district, Lentz devel-

ops, implements, and evaluates a \$68 million operating budget and district-wide facility improvement program. Under his supervision, the district's baseline liquid investment returns have increased by 100 percent through competitive process. Lentz led a district-wide facilities improvement program of \$55 million and operation improvements to provide cost savings, and awarded grants to fund an alternative bus fleet, which saved \$252,000 in its first year of implementation.

Lentz's district has participated in GFOA's Smarter School Spending program (2016 to 2019), and it won GFOA's Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting Award (2017). He participated in the Advanced Government Finance Institute (2007) and was a reviewer for GFOA's Award for Best Practices in School Budgeting.

Lentz was nationally recognized in *District Administration* for synergistic district management (2009). He is involved in organizations including the Association of School Business Officials (current chair of the Editorial Advisory Board), Freedom Financial Credit union (current associate director of board), and School Districts Insurance Consortium of Pennsylvania (current board member and Finance Committee chair). Lentz headed up a health and benefits trust serving school districts in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania (2012 to 2014) and served on Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials (board member, 2010 to 2013). He is adjunct faculty at Wilkes University in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, developing and delivering courses on school financial operations and human resources and material management. Lentz is a Policy fellow from the Education Policy Leadership Center in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

*Past President
Steven Gibson
cuts the ribbon,
opening the
Exhibit Hall.*





RECAPPING THE 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

GFOA's 113th Annual Conference, May 19 to 22, 2019, in Los Angeles, welcomed a record-breaking number of delegates (more than 5,200) from across the United States, Canada, and around the world, who gathered at the Los Angeles Convention Center to learn about the latest developments in public financial management. Nearly 600 first-time annual conference attendee scholarship recipients also joined us at this year's conference. The delegates came together to learn, share with their peers, and discuss issues confronting the profession, attending their choice of ten preconference seminars, three keynote presentations, two general sessions, 85 concurrent sessions, and the largest exhibit hall in GFOA history, with close to 200 companies. GFOA would like to thank those who helped us make it possible: the Local Conference Committee, speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, and delegates.

WELCOME

Sunday. GFOA Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer Chris Morrill thanked GFOA staff and the Local Conference Committee for all of their efforts. He welcomed the following international delegations: The Republic of Georgia, Israel, South Africa, Sweden, and for the first time, Australia.

Monday. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti recognized delegates for the important work they do that does not make it into the headlines. He said how well we react to disasters defines who we are, and that we are a “country of courage.” Garcetti shared three qualities he focuses on to move the City of Los Angeles forward: 1) The idea that freedom is limitless; 2) Being able to take advantage of innovations such as technology; and 3) Being a place of belonging.

Tuesday. Ron Galperin, Controller, City of Los Angeles, addressed delegates as “Government Change Officers.” He defined city transformation as “using technology and innovation for a more responsive and efficient government that works for all” and spoke about the three “T’s” that make it happen: transparency, trust, and transformation. “We are government accountability officers, thought leaders,” Galperin concluded, adding that “it is local government that makes the most impact on people’s lives.”

KEYNOTE SPEECHES

Sunday. Charmaine Brown, a diversity and inclusion leader on the national stage, brought a fresh perspective on the topic of unconscious bias and shared compelling examples of how awareness can lead to transformation and better outcomes, not only in our work environments, but also in our communities. She opened with a quote from the great American poet and civil rights activist, Maya Angelou: “We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.” Next, Brown led delegates in an exercise to demonstrate how our brains “get on automatic.” The audience said the word “stop” ten times together. Before the last time of saying the word, Brown asked, “What do you do at a green light?” and the majority of the audience answered, “Stop.”

Through a series of videos and sharing personal experiences, she challenged the audience to reflect on how “the brain is biased.” Brown continued speaking about identity and inclusive product development and design, and she urged the audience to review policies and processes in their own organizations to see how these systems can be re-thought. For



Diversity and inclusion leader Charmaine Brown said we should “ask more questions, be more aware, and be less certain.”

example, “Do you look at ‘blind’ resumes when hiring a new candidate?” “Do you use gendered language in your communications?” “Who sits on the panels of your organizations and makes the decisions?” She encouraged delegates to act as leaders to propel organizational change and advised “where the leaders go, others will follow.”

Monday. James and Deborah Fallows, researchers and award-winning correspondents, shared their perspective — based on hundreds of interviews from their five-year journey



At their Monday keynote speech, James and Deborah Fallows thanked delegates for “making local government happen. We see people like you doing the quiet work that makes civilization possible.” They noted that “survey data showed that people’s confidence in national government is low, but it is increasing in their local communities.”

through the heart of America — on what makes communities thrive. They traveled in a propeller plane, visiting an area for two weeks and asking the people who lived there, “What’s your town like?” and “What drives you?” There was one main message: “Possibility, hope, and movement.” Maintaining the vitality of a community, the Fallows learned, requires investing resources in community colleges, “unusual” public schools (i.e., experimenting with course curriculum or class schedule), downtown revitalization, public arts, recreation and facilities, sound fiscal management, libraries, broadband, business incentives of the “classic” sort (e.g., taxes), and local media.

Based on experiences, the Fallows developed the following measures, which they refer to as the “10-1/2 Signs of Civic Success”: 1) Divisive national politics seem a distant concern; 2) You can pick out the local patriots; 3) “Public-private partnerships” are really partnerships; 4) People know the

civic story; 5) There’s a downtown; 6) There’s a research university nearby; 7) They have, and care about, a community college; 8) They have unusual schools; 9) They make themselves open; 10) They have big plans; and 10-1/2) They have craft breweries.

Tuesday. Peter Bregman, best-selling author and regular contributor to several publications, including the *Harvard Business Review*, provided strategies on how to handle difficult situations, act courageously, and build their leadership presence. He asked the audience to consider what would happen if they committed to what they wanted changed and held themselves accountable. “What’s stopping you from making that change? It’s not knowledge, skill, time, or opportunity, but ‘emotional courage’ — the willingness to feel. If you are willing to feel everything, you can do anything.”

Bregman shared that “leadership is all about people,” explaining that the key to success as a leader is asking, “How do we remove obstacles that prevent people from being their best selves?” He suggested that the audience focus on the following four elements:

1. Confidence in yourself. You build confidence by:

- Staying true to yourself even if you know you will disappoint people.
- Remaining steady, balanced, and calm no matter what is going on around you.
- Routinely asking for and taking in feedback without defending yourself.
- Recognizing and embracing multiple sides of yourself, including those you sometimes wish weren’t there.
- Putting aside distractions to focus on the future you want to create.
- Investing your energy wisely and strategically.

2. Connection with others. Connect with others by keeping these ideas in mind:

- People clearly know and feel that I listen to them.
- People clearly know and feel that I don’t draw conclusions about them.
- I approach “sticky” problems with curiosity and creativity.
- I give the people around me the energy to move forward.
- I am skilled at initiating difficult conversations.
- I am skilled at communicating in the midst of heated emotions.



Keynote speaker Peter Bregman provided strategies on how to handle difficult situations, act courageously, and build leadership presence. He ended his speech with a lively song and encouraged all attendees to get up and dance like no one was watching.

3. Commitment to Purpose. Commit to purpose by asking yourself these questions:

- How do I relate to myself?
- How do I relate to you?
- How do I relate to something bigger than myself?

4. Act with Emotional Courage. Have the willingness to fail and feel by asking yourself:

- At any given moment, I can identify what emotions I'm feeling and where in my body I feel them.
- I can easily manage the tension of not getting what I want.
- I routinely take bold and calculated risks.
- I intentionally put myself in unknown and uncomfortable situations.
- I skillfully tell people "hard" truths in a way that they can hear it.
- I make the highest impact use of each moment.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

GFOA President Steven Gibson, deputy city manager, City of Rock Hill, South Carolina (who handed over the gavel to Terry Stone, assistant superintendent for business and operations, Hanover County Public Schools, Ashland, Virginia, at the annual business meeting), said that it was an incredible honor to serve as president for the past year. He thanked his family; the City of Rock Hill, South Carolina, where he serves as deputy city manager; colleagues on the Executive Board; the GFOA staff; and all attendees who serve their communities every day.

In his address he recognized some the milestones of the past year:

GFOA's 20,000th Member. GFOA reached a milestone in its history — 20,000 members. Carol Orth, assistant controller, Alameda County — Auditor's Agency, Oakland, California, became the Association's 20,000th member.

GFOA Heroes. GFOA's First Annual Hero Awards recognizes finance officers who have demonstrated extraordinary actions during a time of financial, natural, or human-made crisis. (Read about this year's recipients on page 45 to 46 of this issue.)



During his speech, 2018-19 GFOA President Steven Gibson shared that it was an incredible honor to serve as president for the past year, saying, "What a privilege to work with you."



Terry Stone took over as GFOA president. In her speech, she outlined some of GFOA's major initiatives for the coming years.



Awards for Excellence. The Awards for Excellence in Government Finance program recognizes innovative programs and contributions to our field that exemplify outstanding financial management. The awards stress practical, documented work that offers leadership to the profession and promotes improved public finance. The following entities received the 2019 Award for Excellence for Exceptionally Well Implemented GFOA Best Practices:

- City of Colwood, British Columbia, Canada, for its Sustainable Infrastructure Replacement Plan
- East Bay Municipal Utility District, Oakland, California, for Capital versus Operating: Decisions for the Non-Accountant
- City of Kansas City, Missouri, for the Public Improvements Advisory Committee on the City of Kansas City's Capital Improvements Program
- City of La Quinta, California, for its General Fund Balance and Reserves Policy
- City of Raleigh, North Carolina, for its Online Calculator for Development Services Fees
- City of Roseville, California, for EngageRoseville
- West Metro Fire Protection District, Lakewood, Colorado, for its Fund Balance Guidelines for the General Fund
- City of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, for its Capital Projects Dashboard

Read about the winning submissions and case studies at gfoa.org.

Scholarship Recipients. GFOA congratulates all of the recipients of the association's 2019 scholarships, which were presented at the conference. Read the article in this issue or go to gfoa.org/scholarships for the list of this year's recipients and to read about eligibility requirements. (Read about this year's scholarship winners on pages 43 to 44 of this issue.)

Local Student Scholarship Recipients. GFOA offered a local student scholarship to encourage student participation. Scholarships were offered to 50 students from California schools.

First-Time Annual Conference Scholarship Recipients. Fifty scholarships went to California-based GFOA government members who had never attended the annual conference.

Committees. This year, GFOA committees have developed and revised best practices on topics including administering economic development agreements, presenting the capital budget, and handling receipts in the treasury office.





(Read GFOA's best practices gfoa.org/best-practices. Apply to be on a GFOA committee at gfoa.org/committees.)

Code of Ethics. After a year of researching, drafting, and testing, GFOA's Ethics Taskforce proposed a new value-based Code of Ethics, which was approved by the Executive Board at the annual conference. The code is based on the values of: integrity and honesty; producing results for the community; treating people fairly; diversity and inclusion; and reliability and consistency. GFOA will provide resources, case studies, training, and support to help members live these values and share them with their finance offices, organizations, and communities. (Read about the Code of Ethics in the April 2019 issue of *Government Finance Review*.)

Financial Foundations for Thriving Communities. GFOA's Financial Foundations Framework is built on five leadership pillars: 1) Establish a long-term vision; 2) Build trust and open communication; 3) Use collective decision making; 4) Create clear rules; and 5) Treat everyone fairly. The framework shows you how to improve your financial position now and how to create a strong foundation for a thriving community over the long term. (To learn more about the project and identify how you can connect with other governments that might be interested in joining the effort, see GFOA's training schedule for upcoming webinars at gfoa.org/financialfoundations.)

BUSINESS MEETING

New Executive Board Members. The association's members elected a new GFOA president-elect and five new members-at-large, who will each serve a three-year term beginning immediately. (Profiles of each candidate appear in this issue.)

GFOA's new president-elect is **Marion M. Gee**, director of finance, Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District, St. Louis, Missouri.

GFOA's new members-at-large are:

- **Laura Allen**, town administrator, Town of Berlin, Berlin, Maryland.
- **Chris Daniel**, chief investment officer, City of Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- **Dan Huge**, public finance director, Indiana Finance Authority, Indianapolis, Indiana.
- **William Jones**, city administrator, City of Mequon, Wisconsin.
- **Matthew M. Lentz**, business manager, Upper Moreland School District, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania.

Passing of the Presidential Gavel. Steven Gibson passed the presidential gavel to **Terry S. Stone**, who outlined some of GFOA's major initiatives for the coming years. Stone



thanked GFOA's Executive Board for its leadership, friendship, and continued support of GFOA and the government finance profession. She also recognized Hanover County Public Schools, which has been extremely supportive of her service to GFOA. Finally, she thanked her family for their continuous energy and encouragement.

Stone emphasized that she looks forward to meeting and working with many GFOA members over the next year.

Public Infrastructure Challenges. Stone noted the importance of addressing infrastructure deficiencies, which will require knowledge from across a wide set of public finance and local government management disciplines. She urged GFOA members to tell their stories about the great importance of tax exempt municipal bonds via #builtbybonds.

Stone also asked delegates to contact their U.S. senators and representatives and ask them to protect the full tax-exemption for municipal bonds, restore advance refundings, and adopt bond modernization provisions.

GFOA's Smarter School Spending and Alliance for Excellence in School Budgeting. The framework and network are designed to share information and collaborate on strategies to integrate strategic and long-term financial planning and the alignment of resource allocation to improve student performance. (Learn more at smarterschoolspending.org and gfoa.org/alliance-excellence-school-budgeting.)

GFOA Networks, Including the Urban Forum, Small Government Forum, and Utility Finance Forum. These groups and their events will provide members with opportunities throughout the year to engage with peers on the topics most relevant to their specific organizations. Watch for announcements about future webinars and networking events.

GFOA Student Chapters at Local Colleges and Universities. GFOA's first student chapter launched at Virginia Tech in March 2019. Stone recognized Alberto Jaimes, the chapter's first president; Stephanie Davis, faculty advisor; and Elliott Abbott, chapter secretary. Stone asked that all GFOA members help expand our reach to more local colleges and universities so we can attract new talent to the government finance profession. (For details, go to gfoa.org/gfoa-student-chapters.)

CERTIFIED PUBLIC FINANCE OFFICERS

Thank you to the attendees who took the certified public finance officer (CPFO) exams during the Los Angeles conference, and congratulations to the 795 people who have received the CPFO designation.

CONCURRENT, FEATURED, AND NETWORKING SESSIONS

The conference featured 85 concurrent sessions featuring approximately 300 speakers, including leading practitioners, researchers, subject-matter experts, and other professionals who presented best practices, current events, industry trends, and essential competencies for all finance officers. Sessions covered all major public finance disciplines. (Find session materials at gfoa.org/conference-sessions. Find audio recordings of available sessions at GFOA's e-store, or complete the order form posted at gfoa.org/conference-sessions. Please note



Board member Debby Cherney, CEO of the San Bernardino County Employees' Retirement Association, and Chris Morrill, executive director and CEO of GFOA, enjoy a chat.



Many conference attendees visited the GFOA Financial Foundations Exhibit to connect with GFOA staff and finance officers who are implementing the recommendations.

that the recordings are offered in audio format only and that CPE credits are not awarded for listening to the recordings.)

Several featured sessions covered the latest developments in public finance. One example was “California State Treasurer Fiona Ma Addresses Public Finance Policy Challenges and Solutions.” Ma addressed several hot topics her administration faces and talked about the vital role of municipal bonds in the capital markets, advocacy for affordable housing, and other challenges such as marijuana tax revenues and pensions. (For session details visit gfoa.org/conference-session/37136.)

GFOA planned special networking sessions for members who wanted to engage with their peers on specific issues. (For a listing and to find out how you can become involved, go to gfoa.org/annual-conference/targeted-networking-sessions.)

EXHIBIT HALL

The exhibit hall opened with a ribbon cutting by members of GFOA’s executive board and Starbucks gift cards for the first 113 delegates to enter the hall in honor of GFOA’s 113th

Annual Conference. On Sunday through Tuesday, delegates were able to ask questions and watch live demonstrations of the latest products and services available to help their governments save time and money. (GFOA’s *Buyer’s Guide*, a list of this year’s exhibiting companies, is available at gfoa.org/exhibitor-list.)

SPONSORS

Thank you to this year’s many sponsors for helping make the conference a success! Sponsorship support is critical to delivering high-quality programs, social events, snacks, and beverages during the Annual Conference. (See the list of this year’s sponsors at gfoa.org/annual-conference/sponsorship-opportunities.)

GFOA CARES

GFOA Cares is a program for giving back to our conference host state by contributing to the Children’s Fund, a non-profit with the mission of giving vulnerable children support, opportunity, and hope by breaking destructive cycles through community partnerships. (Go to childrensfund.org/gfoa if you’d like to make a donation in any amount.)



CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Join the discussion on GFOA's social media sites:

-  Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)
GFOA Members Forum
-  @GFOA (#GFOA)
@chrisgfoa
@GFOAjobs
-  GFOA of the US & Canada
GFOA Members Group

Check out #GFOA2019 on GFOA's social media accounts to see all of the selfies from this year's delegates.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Welcome Breakfast. At this new event, attendees and guests met in the convention center for a breakfast buffet to kick off the start of this year's conference.

Closing Event. Attendees attended an exclusive show for GFOA delegates and their guests by comedian, actor, writer, producer, and New York Times best-selling author Jim Gaffigan at the Microsoft Theater. The energy continued with dancing and music by The Red Hot Band, a fixture in L.A.'s music scene.



Save the Date! May 17-20, 2020

GFOA'S 114TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE WILL TAKE PLACE ON MAY 17 TO 20, 2020, AT THE ERNEST N. MORIAL CONVENTION CENTER IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA.

Registration and housing will open this fall.

- Go to gfoa.org/call-for-topics to submit topic and speaker suggestions.
- Check out what New Orleans has to offer at neworleans.com



GFOA Awards \$100,000 in Academic Scholarships

In 2019, GFOA awarded \$100,000 in academic scholarships to students studying public finance. This year's applicant pool was the largest in GFOA's history, with more than 825 applications. Eleven recipients were chosen, each receiving between \$5,000 and \$15,000.

In addition to funding for their academic pursuits, the GFOA Academic Scholarship winners were invited to the 113th Annual Conference in Los Angeles, where they were recognized for their outstanding academic achievements. As a part of their award, GFOA also provides all scholarship winners with a three-year membership to GFOA and one complementary training session per year during that time.

Find out about the scholarship recipients below.

GOLDBERG-MILLER PUBLIC FINANCE SCHOLARSHIP

Amount: \$15,000

JULIE A. WONS is managing director of accounting and grant compliance at Elgin Community College, Illinois, where she leads accounting and management of the annual audit and budget for the college. She is a full-time student in the Masters of Business Administration-Organizational Leadership program at Judson University in Elgin, Illinois, and will graduate in February 2020.

FRANK L. GREATHOUSE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING SCHOLARSHIPS

Amount: \$10,000 each

CARMEN CONIGLIO is senior director, fiscal services, for Palomar Community College District in San Marcos, California. Her responsibilities include financial strategy, overseeing the budget, and management and implementation of bond construction projects. Coniglio has a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in accounting from San Diego State University. She is currently pursuing a Master of Business Administration degree from Louisiana State University-Shreveport and will graduate in December 2019.

SVETLANA RIES is an accountant for the County of Volusia, Florida, where she started working as an intern in 2014. She first studied Audit and Economic Development in Latvia

and, after moving to the United States, obtained an Associate Degree in Science and Business Administration from Daytona State College in Daytona Beach, Florida. Svetlana continued her studies at St. Leo University in St. Leo, Florida, graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting. She is pursuing a Master's Degree in Accounting and plans to take the CPA exam when she graduates.

MINORITIES IN GOVERNMENT FINANCE SCHOLARSHIP

Amount: \$10,000

VANIA BROWN is finance director for Norway-Vulcan Public Schools system in Dickinson County in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Before that, she worked in the accounting department at the Illinois Fire Service Institute. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from Northern Michigan University. Vania is pursuing a Master's Degree in Accounting from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign and will graduate in May 2020, after which she plans to continue working in the public school system.

GOVERNMENT FINANCE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Amount: \$10,000 each

SUSANA ARROYO holds the position of Accountant II for the Village of Hoffman Estates, Illinois, where she has worked since 2013. Her responsibilities include assisting with the preparation of the annual operating budget and annual financial audit; preparing journal entries, financial reports, and bank reconciliations; and grant management. She will graduate in December 2021 with a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois. Arroyo then plans to take the CPA exam, and she wants to continue working in local government.

TERESA EMRICH is acting administrative services director for the City of Farmington, New Mexico, where she started working as staff accountant I in 2008. She is pursuing a Master's Degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance or Accounting at Highlands University in New Mexico. Teresa is President-Elect of the New Mexico GFOA.

NATALIE SIMON is assistant grants accounting manager for the City of Miramar, Florida. She will graduate with a Master's Degree in Business Administration in July 2019. Her goals include obtaining a senior managerial position with the City of Miramar and becoming a Certified Public Finance Officer and Certified Grant Management Specialist.

STACEY WILKES is a CPA and finance director for Amherst County, Virginia. Her previous positions include fund accountant and town treasurer. She is a graduate of Lynchburg College in Lynchburg, Virginia, and is pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Administration at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

JEFFREY L. ESSER CAREER DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIP

Amount: \$5,000 each

JILL BAUER is an administrative analyst for the Ingham County Budget Office in Mason, Michigan. Bauer's responsibilities include coordination, preparation, and administration of the annual budget. She is pursuing an Associate's Degree in Accounting/Business Administration at Lansing Community College.

VICKIE BLACKDEN has been an accountant for the City of Dover, New Hampshire, since 2014. She oversees daily receipts, prepares journal entries, and helps prepare the city's annual budget and comprehensive annual financial report. Before that, she worked as a finance officer for the Town of New Durham, New Hampshire. Blackden is currently pursuing a Bachelor's of Science degree in Accounting at Southern New Hampshire University and will graduate in 2019. Her goal is to obtain a position in finance.

MELISSA DUNBAR is an accounting specialist at Rockford Public School District #205 in Rockford, Illinois, where she has worked since 2009. Her responsibilities include preparing journal entries, balancing monthly cash and investment accounts, helping with the preparation of quarterly financial reports, and processing biweekly payroll. She will graduate in December 2019 with a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from Upper Iowa University in Rockford, Illinois. Her career goal is to become chief financial officer for a public school district. ■



GFOA's Innaugural Hero Award Recipients

Recognizing finance officers who have demonstrated extraordinary actions during a time of crisis, GFOA's Hero Awards — the beginning of an annual program — recognizes finance officers who have demonstrated extraordinary actions during a time of financial, natural, or human-made crisis. The Hero Award Committee, composed of members of GFOA's Executive Board, recently convened and selected the following recipients of the inaugural award.

SCOTT DOWELL, *Administrative Services Director and Finance Director, City of Chico, California*

In November 2018, the City of Chico and Butte County experienced a devastating fire that destroyed the Town of Paradise, California. Thousands of fleeing residents from Paradise and surrounding towns came to Chico, the largest city in the area, so many that Chico's projected population for 2030 has increased. Dowell and his staff prepared an office in the Old Chico City Hall as a place where surrounding governments could continue operations. His information technology staff provided close support to re-establish backups and financial systems, allowing Paradise to make its payroll payments.

FRED JAMES, *Deputy Director/Chief Finance Officer, Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, Las Vegas, Nevada*

Before the Great Recession, James used key budget management strategies to ensure that library services would remain accessible seven days a week. During the recession, he provided additional proactive and ongoing budget management strategies to navigate complex statewide tax caps and secondary funding formulas that severely depressed the growth of post-recession tax revenues. In 2011, he was instrumental in getting approval from the district's board of directors to launch a successful pay-as-you-go capital project strategy that resulted in the design and construction of two new library

facilities in Mesquite, Nevada (opened May 2018) and East Las Vegas (opened April 2019).

MAGGIE KEENAN, *Director—Office of Budget and Management, Cuyahoga County, Cleveland, Ohio*

When Keenan took her position as budget director in late 2015, the county was adopting a biennial budget with an operating shortfall of nearly \$70 million. In addition, more than half the positions in the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) were vacant, communication between the OBM and elected officials was incomplete, and the county was about to lose \$30 million per year in sales tax revenue from the loss of the Medicaid Managed Care sales tax. Since that time, under Ms. Keenan's leadership, the county has adopted balanced budgets each year, ratings have either been maintained or improved (its sales tax bonds are rated AAA), the accuracy rate of quarterly forecasts has increased to an average of 99 percent, budget-related audit findings have been eliminated, and both the quality and quantity of OBM's work product has improved dramatically.

CHRISTOPHER MCCULLION, *Chief Finance Officer, City of Orlando, Florida*

Only weeks before stepping into his role as CFO, the City of Orlando was struck by a terrible tragedy, the June 2016 mass shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando. The immediate aftermath saw a tremendous outpouring of generosity from people around the world who wanted to provide financial support to the victims. McCullion was involved in the logistics of setting up the OneOrlando Fund, which received and processed donations totaling \$31.7 million. As a board member of the fund, he helped provide oversight and guidance to ensure that money was disbursed in a timely, accountable, and transparent manner. McCullion was also involved with establishing the Orlando United Assistance Center, which provides individuals and families with community resources to help with healing.

Dowell, James, Keenan, and McCullion were recognized at a conference general session by more than 5,200 of their peers and during a luncheon with GFOA's executive board.

GFOA thanks all the applicants and nominees who submitted stories of local government heroism for the Hero Award. We are proud of the service you demonstrate to your government, the public, and to the government finance profession. ■

