



THE FUTURE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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Speaker Biographies

Ted Abernathy, managing partner of Economic Leadership LLC, spent the first 29 years of his career as an economic development director for city, county, and regional economic development programs. He has been responsible for new company recruitment, small business support, tourism development, arts promotion, workforce development, and downtown revitalization. Economic Leadership LLC is focused on helping the leadership of organizations position their strategies and actions to meet their goals. Projects include the development of a new economic development strategy for the North Carolina Economic Development Board, an organizational competitiveness assessment for Harrison County, Mississippi, a capital formation strategy for the Piedmont Triad Partnership, and a demand-driven workforce assessment for the Durham, North Carolina Chamber of Commerce. Born in Dallas, North Carolina, Abernathy received his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill and his master's from Johns Hopkins University. He is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute and is an Eisenhower Fellow for global economics. He currently serves as the vice chairman of the board of directors of South Arts.

Martha Perine Beard is the vice president and regional executive of the Memphis Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, which includes western Tennessee, northern Mississippi, and eastern Arkansas. Branch activities include sponsoring and hosting community development seminars, providing economic education, conducting regional economic research, and gathering monetary policy input from business leaders within the local community. Beard joined the Federal Reserve Bank as a management trainee and has served in a number of management and official positions during her Fed career. She transferred to the Memphis Branch in 1997. Beard is active in Memphis business and civic organizations and currently serves on several boards in Memphis, including Memphis Tomorrow, Memphis Regional Chamber, United Way of the Mid South, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the Baptist Health Care Corporation, and the Mid-South Minority Business Council. She was a member of the 1998 class of Leadership Memphis and the 2000 class

of the New Memphis Institute. Beard has been profiled in the Commercial Appeal, Memphis Business Journal, and Grace Magazine. A native of Mobile, Alabama, she holds a BA in business from Clark Atlanta University and a master's degree in economics from Washington University in St. Louis. Beard is married and the mother of three children.

Mike Beatty's first day on his new adventure was August 1, 2013. He retired as commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) on July 31. He now leads a nonprofit organization, Great Promise Partnership, as president and chief executive officer. He developed Great Promise Partnership during his tenure at DCA to address persistent poverty and workforce development needs around the state. The nonprofit is a public-private, cooperative education program designed to help students at risk of not graduating complete their high school education while gaining real-world job experience. He was appointed to serve as commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs by Governor Sonny Perdue in June 2003 and reappointed by Governor Nathan Deal in January 2011. Known for his leadership skills in education, business, and government, Beatty's background provided him a unique perspective on the challenges facing our state's local communities. Prior to his service as DCA commissioner, Beatty worked as an educator and businessman. As an educator, he taught history and coached football for eight years in northeast Georgia schools. As a businessman, he and his wife, Judy, started and operated several small businesses, including a poultry and cattle farm.

Hank M. Bounds was appointed by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning as Mississippi's sixth commissioner of higher education on July 27, 2009. As commissioner, Bounds oversees the state's public four-year university system, which includes the State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), four research institutions, and four regional institutions. Mississippi's public universities enroll more than 80,000 students and award more than 15,000 degrees each year. Bounds, a lifelong educator, previously served four years as state

superintendent of education. As the chief executive officer of Mississippi's public K–12 school system, he launched several groundbreaking initiatives, including On the Bus, a statewide dropout prevention campaign that garnered national attention. Bounds also spearheaded an effort to design a more rigorous state curriculum and assessment system to meet national standards, and implemented High School Redesign, a plan to rework Mississippi high schools to prepare students effectively to compete in the 21st century. In 2009, Bounds worked with state leaders in both legislative chambers to pass the Children First Act, legislation crucial to the turnaround of Mississippi's underperforming schools. Before becoming the state superintendent in August 2005, Bounds served as superintendent of the Pascagoula School District. He was principal of two high schools and one K–12 school. He holds both a BS in sports administration and secondary education, an ME in educational administration from the University of Southern Mississippi, and a doctor of philosophy in educational leadership from the University of Mississippi. Bounds and his wife, Susie, are the parents of a son, Will, and a daughter, Caroline.

Phil Bryant was sworn in as Mississippi's 64th governor on Jan. 10, 2012. Prior to becoming governor, Bryant served one term as Mississippi's 37th lieutenant governor. As lieutenant governor, Bryant worked to ensure accountability in state government. He helped implement webcasting of Senate proceedings and led the fight to pass the most comprehensive ethics reform in nearly 25 years. Bryant earned his reputation of integrity and fairness during his term as state auditor, where he recovered more than \$12 million in taxpayer dollars that were embezzled or improperly spent. After being appointed to the position by Governor Kirk Fordice in 1996, Bryant won reelection by vast majorities in 1999 and 2003. Prior to serving as state auditor, Bryant served five years as a member of the Mississippi House of Representatives. While a member of the legislature, Bryant successfully led the fight to end the capital gains tax for Mississippi-based corporations, and he began a five-year struggle to end the marriage penalty in Mississippi's tax code. Bryant is a native of Moorehead, Mississippi, and is a former deputy sheriff. He earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Southern Mississippi and a master's degree in political science from Mississippi College. He is a contributing author of three books and a former adjunct professor of government. Bryant's dedication to his work is evident

through his years of public service, but his faith and family have always come first. He and his wife, Deborah, have two children, Katie and Patrick, and are active members of St. Marks United Methodist Church.

Laura Davis Chandler is the executive director of Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council (SAWDC), a nonprofit organization formed in May 2008 with a vision to develop an integrated, comprehensive workforce development system. Prior to joining SAWDC, Chandler was president and chief executive officer of the Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation, a private nonprofit that was formed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and in response to the critical need for workforce housing along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, she held the position of development manager for the apartment division at the Mitchell Company, responsible for multifamily development in the Southeast. Prior to that role, she was a development manager with Gables Residential (formerly Trammell Crow), a national premier multifamily real estate firm, and involved in the development of over 2,000 market rate apartment homes over her 10-year tenure. Chandler holds a master's in city and regional planning with a concentration in land development from Georgia Tech and a BS in business administration from Auburn University.

Maureen Conway is executive director of the Economic Opportunities Program (EOP) and the director of EOP's Workforce Strategies Initiative (WSI) at the Aspen Institute. For Workforce Strategies Initiative, she is responsible for leading a team of researchers and consultants in a variety of initiatives to identify and advance strategies that help low-income Americans gain ground in today's labor market. Under her guidance, WSI has grown and expanded its activities to support the field of sectoral employment development. Her vision has led WSI to take on new initiatives that mirror the growth and expansion of the sector approach nationally, including projects that seek to assess the value of workforce development services to business customers, shed light on the ways in which sector programs support constituents in their struggles to overcome a range of personal and systemic barriers, create a framework for and document approaches to systems change, understand the potential for greater collaboration among community colleges and community-based organizations, and much more. Conway's previous experience includes consulting work for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris and work for the U.S. Peace Corps.

Her previous work for the Aspen Institute includes serving as associate director of the Local Employment Approaches for the Disadvantaged program, a research project that focused on the range of initiatives nonprofit community groups engage in to promote employment opportunities for the disadvantaged. She is the author of numerous publications on industry-specific workforce development and she has presented findings from her research at various national and regional conferences. Conway has a master's in regional planning from the University of North Carolina, an MBA from Columbia University, and a BA in economics and mathematics from Holy Cross College.

Karen Elzey is Business-Higher Education Forum's vice president of policy, a position she assumed in 2013. Elzey has more than 20 years of experience in the areas of workforce development, education reform, public-private partnerships, and project management. Prior to assuming this position, she was the founding director of Skills for America's Future, an employer-led policy initiative of the Economic Opportunities Program at the Aspen Institute. Skills for America's Future identified solutions allowing education and training providers to work together with employers, thereby better preparing individuals for employment and helping to ensure that U.S. businesses are more productive, innovative, and competitive. Elzey served as vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for a Competitive Workforce, where she focused on K-12 education reform and job training policies. Previous experience also includes coordinating public-private partnerships between K-12 school districts and employers for a local economic development agency in Indiana, and teaching English as a second language in Poland. Elzey received her BA and MS at Miami University (Ohio) and has also completed the Executive Leadership Program at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business.

Teri Fontenot is the president and chief executive officer of Woman's Hospital, in Baton Rouge, a Level III regional referral hospital for obstetrics, newborn, and women's cancer care. Its \$340 million replacement campus opened in August 2012 with increased capacity for current services and new growth opportunities. Fontenot served two terms as a director on the Sixth District Federal Reserve Bank board and chaired the audit committee. She was the 2012 chair of the American Hospital Association and served a six-year term on the National Institutes of Health advisory committee on research on women's health. She was named

Baton Rouge Businessperson of the Year in 2013, is in the Louisiana State University E.J. Ourso College of Business Hall of Fame, was named to Modern Healthcare's Top 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare in 2011 and 2012, and to Modern Healthcare's inaugural list of the Top 25 Women in Healthcare. She graduated with honors from the University of Mississippi with a BBA in accounting and earned an MBA from Northeast Louisiana University. She is a certified public accountant (inactive) and a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Todd Greene is vice president in the research department at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. Greene's responsibilities include providing leadership, strategic direction, and oversight for the community and economic development division and for the Americas Center. He is also the codirector of the Atlanta Fed's Center for Human Capital Studies. Before joining the Atlanta Fed in 2008, Greene held leadership roles in the private, government, and educational sectors. Most recently he was a member of the general faculty at Georgia Tech where, at various times, he served as center director and oversaw research and programs related to applied economic development, including the Program in Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy and the Center for Manufacturing Information Technology. Currently, Greene is on the board of directors of the International Economic Development Council and the Georgia Academy for Economic Development and is a member of the Southern Economic Development Council. He is a past president of the Georgia Economic Developers Association. In 2002, he obtained the Certified Economic Developer designation (CEcD). Greene earned a bachelor's degree in English and American literature and language from Harvard University and master's degrees in human resources management from Washington University and public administration from Georgia State University.

Mark Henry is the executive director of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. The department helps Mississippians get jobs, provides job training, and administers the unemployment compensation program. At Employment Security, Henry secured from employers an additional \$8 million for targeted job training without a net tax increase. He also has moved aggressively to recover fraudulent overpayments of unemployment benefits by intercepting more than \$29 million in federal and state income tax refunds. Because of the high employment rate for post-9/11 veterans, he requested Governor Phil

Bryant to launch “Hire Mississippi Heroes,” a yearlong campaign to encourage employers to hire veterans. As part of that effort, he successfully pushed for the enactment of legislation to require state occupational licensing agencies to give veterans credit for comparable military training and to grant immediate occupational licenses to qualified military spouses. Henry is also the president of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA). In that capacity, he is the spokesman for all of the state workforce agencies in dealing with Congress and with the U.S. Department of Labor. At NASWA Henry has worked closely with the National Governors Association to give the states more flexibility in funding and administration so that the states will be free to innovate and develop workforce programs that are geared to the unique needs of each state.

Heidi Kaplan is a senior community development analyst at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. She is the team leader for policy and research of labor markets and human capital with an emphasis on low- and moderate-income communities. This work includes monitoring emerging issues in the field, collecting information from the Reserve Banks, and providing the key findings to Board leadership and the public. Prior to joining the Board, Kaplan was a research adviser at the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund. She earned a BA in economics from the University of California–Berkeley and a master’s of city and regional planning from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

Kathy Krepcio is the executive director of the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, responsible for executive management and day-to-day oversight of administration, research, technical assistance, client service, and project operations. Prior to joining the center in 2003, she worked in New Jersey state government, serving as chief of staff of the state office of information technology, and as director for policy and planning for the state’s Department of Human Services. Her research and technical assistance activities have focused on disability employment as well as social welfare, education, employment and training, and program evaluation. Krepcio appears frequently as a speaker at conferences and public meetings. She is the coauthor of several research reports and briefs related to the U.S. workforce system, disability employment, labor market information, dislocated workers, and program evaluation. She earned an MA from the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers and a BA from the

Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

Marta Lachowska has been an economist at the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research since she completed her PhD in economics at Stockholm University in 2010. Prior to that, she spent three semesters at Princeton University as a visiting doctoral researcher. Her research interests include issues related to employment policies, pensions, and insurance systems. In 2012, she and Stephen A. Woodbury wrote a report for the Mississippi Governor’s Office focusing on which factors account for the differences in labor force participation between Mississippi and other southern states.

Karen Leone de Nie is the community and economic development (CED) research director at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. She is responsible for building partnerships and leading research efforts related to community and economic development issues with the objective of improving the policy environment and facilitating sustainable community development practices. She works with colleagues in the Sixth District (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee) and throughout the Fed system to study a variety of community and economic development issues, including foreclosure, small business development, and employment. Prior to joining the Atlanta Fed, she was a researcher at Georgia Tech’s Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development, which does applied research to help communities achieve sound and equitable development through planning and policy. Leone de Nie also worked for the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan planning organization, focusing on real estate development and environmental resource management. She earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and a master’s degree in city and regional planning from the Georgia Institute of Technology. She lives in Atlanta with her husband and son.

Jack Mills is the director of the National Network of Sector Partners (NNSP), an initiative of the Insight Center for Community Economic Development. He guides NNSP’s efforts to make it possible for people to achieve economic security through work, and benefit the industry sectors in which they work, through sector initiatives, a proven approach. He plays a key role in designing and carrying out NNSP’s policy and programmatic support for sector initiatives. Mills joined the Insight Center in 2005. He is

nationally recognized in the field of workforce development. He has worked with governmental entities, community colleges, business organizations, labor-management partnerships, and foundation consortia to develop strategies and plans that support sector initiatives. He has authored or coauthored publications such as *Opportunity in Tough Times: Promoting Advancement for Low-Wage Workers*; *Building Skills, Increasing Economic Vitality: A Handbook for State Policy Makers*; *Supporting Sector Strategies in the South*; and *Reforming Job Training in America*. He has provided training on topics such as how sector initiatives bring about systemic change, success factors for sector initiatives, and state sector strategies. Prior to joining the Insight Center, Mills held senior positions in consulting, nonprofit organizations, and government. He received a master's of public administration from Harvard's Kennedy School.

Jay C. Moon is the president and CEO of the Mississippi Manufacturers Association (MMA), the largest and most influential voice for Mississippi manufacturers. The association represents more than 2,200 manufacturers and associated members. Moon has over 25 years of professional economic development experience in site development, business retention, strategic plan development, financial incentive creation, and marketing. Prior to joining the MMA, he served as the deputy director/chief operating officer with the Mississippi Development Authority. During that period, he was responsible for the recruitment of many well-known national and international companies to Mississippi and led its successful effort to locate the \$1.5 billion, 5,300-employee Nissan Automotive Assembly facility. Moon is a member of the National Association of Manufacturers board of directors and a certified economic developer. He is the past chairman of the International Economic Development Council. Moon is the incoming dean and is an instructor with the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute. He is the chairman of the Mississippi Workforce Investment Board and the State Longitudinal Data System board. He serves on the board for the University of Mississippi's Center for Manufacturing Excellence and is the chairman of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership. Jay has an undergraduate degree in international relations and a master's of public administration from the University of Georgia.

Domenico "Mimmo" Parisi is director of the National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center (nSPARC) and a professor of sociology at Mississippi State University. A significant part of his work at nSPARC is translating university research into practical applications to meet the workforce needs of the state. Parisi has almost 15 years of experience working with local and state organizations to integrate education and workforce activities to improve economic development.

Mark Popovich is a senior program officer at the Hitachi Foundation, where he leads the team managing the Business and Work Program. The program emphasizes the role of business in society in general and the importance of social sustainability more specifically. The Business and Work Program focuses on exemplary employers as they create pathways to greater prosperity and career advancement for lower-wage workers.

Adrienne C. Slack is vice president and regional executive at the New Orleans Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. She is responsible for the branch's board of directors, leads its community outreach and development activities, oversees its economic and financial education programs, and provides regional input into the Atlanta Fed's monetary policy process. Prior to assuming her current role in 2012, Slack was assistant vice president and branch operations officer in New Orleans. She joined the Federal Reserve System in 1990 as a research assistant and economic analyst for the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. In 1993, she transferred to the New Orleans Branch as a cash product analyst. Slack served in several leadership roles during her tenure with the District Cash Function Office and has managed a number of key branch functions, including law enforcement and economic education. She was promoted to assistant vice president in 2009. Slack has served on the Sixth District Cash Subcommittee and on several district and System work groups. She also completed a high-level System interchange assignment with the Reserve Bank Operations and Payment Systems Division at the Board of Governors in Washington, DC. While at the Board, she contributed to Reserve Bank oversight and System policy issues while developing and implementing day-to-day functional operations. Raised in Mississippi, Slack received a BS in business administration with a concentration in economics from the University of Southern Mississippi. She also completed the executive development program at Dartmouth College in 2002.

Nicole Smith is a research professor and senior economist at the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce where she leads the center's econometric and methodological work. Smith has developed a framework for restructuring long-term occupational and educational projections. She is part of a team of economists working on a project to map, forecast, and monitor human capital development and career pathways. Her current research investigates the role of education, psychological, and socioeconomic factors in intergenerational mobility.

Jim Van Erden is a senior policy adviser for the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA). He is an economist and national expert on workforce and economic issues with a diverse background in both the public and private sectors. He has broad-based management and organizational leadership skills in the government, nongovernmental organizations, association, and for-profit consulting environment. Van Erden joined NASWA in 2011 as a senior policy adviser. He provides policy and programmatic analysis and advice on the unemployment insurance program and on a variety of workforce system issues. He also directs research and development projects on unemployment insurance and workforce programs. Prior to joining NASWA, he was senior vice president of Federal Human Services (FHS) for the Lewin Group from 2009 to 2010. He led the FHS group that provides research, consulting, and support for human services programs and child and family services. He has served as vice president, civilian services for DTI Associates. He also served as vice president, membership and enterprise development, for Goodwill Industries International, where he led membership-wide strategic planning initiatives and established an expanded public policy role for Goodwill. He served as senior vice president for workforce development for the National Alliance of Business. Van Erden served in various positions at the U.S. Department of Labor, including administrator for the Office of Work-based Learning, director of the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, and chief actuary of the Unemployment Insurance Service.

James Williams is the vice president of economic and community services at Itawamba Community College (ICC). He has extensive experience working in partnerships with higher education, K-12 schools, and community, state, and federal agencies in external grants and funding. The team he leads provides the workforce training and community service programs for Itawamba Community

College. His team has over 70 training contracts annually with employers in northeast Mississippi and operates four WIN job centers. Williams, along with colleagues from ICC, East Mississippi Community College, Northeast Mississippi Community College, and Northwest Community College, helped create the Mississippi Corridor Consortium (MCC), a group dedicated to delivering enhanced and expanded workforce services to their districts. He is the chair of the management committee and continues to be a strong leader of MCC. The MCC is the training partner for the new Toyota manufacturing facility in Blue Springs, Mississippi. Williams has over 30 years' experience in the community college system and is a frequent speaker at state and national conferences. Prior to coming to Itawamba Community College in September of 2002, he was the vice president of a regional construction and development company. Williams has a BA and MBA in business from Southeastern Louisiana University.



Mississippi Manufacturers Association