



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN



July 12, 2021

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Jill Ashton, Executive Director
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Massachusetts Commission On The Status of Women Elect New Leadership

DENELLA CLARK, Hyde Park resident and President and CEO of Boston Arts Academy (BAA) Foundation, has been re-elected as Chair of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW). Chairwoman Clark was first appointed to the Commission in 2015 and reappointed in 2018 by Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker. She was elected to Chair by her fellow Commissioners, and is the first Woman of Color to lead the Commission. Clark's past roles include serving as Vice Chair and Treasurer.

The Commission's approach shifted to adapt to the concerns of Massachusetts residents and public health and economic needs, and examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, girls, and families. Chairwoman Clark details, "In place of our typical general open meetings, the MCSW launched hearings that focused on demographics most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic due to enduring social and structural issues. This outreach and research work built on our April 2020 Report on the Impact of COVID-19: Related Policy on Massachusetts Women and Girls. In the programmatic year 2021, our efforts began with a hearing and report on Childcare and Education During COVID-19. Following this was a hearing and report on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Status of Women of Color. Finally, the MCSW launched our second annual Girls Initiative." Through research, the Commission was able to engage with more than 8,000 women and girls from across the Commonwealth.

Chairwoman Clark shares, "The Commission is ever grateful to our partners and colleagues, including the members of state administration and the legislature, who collaborated with us during this challenging time in order to listen to the voices of women and advocate for legislation that uplifts our voices. We look forward to expanding our research and efforts in line with our mission to advance the status of women and girls in Massachusetts."

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is an independent state agency that was legislatively created in 1998 to advance women of the Commonwealth to full equality in all areas of life and to promote their rights and opportunities. The MCSW provides a permanent, effective voice for the women of Massachusetts.



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Framingham Resident Elected Vice-Chair of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Framingham resident Audrey Hall was recently elected by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) to the office of Vice Chair. Hall was appointed to the Commission in 2018 by Senate President Karen E. Spilka. She served as Vice Chair of the MCSW's Legislative and Public Policy Committee from 2019 to 2020 and as Chair of the MCSW's Budget and Personnel Committee from 2020 to 2021. In March of 2020 after Governor Baker declared a state of emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic, Hall was elected to serve as Chair of the MCSW's COVID-19 Action Committee.

Hall is a Strategic Communications Consultant with 35 years of Executive Leadership in Marketing and Operations in the private and public sectors. She is the President of the Board of Directors of Framingham Public Access Television and the Executive Producer and Host of The Audrey Hall Show on YouTube, RCN, Verizon and Comcast. Hall is a Mayoral appointee to the Framingham Council on Aging, serving as Clerk. Hall served as an elected town meeting member in Framingham for 19 years and 12 years as Chair of the Ways and Means Committee.

Speaking about her new role as Vice Chair, Hall said, "I am relentlessly passionate about justice, equality, and integrity in government. It's an honor and a privilege to put that passion to work in this leadership role at the MCSW on behalf of all women and girls in the Commonwealth."

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LESLIE-ANN MCGEE, Kingston resident and Director of Marine Operation Programs and Strategic Initiatives at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, has been elected as MCSW Secretary. McGee was appointed to the Commission by the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators in 2019. McGee is an expert in ocean and coastal issues in both the domestic and international arena and has a diverse background working with and for state, regional, national, business and environmental entities globally. She also maintains a consulting practice through her firm, Full Sail Consulting based in Kingston, MA. McGee served as the Director of Coastal Zone Management for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition, McGee was the Director of Programs for the World Ocean Council, Director of Ocean and Coastal Solutions at Battelle Memorial Institute and held state and federal positions with NOAA, the New England Fishery Management Council and the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. McGee is a graduate of the University of Colorado at Boulder and Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment.

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SARAH GLENN-SMITH, Holliston resident and President and CEO for The Learning Center for the Deaf, has been elected as MCSW Treasurer and Chair of the Budget and Personnel Committee. Glenn-Smith was appointed to the Commission by Senate President Karen E. Spilka in 2020. Glenn-Smith has worked as a professional in the healthcare, education, technology and nonprofit arenas for more than 20 years. Prior to joining The Learning Center as the President and CEO, Dr. Glenn-Smith worked for Kaleida Health, the largest healthcare system in Western New York, as both a CEO for their joint radiology venture, and, later, as President of Ambulatory Services. Applying her passion for education, she worked for six years at PLS 3rd Learning, an international education technology company, as Chief Operating Officer, and brings extensive experience in the conception, development and execution of strategic and tactical financial, organization and development initiatives. Dr. Glenn-Smith has also held the roles of Chief Administrative Officer for the healthcare management group, Exigence, and Executive Director of Deaf Adult Services, in Buffalo, New York. She is currently serving on the board of The Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpreters in the role of Treasurer.

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SHAITIA SPRUELL, Clinton resident and Program Manager primarily overseeing Women's Economic Empowerment Programing for the Office of the State Treasurer and Receiver General, has been elected as Chair of the Legislative and Public Policy Committee. Spruell was appointed to the Commission by the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators in 2019. Before joining the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, Spruell served as a regional commissioner on the Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls for one year. Shaitia is passionate about financial literacy, empowering girls and working moms. Earning her B.S. from Bay Path University, she is now enrolled at Fitchburg State University pursuing her MBA in Business Management. Shaitia is also a member of the Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition (MAWOCC) and formerly sat as Board Chair of Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts.

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MARY-DITH TUITT, Boston resident, Community and Peer Veteran Specialist, has been elected as Vice Chair of Legislative and Public Policy Committee and Chair of the AD Hoc Regional Committee. Tuitt was appointed to the Commission by the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators in 2011. Mary-dith was born on the Island of Montserrat in the British West Indies to Henrietta and Michael Tuitt. Tuitt has served as Chief of Staff for State Representative Gloria L. Fox, where she worked as Constituent Services Coordinator for a Boston City Councilor, providing support to the underserved communities of Boston, and has worked on various political campaigns. Over the years, Mary has always been involved and invested in enriching, enhancing and empowering her community. She served as a volunteer with Boston Public schools, various community youth groups, and with her church, St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Columbia Road in Dorchester, MA. An alumnus of the Boston Public School system, Mary-dith graduated from Boston Technical High School in 1985. Shortly after graduation, Mary-dith entered the United States Navy, where she served fourteen years as a Navy Aviation Machinists Mate, first on active duty and then in the active & inactive Reserves.

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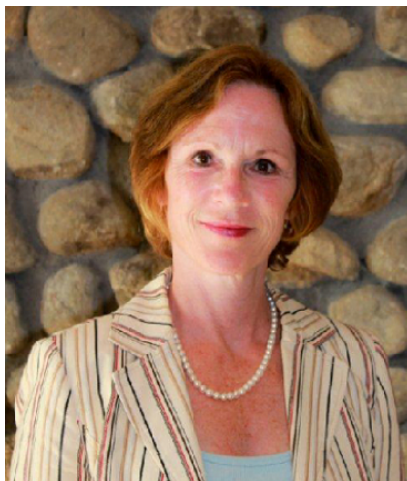
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JEAN FOX, Freetown resident and Director of Outreach for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's South Coast Rail project, has been re-elected as Chair of the Program and Planning Committee. Fox was appointed to the Commission by MA Speaker of the House, Robert DeLeo, in 2017. Heading up the public engagement and outreach effort for a major commuter rail expansion project, Fox led the South Coast Rail project through MassDOT's environmental review and permitting process, ushering the project to construction. Jean is active in her hometown of Freetown as well as the South Coast, most recently spearheading the effort to launch and implement the Freetown Regional Food Pantry. A former Freetown Selectman, Jean has participated on numerous educational boards and committees in the South Coast. She is Chair of the Freetown-Lakeville Regional School Committee and Secretary of the Global Learning Charter Public School Board of Trustees. Fox has been active in bringing much-needed attention to the transportation needs of the region, working on a Transit Development Plan in New Bedford as well as advocating for reliable transportation for women and students to get to and from work, jobs, education, healthcare, and childcare.

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RUTH BRAMSON, Boston resident and former CEO of the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts, has been elected as Vice Chair for the Program and Planning Committee. Bramson was reappointed to the Commission in 2019 by Governor Charlie Baker, having served on the Commission under two previous administrations. Bramson served as the Commonwealth's Undersecretary of Administration and Finance in the Romney Administration. Her career has been dedicated to advancing opportunities for all women and girls and advocating for gender equity and against domestic violence. Bramson has spearheaded initiatives in diversity and STEM education. She served as the first CEO of the Girl Scouts of Eastern MA, working with 45,000 girls to develop their leadership skills and self-confidence. She holds a B.S. from Columbia University and a M.S. from Boston University's School of Education. Bramson also serves as Co Chair of the COVID-19 Action Committee.

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PATRICIA HOHL, Framingham resident and Director of Voices Against Violence, has been elected as Vice Chair of the Budget and Personnel Committee. Hohl was appointed to the Commission by Massachusetts Senate President Karen E. Spilka in November 2019. Hohl is the Director at Voices Against Violence in Framingham where the mission is to save lives, rebuild lives, and secure safer futures for survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Prior to taking the helm at Voices, Patricia worked at the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center as a national training and technical assistance provider implementing Domestic Violence High Risk Teams across the country as part of the Office on Violence Against Women / Dept. of Justice Demonstration Initiative and Technical Assistance grants. Patricia is an attorney with over two decades of nonprofit management experience. She holds a B.S. in Business from UMASS Lowell, a M.S. in Nonprofit Management from Boston University, a graduate certificate in Gender Leadership and Public Policy from UMASS Boston's McCormack Graduate School of Policy & Global Studies, and a J.D. from Suffolk University Law School. Until her appointment, Patricia had been a Commissioner on the MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women since its inception in 2015, where she served at different times as Chair and Legislative Director. She volunteers as a member of the Jane Doe Inc. Policy Advisory Committee and is active in the League of Women Voters of Framingham.

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