



## Speaker Biographies

### **Edward L. Ayers, Ph.D.**

Dr. Ayers, a nationally recognized scholar and educator, became the ninth president of the University of Richmond on July 1, 2007.

Dr. Ayers came to Richmond from the University of Virginia, where he served as the Buckner W. Clay Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Hugh P. Kelly Professor of History. As dean, he led a school with 25 departments, more than 50 majors, approximately 10,000 undergraduates, and 575 tenured or tenure-track professors. At Virginia, Ayers led major fundraising initiatives resulting in more than \$110 million for the College of Arts and Sciences and the largest addition to the central Grounds in a century. He also created a January Term, strengthened advising, and secured a large increase in funding to hire new faculty.

The recipient of numerous awards for his teaching and scholarship, Ayers was named U.S. Professor of the Year for Doctoral and Research Universities by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2003.

One of the nation's leading scholars on the history of the American South, he has authored or edited nine books, one of which was a finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. Ayers also pioneered in digital media with "The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War." In 2000, it won the first annual eLincoln Prize for best digital work on the era of the American Civil War.

Ayers received his education at the University of Tennessee and Yale University, where he earned his Ph.D. in American Studies. He and his wife, Abby, are the parents of two children. Their daughter, Hannah, is a student at the College of William and Mary. Their son, Nate, recently graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University. Abby Ayers, also a graduate of the University of Tennessee, is a former teacher and an active volunteer with children's organizations.

### **Kristen Binette**

Kristen Binette serves as Senior Assistant Director of Admission and Director of the Alumni Recruitment Committee at the University of Richmond. She is also a first-year Richmond MBA student. Kristen graduated from Washington and Lee University in 2000, and spent six years working in the admission office of her alma mater. She is a member of national and regional professional admission organizations as well as the Richmond MBA Leadership Council, the Washington and Lee Richmond Alumni Chapter Board, the Kappa Delta-Zeta Tau Chapter Alumnae Board and Housing Corporation, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Art's Friends of Art.

## **Sherrie L. Brach**

Sherrie Brach is the Chief Executive Officer of United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg. She is responsible for one of the largest United Ways in the United States, which is categorized as a "Metro 1" organization in the United Way system. Metro 1 organization's raise up to \$25,000,000. She leads a Management Team of four Vice Presidents and a total of 65 employees. Sherrie has served in the role of Chief Operating Officer, Vice President of Resource Development and Campaign Director at this United Way.

Sherrie has over 20 years of experience in the United Way system including seven years in Tacoma, Washington as Campaign Manager and Vice President of Marketing and Resource Development. Before joining the United Way system, Sherrie was the Director of Community Affairs for the Department of Defense in Germany, Director of Marketing for a local McDonald's franchise in Oklahoma and Director of Development for the American Lung Association of West Virginia.

### United Way of America:

Committee Member and Organizational Development Consultant of the National Brand Initiative, Facilitator of the New Presidents Forum, Member of National Professional Council and an Instructor for the National Academy of Volunteerism.

### Richmond Service Area:

Sherrie currently serves on the Boards of Central Virginia Better Business Bureau Board, Richmond Weed & Seed, Homeward, LMR and various other committees. Sherrie was also selected as a Fellow for the Urban Health Initiative, supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2007 YWCA Outstanding Womens Awards recipient and a graduate of Leadership Metro Richmond.

Sherrie holds a Bachelors degree in Public Relations from West Virginia University.

## **James W. Dunn**

Jim is the President and CEO of the Greater Richmond Chamber. His career as a professional chamber executive began in 1970 in Devils Lake, North Dakota. During the ensuing 35 years, he has served local chambers in Ohio, Virginia and Georgia, prior to assuming his current position as president and CEO of the Greater Richmond Chamber (of Commerce) in October of 1990.

He was born and raised on a farm in Washington Court House, Ohio and was educated at Ohio State University, studying business administration. Following college, Jim completed a four-year tour in the U. S. Air Force, serving most of his assignment in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Dedicated to the advancement of his profession, Jim is a past Director of the Ohio, Georgia, and Virginia Associations of Chamber of Commerce Directors, and past President of the Virginia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives and past Chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce Executives. He received the 1999 Leadership Award presented by the Richmond First Club and University of Richmond's Jepson School of Leadership Studies, recognizing his leadership in advancing the quality of governance, of public service, and of life in the Richmond Metropolitan region, was Style Magazine's Richmonder of the Year for 2000 and received Leadership Metro Richmond's 2005 Ukrop Community Vision Award.

In 1986, he was awarded the Certified Chamber Executive designation by ACCE. Jim also received ACCE's coveted Chairman's Award in 1990, and was recognized as Virginia's Outstanding Chamber Executive in 1995.

Jim serves on the Boards of Directors of the Richmond Convention & Visitors Bureau, Greater Richmond Partnership, the Virginia Center for Healthy Communities and both the University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University Business School Advisory Boards and Salisbury Country Club. He is the current chairman of The Forum Club.

### **Grant Garcia**

Grant Garcia is a full-time student in the University of Richmond MBA program. Prior to returning to the University of Richmond, Grant worked as a political consultant to Fortune 500 companies and served as Legislative Assistant to a member of the Virginia House of Delegates. He has additional experience working with members of the U.S. House of Representatives and various government affairs and lobbying organizations in Washington, D.C. He is currently an intern at BB&T Capital Markets and will be working as a Summer Associate with Matrix Capital Markets Group in 2008.

Grant earned a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Richmond and is a member of the University's MBA class of 2009. He is also an alumnus of the Bryce Harlow Institute on Business and Government Affairs at Georgetown University.

### **Gail W. Johnson, RN, MS**

Gail Johnson is President of Rainbow Station and PRISM, Inc. As a pediatric nurse at the Medical College of Virginia, she observed the lack of services for children and working parents and developed the concept of a place where children with usual childhood illnesses, and/or chronic medical conditions, could go when their parents had to go work. In 1989, she launched the Get Well Place at Rainbow Station, an infirmary for mildly ill children that is staffed by a full-time pediatric nurse. Rainbow Station also offers Preschool, Nursery School, Private Kindergarten, and recreation programs (in the Village) as well as Prescribed Pediatric Nursing Care for children with chronic medical conditions that require professional nursing.

In 1996, Rainbow Station was chosen as a Rising 25—A Top 25 Fastest-Growing Company, was one of 19 finalists for the Virginia State Entrepreneur of the Year Award, and was named the Greater Richmond Small Business Person of the Year. Gail was named Virginia Small Business Person of the Year in 1997. In 2002 and 2003, respectively, Gail was named YMCA Outstanding Woman in Business and the Innsbrook Rotary's Business Leader.

Gail is, and has been, active in many local and national business and industry associations including the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce, the Virginia Child Daycare Council, state and local associations for early childhood education and the Virginia Council of CEOs.

### **Colleen A. Kraft, M.D, FAAP**

Colleen A. Kraft, M.D., FAAP is the President of the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. In her private practice with Pediatric and Adolescent Health Partners in Richmond, Virginia she develops innovative ways to address morbidities new to the practice of pediatrics. In her previous practice, she served as Managing Partner. She also teaches in the Division of Community Pediatrics at Virginia Commonwealth University, and is Medical Director of Medical

Home Plus, Inc., a non-profit that complements the Medical Home by connecting families and physicians with community resources.

Born in Akron, Ohio, Dr. Kraft was in an inaugural Head Start class in 1965. She received her B.A. from Virginia Tech, her M.D. from the Medical College of Virginia, and completed pediatric training at the Medical College of Virginia Hospitals. For the past twenty years, she has taught medical students and residents in classroom and clinical settings here and abroad.

As President of the Virginia Chapter, Dr. Kraft is often quoted in media and print about the excellent return on public investments in children's health. She is well known to the Governor's staff, State and Federal legislators, insurance companies as well as Medicaid and health department officials. Dr. Kraft has spoken nationally and internationally on numerous pediatric topics, serves on the Executive Committee of the Council on Community Pediatrics, and writes for the Section on International Child Health Newsletter.

### **Robert Lynch, Ph.D.**

Robert G. Lynch is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Economics at Washington College, where he has taught since the fall of 1998. From 1983 to 1998, he taught at the State University of New York at Cortland where he served as Chair of the Department of Economics between 1991 and 1993. He also taught at Huanghe University (1985-86) in the People's Republic of China. Dr Lynch has served as a consultant to numerous organizations including private businesses, governments, labor unions, and research organizations. His areas of specialization include International Economics, Public Policy, Public Finance, Economic Development and Comparative Economics. Dr. Lynch holds masters (1981) and doctoral (1984) degrees in Economics from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and a bachelor's (1979) degree in International and Development Economics from Georgetown University.

Over the past 20 years Dr. Lynch has evaluated the adequacy and effectiveness of various state and local government economic policies, reviewed government economic growth strategies, and studied the efficiency, fairness, and stability of state and local tax systems.

He is the author of numerous works that have analyzed the effectiveness of state and local government economic policies in promoting economic development and creating jobs including his 2004 publication *Rethinking Growth Strategies: How State and Local Taxes and Public Services Affect Economic Development*. In addition, he has written papers that examined issues related to the definition and measurement of income inequality.

Other areas of his research assess the impact of public investment in early childhood education on government budgets, the economy, and crime. One of his most recent publications in this area is *Exceptional Returns: Economic, Fiscal, and Social Benefits of Investment in Early Childhood Development* (2004). Professor Lynch has had articles published in academic journals and by think tanks including the *Journal of Comparative Economics*, *World Development*, the *Journal of Regional Studies*, the *Economic Development Quarterly*, *American Educator*, *State Tax Notes*, the *Economic Policy Institute*, the *Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy*, the *Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation*, and the *Fiscal Policy Institute*.

### **Delegate Jennifer McClellan**

Jennifer McClellan was elected to represent the 71st District in the Virginia House of Delegates in 2005. She serves on the House Commerce & Labor and Education Committees. In 2006,

Governor Kaine appointed Jennifer to the Commission on Sexual Violence, and the Speaker appointed her to the Civil Rights Memorial Commission, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission, and the Board of Trustees of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Living History and Public Policy Center. Jennifer is a member of the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus.

Jennifer is Assistant General Counsel Mid-Atlantic South for Verizon Communications, focusing on state regulatory matters for the District of Columbia, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. She is Secretary of Virginia State Bar Young Lawyers Conference and Immediate Past Chair of the Virginia State Bar's Corporate Counsel Section.

Jennifer serves as Vice President of the State Board of the Sorensen Institute of Political Leadership, and is a graduate of the Institute's 2001 Political Leaders Program and 2005 Candidate Training Program. Jennifer also serves as Vice President of the Board of Trustees for the Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia, and is a member of the boards of the Virginia Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, Flagler Home at St. Joseph's Villa, Boaz & Ruth, and the Oliver White Hill Foundation.

Jennifer currently serves as 1st Vice Chair, Organization for the Democratic Party of Virginia, and is a member of the Democratic National Committee and the Association of Democratic Chairs. She served three consecutive terms as president of the Virginia Young Democrats (1994-1997), and is the founding president of the Metro Richmond Area Young Democrats (1997-2004).

Prior to elected office, Jennifer served Governor Mark Warner on the Virginia College Building Authority (2002-2005), serving two years as Vice Chair.

Jennifer received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Richmond in 1994. In 1997, she received her law degree from the University of Virginia. In 2007, Jennifer was named one of the Top Young Lawyers in Virginia by Virginia Super Lawyers Magazine. In 2006, Jennifer was named the Virginia Jaycees Outstanding Young Virginian. In 2005, Jennifer was awarded the Leadership Metro Richmond Servant Leader Award, and named to Style Weekly's Top 40 Under 40 in 2005.

### **Delegate Christopher K. Peace**

Delegate Christopher K. Peace represents the 97th District in the Virginia House of Delegates serving parts of Hanover, Caroline, King William, King and Queen, Henrico, Spotsylvania Counties and all of New Kent County. Peace sits on the prominent Courts of Justice, Health Welfare and Institutions, and Science and Technology Committees.

During his first term as a member of the General Assembly, Peace worked for a common sense approach to 21st century transportation needs while also fighting for lower taxes and private property rights. He specifically led efforts to maintain a low tax, pro-business climate by fully repealing Virginia's death tax and enacting strong eminent domain legislation.

Peace is also concerned about creating safer communities and better schools along with addressing the needs of our senior population. Peace stands strong on our fundamental rights and traditional values including preservation of our environment and history, the sanctity of life and marriage and the right to keep and bear arms.

Prior to his 2006 election, Peace was a consultant with McGuireWoods, a national public affairs and public relations firm. He had led his own grassroots development and government relations firm focused on the Virginia legislature from 2002-2003. During his time as an advocate for both business and the Citizens of the Commonwealth, Peace successfully fought meals tax increases, for better health benefits for retired educators, and to protect children using the internet on library computers. In 1999, Peace worked as a legislative aide to then-Delegate Eric Cantor (now 7th District US Congressman), as a law clerk for the Richmond City Attorney and Virginia's Attorney General. Peace is a member of the bar association of the District of Columbia. He also serves as the executive director for a local historical non-profit foundation.

Peace received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Hampden-Sydney College and earned his law degree from the University of Richmond. In 2005, Peace was named to the "Top 40 Under 40" by Style Weekly magazine. He is a graduate fellow of Leadership Metro Richmond and University of Virginia's Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership.

### **Michael Petro**

Michael J. Petro serves as CED's Vice President and Director of Business and Government Policy and Chief of Staff. In this capacity, Mr. Petro is responsible for connecting CED's policy projects and activities to the business community, government officials and members of the media.

In recent years, Mr. Petro has been successful in helping build new constituencies around such issues as campaign finance reform, trade and globalization, K-12 education reform and early childhood education. Of particular note was CED's effort to engage and mobilize business leaders around campaign finance reform. Many credit the entrance of the business community as a crucial ingredient that led to the passage of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA).

Prior to joining CED, Mr. Petro served as Vice President for the Center for National Policy. For over seven years he was responsible for overseeing the day to day activities of this public policy organization. He played an instrumental role in directing the organization's political and communications agenda.

Mr. Petro has had extensive interaction and dealings with government and business leaders of various Asian countries. He led a congressional staff delegation to Taiwan and Hong Kong and participated in a trip to South Korea led by former Speaker of the House Thomas Foley. In addition, he has assisted in projects dealing with U.S. policy toward Cambodia and Vietnam.

He has been active in a variety of political activities, including his work on the presidential campaigns of John Glenn and Walter Mondale; serving as National Finance Director for Bob Graham's 1986 Senate Campaign; and working as Executive Director of the Democratic Business Council.

Mr. Petro studied at Brunel University in England and is a graduate of the State University of New York at Brockport.

### **Thomas Shields, M.T., Ph.D.**

Dr. Tom Shields is on the faculty at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies and is director of the Center for Leadership in Education at the University of Richmond. He is also an instructor at the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia. As director of the Center

for Leadership in Education, Dr. Shields is responsible for the implementation of programs and research in leadership studies for students, teachers, and administrators in the K-12 market. The Center offers various programs in leadership studies, such as the Emerging Leaders Institute for the Virginia Association of Independent Schools and the Next Generation Leadership Academy for public school divisions in the greater-Richmond area.

At the Jepson School he has taught classes on the Political Context of Leadership, Foundations of Leadership, Histories and Theories of Leadership, and Leadership and Analyzing Public Policy. He has published articles in *Academic Exchange Quarterly* (Civic and Political Leadership Education in HTML), the *Journal of Black Studies* (The "Tip of the Iceberg"... in PDF) and in *Politics and Policy* (The Fight for Political Representation... in PDF) and has presented his research at numerous academic conferences. In the classroom, Dr. Shields focuses on creating learning environments where students apply theoretical knowledge to practical learning experiences.

He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History with minors in English and Political Science from the University of Scranton. He holds a Master of Arts in Teaching and doctorate in Public Policy and Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University.