

**Election of Officers and Directors for 2020
Candidate's Background & Statement**

President-Elect Candidates

**Michael McCarty, CPRP
Executive Director, Glenview Park District, Illinois
Member since 2013**

Michael has over 28 years in the profession of parks and recreation and is currently the Executive Director of the Glenview Park District one of the largest park districts in the State of Illinois. The Glenview Park District is a 2019 Gold Medal finalist and has a \$36 million operating budget, 115 full-time employees, 858 acres of park land, over 430,000 square feet of facilities, national historic landmarks, a working farm, and has won numerous awards and grants.

Inducted into the Academy in 2013, Michael has served for the last three years on the Board of Directors of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. As an active member of the Academy, Michael has served on the Gold Medal Committee, chaired the 2017 Mentor Committee, and chaired the 2017 and 2018 Advocacy Task Force.

Prior to Glenview, Michael was the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Fairfax, Virginia, a 2011 National Gold Medal winner. Michael has also served as Executive Director for the Longmeadow Parks and Recreation Department in Longmeadow, MA. Michael is a past Chair and eight-year member of the Board of Regents for the Revenue Management and Development School. He has served as the Chair of the Virginia Recreation and Park Society (VRPS) Northern Service Area Board and on their Executive Board. Michael was also a member of the Connecticut Recreation and Park Association Executive Board and Co-chaired the annual conference committee. As a sought-after speaker, Michael has presented on topics ranging from strategic planning to sponsorships throughout the country and most recently at the 2018 NRPA Conference.

I'm honored and humbled to be selected as a candidate for President-elect of this distinguished organization. If selected as President-elect, I will uphold the ideals and foundational principles of the Academy and I will work to establish clear leadership on matters of member engagement, research to advance the profession, strengthening our relationships and partnerships, establishing legislative advocacy platforms and ensuring the financial success of the Academy. Throughout my career, I have admired the leadership the Academy has taken on key issues related to our profession. This leadership has led to continued excellence in management of parks, recreation and policy. We need to continue to strive for excellence in these areas while finding meaningful ways to engage current and future members who are eager to volunteer their time and expertise. I personally will work to seek ways for our members to offer sponsored symposium opportunities to more effectively develop key actions through an inclusive approach to high priority areas of focus. With your support and help, we will be able to maintain the standard we uphold of being the premier organization to champion for Park and Recreation Administration.

I am excited for this opportunity and looking forward to what we can accomplish together.

**Joe Turner
Texas
Member since 2014**

In Sept 2002 Joe was appointed by Harris County Commissioner Jerry Eversole as the Park Administrator for the Parks in Precinct 4. He worked with the team to improve the operations of the existing parks and began the vision and planning for the Spring Creek Greenway between two counties. Today the Spring Creek Greenway is nearly 40 miles of green space with hiking and biking trails in addition to fishing, canoeing and kayaking. In July 2004, Joe was recruited and appointed by Mayor Bill White to serve as the Director of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department. He continued to serve at the request of Mayor Annise Parker and Mayor Sylvester Turner until he retired in April 2017.

His many accomplishments include developing playgrounds without limits and installing them in parks with public transportation nearby to provide equitable access to these playgrounds. He created successful public private partnerships to compliment the Department's Capital Bond Funding. In addition, he developed partnerships to support the expansion of programming in Recreation and Community Centers.

Preservation of historic parks and buildings was a signature element of his time as Director. Joe was able to save and renovate many important parts of Houston's history. Those include Bethel Park, Emancipation Park and Gragg Park. In 2008 under his direction, the Department received their CAPRA Accreditation and at the NRPA Conference in Houston in 2013, the Department received their 5-year reaccreditation.

Today he serves on the New Braunfels Park Advisory Board, the Brackenridge Park Conservancy Board in San Antonio and is on the Board of Directors of the American Academy for Park & Recreation Administration. He is a member of the Texas Recreation and Park Society as well as the National Recreation and Park Association where he served on the Board of Trustees for 7 years.

I am honored to be a candidate for President Elect. I am impressed by the work of the Academy and would like the opportunity to continue that work with each of you. In the recent survey, the statement of advancing public parks and recreation through research, promoting best practices in parks and recreation management, advocating for the profession and promoting professional development is a direction that I believe is important for the Academy. The future of the Academy is bright as we document and develop visionary leaders and I would be honored to work with you to put those words into action. If elected, it would be a privilege to serve in this capacity.

Secretary Candidates

Janet Bartnik, M.S., CPRP

Executive Director, Mountain Recreation Metropolitan District, Colorado

Member since 2014

In her first year on the job in Eagle County, Colorado, Janet Bartnik displayed leadership talent by bringing board members, staff, and the community together to develop vision and direction for the organization which was in the midst of enormous change. Employing a balance between the business model and social service, Janet engaged community partners in the construction of a KaBoom! playground in an underserved rural neighborhood in the District, brought summer lunch programming to the District, and worked with the Town of Gypsum to remove barriers to active living by restructuring its membership offerings and renovating the Gypsum Recreation Center.

For five years prior to joining Mountain Recreation's team, Janet was the Director of Parks and Recreation in Liberty, MO, where she was instrumental in engaging four community partners in the creation of a community health coalition, Liberty Community Health Action Team, and worked with the Liberty Park Board to develop a new mission, vision and strategic plan. Bartnik also served as the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Raymore, MO, a fast-growing community of 15,000 south of Kansas City. Janet has been aggressive in seeking alternative strategies for funding, land acquisition, and had developed a recreation program for Raymore which had previously only had parks.

Serving the profession is a privilege, and the Academy leadership offers many incredible opportunities to have an impact through service to the field. My involvement in Academy committees over the past five years has not only afforded me an opportunity to work with an amazing number of the brightest and most experienced minds in the field, it has also allowed me to grow my leadership skill and given me insight into the ways in which we can continue to influence positive change in the profession. Thank you for nominating me for this post. If elected, it would be an honor to serve in this capacity.

Dirk Richwine, CPRE, AFO

Colorado

Member since 2010

Dirk Richwine (CPRE, AFO) has been a park and recreation professional for over 37 years. For 15 years, he worked for the fastest growing city in the United States, Henderson, Nevada. While in Henderson, the city won two national Gold Medal awards and Dirk led their efforts to be nationally accredited in 2001 and reaccredited in 2006 and 2011. His previous experience included work in both Colorado and Arizona. Dirk holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Golden Gate University and a Bachelor's degree in Community Recreation from Arizona State University.

Dirk has been active in professional associations including President of the Nevada Recreation and Parks Society, board member and chair on the NRPA Administrator's Network, Regent of Pacific Revenue Management School, Rocky Mountain Revenue School and the Oglebay Revenue Management School. He was chair of both the Rocky Mountain and Oglebay Revenue schools. He was the Co-Chair of the Local Host Committee 2015 NRPA Conference in Las Vegas. Dirk has presented at numerous schools, conferences and workshops. He was also a contributing practitioner in the most recent edition of "Management of Parks and Recreation Agencies."

Dirk served on and is Chair on the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and the National Certification Board (NCB). He is a CAPRA lead visitor for over 19 years and is an accreditation mentor. Currently, he is the director on the NRPA Director's School.

Dirk's Academy involvement includes chairing the Membership, Legends and Banquet Committees. He has also served on the Gold Medal and Best Paper committees and was on the Board of Directors. Dirk has been both an Academy and NRPA Young Professional Mentor. In 2019, Dirk was selected as the NRPA Distinguished Professional.

The work we do is important to the people we serve. We need to make sure that we always remember that. The work that the Academy does helps advance that effort in several ways including developing young staff and future leaders, improving professional practices such as CAPRA and the Gold Medal Award and research such as the Best Paper. I hope to continue to play a role in continuing the advancement of our efforts in these and other areas. I am fortunate that I have been able to contribute and look forward to being able to continue to serve the Academy and our profession.

Treasurer Candidates

Bill Foelsch

Director of Parks & Recreation, Township of Morris, New Jersey

Member since 2014

Bill has served as Director of Parks and Recreation for the Township of Morris, a residential community of 23,000 since 2007. As Director, he manages 22 municipal parks and park preserves, two Olympic-size aquatic centers, and oversees an extensive array of recreation services for the Township and the regional service area. Prior to his service to Morris Township, he was Executive Director of the New Jersey Recreation and Park Association for 26 years, managing the membership services, educational activities, and public policy advocacy program of that statewide organization.

He also serves as part-time Park Consultant to the municipality of Chester Township, a position he started in 1981, currently managing seven parks, 80 acres of active recreation area, 8 miles of trails, and more than 1,000 acres of preserved open space.

Bill has served as Chair of the New Jersey Trails Council since his appointment to the Council in 1992. He recently completed his term as President of the New Jersey Recreation and Park Association and continues to Co-Chair their Public Policy Committee. He is a long-time volunteer on the NJRPA Annual Conference Program Committee.

Bill served on the Board of Trustees of the National Recreation and Park Association, was twice Chairman of the National Playground Safety Institute (NPSI) and served on the NRPA Congress Program Committee for 15 years, chairing the Program



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Committee in 2005 for the San Antonio Congress. He has served on nine campaign committees to renew the New Jersey Green Acres and Garden State Preservation Trust statewide open space preservation and park improvements funding programs. He currently serves as the NJRPA liaison to the Keep It Green Campaign, a 185 organization coalition advancing priorities for future GSPT funding for open space, farmland, and historic preservation and natural resources and park stewardship needs.

In October 2014, he was elected as a member of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration participating on the PRORAGIS and Externship Committees in 2015, chairing the AAPRA Externship Committee in 2016 and acting as chair of the Externship Recruitment and Selection Subcommittee in 2018. In 2018 he was sworn in as Treasurer of the Academy and became Chair of the Finance Task Force. Bill spends his recreational time hiking, biking, kayaking, gardening and attending concerts and theater events with his family and friends.

Academy membership is a great honor, but more importantly, it is a critically important opportunity for me to contribute to a profession that has sustained me since age 16. Our relevance as a profession is always under a level of scrutiny by taxpayers, political interests, and those competing for limited public resources, so the Academy must defend the importance and relevance of the services and facilities provided by our respective agencies. We need to continually evaluate the changing demographics and cultural evolution of our country and be ready to anticipate new directions of service. My focus will be to motivate Academy members to empower younger professionals and academics to prepare for this changing world, where administrative and public policy leadership will be critical success factors. The Academy has exceptional levels of talent and experience to contribute to this effort. Having served as Treasurer of the Academy for the 2018-19 membership year, I would like to continue my service on the Academy Board for another term to extend our efforts toward robust fiscal health and program excellence

Ronnie Gathers

Maryland

Member since 2013

Ronnie Gathers is a recently retired Director of the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County, Maryland. He has served the bi-county agency for 30 years representing communities, leading teams and managing resources. Ronnie has served in various capacities providing superior fiscal management, vision and guidance for agencies with operating budgets exceeding three hundred million dollars. Ronnie has demonstrated leadership acumen by serving in several nonprofit and leadership organizations such as the National Park Trust, Leadership Prince George's and Leadership Greater Washington. Ronnie advanced many innovative initiatives over the years adopting a vision of innovative recreation, initiating master plans, restructuring services, developing cultural competency programs and managing fiscal spending through sound policy and management. Through Ronnie's efforts, he has repeatedly obtained his agency's accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). MNPPC received a Gold Medal for building design in architecture and received the Agency's sixth Gold Medal Award for parks and recreation excellence. Many elected officials have acknowledged Ronnie's public service locally and nationally. During the 123rd Congress, Ronnie was awarded a Congressional Record Tribute presented by Congressman James E. Clyburn at the U.S. Capital Building in Washington, D.C.

Since retiring Ronnie has started consulting under the name of Intelligent Strategic Coaching and Consulting (ISC) which was created to provide services to organizations through visioning, strategic planning, management analysis, coaching, diversity and innovative thought. His work has involved coaching of executives, senior level staff and teams on individual development.

I am honored to be nominated as a candidate for the office of treasurer for the Academy. I believe I will be a good candidate due to my long tenure successfully managing many parks and recreation services for one of the largest parks and recreation agencies in the country. My experience is extensive in providing fiduciary responsibility to government agencies and non-profits. I believe I can provide the same level of service for the Academy to ensure that the academy is well positioned for future growth to support the Academy's mission.

Board of Director Candidates (4 candidates for 2 positions)

R.J. Cardin

Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department, Arizona

Member since 2012

The Maricopa County regional park system is one of the largest regional parks systems in the United States, made up of over 120,000-acres of pristine Sonoran desert landscape. The department is responsible for more than 500 miles of trails including the 315-mile loop Maricopa Regional Trail.

RJ has more than 30-years of diverse parks and recreation experience, which includes local, county and state government, commercial recreation and the non-profit sector. He holds a Master's degree from Arizona State University focusing on outdoor recreation and tourism. In addition, he holds Bachelor's degrees in both Business Administration and Recreation Management from Morningside College located in Iowa.

RJ was inducted as a Fellow in the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration in 2014, has served as the President of the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials, is past Chairman of the Arizona State Parks Board and was named Outstanding Park and Recreation Professional for Arizona in 2017.

He strongly believes that through responsible stewardship and the ability to connect the community to nature via quality parks, trails, programs, services and experiences, it is possible to inspire a love for the Sonoran desert's beauty and create life-long users and advocates for public lands.

I firmly believe in the role of the Academy to advance the knowledge base of and for the profession and to advocate on behalf of the profession for the benefit of the people we serve. I have seen a positive change in the Academy toward including more young and diverse professionals, taking a stronger stance on advocacy and in providing more relevant research that will advance both the core knowledge base and best management practice for our field. I would like to work with the Academy and our members in a leadership role to continue those efforts.

Roslyn Johnson

Maryland

Member since 2017

Roslyn Johnson was most recently the Deputy Director of Facility Operations for 6 time National Gold Medal winning agency, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in Prince George's County, MD which is both CAPRA and CALEA certified. In this role, she led innovative recreation programs that served the community. She had oversight of natural and historic resources, sports and arts programs and facilities, maintenance and development, and public affairs and marketing. In addition to these 5 divisions, Roslyn was the Executive Sponsor for Innovation for the entire department.

Roslyn has an extensive career in the field of parks and recreation. In the past 15 years, she has held Deputy Director and Associate Director positions in parks and recreation agencies in Richmond, VA, the District of Columbia, and Baltimore, Maryland. Her background and experience include overseeing multi-million dollar budgets, leading a diverse workforce, managing programs and facilities, and representing the agency in community outreach with elected officials, residents, and communities.

Roslyn has been very involved in NRPA and is currently a Board Member. She presented at the first Urban Park Conference in Chicago, the Legislative Forum 2011 and 2012, was a keynote in Shenzhen, China, taught at the Graduate Institute at Oglebay and just completed a 6 year stint as an instructor for NRPA Director's school. She also presents often at conferences.

Roslyn graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park, and has a certificate from the Harvard Kennedy School. In her

free time, she enjoys the outdoors and making jewelry.

Hello Fellow Members. I humbly ask for your nomination to be on the Board of Director's for the prestigious American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. While it has been my career long goal to be a member of the Academy, I believe I can be most impactful by serving on the Board. I am interested in serving because of my desire to continue to move our profession forward. The Academy is a prestigious group of professionals from around the globe. In my many conversations with younger professionals, not all of them are familiar with the Academy. I want to help get the word out, through a broader platform, about us and share the work we do. Having served on the NRPA Board of Trustees for the past almost 6 years and having taught at Directors School for the past 6 years, I feel I am at the cross section of the pulse of our profession. As a Board Member I can continue to serve our profession and members and in working with the Board, help to shape the future of the Academy with your input. Innovation in Parks and Recreation is one of my passions and I feel as a Director, I would infuse this passion into the work of the Board. It is my involvement and volunteering that I wish to continue to serve, this time on the Board of the Academy if I am so honored to be able to do so. Thank you for your consideration.

Susan Trautman
Chief Executive Officer, Great Rivers Greenway, Missouri
Member since 2007

Susan K. Trautman, CPRP, is the Chief Executive Officer of Great Rivers Greenway. Since 2010, she has been instrumental in advancing a vision of improving the quality of life in St. Louis by building [the River Ring](#), a 600-mile web of more than 45 greenways, parks and trails that are connecting St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County. Great Rivers Greenway is a regional park district covering 1,200 square miles and serving a population of two million people. Working with over 200 partners, she oversees initiatives that impact more than 100 municipalities, creating and preserving outdoor spaces, connecting people to nature, linking and strengthening neighborhoods. The District is also the public steward of Proposition P, the Safe and Accessible Arch and Public Parks Initiative. A 3/16 cent sales tax approved in April 2013 which provided \$100 million in public funds to match \$250 million privately raised for the renovation of the Gateway Arch and the St. Louis Riverfront. Trautman is now spearheading an effort to develop Chouteau Greenway, a major public-private partnership to connect the parks and neighborhoods in St. Louis City.

Trautman served on the Board of Directors for the National Recreation and Park Association for seven years and as 2015-16 Chair of NPRA. She has served as president and on the board of the Missouri Parks and Recreation Association and on numerous committees. She was inducted into the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration in 2007, for which she has served as Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and currently as Membership Chair.

Trautman was honored with the NAACP 2018 Ina Boon Social Justice award for work related to minority inclusion in the CityArchRiver project. She was recognized as a Missouri Athletic Club's 2016 "Women of Distinction". She was a 2011 St. Louis Business "Top 25 Influential Business Woman" and in 2012 was awarded the "Missourian Award". She currently serves as Vice-Chair of the St. Louis Regional Health Commission, and as a Board member of Beyond Housing.

Trautman's background includes serving as the Director of Parks and Recreation with the City of Des Peres, as Planner/Principal with SWT Design, and serving the City of Clayton, Mo., as Director of Parks and Recreation and as Executive Director of The Center of Clayton. For nearly 40 years, she has been responsible for guiding the development and enhancement of numerous park and open space facilities, trails, recreation centers, and delivering successful projects such as the \$27 million Lodge Des Peres and the \$19 million Center of Clayton.

I believe we have a responsibility to serve, I see the Academy as an important link to our field. I have benefitted greatly from the many members of the Academy who have mentored me over the years. Serving on the Academy Board is but one way to pay it forward and to assist in further developing parks and recreation as critical to the quality of life for our communities.

Steve Wolter, CPRP, CPP-I

**Executive Director, Eppley Institute for Parks & Public Lands, Indiana University, Indiana
Member since 2008**

Steve Wolter serves as Executive Director of the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands, and also the National Center on Accessibility at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. He is also an Assistant Professor in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies at Indiana University. With almost 40 years of experience in park and recreation leadership, planning, management and delivery of recreation services and facilities, Mr. Wolter is actively involved in the profession through publications, consulting, research, service, and education.

Steve has served as the Newsletter Editor, a member of the Leadership for the Profession Task Force, and the chair of the Academy Outreach and Advancement Task Force.

Steve brings a blend of training in urban/regional planning and recreation/park management to the profession. He is a leader, collaborator and he is uniquely practiced in the field. He consults, teaches, and researches for a variety of park, public land, and recreation agencies in the nation including the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, as well as local and state park agencies, and local government agencies. With one foot in academics and one in the practical world, Steve is a 'pracademic' who has had tremendous impact in leadership of the national parks, development of policies for national public land agencies, and in communities including Boulder, Anchorage, Washington, D.C., Indianapolis, and countless others. Steve has a Master's degree from Indiana University in Recreation and Park Administration, and a Bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota in Urban Studies.

Working with various Eppley Institute partners across the country, Steve utilizes his executive and management experience as director of park and recreation agencies, (California, and Indiana) to learn from his colleagues, and translate actions in one agency to the broader field of park, recreation, public land and protected area management. "I am fortunate to benefit from this experience, translate it into practices for the field, and use it to teach leadership, planning, public policy, and strategic partnership classes to graduate students at IU." Steve has the privilege of speaking and training for enthusiastic audiences in presentations throughout the nation, as well as internationally in Australia, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Hong Kong, Portugal, and the People's Republic of China.

For some time now, I have thought of the Academy as the most prestigious keeper of our profession and its critical role in society. I still believe that but wonder if the Academy is up to the task, or if the task has changed in scale. This candid observation is not meant as an overly critical statement but as an open-minded question of what the Academy should do and emphasize. While our professional associations and universities are critical to advancing the services, our profession is responsible for, I think they have had to focus on many other issues and problems. This has in some ways, diluted their effectiveness in areas that I think are clearly the Academy's mission. For me, the AAPRA's unique role of uniting learning with advancement of the profession is the key to our profession and its contributions.

Many of us will agree that our societal problems are in the park and recreation wheelhouse, and our members do so much to contribute to community health, sustainability, resilience, and for citizen's quality of life. I happen to think our profession will become even more important as we focus on inequities, climate change, and the pervasive nature of technology that is our future. But, I also feel there is a general erosion of the role of the profession's stature and effectiveness, and consequently our contributions to local, state, and federal agencies. It suggests that we are not regarded as a critical profession as we once were.

The result is clear to me; the Academy has a critical role in addressing this trend in our profession and the possible negative effects it will have in society. I believe a more active, more educationally and research focused, and more vigorous Academy relying on our member's leadership, research, service, and writing, is critical to the advancement of the profession and continuation of our positive impact on quality of life in our country is critical. My hope, if elected to the Board, is to listen, learn, collaborate and help to advance our profession.