

Amanda Burt Column: Meet Our United Way Board Chair and the new Board Members

Our credo at United Way is to fight for the education, basic needs, and health of every person in our community. We know that change doesn't happen alone. I am privileged to be surrounded by the best leaders in Northwest Georgia. I witness some of the busiest people I know make time and invest their resources to address our community's most critical problems in the most efficient and effective ways.

The power of United Way comes from our local community being united for one cause – to improve lives. Over 11,582 donors, 2,954 volunteers, and 138 board and committee members drive our daily operations, support, and impact.

Today, I want to introduce you to our newest United Way Board Members: Allen Bentley, Elliott Davis Decosimo; Emily Finkel, Emily Morrow Home; John Forrester, Hamilton Health Care System; Debbie Macon, Community Volunteer and 2018 Campaign Co-Chair; Patti Renz, Coldwell Banker – Kinard Realty; and Mike Sanderson, Engineered Floors. I appreciate their desire to serve our community.

Ken Jackson has stepped up to lead our organization as Board Chair for 2018. Ken is the Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer at Shaw Industries. A board member since 2014, Ken will tell you that he very much believes that “to whom much is given, much is required.” His United Way journey began as a donor, but today, Ken is a donor, advocate, and volunteer extraordinaire for United Way and our community partners. He saw first-hand the impact of United Way and how synonymous our success is to the success of the community. Core to the vision of Ken's employer, Shaw Industries, is creating a better future for their people and the community as a whole.

In addition to his role as Board Chair of United Way, Ken has served on the UGA Foundation Board of Trustees since 2006 and served as its Chair in 2016 and 2017. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Georgia Terry College of Business and is the Terry College of Business 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient. Ken and his wife Jody have two adult children, Grant and Ginny.

Ken believes strongly in United Way, sharing at our recent Annual Meeting on our legacy of leadership, “We have been blessed with great leadership found in the men and women that have stepped up to lead our campaign in this community... going back to 1952 to today the list of the campaign chairs reads like a list of All-Stars in this community. I believe that these leaders have, by their own example, created a culture of giving that continues on today, and we can see how this “culture” has been passed from generation to generation.”

Ken embodies the spirit of service and leadership. His passion for our mission inspires others to want to give back, as well. Thank you, Ken, for Living United. Our community is a better place thanks to you.

Amanda Burt is the President of United Way of Northwest Georgia