Global Press Board of Directors

Anne Avis

Anne co-chairs the Global Press board and serves on the boards of KQED, Internews and Tinworks Art. Formerly Anne chaired the Board of KQED and co-chaired KQED’s Campaign 21, raising funds to expand original programming and transform KQED’s infrastructure. She is a former trustee of MASS MoCA, Fund for Global Human Rights, StoryCorps and the NPR Foundation. She invests philanthropic funds in entrepreneurial non-for-profit news organizations in the US and abroad.

Anne lives in Palo Alto CA with her husband Greg. They have three grown children. She was raised in Massachusetts and is a graduate of Williams College.

Benjamin McKee

Benjamin is the Chief Financial Officer of The Atlantic, and was previously CFO of Atlantic Media which was a holding company with ownership of Quartz, Government Executive, Long Dash, National Journal, Ballast Research, CityLab, and The Atlantic.

With over 12 years of media and 15 years of finance experience, he has overseen the implementation of substantial growth strategies, restructuring processes, and all M&A activity including the sale of Government Executive, Ballast, The Atlantic, CityLab, and Quartz.

Benjamin earned his MBA from Georgetown University, and his undergraduate degree at the University of Rochester. He lives in Washington, DC with his wife, Alanna, and son, Julien.
Cristi Hegranes

Cristi founded Global Press in 2006 to create a new form of ethical, accurate global news. Her values-driven approach to journalism prioritizes dignity, diversity and transparency.

In her role as CEO and publisher, Cristi leads the business side of the organization, which is committed to keeping editorial processes 100% independent. Cristi is an expert in local journalist security. She created the industry-leading Global Press Duty of Care program to provide for the physical, emotional, digital and legal security of its journalists. The program establishes best practices for the care of local female journalists in challenging markets.

Dr. Geetha Murali

Dr. Geetha Murali is the Chief Executive Officer of Room to Read, a leading international education organization that believes World Change Starts with Educated Children®. Room to Read transforms the lives of millions of children through education, creating a world free from illiteracy and gender inequality. As CEO, Geetha has been a driving force behind the exponential scale of Room to Read’s quality programs – achieving presence in 20 countries and benefiting more than 23 million children to date.

Geetha’s commitment to ensuring measurable and scalable impact through robust technical design and operational excellence has been recognized by former first lady of the United States Michelle Obama, with both the first lady’s girls’ education initiatives, Let Girls Learn and Girls Opportunity Alliance, promoting Room to Read’s gender equality program as a role model for the sector.

Geetha is a member of the Forbes Nonprofit Council, a Social Impact Officer and member of the Young President’s Organization (YPO) and has been recognized by WIRED as a leader who will shape the next 25 years. Geetha received her master’s degree in biostatistics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her master’s and doctorate degrees in South Asian Politics from the University of California at Berkeley.
Emily Kaiser

Emily Kaiser is the Associate Director of the Aspen Institute’s New Voices Fellowship, which provides media and advocacy training to development experts from countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. A veteran Reuters journalist, she joined Reuters in Chicago in 1996, and has reported from more than two dozen countries through postings on three continents. Her coverage beats have included agricultural commodities markets and the Chicago Board of Trade; U.S. retailers; European stock markets; and the U.S. and Asian economies.

Emily earned her journalism degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, and studied Arabic at American University in Cairo and the University of London. A native of Tulsa, Oklahoma, she lives in Washington D.C. with a very tolerant husband, two rambunctious sons and a spoiled dog.

George Woods

A former top salesman for IBM Corporation before going to medical school, George is the recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Utah Medical Center, the first psychiatrist to be so honored. He is currently President of the International Academy of Law and Mental Health. George has worked with legal teams dealing with complex criminal and civil litigation, as well as the philosophy of AI and its cultural implications. He has also worked with Vulcan Industries, Microsoft, and Walmart on psychometrically and culturally competent employment testing procedures. He is also Chief Scientific Officer Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc., a major provider of Behavioral Health services in California.

He is a Lecturer at the University of California-Berkeley School of Law, and was Adjunct Professor at Morehouse School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry from 2002-2018. He also maintains an active neuropsychiatric practice in Oakland, California.
Keith Woods

Keith Woods is Chief Diversity Officer at NPR. He leads and supports NPR's efforts to bring greater diversity to its audience, content and staffing while creating a workplace where a diverse staff can grow and thrive. He is a resource across the organization for leadership and staff working on diversity efforts, as well as for public radio leaders from more than 260 Member stations across the country. Woods also heads up the editorial Training team, which helps strengthen and support the work of journalists by training them in leadership, storytelling, reporting, editing, diversity, audio production and digital strategy.

Before joining NPR, Woods was Dean of Faculty of The Poynter Institute, a school for journalists in St. Petersburg, Fla. There, he led a dynamic faculty and taught for 15 years in seminars on race relations, diversity, ethics, reporting and personal essay writing. He is co-author of The Authentic Voice: The Best Reporting on Race and Ethnicity.

He is a native of New Orleans and a graduate of Dillard University and the Tulane University School of Social Work. He is a former sports writer, news reporter, city editor, editorial writer and columnist, working his way through those jobs in 16 years at the New Orleans Times-Picayune.

Linda Shostak

Linda Shostak retired from a 43-year career as a nationally recognized litigator and trial lawyer at Morrison & Foerster in San Francisco. Linda was a pioneer and innovator at her firm Morrison and Foerster—the second woman to make partner, the first woman to lead a department, the first woman to chair the partnership review committee, and the first woman member of the firm’s partner compensation committee. She was the longest tenured female lawyer and partner in the firm’s history. Linda has been a dedicated mentor and teacher to younger lawyers both within the firm and throughout the larger legal community. She is a role model for a wider, more inclusive vision of effective advocacy.

Linda was a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, an associate of the American Board of Trial Advocates, and is the recipient of ADL’s Distinguished Jurisprudence award.
Michelle Swenson

Michelle works with social enterprises as a board member, advisor and investor. She spent most of her corporate career as a senior executive at Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. where she built businesses, developed products and led strategic planning, marketing and technology organizations. She also led marketing for a fintech startup and was a nonprofit executive director. Her interests include voting rights, reproductive justice and local journalism. In addition to Global Press, she is currently affiliated with Rise Up, Way to Win, Center for Reproductive Rights, Women Donors Network, and others.

She has degrees from Duke University and the University of California, Berkeley.

Umbreen Bhatti

Umbreen is the Constance Hess Williams ’66 Director of the Athena Center for Leadership at Barnard College. Previously, she served as Director of the KQED Lab, the Bay Area’s NPR and PBS station’s in-house innovation lab. As a John S. Knight Journalism Fellow at Stanford University, she developed and then hosted the podcast “Kaleidoscope: Reflections on Islam.” Beyond media, Umbreen has worked with universities, libraries, local government, and nonprofits to support their efforts to meet the needs of their constituents in new and exciting ways.

Earlier in her career, she practiced law at the Disability Rights Legal Center in Los Angeles, the ACLU in Wilmington, Del., and Latham & Watkins in Washington, D.C., and taught law students as an adjunct professor at the Widener University School of Law.

Umbreen is a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School and Barnard College.