

# Elected Officials Retreat

This year marked the 21st anniversary of the Elected Officials Retreat, and the event included a series of presentations and discussions addressing “The Future of the American Dream: The Changing Landscape of Work and Democracy” on both regional and national levels. More than 100 elected officials and community leaders gathered in the Sheraton Station Square ballroom to engage in sustained dialogue over the course of the two-day event.

## ■ Thursday, September 14, 2017

### Welcome and Institute Update

In his opening remarks, **Mark Nordenberg**, chancellor emeritus and chair, Institute of Politics, University of Pittsburgh, remarked on the two constants of past Institute retreats, namely the participants’ collective aim to “make the region better” and “encourage civil dialogue and decision-making that is informed by relevant facts.” Offering evidence of the Institute’s efforts toward creating a regional improvement agenda, he outlined recent work on voluntary municipal disincorporation, urban agriculture, career and technical education, the opioid epidemic, and criminal justice reform. Nordenberg also offered an update regarding the effect of the Institute’s criminal justice reform recommendations, highlighting how County Executive Rich Fitzgerald has created a progress panel to publicize and monitor the progress of reform in the county and hired a criminal justice coordinator, **Edward Mulvey, PhD**.

### Coleman Award Winners

Nordenberg next offered his introductions for this year’s Coleman Award Winners, calling attention to Moe Coleman’s lifelong quest to find common ground. Characterizing the first award recipient, **Laurie Mulvey**, as a pioneer in creating family support centers, Nordenberg invoked the words of one of Mulvey’s nominators, who remarked that Mulvey consistently “empowers people to see their own potential.” Upon her receipt of the award, Mulvey discussed family support programs, how they historically work with (and succeed in aiding) those who are most at risk, and why it is vital for families to tell their stories to leaders and policy makers. Mulvey emphasized the role of authentic relationships operating in conjunction with respectful, strength-based services designed to meet the needs of families.



*James Kelly, with Tracy Soska in the background*

The next recipient of a Coleman Award was **Tracy Soska**, assistant professor;

director of continuing education; and chair of the Community, Organization, and Social Action concentration in the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. In presenting the award, Nordenberg outlined Soska’s critical work in the Pittsburgh region, including his support of the Regional Coalition of Community Builders, as well as his years of editorial work with the *Journal of Community Practice*. According to Nordenberg, Soska always focuses on the positive and works hard to build bridges. Receiving the award, Soska warmly remarked, “Some people get Oscars and Tonys, but I’m getting a Moe. That means so much to me.” He then outlined the three principles he learned from Coleman’s mentorship and methods: the value of finding common ground, working with people from different disciplines and walks of life, and committing long term to mentorship and community engagement.

The final Coleman Award recipient was introduced by Coleman himself, who called Institute of Politics Director **Terry Miller** “a true humanitarian, deeply committed to helping people in need.” Outlining her multifaceted work with the Institute of Politics, POWER (Pennsylvania Organization for Women in Early Recovery), and the Elsie Hillman Civic Forum, Coleman expressed his gratitude for Miller’s sustained brilliance, energy, and creative force. Upon accepting the award, Miller expressed her own gratitude for Coleman’s years of mentorship, remarking that her life is richer because she has been taught how to lean into the community, be of service, and be other-focused instead of self-focused.

## Retreat Overview

In her retreat overview, Miller expressed her view that it is imperative for policy makers to discuss the changing landscape of the American dream, particularly the way our society must prepare for fast-approaching technological changes that will disrupt the nature of American labor. Citing current political discord, as well as recent data revealing that working-class whites are the most pessimistic group in America, Miller advocated an inclusive strategy that would provide all Americans the opportunity to earn a true living wage. In her conclusion, Miller argued that “the human heart is the first home of democracy” and that “all are needed to stitch together the frayed edges of our democracy.”



Attendee talks with Terry Miller



Sree Ramaswamy

## The Changing Landscape of Work: Global and National Trends

**Sree Ramaswamy**, partner, McKinsey Global Institute, began his presentation, “The Changing Landscape of Work: Global and National Trends,” by highlighting that, although we are amid one of the longest sustained periods of job creation since the recession, the growth is far from evenly distributed. According to Ramaswamy’s research, job growth is increasingly geographically concentrated, meaning that half of the national job growth has occurred in 75 counties that amount to approximately 25 percent of the U.S. population. Simultaneously, Ramaswamy highlighted, the median income in the remaining 75 percent of the United States continues to decline. These two different economies exist partially in relation to job skills. Accordingly, wages have increased in capital-intensive industries such as transportation, retail, and construction, whereas industries like technology, pharmaceuticals, and finance have grown considerably. In his presentation, Ramaswamy argued that automation could, in fact, benefit the economy by giving cumbersome, menial tasks to robots so human beings can release their creativity elsewhere. According to Ramaswamy, automation does not create a simplistic conflict (robots versus jobs). Rather, because technological advancement creates large-scale economic growth, job opportunities continue to expand. If you do not have growth, Ramaswamy claimed, you will not have jobs. The issue to resolve, Ramaswamy claimed, is ensuring that the workforce pipeline stays apace with technology-based job displacement. Because the ratio could and likely will accelerate disproportionately over the next decade, Ramaswamy prioritized job training and technological awareness as the best tools to keep Americans trained, informed, and employed.



Valire Copeland

# Elected Officials Retreat (continued)

The panel's second presenter, **Mark Kamlet, PhD**, University Professor of Economics and Public Policy and provost emeritus, Carnegie Mellon University, launched his presentation by redefining the four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: "thermonuclear disaster, climate change, CRISPR [a genetic modification technology], and machine learning," the latter of which was the core subject of Kamlet's talk. Like Ramaswamy, Kamlet explained that, although the gross domestic product of the United States per capita has doubled in recent years, the median wage income has not changed in tandem. Kamlet



*Mark Kamlet*

described this as a hollowing out of the middle class: a situation in which jobs increase, but they move steadily out of the middle class. Claiming that technology affects labor markets in a very specific way, Kamlet remarked that class ascendancy is increasingly difficult to achieve because of the acceleration of machine learning and artificial intelligence. Kamlet concluded his presentation by outlining what he called the necessary planks of the new American dream. In his view, although every citizen should be expected to work and contribute to society, they should also be guaranteed an adequate standard of living. Additionally, strong incentives should exist for those who can create great wealth while simultaneously responding to and managing the acceleration of machine learning humanely and equitably. Otherwise, Kamlet remarked, individuals and corporations could continue to steer the political system away from a more humane response to the dilemmas outlined in his talk.

Following Ramaswamy's and Kamlet's presentations, an open discussion began on the subject of disparities in wealth between urban and rural areas, addressing the 75 percent of counties in the nation not seeing positive economic growth. President Donald J. Trump's geographic victory (winning over 98 percent of the national miles in the 2016 presidential election) was discussed in relation to these disparities. Presenters and members of the audience discussed potential ways to attract investment (public or targeted) aimed at helping communities and businesses upgrade alongside technological and economic advances. Future job trends related to full-time versus part-time employment were also discussed, and the idea of reinforcing a "shared fate" between company management and employees was voiced as an ideal business philosophy, particularly for advancing companies and corporations.

## The Changing Landscape of Work: Regional Challenges and Responses

The subsequent panel began with remarks from **Dennis Yablonsky**, chief executive officer, Allegheny Conference on Community Development. Using his organization's recent publication, "Inflection Point," as a touchstone for his presentation, Yablonsky highlighted the ways that—with regard to workforce training—supply and demand are out of sync programmatically; what's being taught is not necessarily aligned with what is needed, he said. Yablonsky defined the region's workforce issue as the biggest strategic challenge in the region and advocated finding new ways to retain more of the region's university graduates, offer internships, and attract people outside the region to fill gaps when necessary. Yablonsky also highlighted how many organizations are seeking, in conjunction with improved technical skills, more soft skills, particularly customer service skills, as well as an investment in (and positive attitude toward) lifelong learning.



*Dennis Yablonsky*





*Gregg Behr*

After Yablonsky's presentation, the next speaker, **Gregg Behr**, executive director, The Grable Foundation, spoke about the importance of deft adaptation in educational trends and training. Like Yablonsky, Behr emphasized the importance of lifelong learning in response to technological changes, claiming that schools and companies must refine how they think about learning and learning pathways, then create experiences that are engaging, relevant, and equitable. According to Behr, all of these factors are essential to training and preparing both children and adults for the workplaces of the future.



*Bill Strickland*

The panel's final speaker was **Bill Strickland**, president and chief executive officer of Manchester Bidwell Corporation. Strickland outlined the successes of his various educational programs and sites, which, in addition to offering low-income students state-of-the-art education,

nutrition, and immersion in the arts, also incorporate extensive job-training opportunities. Discussing partnerships with companies as varied as HP, Heinz, and Argo AI/Ford, Strickland highlighted the ways that his schools prepare students for advanced technology work and create a comprehensive "program of the future for people who have been left behind."

The panel's open discussion was moderated by **Linda Hippert, EdD**, executive director of Allegheny Intermediate Unit. During the open discussion, the panelists spoke at length about the issue of work as a source of purpose and the importance of training. Panelists and attendees concurred that companies would benefit from changing their hiring and training practices as a result of the current economic climate, or risk floundering due to lack of a loyal, long-term workforce. The role of paid internships for low-income candidates, as well as greater state support for public education geared toward long-term education and training, was also discussed.



*Linda Hippert*

*Guy and Donna Peduto and Terry Miller*



## **Transformational Technology: Progress, Community Costs, Jobs Lost, and Corporate Social Responsibility**

Following a reception and dinner, Nordenberg began his introduction of the Honorable **William Peduto**, mayor, City of Pittsburgh, by commending Peduto's ability to look forward with comfort and express thought-provoking ideas about the future of Pittsburgh. Nordenberg commented that Peduto is well informed in ways that only those who love their work can be. Speaking of the "wounds of the economically displaced," Nordenberg acknowledged Pittsburgh as a center of exciting technological possibilities, but also as a place where the benefits of economic rebirth have not benefitted all in the region.

After cataloging the history of Pittsburgh—from the establishment of Fort Pitt to its new position as a city poised to create prosperity in a multi-industry economy—Mayor Peduto emphasized his notion that "People Make Pittsburgh." Describing the way that his administration uses a four-part metric (People/Planet/Place/Performance) to decide whether a local project deserves government funding, Peduto spoke of creating "One Pittsburgh" where corporations, foundations, and citizens collaborate for collective improvement. Recognizing some of the city's infrastructural needs, Peduto emphasized that his goal is to use tax dollars efficiently to create green infrastructure, build parks, and remove all lead from pipes in favor of a forthcoming state-of-the-art water-filtration system. Additionally, he highlighted his views on the theme of the retreat by arguing that the city needs new types of workforce training that go beyond high school to ensure sustained, long-term employment for residents. In conjunction with this effort, Mayor Peduto advocated for façade grants for neighborhood business districts, microloans for small businesses, and venture-capital funds for emerging startups.

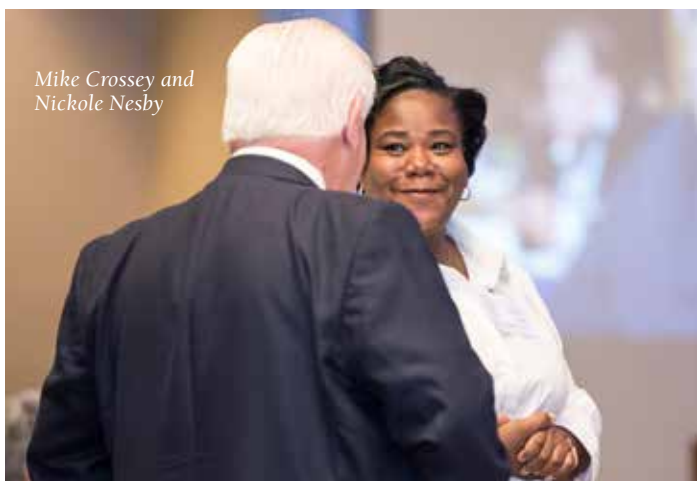
## ■ Friday, September 15, 2017

### Chancellor's Welcome

Following a brief introduction by Nordenberg, **Patrick Gallagher, PhD**, chancellor, University of Pittsburgh, offered his welcome to attendees of the second day of events. In light of the retreat's theme, Gallagher cited a quotation by James Truslow Adams regarding the American dream, highlighting that America should remain the "dream of a land which should be better, richer, and fuller for everyone." Gallagher then voiced his view that in an age of rapid technological advancement and informational abundance, the challenge is to "filter and use" what is genuinely beneficial for all members of American society. Fundamentally, according to Gallagher, the challenge is the speed with which we have to address problems of job training and keep pace with exponential technological changes. Handling this properly would allow employers and employees to prevent sudden, large-scale disruption of education, learning, and teaching in favor of gradual adaptation.

### Opening Remarks and Introductions

Next, Nordenberg offered his opening remarks for the day's first panel, commenting that many attendees told him that they found the previous day's presentations thought provoking, sobering, and discussion generating, while also offering a sense of things that we can do. Reading from and remarking on a manuscript-in-progress by **Alan Lesgold, PhD**, former dean, University of Pittsburgh School of Education, Nordenberg discussed the essential need to recognize those negatively affected by economic rebirth while implementing the concrete actions that can fulfill Mayor Peduto's vision for Pittsburgh: "If it's not for all of us, it's not for us."



Mike Crossey and  
Nickole Nesby



Imam Abdul Wajid and Reverend Bishop David A. Zubik

### Nurturing Civility and Integrity: Roles for the Faith Community and Everybody Else

Following an introduction by Nordenberg, the panel's first speaker, **Reverend Bishop David A. Zubik**, Diocese of Pittsburgh, Roman Catholic Church, began his talk. According to Zubik, examples of a lack of civility in today's society are far too numerous to mention. In response to this dilemma, Zubik presented his "Nine Rules for Nurturing Civility," which place a premium on mutual respect in the act of communication. During his presentation, Zubik claimed that the keys to healthy civic dialogue include "listening without preconceptions," working for a "common good," recognizing the validity of differing voices (excluding those of outright hatred), distinguishing between facts and opinions, and showing a willingness to be self-critical. Citing biblical passages, personal anecdotes, as well as recent events like the demonstrations and counter-demonstrations in Charlottesville, Va., Zubik lamented the prospect of a "new normal in which obscenity becomes hum-drum." He concluded his presentation by reminding attendees that "civility does not come to any of us automatically; we have to work at it day after day."

### Moderated/Open Discussion

During the moderated discussion that followed Zubik's presentation, **Rabbi James Gibson**, senior rabbi, Temple Sinai, spoke of the Torah as a guide in the Jewish faith, shaping an interpretation of what true civility looks like. "Peace," according to Gibson, "is a goal to be attained, not necessarily to be given," and thus should be guided by a set of principles. These principles include judging each person favorably, embracing morals both inside and outside of the Torah, sustaining concern about the welfare of everyone in society, viewing cooperation as a religious principle, and recognizing the value of religious institutions as an indispensable form of "social capital."

The next panelist, **Imam Abdul Wajid**, religious director, Islamic Center of Pittsburgh, spoke about issues of civility and human rights as seen through the prism of Islamic beliefs. Wajid remarked that “our differences are to be cherished,” not regarded as a cause for division or discord. Citing the words of Mohammad, Wajid reminded attendees that “Mohammad says, ‘Know that no Arab has superiority over a non-Arab,’” and that all human beings deserve honor, dignity, and the opportunity to worship the God of their choosing. In his concluding remarks, Wajid called upon all of humanity to return to our basic principles, roots, and values.

The panel’s final speaker, **John Wallace, PhD**, professor, University of Pittsburgh, and senior pastor, Bible Center Church, offered a Protestant perspective on the issue of civility. Using the example of an African-American police officer defending the rights of white-supremacist protestors, Wallace remarked that “this young man exemplifies what our country should be striving for” with regard to maintaining true “democratic integrity.” Wallace offered the message that because “we are all children of God ... any distinctions between us are obliterated.” While lamenting the perversion of scripture to justify the mistreatment of other people, Wallace reminded attendees of Protestantism’s central purpose and commandment, “to make God’s will be done on Earth as it is in heaven,” and, in view of the topic of civility, “to Love God, then love others as I love myself.”

## Redistricting: Challenges from the Past and Opportunities for the Future



In the next presentation, **Ken Gormley**, president, Duquesne University, and executive director, 1991 Pennsylvania Legislative Reapportionment Commission, spoke of the issue of reapportionment, likening it to a “hurricane

[that] blows in temporarily and leaves wreckage in its wake.” Cataloging his role as executive director from 1991–1994, Gormley highlighted the ways that landmark cases related to state reapportionment were affected by a variety of barriers, including Supreme Court challenges and interventions. According to Gormley, “the preservation of seats is the single most important driving force in redistricting.” Because of this

priority, it should not be a surprise that political leaders act like “political creatures,” engaging in backroom deals to preserve various portions of districts that are important to incumbents. Along with incumbency and issues with legislative staff, Gormley claimed that racial gerrymandering has dogged all the states since Reconstruction, a trend he witnessed in Philadelphia during his own tenure. Gormley concluded his presentation by remarking that reapportionment should change by becoming more apolitical by using trained staff and sophisticated computer software to create “the maps that the political parties don’t want you to create,” ones that are “user-friendly to average citizens.” Additionally, Gormley advocated updating and improving the process by which courts review such materials.

## News in a Polarized Age



Amy Mitchell

In the second day’s final presentation, **Amy Mitchell**, director of journalism research, Pew Research Center, acknowledged that the federal government, along with the media, is facing historic lows in public trust. According to Mitchell, “fake news” has existed for quite some time, but our current

digital era makes it easier for individuals to broadcast or publish fake news and easier for others to access it. Mitchell remarked that for those who are newer to navigating online space as well as digital media, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between “fake news” and legitimate news serving a “watchdog” function. Mitchell concluded her presentation by noting that, within her field, there is a growing consensus that fake news is causing increased confusion about the true facts, creating a range of “journalistic” materials that range from “not completely accurate” to “completely made up.”



## Profiles of Coleman Awardees

Retreat attendees hear more about the individuals who win the Coleman Award each year, and we wanted to expose others to the awardees and their amazing stories. Each awardee granted the Institute an interview after receiving his/her award, and the following articles are based on those interviews, as well as information provided in their nominations, which the selection committee used to grant the awards.

### Terry Miller

*In honor of Terry Miller's 25+ years of service to the Institute, a special Coleman Award was presented to her by the award's namesake, Institute Founder and Director Emeritus Moe Coleman. Below are his remarks on the occasion.*



*Moe Coleman and Mark Nordenberg with Terry Miller, Coleman Award winner*

It is my great honor to present to Terry Miller a very special Coleman Award for her 25 years of remarkable service to the Institute of Politics. Terry is one of the most outstanding people I have known. She has an amazing record of accomplishments. It would be impossible in these few minutes to review them all, so I will concentrate on the areas in which I know her best.

She is a true humanitarian with a deep commitment to helping people in need. One of her deepest commitments is to women addicted to drugs and alcohol. She spent countless hours mentoring and counseling individuals with addiction issues. Almost 30 years ago, Terry also created POWER, what in my opinion is the finest agency that helps women in addiction. She developed the concept, raised the money, bargained for the facility, built support for the organization in the community, and mobilized residents and religious, political, and governmental leaders. She was the first director of the agency and continues to play an important role. Thousands of women and children have greatly benefited from her work.

She joined the Institute of Politics staff 25 years ago. With her brilliance and energy, she has been the creative force in shaping the organization in all ways. As a senior staff member and the executive director, Terry has led all aspects of the organization with her unique ability to bring diverse groups together to solve community problems. She is a wonderful leader of the organization, empowering staff, building trust with the community, and developing products that are important in meeting the needs of the region and helping make lives better for its people.

Terry also developed the Elsie Hillman Civic Forum in honor of the person she most greatly admired. The forum is devoted to engaging young people in public service. I know Elsie would be thrilled with what the forum has already accomplished.

### Laurie Mulvey

*It would be hard to find a more unselfish leader than Laurie Mulvey.... [S]he never sought recognition nor was willing to accept it. If she receives the Coleman Award, heaven help the nominators who shine the light on her.*

*— Bob Nelkin, chief professional officer, United Way*



*From Left: Terry Miller, Moe Coleman and Mark Nordenberg with Coleman Award Winner Laurie Mulvey*

Laurie Mulvey knew from the start that she wanted to help people, and a story from her nomination demonstrates her persistence in pursuing this career path. Marc Cherna writes in her nomination, "Early in her career, she so desperately wanted to be part of the work the Community Human Services

Corporation was doing with families in South Oakland, she showed up at their office and convinced them to let her join the team, even though there wasn't even an opening!"

Her determination to start the first family support center in the area is equally inspiring. Recognizing that young parents were struggling without a ready-made support network, she jumped into action, moving a double-wide trailer into the Hill District and offering help to those in need. She provided counseling and connected people to services, sometimes staying after hours and even sleeping in the trailer.

Another example of her ability to take stock of a situation and then take appropriate action was when she noticed low kindergarten-enrollment patterns in the Northview Heights neighborhood of Pittsburgh. She created a community transition team to help address the root causes of the problem.

Cherna describes Mulvey as "a visionary who knows how to motivate whomever is in front of her." The network of family support centers that exist throughout the region, as well as the lives of all the families and children who have been helped through her efforts, leave a legacy of her work that will not be forgotten.

## Tracy Soska

*Harnessing university resources, Soska not only teaches and mentors the students, but is always right alongside them while they work on community projects. Whether it is planting a community garden in Hazelwood or playing Santa by delivering Christmas presents to the Hill House or YMCAs, he inspires the students by proving that he is 100% committed to the ideals and principles he teaches in his classes.*

— Larry Davis, PhD, dean,  
University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work

Throughout Tracy Soska's time at the University of Pittsburgh, one theme remains constant: building bridges. Soska has made it his life's work to form connections between the sometimes disparate groups that the University touches: faculty, students, organizations, and the community at large.

John Wilds, PhD, vice chancellor for community relations, University of Pittsburgh, says that for the past 20 years, he and Soska have shared a vision for the university in terms of making sure that its record of and reputation for public service are nothing less than outstanding. Although Pitt already had a world-class academic program, their goal was to ensure that the university's commitment to public service was



Mark Nordenberg congratulates Coleman Award winner Tracy Soska

just as strong. As a result, they worked on bringing university resources to projects identified by the surrounding community, including a newspaper in Hazelwood that operated for a number of years. Wilds notes that he and Soska are continuing to work on bringing the prestigious Carnegie classification to the university, a classification that requires a dedicated and visible commitment to public service.

In addition to working tirelessly as a part of the university community to strengthen neighborhoods, Soska has also been an influential member of many external organizations, including but not limited to the Allegheny County Library Association, Leadership Pittsburgh, and the Allegheny County Housing and Homelessness Task Force.

*Tracy has done more to relate the University of Pittsburgh to the external community, especially neighborhoods with needs, than almost anyone I know.*

— Moe Coleman, PhD, director emeritus, Institute of Politics

And it is not enough to acknowledge what Soska himself has done—his work has inspired others to follow in his path. He not only instructs his students but also works alongside them in the community, even serving as Santa at the annual Christmas dinner at Pitt and delivering presents to local organizations in areas of need. One former student, Tara Sherry-Torres, is quoted in Soska's nomination as saying, "The first and most obvious thing Tracy ever inspired me to do that focused on Pittsburgh communities was to come to the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. He led my bus tour when I visited the school; we went through a variety of neighborhoods in Pittsburgh, all of which had projects which alumni of the school were deeply involved in. Tracy spoke about these neighborhood initiatives with such passion, and now I am working on one of those community initiatives that Tracy got me involved in."

Soska's commitment to the community, as stated in his nomination, is truly "a way of life" for him. The benefits to the Pittsburgh region, as well as to the numerous communities in which his students have gone on to work in, cannot be overstated.