



## Board of Directors & Honorary Board Members Profile

**Ralph J. Olson (Chairman)** - Ralph J. Olson is a retired senior corporate executive with forty (40) years of business experience in the consumer product industry. He has been recognized throughout his career as a strategic visionary, a great leader and a man of high integrity. He has been Board Chair for HERO for Children since 2005 and has served on the board since its inception. He has recently been named Vice Chair for the Pennsylvania State University Leonard Center which provides strategic and operational direction to the engineering college where he has been a board member since 2000. In addition, he is a member of an intellectual think tank which meets monthly in a roundtable format to research, discuss and debate timely subjects that are impacting the State of Georgia and the United States in general.

Prior to retirement in 2005, he was Chairman, President and CEO of R.A. Jones Company in Covington, Kentucky for ten (10) years. Jones is a global leader in the supply of custom designed high-speed automated packaging machinery for the top 100 consumer product companies in the world. He was the first non-family member to assume such positions for this 102 year old privately held company. He was also President and Chief Operating Officer of Gibson Greetings in Cincinnati where he orchestrated the company to become the largest supplier of greeting cards in supermarkets and drug stores across the country. He was also President of Sherwin-Williams in Chicago. At age 39, he led the company to a dramatic turnaround. He received the Top Gun Award as the Best of The Best after leading the company to three consecutive years of record performance.

He started his career in Philadelphia with Crown Cork & Seal after graduating from Penn State with a mechanical engineering degree. While working full-time at Crown, he also attended the Wharton Business School at the University of Pennsylvania in the evenings and once he completed his studies in marketing and finance, he was recruited to join the Pepsi-Cola Company at their headquarters in Purchase, New York. He became the youngest Vice President in their history after he had successfully spearheaded the development and product launch of the 2 liter plastic bottle which allowed Pepsi, for the first time in its history, to assume a number one position in the cola wars with Coke.

He was named Alumnus of the Year in 1984 by Penn State University and has received numerous other awards throughout his business career. He and his wife have just celebrated their 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in June 2009 and they have two adult children. They currently reside at Reynolds Plantation in Greensboro, Georgia where they enjoy the lake, golf and global adventure travel.

**Michelle O'Donnell (Secretary)** - Michelle is a seasoned coach with more than 16 years of experience in the human resources field. Her primary areas of expertise are in talent management, coaching, performance management, leadership assessment and development. As a coach Michelle helps employees at all levels in identifying challenges and obstacles that hold them back from achieving maximum results. She then works with them to map out a development plan and fully supports them as they are held accountable for achieving their goals. In her most recent corporate role as the Director of Human Resources for Georgia Natural Gas, she coached employees throughout the organization. Senior management depended on her to help fine-tune their leadership skills and relied on her for sound advice about their management skills and strategic direction in the HR area.

Currently Michelle works with clients in career transition, those struggling with whether to stay in a corporate job or choose another option and those who are ready to take the next step in their career. Also, she assists clients who feel trapped in an area of their life to gain clarity around their life goals, priorities, and the things that have been holding them back from success and happiness.

Michelle received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Employment Relations from Michigan State University and a Master of Science degree in Human Resources Development from Georgia State University. She completed her coach training through The Coaches Training Institute. She also holds her SPHR certification. She has worked with Georgia Natural Gas and Panasonic, as well as with several start-up organizations. Michelle is a member of the Board of Directors for the

Georgia Coach Association and H.E.R.O for Children. She is an active volunteer with the Society for Human Resources Management and WellSpring Living.

**James R. Summer III (Treasurer)**- James Summer is an executive director with Ernst & Young and has more than 20 years of experience in providing professional services to a wide variety of clients, including banking, insurance, retail, manufacturing and large not-for-profit organizations. James has extensive experience in providing service to such clients as American Cancer Society, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), Habitat for Humanity International and the Salvation Army, among others.

James has extensive experience in performing audits of federal grant recipients in accordance with the Single Audit Act of 1984 and the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and the related Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines, and the Rules of the Auditor General. He served on the Diversity Steering Committee of the Southeast Sub-Area of the firm for three years and currently serves in the role of the campus coordinating partner at Florida A&M University. He previously served in the role of the campus coordinating partner at Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta University.

James has a bachelor of business administration from Emory University and is a certified public accountant in Georgia. He is a member of the Advisory Boards of the Glenn Pelham Foundation and the School of Business and Industry at Florida A&M University. He is a member of the audit committee at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. He is a Board Member of the Redeemer Foundation where he serves as the Treasurer. He is also a member of the National Association of Black Accountants and the AICPA. James and his wife Kirsten reside in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Ryan Gembala (Co-Founder and Former Co-Executive Director)** - Ryan is a multi-lingual entrepreneur with a passion for creating positive world change. His personal and professional experiences in 30 countries include Venture Capital in San Francisco and Chicago, Banking in Spain, Consulting in Italy and volunteering with AIDS orphans in Brazil. As Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of H.E.R.O. for Children, Ryan built relationships throughout the community and grew fundraising efforts and strategic partnerships to launch and expand H.E.R.O.'s programs. His entrepreneurial experience with H.E.R.O. was featured by *Business Week* and *CNN*, he was the youngest of 40 Atlantans selected to participate in the 2007 LEAD Atlanta class, and he became the youngest of *Atlanta Business Chronicle's* "Top 40 under 40" in 2006.

Currently, Ryan is pursuing his MBA full-time at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business where he is focused on Venture Capital and Entrepreneurship. Growing up in Atlanta, Ryan graduated Summa Cum Laude with Honors from the University of Georgia with a degree in Business. While a student at UGA, Ryan re-Founded and was President of the international non-profit organization, AIESEC, earning him the prestigious Vision Award at the 30,000-person University.

Ryan continues to assist H.E.R.O. for Children's efforts as a member of the Board of Directors. In addition, he loves to travel, watch Georgia Football, scuba dive, and eat great food from around the world...especially the South.

**Garrett Gravesen (Co-Founder and Former Co-Executive Director) –**

**Donna Drakes (Executive Director) –**

**Dr. Sheryl Henderson –**

**Christal Cherry** - Christal M. Cherry is a well rounded fundraising professional. She currently serves as the National Director of Groups, Alumni & Faith Partnerships at UNCF - United Negro College Fund in Atlanta, GA. Prior to that she worked as the Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Spelman College and the Director of Development at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) in Washington, DC.

Ms. Cherry has spent most of her career in higher education which has included Academic and Student Affairs and Development. Today as part of the fundraising team at UNCF in Atlanta, GA, she is responsible for securing financial support from national groups, alumni, and the faith community. With this support, Ms. Cherry aims to help UNCF to meet and exceed its financial goals and maintain its position as a premier charitable organization of higher education for minority scholars.

Ms. Cherry is Chair of the Diversity Committee of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Atlanta Chapter, an independent consultant with the African American Development Officers network and a mentor for Big Brothers, Big Sisters.

Ms Cherry earned a Bachelor of Arts from Hofstra University and Master of Arts in College Student Development from Hampton University.

### **Honorary Board Members**

**Coach Vince Dooley** – Vince Dooley was the head football coach (seasons 1964 through 1988) and athletic director (1979 to 2004) at the University of Georgia. During his 25 year coaching career at UGA, Dooley compiled a 201-77-10 record. His teams won 6 Southeastern Conference titles and the 1980 National Championship. After the 1980 season, Dooley was recognized as college football's "Coach of the Year" by several organizations, including the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association, whose annual award has since been renamed as the Paul "Bear" Bryant Award. Dooley's teams were known for their hard nosed defense and conservative yet fundamentally sound offenses. Coach Dooley is a graduate of Auburn University (bachelor's degree 1954, Master's in history 1963) where he played college football and later coached under Ralph "Shug" Jordan. Dooley was a member of the Phi Kappa Theta fraternity as an undergraduate at Auburn.

Dooley was inducted in the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame in 1978 and the College Football Hall of Fame in 1994. He received the Amos Alonzo Stagg Award, presented by the American Football Coaches Association in 2001. In 2004 the U.S. Sports Academy presented Dooley with the Carl Maddox Sport Management Award, an award given annually to an individual for contribution to the growth and development of sports through management practices. Also in 2004 Dooley was inducted into UGA's Circle of Honor, which is the school's highest tribute to former athletes and coaches. In September 2007, Dooley was given the Homer Rice Award, the highest honor given by the Division 1-A Athletic Directors Association.

Dooley briefly pursued the Democratic Party nomination for U.S. Senate in 1986. His wife, the former Barbara Meshad, ran in the Republican Party primary for U.S. House in 2002.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Dooley is a member of the Gridiron Secret Society. On December 2, 2009, Kennesaw State University hired Dooley to begin working as a consultant to KSU in the school's drive to start a football program. **Coach Dooley was a member of HERO's original board of directors and continues to lend his skills, time and talents to the organization upon request.**

**Coach Paul Hewitt** - Paul Hewitt is the head basketball coach at Georgia Institute of Technology (GA Tech). After playing at St. John Fisher College where Hewitt was a four-year letter winner and served as the Cardinals' captain his senior year, Hewitt spent three years as the junior varsity head coach at his alma mater, Westbury High School on Long Island (1985-88). Hewitt's first collegiate job came as an assistant coach at C.W. Post on Long Island (1988-89) where he helped guide the Pioneers to the ECAC New York State Division Championship that season. Hewitt then spent one year as a graduate assistant under George Raveling at Southern California. His next coaching job came at Fordham University where he spent two years as an assistant coach. He then moved to Villanova where he spent five seasons as an assistant to head Coach Steve Lappas (1992-1997). Prior to his arrival in Atlanta, Hewitt held the head coaching job at Siena in Loudonville, N.Y for three seasons. He led a once struggling Siena program to their first Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference title game appearance and into the NCAA tournament.

Named Georgia Tech's 12th head basketball coach on April 6, 2000, Hewitt has led the Yellow Jackets to the NCAA tournament three times in the last five years, four times altogether, along with one NIT appearance in his seven years as head coach. He has received his highest accolades for guiding the Yellow Jackets to the NCAA in his first season in 2001, and for taking them within one win of the national championship three years later in 2004. Tech's success led to Hewitt receiving the Fritz Coach of the Year award by the Black College Coaches Association, the District5 Coach of the Year by NABC and was a finalist for the Naismith College Coach of the Year Award. Hewitt also received the ACC Coach of the Year Award in his first season with the Jackets, only the second time in league history that a first-year coach has won the award. In the summer of 2006, Hewitt served as an assistant coach for the USA Under-18 national team which won a gold

medal at the FIBA Americas U18 Championship. Coach Hewitt remains connected to HERO for Children through GT HEROes.

**Coach Mark Richt** – Mark Richt is the current head coach of the University of Georgia Bulldogs football team. His previous affiliations include fourteen years at Florida State University, where he served as offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach, and one year as offensive coordinator at East Carolina University. Currently in his ninth season at Georgia, Richt is the longest-tenured active head football coach in the Southeastern Conference, one year ahead of Vanderbilt head coach Bobby Johnson. Mark Richt started his coaching career in 1985 as a volunteer quarterbacks coach for the Florida State Seminoles (FSU), serving under Bobby Bowden. Richt left the Seminoles to join East Carolina University as their offensive coordinator in 1989. After one year at East Carolina, Richt returned to Florida State to serve as the Seminoles' offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach. Under Richt's direction, Florida State had some of college football's most explosive offenses; in his seven years as offensive coordinator, the Seminoles ranked in the nation's top five scoring offenses on five occasions, were top twelve in total offense five times, and top twelve in passing offense five times.

Richt is married to the former Katharyn Francis. The couple has four children: Jonathan, David, Zach and Anya. Coach Richt was a member of HERO's original board of directors and remains connected to the organization through UGA HEROes.