

# 2013 OMAHA SPEAKERS, PRESENTERS & TOUR GUIDES

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## **Dana Bradford** **CEO**

### **Waitt Company**

Dana Bradford is the CEO of Waitt Company. In addition to his duties as CEO, Dana serves as executive chairman of Prince Global Sports, an international racquet sports company and as a director on the boards of Waitt Company; Meritage Homes, a Scottsdale based national homebuilder; Southwest Value Partners, a San Diego based real estate investment company; Vornado Air, a Wichita based consumer products company, and Customer Service Profiles, an Omaha based provider of customer satisfaction data and analytics. He formerly served as chairman of SAFE Boats International, a Seattle based manufacturer of defense and emergency response boats and chairman of Vornado Air, and on the boards of Ballantyne, a movie projector manufacturer; Guild Mortgage, a San Diego based full service mortgage company; McCarthy Group, an Omaha based investment company; NRG Media, a Cedar Rapids based broadcast network of radio stations; and Gold Circle Films, a Los Angeles based movie production company. Dana has been actively involved with the Waitt organization as an advisor and investor since 1999 and a member of its board since 2004. He joined Waitt as CEO at the beginning of 2012. Prior to joining Waitt, Dana led the McCarthy organization, an Omaha based private equity firm. He joined McCarthy in 1999 and served as President, Managing Partner, and a member of its board from 2005 through 2011. Dana is active in his community, serving or having served on the boards of the Children's Hospital and Medical Center, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben Foundation, the Metropolitan Entertainment and Convention Authority, Nebraska Innovation Campus, Ronald McDonald House Charities Omaha, and NCCJ. Dana also serves or has served as an advisor to Aksarben Future Trust and the Robert B. Daugherty Charitable Foundation. He earned a BSBA degree from the University of Arizona and his MBA from Creighton University.

## **David G. Brown** **President and CEO** **Greater Omaha Chamber**

David G. Brown is president and CEO of the Greater Omaha Chamber, a membership organization representing over 3,100 businesses. Under David's leadership, the Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership has successfully landed 391 projects, representing 22,235 jobs and more than \$4.1 billion in capital investment since 2004. In addition to his professional responsibilities, David contributes his time and expertise to numerous community service organizations including the

Ak-Sar-Ben Future Trust, Boys Scouts of America, Building Bright Futures, College World Series of Omaha, Greater Omaha Alliance for Business Ethics, Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben, Nebraska Military Support Coalition, Nebraska P-16 Education Committee, Omaha Sports Commission, United Way of the Midlands and the U.S. Strategic Command Consultation Committee. Nationally, David serves on the American Chamber of Commerce Board and is a member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100. David is a graduate of Dartmouth College with academic specialties in industrial location and environmental studies. With 30 years of experience in economic development and chamber administration, David began his career in organizational leadership in Michigan in 1983 as president of the Monroe County Industrial Development Corporation and director of the Port of Monroe. He also spent time leading the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce and then the Greater Greenville (SC) Chamber of Commerce, before he began his current role in Omaha in 2003.

## **Roger Dixon** **President & CEO** **Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority (MECA)**

Roger Dixon is the President/CEO of the Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority which manages the operations of CenturyLink Center Omaha, the Omaha Civic Auditorium and TD Ameritrade Park Omaha. Dixon joined MECA in 2000 with the goal of building Omaha's premier arena and convention center. During his tenure, MECA's facilities and operations have more than doubled. Its three facilities regularly host top concerts and sporting events including NCAA and Olympic Championships. Roger has been in the industry for over 35 years. Before coming to Omaha, he served as the senior vice president and general manager of the Savvis Center in St. Louis and as the senior vice president and general manager of The Spectrum in Philadelphia. He also worked at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville, Kentucky, the James L. Knight Center in Miami and was an executive with SMG, which manages several major facilities around the country. Roger is a 1976 graduate of Southern Illinois University.



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## **Michael L. Faust** **Assistant to the Chairman** **Kiewit Corporation**

Mike Faust is Assistant to the Chairman of Kiewit Corporation. With revenues of more than \$11 billion, Kiewit is an employee-owned contracting and mining company with operations in the U.S., Canada and Australia. Mr. Faust joined Kiewit in 1979, prior to that working for the Burroughs Corporation and Mutual of Omaha. He is currently engaged in civic, charitable, communications and instructional programs for the company. He earned his degree in accounting from Northwest Missouri State University in 1974. He is currently on the steering committee for Destination Midtown, a member of the Executive Committee of the university foundation at his alma mater, and a director of the Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation. His civic and charitable service includes Buffett Golf Day, Community Alliance, Destination Midtown, Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Nebraska PAC, Northwest Foundation, Omaha Community Foundation, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation, United Arts Omaha, and United Way of the Midlands.

## **Joe Gudenrath** **Executive Director** **Omaha Downtown Improvement** **District Association**

Joe Gudenrath began his role as Executive Director of the Downtown Improvement District on May 11, 2009. Prior to accepting the job with the DID, Joe served in the administration of Omaha Mayor Mike Fahey since 2001, most recently as Chief of Staff. Joe is a native Omahan and graduate of Creighton University. He and his wife, Lisa Wise, have a six year old daughter named Mathilda and one year old daughter named Delaney.

## **Christine Johnson** **President** **Mutual of Omaha Foundation**

Christine Johnson is a visionary entrepreneurial executive who is accustomed to forging new ground, building strong partnerships and developing enterprise-wide strategic plans for philanthropy, community reinvestment, civic responsibility and economic development. She has spent more than 20 years identifying needs in the community and con-

necting individuals to the resources they need to succeed and thrive. As President of the Mutual of Omaha Foundation, Johnson continues that mission today, providing leadership and strategic direction for the insurance and financial services company's community and philanthropic initiatives. Johnson joined Mutual of Omaha in 2001. She has led the creation of a robust employee volunteer program and signature National Month of Caring initiative, resulting in thousands of hours of volunteerism around the country each year. Johnson also works with the CEO and other senior leaders throughout the company, helping facilitate Mutual of Omaha's community presence through strategic partnerships and community board involvement. And through the creation of a Talent Sharing Program, Johnson has provided an avenue for Mutual of Omaha employees to lend their professional expertise by assisting nonprofit organizations with short-term projects that further the missions of the organizations. In 2005, Johnson led the initiative to establish the Mutual of Omaha Foundation with the goal of enhancing and extending Mutual of Omaha's charitable giving efforts. As President, Johnson leads the Board and Foundation in its mission of helping families break the cycle of poverty. By supporting nonprofit organizations in the Omaha community that directly impact families with significant needs, the Foundation is addressing some of the most critical issues facing families today – issues like youth violence, domestic abuse, illiteracy and homelessness. Prior to joining Mutual of Omaha, Johnson was co-founder and Vice President of the Children's Respite Care Center in Omaha for 13 years. Beyond her work at Mutual of Omaha, Johnson serves on the board of directors for the Association of Corporate Contribution Professionals, Business Education Alliance, and Christian Business Women's Fellowship. She also serves on the Stewardship Committee of Christ Community Church and is a Leadership Coach for Creighton University's Anna Tyler Waite Leadership Scholars Program. She is a graduate of the University of Nebraska Medical Center and spent several years practicing as a Registered Nurse. Johnson resides in Omaha, Neb., with her husband, Steve, and two children, Jon, 24, and Melissa, 16.

## **Sarah Johnson** **Manager, Talent and Workforce** **Greater Omaha Chamber**

Sarah Johnson has been with the Greater Omaha Chamber since 2010. Prior to serving as manager of talent and workforce initiatives, she oversaw the Greater Omaha Young Professionals program. Sarah Johnson's current position consists of understanding talent and workforce needs in the Omaha metro and developing a comprehensive strategy to grow, recruit and retain a workforce that enables companies to grow and prosper. One thing that Sarah



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appreciates the most about her job is being able to witness the progress of our community through the efforts of young people and connect people with resources to achieve great things. A native of Omaha, Sarah attended college at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and majored in Journalism. Prior to joining the Chamber, Sarah worked at Archrival, a youth branding agency in Lincoln, Nebraska, and at The Reader, an independent news-weekly in Omaha. Sarah currently serves on the selection committee for Youth Leadership Omaha and is a member of the University of Nebraska President's Advisory Council.

## **Nikola Halcyone Jordan** **Program Associate** **Inclusive Communities**

Nikola Halcyone Jordan currently works as the Program Associate for Inclusive Communities, a social justice non-profit organization celebrating its 75th year in the Omaha area where she leads youth, Young Professionals, and adults through inclusion and diversity workshops and trainings. Prior to her career at Inclusive Communities, Nikola worked in several positions in Omaha Mayor Jim Suttle's staff including Special Assistant to the Mayor where her duties included managing the Mayor's social media presence, coordinating the Mayor's Youth Leadership Commission, and other duties in the community. Outside of work, Nikola is an avid volunteer both in Omaha and around the country. She spends time with local organizations such as Partnership 4 Kids and The Literacy Center, while also spending at least a week each year in New Orleans getting her hands dirty rebuilding homes after Hurricane Katrina. Her love for social justice isn't confined to her work at Inclusive Communities as Nikola's been an advocate and activist most of her life. Her proudest achievement has been being part of the Equal Omaha Coalition which worked diligently to get the Equal Employment Ordinance passed by the Omaha City Council in 2012 protecting citizens from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity. After graduating from Omaha's premiere Yoga Teacher Training Program at Omaha Yoga & Bodywork Center, Nikola started EveryBody Yoga, a class designed for people who don't think they can do yoga. Nikola is working toward her Masters in Social Work; her undergraduate concentrations include Religious Studies, History, and Music.

## **Christopher P. Kircher** **Vice President, Corporate Affairs** **President, ConAgra Foods Foundation** **ConAgra Foods, Inc.**

Chris Kircher is vice president of corporate affairs at Omaha, NE-based ConAgra Foods, Inc., one of North America's leading packaged food companies. He also serves as president of the ConAgra Foods Foundation. He is responsible for leading the company's corporate responsibility, charitable giving and state and local public affairs initiatives. Before joining ConAgra Foods in 2002, Mr. Kircher was with Hill and Knowlton, Inc., one of the world's leading public relations firms where he worked from 1989 to 1996, and then again from 2000 to June 2002 at the firm's headquarters in New York City. His experience covered most areas of external and internal communications including crisis and issues management, media relations, financial communications, public affairs and reputation management. From 1996 to 2000, Mr. Kircher was manager of financial communications at Philip Morris, Inc. (now Altria), where he also served as a media spokesperson during the tobacco industry's historic settlement with the States. From 1987 to 1989, Mr. Kircher was an account supervisor at The Hooper Group, a public relations firm in his hometown of Dayton, OH. He began his public relations career in 1984 at the Icon Group, a financial relations firm also based in Dayton. Mr. Kircher received a bachelor's of science degree in marketing from Wright State University. He is married and has three children.

## **Terry J. Kroeger** **President & Chief Executive Officer** **BH Media Group**

Terry Kroeger is the President and Chief Executive Officer of BH Media Group, a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway. Mr. Kroeger is also the Publisher of The Omaha World-Herald, Nebraska's largest daily newspaper. Mr. Kroeger is a native of Omaha and a graduate of the University of Nebraska, with a degree in finance and economics. He has been with the Omaha World-Herald Company for over 27 years, starting as assistant purchasing agent and property manager in 1985. From 1986-1989 he was Business Manager at the Company owned Kearney Hub. In 1991, he was named Director of Community Newspaper Operations. From 1994 - 1998, he served as publisher of The Record in Stockton, California. He was named vice president of the Omaha World-Herald Company and joined its board of directors in 1996. In 1999, he returned to Omaha to lead the construction of The World-Herald's Freedom Center production facility. He became president and chief operating officer



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of the Company in 2005, becoming Chief Executive Officer in 2008. Mr. Kroeger serves as a Director of Mutual of Omaha Bank, Westside Community Schools Foundation, Omaha Symphony, Creighton University, Children's Scholarship Fund of Omaha and University of Nebraska Foundation. He is the Chairman of the United Way of the Midlands and the Chairman of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce. He is a Governor of the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben and serves on the Strategic Command Consultation Committee. He is a past Chairman of the Inland Press Association. Mr. Kroeger coaches youth basketball. He and his wife, Jackie, have four children – three daughters, Molly, Maggie and Ellie and one son, Jake.

## **Clark Lauritzen** **Executive Vice President** **First National Bank**

Clark joined First National Bank in 2003 and now heads Corporate Banking, Wealth Management, Investment Services, and Asset Management. Previously, he served as president of First National Investment Banking and as a commercial lender for First National Bank of Omaha. Prior to joining First National, Clark worked at Goldman Sachs in New York and Chicago as a part of the Financial Institutions Group in the Investment Banking Division. Clark serves on multiple community boards including the Boys Town Boosters, the Central High School Foundation, and the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce. He also serves on Princeton's Alumni Schools Committee, the University of Nebraska at Omaha Campaign Committee, and the 2013 U.S. Senior Open Executive Committee. Clark is a chapter member of ACG Nebraska and YPO Nebraska. He received an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and a B.A. from Princeton University.

## **Lonnie Michael Jr.** **Database Marketing Program Manager** **Mutual of Omaha**

Lonnie was born and raised in Omaha and graduated from Bellevue University with a degree in Business Leadership. He is a Database Marketing Program Manager at Mutual of Omaha. In this role he project manages consumer marketing campaigns on several insurance products. He also serves as a member of Mutual's Emerging Leaders Network. With a passion for community, he volunteers with the Partnership For Our Kids and is the Multimedia & Technology Ministry Leader at his church. Lonnie also serves on the Board of Directors for Saving Grace Perishable Food Rescue and the Greater Omaha Young Professional organization.

## **Craig Moody** **Managing Principal & Co-Owner** **Verdis Group**

Craig Moody is the Managing Principal and co-owner of Verdis Group, a sustainability consulting firm based in Omaha. Under Craig's leadership, Verdis has quickly grown during its first three years and is working with some of Omaha's largest employers, including the Omaha Public Schools, The Nebraska Medical Center, UNMC, Sarpy County, and Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium. He is a husband and father, organ donor, Omaha transplant, and graduate of the University of South Dakota. He serves on a handful of community boards and committees, earned a Ten Outstanding Young Omahans award in 2010 and the MBJ's 40 Under 40 designation in 2011. Craig believes that global warming is happening and that it is anthropological. He doesn't splurge often, but when he does it's usually on something drinkable. His Gallup strengths are Harmony, Relator, Responsibility, Achiever and Arranger, and he can clap with one hand, a feat that's proven very valuable in the bleachers at Wrigley Field.

## **Darlynn F. Myers** **Director Corporate Relations** **Union Pacific**

Darlynn F. Myers was named Director – Corporate Relations in 2007. She is responsible for Union Pacific's community support across the 23-state operating system, the employee matching gifts program, as well as the Director - Union Pacific Foundation. Since 1997, Myers had served as Director - Union Pacific Foundation and Contributions. Joining Union Pacific in 1980 she has held various positions involving community relations where she led the railroad's heritage programs, Museum, and special projects. She has served on the United Way of the Midlands Board, Executive Board, and various committees for more than fifteen years. Myers is a member of the Council on Foundations, Grants Management Network, and Association of Corporate Contributions Professionals. Myers holds a bachelor's degree from Iowa State University and a Master Business Administration degree from Creighton University.



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## **Denise Niebrugge, CMP** **VP Convention Center Sales & Marketing** **Metropolitan Entertainment &** **Convention Authority (MECA)**

Denise Niebrugge has been a member of the hospitality industry for over 25 years. Her career began as a Director of Sales with the Wichita Marriott in Wichita, KS. In 2001, she joined the Double-Tree Hotel as their Assistant Director of Sales in Omaha, NE. She was one of the first full time employees hired on at the Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority when CenturyLink Center Omaha (then named Qwest Center Omaha) was still under construction. After three years as a Convention Center Sales Manager, Denise was promoted to Vice President of Convention Center Sales & Marketing in April of 2006. Denise is celebrating her 10th anniversary with MECA.

## **Jeremy Pietrocini** **Senior Consultant** **Gallup Inc.**

Jeremy Pietrocini works as a Senior Consultant for Gallup helping to strategically partner with managers and leaders in client organizations to improve individual, team and organizational performance. He helps clients to transform their organizations and meet their most critical business needs by implementing best practices in employee and customer engagement, selection, strengths-based development, leadership, and wellbeing. Jeremy speaks to leadership audiences around the world about the importance of aligning an organization's workplace management with its marketplace strategy to create culture transformation. Since joining Gallup in 2006, Jeremy has provided consulting solutions to Fortune 1000 companies in the financial services, retail, manufacturing, and non-profit sectors. Jeremy most recently served as the Global Director of Client Impact for Gallup's Global Workplace Practice. In this role he helped capture and share best practices as well as lead Gallup's research and development initiatives around helping companies increase performance and clarify their purpose. His personal mission is to be a catalyst for inspiring leaders to transform their organizations and communities—to change the world. Jeremy earned a degree in rhetoric and communication from Kent State University. He is a Gallup-certified Strengths Performance Coach. Jeremy lives in Omaha, Nebraska, with his wife, Jill, and their two children, Joseph and Emma. He contributes to his community by serving on the leadership team at Relevant Community, helping develop next-generation leaders.

## **Dusty Reynolds** **Director, Entrepreneurship & Innovation** **Greater Omaha Chamber**

Dusty Reynolds is the current director of entrepreneurship & innovation for the Greater Omaha Chamber. Reynolds is passionate about building a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem in Omaha. A lot of his efforts are focused on connecting the right resources to each other to strengthen the local and regional startup scene. An entrepreneur himself, Reynolds has a few companies under his belt. Reynolds is married to his bride Julia and has one son, Hudson.

## **Jim Suttle, Mayor of Omaha**

Jim Suttle was sworn in as Omaha's 50th mayor on June 8, 2009. He previously served on the Omaha City Council from District 1 from 2005-2009. Jim is former vice chairman of the Board of Directors for the Omaha-based engineering and design firm HDR, Inc. He served as executive vice president and director of corporate development for HDR, which is the nation's fifth-largest architecture - engineering firm. At HDR, Jim's responsibilities included leadership in expanding opportunities and managing programs for all the engineering and architecture business groups within the firm, in both domestic and worldwide markets. He was also responsible for the transportation services, corporate safety program, international, corporate communications, national governmental affairs and design-build services. As Mayor, Jim has worked to move Omaha forward. Since his inauguration, Suttle has invested in Omaha's potential to become a major center of business and commerce. Through his Small and Emerging Business Program, Heartland Workforce Solutions Workforce Development Program, and the Omaha Adventure Partnership, Suttle has helped Omaha attract new businesses and sustain unparalleled economic growth even during these difficult economic times. Mayor Suttle has also achieved financial success for Omaha by reinforcing the city's financial future and putting Omaha's fiscal house in order. Coming into office in the midst of an economic recession, in only two years, he succeeded in putting a financially deficient municipality back into the black. Jim is the former Public Works Director for the City of Omaha and is a former board member for the YMCA, Methodist Hospital, United Way of the Midlands and the Omaha Symphony. He is past president of the Omaha Downtown Rotary Club. In addition, Jim is currently a member of the Urban League of Nebraska, the Western Douglas County Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, North Omaha Commercial Club, Benson-Ames Alliance and the Benson Neighborhood Association. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Salvation Army. Jim and his wife, Deb, have two adult daughters, along with five grandchildren. Deb Suttle is a former Nebraska State Senator.



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## **Sarah Wernimont** **Coordinator, Talent and Workforce** **Development** **Greater Omaha Chamber**

Sarah Wernimont came on with the Greater Omaha Chamber as a graduate intern in March of 2011. Her role included assisting with community development projects in Midtown, North Omaha and South Omaha. Sarah was hired on full-time at the Chamber in January of 2013. In her role in talent and workforce development, she drives efforts to grow, attract and retain young talent in Omaha. This is done through Intern Omaha and the Greater Omaha Young Professionals programs. Sarah also focuses on specific projects in the Chamber's Entrepreneurship and Innovation initiative. Sarah is a graduate student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha pursuing a Master of Public Administration, which she will complete in August. She graduated from Regis University in Denver, Colorado with a Bachelor of Arts in Peace and Justice, emphasis in politics and poverty, with minors in Politics and English. Sarah has spent most of her professional and educational career advocating for social justice domestically and abroad. She spent the summer of 2007 studying and volunteering in South Africa, is an international team leader for Project C.U.R.E. (Denver) having served in Ghana, Africa in 2010, co-founder of the Elijah, Be Our Light Campaign (Ghana) and loves being involved in the Omaha community. Sarah can typically be found participating in any sort of outdoor or sporting activity. She specifically enjoys rock climbing, skiing and hiking. She also enjoys reading, volunteering, traveling and spending time with family and friends. Sarah grew up in Atlantic, Iowa, spent six years in Denver, Colorado and has resided in Omaha since May of 2010.

## **Lyn Wallin Ziegenbein** **Executive Director** **Peter Kiewit Foundation**

Lyn Wallin Ziegenbein has been with the Peter Kiewit Foundation since 1983, serving first as Associate Director before being named Executive Director in 1986. The Peter Kiewit Foundation is one of the largest private foundations in Nebraska. It has distributed more than \$553 million since its inception in 1980. Grants are made in a wide array of areas including education, culture, youth, community development, human services, and scholarships. The Foundation was created from the estate of the late Peter Kiewit and conducts most of its philanthropy within the state of Nebraska. It is not affiliated legally or administratively with the operating companies which also bear Mr. Kiewit's name. A fifth-generation Omahan, Lyn is an attorney. She has served as an Assistant United States Attorney for Nebraska and has practiced privately. She is admitted to the Bar in the District of Columbia and Nebraska. Her undergraduate degree is in Journalism from the University of Kansas and she earned her law degree at Creighton University where she was on the Law Review. Lyn's current community involvement includes service on the boards and commissions of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Assurity Life Insurance Company, U.S. Council on Foundations, Creighton University College of Business, Eppley Cancer Center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha Sports Commission, Grameen Bank (Omaha), the Convention and Visitors' Bureau, Habitat for Humanity, Completely Kids, "Filmstreams" classic film theater, and Lamp Rynearson Engineering. Her past service includes Nebraska Rhodes Scholar Selection Committee for five years; Federal Reserve Bank/Omaha Branch, five years, the last (2010) as chair; several gubernatorial appointments; a White House Commission on Educational Excellence; the board of the Council on Foundations; the boards of Norwest Bank Nebraska and Alltel Communications; the Higher Learning Commission in Chicago; many statewide and local boards and commissions; her church board and PTA. Lyn was inducted to the Omaha Business Hall of Fame in 2011. Her husband, John, is also an attorney and they are the parents of one son, Charlie, who is 17.



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