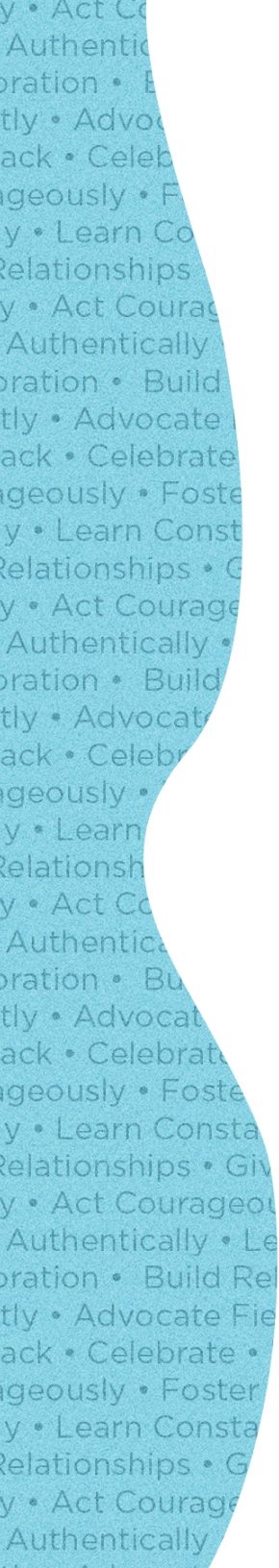


THE 2021  
**ATHENA  
AWARDS**

**KC** CHAMBER



The ATHENA Award is inspired by the goddess of Greek mythology known for her strength, courage, wisdom, and enlightenment. The ATHENA Leadership Award is presented to a woman, or man, who is honored for professional excellence, community service, and for actively assisting women in their attainment of professional excellence and leadership skills. The Young Professional Leadership Award is a natural extension of the ATHENA Leadership Award and is presented to emerging women leaders across professional sectors for exemplary leadership. The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce is honored to continue presenting the ATHENA Awards in Greater Kansas City.

#KCATHENA

# PROGRAM

## Welcome and Introductions

### **Carolyn Watley**

Vice President of Community Engagement, CBIZ/MHM  
Board Chair, KC Chamber

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### **Mary Jane Judy**

Shareholder, Polsinelli  
EWLC Chair

### **Abby Wendel**

President of Consumer Banking, UMB Bank  
EWLC Vice Chair

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### **Karen Daniel**

2020 ATHENA Leadership Award Recipient

### **Chelsea Laub**

2020 ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award Recipient

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### **Dana Foote**

Audit Partner, KPMG

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## Presentation of ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award

### **Michele L. Watley**

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### **Nicole Van Denabeele**

President at Bank Midwest and EVP, Chief Accounting Officer at  
NBH Bank

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## Presentation of ATHENA Leadership Award

### **Sherry Turner**

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## Closing

### **Joe Reardon**

President and CEO, KC Chamber



# MICHELE L. WATLEY

## ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award Honoree

Driven by a passion for service, Michele founded Shirley's Kitchen Cabinet (Shirley's KC), a non-partisan non-profit based in the Midwest that is dedicated to amplifying the voices and power of Black women across the nation through education and advocacy. Shirley's KC works to wield the collective power of over 2,000 Black women in the region, provide training, and position Black women for seats at decision-making tables. Shirley's KC has pipelined Black women for seats on city boards, has hosted presidential candidates to discuss issues impacting Black women, and was instrumental in the passage of the CROWN Act—legislation that strengthened anti-discrimination policies, making Kansas City the second municipality in the nation to have passed such policies.

Michele is also the Founder and President of The Griot Group, a public affairs and strategic communications firm. She has contributed expertise to some of the region's most transformative issues and campaigns, including the largest general obligation bond authorization in Kansas City's history. Her work in advocacy expertise spans every level of government: She worked as senior leadership for presidential campaigns in 2016 and served as senior leadership on the campaign for a statewide elected leader in Missouri. She has developed a nationwide political, government, and private sector network and has garnered national, regional, and local recognition for her expertise and successes in advocacy. In 2017 she was honored by the American Association of Political Consultants with the 40 Under 40 award and received the Rising Star award in politics from Campaigns & Elections magazine, making her the first Black person and the first woman to be honored with both national awards in the same year.

Michele holds a Master of Science in Organizational Development and a Bachelor in Communications from Avila University in Kansas City, MO. She completed coursework in Public International Law and World Politics at Leiden University, a top-ranked school of law in The Hague, Netherlands. Michele also serves as an adjunct professor of Communication at Avila University.



# SHERRY TURNER

## ATHENA Leadership Award Honoree

With a variety of experiences from corporate management to business development to entrepreneurship, Sherry Turner now serves the Kansas City region in a leadership role with the Women's Employment Network, the Kansas City Women's Business Center, and the Women's Capital Connection. Mission alignment of these organizations creates financial independence for women in our community through sustained employment, the advancement of women business owners in all stages of their businesses and access to capital through angel investments. This alliance of non-profits focusing on resources for women was launched in June, 2009 as OneKC for Women.

Previously, Ms. Turner was Director of Small Business and Entrepreneurship with the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Turner believes Kansas City is a great place to grow a business and she is committed to making the Kansas City bi-state region a stronger entrepreneurial economy with a talented workforce.

Managing a workforce of 1100, Ms. Turner was instrumental in conducting the 1990 Census on a national operations level as well as one of seven processing offices located in Kansas City. The Resolution Trust Corporation then recruited her to develop a regional program for records management, which to this date was the largest records undertaking in the history of the U. S. Government. She then relocated to Los Angeles to assist in opening a new office to handle the large volume of the 1980's bank and savings and loan closures.

Entrepreneurial ventures include management consulting in the corporate sector and enhancing applied academic programs through promoting work-based learning opportunities for academic institutions throughout the Midwest.

Ms. Turner holds a B.S from Northwest Missouri State University and is a native of Kansas City. In 2015, she was the recipient of the Legacy Award by Thinking Bigger Business Media and was awarded the Missouri Women's Council Award of Distinction. She is a KC Business Journal's Women Who Means Business honoree, joining the class of 2017.

# 2021 SELECTION COMMITTEE

**Whitney Bartelli**

CommunityAmerica Credit Union

**Deanna Culver**

The University of Kansas  
Health System

**Tiauna Fanning**

Accenture

**Diane Gallagher**

American Century Investments

**Kara Hendon**

FleishmanHillard

**Karen Hogan**

Turner Construction Company

**Chelsea Laub**

2020 ATHENA Young  
Professional Honoree

**Lori McGroder**

Shook Hardy & Bacon

**Laurie Minard**

Garmin

**Leo Nunnink**

UMB

**Julie Pierce**

Henderson Engineers

**Angie Salmon**

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**Beth Soukup**

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**Mara Cohara**

Lathrop GPM LLP

**Karen Daniel**

2020 ATHENA Honoree

**Dana Foote**

KPMG

**Serri Helm**

Mazuma Credit Union

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**Mary Jane Judy**

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Shield of Kansas City

**Dr. Kathrine Swanson**

Metropolitan Community College

**Nicole Van Denabeele**

Bank Midwest

**Abby Wendel**

2021 EWLC Vice Chair  
UMB Bank

**Stephanie Wise**

AdventHealth



# EXECUTIVE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Executive Women's Leadership Council (EWLC) was created for the purpose of convening, connecting and fostering women leaders in the Kansas City region, which is foundational in achieving the overall Chamber's mission.

Mission of the EWLC has been defined as:

- To promote the visibility, development, and advancement of women in business leadership positions
- The EWLC is composed of area Women Executives representative of a cross-section of the Chamber's membership. The women typically work with or run a program to lead women's leadership/advancement within their organization.
- The EWLC has also created a scholarship for young women in the chamber's highly-regarded Centurions leadership training program. Centurions mission is to prepare a cross-section of our community's emerging leaders for their role in shaping the future of Greater Kansas City.

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# 2021 EXECUTIVE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

**Mayra Aguirre**  
Hall Family Foundation

**Kenda Caskey**  
Burns & McDonnell

**Thalia Cherry**  
Cherry Co

**Rebecca David**  
U.S. Engineering Company

**Tammy Edwards**  
Federal Reserve Bank of GKC

**Lisa Garney**  
LMG Construction

**Jenny Housley**  
Blue Cross and Blue Shield  
of Kansas City

**Nicole Jacobs-Silvey**  
Connection Coach KC

**Susan Johnson**  
Andrews McMeel Universal

**Lisa Krigsten**  
Dentons

**Jill Marchant**  
Hallmark

**Mary O'Connor**  
Country Club Bank

**Christine Ricci**  
U Break I Fix

**Polly Thomas**  
CBIZ/ MHM

**Kathleen Boyle Dalen**  
Ewing Marion  
Kauffman Foundation

**Amy Castillo**  
Ability KC

**Mara Cohara**  
Lathrop GPM

**Niki Lee Donawa**  
Truman Medical Centers

**Lesley Elwell**  
Evergy

**Andrea Hendricks**  
Cerner

**Angela Hurt**  
Veracity Consulting

**Sheri Johnson**  
McCownGordon

**Mary Jane Judy**  
Polsinelli

**Sue Lapointe**  
Accenture

**Rachel Merlo**  
Google

**Lynn Parman**  
National Association of  
Intercollegiate Athletics

**Kathrine Swanson**  
Metropolitan Community College

**Abby Wendel**  
UMB Bank

# EXECUTIVE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Executive Women's Leadership Council (EWLC) is pleased to fund a scholarship that promotes the advancement of females by fostering future growth through development programs. The EWLC proudly funds a portion of the tuition for women in the KC Chamber's Centurions Leadership Program.

Members of the Centurions Leadership Program spend two years exploring the opportunities and issues of the Kansas City region. Established in 1976, Centurions was the first program of its kind in the metro. Over time, it has developed the reputation as an unequaled training ground for future leaders of Kansas City.

Centurions are focused on building awareness around issues that affect Greater Kansas City, as well as increasing civic engagement in the community. The mission is to prepare a representative cross-section of the community's emerging leaders for their role in shaping the future of Greater Kansas City. Task forces include topics such as entrepreneurship, diversity, arts and entertainment, and education.

Applicants of the program are selected on the basis of proven professional success and community engagement, as demonstrated through a written application, recommendations, and personal interviews. The program selects a group of men and women from diverse ethnic and professional backgrounds, each with strong potential as a future community leader.

The EWLC Centurions scholarship is based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to being a female, an employee of a business or non-profit with 100 employees or fewer, and demonstration of financial need. It is funded, in part, by a portion of the proceeds from the annual ATHENA reception.

# PAST ATHENA LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

<b>2001</b>	Beth Smith
<b>2002</b>	Anita Gorman
<b>2003</b>	Julia Irene Kauffman
<b>2004</b>	Peggy Dunn
<b>2005</b>	Roshann Parris
<b>2006</b>	Kathleen Sebelius
<b>2007</b>	Karen Pletz
<b>2008</b>	Susan Stanton
<b>2009</b>	Mamie Hughes
<b>2010</b>	Adele Hall
<b>2011</b>	Mary Kay McPhee
<b>2012</b>	Janice Kreamer
<b>2013</b>	SuEllen Fried
<b>2014</b>	Betsey Solberg
<b>2015</b>	Dianne Cleaver
<b>2016</b>	Debby Ballard
<b>2017</b>	Carol Hallquist
<b>2018</b>	Anita Bajaj Newton
<b>2019</b>	Kathy Nelson
<b>2020</b>	Karen Daniel

# PAST ATHENA YOUNG PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

**2010**

Marie Farrell

**2011**

Mary Bosco Heinrich

**2012**

Katie Dunn Fitzgerald

**2013**

Susan Leonard

**2014**

Marshaun Butler

**2015**

Sunita Gupta Lavin

**2016**

Chandra Clark

**2017**

Jessica Palm

**2018**

Adrienne B. Haynes

**2019**

Caitlin O'Byrne Waters

**2020**

Chelsea Laub

# *Tune In!*

## **THE KC CHAMBER'S 134TH ANNUAL DINNER**



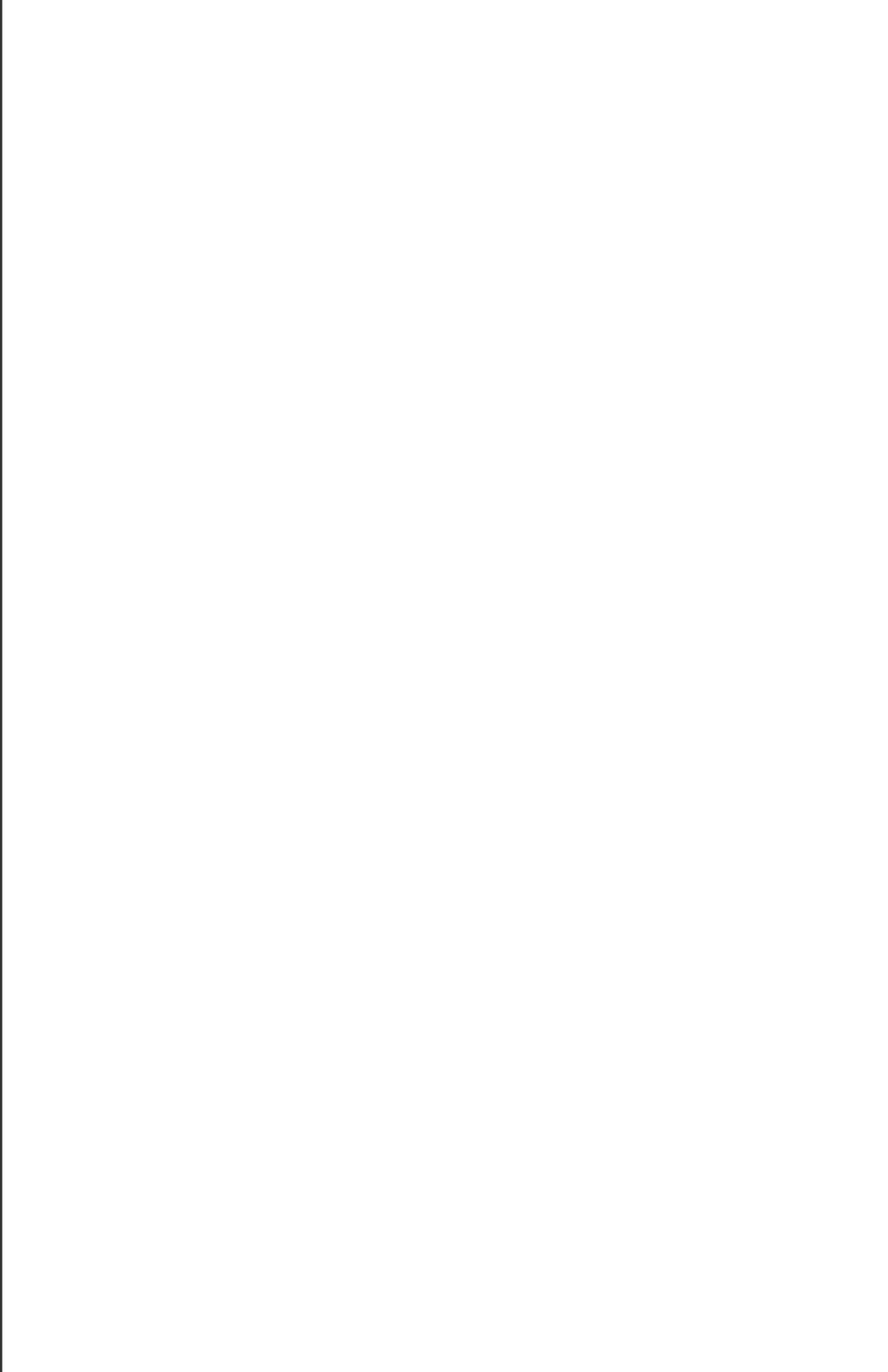
**NOVEMBER 23, 2021**  
**4:00 PM - 8:00 PM CST**

THE KC CHAMBER'S 134TH ANNUAL DINNER IS THE LARGEST AND SINGLE MOST ANTICIPATED EVENT ENCOMPASSING BUSINESSES, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE METROPOLITAN AREA.

A LIVESTREAM OF THIS EVENT WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT ATTEND IN PERSON OR ARE NOT FULLY VACCINATED.

**#KC4ALL**

For more information, visit [www.kcchamber.com](http://www.kcchamber.com)



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T-Mobile  
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UMB

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Metropolitan Community  
College  
Southwest Airlines  
The University of Kansas  
Turner Construction Company