



Board of Directors Biographies & Responsibilities FY27

Heidi Johnston (President)

Tenure: 2023 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: President, Governance Committee, Fundraising Committee

Residence: Martinsburg, WV

Heidi brings a variety of talents to the Board as an independent business owner, freelance writer, and experienced volunteer. She has worked in real estate sales since 2014, honing her skills in customer service, marketing, negotiation, and problem solving. In the preceding decade, she wrote grant applications, newsletters, and feature stories for local nonprofits, municipal offices, and print media. As a grant writer, she secured more than \$2 million for clients in arts & culture, social services, and animal welfare. Living in Ipswich, Massachusetts until 2019, she served for 9 years on the Town's Planning Board, where she chaired monthly meetings, oversaw public hearings, enacted local zoning bylaws, and recommended policy changes. Heidi earned an MBA from the University of Massachusetts and a BS from Bates College in Maine. She holds fond memories of her childhood music lessons, marching band rehearsals, and orchestra performances.

Piper Dankworth (Vice President)

Tenure: 2018 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Vice President, Governance Committee, Fundraising Committee

Residence: Shepherdstown, WV

Before retiring, Piper Dankworth had a 26-year career as a fundraising executive for both regional and national foundations. She held positions as Development Director for the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) of Northern VA, Inova Health System Foundation and Development Officer for the Inova Mount Vernon Hospital and Inova Community Health. Piper's career in healthcare fundraising rose to the national level when she became the Director of Development for the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF). She left NOF in 2011 to become the Executive Director of the JDRF Greater Chesapeake Chapter, raising funds for Type 1 diabetes research. In addition to serving on the board of Friends of Music, as a transplant recipient herself, Piper does much work in the heart transplant community. She serves on the Patient Family Advisory Council for Inova Heart and Vascular Institute; participates in the Heart Failure Collaboratory Think Tank, and mentors heart transplant patients in and out of the hospital. She is also a member of Women Investing in Shepherd (WISH), a local giving circle that supports innovation activities at Shepherd University and local non-profits.

Barbara Zingg (Treasurer)

Tenure: 2018 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Treasurer, Finance Committee, Governance Committee

Residence: Harpers Ferry, WV

Barbara is an award-winning math teacher who did her undergraduate study in Mathematics, Education and Theatre at Mary Washington College (now University) in Fredericksburg, Virginia. She holds two Master's Degrees in Curriculum Design for Online Learning, and Curriculum and Instruction from Capella University and Concordia University respectively. She teaches full-time in the mathematics department at Washington High School and has received numerous accolades including Secondary Math Teacher of the Year from the West Virginia Council for Teachers of Mathematics. She frequently consults for the West Virginia Department of Education on a wide variety of topics relating to many areas of education in the mountain state. In addition to her 28+ years of teaching, Barbara owns and operates a consulting firm, APCS, which provides multi-layered administrative support for a mental health counseling service with offices in West Virginia and a compensation consulting specialist out of New Lenox, IL. She has been married for 47+ years to retired special educator, Rob, and has two grown children. Her mother, Betty Lou Bryant was instrumental in the formation and growth of Friends of Music throughout its history. When Betty Lou passed away at 91, Barbara accepted a position on the board as a tribute to her mother's love and devotion to beautiful music at a local level.

Tim Whetzel (Secretary)

Tenure: 2025 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Secretary, Concerts & Events Committee

Residence: Shepherdstown, WV

Tim is a West Virginia native, (Petersburg), returning to WV in 2020 after 43 years. The time away from WV included graduating from James Madison University, a 35-year career in banking, spanning Alexandria, VA, Washington, DC, Los Angeles and Beverly Hills, CA. Tim currently works as a Psychotherapist, (second career, which completes the circle of having been a psychology major at JMU in the 80's). He is a lifelong music lover, with fond memories of competing for first chair trumpet player in high school band. His interests have involved community volunteering, working with Hospice, Big Brothers, foster care, high school tutoring, and other outreach activities with Greater DC Cares. Most recently, Tim was a member of the Fernbank neighborhood Board of Directors. Being back on the east coast affords multiple destinations for pursuing activities he enjoys, to include art, music, dance, theatre, and many outdoor activities in the natural surroundings. Never imagining, until the more recent years, a return to WV, (especially after the Southern California climate), warrants a quote from T.S. Elliot; "We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

Judith Miller Jones (Immediate Past President)

Tenure: 2016 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Fundraising Committee, Governance Committee

Residence: Shepherdstown, WV

Judy retired from a career in health policy and education at the National Health Policy Forum at George Washington University. For more than 40 years, the Forum was renowned for its off-the-record briefings, publications and site visits to assist congressional staff and high-level executive agency officials gain unbiased and practical information for their decision-making. Locally, Judy has served on the Board of the Jefferson County Health Department and, with her husband Rev. Stan Jones, helped to start Good Shepherd Interfaith Caregivers, still serving the elderly and disabled after more than 25 years. She remains very active on various boards and keeps involved in health and related activities through her work with Health & Human Services Collaborative of the Eastern Panhandle and the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation. A member of the Institutional Review Board at Shepherd University (which oversees privacy and the protection of human subjects data), she also serves on the boards of Panhandle Home Health, Inc. and the Shenandoah Community Health Foundation. At one time, Judy was an instrument-rated pilot; today she is an amateur artist and an avid gardener. Judy joined the Friends of Music board in 2016 with a love of music and a desire for more students to prosper from a well-rounded education, including exposure to the arts and music.

Holly Alessi

Tenure: 2026 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Marketing

Residence: Shenandoah Junction, WV

Holly is the founder of Wind Gap Music, a music retail shop and lesson studio in Shepherdstown, which she opened with her husband, Sean, in June 2025. As the shop expands into full retail in 2026, Holly and her husband Sean are working to reimagine what a local music store can be—honoring the warmth and community roots of the independent mom-and-pop shops that shaped so many musicians. Holly studied Clarinet Performance at Buffalo State University, which she chose specifically for the opportunity to work with a deeply admired professor—a decision that shaped her approach to music and teaching ever since. She has been teaching private lessons since the age of sixteen. Holly currently serves as President and Principal Clarinetist of the Charles Washington Symphony Orchestra, and as a board member and performer with the Eastern Panhandle Community Band. In her professional life, she works as a Senior Account Manager in Business Insurance, bringing a strong background in relationship management and community engagement to all that she does.

Emily Behrmann

Tenure: 2026 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Concerts & Events Committee, Database Management

Residence: Martinsburg, WV

Emily is a biology bachelor from Shepherd University with her sights set on graduate school researching the integration of backyard beauty with the health of native wildlife. Her love of nature was sparked by the natural areas around Shepherdstown and her family's dairy farm; and her desire to uncover its *why's* were nurtured through lively family debates and a curiosity to understand God's creation. In her off-time, she gardens in her backyard and attempts to *fend-off* nature to grow food for her family and friends. She currently supports her local community through her work at the Shepherdstown Farmer's Market through her family's business

Shepherd's Whey Creamery, and at a local vet clinic in Martinsburg. Her love of classical music began through casual childhood piano lessons and was furthered by classical radio through her commutes. She truly fell in love with classical music when she began attending concerts more frequently in person, influenced by the rich resonance of classical instruments, the creative use of intangible, human sound associations to craft ideas such as 'Spring' or 'Escape,' and the breadth of music that falls under "Classical Music." She is honored to connect to her community through joining the Friends of Music board and is excited to be a part of enriching the lives of any who are willing to be uplifted by wonderful music.

Tina Burns

Tenure: 2023 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Concerts & Events Committee, Hospitality

Residence: Kearneysville, WV

Tina retired in 2026 as Director of Resource Development for Shenandoah Community Health (SCH), where she advanced the fundraising and promotional efforts of Shenandoah Community Health Foundation in support of the health center. She is active in the area's non-profit community, collaborating on initiatives that promote health and wellness, with an emphasis on increasing access to healthcare, especially for the underserved. During her tenure with SCH, she has filled a variety of roles, initially with the migrant health program, capitalizing on her language skills. Tina received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish from Mary Baldwin College, now University, and a Master of Arts degree in Spanish from Middlebury College in Vermont and in Madrid, Spain. She serves on the local governing board of the Health, Science, & Technology Academy, the Executive Committee of Morgan County Starting Points, and the tri-county Steering Committee of the Health and Human Services Collaborative. Tina is senior warden of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Leetown and is a member of the Jefferson County League of Women Voters and of WISH (Women Investing in Shepherd).

Ann Henriksson

Tenure: 2024 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Education Committee (Chair), Concerts & Events Committee

Residence: Harpers Ferry, WV

Ann Henriksson retired from Shepherd University in 2016 after nearly 30 years of service. As a librarian at Scarborough Library, she was Coordinator of Reference and Government Documents. In that capacity she taught library instruction classes, liaised with the faculty, and promoted the reference and documents collection. She was active in the WV Library Association and was the Chair of the College and University Section. She successfully spearheaded a campaign to award Shepherd librarians faculty status. For the last 12 years at Shepherd, Ann divided her time between the library and study abroad. She became Shepherd's first Study Abroad Director counseling students, establishing and promoting education abroad opportunities and scholarships, creating course transfer procedures, and health and safety policies and procedures. Since moving to the Eastern Panhandle in 1985, she has been active in Literacy Volunteers, Friends in Action, and Read Aloud. She is a member of WISH: Women Investing In Shepherd and was a member of its Grants Committee in 2018. She is an active

member of the Women's Club of the Harpers Ferry District and has been its Treasurer since 2018 and a member of the Carrie Schilling Scholarship Committee since 2019.

Susan (Suzi) McGraw

Tenure: 2026 – present

FY27 Responsibilities:

Residence: Shepherdstown, WV

Before beginning a successful career in software engineering, Susan devoted more than two decades to music as a pianist, educator, and arts leader. She earned her Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Music Education, and Master of Music degrees from the Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University. After earning her master's degree, Susan was accepted into the Doctor of Musical Arts program in piano performance at Peabody and was awarded a graduate assistantship. In that role, she provided piano instruction to undergraduate and graduate instrumentalists and vocalists. An accomplished performer, Susan appeared frequently in recital and was the recipient of several competition awards. She also maintained a thriving private piano studio in the Washington metropolitan area. Susan served for many years on the board of the Washington Music Teachers Association, where she chaired several major piano competitions and contributed to advancing music education and performance opportunities for young musicians. A lifelong equestrian, she previously lived on a 10-acre horse farm, where she developed a passion for Icelandic horses. Susan was a founding member of the Frida Icelandic Riding Club, the Mid-Atlantic regional riding club of the United States Icelandic Horse Congress. During more than 25 years of service to the organization, she held numerous leadership positions, including president, helping to foster the growth of the Icelandic horse community.

Robert Murphy

Tenure: 2025 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Education Committee, Concerts & Events Committee

Residence: Martinsburg, WV

Robert Murphy has spent his entire life learning and creating practical things. After attending evening classes in construction, he found himself working in quality homes installing architectural millwork. In 2000, he returned to trade school and became a certified aircraft mechanic. Along the way in midlife, he studied classical guitar, learned to read music, and began another vocation as a collector, restorer and student of multiple instruments. He enjoys attending annual musical workshops, performing in numerous groups and recording projects. Known as a folk musician, Robert has always found Classical music soothing to the soul.

John Shaffer

Tenure: 2026 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Publicity, Grant Writing

Residence: Shepherdstown, WV

John first arrived in the Eastern Panhandle in 1980, beginning ten years as a train commuter to the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington— eventually serving as Assistant Director

of the NEA's Challenge Grant Program. He had prepared for this work through training at the nation's first graduate program in Arts Administration at the University of Wisconsin and a yearlong NEA-sponsored internship at the North Carolina Arts Council. During his career, he served in administrative roles with several other cultural and academic organizations, most recently as Director of Arts Programming at the State University of New York at Oswego. On their respective retirements, he and his wife Barbara happily returned to Shepherdstown, where he served on the Vestry at Trinity Episcopal Church and Barbara (the musician in the family) resumed her previous position as Choir Director. Encouraged by FoM's plan to further develop its community partnerships, John has long believed that the most important part of every arts organization is at its edges.

Phyllis Smock

Tenure: 2021– present

FY27 Responsibilities: Education Committee

Residence: Martinsburg, WV

Phyllis worked at the University of Maryland for 30 years. She retired in 2001 and moved to West Virginia. While at the University of Maryland, she held several administrative positions and was the director of alumni relations at the University of Maryland University College (now Global Campus) which served over 50,000 alumni worldwide. As director she managed a 24-member alumni board of directors and organized many large-scale events. Phyllis served on the Board of the Scarborough Society Friends of the Shepherd University Library from 2004 to 2014 and organized yearly educational bus trips for the members as well as serving on the fundraising Gala Committee. She also served as president of the Stonebridge Property Owners Association and was on the board of directors of the West Virginia Organization of Homeowners, a statewide organization whose mission is "Sharing Information-Increasing Knowledge." From 2001 to the present, Phyllis has been an active volunteer and fundraiser for the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education. Phyllis is a graduate of the University of Maryland and has a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies.

Elisabeth Staro

Tenure: 2014 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Fundraising Committee, Concerts & Events Committee

Residence: Shepherdstown, WV

Elisabeth graduated from Boston University with a BSc degree in Nursing. She lived in the Boston area for seven years and worked in Spinal Cord Rehabilitation. She moved to Long Island, New York where she was active in many community projects, including early Hospice development. Elisabeth returned to nursing after raising three daughters, served on her neighborhood Homeowners' Board for twenty years, and taught English in a literacy program leading to citizenship. Upon moving to Shepherdstown in 2006, she was thrilled to find such a vibrant musical scene; supporting Friends of Music became her passion! Actively involved in community affairs, Elisabeth also participates in her homeowners' association, leads restoration efforts of the Shepherd University gardens, and works on new wellness technology in conjunction with Shepherd's Department of Nursing.

Sherry Sykes

Tenure: 2025 – present

FY27 Responsibilities: Education Committee, Concerts & Events Committee

Residence: Rohrsersville, MD

Sherry worked as Friends of Music's part-time, paid Administrator for more than 3 years before joining the Board of Directors in July 2025. As Administrator, she adeptly handled concert logistics, donor relations, mentoring of the student intern, and general office management. Sherry earned her B.A. from Hamilton College and a Master of Arts Administration at Indiana University in Bloomington. Sherry is the former Coordinator for the Community Music Program at Shepherd School of Music, and she previously worked with the Levine School of Music, Yale Opera, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, and the School of Music at the Chautauqua Institution. She is married to professional jazz pianist, Robert Sykes. Sherry is an advocate for arts education for children and adults, and she enjoys building partnerships through music in the community.