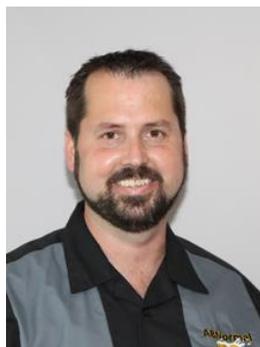


# Promise Council Board Members 2018-2019

## Chad Bevers



Chad was born and raised in Normal and now resides in Heyworth with his wife Amy and their two children Izzy and Lilly. He and his wife and both work in Bloomington/Normal, and their families still reside in the community as well. He spent 10 years working at the Occupational Development Center in Bloomington/Normal as the Plant Manager where his main function was to keep work available for over 100 adults with disabilities. In 2013 he went through the Leadership McLean County program provided by the Chamber of Commerce, where he first learned about Midwest Food Bank and what they do. Several months later he found himself working for Midwest Food Bank, and as of this year has taken on a new role as the Executive Director. Additionally, he opened his own business in Bloomington last year, ***Lil Beaver Brewery***.

## Linda Bowman



Linda (Althoff) Bowman came to this community in 1979 as an undergraduate transfer student from Millikin University in Decatur. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in speech pathology from Illinois State University in 1981 and 1983, and joined the faculty there as a full-time instructor and supervisor in 1986. During her 30 years at ISU, Linda taught graduate and undergraduate courses, supervised graduate clinicians and served as the department's Academic Advisor, Clinic Coordinator, and Clinic Director. She retired from the Department in May of 2015.

Linda and her husband Al served as Illinois State University's President and First Lady from 2003 through 2013. They support a number of local, national and international charities including: Boys and Girls Club, Home Sweet Home Mission, Red Cross, Heifer Project, International Justice Mission, and the Southern Poverty Law Center. They remain active on campus. Their youngest daughter, Natalie, age 25, graduated from the University of Wisconsin, and is a practicing speech-language pathologist in Denver. Laura, age 29 is an ISU graduate, and works for Banana Republic at their corporate headquarters in San Francisco, California.

## Nancy Steele Brokaw



Nancy Steele Brokaw is a local writer who is currently writing for The Pantagraph, ISU, IWU, Holiday Spectacular, Prairie Fire Theatre (PFT), and the Illinois Shakespeare Festival (ISF). Her eighth PFT/IWU children's opera, "Baobob" toured in over 40 local schools during May. For ISF, her Theatre for Young Audiences show "Double, Double" as well as two green shows, will be performed throughout this year's season. She was part of the original group that dreamed up the Promise Council years ago and she served on the Pepper Ridge Promise Council and also

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volunteered in one of their 3rd grade classrooms teaching writing. She's a member of Normal Rotary Club that works with the Promise Council at Oakdale School.

## **Willie Brown**



Willie Brown, CPCU, CLU, FLMI, is a retired executive vice president of State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company in Bloomington, Ill.

Brown began his State Farm® career in 1971 in the data processing department at corporate headquarters. He joined the life company in 1974 and, after several promotions, was named life specialist in 1977 and personnel services representative later that year. After several promotions in personnel, he was named assistant division manager in the Frederick, Md., office in 1985, where he was promoted to division manager that same year. He returned to corporate headquarters in 1989 as director of home office personnel relations.

Brown became an executive assistant in 1991, was promoted to deputy regional vice president in the Illinois Regional Office in Bloomington in 1992 and vice president of operations there in 1995. He was named vice president – administrative services at corporate headquarters in 1999, senior vice president of State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company in 2002 and assumed his current position in 2004.

He is a NAACP Roy Wilkens award winner for life time achievement, lifetime member of NAACP, and an Urban League member. He is member of the boards of State Farm Guaranty and Indemnity and the State Farm Foundation. He served on the United Way of McLean County Board of Directors and is a Trustee of Illinois Wesleyan University and President of the Illinois Wesleyan University's Associates Board. He received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Illinois State University in 1973 and was elected to the ISU College of Business Hall of Fame in 2005. He is a member of Illinois State University's College of Business Advisory Board and the College of Arts and Sciences Community Advisory Board. Brown was elected to the ISU College of Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame in 2008. Brown was elected to the Bloomington High School Hall of Fame in 2007. In 2009, Brown was inducted into the African American Hall of Fame Museum of Peoria as the inaugural recipient of the William Watkins, Jr. Founder's Award. The Founder's Award was created to honor those individuals that have given outstanding service to their community.

## **Rich Garcia**



Rich Garcia joined State Farm® in 1990 as a claim representative trainee in Wichita, Kansas. He held several positions within Claims and Human Resources (HR) before moving into a leadership role in the Pacific Northwest Zone in 1999. In 2001, Rich was promoted to an HR manager position in the Great Lakes Zone, and then transferred to the Florida

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Zone in 2002 where he worked in both HR and Auto Underwriting. In 2007, Rich returned to Corporate, serving as a director in HR. In 2009, he became a Leadership Development Associate (LDA) within Auto Underwriting, followed by Agency Resources and the Executive area in the Great Lakes Zone. In early 2012, Rich returned to his role as a director in HR before becoming a director in the Customer Care Center Sales (formerly Quote and Bind) area in May 2012. He assumed the role of Assistant Vice President – Human Resources in 2013. Rich received a bachelor's degree in science from Emporia State University.

In his free time, Rich enjoys spending time with his family and watching the Kansas City Royals.

## **Karen Hanson**



Work opportunities brought my husband, Chuck, and me from Princeton, IL to B-N in 2008. I joined the Wealth Management division of Heartland Bank and Trust Company in November 2013. I've worked in banking for more than 40 years and have been a Financial Planning certificant for 30 years.

While our sons were growing up in Princeton, I participated in their school activities. For a number of years, I served as vice president of the board of not-for-profit Bureau County Day Care Center (now Zearing Child Enrichment Center) in Princeton and was president of the Princeton Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors.

Since moving to B-N, I have been a member of B-N Sunrise Rotary. I was a McLean County Chamber of Commerce Ambassador for 2 years. In June 2018, I will complete 6 years as a board member of the American Red Cross of the Heartland. I am a member of the IPCF Women to Women Giving Circle. I briefly served on the board of Boys & Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal. In December 2016, I joined the board of Milestones Early Learning Center; I am a member of the Business Committee of MELC. I support community non-profit events during the year.

## **Cheryl D. Jackson**



Ms. Jackson has served as Corporate Counsel for State Farm Insurance Companies since 1992. Ms. Jackson provides counseling and litigation management for a wide range of labor and employment subjects effecting general business issues, personnel issues, and the Companies' agency sales force. Ms. Jackson has extensive experience in representing management's interest regarding Title VII issues, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Age Discrimination In Employment Act (ADEA), wage & hour issues, recruiting & hiring issues, and independent contractor issues.

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From 1999 – 2012, Ms. Jackson also served as an adjunct faculty member of Illinois State University's legal studies program where she taught labor and employment law. The legal studies program became ABA-accredited during Ms. Jackson's tenure with the program.

Ms. Jackson is a graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia [B.A. with Honors in Economics] and the University of Illinois - College of Law. She is a member of the Missouri, Illinois, and American Bar Associations, and a member of the ABA Section of Labor & Employment – Employment Rights & Responsibilities Committee. Ms. Jackson has been a featured speaker and panelist for several legal associations including the Central Illinois Paralegal Association, NALA- The Legal Association for Legal Assistants and Paralegals, the McLean County (IL) Bar Association, and the ABA Labor & Employment Conference.

Ms. Jackson is also very committed to civic engagement, most recently serving on the Board for the Mennonite College of Nursing at Illinois State University. Her immediate past boards include President of the Foundation Board for The Community Cancer Center, and the McLean County Arts Center. She is also a past president of the Central Illinois Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, and a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated – A Public Service Sorority. Ms. Jackson's civic accomplishments were recognized in 2014 as a Women of Distinction nominee by the YWCA of McLean County.

## Larry Johnson



Larry Johnson has held the position of Senior Minister of the Central Pointe Church of Christ since the congregation was established in 2003. Although he has been preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ since 1985, this is his first church in the pastoral role as Senior Minister.

He grew up in the Church of Christ and has, from a very early age, been actively involved in church work. He has served the church in many capacities, with emphasis on church education. His responsibilities have ranged from bible school teacher for all ages, to superintendent, to Educational Director. He has served in church leadership at three congregations in Illinois.

He's worked for many years with the Midwest Youth Conference, serving as Secretary and Treasurer. He has also worked with the Midwest Lectureship, an eight-state conference, and has served as its Chairman since 1998. Minister Johnson has been a presenter at the annual National Teachers Workshop and has preached and conducted workshops on Church Education and Church Marketing throughout the Midwest and South.

Minister Johnson attended the public schools in Decatur, IL. His educational and theological accomplishments include an Associate of Arts degree in Business Management from Richland College; studies toward a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Management at the University of Illinois at Springfield; a Bachelor of Arts degree in Christian Education and a Master of Divinity degree in Christian Education from the Theological University of America.

In early 2003 Minister Johnson was asked to lead an effort to establish a congregation in the Bloomington-Normal community with a focus on saving souls and improving the quality of life for

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members of this community. Under his leadership, God has blessed the Central Pointe church to experience tremendous growth, both spiritually and numerically. The church has purchased a building to meet in while plans are being completed to build a permanent facility in which to worship and provide other activities. Long-range plans include building a youth center, a senior citizens facility, and a life management center in which to serve the community.

As the spiritual leader at Central Pointe, Minister Johnson is a committed family man. He has been married to his wife, Margarett since 1969. They have two adult children: Marcus Johnson of Urbana, IL and Sonia Johnson-Toson of Atlanta, GA. Larry Johnson's ministerial motto is: "Commitment + Consistency = Success."

## **Jen Luna**



I grew up on the northwest side of Chicago. I came to ISU and earned a degree in Education with a focus on Middle School Education. I taught Social Studies and Language Arts for 8 years. Following that I transitioned to early childhood education for about two years. At that point I began working at Advocate Bromenn, working as an educator/trainer. I have been a Director of the Patient Access and Accounts department for the last eight years.

I have been married to my husband Dennis for 15 years and we have two kids, a 5 year old girl name Anastacia and a 9 year old boy named Joey.

## **Vickie Mahrt**



My husband, Steve, and I moved our family to Normal in 1983. I worked as a public school speech pathologist, retiring from Unit 5 in 2014. My husband served as corporation counsel for the Town of Normal for 30 years, and recently joined a law firm specializing in municipal law. We are members of Calvary United Methodist Church in Normal, where we teach a 2nd grade Sunday school class. Our 3 grown children, who all have completed graduate degrees, were educated in Unit 5. I am active in the Illinois Education Association, and have held a variety of leadership and advocacy positions at the local, state and national level. I volunteer as a Court Appointed Special Advocate in McLean County, am an active member of the Bloomington-Normal Sunrise Rotary Club, and serve as secretary for the Back 2 School Alliance.

## **Will Mahrt**



William Mahrt is a general practice attorney in Bloomington focusing on estate planning, real estate, and other transactional areas of law. Will is a native of Normal and an NCHS graduate. In the past, he has served on the board of Heartland Head Start, and he currently serves on the Central Illinois Pride Health Center's board of directors. Last year, Will received recognition for his commitment to pro bono service with a "Lifesaver" award from Prairie State Legal Services.

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## Kellie Milby



I have been on staff at Eastview Christian Church for seven years. In my capacity as Outreach Coordinator, I am responsible for spearheading the Imagine program as well as the Serve Project while assisting with our Food Pantry and Benevolence Program, all which impact the greater Mclean County area.

I work closely with several partner agencies such as PATH, the Housing Authority, Boys and Girls, Youth Build, area Schools and Churches. Our Imagine program provides food, coats, and toys for over 900 families at Christmas time. The Serve Project is in its third year with over 1000 volunteers providing clean-up, painting, maintenance, and landscaping for other agencies in town as well as housing locations. My weekly role brings me in contact with Bloomington/Normal residents in need of financial assistance through our Benevolence Program or food for their household through our Food Pantry. In this arena I have striven to keep strong ties and open communication with other agencies in town, and local businesses such as Meijer for their matching donation program.

I find great joy in using the gifts and talents God provided me to link those in need with the assistance that helps them reach their goal of providing for their families and know the love of our savior Jesus Christ.

## Tony Mortstatter



I grew up in Decatur, Illinois until I left at the age of 18 to attend Eureka College. After graduating from Eureka College, I began my career as a Corrections Officer with the McLean County Juvenile Detention Center. Shortly thereafter, I was accepted into Illinois State University where I earned a M.A. in Art Education with an Emphasis in Art Therapy.

My wife and I moved to Normal in 2001. Bloomington/Normal became our home and community that we wanted to raise our family. We have 2 children, Logan(15) and Cole(12) who go to school in the Unit 5 School District. We are avid sports fans, coaching and supporting our children in softball, volleyball, baseball and football.

In 2013, I made a commitment to my community. As a role model for my children, I wanted to show them that there is more to community than just being a resident. I began volunteering at the Boys & Girls Club to give back and support our community. Within a few months I was asked to join their Board of Directors.

I have served as a volunteer coach for the PCSL for 3 years. I have coached for 5 years and was the Board Treasurer for the McLean County PONY Baseball League. I have also served on the OSF St. Joseph Health Care Foundation Council and am currently the past President.

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In 2017, I was honored and blessed to be named the Chief Executive Officer of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bloomington-Normal. In this leadership role, I continue to find time to volunteer at Midwest Food Bank and Youth Build. I have also continued to volunteer as a coach for PONY Baseball and for the Bloomington-Normal Fighting Irish Football team.

## John Penn



Penn joined Laborers' Local 362 in 1965 and was elected Secretary-Treasurer in 1974. He then became Business Manager in 1976 and in 1994, Penn was elected Business Manager of the Great Plains Laborers' District Council where he served in the position until becoming LIUNA Vice President and Midwest Regional Manager.

In addition to his many union roles, Penn is also Co-Chair for the Children's Christmas Party for Unemployed Families; He has re-established the Bloomington Labor Day Parade after a forty-year absence; Began the *McLean County Union News*; is a Board Member on the Bloomington/Normal Advantage; Volunteers for the Illinois Special Olympics and is currently on the statewide board; Board Member of the McLean County Economic Development Council of Community Enhancement and Advocacy.

In 1986 Penn was honored by Governor Thompson was presented the Illinois Partner in Building Better Communities award for taking a leading role in his community and "Bringing jobs to the jobless." In addition, in 2003, Penn received the Presidential Points of Light Award from President Clinton. This award was created in 1989 to recognize those who take direct and consequential voluntary action in their communities to solve serious social issues.

Penn is a 1979 graduate of the Harvard University Trade Union Program and graduated from Bloomington High School. He served in the United States Air Force, with assignments in South Korea and Vietnam.

John and his wife, Mary, reside in Bloomington, Illinois and have one daughter, three grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

## Mike Thomas



I currently live in Bloomington with my wife, Amber, and we have three year-old twin girls (Millie and Presley). Both my wife and I are from Fairbury, IL – and are proud graduates of Illinois State University. We are very passionate about education, as my wife has spent many years teaching within Unit 5. I currently am the Director, of Personal Lines Underwriting at COUNTRY Financial, where I am fortunate enough to have worked for 15 years. I enjoy and am very proud to be part of this community, and have volunteered and worked/work with many organizations, including: Red Cross, United Way, Midwest Food Bank and MCCA. In our spare time we enjoy getting out of the house as much as possible with our girls and going to ISU sporting events.