

# Eno River Association 2025 Board Nomination Slate

## First Term Board Nominees

### Derrick Drakeford

Dr. Derrick Drakeford is a Social Entrepreneur, the CEO of Drakeford, Scott, and Associates L.L.C. and founder of Purpose University. Derrick served on the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel-Hill, North Carolina Central University, and Shaw University in Raleigh, NC. Derrick holds a Ph.D. in Education from UNC-Chapel Hill, a Bachelors in political science from Bethune-Cookman University, and a Masters in Public Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Government. He holds a certificate in Nonprofit Management from the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work and certificates in Proposal Writing and Fundraising for Nonprofits from the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana -Purdue University. Derrick currently serves as Commissioner for the USS Battleship North Carolina. He has written ten books.



From Derrick: *I was born in Durham. I've been attending the Eno festival for decades, and I regularly go to the Eno river with my dog to meditate and pray I want to give back to the nature it has given to me.*

### Wendy Kuhn

Wendy Kuhn is a strategic planning and project management consulting with extensive experience working with non profit organizations and federal, state, and local governments. She is the former President of the Board for Meals and Wheels of Durham and currently serves on the Town of Hillsborough's Parks and Recreation Board, the Orange County Conservation Council, and The Women in Education Leadership Symposium Advisory Board.

Wendy is an avid hiker, walker, runner, reader, and felter with a strong commitment to the natural world, sustainability, and environmental justice.



From Wendy: *My neighborhood abuts the area that the Eno River Association has helped the State Park purchase from the Classic American Homes Preservation Trust and seeing that process has strengthened my commitment to the work of the Eno River Association and my excitement about what it can achieve.*

## George Parker

A licensed attorney in North Carolina since 2010, George holds an MBA and JD, as well as two undergraduate degrees from NCSU. Growing up in Raleigh and now residing near the Eno River on 4.5 acres of certified wildlife habitat, he has been a regular attendee of the Eno River Festival since 1990 and actively contributes to the Eno River Association through donations and volunteer work. An Eagle Scout, George brings a strong sense of dedication and service to all his endeavors.

George is committed to making a positive impact through non-profits, actively volunteering with the Extra Life charity, supporting the Electronic Frontier Foundation as a donating member and as a working group member defining industry standards for the FinOps Foundation. Professionally, he manages a team at Salesforce, overseeing a budget of \$100 million per month, demonstrating his leadership and strategic capabilities.



From George: *By serving on the board, I aim to apply my diverse skill set to support the Eno River Valley Association in its efforts to preserve and protect this invaluable natural resource for generations to come.*



## Brian Powell

Brian Powell is an attorney, environmentalist and media professional for the North Carolina Conservation Network. Originally from Dayton, OH, he received a BA in Journalism and Political Science from Miami University and a JD from UNC-Chapel Hill. Economic and racial justice have been centerpieces of Brian's career -- from fighting racial bias in the criminal justice system to labor organizing to working with and for communities impacted by environmental racism.



Brian lives in Durham where he is vice-chair of the Durham Workers' Rights Commission. He formerly hosted a radio program on environmental justice and news that aired across the Triangle.

*From Brian: Like so many, the Eno is my peace and its banks are a place of respite, whether I'm running the trails alongside it, meditating to its song or sharing a day of fun on the river with loved ones. I would be honored to be able to return some measure of the enrichment the Eno has given my life. And for anyone reading this: if you haven't yet, please read or listen to Jaki Shelton Green's poetry about the Eno, found in "The River Speaks of Thirst."*

### **Xavier "Xavi" Vallejo**

Xavi Vallejo is the Events Coordinator for the Community Arts & Culture Division of the Town of Chapel Hill. He brings over six years of experience in event and program management and has contributed to over 150 diverse events and programs throughout his career. He brings an additional three years of experience in community and government relations, with a network of over 100 organizations in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area.

Xavi has previously worked with the esteemed Western Governors' Association, the New Mexico Department of Health, the University of New Mexico, and several nonprofits. He has a bachelor's degree in Population Health from the University of New Mexico.



As a wildlife enthusiast and an avid visitor of Eno River State Park, Xavi is passionate about the conservation and protection of the Eno River Basin.

*From Xavi: As a newer Latino resident in Chapel Hill, I have really struggled to find community in the area. In the absence of community, I quickly found myself regularly visiting Eno River State Park as a way to find peace and connect with the world around me. Eno River State Park is the place I feel most at home in North Carolina and I would be honored to help protect and preserve the park in any way that I can.*

## Second Term Board Nominees

### Helen Kalevas

Helen Kalevas has a Master of Science Degree from Northern Arizona University specializing in Avian Ecology where she had also acquired a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology. While obtaining her education, she worked as a river guide/cook on the Colorado River in Grand Canyon which led her to conduct scientific research along the Colorado River for over 20 years. She has several peer reviewed publications on bird studies which included studying birds on several other rivers and riparian areas in the southwest. In addition to research projects, she volunteered for non-profit organizations such as the Museum of Northern Arizona where she organized large fundraising events.



Helen spent her entire career studying river ecosystems to provide scientific data to various governmental agencies to strengthen support for riparian preservation and conservation efforts. Upon moving to the Durham area 15 years ago, she became enchanted with the Eno River and tributaries while hiking along and kayaking the Eno. In learning about the Eno River Association and their mission “to conserve, protect the natural, historic and cultural resources of the Eno River Basin”, she became a volunteer. Wanting to contribute in a more meaningful way, she approached the Board of Directors about joining them seven years ago and was delighted to be accepted.

### Ellen Reckhow

Ellen Reckhow served on the Durham County Board of Commissioners from 1988 – 2020 and as Chair of the Board from 2002 – 2008. Currently, Ellen serves on the Leadership Team of the Orange Durham Chatham League of Women Voters and as Vice President of the Eno River Association. She is on the Board of the Child Care Services Association and Kids Voting NC.



Ellen is the recipient of numerous local, regional, and state awards including: The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the Durham Chamber of Commerce Hall of Fame Award, the Goodmon Award for Exemplary Regional Leadership by an Elected Official, the North Carolina Planning Association Elected Official of the Year, and the Dorothy B. Graham Child Care Services Award.

She is married to Kenneth Reckhow, a professor emeritus in the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University. They have two children and four grandchildren.