



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 16, 2019

CONTACT: Abigail Norman, Executive Director  
617.553.4686, [anorman@eliotsschool.org](mailto:anorman@eliotsschool.org)

## Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts Announces Six New Board Members

New members are leaders in law, finance, community education, communications



*Left to Right: Jae Williams, Marion Davis, Karen Smith McGarity, Neema Chaiban, Bridgit Brown, Jamie Day (Staff photo)*

The Eliot School has announced six new members have joined its 15-person [Board of Trustees](#) this fall. The new trustees bring skills in finance, law, communications and community education to this Boston arts center, which inspires lifelong learning in craftsmanship and creativity for all.

**Bridgit Brown** is Director of Operations, JOIN for Justice, with past experience as Director of Administration & Finance for the Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture. **Neema Chaiban** is an Associate Attorney at the law firm Goulston & Storrs, specializing in real estate law. **Marion Davis** is Director of Communications for the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) and a graduate of the Board Match program at Latinos for Education. **Jamie Day**, an Eliot School neighbor, is an Associate Creative Director, at the global marketing firm MullenLowe. **Karen Smith McGarity**, an avid craft student specializing in fiber arts, has served on the Eliot School's Advisory Council since 2018. And **Jae Williams** is Director of Special Projects at the

Equity, Diversity & Social Justice Center of Emerson College. An award-winning filmmaker and founder of a Roxbury teen media program, he also teaches in Emerson's Communication Studies Dept.

The Eliot School sends artists and artisans to teach visual arts and woodworking to young people in schools and community centers throughout Boston, and offers classes for all ages in its two Jamaica Plain locations. Artisans' talks, an annual artist's residency, a multi-year teen program and family events round out its programs, and it is committed to a process of infusing racial equity throughout all levels of the organization. Founded as a grammar school in 1676, it has offered manual arts training to all ages since 1874.

The organization faces important decision-making in the next few years as it grapples with its need for improved and expanded space, and builds long-term financial capacity to sustain its programming, which has expanded nearly ten-fold in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Biographical Details

**Bridgit Brown** is Director of Operations at JOIN for Justice, a nonprofit organization that trains Jewish leaders for justice and equality. She has more than 15 years of experience in nonprofit and communications sectors. Previously, as Director of Administration and Finance for the Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture, she managed a budget of \$3.6 million, administered the Boston Cultural Council's grant-making program and oversaw operations for the historic Strand Theatre. Before joining the City of Boston, Bridgit was a communications officer for the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, where she distributed communications grants and helped to pilot an online hub for student-centered learning. Preceding that, she raised funds as a development professional for Boston-based nonprofits.

**Neema Chaiban** is an Associate at Goulston & Storrs, a national law firm, where she focuses her practice on the acquisition, disposition, leasing and development of commercial real estate. She works with clients who own and develop office, retail and mixed-used properties across the United States. Neema has an undergraduate degree from Tufts University, a Masters in Environmental Law and Policy from Vermont Law School and a JD from Northeastern University School of Law. She recently moved to Jamaica Plain and is pleased to be active in her new community.

**Marion Davis** is Director of Communications at MIRA, the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition, which she joined after a career in journalism and science and policy communications. Born and raised in Costa Rica, with an American father and a Costa Rican mother, she came to the US for college and chose to make her life here. She worked as a journalist for 15+ years, at the *New York Daily News*, *Providence Journal*, *Providence Business News*, and as a freelancer for the *Boston Globe* and *Providence Phoenix*, before joining the Stockholm Environment Institute, where she worked on global climate and sustainable development issues for seven years. She has a BA from Georgetown University and an MS in journalism from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. Marion comes to the Eliot School from the Board Match program at Latinos for Education.

**Jamie Day** is an Associate Creative Director at MullenLowe, an advertising and marketing agency headquartered in Boston. Throughout his career, he has created award-winning work for a wide variety of national and global clients across many forms of media, including broadcast, digital, outdoor, brand experience and social content. He is passionate about art, design and the creative process. Jamie lives on Holbrook Street, across the street from the Eliot schoolhouse, and his wife, Deirdre, sits on the Eliot School's Advisory Council and Marketing Committee. Their young children attend classes at the Eliot School.

**Karen Smith McGarity** is an avid craft aficionado. Among the applied arts, she works in textiles, woodcraft, paper craft and mosaics. She has taken many classes at the Eliot School and numerous national craft institutions including Haystack, Penland and Coupeville. Professionally, Karen has worked as Asst. Comptroller of Southern National Bank, Auditor for Texas Southern University Employee Credit Union, Purchasing Agent at Rice University, and as a Constituent Issues staff member for Congressman Robert C. Eckhardt. She has continuously

been engaged in civic activities. She worked in her family's political and civic events, As a teenager, and in an after-school program as an American University undergraduate. As a parent, she worked on PTOs', Boy Scout Districts' and assorted community organizations' projects and programming in Houston and Brookline. Later she moved to the Bay Area to attend CCAC and volunteered at a church program for homeless families. Once back in Greater Boston, she focused on fiber arts, learning appropriate repair solutions for her 1785 home and assisting in restoration efforts for an 1816 church designed by Charles Bulfinch in her town. Karen has served on the Eliot School Advisory Council since 2018.

**Jae Williams** is Director of Special Projects in the Equity, Diversity and Social Justice Center at Emerson College. He sits on the faculty of Emerson's Communication Studies Dept. and served four years as Digital Media Producer and as a mentor for film and media production students. He is an award-winning filmmaker (Kay Borne Emerging Filmmaker award, Brother Thomas Artist Fellowship Award) and arts advocate. In 2008, Williams founded Forever Ink, producing short films and executing a monthly film series and an annual charity event. Jae was earlier Director of Marketing & Content Strategy for OneClass, Marketing Director for Myton, Inc., Communications Coordinator for Perkins School for the Blind. In addition to Emerson College, he has also taught Digital Storytelling at Berklee College of Music and video and marketing classes at community centers and schools. He comes to the Eliot School board through LeadBoston, a program of the YMCA promoting emerging leaders of color.