

2017 ELECTION

Candidate Biographies

for office beginning January 1, 2018



First Unitarian Church of Dallas



Mickey Quiñones, President

My family and I have been members of First Unitarian of Dallas since 2006. During that time, I have served as a member of the intern committee where we selected and mentored Ministerial Interns as part of our church's commitment to being a teaching congregation. I have also enjoyed welcoming the congregation to service from the pulpit as a Worship Associate (or lay reader). More recently, I have served on the church Board for the last two years and worked on the visioning and strategic planning process.

My wife is a lifelong UU and my two children (ages 15 and 13) have attended RE classes at our church as long as they can remember and are currently attending OWL and Coming of Age. Outside of church, I am a professor at SMU where I teach in the Management and Organizations department of the business school. My family and I enjoy travelling and spending time in the great outdoors.

Throughout its long history, our church has been a force for good in our community, and I am committed to ensuring that we remain so for many more years to come.



Kassie McLaughlin, Vice President

Kassandra (Kassie) McLaughlin is a member of First Church and has attended the church with her wife, Michelle Touchet, and two sons (Jake and Sloan) since 2011. She and her family are all native Texans, use the term "y'all" without irony, live in Oak Cliff and believe in community, good karma and good coffee. Kassie attended the University of Texas and the University of Michigan, has a B.A., M.S. and a J.D. She practices commercial real estate law as a transactional attorney and is a partner at Bell Nunnally and Martin. Kassie has served on several non-profit boards in the capacities of Chair of Buildings and Grounds, Chair of Audit, Co-chair of Trustee's Committee, Secretary, Chair of Sponsorship, Director over Sponsorship, Director over Programs,

Director for the philanthropic arm of a 501(c)(3). She believes that (1) service is both a privilege and an obligation, (2) First Unitarian Church, through its congregation and staff, is poised for further greatness, and (3) she can happily and joyfully provide her services to the goals of our church.



Bogdan Baciu, Treasurer

I joined First Unitarian in 2015 and became a member in 2016. The appeal of the community is the inclusiveness, the thoughtfulness and the deep positive desire and willingness this community has to create positive change for others. In my short time here I have been involved in several semesters of religious education at the kindergarten level. My intent lies in bringing over my skills as a Finance professional to ensure that our church has the financial stability and flexibility to realize its vision and continue serving in an impactful way.

My background is primarily in investment banking. Currently, I work at Ryan, LLC, a corporate tax firm as the Senior Vice President of Finance. At night, I am currently pursuing a Masters of Accounting at The University of Texas at Dallas in the hopes that I will become a Certified Public Accountant. Additionally, I am a CFA Level 2 Candidate. Personally, I enjoy travelling, reading, yoga and spending time with close friends.



Dean Castelhana, Trustee-1yr term

My wife Carol and I have been attending First Unitarian Church since January 2014 and signed the book in April 2016.

Since joining I have served as an usher and, along with Carol, have spent the last year on the Love First Capital Campaign Steering Committee, starting with the feasibility phase and continuing through the present. The experience has been transformative for me personally, having contributed to such an important aspect of our future, not to mention getting to know and truly appreciate our leadership and staff immensely.

Professionally, I own a small commercial mortgage lending firm here in Dallas by the name of Graham Mortgage Corporation. Since graduating from Iona College in the New York area in 1980, I have spent my entire professional life in the commercial real estate finance field on a local and national basis. I presently own and have in the past owned my own business, understanding the rewards, challenges and responsibilities of such endeavors.

I do have a passion for what I call “campus life” at the church. I enjoy classes, connecting with other members and serving the church however I can.

It would be a great honor to have a chance to serve this important institution in a leadership position.



David Schulze, Trustee–3yr Term

David Schulze has been attending First Unitarian Church since 2012 and has been a member since 2016. Along with his husband Seldon Short, David serves as Event Co-Chair for the Love First Capital Campaign and as a member of the Campaign Steering Committee. He was a speaker at the 2014 DUUC Talks and has coordinated several major church-wide events celebrating milestones in the life of the church.

David has spent his entire professional career as a lawyer in public service. In his current position as Vice President for Policy and Strategy with Dallas Area Rapid Transit, he leads DART's strategic planning initiatives, develops agency policies, and oversees projects that have agency-wide impacts. David previously worked on the reconstruction of Central Expressway, the construction of DART's Light Rail system, served as lead counsel on Dallas City Council's 2000 redistricting, and drafted the Dallas ordinance that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.

David is a member of the Leadership Dallas Class of 2005, has served on the Board of Directors of Big Thought, on the Board of Directors of DIFFA Dallas, on the steering committee for the Emergency Artists Support League (a fund of the Communities Foundation), and was recognized for his efforts in raising funds for LifeWalk.

In his free time, David likes to make art and cook.



Katie Sickorez, Trustee–3yr Term

My husband Rob and I moved back to Texas from Massachusetts in 2013, discovered First Unitarian and Unitarian Universalism about six months later, and joined the church in 2014. We currently serve as facilitators for the Inquirers Series, and I previously taught Sunday school for the 3- and 4-year-olds. I have always had a passion for education, and my first career was teaching middle school and high school band in the Austin area. I later decided to go into medicine, and am now a psychiatrist working at Metrocare Services, specializing in the treatment of adults with severe mental illness. I enjoy supervising medical students and residents during their community psychiatry rotations, and find it especially fulfilling to teach my patients how to better manage their illnesses so that they can lead meaningful, satisfying lives. Rob and I live in Lake Highlands with our 10- and 5-year-old daughters, Sarah and Ava, as well as our menagerie of

rescue pets, which currently includes two dogs, three cats, and two guinea pigs.



Russ Kirby, Trustee–3yr Term

Russ Kirby has attended First Unitarian Church with his family for five years, and became a member in 2016. He serves as the Education Committee Co-Chair for Standing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) DFW, and is actively involved with the church's Cub Scout pack. Russ holds a B.A. in Religion from Pepperdine University, a M.Div. (Multicultural Ministries- African-American Church Studies) from Fuller Theological Seminary, and completed a three-year doctoral fellowship through Fuller's DePree Leadership Center.

For nearly two decades, he has worked with diversity-related initiatives and programs in higher education, corporate management and church communities across the country. As a member, advisor and organizer of numerous groups and committees dedicated to race relations and multicultural concerns, Russ has frequently spoken at scholars' conferences and delivered workshops and presentations on leadership in multicultural churches; and he is also published on the topic. He has trained in conflict mediation and intercultural competency, and has a deep, personal passion for and investment in issues of diversity and equity.

Involved in multimedia and performance art since his youth, Russ was a founding member of Pepperdine's Multicultural Theatre Project. In addition to writing and performing music for television and commercials, he is a spoken word artist and performed in three college tours and regularly at The Comedy Store in Hollywood.

After ten years in ministry and higher education, Russ transitioned into the corporate sector in 2012, and now works as a finance director for Sewell. He has been married to Miranda for fourteen years, and together they have three sons: Aidan, Caulen and Jordan.



Tom Cook, EMGF–3yr Term (Endowment Committee)

Tom has been a member of First Unitarian since 2003, when he and his family were searching for a rational spiritual home for themselves and their then 3-year-old daughter. They found it—and more. Tom is an attorney with Zelle LLP, an international litigation firm where he has practiced since 1992. He is a senior partner and has served on the firm's three-person Executive Committee since 2012. He has previously served on the Program Management Team for the church and has ridden hundreds of miles on bikes with the Rev. Dr. Kanter. Tom and his wife Sherri

are active in a number of charitable organizations in Dallas. Tom holds a J.D. from the SMU School of Law and a B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin. Their daughter Jane is a senior at The Hockaday School in Dallas.



Seldon Short, Nominating Committee–2yr Term

Seldon Short, a native Kentuckian, has been attending First Unitarian Church since 2011. After participating in a circle group and singing in the choir and volunteering at the church for nearly a year, he signed the book of names and made his commitment to this liberal congregation official.

A former teacher with 30 years of experience in the educational arena, Seldon is the Senior Sales Associate for Performance Matters, a data analytics and growth platform software company headquartered in Salt Lake City, UT.

For the last year Seldon and his husband, David Schulze, have served on the Capital Campaign Steering Committee as event co-chairs.

Seldon would be honored to serve on The Nominating Committee and continue to support First Church's move into the future with leadership that is progressive and visionary.



Rebecca Martin, Nominating Committee–1yr Term

I have been a member of First Unitarian Church since August 2016. I am a member of the Steering Committee for Friends for Good, am part of the Pastoral Care team, and I volunteer Sunday mornings in the Book Nook.

I live in Dallas and work for a firm that oversees oil and gas assets for third parties.

I am passionate about the work of First Unitarian Church and am grateful to be a part of such an intelligent, spiritual and progressive community that offers so many opportunities to help make our world more just and compassionate.



Mike Uber, Nominating Committee–1yr Term

Mike Uber has been regularly attending services at First Unitarian Church of Dallas since moving to the area ten years ago, and has been a member since 2010. Mike has been active in service with a variety of church activities, including the summer RE and ushering programs.

Mike's professional background is in the hospitality industry (hotels, catering, events), but his current position involves managing three up-and-comers who show a great deal of potential (stay-at-home dad).

This current gig has been his favorite job yet, and allows him the opportunity to remain involved in activities not only at church, but with his children's schools, sports, and extracurricular activities.

Mike and his wife, Liz, were married in the Unitarian church in New London, CT thirteen years ago, and have three children: Bella (10), Sienna (8), and Zachary (3). They live in Prosper, and absolutely love being part of the First Unitarian church community.