



Friends of Milwaukee County Parks

Board of Directors

President

John Machulak, JD

Machulak, Robertson and Sodos, S.C.

John Machulak is an attorney and the founder of Machulak, Robertson & Sodos, S.C., a general practice law firm. He was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, first growing up on the south side and then moving to Wauwatosa. After graduating from at the University of Chicago, receiving his law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School, and marrying Susan Robertson (now deceased) while in school, he and Susan returned to Milwaukee, living first on the northwest side and then moving to the Tippecanoe neighborhood. Three children later, John and Susan moved to the north side and settled on the Milwaukee River. John regularly bikes to his office on the East Side and loves the Oak Leaf trail. John has great childhood memories of the Menomonee River Parkway including swimming in the Menomonee River. He spent many hours with his young children in Wilson Park and Whitnall Park and on the south shore. Later, he and Susan were regular volunteers monitoring the border between Doctors Park and the Schlitz Audubon Center. Recently, his favorite park to spend time in is Kletzsch Park.

Vice President and President-Elect

Steven H. Silverstein, JD

Community Volunteer

Prior to retiring, Steve Silverstein worked for Thomson Reuters, a news and information company, known for its market leading online legal research platform, Westlaw. Among other duties, he trained lawyers, paralegals and law librarians on the use of Westlaw. He has an extensive background in legal publishing and also practiced law. He secured his law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1981. Since retiring in 2019, Steve has taken on a number of volunteer positions. He serves as a board member with The Park People. He is also involved with Legal Action of Wisconsin, working as a volunteer to assist indigent individuals.

Past President

Nadine Weske

Community Volunteer

Nadine Weske earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from UW Milwaukee in 1997. After graduation, she continued working in the insurance industry switching from sales to claims. In 1999, she moved to Madison with her husband accepting a new position and earned the prestigious CPCU insurance designation. After acting as loaned executive to United Way, she returned home to Milwaukee in 2005 to start a family and is now a stay-at-home mother of two. Nadine volunteers at her children's school, is a Girl Scout leader, on the parent advisory board of McMenamin Irish Dance Academy, is a member of Junior League of Milwaukee and a lifetime member of Lake Park Friends. There are so many wonderful parks but Lake Park is her "neighborhood" park where friends can be found, has a fascinating history including being designed by Olmsted plus beautiful views of Lake Michigan.



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Treasurer

Pat Hintz, JD, CPA

Quarles and Brady

Patricia A. Hintz is an attorney with Quarles & Brady, LLP, where she practices in the areas of taxation and not-for-profit organizations. In 2014, Pat was selected as a “Woman in the Law” honoree by the Wisconsin Law Journal. Prior to attending law school from 1985 to 1991, Pat worked as a tax consultant at Deloitte & Touche, LLP, and PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP. She is a certified public accountant, licensed in Wisconsin. Pat received her J.D. from the University of Wisconsin, a M.S. in taxation from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a B.S. in accounting from Marquette University. Since 2000, she has served as the secretary/treasurer of the Milwaukee Bar Association. She previously served as treasurer of Milwaukee Young Lawyers Association, chair and treasurer of the tax section of the State Bar of Wisconsin; board member and treasurer of the Center for Communication, Hearing and Deafness; and a founding member and treasurer of the Milwaukee Chapter of the Executive Women’s Golf Association. Pat’s favorite park is Brown Deer. She has been playing golf since she was 13 and enjoys the challenge of a championship caliber course. Pat knows that Brown Deer is a rare jewel as part of a public golf course system.

Secretary

Anne Stadler-Vaillancourt

Friends of Lincoln Park

Anne Stadler-Vaillancourt went to MATC for the Culinary Program. She was a manager for 26 years at Beans & Barley, a local independent restaurant, store, & deli. Anne currently works for her husband at DNA Painting & Maintenance. As a lifelong Milwaukee County resident, Anne enjoys walking and riding her bike to different parks in the Milwaukee County area. Growing up on the East Side of Milwaukee, she played in Back Bay, Lake, Estabrook and Riverside Parks. When Anne and her husband bought their first home, living near the Milwaukee River, Lincoln Park and the Oak Leaf Trail ended up being an important deciding factor. Anne is a founding member and co-chair of Friends of Lincoln Park. The group creates events in Lincoln Park to remove invasive weeds, pick up litter and partner with community nonprofits to provide resources and fun outdoor activities for all ages to enjoy. Anne is excited to be a part of The Park People and help raise awareness for the needs of our park system.

Marissa Alexander

Community Volunteer

Marissa Alexander is a recent Midwest transplant, originally from Seattle, Washington, with a passion for parks that flourished while living in San Francisco. Her career has been spent working with grassroots organizations to build healthy communities through access to fresh food, beautiful parks and clean air. Currently, Marissa serves as the managing director for a Midwest foundation that supports the movements for women’s and girls’ rights. In her free time, you can find Marissa biking the Oak Leaf Trail or exploring the many beaches of Lake Michigan.



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Luanne Coyne

Ascension Healthcare

Luanne is currently a telecommunications operator with Ascension Healthcare. She has worked in the healthcare industry in various positions and department for over 20 years. She also was the marketing and fundraising coordinator for a Catholic elementary school for 10 years, and has consulted with many groups on their fundraising endeavors. Her “home” Park Friends group is Pulaski Park in Cudahy, where she serves on the board as fundraising consultant. Luanne currently sits on a number of boards in Milwaukee County and on the state level and enjoys being a very active community volunteer. She believes Milwaukee’s greatest treasure is our amazing park system, her favorites being: Grant Park, Sheridan Park, the Domes and Whitnall Park. She and her husband, Jim, enjoy taking in all the wildlife and beauty the parks have to offer.

Traci Gondek

Milwaukee County Human Resources

Traci works for Milwaukee County Human Resources as the LMS training coordinator. She creates instructional design and is the system administrator for the learning management system. She graduated from UW-Milwaukee with a degree in information studies and specializes in creating learning experiences that focus on diversity and inclusion. Her first job with the county was as a seasonal employee at Greenfield Park. She educates people about monarch butterflies, including everything from their life cycle to their yearly migration to Mexico. She loves to teach people the importance of pollinators, pollinator plants and conservation. In her free time, she and her partner frequent Milwaukee County Parks, preferring long trails through Whitnall Park or exploring the seven bridges at Grant Park.

Ken Solis, MD, MA

Community Volunteer

Ken is an emergency room physician who graduated from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and has a master’s in bioethics from the Medical College of Wisconsin. Ken became interested in invasive plant species when he discovered that buckthorn trees, garlic mustard and other invasive plant species were prevalent not only in his small forested yard but also along the street sides and parks themselves. From 1994 to 1995, he surveyed and documented the presence and density of invasive plants in over 40 parks to make the case that they had to be addressed or risk forever losing the native plant community. The Park People learned of his surveys shortly thereafter and began the volunteer Weed-Out program to try to control invasives in various parks. He was also instrumental in promoting the creation of the park system’s natural areas manager position and staff so that these areas would receive the professional attention that they deserved. Ken is also interested in “Big History” (history extending back to the Big Bang) and is most well-known for being a “freestyle” jump rope pioneer/expert who has been on national TV, set two Guinness World Records, did hundreds of shows and wrote instructional books and videos. Ken’s favorite natural areas are Cudahy Preserve and “Canal Woods” of the southernmost Root River Parkway.



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Jenny Vulpas

Community Volunteer

Jenny is a lifelong member of Friends of Estabrook Park and served on the group's board for approximately seven years. She was a member of the Shorewood Parks for a couple of years before being appointed as chairperson, serving in that position until 2021. Jenny is originally from the Chicago area but has lived in Milwaukee County for the last 35 years. She and her husband have three daughters who grew up running through the woods in Estabrook Park and hiking along the Milwaukee River. Professionally, she has been a graphic designer/illustrator for the last 35 years. She is also an oil painter as well and loves painting plein air at many Milwaukee County Parks.

Executive Director

Barry S. Waddell, CPM

Barry retired from a career in law enforcement after 31 years of service. He now continues to serve the community in his role as executive director with The Park People. Barry has BS in behavioral science and law from UW-Madison. He is also a graduate of the FBI National Academy, Northwestern's University School of Police Staff and Command, and UW Madison's- Certified Public Manager Program (CPM). He is on the board of directors for the Boy Scouts of America-Three Harbors Council, a member of the West Allis Lions Club and serves as the President of the Wisconsin Arson Insurance Council. If you are riding your bike on the Hank Aaron or Oak Leaf Trail you will probably bump into Barry and his wife. His favorite Milwaukee County Park is LaFollette Park in West Allis, where he and his wife helped form The Friends of La Follette Park in 2010.