

Restoring Confidence in American Elections

The Carter Center | Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy

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Speaker Biographies

Opening Remarks



Barbara Smith

Barbara Smith oversees the Carter Center's democracy, human rights, conflict resolution, and rule of law programs, which operate projects and observe elections in countries across the globe. Before coming to The Carter Center in September 2020, Smith was principal and founder of the international development consulting firm Mountain Time Development. She also was a senior associate at the Center for Strategic & International Studies, focused on the Human Rights Initiative, conducting field work and research on civil society. Her wide-ranging career also includes assignments at the United States Agency for International Development and with the National Security Council in the White House.

At USAID, Smith held a number of positions, most recently as deputy assistant to the administrator in the Bureau of Policy, Planning, and Learning. She also co-led the team that created the seminal USAID 2013 Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Strategy, which is applied across the approximately 100 countries where USAID works. Other positions she held at USAID included senior policy analyst, deputy coordinator for Middle East Transition Response during the Arab Spring, and senior field advisor for democracy and governance.

Smith served on the National Security Council as a director for Afghanistan and Pakistan affairs and as senior director for governance and law at the Asia Foundation. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, she was a spokesperson for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. In Afghanistan, she was assistant country representative for the Asia Foundation, where she also directed the foundation's efforts to assist Afghanistan in holding its first post-Taliban elections.

Smith earned a bachelor's degree in government from the University of Texas and a master's degree in political science from Texas State University.



Paige Alexander

Paige Alexander joined The Carter Center as chief executive officer in June 2020, succeeding Ambassador (ret.) Mary Ann Peters.

Alexander has had a distinguished global development career, with over two decades of experience spanning the government and nonprofit sectors. She has held senior leadership positions at two regional bureaus of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), covering missions and development programs in 25 countries.

Between 1993 and 2001, Alexander held several roles in USAID's Bureau for Europe and the Newly Independent States Task Force, including deputy assistant administrator, chief of staff, director for the Democracy and Governance Office, deputy director of the Bosnia Task Force, and country desk officer. After leaving for 10 years to work in a leadership role in the nonprofit sector, Alexander returned to USAID in 2011 in the Senate-confirmed position of assistant administrator for Europe and Eurasia; in 2015, she was again confirmed to lead the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Bureau, overseeing 1,000 employees, programs in 12 countries, and more than \$1.4 billion in annual funding.

Between her assignments with USAID, Alexander was senior vice president and European founder/president of IREX (2001-2010), an international civil society, democracy, and education nonprofit organization. From 2017 until her appointment to The Carter Center, she served as executive director of the European Cooperative for Rural Development (EUCORD) in Brussels and Amsterdam, working to bring market-led solutions to marginalized farmers in Africa to sustainably improve the livelihoods of families and communities.

Earlier, Alexander was associate director of Project Liberty at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government (1992-1993) and a consultant to institutions including the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the Open Society Institute in Prague. She has served on many global boards and committees, including the advisory boards for World Learning and IREX. Alexander currently serves on the boards of the Romanian-American Foundation, the World Affairs Council of Atlanta, the ADL Southeast Region, and as a member of several human rights organizations.



John Williams

John Williams is a fellow at the Baker Institute who oversees the institute's Presidential Elections Program. A national award-winning journalist and speechwriter, Williams has been a policy assistant to the Honorable James A. Baker, III, since July 2004. In that role, he has supported Secretary Baker's efforts to find solutions for a wide array of international and domestic challenges, including the Iraq Study Group, the Commission on Federal Election Reform, the National War Powers Commission and the BP U.S. Refineries Independent Safety Review Panel.

He also prepares speeches, op-eds and other written materials for Secretary Baker and is an employee of Baker Botts L.L.P.

Before working for Secretary Baker, Williams had a long career reporting on governmental and political issues, serving as a political columnist and reporter in his prior job with the Houston Chronicle, where his focus was on state and local issues. He received a 1987 Penney-Missouri Journalism Award for a series of articles about a Mississippi investment banking firm that took advantage of small investors and a 2012 Cicero Speechwriting Award for "The Life and Legacy of Ronald Wilson Reagan." A fourth generation Texan, Williams was born and raised in Austin, where he graduated from The University of Texas with bachelor's degrees in zoology and journalism.



David Becker

David Becker is the Executive Director and Founder of the nonpartisan, non-profit Center for Election Innovation & Research, working with election officials of both parties, all around the country, to ensure accessible, secure elections for all eligible voters. A key element of David's work with CEIR is managing the Election Official Legal Defense Network, providing pro bono legal assistance to election officials who are threatened with frivolous criminal prosecution, harassment, or physical violence.

Prior to founding CEIR, David was Director of the elections program at The Pew Charitable Trusts. As the lead for Pew's analysis and advocacy on elections issues, David spearheaded development of the [Electronic Registration Information Center](#), or ERIC, which to date has helped a bipartisan group of thirty states update over 25 million out-of-date voter records, and helped those states register tens of millions of new eligible voters.

Before joining Pew, David served for seven years as a senior trial attorney in the Voting Section of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, overseeing voting rights enforcement in several states, including California and Georgia, and served as lead counsel on major voting

rights litigation, including the case of *Georgia v. Ashcroft*, ultimately decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.

David serves as CBS' election law expert, and his many appearances in the media include *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, CNN, MSNBC, PBS NewsHour, and NPR, and is frequently published on election issues.

David received both his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of California, Berkeley, and was a two-time champion on *Jeopardy!* and a winner on *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*.



David Carroll

David Carroll leads the Carter Center's initiative on developing standards and best practices in international election observation. He has managed or participated in more than 70 Carter Center projects to strengthen democracy and electoral processes around the globe in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Carroll joined The Carter Center in 1991 to serve as the assistant director of the Latin America and Caribbean Program. Since 2003, he has directed the Center's Democracy Program, playing a key role in the Center's work to build consensus on international standards for democratic elections, as rooted in states' obligations in international and regional human rights law.

He received his Ph.D. in international relations from the University of South Carolina, has published articles and book chapters on development and democratization, and has taught at the University of South Carolina, Georgia State University, and Sewanee - the University of the South.

Session 1: Can a Presidential Election Be Stolen?



Natalie Adona

Natalie Adona is the Assistant Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters for Nevada County. She is a Deputy Member of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) and the County Recorders Association of California (CRAC). She currently serves as the Chair of the CACEO Constitution and Bylaws Committee and the Co-Chair of the state Ballot Design Advisory Committee.

Prior to joining the Nevada County Clerk-Recorder's office, she was the Senior Research and Learning Associate for the Elections Program at Democracy Fund, a private philanthropy based in Washington, DC. Natalie's professional interests over the last 15 years center on elections and voting, including public opinion surveys on the topic. She is the co-author of "Understanding the Voter Experience" and the co-author/Principal Investigator of "Stewards of Democracy." Natalie began her career as a poll worker trainer in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2008 and 2009 and as a student researcher at the Election Administration Research Center at Cal. She has also worked for several elections and voting rights organizations, including MAPLight.org, Project Vote, and the Fair Elections Center.

Natalie holds a B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley, a J.D. from the American University Washington College of Law and a M.P.A. from AU's School of Public Affairs.



Major Garrett

Major Garrett was named CBS News' chief Washington correspondent in December 2018. As chief Washington correspondent, Garrett reports for all CBS News broadcasts and platforms. Garrett is also the host of ["The Takeout,"](#) a weekly multi-platform interview show on politics, policy and pop culture available on CBSN, top radio stations across the country, and all podcast platforms.

From 2012 until 2018, Garrett served as the Network's chief White House correspondent. While covering the White House for CBS News, Garrett reported extensively on presidential actions to confront ISIS, Ebola, nuclear negotiations with Iran and U.S.-European efforts to confront Russia in the standoff over Ukraine. On domestic issues, Garrett reported on the Obama administration's handling of the health care website rollout, numerous policy failures at the Veterans Administration and the president's ongoing efforts in 2014 to address racial strife and criminal justice reform. He has traveled with the president to Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

In 2015-2016, Garrett spent 16 months on the road covering the Republican presidential campaign, including every GOP debate, both major party conventions and every day of the general election. During the transition, Garrett broke numerous cabinet appointments, including Jeff Sessions as attorney general. Garrett has covered every major domestic and foreign policy story of the Trump administration.

Before joining CBS News as chief White House correspondent, Garrett was a fixture during CBS News' coverage of Campaign 2012 through a partnership with the National Journal, where he was chief White House correspondent. He co-hosted the network's coverage of the 2011 South Carolina Republican Primary debate alongside "CBS Evening News" anchor and managing editor Scott Pelley and offered analysis for every 2012 general election presidential debate.

Prior to National Journal, Garrett was the Chief White House correspondent for Fox News. During his eight years at Fox, Garrett also covered two presidential elections, Congress, the war in Iraq and other major stories. Before joining Fox News, Garrett was a White House correspondent for CNN during the administrations of George W. Bush and Bill Clinton. Previously, he was a senior editor and congressional correspondent for U.S. News and World Report, where he reported on Congress and the impeachment of President Clinton. He was a congressional reporter for The Washington Times (1990-95) and the newspaper's deputy national editor (1995-97). Earlier in his career, Garrett was a reporter for The Houston Post, Las Vegas Review-Journal and the Amarillo Globe-News.

Garrett is the author of four books: "Common Cents," with former Rep. Tim Penny (D-Minnesota) Little, Brown Publisher, 1995; "The 15 Biggest Lies in Politics," St. Martin's 1999; "The Enduring Revolution," Crown Forum 2005 and and "Mr. Trump's Wild Ride," St. Martin's, 2018.

Garrett graduated in 1984 from the University of Missouri with degrees in journalism and political science. A native of San Diego, California, he lives in Washington, D.C.



Matt Masterson

Matt Masterson is the Director of Information Integrity at Microsoft. Matt is a former non-resident policy fellow with the Stanford Internet Observatory. He served as Senior Cybersecurity Advisor at the Department of Homeland Security, where he focused on election security issues. He previously served as a Commissioner at the Election Assistance Commission from December 2014 until March 2018, including serving as the Commission's Chairman in 2017-2018.

Prior to that, he held staff positions with the Ohio Secretary of State's office, where he oversaw voting-system certification efforts and helped develop an online voter registration system. Matt holds a law degree from the University of Dayton School of Law and BS and BA degrees from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

As part of his Stanford Internet Observatory fellowship, Matt compiled and published an oral history of the 2020 election, "[The Guardians of Democracy](#)."



Al Schmidt

Al Schmidt joined the Committee of Seventy as President & CEO in January 2022 after serving ten years as City Commissioner of Philadelphia. The Committee of Seventy is a nonprofit and nonpartisan good government organization focused on strengthening democracy and combating political corruption. As City Commissioner, Al was one of three members on the bipartisan Board of Elections where he served as Vice Chairman. Since first being elected in November 2011, Al worked to modernize election operations, improve efficiency, and bring greater integrity to the election process. Al is an advocate of open data initiatives and releasing previously unavailable election data to the public. He has also produced a number of election-related reports, including investigations that have exposed vulnerabilities in the election process and voting irregularities.

Al is a former senior analyst at the non-partisan U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) and served as a policy analyst for the Presidential Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States. Originally from Pittsburgh, PA, Al holds a Ph.D. in history from Brandeis University and a B.A. in history from Allegheny College.

Session 2: Should We Be Worried About Our Elections?



Robert Bauer

Bob Bauer is Professor of Practice and Distinguished Scholar in Residence at the New York University School of Law and Co-Director of NYU Law's Legislative and Regulatory Process Clinic. Bauer served as White House Counsel to President Obama from 2009 to 2011. In 2013, the President named him to be Co-Chair of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration. In 2021, President Biden named him to be co-chair of the Presidential Commission on the Supreme Court of the United States.

Bob was General Counsel to Obama for America, the President's campaign organization, in 2008 and 2012. Bob has also served as co-counsel to the New Hampshire State Senate in the trial of Chief Justice David A. Brock (2000) and counsel to the Democratic Leader in the trial of President William Jefferson Clinton (1999).

Bob is co-author with Jack Goldsmith of *After Trump: Reconstructing the Presidency* (2020), books on federal campaign finance and numerous articles on law and politics for legal periodicals. He has co-authored numerous bipartisan reports on policy and legal reform, including "The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential

Commission on Election Administration” (Presidential Commission on Election Administration, 2014); “The State of Campaign Finance in the United States” (Bipartisan Policy Center, 2018); and “Democratizing the Debates” (Annenberg Working Group on Presidential Campaign Debate Reform, 2015). He is a Contributing Editor of Lawfare and has published opinion pieces on constitutional and political law issues in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Atlantic*, among other publications.



Benjamin L. Ginsberg

Ben Ginsberg, a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at Stanford’s Hoover Institution and a Lecturer at the Stanford Law School, is a nationally known elections lawyer with 38 years’ experience representing participants in the political process. His clients have included political parties, political campaigns, candidates, members of Congress and state legislatures, governors, corporations, trade associations, PACs, vendors, donors and individuals. He represented four of the last six Republican Presidential nominees.

His representations ranged across a variety of election law and regulatory issues, including those involving voting issues and election day operations, election recounts and contests, redistricting, federal and state campaign finance laws, government investigations, ethics and gifts rules, pay-to-play laws, election administration and communications law. Ben was appointed by President Barak Obama to serve as co-chair of the bipartisan Presidential Commission on Election Administration which produced a much-lauded report in 2014 on best practices and recommendations for state and local officials to make U.S. elections run better. He serves as co-chair of the bipartisan Election Officials Legal Defense Network.

Ben, currently a CNN contributor, appears frequently on television as an on-air commentator about politics and the law and has written numerous op-eds. He has also been a Fellow at Harvard University’s Institute of Politics and an adjunct professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center.

He served as national counsel to the Bush-Cheney presidential campaigns in the 2004 and 2000 election cycles and played a central role in the 2000 Florida recount. In 2012 and 2008, he served as national counsel to the Romney for President campaign. He also has represented the campaigns and leadership PACs of numerous members of the Senate and House as well as the national party committees, Governors and state officials. He has wide experience on the state legislative level from directing Republican redistricting efforts nationwide following the 1990 Census and being actively engaged in the 2001-2002 and 2011-2012 rounds of redistricting. He was a partner at Jones Day from 2014 to 2020 and at Patton Boggs for 23 years before that.

Prior to entering law school, Ben spent five years as a newspaper reporter at The Boston Globe, Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, The Berkshire Eagle (Massachusetts), and The Riverside Press-Enterprise (California).

He and his wife, Jo Anne, live in Washington, D.C. and have two children and four grandchildren.



Monica Pearson

Monica Pearson has led a distinguished career in journalism at WSB-TV in Atlanta, Georgia, as the anchor of Channel 2 Action News at five, six and eleven o'clock. Pearson has received over twenty-eight Emmy Awards as well as other awards for her reporting and her "Closeups" segments. She is also a humanitarian who assists in charitable, non-profit, and community causes.

Born on October 20, 1947, in Louisville, Kentucky, Pearson is the daughter of Hattie Wallace Jones Edmondson and the late Maurice Jones. Like her mother, Pearson attended Catholic schools during her formative and high school years. Her mother, who worked her way through school, attended St. Mary's Academy in New Orleans, Louisiana, a prestigious boarding school for black females. Her mother was also one of the first black women to work at the Louisville Post Office.

Pearson knew at an early age that she would pursue a career in communications. One of her part time jobs in high school included working at the local black owned radio station where she did voice over work and read prayers on the station's religious programs. She also sang country music as a teenager on a television show called Hayloft Hoedown. Pearson pursued and obtained her B.S. degree in English from the University of Louisville. She also participated in the Summer Program for Minority Groups at the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University in New York City. Before joining WSB-TV Channel 2, Pearson worked in public relations for Brown Forman Distiller; as an anchor and reporter for WHAS-TV in Louisville, Kentucky; and as a reporter for the Louisville Times. Pearson began her career as the first African American and the first female to anchor a daily evening newscast in Atlanta at WSB-TV in 1975.

Pearson is a recipient of numerous awards: the Women's Sports Journalism Award, Citizen Broadcaster of the Year Award, Broadcaster of the Year Award, Women of Achievement Award, and the Southern Regional Emmy Awards. She also won first place for excellence in journalism/documentary from the Atlanta Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists for her documentary, Hot Flash: The Truth About Menopause.

Pearson is a mother and resides in Atlanta with her mother and husband.

Session 3: Legislation, Audits and Action in the States



Karen Brinson Bell

Karen Brinson Bell became executive director of the North Carolina State Board of Elections on June 1, 2019.

As the state's chief elections official, she leads about 95 full-time employees at the state agency, which is charged with administering elections and overseeing the 100 county boards of elections, as well as campaign finance compliance. North Carolina has more than 7 million registered voters and is the 9th most populous state in the country.

In her time as Executive Director, Karen has overseen more than 10 elections, including the 2020 Presidential election, which is the largest election in North Carolina's history and was held during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other significant elections during her tenure include two special congressional elections impacted by Hurricane Dorian (September 2019), North Carolina's first Super Tuesday primary on March 3, 2020, and a Congressional second primary during the COVID-19 pandemic. These elections have been coordinated efforts with N.C. Department of Public Safety, N.C. Department of Information Technology, N.C. National Guard, and other federal, state, and local partners. In the fall of 2019, these agencies jointly launched the #YourVoteCountsNC campaign to inform voters about election security and other efforts to safeguard elections.

Karen has spent most of her career in elections administration. From March 2011 to March 2015, she served as director for the Transylvania County (N.C.) Board of Elections. Prior to that, she worked for five years as a district elections technician for the State Board of Elections, where she supported 12 county boards in western N.C. in almost all facets of elections.

Before her appointment as executive director, Karen was deputy director of the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center. In that role, she assisted elections administrators on a national level, providing expert testimony and educational tools for conducting elections using that method.



Julietta Henry

Julietta Henry is the Director of the Milwaukee County Election Commission. As the Director of Elections for the largest county in the State of Wisconsin, she is responsible for managing all elections within Milwaukee County by effectively communicating with 19 Municipal Clerks to ensure that the process and implementation of each election is fair, equitable and efficient, including reconciliation of certification of election results. She spearheaded a county-wide computer conversion project that saved taxpayers millions of dollars through her innovations. She has successfully directed recounts for

the 2016 and 2020 Presidential elections, amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to serving at the county, Julietta was the Executive Director of Elections for the City of Milwaukee, the largest municipality in the state. With over 30 years of government service experience at the state, county, and municipal levels, she is a recognized expert on elections and has been asked to advise and troubleshoot election issues throughout her career. Recently, she received the 2021 Milwaukee Business Journal Women of Influence Award in the category of Public Policy and was recognized by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors for her leadership, invaluable service, and election knowledge. She is also a member of the EOLDN (Election Official Legal Defense Network) Advisory Committee. Ms. Henry, who earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Administration from Cardinal Stritch University, is a native of Chicago, Illinois. She is actively involved in her community as a charter member of Cream City (WI) Chapter, The Links, Incorporated for over 32 years; a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated; and a committed member of Christ the King Baptist Church for over 25 years. Guided by the principle of compassion, she believes every person can make a difference in the world through service to others.



Mark P. Jones

Mark P. Jones, Ph.D., is the fellow in political science at the Baker Institute, the Joseph D. Jamail Chair in Latin American Studies and a professor in the Department of Political Science at Rice University.

Jones also serves as the faculty director of Rice’s Master of Global Affairs program. His research focuses on the effect of electoral laws and other political institutions on governance, representation and voting. He has received substantial financial support for this research, including grants from the National Science Foundation. His research has been published in journals such as the American Journal of Political Science, Electoral Studies and the Journal of Politics, as well as in edited volumes published by Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press and Penn State University Press, among others. He is a frequent contributor to Texas media outlets, and his research on the Texas Legislature has been widely cited in the media as well as by numerous political campaigns.

Jones regularly advises U.S. government institutions on economic and political affairs in Argentina and has conducted research on public policy issues in Latin America and Texas for numerous international, national and local organizations, including the Inter-American Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the U.S. Department of Defense, the Texas Department of Agriculture and the city of Houston. He is a frequent commentator in local, state, national and international media on government, politics and public policy. He is currently working on two principal research agendas, one that examines the

impact of political institutions on politics and public policy in Latin America, and the other that analyzes the evolution of partisan politics in Texas over the past 50 years. Jones received his doctorate from the University of Michigan and his bachelor's degree from Tulane University.



Gabriel Sterling

Gabriel Sterling is the Chief Operating Officer for the Georgia Secretary of State, and he is also serving Georgians as the interim Deputy Secretary of State and interim director of the Professional Licensing Division of the office.

He gained visibility during the 2020 election cycle as the Statewide Voting System Implementation Manager when he oversaw the largest rollout of voting equipment in U.S. history with Georgia's new, secure, paper-ballot system – on time and under budget. In that role, he led the response to the COVID pandemic by moving quickly to build a high capacity absentee ballot system, securing protective equipment and sanitizer for the counties that run elections. After the November election, he frequently briefed the media on the details of the largest hand recount in the United States and a second recount. He gained worldwide attention when he gave an impassioned defense of election workers and called on President Trump, and others in positions of responsibility, to stop spreading disinformation surrounding the November General Election.

Before coming to the Secretary of State's office, his involvement with elections was from the other side of the table in that he had a long career as a political consultant with several campaigns on the state and federal level, going back to his teenage years here in Georgia. He also worked as a business and operations consultant to firms as small as \$1 million and up to \$100 million in sales.

He worked on Capitol Hill for Georgia Congressman Charlie Norwood (GA-10) from 1995-96. He served in elective office as a member of the Sandy Springs City Council from 2011-2018. He was an integral part of developing the Sandy Springs City Center, passing "The Next 10" a land use plan to protect and enhance neighborhoods, and played a key role in bringing the Mercedes Benz USA headquarters to Sandy Springs, Georgia. He is still involved in his hometown community recently serving as the Chairman of the Sandy Springs Charter Commission and as a board member for the Sandy Springs Conservancy, an environmental charity focused on preserving greenspace and enhancing recreation opportunities. He is a graduate of the University of Georgia. In his personal time he enjoys yardwork, cooking, and especially engaging in making great BBQ.