



2 Richland County leaders selected for Furman University diversity leaders initiative

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Two Richland County civic leaders have been tapped to represent the Midlands in a leadership fellowship hosted by Furman University. Richland County Councilman Kelvin Washington and Richland Two School Board member Amelia McKie will serve as fellows in the Riley Institute at Furman's Diversity Leaders Initiative.



Richland Two school board member Amelia McKie is one of two leaders picked to be a Riley Fellow (photo provided).

"[Diversity Leaders Initiative] and the Riley Fellows have matured into a potent force to help move South Carolina forward," said Don Gordon, executive director of the Riley Institute. "The members of this class will add considerably to the conversations and lasting partnerships that form among Riley fellows and it is the strength of these bonds that truly produces progress across the state."

Washington and McKie are among a group of 1,400 leaders across the state who have participated in the five-month program that offers case studies and real-world experience to develop strategies to encourage diversity and improve relations among various groups in their own communities.

The groups create a final project that uses the knowledge and skills formed in the classes. Past projects include creating safe summers for underserved children in Charleston; partnering with high school students in Summerton to break down racial barriers and foster service leadership; and bringing bikes, mentor programs and adventure to at-risk youth in the Upstate.

The Riley Institute was established 10 years ago and since has invited individuals from the business, education, non-profit and government sectors to attend. Those who have attended have developed 160 projects across the state.

"[Diversity Leaders Initiative] is unique among South Carolina's leadership programs. In addition to the opportunity to develop new relationships and take part in positive action in their communities, participants gain deep knowledge of how to effectively manage and lead increasingly diverse workers, clients and constituents," said Juan Johnson, Diversity Leaders Initiative facilitator, independent

consultant and former Coca-Cola vice president.

Washington and McKie have exhibited leadership abilities within their own communities.

Washington has served the Lower Richland community for the past 20 years, including serving as a former volunteer fire chief at the Hopkins Fire Station in addition to holding memberships on the Richland County Transportation Study Commission, Richland County Recreation Commission Bond and Park Design Review Committee and Columbia-Sumter Empowerment Zone. He also served as vice chairman of The Renaissance Foundation.

"I'm very excited to participate with such a diverse professionally accomplished class," Washington said. "I look forward to learning differing perspectives from the participants of the program, which will help me in framing policies which impact a growing diverse constituency."

McKie earned her spot on the Richland Two School Board as an active parent and community volunteer. She has served on several parent/teacher/student organizations and School Improvement Councils. She is also a court-appointed Special Advocate for Richland County, vice chairwoman of the S.C. School Improvement Council Board of Trustees and a member of the State Treasurer's Office Diversity Cabinet.

"We are very honored and excited for Board Member Amelia McKie to represent our board and school district in this distinguished program that delves into important issues impacting our state," said Richland Two Board of Trustees Chairman Chip Jackson said.



Richland County Councilman Kelvin Washington will represent the Midlands as a Riley Fellow (photo provided).

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