

Spinal Cord Injury Ontario 2020-21 Board of Directors



MARK ABRAHAM, Treasurer

Mark has served on SCI Ontario's board as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee since 2016 and has been contributing to the financial oversight of the organization as a committee member since 2011.

Mark is the Director of Operations and Administration at Blueprint-ADE. A senior organizational leader, he has successfully guided both for-profit and not-for-profit businesses through phases of growth, change, and maturity. He brings a deep level of business and financial acumen to Spinal Cord Injury Ontario, with over 15 years of management, consulting, and board-level experience across a range of sectors including healthcare, education, policy research, and technology.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Mathematics from the University of Waterloo and a Master of Business Administration with a specialization in strategic management from York University's Schulich School of Business. Mark is a Certified Corporate Financial Planning and Analysis Professional and active member of the Association of Finance Professionals.



KENT BASSETT-SPIERS

Kent serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation, a position he has held since 1999, and was appointed as the Executive Director of the Canadian Spinal Research Organization in 2014.

Kent has extensive experience in developing strategic linkages and partnerships, organizational restructuring and working with the Ministry of Health on policy and system reforms.

Kent is a Certified Health Care Executive with the Canadian College of Health Services Executives. He completed his undergraduate work at Schulich School of Business, York University and graduate work at the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine in the School of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation.

Through his work with the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation Kent has been involved in a number of partnership activities with the Rick Hansen Foundation and the Rick Hansen Institute including the SCI Solutions Network, Canadian Neurotrauma Research Partnership and more recently with the Best Practices Implementation Project.



CRAIG BROWN

Craig was called to the Bar in 1980. He has practiced with Thomson, Rogers for over 30 years and is certified by the Law Society as a specialist in Civil Litigation. Craig is listed in "Best Lawyers in Canada" and is one of Lexpert's "Leading Civil Litigation Practitioners".

Since 1990, Craig has restricted his practice to acting for plaintiffs in serious personal injury claims, class actions and medical malpractice claims. He has over 50 reported Court and Tribunal decisions and has tried numerous jury actions over the past three decades. Craig is an enthusiastic skier and sailor. He volunteers with the Disabled Sailing Association of Ontario and the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing.



HEATHER FLETT

Heather Flett is the Advanced Practice Leader for Spinal Cord Rehabilitation at University Health Network in Toronto. She has 20 years of experience in the field of spinal cord rehabilitation working as a Physical Therapist for 8 years prior to her current role. In her Advanced Practice Leader role, Heather supports clinical research integration and leads projects to advance best practices in SCI rehabilitation. Heather has been an active member of the Ontario Solutions Alliance since 2010. She is a Lecturer in the Department of Physical Therapy at University of

Toronto and completed an MSc in the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science focusing on walking outcomes following incomplete spinal cord injury.



DANA FRANCOZ

Dana Francoz has had a long career in media representing some of North America's most iconic brands to Canadian advertisers and marketers, across every media platform – print, digital, broadcast, radio and Out of Home. Throughout her career, Dana has also been an active volunteer and board member. Most recently, Dana was an active member of the board of the Clarendon Foundation, seeing its eventual

integration into PACE, which serves people with disabilities, allowing them to live independently. Dana grew up with an amazing mother who, although she was in a wheelchair, gave her a real-life example of just how much can be accomplished, no matter what your physical limitations. Her mother, Marjorie Francoz, has been a peer supporter of SCI Ontario for close to 40 years.



GARY FROUDE

Gary Froude is a Muskoka transplant arriving a short 20 years ago coming surreptitiously from an environmental project in Costa Rica and a musical project in Africa. He became managing director of the Muskoka Lakes Music Festival which evolved into an international Chautauqua with Gary at the helm and chaired the national Arts Network for Children and Youth for several years and continues as a

director in assisting that organization with re-structuring its ArtsSmarts partners across the country. Gary was one of the first presidents of a newly formed Rotary Club in Muskoka Lakes, is a multiple Paul Harris Fellow, and has been Secretary of a leading-edge, affordable home ownership project since its inception. He chaired the Board of Muskoka Tourism for a number of years and led Muskoka in the development of a new provincial tourism structure and chaired the Board of the newly formed Explorers' Edge In 2012 Gary was honoured to receive the Muskoka Citizen of the Year award.

In 2013 he was paralyzed by an unknown virus and was introduced to the field of health care as he gained insight into the challenges of complex continuing care in the province and in Muskoka. Gary has been bringing the patient voice to the table as a member of the Muskoka Area Health System Transformation Executive Committee, the Critical Care Council of Ontario and as co-chair of the MAHST Community Engagement Workstream. Gary and his partner Gayle are active members of their community, striving for positive change and valuing quality of life.



OMAR HA- REDEYE

Omar Ha-Redeye is a lawyer who practices civil litigation, employment and human rights law, technology, and health law. He holds a JD from Western, and an LLM in Health Law from Osgoode Hall. Prior to becoming a lawyer, he worked in clinical healthcare, and maintains his American designation in nuclear medicine technology.

Omar joined the Board in 2018 and served on the SCIO Young Professionals Board prior to that since 2015. He is a member of the Advocacy Committee and is actively involved in SCIO's government relations and legislative strategies.



SARAH HICKS, Vice-Chair

Sarah Hicks is a communications professional with more than 20 years' experience. For the last decade she has been working with nonprofit corporations to strengthen their communications and stakeholder engagement capacity – most recently with the Ontario College of Family Physicians and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. Sarah started her career in public relations working with pharmaceutical clients in Toronto, the U.S. and U.K., and then joined GlaxoSmithKline Canada. Sarah speaks French and German and has a BA in Social and Political History from Victoria College, University of Toronto, and a Public Relations Post Graduate Certificate from Humber College.



BARBARA IBBITSON

Barbara Ibbitson is currently a Partner and the Clinical Director of Wright Rehab, a company that, for 18 years, has been providing Social Work and Rehabilitation Therapy to individuals, couples and families adjusting to the aftermath of a traumatic event or injury. Prior to merging with Wright Rehab, Barbara owned and operated Barbara Ibbitson and Associates. Barbara is an active member of The Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers and the Ontario Association of Social Workers. Barbara has a Bachelor's of Social Work degree from the University of Western Ontario and received her Master's of Social Work degree from the University of Toronto.

Barbara has a history of volunteer experience in many community programs and embraces opportunities to give back and be part of something that makes an impact. Barbara has lived with the effects of permanent spinal cord damage for the past 15 years. Her personal lived experience, in addition to her training and clinical background assist her in fostering resiliency and self-compassion in those she works with.



JOANNE MacDONALD

Joanne MacDonald started in the news business 38 years ago, first in radio, then transitioning to television as a story producer with Canada AM in 1983, then on to field producing for CTV National News in 1989. From there, Joanne headed to Ottawa, where she became the Bureau Manager then Deputy Ottawa Bureau Chief for CTV News. She continued to ascend the ranks, ultimately to the role of Senior Vice-President, CTV News where she oversaw day-to-day operations and strategic vision for CP24 and CTV News Toronto.

Joanne has helped shape some of Canada's best journalists. Her leadership, news sense, and commitment to the highest news standards have contributed greatly to cementing CTV News as the powerhouse it is today. She actively contributes to the professional development of young journalists and is on the Advisory Council for her alma mater at the Ryerson School of Journalism.



ALEX MCKINNON

Alex McKinnon, CEBS is the Research Director for the United Steelworkers Union – Canadian National Office. He has been on staff with the Union for 32 year. In 1991, he became the first rank and file member to go into the Unions National Office Research Department and in 2013 became the first rank and file member to be promoted to the Research Director.

Mr. McKinnon serves as a pension trustee on the multi-employer Steelworkers Pension Plan, as well as Chair of the Canadian Energy and Related Industries Pension Plan(CERi). And is the Vice-Chair and past Chair and Vice-Chair of the University of Toronto Pension Plan; Secretary Treasurer of MEBCO and Chair of the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) Multi-Employer Pension Committee. He also serves as a Labour Co-Chair of the Ontario University Pension Project (UPP)

Alex is a graduate of Sir Wilfred Laurier University with a Bachelors' in Economics, as well as holding the CEBS designation and a variety of certifications in pension fund governance. He also volunteers as a spinal cord peer support and in 2018 was awarded the Peer Support Volunteer of the Year



BOB NIGOL, Chair

Bob is the Managing Partner of EPS Settlements Group of Canada.

Bob holds a Master's degree in Policy Studies, specifically in the area of Insurance Law and Finance. He is an accomplished lecturer and published author. Among his philanthropic interests, in addition to Spinal Cord Injury Ontario and Spinal Cord Injury British Columbia, Bob has been an active contributor and consultant to and fundraiser for the Ontario Brain Injury Association and Hamilton Health Sciences. With regard to the latter, the "Making the Links" Charity Golf event that he founded two years ago has raised close to \$150K for the hospital and the related charities (which includes SCI Ontario).



ANDREW OLIVIER

Andrew Olivier has a track record of taking on tough challenges and turning them into incredible successes. By his very nature, Andrew is a leader. He has owned his own business, working as a professional consultant, helping small and medium-sized organizations in areas ranging from financial advice and software efficiencies to accessibility planning concentrating on the standards set out by the AODA

Andrew has also worked for over 15 years as an administrator with his family-owned hotel and tavern where he directs the operational activities in a pub/tavern ranging from price reviews, staffing, and promotion and marketing strategies.

Over the past four years, Andrew has worked as a Mortgage Agent with Dominion Lending Centres. The freedom of this position has allowed him to diversify and expand into many areas of business from pizzerias to funeral services.

Publicly, Andrew is known as the Past Board Chair for ICAN (Independence Centre and Network), an organization that helps people with physical disabilities live on their own. ICAN has over 100 employees and has been serving clients for over 35 years.

As a community advocate, Andrew has been vocal on a number of issues such as speaking publicly at public hearings in favour of Laurentian University's School of Architecture. He also sits on the City of Greater Sudbury's Accessibility Advisory Committee. His community work and leadership has been recognized with a 2012 Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and as a Top 40 Under 40 recipient.

Andrew is fluently bilingual and holds an MBA from Laurentian University.



EUGENE WAI

Dr. Wai obtained his medical degree and completed his residency in orthopaedic surgery at the University of Toronto. During this time, he obtained a Masters of Science in Community Health (Clinical Epidemiology) and then went on to complete 2 additional fellowships in spinal surgery. Currently, Dr. Wai is the Head of the University of Ottawa Combined Adult Spinal Surgery program with over 20 years of experience as a spinal surgeon. Along with front line clinical experience with spinal cord injured patients, Dr. Wai recently led the implementation of evidence based national standards and practices into the Hospital's Acute Spinal Cord Injury Program.

Dr. Wai is an Associate Professor in the Department of Surgery, with a cross appointment in the School Epidemiology and Public Health and has authored over 100 publications related to patient centered outcomes assessment, advanced analytics, and critical evaluation of evidence. He is a member of the Ottawa Hospital Research Ethics Board. Most recently, Dr. Wai served as an expert panelist for Provincial Evidenced Based Initiatives including Quality Based Programming and Health Quality Ontario.



THADUS WEISS

On June 11, 1980, my life changed forever after breaking my neck diving. After two years of extensive rehab and the care from a lot of devoted nurses and doctors I was able to start a new life in a new community with new goals. I began to advocate on behalf of the physically disabled. Over the last 40 years I have seen a lot of changes that have improved the quality of life for those living with a disability. As a director on

the boards of non-profit organizations I have been able to work closely with those who have greatly influenced the changes we enjoy today through out Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario. Many of these changes have made their way into Municipal and Provincial legislation. I am presently working to improve accessible housing options for the disabled community in NWO. I am dedicated and proud of the work we are doing but there is still much to be done.



SHAUN WESTLAKE, Secretary Team Leader, TC Transcontinental Printing

For the last five years Shaun has been a SCI Ontario board member, after being a chapter member in Grey Bruce since the early 90's. Twenty five years ago, I sustained a spinal cord injury from a diving accident at which time he became a client of CPA Ontario. A resident of Owen Sound, since 1983, allows him to be a passionate advocate for those with spinal cord injuries living in rural Ontario. With an education

in computer science, Shaun is employed as a Team Leader at TC Transcontinental Printing in Owen Sound. When not busy working full-time, he is an avid amateur photographer, a fan of OHL hockey and enjoys spending time with friends and family.