

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Peter Collins, Chair



Peter Collins is Co-Founder and Managing Principal of Forge Capital Partners, LLC ("Forge"). Mr. Collins directs all private equity activities for Forge and is the CEO of Forge's real estate private equity fund business. Over the last 20 years, Mr. Collins has overseen more than \$1.5 billion of real estate and corporate transactions including over eight million square feet of commercial and residential real estate development/acquisitions/dispositions.

Peter is a former Trustee of the Florida State University ("FSU") Foundation and recently completed a 2-year term as Chair of the FSU Endowment. Peter is a past Executive Committee member of the FSU College of Business Board of Governors. In 2010, Peter was appointed by the Governor and Cabinet and confirmed by the Florida Senate to the \$200 billion State of Florida Pension Investment Advisory Council and recently ended a term as its Chair. In 2019, Peter was elected to the Board of the Florida Council of 100. Peter is a member of the Urban Land Institute and the International Council of Shopping Centers.

An Eagle Scout, Mr. Collins is the past Southern Region, Area 4 (State of Florida) President and member of the Southern Region Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America ("BSA"). Peter is currently President of the Greater Tampa Bay Area Council. Peter is a past member of the BSA National Foundation Board of Trustees and former Chair of the BSA National Foundation's Investment Committee. Additionally, Peter is the recipient of the BSA's prestigious Silver Beaver, Silver Antelope and National Outstanding Eagle Scout awards.

Mr. Collins earned his Bachelor of Science in Finance as well as his MBA from Florida State University. Peter and his wife, Jennifer, live in Tampa, Florida and have four children. Mr. Collins is an avid golfer, hunter, and private pilot.

Updated October 2023

Maximo Alvarez



Maximo Alvarez was born in Havana, Cuba in 1948, the son of Spanish immigrants. In 1961 at the age of 13, he came to America as part of Operation “Pedro Pan.” He stayed in a children’s welfare home with Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh who was also the Catholic Priest responsible for the Operation in which over 14,000 children under the age of eighteen were given refuge from Communist Cuba. Maximo attended La Salle High School and was a part of the school’s very first graduating class in 1965. He then attended Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina from 1965 to 1967. In 1967 he transferred to Florida State University in Tallahassee, where he received his bachelor’s degree in 1969 and his Master’s degree in 1970.

Soon after graduation, Maximo began his career in the oil industry with Cities Services Oil Company (CITGO Petroleum) where he worked from 1971-1973. In 1973 Maximo switched to Mobil Oil Corporation working as a marketing representative in Tampa, Florida. In 1976, Maximo left the corporate life and decided on his first business venture as an independent entrepreneur opening Sunshine Citrus Corp. Sunshine Citrus enjoyed a successful 11 year run as a citrus gift packing and shipping enterprise. In 1987, when the expansion of I-595 caused Maximo to re-locate his business, he had the opportunity to purchase four underperforming gas stations from Southland Corp, (7-Eleven).

These four gas stations were the cornerstone of Sunshine Gasoline Distributors, Inc . From barely two hundred thousand gallons per month, Sunshine Gasoline grew to over half a billion gallons sold per year. As of today, Sunshine operates over 300 locations and supplies another 250 branded retail facilities (Chevron, BP, Shell, Citgo, Marathon and Exxon/Mobil). Sunshine Gasoline is one of the largest independent branded suppliers for all of their represented brands in the South Eastern United States. In 2016, CSP (Convenience Store and Fuel News) named Sunshine Gasoline as #31 in their “Top 101 Convenience Stores” list, which ranks the largest convenience store chains by store count in the United States and Canada.

Because of his humble beginnings, Maximo has always believed in helping the community as well as the industry in which he has spent most of his career. Maximo has been extremely involved in the Florida Petroleum Marketers Association and was elected Chairman of the Board in 2000 and inducted into its Hall of Fame in 2005. He has worked closely with the Petroleum Council as a tireless advocate for the industry and currently serves on the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Florida Consumer Council.

He has also received awards for his work in Hope for Vision and the Transplant Foundation. In 2006, Maximo became a trustee of Pedro Pan Group, a non-profit organization for immigrant children. In 2010, he was inducted into the Belmont Abbey Wall of Fame and later received a doctor’s degree honoris causa in 2015. He also serves as a trustee for The First Tee, a junior program that sets out to positively impact the lives of young people through the game of golf. Sunshine has been a constant sponsor of Miami Children’s Hospital and the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Maximo’s biggest dream was recently fulfilled when Centro Hispano Catolico opened its door to over 300 children. The Centro Hispano Catolico is a day care center for under privileged children created in honor of Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh. Maximo is a strong believer in the philosophy that every new generation must be better than the last. This philosophy is carried out by his legacy of generosity that began when he was thirteen years old. Ever grateful of the country that allowed him to be where he is today and proud of his success, Maximo states; “If I were to give back everything I have today, it would only be 10% of what was given to me”.

Maximo has been married to his wife, Esther, for over forty years and has three children, Sandra, Maximo Ricardo and Eduardo. His two oldest children are following in his footsteps, working at Sunshine Gasoline and his youngest child, Eduardo began his career as a mechanical engineer after his graduation from the University of Miami. Maximo and Esther are also the proud grandparents of Samuel, Eric, Lucas and Maximo Jose.

Updated October 2023

Kathryn Ballard



Kathryn Ballard has a long history of charitable and community work, including service on the Board of Directors of the Florida Special Olympics, the Florida State University College of Health and Human Sciences Board and the Board of Trustees of the Maclay School of Tallahassee. She also served as Chairman of Maclay School Capital Campaign.

A lifelong FSU fan, Mrs. Ballard has been honored for Outstanding Achievement by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation and the Tallahassee/Leon County Historic Preservation Commission for her efforts to restore Tallahassee's historic Lively House.

Mrs. Ballard graduated from Florida State University in 1987 with a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of Human Sciences.

Bridgett Birmingham



Bridgett Birmingham joined the faculty of Florida State University in 2004 and currently serves as the Diversity and Inclusion Librarian for the University Libraries. Her research areas are primarily in design strategies for libraries including accessibility and usability of library spaces, services, and staff. She also collaborates with colleagues across her field of academic libraries to improve the leadership pipeline for academic libraries and to develop best practices for shared governance and service for research libraries. She has been a full University Librarian since and was the FSU Fred Standley Librarian of the Year in 2016.

Mrs. Birmingham is active in leadership and service to the University. She has been a faculty senator since 2012, served on the university's Enrollment Management Committee for ten years, the Strategic Planning Committee from 2015 to present, the Honors Program Policy Committee for five years, the Faculty Senate Steering Committee since 2014, and performs regular and ongoing service for her department. Beyond FSU, she has served on many Association of College and Research Libraries committees (ACRL), is frequently on conference planning committees, and remains active in mentoring and outreach to new and mid-career librarians.

Bridgett Birmingham is a graduate of the Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University, (B.A., English Literature, 2002), and Florida State University, (M.S., Library Science, 2004).

Vivian de las Cuevas-Diaz



Vivian de las Cuevas-Diaz, an FSU alumna, was appointed to the Florida State University Board of Trustees by Gov. Ron DeSantis June 10, 2021.

An attorney from Miami, de las Cuevas-Diaz is a partner at the Holland & Knight law firm and serves as the firmwide deputy section leader of the Real Estate Section, assisting in managing the firm's nationwide real estate practice. She received her bachelor's degree from Florida State University and her law degree from Tulane University.

de las Cuevas-Diaz also serves on the board of the Coral Gables Community Foundation and is a past president and foundation board member of the Cuban American Bar Association. She also is a board member on the Miami-Dade Beacon Council, a public-private partnership, which is the official economic development organization for Miami-Dade County.

Jorge Gonzalez



Jorge Gonzalez is president and chief executive officer of The St. Joe Company, a Florida-based diversified real estate development and operating company with residential, commercial, and hospitality segments (NYSE: JOE). The company has developed over a dozen master planned residential communities in addition to developing, owning, and operating a broad portfolio of real estate assets including apartments, commercial shopping centers, office and industrial parks, hotels, restaurants, golf courses, marinas, beach clubs, and a private resort membership club.

Jorge holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Florida State University and was the commencement speaker at the FSU 2018 summer graduation ceremonies. He serves or has served on various community, civic, and business-related organizations including the Florida Chamber Board of Directors, Enterprise Florida Board of Directors, Bay Economic Development Alliance (former Chairman), Northwest Florida Manufacturer's Council, Gulf Coast Regional Medical Center, FSU Panama City Development Board (former President), The St. Joe Community Foundation Board of Trustees, and Panama City Beach Chamber Board of Directors. Florida Trend has named Jorge as one of Florida's Most Influential Business Leaders. Jorge and the company are strong believers in supporting education and in 2019, the company vacated its corporate headquarters to allow for the establishment of the Magnet Innovation Center, the first Science Technology and Engineering (STEAM) public high school in Walton County, which was awarded the 2020 Florida Commissioner of Education's Business Recognition Award for a commitment to bringing positive change and implementing bold and innovative approaches to improve the academic performance of students in Florida.

Updated October 2023

Jorge is married to Pamela, who is also a proud FSU graduate, and they have one son, Jake.

Jackson “Jack” Hitchcock



Jackson “Jack” Hitchcock is a junior studying international affairs and interdisciplinary social sciences at Florida State University. He has previously held internship positions with the Florida Department of Education, a State of Florida Representative, and the City of Pensacola.

Hitchcock is the current FSU Student Body President, representing about 45,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Prior to his term as Student Body President, Hitchcock served as the Cabinet Director and Secretary of External Affairs for Student Government, Beta Theta Pi executive board, Chair of the Student Foundation, and a member of the prestigious Garnet and Gold Key Honorary.

Hitchcock enjoys running, hiking, and watching Florida State football. After receiving his bachelor's degree, Hitchcock plans to attend law school or pursue a career in public policy.

Justin Roth



Justin Roth, a Miami native, is a partner at LINK Public Affairs, where he leads the Washington, D.C. office and provides strategic advice and counsel to clients on public affairs matters.

A 1997 FSU graduate who double-majored in history and political science, Roth is a seasoned political and policy professional with expertise in legislative strategies, critical domestic policy matters and foreign affairs. He has more than two decades of experience in government affairs and lobbying for multiple trade organizations. Most recently, Roth served as chief of staff for three prominent U.S. Congressmen and a U.S. Senator, including former Sen. Martha McSally and former Congressman Ron DeSantis.

Throughout his tenure, Roth has leveraged his experience in public policy and communications to advise representatives and shepherd major legislative victories. Working closely with local and national media, he has been involved in every aspect of press and communications. He has overseen virtually every facet of the legislative and policy process with expertise in the areas of financial services and foreign affairs. During his time as chief of staff, he also oversaw the political operations of each member he served.

Updated October 2023

Roth utilized his legislative and policy background to advance the interests of major trade associations such as the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC) and the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America. Acting as their senior lobbyist, he served as a leading government affairs professional, running federal lobbying efforts, providing strategic planning and representing members on all federal legislative and regulatory issues.

Roth earned a Master of Science in History of International Relations from The London School of Economics. He splits his time between Northern Virginia and New Smyrna Beach, Florida, with his wife, Jill, and their two sons, Brayden and Beckett.

Jim W. Henderson



Jim Henderson is Chairman, CEO, and Founder of AssuredPartners, a national insurance brokerage firm. Prior to establishing AssuredPartners in March of 2011, Jim Henderson brought his insurance expertise to Brown & Brown when he joined the company as its CFO in 1985. Jim served in a variety of roles including President and Chief Operating Officer as well as Vice Chairman. In 25 years at Brown & Brown and its predecessor company, Jim executed 300 plus acquisitions, grew revenues from \$7 million to \$1 billion. Earlier, Jim joined Ormond Reinsurance Group as its CFO and Treasurer in 1975. He began his career in Audit and Consulting for the insurance and healthcare practice at Ernst & Whinney (now EY). Jim is a graduate of Florida State University with a BSBA in Accounting and Economics.

Jim's civic and professional services include: Chairman of the Board for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Hallmark Insurance Company Board, Ironshore Insurance Company Board, Citizens Property Insurance Corporation (Florida), Council of Insurance Agents and Brokers Board, Stetson University Business School Board, Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Advisory Board Chairman, Alaqua Country Club Board, Ronald McDonald Homes of Central Florida Board, Kiwanis Club, Boy Scouts of America, and United Way.

Jim and his wife, Carole, reside in Longwood, Florida, and have three (3) children and eight (8) grandchildren that all reside in Florida.

Updated October 2023

Deborah Sargeant



Deborah Sargeant of Gulf Stream, is a Florida native who spent three years at Florida State University before finishing her bachelor's degree in accounting at California State University Long Beach. She is a former member of the Governor's Mansion Commission and volunteers her time with the Bethesda Hospital Foundation, Cason United Methodist Church and the Delray Beach Historical Society.

Bob Sasser



Bob Sasser is the Executive Chairman of Dollar Tree, North America's leading operator of discount variety stores.

Bob is a graduate of Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing. He was inducted into the College of Business Hall of Fame in 2009. Bob serves on the FSU Board of Trustees and he formerly served on the Foundation Board of Trustees. He is a lifetime member of the FSU Alumni association, a member of Seminole Boosters, and a member of the FSU Presidents Club.

Married for more than 40 years to Pamela Sunderland Sasser, they have 2 children, Robert and Jennifer, and 3 grandchildren, Caroline, Catherine, and Harper. Active in civic and community affairs, Bob serves as a Trustee for the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges and The Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia.

John Thiel



John Thiel, an FSU alumnus and former Merrill Lynch executive, is a dynamic board director, trusted business advisor and visionary financial services CEO.

During his 28-year career with Merrill Lynch, Thiel served as head of U.S. Global Wealth Management, steering the iconic financial firm through a period of unprecedented change, including its acquisition by Bank of America and overseeing a \$15 billion business with 23,000 employees.

Thiel currently serves on the boards of Decker Communications and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority Investor Education Foundation, which promotes initiatives focused on improving the financial literacy of underserved populations.

Thiel, who earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from FSU, was inducted into the College of Business Alumni Hall of Fame after many years of service in a variety of capacities. A longtime advocate for curing cancer, he serves on the board of the V Foundation for Cancer Research and chairs the board's Don't Ever Give Up support organization.

In July 2018, Thiel joined My Next Season as a partner and senior adviser. His work involves strategy consulting and business development for the organization, which specializes in executive retirement and career transitions. He also advises and mentors not-for-profit CEOs in developing strategy and proactively responding to change.

Thiel is a frequent speaker and has presented at a variety of venues and made multiple appearances on FOX Business Network and CNBC. He was Florida State's spring commencement speaker in both 2014 and 2019 and served as a Charles A. Bruning Distinguished Speaker at the College of Business.

Drew Weatherford



Drew Weatherford is a Founding Partner of Weatherford Capital, a private investment firm focused on growth equity in rapidly growing technology and technology-enabled businesses with a business-to-business (B2B) or business-to-government (B2G) focus, as well as those operating in highly regulated industries. Drew founded Weatherford Capital with his two brothers, Will and Sam. With offices in Tampa and Dallas, Weatherford Capital seeks to make value-added and value-aligned investments while working closely with an expansive network of founders, advisors, and executives who are committed to helping management teams scale and lead their businesses. Weatherford Capital focuses on growing companies with leaders who share the firm's dedication to excellence, integrity, faith, family, and community.

Updated October 2023

Prior to Weatherford Capital, Drew co-founded Strategos Group, a leading business consultancy and advocacy firm in Florida. Drew serves on the boards of several companies and organizations including Summit Broadband, Florida Venture Forum, Accelerator 111, and Family First. Additionally, Drew was appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis to the board of directors of the Florida Opportunity Fund, Inc. Drew also has served on the boards of the Florida Medical Clinic Foundation of Caring, Take Stock in Children of Florida, onbikes, Space Florida, and Enterprise Florida.

Drew led the Florida State University football team for three years as starting quarterback for the Seminoles. Convinced as an 8-year old that he would some day play for the legendary coach, Drew spent his time at FSU under the tutelage of late Coach Bobby Bowden.

Drew earned an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and is a graduate of Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance and Real Estate from the College of Business. Drew resides in Tampa, Florida with his wife Morgan, daughters Kennedy and Emerson, and son Truett.