



THE DRAKE GROUP

Advancing Positive Legislative
Change In College Athletics



2026-27 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Allen L. Sack
Director Emeritus

ALLEN SACK, Ph.D., Co-founder of The Drake Group, was made a permanent voting member of the Board of Directors by unanimous vote of the Board in 2021, in acknowledgement of his 21 consecutive years of service as a leader of The Drake Group. Dr. Sack earned his Ph.D. in sociology from Pennsylvania State University and a B.A. from the University of Notre Dame where he played on the 1966 NCAA National Championship football team. Dr. Sack is a Professor Emeritus in the college of business at the University of New Haven where he taught for forty-one years. He also served as the Director of the federally funded Center for Athletes Rights and Education (CARE) in the early 1980s. CARE was co-sponsored by the National Football Players Association and the National Conference of Black Lawyers. Dr. Sack is the author of *Counterfeit Amateurs: An Athlete's Journey Through the Sixties to the Age of Academic Capitalism* and co-author of *College Athletes for Hire: The Evolution and Legacy of the NCAA's Amateur Myth*.



Kassandra Ramsey
President
Executive Committee

KASSANDRA RAMSEY, Esq., is the founder of The Law Office of Kassandra Ramsey, P.L.L.C., assisting entrepreneurs, athletes, entertainers, and social media influencers with creating, operating, and protecting their businesses. Ramsey is the Sports Law Chair for the District of Columbia Bar's Arts, Media, Entertainment, and Sports Law Community and an advocate for college athletes' rights. She has written extensively on the name, image, and likeness (NIL) issue in college sports and has authored two e-books to assist current and prospective college athletes to advance their emerging NIL opportunities. She is passionate about educating athletes and their families on the ways college athletes may use these new opportunities to advance themselves for life after sports. Formerly, Ramsey served as the Compliance Assistant for the University of Maryland, College Park Athletics Department. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Virginia State University and her J.D. from Howard University School of Law.



Keith Adams
President-Elect

KEITH ADAMS, Ed.D., President and Founder of the CKA SAVE Project, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the academic and professional development of student-athletes. With over 30 years of experience as an educator, coach, and administrator, he is also the host and executive producer of the *Odd Coaches Podcast*, where he amplifies essential conversations regarding athletic policy and student success. Dr. Adams is a passionate proponent of Project-Based Learning, focusing his current research on academic and athletic motivation, Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) impacts, the transfer portal, and the potential of athlete unionization. A frequent national speaker, Dr. Adams is the 2026 recipient of the Allen Sack National Symposium Exceptional Service Award and continues to lead the CKA Virtual Internship Program (VIP) program, helping student-athletes translate their athletic discipline into sustainable, lifelong professional success.



Wendy Pierpont
Secretary
Executive Committee

WENDY PIERPONT, Ed.D., is a Learning Specialist at University of Oregon's Services for Student Athletes. Her professional focus is on academically underprepared students across all sports, working most intensely with freshmen who take courses in composition, education, and social sciences. Pierpont also serves as the Access Specialist in the unit and supports athletes who need accommodations and testing to get connected with accessible education on campus. She has served on University-wide and athletic department committees on diversity and inclusion and is part of the Behavioral Management Health Team, an athletic department group that works to support the mental health and psycho-social development of athletes. Pierpont received an MA in Education (Intersection of Sport and Education) and teaching credential from U.C. Berkeley, has taught middle school Special Education and Language Arts, and coached cross country for three years before returning to Berkeley for her doctorate. Pierpont attended Boston University on a swimming scholarship and graduated with a BA in History.



Connee Zotos
Treasurer
Executive Committee

CONNIE ZOTOS, Ph.D., is a Senior Associate at the consulting firm Sports Management Resources. Most recently, she served as the Associate Dean of Academic and Faculty Affairs and Clinical Associate Professor of Sports Management in the School of Professional Studies at New York University. Zotos is the former Director of Athletics at Drew University, where she was responsible for the administration of 18 varsity sports programs during her 14-year tenure. Before serving at Drew, Dr. Zotos was the Women's Athletics Director at William Smith College and Philadelphia University and a faculty member at the University of Texas at Austin. She was a head college coach for 12 seasons and a three-time Conference Coach of the Year. She is a prolific writer and speaker in the areas of coaches' employment and compensation systems, creating tiered athletic program models, coach evaluation, and Title IX. She is a recipient of a NACWAA regional and national Athletic Administrator of the Year award and a Women Leaders in College Sports Nike Lifetime Achievement Award. She received a Bachelor's degree from Glassboro State College, a Master's from the University of Colorado, and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the Univ. of Texas at Austin.



Sandy Thatcher
Member-at-Large
Executive Committee

SANFORD THATCHER. After graduating from Princeton in 1965 (summa cum laude in philosophy), Sandy Thatcher attended graduate school for two years and then embarked on a career in scholarly publishing for the next 50 years, mostly at two university presses, Princeton for 22 years and Penn State for 20 years as its director. For the Association of American University Presses (AAUP) he served two three-year terms on its board and then as president in 2007-08. He received the AAUP's highest service award in 1999. He is the author of 100 articles and the *History of Princeton Swimming and Diving*, a book that grew out of his work as secretary of the Friends of Princeton Swimming and Diving from 1970 to 1989. He earned his varsity letter as a swimmer at Princeton and since 1972 has been a member of US Masters Swimming, competing in over 200 meets. His current team, Lone Star Masters, won the national championship in 2022.



Brian DiNapoli
Member-at-Large

BRIAN DiNAPOLI, founder of NIL Insight, a web-based resource that helps high school and college athletes and their families navigate NIL opportunities and connect to resources on mental health, academics, financial literacy, player safety, substance abuse prevention, and life decisions that can shape their futures. A former college athlete and current community football coach, DiNapoli understands that athletes carry far more than what is visible on game day. They balance academics, family, mental health, financial stress, peer expectations, and the hope that sports can create opportunities for a better future. That lived experience fuels his passion for protecting student-athletes and ensuring their education, health, and long-term well-being come first. He is the volunteer coordinator of The Drake Group Dropped Sports Database, maintaining information on colleges and universities that have dropped athletic programs since the approval of *House v. NCAA*, to assist in better understanding how revenue sharing, financial pressures, and changes in college athletics are affecting schools, student-athletes, and non-revenue sports programs.



Donna Grove
Member-at-Large

DONNA C. GROVE, Ed.D., Assistant Professor of Sport Management, York College of Pennsylvania, Coordinator, Sport Industry Practicum Program. With over twenty years of experience in multiple roles including Associate Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator, Deputy Title IX Coordinator, and coach at two and four-year institutions, Dr. Grove offers a broad understanding of intercollegiate athletics, academic program development, and gender equity advocacy. Formerly, she served as President of the Maryland Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (MACDA), Assistant Commissioner of the Maryland JUCO Conference and has been a member of both the Education and Professional Development and Foundation Fund Committees for Women Leaders in Sport. She earned her Doctorate in Sport Management with a leadership specialization from the United States Sports Academy, focusing her dissertation on women's career advancement in sports.



**Marian Melcher
Hanson**
Member-at-Large

MARIAN MELCHER HANSON, is a global sports marketing/media veteran with executive experience at The Equitable, Subaru of America, the Travelers, and ESPN. Overseeing sponsorship programs in the 80's and 90's she invested in women's sports at the US Open (tennis), the US Ski and Snowboard teams (which became a Harvard Business School case study), The NFL, the Masters, and America's Cup sailing, among others. At ESPN, she oversaw the rehaul of their special events organization and then was tasked with bringing new audiences to the network as the VP of Content Strategy. Her strategies paid off as ESPN Original Entertainment delivered more female viewers than Lifetime Network in identical time slots. In 2010 she founded Bardolf, a brand, marketing, and business development consultancy. Bardolf's practice centers on the intersections of technology, sport, medicine, philanthropy, and the environment. Her love of sport has been a throughline in her life and career. A three-season athlete in HS and college tennis player she still competes in 18+ USTA leagues and USTF tri's in addition to skiing, and hiking. She received a BA from Middlebury College.



David Hughes
Member-at-Large

DAVID C. HUGHES, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sport and Leadership at Gordon College. In 2023, his book chapter “Black Men, STEM, and Erasing the Digital Divide: The Need for Black Male Targeted eSports Initiatives” was published in the book *Diversity and Inclusion in the eSports Industry*. In 2022, Dr. Hughes was named a leader in the Metaverse by U.S. Black Engineer Magazine for the work with his Give Black App. Formerly, he served as faculty member at Georgetown University and Hampton University. While at Hampton, he secured a \$340,000 technology grant to start the first eSports initiative at an HBCU. David has been a pre-doctoral fellow at the University of Pennsylvania, a Scientia Foundation Fellow at Rice University, and a Social Justice Memorial Foundation Fellow. He is a graduate of Morehouse College and Prairie View A&M, a member of 100 Black Men and the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.



Jennifer Jackson
Member-at-Large

JENNIFER JACKSON, J.D., Academic Advisor, University of Oregon. Over the last decade-plus, Jackson has worked with a variety of sports and currently advises football and softball Duck athletes. Jennifer’s professional interests include current legal issues around NIL, Title IX, the NCAA, and the future of college sports. Before Oregon, Jennifer attended the University of Alabama Law School and practiced law in Alabama for several years. A graduate of the University of Kansas and a member of their women’s basketball team, she remains a faithful Jayhawks fan. She is a member of The Drake Group Education Fund Working Group (TDGEF), bringing her daily firsthand experience and knowledge of the impact of the changing landscape of college athletics to this academic think tank’s consideration of critical issues in college sports. Jackson also served as a co-author of the TDGEF research report, *Improving Academic Outcomes in NCAA Division I Revenue Sports and HBCU Limited Resource Athletic Programs*.



Aaron Miller
Member-at-Large

AARON MILLER, Ph.D., is an educator, author, podcaster, leadership coach, and cultural consultant. He is also a Lecturer in the Department of Kinesiology at California State University, East Bay, an Associate Adjunct Faculty, Department of Kinesiology, St. Mary’s College of California, and creator/host of the podcast, *The Power of Sports*. Miller has authored *Discourses of Discipline: An Anthropology of Corporal Punishment in Japan’s Schools and Sports* and *Buying In: Big-time Women’s College Basketball and the Future of College Sports*. He is the author of numerous op-eds, essays, and journal articles and book chapters about education, sports, culture, power, violence, and social justice. He has been a Visiting Scholar at Stanford University and a Visiting Professor at Waseda University. Miller received his B.A. from the University of California Los Angeles and M.Sc. and Ph.D. from Oxford University.



B. David Ridpath
Member-at-Large

B. DAVID RIDPATH, Ed.D., is a Professor of Sports Business at Ohio University in the College of Business. Dr. Ridpath has several years of practical experience in the sports industry and teaches classes in several relevant areas with a focus on Governance, Ethics, Leadership and Intercollegiate Athletics. His primary research areas include intercollegiate athletics administration, governance, and rules compliance with an emphasis on college athlete academic achievement and graduation rates. This includes the ethics and components of the NCAA legislative, enforcement, and governance process and the intersection of educationally-based sport development and delivery in the US with other developmental programs throughout the world. Dr. Ridpath is the author of *Tainted Glory: Marshal University, the NCAA, and One Man's Fight for Justice* and *Alternative Models of Sport Development in America: Solutions to a Crisis in Education and Public Health*. An accomplished scholar, he has over 70 national and international refereed presentations and 30 peer reviewed and edited academic articles in print. Ridpath received the B.A. in Speech Communication from Colorado State University, M.S.A in Sports Administration and Facility Management from Ohio University, and Ed.D. from West Virginia University.



Bruce Smith
Member-at-Large

BRUCE SMITH, Ph.D., is Director of Empowerment Strategies and CEO of the ACES Group. He has worked in K-12, higher education and intercollegiate athletics for more than two decades as a teacher, professor, administrator, and coach. As a higher education administrator, his work focused on student life, athletics, and equity and justice at both small private liberal arts colleges and flagship state institutions in California, Arizona, Colorado, and Oregon. Smith specializes in managing comprehensive student support, mentoring and supervising staff, creating connections between curriculum and co-curriculum, and developing equity and justice institutional strategies. As a professor, his work focuses on African American life and culture; the sociology of education, sport studies, and American studies with an emphasis on developing engaging, student-centered, identity-conscious pedagogy. He earned his BA in American Civilization from Brown University, M.S. in Education from the University of Southern, and Ph.D. in Education from the University of California, Berkeley. Smith also serves as Secretary and Board member for The Drake Group Education fund.



Tammi Gaw, Chair
The Drake Group
Education Fund
Ex-Officio Member

TAMMI GAW, Founder and Executive Director of Advantage Rule, a consulting group focused on athlete health and safety, with an emphasis on amateur athletes' rights. As one of only a handful of professionals licensed as both an attorney and an athletic trainer, her career has included in-house counsel positions, non-profit management and board participation, and C-suite level work with integrated planning for large and medium scale sporting events. Ms. Gaw's expertise extends to the business of college sports, including name, image, and likeness (NIL) reform, Title IX, and medical welfare for athletes of all levels. Through Advantage Rule, she combines her extensive experience in sports medicine, business, and law with her passion for advocacy. She is an international speaker on issues around sports business, law, medicine, and social justice and has been featured in a variety of news outlets, podcasts, panels, and publications. She is a published author and continues to write in both fiction and non-fiction genres. Additionally, she was privileged to address the UK Parliament in 2009.