



2026

**Board Leadership Certificate Program
Class Bio Slides**



Michael Bennie

NETYIELD

Owner & CEO



Board Expertise

I help boards of established organizations modernize legacy operating models by combining technical fluency, operational insight, and financial discipline with a long-term stewardship mindset.

Board Experience

- **Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST):** *Technical Committee Member | 2024 – current*
- **MIT Corporation Joint Advisory Committee on Institute-Wide Affairs (CJAC):** *Committee Member | 2009 – 2010*

NFI Connection

I'm driven by my experience working with hundreds of diverse seafood companies over the past decade to support growth while addressing emerging technical opportunities and regulatory challenges through an industry best-practice lens.



Eric S. Davis



Board Experience

- ***Texas Commercial Oyster Mariculture Advisory Board***
Appointed: November 13th, 2024 - present
- ***Barbers Hill ISD School Board, Position 6: 2018 – present***
- ***Barbers Hill Education Foundation: President, 2022-2023*** (Nations largest valued at over \$250 million)
- ***National Fisheries Institute Future Leaders Class of 2025***

Expertise

- ***As a board member I would bring a balanced perspective that reflects both the realities of restaurant operators and the complexities of seafood sourcing and distribution. I am committed to supporting NFI's mission through informed governance, advocacy and industry collaboration that strengthens the long term sustainability, credibility and profitability of the seafood sector.***

“ A real leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen.” Douglas MacArthur



Patrice Flanagan

Seafood Industry Advisor | Board & Growth Strategy



Norwegian Seafood - Advisor



Anchr, Advisor



- Board Value Proposition:

Cross-functional seafood industry perspective, combining supply chain, commercial, and innovation experience with a governance-minded approach to strategic decision-making and responsible growth.

- Board/Governance Experience:

Atlantic Sapphire - Board Member (2019 – 2023)

Riverwood Ladies Golf Association - Board Vice President (2024 –Present)

National Fisheries Institute (NFI) -Salmon Committee

- Personal Connection/Passion:

My connection to NFI began early in my career with Slade Gorton and has shaped my belief in the importance of shared standards, responsible growth, and embracing the diversity of seafood. I value the role NFI plays in fostering collaboration, community, and long-term industry leadership.

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.” - John F. Kennedy

Jessica Gray

VP, Business Development | Cherrystone Aqua-Farms



- Jessica brings expertise in foodservice distribution, market strategy, and revenue growth alongside leadership experience working with executive teams, sales leadership, and business resources teams. An enthusiastic professional, she focuses on strategic planning, performance oversight, and growth initiatives across complex supply-chain environments.
- With a career spanning the full seafood value chain from production to distribution, Jessica has a firsthand appreciation for the role NFI plays in strengthening the industry, advancing responsible practices, and ensuring a resilient future for farms, fisheries, producers, and the communities they support.
- **Board Experience:**
 - National Fisheries Institute | ‘26- ‘29
 - Emerging Leaders Board, WHRO – Public Media | ‘20- ‘21



“I define a leader as anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes, and who has the courage to develop that potential” – Brene Brown



Gustavo Lara



Global Managing Director
Seafood



Board Experience

- **Multi X Salmon:** *Board member, Chair of Sustainability Committee | 2022 – today*
- **Seafood Nutrition Partnership:** *Board member, Co-Chair | 2022 – today*

Value Proposition

I help boards challenge and clarify the mission, focus on the capabilities that drive long-term growth, and bring hands-on commercial judgment with a practical investor’s eye—ensuring disciplined choices, well-judged investments, and the industry and public-sector relationships needed for strong execution.

Personal Connection/Passion

I believe in seafood’s power to nourish, and I’m passionate about helping make blue foods an everyday choice for Americans—because few levers advance public health and global sustainability as effectively.

"Wrong decisions are part of life. Being able to make them work anyway is one of the abilities of those who are successful."

– **Warren Buffett**

"The most common error of a smart engineer is to optimize something that should not exist."

– **Elon Musk**

Patty Mann



Vice President, Sales & Marketing | Piemonte Foods
Seafood Industry Executive | Board Leadership Aspirant

- Lifelong seafood professional with hands-on experience from day boats and long-line commercial fishing to executive leadership.
- Former President of Beeline Seafoods at age 23, leading fresh fish distribution operations in Florida.
- Extensive experience in seafood purchasing, business development, and go-to-market strategy for wild and farmed species.
- Trusted partner to major retail and foodservice customers, educating teams on species attributes and driving category growth.
- Global industry exposure through fish farms, fisheries, and processing plants, translating complexity into commercial success.
- Known for strengthening brand reputation, elevating quality narratives, and building durable, relationship-driven growth.
- Current focus on Steelhead trout and mussels as VP of Sales & Marketing at Piemonte Foods.

“Earn your success based on service to others, not at the expense of others.” — H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” — Mahatma Gandhi

Jamie Marshall



Board Experience

- National Fisheries Institute _2023-present
- Chairman of the Better Seafood Board_2015 – 2022
- Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute _Foodservice/Retail Marketing Committee_2015 – 2020
- Light Foundation _ Board Member_2013 – 2025
- Gloucester Little League Baseball _ President & Coach_2009 - 2024

I have been around the NFI for over 2 decades participating in the 2nd ever future leaders class. I have respect and admiration for this organization and the role they play for the seafood industry.

I add value by asking quality questions, holding leadership accountable, and leveraging experience and relationships to help the organization grow with confidence.

“Leadership requires the courage to make decisions with incomplete information.”--Unknown



Corey Peet

Vice President of
Sustainability

Board Value Proposition

- 25 years of working on the challenges and realities of seafood sustainability
- Extensive experience in leading and participating in multi-stakeholder conversations
- Experience in working directly in countries of origin as well as all the way up to end buyers
- Net work connections in all of the major seafood production countries and well as to US chefs and the culinary community

Board Experience

- **Raincoast Conservation Foundation: 2012 – present**
- **World Wildlife Fund Aquaculture Dialogues (Bivalves, Salmon, Shrimp, Pangasius, Tilapia): 2007 – 2012**
- **Various Technical Committees**

“The invention of the lightbulb was not a result of the continuous improvement of candles”

“Sustainability is not about your thing, it’s about everything”





Brandon F. Phillips, MBA



Board Value Proposition

I enable boards to drive growth and market access by aligning leaders and stakeholders around strategic agendas and the highest-impact priorities as market conditions evolve. I translate external complexity into decisions and action that unlock opportunity, contain risk, and strengthen enterprise performance.

Board & Governance Experience

- **Industry Product Boards (Trade Association Councils)** — Executive leader for multiple product-focused boards & executive committees | **2014–Present**
- **Global Shrimp Council** — Board of Directors | **2023–Present**
- **Kingdom Fellowship AME Church** — Board of Trustees | **2021–Present**

Personal Connection / Passion

I'm motivated by solving complex, fast-moving challenges that shape market access and reputation—convening the right stakeholders around the priorities that matter most and driving decisions to action. I thrive when conditions are dynamic and the board needs clarity, prioritization, and execution discipline.

Todd Raasch



Managing Director NA
& Head of Global Sales



VP North American
Sales

Trademark Training
program “Getting to
Thank you”



Board Experience:

National Fisheries Institute: *Better Seafood Board | 2017– 2018*

Northwest Fisheries – Hiring Committee for executive Director | 2012

School Sports Board – President | 2005– 2006

Church Board: Trustee | 2003– 2004

All of us know, **”There is no I in team”** – we as team players have been taught this mantra from a very early age. However, there is an **“I in LEADERSHIP”** – which should stand for;

Inform – Be the best and most timely communicator with clear and concise words.

Instruct – Coach and mentor with care - almost like they are your kids.

Inspire – Give all around you a reason to believe and reason to follow.

Leadership Rules to live by: – **Todd Raasch**

MEGHAN RUSSELL

Seafood Ecosystem Strategist

A strategic, market-driven leader who aligns enterprise vision, go-to-market strategy, and responsible sourcing to drive growth while strengthening supply-chain credibility and certification integrity.



Founder — Pearl Oceans Consulting (2017), Pearl Oceans Publishing (2023), and The Pearl Foundation (2025) *Industry strategy, storytelling, and women's health & advocacy initiatives*

Committee Member

- Food Marketing Institute
- National Restaurant Association
- Sea Sirens
- In Her Wisdom Group



Mother Nature is inherently dynamic, and the unexpected is part of the world we work in. Guided by the belief that all ships rise with the tides, NFI's mission resonates with me as the industry moves through a period of meaningful transition toward a more resilient, sun-soaked and salty future.

“Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you.”

— Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Michael Siplin



Strategic food safety and quality executive with deep expertise in regulatory compliance, risk management. I bring a strong governance mindset that strengthens brand protection, regulatory readiness, and long-term organizational resilience.

Board Experience

- Spur Christian Academy: *Board Member* | 2023 – Present
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I am passionate about protecting public health while enabling sustainable growth in the seafood industry. NFI's commitment to responsible sourcing, regulatory integrity, and industry leadership aligns with my career focus on building strong food safety cultures and transparent, resilient supply chains

“You will never change your life until you change something you do daily”- John Maxwell





Board Experience

Watkins Christian Foundation

Chair, Next Generation Committee (2023–Present)

- Provide leadership oversight for Next Generation initiatives
- Support governance, philanthropy strategy, and leadership development
- Partner with senior board members on long-term mission alignment

Watkins Associated Industries

Board of Directors Participation

- Participate in quarterly Board of Directors meetings
- Private equity organization owning and operating 9 subsidiaries
- Contribute operational insight across portfolio companies

Personal Connection NFI:

My commitment to food safety and sustainability is rooted in hands-on operational responsible leadership, where protecting consumers, reducing waste, and building supply chains are daily priorities.

Ciera Womack
Vice President, Protein CBU
cwomack@rich.com



Board Certification Impact Statement:

I will bring a deep expertise in end-to-end marketing strategy, from creation to consumption, combined with a passion for understanding consumer behavior and designing value that resonates. My strength lies in crafting compelling brand narratives and building connections that foster loyalty, enabling organizations to drive growth, differentiation, and long-term impact.



Board/Committee Experience

- **United Way:** Fundraising Chair | 2013
- **YMCA:** Marketing Char | 2014
- **Relay for Life:** Marketing & PR Charis | 2014, 2015, Board Chair | 2016
- **Local Parks & Recreation Little League Coach:** Soccer & T-Ball | 2021, 2022, 2023
- **Safe Harbor:** Fundraising Committee, Champions for Children | 2024
- **NFI:** Continuing Education Chair | 2024 to Present
- **Golden Isles Dance Foundation:** Marketing Chair | 2025 to present
- **College Place Methodist Church:** Children's Program Committee | 2018 to Present, Rebranding Committee | 2025, 2026

Simon Sinek

"Leadership is not about being in charge. Leadership is about taking care of those in your charge."

Eleanor Roosevelt

"A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader, a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves."



**INFINITE POSSIBILITIES.
ONE FAMILY.**



Program Instructors

Derek Figueroa



Fig & Co.
President



North Star Strategic,
Founder & Principal



In Pursuit of Purpose
Aspiring Writer

Board Experience

- **Project Angel Heart:** *Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Co-Chair Fundraising, CEO Successor Hiring Committee | 2012 – 2024*
- **National Fisheries Institute:** *Chair, Executive Committee, Investment Committee | 2010 – 2022*
- **Colorado Restaurant Association & Colorado Restaurant Foundation:** *Chair, Executive Committee, HostPAC Chair, CEO Successor Hiring Committee | 2009 – 2019*
- **Seafood Industry Research Fund:** *Board Member, Investment Committee, Recognition Committee Chair | 2012 – 2019*
- **Sea Pact:** *Co-Founder, Board of Advisors | 2013 – 2016*
- **American Culinary Federation:** *Board Member | 2010 – 2012*

"The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born—that there is a genetic factor to leadership. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born." – **Warren Bennis**

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth." – **Muhammad Ali**

"You can't knock on opportunity's door and not be ready." – **Bruno Mars**





Judy Dashiell

COO, NFI



Board Experience

- **Ohio University Scripps College Dean's Advisory Committee: *Member at Large/2014-2025***
- **Ohio University Scripps College Dean's Advisory Committee: *Member Emeritus/ 2026=present***
- **Rolling Stone Culture Council: *Member/ 2025 – present***

"Hope is not a strategy" – James Cameron