

**The NGO Committee on Ageing/NY**  
**Executive Committee**  
**Slate of Nominees 2025-2027**



**William (Bill) Smith, Ph.D**  
***Chair***

William T. Smith, Ph.D. is President/Chief Executive Officer of Aging in America, Inc. Aging in America is the parent corporation of AIA Supportive Services, Morningside at Home, and Morningside House Nursing Home. All are non-profit, non-sectarian agencies.

Dr. Smith has been in the field of social work since 1971 with the last forty years dedicated to the field of gerontology. He has been recognized locally and nationally as an expert on gerontological issues. He is completing his first term as Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing/ NY

Dr. Smith, whose doctorate in Social Work with a concentration in Gerontology is from Fordham University, has also earned a Master's Degree in Social Work in Administration/Case Work from Hunter College and a Bachelor of Science in Family and Child Welfare Services from the University of Wisconsin.

He is a member of the National Association of Social Workers, the Gerontological Society of America, the American College of Health Care Administrators, and the Academy of Certified Social Workers. He served as a member of the Federal Advisory Committee on the Future of VA Long Term Care. He was a member of the Board of Directors and Past Chair of LeadingAge (formerly the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging) in Washington, D.C. He is a former Chair of LeadingAgeNY (formerly the New York Association of Homes and Services for the Aging). Dr. Smith is a former member of the Board of Directors of the International Association of Homes and Services for the Aging and serves as liaison to the United Nations. He was a delegate to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging. He received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor 2006 for his dedication to community service, building bridges between ethnic, racial and religious groups, sharing personal and professional gifts with the local, national or international community and contributing distinguished service to humanity, in particular for his work on behalf of older persons. Dr. Smith is a licensed nursing home administrator, a certified social worker, and a certified retirement housing professional.

Since 2014, he has been planning the redirection of Aging in America, Inc.'s future, utilizing the proceeds of the sale while developing new lines of products and services and cultivating new streams of revenue. Dr. Smith has served two terms as a member at large of the NGO Committee on Ageing and chairs the Development Subcommittee.



**Christopher Hanway**  
***Vice Chair***

Since 2014, Christopher Hanway has served as the Executive Director of Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement, a community-based social service organization in Long Island City, Queens that serves thousands of public housing residents and their families per year. Prior to that, he was the organization's Director of Development & Communications for five years. Christopher has over 20 years of professional experience in the not-for-profit sector, most notably at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, the Institute for Classical Architecture, and the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. He received his B.A. from Hunter College of the City University of New York and his Master's Degree in Public Administration from Baruch College, where he now serves as Adjunct Professor. He sits on several boards, including United Neighborhood Houses of New York, the Chhaya Community Development Corporation and the International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers. Christopher has a particular interest in connecting the work of local, place-based non-profits like Riis Settlement with international social justice and solidarity movements.

Christopher is the immediate past Chair of the NGO Committee on Migration, which advocates at the United Nations and other international organizations on behalf of migrants, refugees and asylees worldwide and serves on the Executive Committee of the NGO Committee on Aging in New York as a member at large. He was the Chair in 2023 and Co-Chair in 2024 and 2025 of the International Day of Older Persons observance at the UN.



**Mary Beth Morrissey, Ph.D**  
***Recording Secretary***

Dr. Mary Beth Morrissey is a New York-licensed attorney in health and public health law, and a gerontological health and social work researcher. She currently serves as UN NGO NY Representative to the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and chair of the New York State Bar Association Health Law Section. Dr. Morrissey has authored numerous scholarly articles, books, and special journal issues in the fields of health and aging, public health, and ethics, and is founder and president of the Collaborative for Palliative Care and Director of its interdisciplinary workforce Certificate Program in Aging, Public Health and Palliative Care.

She has a demonstrated history of leadership working with healthcare, hospital, and long-term care systems and providers, as well as community-based aging and health services agencies. In 2025, she was appointed by Mae Carpenter, Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services, to co-chair the planning of the Westchester Elderboom Conference on Aging. She is past president of the State Society on Aging of New York and has held leadership positions in the American Psychological Association, the American Public Health Association, the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York and the Westchester Women's Bar Association.

Dr. Morrissey holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D., 2011) in gerontology from Fordham University, a Master's Degree in public health (MPH, 2005) from NYMC School of Health Sciences & Practice, and a JD from Fordham Law School (1982). She is the 2024 recipient of the Calvary Hospital Compatriot award in recognition of her leadership in palliative care education.



**Ariana Elezaj**  
***Corresponding Secretary***

Arjanita (Ariana) Elezaj is a former journalist and community activist with 30+ years of experience in program development, advocacy, diversity and inclusion, and community building. Ariana is completing her first term as Corresponding Secretary of the NGO Committee on Ageing. She is currently Chairing the Planning Committee for the 2025 UN International Day of Older Persons, having served as the chair for 2024 and co-chair for 2023. She also serves on the NGO Committee on Human Rights and is the UN representative of the International Federation of Settlement Houses and Neighborhood Centers, a global organization with full ECOSOC consultative status.

Currently, Ariana works at the New York City Department for the Aging in the position of Director of Direct Services, after serving for almost two decades as Deputy Director of Older Adult Services at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, a Settlement House serving New Yorkers in need.

Ariana holds a Master of Public Policy Administration (*MPA*) degree from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, a Bachelor's Degree from Tirana State University in Economics and Business Reporting, as well as certificates in Non-Profit Leadership from Baruch College and Empowered Aging from Columbia Law School Advocacy Institute. She is a fellow and a Board Member of New York University's Center for Anti-Racism, Social Justice and Public Health.



**Katie Weiss**  
***Treasurer***

Katharine (Katie) Weiss serves as the UN representative of the Global Ageing Network (formerly IAHSa) and is currently serving as Treasurer of the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York. Katie spent twenty years working at Citigroup with extensive experience in product development of technology-based consumer financial services. She managed the team that designed the consumer interface for all global ATMS, online banking, telephone banking, and staff and customer service kiosks. At Citigroup, Katie also had significant experience in consumer research, strategic planning, and financial management. Prior to Citigroup, Katie worked at Time Inc. and Deloitte, Haskins & Sells. Katie is currently Board Chair of Aging in America, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting and inspiring innovation for individuals, families and caregivers faced with the challenges and opportunities of aging. In 2007, she co-chaired a consumer cabinet for Leading Age, the national association of not-for-profit aging services providers. She is a graduate of Wellesley College and received an MS in Accounting from NYU.

In addition to serving as treasurer, she is chairing the Membership subcommittee.



## Members-at-Large (5)



**Bethany Brown**  
***Member at Large***

Bethany Brown, JD, serves as AARP International's global advocacy director, advancing AARP's mission to empower people to choose how they live as they age around the world. She leads AARP's international strategic initiatives to advance older persons' human rights and inclusion.

She has extensive experience in international advocacy at the United Nations in the fields of human rights, humanitarian aid, and development. Prior to joining AARP, she started Human Rights Watch's program of work on older persons' human rights.

Brown's work and comments have appeared in major news outlets such as The Economist, The Guardian, The Sydney Morning Herald, and News Deeply, in academic periodicals such as The Health and Human Rights Journal, The Sustainable Development Law & Policy Journal, BMC Geriatrics, and edited books. Bethany is currently serving as a Member at Large of the NGO Committee on Ageing/NY and is Co-chair of the Human Rights Subcommittee.

Brown received her juris doctor from American University Washington College of Law, and her bachelor's from Barnard College of Columbia University.



**Robin Fenley, Ph.D, LCSW**  
***Member at Large***

Dr. Robin Fenley has been a member of the NGO Committee on Ageing/NY (CoA/NY) since 2019 and has served as chair of the Subcommittee on Older Women and chair of the 2022 UN International Day of Older Persons, and currently is the outgoing Vice Chair of the CoA/NY. She is a member of the International Association of Gerontology & Geriatrics (IAGG) and the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA). Robin has collaborated in the development and implementation of virtual parallel events for CSW66, CSW67, CSW68, CSW69, and the 2022 NYC World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Working to advance the rights of older persons, with a focus on older women, she has collaborated with IAGG and INPEA colleagues in the creation and submission of written interventions to UN working groups, delivered oral interventions in various fora, and served as moderator during the 2025 Commission on Population Development.

A social gerontologist by training, Dr. Fenley's areas of practice include caregiving, dementia, elder abuse, psychiatry and long-term care in community, institutional, and governmental settings. She retired from the NYC Department for the Aging as Assistant Commissioner, implementing New York City's initial National Family Caregiver Support Program and established the first legislated Social Adult Day Ombuds Office in NYC. Dr. Fenley is an Adjunct Professor at the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service in New York City, has published and co-authored academic chapters, and is an advisory board member for community-based organizations that work with unhoused older adults and aging persons with intellectual disabilities.



**Kahir N. Lalji**  
***Member at Large***

Kahir Lalji is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of HelpAge Canada and Vice President of the International Longevity Centre, Canada. Kahir also leads National and International portfolios and task forces on Ageing with a focus on low-middle income countries, and minority groups. Kahir's extensive experience in the Civil Society space includes building the Healthy Ageing Movements in Canada and serving as head of Government Relations & Stakeholder engagement with the United Way of British Columbia in addition to other past positions leading community-based organizations. Kahir has worked to bring internationally recognized social movements in the field of Ageing like Mens' Sheds, Social Prescribing and other social and economic development programs to Canada and to minority groups in low-middle income countries. Working at programmatic and policy levels, Kahir takes a life-course approach when developing social, economic and rights-based programs, supports and strategies in advancing the national and international ageing agendas with a particular focus on traditionally underserved and equity denied populations.

Kahir is a Gerontologist with a Masters of Gerontology from Simon Fraser University and a fellowship in developmental leadership and evaluation. With over 15 years of civil society & NGO leadership experience, Kahir has extensive experience in community development initiatives at the local, regional, national and international levels enabling him to effectively facilitate engagement with various knowledge user groups and a diverse, sophisticated suite of stakeholders.

Kahir is on the Board of Directors for Alzheimer's Society of British Columbia and serves as the Country and global lead on Ageing for the Ismaili Community. Kahir was the past board member of Aging 2.0, past President of the Board of Directors for British Columbia Original Minds Association and past board member for BC211. Kahir's work is substantiated by several publications in the community based and civil society spaces on aging.

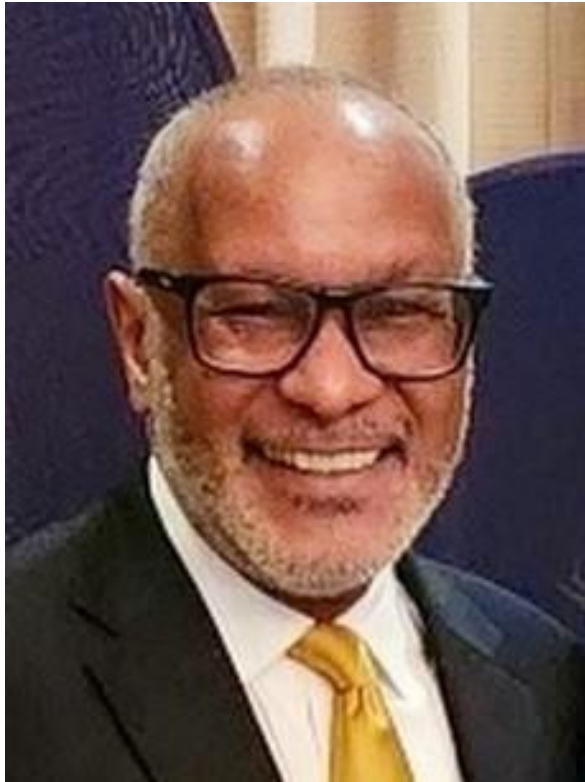




**Connie Sobon Sensor, Ph.D**  
***Member at Large***

Dr. Connie Sobon Sensor is a Registered Nurse, research scientist, and former professor at Rutgers University. She represents the League of Women Voters (LWV) at the United Nations, where she leads and organizes delegations and presentations for the UN Commission on the Status of Women and other global events related to the LWV's special consultative status with ECOSOC. Connie was a delegate to the global climate conference (COP) in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt in 2022 and in Dubai, UAE in 2023. She serves as an elected Vice President for the UN-affiliated Global NGO Executive Committee. Connie is Past-President of the Northeast Chapter of the Transcultural Nursing Society and was a national Public Policy Advisor for the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses.

Dr. Sensor earned a Ph.D from Seton Hall University, a Master's Degree in Clinical Management from Kean University, and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from New Jersey City University. As a Registered Nurse, she has devoted her career to human rights and healthy ageing across the life span. She has published and presented locally, nationally and internationally about the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Leadership in Global Health, and her research about health-related beliefs, practices and experiences of migrant populations.



**Edwin Walker**  
***Member at Large***

With a career spanning over 40 years, Edwin L. Walker has advocated for older Americans, leading the Administration on Aging within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He guided the development of home and community-based long-term care and elder justice programs, enabling older adults and their caregivers to age with dignity and independence and be free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Prior to his federal service, Walker directed the Missouri Division of Aging, overseeing comprehensive services for older adults and individuals with disabilities. In March 2024, Walker retired from federal service, leaving a legacy of leadership in aging policy and program development.

Currently, Walker serves in advisory capacities with numerous organizations, including the board of trustees of the Next50 Foundation; representative of the National Council on Aging to the Executive Committee of the NGO Committee on Ageing to the United Nations, New York; the advisory board of Cumulus, Care, Inc.; and the boards of directors of NCBA, Inc., and Aging While Black.

He holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Media Arts from Hampton University.

Immediate Past Chair (Ex-Officio)



**Cynthia Stuen, PhD**  
**Immediate Past Chair Ex Officio**

Cynthia Stuen is the International Federation on Ageing Main Representative to the United Nations and Vice President for North America on the Board of Directors. Dr. Stuen was Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing/NY for two terms and serves ex officio on the Executive Committee. She is active in advocacy for the protection of the human rights of older persons with a special interest in older women and older persons with sensory impairments. She is active in monitoring the inclusion of older persons in the UN's Agenda 2030 and support of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing.

Her professional career of over 40 years as a gerontological social worker has focused on policy, planning and administration to improve the lives of older persons and recognize the lifelong inequities endured. Serving in various capacities at Lighthouse International during her 24 year tenure. She was Director of its National Center for Vision and Aging developing public and professional education on age-related vision and hearing loss for older persons. Her last position was as Senior Vice President, Chief Professional Affairs Officer that involved advocating for policies to support older sensory impaired persons at the national, state and local level while also maintaining involvement and education in international environments to preserve sight and prevent excess disability.

Her graduate degrees are from the University of Chicago (AM) and Columbia University (PhD) in Social Work. She is a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America and the New York Academy of Medicine.