

2025 FINALIST JUDGES

Branden Dalley



Branden works as the Director of the Student Union at the University of Utah, where he recently completed his PhD in Education, Leadership, and Policy. His research is in the higher education finance arena with a focus on student loan debt and how debt can impact various student populations differentially. He is the founder of the Student Union Leadership Scholarship fund which has seen over \$1,000,000 in scholarships awarded to students in need. Through programs such as the Union scholarship fund, Branden strives to create awareness of the importance of community on campus. He hopes to endow many scholarships in the future that will help students in perpetuity.

Don Willie



Don Willie is a seasoned executive and community advocate with extensive experience leading transformational change in public, private and nonprofit sector organizations. He currently serves as the Director of Operations for The Point of the Mountain State Land Authority, Utah's transformative 600-acre infill development in Draper. Don previously served as the turnaround President & CEO of the St. George Area Chamber of Commerce and Managing Director at World Trade Center Utah.

Don and his wife are the co-founders of the Love Utah Box, a curated gift box showcasing Utah-made products, and Epicenter Strategies, a public relations and political strategy consultancy. He has also founded multiple nonprofit organizations and initiatives to address critical community needs. Don serves on several private and nonprofit boards, including Altabank, Utah Symphony | Utah Opera, Women's Leadership Institute, Envision Utah, Neighborhood Connection, Canyons Education Foundation, and the Utah Commission on Service and Volunteerism. Together, he and his wife, Jennifer, are the proud parents of four active children and reside in Sandy. Don is also the 2006 recipient of the Utah Young Humanitarian Award.

Erin Armstrong



Erin Armstrong is a Utah native and a graduate of the University of Utah in Behavioral Science & Health and Gerontology. Her experience at the University grounded her interest in serving within her community. Erin is a Program Officer at the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation. She enjoys the many engaging associations and activities that stem from her involvement with the Foundation and its varied projects. She is a past volunteer board member at Red Butte Garden. Erin was a past board member for the United States National Committee for the United Nation Women Utah Chapter. She also has been involved in scholarship fundraising and other projects with the Young Alumni Association at the University of Utah, serving as Vice President. In her spare time, she enjoys supporting the arts, hiking throughout the state, she is a foodie who enjoys the science and art of a good meal, & spending time with family & friends.

Hoang Nguyen



Hoang is the managing partner of Sapa Investments and served as the chief executive officer of Holding Dragons at its inception in 2019. In November 2024, Hoang was elected to serve in the Utah State House of Representatives, making history as the first elected refugee and Vietnamese-American to ever serve in the Utah State Legislature. She earned her Bachelors at the University of Utah and went on to earn her Master of Business Administration.

She comes from a long line of female entrepreneurs that have owned and operated various businesses. She has spent the last decade developing a culture that is people-centric through initiatives that have empowered individuals to realize their professional and personal goals. Hoang serves Utah through her commitment and involvement with local organizations that are dedicated to ignite change through equity, prosperity, and inclusivity.

Jane Irungu, Ph.D.



Currently, Dr. Irungu serves as a Special Advisor to the President at Utah State University. She is tasked with advising and influencing the university's strategic planning and growth initiatives, with a particular focus on ensuring equitable access and opportunity across the USU system. Her career as an educator started nearly four decades ago in her home county of Kenya, Africa, where she worked as a high school teacher and administrator. In the US, she has served at different higher education institutions with a focus on teaching, organizational management, student success support, and inclusive excellence initiatives.

Dr. Irungu received her doctorate in Educational Leadership & Policy Studies and a Master's in Higher Education Administration from the University of Kansas. Her Bachelor's in Secondary Education is from Kenyatta University in Kenya.

Loggins Merrill



Loggins Merrill is the Director of UServeUtah, the state's commission on service and volunteerism. UServeUtah is a division of the Department of Cultural and Community Engagement. At the commission, he oversees the development and implementation of multiple community engagement service programs and training courses as well as the administration of AmeriCorps programming. These programs aim to engage Utahns across the state to identify local community concerns and find solutions through service.

Prior to his time with UServeUtah, Loggins worked for 23 years at the Department of Workforce Services. Most of his time there was spent in workforce development, assisting people to continue their education and enter the workforce. He served as the state Workforce Development Director and oversaw statewide operations in over 30 employment centers to deliver local services. Loggins worked a lot with people experiencing homelessness and oversaw the Dignity of Work program as part of Operation Rio Grande and was recognized with the Governor's Award for Excellence for his work and impact in this area. Loggins also worked to help refugees integrate into their communities in Utah and provide a variety of training and workforce programs as they arrived in Utah during their resettlement process. He has worked with community partners throughout his career to collaborate and make deep community impacts.

Miranda Collard

In the role of Global Chief Client Officer for Teleperformance, Miranda is responsible for leading all aspects of the customer delivery and strategy. As such she leads a Global team of diverse leaders responsible for developing and executing innovative solutions to many of the world's Fortune 500 companies. She has spent over 25 years with Teleperformance. In her previous role she served as Chief Client Officer of the English World.

Miranda has experience in designing multi-channel solutions for a multitude of different industry verticals including HealthCare, Financial Service, and Retail- amongst many others. She has led initiatives with Teleperformance to catapult the hiring of veterans and their spouses through specifically designed programs that increased the results by over 300%. This program specifically assists spouses who are managing deployments and PCS assignments without having to leave their employer. Her most recent venture is the Chair of TP Women which she founded and launched with Teleperformance in 2019. With over 300,000 employees around the world it's a critical mission to build upon an already diverse group of employees.

Miranda resides in Utah with her husband, 4 kids and 10 pets. She loves spending time with her family and working within the community supporting organizations that are focused on improving the lives of people around the world. Miranda is currently on the Board of Directors at Youthlinc.



Dr. Thomas Appiah

Dr. Thomas Appiah, President and CEO of Appiah Consulting Team International Inc., is recognized globally for his professional and community service work. With experience across Canada, Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the U.S., he excels at strategically positioning products for sustainable growth. In 2007, he founded Appiah Consulting, focusing on emerging African markets. Additionally, he serves as Chairman of the African Chamber of Commerce of Utah and was a member of Zions Bank's Diversity Board. Appiah is passionate about education, teaching as an Adjunct Professor at Utah Valley University's Woodbury School of Management and as a visiting Lecturer at Brigham Young University and the University of Utah. He is also a consultant for the University of Utah's Masters of Business Creation (MBC) Global program.

A dedicated community leader, Appiah played a pivotal role in establishing HART (Humanitarian Aid Relief Team) to Ghana, providing medical aid and infrastructure development. He currently serves on HART's board and the board of Utah Global Diplomacy. As the founder of Citizens Taking Responsibility (CTR) NGO, he broadcasts a weekly leadership program in Ghana, promoting community involvement.

Appiah's philosophy centers on encouraging active citizen engagement in community improvement. He integrates this belief into his professional and service efforts, striving for mutual respect in all negotiations. Outside of work, he enjoys family life with his wife, four children, and three grandchildren.

