Alan Essig
Executive Director
Georgia Budget & Policy Institute, Atlanta

Alan currently serves as Executive Director with the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute (GBPI). The Georgia Budget and Policy Institute is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that engages in research and education on the fiscal and economic health of the state of Georgia.

Previously he served as a Senior Research Associate with the Fiscal Research Center of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University where he undertook policy research in regards to state budget policy and process, social welfare issues, and taxes.

Alan also served as the Deputy Policy Director to the Governor. He advised the Governor and helped formulate policy in the areas of health and human services including child welfare, public health, mental health and developmental disabilities, aging and Medicaid.

Alan has also worked as Committee Aide for the Georgia State Senate and Georgia House of Representatives Appropriations Committees, Assistant Commissioner for the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Director of the Georgia State Senate Research Office, Deputy Director of the Budgetary Responsibility Oversight Committee, and as a legislative budget analyst for the New York State Senate Finance Committee.

Alan has an MPA from the State University of New York at Albany.
Kelly McCutchen
President
Georgia Public Policy Foundation, Atlanta

Kelly McCutchen is president of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, an independent think tank that proposes practical, market-oriented approaches to public policy to improve the lives of Georgians. He is a native of Ellijay, Georgia, and a graduate of Georgia Tech. He was Assistant Vice President in the Trust Department of Trust Company Bank in Atlanta before joining the Foundation in 1993.

Kelly writes on education, tax, health care and economic policy. At the Foundation, he has helped create the Civic Renewal Project that highlights the work of outstanding community-based organizations, the "No Excuses" program to recognize and study high achieving, high poverty public schools, and award-winning statewide report cards on education, crime and taxes.

Kelly is a member of the Atlanta chapter of CEO Netweavers and has served on the boards of the Georgia Tech Alumni Association and Leadership Georgia. He was a founder of Tech High, a math, science and technology-focused public charter school in Atlanta. He served on the 2009 Georgia Senate Budget Task Force and he currently serves on the boards of the Conservative Policy Leadership Institute, the Tech High Foundation and the Healthcare Institute for Neuro-Recovery and Innovation Foundation.
THOMAS W. ROSS is the President of Davidson College. Davidson is a highly selective, nationally recognized liberal arts college located approximately 25 miles north of Charlotte, North Carolina in the town of Davidson. Prior to his becoming President in August 2007, Tom had served as the Executive Director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation since January 2001. Previous to the Foundation, Tom served as the director of the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts from June 1999-December 2000 and as a North Carolina Superior Court Judge from January 1984 to November 2000. Before 1984, he served as Chief of Staff to a U. S. Congressman, a partner in a Greensboro, NC law firm and as an Assistant Professor of Law and Government at the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In November 2000 Tom was presented the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence. This award, named for U. S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist, is presented annually to one state court judge nationally who possesses the qualities of judicial excellence. In 1994, he was one of ten people in the United States selected as “Public Official of the Year” by Governing Magazine. In 1995, he received one of nine Foundation for the Improvement of Justice Awards presented nationally. In 1996, he was named “North Carolina Trial Judge of the Year”. In 1999, he was presented the Order of the Long Leaf Pine by Governor Jim Hunt and the Raleigh News and Observer named him “Tarheel of the Week.” In 2001, Tom was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award by Davidson College and in 2005 he was presented the Distinguished Alumni Award by the UNC School of Law.

Tom served as Chair of the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission from 1990 to 1999. In this capacity, he led North Carolina to adopt innovative sentencing guidelines and community corrections legislation that have been called a “model for the nation” by the American Bar Association Journal. The Ford Foundation and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University recognized the work of the Sentencing Commission in 1997 with the Innovation in American Government Award. Tom also served as Chair of the Governor’s Commission to Modernize State Finances in 2002.

Tom received a BA degree from Davidson College in 1972 and a JD degree with honors from the University of North Carolina in 1975. He is a 1985 graduate of the National Judicial College. He lives in Davidson, North Carolina with his wife, Susan, and has two children, Tommy Ross and Mary Kathryn Elkins.
Rep. Mickey Channell  
Georgia House of Representatives  
HD 116 (R – Greensboro)

Born in Washington, Georgia, Representative Mickey Channell is a life-long resident of House District 116 and a fourth generation Greene Countian. After graduating from Greene County Public Schools, he went on to attend Young Harris College, where former Georgia Governor, Senator Zell Miller taught him political science. The avid Bulldog fan later obtained his B.B.A. in Business Administration from the University Of Georgia Terry College Of Business.

Having owned various local small businesses over the years, Mickey understands the economic needs of our district. Mickey is a strong advocate for jobs and economic development, and previously served on the Board of Directors of the Georgia Cities Foundation, a public-private partnership that provides loans for revitalization projects for downtown areas in small towns throughout Georgia. He also previously served as a Trustee of the Georgia College and State University Foundation in Milledgeville.

Considered an expert on healthcare in Georgia, Mickey’s proudest achievement in the State Legislature was authoring the PeachCare for Kids legislation (http://www.peachcare.org/), securing affordable healthcare services for over 200,000 children of Georgia’s working families.

Now in his 18th year in the Georgia House of Representatives, Mickey has held several Committee leadership positions, including Chairman of Industrial Relations, Vice-Chairman of Appropriations and Secretary of Transportation. Mickey is the current Chairman of the Health Subcommittee of Appropriations, where he has oversight of the allocation of a $13 billion state health care budget. In addition to Appropriations, Mickey’s other committee assignments include Transportation, Rules and Human Relations and Aging.

No stranger to public service, Mickey has held different public offices in his district, including membership on the Greene County Board of Commissioners and the Greene County Board of Education. He also served as Chairman of the Georgia Nonpublic Post Secondary Education Commission the same year he was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives. Involved in many civic organizations, Mickey is a founding member of the Greene County Rotary Club, is currently an honorary member of the Greene/Putnam Counties Rotary Club and a past President of the Greene County Chamber of Commerce. Mickey was also a co-organizer of the Greene County Youth Baseball Program.

Mickey currently owns and operates Channell Enterprises, a real estate holding company which he founded in the 1960s. He and his wife of 46 years, the former Carolyn Devane, are the proud parents of four grown children and they spend as much time as possible with their nine grandchildren. Mickey and Carolyn are active members of the First United Methodist Church of Greensboro.
Hon. Robert Reichert  
Mayor  
City of Macon, Georgia

Robert Reichert was born in Macon on August 11, 1948, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert P. Reichert, Sr. He attended elementary school and high school in Macon, graduating from Stratford Academy in 1966. Thereafter, he attended the University of Georgia for approximately two years before enlisting in the U.S. Army.

In 1970-71, he served with the 1st Air Cavalry Division as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. He attained the rank of Chief Warrant Officer and completed his service in the armed forces as a member of the 3rd Armored Division in Ft. Hood, Texas. He returned to Macon after his tour of duty, and worked at a local car dealership, primarily in Sales, but also in the Parts Department and in the New Car Warehouse.

He re-entered the University of Georgia in 1976 and received a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture degree, majoring in Biology in 1978. He subsequently went to law school, and during the Fall of his senior year at Mercer University's Walter F. George School of Law, interned in Washington with Senator Sam Nunn in his legislative section.

Robert received his Juris Doctor degree in 1981, and joined the firm of Anderson, Walker & Reichert as an associate attorney. He is a member of the Georgia Bar Association and American Bar Association and he was recently selected to be a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. Robert is active in a number of civic organizations. He is former President of the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Industrial Home and he has served as a Member of the Board of Directors for the Macon Rescue Mission and the Douglass Theatre. He is a member and former Director of the Kiwanis Club of Macon, and a former Scoutmaster and Round Table Commissioner for the Boy Scouts. He completed Leadership Macon in 1986 and has served as a member of its Board of Director.

In November 1987, Robert was elected to Macon City Council and he served on the Public Properties Committee and the Public Safety Committees. Robert was elected in 1992 to the Georgia House of Representatives, District 126, and represented northwest Macon and Bibb County through the 2002 legislative session. While in the House of Representatives, he served on the Industry Committee, the Judiciary Committee and the Regulated Beverage Committee.

In addition to his regular legislative duties, Robert served on the Georgia Future Communities Commission, co-chaired the Joint Study Commission on Regional Development Centers, and chaired the House Study Committee on the 3 Tier system for alcoholic beverage distribution. He did not run for re-election in 2002.

On November 6th, 2007, Robert was elected Mayor of Macon with 96% of the vote and took office on December 11th, 2007. Robert and his wife, Dele, have two children, and they are members of the Vineville United Methodist Church.
Holly A. Robinson, Ed. D
Commissioner
Bright for the Start
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

As commissioner of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Dr. Holly A. Robinson manages state programs that deliver exemplary early care and education services to Georgia's youngest citizens and their families. In three years as Commissioner, Dr. Robinson's focus is to ensure every child in Georgia - from birth to age five - grow and develop in safe, stimulating and high quality environments that enhance their school readiness skills.

Under Commissioner Robinson's leadership, Bright from the Start has made progressive and innovative changes to benefit Georgia's children. While quality, rigor in curriculum and teacher credentialing has been expanded in Georgia's Pre-K Program, enrollment has steadily increased with 82,000 children being served during the 2009-2010 school year. Georgia's Pre-K is celebrating a unique milestone this year - it is currently serving its one millionth child - a first in the nation for the voluntary, universal, lottery-funded program. The nationally recognized program is ranked third in the nation by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). To ensure that students' progress can be tracked throughout their school career, under her leadership the agency partnered with the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) to implement the Georgia Testing Identification System for all children participating in Georgia's Pre-K Program.

Commissioner Robinson currently oversees an annual budget of $498 million. She also directs the licensing and monitoring of approximately 10,000 center- and home-based child care facilities throughout the state.

Commissioner Robinson received a BA from Old Dominion University, a MA from Villanova University, and an Ed.D. from Rutgers University. She and her husband have a son and daughter-in-law, and she is the proud grandmother of two young grandsons.
Dr. Ledbetter has extensive experience in public policy making, analysis, and administration. From 1995 until he joined the Institute, he was executive director of the Georgia Health Policy Center, a research unit within the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. Prior to that, he served for 12 years as the commissioner of the Georgia Department for Human Resources, the state’s largest agency. He directed more than 100 programs addressing issues of mental health, substance abuse, public health, rehabilitation, public welfare, social services, and aging.

Ledbetter holds a doctorate in rehabilitation counseling from the University of Georgia and an M.Ed. in counseling and guidance from the Stephen F. Austin College in Texas. He is also a graduate of the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government.