

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hope Blackley and Kristen Jerome Join SC Women in Leadership Board of Directors

June 20, 2023 (Columbia, South Carolina) – The staff and volunteers of [SC Women in Leadership](#) (SC WIL) welcome Hope Blackley and Kristen Jerome, CPA, to the board of directors. Blackley and Jerome bring a wealth of personal and professional experience to SC WIL's efforts to include women's perspectives in the 2,000 some elected seats available across the state, not to mention the thousands of public appointed boards and commissions at the local, county, and state levels.

SC WIL is the only organization in South Carolina solely focused on helping women overcome the barriers that keep them from seeking and winning leadership positions at all levels of government. Through their [More in 2024](#) ambitious year-long recruitment push, SC WIL seeks to triple the number of women running for elected office across the state in the 2024 election cycle and applying to serve on public boards and commissions.

Hope Blackley is President & CEO of Hope Consulting, LLC, where she helps others grow in the professional aspects of their career, management, partnerships, and being leaders of change in their communities. Her diverse professional background includes roles as a preschool teacher, child victim advocate for the South Carolina 7th Circuit Solicitor's Office, Crime Victims' Ombudsman for the state under South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford, director of the S.C. Governor's Office of Victim Services Education & Certification (OVSEC), district director for Congressman William Timmons, and Spartanburg County Clerk of Court. She is a 2019 Liberty Fellow, and her community service work includes founding the Institute for Youth Justice, serving as the 2020-2021 Chairwoman on the Mary Black Foundation Board, South Carolina Judicial Merit Selection Commissioner Board, and the Hub City Writers Project Board. Blackley earned her B.S. in Child Development from South Carolina State University.

Kristen Jerome is a partner at Bauknight Pietras & Stormer, PA, a full-service accounting and advisory firm where she started her career in business advisory services and assurance 13 years ago. Kristen helps clients solve unique problems and is experienced in specialty practice areas, including merger and acquisition due diligence, revenue recognition for complex business cycles, best practice assessments, and forecasting. Kristen is a routine speaker and contributing author in professional and community events and publications, covering technical issues, leadership, and everything in between. Kristen has been involved in a number of professional and community organizations and has served in a number of leadership roles, most notably: the YMCA of Columbia Board of Directors, the Leadership Columbia Advisory Board, the Bullstreet Commission, OneColumbia for Arts and History, the South Carolina Association of Certified Public Accountants, the Women's Presidents Organization and Columbia Real Estate Women. Kristen was recognized by Greenville Business Magazine as a South Carolina Women in Business Honoree in 2021 and as

one of the State Newspaper's 20 Under 40 in 2018. Kristen earned her B.S. from the University of South Carolina, where she majored in both Accounting and Insurance/Risk Management, with a minor in Italian.

If you are considering running for office, seeking appointment, or would like to get involved with the [More in 2024](#) recruitment effort as a candidate, volunteer, or confidentially refer a woman you think should run for elected or appointed office, let SC WIL know at this [link](#). SC WIL does not share nor sell potential candidate names or other data to any third parties.

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About SC Women in Leadership

SC Women in Leadership (SC WIL) is a statewide multi-partisan group of women working together across differences to move South Carolina forward by informing, inspiring, and involving women in leadership. SC WIL's work sharing information about, making connections to, and encouraging women's engagement in local and state civic leadership is moving South Carolina forward socially, economically, educationally, and environmentally. SC WIL believes that as talented women with diverse and inclusive backgrounds step up to lead and to govern, gender and racial equality, as well as community equity can, at last, become a reality. SC WIL's vision is for women to be represented at every level of leadership, including elected officials, appointed government boards and commissions, and as active volunteers and advocates in the community.

SC WIL trained and connected 850 women through their signature events in 2022. To assist women in targeting the most winnable elected offices, they have developed an Opportunity Seats database. SC WIL built and maintains the only multi-partisan registry of female candidates and list of women holding elective office in South Carolina. They maintain the only statewide database of open positions on public appointed boards and commissions. SC WIL also connects and recognizes accomplished women in the public eye.

Visit scwomenlead.net to see how SC WIL is working to fill the pipeline with women, increase fair voting, and reduce polarization.

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