

# MANKO | GOLD | KATCHER | FOX LLP

AN ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY LAW PRACTICE

## SERVICE SPOTLIGHTS

**Alice Douglas, Julie Hayes, Dylan LaMorte and Garrett Trego**  
*JP Morgan Corporate Challenge to benefit the Fairmount Park Conservancy*

Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox has been a long-time supporter of the Fairmount Park Conservancy—whose mission it is to bring parks to life. They work with the City of Philadelphia and its communities to steward our parks and nurture our shared environment, cultural resources and public health. Founding partner Joseph Manko serves as the Vice President and Development Co-Chair of the Fairmount Park Conservancy.

Recently, the firm participated in the JP Morgan Corporate Challenge race to raise funds for the Conservancy. Attorneys Garrett Trego, Alice Douglas and Dylan LaMorte teamed up with Marketing Director Julie Hayes to run “3.5ish” miles. We were proud to support a great cause but also rank as the top local team.

LOCAL RANK	COMPANY	TOTAL FINISHERS	AVG. FINISH TIME ⓘ
1	Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox Legal • Philadelphia	4	🕒 26:13
2	Aramark Beverages/Foods/Tobacco • Philadelphia	8	🕒 26:24
3	Burns & McDonnell - Philadelphia Engineering/Architecture • Philadelphia	11	🕒 29:00



L-R: Trego, Douglas, Hayes and LaMorte

**Matthew Sullivan**

*Rose Valley Borough Council and Chair of the Delaware County Redevelopment Authority*

Manko Gold has a long history of community service, and I am proud to be helping to continue that tradition. When I finished law school and started at MGKF, my wife and I moved back to Delaware County where I was born and raised. We were just starting a family and I wanted to give back to the community while also helping to guide the area where my kids would grow up. I was elected as a Township Commissioner in 2007 and served in that role for the next 13 years. In the spring of 2020, we moved one town over right as the pandemic was about to hit.



As school districts and parents struggled to navigate the pandemic, I was suddenly no longer an elected official for the first time in over a decade. I wanted to help our community through the pandemic and was appointed to serve out the term of a school board member who resigned. As my colleagues on the school board teased me endlessly: I was the only member who knew what I was signing up for when I took my seat on the board! While it was not always fun, I was proud to help the administration navigate the pandemic, support our schools, and get our kids back in the classrooms safely, while also conducting a successful search and hiring for a wonderful new superintendent for the district.

During my tenure on the school board, I was also appointed to serve on the Delaware County Redevelopment Authority and my Borough's planning commission. As my term on the school board expired, I decided to refocus my energies on the County and the Borough. Accordingly, I am currently serving as the Chairperson of the Redevelopment Authority and was elected to a seat on the Rose Valley Borough Council. I am a strong supporter of efforts to revitalize and strengthen our cities and suburbs, so I find my work on Borough Council and the Redevelopment Authority to be incredibly fulfilling.

## Nicole Moshang

*Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia Board Member*

Being active in our communities is a hallmark of MGKF attorneys – whether it be in our professional or individual lives. The firm supports my participation in several professional organizations related to my environmental practice, which has allowed me to grow my network of colleagues within a collaborative group of professionals. One of my most fulfilling commitments, however, comes from my involvement with Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia, where I have served on the Board of Directors for four years and currently as Co-Chair the Governance Committee. Habitat for Humanity’s mission is to “build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter.” Habitat’s dedicated and passionate team provides opportunities to Philadelphians to build or improve a place to call home. Volunteering on a build day alongside future homeowners and lending a hand to help fulfil a dream for a local family leaves lasting impressions – not just sore muscles! I truly treasure being part of something so transformative of the lives and community of Philadelphia – whether it be working on a new build, the rehabilitation of an existing home, or stocking shelves at one of the ReStore locations.



Pictured above: Nicole celebrates the ribbon-cutting of Habitat’s newest ReStore with Swoop.



Mankoff, Gold, Katcher & Fox is a proud sponsor of Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia’s Building Hope Virtual Lunch-In.



## **Tom Duncan**

*Lower Merion Conservancy Board Member*



The firm has had a long-standing relationship with the Lower Merion Conservancy and involvement with its board. The Conservancy works to protect open space, preserve historic resources, and conserve the local watershed in Lower Merion Township, which includes our firm's offices in Bala Cynwyd. What drew me to the Conservancy was my interest in preserving open space. I currently serve on the Conservancy's Executive Committee, and I chair its Sustainability Committee which focuses on entering into conservation easements with Lower Merion residents and promoting sustainability practices within Lower Merion. As an environmental attorney, I am able to provide a solid voice on the board to help guide projects and navigate complex issues.



*The Lower Merion Conservancy hosts an annual gala to raise funds for its important programming.*

## **Robb Fox**

*SEPTA Board Member*



I have served on the Board of SEPTA for the past 7 years. I view public transit as essential to our Region for many reasons. It is a driver for our economy and our workforce. By definition it embodies sustainability because it is a more green alternative to other forms of transportation.

Being a SEPTA board member is both interesting and challenging. You often read stories in the news about things that SEPTA does wrong: safety issues, on time performance, contracting etc. But those articles misunderstand the unbelievable complexity of operating this system on a day-to-day basis. And that is the challenging part of being a Board member. The normal challenges were accelerated during the pandemic which has had a profound and long-lasting impact on SEPTA. More people work from home and that impacts our ridership. Crime and homelessness have escalated in Philadelphia and SEPTA's system is not immune from that. So those are just some of the challenges, but I so firmly believe in the importance of SEPTA to the Region, that I enjoy this work immensely.

In the past year I have been the Chair of a Board committee dealing with efficiency and accountability. We asked SEPTA employees to come up with initiatives that could save SEPTA money and also improve organizational health. We just released our first annual report which identifies that SEPTA achieved \$38 million in annual recurring savings which we believe by the end of next year will increase to over \$100 million in annual savings. Given the need for additional public funding this is a huge example of how SEPTA can be a good steward of that public funding. We also reorganized the management structure at SEPTA to make us more nimble, transparent and responsive. [Hear firsthand why Robb chose to serve on the SEPTA Board.](#)

## **Kate Campbell**

*Ss. Colman-John Neumann School Youth Basketball Coach*



I grew up playing sports. Through high school I competed in basketball, track, and cross country, and in college I learned to love a new sport and became a Division I rower. Sports provide such a great outlet, both physically and mentally. You learn about self-discipline, teamwork, listening, being coachable, and of course, the art of graciously winning and losing.

I've been coaching youth basketball for the past 10 years, starting first with my now 15-year-old daughter and now with my son, where I have the privilege of volunteering as head coach for his 4th grade team (all 14 of them)! If you were a spectator at one of our games this season, my play-calling would give you insights into some of my favorite things – Villanova, [Jason] Kelce, and my favorite – our inbound play called “Dorito.”

In all seriousness, it has been such a pleasure spending quality time with my children and their friends not only as a mom, but also as a coach. If I need to break away from the weight of work in the middle of the afternoon, there's no better reason than to run around on a basketball court with a bunch of spirited 9- and 10-year-olds who just want to have fun shooting hoops with their friends. The lessons that are taught and the memories that are made are not just for my own kids and those that I coach, but for me too.



## **Alice F. Douglas**

*Our Mother of Good Counsel Parish, Catechist*

*Preschool and Kindergarten Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) Class*



This year, I was blessed to become an associate attorney at MGKF and a catechist for the preschool and kindergarten PREP class at my parish, all within the same month! Working with children has long been a passion of mine, and I am so glad to have found a firm that encourages each of its members to pursue avenues for community involvement, in addition to personal and professional growth.

One of our main goals in PREP class is to prepare our students to become active and caring members of their communities. Every Sunday, we discuss and learn to practice the virtues of faith, hope, charity, and love through readings, crafts, and community service projects. In the photo above, you can see the children's drawings depicting the beauty of our natural world, which we tied into our lesson about respecting our neighbors and our common home.

No matter how much lesson planning I do, I find that I have as much to learn from the class as they do from me. My students are optimistic, creative, and compassionate. They find joy in the little things, help one another, and are endlessly curious. Even during challenging moments, I have learned patience and understanding. I strive to incorporate each of these values into my practice of law, and every Monday, I feel refreshed starting my work week knowing that I made an impact on the lives of the children in my class.





**Bryan P. Franey**

*Riverbend Environmental Education Center, Board of Directors*



Giving back to your community is a core value at MGKF and is encouraged right from the beginning of your career. Founder Joe Manko encouraged me to find something that I would feel passionate about. Based on this guidance, I sought out a non-profit organization involved in either youth education or the environment. In 2016, I found an organization that combines both of these passions: Riverbend Environmental Education Center.



Many people in the Philadelphia area know Riverbend for its beautiful 30-acre preserve in Gladwyne or for its revered and long-standing summer camp. But what many people do not know, and what drew me to the organization, is that Riverbend provides environmental education programs to children throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania with particular focus on schools with nature deficits. Riverbend sends environmental educators into classrooms in Philadelphia and Norristown (among many other school districts) to teach environmental principles using the resources available at that school. Students learn about nature through hands-on instruction. In addition, Riverbend provides instruction and curriculum to teachers so that they are empowered to provide environmental education for years to come. Riverbend also hosts dozens of field trips at its preserve throughout the year.

I am so humbled by the support of my MGKF colleagues throughout my time serving on the Riverbend board. My colleagues regularly attend events at Riverbend and make individual donations. The firm has allowed me to host board meetings at the office and has been an annual sponsor of Riverbend for several years.

My family has also fallen in love with Riverbend. My three sons have participated in camps and together we have built stick forts, found crayfish in the creek, and hiked many of the trails. When the boys come home covered in dirt, we know it was a great day at Riverbend!

### **Todd D. Kantorczyk**

*Tredyffrin/Easttown School District, School Board Director*



When my family moved to the Philadelphia area from Washington, DC in 2004, my wife had one request: find an excellent public school district for our three children. We ultimately chose to live in the Tredyffrin/Easttown school district. We felt strongly that as parents and members of our new community it was important to play an active role in our local schools by attending back to school nights, volunteering at school events, and even attending school board meetings.

Fast forward about eight years, and when a school board director chose not to seek another term, she asked if I would be interested in running for the seat. When I was growing up, my mother served on our local school board, and seeing firsthand the impact she was able to have on our community, I had always thought in the back of my mind that being a school board director would be an excellent way to give back, so I agreed to step up and run. The first challenge was getting elected, which in large part involved knocking on doors, talking to people about why I was running, and asking for their votes. I certainly wasn't a natural when it came to "door knocking," but I became good enough by the end, and on election night in 2015 I was able to celebrate a win with my family.

Once I was sworn in, the amount of information I had to take in was like drinking from a firehose. Running a school district of almost 7,000 kids is a huge effort that involves complicated financial, educational and legal questions that have direct effects upon our student population on a daily basis. During my tenure, I have served as chair of both the finance and facilities committees, which allowed me to take deep dives into these areas of interest. But probably the biggest challenge came in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. When I first ran, no one could have envisioned that our school board, like many others in Pennsylvania and around the country, would be forced to make unprecedented decisions about if and how to run a public school district during a pandemic. I would not be telling the truth if I said that our monthly meetings were always a positive experience, and our board knew the right answers at every turn. I can say, though, that through those stressful times, my respect for my fellow board directors, our administrators, our teachers, our support staff, and our community continued to grow as we worked together to get through and back to "normal." Serving as a school board director has also helped me develop my "soft skills," which undoubtedly has assisted me in my legal career. Looking back, serving as a school board director has been one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my professional life, and I am grateful that Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox has provided me the flexibility to serve in this volunteer role.

## **Rodd W. Bender**

*Beth David Reform Congregation*



Feeling connected to a welcoming, supportive community that shares my values has always been important to me. For that reason, when I began as an associate at MGKF over two decades ago, my wife and I searched for a spiritual home that could provide those qualities. We settled upon Beth David Reform Congregation, a medium-sized synagogue in nearby Gladwyne, Pennsylvania (introduced to us by MGKF's founding partner Joe Manko, a former Beth David

president and longtime leader). Beth David has proven to be a wonderful community for our family. Through its deep commitment to social action, inclusivity, education, and community service, Beth David truly reflects its mission of “inspiring a community of seekers, learners, and doers to pursue the best in ourselves and repair the world.”

Wanting to help make sure Beth David continues to grow and thrive for future generations, I soon began to volunteer for various roles at the temple. These gradually grew from serving on committees to becoming a member of the Board of Trustees and taking on various officer positions. In June 2022, following in Joe Manko’s footsteps, I was elected as Beth David’s current president. This newest role brings with it significant responsibility for the governance and financial sustainability of the congregation. While it can sometimes be challenging to balance this volunteer commitment with other professional and family responsibilities, helping to lead Beth David is incredibly fulfilling. When Beth David members and professionals organize nonpartisan voter engagement initiatives, cook meals for and host families experiencing homelessness, offer worship services geared to participants with special needs, save an abandoned Jewish cemetery from development and work with other community groups to restore the property, and pursue a host of other activities to “repair the world,” I am proud to do my part in sustaining this special community.

Rodd share's his perspectives in this [short video clip](#).

## **Bruce S. Katcher**

*The George W. Nebinger School Library*

I have long felt that libraries were special places to advance reading literacy and after learning that most Philadelphia public schools had to close their school libraries due to the lack of funding I wanted to effect real change in the situation in my own South Philadelphia neighborhood. I teamed up with a small group of dedicated neighbors to develop a volunteer program to reopen the library in our local public school, the George W. Nebinger School, a very diverse K-8 school. We acquired many new books for the students and obtained access to a computerized library card catalog program with the assistance of the University of Pennsylvania and WePAC, a non-profit that mobilizes volunteers to reopen and staff libraries in Philadelphia public schools. As a result, the volunteer-run Nebinger library was reopened in 2018. It was incredibly fulfilling to see the students enjoy their bi-weekly visits to the library!

When schools closed and switched to remote learning during the pandemic in early 2020, we purchased a number of electronic book subscriptions with grant funding and developed a pilot program to enable second grade students to check out and read electronic books on their school laptops. When school finally reopened a year later, our library had been converted into two classrooms to accommodate the school’s growing student population. To reopen again, we were faced with the difficult job of reorganizing and reducing the size of the collection which had been randomly boxed-up and moved to a smaller room shared with several specialized teachers. Our volunteer team accomplished the reorganization and downsizing over the 2021 – 22 school year and into the summer. Finally, the library, now dedicated solely to library use, reopened at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year and the stage is set to enable us to assist with the



critical task of advancing the literacy skills of the students. It's been a great opportunity to give back to the community.



### **Katherine L. Vaccaro**

*Board of Directors, Brandywine Valley SPCA*

I got a taste for the importance of animal adoption and advocacy as a young girl, when I started going with my mom to her board meetings for our local animal shelter. As I got older, my heartstrings continued to pull me towards animal welfare, and I started volunteering for a rescue organization in my 20s. When I was asked several years ago to join Brandywine Valley SPCA's board of directors, I didn't think twice. [BVSPCA](#) is nothing short of exemplary, saving thousands of animals every year. Currently, they have five locations across Pennsylvania and Delaware and regularly make trips to rescue animals from areas devastated by natural disasters. BVSPCA even works with other animal welfare organizations to enhance those groups' programs. I am so proud to give back to BVSPCA.

Kate share's her perspectives in this [short video clip](#).



## **Shoshana (Suzanne Ilene) Schiller**

*Judge of Elections - Philadelphia, PA*

When I first moved to Philadelphia, one of the things I loved most, cheesy as it was, was walking by the Liberty Bell at night, enclosed only in glass and lit up for all to see. But the principles that bell represents are guaranteed, really, only by our right to vote and voting – at least in Pennsylvania – doesn't happen without people working at the polls. As a Judge of Elections, I'm responsible for making sure that my local polling place runs smoothly on election day, that election laws are followed, and that everyone who is eligible to vote can do so safely and without interference. Living in a densely populated area of Philadelphia, it's also an opportunity for neighbors to see one another and participate in an activity that really defines community – there are people with their kids and their dogs, there are teens and new citizens voting for the first time and there are voters in their 80's and 90's who have never missed an election. I love greeting the early voters waiting for the doors to open and at the end of each very long election day, I feel really satisfied knowing that every person who came through our polling place has had a voice in the future of our city, our commonwealth, and our country.

