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## **EIGHT ATLANTA LEADERS JOIN BOARD OF LOCAL PARKS ORGANIZATION NEW MEMBERS BRING DIVERSITY OF EXPERTISE TO ADVANCE PARK PRIDE'S MISSION**

Atlanta, GA., January 14, 2021 – A new cohort of park champions has joined Park Pride's Board of Directors, expanding the breadth of expertise of the nonprofit's leadership and furthering its mission to engage communities to activate the power of parks.

Sofia Bork, Wesley Brooks, Lane Courts, Omari Henderson, Pedro Pavón, Cynthia Searcy, Daryl Smith, and Nikki Walker, join 16 other members of the board tasked with providing governance and oversight to the organization.

**Sofia Bork** is an Engagement Readiness Consultant at Truist Bank where she leads communication strategies. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and is an alumna of the LEAD Atlanta 2019 class. Her passion for her community is evident through her volunteer efforts at the Sara J. González Park, which led to her recognition as a Park Pride Inspiration Award Winner in 2020.

**Wesley Brooks** is an affordable housing advocate who currently serves as the Chief Housing Officer for Atlanta Habitat for Humanity, leading a new department that focuses on affordable housing policy, strategic neighborhood development, community engagement, real estate, and family services. Wesley also currently serves as a Brigade Engineer for a reserve unit in the United States Army of Engineers.

**Lane Courts** is the owner of Spruce Design Team, providing artistically designed floral arrangements for in-home deliveries, gifts, and event design. She is also a board member of A Million Matters and a member of the Peachtree Garden Club.

**Omari Henderson** is a Senior Principal of Innovation at Chick-fil-A where he's focused on future business development. He is also co-owner of the ZuCot Gallery, a fine art gallery in Atlanta with the largest inventory of African American art in the Southeast, and the founder of the Youth Challenge Incorporated Foundation, a nonprofit mentoring program for young men ages 12-17.

**Pedro Pavón** serves as the Global Policy Director for Ads Privacy and Civil Rights at Facebook. Earlier in his career, he served as counsel to the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the US Department of Justice. Pavón is the Founder and former President of the Hispanic and Latino/a Law Student Association at the University of Florida College of Law.

**Cynthia Searcy** is the Associate Dean for Academic Innovation & Strategy at the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. Aside from her academic duties, she also coordinates consulting projects completed by teams of graduate students for government and nonprofit agencies. Searcy previously served as Board Chair for the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition and currently serves on their advisory committee.

**Daryl Smith** is Co-founder and Vice President of Tempus, a billable time management and invoicing solutions app. A retired NFL and Georgia Tech athlete, Smith understands the importance of having access to the recreational opportunities that parks provide and looks forward to working with Park Pride to bring great parks within walking distance of all Atlantans.

**Nikki Walker** leads the Innovation and e-Commerce Commercial teams at The Coca-Cola Company. She has played a role on Coca-Cola's Global Environmental Sustainability team and has helped shape the company's global environmental policy development and compliance. Walker also currently serves on the Board of Directors for Southface.

Mark Balloun, Chair of Park Pride's Board of Directors, is excited by the energy and talent of the newest board members. "The diversity and expertise brought by this new slate of board members will advance our progress towards a more equitable and inclusive Park Pride and bring us one step closer to achieving our vision of great parks for all. I look forward to working with them."

"Park Pride's Board of Directors is tasked not just with providing the leadership needed to achieve our ambitious goals for parks and greenspace in Atlanta, but also with navigating and responding to challenges as they arise with courage and compassion," said Michael Halicki, Park Pride's Executive Director. "The passion of this group will help Park Pride to better serve communities who need parks now more than ever."

For a full list of Park Pride's Board of Directors, visit <https://parkpride.org/who-we-are/board-of-directors/>.

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**About Park Pride:**

For over 30 years, Park Pride has worked to engage communities to activate the power of parks! Working with over 160 local Friends of the Park groups, Park Pride provides leadership, services, and funding to help communities realize their dreams for neighborhood parks that support healthy people, strong neighborhoods, vibrant business districts, a robust economy, and a healthy environment. Park Pride is active in greenspace advocacy and educating both civic leaders and the public about the benefits of parks. The nonprofit annually hosts the Parks and Greenspace Conference, the largest parks conference in the southeast. Learn more about Park Pride at [parkpride.org](http://parkpride.org).