

2023 Sunset Lake Board of Directors Candidates (6) – In Alphabetical Order

Michelle Bearden – Lot 248 – 30272 W. Lake Drive

I am seeking re-election to the Board for another 3-year term. I grew up in Girard out on Spillway Road and drove past Sunset Lake nearly every day. I often daydreamed about living here one day. In 2016, that daydream became a reality when my husband, John, and I purchased our home on West Lake Drive. It truly is a perfect place to gather together with our four children and extended family.

Professionally, I have spent my entire career in the banking industry. I began as a bank examiner with the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency. Then, after we had our first child, I moved to the bank side to reduce my travel time. Locally, I have worked at United Community Bank for 23 years. In my current role as Chief Risk Officer, I oversee the Compliance and Audit functions and collaborate with all departments to identify risks and implement internal controls within each business process.

Board and Volunteer Experience: I have served on the SLA Board for the past three years and primarily focused on “cleaning up” our Bylaws and Rules and Regulations and assisted with the annual budget planning. While I admittedly know very little about the environmental and engineering aspects of maintaining a residential lake, I do understand the importance of budgeting, financial reporting, and developing policies and procedures. If re-elected, I promise to be a positive team player and I will do my best to maintain the system of internal controls and transparency implemented by the prior and current boards.

Dr. Nancy Bitner – 130 – 30881 East Lake Drive

I have lived at Sunset Lake for 10 years. I have watched this board morph from a governing body that was responsible for good money management and lake maintenance to a board of people with personal agendas and vendettas. I want this board to get back to making sure the decisions it is making will preserve this way of life that I have grown to love. This board needs to be focused on a 1, 3, and 5 year strategic plan that addresses dam maintenance and preservation, dredging priorities (not based on who you are, but who needs it most), fishery quality and road/services improvements. I love the fireworks as much as anyone on the lake, but the board spends way too much time on this endeavor.

Board and Volunteer Experience: I remember when it was member driven and Jeanette Early and I started the Poker Run to help fund the fireworks. I have extensive professional experience in serving on state and national boards as both a member and executive officer, I have procured and managed millions of dollars in grant funds, and helped multiple organizations develop and implement successful strategic plans. I love this lake and plan to retire here with my husband. I would appreciate your vote to bring back lake and member services focus to the Sunset Lake Board.

Jenny Buhl – Lot 8, 30755 Circle Drive

My husband, Shane, and I moved to Sunset Lake in October 2020 and are glad we made the move. Prior to that, we lived in Girard for 30 years while raising our 3 children. I am a Producer Payroll and Reconciliation Specialist for Dairy.com.

Board and Volunteer Experience: During those years, I was very involved in the community, volunteering and serving on many committees and groups including the following: Girard Park Committee to replace old park equipment with updated equipment, Girard Little League, serving as President and coaching for many years, St. Patrick’s Catholic Church Religion Teacher, Spikes and Tykes Volleyball League in Farmersville, taking the first North Mac group of 3rd and 4th graders, Girard Festival Days Volleyball Tournament Coordinator, North Mac Public Schools Foundation, currently a committee member. I would like to serve on the SLA board to be involved in decision making to help ensure the lake continues to be a great place to live and attract new residents with a like mindset.

See Back for Additional Candidate Information

Valerie Jaglela – Lot 139 - 30701 East Lake Drive

I would like to be accepted as a Sunset Lake Board nominee. I have owned property at Sunset Lake since 2013. My husband, Tom and I became permanent residents in 2015. I have attended many monthly board meetings. My objective would be to enhance lake living. I firmly believe that all homeowners should take a turn sitting on the board. I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Biology. I am knowledgeable about our lake's ecosystem and would strive to keep it healthy. Along with keeping our lake healthy, I would like to keep our community socially active.

Board and Volunteer Experience: At my former residence in Bloomington, MN, I held the Vice President and President position for our HOA (Homeowners Association). I also held the title of Block Captain for the Neighborhood Watch Association.

David Johnson – Lot 49 – 15658 N. Lake Road

I was born in Springfield and raised in Petersburg. My wife, Betty, and I moved here in August 2021. We have two grown sons, Jeremy, and Joshua, and two granddaughters, Ellie, and Adalynn. Since moving here, I have been involved with several volunteer projects.

Board and Volunteer Experience: PORTA Athletic Booster Club, Member, Vice President, and President. Coached Petersburg Junior Baseball (Pony Baseball, Connie Mack, Senior League. Travel Team – River Bandits (Tennessee, Missouri, Kansas, Michigan, and Kentucky) Active in Girard United Methodist Men's Group.

Thomas Sidener – Lot 167 – 16124 Emerson Airline Road

My objective is to be considered for a Board position at the Sunset Lake Association. I am currently retired as an associate professor for the Math and Computer Sciences Department at Lincoln Land Community College. I have completed bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Illinois in computer science. I completed my graduate degree with a 4.0 grade point average and graduated with honors in 2006. Upon receipt of my graduate degree, I was asked to teach on campus at the University of Illinois Springfield. I have been teaching as an adjunct/instructor/Associate Professor for 18 years.