

## **Freedom to Teach Fund Volunteer Advisory Council – Bios**

### **Ron Jones**

Ron Jones is a proud native of Hugo, OK and a product of Hugo Public Schools. He was born in Hugo to a single mother surviving on minimum wage to raise Ron and his two older brothers. Ron's kindergarten teacher saw promise in him and created an advanced packet for his mother to review with him nightly. Passionate teachers, loving friends and family, and the support of Hugo,

OK launched Ron through the University of Chicago Law School. While in law school Ron participated in trial courses, community service projects, and a criminal defense clinic. Upon graduation he accepted a position at a nonprofit, and moved into low-income housing on Chicago's westside to provide holistic defense for youths accused of crimes, but his heart has always been in Oklahoma. In 2018, Ron returned to Oklahoma to provide holistic defense of mothers accused of crimes also for a nonprofit. Ron currently owns and operates a trial boutique law firm in Oklahoma City, The Jones Firm, PLLC.

In his free time, he reads, enjoys time with friends & family, and volunteers. Ron donates backpacks to children in Hugo each year, serves on the board of Red River Hoops, and mentors youth in his hometown. Ron knows the power of Oklahoma's public schools, he's the living embodiment of it.

### **State Senator Mary Boren**

Senator Mary B. Boren was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate in November 2018. She represents the people living in District 16 which covers Norman in Cleveland County.

After graduating with distinction from the University of Oklahoma, College of Law in 1992, Senator Boren began her education policy career as a Carl Albert Executive Fellow for the State Regents of Higher Education and State Textbook Committee, where she served all of Oklahoma's universities and public schools.

She was enlisted by Governors Walters and Henry to serve as an interim legal analyst during the last weeks of the legislative sessions in 1993, 1994, and 2003, where she reviewed and briefed legislation for the Governors' approval.

Senator Boren credits her participation in the Institute for Child Advocacy's Kids Count Leaders training and the American Bar Association's Children and Law Committee, as motivation to become a Child Advocacy Attorney and provide affordable legal representation for foster parents, grandparents, and parents undergoing family crisis from 2003-2009. In 2009, she became a certified school counselor and worked for Little Axe High School and Adams Elementary School in Norman until 2015. Senator Boren was elected by her peers to serve on the Professional Educators of Norman bargaining team.

Senator Boren has been married to Dr. Nathan Boren who board certified Family Physician since 1992. Together they have three children (Altus, Harrison, and Macy) and are members of the First Christian Church of Norman.

### **Kristin Hilty Caruso, Esq.**

Kristen Hilty Caruso received her B.A. in English from the University of Oklahoma and her J.D. from the University of Oklahoma College of Law. She is a member of the Oklahoma Bar Association and is a practicing attorney in the fields of oil and gas, employment law, real estate, and estate planning. She spent sixteen years in the private sector with the Vernon L. Smith Group of Companies where she served as In-House Counsel, Director of Management, and Director of Human Resources. Hilty Caruso served as an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Oklahoma from January 2016 to December 2020 before joining Price College of Business, Management and International Business Division as a Lecturer in Management and Legal Studies in January of 2021.

Hilty Caruso currently serves on the Division of Management and International Business Board of Advisors for Price College of Business, the Board of Directors for the Oklahoma Rural Schools Coalition, the Board of Directors for the Noble Public Schools Foundation for Excellence, and the Board of Directors for the Noble Soccer Club. When not at the soccer fields, she, her husband Darin, and their daughter Abby, can usually be found at the park with their dogs.

### **Elizabeth Pierce, Esq.**

Elizabeth Pierce started her career in banking 25 years ago as a Bank Examiner for the Federal Reserve Bank and then transitioned to a credit specialist for local banks. She also has experience with Fair Lending compliance. Elizabeth is a member of the Norman League of Women Voters and often moderates candidate forums.

Public education has been essential to her success, she graduated from Oklahoma State University with degrees in Agricultural Economics and Accounting along with a University of Oklahoma Law degree. If you are wondering, at football games it's "Orange Power." Elizabeth's interest in serving on the Advisory Board of the Freedom to Teach Fund stems from growing up as a "teacher's kid," being taught and coached by both her parents!

She has seen first hand how the quality of education can be negatively affected by the personal agenda of a parent, administrator or school board member while placing debilitating stress on teachers that advocate for facts, fairness and excellence.