



Dr. Michelle Foster
President and CEO
The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation

Dr. Michelle Foster is the President and CEO of The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation (TGKVF). Before joining TGKVF, Michelle was the CEO of the Kanawha Institute for Social Research & Action, Inc. (KISRA), a community-based, non-profit organization that strengthens West Virginia families through health, employment, asset development, and learning initiatives. Michelle's original career was as a chemical engineer, most recently at Union Carbide Corporation.

Michelle's chemical engineering undergraduate degree was conferred at City College of New York. Additionally, she has a doctorate in community economic development (CED) from Southern New Hampshire University and two master's degrees – one in CED from SNHU and another in engineering management from Marshall University. Her doctoral dissertation was entitled, "The Contributions of Pre-Incarceration Experiences and Prison-Based Programs to Post-Release Employment Acquisition, Retention and Recidivism." Most recently, she completed additional university-level studies in impact investing at the University of Oxford, Saïd Business School as well as in nonprofit management and leadership at Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Through the years, Michelle's work has been recognized locally and nationally. She has received many awards including the Living the Dream Award from the WV Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission (2016); Woman on a Mission Award from Union Mission (2016); Civil Rights Day Award from the State of West Virginia, Office of the Governor (2015); Dr. Martin Luther King, Humanitarian Award from the Saint Albans Ministerial Association (2015); Fatherhood Champion of Change recognition from President Barack Obama at the White House (2012); National Association of University Women, Charleston Branch, Leadership Award (2012); Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Theta Psi Chapter, Citizen of the Year (2012); Charleston Police Department, Award for Community Service (2011); U.S. Small Business Administration, Minority Business Champion (2009); and West Virginia State University, President's Award for Community Service (2009).

Michelle lives a life of community service and is actively engaged with several organizations in West Virginia and the Appalachian region. She is a member of the WV Workforce Development Board and the Charleston Rotary. In the philanthropy sector, Michelle serves as a Philanthropy West Virginia board member, Appalachia Funders Network steering committee member, and founding member of African American Philanthropy in Action (a giving circle). She is the President of the Charleston-Institute (WV) Chapter of the Links, Incorporated and has been a member of the organization since 2011. Additionally, she has served as the Minister of Administration of Ferguson Memorial Baptist Church since 1997. Over the years Michelle also served on the boards of the WV Community Development Hub, Kanawha County Library, WV Center on Budget and Policy, WV Non-Profit Association, and Our Children Our Future.

In her free time, Michelle enjoys traveling, attending music festivals and theatrical productions, making scented candles, and soul line dancing. She also places a premium on spending quality time with her family and friends.