

NATIONAL BANKERS ASSOCIATION SELECTS NEW BOARD LEADERSHIP

On January 1, 2021, the National Bankers Association (NBA) seated its new board of directors, led by Chairman [Robert E. James, II](#), of Carver State Bank in Savannah, Georgia. The new board was elected in October 2020, during the business session of the virtual NBA Convention. James succeeds [Kenneth Kelly](#), Chairman & CEO of First Independence Bank of Detroit, Michigan, who chaired the Association for 2 years. James will serve a two-year term as Chair.

Joining James on the [NBA Board of Directors](#) are: Kelly, as Immediate Past Chairman; Vice Chair, Cynthia N. Day, President & CEO of Citizens Trust Bank, Atlanta, Georgia; Second Vice-Chair, Todd McDonald, Vice President of Strategy of Liberty Bank & Trust Company, New Orleans, LA; Secretary, Robert P. Cooper, Senior Counsel of OneUnited Bank, Boston, MA; Treasurer, B. Doyle Mitchell, President & CEO of Industrial Bank, Washington, D.C.; Evelyn Smalls, President & CEO of United Bank of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA; Dominik Mjartan, President & CEO of Optus Bank, Columbia, SC; Laurie Vignaud, President & CEO of Unity National Bank, Houston, TX; and Patrick C. Cooper, Chairman, Commonwealth National Bank, Mobile, AL; and Kim D. Saunders, President & CEO of the NBA.

“I am honored and humbled that such an esteemed group of bankers chose me to lead this storied organization, and to follow the stalwart leadership of Kenneth Kelly, who has created a great platform for us to build on,” James said. He added, “Minority banks are critical to the communities we serve and to the American economy. Our leadership team will focus on three priorities – attracting much needed capital to our banks to allow us to expand our mission, raising our profile to inform the public and policy makers about the incredibly positive impact we have on minority communities, and building the infrastructure of the NBA so it will remain for generations to come. It is also a privilege to follow the example set by my father, Bob James, who was a two-time Chairman of the NBA, and other committed bankers like Alden McDonald, Jim Young, Bob Cooper, Ignacio Urrabazo, Preston Pinkett, Doyle Mitchell, and others, all of whom have left their imprint on this organization,” James said.

James first entered banking 20 years ago when he was elected a Director of Carver State Bank. In addition to serving as a member of the bank’s board, he is President of the Carver Community Development Entity (CDE), the bank’s community development finance affiliate, and the bank’s Director of Strategic Initiatives. Under James’ leadership, Carver CDE has won

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two awards totaling \$80 million in allocation of federal New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) from the U.S. Department of Treasury, which it uses to attract private capital to high impact projects in distressed communities across the state of Georgia. In the 20+ year history of the highly competitive NMTC program, Carver is the only non-Atlanta based entity, and only community bank in Georgia to ever win an award.

Founded in 1927 as the National Negro Bankers Association, today, the Association has expanded its membership to also include Hispanic-American, Asian-American, Native American and women – owned banks. Recognized as the voice of minority banking in America, the NBA’s mission is to create an inclusive financial services industry and a vibrant business environment for minority financial institutions, their customers and the communities they serve. Member banks are located in twenty-two states and the District of Columbia.

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