

Kate Bensen

Kate Bensen joined The Chicago Network in April 2010 as Executive Director and became its President and CEO in 2013. Prior to joining the Network, Kate led the nonprofit capacity building practice for Conlon Public Strategies for two years, using her broad based experience in organizational development, growth and positioning to assist clients with strategic planning, visibility, governance, board development and fundraising matters. She also provided strategic counsel to clients on government relations matters.

Kate has more than 20 years' experience in working with nonprofits, as a lawyer, board member and nonprofit leader. Prior to joining Conlon Public Strategies, Kate served as Chair of the University of Chicago Women's Board from 2004 to 2007, where she significantly enhanced this 47-year old organization's membership, fundraising results, grant making efficacy and visibility among key stakeholders.

Kate practiced law at Schiff Hardin LLP, one of Chicago's leading law firms, from 1986 to late 2003, serving as a partner in the firm's Finance and Public Finance Groups where she structured and managed complex, multi-party financing projects. Throughout her practice, Kate also counseled a wide variety of nonprofits on organizational, operational, restructuring and governance matters.

Kate is involved with many civic and philanthropic organizations, and currently serves as a director of the Grammy award winning ensemble eighth blackbird and The Arts Club of Chicago. Kate is a member of the Economic Club, International Women's Forum, Executives' Club, Women's Board of the University of Chicago (past Chair) and the Fortnightly of Chicago. She also serves on the President's Advisory Council for Governors State University. In 2008 she received the University of Chicago's Alumni Service Medal for her work in securing an Alumni House for the University.

Previous boards include the National Public Housing Museum (Nominating and Governance Chair), Chicago Finance Exchange (past Chair), University of Chicago Alumni Board of Governors (past President), Institute for Psychoanalysis, Fortnightly of Chicago, Guild of the Chicago History Museum (Nominating Committee Chair), Joffrey Ballet Women's Board (Membership Chair), Friends of the Parks, Emergency Fund (Nominating and Governance Chair), James Kelly Choreography Project and Fairway Network. She is a past member of the University of Chicago Visiting Committee on the College and chaired her church's audit committee for several years. Kate received her AB in economics from the University of Chicago and her law degree from Loyola University of Chicago School of Law. Her LinkedIn profile is <http://www.linkedin.com/in/katebensen>.