

MINNESOTA DFL



TRAINING SUMMIT

## Speakers, Guests, and Trainers

### Special Guest Speakers



#### **Ken Martin, Minnesota DFL Chairman**

Ken Martin is currently serving his fifth term as Chairman of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) Party. He has held this post since 2011—making him the longest serving Chairman in the 75-year history of the DFL.

Ken was only a senior at Eden Prairie High School when he joined Paul Wellstone’s campaign for U.S. Senate. And as he did for many people, Sen. Wellstone inspired Ken to pursue a political career dedicated to the principle that “we all do better, when we all do better.”

Ken has worked tirelessly to rebuild and refocus the DFL around that iconic ideal. When he was first elected Chairman, he inherited a party deeply in debt and reeling from recent defeats. By building the party to win and to last, Ken restored Minnesotans’ confidence in the DFL. He made the DFL what it is today—an all-day, year-round party dedicated to organizing communities, empowering the grassroots, electing progressive candidates, and improving the lives of all Minnesotans.

Given his success as the DFL Party Chairman, Ken was elected by his peers across the country to serve as the President of the Association of State Democratic Chairs in 2017, he was re-elected to this position in 2019. He also serves as a Vice Chair of the Democratic National Committee (DNC). Through this national platform, Ken works with state and local party committees to build permanent, long-lasting political infrastructure so they can elect candidates from the school board to the Oval Office.

Before his election as Chairman, Ken spent two decades working to further progressive candidates and causes. He played key leadership roles on various campaigns, including Dayton for Governor in 2010, Hatch for Governor in 2006, Kerry for President in 2004, Humphrey for Secretary of State in 2002, and Gore for President in 2000. Ken led the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment campaign in 2008, which dedicated funding to the arts, environment, conservation, and parks and trails in Minnesota. It is the largest conservation finance measure in the nation to ever become law.

Ken holds a B.A. in Political Science and History from the University of Kansas. He and his wife, Jennifer O’Rourke, live in Eagan, Minnesota, with their two sons.



### **Mũthoni Wambu Kraal, DNC National Political & Organizing Director**

Mũthoni Wambu Kraal is the National Political & Organizing Director at the Democratic National Committee. In this role, Mũthoni directs the electoral and organizing strategy and investments of the party committee.

Most recently, she served as the Vice President of National Outreach and Training at EMILYs List, where she oversaw their training programs, and created strategic partnerships with the progressive community and beyond.

Wambu Kraal was born in Chicago and spent her formative childhood years in New York City. Raised by two passionate educators who met because of their community activism, she attributes her dedicated interest in politics to parental osmosis. This includes the subtle fact that she could hold protests signs before she could walk. It was during 2 cycles at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee raising money for candidates and Congressional incumbents in tough races that she learned about the world of campaigns and the important role fundraising plays in winning campaigns. She also saw up close that some of the most underrepresented groups in Congress—women and people of color—weren't keeping up with the growing influence of money in elections.

Wambu Kraal has over two decades of experience in politics. She co-opened and ran a woman-owned fundraising firm that serviced clients at every level of political office. She served as the PAC Coordinator for the AFL-CIO, and served as the deputy political director for then-U.S. Senator Joe Biden. In 2008, she was the deputy campaign manager and political director for Senator Kay Hagan's successful race against Senator Elizabeth Dole in North Carolina.

A graduate of Howard University where she earned a B.A. in journalism. Wambu Kraal is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and a lifetime member of the American Council of Young Political Leaders. She resides in Washington, DC with her husband John Peter and their young son Mirii. The boy is subject to the same parental osmosis as she was growing up. He's been standing with women before he could physically stand.



**Rebecca DeHart.**

Rebecca DeHart has more than 17 years of political and advocacy experience working in Georgia and around the nation. Most recently, Rebecca was the Executive Director of the Democratic Party of Georgia where she was widely credited for her role in rebuilding the Party from a struggling, two-employee organization to a place of strength. This past cycle she directed a \$25 million operating budget and a staff of more than 150 people.

Prior to her tenure at the state party, Rebecca was the President and founder of Steel Cut Strategies, LLC, a firm specializing in campaign management, communications and governmental affairs. During her 13-year lobbying career under Georgia's Gold Dome, she was well known for her efforts advocating for greater access to healthcare, reproductive justice and safety for women, children and families.

After the 2008 elections, Rebecca began focusing her work on strategies and the operationalization of ideas needed to run successful campaigns in Georgia. In 2012, she became the Senior Vice President of a political direct mail firm, serving as both the chief creative strategist and general consultant to races around the nation, including legislative caucuses in battleground states like North Carolina. In 2013, Rebecca focused on municipal elections in Georgia and batted 1000, winning every race she worked on.

Prior to founding her own firm, Rebecca was the communications director and lobbyist for the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association and the executive director for the Georgia Commission on Family Violence. A social worker by training and a graduate of Loyola University of Chicago, Rebecca started her career working at the Women's Counseling Center of Hull House in Chicago, Illinois.

Rebecca and her husband have two sons, Rowan and Wylan, two dogs and a cat. When she's not working, you can find her playing with her kids, digging in the dirt planting beautiful, colorful things and/or cooking and eating delicious food.

## Trainers



### **Tyler Blackmon, Minnesota DFL Finance Director**

Tyler Blackmon came to the DFL in July 2017 after serving as a Communications Specialist at the Minnesota House of Representatives and earlier as the Finance Assistant for the DFL House Caucus. Prior to moving to Minnesota in 2016, he served as a campus organizer for Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy's successful re-election campaign and as an intern at the State Innovation Exchange, Better Georgia, and Georgia Equality. Tyler was born and raised in Georgia and graduated with degrees in Economics and Political Science from Yale University. He now lives in Saint Paul with his partner, Kevin, and his demonic cat, Reginald.



### **Cheyenne Davis, ASDC and DNC National Training Director**

Cheyenne is the National Training Director of the Association of State Democratic Committees and Democratic National Committee's Best Practices Institute (BPI). She comes to the BPI from the Kansas Democratic party, where she served as the Deputy Executive Director, as well as the Field, Political, and Data Director. Previously, she worked for the Kansas State Senate Democratic Leader, as well as the Kansas Racing and Gaming Commission. Cheyenne graduated from the University of Kansas with degrees in political science, American studies, and history. Cheyenne is from Topeka, KS, and is a devoted fan of the Kansas Jayhawks.



### **Brian Evans, Minnesota DFL Communications Director**

Brian Evans joined the DFL after cutting his teeth across the St. Croix River in Wisconsin. Most recently, he served as the communications and digital director for Kelda Roys' campaign for governor and worked as the senior digital organizer for Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin. Evans also spent two years at Wisconsin's Democratic Party, first as their deputy candidate services director and then as their deputy communications director. In his free time, Evans loves to read, write, and listen to podcasts.



**Lauren Harmon**

Since getting her start as a field organizer, Harmon has spent her career working to build a stronger Democratic infrastructure and elect Democratic candidates at every level of office. Harmon directed the Ohio Democratic Party's Women's Caucus in 2012 for Sen. Sherrod Brown's re-election campaign, later returning as the party's Coordinated Campaigns Director. In 2013, she served as Executive Director of the Democratic Party of Virginia as Democrats swept all three statewide offices. As Director of Voting and Democracy Campaigns at the Center for American Progress Action Fund, Harmon developed innovative state and national campaigns in support of voting rights and getting big money out of politics. After serving as senior vice president at Bergmann Zwerdling Direct, a

boutique progressive direct mail firm where she worked with candidates up and down the ballot to tell their stories and support their campaigns, Harmon joined the Association of State Democratic Committees (ASDC) at the Democratic National Committee to advocate for strong state Democratic parties all across the South. Harmon and her husband Jody live in Washington, D.C.



**Alyse Maye-Quade, Minnesota DFL Organizing Director**

Alyse Maye Quade comes to the DFL after serving as the Midwest Organizing Manager for Everytown for Gun Safety, advocating for gun violence prevention across the Midwest. She previously served as a fundraising coordinator for Neighborhoods Organizing for Change. Her political experience includes serving as Deputy Regional Organizing Director for Senator Al Franken's campaign in 2014. Born and raised on a farm in Jeffers, Minnesota, Maye-Quade studied Political Science and Journalism at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. She lives in Apple Valley with her wife, Erin Maye-Quade, and their dog, Sota.



**Erin Maye-Quade,**

Erin Maye-Quade was first elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 2016, and was the only member of the Minnesota State House to flip a seat from Republican to Democrat. She quickly established herself as a fierce advocate for working families championing paid family leave; expanding access to affordable child care; ending childhood hunger; eliminating gun violence; and investing in treatment for mental health and substance abuse issues. In 2018, Rep. Maye-Quade founded the Childhood Hunger Caucus, a coalition of businesses, nonprofits and policymakers dedicated to ending childhood hunger in Minnesota.

After legislation to prevent gun violence was stopped by Republican lawmakers, Rep. Maye-Quade held a 24-hour sit-in on the House floor to protest Republican inaction to prevent gun violence and shared stories of victims and survivors of gun violence. In June of 2018, Rep. Erin Maye-Quade was endorsed as the DFL candidate for Lt. Governor. Currently, Erin is the Advocacy Director at Gender Justice, a legal

non-profit dedicated to addressing gender inequities through the law. There, she works to advance gender justice through public education, legislative outreach, strategic partnerships and coalition-building.



**Collin Murray, Minnesota DFL Voter File Manager**

Collin Murray started at the DFL on the coordinated campaign during the 2018 campaign cycle. He is the Voter File Manager, which means he is responsible for helping people access and utilize VAN, as well as training our party to better understand and use their campaign technology. Before Collin came to Plato he studied both computer and political science at the University of Minnesota where he did quantitative cancer research until he got involved in democratic campaigns in early 2016!



**Trista Schwind, Minnesota DFL Red to Blue Director**

Trista Schwind returns to the DFL as Red to Blue Director for the 2020 cycle. She first became involved in politics as a volunteer on a local legislative race during her time at MSUM-Moorhead. Her passion grew when she discovered how field operations can affect the outcome of an election. In between campaigns, Trista loves to craft, cook, and go camping.