



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Announces Addition of Buffalo-based Elizabeth Woike-Ganga to Board of Trustees

Detroit, MI/ Buffalo, N.Y. (February 22, 2023) – The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation announced today the appointment of Elizabeth Woike-Ganga to the organization’s board of trustees. Born and raised in Buffalo, Woike-Ganga was selected for her strong community leadership and deep knowledge within the non-profit sector, along with her cross-cutting experiences throughout the Western New York region and abroad. She is the first new, at-large trustee appointment to the Foundation since 2016.

Woike-Ganga currently serves as the president & CEO of BestSelf Behavioral Health, Inc. in Buffalo, NY. BestSelf is the largest not-for-profit community-based behavioral health agency in Western New York and provides easy access to a full continuum of person-centered, trauma-informed behavioral health treatment and recovery services to people across Western New York. Woike-Ganga’s trajectory to this leadership position first began when she joined Lake Shore Behavioral Health as an intern in 2002 and then worked her way up to the position of chief operating officer. Woike-Ganga was instrumental in realizing the merger between Lake Shore and Child and Adolescent Treatment Services that ultimately formed BestSelf Behavioral Health, where she continued to grow her role into her current position in 2020.

“I am deeply honored and humbled by the opportunity to help carry out the legacy of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.,” said Woike-Ganga. “The Foundation’s work in our community is incredibly impactful and positioned to be long-lasting. I look forward to using my experience to contribute to this vital work alongside the other trustees.”

“The only thing more impressive than Liz’s resume is her passion and advocacy for the health and wellbeing of the people of Buffalo and Western New York. Her deep connection and commitment to the community, paired with her background, will provide an invaluable contribution to the Foundation as we get deeper and more focused in our work,” said Mary Wilson, chair of the Foundation. “Our board and staff look forward to working with Liz to ensure our programmatic investments and initiatives continue to make a positive impact on the quality of life in Southeast Michigan and Western New York.”

After graduating with a BA from Yale University, Woike-Ganga spent a year in Costa Rica on a Fulbright Scholarship followed by two years as a Peace Corps volunteer and trainer in Gabon, Central Africa. After returning to Buffalo, she worked at Vive, Inc., an Organization for World Refugees, as assistant director while pursuing a Master of Social Work at SUNY Buffalo. She is a 2013 graduate of Leadership Buffalo and served as a Health Leadership Fellow in 2016 with the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York. Woike-Ganga was named a Woman of Influence in 2018, a C-Level leader in 2020 by Buffalo Business First; ranked on the Power 250 and Power 150 Women list by Business First for the last five years and was the recipient of the Athena Award from the Buffalo Niagara Partnership in 2022.

With her appointment to the board of trustees, Woike-Ganga will be joining the Foundation’s three life trustees; Jeffrey C. Littmann, Mary Owen, Mary Wilson, and three at-large trustees; Jerry Mazurkiewicz, David Colligan and Frank Fountain; in addition to non-trustee committee members; Thomasina “Tina” Stenhouse, Monique Wells, Ray Telang, and Howard Morris.



RALPH C. WILSON, JR.
FOUNDATION

About the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation:

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation is a grantmaking organization dedicated primarily to sustained investment in the quality of life of the people of Southeast Michigan and Western New York. The two areas reflect the devotion of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. to his hometown of Detroit and greater Buffalo, home of his beloved Buffalo Bills NFL team. Prior to his passing in 2014, Mr. Wilson provided that a significant share of his estate be used to continue a life-long generosity of spirit by funding the Foundation that bears his name. Based in Detroit, the Foundation began with a grantmaking capacity of \$1.2 billion over a 20-year period, which expires January 8, 2035. This structure is consistent with Mr. Wilson's desire for the Foundation's impact to be immediate, substantial, measurable, and overseen by those who knew him best. For more information visit www.rcwjrf.org.

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