

Senator Winnie Brinks

Sen. Winnie Brinks is the first woman to represent Grand Rapids in the Michigan Senate since Eva McCall Hamilton was elected in 1920.

As the daughter of dairy farmers and Dutch immigrants, Brinks learned the importance of hard work at a young age. Her mother raised five children and ran the family's farm after the death of her father. This set an example of resilience and determination that Brinks carries with her to this day.

Before her election to the Michigan House of Representatives, Brinks was a caseworker at The Source. There, she helped businesses and nonprofits improve workplaces to grow and retain employees. She also previously served as the executive director of a community-based corrections agency and as a school paraprofessional.

Brinks is dedicated to keeping the Grand Rapids and West Michigan an economic leader in the state. In the state House, Brinks worked tirelessly to protect our drinking water from toxic PFAS contamination, create jobs, ensure every child has access to a world-class education and honor our state's debt to our veterans.

Brinks is a graduate of Calvin College, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Spanish with a concentration in sociology.

She and her husband Steve, a Spanish teacher, live in Grand Rapids and are the parents of three incredible daughters, Olivia, Annalise and Emma. She attends Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids.

Tina Freese Decker

Tina Freese Decker is the President & Chief Executive Officer of Spectrum Health System, a \$7 billion integrated health system, with a medical group, health plan and 14 hospitals employing 31,000 individuals in Southwest and West Michigan.

Over her 18 years serving Spectrum Health in various strategic and operational roles, Tina has developed a track record for cultivating culture and driving strategy. She is committed to building a health system that celebrates and reinforces diversity and inclusion for employees, patients, families and members.

As President & CEO, she has successfully implemented a new mission, vision and values. This foundational strategic work has been instrumental to reducing health disparities, lowering cost, and improving health and access.

Tina's awards include Modern Healthcare's 2019 Top 25 Women Leaders, Crain's Detroit Business' 2019 Health Care Heroes award and 2018 Most Notable Women in Health Care; Managed Healthcare Executive's 10 Emerging Healthcare Industry Leaders 2018.

She earned a Bachelor of Science in finance from Iowa State University and graduated with a Master of Health Administration and Master of Industrial Engineering from the University of Iowa. Tina and her husband, Jay, live in Grand Rapids, Michigan with their two children.

Jeffrey Polet

Jeff Polet is Professor of Political Science at Hope College. He is a graduate of Calvin College and did his graduate work at The Catholic University of America. He has published broadly on American constitutionalism, contemporary political thought, and educational issues. He serves on the board of directors of The Front Porch Republic and as the Academic Director of The Russell Kirk Center's campus outreach programs. He is married with three grown children.

Paul Isely

Dr. Paul Isely is currently Associate Dean and Professor of Economics for the Seidman College of Business at Grand Valley State University. He joined the GVSU faculty in 1995 after earning his Ph.D. in Economics from Purdue University. He also holds an M.S. in Economics from Purdue University and a dual B.S. in Physics and Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Isely's research interests have led to many local articles and reports. These articles have explored West Michigan's economy including forecasts of growth, the state of entrepreneurship, healthcare costs, environmental clean-up values, economic impacts of various activities, and the costs and benefits of wind power. These studies have resulted in him being interviewed extensively by TV, radio, and newspapers on the West Michigan economy and its relationship to the national and state economies.