**MDLC Board Member Brief Biographies**

**Sandy Asirvatham** joined the DRM Board in June 2015. She is a writer, musician, and now co-owner of a video & TV production company who has lived in Baltimore City since 1995. Sandy’s interest in disability stems from her passion for civil rights, interest in policy advocacy and belief in the rights of individuals to self-determination. She is eager for the opportunity to learn more about the breadth of DRM’s work and utilize her skill set in advancing the organization’s mission. “I have been impressed by DRM’s vigorous community presence and the social activism. I am excited to be a member of the DRM Board of Directors, and am looking forward to exploring how current disability law affects Maryland citizens and how it can be improved."

**Kelly Bagby** joined the DRM Board in 2013 and chairs the Fundraising Committee. Ms. Bagby is an attorney on the Health Team at AARP Foundation Litigation where she represents older people throughout around the country in civil rights cases. She is a graduate of University of Baltimore Law School and Franklin and Marshall College. Ms. Bagby’s first job as a lawyer was at DRM (then MDLC) in 1994, and she has worked on disability rights issues ever since. She was the Legal Director at University Legal Services (the Protection & Advocacy program for the District of Columbia) for seven years, then worked for the United States Health and Human Services’ Office of Counsel to the Inspector General focusing on quality of care issues in nursing facilities. Ms. Bagby is a person with a disability and lives in Queen Anne’s County. “I am very proud to be a member of the DRM Board so I can support the work that DRM’s staff does every day to enhance the lives of people with disabilities – especially those who live on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.”

**Ken Capone** was elected President of the DRM Board of Directors in 2016. Mr. Capone is a recognized leader in Maryland’s self-advocacy movement. He coordinates the advocacy and public policy initiatives of People on the Go and is a valued member of the Developmental Disabilities Coalition. Mr. Capone is or was active on such advisory bodies as the Maryland Commission on Disabilities and Waiting List Advisory Committee. In May 2014, President Obama appointed him to the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities. Mr. Capone studied Computer Programming at Johns Hopkins University, completed the Partners in Policymaking program, served as a Legislative Intern with the Maryland Senate, and worked as an “Ask Me” interviewer for The Arc of Maryland and Developmental Disabilities Administration. Mr. Capone was practically destined to become an advocate as his family was determined to ensure that he was fully included. “Working with DRM’s phenomenal advocates to advance the rights of people with disabilities as a member of the Board is deeply meaningful to me. What you do for yourself dies when you die, but what you do for others lives on after you are gone."

**Neil R. Ellis** joined the DRM Board in June 2015 and chairs the Strategic Planning Committee. He is a partner in the Washington, DC office of Sidley Austin LLP, practicing in the areas of international trade regulation and antitrust. He has represented foreign and domestic companies in complex commercial litigation, advised companies and governments to resolve trade disputes, and counseled a range of clients regarding compliance with federal antitrust rules. Mr. Ellis previously worked in the Appellate Section of the Department of Justice’s Antitrust Division, and was a law professor at Hofstra University. He is the parent of an adult daughter with physical and developmental disabilities, and first became acquainted with DRM as pro bono co-counsel. “I am very impressed with the quality of DRM’s legal work and honored to be part of the organization. Through my daughter’s disabilities I have become familiar with Maryland’s disability rights issues, and I have been motivated to assist the disabled population in achieving their human potential so that the obstacles they confront do not limit or define them.”

**Daniel Erchick** joined the DRM Board in 2013. Mr. Erchick is a Research Associate and faculty member at the International Vaccine Access Center, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, where he also completed his Master of Public Health. Previous to this position, Mr.Erchick lived in Sierra Leone, working with local disability advocates to improve and expand special education services. He is passionate about the epidemiology of disability and infectious disease, and global efforts to increase access to basic health interventions that save lives and prevent disability. He is current work brings him to Nepal. “As a person with a disability (I was born without a left arm) I am committed to addressing the barriers that exclude persons with disabilities from the fullest participation in society. DRM is a strong advocate for disability rights, and I am honored to be able to support their mission.”

**Vicki B. Finkelstein** was elected and served as the DRM Board President in 2014 and 2015. Ms. Finkelstein has been a real estate lawyer throughout her nearly 30-year career. She has worked as Director of Real Estate and Senior Real Estate Counsel at W.R. Grace & Co., managing their global real estate portfolio. She has also worked for The Rouse Company and was partner at Frank, Bernstein, Conaway & Goldman. Ms. Finkelstein graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Pennsylvania and also received her J.D. from Penn. She was a founding member and President of Friends of Tourette Syndrome Research, Inc. “Having raised a child with Tourette Syndrome, I am acutely aware of the challenges that parents of a child with a disability face. Obtaining necessary accommodations is often difficult and frustrating. My commitment to DRM stems from our shared passion for ensuring that people with disabilities can access the supports they need to achieve their full potential.”

**Kim Fusco** joined the DRM Board in 2013 and currently serves as Treasurer. She is a manager in the Audit, Accounting, and Consulting Department at Ellin & Tucker in Baltimore. Ms. Fusco is a leader in the firm’s Not-for-Profit Services Group and chairperson of the Not-for-Profit area of the firm’s Technical Standards Committee. She also chairs the firm’s Giving Back Committee that organizes firm-wide volunteer events in the Baltimore community. Ms. Fusco lives in Halethorpe with her husband. “I have several family members that have struggled with mental health disabilities, and I am honored to serve an organization that does so much to advocate for individuals with all types of disabilities.”

**Chris Gunderson** joined the DRM Board in July 2016. He is a Counsel in the Baltimore, MD office of Venable LLP, practicing in the areas of commercial litigation and energy regulation. Chris has represented international and domestic companies in litigation involving a range of issues across multiple industries, including banking, insurance, and energy production and distribution. He also routinely represents energy and utility companies before the Maryland Public Service Commission. Chris earned his law degree from the University of Maryland, and his undergraduate degree from Towson University, where he met his wife, Michele. Chris and Michele reside in Towson with their three children. “The strength and compassion of any society is demonstrated by its commitment to improve the lives of its vulnerable or marginalized citizens. The work performed by DRM is at the heart of this commitment, and I am excited about the opportunity to do my part to help DRM advance the lives of people with disabilities.”

**John Halaby** is the Vice-President of MDLC, and a Vice President of T. Rowe Price Group and T. Rowe Price Investment Services, where he manages a national accounts team. Mr. Halaby earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell University where he met his wife, Jessy. They reside in Reisterstown with their two children. "I am very honored to serve on the board of DRM as I have experienced, through my own family members’ struggles, the institutional barriers that individuals with psychiatric disabilities face as they strive to be accepted by the larger community."

**Marlene D. Hamlin** joined the DRM Board in 2015. She is a Health Technician at Anne Arundel Medical Center, a former labor representative, and Persian Gulf Army veteran with 16 years experience including as Squad Leader and Officer Candidate before her medical retirement. She is the mother of two sons, one of whom also has a disability and received assistance from DRM in a special education matter. “I know first hand how DRM’s legal assistance can be a positive turning point for individuals and families, and I am honored and thrilled to work alongside this amazing team that goes to such great lengths to ensure that others have their voices heard.”

 **James Hubbard** was for 22 years, until his recent retirement, among the most widely respected and effective members of Maryland’s House of Delegates, where he represented Prince George’s County and served as House Majority Leader. Mr. Hubbard is a recognized leader in a vast array of issues affecting people with all types of disabilities, in addition to the environment, public health and individual rights. As a longtime member of the Health and Government Operations Committee, he chaired the Public Health & Long-term Care Subcommittee among his numerous committee assignments. Mr. Hubbard received his B.A. from the University of Maryland. He was elected to the DRM Board in December 2014. “As a member of the Maryland General Assembly, I have long been impressed with the quality of DRM’s advocacy. Continuing to work closely with the organization as a Board member is a tremendous new opportunity to affect positive change for people with disabilities.”

**Aaron M. Kaufman** is a lifelong Marylander who has been a self-advocate since childhood, as both he and his brother have cerebral palsy. He earned his B.A. in American Studies from the University of Maryland. Always believing in giving back to his community, Mr. Kaufman is Vice Chair of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council and a Board member of the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities and the Jewish Foundation for Group Homes. "In my previous job, I worked very closely with DRM and was blown away by the caliber of the staff and all the transformational work they do each day. I was inspired by their work and wanted a closer connection to this amazing organization."

**Vicki Mills** has been advocating with and for people with developmental disabilities (DD) in Maryland for many years, beginning with helping residents of the Great Oaks Developmental Center find their way to freedom in the community and continuing with similar efforts regarding the Rosewood Center. Ms. Mills is the Co-Chair of People on the Go, the statewide self-advocacy group of people with DD. She also serves on The Arc Maryland’s board and has served on the Maryland DD Council where she chaired the Cross-Cutting Issues Committee. Ms. Mills is a strong proponent of Employment First policies and of including people with disabilities in the community and in the workforce. “I am honored to serve on the DRM Board. It gives me advocacy tools I can use to help develop new leaders in the DD community who will become empowered and inform DRM’s work.”

**Nevett Steele, Jr.** became the Chairperson of DRM’s Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Advisory Council in 2014, and as such is also a valued member of the DRM Board of Directors. Mr. Steele is a semi-retired attorney with a long history of pro bono service and support for nonprofit organizations and social justice causes. In addition to his general practice, Mr. Steele is involved with On Our Own and advocates for mental health consumers. He is a graduate of Hamilton College and the University of Maryland School of Law. “I am impressed by DRM’s advocacy work, its skill in representing people with disabilities, the quality of its staff and Board, and its willingness to take on tough, frequently unpopular issues. I am a proponent of human rights and opponent of coercion in mental health.”

**Laurie Wasserman** joined the DRM Board in 2015 and is the Nominations Committee chairperson. She is a partner in the family law department at Tydings & Rosenberg LLP, where she advocates for and advises clients on all matters relating to the “human” side of the law, including custody, divorce, and support cases. Many of her cases involve families with a special needs child. Ms. Wasserman recognizes the unique challenges facing these families and provides support and guidance in the areas of guardianship, benefits, special needs trusts, special education, and the interrelation between these issues and Maryland family law. She is excited to be a member of DRM’s Board and apply both her professional and personal experience to the organization.

**Tony Wright** was elected to the Board of Directors in 2014 after first serving on the Board as the PAIMI Advisory Council Chairperson, and was elected Secretary in 2015. Mr. Wright has served as Executive Director of On Our Own, Inc. Wellness & Recovery Center since 2001. He has expanded the organization to include 7 consumer-run behavioral health self-help services throughout Baltimore City and County. He has augmented the On Our Own mission and vision to serve as a model for peer-operated centers nationwide. Mr. Wright is also an artist and is currently pursuing an MSW. “DRM plays a critical role in advocating for people with mental health disabilities and ensuring that their legal and human rights are respected. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to bring my experience to DRM’s PAIMI Council and Board, and to help the organization achieve its essential goals.”