

NJHN BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATE STATEMENTS
FOR 2022-2024 ELECTION TERM
(in alphabetical order)



Tamar Kieval Brill hails from Albany, NY. She has a B.A. in psychology and education from Barnard College, Columbia University, and a M.A. in counseling from NYU. Aside from a five-year stint in corporate America, she spent her working life in higher education, first at NYU and then for 32 years at Rutgers University, where she served as an assistant dean. She retired in June 2019. She is married to Gary Brill for nearly 47 years. While Tamar was raised in a very observant Jewish household, she realized in college that she did not believe in God and about 30 years ago began to seek out Humanist organizations, although she is a member of the I.L. Peretz Secular Jewish Community. She's been a member of the NJHN for about 15 years (while attending many events for much longer than that). She has

served on the NJHN Board of Directors since 2011 and was also involved in the Humanist Community at Rutgers University. She began working with the Membership Committee more than ten years ago and now serves as Co-chair. She also joined the Program Committee last year. This year, she's gotten involved in several of NJHN's online events, including our Book Club and the Exploring Humanism course. She looks forward to assisting with the development of some additional initiatives for NJHN, as well as working with some new software to assist with membership.



Michael Cluff has been active in state and national Humanist activism since the 1990s, including serving as President of South Jersey Humanists and as a member of NJHN. He has also worked professionally with Atheist Alliance of America, co-hosted their Secular Nation podcast and supported their publicity and social media presence. He has also been a vocal advocate of humanism within the Unitarian Universalist community, which he admits can be a challenge! Michael lives in the Atlantic City area -- not far from the purported home of the Jersey Devil. He plans to bring a South Jersey perspective to the NJHN, and encourage active participation between local humanist organizations. He also intends to advocate strongly for direct social justice action, using his connections with

SURJ-NJ and other organizations to encourage humanists to "walk the walk." And finally, he hopes to bring his graphic design skills on board to assist with social media postings, publications or in other ways.



Michael Jacobsen has been a member of NJHN for over 10 years and has had the privilege of serving the organization previously as vice-president and board member. He is deeply committed to the principles and values of Humanism and believe that we Humanists all have a duty to promote these principles and values, and by doing so help create a better future for all people. He has been involved in numerous organizational activities in past years and this year is currently moderating the NJHN online discussion group "Exploring Humanism." He would consider it an honor to rejoin the NJHN board!



Brenda LaDuke is originally from Erie, PA, and moved to NJ about 25+ years ago. She works in Information Security, is married with 3 nearly adult children, and in her free time is an avid quilter. Brenda has been an active member of NJHN for many years, and a board member for the past 6 years, dedicating most of her energies to the Program Committee and Finance.



Sue Landry has been a member of the New Jersey Humanist Network since 2010. Although she has been a regular attendee at NJHN events, she has not previously served on the board. Sue has a bachelor's in Sociology and Psychology from St. Lawrence University. She was a newspaper journalist for 17 years before working at a couple of consumer health websites, including Everyday Health. She then moved into medical editing and is currently VP of Editorial Services at Nucleus Global, a large medical communications agency, where she manages a team of medical editors. Sue would like to help spread the word about NJHN and increase its membership. She envisions NJHN as a haven for like-minded people to share ideas, make new friends, and have fun. She is married to Tom Savonick, who is also a member of NJHN.



Rhonda Marker is throwing her hat into the ring for election to the Board of Directors after ten years of NJHN membership. She remembers her first activity with NJHN. Although she was a stranger to the group, she was welcomed as if we had been friends all along. Recently, she has been leading monthly discussions for the NJHN Book Club. It is that welcoming atmosphere and sense that each of us belongs here that she wants to cultivate through service on the Board of Directors. We are becoming more creative about ways to connect with each other, and she would like to continue those efforts. She looks forward to finding ways to hold in person events while still collectively caring and looking out for each other. Humanists are smart and resourceful and Rhonda believes that we can do this. For those of you who do not know her personally, she has been a librarian at Rutgers University long enough to survive five university presidents. Currently, she is the interim director of the library at Rutgers-Newark. Rhonda listens to audiobooks on her commute between Mercer and Essex Counties.



Lisa Ridge has been a member of NJHN since 2002. Volunteering time to NJHN is a very big part of her life, so it's good that she really enjoys doing it! She has served as both President and Vice President, is currently chair of our committees for programs and membership, and is the admin for our Facebook, Meetup and Twitter accounts. Lisa has been scheduling our program speakers since 2003 and has managed our fundraising efforts for NJHN and other nonprofit organizations over the years, as well as many of our picnics and HumanLight celebrations. She is committed to a positive, productive Humanist community in New Jersey and working with other organizations to achieve that goal, especially now with the challenges we face in a diverse but divided society. Lisa attends as many conferences (pre-pandemic) and online webinars and meetings as she can to keep our

community informed about issues, news, and events at the local, national, and global levels. And she regularly stays in touch with secular activists and leaders here in New Jersey, around the U.S., and internationally so she can share their views and work with our members. Lisa hopes we'll soon return to in-person activities and work together on new goals we have for NJHN to increase our visibility and our outreach to new members! Lisa lives with her partner Tim (also an NJHN Board member) and their six cats in Ewing in Mercer County.



Tim Ridge has been a member of NJHN since 2002, and first joined the Board of Directors in 2003. He has held two executive committee positions, Vice President and Treasurer. Tim has redesigned our website twice since 2003 and has always dealt with the various technical issues involved in keeping the site up and running smoothly. He is currently the chair of the Technology committee (formerly the Website committee) and a member of the Marketing committee. When we have meetings in person, he is the A/V consultant, working with our speakers to ensure they have everything they need to be heard and run their presentations. Tim has appeared as a speaker for the group several times, including his Carl Sagan presentation and hosting a discussion about fascism (which he thinks is high time we did again). Tim's nineteen years on the board has given him a detailed view of the history and development of NJHN.



Gwenn Seemel only discovered the New Jersey Humanist Network in early 2021, but she's been an enthusiastic member ever since, noting often and passionately to anyone who will listen just how much the NJHN has meant to her over the last year. Gwenn has been a full-time painter and intersectional feminist for almost twenty years. Last December she created a HumanLight artwork and animated GIF showing the red, blue, and yellow candles lit with tiny dancing humanist symbol flames, and it's Gwenn's intention to continue to nurture the visual culture of humanism. This will help humanists to become more visible to others and also to celebrate our values as a community.