

## **Marybeth Gardam**

**Position:** Development Committee Chair - full term, ends January 2028

Iowa City, IA

Line of work/profession: Retired

How long have you been a member of WILPF US? (minimum of 24 months of continuous membership is required) Since 2003

1. WILPF US is a mission-driven membership organization. What does that mean to you?

It means that WILPF US is supported by its members in every sense of the word, and the national organization is responsible to its members for fulfilling its mission and acting in a fiscally responsible way. I believe that members should have the opportunity to voice their opinions, but that the weight given to those opinions should be valued against their level of experience and their willingness to contribute in various ways to the long-term sustainability and programmatic success of the organization. Leaders need to be responsible for developing strategies and members should be asked to support those strategies.

2. Please describe your involvement in WILPF, including a brief summary of work at the level of branch, national, and/or international:

When I joined WILPF in 2003 at the branch level I participated in the Corporate Study Course and became deeply involved in promoting that course in Des Moines. Eventually I became co-President of the Des Moines branch for 3 years. When we moved from Des Moines in 2012 I was tapped to be more active at the national level, and served as Co-Chair of the Corporations VS Democracy Committee for 2 years. Eventually the other two co-chairs retired and I was left to chair the committee alone. I do the best I can and have seen the committee through a major transformation into the Women, Money & Democracy Committee where our members conduct an annual planning retreat to gain input into the work plan for the 2-3 years ahead. Since 2014 I served in some capacity as part of WILPF's Development Committee, eventually becoming the Development Chair, and then Interim Chair. I have stayed involved on the Development Committee, even when I was not chair. From 2014 through 2021 I performed all the fundraising duties that would normally have been the responsibility of staff, donating my time and expertise. I also planned and facilitated ONE WILPF Calls for 7 years to try to build solidarity and unity across WILPF US, with the help of Anne Henny, Sandy Thacker and Michael Ippolito, first on the Maestro audio platform and finally on Zoom.

3. Why are you interested in filling this position?

Fundraising at WILPF is everyone's job, but the Chair of Development is a position that no one wants. Fundraising needs a voice on the national Board. Arguably it is the easiest role to critique and measure effectiveness based on the generosity of our donors and efforts to reach out. I have been gratified by the generosity of our members, but there is still much

work to be done to find new major donors to replace those who are aging out and leaving us. It's critical that we continue to expand donorship, along with membership. And donations are inextricably connected to our ability to be visible (communications and social media) and effective (program and actions). My goal has always been to more compellingly inspire actions that can be the foundation of our fundraising, and to appeal in every way possible to new and current donors to do more to support WILPF. It is frustrating that so many members do not prioritize WILPF in their annual giving, as much as they do other organizations. I'm hoping to be able to work well with the new Executive Director to analyze the fundraising process at WILPF and improve it as much as possible.

4. Please describe your other non-WILPF work or involvement that you believe helps qualify you for this position:

I worked professionally in advertising, marketing, fundraising and non-profit leadership over the course of my career from the 1970s through the 1990s. During the 1970s, in New Jersey, I raised grant money from the Kresge Foundation (for a new ICU) and from the Prudential Foundation (for a new Hospice program) for the non-profit community hospital where I worked as Development Director and Community Relations Spokesperson. I worked also in marketing for Bell Labs, then Bell Communications Research in New Jersey. In the 1990s I was employed as Director of the Peace & Justice Center of Central Georgia (during the time of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua) and I co-founded the People of the Road Coalition in Georgia that advocated for the rights and healthcare services for Migrant Farmworker families. I organized a new women's peace organization in Cedar Rapids Iowa in 2000 and recruited 200 women the first year we operated. I organized 4 different Iowa chapters of Move To Amend. I ran my own manufacturing business for 7 years.

5. What skills can you offer in this position?

Expertise in writing, grant writing, some graphic design, Canva software, word processing, marketing and fundraising. With the help of our Office Manager's bi-monthly income reports, I write monthly summaries for the Board and Finance Committee, and encourage our members and staff to continue to prioritize their giving to WILPF, tying together as much as possible the need for fundraising with the costs of supporting our programmatic and advocacy activism. I oversee the contracts and act as liaison for two part time contractors in the area of fundraising. We still have much work to do to make WILPF sustainable for the next few decade

### **Candidate Statement**

I am running for Chair of the Development Committee of WILPF US because I feel I have the experience to make a difference. My background and work experience allows me to bring a unique set of skills to WILPF, and my prior experience in this role informs the work that lies ahead and will assist the new Executive Director in fundraising outreach efforts.

If elected I promise to continue to oversee WILPF's fundraising staff and annual giving program (2 mailed appeals a year plus online giving asks, grant application processes, bequests, major gifts and new donor lead development). This is a lot of work, even without

the hours of team meetings, board, finance and steering committee meetings. Development is the only really measurable area of WILPF where success or failure is immediately quantifiable. No wonder it is such a difficult board position to fill.

My position on fundraising at WILPF is that it is everyone's job, not just the staff and Development Committee. We have neglected fundraising as a committed part of our strategic planning for far too long. It is going to take a significant investment to build relationships with new qualified donors, donor lead research, and consistent efforts that will probably not pay off in the short term, but which will help raise our visibility and long term sustainability.

## **Activist Bio**

I attended Seton Hall University in South Orange NJ where I earned a BA in Communications in 1973. I worked professionally in advertising, marketing, fundraising and non-profit leadership over the course of my career from the 1970s through the 1990s. I've been a peace and justice volunteer and organizer since the 1980s.

During the 1970s, in my native New Jersey, I worked as a copywriter and account manager for clients like the NJ Ballet Company, the NJ Shakespeare Company at Drew University, Brooklyn Academy of Music, plus a bunch of manufacturing, banking and retail clients. I've had to hire and fire mall Santa Clauses and deal with demanding clients. I faced a lot of the kinds of misogyny and objectifying women that you've all seen on the tv show Madmen, and I resolved to get out of Advertising. But I brought my advertising and marketing skills to a non-profit world.

I signed on to work as Development Director and Community Relations Spokesperson for a small non-profit hospital (Freehold Hospital) in Monmouth County NJ. It's now a large regional medical center but back then it was struggling. I raised grant money from the Kresge Foundation (for a new ICU) and from the Prudential Foundation (for a new Hospice program) as well as handling annual giving programs, special events and major donors. I planned and coordinated volunteers to run an annual golf outing and a charity ball, both of which raised thousands of dollars. Though it was a small hospital it was in the NY Metro area and I faced a lot of challenges repairing some major PR gaffes and glitches from before my time.

Subsequently I got a taste of corporate culture when I worked doing marketing for Bell Labs, then Bell Communications Research as a long-term contract employee. In 1984 my husband's job moved to Macon, Georgia, where I found it hard to get an advertising job and we started a family. We attended the Black Catholic church, St. Peter Claver, and our daughter was one of about 10 white students in the parochial school there. I was hired part time to raise money for the school building campaign, reporting to the Parish Council. Afterwards I was offered a job as director of the Central Georgia Center for Peace, where we did educational forums and organized protests with the group Central Georgians for Central Americans.

It was during the 80s, before our daughter was born that I met a Catholic sister who was working with migrant farmworkers in Georgia, a mostly invisible population. She and I created a non-profit entity called People Of The Road Coalition, organizing all the faith leaders and social workers who were already working with migrants, though the State denied there were any there. We obtained a government grant to fund the project and pay for a 2nd migrant health clinic in the state. I also worked as a volunteer fundraiser for the Georgia Children's Home during that decade. During the 90s I was dealing with some health issues and raising a new baby as an "older" mom.

In 2000 we moved to Iowa and I have to admit I was looking forward to NOT working on peace and justice for a while. I had signed up for writing courses at University of Iowa. But following the 9/11 attacks in 2001 I was pulled back into peace work and co-founded Women For Peace in Cedar Rapids IA with 6 Christian women and 6 Muslim women, and with the support and encouragement of the Franciscan sisters and the Mercy Sisters. Within the first year we had recruited 200 women who were actively protesting the coming war, standing on street corners with signs in all kinds of weather and hosting speakers, peace walks and educational forums.

When I joined WILPF in 2003 at the branch level I participated in the Corporate Study Course and became deeply involved in promoting that course in Des Moines. Eventually I became co-President of the Des Moines branch for 3 years. During that time I served as a founding Steering Committee member for Move To Amend, and started two Move To Amend Affiliates and planted the seeds for two more. When we moved from Des Moines in 2012, I was tapped to be more active at the national level, and served as Co-Chair of the Corporations VS Democracy Committee for 2 years. Eventually the other two co-chairs retired and I was left to chair the committee alone, though I have asked repeatedly for others to relieve me and lead the committee. I do the best I can and have seen the committee through a major transformation into the Women, Money & Democracy Committee where our members conduct an annual planning retreat to gain input into the work plan for the 2-3 years ahead.

Since 2014 I served in some capacity as part of WILPF's Development Committee, eventually becoming the Development Chair, and then Interim Chair. I have stayed involved on the Development Committee, even when I was not chair. From 2014 through 2021, and again from 2023-24 I performed all the fundraising duties that would normally have been the responsibility of staff, donating my time and expertise.

During this time WILPF US faced some tough times and internal conflicts. In an attempt to unify our organization, I devoted 7 years to planning and facilitating monthly (then quarterly in 2023) One WILPF Calls/Zooms to help plan Solidarity actions across the country and raise our visibility.

I've been working for peace and justice since the 1980s. Since 2003 WILPF US has been my faith-based community where I met some of my most trusted and like-minded women friends. I've been married for 42 years and my husband has kept bail money on hand for the last 20 years, though so far I have not been arrested. We have one daughter who now lives

2 miles away, and a nearly 6 year old grandson who is the light in our lives. In running for this office I know I will have to be sacrificing family time, which I regard as precious.

### **Letter 1**

I am officially recommending WILPF US member Marybeth Gardam for the position of Development Chair. Marybeth has served in this position since 2014 and has fulfilled all the tasks required in this role, despite great odds and obstacles. She has a deep appreciation for the donors and members of WILPF US, and she is tireless in her efforts to raise money and awareness for our organization.

I've worked with Marybeth on many projects and served with her as a sister Board Member for three years. She is reliable, honest, and she does what she says she'll do. She is easy to work with and has a good sense of humor.

I know Marybeth would wish for someone else to step forward and fill this role, but she is once again offering herself in this important role. Marybeth is very loyal to WILPF US and would make a fine Board Member, just as she has in past years.

Thank you for your consideration. Feel free to contact me if you have any other questions.

Laura Dewey  
WILPF Detroit Chair  
former WILPF US Board Member  
Lloyd Family Legacy Campaign Planning Team

### **Letter 2**

Dear Nominating Committee: It is my pleasure to recommend Marybeth Gardam for the WILPF Board position as Development Chair. For the past ten year Marybeth has tried to recruit me to join the Development Committee during her tenure as a member and as Chair. I respectfully declined for health reasons but have worked off and on over the years in an advisory capacity as I too once was a professional fundraiser. WILPF has benefitted so much from her broad background in marketing, public relations, organizing and fundraising. I'm very grateful that she is willing to run for this position as we bring on an Executive Director. Having a strong experienced Development Chair to work with our Executive Director will be essential for our success as an organization. I plan to continue my association with Marybeth because I enjoy working with her. She is willing to listen to suggestions and ideas as well as patiently explaining how Development activities and programs are created and work within our quirky organization. Her dedication to growing WILPF is truly remarkable. I can't think of anyone who can do this impossibly tough job better.

Yours truly,  
Regina Sneed  
Life Member  
San Francisco Branch