



WLI Champions Profile (2019)

Name Pamela J. Wideman

Title Director –Housing & Neighborhood Services Department

Company City of Charlotte

Discipline Community Development/Local Government

Describe a Magic Moment in Your Career or Life: There are several “magic moments” that come to mind. Being able to save the home of a long-time senior resident who is also a long-time community leader. City Council’s approval of funding for the largest amount of affordable housing units in the history of the City’s Housing Trust Fund, and being appointed as the Director of the Housing & Neighborhood Services Department. I describe these moments as magical because each of them allowed me to embrace the essence of public service, while allowing me to utilize my gifts and talents to increase the supply of affordable housing in Charlotte and live out the meaning of one of Marian Wright Edelman’s quote which deeply resonates with me, “Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time.”

Describe Who or What has been a Key Influencer in Your Life: My parents were key influencers in my life. They both were personal and professional servant leaders. My mother was the oldest of 12 siblings and was a leader and caregiver by nature. Additionally, she was employed at the local hospital for 37 years as a housekeeper. In that role she made sure that colleagues, patients, and visitors were comfortable while there, recognizing that in that setting – a hospital – people often feel extremely vulnerable. My father was employed by the local transit service as a bus driver. He prided himself on ensuring that his passengers had a great experience while making it to their destinations on time. My parents provided the perfect foundation for my career. They both instilled in me the value of helping others.

Next Big Challenge as an Industry: As cities across the Country continue to grow and thrive, the next big challenge is for City leaders to develop funding and regulatory tools and strategies to help ensure that developers can deliver an adequate supply of high-quality affordable housing designed to create environments where all residents can achieve upward economic mobility.

What is Your Secret Talent: My secret talent is working with others to achieve a common goal such as increasing the supply of affordable housing. Examples of this include working with elected officials, often with limited understanding of the challenges associated with affordable housing; City Management who are juggling various city issues such as crime and increasing traffic congestion, all related to the need for an increased supply of high-quality affordable housing and working with residents who represent the full continuum of affordable housing advocates as well as opponents – those who need affordable housing, those who advocate for and support affordable housing, and those who often embody the elements of NIBYism when it comes to affordable housing.

Your Take on Championing Others: While in graduate school, I was introduced to the theory of Intergenerational Transfer, which is the transmission of something from a member of one generation to the next with no expectation that the recipient will repay the giver either directly or indirectly. Or simply stated, the responsibility of leaving things better than I found them. Therefore, I believe that championing others is essential!

One Word that Captures You Helpful