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**YWCA Allentown Welcomes New President to Board of Directors**

**Allentown, PA, February 24, 2020** – The YWCA Allentown is proud to welcome a new President to its Board of Directors.

Cheryl Johnson Watts, who joined the board in 2019, was approved unanimously by existing board members at the organization’s January 2022 meeting. Ms. Johnson Watts brings to this role her advocacy skills, wide ranging experience in politics, education, production, and finance, along with a deep commitment to community connection.

"It is an honor to serve the YWCA Allentown in achieving the continuous goal of empowering women and eliminating racism," said **Johnson Watts**. "Since the 1850s, the YWCA has continually challenged itself to evolve to meet those goals. I look forward to leading that process here in Allentown."

Ms. Johnson Watts succeeds Mar Haeussler, who served as YWCA Allentown’s board president since 2017.

"I am honored to be able to ‘pass the baton’ on to Cheryl to lead the YWCA Allentown," said **Haeussler, immediate past president of the YWCA Allentown board**. "I have gotten to know Cheryl in several capacities as our paths have crossed in multiple areas of community development. I remember fondly our trip down to boathouse row to watch the first group of Allentown students involved in the YWCA’s rowing program with Lehigh University compete in the 2017 Philadelphia Youth Regatta. With Cheryl's commitment to the YWCA's mission and her skills as a leader, I have full confidence that she will lead our organization to the next level."

Ms. Johnson Watts is a Consultant for the PA Coalition of Public Charter Schools. In addition to her board work at YWCA Allentown, she serves as Third Vice President and Education Chair for the NAACP Allentown Branch.

"We are excited to welcome Cheryl as our new Board President. At YWCA Allentown, our mission of eliminating racism and empowering women drives what we do every day," said **Sarah Barrett, Executive Director of YWCA Allentown**. "We value and seek out leadership from those who are committed to racial, social, and gender justice in their professional and personal lives to help guide our organization. We are grateful for their commitment to our organization, our mission, and our work to ensure equity and justice for all."

Full Bio for Ms. Johnson Watts follows.

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**About YWCA Allentown:** YWCA Allentown is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families, and strengthen our community. YWCA Allentown is part of an international movement serving over 2 million in the United States and 25 million worldwide. To learn more about our work, visit [www.ywcaallentown.org](http://www.ywcaallentown.org).



*Cheryl Johnson Watts*

Cheryl Johnson Watts is an advocate for Education Reform and Economic Advancement. The Women's March of 2017 inspired her to include politics in her advocacy toolkit. Cheryl was elected to the Allentown School District Board of Directors in November of 2017. She also served as the PA Regional Organizing Director for Mike Bloomberg 2020 for Congressional District 7. Prior to political involvement, Cheryl acquired over 20 years of experience connecting people and creating opportunities by producing conferences and special events in the U.S., Europe, and Latin America for MTV Networks, the National Basketball Association, her own consulting practice, and Euromoney Institutional Investor's IMN. Cheryl was born and raised in Queens, New York. She moved to Allentown, Pennsylvania in 2012 while working as a Financial Advisor for Merrill Lynch Wealth Management. The sense of community she experienced during Hurricane Sandy let her know that Allentown would be her permanent home. Ms. Johnson Watts is Third Vice President and Education Chair for the NAACP Allentown Branch. She has also served on the Lehigh Career and Technical Institute's Joint Operating Committee (2019 - 2021) and volunteered with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's Transportation Multi-modal Working Group (2017 - 2021). She served on the City of Allentown Human Relations Commission in 2019. Cheryl graduated from Princeton University in 1985 and has volunteered on their Alumni Schools Committee since 1987. She resides in Allentown's West End with her husband Michael Watts.