

Now You Know: Honoring the Life and Legacy of Kitty Dukakis

Sponsored by the [Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy](#), this symposium will celebrate women's leadership in public service as exemplified by the life and legacy of Kitty Dukakis. The goal is to form new coalitions across the public, private, non-profit, and academic sectors that will actively work together to move the needle in each area and fulfill the collective vision of Kitty and Michael Dukakis to build a thriving community that serves the most vulnerable residents of the Commonwealth.

Date and Time: Thursday May 14, 2026, 12-6:30pm

Location: [John D. O'Bryant African American Institute, Northeastern University](#)

Luncheon and Opening Remarks – 12:00-1:15pm

Arrival and Lunch (12:00-12:20pm)

Opening Remarks (12:20-12:30pm)

- Dukakis Center current [Alicia Modestino](#) and former [Ted Landsmark](#) Directors
- [Andrea Dukakis](#)
- [Maria Ivanova](#), Policy School Director, Northeastern University
- [Beth Winkelstein](#), Provost, Northeastern University

Keynote Speech (12:30-12:40pm)

[Trinh Nguyen](#), Chief, Worker Empowerment Cabinet, City of Boston

Fireside Chat (12:40-12:50pm)

Alicia, Ted, and [John Dukakis](#) with Trinh Nguyen

“Engage, Think and Do” Award Presentation (12:50-1:00pm)

Trinh Nguyen, [Worker Empowerment Cabinet](#) & the [SuccessLink](#) Team

Coffee and Networking Break (1:00-1:15pm)

Panel Presentations – 1:15-5:30pm

Bringing together policymakers, practitioners, community members and researchers, we will collectively explore how to make meaningful progress across four policy areas championed by the former Massachusetts First Lady: **(1) Housing insecurity and affordability, (2) Mental health and substance use, (3) Resilient urban neighborhoods, and (4) Preserving community through the arts.** See more details below.

Panel 1: Addressing Housing Insecurity and Affordability – 1:15-2:15pm

Moderator

[Alicia Modestino, Director, Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy](#)

Panelists

- [Patrice Williams, Assistant Research Professor of Participatory Action Research](#)
As a member of the [Healthy Neighborhoods Research Consortium](#), Dr. Williams co-leads the Healthy Neighborhoods Study (HNS) – a 7-year multidisciplinary, multi-site participatory action research project focused on neighborhood change in 9 low-income, racially/ethnically diverse communities in metropolitan Boston. Her work focuses on understanding the systems of benefit and harm influencing real estate development at the neighborhood level which have constrained inventory such that housing production has not kept up with demand, causing prices to skyrocket. Alongside a group of resident researchers, she helped develop interactive data tools that track corporate ownership of properties and their eviction histories as well as the gap between subsidized housing for residents versus the housing options that meet the needs of residents.
- [Robyn Gibson, Emerging Scholar, Healthy Neighborhoods Study](#)
- [Rachel Heller, CEO, Massachusetts Housing Partnership](#)
- [Aisha Miller, Vice President, Related Beal](#)
- [Matt Noyes, Director of State and Federal Advocacy, CHAPA](#)

Panel 2: Destigmatizing Mental Health and Substance Use – 2:15-3:15pm

Moderator

[Kim Lucas, Associate Director for Civic Research, Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy](#)

Panelists

- [Beth Molnar, Professor, Public Health and Health Sciences](#)
Social/emotional difficulties among children 1-8 years are associated with future psychopathology and other impairments yet only 25 percent of those in need receive services. Development of innovative technological tools has potential to decrease gaps in screening, referrals, and services and to promote sustainability. Working with the Boston Public Health Commission, Dr. Molnar utilized user-centered, participatory design approaches to develop smartphone technology to enhance and personalize care coordination and family support.
- [Brendan Little, Co-Founder and Co-Director, Halo Initiatives](#)
- [Jade Bulger, Director of Clinical Services, Bridge Over Troubled Waters](#)
- [Nathaniel Van Kirk, Program Director, OCD Institute, McLean Hospital](#)

Coffee and Networking Break 3:15—3:30pm

Panel 3: Building Resilient Urban Neighborhoods– 3:30-4:30pm

Moderator

[Joan Fitzgerald, Professor of Public Policy and Urban Affairs](#)

Panelists

- [Sara Carr, Associate Professor, School of Architecture](#)
Extreme heat widens spatial and health inequities as the brunt of heat islands, flooding, and air pollution fall on low-income neighborhoods and communities of color which often also lack parks and urban tree canopy that can mitigate these environmental effects. Dr. Carr will discuss a recent project with GreenRoots based in Chelsea, MA, to advance best practices for public space, shade, and cooling as a civic resource and means towards climate justice. Prioritizing public space improvements that provide shade and cooling in the summers and opportunities for year-round activities should be prioritized as a key civic infrastructure.
- [Christopher Osgood, Director of the Office of Climate Resilience, City of Boston](#)
- [Cheri Ruane, Chief Development Officer, Watson and Sampson](#)
- [Greg King, Managing Director TSK Energy Solutions LLC](#)

Panel 4: Preserving Community through the Arts – 4:30-5:30pm

Moderator

[Ted Landsmark, Distinguished Professor of Public Policy and Urban Affairs](#)

Panelists

- [H. Killion Mokwete, Assistant Professor, College of Arts, Media and Design](#)
Leveraging community-based learning approaches, Dr. Mokwete leads the Community Practice teams, teaching studios based on community engaged processes and partnerships in Roxbury, Dorchester, East Boston and Lynn. He will discuss a recent project in which he helped design the new [Winthrop Community Garden in Roxbury](#) in conjunction with Roxbury Path Forward Neighborhood Association and other community leaders to commemorate the Black Panther Party and its efforts on behalf of the Roxbury community.
- [Jody Kipnis, Co-Founder, Boston Holocaust Museum](#)
- [Anne Hawley, Norma Jean Calderwood Director, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum](#)
- [Kate Gilbert, Founder and Executive Director, Boston Public Art Triennial](#)
- [Heather Kaplow, Inaugural Artist in Residence, City of Cambridge](#)

Student Awards, Closing Remarks and Reception – 5:30-6:30pm

Kitty Dukakis “Against All Odds” Award

[Elyssa Tardif](#) and [Paula Sampson](#), Massachusetts Historical Society

Ted Landsmark “Good Trouble” Award

Ted Landsmark will present the award

Closing Remarks and Reflections

[Richard O’Bryant](#), Chief Belonging Officer, Northeastern University

Reception in Celebration of Ted Landsmark’s Distinguished University Service