

2017 Communication & Leadership Recipient



In 2012, more than two million Michigan voters elected Kim Trent to an eight-year term on the Wayne State University Board of Governors. Her priority as a board member is working to improve the university's anemic six-year graduation rate for African American undergraduate students.

Kim Trent began her career as an award-winning city hall reporter for The Detroit News, covering the city's housing department, Detroit City Council and the mayoral administrations of Coleman A. Young and Dennis W. Archer. She left The News in 1995. In 1996, she moved to Cape Town, South Africa, where she earned a graduate diploma in African Studies from the University of Cape Town. She returned to the United States and after a brief stint as a city hall reporter for the Toledo Blade, joined the Washington staff of former U.S. Representative Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick in 1997.

Kim Trent

After six years as Congresswoman Kilpatrick's communications director, Trent joined the staff of United States Senator Debbie Stabenow as Stabenow's regional manager for Detroit in 2003. In 2007, she was appointed Director of Governor Jennifer M. Granholm's southeast Michigan office, a cabinet-level position in state government. She now serves as a policy associate for Michigan Future Inc., an Ann Arbor-based think tank that is focused on creating strategies to prepare Michigan for the knowledge-based economy.

She earned a bachelor of arts degree in journalism and Africana studies and a master of arts degree in communication from Wayne State University. She has completed fellowships with the American Political Science Association in Washington D.C. and the Michigan Political Leadership Program at Michigan State University. She is also a graduate of the Detroit Regional Chamber's Leadership Detroit program. She frequently writes about race and gender issues for local and national publications and is a regular panelist on Detroit NBC affiliate WDIV's weekday morning show "Live in the D."

Ms. Trent's community leadership includes her service as president of Enough Sexual Assault in Detroit (SAID) African American 490 Challenge – an effort to raise more than \$600,000 to process backlogged DNA rape kits in Detroit. She also serves as president of the Rosa Parks Scholarship Foundation and vice president of City Connect Detroit and is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's National Social Action Commission. She has received many awards, including the State Bar of Michigan's Liberty Bell Award, the Michigan Democratic Party's Martin Luther King Leadership Award and the Michigan Chronicle's Women of Excellence Award. She lives in Detroit with her husband, author and communications consultant Ken Coleman, and their son.