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## **Mayor LaFrance announces Chief Equity Officer**

**Anchorage, AK**— Mayor LaFrance announced today that Kim Waller will be the Municipality of Anchorage’s Chief Equity Officer.

“We know there’s work to do when it comes to making our local government work for everyone in Anchorage,” said Mayor Suzanne LaFrance. “I am grateful that Kim will be bringing her talents and experience to drive equity in our Municipal policies and programs.”

In her current role, Waller serves as the Senior Director of Diversity & Inclusion with The Foraker Group. Here she has assisted boards of directors, staff, and task forces around Alaska in their efforts to define and meet goals to create more inclusive and welcoming spaces.

Waller is a lifelong Alaskan who was born in Fairbanks to a southern mother (Cynthia Rufen-Blanchette) and a father hailing from the French West-Indies (Daniel V. Rufen-Blanchette), Kim and her sister, Chantalle Rufen-Blanchette, spent their earliest years in North Pole, Alaska. Their family moved to Anchorage when she was in elementary school.

Waller has a background in communications. She began her career as an intern at KTUU and moved into broadcasting at KFAT 92.9 FM before relocating to New York City to work for MTV Networks and NBC. Waller spent ten years at Power 105.1, where she launched, produced, and hosted Power on the Block, a public affairs show, for which she received a national Gracie Award.

Waller received her B.A. in Mass Media from New York University, where she was awarded the Stenbeck Scholarship and recipient of the Founders Day Award for academic achievement. She also holds an A.L.M. in Journalism from Harvard University.

“Kim’s work at the Hutchins Center demonstrated the commitment to equity and education that has been evident at all stages of her career,” said Henry

Louis Gates, Jr., Alphonse Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center at Harvard University. “Kim is gifted at creating innovative spaces within institutions and organizations to amplify the voices and concerns of those who have too often been marginalized, silenced, and made invisible.”

Here in Anchorage, Waller launched Women’s Power League of Alaska (WPLAK), a network of Alaskans united for the purpose of strengthening the state’s economy through the empowerment of women. The nonprofit accomplishes its mission through mentorship, professional development, and community building.

Waller is an active and highly decorated member of the community. Most recently, she was the recipient of the Ebony Aurora Award ('24). She is an ATHENA Society Inductee ('23) and recipient of Alaska’s Significant Community Engagement Award, UAA - Sigma Alpha Pi ('19). She currently serves on the Executive Board of Directors for Alaska Public Media ('22 – current), as the Foundation Chair for Jack and Jill Inc., Anchorage Chapter ('21 – current), and on the PTA of Bear Valley Elementary School ('22 – current).

She will start in the Chief Equity Officer role in September.

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