

# Greater Milwaukee Committee: Joel Brennan named president of GMC

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*Milwaukee-area native ready to bring a 'bias toward taking action' in advancing community-building initiatives*

**MILWAUKEE** - Joel Brennan, a native of the Milwaukee area with extensive experience in both the public and private sectors, has been named president of the Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC), as announced Wednesday by the GMC board of directors.

Brennan succeeds Julia Taylor, who announced her retirement as GMC president earlier this year after 19 years of service, and will be leaving his role in Gov. Tony Evers' administration as secretary of the Department of Administration, a position he was appointed to in January 2019.

"One of the things I've learned over the past three years is to have a bias toward taking action and doing whatever you can to move our community forward. I'm honored to lead the GMC and build on the initiatives established by Julia Taylor and the GMC," Brennan said. "The GMC has a tremendous track record of accomplishment over its long history that provides a solid foundation to make an even greater impact on the challenges facing our community."

Among the issues the GMC will continue to address include identifying opportunities to improve K-12 educational outcomes in Milwaukee, talent retention and equitable workforce development, business development, and growing resources to address

the area's infrastructure needs.

"Joel Brennan brings an incredibly unique skill set and track record of success in both the public and private sectors, all of which made him the strongest candidate to fill this role," said Gregory Wesley, co-chair of the GMC selection committee, who also serves as senior vice president, strategic alliances and business development at the Medical College of Wisconsin. "He's well suited to advance the GMC's mission of building better communities and improving the lives of all people in southeastern Wisconsin."

Wesley, along with selection committee co-chairs Mary Ellen Stanek, and Cristy Garcia-Thomas said there was a diverse pool of applicants for the position featuring a variety of different personal and professional backgrounds.

"It was a very impressive pool of applicants," said Stanek, founder, managing director and chief investment officer at Robert W. Baird & Co. "Given the needs in our community and the chance we have to move our community forward, we all believe Joel is uniquely qualified to achieve that goal."

Prior to working in Gov. Evers' administration, Brennan served as president and CEO of Discovery World from October 2007 through January 2019. Under his leadership, the organization turned multi-million dollar operating deficits into surpluses and eliminated millions in capital debt.

Brennan also served as head of Milwaukee's Redevelopment Authority, where he directed real estate development and large economic development projects. Major successes include redevelopment of the Menomonee Valley, relocation of Manpower World Headquarters to downtown Milwaukee, reconstruction of the Milwaukee Intermodal Station, and redevelopment of the former Pabst Brewery site.

"Joel's professional accomplishments and knowledge of both the local business and political landscapes are tremendous assets that he'll be able to leverage to the benefit of the GMC, and more importantly, the broader community," said Garcia-Thomas, chief external affairs officer at Advocate Aurora Health.

The GMC is made up of almost 200 of the top CEOs and leaders of major business, industry, financial institutions, law firms, and educational institutions in the metropolitan area and is dedicated to improving the civic life and economy of southeastern Wisconsin.

“The GMC is an important organization with a strong legacy of progress and achievement,” said Greg Marcus, GMC board chair and president and CEO of the Marcus Corporation. “Joel’s professional background will serve him well in connecting the dots to build on the work we’ve accomplished as an organization and take it to a new level focusing on the key issues that will improve our quality of life.”