Biographies

Dalia Halpern-Matthews FRSA

Dalia Halpern-Matthews is Chief Executive at Creating Cultural Capacities UK, an organisation providing services in the fields of corporate social responsibility, tackling social isolation, regeneration, innovation, creativity, culture, health and wellbeing, property, change management, new routes around historical roadblocks and governance.

Born in Chatham, and having grown up in Rochester, Dalia attended Chatham Grammar School for Girls, and later Leith’s Cookery School and the University of Wolverhampton. An astute community and business leader, she is passionate about improving people’s lives, building sustainable communities, visual arts, music and her family.

In an inspirational career Dalia has led projects on safeguarding, governance and the importance of creativity, has set up large scale community arts events and educational programmes and also assisted Medway Council with its City of Culture bid for 2025. Known for encouraging charities to think with a charitable heart and a commercial head, she likes to inspire organisations to collaborate rather than compete. Her involvement with the University of Kent includes working on degree apprenticeships, culture and the arts and on Medway-specific projects.

Dalia was a pioneer in using the Arts to improve health and wellbeing, enabling many people to use this as a “Social Prescription.” During the pandemic Dalia created the Communities and Faith Forum while running the Befriending Programme at Medway Voluntary Action. This Forum comprises over 45 communities and organisations across faith, ethnicity, nationality, race and location working together across Medway to support well over 5,000 people.

Dalia is regular commentator in the media, demonstrating her commitment to challenge injustice and highlighting how education and understanding can help people to understand the pernicious nature of racism, stereotyping, discrimination, disinformation and bias.
Dina Asher-Smith

Dina Asher-Smith is the fastest British woman in history. She currently holds British records in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m; British Junior records in the 100m and 200m and the European Junior Indoor record in the 200m. She is also the world's fastest teenager ever over 60m and 200m.

Born in Orpington, Dina attended Newstead Wood School and then Kings College London where she graduated with a BA in History. She joined Blackheath and Bromley Harriers Athletics Club at the age of eight.

Dina is the World 200m Champion, four times European Champion and the first British woman to run a 100m sprint in less than 11 seconds. In 2018 she won three gold medals and set new British Records in the 100m and 200m at the European Championships. In 2019 she became the only British athlete ever to win three medals at a single World Championships. At the Olympic Games she won two bronze medals in the 4x100m relay. As a teenager she won the World Junior Championships and European Junior Championships and was selected as the youngest ever athlete on the British senior team at the World Championships in 2013.

Dina has appeared on the cover of fashion magazines Vogue, GQ and Grazia and walked the runway at the Paris Fashion show. She has featured in many advertising campaigns for brands including Nike, Hublot, Muller, Samsung, Louis Vuitton and Puregym.

Dina was awarded the Sunday Times British Sportswoman of the Year in 2018 & 2019, the BT Sport Action Woman of the Year in 2018 and was a finalist in the BBC Sports Personality of the Year twice.
Dr Nike Folayan MBE (PhD, CEng, FIET)

Dr Nike Folayan is a Chartered Electronics Engineer and Co-founder and Chairperson of the Association for Black and Minority Ethnic Engineers (AFBE-UK). Nike received a Masters degree from the University of Kent and a Doctorate degree in engineering focusing on electromagnetic bandgap antennas for mobile applications.

A technological innovator, Nike has been at the forefront of developing pioneering communication and control solutions for major railway schemes, including HS2 and Crossrail. She is Technical Director and the Technical Discipline Leader for Communications and Control within WSP, an engineering consultancy where she leads a team of telecommunications engineers in the UK and India working on a variety of global projects within the transport sector in the UK, Australia, South America, Middle East and Africa.

Nike co-founded AFBE-UK in 2007 to promote higher achievements in education and engineering, particularly among people from black and minority ethnicity backgrounds. This network of 2,500 members run initiatives that cater to the needs of pupils as young as 8 to experienced technical professionals seeking progression into corporate management. The programmes have benefitted more than 20,000 people.

In 2019 Nike was named in the Financial Times published 100 most influential women in engineering. She has served on various industry boards for the Science Council, Royal Academy of Engineering, and Transport for London and is a member of the engineering industrial panel at the University of Kent. She was recently a judge at the IET Young Woman of the Year 2019 Award and in 2020 Nike joined the board of Commissioners for the Hamilton Commission. Nike is Patron of Croydon Supplementary Education Project and a Trustee at EngineeringUK and Stemettes Futures.

In 2020, Nike was awarded an MBE for her contribution to Diversity in Engineering in the Queens New Year's honours list.
Dr. Richard Hodges OBE

Dr Richard Hodges OBE is President Emeritus of The American University of Rome, having served as it’s President from 2012-2020.

Richard began his career with excavations in his home village of Box, Wiltshire. He studied archaeology and history at the University of Southampton and completed a doctorate on the archaeology of Dark Age trade. In 1976 he joined the University of Sheffield as a lecturer and launched excavations and cultural heritage projects in England and Italy at Roystone Grange (Derbyshire), Montarrenti (Tuscany) and San Vincenzo al Volturno (Molise).

He joined the Butrint Foundation as its scientific director (1993-2012) to initiate new excavations and site management strategies at the Unesco World Heritage Site of Butrint (Albania). From 2000-12 he oversaw the International Centre for Albanian Archaeology and the Gjirokastra Conservation Project. He was currently Principal Investigator of a major ERC-funded project in western Tuscany (2015-21), for the University of Siena. He was Director of the British School at Rome (1988-95); Director of the Prince of Wales’s Institute of Architecture (1996-98); Director of the Institute of World Archaeology at the University of East Anglia (1996-2007); Williams Director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology (2007-12).

He is President of the Box Archaeological and Natural History Society, a trustee of the Packard Humanities Institute, President of LoveItaly, the Butrint Management Foundation (Tirana), a board member of the Italian Ministry of Culture’s Herculaneum Board and trustee of the Corinth Roman Fresco Program. His books include Dark Age Economics (1982), Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe (1983), Wall-to-Wall History (1991), Visions of Rome. A Life of Thomas Ashby (2000), and The Archaeology of Mediterranean Placemaking (2016).

Dr. Hodges was awarded the Order of the British Empire in the Queen’s Honours, 1995.
Ptolemy Dean

Ptolemy Dean qualified as an architect at Edinburgh University before winning an ICOMOS scholarship, after which he worked on various Grade I listed buildings including Stowe and Chastleton House. In 1993 he became a SPAB Lethaby Scholar, with a specialism in Sir John Soanes' country houses.

Ptolemy joined Richard Griffiths Architects in 1994, working on Southwark Cathedral, before establishing his own architectural practice. In 2012 he was appointed Surveyor of the Fabric at Westminster Abbey and has served on the London Advising Panel of English Heritage, the Architectural Panel of The National Trust and is on the committee of SAVE Britain's Heritage.

In 2019, he was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to heritage and design.
Daniel Rubin

Daniel Rubin is founder and CEO of the footwear company and brand, Dune. With over three decades of experience in footwear; from shoe manufacturer to wholesaler and then retailer, he is a notable figurehead of the retail industry.

Daniel went to Stowe School, Buckingham, and then studied Accounting at the University of Kent from 1966 to 1969. After graduation he took articles at the accountancy firm, Touche Ross (subsequently acquired by Deloittes), where he qualified as a Chartered Accountant. He then worked at a small merchant bank, London & Continental Bankers and later as Finance Director at Goodman Price, a demolition and engineering company.

In 1976 he briefly joined his father’s women’s fashion shoe manufacturing company, Jack Rose Shoes Limited. The following year he bought 50% of another women’s shoe manufacturing company, London Lane Shoes, making fashion shoes for large UK retail companies.

In 1986 he sold his shares in London Lane and set up a footwear design and wholesale company called Browning Enterprises Limited, importing primarily from the Far East and selling to the likes of Marks & Spencer and Next. In 1992 he founded Dune.

The Dune Group is entering its 30th year. The brand, Dune London, which specialises in premium footwear and accessories and has wide recognition, is sold in over 300 stores in over 30 countries around the world. In the UK it has wide distribution, in not only its own stores, but through John Lewis, Fenwick’s and Selfridges amongst others. The company has won the Drapers Award for the Best Multiple Retailer three times in recent years.

Daniel joined Kent in 1966 and is one of the “Second 500” group of students. He has been instrumental in Kent Business School’s Business Start-Up Journey as a mentor, keynote speaker and judge. Daniel won the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2014 Drapers Footwear and Accessories Awards.
Mark Thomas

Mark Thomas is a London born comedian, presenter, political satirist and journalist from south London. He first became known as a guest comic on the BBC Radio 1 comedy show The Mary Whitehouse Experience in the late 1980s and was a founding member of the Cutting Edge comedy show at the Comedy Store. He is widely known and celebrated for political stunts on his show, The Mark Thomas Comedy Product on Channel 4.

He is the recipient of four Fringe Firsts, Amnesty International Freedom of Speech Award, Stage Special Fringe Award, Herald Award, Time Out Award, Kurdish Medal of Honour, UN Association Global Human Rights Defender Award.

Born in south London, Mark attended Bretton Hall College where he obtained a BA (Hons) in drama. He is the author of five books and has been a columnist for the New Statesman. Mark has had a long affiliation with the University of Kent, where he delivered the inaugural Linda Smith Lecture in 2015. The Mark Thomas Collection also forms part of the University's British Stand-Up Comedy Archive. This includes material related to Mark's early stand-up career on the comedy circuit in the 1980s and 1990s through to his later solo shows between 1996 and 2015, and includes audio-visual recordings, press and promotional material. The collection also contains material related to Mark's broadcasting career on television and radio in the 1990s and 2000s, and also material related to his book and audio publications. There is also extensive material related to Mark's campaigning and activism work (some of which has informed his stand-up performance and television work), including campaigns involving arms and the arms trade, multinational corporations, and campaigns for civil liberties. This material includes press and publicity, correspondence, audio-visual recordings, notebooks and personal diaries, and photographs.
Joe Egan was born in Bolton and educated at Thornleigh Salesian College and the University of Kent at Canterbury. He then spent several years travelling round the world before entering the Law and qualifying as a solicitor in 1982.

In December 1986 he set up the firm with an ethos that one solved the client’s problem first and worried about getting paid second rather than the other way round. He became the first solicitor in Bolton to achieve the right to appear in the Crown Courts when he was granted Higher Rights in 1995. Since then he has successfully defended clients before juries in Bolton, Manchester and London and in the Court of Appeal in London.

For over 15 years he has been Joint Honorary Secretary of Bolton Law Society of which he is a past President. Since 1996 he has represented solicitors in Lancashire and Greater Manchester on the Law Society’s national council. In 2015 he was elected to be Deputy Vice President of the Law Society of England and Wales.

In 2017 he stepped down as managing director to focus on his role as Vice President of the Law Society before becoming President in July 2017. In July 2018 when his tenure as President concluded Joe came back to the firm to head up the Civil Litigation Department.
Keith Teare

Keith Teare is SVP and Head of Corporate Development at InFarm, a billion-dollar vertical farming company, and founder of SignalRank Corp, a Silicon Valley data analytics fintech startup in the venture capital space.

Keith was born and raised in Scarborough, North Yorkshire, and attended George Pindar Secondary Modern School, the Scarborough Boys High School and then the University of Kent. He studied British Constitution and Sociology and earned a BA (Hons) degree.

In the 1980s Keith pioneered the use of computer networks and databases to power the transformation of organizations like Warner Brothers Music and Mobil Oil. In the 1990s he was founder and CTO of Europe's first Internet Service Provider for consumers - EasyNet. He also co-founded the world's first Internet Café - CYBERIA.

Between the late 1990s and early 2000s, Keith built RealNames as founder and CEO the company that invented paid keywords on the Internet. The system became the internet’s primary navigation system in many countries through partnerships with the Chinese Government, the Japanese domain name system, and 20 other nations all of whom needed to use non-latin characters for Internet Navigation. They partnered with Google for “I'm Feeling Lucky” and Microsoft in their Internet Explorer browser. In 2001 VeriSign used the technology to launch the first multilingual domain name capability on the Internet. RealNames and EasyNet were both valued at over $1 billion by investors during the late 1990s.

Throughout his career Keith has raised over $1 billion and returned many times that to investors. He has worked with governments, including China, Japan, the UK, and the US Government, Investors, boards, partners, customers; advertisers and their agencies, bankers, and others.

He has served on many boards, both public and private, as a member or as Chairman. Since 1997 He has lived in Palo Alto, California. He is a long-standing member of the University of Kent in America Board.