Alexandra Nichols’ extensive background in international studies and business has benefited numerous civic and charitable causes in Chicago and throughout Illinois. Now board chair of the Music Institute of Chicago, she led a multi-million dollar campaign (2000-2003) to convert a century-old Evanston church into new performance concert hall and music education center. This project was recognized by Landmarks Illinois with a Richard H. Driehaus Preservation Award for Outstanding Adaptive Reuse.

John Nichols served as board chair and CEO of Illinois Tool Works (1980-96) and, more recently, as president and CEO of the Marmon Group, Inc. A member of the National Business Hall of Fame, he has served on numerous professional, educational and cultural boards. As chair of the North Lawndale Charter School, he helped complete the conversion of a long-vacant Sears, Roebuck & Co. powerhouse into a new high school on the West Side of Chicago. The project was recognized by Landmarks Illinois with a Richard H. Driehaus Preservation Award for Project of the Year.