



Teresa Tomlinson Biography

Teresa moved to Columbus in 1994 from Atlanta and married Trip Tomlinson, who was raised in Columbus graduating from Hardaway High School. Since the year 2000, Teresa has been a member of Columbus' Metropolitan Planning Organization's Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), which studies issues of regional growth and provides citizen input on important state and municipal transportation decisions. She serves two years as the CAC's Chair and as its representative on the Planning Organization's Technical Committee and Policy Committee.

She has volunteered countless hours on municipal committees. Whether it was:

- *Fiscal Responsibility* - helping to negotiate the improved use of taxpayer monies by creating roads and infrastructure improvements that facilitate transportation and economic development, while building-up, not destroying, neighborhood communities;
- *Community Advocacy* – working with residents to create neighborhood associations and Crime Watch groups in coordination with the Columbus Police Department; promoting local businesses through facilitating the MidTown Business Association and “buy local” campaigns;
- *Building Consensus* - developing workable solutions to previous political impasse by conceiving of and building consensus for the land swap deal that traded the city's old Firestone property for acreage on which the City Services building, a multi-story parking deck and a regional swim competition Natatorium is sited to be built; or
- *Municipal Leadership* - drafting local legislation and regularly conferring with elected and administrative staff to enhance Columbus' quality of life and create economic incentives for more thoughtful, competitive growth;

Teresa has been working to improve and promote Columbus, Georgia.

On three occasions she has been recognized by the Columbus City Council for her work on government appointed boards and task force committees; was recognized by the Georgia House of Representatives as an Outstanding Volunteer; has received a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for “outstanding achievement, service and public distinction”, was named a Columbus Woman on the Rise and Exceptional Role Model in Business and was a Concharty Council of Girl Scouts Woman of Achievement.

She is active in the community having served as Chairperson on the Strategic Communications Task Force for the Regional Growth Management Plan related to BRAC growth, and having served as a member of the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce Board (Ex Officio); as Mayor Wetherington's appointee to the Columbus Conventions and Visitors Bureau Board; on the Board of Trustees for the RiverCenter; on the Board of Directors of Columbus Regional Medical Center Foundation; as Mayor Poydasheff's appointee to the Columbus South Revitalization Task Force; and many others.

Teresa, and her husband Trip Tomlinson, are owners of Tomlinson Properties, LLC (which acquires, rehabilitates and preserves commercial and residential in-town properties), and The Butler's Pantry, Inc. (a wholesale food provider of deli foods and gourmet foods to-go).

For 16 years, Teresa practiced law with the firm of Pope, McGlamry, Kilpatrick, Morrison and Norwood, LLP where she became an equity partner in 1998. She specialized in complex litigation handling cases involving the 1996 crash of a ValuJet airliner in the Florida everglades; United States Senate hearings on home loan mortgage fraud, and the aftermath of the billion dollar accounting fraud at HealthSouth Corporation. She has also defended the parent company of Popeye's and Church's Chicken, as well as Seattle Coffee Company, in federal securities actions. She has been admitted to practice in courts across the country, including the United State Supreme Court. In 2005, Teresa was selected as a Georgia Rising Star Super Lawyer, which are lawyers age 40 and under who have been identified as "outstanding lawyers who have demonstrated superior professional potential". In 2006, she became a board member, and currently serves as Vice Chair of Justice Served, Inc. a non-profit organization affiliated with the Georgia Court of Appeals, which promotes through education the importance of the judicial system.

In July 2006, Teresa took a leave of absence, or "sabbatical", from her law practice to become the interim Executive Director of MidTown, Inc. a community renewal project which seeks to stabilize neighborhoods in, and bring economic development to, the geographic center of Columbus, Georgia. MidTown, Inc. announced in July 2007 that Teresa would assume the permanent position of its Executive Director, taking an "Of Counsel" role with her law firm. During her 12-month tenure as Interim Director and her first six months as Executive Director, Teresa worked without pay so as to give the organization the opportunity to establish itself through the successful completion of a major \$1.2 million fundraising campaign. Her leadership is credited with the branded of the MidTown Columbus region, the creation of the credible and perpetual non-profit organization (MidTown, Inc.), the Library land swap between the Muscogee County School District and the Columbus City government, a \$1 million Transportation Enhancement Grant to recreate the Wynnton Corridor streetscape, the creation and growth of the MidTown Business Association and much more.

Teresa is a graduate of Sweet Briar College in Virginia (1987, *cum laude*) with a dual degree in Government and Economics, and a Certificate (commonly referred to as a "Minor") in Business Management. She received her law degree from Emory University School of Law in 1991.

