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Governor Moore Announces Nicole Earle as Chair of the Maryland Racing Commission—First Woman and First African American in this Leadership Role

Special to the Baltimore Times

ANNAPOLIS, MD (June 5, 2026) — Governor Wes Moore today announced the appointment of Nicole Earle to chair the [Maryland Racing Commission](#). She is the first woman and first African American to serve in this state leadership role, and her tenure will begin on June 10, 2026. George Mahoney, outgoing chair, will continue to serve as a Commission member.

"Nicole Earle is the right leader at the right time and I am proud to appoint her as Chair of the Maryland Racing Commission," said Gov. Moore. "This appointment is a historic milestone for Maryland and I am confident her expertise and experience will guide her while leading our horse racing industry."

"The horse racing industry is in an exciting chapter of transformation as we prepare for a revitalized Pimlico," said Maryland Department of Labor Secretary Portia Wu. "Ms. Earle's extensive expertise in development finance and community investment makes her uniquely suited for this role. She brings a vital perspective that ensures Maryland racing remains an economic engine that uplifts local communities and that we uphold the integrity of this Maryland tradition."

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Earle is the President and CEO of Dominion Real Estate and Dominion Community Development Corporation and has over two decades of experience in the real estate industry. She has financed and managed over \$1 billion in real estate projects focusing on economic growth, affordable housing, and community revitalization. She has served as a member of the Maryland Racing Commission for a year.

A prominent leader in the Park Heights community, Earle previously served as a Commercial Community Development Lender for Fulton Bank and as Development Manager for the Housing Authority of Baltimore City, where she managed complex projects like the \$400 million Uplands mixed-income development. She holds a master's degree in management and public policy with a concentration in financial management and economic development from Carnegie Mellon University.

"It is an honor to serve as Chair of the Maryland Racing Commission during this important period for Maryland racing," said incoming Maryland Racing Commission Chair Nicole Earle. "I look forward to working with my fellow Commissioners and industry stakeholders to uphold the integrity of racing, support a safe and vibrant racing environment, and contribute to the success of Maryland racing as

investments in Pimlico and Laurel shape a sustainable future for this longstanding Maryland tradition."

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"I am thrilled to welcome Ms. Earle as our new chairperson, after a year of service as a Commission member," said Maryland Racing Commission Executive Director Chris Merz. "Her impressive background in large-scale project analysis and strategy will be a vital asset to this leadership role. I look forward to working closely alongside her as we honor Maryland's rich racing heritage while building a modern and sustainable future for the sport."

The chair of the Maryland Racing Commission leads the nine-member body appointed by the Governor to regulate thoroughbred, standardbred and pari-mutuel wagering in Maryland. Key responsibilities include presiding over the commission during meetings, overseeing hearings on appeals, and participating in decisions involving licensing, disciplinary actions, racing dates, purse structures, and regulatory approvals.

[Maryland Racing Commission](#) is dedicated to safeguarding health and safety in horse racing, enforcing rules for fair racing, and protecting the public through transparent betting operations. Committed to the highest standards of equine welfare, jockey safety, and regulatory integrity, the Commission supports horse racing as a cherished Maryland tradition and a high-value economic driver that supports thousands of jobs across the state.

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