**William E. Strickland, Jr.**

**Founder and Executive Chair – Manchester Bidwell Corporation**

As founder and executive chairman of Manchester Bidwell Corporation and its subsidiaries, Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild (MCG) and Bidwell Training Center (BTC), and National Center for Arts and Technology, Bill Strickland has created an educational model designed to create empowering educational environments for adults-in-transition as well as urban and at-risk youth, enriching Southwestern Pennsylvania, and the world.

In 1968, Strickland founded Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild to help combat the economic and social devastation experienced by the residents of his North Side neighborhood. Later in 1972, he assumed leadership of Bidwell Training Center to guide its transition to providing skills relevant to Pittsburgh’s economy. GRAMMY®-winning MCG Jazz was added to the MBC family in 1987, which is one of the longest-running jazz subscription series in America. What started as an informal art program and exhibition space for inner-city minority children has now transformed into a 62,000 sq. ft. arts and career-training center, as well as a 40,000 sq. ft. production and educational greenhouse.

Throughout Strickland’s distinguished career, he has been honored with numerous prestigious awards for his contributions to arts and the community, including the coveted MacArthur “Genius” award. He is also the author of *Make the Impossible Possible*.

Strickland holds a B.A. in American history and foreign relations from the University of Pittsburgh and graduated cum laude.