

TIFFANEY MCCLENDON

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Strategic and mission-driven leader with 20+ years of experience developing people, strengthening organizations, and advancing meaningful change. Founder & CEO of R.I.S.E. Leadership and Director of Learning & Engagement at Birmingham Zoo, bringing expertise in leadership development, organizational culture, education, coaching, and strategy.

ICF Associate Certified Coach, strategist, educator, speaker, and author with experience developing leaders at every stage, building inclusive systems, and helping individuals and organizations navigate complexity, strengthen impact, and create sustainable change.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Strategic Leadership

- Organizational Strategy & Culture Development
- Inclusive Culture & IDEA Systems Integration
- Learning Systems Architecture
- Leadership Pipeline & Talent Development

Operational & Financial Leadership

- Multi-Program Budget Oversight (~\$575K annual operating budget)
- Revenue-Aligned Program Design
- Cross-Functional Team Leadership (4 managers; 12-person departmental team)
- Performance Systems & Accountability Structures

Executive Influence & Industry Engagement

- Executive Coaching & Advisory Services
- Public Speaking & Industry Facilitation
- Assessment Interpretation (DISC, 360)
- Board & Committee Leadership

SENIOR LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Birmingham Zoo

Director of Learning & Engagement | 2024–Present

- Provide strategic oversight for institutional learning systems, volunteer engagement infrastructure, and IDEA strategy integration within a public-serving institution exceeding 500,000 annual visitors.
- Lead revenue-generating and mission-aligned educational initiatives serving 5,000+ participants annually across on-site and community-based programs.
- Direct ~\$575K annual departmental budget with responsibility for forecasting, expense management, and alignment with institutional revenue and expense targets.
- Lead four direct-report managers overseeing a 12-person departmental team across education, interpretation, volunteer management, and inclusion functions.
- Serve as strategic partner to executive leadership in strengthening institutional culture, engagement systems, and professional development architecture.
- Advance institutional inclusion strategy through committee leadership, training design, and policy influence.

Promoted through four progressive leadership roles reflecting expanded scope across revenue operations, member engagement, and institutional inclusion strategy.

- Staff Learning & Inclusion Manager (2023–2024)
- Guest Services Programs Manager (2021–2023)
- Membership & Group Sales Manager (2018–2021)
- Membership & Group Sales Supervisor (2016–2018)

ENTREPRENEURIAL & CONSULTING LEADERSHIP

R.I.S.E. Leadership

Founder & CEO | Feb 2025–Present

- Lead executive coaching and leadership mentoring engagements serving leaders across nonprofit, conservation, and corporate sectors.
- Design and facilitate customized leadership development programs and individualized growth strategies for emerging and advancing leaders.
- Advise organizations on leadership infrastructure, culture strategy, and capacity development.
- Advise organizations on digital presence strategy, designing and launching mission-aligned websites that strengthen visibility, credibility, and stakeholder engagement.

Leadby

Strategic Advisor, Leadership Development | 2024–Present

- Design and deliver leadership development programming for the Aspiring Leaders Network.
- Deliver executive coaching informed by DISC and 360 assessment data to support participant growth and performance within contracted programs.
- Collaborate with program leadership to align curriculum, coaching, and assessment strategy with contracted organizational objectives.

INDUSTRY TEACHING & FACULTY ROLES

Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA)

Instructor | 2024–Present

- Facilitate week-long leadership programs serving professionals from AZA-accredited institutions worldwide.
- Develop and refine curriculum aligned with evolving leadership best practices and participant feedback.
- Facilitate interpretation and application of DISC and 360 assessments within cohort-based leadership development program.
- Guide participant capstone project development and implementation planning.

PUBLICATIONS

- McClendon, T. (2026). *Pocket Coach: 40 Questions for 8 Difficult Moments*. R.I.S.E. Leadership.

SELECTED SPEAKING & INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

- AZA Conservation Education Committee Regional Conference, Moderator (2026)
- AZA Mid-Year Conference, Diversity Summit Planning Lead & Facilitator (2025)
- AZA Annual Conference, Moderator (2024)
- AZA Annual Conference, Panelist & Moderator (2023)
- Canopy Strategic Partners Community Conversations, Panelist (2022)

BOARD & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Board of Directors, Minorities in Aquarium & Zoo Science (MIAZS), 2025–Present
- Chair, Professional Development Committee, MIAZS, 2025–Present
- Diversity Committee Member, Association of Zoos & Aquariums, 2024–Present
- Chair, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility Committee, Birmingham Zoo, 2024–Present

CERTIFICATIONS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Associate Certified Coach (ACC), International Coaching Federation, 2026
- Certified Executive Coach (CEC), Symbiosis Coaching, 2025
- Certified Diversity Professional (CDP), National Diversity Council, 2023
- DEI in the Workplace, University of South Florida, 2022
- MPACT Manager Training, Personnel Board of Jefferson County, 2021
- Employee Engagement, Disney Institute, 2021
- Quality Service, Disney Institute, 2021