



Kelly A. Garnes

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
STRATEGIST · EDUCATOR

MBA, Columbia Business School
Faculty, Klingenstein Center, Columbia University
Ed.M., Harvard University
B.A., University of Virginia

Kelly A. Garnes went from teaching history in Newark to running a **\$135M financial portfolio** as a school CFO. She teaches at the **Klingenstein Center at Columbia University**, serves as Board Treasurer of the **NBOA**, and founded **The Garnes Institute**. On stage, she turns financial complexity into strategic clarity and gives every audience a framework they can use Monday morning.

The training earlier this week was literally the best financial training I have ever participated in (and I've probably participated in at least 100 financial trainings in my career). Kelly Garnes was terrific and provided excellent advice.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

KEYNOTE TOPICS

From Invisible to Indispensable

Why the people who keep organizations alive are often the last to be seen, and the three moves that change that. Built on the Visibility Architecture framework: Translate your value. Track your impact. Tell your story.

StormProof

How to build an organization that doesn't just survive disruption but comes out of it stronger. Covers scenario planning, reserve strategy, and the leadership decisions that separate resilient institutions from fragile ones.

AI for Organizations

What leaders actually need to know before buying the software everyone is selling them. A governance-first approach to AI adoption that puts mission and human judgment ahead of hype.

Own Your Numbers

The financial confidence session that turns number-avoidant professionals into data-driven leaders. Perfect for ERGs, women's leadership summits, and teams that know the numbers matter but don't know where to start.

The Career Pivot Playbook

From classroom to C-suite: the framework for professionals ready to rewrite their career story. Kelly's own path from teaching to a \$135M CFO role is the proof of concept.

The Entrepreneurial Mindset

How to find the business hiding inside your expertise and build it while keeping your day job. Covers idea generation, revenue model design, and the mental shifts that turn professionals into founders.

CREDIBILITY

- CFO, Gill St. Bernard's School
- Board Treasurer, NBOA
- Faculty, Klingenstein Center, Columbia University
- Former COO, Ascend (\$101M)
- Founder, The Garnes Institute
- NYSAIS Keynote, 2026

AUDIENCES

Corporate / ERG

Nonprofits

Independent Schools

Women in Leadership

Entrepreneurs

Associations

FORMATS

Keynote

45-60 min

Workshop

90 min to full day

Fireside Chat

Moderated Q&A

Panel

Moderator or panelist

Virtual

Live or pre-recorded

Emcee / Host

Half or full day

Retreat

Full day or multi-day