

Itohowo (Ita) E. Ekpoudom '03
New York, NY

Region I Alumni Trustee Candidate

Since 2018 Ita Ekpoudom has been a partner at GingerBread Capital, a firm with the mission to engage, educate, and elevate the next generation of successful women business leaders and investors. In this position she feels she aligns her personal and professional life around doing things with and on behalf of people she cares about. For her, that has centered around advocating for gender equity in business and leadership.

Ekpoudom is the daughter of Nigerian immigrants who came to the U.S. in the 1960s, some of the first in their families to study abroad. They instilled in their children the importance of education, showing them, Ekpoudom states, “what is possible when opportunities and access align.” They encouraged her to be a doctor; but she found her passion in finance and was among one of the first cohorts of students to get a certificate from Princeton’s Program in Finance.

After five years at Goldman Sachs, Ekpoudom took time for a “reset.” She headed to Wharton to earn an MBA and expanded her international experience by participating in Wharton’s international exchange program with INSEAD in Singapore. She then went on to global product management roles at American Express and TravelClick.

As Ekpoudom moved into the venture capital realm, she noticed that women were underrepresented as both founders and funders, and she wanted to be part of the solution. During the same time, Ekpoudom suffered through several deaths in her family. Those losses crystallized

for her “that no day is given, and that we must live with a sense of urgency and move with intention.” After taking eight months off, she decided to make a bold move and formed Tigress Ventures, an advisory and consulting firm, in 2014.

As founder and CEO of Tigress Ventures, Ekpoudom tapped her network “to bring together visionary entrepreneurs with seasoned professionals to help women scale their businesses and hone their leadership skills.” Tigress Ventures hosted a monthly speakers series featuring thought leaders and industry experts and provided private consultations for individual clients. She also served as a venture partner at Plum Alley Investments, where she oversaw investment opportunities and pipeline for high-growth female-founded and gender-diverse startups.

Ekpoudom’s volunteer activities mirror her professional objectives. She currently chairs the New York chapter of All Raise, an organization which works to “amplify female and non-binary voices, accelerate their success, and create a tech culture where women and non-binary voices are leading, shaping, and funding the future.” Ekpoudom has served as the president of the Alumnae Association Leadership Board of, and remains a member of, W.O.M.E.N. in America, whose vision is empowering women to achieve positions of influence in business. She is also the former chair of the Women’s Entrepreneurship Council at the St. Francis College Center for Entrepreneurship in Brooklyn.

Similar themes run through Ekpoudom’s engagement with Princeton. She is a member of the Vice Dean for Innovation’s advisory council and has led workshops, sat on panels, and mentored student entrepreneurs on campus and in New York City. As a member of the steering committee

for the affinity conference Thrive: Empowering and Celebrating Princeton's Black Alumni, she was a force behind the conference's entrepreneurial content.

Ekpoudom's alumni engagement has been a constant since graduation. She has held multiple titles in service to her class, including treasurer and Reunion co-chair. Among other volunteer roles, she sat on the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council as chair of the Committee on Reunions. Having served as music director of the Princeton Tigressions as an undergraduate, she later co-chaired their alumnae board: "One of my most impactful experiences at Princeton was being a member of Tigressions. In them, I found a second family and sisterhood, and that is still true today."