

The Tennessee Human Rights Commission;
Metro Human Relations Commission; and
Tennessee United for Human Rights
With Partner Organizations
Present The Tennessee Celebration of

International
HUMAN RIGHTS DAY



Celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*Born **Free** & **Equal**?*
*The Timeline of **Justice** in **Nashville***

December 11, 2018
First Amendment Center

International Human Rights Day

On October 24, 1945, in the aftermath of World War II, the United Nations came into being as an intergovernmental organization, with the purpose of saving future generations from the devastation of international conflict.

United Nations representatives formally adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on **December 10, 1948**. The Declaration was drafted by representatives of all regions of the world and encompassed all legal traditions. It is the most universal human rights document in existence, delineating the thirty fundamental rights that form the basis for a democratic society.

Following this historic act, the Assembly called upon all Member Countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and “to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories.”

Today, the Declaration is a living document that has been accepted as a contract between a government and its people throughout the world.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Declaration, and the United Nations has announced the theme: Born Free & Equal. In alignment with this theme, Tennessee is celebrating with: **Born Free & Equal? The Timeline of Justice in Nashville**. The past, present and future of human rights in this city will be showcased tonight.

In Tennessee, the Human Rights Day celebration has become a time to reflect and look to the future. During the event, we honor those who have given a lifetime of service to making human rights a reality, those who have given outstanding service to forward human rights and those who are picking up the torch and carrying it forward.

Program Agenda

Master of Ceremonies—Beverly Watts
Executive Director, Tennessee Human Rights Commission

Gubernatorial Proclamation presented by—Annazette Houston
Chair, Tennessee Human Rights Commission

Remarks on the 70th Anniversary—Melody Fowler-Green
Executive Director, Metro Human Relations Commission

Mayoral Proclamation presented by—Janice Snow Rodriguez
Chair, Metro Human Relations Commission

2018 Human Rights **Rising Advocate** Awardees

- Fayo Abadula
- Anne Barnett
- Odessa Kelly
- Community Oversight Now

Moment of Reflection on historical human rights events in Nashville

2018 Human Rights **Outstanding Service** Awardees

- Dawn Deaner
- Tom Negri

Panel: Current Issues—Children, Women & Immigrant Rights

Moderator—Melody Fowler-Green, MHRC

Immigrant Rights—Dennisse Calle, TIRRC

Children's Rights—Phoebe Castelblanco, UNICEF USA

Women's Rights—Sharon Roberson, YWCA of Middle Tenn.

2018 Human Rights **Lifetime Achievement** Awardees

- King Hollands
- Dr. Blondell Strong Kimbrough

Musical Selection—Angela Taylor, *Peaceful Swag*

Closing Remarks—Beverly Watts
Executive Director, Tennessee Human Rights Commission

Unity Prayer—Rev. Brian Fesler
Pastor, Church of Scientology

Master of Ceremonies Beverly Watts



Nashville native **Beverly Watts** was appointed the Executive Director of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission in July 2007. Prior to her current appointment, she served as Special Advisor to the Chair at the U S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission responsible for state and local relations. She has more than 25 years of civil rights enforcement and education experience in the public and private sector.

Beverly is the recipient of numerous awards including her July 2005 Induction to the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame. She is the recipient of the 2005 Louisville Metro MLK Freedom Award; 2003 Women Leading Kentucky Martha Layne Collins Leadership Award and the 2003 EEOC/FEPA Award for Innovative Outreach, to name a few.

Special Remarks Melody Fowler-Green



Melody (“Mel”) Fowler-Green is the Executive Director of the Metro Human Relations Commission. Prior to taking the helm at the Commission, Mel was a public interest and civil rights attorney. She represented workers from many service industries including restaurant staff, cable installers, landscapers, construction workers, and farmworkers in wage & hour actions (including large class actions) and in employment discrimination cases. Mel also served as the first staff attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee.

Mel graduated cum laude from Georgetown University Law Center in 2000. She also holds an MA in Women’s Studies from the University of Cincinnati, and a BA in Theatre from the University of Michigan-Flint.

Current Issues Panel Discussion



Dennisse Calle earned a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Latin American Studies from Princeton University. In undergrad, Dennisse was part of an immigrants rights organization where she worked to organize day laborers, run a college prep program for undocumented students, and participate in national conversations around the DREAM act. After graduation, Dennisse completed two fellowships in civic service and in October of 2018 she joined the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition as Policy Officer. In her role, she focuses on how policy impacts immigrant and refugee families at a local level.



Phoebe Castelblanco is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with two degrees in geology and peace, war and defense. She has volunteered with various organizations and worked with children for more than five years. Phoebe cultivated a passion for defending human rights while interning with Human Rights Watch and is eager to direct her career toward protecting children. She is very excited to collaborate and innovate with the team as the Community Engagement Fellow in Nashville with UNICEF USA.



Born of two educators, **Sharon K. Roberson** comes by her desire to learn and educate honestly. As the YWCA Nashville & Middle Tennessee's president and chief executive officer, she is acting on her belief that we can lift everyone through education. The YWCA has been servicing Nashville and Middle Tennessee through their programs designed to help women, girls and families by eliminating racism and empowering women. Sharon joined the 119-year-old organization after working as Senior Vice President and General Counsel & Secretary for Direct General Corporation. She assumed her post at the YWCA in November of 2016. She is an award recipient of the Academy for Women of Achievement, a former YWCA board member, graduate of Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University Law School, and is currently YWCA President and Chief Executive Officer.

Rising Advocate Awards



Fayo Abadula is a champion for empowering young girls in her community. Beginning in 2018, she co-founded the Oromo Youth of Nashville, a mentorship group for the Oromo youth and anyone from the African Diaspora interested in pursuing a college degree. This group currently mentors 18 high schools students, providing ACT preps four days a week, University campus visits and best of all acts as a big brother/sister to the students. Fayo has made a profound contribution to this group, as a mentor especially to the girls who come from poor families and want to do the best for themselves. She is also president of the Vanderbilt Muslim Student Association.



Anne Barnett is a lifelong Tennessean. She was born in Paris and received her education in Knoxville, where she fought for social and economic justice alongside fellow students and campus workers. After graduation, she continued labor organizing as Co-Chair of Jobs with Justice of East Tennessee and as Membership Coordinator with United Campus Workers, Tennessee's Higher Education Union. She moved to Nashville in 2015 where she is a current Trustee on the Executive Board of the Central Labor Council, Union Representative with United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1995, and Executive Board member of OUTreach, UFCW's LGBTQ Labor Caucus. In her spare time, she also participates in local campaigns fighting racism and economic oppression.



Odessa Kelly works tirelessly for the city of Nashville and all its residents, particularly around the human rights to housing, employment, and one's standard of living. Most recently, she was a leader along with Anne Barnett on Stand Up Nashville's efforts to secure a Community Benefits Agreement with the developers of the soccer stadium. She serves on the board of the New Leaders Council and she is committed to sharing political knowledge and training others to join her in pushing for equity in the Nashville community. She's Co-Chair of Economic Equity for NOAH (Nashville Organized for Action and Hope) and works on securing living wage jobs for the people of Nashville.

Rising Advocate Awards



After years of civil rights, social justice, and religious organizations calling for some type of community oversight for the Metro Nashville Police Department (MNPd), a coalition was formed comprised of the following social justice groups and organizations: Gideon's Army, the No Exceptions Prison Collective, Nashville NAACP,

Tennessee State Conference of the NAACP, Black Lives Matter Nashville, Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Nashville, Democracy Nashville & Democratic Communities, Workers' Dignity, Music City Riders United, Nashville Peacemakers, Justice for Jocques Coalition, and Southerners On New Ground.

The coalition was formed to create a Community Oversight Board for the city of Nashville, which will help protect citizens against any potential racial or other discrimination shown by police officers conducting their duties. In October 2016, Gideon's Army released its extensive Driving While Black report, which confirmed accounts of Black community members by detailing the racially disparate impact of traffic stops conducted by MNPd. Among its list of demands, the report called for a civilian oversight board.

Less than four months after the release of the report, on February 10, 2017, MNPd flex officer Joshua Lippert shot and killed Jocques Clemmons, a Black father and Nashvillian, while Clemmons ran away from Lippert after a traffic stop. After Clemmons' death, and amidst the contentious process of determining who would conduct the investigation, community groups, led by the Justice for Jocques Coalition, renewed their call for a community oversight board in Nashville.

The Community Oversight Now coalition worked for months to gain support for a charter referendum to create an independent community oversight board with compulsory and investigative powers. On November 6, 2018, the amendment to establish the Community Oversight Board was passed when Nashville citizens voted in favor of it. The amendment established The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County Community Oversight Board, which will have the independent power to investigate allegations of misconduct against MNPd officers and pass along recommendations.

Outstanding Service Awards



Dawn Deaner served in the Metropolitan Public Defender's Office for Nashville-Davidson County for twenty years. In this role, she challenged a judicial system fraught with injustice. Now, she is spearheading the Choosing Justice Initiative where she will take on clients who can't afford an attorney but also can't get a public defender. CJJ will also be a vehicle through which Dawn can advocate for reforms in other areas of the system. Dawn is also an Adjunct Professor of Trial Advocacy at Vanderbilt University Law School. She received her law degree

from George Washington University Law School, and her undergraduate degree from Columbia University. In 2011, Dawn received the Tennessee Bar Association's 2011 Ashley T. Wiltshire Public Service Attorney of the Year award. In 2012, she was recognized by Gideon's Promise with the Stephen B. Bright Public Defender Award for her contributions to improving the quality of indigent defense in the South.



Tom Negri worked with Loews Hotels for 35 years, most recently as the Managing Director of Loews Vanderbilt Hotel from 1997-2013. He has served on nearly 20 boards and action committees, including Habitat for Humanity, the Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau, the YWCA, American Red Cross, Conexión Americas and the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, as well as taking a leading role on Nashville for All of Us, the

initiative to defeat the "English Only" bill driven to a special election by Metro Councilman Eric Crafton in 2009. He was the interim director of the Metro Human Relations Commission for two years, after he retired as manager of Loews Hotel. While he was at Loews, Tom stood firm to ensure the hotel was welcoming to all. Upon his retirement, there were more than 40 cultures represented on hotel staff, and he had dubbed the staff cafeteria the "Crosswinds Café," to recognize the various peoples who came from other places. He was an integral member of the Coalition for Education About Immigration and a major advocate for diversity in Nashville. In 2013, he received the Peggy Steine Memorial Award for Human Rights Collaboration from CommunityNashville with his longtime friend and community advocate, Avi Poster. In 2014, he was presented with the Carrie Hull Award by the YWCA for his work promoting diversity and reducing violence against women.

Lifetime Achievement Award

King Hollands



In 1960 Nashville was a principal training ground for some of the nation's most influential leaders in the civil rights movement, many of whom were schooled in the techniques of nonviolent protest. Along with the Nashville community, a group of young Nashville college students organized the Nashville sit-ins, city marches, and an effective downtown store boycott that led to the desegregation of public accommodations in the city. The Nashville protests came to serve as models for later protests throughout the South.

King Hollands is a Nashville native who attended local public elementary schools and the first integrated High School, Father Ryan, in 1954. King went on to attend Fisk University in 1957, and, while there he fought for civil rights on the battleground of downtown Nashville's lunch counters.

During the movement, he was assaulted, shot at and spent two weeks in jail. He had been trained in nonviolent protest tactics at the famous Highlander School in Monteagle, Tenn., where Rosa Parks and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. had been trained by longtime union organizer Myles Horton.

The Nashville movement began in February 1960 when students at Fisk, American Baptist College, Tennessee A&I University and Meharry began to test and later sit-in at downtown stores including Woolworth, S.H. Kress, McClellan's and Walgreens where they successfully practiced non-violence while being attacked and jailed.

He later attended NYU's Graduate School of Business and Vanderbilt University's Engineering Management Program.

His professional history includes: Research Physicist, Corporate Management with AT&T, IBM Business Development with ICBO New York, MEDCO, American Baptist College Business Manager/ Adjunct Professor and TN Minority Economic Development Division and he is currently with TennCare's Information Services Division.

King has remained involved in the community and is committed to social justice work.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. Blondell Strong Kimbrough



Dr. Blondell Strong Kimbrough, Ph.D., earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Tennessee A & I State University (now Tennessee State University, 1964), a Master's of Science Degree from George Peabody College (now George Peabody of Vanderbilt University, 1967) as one of the first African-American women to study at the college; and, a Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Library Science) from The University of Michigan, 1983 and continued post-doctorate work in the Center for African-American Studies. Her education

allowed her to experience work in varied areas - academically and community service. Her most significant launching pad for giving back has been the NAACP where she has coordinated major voter registration drives and election protection activities; worked successfully in concert with attorneys to gain the freedom of incarcerated individuals wrongfully convicted; served in many leadership roles on the local and state levels; witnessed the election of the first African-American mayor in Selma, AL as an active participant in that electoral process; and served as event planner for regional, state and local events.

Dr. Kimbrough has received recognition from the national Points of Light Foundation, Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center of Vanderbilt University, ACLU, TN State Conference NAACP and the Nashville Branch NAACP.

She serves as the coordinator for Spruce Street Baptist Church's annual Toy Drive for less fortunate children. She is an Alpha Kappa Alpha Soror earning her pearls at TSU during the Fall of 1961. She would like to recognize individuals who have blessed her in life: "Gratefulness is always in order for the sustaining blessings I received from my parents - Jeff and Bertha McDonald - during their lifetime. I give honor, praise and thankfulness to my spouse and partner - Dr. Charles Kimbrough-- for the love and support he gives in all that I do. I recognize my sister, Dr. Patricia A. Carter, for being a guardian angel." She is also the biological mother to two sons.

Acknowledgements

Event Chair

Rev. Brian Fesler, *Church of Scientology*

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Beverly Watts, *Tennessee Human Rights Commission*

Event Host

A very special thank you to the First Amendment Center and Gay Campbell for being wonderful hosts.

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- Bob Teague, Angela Taylor and Massood Taj for brightening our lives with song

Next Year

If your organization would like to participate in the planning for 2019, please contact the Chair at info@nashvillehumanrights.org.

More Information

Visit www.nashvillehumanrights.org, join our mailing list and see:

- The full Universal **Declaration** of Human Rights
- **Information** about Human Rights Day
- Free educational **videos and materials**
- Student **artwork** depicting human rights
- A resource **directory** of Tennessee human rights organizations
- A pdf version of this **program**
- Information about **past events** and award recipients
- **Upcoming events** centered around human rights
- And **more!**