

# Tennessee Human Rights Day Celebration December 8

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Tennesseans gather each year around December 10th for the Tennessee Celebration of International Human Rights Day (TCIHRD). The TCIHRD will take place in Nashville on Thursday, December 8th at 5 pm at the Nashville Church of Scientology. During the event, leaders are acknowledged, and awards recognize human rights champions in three categories: Rising Advocate, Outstanding Service, and Lifetime Achievement.

Muriel Nolen, director of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission, will serve as master of ceremonies for the affair. Rev. Davie Tucker, director of Metro Human Relations Commission, will comment on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and how it applies locally. The theme, “Advancing Universal Freedom,” will be explored by a special panel.

The Lifetime Achievement Award will go to A.J. Starling, a past commissioner for the Tennessee Human Rights Commission, an advocate for workers’ rights since 1971. Some of his earliest work was with the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1235; since the early 1980s he has been with the Tennessee AFL-CIO.

Outstanding Service Awards are going to Dr. Allison Quintanilla Plattsmier, the Executive Director of the Edgehill Neighborhood Partnership; Rev. Earle Fisher, the senior pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in Memphis and founder of #UPTheVote901; and Robin Derryberry, who served on the Tennessee Human Rights Commission from 2015 – 2022.



**(top row l-r) Muriel Nolen, Allison Quintanilla Plattsmier, Rev. Davie Tucker (middle row l-r) Jacob Aparicio, Dr. Stephanie Kang, Rev Earle J. Fisher (bottom row l-r) Robin Derryberry, A.J. Starling, and Rev Brian Fesler.**

Rising Advocate Awards will go to Jacob Aparicio, the Building Bridges & WE City Program Coordinator for the Oasis Center and Stephanie Kang, the Bureau Director of Health Equity for the Metro Public Health Department.

A committee of human rights organizations, nonprofits, and advocates, including the Tennessee Human Rights Commission, Metro Human Relations Commission, Tennessee United for Human Rights, the Scarritt Bennett Center, the Nashville chapter of Amnesty International, the Church of Scientology and others, work together each year to plan the event.

“Human Rights Day is a day to remember past advances in human rights, to honor those who have made our lives better,” says planning committee chair Rev. Brian Fesler, pastor of the Church of Scientology in Nashville. “It’s also a day to refresh and restore and be inspired for the following year, and a sort of annual reunion of the state’s various agencies and organizations who work daily to make human rights a fact. The day centers around the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and this year we focus on how human rights advance universal freedom.”

The event will be live in person this year, after two years of virtual events during the pandemic. To ensure the safety and health of all, extra precautions are being taken. Temperature screenings will take place at entry, and the committee asks that anyone who may have symptoms of illness to please view the event later when it is posted online. The event venue this year is the Church of Scientology, 1130 8th Ave S, Nashville TN 37203. There is no charge for admission, but donations are being accepted to cover costs of the event. Registration is at [TnUHR.org](http://TnUHR.org), with more information about the event and human rights.