

The Tennessee Human Rights Commission;
Metro Human Relations Commission;
Scarritt Bennett Center;
United Nations Association, Nashville Cordell Hull Chapter;
Tennessee United for Human Rights;
and others

Present the 2023 Tennessee Celebration of...



*Dignity, Freedom
and Justice for All*

Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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 75th anniversary of the Declaration. Tennessee is celebrating with the theme: **Dignity, Freedom and Justice for All.**

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

Opening— Sarah Anderson, Southern Word Poet

Master of Ceremonies—Muriel Nolen
Executive Director, Tennessee Human Rights Commission

Gubernatorial Proclamation presented by—Veronica McGraw
Deputy Director, Tennessee Human Rights Commission

Special Remarks—Rev. Davie Tucker
Executive Director, Metro Human Relations Commission

Mayoral Proclamation presented by—Maryam Abolfazli
Chair, Metro Human Relations Commission

2023 Human Rights [Rising Advocate](#) Honorees

~ Kosar Kosar
~ Zacnite Vargas

Special Remarks—Samar Ali
Vanderbilt Professor of Political Science and Law
Co-Chair, Vanderbilt Project on Unity & American Democracy

2023 Human Rights [Outstanding Service](#) Honorees

~ Tamika Braden
~ Jenn Garcia

Comments on the UDHR—David Whitfield
President, United Nations Association Nashville Cordell Hull Chapter

2023 Human Rights [Outstanding Service](#) Honorees

~ Martesha Johnson Moore
~ Kelly Sue Waller

Presentation on THRC 60th Anniversary—Muriel Nolen

[Discussion: Dignity, Freedom & Justice for All](#)

Moderator—David Plazas; **Guest**—Rabbi Michael Danziger

2023 Human Rights [Lifetime Achievement](#) Honorees

~ Ludy Wallace

Closing Remarks—Muriel Nolen

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



Master of Ceremonies Muriel Nolen



Muriel Malone Nolen was appointed the Executive Director for the Tennessee Human Rights Commission in February 2022. Prior to joining THRC, she served as Assistant District Attorney General in Shelby County for 18 years. Mrs. Nolen is a trial lawyer by trade and has worked for various governmental and non-profit agencies throughout Tennessee such as Tennessee Attorney General's Office, Memphis Area Legal Services, Hamilton County District Attorney General's Office, and Southwest Tennessee Community College. Mrs. Nolen received her Bachelor of

Science and a Master of Science from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. She received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Memphis. She currently serves on the Board of Crime Stoppers of Memphis and Shelby County and the Executive Board of Ben F. Jones-National Bar Association and is the immediate past Regional Director of The National Black Prosecutors Association. Mrs. Nolen is a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Special Remarks Rev. Davie Tucker



Rev. Davie Tucker, Jr. is the Executive Director of the Metro Human Relations Commission. He is also the Pastor of Beech Creek Missionary Baptist Church and recently served as the Coordinator of Alumni Affairs for American Baptist College. He is the past president of the Interdenominational Ministers Fellowship, a member of the Nashville Baptist Ministers Conference and director of the Center for Equity, Change and Sustainability, and former Chair of the Metro Human Relations Commission. He is also the founder and chairperson of the Center for Imagination, Inc., an after school program focusing on at-risk youth.

Rising Advocate Awards



Kosar Kosar serves as multicultural organizer at the Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC). He leads TIRRC's Black Immigrant Caucus, a group dedicated to creating space for Black immigrant community members and leaders across the state to connect and ensure Black immigrants can shape TIRRC's campaign priorities and goals. He was born and raised in Nashville, TN to Somali refugees. In response to the summer protests in 2022, Kosar co-founded an organization called Safer Schools Nashville, which worked towards safer alternatives to school policing and advancing the social, emotional and intellectual development of all

Metro Nashville Public Schools Students. He helped organize and build a coalition with several stakeholders across the district and advocated for policy changes. He managed TIRRC's nonpartisan GoTV efforts during the 2022 midterms, reaching over 300,000 immigrant voters statewide. Kosar also leads national refugee campaigns with NPNA to help strengthen this country's commitment to refugees. He continues to be involved at the local level through his human rights advocacy work as a commissioner with the Metro Human Relations Commission, a guest columnist for the Tennessean newspaper, and an author for the Tennessee Lookout.



Zacnite Vargas, BSN, RN, currently serves as the Tennessee President of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses. She is a Registered Nurse at the Metro Public Health Department where she consistently demonstrates an unwavering commitment to uplifting minority nurses and promoting health equity. Over the past six months, Zacnite has played a pivotal role in the formation of the Health Equity Coalition (HEC), actively engaging in collaboration, cultivating norms, and developing the structure of the HEC. Zacnite has been instrumental in the development of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), with a specific focus on addressing health inequities among

underserved populations in Davidson County. Zacnite was recognized with the 2017 Benjamin S. Pressnell Bill of Rights Award. She has leadership roles with both the Tuition Equality Campaign and the New Leaders Council Institute. Her commitment to social justice and her advocacy work began early in her career when she founded "Jóvenes Unidos por un Mejor Presente," a group dedicated to the betterment of youth at Conexión Americas.

Outstanding Service Awards



Tamika Braden founded The HELP Center in Nashville, TN on December 16, 2014. She realized the overwhelming obstacles individuals face when leaving prison and returning to the community. Braden has over ten years' experience in Quality Control and Case Management with a track record of producing extraordinary results in both areas and a commitment to human development and community service. She had been Operations Supervisor for ResCare, Case Manager for MAXIMUS, and has experience with child support and other contracts for the

State of Tennessee. The HELP Center's goal is to help prison inmates get good-paying jobs, continued education, and support after they return to their homes. The first HELP Center opened in East Nashville in February of 2015. Since then, The HELP Center has grown to an expansive social service focused agency with an extensive array of supportive services, assisting hundreds of men and women each year in Davidson County of Nashville, TN. Keeping with Tamika's vision, proximity is fundamental, and all of The HELP Center's work with partners, supporters, and the people served is relationship based. The HELP Center specializes in employability, resume writing, basic computer operation, computer software navigation, housing, driver's license reinstatement, transportation, GED preparation along with in-house testing.



Jenn Garcia has been dedicated to serving youth in Davidson County and Middle TN with the Oasis Center for nearly 20 years. Starting her time with the Oasis Center providing direct youth services in programs such as the PULSE Teen Leadership Program and the International Teen Outreach Program, Jenn has advanced in the organization to Vice President of Action, Advocacy and Education. Jenn has been a champion for youth voice in her community, mentoring youth from diverse backgrounds and advocating for their rights no matter their national origin, religion,

gender or sexual identity, etc. Jenn currently oversees Oasis' Youth Engagement and Action (YEA) programs, all of which are positive youth development models that teach life skills, increase healthy behaviors, and create a sense of purpose in young people. She has transformed the lives of hundreds of youth through substance abuse and teen pregnancy prevention, youth leadership development, and service learning. Under her leadership, the youth served through the YEA programs have reduced or delayed alcohol and drug use by 84% and have contributed over 1800 hours of service annually. Jenn spear-headed multiple city-wide youth initiatives that have engaged over 1,000 teens in service learning; smoking prevention, and celebrations of diversity.

Outstanding Service Awards



Martesha Johnson Moore was sworn-in as the Nashville Metropolitan Chief Public Defender on August 28, 2018. She is the first African American to be elected to this position and only the second woman. She has devoted her entire career to public defense work and believes people are worth more than the worst thing they have ever done. Martesha has been privileged to stand with thousands of low income people accused of crimes. She has told their stories and relentlessly advocated for fairness and equality in the justice system. She has handled a wide array of complex criminal cases-representing people from arrest to jury trial. Martesha ensures her clients are educated about

their Constitutional rights and the criminal justice process. She has partnered with community agencies to secure housing, mental health and recovery assistance for those who are experiencing homelessness and co-occurring disorders. She passionately serves her clients, believing that people should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of race, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation or the nature of the charges against them. She is also an active participant in DEFEND Nashville, an initiative from the public defender's office designed to partner with the larger Nashville community in the fight for equal justice for ALL.



Kelly Sue Waller is the Director of Southern Crossroads. A decade ago when Kelly Sue was working low-wage jobs in Nashville, she found Worker's Dignity, and found community. After a "white lives matter" protest that brought more than 100 far-right, white supremacist protesters to Shelbyville, TN in 2017, Kelly Sue began the groundwork to create a community organization that offers a different vision. The Bedford County Listening Project began as a door to door initiative to talk to residents about why they think their community was targeted for this hateful event and ask what issues are the most pressing in their lives. From that, she built a membership-based

organization that has focused primarily on renters rights and eviction prevention, with parallel goals of bringing people together. A key component is education about how race is historically used to divide people, especially working class people, who experience similar social issues. The BCLP has taught everyday people how to advocate and pass local policies, has helped meet people's basic needs through mutual aid efforts, and has created a welcoming place in a rural area that does not have the same level of social infrastructure that exists in larger cities. Kelly Sue is working to replicate this model in other small Southern towns.

Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All



David Plazas is moderating this year's panel on the theme: Dignity, Freedom and Justice for All. He is the Opinion and Engagement Director for the USA TODAY Network newsrooms in Tennessee and The Tennessean. He has written nationally award-winning columns on affordable housing, government accountability and civic engagement. He leads the acclaimed Civility Tennessee campaign. He curates the Latino Tennessee Voices newsletter and hosts the Tennessee Voices video podcast, which has produced more than 370 episodes since March 2020.

Panel Members



In 2010 **Samar Ali** was named a White House Fellow in President Barack Obama's administration and worked closely with the Homeland Security Secretary on counterterrorism measures, gaining experience with bilateral negotiations on behalf of the U.S. government. She worked under Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam as assistant commissioner of international affairs, supporting Tennessee's global relations. She is president and CEO of Millions of Conversations, a nonprofit organization that aims to unite Americans around common values for a shared future.



Michael Danziger became Senior Rabbi of The Temple Nashville on July 1, 2022. Prior, he had served as Assistant and Associate Rabbi at the Isaac M. Wise Temple in Cincinnati, Ohio following his ordination from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. He was Hillel leader at The University of Texas, and was a long-time staff member and Assistant Director at Jacobs Camp, and was the first Youth and Family Life Director at Temple Israel in Memphis.

Lifetime Achievement Award



Ludye N. Wallace is a former Metro Councilman, President of the Nashville NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], and lifelong community organizer dedicated to helping others. He has a bachelor of science in Political Science from Tennessee State University, is a Lifetime Member of Tennessee State University's Alumni Association, a Lifetime Member of National Tennessee State University's Alumni Association, Kappa Alpha Psi Lifetime Member, and one of the Longest Serving Members of Metro Council of Nashville and Davidson County, having served twenty-eight years. During that

time, he served on the Budget and Finance Committee, and served as Speaker Pro Tem on seven occasions. Of his time on the council, Ludye says: "At the time I was elected, the community was so segregated. There were hardly any sidewalks or street lights in my district. I did legislation that provided for the residents and people living downtown." He was also instrumental in the naming of the A.A. Birch Building, named after Adolpho A. Birch, Jr., an American lawyer and judge who was the first African American to serve as Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court. Ludye has a Gold & Diamond Lifetime NAACP Membership. He is one of the longest serving presidents

of the Nashville branch of the NAACP, having served for eight years. Of his time with the NAACP, he says, "We marched, we held press conferences, we protested whenever there was a police killing or police brutality, we were vocal during the time I served." Among his legacy includes work to help children by advocating for safe school environments. He has also been a staunch supporter and advocate for affordable housing. "The housing crisis is a problem for all of us," he says. During his

life, he has always wanted everyone to have a seat at the table and have an equal opportunity to advance. He has also advocated for criminal justice reform and wants additional programs in place for people to have a pathway from the criminal justice system to reenter society as productive citizens. Ludye has a lifetime of advocacy for helping others and making things better.



Retiring Metro Councilman Z. Alexander Looby, right, pledges his support Aug. 23, 1971, to Ludye Wallace, left, who is seeking to succeed him as Metro Councilman from the 20th District. Looking on is Dr. C.J. Walker, Chairman of the 20th District Citizens Committee for Wallace.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence. (2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country. (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27. (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29. (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Acknowledgements

Event Chair

Rev. Brian Fesler, *Church of Scientology*

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Jacob Aparicio, *Tennessee Human Rights Commission*

Lucy Berard, *United Nations Association, Nashville Cordell-Hull Chapter*

Julie Brinker, *Church of Scientology*

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Muriel Nolen, *Tennessee Human Rights Commission*

Rev. Sondrea Tolbert, *Scarritt Bennett Center*

Rev. Davie Tucker, Jr., *Metro Human Relations Commission*

Rev. Kelli X, *Scarritt Bennett Center*

Venue

Thank you to the Church of Scientology for being gracious hosts this year.

Awards and Refreshments

Thank you to the Tennessee Human Rights Commission for providing the awards, and to Metro Human Relations Commission for sponsoring refreshments.

Performance

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Southern Word Poet Sarah Anderson for her dedication to human rights and amazing performance.

Program Booklet

Thank you to the Church of Scientology for program design and printing.

Next Year

If your organization would like to participate in the planning for 2020, please contact the Chair at info@tnuhr.org.

More Information

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

- The full Universal **Declaration** of Human Rights
- Educational **videos** and videos of **award winners**
- A resource **directory** of Tennessee human rights organizations
- Information about **past and upcoming events**
- And **more!**