

REMEMBER, REFLECT
& CELEBRATE.



*50 years of the
Tennessee Human Rights Commission*

50th Anniversary Commemorative Celebration

Honorary Chair	Governor Bill Haslam
Honorary Co-Chair	Lt. Governor Ron Ramsey
Honorary Co-Chair	Speaker of the House Beth Harwell

Co-Chairs

Commissioners Ruby Miller, Patricia Pierce & Jocelyn Wurzburg

February 28, 2013
Tennessee State Museum
Nashville, TN

Program

Welcome

Chair Stacey Garrett, Board of Commissioners
Beverly L. Watts, Executive Director

Remarks from 50th Anniversary Committee Co-Chairs

Commissioners Patricia Pierce & Jocelyn Wurzburg

Honoring of *Human Rights Advocates*

Beverly L. Watts, Executive Director
Commissioners Patricia Pierce & Jocelyn Wurzburg

Historical Presentation & Remarks

Linda T. Wynn, Asst. Director for State Programs, Tennessee Historical Commission & Faculty Member, History & Political Science Dept. Fisk University

Linda T. Wynn is a member of Fisk University's faculty where she teaches in the department of history and political science. She earned her B.S. (1969) and M. S. (1971) degrees in history and a Masters in Public Administration (1980) from Tennessee State University. She helped to design *The Beloved Community: Then and Now*, a course on the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, a collaboration course among American Baptist College, Fisk University, and Lipscomb University. Mrs. Wynn is has been an editor, co-editor, contributor and consultant for several books related to African American and Tennessee history.

We acknowledge our sponsors & partners
with sincere gratitude and thanks

- ◆ Commissioner Chrystal Cross Horne
- ◆ Commissioner Spencer Wiggins
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Human Rights Advocates

Mr. George Barrett Mr. Barrett has represented many unions and civil rights, discrimination and class-action plaintiffs. He was the original counsel in the case to desegregate the Tennessee public higher education system. He has served on many Commissions and councils including the Governor's Commission on Human Relations. He is currently appealing the Constitutionality of the current Voter ID law.

Mr. Waverly Crenshaw Diversity and non-discrimination education is priority in Mr. Crenshaw's legal work as partner at Waller Lansden. He has contributed to the THRC's Employment Law Seminar for over a decade. Community service includes board membership to the Middle TN Workforce Development Center and the Governor's Advisory Committee on Equal & Fair Employment Opportunity.

Dr. Charles Kimbrough A pioneer in NAACP establishment in TN, Dr. Kimbrough organized NAACP chapters in Sparta, IL, Dugoin, IL, Pulaski, TN and Waverly, TN. He is a former President of the Nashville NAACP, where he led a surge in chapter membership. He was also one of the first African Americans to hold a license to practice veterinary medicine in Tennessee and as a minister, he touched thousands of lives.

Ms. Jane Eskind Ms. Eskind served as the first woman Chair of the Tennessee Democratic Party in the 1990s and was the first woman elected to the Public Service Commission in 1980. She served many organizations including the Anti-Defamation League, the International Women's Forum, the Women Executives in State Government and chaired the Tennessee Commission on the Status of Women.

Senator Thelma Harper Senator Harper was the first African American female elected to Tennessee State Senate in 1991. She has served her constituents for over 20 years as Senator, Chair of the Tennessee Black Caucus and on several Senate Committees. She previously served as Councilwoman for Davidson County. She has also served the community through countless activities and memberships.

Ms. Rosetta Miller-Perry During the height of the civil rights movement in Memphis, Ms. Miller-Perry worked with the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. In 1975, she became the Director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in Nashville. She retired from government service in 1990. She then founded the Tennessee Tribune newspaper that has been educating the black community in Nashville for over 20 years.

Dr. Tommie Morton-Young Dr. Morton-Young was the first African American to graduate from Vanderbilt Peabody College in 1955. She organized African American Genealogical & Historical Societies in North Carolina and Tennessee. She is also a former chairperson of the North Carolina Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Currently, Ms. Morton-Young owns and operates Authentic Tours: Teaching through Tourism.

Nashville for All of Us This unprecedented citywide coalition includes over 80 organizations and business and nearly 400 individuals. This coalition worked tirelessly to combat a divisive proposed amendment, the English Only Charter Amendment. On January 22, 2009, Nashville for All of Us saw their efforts succeed when the legislation was defeated in a margin of 57-43%.

Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) TIRRC works to defend the rights of immigrants and refugees and create an atmosphere where they are recognized as positive contributors. TIRRC's has engaged thousands of new American voters, created the Welcoming Tennessee Initiative, advocated for increased funding for English learner language programs and increased access to drivers licenses for immigrants.

YWCA of Middle Tennessee Through many programs the YWCA of Middle Tennessee works to break down barriers to human rights, barriers that perpetuate racism, violence and hopelessness. The YWCA's Racial Justice initiative (Stand Against Racism, Community Conversations on Race) has been encouraging equality through conversation and community programs for many years.



Tennessee Human Rights Commission History & Overview

On September 30, 1963, Governor Frank G. Clement signed Executive Order 18 creating the Tennessee Human Relations Commission. At that time, the Commission's purpose was to advise the public on their human rights, researching and making reports on human relations and reporting these findings to the Governor. The Commission accomplished this by working closely with other governmental agencies with similar duties. In 1967, legislation was passed creating the Tennessee Commission on Human Development which absorbed the duties of the previous Commission, adopted rules and regulations to govern its proceedings and added a prohibition against sex discrimination.

In 1978, the Tennessee Human Rights Act (THRA) became law transforming the Commission from an advisory agency to an enforcement agency. Current Commissioner Jocelyn Wurzburg of Memphis, TN was the author of this legislation and her leadership was critical to its passage. In 1979 and 1980, the law was amended to include disability and age as protected classes. In 1983, the Commission officially became the Tennessee Human Rights Commission (THRC). In 1984, the law was amended to prohibit discrimination in housing. In 1990, the expansion was extended to include familial status and disability as protected classes. Today, the THRA prohibits discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, age (employment only), disability, familial status (housing only) and national origin. In 2009, the THRA was expanded to give authority to verify that state governmental entities comply with requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI). Title VI prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color or national origin.

THRC has had collaborative partnerships with the federal government for more than 30 years. In 1979 the Commission partnered with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission through an employer monitoring grant; now expanded into a Work Share agreement. In 1994, THRC partnered with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as a substantially equivalent agency. These relationships allow the Commission to enforce Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Title VIII of the Fair Housing Act.

The mission of the THRC is to safeguard individuals from discrimination through enforcement and education. The THRA and Tennessee Disability Act are enforced through receiving, mediating, investigating, conciliating and, when necessary, litigating allegations of discrimination. Since 2009, the Commission has also coordinated the state of Tennessee's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Commission uses a variety of public meetings, outreach events and resources to educate the public about their rights.

The Commission executes its mission through a 15 member Board of Commissioners and staff of 29 in four offices (Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga and Knoxville). In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, the Commission received 1,118 inquiries, accepted 681 as complaints and closed 559 cases. Through 10 Rule 31 trained mediators, the Commission has operated a successful Mediation Program since its reactivation in 2008. During 2011-2012 fiscal year, the Commission had a 50% success rate in mediations, awarding nearly \$97,000 in monetary benefits and non-monetary benefits including letters of apology, policy changes, training, promotions and uncontested unemployment.