



TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
312 Rosa L Parks Ave, 23rd Floor, Nashville, TN 37243
Phone (615) 741-5825 | Fax (615) 253-1886 | <http://www.TN.gov/HumanRights>

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 9, 2015

CONTACT: T. Howell
(615) 253-1608
T.Howell@TN.gov

UT College of Law Partners with Tennessee Human Rights Commission *College to Host Lecture as Part of Semester-Long Partnership*

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Beverly L. Watts, executive director of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission, will deliver a public lecture and visit with students at the University of Tennessee College of Law on Wednesday, Sept. 16. Her visit is part of a semester-long partnership between the college and the THRC in which students are making complex legal documents easier to understand for the general public.

Watts' lecture, "Human Rights: Education and Enforcement in the State of Tennessee," is set for noon in room 132 of the College of Law, 1505 W. Cumberland Ave., in Knoxville. The lecture is free and open to the public, and visitor parking is available in the Volunteer Hall garage behind the law school on White Avenue.

Following her lecture, Watts will meet with students enrolled in UT Law's new human rights practicum, taught by UT Law professors Robert Blitt and Valorie Vojdik.

"This course fits squarely into the college's commitment to experiential learning," said Blitt. "After studying the mandate of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission and exploring challenges related to confronting discriminatory practices in housing, public accommodation, and other services receiving federal financial assistance, students will design and implement a computer-based 'guided interview' that will facilitate the completion of the commission's existing complaint form."

The course was developed through a grant from the Computer Assisted Learning Institute, which offers the technology for the students to transform the process of completing the THRC's legal documents into a step-by-step, easy-to-understand process.

"This partnership is an exciting opportunity because it will be a valuable tool to help Tennesseans understand how to file complaints under the TN Human Rights Act" said Watts. "It will provide them with easier access to justice when their rights have been violated. We're extremely happy to collaborate on such an important project."



As a result of the partnership, the state's Commission plans to expand education on filing complaints. By simplifying the complaint process, it will be easier for a potential complainant to determine whether or not his or her rights have been violated and file in a knowledgeable and timely manner.

Watts was named executive director of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission in 2007. She has more than thirty years of experience in civil rights enforcement and education in the public and private sectors.

The Tennessee Human Rights Commission is an independent state agency responsible for enforcing the state's antidiscrimination laws, which prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodation. The commission also ensures Tennessee's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin by state agencies receiving financial assistance.

###