

Texas Motherhood Summit

Thursday, May 5, 2022 | 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM (CST)



Melissa Atkins Wardy, Director of the Texas Family Leadership Council, [CHILDREN AT RISK](#)

Melissa Atkins Wardy is a change agent, creative strategist, and intentional storyteller offering expertise in collaboration, abundance thinking, and fundraising leadership with a foundation in relationship stewardship, equitable team building, and public relations. Melissa's career has been dedicated to steering a shift in the way people think about and advocate for children. Melissa is the Director of the Texas Family Leadership Council, a statewide collaborative of CHILDREN AT RISK. The TXFLC is made up of child and family-focused organizations, community leaders, and influencers who come together to share information and resources to

improve the quality of life for Texas children. TXFLC working groups tackle the most pressing issues facing families in our state by sharing information, evaluating policy solutions, and developing a united advocacy agenda. Melissa lives with her husband and two teens in beautiful El Paso, Texas. When not at work, you can find her on a trail in the mountains.



State Representative Toni Rose, [Texas District 110](#)

State Representative Toni Rose was elected in 2012 to represent Texas House District 110, which includes the communities of Oak Cliff, Pleasant Grove, and Balch Springs in Dallas County. Representative Rose is a proud alumna of Paul Quinn College. Her legislative focus includes mental health reform, access to affordable healthcare, and criminal justice reform. Currently, Representative Rose serves as a member of the House Committee on Appropriations; as Vice Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Article II, which leads budget considerations on the Health and Human Services Commission; House Committee on Calendars; House Committee on Human Services; House Select

Committee on Youth Health and Safety; Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Community-Based Care Transition, and as Vice Chair of the House Select Committee on Health Care Reform and House Committee on Redistricting. Over the course of her legislative service, Representative Rose has secured hundreds of millions of dollars to fund programs that improve the lives of everyday Texans. Some of her budgetary accomplishments include securing state funding for land acquisition and planning of a new state mental health facility serving Dallas/Fort Worth, state services that reduce the risk of children being removed from their homes, Early Childhood intervention program, as well as fully funding the Texas HIV/AIDS Medication Program (THMP). Representative Rose's other accomplishments include extending Medicaid healthcare.

Representative Rose's other accomplishments include extending Medicaid healthcare benefits for new mothers postpartum from two to six months, allowing Dallas County to transport senior citizens to county-run health centers and wellness events, and designating December 1st as Rosa Parks Day. Representative Rose's hands-on approach was instrumental to her election as First Vice-Chair of the Texas House Democratic Caucus, her appointment as Chair of the House Democratic Campaign Committee, and her former roles as Secretary to the Texas Legislative Black Caucus and Treasurer of the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women (NOBEL Women). Representative Rose holds membership with the: NAACP Dallas Branch, League of Women Voters of Dallas, Paul Quinn National Alumni Association, Texas Coalition of Black Democrats, United Negro College Fund (UNCF), National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Club, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Representative Rose continues to be a fierce champion for District 110 and the great state of Texas



Dr. Elizabeth Gregory, Director, Institute for Research on Women, Gender & Sexuality, [University of Houston](#)

Elizabeth Gregory, PhD, Taylor Professor of Gender & Sexuality Studies, directs the WGSS Program and the Institute for Research on Women, Gender & Sexuality at the University of Houston, where she is also a professor of English. Her books include *Ready: Why Women Are Embracing the New Later Motherhood* [2012/2007], *Apparition of Splendor: Marianne Moore Performing Democracy through Celebrity* [2021] and others. Her next project (*Domestic Product*) proposes a framework for building a culture and economy of care. Her work at the IRWGS focuses on analysis of Houston/Harris County gender and sexuality data from pre-existent and newly developed sources. She received her PhD from Yale, her MA from the University of Kentucky, and her BA from Barnard College.



Emilee Whitehurst, President & CEO, [Houston Area Women's Center](#)

Emilee is only the fourth person to lead the Houston Area Women's Center in its nearly 45-year history. She brings over 25 years of experience leading non-governmental organizations at the grassroots level, in faith communities, the arts, and health care. Emilee has spent her career championing human rights, addressing poverty, homelessness, and abuse. She is a recipient of the Echoing Green "Social Entrepreneur" Fellowship and received the William Kennedy Public Service Fellowship from Harvard Divinity School. Emilee holds a BA in Human Biology from Stanford University and a Masters of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School. She is an Ordained Presbyterian Minister and serves on the General Council of New Covenant Presbytery. She is an alum of Leadership Houston, and an American Leadership Forum (ALF) Senior Fellow. Most recently Emilee served on the Mayor's Police Reform Task Force. She originally hails from Austin but considers herself a Houstonian. For the sake of her community and, especially her two daughters, she believes in a future free from domestic abuse and sexual assault and will work until it stops.



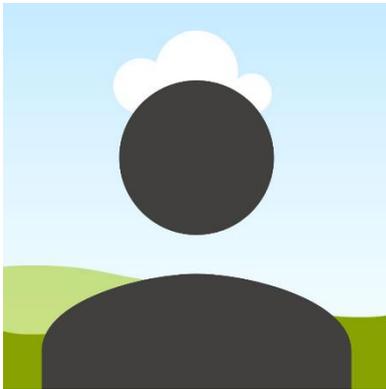
Dr. Conte Terrell, Founder & Owner, [Fresh Spirit Wellness Inc.](#)

Dr. Conte M. Terrell, "Dr. Conte" is one of the nation's most sought-after Domestic Violence Recovery Experts. She is an ordained minister, an electrifying speaker, counselor, coach; coveted author and talk/radio personality! Dr. Conte is a survivor of a ten-year marriage to a physically abusive spouse. This led her into a passionate career where she founded Fresh Spirit Wellness for Women Inc., a non-profit organization for women, youth and families challenged by the crisis of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Her nonprofit organization is the oldest African American, female founded Domestic Violence agency in Harris County; the most populous county in Texas and the 3rd largest in the United States. Since its inception in 1997, Fresh Spirit Wellness for Women Inc. has received great success. She then went on to complete a Doctoral degree in Counseling to better accommodate the needs of the population that she was serving. Dr. Conte has assisted thousands of women, couples and families in overcoming and healing from toxic and abusive relationships along with teaching them how to attract healthy relationships. Her awesome personal survival testimony has been seen, read, or heard, on television, radio, magazines and books. She has been trained and certified in numerous Family and Domestic Violence programs and often assists in family court cases as a Domestic Violence Expert Witness for the prosecutor.



Dr. Theresa Morris, Professor of Sociology, Coordinator, [Women's and Gender Studies Program, Texas A&M University](#)

Theresa Morris Ph.D. is Professor of Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies and Coordinator of the Women's and Gender Studies Program at Texas A&M University, where she conducts research on gender, reproduction, and birth. Her first book, *Cut It Out: The C-Section Epidemic in America* (NYU Press 2013), was positively reviewed in several venues, including the *New York Times*, and her second book, *Health Care in Crisis: Hospitals, Nurses, and the Consequences of Policy Change* (NYU Press 2018), received an Honorable Mention for the 2019 Adele E. Clarke Book Award. She has also published articles in journals, including *American Sociological Review*, *Birth*, *Social Forces*, and *Women's Health Issues*. Dr. Morris teaches graduate and undergraduate classes covering Reproduction and Birth, Gender, Gender and Health, and Medical Sociology.



Anne Van Horn, Community Outreach Director, [Baylor College of Medicine Teen Health Clinic](#)

Anne Van Horn has been the Community Outreach Director of the Baylor College of Medicine Teen Health Clinics and the Executive Director of the Foundation for Teen Health for more than 16 years. The clinics provide free primary preventative care, reproductive care, and mental health services for young men and women ages 13 to 24. The Foundation supports the work of the BCM Teen Health Clinics particularly Project Ascend. This project connects opportunity youth to training for a career in health care. The model for this program was based on the Social Determinants of Health framework. Anne has coauthored numerous publications on Ascend as a social determination of health intervention. She is also involved in logistics for the Step Up Mental Health program which provides group therapy and teletherapy in a school based clinics. Anne is passionate about the work of the clinic and forging working relationships with community partners to ensure the success of the clinics. She works extensively with Harris Health, HISD and Harris County Commissioners. Anne is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin with a B.S. in education.



Dr. Kathleen Broussard, [Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of South Carolina](#)

Dr. Kathleen Broussard completed her Ph.D. at the University of Texas at Austin and will join the University of South Carolina as Assistant Professor of Sociology this fall. Her research examines women's attitudes and decision-making processes surrounding contraceptive use, abortion, and formal healthcare engagement. Most recently, she interviewed women living near the U.S.-Mexico border who attempted to end a pregnancy outside of the formal healthcare setting. This research highlights the negative impacts of stigma and restrictions to formal abortion services and offers a pathway forward for making reproductive healthcare as safe and supported as possible.



Christian Menefee, [Harris County Attorney](#)

As the Harris County Attorney, Christian D. Menefee is the chief civil lawyer for the largest county in Texas. He is the first African-American and the youngest person to serve in the position. Before serving as Harris County Attorney, Christian practiced in the Houston offices of two international law firms, focusing on business litigation and corporate investigations. In private practice, Christian also focused heavily on pro bono work, including advising the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, advising immigrants and their families at Bush Intercontinental Airport during the “Muslim ban,” and working with Texas Appleseed on expanding alternatives to involuntary commitment for the mentally ill. Additionally, he completed a fellowship with the Harris County Public

Defender’s Office. The son of two veterans, Christian attended public schools in Harris County and was the first in his family to attend college. He is a graduate of The University of Texas at San Antonio, and Washington University St. Louis School of Law.



Teresa Granillo, PhD, CEO, [AVANCE, Inc.](#)

Dr. Teresa Granillo is the CEO of AVANCE, Inc., a non-profit that creates pathways to economic mobility for predominately Latino families through innovative, two-generation education and support for families with young children. Dr. Granillo was a first-generation college graduate of The University of Arizona earning a BA in Psychology and graduating Magna Cum Laude. She then went on to earn a Master’s of Social Work, a Master’s of Science in Psychology, and a Dual Ph.D. in Social Work and Psychology from the University of Michigan.

Dr. Granillo has spent a decade as a non-profit executive. She spent six years as the Executive Director of Con Mi MADRE, a two-generation non-profit that focuses on helping young Latinas to pursue higher education. Under her leadership the organization expanded across the state of Texas, increasing service provision by 97% and increasing revenue by 200%. Prior to the non-profit sector, Dr. Granillo was a Tenure-Track Professor at UT Austin in the School of Social Work. She taught clinical skills to social work students focusing on evidence-based and culturally responsive practices for children and families. She also led a successful line of research in the area of Latina/o mental health and help seeking with a particular emphasis on Latina youth. Dr. Granillo has also served the community through various volunteer positions. She currently serves on the National Advisory Council for the Hogg Mental Health Foundation and is a board member for Unidos US (formerly the National Council of La Raza). She has served as a board member for Workforce Solutions Capital Area, the Education Chair on the Board of the Hispanic Women’s Network of Texas, board member for a women’s empowerment non-profit, HERdacity, and member of the Education Committee of the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. She has received several awards and recognitions including the Austin Under 40 Award in Non-profit/Community Service, The Lora Lee Peterson Teaching Excellence Award, the Women of Distinction Award from the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce, the Confidence Award from the 1st Tee of Greater Austin, and the Estrella Award from the Hispanic Women’s Network of Texas. She was also featured on the front cover of Austin Woman Magazine and nominated Best CEO Award from Austin Business Journal.

Dr. Granillo has spent over two decades working to ensure that Latinx children and families have all the mental, physical, social, and economic resources to thrive. She is particularly passionate about the power of education. As a first-generation college graduate, she knows firsthand how an education can end the cycle of poverty. She is committed to mentorship, particularly of young women as she claims that she would not be who she is or where she is today with the mentorship of many strong women, including her mother.



Krista Del Gallo, Legislative Director, [Texas Council on Family Violence](#)

Krista Del Gallo is the Legislative Director at the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) where she has worked on the Policy Team for over twenty years on issues relevant to survivor economic stability, immigration relief and options, child welfare and custody, and health. Krista works with a range of advocates, systems and policy makers to improve the landscape for survivors in Texas. She has worked in the domestic and sexual violence movements since 1994 in programs in rural Indiana, the Rosebud Lakota reservation, and Austin, Texas.



Sylvia Acosta, PhD, President & CEO, [YWCA Paso Del Norte Region](#)

Sylvia Y. Acosta, Ph.D. currently serves as the CEO of the largest YWCA in the nation. At the YWCA El Paso Del Norte she oversees a budget of over 37 million dollars with more than 400 employees. Dr. Acosta has over three decades of professional experience in nonprofit management, executive university leadership, fundraising, and legislative and policy development at the local, state, and national levels. Her experience in nonprofits includes serving as one of the first and youngest President/CEO of a Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in the United States, serving as COO of a national early childhood education program, and leading various nonprofits focused on improving the lives of women, families and children. Dr. Acosta holds a PhD from New Mexico State

University where she studied higher education administration and leadership. Dr. Acosta holds a Masters of Arts degree from St. Mary's University in political science with emphasis on national security. Her Bachelor of Arts degree is in political science from the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Acosta is an active member of various civic and professional organizations and currently serves on various boards. She is the proud daughter of migrant workers and considers herself an example of the American Dream. Dr. Acosta is a first generation college graduate. She is married to Joe Graham, PhD and has two wonderful children.



Summer Kelly, Senior Manager, Community Engagement, [Amazon](#)

Summer is the Southwest Community Partnerships Lead for Underserved Populations in Amazon's Worldwide Consumer business. The team designs and implements retail products and services to meet the needs of underserved customer segments. Recently, the team launched Amazon's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) acceptance program, which enables SNAP recipients the opportunity to purchase groceries online using their EBT card. The program engages non-profit and community-based organizations to amplify their anti-hunger efforts and support outreach programs. Prior to joining Amazon, Summer dedicated 15 years to identifying and advocating for social and economic initiatives that provide historically underrepresented students

with access to a high-quality education. In her role as Director of Strategic Partnerships at EMERGE she partnered with the nation's leading colleges and universities to innovate and implement community-based learning programs that enhance the college experience of first-generation college students. She has served in a number of roles in education, including: classroom teacher, leader of college access programs, and Director of Innovation. She has worked with organizations such as: The DREAM Project, Houston Independent School District, KIPP Texas, and Harlem Children's Zone. Summer earned a M.A. in Leadership, Policy and Politics from Columbia University and a B.A. in Political Science and Public Relations from the University of Southern California.



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