

*The* Tennessee Human Rights Commission;  
Metro Human Relations Commission; and  
*With* Tennessee United for Human Rights  
*Present* Partner Organizations  
The Tennessee Celebration of

# International Human Rights Day



*Vote on Purpose:  
The Communal Impact of One Vote*

Celebrating the 71st Anniversary of the  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

December 10, 2019  
First Amendment Center

# 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 71st anniversary of the Declaration. Tennessee is celebrating with the theme: **Vote on Purpose: The Communal Impact of One Vote** to align with the upcoming 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing and protecting women's constitutional right to vote.

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

**Musical Selection**— Courtney Ariel, *Burning Bright*

**Master of Ceremonies**—Beverly Watts  
Executive Director, Tennessee Human Rights Commission

**Gubernatorial Proclamation** presented by—Annazette Houston  
Past Chair, Tennessee Human Rights Commission

**Mayoral Proclamation** presented by—Dr. Janice Rodriguez  
Chair, Metro Human Relations Commission

**Special Remarks**—Melody Fowler-Green  
Executive Director, Metro Human Relations Commission

**2019 Human Rights Rising Advocate Awardees**

~ Frances Anderson  
~ Tequila Johnson

**Special Remarks**—Bob Teague  
President, United Nations Association Nashville Cordell-Hull Chapter

**2019 Human Rights Outstanding Service Awardees**

~ Rev. Keith Caldwell  
~ Rashed Fakhruddin

**Panel Discussion~ Vote on Purpose: The Communal Impact of One Vote**

**Moderator**—David Plazas, the Tennessean  
Aisha Lbhallal, Muslim Women's Council  
Raul Lopez, Men of Valor  
Omari Booker, Freedom Artist

**2019 Human Rights Lifetime Achievement Awardees**

~ Abby Rubenfeld  
~ Rev. Edwin C. Sanders, II

**Closing Remarks**—Beverly Watts  
Executive Director, Tennessee Human Rights Commission

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

## Master of Ceremonies *Beverly Watts*



Nashville native **Beverly L. Watts** has been Executive Director of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission since 2007. Previously, she served as Special Advisor to the Chair at the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission responsible for state and local relations. Beverly served for more than 12 years as the Executive Director of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights and was one of the first Title IX Coordinators in the US at the Office for Civil Rights. Beverly is a past President of the International Association of Official Human

Rights Agencies where she currently serves as the 1st Vice President. She also serves on the Equal Educational Opportunities Group and the National Community Reinvestment Coalition Boards. She is a member of the TN Access to Justice Commission. She is a past Chair of Women Executives in State Government, has served on CABLE Nashville and the YWCA of Middle Tennessee boards. Beverly is the recipient of numerous awards and honors including the 2019 CABLE Power of Inclusion Champion Award, 2018 YWCA Academy of Women, the ECHO 2014 Dreamers Award, and the 2005 induction into the KY Civil Rights Hall of Fame.

## Remarks on the Declaration *Melody Fowler-Green*



**Melody ("Mel") Fowler-Green** is the Executive Director of the Metro Human Relations Commission. Prior to taking the helm at the Commission, Mel was a public interest and civil rights attorney. She represented workers from many service industries including restaurant staff, cable installers, landscapers, construction workers, and farm workers in wage & hour actions (including large class actions) and in employment discrimination cases. Mel also served as the first staff attorney at the American Civil Liberties

Union of Tennessee. Mel graduated cum laude from Georgetown University Law Center in 2000. She also holds an MA in Women's Studies from the University of Cincinnati, and a BA in Theatre from the University of Michigan-Flint.

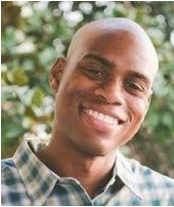


# Vote on Purpose: The Communal Impact of One Vote



## **David Plazas ~ Panel Moderator**

David Plazas is the Opinion and Engagement Director for the USA TODAY NETWORK Tennessee and The Tennessean. He is an award-winning journalist who wrote a series on affordable housing, “The Costs of Growth in Nashville” (2017), and leads a statewide campaign, “Civility Tennessee” (starting in 2018), to encourage, promote and practice civil discourse.



**Omari Booker** is a Nashville artist whose consistent affinity for realism is apparent in his work. He takes a process-oriented approach to his art, and the philosophy that undergirds Omari’s work is FREEDOM THROUGH ART. He aspires to create work that communicates to his audience their unique and intrinsic ability to be free.



**Aisha Lbhalla** is the founder of the Muslim Women's Council and a former member of the Metro Human Relations Commission. In 2016, she joined a national conversation on gender equality issues that included First Lady Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey. Aisha is also the 2015 recipient of the Human Rights Rising Advocate Award.



**Raul Lopez** was called to full-time prison ministry at Men of Valor in 2006, and in 2014 he was appointed to be its Executive Director. Raul served as Minority Communications Director for the Tennessee GOP and helped found and host Qué Pasa Nashville and Spanish TV. Raul is also active in the Latino community as member of two area Hispanic Chambers as well as his local church and various Conservative causes.

## Musical Guest Courtney Ariel



**Courtney Ariel Bowden** combines her heartfelt lyrics, melodic voice, and gift for storytelling to create songs that are vulnerable and engaging. Born in Atlanta, Georgia and raised in San Diego, California with a family that enjoyed an eclectic range of music, her parents also imparted to her the importance of serving others. In addition to singing and writing songs, Courtney loves being invested in her community.

## Rising Advocate Awards



After graduating Belmont University, **Frances Anderson** moved to Thailand where she became certified to teach English as a Foreign Language at Chiang Mai University. She taught English to Kindergarten and Pre-K children, while also spending time volunteering with Burmese women refugees. When she returned to Tennessee, she began volunteering for CRIT (Center for Refugees and Immigrants of Tennessee) and later was hired as a Site Coordinator for the after-school program working with predominantly Burmese refugees. Frances then became a Resettlement Specialist at the Nashville International

Center for Empowerment, and is now the State Refugee Health Coordinator for Catholic Charities of Tennessee.



**Tequila Johnson** is a community organizer whose work focuses on creating equality and increasing civic engagement among Black Americans and other communities of color. She is the co-founder and vice president of The Equity Alliance, a Tennessee-based nonprofit that helps citizens with tools and strategies to strengthen their communities. In 2018, Johnson served as the statewide manager for the Tennessee Black Voter Project. The group, under Johnson's leadership, submitted 91,000 voter registration forms. Tequila is also the founder and CEO of The Equity Consulting Group, LLC, a firm

specializing in issue advocacy, government relations, community relations and media strategy. She also serves as the Assistant Director of Outreach and Student Engagement at the Tennessee State University Center for Service Learning and

## Special Remarks Bob Teague



**Bob Teague** is the President of the United Nations Association Nashville Cordell-Hull Chapter. He's an exceptional entrepreneur and musician, with more than 2,000 original copyrights. Bob has traveled extensively and wants everyone to appreciate and cherish the opportunities we have to combine our cultures and languages into a world of caring and sharing, peace and prosperity, with love and respect for the environment and each other.

## Outstanding Service Awards



**Rev. Keith Caldwell** is pastor of Key United Methodist Church in Murfreesboro and president of the Nashville branch of the NAACP. He did his undergraduate work at Tennessee State University and American Baptist College, and received a Master of Divinity degree from Vanderbilt University. His professional experience includes working as a grassroots community organizer. Rev. Caldwell along with Sekou Franklin founded the Urban EpiCenter in 2007 as a multi-racial, grassroots organization in Nashville grounded in the belief that community organizing and direct action for racial and economic justice should be the focal points of social and political activity in under-served, under-represented and under-empowered communities.

He has worked as Executive Director of the Urban Epicenter since its inception. Rev. Caldwell was elected President of the Nashville NAACP Chapter and installed in December 2018. He is committed to economic justice, fair housing and criminal justice reform, and wants to include all people in the conversations and actions necessary to make change for the city.



**Rashed Fakhruddin** is a past president of the Islamic Center of Nashville and for over 15 years has coordinated and provided presentations on Islam to universities, schools, leadership groups and churches upon request in order to help develop a better understanding of Muslims, while building bridges and fostering stronger relationships within the community. Rashed is also a founding member of the American Muslim Advisory Council (AMAC), which works to help build a bridge between Muslims in Tennessee and law enforcement, as well as other government agencies and organizations. The motto of AMAC is 'enhancing safety for all Tennesseans'. Rashed is

also an alumni of Leadership Nashville (2009) and served on Vanderbilt's Visiting Advisory Board for Diversity and Equity. Rashed serves on the YWCA board and has been involved with the YWCA's MEND, or Engaging Men to End Violence against Women initiative. Through MEND, Rashed has been creating awareness in the Muslim community on domestic violence in the form of sermons and programs at the different mosques throughout Tennessee. Rashed also serves on the You Have The Power board which advocates and works for those whose safety, social and emotional well-being are at risk due to being targets or victims of violent crime, as well as bullying. As a result of his work in the community, Rashed has received several awards including the Women's Political Collaborative of Tennessee's Good Guys Award, the YWCA's MacDonald-Negri Service ('Man of the Year') Award and the Community Nashville Human Relations Award.

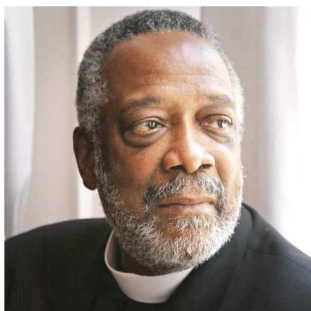
## Lifetime Achievement ~ Abby Rubenfeld



**Abby R. Rubenfeld** is an attorney in Nashville, Tennessee. Her general practice includes an emphasis on family law, LGBT and AIDS-related issues, and civil rights cases. She was the founding Chair of the Tennessee Bar Association Section on LGBT Rights in 2015-2016. Ms. Rubenfeld also was an Adjunct Professor at the Vanderbilt University Law School in Nashville for seven years, teaching a course on Sexual Orientation and the Law. She served for seven years on the Board of Directors of the Human Rights Campaign, a national civil rights

organization and the largest lesbian and gay political organization in the world, and for many years on the Board of Directors of the ACLU of Tennessee. She has also served as Chair of the American Bar Association (ABA) Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities (IRR- now called the Section on Civil Rights and Social Justice) and as Chair of the Nashville Bar Association Family Law Committee. From 2007 to 2009, she was appointed by the President of the ABA to serve on the then-newly created ABA Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. She was also formerly a member of the Tennessee Bar Association Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity and on the Executive Committee of its Family Law Section. In 2014 , she was honored to be inducted into the YWCA Nashville Academy of Women of Achievement. In 2017, she joined the Board of Directors of the YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee. She is extremely proud to have been co-counsel for the Tennessee plaintiffs in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (*Tanco v. Haslam*), the cases that brought full marriage equality to the United States on June 26, 2015. She was named Nashvillian of the Year for 2015 by the Nashville Scene magazine, along with *Tanco* co-counsel Bill Harbison, and also received the 2016 Tune Award from the Nashville Bar Association (also along with co-counsel Bill Harbison), the highest award given by the Nashville Bar Association. In 2014, she was honored with a Legacy Award from Nashville Black Pride. In 2015, she was also honored with several awards, including the Justice Award from the National Center for Lesbian Rights (given to the plaintiffs and attorneys from *Tanco v. Haslam*, the successful companion case to *Obergefell* that brought marriage equality to the country) and the Bill of Rights Award from the ACLU of Tennessee (also given to the Tennessee plaintiffs and attorneys from *Tanco v. Haslam*). In 2016, she also received the prestigious Stonewall Award from the American Bar Association Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Commission. Because of her significant civil rights victory, she received the 1996 Bill of Rights Award from the ACLU of Tennessee. In October 1997, the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association (NLGLA) awarded her its highest honor, the Dan Bradley Award, recognizing her outstanding efforts on behalf of equality under the law. In 1990, 1994, 1995, and 1996, Ms. Rubenfeld was named as "Tennessean of the Year" by Qym, Tennessee's then lesbian and gay news weekly. She was also honored to receive the 2003 Equality Award from the Tennessee chapter of the Human Rights Campaign.

## *Lifetime Achievement ~ Rev. Edwin C. Sanders, II*



The **Reverend Edwin C. Sanders, II**, is the Senior Servant and Founder of Metropolitan Interdenominational Church (established 1981) in Nashville, Tennessee. This congregation attracts a broad cross-section of people with the mission of being “inclusive of all and alienating to none.” Metropolitan has outreach ministries in the areas of substance abuse, advocacy for children, sexual violence, and harm reduction, and since 1984 has provided services to persons infected with, and affected by, HIV/AIDS with the First Response

Center being founded in 1992. Rev. Sanders received the Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology from Wesleyan University in 1969. His professional life began as Co-Director of Wesleyan’s African American Institute. He later served on the Wesleyan University Board of Trustees, and, in 2014, received the Wesleyan University Distinguished Alumnus Award. He pursued graduate studies at Yale University and Vanderbilt University Divinity Schools. In Nashville, Tennessee, Rev. Sanders has served as Pastoral Counselor for the Meharry Medical College Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program, Director of the Southern Prison Ministry, and Dean of the Chapel at Fisk University. Rev. Sanders is an emeritus member of the Board of Directors of the Black AIDS Institute, a member of the Interdenominational Ministers’ Fellowship and the Ryan White Community AIDS Partnership, a life member of the NAACP, and served as a Commissioner for the Tennessee Human Rights Commission. Appointed to the CDC Advisory Committee on HIV and STD Prevention during the Clinton Administration, he served five years on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS during the Bush Administration. He also served as co-chair of the National Syphilis Elimination Working Group, and was involved with the Obama Administration White House Office on AIDS in implementing the National AIDS Strategy. Rev. Sanders presented at the International AIDS Conferences in Switzerland, South Africa, Canada, Austria, the Netherlands and the United States, and at the AIDS Vaccine 2011 Conference in Thailand. Rev. Sanders serves on the Boards of Directors of The National Minority AIDS Council, The Drug Policy Alliance, and Project Return addressing recidivism and mass incarceration. He is the National Coordinator of Religious Leaders for a More Just and Compassionate Drug Policy. Currently he serves on the Howard University School of Divinity Board of Visitors; as Chair of the HIV Vaccine Trials Network Legacy Project Advisory Group designed to increase the participation of African Americans, Latinos and Asian Pacific Islanders in HIV vaccine studies; and on the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Scientific Advisory Board. In 2002, Rev. Sanders was a candidate for Governor of the state of Tennessee, finishing third out of a field of fourteen candidates. He is married to Atty. Denise Billye Bowers Sanders and they have three children: Simunye (Edwin III), Grace Louise, and Joseph Wesley.

# The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

What follows is an abridged version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (the full text of the Declaration is available in most libraries, from United Nations information centers in each capital city, and is on the United Nations Internet website at <http://www.un.org>) There are 30 basic rights and the Declaration explains each.



1. Every person is born free and equal in dignity and rights.

2. Every person has human rights regardless of race, sex, language, belief or religion.

3. Every person has the right to life, liberty and security.

4. Slavery and the slave trade are prohibited.

5. No person shall be subjected to torture.

6. Every person has the right to recognition as a person before the law.

7. All persons are entitled to equal protection before the law.

8. Every person is entitled to the aid of law when not treated fairly.



9. No person shall be subjected to arbitrary detention.

10. Every person is entitled to an impartial hearing.

11. Every person shall be considered innocent until proven guilty.



12. Every person has the right to protection of his or her privacy.

13. Every person has the right to travel freely within a country and to leave and return to his or her country.

14. Every person has the right to asylum from persecution.







15. Every person has the right to a nationality.

16. All adults have the right to marry of their own free will and to found a family.

17. Every person has the right to own property.

18. Every person has the right to freedom of religion.



19. Every person has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

20. Every person has the right to freedom of personal assembly and association.

21. Every person has the right to take part in the government of his or her country.



22. Every person has economic, social and cultural rights.

23. Every person has the right to work, to just pay, and to form and join unions.

24. Every person has the right to rest and leisure.

25. Every person has the right to an adequate standard of living.



26. Every person has the right to an education.

27. Every person has the right to participate in cultural activities and benefit from scientific advancement.

28. Every person is entitled to a social order in which these human rights can be realized.



29. Every person has duties to the democratic society according to the law.

30. No person can take away these rights and freedoms.

# Acknowledgements

## Event Chair

Rev. Brian Fesler, *Church of Scientology*

## Planning Committee Members

Julie Brinker, *Church of Scientology*  
Melody Fowler-Green, *Metro Human Relations Commission*  
Lynn Grassmeyer, *Amnesty International*  
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Frank Guzman, *Tennessee Human Rights Commission*  
Sarah Imran, *Metro Human Relations Commission*  
Cherisna Jean-Marie, *Scarritt Bennett Center*  
Kendl Kobbervig, *human rights advocate*  
Aisha Lbhalla, *Muslim Women's Council*  
Veronica McGraw, *Tennessee Human Rights Commission*  
Sean Richardson, *human rights advocate and attorney*  
Beverly Watts, *Tennessee Human Rights Commission*

## Event Host

A very special thank you to the First Amendment Center for being wonderful hosts.

## Awards

Thank you to the Tennessee Human Rights Commission for providing the awards.

## Program Booklet

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

## Refreshments

Thanks to the Metro Human Relations Commission for providing refreshments.

## Music

Thank you so much to Courtney Ariel & Bob Teague for musical entertainment.

## Next Year

If your organization would like to participate in the planning for 2020, please contact the Chair at [info@nashvillehumanrights.org](mailto:info@nashvillehumanrights.org).

## More Information

Visit [www.nashvillehumanrights.org](http://www.nashvillehumanrights.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!**