



# LGBT+ COLLEGE CONFERENCE AWARDS DINNER

APRIL 6, 2019  
7PM - JAMES UNION BLDG  
TENNESSEE ROOM



**Sidney A. McPhee**

President  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Cope Administration Building 204  
1301 East Main Street  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
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**MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

April 6, 2019

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2019 LGBT+ College Conference Awards Dinner. MTSU is once again excited to partner with great colleagues, sponsors, and friends in celebrating the outstanding role models being honored tonight. These honorees have responded to essential needs on campuses, in workplaces, and in this community to address issues of diversity, inclusion, and social justice. They have often worked behind the scenes, without notice or recognition, in their respective areas to open doors and create safe places.

The honorees have advocated with strength and conviction for the inclusion of LGBT+ students, colleagues, and friends and resisted stereotypes, discrimination, and exclusion at all levels and in all places. These honorees, individually and collectively, inspire us to continually raise our voices to create positive change.

When we join together to include and not exclude, great things are possible!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sidney A. McPhee".

Sidney A. McPhee  
President





April 6, 2019

Dear Friends,

Thank you all so much for attending this year's LGBT+ College Conference Awards Dinner. I hope you have all enjoyed the conference. I know we had an amazing program and an incredible group of presenters and participants. On behalf of MTSU Lambda Association, I would like to especially thank our presenters for volunteering their time and effort to this important endeavor.

I'd also like to thank the MTSU College of Behavioral and Health Sciences for being with us since the beginning, and to thank our ever-growing list of sponsors and supporters on campus and in the community for joining us on our journey.

Those being honored this evening are already changing the world around them, making their communities a better place for all people. MTSU Lambda Association would like to thank them for their commitment to the LGBT+ community and beyond.

Again, thank you so much for your support, showing that—once again  
—All Diversity is True Blue!

Sincerely,

Maxwell Pearson  
President  
MTSU Lambda Association





## 2019 LGBT+ COLLEGE CONFERENCE AWARDS DINNER HOSTS



**KAYLA GORE**  
*(she/her/hers)*

Kayla Gore's organizing work includes assisting in several campaigns with the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, including fighting for housing equality for all people who are chronically homeless and advocating for the just treatment of transgender people by law enforcement. She works to connect transgender people to core OUTMemphis services, including HIV testing, HIV+ support services, sexual reproductive health needs, emergency services, and peer-led groups. She is excited about expanding transgender decriminalization programming at OUTMemphis and building legal support services to meet the needs of transgender people in the Mid-South.



**JENNIFER NOVO**  
*(she/her/hers)*

Jennifer Novo is a dedicated champion of diversity in higher education. During her time in higher education, she has held various roles including Director of Student Success, University Student Retention Specialist, Dean of Student Success, and Director of the Academic Enhancement Center. She is committed to student success. In 2018, she received the Academic Advancement Award from Middle Tennessee State University's Office of Intercultural and Diversity Affairs and became a Climate Reality Leader. She currently serves as Chair of the Grants and Funding Committee for the Cumberland University Diversity and Inclusion Task Group.

## 2019 LGBT+ COLLEGE CONFERENCE AWARDS DINNER MUSIC



**SHERI NICHOLS BUCY**  
*(she/her/hers)*

Sheri Nichols Bucy is widely known as larger-than-life Sheri Lynn, one-half of the Jugg Sisters of the wildly popular and zany NashTrash Tours. In business since 1997, their rolling comedy show on wheels is the longest-running entertainment tour in Nashville. This is a rare opportunity to hear Sheri's more refined side, as she performs songs from her award-winning, one-woman show *Le Miracle de Piaf* based on the life of the legendary Edith Piaf. Sheri's stunning embodiment of Piaf during theatrical runs in Detroit, Los Angeles, and Hong Kong earned international critical acclaim.

**BARBARA SANTORO**  
*(she/her/hers)*

Barbara Santoro hails from the Washington, DC area where she studied classical piano with internationally renowned pianist, author, and educator Mary Gae George. She and her husband, drummer Vince Santoro, moved to Nashville in 1992 to perform, tour, and record with country artists Rodney Crowell, Rosanne Cash, Carlene Carter, and others. She began work at Vanderbilt's Blair School of Music as an accompanist for classical voice students, and joined the faculty as Adjunct Artist/Teacher in 2013. She also works as an accompanist/coach at Belmont University and privately for professional and amateur opera singers.



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# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



## CANDACE WINTERS JOHNSON *(she/her/hers)*

Candace Winters Johnson is a newlywed to husband Mike (FTM) and the mom to three adult sons, the youngest, Damien age 19, is transgender FTM. They've written a book together about their journey. One side tells Damien's childhood journey, flipping the book over gives Candace's view, that speaks to the parent. She's a fierce activist for the LGBTQIA+ community and a mama bear for any kid that needs it and crosses her path. She's a member of several groups that support and affirm the community including: SerendipityDoDah, MamaBears, Free Mom hugs, Vanderbilt transbuddy volunteer program, and PFLAG Nashville. She worked eight years as a surgery tech at Vanderbilt Medical Center and had dreams of a career in stand up prior to being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2015. Her days are filled with writing and working for the cause of inclusivity of human rights, as well as her passion to become a master gardener with the handicap of having a black thumb. She truly rejoices in feeding the hundreds of songbirds that find their way into her backyard in Franklin, Tennessee. Another passion is nourishing the hungry souls that find their way into her kitchen. The rest of her time is spent wrangling dust bunnies and loose fur created by their four four-legged fur babies.



## DAMIEN CONNOR *(he/him/his)*

Damien Ryan Connor is a 2018 graduate from Independence High School in Thompson Station, TN. He graduated with the rank of Captain and a leadership award from their JROTC program. He currently works part time and has been accepted into a volunteer firefighter program that will train him to eventually become a professional firefighter. In addition to writing his side of the book, in his free time he enjoys playing video games. He also spends his free time hanging out with his girlfriend, brothers, and close friends.



# PROGRAM

Hosted by Kayla Gore and Jennifer Novo

## Welcome and Introductions

### The Occasion

### Greetings

#### **Dr. Debra Sells**

Vice President for Student Affairs,  
Middle Tennessee State University

#### **Dr. Harold "Terry" Whiteside**

Dean, College of Behavioral and Health Sciences  
Middle Tennessee State University

#### **Maxwell Pearson**

President,  
MTSU Lambda Association

### Musical Prelude

**Sheri Nichols Bucy** with **Barbara Santoro**

"Non Je Ne Regrette Rien"

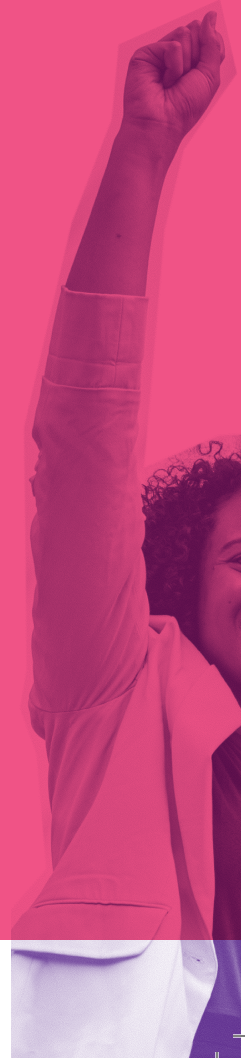
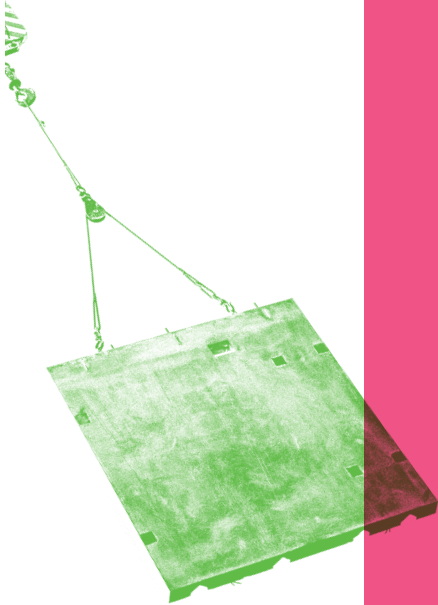
"La Vie en Rose"

### Dinner

### Welcome Back

### Keynote Address

**Candace Winters Johnson & Damien Connor**





## 2019 Conference Awards Presentation Ceremony

Terry Whiteside Ally in Diversity Award

Civic Advocacy Award

Community Excellence Award

Diane Easter Corporate Engagement Award

Academic Advancement Award

## MTSU Lambda Association Award Presentation

Wayne C. Rosing LGBT+ Advocacy Award

**Donna Baker**

Archivist, Middle Tennessee State University Albert Gore Research Center

## MTSU Lambda Association Heroes Scholarship Presentation

### Remarks

**Dr. William Langston**

Professor, Department of Psychology, Middle Tennessee State University

## Acknowledgements and Conference Closing



## NOMINEES

### Terry Whiteside Ally in Diversity Award

This award serves to recognize allies of the LGBT+ community for their work in advancing, supporting, and advocating in the community where they live, work, and play. The award was named for Dr. Terry Whiteside, Dean of the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences at Middle Tennessee State University, in 2014. His support was crucial to the launching of the Inaugural LGBT+ College Conference.

#### Ray White

Licensed Professional  
Counselor

#### Paul Wydra

Middle Tennessee State  
University Foundation

#### Patrick McCarthy

Middle Tennessee State  
University Department of  
Psychology

### Civic Advocacy Award

This award serves to recognize individuals for their outstanding civic works in support of the LGBT+ Community through civic related advocacy efforts. Examples include an individual whose personal or professional efforts focus on legislation, building grassroots coalitions, or providing leadership to overall strategic advocacy.

#### Angelita Gonzalez-Mroz

PFLAG Murfreesboro

#### Ronellis Tunstill

My House/Nashville CARES

#### Justin Miller

Tennessee Equality Project  
Rutherford County

### Community Excellence Award

This award serves to recognize individuals for their work in advancing LGBT+ rights and the efforts of the LGBT+ community. Efforts include advocating for community programs, and initiatives that speak to the unique challenges of the LGBT+ community.

#### Mac Huffington

Mac Productions

#### Michael Reding

PFLAG Nashville/Nashville in  
Harmony

#### Ray Holloman

Philanthropist





## NOMINEES

### Diane Easter Corporate Engagement Award

This award serves to recognize individuals for their professional efforts in advancing and advocating for LGBT+ inclusive workplace and community initiatives. The individual recognized will have successfully led high-impact collaborative programs with higher education and/or other organizations to advance social progress while contributing to the strategic goals of their company. The award was named for Diane Easter in 2014. Her support was crucial to the launching of the Inaugural LGBT+ College Conference.

**Bethany Mason**  
Dollar General

**Ron Balcarras**  
Deloitte

**Robert Wilson**  
Culture Shift Team

### Academic Advancement Award

This award serves to recognize individuals who have made a tremendous impact on diversity and inclusion through study, research, or thought at an academic institution. This individual's efforts will have contributed to increased knowledge and understanding that supports and advances inclusive policies and practices.

**Christina New**  
University of Memphis

**Roberta Nelson**  
Vanderbilt University

**Tyler Kibbey**  
University of Kentucky



## PAST AWARDEES

### **Terry Whiteside Ally in Diversity Award**

2018 Sharon Collins  
PFLAG Franklin

2017 Anna Belle Robertson  
Jackson State Community  
College

2016 Claudia Huskey  
Special Advisor to the Mayor,  
Nashville

2015 Dr. Kenny Yarbrough  
Volunteer State Community  
College

2014 Dr. Harold (Terry)  
Whiteside  
Middle Tennessee State  
University

### **Civic Advocacy Award**

2018 Selena Haynes  
Focus Middle Tennessee

2017 Beverly Watts  
Tennessee Human Rights  
Commission

2016 Dr. Jessica Kratzer  
& Dr. Mary Beth Asbury  
Middle Tennessee  
State University

2015 Dr. Marisa Richmond  
Tennessee Transgender  
Political Coalition

2014 Chris Sanders  
Tennessee Equality Project

### **Community Excellence Award**

2018 Kayla Gore  
OUTMemphis

2017 Doug Alexander  
Nashville Cares

2016 Kathy Halbrooks  
PFLAG Nashville

2015 Thomas Chappell  
Association for Family  
and Community Integrity

2014 Michael McDaniel  
Community Foundation of  
Middle Tennessee

### **Diane Easter Corporate Engagement Award**

2018 Greg Cason  
Nissan

2017 Ron Snitker  
Waller Law

2016 Steve Smotherman  
Cracker Barrel

2015 Cathy Lively  
Nissan Motor Corporation

2014 Diane Easter  
Deloitte LLP

### **Academic Achievement Award (introduced 2015)**

2018 Bonnie Johnson  
University of Tennessee  
Knoxville

2018 Jennifer Novo  
Cumberland University

2017 Dwayne Jenkins  
Nashville Cares

2016 Morgan Hunlen  
Middle Tennessee  
State University

2015 Brock Swims  
Christian Brothers University

### **Wayne C. Rosing LGBT+ Advocacy Award**

2018 Christy Osborne  
Middle Tennessee State  
University Alumnus '98

2017 Jon Breeding  
Freddie Mac

2016 John Weaver  
Delta Airlines

2015 Christian Grantham  
Half Hill Farm

2014 Dr. Jim Williams  
Middle Tennessee  
State University

2013 Wayne C. Rosing  
Middle Tennessee  
State University



## 2019 CONFERENCE ADVISORY BOARD

### **Ron Snitker**

Chair, Conference Advisory Board  
Waller

### **Paul Wydra**

Middle Tennessee State University  
Foundation

### **Lynn Cothren**

Special Assistant to Executive Director,  
Tennessee Human Rights Commission

### **Cathy Lively**

Nissan North America

### **Selena Haynes**

Focus Middle Tennessee

### **William Langston**

Middle Tennessee State University  
Department of Psychology

### **Marisa Richmond**

Middle Tennessee State University  
Departments of History and Women's  
and Gender Studies

### **Joshua Rigsby**

Middle Tennessee State University  
LGBT+ Program Assistant

### **Christopher Michael Maupins**

### **Diane Hatley**

Nissan North America

## EVENT PATRONS

**Joshua Rigsby - Nashville, TN**

**Dr. William Langston - Murfreesboro, TN**

**Ron Snitker - Nashville, TN**

**Atty. Terry Bird - Atlanta, GA**

**Jon Breeding - Washington, D.C.**

## AWARDS DINNER TABLE SPONSORS

**Tennessee Human Rights Commission**

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of Behavioral and Health Sciences**

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**Middle Tennessee State University College  
of Liberal Arts**

**Middle Tennessee State University College  
of Media and Entertainment**

**Middle Tennessee State University  
Vice President's Office for Student Affairs**

**Middle Tennessee State University  
Department of Psychology**

**Joshua Rigsby**

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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



The members of MTSU Lambda Association thank all those who have supported us publicly and financially in the presentation of the 2019 LGBT+ College Conference Awards Dinner. A very special thanks to those honored this evening for their outstanding contributions toward making our communities welcoming to all identities and building support.

Conference graphics and artwork by Taylor Watson