



LGBT PLUS
COLLEGE CONFERENCE

AWARDS
DINNER

APRIL 15, 2023 | 7:00 P.M.

STUDENT UNION BUILDING
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



Office of the President

Middle Tennessee State University
204 Cope Administration Building
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
o: 615-898-2622 • f: 615-898-2507



April 15, 2023

Dear Friends and Colleagues,



Welcome to the 2023 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,

Sidney A. McPhee (he/him/his)
President

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April 15, 2023

Dear Friends,

Thank you all so much for attending this year's LGBT+ College Conference Awards Dinner. I hope you have 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,

Zofia Zagalsky (she/her)

President
MTSU Lambda Association



HOSTS



KAYLA GORE
(SHE/HER)

Kayla works to help organize and conduct direct outreach and to advocate for the rights of women, especially transgender women. Kayla's most recent work is with the #tinyhouseprojectMSH with the goal of developing homes for Black and Brown Trans Women. Project details can be found on the MSH website, www.mshmemphis.org.



JUSTIN REED
(HE/HIM)

Justin Reed serves as the Director of Student Unions at Middle Tennessee State University and is this year's Conference Advisory Board Chair. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Wesley Foundation and works to create inclusive environments both on and off Campus.

MUSIC



MAJOR MINORS

Major Minors, the youth chorus of Nashville in Harmony, offers LGBTQIAP+ and allied youth, ages 12-18, an opportunity to discover their voice, build their community, and become powerful self-advocates and agents of social change. They discover their powerful individual voices, and collective voice, by performing songs that express their experiences, their identity, and their hopes for a world where all are loved and accepted.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



PHIL COBUCCI
(HE/THEY)

phil cobucci (he/they) was born and raised in the New York City/New Jersey area to fundamentalist Christian parents. As a young child, phil and his family were actively involved in their local church, which took up most of their lives, and social affairs outside of the Christian viewpoint were rare.

From a young age, phil was often told that he was supposed to fit into a specific style, "conservative, Christian, straight" box. That box diminished his existence and limited his becoming in a way that followed him for much of his teens. After graduating high school, instead of starting college like most of his peers, phil was sent to conversion therapy as his parents felt his life was not following the destiny they desired for him.

Following nine months of intensive Bible training, emotionally abusive treatment, and attempts to make him "straight," phil returned to New Jersey and started a job at Starbucks Coffee Company. During those few short months at Starbucks, for the first time in his life, phil felt as though he was seen, accepted, and loved for being a member of the queer community. If it wasn't for those few short months and those feelings of love and acceptance being wrapped around him from the staff and the brand ethos, phil is not sure how his process towards acceptance of himself would be today.

Following that summer in 2002, phil was sent to Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA, as their only option to gain additional training to start a career. Despite being at an ultra-conservative school, phil found ways to break open the straight-and-narrow box his parents had hoped they could force him into. While at Liberty University, phil saw many classmates who identified as LGBTQ+ vanish from the university, either being expelled or put into other forms of conversion therapy. While in school, he maintained a management-level position with Starbucks in Virginia, allowing for continued company growth and a sense of security and safety around his identity.

In 2005, while still in school, he started his marketing, branding, and communications career with Warner Bros. Records, which quickly translated into a full-time job post-university back home in New York City. He stayed with Warner Music Group until late-2009 when he was laid off as part of a system-wide restructuring resulting from the Napster era. Living in and around New York City exposed phil to what it was like to live into his truth and experience life as a queer person. After getting laid off, he set his sights on either Los Angeles or Nashville with hopes that he would continue with a marketing career in the music industry. After a short stint in Los Angeles, he ended up in Nashville, where he has lived since.

In 2009, phil founded BAM! Social Business, a digital marketing agency, and built it to a team of twenty full and part-time strategists, advertisers, copywriters, editors, and more. In this marketing, branding, and communications work, phil and his team told stories for businesses and organizations from all walks of life. This career was rewarding in many ways. The company grew considerably over the next ten years in business, but as the company passed a decade in operation, phil realized it was time for a change.

At the same time, phil was finishing his fifth year of service on the Nashville Pride Board of Directors and continued to hear stories from people throughout our diverse and beautiful community that there was a lack of

connection and that many folks in our community did not feel as though there was a way to stay involved in the LGBTQIA+ community year-round. So, utilizing his background in marketing, strategy, and research, phil, along with six other researchers, launched the Middle Tennessee Community Visioning Project commissioned by Nashville Pride. The research project was completed over six months and allowed our community organizations to share their needs and desires to create a community that worked and supported all of us. The research report was finalized in late 2019 and delivered to the community in December 2019.

2020 has brought many challenges and changes for many of us; for phil, nearly every aspect of his life was dramatically altered professionally and personally. Over just twelve short months, phil uncovered a web of deceit and theft with former employees. He experienced a catastrophic tornado that destroyed his home, two burglaries, two insurance lawsuits, a significant health issue, and the pandemic. While navigating these concurrent losses, phil was also forced into a deeper understanding of his experience as a queer person and to navigate the traumas of childhood sexual and faith-based abuse.

Following what he lovingly refers to as his menty-b at the end of 2020, phil received the care he needed to align his heart and life to a new path. He started 2021 with an open heart, an open mind, and a path made clear — determined to do something with the stories, research, and data collected as part of the visioning project just a year prior.

WITH A PERMANENTLY OPEN HEART, THERE IS NO MORE VALVE. YOU CAN LIVE IN LOVE — WHICH FEEDS YOU AND STRENGTHENS YOU. THAT IS WHAT YOUR HEART IS MEANT TO BE.

So, with a renewed passion and vision for the queer community, phil began writing, researching, and dreaming. By June 2021, he was sharing these ideas and the additional research with members of the community, which resulted in the founding of inclusion tennessee in the fall of 2021. inclusion tennessee was founded to connect people, opportunities, and resources to enrich and enhance the multi-faceted LGBTQIA+ community. inclusion tennessee is an equity and justice focused organization committed to building models of

collaborative impact statewide through advocacy and education, creating health and wellness programming and developing navigation services, while also building safe spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community to gather throughout the state.

Today, we all share meaningful stories that reflect loss, resilience, and hope. Each story is unique and can inspire and influence our communities, clients, business, and employees in fresh ways. Through what phil has learned and experienced, he has dedicated his life to creating change through a lens of equity, justice, and inclusion through all his practices.

Outside of his work in the LGBTQIA+ community, phil has also had the pleasure of serving as President of the Historic Buena Vista Community Association, a Member at Large of the Davidson County Foster Care Review Board, a Member at Large of the Davidson County Short Term Rentals Board, Secretary of the Board for Nashville Emerging Leaders, and also Member at Large of the PENCIL Board. phil has also participated in a variety of leadership and educational programs, including Nashville Emerging Leaders (2016), the MBA-Mini Program at Belmont University (Class of 2017), and the New Leaders Council - Nashville Chapter (Class of 2018). He has been featured in several magazines and newspapers, including *Teen Vogue*, *them*, *Advocate*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *Nashville Business Journal* (40 under 40 in 2018), and many other regional publications and television shows. phil will start his Master in Public Service at the Clinton School of Public Service at the University of Arkansas this May.

In his free time, phil enjoys reading, cooking, and traveling. phil and his partner Stuart live in the Historic Buena Vista neighborhood of Nashville with their dogs, Billie Jean King and Ousier Boudreaux.



PROGRAM

Hosted by Kayla Gore (she/her)
and Justin Reed (he/him)

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

THE OCCASION

GREETINGS

Dr. Barbara Turnage (she/her)
Dean, College of Behavioral and Health Sciences,
Middle Tennessee State University

Zofia Zagalsky (she/her)
President,
MTSU Lambda Association

MUSICAL PRELUDE

Major Minors

DINNER

WELCOME BACK

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

phil cobucci (he/they)

2023 CONFERENCE AWARDS PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Terry Whiteside Ally in Diversity Award
Marisa Richmond Civic Advocacy Award
Community Excellence Award
Diane Easter Corporate Engagement Award
Academic Advancement Award

MTSU LAMBDA ASSOCIATION AWARD PRESENTATION

Wayne C. Rosing LGBTQ+ Advocacy Award
Dr. Debra Sells (she/her)
Vice President for Student Affairs,
Middle Tennessee State University

MTSU Lambda Association
Heroes Scholarship Presentation

REMARKS

Dr. William Langston (he/him)
Professor, Department of Psychology,
Middle Tennessee State University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & 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.

Mirabelle Stuedter (she/her)
Americans United for Separation of
Church and State

Lyndsay Sneckenberger (she/her)
Tennessee Valley Authority

MARISSA RICHMOND 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. This award was named for Marisa Richmond in 2019 in honor of her extraordinary level of commitment to civic advocacy.

Roberta Chevrette (she/her)
Middle Tennessee
State University

Pamba Paul Samuel (he/him)
Together for Uganda

Dr. Amy Aldridge Sanford (she/her)
Middle Tennessee
State University

NOMINEES

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.

Ray Holloman (he/him)
Tennessee Transgender
Task Force

Shae Crowell (they/she)
Nashville in Harmony/
Rainbow Rutherford

Dr. Brian Issac Marshall (he/him)
MashUp! Nashville

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.

Neyder McDonald (he/him)
Chair Emeritus
UBS PRIDE ERG

Victoria Montefusco (she/her)
Tennessee Valley Authority

Bo Robertson (he/him)
Fourth Capital Bank

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.

Allie Sultan (she/her)
Middle Tennessee
State University

Ann Petty (she/they)
Middle Tennessee State
University Honors Student

La Shonda Mims (she/her)
Middle Tennessee
State University



PAST AWARDEES

Terry Whiteside Ally in Diversity Award

2022 Ray White
Licensed Professional Counselor

2019 Patrick McCarthy
Middle Tennessee
State University

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

Marissa Richmond Civic Advocacy Award

2022 BoroPride Planning Team
(Leslie Russell Yost, Troy Yost, William
Langston, Trent Jackson, Christopher
Michael Maupins, Nichole McVeigh,
Norman Hanks, River Johnson, George
W. Manus, Jr., Brittany Potts, Laura
Bohling, Airana McMillan)
BoroPride

2019 Ronellis Tunstill
Nashville CARES

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

2022 Jake Martino
PFLAG Nashville

2019 Michael Reding
PFLAG Nashville/Nashville
in Harmony

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

2022 Ron Balcarras
Deloitte

2019 Bethany Mason
Dollar General

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)

2022 Dr. LaToya Eaves
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

2019 Tyler Kibbey
University of Kentucky

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

2022 Vincent Windrow
Middle Tennessee State University

2019 Donna Baker
Middle Tennessee State University
Gore Research Center

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

2023 CONFERENCE ADVISORY BOARD

Justin Reed (he/him)
Conference Advisory Board Chair
Middle Tennessee State University

Ron Balcarras (he/him)
Deloitte

Roberta Chevrette (she/her)
Middle Tennessee State University

Lynn Cothren (he/him)
Tennessee Human Rights Commission

Shae Crowell (she/her)
Veteran Public-School Educator, Community
Leader

Kerri French-Nelson (she/her)
University of Memphis

Jamie Fuston (they/them)
Volunteer State Community College

Diane Hatley (she/her)
Nissan

Don Hayes (he/him)
Nissan

Selena Haynes (she/her)
CEO of S&L Companies

Christina Hutson (she/her)
Middle Tennessee State University

Tyler Kibbey (he/they)
Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft at Humboldt-
Universität zu Berlin

William Langston (he/him)
Middle Tennessee State University

Shane McCoy (they/them)
Middle Tennessee State University

Lloyd McDonald (he/him)
USHAdvisors

Marisa Richmond (she/her)
Middle Tennessee State University

Danielle Rochelle (she/her)
Middle Tennessee State University

Michelle Stevens (she/her)
Middle Tennessee State University

Brad Tammen (he/him)
Middle Tennessee State University

Ray White (he/him)
Whitewood Counseling

CONFERENCE SPONSORS

NISSAN



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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 2023 LGBT+ College Conference Awards Dinner. A very special thank you is extended to those honored this evening for their outstanding contributions toward making our communities welcoming to all identities.

The 2023 LGBT Plus College Conference is a partnership between MTSU Lambda Association (Tennessee's oldest continuously active LGBTQ+ student organization) and the MTSU College of Behavioral and Health Sciences.

Conference graphics and artwork by Taylor Watson (he/him)