



ALL IDENTITIES

STANDING STRONG

APRIL 4-6, 2024

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



LGBT+
COLLEGE
CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE PROGRAM



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MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE ADVISORY BOARD

On behalf of the 2024 LGBT Plus College Conference Advisory Board, I welcome you and thank you for participating in this year's conference. I am honored to serve as chair of this year's Board once again.

The Conference Advisory Board is proud to have played a part in making this eleventh edition of the conference the best yet. We are excited to explore this year's theme, *All Identities: Standing Strong*.

The Board's purpose is three-fold:

- 1. Share information with our colleagues and peers, encouraging their participation and attendance;
- 2. Offer advice and counsel to ensure relevant, timely programming and presentations; and
- 3. Secure financial and public support for the conference and its related events.

Thanks to the organizers, MTSU Lambda Association, academic advisor Dr. William Langston, and Development Director John Roberson. And, of course, thank you to our sponsors.

I also want to thank all of the people you will see presenting and sharing at this year's conference. We literally could not do it without you!

As a Board, we thank you all for your participation, dedication, and commitment to belonging and engagement for everyone. We commend you for your attendance and ask that you leave here sharing the knowledge, messages, and resources of the minds—including yours—that make this event possible.

Justin Reed (he/him)
2024 Conference Advisory Board Chair



2023 REFLECTIONS

In 2023 the conference continued to grow by partnering with the Middle Tennessee State University Holocaust Studies program to present a discussion of the evolution of the pink triangle from a Nazi concentration camp badge into a widespread emblem of queer liberation, pride, and community. The conference also hosted its first ever Lavender Celebration of Graduates.

The first day, April 13, spotlighted legislation influencing transgender life in Tennessee. Paul Pamba discussed LGBTQ+ peoples' rights and challenges in East Africa. The day ended with a business etiquette discussion and resume review session.

The second day, April 14, was devoted to panel discussions. The opening panel addressed fundraising, with practical tips and advice. The documentary keynote was *Paragraph 175*, which documented the impact of the holocaust on LGBTQ+ people. The Bringing Your Whole Self to Work panel explored maintaining one's identity in the workplace.

The final day, April 15, was devoted to working and strategy sessions. The opening panel included personal reflections on pulling together. Then, the LGBTQ+ Community Keynote reviewed Curtis Chen's memoir *Everything I Learned, I Learned in a Chinese Restaurant*. Participants enjoyed the Community and Religious Organizations Fair and the first Lavender Celebration of Graduates. The day ended with an Issues Summit exploring the history of efforts to ban Pride celebrations.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

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Center for Fairness, Justice, and Equity
in the College of Education

College of Media and Entertainment

President's Commission on
the Status of Women

James E. Walker Library

GET READY TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION WITH THE
2025 LGBT PLUS COLLEGE CONFERENCE
ALL IDENTITIES: DRIVING CHANGE!

APRIL 3–5, 2025



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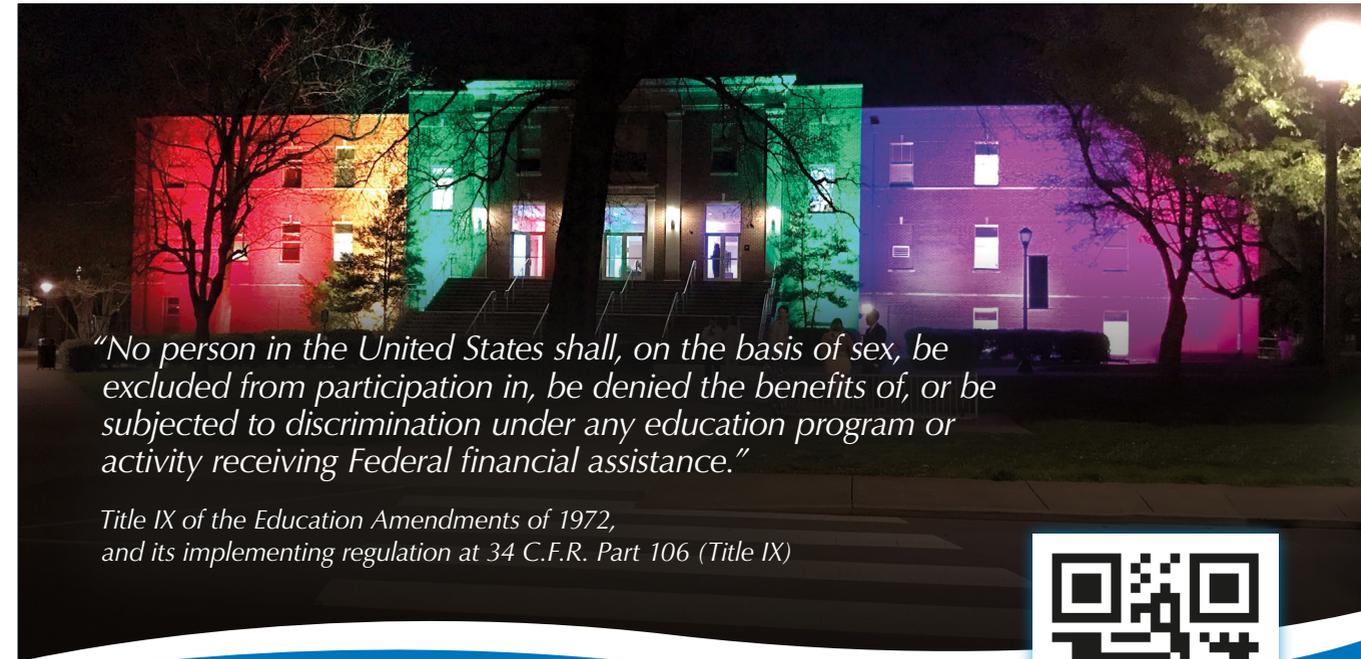


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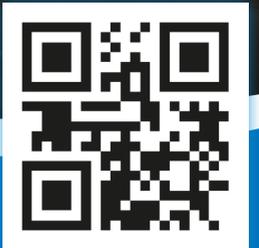


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Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance

mtsu.edu/iec

Tennessee Human Rights Commission



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by calling **800-251-3589** or visiting **tn.gov/humanrights**

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DAY 1 THURSDAY, APRIL 4

STUDENT UNION BUILDING - BALLROOM
REGISTRATION BEGINS 8:45 A.M.

**Day Host: Ray White, Ed.S. (he/him),
Clinical Counselor, Walters State Community College**

Welcoming Remarks | 9:15 a.m. – 9:35 a.m.

Sarah Calise (she/they), Curator of Community Histories, Vanderbilt University Libraries

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Education Spotlight—“Queers Read This!”: Contemporary AIDS Literature | 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Dr. Eric Hughes (he/they), Lecturer in English and Women’s and Gender Studies, Middle Tennessee State University, introduced by **Roberta Chevrette** (she/her), Associate Professor of Communication Studies and Women’s and Gender Studies, Middle Tennessee State University

This talk will focus on three contemporary texts that portray the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 1990s—*Like a Love Story* (2019), *The Prettiest Star* (2020), and *My Government Means to Kill Me* (2022). It will consider the exigencies behind this retrospection in the so-called “post-AIDS” era, with an emphasis on queer culture, history, and politics in contemporary AIDS literature.

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University College of Liberal Arts

Voices—Creating a Welcoming Island in a Sea of Prejudice: How to Support LGBTQ+ Students and Employees in Non-Inclusive Communities | 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Dr. Candace Lapan (she/her), Assistant Professor of Psychology, Wingate University

This talk will overview the experience of seeking out educational and employment opportunities at institutions of higher education as an LGBTQ+ person. Drawing on her personal experience and research, Dr. Lapan will explain the unique challenges that LGBTQ+ people face in these situations, particularly when institutions are located in less than welcoming communities.

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University President’s Commission on the Status of Women

Lunch Break | 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

KEYNOTE PANEL

From Policy to Practice: The Role of Business in Social Advocacy | 1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Dr. Stephanie Mahnke (she/her; moderator), Executive Director of the Tennessee Pride Chamber of Commerce and Tennessee Pride Chamber Foundation, **Brynn Plummer** (she/her), Vice President and Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at AllianceBernstein, **Joseph Woodson** (he/him), Founder and President of Woodson Results, LLC, **Josh Wood**, Tennessee Pride Chamber

Businesses are increasingly aware of the importance of inclusivity and diversity in their operations. A diverse workforce that feels embraced by their employers leads to increased innovation and profitability. Consumers are more likely to spend money at companies that reflect their values. However, speaking out on politically charged issues can lead to public backlash and financial consequences. What roles and obligations do employers and businesses have in advocacy and impacting social change?

Sponsored by Tennessee Pride Chamber

Plenary Panel Discussion—Bringing Your Whole Self to Work | 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Dr. Patrick McCarthy, J.D. (he/him; moderator), Professor of Psychology, Middle Tennessee State University, **Amna Osman** (she/her), Chief Executive Officer of Nashville CARES, **Maurice Moore, Ph.D.** (they/them), Assistant Professor of Drawing and Painting, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, **Dr. Sam Zaza** (she/her), Associate Professor of Information Systems and Analytics, Middle Tennessee State University, **Greg Cason** (he/him), Purchasing Manager at Nissan Group of the Americas and Owner of Inspired Concepts and Events and Misty Blue Event Venue

This panel explores the “bottom line value” that organizations place on their capacity to create a culture in which differences are respected and inclusion is strategically leveraged as an organizational strength. Students will gain insights on how employers’ policies and practices address various dimensions of diversity. D&I professionals and other leaders will benefit from open and honest dialogue for the benefit of the work unit and organization.

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University Department of Psychology

Math and Science Education Ph.D. Seminar—Empowering LGBTQ Youth Through Science Education
4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Dr. Gary Wright (he/him), Assistant Professor of Science Education in the Department of Learning, Teaching and Curriculum, University of Missouri, introduced by **Kate Coscia** (they/them), second-year student in the Mathematics and Science Education Ph.D. Program, Middle Tennessee State University

Access to a gender and sexual diversity-inclusive curriculum, supportive teachers, and mentorship opportunities can have a significant positive impact on LGBTQ students’ feelings of safety, academic performance, educational aspirations, sense of belonging and well-being, equity literacy, and it can enhance empathy and acceptance of all students towards diverse identities. The lecture will highlight opportunities to empower LGBTQ youth through science education.

Presented in partnership with Middle Tennessee State University College of Basic and Applied Sciences

LGBT PLUS COLLEGE CONFERENCE
FILM FESTIVAL

6:00 PM - STUDENT UNION BUILDING - BALLROOM

Allie Sultan (she/her; host), Associate Professor of Media Arts,
Middle Tennessee State University

The festival will feature LGBTQ+ themed films submitted from around the globe.

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University College of Media and Entertainment

CONFERENCE DISPLAY

Available During Conference Hours Each Day

**BREAKING THE STIGMA AROUND AUTISM:
AN INTERACTIVE ART EXHIBITION**

Jillian DeGrie (she/they)

multimedia artist pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Middle Tennessee State University

Neurodivergence affects an ever-growing percentage of the population. For years, the definition of autism was based solely on the experience of nerdy white boys. Modern day research on autism is finally beginning to include people of other ages, genders, and races. Thus, more people are being diagnosed today than ever before. However, the stigma surrounding autism has not adjusted accordingly. Inaccurate representations in the media, preexisting stereotypes, and the taboo surrounding mental health discussions have prevented an accurate understanding of autism by neurotypical people. This project is my attempt to destigmatize autism through an education-based approach. I created an interactive art exhibition that allows the viewer to experience aspects of autism themselves to better learn how the disability affects autistic people.

Sponsored by Tennessee Human Rights Commission



Celebrating differences and promoting acceptance

MTSU LGBT + College Conference
April 4 - 6



Connect
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Promoting health equity in Tennessee

Accepting applications through May 1



Open to graduate and undergraduate students
For more information, visit bcbstnews.com/scholarship



DAY 2 FRIDAY, APRIL 5

STUDENT UNION BUILDING - BALLROOM
REGISTRATION BEGINS 8:30 A.M.

Day Host: Elizabeth Cannan-Knight (she/ze/fae), MTSU Lambda Association

Conference Opening Address | 9:00 a.m. – 9:20 a.m.

Gini Pupo-Walker (she/her), Executive Director for Tennessee for the Education Trust

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Equity and Compliance

Opening Plenary Discussion—LGBTQ+ Identity and Neurodiversity | 9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Trent Jackson (they/them; moderator), **Katie Munday (they/them)**, multiply neurodivergent advocate and consultant, **Jillian DeGrie (she/they)**, multimedia artist pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Middle Tennessee State University, **Kirk Aldave (he/they)**, Middle Tennessee State University, **Kathlene Smith (she/her)**, Manager of DEI for Nissan Group of the Americas

Being LGBTQ+ and being neurodivergent can each come with unique challenges and experiences. The discussion will begin with a look at some of the experiences of autistic transgender and non-binary adults, shared by Katie Munday. The panel and audience will then share in discussing additional intersections of LGBTQ+ identity and neurodiversity.

Sponsored by Nissan Group of the Americas

DOCUMENTARY KEYNOTE PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

Mama Bears | 11:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Allie Sultan (she/her; moderator), Associate Professor of Media Arts, Middle Tennessee State University, **Daresha Kyi (she/her)**, Emmy Award-winning director, **Candace Winters Johnson (she/her)**, **Emily Gilreath (she/her)**, **Jessica Gaby (she/her)**, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Middle Tennessee State University

••• Lunch will be served immediately prior to the beginning of the film •••

MAMA BEARS is an intimate, thought-provoking exploration of the journeys taken by Sara Cunningham and Kimberly Shappley, two “mama bears”—whose profound love for their LGBTQ children has turned them into fierce advocates for the entire queer community—and Tammi Terrell Morris, a young African American lesbian whose struggle for self-acceptance perfectly exemplifies why the mama bears are so vitally important.

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University Vice President for Student Affairs



Plenary Panel Discussion—Let’s Get One Thing Straight: Banned Books, “Decency” Ordinances, and Public Library Collections | 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Kristen West (she/her; moderator), Chair of the User Services Department, Middle Tennessee State University James E. Walker Library, **Dr. Poushali Bhadury (she/her)**, Assistant Professor of English, Middle Tennessee State University, **Jordan Nielsen (they/them)**, Inclusion & Education Librarian, Middle Tennessee State University James E. Walker Library, **Dr. C. Rebecca Oldham (she/her)**, Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Science, Middle Tennessee State University, **Ken Paulson (he/him)**, Director of the Free Speech Center and Dean Emeritus of Middle Tennessee State University’s College of Media and Entertainment, **Steve Sullivan (he/him)**, Smyrna Town Council member and Chair of the Rutherford County Library System Board

Public library books, especially those written for LGBTQ+ audiences, are increasingly becoming the subject of challenges and book bans. This panel of academics and community leaders will provide multiple perspectives on how “decency” laws are having (un)intentional ramifications on public library collections.

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University James E. Walker Library

Plenary Panel Discussion—Exploring the Impact of Overturning Roe v. Wade on Bodily Autonomy for LGBTQ+ People | 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

William Langston (he/him; moderator), Professor of Psychology, Middle Tennessee State University, **Patrick R. Grzanka (he/him)**, Professor of Psychology and the inaugural Divisional Dean for Social Sciences, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, **Francie Hunt (she/her)**, Executive Director of Tennessee Advocates for Planned Parenthood, **Theodore Baker (he/him)**, Youth Organizing Fellow for Rutherford County with Planned Parenthood of Tennessee and Northern Mississippi, **Antoine Dandridge (he/him)**, founder of the “Black Lifestyle Advocates for Culture and Knowledge” Organizer Program, Planned Parenthood of Tennessee and North Mississippi

Please join us for an important panel discussion on the implications of the Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade for bodily autonomy rights for LGBTQ+ people. We will be hosting representatives from Planned Parenthood and members of the LGBTQ+ community to explore how the rollback of abortion rights could further enable restrictions on healthcare access and procedures related to gender affirming care, potential legal challenges to medical treatments for transgender youth, discrimination in reproductive healthcare, and other threats to self-determination over one’s own body and healthcare decisions.

Sponsored by Planned Parenthood of Tennessee and North Mississippi

Strategy Session—Building Structures for Belonging and Engagement | 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

William Langston (he/him; moderator), Professor of Psychology, Middle Tennessee State University, **María C. González (she/her/ella)**, Martha Gano Houstoun Research Professor in Literary Criticism, University of Houston

After the Texas legislature passed Senate Bill 17 (Texas SB 17), higher education institutions in Texas were required to end diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. The purpose of this strategy session is to develop resources for students that would still be available if a law like Texas SB 17 were to be passed in Tennessee.

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University Center for Fairness, Justice, and Equity in the College of Education

LGBT PLUS COLLEGE CONFERENCE GAME NIGHT

6:00 PM - STUDENT UNION BUILDING - GAME ROOM

William Langston (he/him; host), Professor of Psychology, Middle Tennessee State University

Conference participants will gather for an evening of interaction and fun with a variety of games and activities.

Middle Tennessee State University Intercultural and Diversity Affairs Center and Tennessee Valley Authority





DAY 3 SATURDAY, APRIL 6

STUDENT UNION BUILDING - BALLROOM
REGISTRATION BEGINS 8:30 A.M.

Day Host: Beverly Mangan (she/her), President of MTSU Lambda Association

Welcoming Remarks | 9:00 a.m. – 9:20 a.m.

Dr. Michelle Stevens (she/her), Professor of Educational Leadership, Director of the Center for Fairness, Justice, and Equity in the College of Education, Middle Tennessee State University

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University Student Activity Fees Committee

Plenary Discussion—Personal Reflections on Standing Strong | 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Beverly Mangan (she/her; moderator), President of MTSU Lambda Association, panelists selected from conference attendee volunteers

Sponsored by Connect

COMMUNITY KEYNOTE

My Beautiful Black Hair: 101 Natural Hair Stories from the Sisterhood | 10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

St. Clair Detrick-Jules (she/her), award-winning filmmaker, photographer, author, activist, and public speaker, introduced by **Danielle Rochelle** (she/her), Director of Intercultural and Diversity Affairs, Center for Student Involvement and Leadership, Middle Tennessee State University

"When my little sister Khloe was just four years old, with tears running down her face, she told my dad that she hated her afro because her white classmates were making fun of it. My anger turned into sadness, which quickly turned into joy: this was an opportunity for me to teach my little sister that her curls—just like everything else that comes from our Black ancestors—are beautiful. I spent the next two years photographing and interviewing 101 Black women with natural hair."

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University Distinguished Lecture Fund

Lunch Break, Networking, and Religious and Community Organizations Fair | 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Conference attendees will have an opportunity to network with participating religious and community organizations.

DON'T MISS →

LGBT Plus College Conference Lavender Celebration of Graduates | 1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Michelle Conceison (she/her; host), Chair of the Recording Industry Department, Middle Tennessee State University, **Allie Sultan** (she/her; host), Associate Professor of Media Arts, Middle Tennessee State University, **Dr. Marisa Richmond** (she/her; keynote), Lecturer in History and Women's and Gender Studies, Middle Tennessee State University

The Lavender Celebration of Graduates recognizes LGBTQ+ students of all backgrounds and acknowledges their achievements and contributions.

Sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee

Strategy Session—Addressing Loneliness: A Dialogue on LGBTQ+ Older Adults' Needs and a Vision for an Inclusive Community | 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

phil cobucci (he/they), inclusion tennessee, **Gretchen Funk**

This panel, developed in collaboration with inclusion tennessee and Fifty Forward, is divided into three parts, each focusing on critical aspects of LGBTQ+ older adult experiences. The first part is a discussion on the occurrence of loneliness among LGBTQ+ older adults and the needed programming for this demographic. The second part is a segment featuring a panel discussion with local LGBTQ+ older adults and organizers. The final segment will be an interactive Q&A session where attendees can ask questions and engage directly with the panelists.

Sponsored by inclusion tennessee and Fifty Forward

Conference Closing | 4:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

2024 LGBT PLUS COLLEGE CONFERENCE AWARDS DINNER

APRIL 6, 2024 • 7:00 PM
STUDENT UNION BUILDING - BALLROOM

Join us in a celebration of the conference attendees and presenters and help us recognize the remarkable achievements of our nominees and award winners.





SPEAKER BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Kirk Aldave (he/they)

Kirk Aldave is a freshman at MTSU pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Biology. He enjoys animals of all types, especially birds, and wishes to do work involving them in the future. While animals are a part of him, Kirk is also an aspiring artist and voice actor who wishes to experience the industries. Kirk learned to express himself through various art forms like music, writing and drawing. He enjoys experimenting with his interests and wishes to learn how to better his practices in art. To him, animals and art have been a big part of Kirk's life, and he wishes to find a way to work with both in the future.

Kirk is a neurodivergent and queer and grew up mainly in Nashville, TN. Despite being unsure of where his career path will take him, Kirk hopes to learn from the community of MTSU and find his way in life.

Theodore Baker (he/him)

Theodore Baker is a Youth Organizing Fellow for Rutherford County with Planned Parenthood of Tennessee and Northern Mississippi. He is a Senior at Middle Tennessee State University and will graduate in August with a B.S. in Political Science.

As a student specializing in Pre-Law and Women's and Gender Studies, Theodore has specialized in learning more about how LGBTQ individual's rights have and have not been protected through the courts and legislature. As an organizer, he is happy to be part of the multidimensional advocacy needed to ensure change. Through his civic engagement work, Theodore has focused on connecting with the Rising American Electorate, to uplift voices that are often drowned out. He spends a considerable amount of time connecting and organizing on campus, especially through the MTSU Generation Action Chapter.

Poushali Bhadury (she/her)

Dr. Poushali Bhadury is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, MTSU. She specializes in international and comparative Children's and Adolescent Literature, as well as comics and graphic novels, book history, and postcolonial literature. Her current book project, *The Home and the World in Postcolonial Print Culture: Dev Sahitya Kutir and Bengali Children's Publishing (1940-1975)* explores mid-20th century pulp series fiction for Indian youth readers. An active researcher, Dr. Bhadury regularly presents at academic conferences, publishes articles in peer-reviewed journals and collections in her field of study, and has been awarded several research grants. Recently, she has enjoyed curating the #VeryAsian Foundation's Asian American Youth Literature list, aka the May Book Project, as well as serving on the Metadata Advising Committee for a multi-institution IMLS grant for the Diverse Bookfinder website, enhancing the discoverability of middle grade (MG) and young adult (YA) novels featuring Black and Indigenous people and People of Color (BIPOC) characters. Dr. Bhadury is passionate about advocating for LGBTQ+ youth through her teaching and research: she has designed and taught an MTSU English upper-division undergraduate course on queer YA literature, published on queer women in South Asian comics, and is currently researching LGBTQ+ desi YA fiction from both South Asia as well as its global diaspora.

Sarah Calise (she/they)

Sarah Calise is a public historian and archivist working in Nashville. She holds a bachelor's in history from the University of Florida, a master's in public history from Middle Tennessee State University, and a master's in information science from the University of Tennessee. In 2021, Calise founded Nashville Queer History, an all-volunteer community organization dedicated to researching, preserving, and sharing the LGBTQ history of Middle Tennessee. She is currently under contract with Vanderbilt University Press to write the first published nonfiction book on Nashville's queer past. She also works full-time at Vanderbilt University Libraries as Curator of Community Histories. In 2023, the Society of Tennessee Archivists gave her the John H. Thweatt Archival Advancement Award for fostering a broader awareness of the local history and diversity of the Mid-South.

Elizabeth Cannan-Knight (she/ze/fae)

Elizabeth Cannan-Knight is a freshman sociology student and director of the Clarksville Kaleidoscope Network, as well as president of MTSU Generation Action. Elizabeth is also an officer in MTSU Lambda Association.

Greg Cason (he/him)

Greg Cason is a Purchasing Manager at Nissan Group of the Americas and Owner of Inspired Concepts and Events and Misty Blue Event Venue. He holds an Associates of Science Degree from Volunteer State Community College, Business Administration Degree from Tennessee State University and Masters of Business Administration Degree from Middle Tennessee State University. He has volunteered and/or served on the Board of Directors with organizations such as Nashville Pride, Nashville Black Pride, MashUP Nashville, Street Works, Common Ground Cooperative and past Vice President of the Tennessee Pride Chamber. He previously served on the planning committee for this conference for several years. He is the recipient of The Mark Manasco Community Service Award, Black Excellence in Arts and Entertainment, LGBT Community Service Award, Brothers United Legacy Award, Street Works "Yess" Award, and the Diane Easter Corporate Engagement Award all honoring his work in the LGBTQIA+ community. His motto is: "I give because I know how it feels to be without."

Roberta Chevrette (she/her)

Roberta Chevrette (PhD, Arizona State University) is an Associate Professor of Communication Studies and Women's and Gender Studies at Middle Tennessee State University. Her research interrogates relationships among rhetoric and popular culture, identity, and social justice using queer, feminist, anti-racist, and postcolonial frameworks. Along with numerous articles and book chapters, she is coauthor of the book *Dangerous Dames: Representing Female-Bodied Empowerment in Postfeminist Media*.

Michelle Conceison (she/her)

Michelle Conceison is a manager, professor, researcher, and community organizer. She is a tenured Associate Professor at Middle Tennessee State University, where she serves as Chair of the Recording Industry Department in the College

of Media and Entertainment and teaches Music Business course. She founded Nashville-based artist management and marketing firm Mmgmt. She works with Kyshona, Della Mae and the Guy Clark estate, and her company serves many clients. She is global Chair of Mentorship for Women in Music, and runs professional development programs for multiple music organizations. Prior to music, she worked in digital media, leading teams at multiple global advertising agencies. She has served on the boards of Folk Alliance International (former President), International Bluegrass Music Association (former Secretary), Women In Music (founding Nashville Chapter Chair). She is a member of Leadership Music (2024) and Leadership Bluegrass (2019). Her fields of research include public history, LGBTQ+ and gender studies, change making, audience and industry stakeholder analysis, representation in media, merchandising, and leadership in music organizations.

Kate Coscia (they/them)

Kate Coscia (they/them) is a second-year student in the Mathematics and Science Education Ph.D. Program at Middle Tennessee State University with a concentration in biology education. They have a Bachelor of Science in cell biology and biotechnology from Georgia Gwinnett College. They are a graduate research assistant working with Dr. Liz Barnes in the Social Perceptions of Science Lab at MTSU, where their research focuses on improving science communication training for undergraduate biology students.

Antoine Dandridge (he/him)

Antoine Dandridge is a third-generation organizer! He grew up at the helm of his grandparents, rural West Tennessee civil rights and healthcare activists, the late Square and Wilola Morman. He is also the founder of the B.L.A.C.K Organizer Program and fellowship, commonly known as "Black Lifestyle Advocates for Culture and Knowledge," a constituency program of Planned Parenthood of Tennessee and North Mississippi (PPTNM). Serving the reproductive-rights community for nearly a decade, Antoine filled the missing gap of an equitable space at PPTNM to innovate a new era of Black engagement within Tennessee's deep south's affiliate's external affairs programs. PPTNM



Black Org Program acts as the liaison of all PPTNM constituencies through amplifying the “call to action” for continuous reproductive justice and health equity via: education, storytelling, social engagement, direct action and peer accountability.

During his personal time, Antoine dabbles his hands in acting (film and theater), social media rants, eating good food, documentaries and spending quality time with his friends and family. Many people often see him as the life of the party, but Antoine affectionately enjoys being around positive vibes and celebrating life whenever possible! Today, Antoine is most excited about creating new moments with his partner, his dog Brooklyn (of 14 years) and being an uncle to a new generation of great nephews and (great) niece!

In the future, Antoine seeks to evolve his passions into a media brand and campaign strategist to unite Black and Brown professional organizers. In the meantime, Antoine will continue to challenge the social norms that commonly create the chaos that often divert southern voters from achievable equity and people power!

Jillian DeGrie (she/they)

Jillian DeGrie is a multimedia artist pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts at MTSU. DeGrie is queer, neurodivergent and disabled. They have several years of experience combining their personal experiences with modern scientific research to create art about these topics. DeGrie’s art focuses on how stigma and discrimination affect members of minority groups. Their largest and most recent project was a solo show called *Breaking the Stigma Around Autism: An Interactive Art Exhibition*, which will be on display at this year’s conference. More info about this exhibition as well as a digital gallery can be found at <https://jilliandegrieillustration.square.site/thesis-exhibition>

St. Clair Detrick-Jules (she/her)

St. Clair Detrick-Jules is an award-winning filmmaker, photographer, author, activist, and public speaker. She captures personal stories and intimate moments centering Black liberation, immigrant justice, and women’s rights. An Afro-Caribbean artist who remains rooted in her community, St. Clair grounds her work in radical love, joy and the knowledge that a more just world is possible.

St. Clair has a BA from Brown University in French and Francophone Studies. She has been featured in *The Washington Post*, *Washingtonian Magazine*, *BuzzFeed News*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Byrdie*, and NPR’s *Strange Fruit*, among others. Her documentary *DACAmented* has received awards at Immigration Film Fest, Baltimore International Black Film Festival, Ogden City Latino Film Festival, and Cornell University’s Centrally Isolated Film Festival. Her books *My Beautiful Black Hair* and *My Hair Is Like the Sun* showcase the beauty of natural Black hair. St. Clair currently resides in her hometown of Washington, DC.

Jessica Gaby (she/her)

Jessica Gaby is a proud mother and an assistant professor of psychology at MTSU, where her research and university service include a focus on LGBTQ+ advocacy and increasing belonging for individuals of all backgrounds.

Emily Gilreath (she/her)

Emily Gilreath is a proud mother of two elementary-aged children who live in Rutherford County. Her journey into LGBTQ advocacy began unexpectedly when one of her children came out as transgender in preschool, presenting her with challenges she never anticipated.

Navigating the intricate landscape of education and social acceptance, Emily, her husband, and her family have encountered many obstacles in their path. From grappling with school policies to confronting societal prejudices, their resilience has been tested time and again. Despite the hurdles, Emily stands firm in her commitment to fostering a supportive environment for her transgender child and championing inclusivity within her community.

María C. González (she/her/ella)

María C. González is currently the Martha Gano Houstoun Research Professor in Literary Criticism. The author of *Contemporary Mexican American Women Novelists: Toward a Feminist Identity* and co-editor of *Voices Breaking Boundaries’* three volume series collection of transnational art and essays, *Borderlines*, she is past President of the National Women’s Studies Association, past Chair of the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies, and one of the founders of the GLBT Studies Minor and the LGBT Resource Center at the University of Houston.

Patrick R. Grzanka (he/him)

Patrick R. Grzanka is Professor of Psychology and the inaugural Divisional Dean for Social Sciences at the University of Tennessee’s flagship campus in Knoxville. He is President of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI.org) and directs the Social Action Research Team at UT (socialactionrt.org). An award-winning scholar-teacher-activist, his work on social issues including reproductive justice has been published widely and supported by funding from the National Science Foundation. For the past decade, he has collaborated with Tennessee Advocates for Planned Parenthood (TAPP) and the Tennessee Equality Project on a range of projects that explore the consequences of harmful legislation on the lives of structurally vulnerable Tennesseans, especially youth and emerging adults, pregnancy-capable people, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Before joining the faculty at UT, Grzanka taught at Arizona State University (2010-2014); he earned his B.A. (2004) and Ph.D. (2010) from the University of Maryland. He proudly serves on the Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood of Tennessee and North Mississippi and is currently Board Chair of TAPP.

Eric W. Hughes (he/they)

Dr. Eric Hughes is a lecturer in the English department and a faculty member in the women’s and gender studies program at Middle Tennessee State University. He received his B.A. from the University of Tennessee-Southern, his M.A. from the University of North Alabama, and his Ph.D. from MTSU. His specializations are twentieth-century American literature, modern British literature, queer and gender studies, and rural queer studies.

Francie Hunt (she/her)

Francie Hunt is the Executive Director of Tennessee Advocates for Planned Parenthood, the advocacy and political arm for Planned Parenthood in Tennessee working to support community organizations across Tennessee to protect and defend the rights for LGBTQ+ individuals, including the Black Organizing Program, Raiz, Generation Action, and the Youth Organizing Program. She was the previous director with Stand for Children. She was one of the organizers of the Power Together March in solidarity with the Women’s March on Washington in January 2017, 2018, and 2019. Francie

served on the Nashville Public library board and Walk Bike Nashville. She serves on Planned Parenthood Federation of America’s Executive Committee of the State Public Affairs Network and their national election scenario planning committee. Francie walked across the state of Tennessee in protest and pilgrimage for bodily autonomy.

Trent Jackson (they/them)

Trent began their career in Arizona in research and development for cancer diagnostic equipment, focused on reliability. Changing tracks after a few years, they moved to a larger city and began working in software quality assurance. When the company relocated to Cookeville, Tennessee, Trent decided to come along and see what a new horizon could bring.

Tennessee has represented an unforeseeably large amount of growth and self-discovery for Trent. They joined the planning committee for BoroPride, got married, and found comfort in their gender identity. Diagnosed multiply neurodivergent in early 2023, Trent has been learning all they can over the past year about what this means for them.

Trent is autistic, disabled, gay, trans non-binary, and they are excited to work with experts to share and discuss the intersection of LGBTQ+ identity and neurodiversity at this year’s conference.

Daresha Kyi (she/her)

Daresha Kyi is an Emmy Award-winning director who also writes and produces film and television in Spanish and English. A graduate of NYU Film School, *Mama Bears* is her second feature documentary. In 2018 she was commissioned by the ACLU to direct *Trans In America: Texas Strong*, which garnered over 3.5 million views online, screened at SXSW, and won two Webby Awards and an Emmy for “Outstanding Short Documentary.” *Texas Strong* is a stand-alone short that also serves as a proof of concept for *Mama Bears*.

In 2017 Daresha co-directed and co-produced *Chavela*, a multiple award-winning documentary about iconic singer Chavela Vargas that was distributed domestically by Music Box Pictures, screened in over 40 countries, and was recently ranked the Number One Latin American Documentary of the Decade by CineArte magazine.



She has also produced *Dispatches From Cleveland*, Kristina Wong's *How Not to Pick Up Asian Women*, and Emmy-winning writer Kevin Avery's comedies *The Whizz* and *Thugs, The Musical*.

Daresha's films have been funded by ITVS, NEA, NYSCA, the Jerome Foundation, and numerous others. A former fellow in the Firelight Media Documentary, Chicken & Egg Eggcelerator, Creative Capital, and A Blade of Grass programs, Daresha has an extensive background producing content for FX, WE, AMC, Telemundo, and FUSE, among other networks.

William Langston (he/him)

Dr. William Langston is a psychology professor at Middle Tennessee State University. Dr. Langston is the faculty advisor for MTSU Lambda Association (MTSU's all-inclusive LGBTQ+ student organization). Dr. Langston is also a member of MTSU's Community Engagement Advisory Group. Dr. Langston organizes the LGBT Plus College Conference and is a founding board member of Murfreesboro's BoroPride celebration. Dr. Langston was recently selected as one of Focus Middle Tennessee's 40 Over 40 in Middle Tennessee. Dr. Langston received his BA in psychology from the University of Houston in 1989 and his Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1994. Dr. Langston has been a professor at MTSU since 1997 and specializes in teaching research methodology and cognition. Dr. Langston's research explores the psychology of belief. As part of his research program, Dr. Langston is a ghost investigator and has visited some of the most haunted places in the country. In his spare time, Dr. Langston enjoys stand-up comedy and can routinely be seen bombing at local open mics.

Candace Lapan (she/her)

Candace Lapan is a Developmental Psychologist who received her PhD from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Wingate University. Her research merges social, cognitive, and educational psychology examined through a developmental lens. Her main line of research examines how the emotional experience of social comparison affects children's self-perceptions. Her research also examines applied issues such as

academic success, community engaged teaching practices, and social emotional learning curriculum development.

Throughout her education and career in academia she has become an advocate for social justice, particularly related to LGBTQ+ issues. She teaches a service-learning course on the experience of LGBTQ+ homelessness, advises her university's LGBTQ+ student organization, and has brought grants to her university to provide faculty and staff training about LGBTQ+ issues. She advocates for the Union County North Carolina LGBTQ+ community through her community engaged work, including serving on the boards of Union County Pride and the Union County Community Shelter.

Stephanie Mahnke (she/her)

Stephanie is the Executive Director of the Tennessee Pride Chamber of Commerce and Tennessee Pride Chamber Foundation. Prior to her role at the Pride Chamber, she served as the Director of LGBTQ! Life at Vanderbilt University, and Assistant Professor of English at Utah Valley University, where her teaching and research centered around community engagement, cultural rhetorics, and queer rhetorics. For the last decade, she has worked as an educator and consultant for non-profits, businesses, and state boards of education in their work with indigenous, LGBTQ+, and AAPI communities. She currently serves as the Vice President of Nashville Launch Pad and Treasurer-Secretary of the Maddox Foundation, organizations that support services for LGBTQ+ youth in Middle Tennessee.

Beverly Mangan (she/her)

Beverly Mangan (she/her) is president of MTSU Lambda Association.

Patrick McCarthy (he/him)

Dr. Patrick McCarthy, J.D., received his Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from George Mason University and his J.D. from the Nashville School of Law. He is a licensed attorney and a member of the American Bar Association's Labor and Employment Law Division. Dr. McCarthy is a co-founding Senior Consultant of MTSU's Center for Organizational and Human Resource Effectiveness (COHRE) and has worked with over 80 clients ranging from Fortune 100 corporations to community

nonprofits. Dr. McCarthy is also a past recipient of the LGBT+ College Conference's Ally in Diversity Award, and MTSU's LGBT+ Faculty Advocate of the Year Award.

Maurice Moore (they/them)

Dr. Maurice Moore is an Assistant Professor of Drawing and Painting at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. They received a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Performance Studies from the University of California-Davis, and a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Studio Art from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Published by Versal Journal, and winner of their 2022 Amsterdam Open Book Prize, Maurice Moore's newest book, *Drawing While Black Mixtape Vol 1*, is a text composed of visual poems that explore various types of queer mark-making. Their works have also appeared in *Communication and Critical Cultural/Studies*, *Decoded Pride*, *ObsidianLit*, and *Poetry Foundation*. From 2011 to the present, the creative has exhibited at the Centre for Recent Drawing (C4RD) in London, United Kingdom; Calabar Gallery in New York, NY; Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art in Davis, California; and the Weatherspoon Art Museum in Greensboro, North Carolina. Website: <https://maurice-moore-mkx7.squarespace.com>

Katie Munday (they/them)

Katie Munday is a multiply neurodivergent advocate and consultant demystifying neurodivergent experiences. They are involved in several research projects in the charity sector on Disabled and gender diverse people's experiences of inequity in cancer services. They have spoken at the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cancer around their research findings. They have an MRes in Humanities and Social Sciences, in which they collected and shared the stories of gender diverse Autistic adults to co-create recommendations for future research. They have also published on the experiences of Autistic gender diverse adults in seeking gender identity healthcare. Katie is Autistic, Disabled, trans and queer.

Jordan Nielsen (they/them)

Jordan Nielsen has been an academic librarian for more than a decade, and they are currently serving as the Inclusion & Education Librarian and an Associate Professor in the James E. Walker (JEWL) Library at Middle Tennessee State University. In this

role, Jordan coordinates the Library's belonging and engagement initiatives in an effort to foster a more inclusive environment for everyone who uses the JEWL. Jordan also serves as the JEWL's liaison to the College of Education where they support the research, teaching, and learning efforts of the faculty and students. Additionally, Jordan oversees the JEWL's Curriculum Collection unit which provides access to a variety of resources related to K-12 education, including young adult, graphic novel, and non-fiction collections. Jordan's research focuses on inclusive hiring in academic libraries, and their most recent publications include the research paper, "Inclusive Hiring in Academic Libraries: Attitudes and Reflections of Search Committee Members" and the forthcoming book they co-edited, *Toward Inclusive Academic Librarian Hiring Practices*.

C. Rebecca Oldham (she/her)

Rebecca Oldham, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Science (HDFS) and affiliate faculty of Women's and Gender Studies at MTSU. Her research expertise is in romantic relationship development, sexual behaviors, violence in intimate relationships, and masculinity. Since 2015, she has taught various courses on healthy relationships, communication, and family violence (e.g., child abuse, intimate partner violence). Her background in HDFS emphasizes a lifespan development perspective and the importance of societal contexts in promoting healthy relationships and sexuality across diverse populations. As an academic, Dr. Oldham serves on committees for the National Council on Family Relations and the International Association for Relationship Research. As an instructor and community member, Dr. Oldham values the wisdom and expanded impact of collaborating with community partners who are helping families dealing with family violence every day. She and her students work with local non-profits that serve families vulnerable to trauma, abuse, and economic insecurity such as the Child Advocacy Center, The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Center, The Family Center, and the Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence.

Amna Osman (she/her)

Amna Osman, Chief Executive Officer of Nashville CARES, has 25 years of experience as a public health innovator and executive leader with an



extensive background in all aspects of leadership and management. Prior to her current role, Amna was President and CEO at HAVEN, a domestic and sexual violence nonprofit in the Greater Detroit Area. She was the founder and President of Osman Consulting where she provided leadership development in the United States and overseas. Amna served as the Director of the Division of Health, Wellness, and Disease Control for the Michigan Department of Community Health and was responsible for operational oversight of the Division which consisted of Health Disparities Reduction/Minority Health, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, HIV/AIDS Prevention Education, Care and Treatment, AIDS Drug Assistance Program and the HIV/AIDS Oral Health Program.

Amna is a graduate of the Great Lakes Leadership Academy, Leadership Advancement Program from Michigan State University. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology from the United States International University in San Diego, CA. A diploma of HIV Prevention Leadership from South Carolina State University & the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. A diploma of Leading Change from Macomb's Executive MBA School of Business in Austin, TX. She has a Master of Public Administration from the University of Michigan and is currently working on her PhD in Leadership and Change at Antioch University.

Ken Paulson (he/him)

Ken Paulson is the director of the Free Speech Center and dean emeritus of MTSU's College of Media and Entertainment. He is also the former editor-in-chief of *USA TODAY* and remains a columnist on *USA TODAY*'s board of contributors, writing about media and First Amendment issues. Paulson is a former president of the American Society of News Editors, the nation's largest organization of news-media leaders. Paulson also was the host of the Emmy-honored television program "Speaking Freely," seen in more than 60 PBS affiliate markets nationwide over five seasons.

Brynn Plummer (she/her)

Brynn Plummer is a Vice President and Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at AllianceBernstein (AB). Prior to joining AB in 2022, she was vice president of Equity, Inclusion and Community at the Nashville

Entrepreneur Center (NEC), a not-for-profit, public-private start-up incubator. At the NEC, Plummer grew the LGBTQ+, Black, woman and Latino entrepreneur community by more than 400%, and worked to have February 15 officially recognized as Black Innovation and Entrepreneurship Day in Nashville. She also co-founded Twende, a pre-accelerator for Black and Latino start-ups, and later led the campaign that made the program the state of Tennessee's official minority-owned business acceleration program. Prior to this, Plummer taught middle school English and social studies with Teach For America (TFA) and joined TFA Nashville's regional team. During her time at TFA, Plummer founded the region's public school leader pathway program, reversed a four-year decline in alumni promoter scores and helped grow the Nashville TFA alumni base by 40%. She is a board member for the Art & Business Council and is founder and owner of Dissocialite Design Co. Plummer holds a BA in English and comparative literature from Columbia University and a MEd in instruction from Lipscomb University.

Gini Pupo-Walker (she/her)

Gini's career spans over twenty years in education, and she currently serves as the Executive Director for Tennessee for the Education Trust, where she works with partners across Tennessee to increase educational opportunity and achievement for historically underserved students, in both P-12 and higher education. She previously worked as a Senior Director of Education Policy at Conexión Américas, and as a district leader and high school teacher of Spanish and History in Nashville and Seattle. Gini served on the school board for Metro Nashville Public Schools from 2018-2022, representing District 8.

Gini is a 2012 graduate of Leadership Nashville, and a 2018 graduate of Leadership Tennessee, and was a Master Fellow with the National Institute for Latino School Leaders, a program led by UnidosUS. She serves on the executive board of the Memorial Foundation, TIRRC Votes, and on the advisory committees of the Sycamore Institute, Tennessee Achieves, and Brown's Promise. Gini is married to Edward Wright-Rios, a professor of Latin American history at Vanderbilt University, and is the proud mother of two grown children who live in Panama and Chattanooga.

Marisa Richmond (she/her)

Dr. Marisa Richmond teaches history and women's and gender studies at Middle Tennessee State University. She is the President of the Tennessee Federation of Democratic Women. and a Co-Chair of the Transgender Advisory Committee of the Democratic National Committee. She served one term on the Democratic National Committee, was elected to four terms on the Davidson County Democratic Executive Committee, and was President of the Davidson County Democratic Women in 2013. She also served as a Tennessee Delegate to three Democratic National Conventions in 2008, 2012, and 2020.

Dr. Richmond is also a member of the Metro (Nashville) Historical Commission, having previously served as a member, and Past Chair, of the Metro (Nashville) Human Relations Commission, of the ad hoc Nashville Mayor's Council on the Status of Women, and the Davidson County General Sessions Court Judicial Equity Collective. Previously, she served many years as the President and Lobbyist for the Tennessee Transgender Political Coalition.

Dr. Richmond is a prolific author and speaker on transgender rights, and has served on many boards at the Local, State, and National levels. She has been recognized for her work with many awards. She has three degrees, all in U.S. History. Her A.B. is from Harvard University, her M.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, and her Ph.D. from George Washington University.

Danielle Rochelle (she/her)

Danielle Rochelle currently works as Director of Intercultural and Diversity Affairs under the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). She has worked in higher education for over 9 years, starting her higher education journey as an academic advisor.

She received her undergraduate degree from MTSU before completing her master's in art therapy at Florida State University, she is now pursuing her doctorate in Assessment, Learning, and Student Success with a concentration in Higher Education back at her alma mater, MTSU.

Danielle and her husband, Chris share two children, ages 5 and 8, who are both convinced their parents

work at the coolest place ever (they visit on fun days). Like many other MTSU employees, Chris works as the Assistant Director in the Daniel's Veteran Center on campus. In addition to the kids, they also have two dogs, Marbles and River, so there is rarely a dull moment in the Rochelle household.

Danielle's love for the field rests with the day-to-day work with students and the ability to assist them in finding their place within the college environment and working towards their full potential. Although working within this field can be a heavy lift, Danielle finds it rewarding and meaningful as there are more good days than not.

Kathlene Smith (she/her)

Kathlene Smith has been a Manager of DEI for Nissan Group of the Americas for two years, promoting into the role after joining the organization in 2020. Kathlene came out as neuroqueer for the first time professionally in this role, due to the demonstrated inclusion and sense of belonging created by the executive team. Kathlene holds a Bachelor's Degree in English, and prior to joining Nissan spent 15 years in healthcare data analysis and administration.

Michelle Stevens (she/her)

Dr. Stevens, professor of Educational Leadership, serves as the director of the Center for Fairness, Justice, and Equity (FJE) in the College of Education at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). Prior to her current appointment, Dr. Stevens served as professor in the Professional Counseling Program for 14 years and provided supervision for school counseling and clinical mental health counseling students throughout their programs. Scholarly areas of interest include the study of the implications of unjust and inequitable practices connected to historical trauma on under resourced communities as well as mentoring throughout the pipeline. Prior to joining the clinical mental health faculty at MTSU, Dr. Stevens instructed at Youngstown State University, Cleveland State University, Kent State University and was a K-12 school-based therapist in Akron Ohio. Dr. Stevens is a licensed professional counselor and has over 20 years of clinical experience working with clients of all ages who have experienced underlying issues related to trauma.



As the director of the FJE, Dr. Stevens is responsible for the creation and implementation of programs and initiatives aimed to cultivate an inclusive and diverse COE by supporting the professional and personal developmental needs of current COE faculty, staff, and students. Additionally, Dr. Stevens leads the FJE in working with community partners to enhance and increase the recruitment and retention of diverse educator candidates, advanced degree seeking students, and COE faculty members from a multitude of racial, ethnic, gender identity and expression, socio-economic, sexual identity, learning ability, and mental health backgrounds.

Steve Sullivan (he/him)

Steve Sullivan is an elected member of Smyrna Town Council and serves as chair of the Rutherford County Library System Board. He has been a resident of Smyrna for 31 years and is a graduate of Smyrna High School. He attended Trevecca Nazarene University and graduated with a BA in Management and Human Relations and a Master's in Business Administration. He is a former United States Marine where he served in the infantry, and he is a Veteran of Operation Desert Shield/Storm. Mr. Sullivan has been in IT Management for 20 years, and currently works for Nissan as an IS Manager. He has served as President of Smyrna Adult Softball League and has been a Parks Athletic Committee member for nine years. He also served as a board member and coach for the Smyrna Girls Softball, Fast-pitch, Soccer, and Baseball youth leagues at various times over the last 15+ years. Mr. Sullivan and his family are active members of World Outreach Church in Murfreesboro.

Allie Sultan (she/her)

Allie Sultan is an Emmy Award-winning independent filmmaker whose work spans narrative, documentary and experimental modes. A graduate of the MFA-Cinema program at San Francisco State University, she has worked as a picture and sound editor with some of the San Francisco Bay area's finest film companies and organizations—including American Zoetrope, ZAP Zoetrope-Aubry Productions, Berkeley Sound Artists, the Bay Area Video Coalition, and Tippett Studio. Her latest film project, *Incognita's Infamous Adventures*, won Best Web Series at the 2021 Orlando Film Festival. She is currently in post-production on a feature documentary about LGBTQ Christians.

Allie is an Associate Professor of Video and Film Production at Middle Tennessee State University, where she teaches film and video production to the next generation of independent filmmakers.

Kristen West (she/her)

Kristen West, associate professor at Walker Library and interim Chair of the User Services Department, has been a librarian at MTSU since 2007. Her work includes providing information literacy instruction to MTSU students in the library, in online courses, and through the library's Web site. Her articles have appeared in several professional publications, including *College & Undergraduate Libraries*. She holds a bachelor's degree in art history from Brigham Young University and a master's degree in information science from the University of North Texas. Kristen is the library liaison for faculty and students in Criminal Justice Administration, Health and Human Performance, and Nutrition and Food Science. Her research interests include information literacy and recreational reading in academic libraries.

Ray White (he/him)

Ray A. White, Ed.S. is licensed by the State of Tennessee as a Licensed Professional Counselor with both Mental Health Service Provider, and Approved Supervisor status. White works as a Clinical Counselor for Walters State Community College and teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in higher education. Additionally, he maintains a professional private practice (Whitewood Counseling & Consultation) where he sees clients, and supervises graduate students working towards licensure.

Candace Winters Johnson (she/her)

Candace Winters Johnson is the proud mom of three grown sons, the youngest of whom is Damien, her trans son. He is the person that put her on her path to becoming a proud mama bear and author of "Particular Peyton, Daring Damien," the story of their path to discovering his true self and her learning how to support him. This journey led her to meeting and becoming the wife of a trans man and a fierce advocate for the trans community. She has spoken to the Tennessee legislature against anti-trans bills and is the TEP chair of Lawrence County. She, Damien, and her husband Mike have all spoken since then at different events, helping to educate others on the

trans experience and how best to support the trans community as a family member and friend, including as keynote speaker at the 2019 LGBT Plus College Conference Awards Dinner. They reside in Middle Tennessee.

Joseph Woodson (he/him)

Joseph Woodson is Founder and President of Woodson Results, LLC, a government relations and consulting firm. Joseph has over a decade and a half of experience in state and local government and community advocacy in Tennessee.

From 2015 to 2019 he served as Liaison to Metro Council and Senior Legislative Advisor to the Mayoral Administrations of Megan Barry and David Briley. Under the leadership of Mayor Briley, Joseph also helped create the position of—and was appointed as—Metro Nashville's first LGBTQ+ Community Liaison. In this role, Joseph oversaw the completion of initiatives like the historic Nashville LGBT business enterprise certification, creation of the city's Safe Place Program, and the establishment of LGBTQ+ community liaisons in Metro's Fire and Police Departments.

Prior to the Mayor's Office, Joseph served as Director of Legislation for the TN State Comptroller.

Over the years, Joseph has been active with a number of community organizations including the TN Pride Chamber, Nashville Pride, inclusion tennessee, Metro Human Relations Commission, Nashville Cares, and the Legal Aid Society of Middle TN. He served as President of Nashville Pride in 2015, currently serves as Advocacy Chair and on the Executive Committee for TN Pride Chamber, and is a co-founder of inclusion tennessee. A UT Knoxville alum, Joseph has also served on the statewide University of Tennessee Alumni Legislative Council.

When he's not working or volunteering, Joseph enjoys painting, live music, collecting vinyl, thrifting, and "anything nerdy from sci-fi to comic books."

Gary Wright (he/him)

Dr. Gary Wright (he/him) is an Assistant Professor of Science Education in the Department of Learning, Teaching and Curriculum at the University of Missouri. He holds a Ph.D. and M.Ed. in Science

Education from North Carolina State University, and a B.A in Biology with a secondary science license from the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Dr. Wright is a first-generation college graduate and former high school science teacher.

Dr. Wright's research focuses on justice-oriented science teaching and gender and sexual diversity (GSD)-inclusive science education, with a particular focus on preparing pre-service and in-service science teachers to work with and learn from LGBTQ students. He draws on a variety of frameworks in his research, including queer and trans theory, teacher attitudes and beliefs, and identity. He also conducts research on mentoring in STEM, exploring the impact of a distance near-peer mentoring model on the STEM identity of underserved students living in rural communities in the U.S. and Botswana.

Sam Zaza (she/her)

Dr. Sam Zaza is an associate professor at the Information Systems and Analytics Department, MTSU. Her research is around workers such as DEIB, IT skills for the future work, retention, recruitment, and the digital divide. Her work is featured in top-tier journals such as *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, *Information Systems Journal*, *Information and Organization*, among other journals and international and regional conference presentations and publications. She serves on the board for the ACM SIGMIS CPR and the conference chair for the 2024 conference to be held at MTSU May 29-June 1st. She serves at the non-profit Association for Information Systems (AIS) as SIG Social Inclusion president, SIG Leadership in Information Technology president, past president of the Middle East and North Africa Chapter, and chair of the AIS Women's Network College. Her efforts are acknowledged by accolades such as the Diversity & Inclusion Advocate of the Year 2023 by the Greater Nashville Technology Council, the Sandra Slaughter Award 2023, and the Leadership Excellence Awards, Outstanding Educator Award, among other acknowledgments.



The 2024 LGBT Plus College Conference is a partnership between MTSU Lambda Association and the Middle Tennessee State University College of Behavioral and Health Sciences.

*Conference editing services provided by Trent Jackson (they/them).
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