



2020 VOLUME 2
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HOT Chapter Newsletter



> Heart of Texas

Advancing women
Advancing transportation

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear WTS Members, Supporters and Friends,

As we enter summer and warmer weather, things certainly are heating up here at the Heart of Texas (HOT) Chapter!

We hope you've been able to participate in some of our recent virtual events. If not, have no fear - we have more events coming soon to a computer screen near you!

As you may have seen, great changes are underway both locally and at WTS International. We've upgraded many of our systems in order to bring you an enhanced member experience and we've revived our image with a new logo. In addition, we and WTS International are hard at work building out our new website pages and more of those will be completed soon. Please be sure to update your browser bookmarks to our [new chapter page](#).

On May 21, WTS International hosted their Annual Business Meeting via Zoom. During this meeting, they inducted the new International and Foundation Boards of Directors. Please join us in thanking our very own Lisa Loftus-Otway from UT's Center for Transportation Research for her past two years of service on the WTS International Board of Directors. During this meeting, they also recognized all of the WTS International Award and Scholarship winners, as well as each of the chapters who achieved Circle of Excellence status. I'm pleased to announce that the Heart of Texas Chapter once again achieved Gold states – the highest recognition category available!

While we were devastated to have to cancel our April 25th Gala due to Covid-19, we were still able to award our scholarships to some very deserving young women as they pursue education in STEM and transportation related studies. The safety of our members, supporters and guests remain our top priority. As a result, we do not anticipate being able to hold a gala this year and still maintain safe social distancing. However, we are working on bringing you some of those festivities in a virtual platform.

As we reopen businesses, and renew our economy, let's remember to also build up our WTS community. There are lots of people in our workplaces and industry circles who could benefit from the many personal and professional growth opportunities as well as the camaraderie offered by being active in WTS. From virtual events to serving on a committee or volunteering for specific initiatives, we offer a welcoming, inclusive, diverse and dynamic space for all people.



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Senior Archaeologist

Galindo Environmental Consulting, LLC

President’s Letter continued...

Speaking of Diversity, did you know the [WTS Diversity & Inclusion Committee Charter](#) was adopted in 2017 and displayed at the 2018 WTS Annual Conference for signature by all attendees as a reminder of the purpose and commitment of our organization?

In a June 3rd statement regarding the recent plights faced by our minority communities, WTS International President and CEO Sara Stickler remarked: “*Our members advocate for equity and access every day in their workplaces, communities, and industry, to modernize transportation systems, eliminate bias in the workforce, combat environmental injustice, and expand opportunities through transportation for residents and citizens in our society.*” You can read the full announcement here: [View Statement](#).

Our next luncheon on June 17th will take a look at equity and disparity with regard to mobility in the Austin area. You can register for this [online event here](#).

Through education, love, and respect for each other, I am hopeful we can come together and heal the wounds of this land.

In closing, I’d like to challenge each of us to help out in our communities where we can so we may positively impact our community and strengthen our future.

All the best,
Jackie Sartor

WELCOME OUR NEW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHAIR!



Please join us in welcoming our new Heart of Texas Chapter’s Professional Development Chair, Heidi Corcoran! Heidi is the Mobility and Innovation Strategist for Milligan Partners LLC.

In her new role, she will be responsible for the chapter’s large-scale professional development activities, including the annual Professional Development Seminar.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Heidi will need a sub-committee to support the Chapter’s efforts. If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to Heidi Corcoran or Jackie Sartor.

BIO

Heidi believes quality education is the key to getting any message delivered. She has the tools and passion to achieve that for any project. She knows the value of creating and sustaining a brand image, and has been successful in various ways. Her work experience includes a vast skill set from product sales and event planning to providing analytical and technical support for transportation planning programs. Her areas of particular interest and experience are in customer/client services, public outreach, and stakeholder engagement especially when it comes to mobility and innovation strategies.





John Michael Cortez (L) and Juany Torres (R)

SAVE THE DATE

Feature June Virtual Event is June 17th at 12:00 PM. John Michael Cortez and Juany Torres (WTS HOT Chapter’s inaugural Fellow) from the City of Austin will be presenting an equity and disparity study on transit and mobility options available in the Austin area.

June Lattes & Leadership is June 25, 2020 at 4:00 PM. Stay tuned for virtual event information! We’re excited to hear from Shuronda Robinson, President/CEO of Adisa Communications.

Gala Update: Stay tuned for an upcoming announcement on a virtual auction supporting future scholarships and celebration for our 2020 award and scholarship recipients!

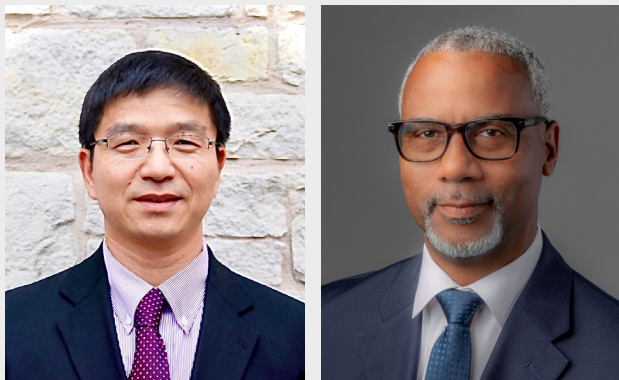
(Registration and virtual event information will be sent by email).



Shuronda Robinson

PREVIOUS EVENTS

MAY LUNCHEON



Ma (Left) and Pete (Right)

Many thanks to our May virtual event speakers, Kevin Pete, TxDOT Research & Technology Implementation Division (RTI) Director, and Jianming Ma with the TxDOT Traffic Division titled Emerging Transportation Technologies in Texas. Kevin gave an overview of his role as the director and some of the projects that his division oversees such as full-depth reclamation for maintenance projects and the crash testing program among others. Jianming spoke about the safety challenges and the potential solutions of incorporating automated transportation.

MAY LATTES AND LEADERSHIP



Ashley McLain of Cox | McLain Environmental Consulting, Inc.

Thanks to Ashley McLain who led our first virtual Lattes and Leadership event on May 28, 2020. Ashley reflected on her virtual experience:

“I liked the zoom format and sitting in my backyard, because it was so easy to be open and honest. I was surprised to get the question of my experience at the UN Environment Program and told the story about meeting a giant panda during the ecotourism conference in China!

I conveyed how proud I was to be able to provide jobs for my employees during these difficult times. I shared by dad’s motto of “win a few, lose a lot” since that has always given me determination and persistence. I ended by reminding the WTS members to support each other through the challenging times ahead, and asked everyone to have each other’s backs!

Hopefully someone out there got a bit out of our conversation. I sincerely appreciate WTS! Ashley”

2020 CHAPTER RECOGNITION AWARDS

Congratulations to our 2020 Recognition Award Winners! We greatly appreciate everyone’s participation in the voting opportunity in December, 2019. The following awards are typically presented at our annual WTS Heart of Texas Chapter Gala, which was to be held on Saturday, April 25, 2020. But as you know, the Gala was canceled due to COVID-19 and the desire to keep our membership safe.

Award Category	Recipient
Member of the Year	Melanie Norrell, Director, AECOMM
Woman of the Year	Shari Cannon-Mackey, Section Manager, Burns & McDonell
Ray LaHood Man of the Year	Mike Weaver, Central Region Strategic Business Development Office, HNTB
Employer of the Year	Atkins
Rosa Parks Diversity	Tracie Brown, Director of Operations, CTRMA
Innovative Transportation Solution	CTRMA Wrong Way Driving

ATKINS

Member of the SNC-Lavalin Group



CTRMA Wrong Way Driving



Melanie Norrell



Shari Cannon-Mackey



Mike Weaver



Tracie Brown

CORPORATE SPONSOR SPOTLIGHTS



WENDY TRAVIS



Wendy Travis, a vice president for local engineering firm Garver, has been defying statistics on women in STEM for the past 26 years. From Garver’s Round Rock, Texas office, Wendy serves as the firm-wide business leader for Garver’s Planning and Environmental Team. She has a wide range of experience, specializing in corridor planning, environmental studies, NEPA documentation, public involvement, and program management. She also serves as Garver’s Project Manager for several corridor studies for the Texas Department of Transportation.

Wendy is dedicated not only to her work but to investing in others. She’s a leader in Garver Connect, an employee-led initiative designed in part to support the firm through recruitment, retention, and development of the company’s women, and she’s always looking for ways to invest in the next generation of engineers through STEM education.

Through GarverGives, the firm’s corporate giving program, Wendy has volunteered with Bullock Texas State History Museum to lead STEM-focused activities for elementary students. She also played an instrumental role in bringing Garver’s Chain Reaction Challenge, an event in which the firm celebrated its 100th year by introducing students to engineering, to Austin ISD students.



2020 WTS HEART OF TEXAS CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Congratulations to our 2020 WTS HOT Chapter Scholarship Winners! The following women inspire us with their passion and vision for their futures.



Nadia Carlson

Helene Overly Scholarship

Nadia Carlson is a master’s student in the Community and Regional Planning program at the University of Texas at Austin. Nadia is currently working as a graduate research assistant at the Cooperative Mobility for Competitive Megaregions research center which is focused on improving the mobility of people and goods in urban and rural communities of megaregions. The impending risks of climate change fueled her interest in bicycle and pedestrian planning. She currently serves on the Bicycle Advisory Council for the city of Austin to help shape city policy around the use of bicycles.



Jordan McGee

Maggie Walsh Leadership Legacy Scholarship

Jordan McGee has eagerly dedicated herself to the field of transportation through continual volunteer service, employment and coursework, all expanding her knowledge and passion for transit. She is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning degree at the University of Texas at Austin, with a focus on transportation planning and policy. At the university, she has encouraged students to become active voices in the participation process and helped many of them develop their first public testimony. Alongside her studies, she is serving as a Government Relations Intern at Capital Metro, where her responsibilities include securing commitment and support from elected officials and stakeholders for Project Connect, a potential high-capacity and high-frequency transit plan for the Austin, Texas region.



Angela Floyd

Sharon D.Banks Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship

Angela Floyd is a senior at the University of Texas at Austin studying civil engineering with a focus on transportation engineering and roadway design. She discovered her passion for transportation engineering from her work experience with HNTB where she worked on several small roadway design projects and some larger highway design projects. In her spare time, you can find her in the pool, as she is a leader of the UT Women’s Water Polo team. Upon graduating in May, she plans to remain in Austin and further develop her technical skills by working on roadway design projects full time, and work towards obtaining her PE license.



Eshita Sangani

Transportation YOU

Eshita Sangani is a senior at the Liberal Arts and Science Academy. With her interest in math and science, she became fascinated with engineering and its vast applications in society. Eshita will be majoring in Electrical and Computer Engineering at Cornell University. She plans to work in the energy industry, which greatly affects transportation and its effects on climate, by using nanotechnology to develop renewable energy sources. Her goal is to design solutions with long-term sustainability and global impacts in mind.

Scholarship Winners continued on the next page...

Scholarship Winners continued...



Arushi Harkawat

Friends of WTS Scholarship

Arushi Harkawat has always had a passion for math and science. In high school, she participated on a nationally ranked Science Olympiad team in physics, engineering, and chemistry tournaments at MIT, UT Austin, and UPenn. She has also participated in Science Fair for many years; in one of her favorite projects she worked with a UT Civil Engineering professor on a pilot project about Green Bike Lanes. She is a leader of LASA’s Women in Computer Science club, where she helps organize a city-wide Hackathon in collaboration with leading corporate companies. Arushi plans to attend UT Austin in Fall 2020 as a computer science major.



Tianna Storey

Friends of WTS Scholarship

Tianna Storey is currently a high school senior at the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders. Her passion for protecting the environment and growing plants inspired her to continue her studies at Texas Tech University and major in Environmental Engineering. Tianna is the co-captain of her school’s color guard team and will be performing with them in the 2020 Macy’s Thanksgiving parade. During her sophomore year, she participated in the Transportation YOU mentorship program, where she learned about the careers of her mentors and received wonderful advice. After college, she plans to give back to the community and mentor aspiring female engineers like her mentors have done for her. Tianna is excited about what is yet to come in her journey and is grateful for receiving this scholarship.



Harshitha Gadam

Friends of WTS Scholarship

Harshitha Gadam is a senior at Anderson High School. She will be majoring in Management Information Systems at the University of Texas at Austin. She is passionate about STEM and aims to bridge the gap between women and technology. Harshitha’s experience with Girls Who Code and Nexus Private Capital has shown her how expansive and applicable technology can be to the real world. She enjoys collaborating with people on impactful projects involving technology such as websites that aim to spread awareness about important social issues, and provide free resources in a single location. Harshitha is extremely grateful for this scholarship as it has allowed her to pursue her education.



Alexandra Lopez

Friends of WTS Scholarship

I am a senior at the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders in the Engineering Pathway. In high school I trained in ballet and ran cross country. I also interned at the Bercy Chen Studio and completed a mentorship with Women in Transportation; both allowed me to experience the challenges of working in the field of engineering and motivated me to earn an engineering degree in college. I’ve prepared myself for this challenge by involving myself in the National Honor Society and becoming an AP Scholar. Next year I will be pursuing mechanical engineering in the Swanson School of Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh.



AMANDA CORSON



Member of the SNC-Lavalin Group

Ms. Corson currently serves as the Consulting Services Technical Professional Organization (TPO) Practice Director at Atkins. In this role, she is responsible for managing a diverse group of staff across the US in a variety of technical disciplines. She received her B.A. in Economics from Pomona College in 1989 and her M.B.A. from George Mason University in 1993. She started her career in the Washington, D.C. area as a policy analyst and moved to Austin in 1995. After her tenure with the TNRCC (now TCEQ), she returned to the consulting field.

In 2009 Amanda joined Atkins as a Sr. Planner working primarily on toll feasibility projects for Texas clients including the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, the Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority, and the Northeast Texas Regional Mobility Authority. In 2014, Amanda assumed the role of Technical Director of Atkins’ Tolls TPO where she was responsible for managing technical staff supporting Atkins’ tolls clients. Having served in this role for three years, she transitioned to Consulting Services Practice Director where she is responsible for managing technical staff in the Right-of-Way, Tolls, ITS and Traffic Operations, and Traffic Management Center TPOs. In her national role, Ms. Corson has participated in Atkins women-in-leadership discussion panels and is also involved in Atkins’ mentoring program.

Currently Amanda serves as Deputy Project Manager on the TxDOT Statewide Planning and Toll Systems Integration contract with the Toll Operations Division (TOD). In this role she has managed oversight of the statewide Toll Systems Integrator for several time-of-day and dynamically priced managed lanes projects in Dallas Texas, including I-30, I-635, I-35E, and Midtown Express.

Amanda has served as a member of the Heart of Texas WTS Advisory Council since 2017 and has also served on the scholarship review committee in past years.

Having a less traditional educational background than most in the transportation industry, her career has taken some interesting twists and turns. She is motivated to share these experiences with other women to illustrate that career growth opportunities can present themselves in unexpected ways. She encourages openness to all assignments as some of the smallest ones can unexpectedly turn out to be career growth opportunities. She is committed to supporting women in pursuing and advancing their careers in transportation so that our industry remains resilient and in good hands.

MEMBER UPDATE

Member	Employer
Amanda Corsen	Atkins North America
Amelia Stepnoski	LJA Engineering & Surveying, Inc.
Christina Currier	FHWA
Colt Amberg	Ulteig
Janelle Cary	HNTB Corporation
Kate Wilder	WSB
Ken McHenry	Burns & McDonnell
Krista Wells	Atkins North America

Member	Employer
Levi Riley	SAM-Construction Services, Inc.
Lori Bible	CobbFendley
Mona Azzo	LJA Engineering & Surveying, Inc.
Monique Rivera	HNTB
Nicole Debevoise	Halff Associates, Inc.
Sukrit Narula	HDR
Vanessa Molina	KFrieese & Associate
Ybette Ochoa	CDM Smith

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