



2020 VOLUME 3

September 17, 2020

HOT Chapter Newsletter



> Heart of Texas

Advancing women
Advancing transportation

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PRESIDENT’S LETTER



Greetings WTS Members, Friends and Supporters,

I hope this note finds you all in good health and spirits. I know the last six months have been challenging for everyone, to say the least. But I am truly amazed at how our chapter, especially our committee chairs, have persevered and risen to the challenges this new socially-distanced and virtual business world presents.

Over the summer, I hope you have had an opportunity to take part in some of our virtual luncheons and Lattes & Leadership series. As you may recall, we had our virtual Corporate Partners and Members-Only reception on August 18th where we honored 14 of our local and state elected officials while celebrating the centennial anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment which gave women the right to vote. During this event, we raised \$1,431 in donations to support our scholarship fund and we’d like to express our gratitude for all our donors.

On a related note, many of you may recall that in addition to our current 501 c6, we have been trying to obtain a 501 c3 Foundation status from the IRS over the past several years to aid our chapter’s scholarship fund. I’m elated to announce that we received word on September 8th that this has finally been approved! It has been a long road, but thanks to the tenacity and commitment of several of our current and past board members, we have now reached new level of fundraising abilities. In addition to thousands of dollars in tax savings annually, this will also allow our corporate partners and other donors to deduct donations to the WTS Heart of Texas Foundation to the fullest extent allowed by law and it will enable us to raise more money across more platforms for our scholarship program.

With these efforts, we will be able to make even more meaningful impacts to the education of women pursuing careers in Transportation. And for some, it will be life-changing! Please join me in thanking Odette Tan, Lisa Loftus-Otway, Vicki Ortega, Lindsay Wood, Laura Friello, Ashley Savage-Williams, and Tonia Norman for their assistance with the 501 c3 application.

We are equally grateful for each and every one of you and your commitment to helping WTS reach our mission of Advancing Women and Advancing Transportation.

President’s Letter continued on the next page...



COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Asakura Robinson

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Transit Enhancement Program

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Natalia Zuniga-Garcia

Graduate Student

UT Austin

TRANSPORTATION YOU CHAIR

Mary Jo Galindo

Senior Archaeologist

Galindo Environmental Consulting, LLC

President’s Letter continued...

We have many more events coming your way in the next weeks and months. In addition to continuing our virtual luncheons and adding more virtual Lattes & Leadership and happy hour events, we are pleased to announce that we will hold our 16th Annual Gala as a virtual event on Thursday, September 24th! Please mark your calendars and join us as we celebrate our chapter award winners and recognize our scholarship recipients from this past spring.

And speaking of chapter awards, it is time to start thinking of deserving candidates for our 2020 chapter awards to be presented during our 17th Annual Gala in 2021.

We will also hold our Professional Development Seminar in a virtual setting on October 23rd.

This fall we’ll also be electing a new Board of Directors for the 2021 and 2022 term, so keep an eye out for that candidate slate.

As we enter fall, may we all hold dear the many blessings that we are fortunate to have during these challenging times and make a concentrated effort to be kind and giving to others.

All the best,
Jackie Sartor

THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

BRITTANY FAULKNER



WTS HOT Chapter desires to lift strong women up, and give praise when its due! Brittany Faulkner recently assisted the WTS HOT Chapter communications team transition from the old website to the new system. Thank you, Brittany, you are indeed the reason for our everyday success!

- UT Austin Community & Regional Planning + Urban Design; anticipated graduation 2022
- **What are you passionate about?** Creating spaces of interaction between people and nature, what’s commonly referred to as biophilic design. Access to and immersion in nature provides a variety of health benefits, and I love opportunities where I can incorporate nature into the built environment in a way that creates a fun, interactive, and healing landscape.
- **Why do you find mentorship valuable?** The guidance that I’ve received from mentors has been crucial to developing the way I look at planning and design. In general, their experiences and advice often challenge you to think outside the box. It is this push that allows the next generation of planners and designers to generate new ideas and ways of working that move the field into the future.





SEPTEMBER LUNCHEON

Coping with COVID-19 Tips for Combating Anxiety During Uncertain Times

Save the Date for our next September virtual event on September 16th at 12:00 PM featuring Melissa Bentley, a Licensed Professional Counselor in the State of Texas, to discuss the challenges we are presented by the current pandemic feeling of stress, how we can take care of ourselves even if we have to take care of others. Melissa will give tips for combating anxiety during these uncertain times.

Melissa Bentley, LPC, PMH-C

16TH ANNUAL GALA (REGISTER [HERE](#))

Presents THE

VIRTUAL

16TH ANNUAL

Scholarship & Awards

GALA

Thursday, September 24

5:30 P.M.

Silent Auction • Raffle
Keynote Address • Live Music

Tickets
Member: \$20* • Non-Member: \$25*
Government: \$15* • Student: Free

*Tickets include a raffle ticket and \$10 donation to the scholarship fund.



SAVE THE DATE



Transportation During a Pandemic: A Brave New World

Friday, October 23, 2020

8 AM - 12 PM

- **Panel 1** - Moving Forward with Transportation: Bracing for Impact
- **Keynote Session** - Lessons Learned in Crisis Management
- **Panel 2** - Transportation Opportunities in a Crisis

Registration details, agenda, and speakers will be released in late-September.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN (REGISTER [HERE](#))



Emerging Technologies in Transportation

Join the Southwest Region to learn about emerging technologies in the transportation industry, featuring:

- ▶ Sharon Hawkins, ARDOT
How Linear Referencing Brings Us Together
- ▶ Kevin Pete, TxDOT
Research and Technology Implementation
- ▶ Kelsey Tobin & Alexa Teipel, Terracon
Effective Data Communication for Environmental Projects
- ▶ Moderated by Kimberly Sims, HNTB

October 6 | 11:30 AM-1 PM | Online Webinar





Cortez (L) and Torres (R)

JUNE LUNCHEON

Equity in Transportation Mobility in Austin

We had a great virtual lunch event in July with our featured speakers from the City of Austin, John-Michael Cortez, Special Assistant to City of Austin Mayor Steve Adler, and Juany Torres. Juany is our WTS HOT Chapter inaugural fellow. They presented an equity and disparity study on transit and mobility options available in the Austin Area.



Shuronda Robinson

JUNE LATTES AND LEADERSHIP

Shuronda Robinson, President, Adisa Communication

Shuronda Robinson was the speaker for the June month Lattes and Leadership meeting. She talked about her career history mentioned that how she started her journey with just \$35 in New York and ended up with the main contacts for her future career path. She is an entrepreneur and founded her own company Adisa Communication in 1995. She has led the company by offering clients intuitive and creative public relations and communications services. She is a former award-winning journalist and told her story with an authentic voice.

She also discussed the challenges and obstacles she faced during her career in different stages. Through Adisa Communication, she has helped a diverse group of clients and coached them for their success. Her national coaching practice offers one-on-one coaching, workshops, seminars, and online programs.



Giannini, Johnson, and Ray

JULY LUNCHEON

Municipalities at Work: Roles in City Government

For our July virtual luncheon, we were delighted to welcome Amy Giannini, P.E., CFM; Angela Johnson, P.E. Ph.D.; and Samuel Ray, P.E. who presented a look at engineering roles within city governments and what makes municipalities work. Our audience took away the different perspectives in the municipal roles in different cities, big to small.



Isaak (L) and Ashley-Nguyen (R)

AUGUST LUNCHEON

TxDOT Women in Leadership

Our August virtual lunch event was full of great women engineers from different TxDOT districts and divisions. Lynn Isaak, P.E., served as the moderator for panelists Heather Ashley-Nguyen, P.E., PMP; Kelly Morris, P.E.; and Randee Shields, P.E. for a look at leadership roles within TxDOT, their individual experiences, and career journeys. Our speakers came from rural districts, urban districts, divisions, and different backgrounds which gave the intimate conversation a full spectrum of perspective of what is to be a woman in the transportation field and working at TxDOT.



Morris (L) and Shields (R)

JULY LATTES AND LEADERSHIP

Cinde Weatherby, Urban Transportation Commission (UTC) Advisory member



Cinde Weatherby

Cinde Weatherby transferred her professional expertise to membership and volunteerism in the Austin area League of Women Voters in 2014. She was soon appointed to the Board of Directors, eventually leading the group as president in 2016-18. Since 2015, she leads the LWV Texas statewide legislative voting rights and election law advocacy in the State Capitol and state agencies.

During Cinde’s distinguished professional career in both the public and private sector, she was an active WTS member in the Dallas/Fort Worth and Heart of Texas Chapters. She also enjoyed terms on the WTS International Board and the WTS Foundation Board.

She retired as the director of Texas A&M Transportation Institute’s Strategic Solutions Center, responding primarily to requests from state transportation policy makers.

Her facilitation and management led to establishment of three new transportation governmental agencies, including Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART); implementation of major infrastructure projects and transportation services, such as Denton County Transportation Authority’s commuter rail service; adoption of major plans, and collaborative regional transportation initiatives.



Mitzi Ellison

AUGUST LATTES AND LEADERSHIP

Mitzi Ellison, Vice President at Nancy Ledbetter and Associates.

Mitzi Ellison, former chapter president and current Vice President at Nancy Ledbetter and Associates, shared insights from her career on how she approaches public involvement. She provided examples of how being open to establishing and nourishing relationships and learning from a wide range of experiences at different stages of life makes such a tremendous impact on your current and future opportunities. She learned a lot about media relations, public relations, and outreach during her work at the PanTex plant in the Amarillo area.

She also emphasized the importance of her ability to explain technical and complicated subjects to a general audience. Her experience working on the I-69 Corridor team brought her into the transportation public involvement world. She has since worked on the I-35 corridor and My35 project teams. Her first transportation construction project team was for the Chisholm Trail project.

Mitzi also discussed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on public involvement. She stated that while the best way to conduct public involvement is in person, the restrictions brought on by the pandemic have highlighted some of the aspects of public involvement that allow transportation professionals to reach people in meaningful ways. She indicated that online meetings have helped reach affected landowners, due to the more personal attention and shorter, more focused one. She also emphasized the importance of using more “tried and true” methods of reaching people - mailing information, making phone calls, etc. - in the Covid-19 situation, because not everyone affected by a transportation project has access to the virtual methods of outreach. She suggested that this situation provides an opportunity to partner with other groups in the community to get the word out to the public on one-on one meetings.



Terri Hoffman, CLU

SEPTEMBER LATTES AND LEADERSHIP

Building and protecting your financial security under any circumstances!

Terri Hoffman is a financial advisor at Capitol Wealth Strategies - a full service financial planning firm specializing in wealth management, estate planning, and investments in Austin, Texas. Terri’s true passion is working directly with clients to help them find financial freedom and reach their life goals. As she puts it: “When I see someone retire with ease, I feel tremendously gratified.”

THANK YOU FOR RAISING \$1,431!

2020 CORPORATE PARTNER & MEMBERS ONLY EVENT



Chapter Members and Corporate Partners celebrated the 100-year anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment by honoring fourteen women who have served our community at the state and local level as elected officials and leaders on local transportation initiatives. Honorees included:

- Austin City Council Members: Alison Alter, Ann Kitchen, Delia Garza, Paige Ellis
- State Representatives: Celia Israel, Sheryl Cole
- State Senators: Donna Campbell, Sarah Eckhardt
- Hays County Commissioner: Debbie Gonzales Ingalsbe
- Travis County Commissioners: Brigid Shea, Margaret Gomez
- Williamson County Commissioners: Cynthia Long, Terry Cook, Valerie Covey

Event attendees raised \$1,431 for the Friends of WTS scholarship and heard honorees’ perspectives on women’s suffrage and the influence it’s had on their careers. Attendees also had the opportunity to meet and talk with event honorees in small group networking sessions. We’re so grateful for the incredible leadership of these fourteen women, and their support of our chapter.

2021 SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Thanks to your continued financial support, our 2020 WTS HOT Chapter Scholarship Winners have received their checks! Please join us for our 16th Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala on Thursday, September 24 at 5:30 PM.





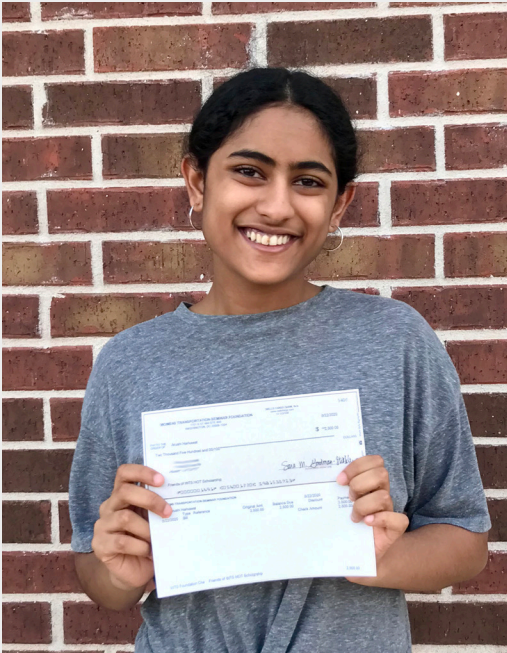
> Heart of Texas
Advancing women
Advancing transportation

Apply for WTS
scholarships by
December 1st.

Scholarship information will be posted online in October:
www.wtsinternational.org/chapters/heart-texas



Alexandra Lopez



Arushi Harkawat



Jordan McGee



Nadia Carlson



Tianna Storey

MEMBER UPDATE

Member	Member	Member
Amelia Stepnoski	Kimberely Petty	Nicole Debevoise
Colt Amberg	Mona Azzo	Renee Jackman
Jaylia Travis	Monique Rivera	Sukrit Narula

UPCOMING: OCTOBER

Chapter Recognitions Awards

It's that time of year again! Call for nominations will be in October- so please start thinking of deserving individuals and organizations for the following categories:

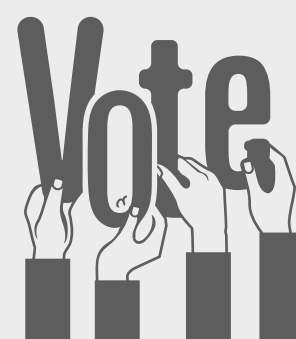
- Woman of the Year
- Member of the Year
- Man of the Year
- Employer of the Year
- Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership
- Innovative Transportation Solutions

UPCOMING: NOVEMBER

Board Elections

This fall we will be electing a new Board of Directors for the 2021 and 2022 term. An email will be sent for the following positions:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer



CORPORATE SPONSOR SPOTLIGHTS

Jacobs

Challenging today. Reinventing tomorrow.

Jacobs Engineering Group Inc., leads the global professional services sector delivering solutions for a more connected, sustainable world. With approximately \$15 billion a year in revenue and a talent force more than 50,000-strong, Jacobs was recently named the #1 Design Firm worldwide by ENR Magazine and #1 Most Admired Company in the engineering and construction industry by Fortune Magazine.

Jacobs is a strong supporter of WTS with a Gold Level Corporate Sponsorship at the local level and a Trailblazer Corporate Partnership at the International level. The Jacobs Austin office has a long history of active participation in WTS-HOT chapter.

Jacobs commitment to Inclusion and Diversity is exemplified by the **Jacobs Women's Network (JWN)**. The JWN is an employee network providing a sustainable and progressive platform for women to develop talent, broaden access to opportunities, drive career growth, and reach untapped potential. **Stephanie Messerli** served as the JWN National Chair for the USA Central Region. The JWN-Austin Co-Chairs include **Emily Weigand, Lily Aung, Lizette Saenz, and Carine Choubassi** who organize local events. JWN-Austin events include lunch and learn presentations by local leaders within Jacobs, a book club (currently reading Dare to Lead by Brené Brown), and opportunities to attend the JWN Global Summit. This is further facilitated by the Jacobs sponsored participation and support for WTS activities.

Please contact Stephanie Messerli (stephanie.messerli@jacobs.com, 512-732-7548) if you are interested in learning more about Jacobs

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1848

