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Leadership Tennessee Names 30 Individuals to Leadership Tennessee NEXT Program

The Organization Selects Emerging State Leaders Who Will Gain a Deeper Understanding of Tennessee’s Most Pressing Issues

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (July 10, 2023) – Leadership Tennessee, a collective with a mission to foster non-partisan dialogue on issues of state importance, today announced 30 individuals named to its Leadership Tennessee NEXT program, the seventh class to participate.

This year’s class includes representatives from 16 Tennessee counties with diverse professional experience ranging across such sectors as business, government, medical, nonprofit and education.

The cohort is Tennessee’s only statewide leadership program focusing on existing and emerging leaders and spanning geographic and industry boundaries. It offers early- to mid-career professionals in-depth personal and professional development while fostering a better understanding of our state.

During each class session, members will be able to engage with those from the Signature Program, highlight issues and opportunities specific to Tennessee, and promote personal skill development.

“Our goal is to foster connection for engaged citizens, ensuring decision-makers are well-informed and committed to solving problems through strategic dialogue and a balanced, pragmatic approach,” said Alfred Degrafinreid II, president and CEO, Leadership Tennessee. “Working with emerging leaders who are motivated to create change is central to our mission.

With this Leadership Tennessee NEXT class in place, Tennessee is well-positioned to tackle the challenges we face in new and interesting ways.”

Individuals named to the cohort, alphabetically by county, are:

Anderson

- **Virginia Moon**, Managing Editor, Warner Bros. Discovery

Blount

- **Jessica Belitz**, Director of Workforce Development, Blount Partnership

Cannon

- **Joe Patterson**, Lieutenant, Tennessee Highway Patrol

Davidson

- **Christiane Buggs**, Director of Partnerships / MNPS Board Member, TECA / Metro Nashville Public Schools
- **Judith Clerjeune**, Campaigns and Advocacy Director, Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition
- **Indira Dammu**, Senior Analyst, Bellwether
- **Aleah Guthrie**, Vice President of Policy and Government Relations, SCORE
- **Omaràn Lee**, Nashville General Hospital/NewWork Fellowship; Director of Spiritual Care/ Pastor
- **Cooper McCormick**, Legislative Liaison, The Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- **David Pemberton**, Sales and Strategic Partnerships, Delta Dental of Tennessee
- **Ben Sterling**, Vice President of Content and Public Relations, tnAchieves

Hamilton

- **Terran Anderson**, Vice President of Community and Corporate Engagement, United Way of Greater Chattanooga
- **Tucker McClendon**, Deputy County Mayor, Education and Workforce Development, Hamilton County Government
- **Arch Trimble IV**, Director of Strategic Relationships, RSS Insurance

Knox

- **Josh Andrews**, Owner/President, Finish Point
- **Brewton Brownlow Couch**, Chief of Staff, Howard Baker School of Public Policy

Madison

- **Lauren Saliba**, Director of Leadership Development, Greater Jackson Chamber of Commerce

Maury

- **Adam Jarvis**, Assistant Commissioner, State of Tennessee

Obion

- **Charles Peery**, Partner, ATA CPAs

Rutherford

- **Shanice Cheatham**, Presidential Fellow, Meharry Medical College

Sevier

- **Austin Williams**, CEO, Compass

Shelby

- **Jamal Boddie**, Executive Director, Bloom, Inc.
- **Dre Jones**, Manager, Deloitte Digital
- **Jarlecia Jones**, VP of Lending, PathwayLending

Sumner

- **Lacie K. Dunn**, Associate Officer Senior Financial Analyst, AllianceBernstein
- **L. Maverick Flowers**, Associate Attorney, Polsinelli P.C.

Unicoi

- **Natalie Willis**, Security Director, Nuclear Fuel Services

Washington

- **Daryl Carter**, Associate Dean, Director and Professor of History, East Tennessee State University
- **Melissa Nipper**, Executive Director of Communications, East Tennessee State University

Williamson

- **Chris Fears**, Deputy Director, State of Tennessee

Candidates are evaluated based on the following criteria: professionals who excel in their fields, are engaged in service to their various communities and are dedicated to bringing Leadership Tennessee's vision to life.

Since Leadership Tennessee's founding 10 years ago, more than 500 members have graduated both from Leadership Tennessee NEXT and the organization's Signature Program.

ABOUT LEADERSHIP TENNESSEE

Leadership Tennessee was founded in 2013 as an initiative of the College of Leadership and Public Service at Lipscomb University, and in 2021, it launched as an independent 501(c)(3). The program fosters collaborative, non-partisan dialogue on issues of state importance, connecting a network of diverse leaders and engaged citizens. Citizens with demonstrated

community and professional leadership from every region of the state bring their diverse backgrounds and experiences to an in-depth exploration of the complex issues facing Tennessee, with a focus on how leaders can collaborate to effectively address those issues.

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