

Civil Rights Pre-Conference
April 30, 2024, 1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
Courtyard Marriott
808 R St.
Lincoln, NE 68508

Online Registration:
lincoln.ne.gov keyword: crc2024

Lincoln Commission on Human Rights Presents:

Civil Rights 2024 Pre-Conference



Marco Barker

Marco Barker has served as the inaugural vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the state's land-grant, since April 1, 2019. He holds an appointment as associate professor of practice in educational administration. Barker previously served in diversity leadership roles at Westminster University, the University of North

Carolina at Chapel Hill and Louisiana State University. In his most recent position at Westminster University, Barker was the inaugural associate vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion and the college's chief diversity officer. Barker leads the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which shapes the policies, protocols and practices needed to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion across the university and facilitate change. In terms of engagement, Barker currently serves as a national board member for the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Barker is a certified qualified administrator for the Intercultural Development Inventory. He earned his bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from the University of Arkansas, Master of Business Administration from Webster University and doctoral degree in educational leadership and research from Louisiana State University.



Shari Collins

With a lifelong dedication to education, Shari Collins is a seasoned expert in training, leadership development, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). With over 25 years of experience in the DEI field, Shari's passion for fostering inclusivity and positive change has taken her across the globe, where she engages in speaking engagements, consulting projects, and training sessions across various industries. At the forefront of her career, Shari holds an

esteemed contract with the National Education Association, where she collaborates with educators nationwide to advocate for more inclusive behaviors and foster welcoming environments in schools. Beyond her professional endeavors, Shari is an avid reader and lifelong learner, finding joy in caring for her plants, exploring new destinations through travel, and cherishing time with her family, which includes two rescue Yorkie sisters. Shari's commitment to education, diversity, and creating inclusive spaces reflects her dedication to making a positive difference in the world.



Brittney Hodges-Bolkovac

Currently serving as the Executive Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion with Lincoln Public Schools, Brittney Hodges-Bolkovac has made it one of her missions to ensure all students are provided equal access and opportunities along their academic journey to prepare them for life far

beyond the final bell! Hodges-Bolkovac is a true product of "community" and knows not only the power of relationships, but the impact on one's trajectory when ensuring young people have positive adults paired with community support. As a champion for educational equity, she regularly supports others along their journey of fostering positive and healthy relationships through activities and open dialogue; ultimately creating a sense of belonging for all. Hodges-Bolkovac earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies from the University of Nebraska, a Master of Arts in Teaching from College of Saint Mary, a Master of Education in Administration from Concordia University, and is currently finishing her Educational Specialist Degree and Doctorate of Education degree at Doane University.



Steve Laravie

Director, Indian Center, Inc.



T.J. McDowell, Jr.

Mayor's Chief of Staff
Moderator



John Harris

John Leonard Harris is a native of St. Louis Missouri who currently resides in Lincoln, Nebraska. Mr. Harris is a dynamic keynote and conference speaker, award-winning writer, poet and actor. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia (Speech and Dramatic Arts, emphasis Radio-TV-Film Production) and his Master's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Education, emphasis Teaching and Learning).

Mr. Harris founded Encouragement Consulting Services through which he has provided workshops and training for over 20 years in the areas of: corporate culture, workplace diversity, leadership, motivation, personal and professional growth, organizational effectiveness, team building and employment (hiring, job search tools and techniques).

Mr. Harris has worked as a consultant, training partner and employee coach for TAG Consulting and Insignia Federal Group, both in Fairfax, Virginia. He has worked as a Subject Matter Expert for Continuum Employee Assistance Program (Lincoln,

Nebraska) and Southern Glazer's Distributors (Dallas, Texas). He is a skilled consultant, employee coach, program developer and workshop facilitator. Mr. Harris always receives excellent reviews for his program design, delivery and content impact. His interactive and engaging style makes learning enjoyable for all participants.

Mr. Harris has been honored with his selection to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "Wall of Honor", the Melvin Jones Mentoring Award for his work with youth and the Millard T. Woods Award for his contributions to the community. His greatest achievement is his 37 year marriage to his wife, Charlene, and the raising of their four adult children (Preston, Shannon, JoAnna and John Jr.) They have four beautiful grandchildren (Eli, Legend, Owen, and Jacyxn Love).