

Midwest Equal Opportunity Summit Presenters BIOD

May 15-17, 2019-Kansas City, MO

***Andrea Mazza Follett**

Andrea Follett joined the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Office of General Counsel as an Associate General Counsel in April 2019. From 2016-19, she served as the DOLIR Equal Opportunity Officer. She began her professional career in the Missouri Attorney General's Office, where she handled approximately 250 appellate criminal cases. After several years in the practice of criminal law, Andrea changed her focus to employment and education law and worked for a government agency, a statewide advocacy organization, and one of Missouri's largest school districts. Andrea also served as the Coordinator of Professional Development and an adjunct professor at the University of Missouri School of Law. Andrea received both her undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Missouri, studied at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, and is a Society for Human Resource Management Certified Professional (SHRM-CP). She lives in Columbia, Missouri with her husband and two children.

Chris Slinkard

Chris Slinkard is the Director of the Missouri Division of Employment Security which is responsible for administering Missouri's unemployment program. He is also a principle in a successful light manufacturing company located in Missouri and serves in an advisory role to other businesses in Texas, Kentucky and Missouri. He believes that private sector job growth and workforce training are the foundations of economic development and greater opportunity for citizens.

Prior to serving in state government, Chris served as full-time faculty in the School of Accountancy at Missouri State University. He has worked as institution project specialist for Missouri's Metrics Innovation Project funded by the US Department of Labor and Activity Director of a Title III US DOL grant. As the former president of an international construction and manufacturing company, he formulated strategy which led to revenue growth and new job creation that received the Missouri Chamber Fast Track Award in 2008. The company provided products and services to a variety of customers that ranged from small businesses to Fortune 100 companies and government agencies in 49 states and several foreign countries. He has owned and operated a public accounting/consulting practice and several other small businesses.

Chris is a Certified Public Accountant licensed in Missouri, a Certified Information Technology Professional and a Chartered Global Management Accountant. He received a BS in Accounting and an MS in Project Management from Missouri State University. He and his family are life-long residents of southwest Missouri, where they presently operate a small beef cattle ranch in Diamond, MO

Colin Plaisance

Colin Plaisance is an Equal Opportunity Specialist for the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) Civil Rights Center (CRC). He has been serving in this role since October of 2016. His roles and responsibilities include compliance assistance for states and recipients regarding nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements. Mr. Plaisance also conducts investigations of complaints filed with the Office of External Enforcement. He also serves as an Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor for the Office of Internal Enforcement.

During his service with DOL, he was part of a team that received the Secretary of Labor's Exceptional Achievement Award in May 2019 for developing and presenting the December 2017 National State-Level Equal Opportunity Officer Training Forum. Prior to working for DOL, Mr. Plaisance served in the U.S. Peace Corps as an Organizational Development volunteer in the Republic of Georgia at the Samtskhe-Javakheti Media Center. Mr. Plaisance's primary projects with the Media Center included establishing gender equality clubs to help end domestic violence, promote women in the workplace and end underage marriages in the region.

Mr. Plaisance received his Master's in Public Administration from George Mason University.

David Laboy

David Laboy is a Technical Advisor in the Office of External Enforcement (OEE) of the Civil Rights Center at the U.S. Department of Labor focusing on providing training and technical assistance for internal and external stakeholders and conducting compliance reviews. OEE investigates and adjudicates discrimination complaints and administers and enforces the laws that apply to recipients of federal financial assistance under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Before joining OEE, he worked for the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Consulate General Ciudad Juarez in Mexico, and served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guatemala working primarily on civil rights and local government transparency.

Denise M. Sudell

Denise M. Sudell is a Senior Policy Advisor for the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) Civil Rights Center (CRC). She recently returned to that position after four and a half years as Chief of CRC's Office of External Enforcement. She originally came to CRC as a Senior Policy Advisor in January 2003, after nearly 15 years as an attorney in DOL's Office of the Solicitor (SOL). She specializes in disability issues, among others.

During her service with DOL, Ms. Sudell has received a number of honors and awards, including DOL's Distinguished Career Service Award (spring 2006). She was also a participant, and DOL's representative, in the February-March 2008 session of the Senior Executive Fellows program at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. More recently, she was part of a team that received the Secretary of Labor's Exceptional Achievement Award in May 2019 for developing and presenting the December 2017 National State-Level Equal Opportunity Officer Training Forum. In June 2014, she was recognized as one of DOL's LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) pioneers.

Ms. Sudell received her Juris Doctor degree from Northeastern University School of Law in Boston.

***John M. Ybarra**

John M. Ybarra, CPM, is the State-Level Equal Opportunity Officer with the Kansas Department of Commerce, where he coordinates state workforce program compliance with federal nondiscrimination and equal opportunity laws. John also monitors all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act grant programs throughout Kansas and manages the workforce system discrimination complaint procedures. John is fluent in Spanish and enjoys assisting limited English proficient customers. John lives in Topeka, Kansas, with his wife Amber and three-year old son, Vincent.

Julie Brinkhoff

Julie directs the Great Plains ADA Center's core service activities including training, technical assistance, product development, and dissemination. Julie has extensive experience in designing and disseminating training programs and materials on a variety of topics related to the ADA. She has assisted numerous communities in meeting ADA compliance obligations, developing ADA implementation policies/strategies, and meeting Project Civic Access requirements. Her primary areas of expertise are ADA employment provisions, service animals, accessible web design, customer service, and Title II and III ADA implementation. She is especially interested in designing and disseminating information in effective, user-friendly formats through multi-media. She holds a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Missouri and has been involved with the Center since 1995.

Mardy L. Leathers, Director

Mardy Leathers was appointed to serve as the Director of the Missouri Division of Workforce Development in October 2017. Since his appointment, he has served an integral role in transforming Missouri's public workforce development system, expanding and modernizing apprenticeship and work-based learning programs in Missouri, the state's Talent for Tomorrow and Best in Midwest initiatives, and launched the Missouri-United Kingdom Apprenticeship Partnership.

Prior to becoming the Director of Workforce Development, he most recently served as Executive Director of the Center for Workforce Development at East Central College in Union, Missouri. There, he played a key role in developing the statewide Community College Workforce Development Network and oversaw the college's business and industry training efforts, community education, healthcare career certification and WIOA programs. Additionally, Leathers served as Crawford County, Missouri Clerk, holds a BS from Southeast Missouri State University, a MBA from William Woods University, and is a Doctor of Management candidate with Webster University.

Maxine Manus

Maxine Manus started with the OFCCP in October 1987 as a Compliance Officer in training in Kansas City. Her journey continued as she became the Assistant District Director in St. Louis in 2001 and again in 2007. In 2010, Ms. Manus moved to Chicago, IL as the District Director over the Chicago, St. Louis, and Indianapolis District Offices. In 2011, Ms. Manus journey went full circle when she returned to Kansas City and is now the District Director over the Kansas City District Offices which include Kansas City, Omaha, St. Louis and Indianapolis. Throughout her career, Ms. Manus has had many notable case settlements with systemic discrimination cases and complaint investigations. Ms. Manus is the proud mother and grandmother of two incredible women and eight wonderful grandchildren which includes 5 year quadruplets!

Michael Mulé

Michael Mulé is an Attorney-Advisor in the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section (FCS) of the Civil Rights Division at the United States Department of Justice and is a member of the FCS language access courts initiative. FCS investigates race, color, and national origin discrimination complaints filed against recipients of federal financial assistance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and coordinates Title VI enforcement with other federal agencies. Mr. Mulé conducts Title VI investigations and provides Title VI and language access training to non-federal entities. Before joining FCS in 2010, Mr. Mulé was a staff attorney at the Empire Justice Center in Rochester, New York where he focused on improving access for LEP and Deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Rob Carr

Rob Carr is the ICT Accessibility Program Manager for Oklahoma ABLE Tech. ABLE Tech is Oklahoma's Assistive Technology Act Program housed at Oklahoma State University. Rob helps Oklahoma state agencies and higher education institutions to make their websites and software more accessible. Rob gets to work with Oklahoma's public sector on everything from the details of creating accessible content to statewide accessibility policy and guidance. Rob regularly talks about accessibility at local and national conferences and events. Rob serves as a strand co-advisor for the national Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) conference and has served as a mentor and judge for a national accessible web design contest, Open AIR. He also organizes Oklahoma's statewide technology accessibility conference, TechAccessOK

***Scott Bowers**

Scott's experience in the EO/EEO field dates back to 1994 when he joined the Fort Logan Mental Health Center Affirmative Action Committee as an employee. The following year, he began working in the Colorado Dept. of Human Services human resources office specializing in workplace investigations including allegations of sexual harassment and discrimination. More recently, he has enjoyed the challenges in his current position of EO Administrator for the Colorado Dept. of Labor and Employment. His favorite part of the job is heading up the Diversity

Committee to help create an inclusive working environment and increase the overall performance of the organization.

Toria A. Mroz

Toria Mroz is an attorney mediator for the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), St. Louis District, Kansas City Area Office. During her tenure at the EEOC, Toria has mediated over 2,000 workplace disputes involving a wide range of complex issues regarding EEO matters. She has conducted numerous negotiation and mediation skill-based training sessions to attorneys, mediators, and human resource personnel and has given numerous presentations on the how to best prevent and resolve discrimination and harassment complaints in the workplace. Toria is the designated trainer in the Kansas City Area Office for EEOC's new initiative on Respectful Workplace Training, which is designed to help employers create a culture that minimizes harassment and bullying in the workplace.

Toria served as a member on EEOC's National Diversity and Inclusion Council, an advisory body to the EEOC Chair, to help foster effective diversity management practices and promote diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives within the Commission. In her role, Toria developed training programs to enhance cultural awareness throughout the agency and foster understanding on implicit bias and unconscious discrimination.

Prior to coming to the Commission, Toria served as a Regional Coordinator for Midland Mediation and Settlement Services, where she mediated civil rights and employment matters, and worked with various judicial districts, state agencies and private organizations in developing conflict resolution systems. She has facilitated consensus-building workgroups comprised of community stakeholders to develop state-wide policies and practices to better serve children with disabilities. She has also led staff retreats for non-profit organizations to enhance teamwork effectiveness and interpersonal communication.

Toria earned her Juris Doctorate from the University of Missouri - Kansas City School of Law and a Bachelor's degree in Business Communications from Missouri State University.

***Danielle Smith**

Danielle Smith is the State of Missouri WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer. Danielle has worked for the Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development since 2006. Prior to becoming the State WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer, Danielle was Regional Coordinator for the Division of Workforce Development where she managed and administered Missouri Job Center programs. Danielle received her B.A. from University of Arkansas-Little Rock and her M.A. from the University of Phoenix. Danielle first started her career in Kansas City, MO as a teacher. She later entered into the Human Resource field in Tulsa, Oklahoma which led her back to Kansas City, MO where she has worked for private and government organizations in workforce services for over 20 years.

**Midwest EO Summit Committee Member*