

**CHALLENGE. DISRUPT. ELEVATE: MAKING ROOM FOR WOMEN EVERYWHERE.**



# WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**February 9, 2024**

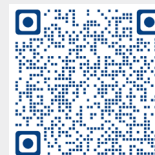
**JONES GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS | MCNAIR HALL, RICE UNIVERSITY**



**RICE | BUSINESS**  
Jones Graduate School of Business

# WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2024 – AGENDA

6:45 am – 8:00 am	<b>REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST</b>	Anderson Family Commons
8:15 am – 8:35 am	<b>WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adrienne Miller – 2024 Women in Leadership Conference President</li> <li>Barbara Bennett Ostdiek – Senior Associate Dean of Degree Programs and Professor of Finance and Statistics</li> </ul>	Shell Auditorium
8:40 am – 9:30 am	<b>OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tandra C. Perkins – SVP, Chief Digital and Administrative Officer, Phillips 66</li> </ul>	Shell Auditorium
9:45 am – 10:40 am	<b>MORNING PANELS I</b> <b>Elevate: I Am A Vital Voice – Seen and Heard in Rooms that Matter</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joy Mayfield – Vice President, Compliance &amp; Ethics, Cheniere</li> <li>Natalie Smith – Senior Director, EY-Parthenon</li> <li>Kristen Ghattas – General Manager, Gas Supply &amp; Trading for the Americas, Chevron</li> <li>Laura Urrutia – Commercial Director, Tenaris</li> <li>Moderator: Maya Pomroy – Founder, The Public Lead</li> </ul> <b>Challenge, Disrupt, &amp; Elevate: Legislation in Texas – How Texas Influences Women in Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elaine Balagia – Assistant General Counsel, Liberty Energy</li> <li>Christal Delgado – Senior Legal Officer – Labor &amp; Employment, UT Health</li> <li>Brenda Rios Brombacher – Director of Economic Development, Harris County</li> <li>Pam Linberg – Principal, Jackson Lewis</li> <li>Moderator: Lee Ann Butler – Senior Lecturer in Management, Rice Business</li> </ul>	Shell Auditorium  Anderson Family Commons
10:55 am – 11:50 am	<b>MORNING PANELS II</b> <b>Disrupt: A Conversation with Female Entrepreneurs – Pursuing New Ideas and New Ventures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delaney Berman – Founder, Berman Foods</li> <li>Carmen Carter – Founder, Carmen Renee Blog</li> <li>Emily Keeton – Operating Partner, Loeb.nyc</li> <li>Juliana Garaizar – Chief Development and Investment Officer, Greentown Labs</li> <li>Moderator: Raisha Smith – Founder, EveryDopeGirl</li> </ul> <b>Challenge: Finding Balance – Support &amp; Advocacy While Juggling it All</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracy Ross – Vice President, West and Texas Sales, NRG</li> <li>Tamara Clarkson – Counselor &amp; Owner, Tamara Clarkson, LPC</li> <li>Judy Sultan – Head of Marketing &amp; Corporate Citizenship, Aramco Americas</li> <li>Leslie Reyes – Project Engineer, Zachary Construction</li> <li>Moderator: Dr. Connie Porter – Senior Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion &amp; Associate Clinical Professor of Marketing, Rice Business</li> </ul>	Anderson Family Commons  Shell Auditorium
11:50 am – 1:00 pm	<b>NETWORKING LUNCH</b>	
1:00 pm – 1:45 pm	<b>INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS I</b> <b>Elevate: Allyship &amp; Sponsorship – Advancing Women in the Workplace</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr. Devan Ford – Founder, Dr. Devan's Coaching &amp; Consulting Co.</li> </ul> <b>Challenge: Negotiating to Create Value – Developing your Negotiation Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hillary Holmes – Partner, Gibson, Dunn, Crutcher LLP</li> <li>Tiffany Stott – Director, Career Development Office, Rice Business</li> </ul> <b>Disrupt: Tools To Grow Your Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hesam Panahi – Director of Strategic Initiatives and Programs, Liu Idea Lab for Innovation and Entrepreneurship</li> <li>Chinenye Ozougwu – CEO, El Shaddai Care Services</li> <li>Stacy LaToison – Founder and CEO, Dream Big Ventures, LLC</li> <li>Moderator: Stephanie Tsuru – Founder, SheSpace</li> </ul> <b>Elevate: Executive Presence – Building Your Presence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Janet Moore – Director of Communication Program, Senior Lecturer in Management, Rice Business</li> </ul>	
2:00 pm – 2:45 pm	<b>INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS II</b> <b>Challenge: Growing Your Career- Crafting a Strategy for Next Steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Katie Baird – Executive Coach and Founder, Baird Coaching</li> </ul> <b>Elevate: Coaching to Help Others - Developing Your Coaching Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ruth Reitmeier – Director of Coaching, Rice Business</li> <li>Amber Barger – Senior Director of People Experience, EY</li> </ul> <b>Disrupt: Disrupting Traditional Leadership Norms - Understanding Leadership Styles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landi Spearman – CEO, Organized SHIFTTM</li> </ul> <b>Elevate: Allyship - Attracting and Retaining Diverse Talent</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leo Flores – Talent Management Strategy and Planning Manager, Cisco</li> <li>Kendall Toarmina – Management Consultant, Organizational Effectiveness, Slalom</li> <li>Ally Cedeno – Founder, Women Offshore</li> <li>Takeya Green – Investment Banking Associate &amp; Head of Recruiting, Citi</li> <li>Moderator: Jessica Krom – Director of Staff Administration, Rice Business</li> </ul>	
3:00 pm – 3:45 pm	<b>CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEAKER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kelly Rooney – SVP, Chief Human Resources and Diversity &amp; Inclusion Officer, Waste Management</li> </ul>	Shell Auditorium
3:45 pm – 4:00 pm	<b>CLOSING REMARKS   OWL AWARD</b>	Shell Auditorium
4:00 pm – 5:30 pm	<b>CLOSING RECEPTION</b>	Anderson Family Commons



SCAN THE SLI.DO QR TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR PANEL AND WORKSHOP SESSIONS!

# WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Welcome to the 24th Women in Leadership Conference at Rice's Jones Graduate School of Business. Your commitment to developing women leaders matters now more than ever. It is by having sponsors, allies and mentors that women can continue to excel and show their remarkable talents. We are so appreciative that you show up for women.

Each year, this conference sells out earlier and at expanding numbers. This year, we made more room for women across every program to be involved in leading WILC, expanding to 20 student members and four faculty members. We have more moms, more industries and more skillsets represented. It is from the value of inclusivity that our theme emerged: **"Challenge. Disrupt. Elevate: Making Room For Women Everywhere."** We aim to offer new ideas and knowledge that challenge you. We plan to help you develop skills to disrupt. And we hope to elevate your commitment to change.

We could not do this event without you. You are the reason we continue to come back bigger and better each year. So, please enjoy yourself today, learn something new, garner inspiration from those around you, and take that into your communities. You are the change we hope to see in the world.

With special thanks, we spotlight the many generous sponsors who support our mission. Without them, this conference would not be possible. We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to the staff, students and faculty of Rice Business, whose passion for this event each year remains unmatched and invaluable. We are grateful to each and everyone of you!

With abundant fortitude and an abiding commitment to progress,

The 2024 Women in Leadership Conference Planning Committee



*Adrienne Miller*  
ADRIENNE MILLER  
President



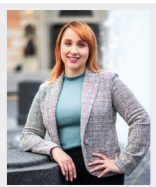
*Kalyn Speck*  
KALYN SPECK  
Operations Co-Chair



*Nimo Quadri*  
NIMO QUADRI  
Operations Co-Chair



*Jingjing Bai*  
JINGJING BAI  
External Relations Chair



*Jocelyn Gutierrez*  
JOCELYN GUTIERREZ  
Marketing Chair



*Ann Broostin*  
ANN BROOSTIN  
Operations Committee



*Ayushi*  
AYUSHI SAHRAWAT  
Operations Committee



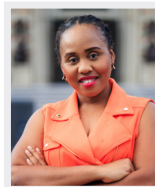
*Nita Kuttikandathil*  
NITA KUTTIKANDATHIL  
External Relations Committee



*Saher Vaid*  
SAHER VAID  
External Relations Committee



*Swetambari Arabolu*  
SWETAMBARI ARABOLU  
External Relations Committee



*Francisca Unigwe*  
FRANCISCA UNIGWE  
Marketing Committee



*Moni Ogunlana*  
MONI OGUNLANA  
Marketing Committee



*Vilani Perera*  
VILANI PERERA  
Marketing Committee



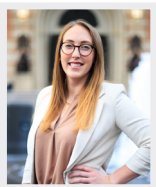
*Dana Vazquez*  
DANA VAZQUEZ  
Volunteer Chair



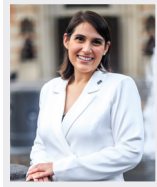
*Aditya Gupta*  
ADITYA GUPTA  
Allyship Chair



*Crystal Ho*  
CRYSTAL HO  
First Year Representative



*Emily Brown*  
EMILY BROWN  
First-Year Representative



*Monique Pourkarimi*  
MONIQUE POURKARIMI  
First-Year Representative



*Chaye Deutsch*  
CHAYE DEUTSCH  
First-Year Representative

\*Breakout rooms are available for those that need to take calls (213A, 213B, 213C, 213D, 213E, and 213F) and a mother's room is located inside the second floor restroom near the rotunda.

# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



TANDRA C. PERKINS – Opening Keynote Speaker

**Senior Vice President, Chief Digital and Administrative Officer, Phillips 66**

Tandra (Jackson) Perkins is senior vice president and chief digital and administrative officer for Phillips 66, a diversified energy company. She has nearly 30 years of professional experience across multiple industries, including energy and chemicals, industrial manufacturing and health care. Before assuming her current role, she was vice chair of growth and strategy for KPMG in the U.S., an audit, tax and advisory professional services firm. She held several leadership roles within KPMG during her 21-year tenure, including managing partner for its Houston major market. Tandra is a member of the board for the United Way of Greater Houston and has served on numerous nonprofit boards, including Louisiana State University's Dean Advisory Council, Women Corporate Directors, Greater Houston Partnership, CEOs Against Cancer, Houston Zoo, Ronald McDonald House of Houston, and Central Houston.

She earned a B.S. in accounting from Louisiana State University and an MBA in information systems from the University of Houston. She is a Certified Information Systems Auditor.



KELLY ROONEY – Closing Keynote Speaker

**Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resources and Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Waste Management**

As senior vice president, chief human resources officer and diversity and inclusion officer for WM, Kelly Rooney drives an innovative, people-first strategy aiming to make the company an employer of choice with nearly 50,000 employees. Reporting to the CEO, Ms. Rooney leads human capital, employee experience and operational effectiveness strategy focused on human-centered leadership, organizational health, talent development, and belonging. Ms. Rooney has held several roles at WM including vice president of HR, area general manager and area director of collection operations.

Before joining WM, Ms. Rooney spent over 25 years working in field operations and management in trucking and environmental services. Ms. Rooney holds a BA in psychology from Roanoke College, an MA in organizational leadership from Gonzaga University, and certificates in strategic planning, CHRO and HR management and analytics from Wharton School of Business.



BARBARA BENNETT OSTDIEK – OPENING REMARKS

**Senior Associate Dean of Degree Programs, Professor of Finance and Statistics, Rice Business**

Barbara Bennett Ostdiek is the senior associate dean of degree programs and a professor of finance and statistics at Rice Business. She has been on the faculty since 1994, teaching courses in portfolio management, investments and finance. Her research focuses on investment strategies, portfolio optimization and information flow in financial markets. Ostdiek has published extensively in top finance journals including the Journal of Finance, Journal of Financial Economics, and Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis. She serves on the board of USAA Investment Management Company and the investment committee of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Ostdiek earned her B.A. summa cum laude from the University of Nebraska and her Ph.D. in finance from Duke University. She has received multiple Excellence in Teaching Awards from Rice Business for her work training future business leaders and investment professionals.

Learn how to step into your power, elevate your voice and make a meaningful impact in critical conversations.



**JOY MAYFIELD**

**Vice President, Compliance & Ethics, Cheniere**

Joy Mayfield is a certified compliance and ethics professional with over 20 years of experience in the energy industry and over 10 in compliance and regulatory risk management. She is currently the vice president, compliance and ethics at Cheniere Energy, Inc., a leading global energy company that produces and exports liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the U.S. Joy leads and oversees multiple functions and initiatives that support and uphold the organization's core values, directing corporate compliance and ethics, global trade compliance, anti-bribery and corruption due diligence, information management and data privacy, and DEI initiatives. She also manages the Enterprise Training program. Her passion and expertise in compliance and ethics enable her to incorporate controls and improved methods of working into the business processes, optimize efficiencies and effectively mitigate risks. Joy's professional objective is to promote and preserve integrity, safety and trust in the energy industry. She holds a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from Texas A&M University and an MBA from Rice University.



**NATALIE SMITH**

**Senior Director, EY-Parthenon**

Natalie Nicole Smith is a strategy and transactions senior director within the value creation practice at EY, serving private equity clients from the beginning to the end of the deal life cycle that have a focused portfolio within the advanced manufacturing and mobility and retail sectors. Prior to that, she worked in their M&A practice as a senior consultant. Natalie began her career as an offshore engineer at BP and had the pleasure of executing her own procedures for six years within the Gulf of Mexico across facilities, rigs and vessels. Natalie earned a B.S. in mechanical engineering from Prairie View A&M University, an M.S. in mechanical engineering from the University of Michigan, and an MBA from Rice University, where she started her company, Sisterly Village, a social enterprise that designed and produced attire for women's organizations. Outside of work, she enjoys being a devoted wife and mother to her son and daughter.



**KRISTEN GHATTAS**

**General Manager, Gas Supply & Trading for the Americas, Chevron**

Kristen Ghattas serves as Chevron's general manager, Gas Supply & Trading for the Americas, where she is responsible for the company's natural gas and natural gas liquids trading activities. She previously served as general manager, Value Chain Optimization and Commercial, where she was responsible for the company's wellhead- to-customer margin optimization for Chevron's significant Permian and Haynesville assets. Kristen joined Chevron with the acquisition of Noble Energy and led the merger integration team. At Noble, she held positions of increasing responsibility including vice president, Strategy, Planning & Analysis and director, Eastern Mediterranean Strategy & Planning. She started her career at J.P. Morgan in M&A investment banking, and has worked across multiple industries including technology, media and oilfield services. She received her B.A., JD, and MBA from Yale University. She currently serves on the executive committee of the Center for LNG and on the board of Chevron's joint venture with Brightmark in renewable natural gas. She lives in Houston with her husband and two sons, and enjoys teaching, traveling and team sports.



**LAURA URRUTIA**

**Commercial Director, Tenaris**

With over 17 years of distinguished international experience in management, sales, supply chain, procurement and human resources, Laura Urrutia stands out as a results-oriented and persistent negotiator. Her expertise spans business strategy, sales, strategic procurement and people management, making her a versatile and dynamic leader in the corporate sector. Currently serving as the commercial director at Tenaris in Houston, Texas, she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her role. As senior sales manager and procurement manager, Laura led diverse teams to achieve project completion and meet cost savings goals. Her ability to see the big picture and motivate her team has been instrumental in her success. Laura holds a degree in Industrial Engineering from the Tecnologico de Monterrey (Mexico), reflecting a solid educational foundation that has supported her career. In her personal time, she enjoys golf and spending time with her son.



**MAYA POMROY – MODERATOR**

**Founder, The Public Lead**

Maya Buryakovsky Pomroy is the founder of The Public Lead, and current Co-Host of Owl Have You Know, a Rice Business Podcast. An entrepreneur at heart, she launched an educational toy and bookstore in Austin and grew the business to be one of the most beloved family destinations. Maya brokered the sale of her retail firm before moving to Houston. She served as an award-winning news anchor, reporter and executive producer for television news at multiple stations. She holds a B.B.A. from The McCombs School of Business, a Bachelor of Journalism from The University of Texas, a Master's Degree in Public Policy from LBJ School of Public Affairs and an Executive MBA from Rice Business. As a refugee from the former Soviet Union, Maya is passionate about immigration policy reform, specifically as it relates to children and serves on multiple Boards, including Children@Risk, Children's Museum of Houston, Generation Serve Houston, Impact 100 and Main Street Theater. She's a mom to two daughters, two dogs, and a wife to one husband.

# CHALLENGE, DISRUPT, AND ELEVATE: LEGISLATION IN TEXAS

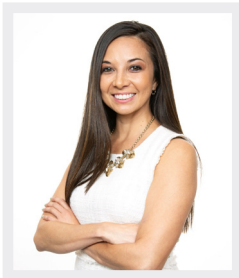
Discover how Texas legislation is impacting women entrepreneurs, from pay transparency and workplace protections to sexual harassment training, education, healthcare and maternity leave.



**ELAINE BALAGIA**

**Assistant General Counsel, Liberty Energy**

Elaine Balagia is the assistant general counsel at Liberty Energy, where she manages litigation, employment and compliance for the organization. A two-time graduate of the University of Texas, Elaine has dedicated her time and energy outside of work to numerous charitable causes, including serving as president of the board of the iWRITE Literacy Organization, an advisory board member at Theatre Under the Stars, and an executive board member and legal advisor to the president at VICTORY, Inc., a non-profit dedicated to cancer research and treatment. In 2023, she was honored as a Global Leader of Influence by the World Affairs Council of Houston and was previously honored as a Woman of Distinction by the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation. Elaine is passionate about women's rights, both in the workplace and in the world, and has spent her career advocating for and enacting paid family leave, pay equity and pay transparency in the workplace. She has a brilliant 7-year-old daughter and is grateful to be married to her wonderful, supportive husband, Brant.



**CHRISTAL DELGADO**

**Senior Legal Officer - Labor & Employment, UT Health**

As a senior legal officer at a prominent academic health care institution, Christal Delgado oversees all employment law matters. She has over 14 years of legal experience, is board certified in labor and employment law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization – a distinction held by less than 1% of practicing attorneys in Texas – and is well-versed in counseling and litigating all aspects of employment issues. Christal is an alumna of Texas Tech University School of Law and holds a B.A. from The University of Texas at Austin. She is licensed to practice law in Texas and Colorado, currently contributing as a Leadership Council Member for the Houston Bar Association Health Law Section. Additionally, she organizes a monthly meet-up group known as the "Virtual Water Cooler," comprising a network of employment law attorneys serving the healthcare industry in Houston and surrounding areas. Christal resides in Houston, where she is dedicated to promoting equitable and inclusive workplaces within the healthcare sector.



**BRENDA RIOS BROMBACHER**

**Director of Economic Development for Harris County**

Brenda Rios Brombacher serves as director of economic development for the Office of the Harris County Judge, advising the team on economic development functions by planning, organizing and implementing strategic partnerships. Prior to this role, she served as director of the McNair Center for Entrepreneurship & Free Enterprise and associate professor in the Archie W. Dunham College of Business at Houston Christian University. Brenda also worked as the director of entrepreneurial initiatives and community relations at Houston Community College. Her diverse career includes experience at GriffinWorx, Inc., (formerly StartUp Cup), Deloitte, the Office of Intellectual Property Enforcement (IPE), the U.S. Department of State, and the Office of Commercial and Business Affairs at the State Department in Washington, D.C. Brenda is currently a doctoral candidate in business administration at Walden University, specializing in entrepreneurship. She received her B.B.A. in international business with a concentration in marketing at the University of Houston-Downtown, and a Master of Diplomacy and International Conflict Management at Norwich University.



**PAM LINBERG**

**Principal, Jackson Lewis**

Pam Linberg is a principal in the Houston, Texas, office of Jackson Lewis P.C. She represents and counsels employers on all aspects of the employment relationship. Pam is the business development liaison for the Houston office and is a seasoned litigator. She defends employers in lawsuits, arbitrations, agency proceedings and appeals in a broad range of claims, including race, gender, age, disability, national origin, religion, sexual orientation and pregnancy discrimination, as well as claims involving harassment, retaliation, wage and hour, leave, and benefits. Pam also helps employers bring and respond to claims involving non-compete, non-solicitation, and restrictive covenants. Pam regularly counsels employers on compliance with federal and state laws, and drafts employment policies and agreements. She regularly conducts training for employers on various employment topics, and she is a CLE lecturer in these areas. Prior to joining Jackson Lewis, in addition to employment litigation, Pam represented clients in a variety of commercial litigation matters, including contracts, business torts, fiduciary duties, trade secrets, commercial fraud, defamation, and anti-trust disputes.



**LEE ANN BUTLER – MODERATOR**

**Senior Lecturer in Management, Rice Business**

Lee Ann Butler is a senior lecturer of management and the academic director for MBA@Rice at the Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Business at Rice University. She has been teaching business law and related courses since 2001 – first at Louisiana State University, later at the University of Texas at Dallas, and, since 2010, at Rice. Prior to teaching, Lee Ann practiced in the area of financial transactions law both as a litigator in creditors' rights defense and, later, as a regulator as the attorney for the State of Louisiana's Department of the Treasury. She earned both her Bachelor of Science in business and her Doctor of Jurisprudence degrees from Indiana University, and she is (inactively) licensed as an attorney in the states of Indiana, Louisiana and Florida.

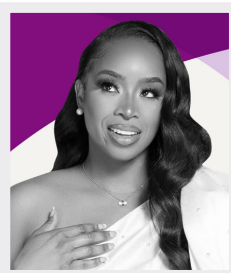
Dive into the world of women-led ventures, featuring stories of trailblazing entrepreneurs and advocates who are reshaping norms and empowering a new era of female-driven innovation and empowerment.



**DELANEY BERMAN**

**Founder, Berman Foods**

Delaney Berman earned a B.A. in philosophy from William & Mary. After graduating, she worked as a litigation paralegal, before pivoting to pursue her dream of creating a plant-based food startup. She joined the Rice Business Full-Time MBA program in 2020 and interned at the Mercury Fund as an entrepreneur in residence, incubating an artisanal plant-based cheese company. While at Rice, she won the Outstanding Woman in Leadership Owl Award, was a semifinalist in the John R. Lewis Racial Justice Case Competition and won first place in the sixth annual PepsiCo MBA Invitational Business Case Competition. She is now the founder and CEO of Berman Foods.



**CARMEN CARTER**

**Founder, Carmen Renee Blog**

Carmen Carter is a published lifestyle influencer and digital content creator who has garnered over a total of 370,000 followers across all of her social network platforms. She has been published in Oprah Magazine and has appeared on the Tamron Hall show. Carmen has worked with over 500 brands in her 12 years of being a digital content creator, from Loft, Walmart, Amazon, Barefoot Wines, Kohls and Lincoln Navigator. She has turned her business into a multi-six figure enterprise and prides herself in cultivating a community that is inspired to create an elevated life at an economically friendly price. When it comes to content creation and storytelling, being able to make things relatable and real to her audience has always been her focus. Carmen holds a master's degree in higher education. She is a wife and mom of two, and loves sharing her life with her audience. Her goal is to continue inspiring women and families to live intentionally.



**EMILY KEETON**

**Operating Partner, Loeb.nyc**

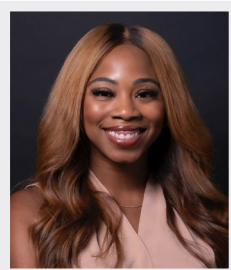
Emily Keeton currently serves as an operating partner for Loeb.nyc, an early stage venture capital fund. Prior to this role, she served as the CEO of Tempest, a leading online digital health platform. She was previously the managing director of WeWork's Creator Fund and Global Head of M&A at WeWork. Emily started her career in investment banking at DLJ and Credit Suisse after receiving her MBA from Harvard Business School and her bachelor's degree from Columbia University. She has also served on the board of directors for ezCater and America's Test Kitchen as well as the advisory board of the Liu Idea Lab for Entrepreneurship at Rice University.



**JULIANA GARAIZAR**

**Chief Development and Investment Officer, Greentown Labs**

Juliana Garaizar is a general partner at 4WomanVC, Portfolia and Malaika Ventures. Previously she was the chief development and investment officer at Greentown Labs. A board member of the Angel Capital Association, Juliana is a lead investor of the Portfolia Rising America Fund that invests in BIPOC and LGTBQ founders, the Portfolia Consumer and Rising Tide Funds and serves on other BIPOC and LGTBQ boards. A Kauffman and VC Include Fellow experienced in bridging the gender gap in investing, she is part of the City of Houston's Women Commission. Juliana was the Texas Medical Center venture fund director and the managing director of Houston Angel Network. She was manager of the French Riviera's Sophia Business Angels Network and Antipolis Innovation Campus. Previously, Juliana worked for five years in Singapore for the Trade Commission of Spain and the Asia Technology Office of Citigroup. She obtained an MBA at the London Business School and Haas School of Business in Berkeley, specializing in entrepreneurship.



**RAISHA SMITH – MODERATOR**

**Founder, EveryDopeGirl**

Raisha Smith (She/Her) is a sales executive at Microsoft, where she leads sales and AI business development efforts in the education sector for the state of California and Washington, including K-12 and higher education institutions. With a background in strategic management and entrepreneurship, Raisha is passionate about providing innovative solutions in EdTech and is a proven leader and change agent at Microsoft. She is also the founder of EveryDopeGirl, a community that fosters intentional support among female entrepreneurs globally, promotes diversity and is an entry point and ideation lab to over 20,000 women in business. Raisha holds an MBA from Rice Business '22 and is known for her dedication to empowering others and her commitment to making a positive impact on the community.

## CHALLENGE: FINDING BALANCE – SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY WHILE JUGGLING IT ALL

Gain expert tips and insights on balancing your personal and professional life. Learn about self-advocacy and supportive networks to help you build resilience and navigate life's complexities.



### TRACY ROSS

#### Vice President, West and Texas Sales, NRG

Tracy Ross is the vice president of NRG Business West and Texas Sales, leading teams in and across Canada, Texas and California in structured sales, integrated sales, regional broker sales, and strategic client services for both direct and indirect channels. Her team's highest priority is helping guide customers and brokers through their energy journey from reducing costs to finding sustainable solutions. Tracy began her career in the energy industry more than 28 years ago in natural gas. She has also held roles as the director of large commercial & industrial direct sales for TXU Energy, and director of mass market sales channel and large C&I direct sales for Champion/Calpine Energy. Tracy earned her Bachelor of Business Administration in economics from Illinois College.



### TAMARA CLARKSON

#### Counselor & Owner, Tamara Clarkson, LPC

As the owner of a Houston-based counseling practice, Tamara Clarkson partners with high-achieving individuals as they navigate the challenges that arise in life and career. Her journey as a working professional, partner and mom pushed her to ask herself if she really could have it all and if so, what did "all" look like. Her mission is to help stuck and worn out Houstonians process what they want out of life and create a plan for how to get there. Before becoming an entrepreneur, Tamara had the honor of working with students at both Rice University and Purdue University for almost a decade as a career counselor. As an associate director at Rice Business' Career Development Office, she helped students gain the confidence to bring their authentic selves to the job search process, interview room and negotiation table. She is a first-generation college student and volunteers with Career Spring to help first-gen graduates navigate their careers effectively.



### JUDY SULTAN

#### Head of Marketing & Corporate Citizenship, Aramco Americas

Judy Sultan heads the corporate citizenship team in the Public Affairs Department for Aramco Americas, the U.S.-based subsidiary of Saudi Aramco, a global leader in integrated energy and chemicals. In this role, she is responsible for leading Aramco's role in the community, as well as managing donations, sponsorships and relationships with corporate partners in North America, including non-profits, local government, industry peers, and other stakeholders. Judy helped to establish Aramco's philanthropic programs and has been closely involved with building partnerships that support disaster relief, STEM education, environmental solutions, and priorities in underserved communities. Under her tenure, Aramco Americas has distributed tens of millions of dollars through non-profit organizations to communities throughout the U.S. She is a member of the International Association of Business Communicators and is certified as a Strategic Communications Management Professional. Judy holds an M.A. in public relations from the University of Houston, a B.A. in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin, and a certificate in Spanish and cultural journalism from the University of Seville.



### LESLIE REYES

#### Project Engineer, Zachry Construction

Leslie Reyes started her career working in heavy highway construction over 16 years ago with Zachry Construction Corporation. She has worked on projects in Texas, North Carolina and South Carolina. Currently, Leslie is a senior project engineer and assigned to the Houston Ship Channel Bridge. She started her journey of intentionally developing by joining the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Houston's chapter, serving on the Board of Directors for 2020-2021 and as Vice President for 2021-2022. Additionally, in 2022, Leslie took on the role of co-director and later director of Zachry Women Breaking Ground (ZWBG), an employee resource group. She used her experience to help guide and develop the female leaders within Zachry by providing access to and creating ZWBG conferences, workshops, training opportunities and one-on-one guidance. Leslie is currently in her last year of graduate school at NJIT thanks to her supportive husband and son. The three of them love to go camping, work in the garden and take care of their chickens and bees.



### DR. CONNIE PORTER – MODERATOR

#### Senior Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion & Associate Clinical Professor of Marketing, Rice Business

Constance Porter is the senior associate dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and associate clinical professor of marketing at Rice University's Jones Graduate School of Business. Connie has led the Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion since 2021, teaches various marketing courses and, over the years, has published in premier academic journals. Prior to joining Rice, she taught at University of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business. Connie earned a B.S. in economics from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, an MBA from University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. from Georgia State University. Prior to pursuing a career in academia, she spent several years as a management consultant and commercial banker.



## ELEVATE: ALLYSHIP & SPONSORSHIP – ADVANCING WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

Unlock the power of allyship in advancing women's leadership. Learn to be an effective ally, engage in discussions, and gain insights for driving positive change and creating more inclusive, equitable environments.



**DR. DEVAN FORD**

**Founder, Dr. Devan's Coaching & Consulting Co.**

Dr. Devan Ford is founder, lead consultant and coach at Dr. Devan's Coaching + Consulting Co., assisting companies, schools, and non-profit foster equity, diversity, inclusion, belonging and transformative leadership. She also serves as director of workforce communities and connections at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, leading programs and initiatives promoting employee engagement and belonging. Dr. Ford is also lecturer of women's and gender studies at the University of Houston. Dr. Ford graduated from Texas Southern University (B.A.), Texas A&M University (M.A.), and the University of Arkansas (doctorate). She holds certifications in unconscious bias, cultural intelligence, diversity and inclusion, mediation and conflict resolution, leadership and life coaching. Outside of work and community service, Devan enjoys cooking, reading, writing poetry and short stories, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.

## CHALLENGE: NEGOTIATING TO CREATE VALUE – DEVELOPING YOUR NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Master the skill of self-advocacy for lasting career impact. Join our session on the essential foundations of effective negotiation, applying it specifically to bolster your value in negotiations.



**HILLARY HOLMES**

**Partner, Gibson, Dunn, Crutcher LLP**

Hillary is co-partner in charge of the Houston office of global law firm Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, co-chair of the firm's Capital Markets practice group and a member of the firm's Securities Regulation and Corporate Governance, M&A, ESG, and Energy Practice groups. She advises corporations, investment banks and institutional investors on capital raising transactions, M&A transactions, governance, securities laws and ESG issues. She also counsels boards of directors in special situations. With over two decades of deep expertise in the energy industry, Hillary regularly presents on topics relating to the U.S. capital markets, ESG issues and the state of the energy industry. She is an officer of the Society for Corporate Governance Houston Chapter, a member of the Executive Council of the KBH Center for Law, Energy and Policy at the University of Texas, and serves on the editorial board of Insights: Securities Regulation, and on the advisory board and the ESG Strategies Committee of the Institute for Energy Law, as a co-editor of the Securities Regulation and Corporate Governance Monitor.



**TIFFANY STOTT**

**Director, Career Development Office, Rice Business**

Tiffany Stott leads the career education and advising team that develops and implements instructional programming and delivers career coaching at the Jones Graduate School of Business at Rice University. Her goal is to assist MBA students and seasoned professionals in making informed career decisions and to prepare them for career advancement. Helping people achieve their goals and find new meaning in their careers is what brings her joy. She has been a professional career coach for 15 years and holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in counseling from the University of Texas at Austin.

## DISRUPT: TOOLS TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Join our session designed for small business owners and startups to offer tools, strategies and insights to create and expand ventures sustainably.



**HESAM PANAHI**

**Director of Strategic Initiatives and Programs, Liu Idea Lab for Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

Hesam Panahi is a senior lecturer in entrepreneurship at Rice University's Jones Graduate School of Business and the director of strategic initiatives and programs at the Liu Idea Lab for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. In these roles, he works with faculty, staff and students to design, launch and iterate curricular offerings in entrepreneurship and innovation for students across campus. Prior to Rice, Hesam was a clinical assistant professor at University of Houston's Bauer College of Business, where he taught courses in management information systems, computer science, industrial design and entrepreneurship. While at the University of Houston, he also founded RED Labs, the University of Houston's startup accelerator and technology entrepreneurship program. Hesam is a former startup founder, having served as CTO for a language translation services company and as the founder of a software development studio. He holds a Ph.D. and Bachelor of Business Administration in management information systems from the University of Houston.

## DISRUPT: TOOLS TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS – CONTINUED



**CHINENYE OZOUGWU**  
**CEO, El Shaddai Care Services**

Chinenye Ozougwu is a dynamic and results-driven leader with over eight years of experience as a successful business owner. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Texas at Austin, she began a nearly six-year journey as an oncology registered nurse at MD Anderson. In 2016, Chinenye assumed the role of owner and CEO at El Shaddai Care Services, a prominent Health Care Provider Agency specializing in services for the elderly and disabled. In addition to her business acumen, Chinenye is a talented singer/songwriter, using her music as a healing force. She has shared her voice at meaningful events, such as the yearly Memorial for Patients at MD Anderson and a missions trip in Belize. Whether singing for patients or founding the first MBA@Rice scholarship, Chinenye consistently shines her light. She earned an MBA from Rice University, where she also served as the President of the Rice Business Student Association for MBA@Rice.



**STACY LATOISON**  
**Founder and CEO, Dream Big Ventures, LLC**

Staci LaToison is an award-winning investor, global speaker, consultant, podcast host and bestselling author. She founded Dream Big Ventures, dedicated to empowering career-driven women through professional development, community engagement, and investment opportunities. With over two decades at Chevron managing global teams and billion-dollar budgets with roles in China and Angola, she launched Dream Big to inspire women to unlock possibilities they never imagined. Dream Big now hosts empowering workshops and supports women-led businesses, building a robust community network. Staci has also been recognized as the Mendoza Ventures Funder of the Year, L'ATTITUDE Ventures Game Changer, HBJ Women Who Mean Business, Chase Latina Executive Award. Through her podcast, 'Her Money Moves,' she explores inspiring stories and provides practical tips to enhance women's financial wellbeing. The show highlights how empowered women in leadership roles can propel industries, uplift communities, and stimulate global economic growth. An active board member, Staci serves with the University of Houston, Houston Hospice, and Discovery Green Conservancy. She's also part of the Latino Corporate Directors Association and the Women Presidents Organization.



**STEPHANIE TSURU – MODERATOR**  
**Founder, SheSpace**

Stephanie Tsuru spent 25 years in the health care industry before receiving her MLS at Rice. Energized by the strength and potential of women, she co-founded SheSpace, a female focused work and programming space. Drawing on the power of collaboration, she brings her wisdom and passion to a space which advances women's social and professional networks. She is also passionate about literacy efforts, co-founding Houston's state-of-the-art mobile library fleet. An avid runner and community advocate, she co-chairs the Hermann Park Commons Capital Campaign. She recently indulged in her fondness of life-long learning by completing the Rice Leadership Accelerator and the ALF leadership program. Stephanie dedicates much of her time to empowering women. When she is not immersed in SheSpace, she is a proud wife, mother, and grandmother to two girls, Lucy and Stella, and the newest member of the family, Poppy Jane.

## ELEVATE: EXECUTIVE PRESENCE – BUILDING YOUR PRESENCE

Unlock the secrets of developing executive presence. Learn the art of cultivating and refining your executive presence for a lasting and impactful impression.



**JANET MOORE**  
**Director of Communication Program, Senior Lecturer in Management, Rice Business**

Janet H. Moore brings 25-plus years of global professional experience throughout North and South America, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. As a full-time communication faculty member, she enjoys researching the intersection of leadership, authenticity and personal style. Her teaching specialties include personal branding and executive presence. Janet has led Rice Business study trips to India and Mexico, and guest lectured at the International Space University in Haifa, Israel. As a professionally-trained and certified executive coach, she has also coached professionals at companies like Accenture, ConocoPhillips, Goldman Sachs, KPMG and Sinopec. Janet spent the first 15 years of her career practicing international business law. She graduated with honors from both Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and the University of Texas School of Law, and attended the London School of Economics.

**CHALLENGE: GROWING YOUR CAREER – CRAFTING A STRATEGY FOR NEXT STEPS**

Elevate your career path in our dynamic workshop where you will learn practical strategies for women to make strategic choices, leverage strengths and navigate career challenges for a fulfilling professional journey.



**KATIE BAIRD**  
**Executive Coach, Founder, Baird Coaching**

Katie is an executive coach who strongly believes windows of transition represent opportunities of abundant potential for personal growth, professional success and advancement. As such, her coaching business is tailored to support business leaders at these exciting high-stakes inflection points. Katie is a Rice University-trained ICF-certified coach, with an undergraduate degree from Washington & Lee University and a master’s of public policy from American University. She spent nearly three years of mentorship under the tutelage of several premier coaches with expertise in human behavior, systems change and energy leadership. Her approach is also informed by her years with Deloitte Consulting, much of which focused on workshops designed to assist recently appointed executives make a successful and efficient transition into their new role. In both a coaching and service capacity, Katie is passionate about helping women thrive professionally. She keeps busy in Houston with her husband, son and pup, Copley (an ode to her days in Boston).

**ELEVATE: COACHING TO HELP OTHERS – DEVELOPING YOUR COACHING SKILLS**

Learn to empower and inspire leadership. Enhance coaching skills, explore effective communication, develop mentorship nuances, and discover the transformative power of coaching for individual potential and positive change.



**RUTH REITMEIER**  
**Director of Coaching, Rice Business**

Ruth Oh Reitmeier is an executive coach, consultant and keynote speaker with over 25 years of experience developing leaders and building high performing teams in various organizations. She is a PCC credentialed coach with the International Coaching Federation and has been active on multiple global task forces dedicated to expanding the coaching profession and delivering quality coach training. Her research interests include studying the effects of coaching and coaching education, team development and Gen Z’s impact on the workplace. Ruth works with organizations to create developmental coaching cultures and enhance organizational effectiveness. As the director of coaching at Rice Business, she is responsible for building and overseeing executive coaching programs for students and staff. Ruth received her undergraduate degree from Rice University and earned her Master of Science in Executive Coaching and Organizational Consulting from New York University. She lives in Houston with her husband, Tyler, and has three grown children, Reagan, Avery Anne and Reece.



**AMBER BARGER**  
**Senior Director of People Experience, EY**

Amber Barger is an organizational change leader and executive coach with 15 years of experience in technology, energy and life sciences industries. As a Master Certified Coach, she is passionate about enabling change - from coaching behavior change with individuals to facilitating large-scale transformations in communities and organizations. She has supported hundreds of leaders to accelerate their performance at work. In her current role at EY, Amber leads consulting teams to help large global organizations enhance their employee experience in ways that impact enterprise business outcomes and enable the future of work. Amber holds a master’s degree in learning and organizational change from Northwestern University and a bachelor’s degree in marketing from the McCombs Business School at The University of Texas at Austin. Soon she will complete her doctorate degree from Columbia University with a focus on learning and leader development.

**DISRUPT: DISRUPTING TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP NORMS – UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP STYLES**

Learn how to disrupt traditional leadership norms, embrace your unique leadership identity, and contribute to the evolving spectrum of leadership in the professional landscape.



**LANDI SPEARMAN**  
**CEO, Organized SHIFT™**

Landi Spearman grew up eldest of five alongside entrepreneurial parents who operated eight different businesses, exposing her early-on to leadership under fire. Named 2023 Top 15 Coach and four-time award-winning CEO, she is adept at helping leaders to navigate barriers, embrace uncertainty, and improve mission-critical decision-making, while avoiding burnout. By leveraging data, proven change methodology and the latest behavioral science, Landi created the proprietary SHIFT approach to deliver immersive, multisensory experiences for coaching and change leadership development. In 2019, she founded Organized SHIFT to equip Fortune 500 leaders to better navigate the pace, complexity and demands of today’s multigenerational workplace. Her corporate career spans two decades across operations and HR leadership roles at Fortune 500s including: Kraft, GE and Eaton. Landi holds dual degrees in organizational behavior management from University of Michigan Ross School of Business and Spanish, and is bilingual.

## ELEVATE: ALLYSHIP – ATTRACTING AND RETAINING DIVERSE TALENT

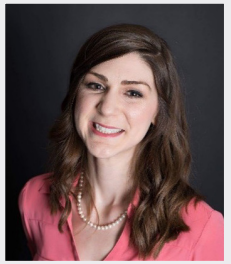
Explore strategies for attracting and retaining diverse talent. Gain actionable insights and practical tools for leaders and allies committed to creating inclusive workplaces for thriving diverse talents.



**LEO FLORES**

**Talent Management Strategy and Planning Manager, Cisco**

Leo Flores is a strategy and planning manager within the Talent Management organization at Cisco Systems. He has spent the bulk of his career working in the technology industry, specializing in the areas of recruiting, employee experience and professional development. Prior to Cisco, Leo worked at an early-stage startup, building out their people operations function. He is a 2022 Rice Business alumnus and is based out of Houston, TX.



**KENDALL TOARMINA**

**Management Consultant, Organizational Effectiveness, Slalom**

Kendall Toarmina is a management consultant, with an emphasis on the human element, at Slalom, Inc. She helps organizations be more effective in a variety of ways. From designing change management plans to help the people in an organization adopt new initiatives and programs, to helping innovate new products, to advising senior leaders on talent acquisition and management, Kendall's experience is broad. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is paramount to Kendall. She co-founded and led the Rice University MBA program's first ever Diversity and Inclusion Conference in 2017 and has been named a Woman of Power by OutSmart Magazine. Kendall leads Slalom Houston's LGBTQ+ employee resource group, Prism, and is chief of staff for public sector and social impact clients. Outside of work, she is a vice president of the board of directors of Houston Hillel and volunteers at the Montrose Center.



**ALLY CEDENO**

**Founder, Women Offshore**

Founder and president of the Women Offshore Foundation, Ally Cedeno is a powerhouse in the maritime and offshore energy industries. A distinguished alumna of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, she furthered her education by earning an MBA from Rice University's Jones Graduate School of Business. With her chief mate license for unlimited tonnage vessels, Ally's extensive experience encompasses various roles, from 3rd mate to a senior dynamic positioning operator to advancing from a roustabout to an assistant driller in the drilling department. Recently, she shifted her career focus to HR to pursue her passion for enhancing career development opportunities in offshore environments. Throughout her 15-year career, Ally faced the challenge of being one of the few women in operational roles at sea. Undeterred, she founded the Women Offshore Foundation, helping to propel women into meaningful careers through access to a global community and professional development resources while raising awareness among industry leaders and decision-makers about the issues affecting women in maritime and offshore industries.



**TAKEYA GREEN**

**Investment Banking Associate & Head of Recruiting, Citi**

Takeya is a senior investment banking associate at Citigroup and a 2022 Rice MBA graduate. In her role, she assists clients in capital markets advisory, mergers and acquisitions, and debt financing. In addition to her work responsibilities, she is the recruiting lead for the Houston office, hoping to increase representation in financial services. She has spent 10+ years assisting organizations increase both their workforce and/or student body representation. In 2022, she became the inaugural recipient of the Texas Business Hall of Fame's "AT&T Future Executive Leader of Distinction" Award due to her community impact, professional achievements and academic performance.



**JESSICA KROM – MODERATOR**

**Director of Staff Administration, Rice Business**

Jessica (Steptoe) Krom has been a member of the Rice Business community for four years and currently serves as the director of staff administration. She has enjoyed over 10 years of higher education experience in both public and private institutions and has worked to support both undergraduate and graduate student experiences. As a proud first-generation college graduate and woman of color, Jessica has most enjoyed professional experiences that allowed her to lead dynamic teams, advocate for others and support DEIB-focused initiatives. Prior to joining Rice, she served as associate director in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University, where she contributed to student recruitment goals and engagement. Jessica also worked as a senior admissions counselor for the Undergraduate Office of Admissions at Baylor University, where she earned her BS in education. She is a residential associate at Rice University, living with her family on campus to support undergraduate student experiences, a wild and rewarding adventure.



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Nurturing a supportive environment creates a safe space for everyone to be themselves. We prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion and will continue working toward a more unified future.

We're proud to recognize the Rice Women in Leadership Conference on years of innovation, influence, and inspiration.



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*Special thanks to the Rice Business staff who supported the planning of this event. These teams include Academic Programs and Student Experience, Events, External Relations, Marketing and Communication, and the Office of Technology.*