



December 6, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Page 1 of 5

Contact:

Lara Weber, Communications Officer, City of Tulsa
(918) 596-7804

2023 Pinnacle Award Winners Announced;

Mayor to Honor Winners at Dec. 8 News Conference

TULSA – YWCA Tulsa, in partnership with the Mayor’s Commission on the Status of Women, is thrilled to announce the honorees for the 2023 Pinnacle Awards celebrating exceptional women of Tulsa.

The winners will be made official at an announcement event with Mayor G.T. Bynum set for Dec. 8, at 10 a.m. in the 10th Floor South Conference Room in City Hall, 175 E. 2nd St.

The 2023 winners are:

Anna C. Roth Legacy Award: Rose Washington-Jones

As chief executive officer of Tulsa Economic Development Corporation (TEDC), Rose Washington-Jones is responsible for developing, implementing, and overseeing strategies that support the organization's role as a catalyst leader in local economic growth. TEDC reaches over 500 entrepreneurs and small businesses each year through workshops, development services and loans ranging from \$500 to \$10 million, and under Rose’s leadership, TEDC has become a highly regarded partner in many economic development initiatives. With broad experience creating strategic alliances in diverse communities, she is known to be resourceful, creative and solutions oriented.

Rose currently serves on numerous boards, including Bank of Oklahoma Financial, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Oklahoma, George Kaiser Family Foundation, Tulsa Community Foundation, and Tulsa Regional Chamber, where she recently completed a year as chairwoman. She has also received multiple honors which include the U.S. Small Business Administration Oklahoma Minority Small Business Champion of the Year, the Tulsa Chapter of Business and Professional Women – Woman of Achievement, and The Journal Record – Most Admired CEO.

Arts and Humanities Award: Dr. Tamecca Rogers

A Tulsa native, Dr. Tamecca Rogers is a filmmaker, author, publisher, columnist and CEO of a nonprofit organization. She most recently wrote and published a children's book titled, "Who Said You Can Touch My Hair?" to encourage open conversation about boundaries between different cultures. In an effort to stop race-based hair discrimination in schools and workplaces, she has completed a documentary titled "CROWN" to encourage lawmakers to pass the CROWN Act in Oklahoma. She enjoys co-authoring children's books with her youngest son, Keith, and she has self-published several successful parenting and educational articles. Her work has been featured on CBS National News with Tanya Rivero and KJRH local news with Julie Chin. Dr. Rogers serves as the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Tulsa Tech and volunteers her time to further DEI education across our state. Her work empowers women and helps teachers and parents approach complex topics and issues with children such as race, inclusion, identity and self-love.

Community Service Award: Irma Chajeki

Irma Chajeki currently serves as a bilingual immigrant specialist for the American Dream Center and has spent more than 40 years helping immigrants in our city. Irma has served on the board of directors for Coalition of Hispanic Organizations, Tulsa Global District, Coalition for the Safety of Families, Legal Aid of Oklahoma, Child Abuse Network, Birthright of Tulsa, 12 & 12 Drugs and Alcohol Programs and Pan American Round Table of Tulsa. She was also a committee member for TPS Hispanic Advisory Committee and City of Tulsa Hispanic Commission. Earlier this year, Irma was honored with the Compassion Award from the City of Tulsa Human Rights Commission. In 2005 she received recognition from the Oklahoma Governor's office for outstanding support to issues affecting the Hispanic community and has been honored by Catholic Charities of Tulsa for more than 25 years of service to the Hispanic community.

Corporate Business Award: Elian Hurtado Jarve

The founder of Galera Business Consulting, Elian Hurtado Jarve is a business consultant with over 20 years of expertise in helping financial companies increase revenue and grow their presence in Hispanic/Latinx communities. In 2020, Elian was appointed by the Mayor of Tulsa as a trustee of the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity (TAEO), now Partner Tulsa, and currently serves as the organization's vice chair. She has served on a number of boards across Tulsa, including Tulsa Global District, College Bound Academy, Coalition of Hispanic Organizations, Growing Together, YMCA of Greater Tulsa, and La Cosecha, and was the Commissioner of Economic Empowerment for the City of Tulsa. During the pandemic, Elian partnered with the Avanzado Juntos loan program to aid more than 75 undocumented Tulsa business owners by helping them access support funds they needed to stay afloat.

Education Award: Dr. Sarah Wyatt

Dr. Sarah Wyatt is the Director of Strategy and Operations for the Tulsa Higher Education

Consortium. She has dedicated her career to supporting students in Tulsa-area higher education institutions by supporting and implementing strategies to bolster student success and retention in postsecondary education. Dr. Wyatt currently serves as a trustee on the Union Public Schools Foundation Board and previously served the Jenks Public Schools Foundation. She is also a committee member for Oklahoma Women's Alliance Advocacy Committee, Career Pathways Committee for the State of Oklahoma, and The National Association for Collaborative Leadership Professional Development Committee. Additionally, she has previously served on the Tulsa Community College Strategic Plan Steering Committee, United Way Steering Committee, University of Tulsa Accessibility Committee, and the Tulsa Transfer Project. She has also volunteered her time with Reading Partners, Junior Achievement, and United Way Day of Caring. As a native Oklahoman, Dr. Wyatt is a fierce advocate for education throughout our state and boldly pursues equity, access, and opportunity for students in both K-12 and higher education settings.

Entrepreneur Award: Anita Williams

Citizens in Anita Williams' north Tulsa community have an average life expectancy of 11 years less than citizens in south Tulsa, and she aims to change that. After a lengthy career as a registered nurse, Anita branched out and founded A&M Health Care Clinic, a primary care clinic in North Tulsa created to promote health equity and access for adults 14 years of age and older. Anita is also a member of the Eastern Oklahoma Black Nurses Association and has volunteered with Families with Sickle Cell Disease, St. John Medical Center Safety Net Coalition, and AHA Vestido Rojos. She has also spent more than five years serving as a mentor for nurse practitioner students.

Health & Wellness Award: Deneisha Johnson

Deneisha Johnson is a strong advocate for behavioral health in the Tulsa community, serving as the current board chair and the public relations chair for Counseling & Recovery Services of Oklahoma. Eleven years ago, Deneisha lived in Chicago where she was unemployed and unhoused. She moved to Tulsa and worked tirelessly to reestablish her career. Today, she serves as a finance manager for the American Red Cross and shares her personal story to encourage others to make change. Deneisha is a member of Leadership Tulsa Class 62, and she hopes to leave a legacy of helping our community through mental health and substance abuse struggles.

Rising Star Award: Ashley Townsend

Ashley Townsend is a Vice President and Community Manager at Chase bank and is the first person in Tulsa to occupy this important community role. Ashley partners with local businesses and community groups to provide free financial education workshops and resources to help close the racial wealth gap in our city. In 2020, Ashley organized the Black Organization for Leadership Development Group (BOLD), the first JPMorgan Chase Business Resource Group in Oklahoma to give a voice to minority leaders in corporate America. Ashley led the executive team that organized the \$250,000 contribution from

JPMorgan Chase to the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Commission. In addition to her work with Chase, Ashley has served on the board of directors for Habitat for Humanity, Iron Gate, Volunteers of America, and is an advisory board member for the Tulsa Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Corporate Champion Award: The Persimmon Group

The management consulting industry is traditionally dominated by men, but the Persimmon Group is breaking barriers with women representing 50 percent of its senior leadership and 71 percent of its senior consultant positions. Persimmon has also prioritized the recruitment and advancement of women of color, who currently hold 28% of senior consultant positions. The agency was named to Best Places to Work in Oklahoma in 2022 and has won other prestigious awards for its efforts to take care of its employees.

In late August, Pinnacle Awards nominations were opened for community members to nominate a phenomenal woman in one of eight categories. After the nomination window closed, a selection committee scored nominations in each category with the highest scoring individual winning the award. The Anna C. Roth Legacy Honoree does not come from nominations and is instead selected by a YWCA Tulsa committee comprised of board of directors members and senior leadership.

“As Mayor of Tulsa, I am honored to recognize this year’s Pinnacle Award winners – women who have distinguished themselves as leaders in our community,” Mayor G.T. Bynum said. “I am grateful for their service as professionals and volunteers, working to make Tulsa a better place.”

YWCA CEO Julie Davis added that each honoree exemplifies YWCA’s mission of eliminating racism and empowering women in our city.

"It's always an honor to be able to tell the stories of women who are fearless change agents in our community," Davis said. "These women are creating a Tulsa that is more inclusive, more representative, more creative, and more powerful because of their work."

All nine honorees will be celebrated at the annual Pinnacle Awards, set for Friday, March 24, 2023, at Cox Business Convention Center in downtown Tulsa. The event honors the investment that women are making in our city and financially supports the work of YWCA Tulsa to empower women and eliminate racism.

Pinnacle Awards sponsorships are available now. For more information, contact Kyle Rutledge at krutledge@ywcatusa.org.

History of the Pinnacle Awards

In 1987, the Pinnacle Awards were established by the Mayor’s Commission on the Status of Women to celebrate the important contributions of women to the City of Tulsa. The

presentation of these awards honored women who were exemplary leaders in the Tulsa community and demonstrated both professional success and commitment to service. In 2015, the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women forged a partnership with YWCA Tulsa's event Women of the Year recognizing women who were role models and embodied their mission of eliminating racism, empowering women, standing up for social justice, and helping families. Over the last thirty years we have collectively honored over 200 women, sharing their stories, amplifying their voices, recognizing their service, and congratulating them for their achievements.

About YWCA Tulsa

YWCA is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, freedom, dignity and justice for all. YWCA Tulsa focuses on two main issues: Immigrant and Refugee Services, and Health Equity and Wellness.

YWCA Tulsa has been at the frontline of serving immigrants and refugees for nearly 40 years, and continues to focus on addressing systemic disparities for newcomers, eliminating barriers, and investing in the success of those who have come to our community to build a new life.

YWCA's two fitness centers provide cardio and weight lifting equipment, thousands of fitness classes each week, and an aquatics center. Our health and wellness staff works to ensure all Tulsans, regardless of socioeconomic status, are able to attain their fitness goals.

For more information, visit www.ywcatulsa.org

About the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women

The Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women acts as the central clearinghouse and coordinating agency for activities and information relating to women. The commission is charged with helping women develop a collective voice to influence public policy and effect positive changes in their lives, in addition to stimulating research in the area of women's legal rights; educating the community on the status of women by publicizing information on women's rights and obligations; reviewing the range of services available to women to enable them to fully contribute to society through their homes and participation in community life; and to strengthening existing services and assisting public, commercial, cooperative or voluntary agencies in pursuing needed services. For more information about the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women, see the City of Tulsa website.

###