

Table of Contents

Metro Human Relations Commission Names New Executive Director

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Mayor Karl Dean today announced that the Metro Human Relations Commission has appointed Melody (Mel) Fowler-Green as its new executive director. Fowler-Green has 15 years of experience as an attorney advocating for social justice.

“Mel Fowler-Green has spent her legal career as an advocate committed to human and civil rights,” Mayor Dean said. “Her experience will be an asset to the Metro Human Relations Commission as it continues its work to make our city more tolerant, welcoming and inclusive.”

At a meeting earlier this week, the Metro Human Relations Commission voted to name Fowler-Green to the position. Tom Negri has served as interim director since August, 2013. Fowler-Green will begin the job in the coming weeks.

“Ms. Fowler-Green’s education, experience and dedication to social justice will ensure that the Commission’s work moves forward boldly,” said Frank Trew, chairman of the Metro Human Relations Commission. “We are indebted to Tom for the work he has done to push forward our mission, and we are confident, after a lengthy search, that Ms. Fowler-Green is best suited to continue our work.”

The Metro Human Relations Commission’s search committee focused on finding an executive director who could lead the Commission’s work to create a more inclusive city through efforts related to, for example, race relations, immigrant access and inclusion, LGBT rights, ADA and faith/religious tolerance.

Fowler-Green was the first staff attorney hired by the ACLU of Tennessee, where she worked on issues of racial justice, religious tolerance and LGBT rights. She argued

the case before the Tennessee Supreme Court challenging the state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. In private practice, she has worked exclusively as a plaintiff-side attorney representing low-wage workers and individuals who have suffered discrimination based on race, sex, national origin and disability. Additionally, she has advised university students on Title VI discrimination.

“I am honored and excited to lead the Commission at this time in Nashville's history,” Fowler-Green said. “Our city has been a leader in civil and human rights in the South, and now that Nashville is on a national stage, we have an opportunity to broadly exemplify true inclusion and ensure that our growth does not leave vulnerable or marginalized communities behind.”

Fowler-Green has served and advocated for marginalized communities throughout the South. She represented and advocated for migrant farmworkers and other indigent immigrant communities as a staff attorney at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid and as the managing attorney at its project based here in Nashville, Southern Migrant Legal Services. She graduated cum laude from the Georgetown University Law Center in 2000.

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[Print](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

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