

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON
MASTER of PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UH MPA PROGRAM ANNOUNCES WINNERS FOR ANNUAL PUBLIC OFFICIAL AWARD

10th Annual Master of Public Administration Program Public Officials of the Year Event Honors Distinguished Public Officials in the Houston Metropolitan Area

March 1, 2021

Houston, TX – The 10th annual Public Officials of the Year event will be held virtually on Friday, March 5, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. The event is hosted by the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at the University of Houston and honors outstanding public officials in the greater Houston area. This year's virtual event is generously supported by Hawes & Associates and co-sponsors Olson and Olson LLP, CobbFendley LLP and David Hawes.

This year's five honorees embody the true spirit of the MPA program. As explained by the MPA Program Director Dr. James Thurmond, "These officials exhibit qualities consistent with those of the MPA program – trust, accountability, performance, ethical decision-making and crossing jurisdictional boundaries to solve problems. We are honored to have them recognized as Public Officials of the Year."

The MPA Pioneer of Public Service Award for longtime service to the greater Houston community goes to Houston Chief Development Officer Andy Icken. The four Public Official of the Year awards will be presented to DeWight Dopslauf, Harris County purchasing agent; Lina Hidalgo, Harris County judge; El Campo former mayor Randy Collins and Dr. Umair Shah, former Harris County public health executive director.

Andy Icken, Houston Chief Development Officer

Andy Icken currently serves as Mayor Sylvester Turner's chief development officer. He has oversight of the Houston Airport System, convention and entertainment facilities, planning department, office of business opportunities, housing and community development department, emergency medical services, economic development, international affairs and homeless initiatives.

Prior to his appointment as chief development officer, he served as deputy director of public works and engineering, worked six years as executive vice president of the Texas Medical Center and 30 years with ExxonMobil.

DeWight Dopslauf, Harris County Purchasing Agent

Dopslauf is currently the purchasing agent for Harris County, Houston, Texas. Dopslauf has over 25 years of purchasing experience, with three years in the private sector and 22 years in the public sector. He has been a certified public procurement officer since 2010 and a certified purchasing manager since 2005. Dopslauf was elected to the Institute of Public Procurement Board of Directors in 2008 and has served in that capacity for four years.

In addition, he is a member of the Institute of Supply Management and the Southeast Texas Association of Public Purchasers.

Lina Hidalgo, Harris County Judge

Judge Lina Hidalgo is the head of Harris County's governing body. She is the first woman to be elected County Judge and only the second to be elected to the Commissioners Court.

The County Judge is the presiding officer on the Commissioners Court. She is also the county's director of emergency management, leading the Harris County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HCOHSEM). In addition to her formal duties, Judge Hidalgo plays an important advocacy role for the county.

Judge Hidalgo believes that our region will remain competitive only through proactive and creative leadership on issues like flood control, transportation, criminal justice reform and education. She is committed to ensuring that Harris County government is transparent, accessible and accountable to every resident. She wants Harris County to be a place where everyone can attain the American Dream.

Randy Collins, Former Mayor of El Campo

Randy Collins served as the El Campo mayor for six years, and prior to that, served as a council member for 14 years. Collins is a devoted public servant for the city of El Campo and all its citizens. He has played a leading role in COVID-19 planning and resource allocation. Members of El Campo's local government believe Collins to be the reason they learned they could not only survive but thrive through this pandemic, and he leaves a legacy of leadership and public service behind in El Campo as he forges a new path.

Dr. Umair Shah, Former Executive Director Harris County Public Health

Dr. Shah is the former Harris County Public Health (HCPH) Director and is now the secretary of health for the Washington State department of health. He began a distinguished career as an emergency department physician at Houston's Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center. He started his public health journey as chief medical officer at Galveston County's Health District before joining HCPH to oversee its clinical health system and infectious disease portfolio. Under his leadership, HCPH has won numerous national awards, including recognition as Local Health Department of the Year from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) in 2016. He holds numerous leadership positions with respected entities such as the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; U.S. Centers for Disease Control

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and Prevention; Trust for America's Health etc. Over his career, Dr. Shah has been a clinician, an innovator, an educator and a leader in health.

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