

Renée D Cross

Senior Director, Hobby School of Public Affairs, University of Houston

A native Houstonian, Renée Cross is a graduate of Milby High School in the city's East End. Renée's early professional experience was working as a photographer, instructor and division manager for a national portrait company for thirteen years. With a lifelong avid interest in politics and public service, she returned to college and earned a bachelor of science degree in political science and psychology summa cum laude at the University of Houston and a masters degree in political science from the University of St. Thomas.

Renée worked as the district director in the office of a state representative for two years before joining the staff of the University of Houston Center for Public Policy as a researcher. Now with the Hobby School of Public Affairs for over nineteen years (the Center for Public Policy is one of several entities housed within the Hobby School since 2016), Renée serves as the School's senior director, managing overall operations and external relations, developing research projects and partnerships, and supervising professional training and internship programs. Her academic interests include Houston and Texas government, politics, and history; urban politics; and civic engagement and voter participation. In addition to serving as the course instructor for the School's internship programs, Renée teaches upper level political science courses such as Texas Politics, Urban Politics, State and Local Government & Politics, Campaign Politics, and Participation & Democracy in American Politics at the University of Houston and the University of Houston-Downtown. She has been quoted in publications such as the Wall Street Journal, the Chicago Tribune, the Houston Chronicle, the Texas Tribune, the Washington Times, the Austin-American Statesman and the Dallas Morning News, and has been featured on local media including KUHF radio and KPRC, KUHT and Fox 26 television.

Renée's current professional affiliations include serving as an advisory board member for the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area and a member of the Harris County Election Division's Hispanic Voter Outreach Committee. Her other affiliations include the Woodland Heights Civic Association and the Hobby School of Public Affairs Alumni Association. Her previous service includes working as a member of the White House Presidential Personnel Office's regional referral network; governing board member for the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County; research committee member of the League of Women Voters of Texas; advisory board member for the Center for Recycled Art; member of Mayor White's Task Force on Houston History; member of the City of Houston's Houston Counts (Census 2010) committee; member of the Woodland Heights Historic Preservation Committee; volunteer for Catahoula Rescue; and as a docent for the Houston Zoo. Renée is also a graduate of the Center for Houston's Future Leadership Forum and the City of Houston's Project Leadership Institute-Historic Preservation.

Renée and her husband Stan share their never quite completely restored 1920 bungalow in the Woodland Heights with their rescue dogs and cats.