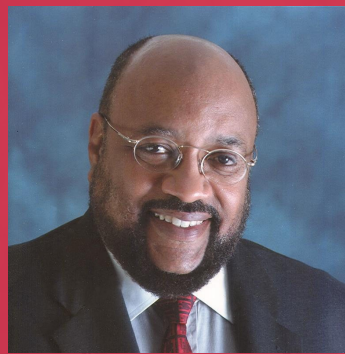


CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Diverse Perspectives Panel Discussion

Tuesday, February 23, 2021 | Noon - 1 pm | Virtual

MODERATOR



Elwyn C. Lee, J.D.

Vice President for Neighborhood & Strategic Initiatives
Co-Chair, UH Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee

PANELISTS



**Reverend
Alexander Johnson**
Executive Pastor
Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church



Attorney Gene Locke
Attorney and Activist
UH '1969



Helen Stagg
Chief Executive Officer
Change Happens



Brian Kirksey
Vice President
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Moderator

Dr. Lee grew up in the historic Third Ward of Houston, attending public schools, including Yates senior high. He completed his last two years of high school at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, after which he attended Yale College, graduating magna cum laude. An internship with the New York Mayor's office and a year with the McKay Commission investigating the Attica Prison Riot preceded study at Yale Law School. After graduation, Lee joined Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering (now WilmerHale), a prestigious large firm in Washington, D.C. After three years he joined the University of Houston Law Center, where he later became the first tenured African American law professor.

Moving into administration, Lee served three semesters as interim director of the UH African American Studies program. For the next twenty years, Lee served as vice president for student affairs, responsible for a comprehensive array of student and enrollment services. In his current vice presidential role, Dr. Lee develops strategies for making UH more inclusive and serves as executive leader of the UH Third Ward Initiative that collaborates with neighborhood stakeholders to address disparities in education, health, economic empowerment and art exposure. He is a member of the UH President's Cabinet and serves as chair of the UH State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) as well as several other committees. While active in Third Ward organizations such as Change Happens, Third Ward Complete Communities and the Emancipation Economic Development Council (EEDC), he also serves on the boards of Project Row Houses and SHAPE Community Center. Over the years Dr. Lee has been a member of the March of Dimes board, the Sam Houston Area Council Boy Scouts Executive Committee, the NAACP and the Houston American Leadership Forum. He is married to Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee.



**Reverend
Alexander Johnson**
Executive Pastor
Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church

The Reverend Alexander E.M. Johnson, born the third child to Maurice and Deborah Johnson, serves as the Executive Pastor of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church in Houston, TX. A native Houstonian, Johnson received his education in the Aldine Independent School District, where he received All-State honors in football and track and field, prior to earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in The Comparative Study of Religion from Harvard College in Cambridge, MA, with a Secondary degree in African American Studies. He holds the Master of Divinity Degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, NJ.

After his commencement from Princeton Theological Seminary, Rev. Johnson was invited to serve as the Associate Pastor for Worship and Ministry at his home church, Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Marcus D. Cosby. Having served faithfully as Associate Pastor for over 6 years, Rev. Johnson was thereafter promoted to the position of Executive Pastor. In his current capacity, in addition to the role of operational oversight, Rev. Johnson is responsible for ensuring the efficacious and impactful flow of Wheeler's four Sunday worship experiences as well as overseeing the more than 70 ministries of the church. He is committed to advancing the work of these ministries as they continually seek to Minister to the Total Person.

Rev. Johnson has served as a Ministry Fellow for the Fund for Theological Education and was the recipient of the Princeton Theological Seminary John T. Galloway Award in Expository Preaching and the Aaron E. Gast Award in Urban Ministry. He currently serves as co-chair of the Dean's Advisory Board for the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Houston. He is a proud member of the Harvard Alumni Association, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and the NAACP. With a firm belief that there is transformative power found in the love of God, Rev. Johnson seeks to share that love for the edification and transformation of all of God's children. He is driven by a passion for God, God's people and the preaching and teaching of God's Word. Rev. Johnson is the proud husband of Mrs. Kristen Ann-Marie Johnson and they are the proud parents of Alexander E.M. Johnson II.



Attorney Gene Locke

Attorney and Activist
UH '1969

Gene Locke's life is a true Houston story of hard work, opportunity, service and family. The son of a school teacher, Gene attended law school at night while working a rotating shift at the Shell Oil refinery. He served as City Attorney for the City of Houston under Mayor Bob Lanier and today, Gene Locke is known as one of Houston's most successful attorneys.

Named a Texas Super Lawyer, Gene is a partner at Andrews Kurth LLP where he counsels various government entities. He was the government's lead lawyer in the negotiations and development of Minute Maid Park, Reliant Stadium and the Toyota Center. Gene also serves as Special Counsel to the Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) and the Port of Houston Authority and was responsible for drafting successful small business programs for both agencies.

Born in East Texas, Gene graduated first in his high school class from Pemberton High School in Marshall Texas. He entered the University of Houston as our nation's universities first opened their doors to African-Americans. It was here that he took his first steps as a community leader and activist. Gene quickly became a front runner, recognized for his intellect, compassion and uncompromising character. After college Gene continued his commitment to service, fighting for civil rights, equal opportunity and community empowerment. He gained invaluable experience in public service as chief of staff to the late Congressman Mickey Leland. In 1995, Gene was tapped as City Attorney for Mayor Bob Lanier. As City Attorney, Gene worked with Mayor Lanier in revitalizing downtown Houston, providing new housing opportunities, defending the City's successful affirmative action program and protecting neighborhoods.

Like many of Houston's leaders, Gene's commitment to the city reaches beyond career achievements. Gene chaired the Houston Katrina Rita Fund, and has served on the Board of Directors of the Houston Bar Association, the Center for the Retarded, the Houston Community College System, and University of Houston Alumni Association. Gene is a member of the board of the Center for Houston's Future, the Houston Urban Debate League Advisory Council, and the Wheeler Avenue Christian Academy. He is a trustee of the Texas Southern University Foundation, a fellow with the American Leadership Forum and a member of Sigma Pi Phi, Nu Boule. He received the Diversity First Award from the Texas Diversity Council in 2007 and is a prior recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award from South Texas College of Law and from the University of Houston Black Alumni Association. Gene is also a past recipient of the NAACP Freedom Award for Outstanding Service.



Helen Stagg

Chief Executive Officer
Change Happens

Helen Stagg is Chief Executive Officer of Change Happens, a community-based social service organization in Houston, Texas. Change Happens is one of the largest minority-founded organizations in the Greater Gulf Coast Region of Texas. As CEO Ms. Stagg is responsible for operational planning and management, program operations and oversight, addressing strategic organizational issues, human resources planning and management, financial planning and management, fundraising, and community relations/advocacy. Change Happens' mission is to "empower people to help themselves" and to this end the organization is makes a difference to the 65,000 clients it serves annually.

Ms. Stagg's role in leading one of Houston's premier non-profit organizations has resulted in exceptional growth that expanded the organization's program to include: after school and summer enrichment programs, HIV prevention, housing and supportive services, workforce development and employment, reentry support programs, case management, enrollment in health insurance coverage for the uninsured, substance misuse prevention and treatment, mentoring; and neighborhood and economic revitalization, affordable housing, community engagement and expanding services for children and families.

Ms. Stagg received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Texas A&M University, Commerce. Ms. Stagg completed her graduate studies and received a Social Work Master's Degree from the University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work. After receiving her undergraduate degree, Ms. Stagg had a long career with Texas Health and Human Services Commission. She joined Change Happens and began her work in non-profit leadership. Ms. Stagg is a Certified Prevention Specialist and an Internationally Certified Prevention Specialist. She has presented at various national conferences hosted by the Administration for Children and Families and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Ms. Stagg is a scholar from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Arnold School for Public Health, CDC/ASPH Institute for HIV Prevention Leadership.

Ms. Stagg serves on the board of the Texas Association of Substance Abuse Programs, the Greater Houston Healthy Marriage Coalition, and the Advisory Board of the University of Houston's Health Research Institute. She was an honoree of the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work's 50 for 50 honorees (2019). This recognition honors 50 GCSW alumni who "represent the vision of achieving social, racial, economic, and political justice." Ms. Stagg was recently named one of three recipients awarded the Third Ward Go Champion award for her dedication in spearheading comprehensive, resident-led, and collaborative community development in Houston's Third Ward. Ms. Stagg has served as an adjunct professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work and Houston Community College.



Brian Kirksey

Vice President
UH Black Student Union (BSU)
UH '2022

Brian Kirksey is a born and raised Houstonian who is a current Junior at the University of Houston. As of now, Kirksey is an Accounting & Finance double major with an expected graduation date of May 2022.

He is also the current Vice President of The Black Student Union in addition to the current Treasurer of The Collegiate 100 Organization. In his free time, he likes to hang out with friends, cook and listen to music. Kirksey is a member of the University of Houston Racial and Social Justice Committee.

About UH Staff Council and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Ad Hoc) Committee

The University of Houston Staff Council is an advisory body to the President of the University and the University administration. Staff Council consists of elected staff members from each division who represent the entire staff body.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Ad Hoc) Committee's mission is to recommend and promote diverse, equitable, and inclusive initiatives in alignment with University of Houston's culture and enhance the staff experience. DEI launched a "Workplace Conversations" event series in June 2020 to help build and promote an inclusive work culture that encourages, supports, and celebrates the diversity of experiences, cultural backgrounds, and ideas among our staff.

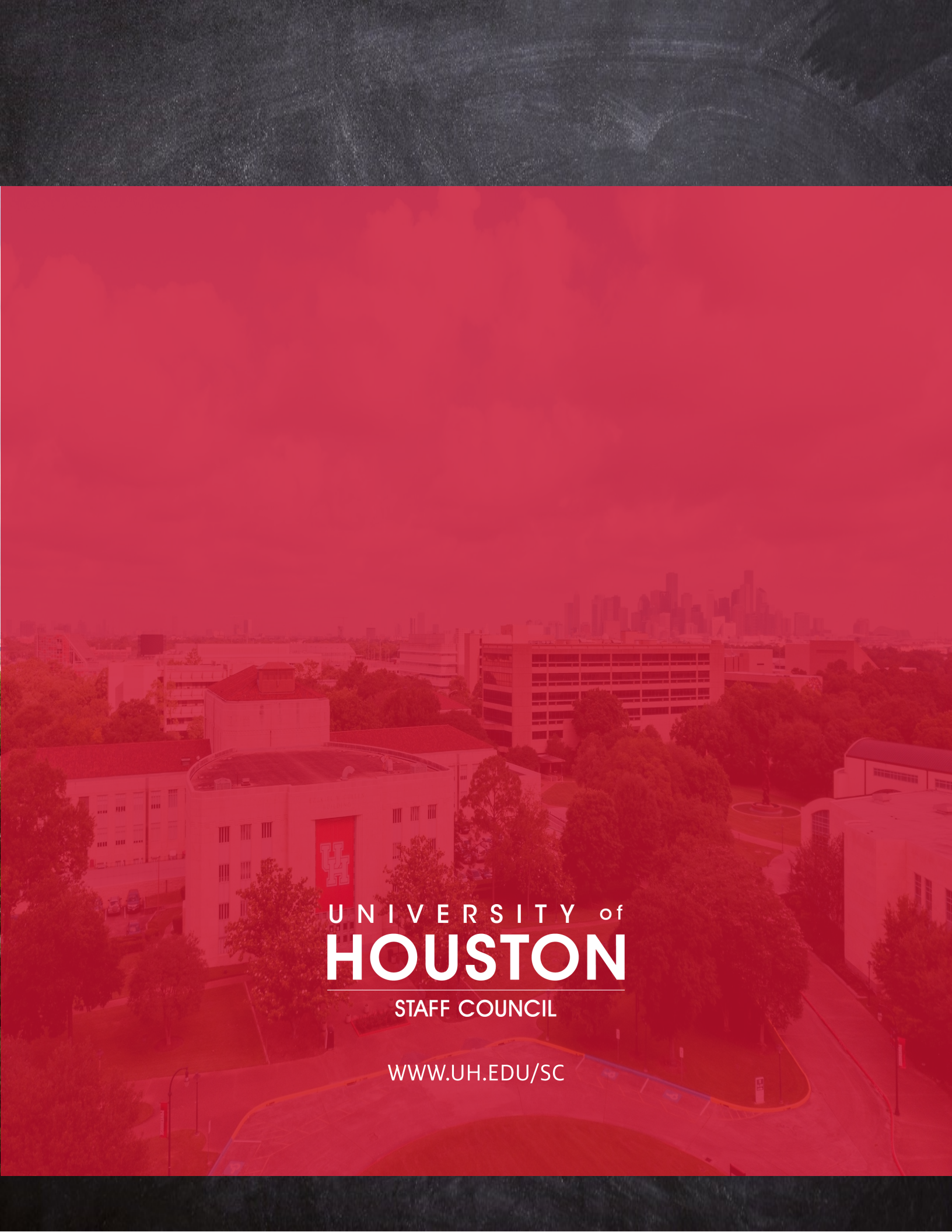
UH staff and supporters can find campus and external resources on the Staff Council website, <https://uh.edu/staff-council/diversity-equity-inclusion/>.

Questions about DEI's Celebrating Black History Month virtual event

Information about the 2021 Staff Council Workplace Conversations' event titled "Celebrating Black History Month: Diverse Perspectives Panel Discussion" is found on the DEI webpage, <https://uh.edu/staff-council/diversity-equity-inclusion/>.

For information about Staff Council's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Ad Hoc) Committee email staffcouncil@uh.edu.

For questions about the virtual event, please contact event Co-Chairs Karl Hearne (khearne@uh.edu) and Diedra Fontaine (dfontaine@uh.edu).



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