



TML Newly Elected City Officials' Orientation

You've got questions...we've got answers.

Speaker Bios

August 12-13, 2021 ~ Bastrop



Joe Serio

President, Joe Serio Enterprises

Dr. Joe Serio is an international speaker, trainer, and author who holds a Ph.D. in criminal justice from Sam Houston State University (SHSU), with a specialization in leadership and organizational behavior. His career is highlighted by unique experiences in the former Soviet Union investigating the Russian mafia, including a year spent working in the Organized Crime Control Department of the Soviet national police prior to the collapse of the USSR.

He started his own company assisting foreign corporations in Russia and later became a consultant to the New York-based global corporate investigation and business intelligence firm, Kroll Associates. Soon, he became the director of the Moscow office of Kroll, overseeing investigations across the former Soviet Union. While in Russia, he was also a consultant to major U.S. and European media companies and helped produce three documentaries for A&E's *Investigative Reports*.

Back in the U.S., Dr. Joe devoted much of his time to finishing his Ph.D. and traveling around the U.S. speaking to corporate audiences on business security issues in Russia. He also served as editor-in-chief of the well-regarded magazine, *Crime and Justice International*, and as co-instructor of week-long programs on developing effective relationships with the media.

Dr. Joe is the author of the critically-acclaimed book, *Investigating the Russian Mafia*. He recently released the first two books in his Get the Nerve® Series, *Overcoming Fear: 50 Lessons on Being Bold and Living the Dream* and *Public Speaking: 50 Lessons on Presenting Without Losing Your Cool* with more to follow. He has been interviewed by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Dallas Morning News*, CNN, NBC News, Fox News, WGN Radio (Chicago), *The European* (UK), *Legal Realm* (China), *Sekai Nippo* (Japan), *Sol de Mexico*, and many other media outlets.



Lee Woodward

City Secretary/PIO, City of La Porte

Lee Woodward is the city secretary and public information officer for the City of La Porte and was previously the same for the City of Huntsville. Woodward is the 2021 Secretary and Legislative Committee Chair for the Texas Municipal Clerks Association (TMCA) and is an instructor for their annual Election Law Seminar, as well as for the annual Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) seminar on election law. She is a co-author of the tenth and eleventh editions of TMCA's *Texas Municipal Clerks Handbook*. Woodward holds credentials as a Texas Registered Municipal Clerk, Texas Certified Public Manager, IIMC Master Municipal Clerk, Professional Registered Parliamentarian, and Certified Parliamentarian. She is a member of the Texas Association of Municipal Information Officers (TAMIO), Texas City Management Association (TCMA), Texas Women Leading Government (TWLG), serves as an instructor of parliamentary procedure for the Texas Municipal League's Newly Elected Officials Conference; is an IIMC Athenian Dialogue Society Fellow and Facilitator, and is a member of the National Association for Media Literacy Education. She received a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University (College Station) and a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University.



Martie Simpson

Consultant and GFOAT Executive Director

Martie Simpson currently serves as the Executive Director for the Government Finance Officers Association of Texas. She started her career with a large certified public accounting firm. She then went to work in the private sector for a manufacturing company and later for an insurance company. In 1997 she began her career in municipal government with the City of Killeen, finishing her career in municipal government with the City of New Braunfels.

She has served on the board of GFOAT in various capacities to include Treasurer and President. Martie currently lives in New Braunfels, Texas and is blessed with three adult sons.



Dan Johnson

City Manager, City of Richardson

Dan Johnson is the city manager of Richardson, Texas. Johnson's 44 years as a public administrator have been served in a variety of capacities in the DFW Metroplex. Johnson was appointed to the position of city manager in 2012. Prior to serving as city manager, Johnson served as Richardson's deputy city manager from 1996 until his appointment to city manager. Prior to his move to Richardson in 1996, Johnson served for 11 years at the City of Carrollton, Texas, including three years as city manager, and eight years as deputy city manager. Earlier service included responsibilities as director of regional services for three years at the North Central Texas Council of Governments (D-FW metro area), and he was budget officer in Sherman, Texas, for five years.

Johnson holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Austin College, and a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Texas. He is also a graduate of the Public Executive Institute of the LBJ School of Public Affairs. Johnson is the 1995 Distinguished Alumni recipient for the Department of Public Administration at the University of North Texas. He is a past president for the Urban Management Assistants of North Texas, the North Texas City Management Association, and the Texas City Management Association. Dan serves on the Methodist Richardson Medical Center Advisory Board, the University of Texas at Dallas Development Board and the Advisory Council for the UT Dallas School of Economic, Political & Policy Sciences. He also serves as treasurer and Board Executive Committee Member of the North Texas Commission.



Christy Drake-Adams

Director of Legal Services, Texas Municipal League

Christy received her J.D. from Baylor University and her M.P.A. and B.A. from Texas Tech University. She was in private practice in Austin for seven years, specializing in municipal and local government law. In 2007, she began serving as an assistant attorney general on the Opinion Committee of the Office of Attorney General. Since October 2010, she has worked with the Texas Municipal League (TML). She currently serves as the Director of Legal Services and Assistant General Counsel for the Texas City Attorneys Association. Christy is a recipient of the 2018-2019 Texas Government Lawyers Section "Outstanding Government Lawyer" award.



Tom Bryson

Tom Bryson, Communications Consultant, DFW Strategic Communications

A native of New Orleans and a proud graduate of LSU, Tom Bryson has been a local government communicator for 31 years. Following an early career stint as a newspaper reporter, he came in from the dark side in 1990 to work, first, for the City of Duncanville, then for the City of Farmers Branch where he retired in January of 2021. At Farmers Branch, he was responsible for all city internal and external communications activities and a variety of city media, including website, social media, cable television programming, print publications, two different weekly eNewsletters, and media relations.

During Tom's tenure, the Farmers Branch communications department was recognized more than 55 times at the local, state, and national levels for municipal government communications achievement. Tom is a past president of both the TML affiliate, Texas Association of Municipal Information Officers, and of the national City-County Communications and Marketing Association where he was named national Communicator of the Year in 2016. Additionally, he is a founding member of the Advisory Board for the Certified Public Communicator program at TCU - the first certification program of its kind, in the nation, for government communicators.

Tom enjoys writing, watching an unhealthy amount of television, and playing golf badly. He is married to Dr. Mechelle Bryson, the head of schools at Westlake Academy. They are proud parents of their son Taylor, an aspiring filmmaker and graduate of Centenary College of Louisiana who is currently working for Walt Disney World in Florida.



Monty Wynn

Director, Grassroots and Legislative Services

Monty Wynn is the Director of Grassroots and Legislative Services for the Texas Municipal League where he coordinates and implements the legislative policy program for the 1,167 member cities. He has been with TML for 14 years. Prior to his work at TML, Monty worked for two state comptrollers, was the Committee Director for the House Public Education Committee, and served as the Chief of Staff to two Senators.

Monty is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin with a degree in Economics and Political Science. He and his wife, Rosemary, have two sons, Aiden, 14, and Owen, 13.



JJ Rocha

Grassroots and Legislative Services Manager, Texas Municipal League

JJ Rocha is the Grassroots and Legislative Services Manager at the Texas Municipal League where she coordinates the legislative policy program for the 1,167 member cities. Before joining TML in 2010, she interned at the Texas House of Representatives. JJ is a graduate from St. Edward’s University with a degree in political science. In 2014, she received her Master’s from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin.



Bill Longley

General Counsel, Texas Municipal League

Bill Longley graduated from the University of Richmond in 2004 with a degree in political science and sociology. In 2007, he received his law degree from the University of Texas School of Law. Bill worked as a law clerk at TML while in law school. Prior to working for TML, Bill served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Open Records Division of the Office of Attorney General.

In his 12 years at TML, Bill has worked on a variety of legal and legislative issues as they relate to Texas cities. He co-authored the TML Revenue Manual and TML Economic Development Handbook, and has spoken on numerous topics, with a focus on economic development, municipal revenue, open government, and elections.



Tad Cleaves

Legal Counsel, Texas Municipal League

Tad joined the Texas Municipal League in 2021. During his 13+ years’ experience as an attorney, he has served as an in-house City Attorney and Assistant City Attorney for multiple cities in Texas as well as outside counsel to cities across the state while employed with private law firms. He earned a history degree at The University of Texas and a mathematics degree at Texas Tech University before studying law at the Chicago-Kent College of Law. Most importantly, he has an extraordinary wife, four boys,

three cats and two dogs to keep him company in his free time.



George E. Hyde

Partner, Russell Rodriguez Hyde Bullock, L.L.P.

George Hyde is a 1998 St Mary’s Law honors graduate. Shortly thereafter, George elected to live the lifestyle of a local government lawyer, became approved claims council for the TML Risk Pool defending cities, their employees and officials in state and federal court, and was also appointed as City Attorney in numerous cities across Texas.

He has held the following local government positions in his life: Municipal Park Ranger, Firefighter, Deputy Constable, Deputy Sheriff, Municipal Police Officer, Assistant and City Attorney.

He has handled 1000’s of open record requests and numerous Texas Public Information Act lawsuits, including notable decisions such as Adkisson v. Paxton, El Paso, Tx. v. Paxton and in 2018, received what was characterized by the AG’s office as the largest attorneys’ fee award in a Public Information Act case. The City of Carrollton successfully sued the AG over the scope of public information relating to the release of certain police records. The matter went to the Texas Supreme Court, who ruled favorably for the City and the trial court then awarded the city its fees in a Judgment awarding over \$100,000 (took 6 years).



Evelyn Njuguna
Assistant Director of Legal Services, Texas Municipal League

Evelyn Njuguna is the Assistant Director of Legal Services at TML where she provides legal information to city officials, presents on issues relevant to cities, and monitors legislation during the legislative session. She graduated from the University of Tennessee where she received both her undergraduate and law degrees. Evelyn previously worked at TML in 2006-2008, and recently returned to TML after serving as an Assistant City Attorney at the City of Houston and First Assistant City Attorney at the City of Missouri City.



Moderators



Steve Rockey
TAMCC President, TML Board Director for TAMCC, and Councilmember, City of Friendswood

Steve Rockey was first elected to the Friendswood city council in 2012. He grew up in the midwest and graduated from Kenston High School in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. While in high school, Steve was a wrestler and studied the Russian language. He was selected by the United States State Department to be a foreign exchange student to the Soviet Union during the cold war years.

After graduating Summa Cum Laude with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from Ohio University, he moved to Houston to work for the Shell Oil Company in their research laboratories in 1978. While working at Shell full time, he returned to school at the University of Houston to earn a second bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering. He was then promoted to an engineer position and continued working at Shell at several different locations. In 2009, Steve started an engineering consulting business.



Bert Miller
TAMCC Immediate Past President, and Mayor, City of Navasota

William A. (Bert) Miller III has been the mayor of Navasota since 2006 and previously served as a councilmember from 2005-2006. A product of Navasota High School, Miller attended Stephen F. Austin University and Blinn College. He is the president of Miller Insurance Agency, where he has worked since 1997. He also owns the Classic Rock Coffee and Kitchen in Navasota. Previously, he worked as a sales representative with Trinity Industries for eight years.

Bert serves on several boards, including the Navasota Economic Development Corporation, the Brazos Valley Council of Governments, the Grimes County Crime Stoppers, the Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley, the Grimes County Health Resource Commission, the Navasota Kiwanis Club, and the Navasota ISD Education Foundation. Additionally, he is a member of the 100 Club, the Washington-On-The-Brazos Park Association, the Navasota Theater Alliance, the Independent Insurance Agents of Texas, the Grimes St. Joseph Healthcare Council, and more.