

## 13<sup>th</sup> Annual DIVERSITY CONFERENCE

Friday, March 10, 2017

### BREAKOUT SESSION SUMMARIES\*

*\*Please note that all breakout sessions are subject to change.*

*Social Worker contact hours for Continuing Education (previously known as CEU's) will also be awarded at the conference for those attendees who are interested. Below does not reflect the list of sessions offering contact hours. A final list of breakout sessions offered for Continuing Education/CEU's will be provided at the conference.*

#### **ESTHER BARTOW**

##### ***“The Workforce, Education and Trans People”***

Transgender people have some of the biggest challenges with workplace and school discrimination. Join Esther as she shares her story as a transgender and genderqueer person in the workforce and academia, as well as ways to make professional spaces safer for all members of the LGBT community.

#### **DALLAS BLACK**

##### ***“When Biography Becomes Biology: Psychological Trauma and the Body”***

Trauma, despite its frequency, is *not* a normal experience of life. It affects the way a person thinks, feels, copes, adapts, learns, and makes decisions throughout the lifespan. Additionally, psychological trauma changes the entire body's ability to function, heal, react, fight disease, and survive. This session will address the many faces of trauma, its psychological costs, and its long-term biological effects on the human body. Established and emerging therapies for healing trauma will be discussed as well. This session's message is one of recovery and hope.

#### **KITTY BOGLE**

##### ***“The Altered Brain”***

Our brains impact how we react to our everyday situations – which is why it is essential to understand why we react the way we do to certain situations and substances. The Altered Brain will begin with a basic introduction to how the brain functions, including how neurons and neurotransmitters work. We will then discuss the “reward pathway and addiction” – what it is and how it reacts when a person becomes addicted to a substance.

#### **KEVIN COOK**

##### ***“From Mayberry to Matryona's: Cultural Constructions of American and Russian Rural Values”***

This session will discuss and explore two versions of small-town life as represented in the fiction and drama of the Cold War Era. Mayberry, North Carolina was home to Sheriff Andy Taylor, Aunt Bea, Barney Fife, and Opie. This nostalgic vision of the American town – amusing, simple, and safe – is an enduring symbol of the small town as relatively carefree and virtuous. Matryona's Home – Alexander Solzhenitsyn's tale of a Gulag survivor's return to society – likewise exemplifies values from bygone days: Matryona is an elderly, humble and unschooled peasant. Like Andy, she represents a way of life that contrasts with the centers of power and populations in the Industrialized Soviet Union. This session will compare and contrast the characters and depiction of these fictional worlds in order to better understand how popular culture both reflects and shapes our lives.

## DIVERSITY CONFERENCE 2017

### SESSION SUMMARIES

**JEFF & KAREN JENTZ**

***“All One Song: Progressive Revelation of the World’s Religions”***

What do the various world religions have in common? Is it possible that they derive from the same divine Source, singing the same song? Are their similarities stronger than their differences? What about the Prophets themselves, who have brought these sacred teachings, laws, and holy books, and their devoted followers? Focusing on the missions of six great Prophets (Krishna, Moses, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, and Baha’u’llah), we will explore and compare the essence of their sacred teachings across the ages. Interactive discussion will be included.

**ERICA SPILLER**

***“Inclusive Instruction and Engaging Environments for LGBTQA Learners”***

As student bodies continue the positive change toward increased diversification, faculty and other institutional stakeholders must stay current and comfortable with how to provide an inclusive and engaging learning environment and campus community for LGBTQA learners. As instructors work to create these environments, they must do so while also managing many classroom formats (such as face-to-face, online, distance, or blended), which often means the diversity of the student body might not be easily known to the professor. Faculty can employ a number of techniques to work toward creating a productive classroom environment and gaining personal growth in their own support and understanding of LGBTQA students.

**ALEX TUCKNESS**

***“Toleration and Justice in a Broken World”***

What does it mean to be tolerant, and what does tolerance require of us in a world where there is much injustice? This presentation will examine the meaning of toleration and suggests ways we can pursue justice, recognizing diversity, and seek truth amid disagreement and difference.

***“Mercy and Injustice in America’s Prisons”***

There is increasing awareness of injustices in America’s criminal justice system. America has an extremely high incarceration rate with race and poverty as significant factors. This presentation looks at Western history to recover an approach to justice that includes mercy and suggests how mercy could apply us to think differently not just about criminal justice, but immigration as well.

*Additional breakout sessions will also be offered, that include topics related to: generational poverty; generational diversity; shame and shame resilience; women and their impact on the world’s history; and an ‘intercultural experiences’ panel.*