

The Mayor's Better Austin Foundation Board of Trustees



Judge Darlene Byrne

Darlene Byrne has served as Judge of the 126th Judicial District Court in Travis County, Texas since January 2001. Prior to her election in 2000, she practiced law for thirteen years in the areas of employment, commercial and governmental entity litigation. In 2012, Judge Byrne was reelected to her fourth term as Judge.

Judge Byrne is a graduate of the University of Houston Law Center where she graduated Magna Cum Laude, was a member of the Order of the Coif and where she was on the editorial staff of the *Houston Law Review*.

She currently serves as the Vice-Chair of the Supreme Court of Texas' Permanent Judicial Commission for Children Youth and Families. She also serves as President-Elect on the Board of Trustees of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and serves on the Editorial Staff for the NCJFCJ Journal. She serves as the Chair of the Oversight Committee for the Office of Parent Representation and Office of Child Representation (two public defender-type law offices for families and children involved in child welfare cases, which Judge Byrne helped establish). She also served as the Chair of the Travis County Juvenile Justice Board from 2009-2012. She founded and is the lead judge for the Travis County Model Court for Children and Families. She is the supervising judge, former presiding judge, and is a founding team member of the Travis County Family Drug Treatment Court.

Judge Byrne is proud to have been recognized as the recipient of the 2008 Texas CASA Lone Star Proud Judge of the Year Award, the 2011 Judge of the Year by CASA of Travis County, 2013 recipient of the Travis County Women's Lawyer Association's Pathfinder Award, 2009 recipient of their Outstanding Achievement Award and the 2005 recipient of their Government Service Award. She also received the Austin Child Guidance 2013 Austin Icon for Children Award. She received the 2009 recipient of the YWCA of Greater Austin's Woman of the Year Award in the area of racial justice.

Judge Byrne is also an Austin Bar Foundation Founding Life Fellow and a Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation. She served as a co-chair for the Austin Do the Write Thing Challenge from 2008 to 2011. She has served as co-chair of the 2008 and 2009 Law Day celebrations of the Austin Bar Association ("ABA"), as past co-chair of the ABA Vanishing Jury Trial Committee, as past Secretary of the Texas Administrative and Public Law Council for the State Bar of Texas, as the 2005 Judicial Chair of the Austin Bar Foundation Gala, and as chair and member of numerous Committees and Advisory Boards for the NCJFCJ. In her role as a mom and community member, she was a board member of GenAustin (Girls Empowerment Network), a past chair of Ballet Austin Barre, a past Board Member and Treasurer for the Austin Rape Crisis Center (Safe Place), and is a graduate of Leadership Austin.

Judge Byrne is the mother of three wonderful kids (Erin, Conor, and Devin) and is the proud spouse of Dan Byrne of Fritz, Byrne, Head and Harrison, L.L.P.



Cookie Ruiz

Cookie Gregory Ruiz has more than 25 years of experience in the areas of strategic planning, organizational development and non-profit fund-raising/management. Since 2002 she has held the professional designation of Certified Fund Raising Executive (C.F.R.E.) by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Her community honors include *Austin Business Journal's* "Profiles in Power" Award, Austin Community Foundation's Beverly S. Sheffield Award for Excellence as a Nonprofit Executive, The American Red Cross "Clara Barton Medal of Honor," Volunteer of the Year for the Austin Independent School District, the Lone Star Girl Scout Council "Women of Distinction" Award, and The Junior League of Austin Volunteer Extraordinaire Award. Ms. Ruiz served as the city-wide Chair of CreateAustin, a City Council appointee to

ImagineAustin's Citizen's Advisory Task Force, and is a graduate of the Austin's City Works Academy. As a graduate of Leadership Austin she served four years on its Board of Directors.

Ms. Ruiz is currently a member of the Board of Trustees and former national Chair of Dance/USA, a member of the national Board of Directors of the Performing Arts Alliance (Washington DC), the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of Texans for the Arts, the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), the Board of Directors of Housing Works Austin and a Community Advisor to the Young Women's Alliance (YWA). She is also a Fellow of The National Arts Strategies International Chief Executive Program.

Ms. Ruiz serves as a speaker, facilitator and presenter for a variety of leadership conferences, including the National Conference on Community Leadership, the National Performing Arts Conference, American for the Arts Annual Convention, National Conference of Dance/USA, The Governor's Women's Business Leadership Forum and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

In 1996, Ms. Ruiz joined the staff of Ballet Austin as Development Director, became General Manager in 1997 and Executive Director in 1999.



Kerry Tate

Kerry Tate is an Austin entrepreneur and longtime civic leader. She is Founding Partner of Civic Interest LLC, a base camp for civic-minded people and projects and Moore-Tate Projects+Design, a homebuilder in South Austin.

Kerry is the former Board Chair of the Austin Community Foundation, the Austin Chamber and Leadership Austin, where she later received the Polly Scallorn Award for Community Trusteeship. She currently serves on the board of the Mueller Foundation, which supports affordable housing through philanthropic stewardship. Kerry has been honored for ethics in business, entrepreneurship, and civic leadership by several local non-profits such as Care Communities, First Tee, and the YWCA, as well as for professional lifetime achievement in the field of communications. As a survivor turned fundraiser, she has also led the Texas Mamma Jamma Ride, which has raised more than \$2 million for local families fighting breast cancer. She is a former trustee at Seton Cove Center for Contemplative Study. Kerry is a Texas native and graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University where she received the Distinguished Young Alumnae Award.

The Mayor's Better Austin Foundation Staff



Laura Hernandez

Laura Hernandez is a born and raised Texan and has lived in Austin for ten years. She served as the Executive Director for the Travis County Democratic Party from 2009-2012. She was the Legislative Director for Texas State Representative Abel Herrero in the 81st legislative session and Representative Lon Burnam in the 83rd session. She was the Finance Director for the Andy Brown campaign for County Judge where she lead the effort to raise \$750,000, more funds than any other local partisan campaign in Travis County history.

Ms. Hernandez was the Deputy Campaign Manager for Steve Adler's campaign for Mayor, leading the team that raised nearly \$1.2 million, more funds than any municipal campaign in Austin's history, under what is argued to be the strictest campaign finance rules in the nation. She graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a Bachelor of Science in Political Communication and has been involved in Democratic politics at the local and state level since she joined and led the University Democrats club at UT in 2006. She lives in East Austin and enjoys running Town Lake and swimming in Barton Springs.



Mark Yznaga

Mark Yznaga combines a broad background in public policy development with expertise in community decision-making. He has been leader in policy development on a wide range of issues including planning, transportation, energy and housing. Yznaga co-founded the Save Our Springs Coalition, chaired Liveable City, and has been involved in numerous initiatives including serving as a Regional Co-Chair for the Central Texas Smart Growth Conference, the Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project, Create Austin, AISD Bond Committee ,HousingWorks Austin, Imagine Austin Citizen Advisory Task Force, and CodeNext, the rewrite of Austin's Land Development Code.



Diane Land

Ms. Land has been a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) since 1978. She also holds a Texas Real Estate Broker's License and the designation of Certified Property Manager (CPM) from the National Property Management Institute. She started her career in public accounting, specializing in real estate and oil and gas taxation with Coopers & Lybrand. This lead her to the national offices of Trammell Crow Company in 1980 where she was Tax Manager, then National Tax Department Manager. In 1984 she transferred to the Trammell Crow Company Austin office where she served numerous roles during her 10 years: Financial Manager, Retail Leasing Agent, Retail Property Management Director, Managing Director of Property Management, Regional Asset Manager for Central Texas, and Operating Officer for the Central Texas Region. In 1994, Ms. Land left Trammell Crow to start her own property management company, DT Land Group, Inc. She serves as President of this organization today.