

CITY OF COLUMBIA

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

Members

Scott Dean
Dalton Calcote
Elizabeth Miller
Amanda Andrade
Gina Long
Meghanne Thompson
(vacant)

Chair
Vice-Chair

Term Expiration

March 2016
March 2017
March 2017
March 2016
March 2015
March 2017
March 2015

Staff Liaison

Adam Kruse Assistant City Counselor, Law Department

City Ordinances – Human Rights Violations

The city ordinances prohibiting human rights violations are in Chapter 12, Art. III of the City Code of Ordinances. These prohibit discrimination in **Employment, Housing, and Public Accommodation** based on an individual's status in a protected category (*race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age* (as it relates to employment) or *familial status* (as it relates to housing)).

About the Human Rights Commission

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) is dedicated to minimizing or eliminating discriminatory practices made unlawful by Chapter 12. It is comprised of seven (7) volunteer members, each appointed by Council to three (3) year terms. The HRC receives discrimination complaints from the public for investigation, mediation or referral to a state or federal agency. It also participates in outreach activities to raise awareness and improve human relations in the community.

History of the Formation of the Columbia Human Rights Commission

The City of Columbia first established the Human Rights Commission in 1974. The HRC was originally given powers to conduct administrative hearings and redress violations by ordering appropriate relief (including cease and desist orders, reinstating employment or granting back pay). In 1990, the Missouri Supreme Court issued an opinion that made it clear the City's HRC was operating beyond its constitutional limits. The City Council established a task force to make recommendations on the future of the HRC. In 1991, City Council restructured the HRC based on the recommendations of the task force. The new HRC no longer had the authority to decide cases; instead, it would seek to eliminate discriminatory practices by educational programs and by conciliating and mediating individual complaints.

Complaints Received by Columbia Human Rights Commission - 2013

- E-01/13 A person filed a complaint on January 24, 2013. The complaint alleged employment discrimination based on sex. After its review, the HRC administratively closed the complaint because the complainant voluntarily withdrew the complaint.
- E-02/13 A person filed a complaint on February 25, 2013. The complaint alleged employment discrimination based on sex. Both parties agreed to participate in mediation at the University of Missouri Law School Center for Dispute Resolution. After its review, the HRC administratively closed the complaint because the case was successfully mediated.
- E-03/13 A person filed a complaint on May 31, 2013. The complaint alleged employment discrimination based on sex. The complaint was referred to MCHR, their investigation found no probable cause. After its review, the HRC made a finding of no probable cause consistent with MCHR's investigation.
- PA-04/13 A person filed a complaint on August 24, 2013. The complaint alleged public accommodation discrimination based on a disability. The business constructed a ramp to improve accessibility and the complainant withdrew the complaint. After its review, the HRC administratively closed the complaint because the case had been resolved and the complainant withdrew the complaint.
- H-05/13 A person filed a complaint on September 5, 2013. The complaint alleged housing discrimination based on retaliation. After its review, the HRC administratively closed the complaint because it did not allege a violation of Chapter 12 of the City Ordinances.

Inquiries Received by the Columbia Human Rights Commission - 2013

An inquiry is when a member of the public has an allegation or a question about discrimination but that person never filed a formal written complaint. Each inquiry is handled by the staff liaison with an in-person meeting or a telephone conversation (depending on what the inquirer is most comfortable with). Inquirers are provided with personal responses specific to their questions, informed of their options for filing a complaint, and provided contact information for any future questions.

In 2013, the Human Rights Commission received seventeen (17) inquiries: six (6) involved Employment, four (4) involved Housing, two (2) involved Public Accommodations, and five (5) involved Other. The discrimination alleged in these inquiries included national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, familial status and/or race.

Human Rights Enhancement Program - 2013

The HRC's aim is to minimize or eliminate discriminatory practices, to carry out educational programs and to cooperate with other organizations to further this purpose. To that end, the HRC recommends Human Rights Enhancement activities in our community to be sponsored by the City and assists in coordinating these events. The following are the Human Rights Enhancement activities that were sponsored in 2013.

1. *MLK Presentation, "Share the Dream, Live the Reality"*
 - **MU MLK Celebration Committee**, January 30, 2013
 - A presentation by television Judge Glenda Hachett regarding the lessons she has learned on the bench. The presentation took place at the Missouri Theater and was free and open to the public.

2. *Family Assisted Bathroom Signage Program*
 - **MU Wellness Center**, April 1 – September 30
 - An educational program intended to promote the availability of family assisted bathrooms in the District. Programming will include safe spaces training and the provision of family assisted bathroom signage. The program is intended to increase safety and inclusivity for families, persons with disabilities, and persons identifying as transgender. The HRC worked with the City's Building Construction Codes Commission to institute more inclusive restroom ordinances.

3. *"The Human Rights Crisis in Tibet: The Venerable Champa Lhunpo" Presentation*
 - **Columbia Public Schools - Amnesty International**, November 14, 2013
 - An educational program by Tibetan Monk Champa Lhunpo at Hickman High School to discuss human rights issues in Tibet and the dangers of ignoring these issues. He presented to students at Hickman High School all day and had another presentation after school in the Theater at Hickman that was free and open to the public.

4. *"New Kid" Play*
 - **Missouri Immigrants and Refugees Advocates**, November 22 & 23, 2013
 - The play is about a child immigrant who goes to a new school and tries to make new friends but he does not understand the language or the customs. The play is aimed at youth and intended to raise awareness of issues facing immigrants, to increase mutual respect and understanding and create a more welcoming community. The play was held at the Little Theater on the University of Missouri campus; it was free and open to the public.

5. *"The Dream is Now" Screening & Panel Discussion*
 - **Ragtag Cinema**, December 5, 2013
 - This was a screening of a documentary film that addresses the challenges faced by children of undocumented immigrants and current immigration policies. After the filming, there was a panel discussion that included young immigrants, an immigration attorney and a health services worker. The event took place at Ragtag Cinema; it was free and open to the public.

2013 Members

Term Expiration

Scott Dean	Chair	March 2016
Dalton Calcote	Vice-Chair	March 2014
Virginia Law	Secretary	March 2014
Amanda Andrade		March 2016
Gina Long		March 2015
Jessica Macy		March 2015
Matt Mazick		March 2014

Year in Review - 2013

- The HRC was recognized by the Missouri Commission on Human Rights as **Missouri's Local Human Rights Commission of the Year**.
- The administrative responsibilities of the commission transferred from the Public Health & Human Services Department to the Law Department.
- The HRC organized and planned 2013 Columbia Values Diversity Celebration. This responsibility has now transitioned from the Public Health & Human Services Department to the Cultural Affairs Department who will plan it for 2014 and beyond.
- The HRC conducted the following outreach: had booth displays at PrideFest, MU Off-Campus Housing, BCCA Mature Living Festival, Graduate Student Fair; provided feedback for a local fair housing website, www.midmohousing.com; assisted in creating brochures for service animals; HRC members were involved in the CHAMP process.

Future Goals - 2014

- Host a Columbia Fair Housing Seminar
- Look into Welcoming Cities Project and determine whether the City of Columbia would benefit from joining that organization
- Raise the City's Score on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Index Score Test