

The University of Houston Friends of Women's Studies present  
The Barbara Karkabi Living Archives Series  
*Transgender 101*  
February 9, 2015

**Panel Biographies**



**Phyllis Randolph Frye** is an Eagle Scout, a former member of the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, a US Army veteran (1LT-RA 1970-72), a licensed engineer, a licensed attorney, a father, a grandmother and a lesbian wife. She is the first, out, transgender judge in the nation.

Now having lived almost sixty percent of her life as the woman she always felt herself to be, Phyllis remains on the cutting edge of LGBTI and especially transgender legal and political issues. When the “gay” community was still ignoring or marginalizing the transgender community in the early 1990’s, Phyllis began the national transgender legal and political movement (thus she is known as being the TG movement’s “Grandmother”) with the six annual

transgender law conferences (ICTLEP) and their grassroots training.

Attorney Frye is one of the Task Force’s 1995 “Creator of Change” award winners. In 1999 she was given the International Foundation for Gender Education’s “Virginia Prince Lifetime Achievement” award. In 2001 she was given the National LGBT Bar Association’s (a.k.a. Lavender Law’s) highest honor, the “Dan Bradley Award.” She was honored beginning in 2009 by Texas A&M University with an annual “Advocacy Award” given in her name. In 2013 the Houston Transgender Unity Committee gave her its “Lifetime Achievement Award.”

In 2010 Phyllis was sworn-in as the first, out, transgender judge in the nation, as a City of Houston Associate Municipal Judge. She retains her senior partnership with Frye, Oaks and Benavidez, PLLC, (at [www.liberatinglaw.com](http://www.liberatinglaw.com)) which is an out LGBTI-*and-straight-allies* law firm. While the members of the firm practice law in a variety of areas, Phyllis devotes her practice *exclusively* to taking transgender clients -- both adults and minors -- through the Texas courts to change the clients’ names and genders on their legal documents.



**Monica Roberts**, legendary blogger and advocate who has worked tirelessly for the transgender community over the last two decades, is facing homelessness. Roberts is a native Houstonian and a [trailblazing trans community leader](#) who is the founding editor of the award winning blog [TransGriot](#). She’s a history buff, thinker, lecturer and award winning advocate on trans human rights issues who works diligently at encouraging acceptance of and promoting awareness about trans people. She is also a dear friend of GLAAD’s whose voice and influence in the LGBT movement has helped us amplify the everyday stories of people in the transgender community. [Her blog has been nominated for a GLAAD Media Award](#), and she is highly visible and is passionate about the advancement of transgender lives in her home state of

Texas and nationally.



Following the July 4<sup>th</sup> 2010 death of her firefighter husband, **Nikki Araguz Loyd** was sued for the death benefits and her marriage was subsequently invalidated by a Texas judge based on her birth as a transgender person. After a half decade long battle the case was overturned on appeal and is currently awaiting a hearing in the Texas Supreme Court. Araguz Loyd has taken her struggles and turned them into a triumph for all transgender people assuring the legislative, judicial and procedural changes in all forms of government for the improved lives of all people regardless of the gender identity. Acknowledged as the inspiration by Harris county Sherriff Adrian Garcia for his monumental and comprehensive changes to the process with which transgender inmates are handled, Araguz Loyd uses her voice and public persona to ensure

that all people are treated with equal respect. Having been featured on ABC's 20/20, NBC, CBS, PBS and numerous articles around the world, Nikki and her family were the subject of a digital docu-series called Nikki's American Dream focusing on the families activism and her life as a transparent.

Nikki Araguz Loyd travels the country helping families heal and trans identified people achieve the transitioned status they desire including access to name changes and hormone replacement therapies. She is known throughout social media as [@AmericanNikki](#) for her compassion, wit and unrivaled honest opinion. [www.nikkiaraguz.com](http://www.nikkiaraguz.com)



**Lorraine Schroeder** was hired as the first director of the UH LGBT Resource Center in May 2010 when the Center opened. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Education and a Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).



**Lou Weaver** is a leader in Houston's Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender community. He currently serves as a co-chair for the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force's Creating Change 2014 conference in Houston, and is on the board of the Victory Fund, a national group of community leaders dedicated to electing more openly LGBT candidates to public office by promoting the work of the Victory Fund in their own communities. He is extremely active with the diversity committee of the Houston chapter of the Human Rights Campaign. Lou is a sought after speaker on LGBT issues, specializing in trans\* discussions in the Houston area. He is currently completing his studies at the University of Houston, where he is a member of the LGBT Resource Center's Advisory Board. He has helped educate the

University of Houston Main Campus' Student Health Services group and the Counseling and Psychological Services groups regarding culturally competent care for the LGBT communities.



**Moderator:**

**Dr. Guillermo De Los Reyes** is an Associate Professor of Latin American Cultures and Literatures and Director of Undergraduate Studies. He also serves as Associate Director of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and he is a Faculty-in-Residence since 2011. He holds a Ph.D. and a M.A. from the **University of Pennsylvania** (2004, 1999) and a M.A. and B.A. from the **Universidad de las Américas-Puebla** (1997, 1994). Dr. De Los Reyes' research interests are: Colonial

Mesoamerica; gender, sexuality, and queer theory; Latin American cultural studies; secret and fraternal societies; and policy studies.

Dr. De Los Reyes is the author of *Herencias Secretas: Masonería, política y sociedad en México* (2009: Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla) and is currently working on a book-length project entitled: *"El pecado nefando:" Rethinking Gender and Sexuality in Colonial Mexico*.