



State of Connecticut COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Central Office ~ 25 Sigourney Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Promoting Equality and Justice for all People

TANYA HUGHES NAMED HEAD OF CONNECTICUT'S CIVIL RIGHTS AGENCY

(Hartford) The nation's first state-sponsored civil rights agency appointed Tanya Hughes as the new Executive Director of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities at its November 13, 2013 meeting.

"The Commission voted both unanimously and enthusiastically to appoint Tanya Hughes as executive director because our goal is to solidify our position as the nation's leading governmental civil rights agency," CHRO Chairman Gary Collins said. "As we turn our attention to the development and execution of a strategic plan that will make us an even more efficient and effective agency, Tanya Hughes' demonstrated leadership and ability to drive change will be the single most important component to our success."

Hughes, who most recently served as the regional manager of CHRO's Bridgeport office, is a nineteen year employee of the Commission. She has served as the interim executive director since July 1st of this year. Her previous roles included service as an investigator and staff attorney before assuming the leadership of the Bridgeport office.

Under Hughes' leadership the Commission received \$227,000 in federal grant money to stop discrimination in housing. CHRO has also significantly increased its public profile, taking a leading role in the newly established Racial Profiling Prohibition Project, holding community forums on improving relations between citizens and the police, bullying in schools and outreach to students.

"Our focus is on programs that will create understanding between people and reduce discrimination whether based on race, gender, disability or other factors protected by Connecticut law" Hughes stated. "I am very excited to have the Commissioners' confidence to guide the Commission into a new era."

Commission Chairman Gary H. Collins said at the meeting, "Many people sought to head this organization because of its proud tradition as a pioneer in civil rights." He went on to explain that the Commissioners had reviewed resumes from across the nation, including Oregon. "There were many qualified applicants, but ultimately Tanya's vision, energy, positive personality and accomplishments in a short time at the helm convinced the Commission that she was undisputedly the best candidate for the job."

The Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities was the first state government civil rights agency in the United States of America established in 1943 as the Inter-racial Commission. Today the agency's mission is to eliminate discrimination through civil and human rights laws. The CHRO investigates and enforces the laws against discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodation and credit.

For Immediate Release: November 14, 2013

Contact:

Jim O'Neill

james.j.oneill@ct.gov

O 860-241-4866 - C 860-539-7493

Tanya Hughes Biography

Tanya Hughes was named executive director of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities on November 13, 2013.

Previously Ms. Hughes served for four months as the interim executive director, and fifteen years as the regional manager of CHRO's Bridgeport office. She has had a distinguished nineteen year career at the Commission including four years as an investigator and staff attorney. While serving as interim director, she was very instrumental in increasing staffing levels and improving relations with the public and other agencies. She has been an active member on the Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project, leading to CHRO's inclusion on the notification slip issued to drivers during a traffic stop.

Ms. Hughes was born Tanya Alesia Poole in Anderson, SC and raised in Buffalo, NY. After graduating from Mount Saint Joseph Academy, she immediately began her studies at Spelman College in Atlanta, GA as a member of its inaugural Honors Program. Upon graduation, she attended the State University of NY at Buffalo School of Law, graduating in 1987. For over 8 years, she honed her skills at the New York City Department of Law where she prosecuted child abuse and neglect cases, and even appeared once before the Hon. Judge Judy Scheinlan during her training period.

In 1994, Tanya relocated to New Haven, CT following the death of her dad, David L. Echols. Here she met her husband Larry Hughes and began working for the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) as a staff attorney. She was promoted to Regional Director in 1998 and has led the agency in case processing and service to the citizens of CT.

Mrs. Hughes serves as a champion for human rights for all, as evidenced by her numerous affiliations: she has served as president of the New Haven chapter of Jack & Jill of America, Inc.; Tau Xi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (Connections Chairperson); The New Haven Chapter of The Girl Friends, Inc. (Parliamentarian); The Fairfield Chapter of Chums, Inc. (Recording Secretary); St. Luke's of New Canaan Parent Association; Park City Prep School Board of Directors (Past Chairperson); Board of Directors, Southern CT Sickle Cell Anemia Association (2002-2008); Bridgeport Parent Leadership Training Institute (2006-present).

Tanya and Larry are parents to three children: Nikkia (Terry), Chelsea and Caitlyn. Nikkia and Terry reside in Durham, NC with their son, Jordan and new baby girl, Sarah. Chelsea is a recent graduate of Virginia State University and now resides in Bronx, NY where she is employed with Leake & Watts foster care agency as an Intervention specialist. Caitlyn, aged 14 is a 9th grade honor student at St. Luke's Independent School in New Canaan, CT. Tanya has much to be proud of but is most proud of being able to serve as a positive role model and influence to the children. She tries to live by the scripture "to whom much is given, much is required" and adds - it is expected!