

# **SPEAKER BIOS**



EMCEE Jasmin Brand CEO Launch DFW

Jasmin Brand is the CEO of LAUNCH (also known as Launch DFW) and has a decade of executive experience in digital publishing and marketing strategy to the community-powered, digital platform on a mission to propel the future of startups in Texas. Brand is also the Founder of Her Texas, a media company dedicated to sharing the game-changing, diverse stories of Texas women.

Some of Brand's accolades include Minority Business Leader of the Year Award presented by the Dallas Business Journal, the inaugural Young Professional Leadership ATHENA® Award presented by the Dallas Regional Chamber and KPMG, and Techweek 100 Talent Cultivator Award.

### Knowing Yourself to Make an Impact | 9:30 AM



Rocky Garza People Expert Rocky Garza

Over the past 15 years, Rocky Garza has helped thousands of individuals who feel stuck, fearful, or just confused create a clear and simple way to bring clarity to know who they are, gain confidence to believe in themselves, and courage to live it out everyday.

As a people and culture development expert, Garza challenges audiences to consider their thoughts, fears, and dreams. He reminds leaders, teams, and organizations that every person is, at the core, just a human. Garza also explores relationship management and humanity through keynotes, workshops, and his Personal Identity Mapping service – an examination how and why people do the things that they do. The result is intense clarity and deep learning about the 'one' whole person each individual really is, and the realization of the need to be that same person in every part of life: as a servant leader, as a respectful partner, as a key teammate, and as a difference maker and engaged member in family and community.

## Bringing Your Authentic Self | 11:10 AM



**KEYNOTE** Lucy Billingsley Partner **Billingsley Company** 

Lucy Billingsley has spent her career in real estate, developing and managing commercial developments. She, and her husband Henry, started Billingsley Company in 1978 to manage their growing real estate portfolio. The company specializes in developing office buildings, multi-family, retail and industrial properties, and master-planned communities, which include Cypress Waters, International Business Park, Austin Ranch, and the Arts Plaza campus in Dallas' Arts District.

Prior to Billingsley Company, Billingsley was Chief Executive Officer of the Dallas Market Center and the Crow Design Centers in Dallas, Houston, and Boston, and Wyndham Jade Travel. For her work, she has been honored with induction into the Texas Business Hall of Fame, the NTCAR Hall of Fame, and awarded the 2013 H. Neil Mallon Award and the Dallas Historical Society's Award for Excellence in Business.

Born and raised in Dallas, Billingsley is a graduate of the University of Texas with a B.B.A. in finance. She lives in Dallas with Henry, and has four children and eight grandchildren.



MODERATOR **Candace** Carlisle Senior News Writer CoStar News

Candace Carlisle is a senior reporter at CoStar News, covering real estate in Dallas-Fort Worth and Austin. The award-winning journalist recently began working at the Washington, D.C.-based news outlet after spending nearly eight years covering real estate at the Dallas Business Journal, where she was also a senior reporter. The three-year award winner at the National Association of Real Estate Editors is also a company-wide winner of the American City Business Journal's coveted Eagle Award for her reporting excellence. Prior to joining the Business Journal, Carlisle's work also appeared in The Dallas Morning News, the Denton Record-Chronicle, and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

Carlisle graduated magna cum laude with a master's degree in journalism from the University of North Texas. She also earned her undergraduate degree in business from The University of Texas at Dallas.

### Growing Innovation | 1:40 PM



Lucas Rodriguez, MS, Ph.D.

Dr. Lucas Rodriguez is a businessman with a strong scientific background in biomedical engineering. He co-founded CerSci Therapeutics, a non-opioid drug development firm concentrating its efforts on developing analgesic drug products without the deleterious side effects of current pain treatments on the market. CerSci is attempting to revolutionize the way in which pain is treated in our world today. Since inception, Rodriguez has raised more \$20 million, enabling the organization to have received approval of their first Investigational New Drug Application from the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Rodriguez has also founded two other startup companies in DFW: Ted's Brain Science, and Logan Medical Devices. He is also a principal of Orchid Capital, a consulting firm for startup organizations and entrepreneurs needing assistance in business startup activities, material preparations, fundraising, and general startup consulting services. Rodriguez has won numerous awards in entrepreneurship and business development, and prides himself as a problem solver, leveraging his engineering background in everything he does.

Rodriguez received his master's and Ph.D. degrees in biomedical engineering from the University of Texas at Dallas, after receiving his bachelor's in biology with a minor in chemistry from Baylor University. During graduate school, he Rodriguez pursued a concentration in Innovation and Entrepreneurship at The University of Texas at Dallas Naveen Jindal School of Management.



Matt Alexander Co-Founder & CEO Neighborhood Goods

Born and raised in London, England, Matt Alexander now resides in Dallas, where he serves as the Co-Founder and CEO of Neighborhood Goods. Neighborhood Goods is reshaping the notion of department stores and physical retail to foster a new culture around shopping and the experiences therein. In addition to hosting an ever-changing landscape of the world's most exciting brands, products, and concepts, Neighborhood Goods is building social spaces, featuring food, drinks, events, live speakers, and more.

Alexander is an advisor to a number of startups and accelerators, a member of SMU's Executive Board, and also co-hosts Bonanza! on Relay FM.



Sarah Shadonix Founder & CEO Scout & Cellar

A good glass of wine is an experience; it's the perfect pairing for a moment of relaxation or evening of celebration. Unfortunately, the trade-off for many is a morning-after filled with headaches and fatigue. As an attorney-turned-sommelier, Sarah Shadonix formed Scout & Cellar in August 2017 with the goal of providing a better experience for consumers by eliminating literally and figuratively – the headaches of drinking and purchasing wine.

Traditional labels can have up to 300 additives and high levels of sugar, Shadonix's Clean-Crafted Wine uses naturally grown fruit without synthetic pesticides, added sugars, or non-organic chemicals. Shadonix will share how Scout & Cellar has successfully navigated its first 18 months, growing from just herself to more than 50 employees and thousands of consultants.



MODERATOR Natalie Pazera Director, Research & Innovation Dallas Regional Chamber

At the Dallas Regional Chamber, Natalie Pazera serves as the connector of corporations, entrepreneurs, investors, and educators with the goal of mobilizing innovation across DFW. She also promotes there region as a relocation site by presenting prospective companies with an overview of the innovative entities, programs, and projects that thrive in the area.

Pazera was a member of the inaugural Venture Dallas summit host committee, which convened innovators, business luminaries, and investors from around the nation to experience the forces propelling the Dallas Region as a premier hub of innovation. She has also worked at a technology startup accelerator investing in early stage B2B companies where she managed corporate partnerships and investor relations.

Pazera holds a bachelor's degree in business and marketing from Baylor University.

## Enhancing Community - Get On Board Panel | 3:00 PM



**Byron Sanders** President & CEO **Big Thought** 

Byron Sanders is a committed advocate for education, economic development, and creating equitable communities throughout Dallas. As President and CEO of Big Thought, he explores innovative ways to narrow the opportunity gap for children. Big Thought connects people and organizations to prepare youth and children in under-resourced communities for tomorrow's creative economy through quality in-school, after-school, and community-partnership experiences.

Prior to Big Thought, Sanders served as Vice President for U.S. Trust, the private bank of Bank of America, where he connected high-net worth individuals and institutions to solutions that accomplish their financial goals. He is the former Executive Director of the Dallas Education Foundation, where he built and cultivated philanthropic, corporate, and community relationships to support initiatives benefiting the students of Dallas Independent School District. He also served as Vice President of Group Excellence, a mentoring and tutoring organization serving at-risk K-12 public school students.

Sanders is a member of many boards in the region. He has also received several awards for his work, including of the Dallas Business Journal's Minority Business Leaders and 40 Under 40 awards. He was named a Presidential Leadership Scholar by the presidential centers of George W. Bush, William J. Clinton, George H.W. Bush, and Lyndon B. Johnson.

A graduate of the University of Tulsa with a BSBA in marketing, Sanders and wife Celeste share two young children.