



# FWIT NEWS

VOL 14, ISSUE 3 • AUGUST 2023



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

**The *WOW* women of FWIT filled my year to Go the Distance**

**Melody Hess, FWIT 2022 - 2023 Association President**

When I started my role in September 2022 as the FWIT Association President, I was truly honored to accept this role for such a fantastic organization. I had the overall feeling of not being qualified for this new position, but with the encouragement I received from many, these feelings were replaced with optimism to move forward with as much dedication as I could offer.

It was so rewarding to visit the Groups across the state of Texas and meet many of our members and guests during these meetings. I appreciated their warm welcome and I could feel the momentum with many of the Groups as they continue to grow with new members and new ideas. Our membership is now well over 325, which can be attributed to the work of many board members and Association members, as well as the support from both Texas Bankers Association and Independent Bankers Association of Texas.

I will be eternally grateful for the support and hard work from every board member and I'd like to thank each of them for their many contributions, so I'd like to share just some of their efforts. The year started with the completion of some major revisions to the SOPs, to separate the reference information from the actual documents, along with other revisions necessary to add verbiage where it was necessary, make updates for consistency and clarification. We jumped right into the year with our first board meeting in September, shortly after the conference. With the assistance of others, our first new board orientation meeting was held, which provided an overview about the Association and where to find necessary information. A quarterly huddle was introduced for the Group presidents to share ideas for planning and speakers. The Association brochure has been revamped, which received rave reviews and will be used for the design concept for other marketing materials going forward. A storefront with Land's End was established this year, so our members can order items they may like and use the most with the FWIT logo included, which helps our Director at Large with managing inventory. Most recently, the Summer Leadership Forum was held in Austin. It started with a Friday Fun night followed by a full day on Saturday finding "Clarity" and our inner compass.

My term will come to an end shortly, as we are getting closer to our Annual Conference in Longview, so I hope everyone has made their plans to attend a fantastic conference with Co-Chairs Laura Rodgers and Tammy Gibbons, along with the Group in Longview, spending so much time and effort planning.

I learned this year about the term WOW women of FWIT and I now understand and know the importance these ladies provide the Association. Two of these ladies I've been able to rely on for their incredible support are BJ Cary and Nancy Kinder, who continue to offer their wisdom year after year.

As Nancy put it recently, "when our members catch the FWIT spirit" they know what FWIT can provide, so let's keep moving forward on our journey and encourage the new 2023-2024 board to make their contributions to this incredible Association.

## FINANCIAL WOMEN IN TEXAS NEWSLETTER

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# Reminders

Things to keep in mind...

Things to take note of...

Things to add to your calendar...

Things that are due...

Things to do...



## FWIT Association Board Meetings

All members are invited and welcome to attend the monthly meeting held via Zoom.  
3rd Thursday of each month from  
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Zoom Meeting ID and Passcode can be found in the Members Area of the website:  
<https://www.fwitexas.org/>



## Now Available

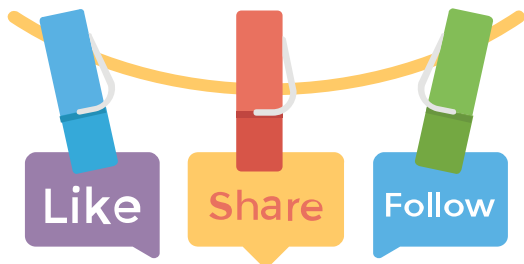
Customize your own FWIT logo item through our Land's End store front.  
Order Online and have it shipped directly to YOU!

Click the **SHOP NOW** button below or visit the Member Merchandise page @ [fwitexas.org](https://www.fwitexas.org/)

**SHOP NOW**



## Let's Get Social! Like, Share, and Follow FWIT



PREFER PHOTOS AND VIDEO MEDIA  
FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM HERE: [FWITINSTA](https://www.instagram.com/fwitinsta/)  
[HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/FWITINSTA/](https://www.instagram.com/fwitinsta/)



PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS MATTER  
CONNECT WITH US ON LINKEDIN HERE:  
[HTTPS://LNKD.IN/GHF7G9GV](https://lnkd.in/GHF7G9GV)



Don't miss your opportunity to join FWIT in **Longview Texas, September 6-8** for the **FWIT 2023 Annual Conference**

Haven't registered yet? What are you waiting for?

## Members and Non-Members welcome to attend the full conference or register

to attend Thursday Only – Including the Banquet Thursday Luncheon Only or Thursday Evening Banquet Friday Only or Friday Industry Insights Luncheon

## Exclusive Room Rates at the Holiday Inn Longview | Infinity Event Center are available until 8/15/23.

Use GROUP CODE **FWT** or call the hotel at 903-663-6464



# NEW MEMBERS

FINANCIAL WOMEN IN TEXAS (FWIT)

BRINGS TOGETHER WOMEN IN FINANCE FOR THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, EXPERIENCES, AND INTERESTS



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**A big warm "Howdy, Y'all" to the newest FWIT members across Texas**

*from March through June 2023*

### Dallas

- Hope Hamlyn
- Cynthia Aceves
- Laura Pickens
- Stephanie Johnson
- Kristi Reynoso
- Andrea Sanderson
- Lacy Samples
- Brandi Freeman

### East Texas

- Tina Scott
- Lisa Cook
- Elise Hensman

### Houston

- Lindsey Deutschendorf
- Katie Bliss
- Crystal Kirkham
- Lindsay Weldin
- Bri'Anna Arceneaux

### Austin

- Tory Warrick
- Devyn Lucas
- Sara Sabella Holmes
- Adriana McCaslin
- Heather Maldonado
- Nicole Green
- Samantha Mullin
- Donna Day



### San Antonio

- Kate Miller
- Laura R Rodriguez
- Phyllis Kyle
- Melanie Sweeney
- Cynthia Torres
- Lisa M Garcia
- Stefani Byron Wade

### Big Country

- Tammy Withers
- Misti Collier
- Kelsey Goates

### Gulf Coast

- Katrina Socha
- Monica Davila

### Hill Country

- Becca Hoeppepner
- Kandice Bethke
- Elizabeth Ann Landry

### Virtual

- Rebecca McKenna
- Holli McClain
- Alexandra Carr
- Sterling Fielder



***Queue the confetti and balloons!***  
***The 2023 Conference Scholarship Winners Announced!***  
***Congratulations to both First Time & Returning Attendees***

### **FIRST TIME ATTENDEES**

**Krystal English**  
*East Texas Group*

**Margie Llanes**  
*Gulf Coast Group*

**Cynthia Torres**  
*San Antonio Group*

**Lindsay Weldin**  
*Houston Group*



### **RETURNING ATTENDEES**

**Julissa Alejandre**  
*Houston Group*

**Kristin Graham**  
*East Texas Group*

**Lynda Huffaker**  
*Llano Estacado Group*

**Cheryl Linder**  
*Gulf Coast Group*

**Laum Montgomery**  
*East Texas Group*

**Ellen Parson**  
*San Antonio Group*

## **Financial Women in Texas & Associated Bank Networking Happy Hour**

It was a great opportunity for FWIT members to enjoy some networking time prior to the start of the TBA Annual Convention, held at the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort in mid-May.

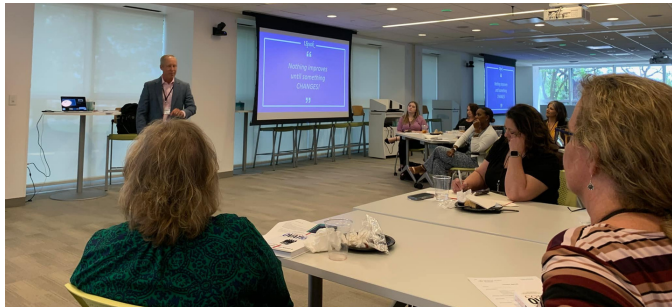


# AUSTIN

**FWIT Austin Group engaged in networking and leadership growth at their April meeting. Guest speaker Russ Peterson, Founder & President of iSpeak provided the group with a great presentation and provided actionable advise to apply in any business and career.**



Pictured above is guest speaker, Russ Peterson, and the FWIT Austin Group members that attended the April luncheon meeting held at UFCU Plaza.



## Congratulations!

The FWIT Austin Group would like to congratulate Member Nayer Sikder on her recent appointment as a City of Austin Commissioner. Nayer will proudly serve on the Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission and will advise the Austin City Council on issues related to the Asian American Resource Center. She will also provide ongoing guidance and support for the City's Asian American quality of life initiatives. Nayer has been a FWIT member since 2016 and was FWIT Austin Group's 2022 Member of the Year. CONGRATS, NAYER!





# BIG COUNTRY

FWIT Big Country Group has been busy the last quarter hosting socials, luncheons, and inspiring women's empowerment. They've had some amazing speakers at their monthly events and Big Country FWIT members were ready to network and learn together.



Pictured above: Andi & Josh Rader, Co-Owners of Firehouse Fitness speak to the Big Country FWIT group about entrepreneurship and marriage at their March Luncheon held at Community Foundation of Abilene.



Pictured above: The Big Country FWIT group engaged in a very successful Women's Empowerment Luncheon held in May. Guest speakers Misty Lowry, Jennifer Cheung-Navejas and Katie Alford shared some very powerful and encouraging messages with the group. Lots of fun and fellowship happened in the room and the group is looking forward to the next empowering event!





# DALLAS

FWIT DALLAS GROUP

## Program Meeting

**MATTHEW SMITH**  
DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION INITIATIVES  
INDEPENDENT BANKERS ASSOCIATION  
OF TEXAS

**SEVY'S GRILL**  
8201 PRESTON ROAD  
DALLAS TEXAS  
\$50 INCLUDING LUNCH  
11:30 - 1:00

MARCH 21 2023

RSVP BY FRIDAY MARCH 17TH



FWIT Dallas Group pictured above enjoyed time together during their March meeting at Sevy's Grill. Guest Speakers pictured below, Matthew Smith with IBAT spoke about Bankers Helping Bankers and Wendy Wagner with AIS InfoSource spoke on the benefits of robotic process automation.



In early May, the FWIT Dallas Group enjoyed an elegant Kentucky Derby Themed High Tea at Lavendou Bistro. FWIT Association President, Melody Hess, was their special guest. It was a great time for all to network while showing off their best derby hat and wear while learning more about the history of FWIT, it's mission, the value of membership, and all the exciting updates and upcoming events in store for the FWIT Dallas Group.



# EAST TEXAS

It's been a great first half of 2023 for the FWIT East Texas Group. Membership is growing and they're truly an active group of awesome ladies! While busy planning for a great conference and having a fantastic time doing it, regular meetings and activities have continued to take place and the group hasn't skipped a beat to make it all happen!

## ★ March



At the March meeting, Elder Law Attorney, Chris Parker shared useful information on elder abuse and scams involving elders. The month's community project for Rahab's Ranch and Retreat was a huge success! Pictured left are group members who walked the red carpet at their annual fundraiser. Kristen Graham and Krystal English delivered the much needed donated items which filled two SUVs and they were able to take a tour of the facilities and met some of the women and children who will benefit from the donations.



## ★ May



In March, new member Tina Scott was welcomed as a new member and received her FWIT pin.

In May, new member Lisa Cook of Texas Bank in Henderson received her FWIT pin from Janet Sledge, pictured left. Karen Partee, Executive VP/Chief Marketing Officer of Texas Bank and Trust was the May meeting speaker. She gave an insightful presentation on "Brand Integrity". The FWIT group learned that not only is a company's brand important, but personal brands are just as important, as are those of the organizations we are involved in. Finn's Friends was the community project for the month of May. Several FWIT members volunteered, as seen below, with fellow FWIT member and Finn's and Friends Board Member, Stacy Cammack, at the 2nd Annual Paddle Battle.



Pictured above, FWIT East Texas Group Members at their May Meeting



Congrats! to the 3 young ladies from Paris High School who were awarded \$500 scholarships.



Seen above, FWIT Members Lisa Butler and Sonya Lawrence had the honor of presenting the awards from FWIT East Texas Group.



# GULF COAST

FWIT Gulf Coast Group enjoyed time together at the April 11th lunch meeting held at 9ER's Grill in Wharton. Pictured below is guest presenter and FWIT Member, Paul Nunn who spoke about "The Employee Life Cycle." It was a highly engaging presentation with a lot of participation from those present. Everyone walked away learning so much more than they knew about leadership development. Kudos to Paul for sharing his knowledge!



Matthew Smith from IBAT, guest speaker at the June 20th meeting held at the Ol' Railroad Cafe in Rosenberg is seen above with the members who attended the lunch meeting. He facilitated a very engaging presentation on "Bankers Helping Bankers"





# HILL COUNTRY

FWIT Hill Country Group continued their 2023 theme "Stopping Fraud at The Door" with meetings in February and March, followed by a Panel Discussion meeting in May at Schreiner University.



Pictured left, **Fred Herdan** with Amazon Web Services, presented a very information presentation on Cyber Fraud and Cloud Security at the FWIT Hill Country Group February meeting.



Pictured left, FWIT Member **Sandy Sullivan** shared her expertise on Elder Fraud and navigating the lines of customer protection and privacy at the March meeting held at Security State Bank & Trust in Kerrville, TX. FWIT Hill Country Group members in attendance are pictured below.



Pictured above are the FWIT Hill Country Group members who attended the May meeting held at Schreiner University.

Also pictured with the group is Association President, Melody Hess. The group enjoyed the networking that evening and a panel discussion on "Building Hill Country Bankers for Tomorrow Through University Partnerships."





# HOUSTON

**FWIT Houston Group kicked off Spring and Summer with two impactful member meetings!**



Please Join The  
FINANCIAL WOMEN IN TEXAS  
HOUSTON GROUP

For April's Speaker Luncheon

Don't Be a Victim:  
Practical Cybersecurity Tips

*Presented by*

**Jon Villanti**  
Chief Information Security Officer  
Stellar Bank

Federal Reserve Bank  
1801 Allen Pkwy.,  
Houston, TX 77019  
Wednesday | April 19<sup>th</sup> | 11:30 AM



**FWIT Houston group met at  
the Federal Reserve Bank in Houston for their  
April Speaker Luncheon**

They welcomed Jon Villanti, Chief Information Security Officer, Stellar Bank who gave a very informative presentation on Information Security.

For their final speaker meeting of the fiscal year, **the Houston FWIT Group met in June** at the Junior League of Houston, and enjoyed networking time and an engaging presentation on the Employee Life Cycle from FWIT Member, Paul Nunn.

**CONGRATULATIONS**



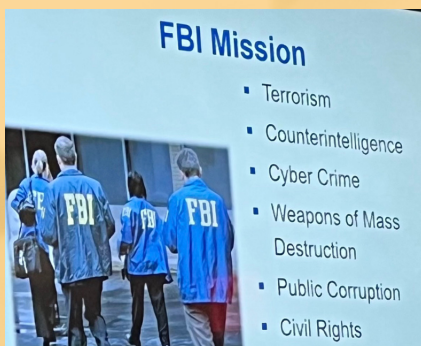
**Congratulations**  
FWIT Houston Members  
**Jessica Lovell**  
**and Aydee De Leon**  
for recently being awarded a  
**FWIT 2023**  
**General Education**  
**Scholarship**  
in the amount of  
\$1,000 each from the  
FWIT Association.

# SAN ANTONIO

FWIT San Antonio Group continues to have their monthly meetings the second Thursday of each month and their March, April, and May meetings were well attended and engaging.



Pictured above, **San Antonio group President, Novie Allen** welcomes new members to the **March Meeting**, along with **guest speakers, Doug and Ryan from Straight Edge Technology** who gave practical cyber security advice to use both inside and outside of the workplace.



Pictured above, guest speaker, **Michelle Benavides, former FBI agent**, spoke to the FWIT San Antonio Group at their **May** evening meeting about "**Sixty Shades of Strength.**"



In **April**, the FWIT San Antonio Group enjoyed an "**Overview of the Fed**", presented by **Armida Riojas**. The group is also thankful to member, **Tina Montoya, President/CEO of Lonestar Pest Solutions**, for her company's sponsorship of the April meeting.



Thanks to **GFCU** for sponsoring the **May** meeting. It was a great night filled with **networking** for existing, new, and potential **FWIT members.**



# 2023 CONFERENCE

It's almost time for our 14th Annual Conference Hosts, FWIT East Texas Group, to welcome us to Longview, TX, September 6-8, 2023. It's time to Go the Distance and Map Your Field of Dreams! Conference Co-Chairs Laura Rogers and Tammy Gibbons ask, "Will you be joining us?" Let's Conference in East Texas!



## Conference Schedule Keynote, Workshop, & Luncheon Speakers Announced

Check in starts on Wednesday, 9/6 @ 4:00 PM, followed by an Opening Reception "Party in the Pines" (in the Holiday Inn Longview Hotel) at 6:30 PM. Check out the full conference schedule/agenda on the Annual Conference page of the Financial Women in Texas website: [www.fwitexas.org](http://www.fwitexas.org)

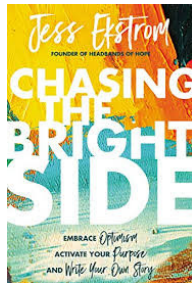


**Dr. Michelle Adams, PhD**  
*The Science of Stress*

**Regina Barr**  
*Breaking Barriers: How Smart Women Overcome Obstacles and Skyrocket Their Way to Success*

**Paul Nunn**  
*You Goal Girl!*

**John Grubbs**  
*The Decision -Making Advantage*



Headlining **Keynote Speaker Jesse Ekstrom**, Author of Chasing the Bright Side, and founder of Headbands for Hope will kick off the first day with a powerful message from her book which teaches how to embracing optimism, activate your purpose, and write your own story.

## Other Speakers Include:



**Christopher Biane, CSP**  
*Workplace Safety*

**Celeste Embry, TBA**  
**Christopher Williston, IBAT**  
*Legislative and Industry Updates*

**Hanna Bauer**  
*It's Not About Me*

**PLUS a Roaring 20s Casino Night with DJ**



**DON'T MISS OUT!**



# FWIT 2023 SUMMER LEADERSHIP FORUM

**The Summer Summer Leadership Forum held on Saturday, June 10th, in Austin, Texas at the Lone Star Court, was another great one for the books!**

With almost 60 members attending the full day of focused activity, there was plenty of networking, making of new friends and memories, bonding over what financial women in Texas have in common, and the expanding of minds with new learning from Masterclass presenter Debbie Peterson.

There was also fun by the fire and pool, and the making of s'mores while enjoying the band playing in the background. And of course, a little retail therapy at the cool retro-vibe venue.

If you missed this year, you won't want to miss it in 2024. Keep watch for details about the date and location coming in early 2024 from the incoming Director of Education, Koren Bowie.



***FWIT Association President, Melody Hess takes a moment to stop and welcomes everyone to the 2023 Summer Leadership Forum at the Lone Star Court, Austin, TX***







2023  
SUMMER



LEADERSHIP  
FORUM





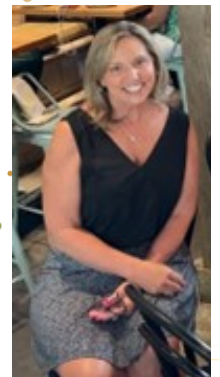
# *You're invited to our Friday Fun!*

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Join us at the Water Trough for appetizers and  
you may purchase drinks at the bar

7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Enjoy s'mores generously provided by the  
Austin Group while we network and enjoy live  
music in the Courtyard





# The Way Forward Masterclass

Your Roadmap to Success by Design not Default  
with Facilitator Debbie Peterson



FWIT Board Meeting and Board of Directors  
Transition Discussion led by  
Association President, Melody Hess

