

LOCAL / REGIONAL

East Tennessee Historical Society Honors Hamilton County Initiative with Award of Excellence in East Tennessee History

KNOXVILLE, Tenn., June 16, 2022 – The East Tennessee Historical Society’s (ETHS) annual Awards of Excellence were presented at the organization’s Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, June 7, at the Museum of East Tennessee History in Knoxville. Since 1982, the Society has annually recognized individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the preservation, promotion, programming, and interpretation of the region’s history. One Hamilton County initiative was among the 41 awards presented.

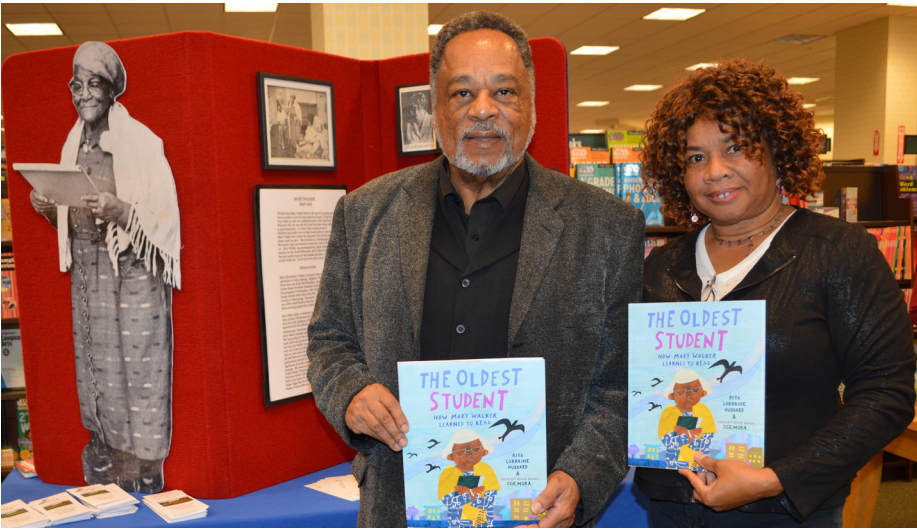
**Rita Lorraine Hubbard** was the recipient of a Community History Award for excellence in promoting and preserving Black history in East Tennessee, specifically through the authorship of inspiring non-fiction

biographies and educational picture books.

About the East Tennessee Historical Society:

Established in 1834, the East Tennessee Historical Society is widely acknowledged as one of the most active history organizations in the state and enjoys a national reputation for excellence in programming and education. For nearly 200 years, the East Tennessee Historical Society has been helping East Tennesseans hold on to our unique heritage—recording the events, collecting the artifacts, and saving the stories that comprise the history we all share.

For more information on ETHS, exhibitions, or programs, call 865-215-8824 or visit our website at [www.EastTNHistory.org](http://www.EastTNHistory.org).



Author, Rita Lorraine Hubbard at right, continues to garner recognition for her writings which include her children’s book, “The Oldest Student, the Mary Walker Story”. Also shown is John L. Edwards, III, former Executive Director of the Mary Walker Historical & Educational Foundation.

July 5 is the Registration Deadline to Vote in the Aug. 4 Election

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Tennesseans who want to cast a ballot in the Aug. 4 State and Federal Primary & State and County General Election must register or update their voter registration before the voter registration deadline on Tuesday, July 5.

“Going into this 4th of July holiday, I can’t think of a more patriotic thing to do than to register to vote,” said Secretary of State Tre Hargett. “With our convenient online voter registration system, it’s never been easier or safer for Tennesseans to register to vote or update

their registration.”

Registering to vote, updating your address or checking your registration status is fast, easy and secure with the Secretary of State’s online voter registration system. Any U.S. citizen with a driver’s license or a photo ID issued by the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security can register online in minutes from any computer or mobile device at [GoVoteTN.gov](http://GoVoteTN.gov).

Voters can also download a paper voter registration application at [GoVoteTN.gov](http://GoVoteTN.gov). Completed paper voter reg-

istration applications must be mailed to your local county election commission office or submitted in person. Mailed voter registrations must be postmarked by July 5.

Election Day registration is not available in Tennessee.

Early voting for the Aug. 4 election starts Friday, July 15, and runs Monday to Saturday until Saturday, July 30. The deadline to request an absentee by-mail ballot is Thursday, July 28. However, eligible voters who will be voting absentee by-mail should request the ballot

now.

For up-to-date, accurate information about the Aug. 4 election, follow the Secretary of State’s social media channels Twitter: [@SecTreHargett](https://twitter.com/SecTreHargett), Facebook: Tennessee Secretary of State and Instagram: [@tnsecofstate](https://www.instagram.com/tnsecofstate).

For more information about registering to vote, voter eligibility and other Tennessee election details, visit [GoVoteTN.gov](http://GoVoteTN.gov) or call the Division of Elections toll-free at 1-877-850-4959.

Chattanooga to Breathe New Life Into Thousands of Acres of Blighted City-owned Properties Through Innovative Program

*Through participation in the Putting Assets to Work Incubator, the city will harness hundreds of dormant public assets to generate economic growth, creating jobs, housing, and new tax revenue.*

Chattanooga, Tenn. [June 28, 2022] — The City of Chattanooga will join five other communities across the country in the inaugural Putting Assets to Work (PAW) Incubator, a selective new initiative that will revitalize and recirculate underutilized property and other assets to drive prosperity across the city.

Instead of sitting on old properties, using them for storage, or allowing them to become overgrown and blighted, the initiative will help the City propel these community assets back into circulation where they can both grow the economy and increase funding for key initiatives.

As part of Mayor Tim Kelly’s 100-day plan in 2021, the City inventoried more than 650 underutilized parcels totaling more than 2,500 acres that could be leveraged toward a higher and better use. Each proper-

ty is unique, ranging from surplus tax sale properties to difficult-to-develop brownfields, and must be further studied to determine an appropriate use.

Through Putting Assets to Work, the city will embark on a 10-month fact-finding mission to map and plan uses for these underutilized properties and other assets — such as dormant parking lots or former industrial sites — that could be suitable for private investment. A similar project in Utah revealed a collection of underutilized assets that were worth billions of dollars in economic opportunity.

The City will then leverage these assets to create jobs and homes while still retaining public ownership of the underlying properties. The proceeds will return to the community in the form of new revenue for key initiatives that support the One Chattanooga strategic plan, such as affordable housing and transportation infrastructure investments, creating a virtuous cycle.

“By participating in the Putting Assets to Work Incubator, our city is getting an incredible opportunity to

leverage its public assets in an innovative way,” said Mayor Tim Kelly. “With increased returns on previously underutilized assets, we’ll be able to better fund critical initiatives like affordable housing and infrastructure improvements, improving the quality of life in our communities.”

The Putting Assets to Work Incubator is a new initiative spearheaded by former Mayor and Congressman Ben McAdams, in partnership with the Sorenson Impact Center, Government Finance Officers Association, and Urban3. The city was selected to participate through a competitive application process, joining 5 other local governments: the Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Resilience Authority, in Annapolis, Maryland, and Anne Arundel County, Maryland; the City of Atlanta, Georgia; the City of Cleveland, Ohio; Harris County, Texas; and the City of Lancaster, California.

“We are absolutely delighted to start working with the City of Chattanooga,” said McAdams, who served as Mayor of Salt Lake County from 2013 to 2019 before being elected to

the U.S. House of Representatives. “When I was mayor, we identified all government-owned assets within the county and were shocked to discover they were valued at roughly \$10 billion. That’s huge for a jurisdiction our size. If we are able to improve the public return on our assets even slightly, we can start to address some of the major challenges facing our region. Now through our Putting Assets to Work incubator, we hope to be able to provide a blueprint for others to do the same.”

The PAW Incubator is made possible by a partnership with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based think tank dedicated to improving quality of life through the effective use, taxation, and stewardship of land; and thanks to support from Schmidt Futures, a philanthropic initiative founded by Eric and Wendy Schmidt that brings talented people together in networks to prove out their ideas and solve hard problems in science and society.

Gun Control: from front

As the bill was making its way through Congress, The Conversation published a number of articles looking at its provisions and how effective they might be in addressing America’s gun violence crisis.

1. Support for states’ red flag laws

Among the elements of the new law is support for states to pass what are called “red flag laws.”

LaGrange College political science professor John A. Tures writes that these laws allow police to take guns from people deemed a threat to themselves or others and bar them buying firearms.

To determine if red flag laws reduce gun deaths overall, Tures examined states’ firearm death rates, in light of whether they had a red flag law or not, in each of three years – 2018, 2019 and 2020.

On average, states with red flag laws in 2019 and 2020 had significantly lower firearm death rates than states

without them. In 2018, the average death rates for both groups were closer, but states with red flag laws still had a meaningfully lower rate.

“In 2020, if there were no red flag laws, I estimate that 52,530 Americans would have died in gun deaths. The number actually recorded was 45,222, indicating red flag laws saved 7,308 American lives that year,” Tures writes.

2. What is the ‘boyfriend loophole’?

One of the sticking points in negotiations over the bill that was eventually resolved was the “boyfriend loophole.”

Under current federal legislation, Michigan State University criminal justice professor April M. Zeoli explains intimate partner relationships are defined only as those in which two people are or were married, live or lived together as a couple, or have a child together.

People who were in a dating relationship are largely excluded from this definition.

As a result, Zeoli writes, “dating partners are exempt from federal laws

that prohibit those convicted of domestic violence misdemeanor crimes, or those who are under domestic violence restraining orders, from buying or possessing a firearm.”

This is what is referred to as the “boyfriend loophole.”

Research suggests that when a violent male partner has access to a gun, the risk of murder to the female partner increases fivefold.

With Biden signing the bill into law, the wording extends the ban to “those who have or have had a continuing relationship of a romantic or intimate nature.”

Though the bill will close the loophole for those convicted of domestic violence misdemeanor crimes, it does not cover restraining order laws.

3. Does the law protect schools?

The new law would provide US\$1 billion to help schools put in place comprehensive strategies to create safe and healthy learning environments, including \$300 million to increase access to mental health services.

Part of the strategy involves risk assessment.

In the years since the Columbine shooting in 1999, researchers and federal law enforcement agencies have studied school shootings and developed risk assessments to gauge the likelihood of actual violence by a young person identified as a possible risk.

As Paul Boxer, a Rutgers University - Newark psychology professor, explains, the assessments are conducted by professionals that include police officers, teachers and mental health counselors.

Together, they determine a young person’s risk for violence.

“These teams may not be able to prevent every possible incident,” Boxer cautions. “Still, this sort of approach is critical to improving the process of identifying and stopping potential shooters overall.” (The CONVERSATION - Editor’s note: This story is a roundup of articles from The Conversation’s archives.)

Red Flag Laws: from front

Since Connecticut became the first in 1999, states across the country have enacted laws allowing police to seize guns from people a court agrees are dangerous – and often barring them from buying guns as well.

Red flag laws spread after Parkland shooting

The nation’s first red flag law was passed in Connecticut in 1999, allowing police – but not medical professionals or family members –to ask a judge for permission to seize the guns of a person believed to be imminently dangerous to themselves or others. In the subsequent two decades, a handful of other states passed similar laws.

In 2018, the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, sparked a new crop

of them. That year, Florida passed a red flag law, and many other states followed suit. By the end of 2021, 19 states and the District of Columbia had done so. Not every state is on board: In 2020, Oklahoma banned its counties and municipalities from passing red-flag laws.

While differing slightly from state to state where they do exist, these laws generally allow a judge to declare a person legally ineligible to own or purchase guns for a maximum of one year. The request has to come from the police or, in some states, a doctor or relative. The person can usually challenge the ruling in court, and police can seek extensions of the decision, which is often called a “risk protection order,” if they deem it appropriate.

In Florida, where the request must come from police, an average of five of these orders are granted every day.

Do they reduce gun deaths?

Research has shown that Connecticut’s red flag law reduced suicides, which involve firearms more than half the time.

To determine if red flag laws reduce gun deaths overall, I examined states’ firearm death rates, in light of whether they had a red flag law or not, in each of three years – 2018, 2019 and 2020.

The seven states with the lowest firearm death rates for 2020 all had red flag laws. And 14 of the 15 states with the highest firearm death rates that year did not have a red flag law. The exception was New Mexico, where a red flag law took effect halfway through the year.

On average, states with red flag laws in 2019 and 2020 had significantly lower firearm death rates than states without them. In 2018, the average death rates for both groups were closer, but states with red flag laws still had a

meaningfully lower rate.

Then I imagined those average firearm death rates applied to the whole country – if the whole nation had a red flag law, or there were none at all. In 2020, if there were no red flag laws, I estimate that 52,530 Americans would have died in gun deaths. The number actually recorded was 45,222, indicating red flag laws saved 7,308 American lives that year.

If red flag laws had existed either state by state or at the federal level, my estimate is that 33,780 people would have died by firearms in 2020 – saving an additional 11,442 lives. (The CONVERSATION)

(Editor’s Note: No RED FLAG LAWS for: Tennessee; and surrounding states of Georgia; Arkansas, Alabama, Kentucky; Mississippi; North Carolina; South Caroline; Missouri.)