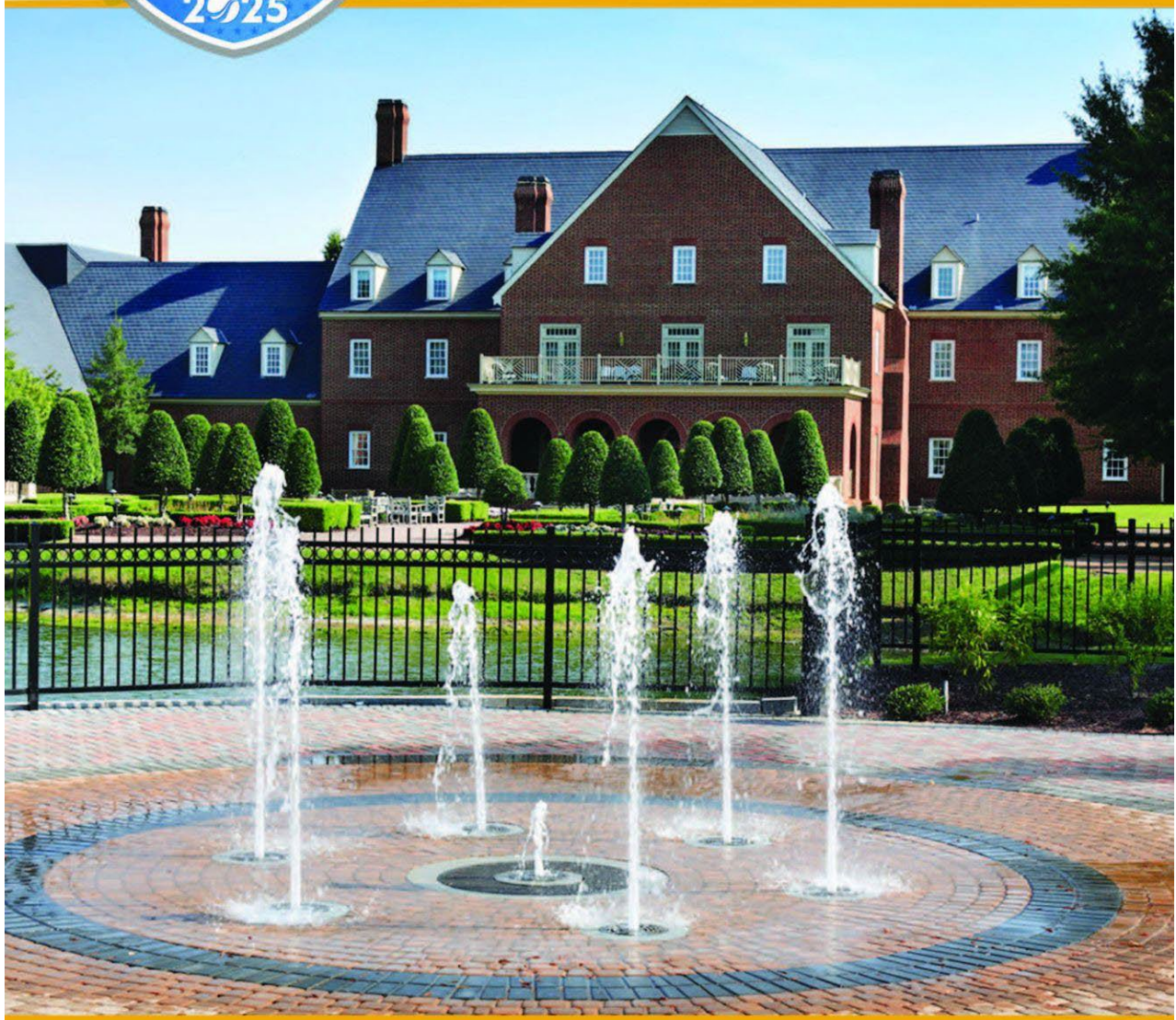




# 2025 VIRGINIA HIGHWAY SAFETY SUMMIT



## MAY 19-21

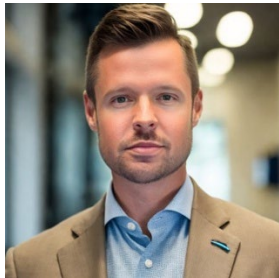
THE FOUNDERS INN AND SPA,  
TAPESTRY COLLECTION BY HILTON  
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA





# Welcome to the 2025 Virginia Highway Safety Summit!

May 19, 2025



Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles and the Virginia Highway Safety Office, I am pleased to welcome you to the 2025 Virginia Highway Safety Summit.

This gathering brings together a powerful and diverse network of professionals—law enforcement officers, safety advocates, nonprofit leaders, researchers, educators, and public servants—united by a shared mission: saving lives on Virginia’s roads. Your work is critical, and the impact of your efforts reverberates through every community in the Commonwealth.

The Summit is more than a professional development opportunity—it is a moment to pause, reflect, and re-energize. It is a chance to learn from one another, discover new strategies, strengthen collaborations, and renew our commitment to a safer future for all road users. Whether you are here to share best practices, gain new insights, or build new partnerships, your presence signals a collective dedication to innovation and progress.

Together, we are building a culture of safety. Thank you for your continued leadership, your service, and your commitment to making Virginia’s roads safer for everyone.

Yours in service,

***Gerald Lackey***

Gerald Lackey

Commissioner, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles



# 2025 Virginia Highway Safety Summit

## Agenda at a Glance

**May 19 - May 21, 2025**  
**Founders Inn, Virginia Beach, Virginia**

Monday, May 19, 2025		
7:00 am- 5:00 pm	Registration Open	Lobby
7:00 am - 9:30 am	Breakfast	Swan Terrace
9:30 am – 9:45 am	Opening Session	Ballroom 2-4
9:45 am – 10:45 am	Plenary Panel: <i>Country Roads, Safely Home: Strategies for Saving Lives on Rural Roads</i>	Ballroom 2-4
10:45 am –11:15 am	Break / Expo Hall	Lobby
11:15 am - 12:15 pm	Breakout 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <i>LE: Slow Down Richmond!</i></li><li>○ <i>Saving Lives: Highway to Safety: Spotting and Stopping Human Trafficking</i></li><li>▪ <i>Comm/Collab: Hop, Skip &amp; Jump: Safe Crossings are Not a Game</i></li><li>❖ <i>RR: Data Driving Decisions: City Streets to Rural Roads</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <i>Jefferson</i></li><li>○ <i>Franklin</i></li><li>▪ <i>Ballroom 1</i></li><li>❖ <i>Madison</i></li></ul>
12:15 pm - 1:45 pm	Virginia Highway Safety Awards Luncheon <i>The Honorable W. Sheppard Miller III, Secretary of Transportation</i>	Ballroom 2-4
1:45 pm - 2:45 pm	Plenary Panel: <i>Raise Your Hand If You've Never Driven Distracted: Why We Do It and How to Stop It</i>	Ballroom 2-4
2:45 pm - 3:15 pm	Break / Expo Hall	Lobby
3:15 pm - 4:15 pm	Breakout 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <i>LE: Community Collaboration Unleashed</i></li><li>○ <i>Saving Lives: Fentanyl Awareness: Confronting a Deadly Threat on Our Roadways</i></li><li>▪ <i>Comm/Collab: Cracking the Code: Communicating with Gen Z</i></li><li>❖ <i>RR: Coming Together in Rural</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <i>Jefferson</i></li><li>○ <i>Franklin</i></li><li>▪ <i>Ballroom 1</i></li><li>❖ <i>Madison</i></li></ul>





	<i>Communities to Save Lives</i>	
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Speed Networking Reception	Atrium

### Tuesday, May 20, 2025

7:00 am- 4:00 pm	Registration Open	Lobby
7:00 am - 8:30 am	Breakfast	Swan Terrace
8:30 am - 9:30 am	Plenary Panel: <i>Influence for Impact: Partnering with Digital Voices to Promote Highway Safety</i>	Ballroom 2-4
9:30 am - 10:00 am	Break / Expo Hall	Lobby
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Plenary Panel: <i>The Big Green Elephant in the Room: How Do We Convince Drivers It's Not Safe to Smoke Weed and Drive?</i>	Ballroom 2-4
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Closing Keynote Speaker: <i>Gary Zelesky</i>	Ballroom 2-4
12:15 pm - 1:00 pm	Law Enforcement Training Lunch	Madison/Franklin
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Law Enforcement Training: <i>Understanding Checkpoints</i>	Jefferson

### Wednesday, May 21, 2025

7:00 am- 12:00 pm	Registration Open	Lobby
7:00 am - 8:00 am	Breakfast	Swan Terrace
8:00 am - 12:00 pm	Law Enforcement Training: <i>DUID THC Track</i>	Jefferson

#### Breakout Session Key:

- **LE = Law Enforcement Track**
- **Saving Lives = Saving Lives Beyond Highway Safety Track**
- **Com/Collab = Communication & Collaboration Track**
- ❖ **RR = Rural Roads Track**



# 2025 Virginia Highway Safety Summit

## *Plenary Sessions*

Monday, May 19, 2025		
9:30 am - 9:45 am	<b>Opening Session</b>	Ballroom 2-4
9:45 am - 10:45 am	<p><b><i>Plenary Panel: Country Roads, Safely Home: Strategies for Saving Lives on Rural Roads</i></b></p> <p>Rural roads make up the vast majority of our nation's roadway system—and account for a disproportionate share of traffic deaths. Every year, more than half of all traffic fatalities in the U.S. occur on rural roadways, often due to roadway departures, speeding, impaired driving, and lack of seat belt use. This plenary session brings together state experts to explore the most pressing risks on rural roads and the proven strategies that can save lives. From innovative infrastructure improvements and cost-effective countermeasures to targeted enforcement and community-based education campaigns, panelists will share insights, success stories and actionable ideas to ensure that more people make it safely home on our country roads.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Brandy Brubaker, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office</li></ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Stephen Read, State Highway Safety Engineer, VDOT</li><li>○ First Sgt. Jeff Jones, Virginia State Police</li><li>○ Kira Shifflett, VCU Health Trauma Outreach Coordinator</li></ul>	Ballroom 2-4
12:15 am - 1:45 pm	<p><b>Virginia Highway Safety Awards Luncheon</b></p> <p>The Awards Luncheon is a celebration of excellence, leadership, and service—an opportunity to recognize individuals whose achievements towards highway safety have made a lasting impact in here in the Commonwealth. This special event honors four prestigious awards:</p> <p><b><i>Trailblazer Award</i></b> – Presented to a visionary leader who has broken new ground, challenged the status quo, and paved the way for others through innovation and courage.</p> <p><b><i>Lifetime Achievement Award</i></b> – Given to an individual whose career reflects decades of outstanding service, enduring commitment, and a</p>	Ballroom 2-4



	<p>legacy of meaningful contributions.</p> <p><b><i>Rising Star Award</i></b> – Recognizes an emerging talent whose early accomplishments and dedication signal a promising future of leadership and positive influence.</p> <p><b><i>Law Enforcement Award</i></b> – Honors a law enforcement professional who demonstrates exceptional bravery, integrity, and a deep commitment to public safety and community engagement.</p> <p>Each award represents a powerful story of dedication, impact, and inspiration. We are proud to celebrate these outstanding individuals and their extraordinary achievements.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Brandy Brubaker, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office</li></ul> <p><b>Awards Presenter:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The Honorable W. Sheppard Miller III, Secretary of Transportation</li></ul>	
1:45 pm - 2:45 pm	<p><b><i>Plenary Panel: Raise Your Hand If You’ve Never Driven Distracted: Why We Do It and How to Stop It</i></b></p> <p>Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from leading experts about distracted driving, the perceptions, education, and enforcement related to distracted driving.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Jillian Cowherd, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office</li></ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Brad Hughes, Victim Advocate</li><li>○ Aimee Cox, Research Scientist, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety</li><li>○ Margart Steele, Deputy Director, Community Operations, Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services</li><li>○ Deanna Grossi, Virginia State Coordinator, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)</li></ul>	Ballroom 2-4



Tuesday, May 20, 2025		
8:30 am - 9:30 am	<p><b>Plenary Panel: Influence for Impact: Partnering with Digital Voices to Promote Highway Safety</b></p> <p>Explore how highway safety programs can effectively partner with social media influencers to reach a variety of audiences with life-saving messages. From micro-influencers in local communities to niche creators, the session will cover strategies for identifying, vetting and collaborating with influencers to amplify safety campaigns (OP, impaired driving, pedestrian) in your jurisdictions.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Jillian Cowherd, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office</li></ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Amberly Crittenden, 360 Media Planner, Two Tango</li><li>○ Juliana McGrath, Outreach &amp; Communication Specialist, Harrisonburg Police Department</li></ul>	Ballroom 2-4
10:00 am- 11:00 am	<p><b>Plenary Panel: The Big Green Elephant in the Room: How Do We Convince Drivers It's Not Safe to Smoke Weed and Drive?</b></p> <p>Driving high is dangerous – but how do we get that message across? Join moderator Shawn Casey, Chief Government &amp; External Affairs Officer of the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority (CCA), for a conversation with experts from Virginia Tech, the CCA, the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health, and the Montgomery County Police. Panelists will share the latest research on cannabis and driving, what the data tells us, and how to change behavior. Featuring scientists, data specialists, behavioral experts, and law enforcement, this session tackles one of today's biggest public safety challenges.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Shawn Casey, Virginia Cannabis Control Authority</li></ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Brianna Bonat, Virginia Cannabis Control Authority</li><li>○ Jayme Derbyshire, Montgomery County Department of Police</li><li>○ Leah Floyd, PhD, Executive Director, Spruce and Holly Consulting</li><li>○ Naomi Dunn, PhD, Research Scientist, Virginia Tech Transportation Institute</li></ul>	Ballroom 2-4
11:00 am- 12:00 pm	<p><b>Closing Keynote Speaker:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Gary Zelesky</li></ul>	Ballroom 2-4



# 2025 Virginia Highway Safety Summit

## ***Breakout Sessions***

**Monday, May 19, 2025**

**Breakout Session 1: 11:15 am - 12:15 pm**

Law Enforcement Track	<p><b>Vision Zero: SLOW DOWN Richmond!</b></p> <p>The City of Richmond continues to improve the traffic safety for all road users. The Vision Zero Task Force, implemented under the Richmond Department of Public Works, is the foundation for this success. The Richmond Police Department provides enforcement and education support, including the operation of the Traffic Safety Camera Program. The goal is to eliminate speeding on city streets, with emphasis on active school zones. This session will focus on traffic safety initiatives and countermeasures implemented by the Vision Zero Task Force to reduce speed through refined engineering and law enforcement responses in today's environment.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Seppo Karkkainen</li></ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Paige Hairston, Communications and Marketing Analyst, Office of Strategic Communication, City of Richmond</li><li>Dr. Afshin Famili, PE, Traffic Operation Engineer, City of Richmond Department of Public Works</li><li>Margaret Ekam, Senior Deputy Director, Office of Strategic Communication, City of Richmond</li><li>Ronnie Armstead, Major, City of Richmond Police Dept.</li></ul>	Jefferson Auditorium
Saving Lives Beyond Highway Safety	<p><b><i>Highway to Safety: Spotting and Stopping Human Trafficking</i></b></p> <p>This workshop aims to equip highway safety professionals with the knowledge and tools necessary to recognize, report, and prevent human trafficking incidents on the road. Participants will learn how to identify potential signs of trafficking, understand the psychological and logistical factors involved, and collaborate with law enforcement and support services to take effective action. Through real-life stories and interactive discussions, this session will empower attendees to make a difference in the fight against human trafficking within the context of highway safety.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p>	Franklin Room





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jillian Cowherd, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office</li> </ul> <p><b>Presenter:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Melissa Gaona, Journalist, WDBJ-7, Roanoke, Virginia</li> </ul>	
Communication & Collaboration Track	<p><b>Hop, Skip &amp; Jump: Safe Crossings Are Not a Game</b></p> <p>The presentation will explore past research on pedestrian safety using alternative crosswalks, current evaluations of Virginia pedestrian programs across five high-risk localities, and their intersections. Emma Hood, a graduate researcher with expertise in traffic psychology, has focused her studies on pedestrian behavior, social marketing, and safety infrastructure. With years of research experience leading Dr. Bryan Porter's team and active involvement in traffic safety initiatives like Drive Safe Hampton Roads, Hood brings a multifaceted approach to improving transportation safety for vulnerable road users in the Commonwealth of Virginia.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dwight Jenkins, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office</li> </ul> <p><b>Presenter:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Emma Hood, Old Dominion University Research Foundation</li> </ul>	Ballroom 1
Rural Roads Track	<p><b>Data Driving Decisions: City Streets to Rural Roads</b></p> <p>Effective highway safety programming starts with the best data possible. With our current ability to pin-point crash locations and drill down to the narrowest details, having accurate and timely data is critical; the first and primary source of which comes from law enforcement on the ground. The Highway Safety office continues to improve and expand capabilities from collecting and entering the data into TREDs, to standardizing location data, and to transforming data into information.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Angelisa Jennings, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office Deputy Director</li> </ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Walt Reel, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office, Senior Trooper</li> <li>○ Ajay Kadyan, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office</li> <li>○ Dr. Kathleen Hancock, Virginia Tech, Professor</li> </ul>	Madison Room



**Monday, May 19, 2025**

**Breakout Session 2: 3:15 pm - 4:15 pm**

Law Enforcement Track	<p><b>Community Collaboration Unleashed</b></p> <p>Highway Safety isn't just a message—it's a movement, and it starts with community connection. In this session, explore how law enforcement and local partners are transforming everyday interactions into powerful moments for engagement, education, and empowerment. From Coffee with a Cop to National Night Out and interactive school events, these collaboration efforts are building trust, sparking conversations, and spreading life-saving knowledge. You'll hear about bilingual outreach aimed at teen drivers in urban neighborhoods, creative strategies for reaching rural communities, and how to turn feedback into action. Plus, DRIVE SMART Virginia will share turnkey tools and inspiring examples to help you plan and host events that truly make an impact.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Dwight Jenkins, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office</li></ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ MPO T.J. Rodriquez, City of Manassas Police Department</li><li>○ Kristin Pettway, Exec. Director, DRIVE SMART Virginia</li><li>○ Sr. Deputy Steven A. Russo, Stafford County Sheriff's Office</li></ul>	Jefferson Auditorium
Saving Lives Beyond Highway Safety	<p><b><i>Fentanyl Awareness: Confronting a Deadly Threat on Our Roadways</i></b></p> <p>Fentanyl is devastating communities across the Commonwealth—and it's increasingly showing up in traffic stops, crash investigations, and impaired driving cases. This session will explore the intersection of the opioid crisis and highway safety, offering practical insights for law enforcement and safety professionals. Hear from advocates about strategies for prevention and response.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Brandy Brubaker, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office</li></ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Marcus R. Anderson, Deputy Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security</li><li>○ Jill Cichowicz, Founder and CEO of 2 End The Stigma and A Night For Scott Fundraiser</li></ul>	Franklin Room
Communication & Collaboration	<p><b>Cracking the Code: Communicating with Gen Z!</b></p>	Ballroom 1



Track	<p>Effective communication with young people is more than just talking – it's about building trust, listening actively, and creating space for their voices to be heard. In this workshop, participants will explore practical strategies for fostering meaningful dialogue and authentic collaboration with youth. Through real-life scenarios and group discussion, we'll examine how to navigate common communication challenges, build rapport, and engage young people as partners in decision-making. You'll leave with tools to strengthen your communication approach and empower the young people you support.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Rebecca Overman, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office</li></ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Tammy McGee, Conner Gweedo Memorial Foundation</li><li>○ Christy King, Christopher King Foundation</li><li>○ Kendall Lythgoe, YOVASO Program Manager, VA State Police</li></ul>	
Rural Roads Track	<p><b>Coming Together in Rural Communities to Save Lives</b></p> <p>This session will discuss how coming together as a rural community can reduce impaired driving. Featuring Hanover County, a rural area, the local law enforcement and a non-profit will present on successes and future plans.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Katharine Beachboard, DMV Virginia Highway Safety Office</li></ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Whitney Whalen, Executive Director, Hanover Cares Coalition</li><li>○ Ryan Vasconi, Sergeant, Hanover County Sheriff's Office</li></ul>	Madison Room



# 2025 Virginia Highway Safety Summit

## *Law Enforcement Training*

**Tuesday, May 20, 2025**

**Training Session #1: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

Law Enforcement Training	<b>Understanding Checkpoints</b>  <b>Instructor:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Paula Bruns, Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor</li></ul>	Jefferson Auditorium
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**Wednesday, May 21, 2025**

**Training Session #2: 8:00 am – 12:00 pm**

Law Enforcement Training	<b>DUI/THC Track</b>  <b>Instructor:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Paula Bruns, Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor</li></ul>	Jefferson Auditorium
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# 2025 Virginia Highway Safety Summit

## *Exhibitors*



Spread the word about what's happening here at the Summit! Post on social media using the hashtag  
**#VaSafetySummit25**



# 2025 Virginia Highway Safety Summit

## *Speaker Bios*



### **Deputy Secretary Marcus R. Anderson**

Marcus R. Anderson began his law enforcement career over 30 years ago, initially as a uniformed patrol officer with the Huntsville, Alabama Police Department. He subsequently joined the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in 1998, where he served as a Federal Agent. During his tenure with the DEA, Marcus undertook a wide range of both domestic and foreign assignments across various regions, including the Latin America and Caribbean Special Operations Division, Belize, Ohio,

Alabama, Louisiana, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Florida, and Kentucky. Notably, in recognition of his contributions to Kentucky, he was commissioned as an Honorary Colonel with the Kentucky State Police.

Marcus holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Athens State University, a Graduate Certificate in Criminal Justice from the University of Virginia, and a master's degree in public safety, also from the University of Virginia. He recently graduated from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy, Session 282.

Currently, Marcus is deeply honored to serve the people of Virginia in his role as Deputy Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, where he also serves as a special advisor to Governor Youngkin on opioid interdiction and related responses to the fentanyl epidemic. His primary focus is to establish a robust platform that fosters collaborative partnerships and, ultimately, enhances public safety within the communities he serves.



### **Major Ronnie Armstead**

Major Armstead is a 37-year veteran of the Richmond City Police Department. He currently holds the rank of Major and oversees Support Services, which consists of Major Crimes, Special Operations Division, Special Investigations Division, and Community Youth and Intervention Services. He is a graduate of the University of Richmond, with a BS in Human Resource Management. He is also a graduate of the 87th Senior Management Institute for Police, the 50th Police Executive Leadership School, and FBI- LEEDA Command School.



### **Brianna Bonat**

Brianna Bonat is the Director of Public Health and Engagement at the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority, where she directs administrative, analytical, and educational efforts to support the public health focus of the Authority's mission. She previously worked on substance misuse prevention at other Virginia agencies, including roles at the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth and Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority. Brianna earned her bachelor's degree





in kinesiology and health sciences from William & Mary and her master's degree in public health from Virginia Commonwealth University. Outside of work, Brianna enjoys spoiling her dog and planning her next weekend trip.



### **Brandy Brubaker**

Brandy Brubaker joined the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' Highway Safety Office in 2024 as Director of Highway Safety Strategy. She leads a dynamic team of highway safety professionals dedicated to saving lives through the development of data-driven strategies and multi-faceted marketing campaigns designed to change behaviors and prevent crashes before they occur. A DMV employee since 2014, Brandy previously worked in the agency's Communications Office, serving as Director of Communications and spokesperson. She started her career as a crime reporter, writing award-winning pieces for newspapers in Pittsburgh and West Virginia. A Pennsylvania native, Brandy earned a journalism degree from Penn State University.



### **Shawn Casey**

Shawn Casey serves as the Chief Government & External Affairs Officer at the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority. She joined the CCA in 2022 and oversees the agency's licensing, regulatory, and public health work. Previously, Shawn was a Senior Assistant Attorney General in Colorado, where she advised the state's Marijuana and Liquor Enforcement Divisions on regulatory and policy issues. She began her legal career clerking at the Colorado Court of Appeals and the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado. Shawn holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia and a law degree from the University of Arizona.



### **Jill Cichowicz**

Jill Cichowicz, Founder and CEO of the nonprofit 2 End The Stigma and A Night For Scott Fundraiser was born in Virginia but moved around quite a bit due to her father being an Army Pilot. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Public Relations with a minor in Marketing from Virginia Commonwealth University, then moved to Fort Bragg to become the "perfect Army wife" serving as FRG Leader and volunteering countless hours at each Army post she moved to with her husband, Marc and 2 energetic boys Carter and Christian! They retired after serving 25 years and 5 long deployments, moving back to Richmond. After losing her twin brother, Scott Zebrowski, to Fentanyl poisoning on February 28, 2017, she created her annual fundraiser to benefit those struggling with substance use disorder (SUD) and ending the stigma associated with the disease of addiction to normalize the need for help. Her fundraiser has been voted The Best Charity Event in Richmond (2019, 2020, 2023) and First runner-up (2021, 2022, 2024). Due to that success, she began 2ETS Community Day as well as the annual Fairways For Scott golf tournament. Jill does national public speaking on addiction, has written for Blogs, Podcasts, partners with Virginia Department of Corrections, has served on the Purdue Pharma Ad Hoc Victims Committee for 5 plus years, most notably giving her testimony in Federal Court against

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**#VaSafetySummit25**



Purdue Pharma/The Sackler Family in the historic bankruptcy case. Jill often partners with local recovery organizations such as Rams in Recovery, Chesterfield Recovery Academy, CARITAS and Real Life Community Center to provide volunteers at local Food Banks in addition to serving on multiple boards in her Community. In 2023, Jill was honored as one of the “12 Women Who Drive Richmond” for her “tireless efforts to bring hope, light, and awareness to one of the most important causes of all time.” To emphasize the importance of carrying Narcan, Jill created the annual “Save A Life For Scott” hosted on the anniversary of his passing to offer the community FREE REVIVE! Training with Narcan distribution. She continues to advocate for those voices no longer heard and for those battling today as a way of channeling her grief in honor of her twin brother that she loved so much, to include serving on Governor Glenn Youngkin’s Virginia Addiction Recovery Council (VARC) and partners with First Lady Suzanne S. Youngkin serving on her Fentanyl Ambassadors Program. In her downtime, she loves spending time with her boys and hoping that her work will make an impact on them-she is blessed with so much support from her doting husband and community.



### **Aimee Cox**

Aimee Cox is a research scientist at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Ms. Cox joined the Institute in 2020 and conducts research on older drivers and distracted driving. She received a bachelor’s degree from Eastern Michigan University and a master’s degree in public health from the University of South Florida.



### **Amberly Crittenden**

Amberly Crittenden, local to Richmond, Virginia, is a 360 Media Planner at Two Tango Collaborative. Within her role, she strategically plans and executes multi-channel media campaigns with a holistic, integrated approach. She stays attuned with media’s ever-evolving landscape, emerging trends, and best practices to authentically connect with audiences, deliver maximum results, and achieve client goals.



### **Jayme Derbyshire**

Officer Derbyshire has been with Montgomery County Department of Police for twenty-three years. She currently serves as the coordinator for their Chemical Test for Alcohol Unit. In this capacity, she is responsible for various training initiatives, to include an initiative known as Cannabis Impairment Detection Labs. Jayme is a longtime traffic safety champion. She is a certified Drug Recognition Expert (DRE), a Drug Recognition Expert Instructor, and has had the privilege of speaking both locally and nationally on impaired driving. In addition to enforcement efforts, Jayme has spent significant time offering testimony in front of Maryland’s General Assembly in an effort to increase traffic safety through legislative efforts. Jayme is a recipient of the Maryland Highway Safety Office’s Innovative Program Award, the Montgomery County Department of Police Chief’s Award, the Kevin E. Quinlan Advocacy Award, and was Maryland’s Drug Recognition Expert of the Year. She resides in Maryland with her husband and three children.



### **Naomi Dunn**

Dr. Naomi Dunn is a Research Scientist with the Division of Vehicle, Driver, and System Safety at Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. She has extensive experience in the areas of human factors, transportation safety, driver behavior and performance, and crash causation. Dr. Dunn leads VTTI's alcohol- and drug-impaired driving research program and has conducted a variety of impairment-related projects focused on the safety implications of cannabis legalization and the development of a sentinel surveillance system for drug use by drivers in crashes. She is currently working closely with industry partners to support the development of technologies to detect alcohol-impaired driving.



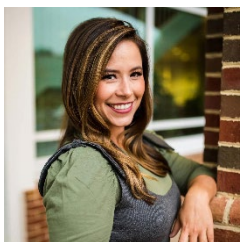
### **Margaret Ekam**

Margaret Ekam is the Senior Deputy Director of the Office of Strategic Communication for the City of Richmond, Virginia. With nearly 30 years of experience in strategic communications, media relations, and public policy, she has led impactful initiatives across government, nonprofit, and political sectors. Margaret previously held key leadership roles at the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, where she was honored with the NCDPS Badge of Excellence for her leadership of the 2022 Victim Services Awareness Marketing Campaign. She continues to drive public engagement through strategic messaging, advocacy and mission-driven communication.



### **Dr. Afshin Famili**

Dr. Afshin Famili is a licensed Professional Engineer with a background in transportation operations, safety, and planning. He currently serves as a Transportation Operations Engineer for the City of Richmond, managing multimodal projects aimed at improving pedestrian and bicycle safety. His prior experience includes roles with the Texas Department of Transportation and the South Carolina Department of Transportation. Dr. Famili holds a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering with a specialization in transportation and focuses on data-driven decision-making, traffic operations, and Safe System strategies.



### **Melissa Gaona**

Melissa Gaona is a United States Army veteran and a journalist for CBS affiliate WDBJ7 in Roanoke, Virginia. After reporting on numerous stories of trafficking in the Commonwealth, Melissa took a position with one of Virginia's only safehomes for juveniles who've experienced trafficking and exploitation, The Lampstand as the Communications Coordinator. In her role with the non-profit, she is certified to teach prevention education inside area schools. She also provides professional training for businesses, law enforcement, coalitions, and organizations around the Commonwealth.





### **Deanna Grossi**

Deanna Grossi serves as the Virginia State Coordinator for Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), overseeing statewide initiatives to empower youth to make positive choices and promote safety within their communities. A graduate of Roanoke College, Deanna was actively involved in SADD as a chapter president and Community Engagement Intern, with an emphasis on building peer connections and fostering a culture of support and responsibility. In her role, she continues to advocate for youth leadership, development of college chapters, and community engagement.



### **Paige Hairston**

Paige Hairston is a dedicated public service professional with over three decades of experience advancing city initiatives through strategic communications and civic engagement. Her career spans key city departments, including Human Resources, Police, Information Technology, Parks and Recreation, Public Utilities and Public Works. In each role, she has championed city programs, led talent recruitment efforts, crafted public policy, fostered strong community connections, raised awareness for programs and services, and created unique, longstanding partnerships. Paige leads outreach, marketing and advertising for a range of high-impact initiatives, including the Vision Zero Campaign.



### **Dr. Kathleen Hancock, P.E.**

Dr. Hancock is a professor in Civil and Environmental Engineering at Virginia Tech with 40 years of experience in transportation engineering. Her areas of expertise include highway safety, data analysis and visualization, and geospatially enabling decision making. This is her 15th year working in partnership with the Virginia Highway Safety Office.



### **First Sergeant Jeff Jones**

A proud native of Smyth County, Virginia, First Sergeant Jones has dedicated over two decades of service to the Virginia State Police. First Sergeant Jones has been assigned to several key locations, including South Boston, Wytheville, Norfolk, Franklin, Melfa, and Emporia. These assignments have provided him with diverse experiences, allowing him to effectively address a wide range of challenges and develop strong leadership skills. Currently serving as the Area Commander in Emporia, First Sergeant Jones is also the Statewide Coordinator for the Crash Reconstruction Team, overseeing critical investigations that ensure public safety on Virginia's roads. In addition to these duties, he is deeply passionate about building and maintaining strong community relationships. First Sergeant Jones is dedicated to mentoring the younger generation of troopers, guiding them through the complexities of law enforcement and helping to shape the future of the Virginia State Police.



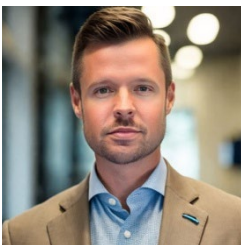
### **Ajay Kadyan**

Ajay Kadyan serves as the Project Manager for TREDs at the Virginia Highway Safety Office, bringing 18 years of experience in managing and advancing highway safety programs. In this capacity, Mr. Kadyan oversees the development, implementation, and optimization of data systems critical to the state's traffic safety infrastructure. With a expertise in traffic records management, Mr. Kadyan has played a pivotal role in the integration and enhancement of TREDs, ensuring that the system effectively supports Virginia's law enforcement and public safety agencies. His leadership ensures that TREDs consistently provides accurate, real-time data that is essential for data-driven decision-making and policy formulation aimed at improving highway safety across the Commonwealth. Throughout his tenure, Mr. Kadyan has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to leveraging innovative data solutions to improve traffic safety outcomes, minimize traffic-related incidents, and support the state's broader highway safety initiatives. His strategic vision, combined with his extensive hands-on experience, has been instrumental in the sustained success and growth of the TREDs project.



### **Christy King**

Christy King is the founder and executive director of the Christopher King Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting safe driving habits among youth. She established the foundation after her son, Christopher, tragically lost his life in a car crash caused by a reckless driver. Determined to prevent similar tragedies, Christy has worked tirelessly to educate teens about the importance of buckling up and the dangers of distracted driving. In 2025, Christy's advocacy led to a major legislative achievement: the passage of the Christopher King Seat Belt Law. Signed into law by Governor Glenn Youngkin, this legislation requires all adult passengers aged 18 and up to wear seat belts in every seat of vehicles equipped with safety belt systems. The law, effective July 1, 2025, addresses Virginia's previously low seat belt usage rate of 73%, compared to the national average of 92%.



### **Dr. Gerald Lackey**

As Commissioner, Dr. Gerald Lackey leads the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles which collects more than \$3 billion in revenue for the state's transportation network. It has a statewide workforce of more than 2,200 employees across 76 customer service centers, 13 weigh stations, and headquarters operations. Commissioner Lackey also serves as the Governor's Highway Safety Representative, chairs the Virginia Motor Vehicle Dealer Board, and is a member of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) Identity Management Committee. Dr. Lackey has more than 15 years of experience in collaborating with government agencies, customer groups, and Fortune 500 companies to develop winning strategies, optimize business processes, and deliver on strategic growth initiatives. In his most recent role as Vice President of Business Optimization at GAF, the world's largest roofing manufacturer, Dr. Lackey led strategic growth projects and productivity efficiencies across the company. During his time at GAF, he helped launch a new, award-winning product line, as well as removed thousands of hours of wait time from customer-facing processes in its commercial





roofing division. Prior to GAF, he was an Associate Partner at McKinsey & Company working with manufacturing companies and energy-related public sector agencies to drive multi-year transformational change. His business acumen and transformation skills led to greater value for customers and citizens in the United States, Middle East, and Europe. Dr. Lackey is credited with launching a new paper and packaging company post an acquisition of equals; making significant and sustainable cost reductions in an international packaging company; and establishing a lean operation program for a North American oil company. Dr. Lackey received a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Spanish from Duke University and a Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a subspeciality in quantitative methodology.



### **Kendall Lythgoe**

Kendall Lythgoe joined YOVASO full-time in October 2021 as the Education and Strategic Planning Coordinator for YOVASO. She is responsible for coordinating the interactive safety programs, including the Distracted and Impaired Driving Simulators, ScanEd: Physics of a Crash, and other hands-on educational programs for teens. Kendall also develops collaborative partnerships with other state and local organizations to help expand youth traffic safety programs and increase outreach to teens. She is a 2021 graduate from Virginia Tech and has been involved with YOVASO since she

was a freshman in high school.



### **Tammy Gweedo McGee**

Tammy Gweedo McGee, founder of the Gweedo Memorial Foundation, became a nationally recognized advocate for teen driver safety after the tragic loss of her only son, Conner, in a preventable crash. Her foundation promotes education and advocacy to save lives. Tammy developed the anonymous reporting platform,

[www.IfYouSeeSomethingSaySomething.org](http://www.IfYouSeeSomethingSaySomething.org), allowing teens to report concerning driving behavior without fear of retaliation. Her efforts have led to four life-saving pieces of legislation in Virginia, strengthening driver education and accountability. Tammy also organizes community outreach

events like the Keeper's Cup Soccer Tournament which drew almost 1,000 teenagers to engage in Conner's love of soccer all the while learning about traffic safety. Her work continues to create a lasting culture of responsibility and safety for young drivers.



### **Juliana McGrath**

Juliana McGrath is the Outreach and Communication Specialist for the Harrisonburg Police Department. With a passion for community engagement, she leads initiatives that build trust between the department and residents and engages the community in a way that makes public safety fun. Juliana manages public relations, coordinates outreach programs, and ensures transparent communication through various media channels. In her free time, she enjoys spending time outdoors in the Shenandoah Valley, reading, and watching JMU football games.

Spread the word about what's happening here at the Summit! Post on social media using the hashtag

**#VaSafetySummit25**



### **Kristin Pettway**

Kristin Pettway has been with DRIVE SMART Virginia since 2009, when she was hired to work outreach tables at truck stops along I-95. She is now the Executive Director. During her time with the organization, Kristin has managed various award-winning traffic safety programs and helped create DRIVE SMART's interactive teen driving program. She has also developed traffic safety campaigns and collaterals, managed community and sports partnerships, and managed the annual Distracted Driving Summit. Her favorite part of the job is collaborating with and supporting the organization's partners.



### **Walt Reel**

Senior Trooper Walt Reel began his career in 1999 with the Virginia State Police (VSP), Richmond, VA as a State Trooper assigned to the Chesapeake Division Five. Trooper Reel was then assigned to the Fifth Division Crash Team in 2004. He not only conducts training classes and instructs, he provides in-depth reconstruction testimony for both criminal and civil trials. In 2018, Trooper Reel added to his duties by being selected as a Crash Investigator within the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), Highway Safety Office (HSO) in Richmond, Virginia. In 2019, Trooper Reel was certified as a Crash Data Retrieval Technical Instructor, with that knowledge he trains other law enforcement officers statewide. His assignments assist with the goal of reducing crashes, injuries and fatalities in the Commonwealth and one day having zero fatalities on Virginia's roadways.



### **T.J. Rodriquez**

Master Police Officer T.J. Rodriquez has devoted 27 years of distinguished service to the City of Manassas Police Department. Throughout his career, he has served in various roles, including Patrol Officer, School Resource Officer, and Patrol and Investigative Supervisor. In January 2021, Officer Rodriquez was appointed as a Community Vitality Officer (CVO), a position created to advance 21st-century community policing strategies through innovative, community-based outreach. His work emphasizes youth and parent engagement, strengthening relationships, proactively addressing at-risk behaviors, and enhancing public safety through education and collaboration. One of his signature initiatives is the Parent E3 Series, a program designed to Engage, Educate, and Empower parents to support their children through life's challenges. This impactful initiative earned the Public Safety Innovator Award from the Virginia Municipal League (VML) in October 2023 and the Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service in Community Policing from the U.S. Department of Justice in December 2024. Officer Rodriquez has also expanded his outreach by developing a comprehensive highway safety and traffic education strategy aimed at preventing impaired driving, distracted driving, and violations of Move Over laws. These efforts include targeted community outreach to parents and new teen drivers through strategic partnerships with the local high school, driver's education programs, and community events. His presentations and workshops promote safe driving habits, provide practical resources, and foster a shared sense of responsibility for roadway safety among youth and families.



In recognition of his commitment to DUI prevention and enforcement, Officer Rodriguez is a two-time recipient of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Virginia Award, highlighting his dedication to saving lives through both enforcement and education. Guided by the principles of a Guardian Mindset, Officer Rodriguez leads with integrity, trust, and a steadfast commitment to public service. His holistic approach to safety, blending prevention, education, and empowerment, continues to make a lasting impact on the Manassas community. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and a Master of Arts in Human Services and Family Counseling from Liberty University.



### **Steven A. Russo**

Steven Russo is a Deputy in the Stafford County Sheriff's Office Special Operations Division assigned to the Traffic Safety Unit. He previously worked with the Virginia Department of Corrections as an Officer and Sergeant, the Colonial Beach Police Department in Colonial Beach Virginia as a Police Officer, and the Wythe County Sheriff's Office. He attended the Rappahannock Regional Criminal Justice Academy. He has worked as a patrol deputy, school resource officer, and traffic deputy. His certifications and trainings include DCJS General Instructor, Level I Crash Reconstruction Investigator, FAA Commercial Drone Pilot/ Drone Team (Stafford Sheriff's Office), Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (Stafford Sheriff's Office), Marine Patrol Team Member (Stafford Sheriff's Office), and ATV Team Member (Stafford Sheriff's Office). He was raised in Bland, Virginia, and comes from a family of Law Enforcement. In his off time, he raises and trains horses.



### **Kira Shifflett**

With a background in Emergency Nursing, farming and restaurant ownership, Kira Shifflett is the Adult Trauma Outreach Coordinator and Trauma Survivors Network (TSN) Coordinator at VCU Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia. Kira provides performance improvement feedback, outreach and targeted education (such as RTTDC) to area hospitals and EMS providers. In her role as TSN Coordinator, Kira supports survivors of physical trauma and their families on their journeys to recovery through providing peer support, community resources, support groups and collaborative networking. Kira also assists with injury prevention programs such as Stop the Bleed, Matter of Balance and CarFit.



### **Sergeant Ryan Vasconi**

Ryan serves as a Sergeant with the Hanover County Sheriff's Office. He is currently assigned to the Patrol Division-Special Operations, where he supervises the agency's Safe Streets Unit, Traffic Safety Unit, and Motor Carrier Unit. He also provides extensive oversight of the agency's DMV grants, Tow operations, and is an instructor for several traffic safety related topics. Ryan has an unwavering focus and passion for traffic safety, continuously sharing his passion for safety with others each day. In Ryan's off time, he enjoys spending time with his wife and two dogs.



## **Whitney Whalen**

Whitney Whalen is the Executive Director of Hanover Cares, bringing over five years of experience in nonprofit leadership, coalition sustainability, fundraising, and community engagement. Passionate about public health and youth empowerment, she specializes in building collaborative partnerships to address substance use prevention and mental wellness. Whitney has a strong track record in grant writing and program development, leveraging data-driven strategies to drive lasting community impact. She actively supports initiatives that promote equity and well-being, particularly among underserved populations. Whitney is dedicated to creating healthier, more resilient communities through advocacy, education, and inclusive outreach.

## ***Closing Keynote Speaker***



### **Gary Zelesky**

**Igniting Passion, Purpose, and Performance Across the Globe**

With an electrifying stage presence and a message that resonates long after the applause fades, Gary Zelesky has spent decades inspiring audiences across the United States and around the world. From global giants like MasterCard, Hallmark, Boeing, and Gulfstream to law enforcement agencies, universities like UCLA and the University of

Michigan, and countless organizations in both the public and private sectors—Gary's influence is far-reaching and deeply felt.

A deeply personal part of Gary's mission is raising awareness about the devastating impact of drinking and driving. After losing his younger brother to a drunk driver, Gary committed himself to sharing this life-saving message nationwide. He has delivered powerful talks for organizations such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Every 15 Minutes, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Executive Leadership, School Resource Officers Associations, and law enforcement groups across the country. Internationally sought-after for his high-energy keynotes, Gary has lit up stages in Australia, the UK, Ireland, the Bahamas, Italy, and beyond. His unique blend of humor, vulnerability, and hard-earned wisdom doesn't just entertain—it transforms. Audiences walk away not only laughing but thinking, growing, and ready to act. Gary is the author of *The Passion-Centered Person: How to Go from Having Just a Career to Having a Life and Big Laughs, Bigger Lessons*. A lifelong learner, he used the global pause to earn a Master's in Executive Leadership, further sharpening his ability to connect, coach, and catalyze change. Whether he's addressing Fortune 500 leaders or high school students, Gary challenges individuals and teams to find purpose, make an impact, and live with passion. He doesn't just speak—he moves people. Married for 35 years to his best friend and co-adventurer Cherrisse, Gary is a proud father of three and "Poppy" to five beloved grandchildren. He's living his best life—and he's here to help you do the same.