

2017 HOPE FOR HUMANITY HONOREE: LAUREN EMBREY

Lauren Embrey believes that every day provides a new opportunity to become the meaningful change we desire to see in the world, and it starts with a look inside ourselves.

“Each one of us can be part of the solution,” says Lauren, “and it starts by understanding our biases and the language we use.”

As one of the nation’s most influential philanthropists and advocates for gender and racial equity, Lauren has revealed her heart, generously sharing her time, talent and spirit with the city she has called home all her life, Dallas. She serves on numerous local and national non-profit boards, including the AT&T Performing Arts Center, the Dallas Theater Center, PEN America, Women Moving Millions, and the Human Rights Initiative of North Texas.

Lauren grew up in Dallas and attended SMU where she earned both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees. President and Philanthropic Visionary of the Embrey Family Foundation and CEO of Embrey Interests, Ltd., Lauren put belief into action in 2006 when she, along with her sister Gayle, founded the Embrey Human Rights Program at Southern Methodist University, which offers the only bachelor’s degree in human rights education in the South. “There is no such thing as a lesser human being,” the motto for the Embrey Human Rights program, is a sentiment Lauren lives daily.

For Lauren, encounters with gender and racial inequity during her formative years led her to speak out on behalf of others and to begin supporting organizations with people-centered missions — efforts that have had impact across Dallas and the national landscape — including “Dallas Faces Race” and the Women’s Media Center’s “Name It. Change It.” initiative. “I fought these boundaries for years,” she says, “in the only way I knew how, through my financial independence and my determination to make my own decisions.”

Her passion for theater, dance, film, and human rights work has culminated in several artistic projects designed to engage audiences with the world around them, including social injustices that often go unnoticed or undiscussed. Lauren was an Executive Producer for the documentary *Playground*, a film on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in America, a Producer for the Global Arts Corps production of *Truth in Translation* US Premiere, and the visionary for the collaborative work of the Dance Exchange project *Bricks and Bones - Race and Erasure* in Dallas.

To acknowledge her volunteer service and support, many groups have recognized her—Lauren is the recipient of the Dallas Women’s Foundation Maura Award and the MS Foundation’s Women of Vision Philanthropy Award, to name but a few—but it is her passion for igniting social change that motivates her to speak boldly and give freely.

“Philanthropic giving has become the single most expansive force of my adult life,” she says. “My education as a donor—not just learning about social change, but helping to drive it—opened up my world in ways I never imagined.”

Lauren is the proud mother of two wonderful sons, ages 26 and 30.

