



# DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

THIRTY YEARS OF SERVICE TO AMERICAS DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

NEWS ADVISORY

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Washington, D.C. February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 Dialogue on Diversity presented its sixteenth yearly program on the progress of Information Technology and the concern over its impacts on privacy values, held on February 20 at the **Stewart R. Mott Foundation** on Capitol Hill with a greeting by **Ma. Cristina Caballero**, Dialogue President, stressing the role of privacy in any just society. **Jenny Aramony** of the Census Bureau extended the invitation to work in that premier civic enterprise later this year, as a Census Taker, with the awesome duty of absolute confidentiality.

The final portion of this introductory session was given over to the thoughts of **Frank Torres**, Senior Counsel for the Microsoft Corporation, and a longtime fan of Dialogue on Diversity's programing, new responsibility in the Microsoft organization for management and oversight of the industry's galloping Artificial Intelligence research.

**Jackie Reyes-Yanes**, Director of the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs, part of the city administration's campaign for small business formation and culture enrichment in the District, received the much merited Diversity City Leadership Award, and laid out a lively summary conveying the vitality of the "MOLA's" vigorous programing. **Franklin Garcia**, a staunch friend of Dialogue on Diversity, offered the attendees a bill of reasons why the District of Columbia should be made a State forthwith, mentioning that the Dialogue's Ma. Cristina Caballero had received a Champion Award in December, 2019 in recognition of her support for the full panoply of statehood.

The program highlight was the conversation of **Robert Raben**, and an eager audience. Mr. Raben reviewed at length his own experience, remarking that his stint of a few years as counsel to a Congressional committee had pushed his own thought further to the left than he had ever sensed at the outset. So that the research and analysis that is the daily regimen of his office, now completing some twenty years of a quiet but immensely influential role on the Washington scene

**Nicol Turner-Lee, Ph.D.**, of the Brookings Institution reviewed her observations, based on field work during the last year in all corners of the U.S., seeking to put together a picture, comprehensive and accurate, of the narrowed access to broadband transmissions. These are chiefly rural and small town areas, where the residents are living in worlds without information sources and services that are available as a matter of course for urban populations.

**Mana Azarmi**, of the Center for Democracy and Technology, whose own history is that of an immigrant family from Iran, has studied the practices denying the elemental proprieties to migrants, now the plight of Latinos. among them children, caught in the logjam at the southern border. Ms. Azarmi's subject was the procedures now in effect upon entry to the U.S. and the new attention newly directed to mobile phones. These are being mined for their lists of contacts, so that the government obtains data not only on the entrants but on their contacts.

As the technology expert for Black Civic Participation, **Joycelyn Tate**, appears once more with our Dialogue for an account of privacy abuses and of the problem of patchwork laws state by state, in the absence of a uniform national legal framework, like the newly instituted GDPR in the EU. Ms. Tate has for long given over all her estimable skills and efforts to the Black Women's Roundtable and related groups.

**Adrian Gropper**, by profession a Physician and by training and choice an engineer, is our reigning expert on the intricate puzzles of medical records, how to exploit their obvious utility, indeed necessity, for curing the instant ills of patients, but also in research for the sake of the crowd of future, not yet identified patients. Dr. Gropper, among his other distinctions, serves as Chief Technology Officer for the Patients Privacy Rights organization, perhaps the most aggressive of advocacy group for privacy interests in this field.

A current honoree as Congressional Science Fellow is **Zack Valdez**, a young agricultural scientist and a forceful advocate for technology studies among Latino/a fellows, among them many young women who might, and ought, to aspire to a career in the technical professions. Mr. Valdez is an active missionary for STEM on behalf of the fast-growing Society for Hispanic Professional Engineers.

Once more for this week's program the Future of Privacy Forum has taken a major role. **Anisha Reddy** is an FPF expert on the privacy quandaries facing school teachers and administrators, not to mention school boards and parents, and, not least, the hapless students themselves. A high degree of sensitivity and a studied climate of tolerance, however difficult it is to maintain, is the order of the day.

**Jeremy Greenberg** and **Brenda Leong** of FPF brought a tightly reasoned account of the burgeoning IoT technology and the role of artificial intelligence in perfecting the operations of these often immensely complex systems. Ms. Leong concluded with a concise summary of the notion of algorithms, the word of the year to conjure with, as the rule or formula for turning input observations into output as a coherent rule or decision.