

Citizen of the Year 2022

Sponsored by Patterson Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram of Marshall

“It is the goal of a community to have their young people return to (*and find*) their place as contributing members in leadership roles for the betterment of its citizens. Tonight’s recipient dedicates his time, talent and career to the betterment of our community,” states one nomination. Another says “An energetic solutions-oriented leader with a great vision for Marshall, along with the unbridled dedication to his community make him the perfect candidate for this year’s honors.”

Our award winner serves on numerous local boards including the Boys and Girls Club of the Big Pines, Community Advisory Council, Wiley College Business Administration Advisory Board, Texas State Technical College Foundation Council of Advocates, the Northeast Texas Regional Mobility Authority East Texas I-20 Corridor, Greater Marshall Chamber of Commerce, Trinity Episcopal School and others at the state and regional levels. “His leadership on these boards significantly enhances the quality of life in the Marshall community,” writes one nominator.

Since his appointment as director in a vital local entity, the evidence speaks for itself...and loudly! Our recipient has developed or led a great number of efforts aimed at bringing Marshall **together** and heading the city and surrounding areas toward unprecedented growth and prosperity:

- Leading The Synergy Group – A monthly collaboration bringing City, County, Chamber, Business and local Education leadership together to

share/discuss common goals and solutions for the economic and social betterment of the region.

- Creator of The WeAlign Group – bringing business leaders, funding sources and educators together to discuss workforce issues, solutions and available resources.
- Developed and organized the Marshall Job Fair – a first-of-its-kind event aimed at connecting local employers with hundreds of the best and brightest high school and college students in our area. The event provided a great chance for the next generation of workplace professionals to discover career paths they may not have previously known were options. A rousing success, with over 40 employers and 400 kids making connections that will help to fuel the Marshall economy for years to come.
- Founded the Marshall Economic Summit – bringing nationally recognized Economic Advisers and Developers to Marshall to launch a concerted effort to bring new business growth and revitalization of incumbent business to Harrison County.
- Scheduled a variety of Podcasts for broadcast on “Gone to Texas” as a follow-up to the Economic Summit. The aim is national businesses that may have an interest in relocating to Texas, and designed to give Marshall an edge in attracting those business investments.
- And...a staunch champion for growth of MISD Dual Enrollment education opportunities for students and employer needs alike.

His vision for the economic vitality of our community has led to collaboration of local public schools, colleges, universities, industry partners

and community members. Highlights of his tenure as Director of the Marshall Economic Development Corporation include:

- Project management of over \$2.9 MM in business park construction projects
- Agreements requiring private sector investment of \$57 MM and 180 jobs
- Allocated over \$1.7MM to primary job training initiatives including assistance with the development of Synergy Park and the Great Commission Center at ETBU
- Obtained \$367,000 matching high demand job training grants from the State of Texas
- Collaborating the with City, County, Chamber, regional developers, educational institutions and other forward-thinking organizations to spur private investment by building local capacity through skills training and quality of place programs.
- Created a blight remediation program through the City's Certificate of Occupancy Program with private sector commitments of \$4MM. With a goal of bettering and beautifying existing aging and often historical buildings, this program will benefit Marshall and its downtown area for years to come.

“A self-described ‘boomerang kid’ from Marshall who has found the best of all worlds: loving what you do, loving who you are with, and loving where you are” in the Marshall community where he was raised. A graduate of Marshall High School who has traveled and worked around the world, our recipient and his lovely wife chose to return to Marshall to live, work and raise their family. Dinora is the Director of the Michelson Museum of Art

and they are the proud parents of 2 daughters Gabriela and Grace. After graduating from MHS in 1995, he obtained his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration at SMU in 1998 and his MBA from the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Phoenix, Arizona in 2008. He holds numerous economic development certifications including the Certified Economic Developer Professional designation and is one of only approximately 1100 active economic developers across North America. How fortunate are we to have someone with such outstanding credentials as our MEDCO Director and Marshall resident!"

He has set out to not only lead, but to make a difference in the community he loves. His work is more than a job, it is a passion. He isn't pretentious, proud or self - promoting. His light is still late into the night as he diligently and methodically works on the next big project. We concur with our last sentiment shared from one of his nominators: "How fortunate are we to have someone with such outstanding credentials as our Marshall Economic Development Director and Marshall resident!"

Please join me in welcoming to the stage the 2022 Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year, sponsored by Patterson Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram of Marshall, ***Rush Harris***.