

## TBI Conference Presenter Biographies

### **Amanda Acord-Vira, MOT, EdD:**

Amanda Acord-Vira received her master's degree in occupational therapy and doctorate in educational psychology from West Virginia University (WVU). She also obtained her graduate certificate in special education and traumatic brain injury from George Washington University. Her experience includes over 15 years working with individuals following acquired and traumatic brain injury through clinical practice, research and education. She is currently an associate professor in the Division of Occupational Therapy at West Virginia University. Her research interests include return to community participation, work, school and functional activity following brain injury.

### **Andy Arias:**



Andy Arias has been an advocacy professional for over seven years. He has worked as a System Change Advocate and Program Manager for Orange County & Los Angeles. He is member of many boards and commissions related to creating greater visibility and advancement for diverse communities, especially the disability community. Andy is often hired speak and train at universities, high schools, and to Congressional leaders on ADA compliance and the inclusion of people disabilities and others from diverse backgrounds and

communities. He has received several awards for his presentations on LGBTQ diversity and disability equality. Andy's experience and leadership gave him skills to develop and implement a youth program that served over 150 young adults in Southern California helping them reach their dreams for independence. The curriculum for this program is used today by specific county agencies. Andy excels in teaching students that nothing can get in the way of their dreams, as long as they use their disabilities as an asset. Andy advocates in the entertainment industry by creating visible pathways as an actor and stand-up comedian. As an actor, Andy has had the pleasure of working with Tom Hanks, Mark Ruffalo and Hilary Swank on projects. He is often asked to consult with producers and directors to create greater media visibility of people with disabilities. He has also produced several small projects that have brought attention to persons with disabilities and the LGBTQ to community.

### **Mitch Balaban, MA:**

Mitch Balaban is a graduate of Morris Harvey College (University of Charleston) with a master's degree in education as well as West Virginia College of Graduate Studies with a master's degree in special education. He is retired from Kanawha County Schools where he worked in their Work Exploration Program. He is also the Kanawha County Schools Director of Special Olympics. He is currently a member of the Training and Technical Assistance Centers team.

### **Doug Cumpston:**

Doug Cumpston is an Assistive Technology Specialist at West Virginia Assistive Technology Systems at the WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities. He holds trainings and presentations about accessibility through the state. He recently presented at the 2018 Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) Conference on Creating Accessible Documents. He graduated from the California University of Pennsylvania in 2008. He has worked with people with disabilities and in the mental health field for over 10 years.

### **Diana Davis, PhD, OTR/L:**

Diana Davis is an Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy (OT) at the West Virginia University School of Medicine. Dr. Davis has over 25 years' experience working with individuals with acquired and traumatic brain injuries in a variety of settings. She has published on OT intervention with Clients with Brain Injuries as well as driving rehabilitation. She also offers OT services including driving risk assessment through the Faculty Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy clinic at WVU.

### **Judy Dettmer:**



Judy Dettmer is the director of MINDSOURCE – Brain Injury Network, at the Colorado Department of Human Service in Denver, Colorado and has almost 30 years of working with and advocating for individuals with brain injuries. She is a member and past president of the State Board of Directors for the Brain Injury Association of Colorado, a member of the Colorado Brain Injury Collaborative, a member of the Colorado Advisory Board on Brain Injury, and served as past president of directors for the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA). She has co-written multiple funded grants, has authored many publications on brain injury and has given over 100 presentations on brain injury across the nation.

### **Gregory Elkins, M.D.**

Greg Elkins is the medical director for Lincoln Primary Care Center located in southern West Virginia. He is a graduate of the athletic training curriculum at WVU, the Marshall University School of Medicine and the Family Practice Residency at Marshall. He has been a member of the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission (WVSSAC) Sports Medicine Committee since the 1980's and served on the National Federation of High School Associations Sports Medicine Advisory Committee for 6 years during the time when concussion rules changed across the country. He continues to serve as team physician for Lincoln County High School.

### **Terry Gee, MS, PT:**

Terry Gee graduated from the University of Kentucky with a master of science in physical therapy in 2002. He has worked at the Hershel Woody Williams Veterans Administration (VA) since March, 2003. Since 2008, he has been the physical therapist member of the polytrauma team and has attended several continuing education courses offered by the VA, Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, and the private sector related to the proper treatment and care for TBI related dizziness. In 2009, Terry completed a vestibular physical therapy competency from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and led the establishment of a vestibular rehabilitation program at the Hershel Woody Williams VA. He is looked upon throughout the medical center as a specialist in the assessment and treatment of complex vestibular patients, including post concussive sequelae as it relates to dizziness and balance disorders.

### **Greg Gerdeman, Ph.D.:**



Dr. Gerdeman is a neuroscientist and educator with expertise in the physiological actions of cannabis and the endocannabinoid system (ECS). His PhD dissertation in Pharmacology from Vanderbilt University was one of the first studies to discover endocannabinoids acting as “retrograde messengers” that regulate synaptic plasticity in the brain, findings that have become a foundation to modern understanding of the ECS and the neuroprotective actions of cannabis. Greg’s research has been widely cited in the scientific literature, and highlighted in such diverse publications as *Science*, *National Geographic*, *Men’s Health*, and *The New York Times*. He has been a member of the International Cannabinoid Research Society (ICRS) since 1999, and has received research funding through grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). His scholarly research has spanned topics ranging from the synaptic physiology of the ECS; behavioral pharmacology of CB1 receptors and their regulation of habitual memories; the physiological activation of ECS signaling in exercise; and the evolutionary and comparative biology of cannabinoid receptors through studies on invertebrate marine chordates.

Through deep study of the science of cannabis, Dr. Gerdeman became a vocal advocate for reclaiming this plant as a safe and effective natural remedy. Over the last 10 years, he has progressively studied the chemical ecology and genetics of cannabis, and the extraction of cannabis biomolecules to create medicinal formulations. He recently resigned a tenured faculty position as professor of biology at Eckerd College (St. Petersburg, FL) to become Chief Scientific Officer for 3 Boys Farm: a rainwater harvesting, solar powered, low carbon footprint, USDA certified organic produce farm that is newly licensed to cultivate cannabis in the state of Florida.

**Delcie Gorum, J.D.:**

Delcie Gorum is a graduate of the University of Kentucky College of Law and is currently working as a staff attorney at Disability Rights of West Virginia (DRWV). DRWV is the federally mandated protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities in West Virginia DRWV protects and advocates for the human and legal rights of persons with disabilities through: information and referral services; education, training, and technical assistance; direct and systemic advocacy; and direct and systemic litigation. While attending law school, Delcie held a variety of intern and clerk positions with agencies such as the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky, the Kentucky Environmental and Energy Cabinet, Franklin Circuit Court in Frankfort, Kentucky, and the University of Kentucky College of Law Legal Clinic. She is a member of the West Virginia Bar and has been admitted to practice before both the Southern and Northern Federal District Courts of West Virginia.

**Melissa Hall, LGSW, MSSW:**

Melissa Hall is the social work case manager for the Polytrauma/TBI and Amputee program at the Hershel Woody Williams VA Medical Center in Huntington, WV. Previously, Melissa worked as a social work case manager at a non-profit civilian hospital, and has also worked as a child protection service social worker. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in social work from Morehead State University and a master's degree in social work from the University of Louisville.

**Sandra Hall, MSW, BSN, LSW, RN, HNB-BC:**

Sandra Hall is the polytrauma team coordinator and registered nurse case manager for the TBI and Amputee Systems of Care at the Hershel Woody Williams VA Medical Center in Huntington, WV. Prior to accepting this position, she spent eight years as an acute care social worker, specializing in emergency room, intensive care, and trauma case management and the last nine years as a bedside intensive care nurse specializing in neuro-trauma and surgical care. Sandra is an advocate for holistic health integration and recently founded Mountain State Holistic Nursing, the only chapter of the American Holistic Nurses Association in West Virginia. She serves on the national Center for Information Dissemination and Education Resources' Complementary and Integrative Health Cyberseminar Planning Board and the VA-based Life-Sustaining Treatment Decisions Advisory Board. Sandra and the VA are currently working to bring whole health and modern technology to the forefront of TBI care.

**Stephen Heck M.Res. M.A.:**

Stephen Heck is a PhD student in the West Virginia University Department of Social and Behavior Sciences program. He received his master's degree in psychological research from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom in 2009 and his master's degree in forensic psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology in

2015. Notable employment includes the U.S Army, Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC), and the Robin Hill Farm Brain Injury Rehabilitation Services. Stephen has 10 years of military experience as a chemical, biological, nuclear, & explosives (CBRNE) officer. He served 6 years on active duty and continues to serve in the Army Reserves. With DVBIC he was employed as a research coordinator at Fort Hood, TX. At Robin Hill farms he assisted individuals with traumatic brain injuries with their daily living activities in a residential care facility. His research interests include traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and military studies. His current research projects include: art therapy mask intervention with West Virginia TBI survivors, college students' experience with and knowledge of concussions, West Virginia Medicaid TBI claims data, and Army Reserve and National Guard service members' experience with balancing life requirements with their military requirements

### **Darcy Keith:**



Until September 12, 1991, Darcy Keith's life was pretty normal. A gifted student in actuarial science at Ball State University in Muncie, IN, the attractive, intelligent and popular 22-year-old led an active, normal collegiate life.

Then tragedy struck. She was riding home with four sorority sisters from a function at Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky when their car was hit broadside by a semi-tractor trailer. The car was crushed completely by an impact so great that the license plate of the semi-tractor was imprinted into its crumpled side panel. Two of Darcy's friends in the backseat, where she was also sitting, were killed instantly. Darcy was the only survivor in the back seat. Learn how determination and hope kept her alive.

### **Courtney Lanham, MSW:**

Courtney Lanham is the training specialist at the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities as well as an adjunct professor for the WVU School of Social Work. They previously served as Behavior Specialist for the Positive Behavior Support program at the Center. They received their bachelor's degree in psychology from West Virginia University in 2009. They received a master's of social work from West Virginia University in 2011, in which they focused on clinical care for individuals struggling with mental health issues, as well as gender and sexuality. Courtney is a graduate of the Georgetown University Cultural and Linguistic Competence Leadership Academy. They currently have interests in training of staff and community members with a focus on diversity and cultural competence.



### **Gabriella Lawrence-Soto, BA:**



Gabriella Lawrence-Soto is a grant project manager, at Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), the lead state agency for Traumatic Brain Injury services, who also helps individuals with disabilities to live and work independently. She has been part of the senior management team for brain injury services within the community based services department of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission since 2014. Gabriella co-leads two national workgroups: Opioids and Mental Health Concerns group and Sustainable Partnerships, with other Administration on Community Living (ACL) grantees in a mentor capacity and contributes to ACL TBI Workforce Development work group. Prior to her time with MRC, she has worked with various populations (e.g., at-risk, low-income, youth, disabilities, and older adult). She has case management experience supporting individuals living with a brain injury and other neurological disorders in Massachusetts. Gabriella also has experience with resource facilitation, staff development, training, program management and partnership building across human service systems. She is a certified options counselor in Massachusetts. She holds a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from Hamilton College and is currently pursuing a master's degree in program and project management from Brandeis University. She has been a National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) member since 2014. She has continuously served on the NASHIA Training and Education committee since 2015 and has served as secretary for the NASHIA Board of Directors since 2017.

### **Roger May:**

Roger May is the media resource specialist for the WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities. Roger is also a photographer and writer based in Charleston, West Virginia. He was born in the Tug River Valley, located on the West Virginia and Kentucky border, in the heart of Hatfield and McCoy country. His photographs, essays, and interviews have been published by The New York Times, The Guardian, The Wall Street Journal, The Atlantic, National Geographic, and ESPN. In February 2014, he started the crowdsourced *Looking at Appalachia* photography project.

### **Teresa McCourt:**

A social worker by training, Teresa McCourt is the assistant director for the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities. She has over 18 years of experience in leadership positions within the field of human services. In her current role, she oversees seven community-based programs within the Center, and has expertise in community- and institutional- program development and implementation, service delivery models, serving people with disabilities, and ensuring accessibility of programs and services for those with disabilities. She serves the state as a member of the WV Developmental Disabilities Council, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Waiver Quality Improvement Council, the Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board, the Medley Management Advisory Team, and the Family and Community Support Council.

**Jeff McCroskey, MA:**

Jeff McCroskey is the Chief Executive Officer of Community Access, Inc. who provides community-based services to individuals with disabilities. He graduated from Marshall University with a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education as well as from West Virginia College of Graduate Studies with a master's in behavior disorders. He is currently the lead of the Transition Technical Assistance Team (TTAC) funded by the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education.

**Chris Napier, MA:**

Chris Napier taught special education in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio for 8 years. He graduated from Marshall university with a bachelor's degree in health science and as well as a master's degree in teaching from the University of the Cumberland. He is currently the transition resource coordinator for the Transition Technical Assistance Center.

**Betsy Petersen, MA:**

Betsy Peterson is a graduate of West Virginia University as well as West Virginia college of Graduate Studies where she earned a master's degree in learning disabilities. She taught special education at the high school level for 13 years in Kanawha County. She then went to the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education where she was the parent coordinator. She retired in 2016 but still does some contract work for the Department of Education and is a member of the TTAC team.

**Kristi Pritt:**

Kristi Pritt is the director of WVABLE which is a program of the West Virginia State Treasurer's Office. Kristi was previously the chief financial officer at the West Virginia Health Care Authority. Prior to this position, she was the associate director for WV GEAR UP at the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and the chief financial officer for the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities.

**Megan Ramsburg, BS:**

Megan Ramsburg is a behavior specialist in the Positive Behavior Support program at the WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Eastern Kentucky University with particular interest in non-verbal behavior. She has worked with children and adults with disabilities in the Title XIX I/DD

Waiver program in various roles including clinical/program director, behavior support and service coordination for 10 years.

**Anastasia Riley, MBA, CBIS:**

Anastasia Riley has worked as a behavior specialist in the Positive Behavior Support program at the WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities as a behavior specialist in the positive behavior support project since May of 2011. She received a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in sociology in 2004 and a master's degree in business administration from WVU in 2008. She has worked with people who have intellectual/developmental disabilities since 2002 in the Title XIX IDD waiver program. She also has experience providing counseling services for at risk youth and their families. She has taught positive behavior support as well as provided therapeutic consulting services. Anastasia has taught at the collegiate level and has spoken at several conferences. Anastasia is also a certified brain injury specialist and the mother of two young children.

**Greg Siegwart:**

Greg is the member of the WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities Advisory Committee and well-known artist. Born in Wheeling, Greg Siegwart's love of painting began when he picked up a brush at the age of 10. This hobby turned into a therapeutic refuge for him after experiencing a traumatic brain injury after an automobile accident in 2000. This self-taught artist continues his love of oil painting, while progressing further into the world of fine arts. Greg's paintings have been exhibited throughout West Virginia. His works are in collections across the United States and Europe. Most recently, Greg held a solo exhibit of 52 paintings at the Wheeling Artisan Center.

**Katherine Snedaker, LCSW:**



Katherine Price Snedaker, is the executive director and founder of PINK Concussions, an international non-profit focused on female injury from sport, domestic violence/assault, accidents and military service.

PINK Concussion's mission is to improve the care and recovery of women and girls by educating patients and medical professionals on sex differences in brain injury. Originally PINK Concussions began as a website Katherine built in 2015, to publicize little-known, existing research on female brain injury, but now PINK Concussions has grown to an international organization with medical summits and group members across the world.

Since 2016, PINK Concussions has organized six international medical summits on Female Brain Injury to train over 1,700 civilian and military medical professionals. PINK Concussions also conducts research studies and facilitates ongoing support groups for



women, young women, veterans, and caregivers/parents as well as medical professionals. In 2017, Katherine launched five Facebook support groups to provide community, research and education for women, teen girls, caregivers, female veterans and medical professionals. These incredibly successful groups of 3,400+ members are active 24 hours a day, 7 days week. Katherine has presented to patient and medical groups from the US Army at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (Germany) to the International Brain Injury Association's World Brain Injury Congress at the Hague. PINK Concussions and Katherine have been featured in such publications as Scientific American, Marie Claire, US News and World Report, The Washington Post, HEALTH magazine, STAT, Outdoor Magazine, AP the Big Story, FiveThirtyEight, and Neurology Advisor. Katherine has appeared on Good Morning America, NBC-CT, ESPN's Outside the lines, and Aljazeera.

### **Melanie Whetzel, M.S.Ed, CBIS:**

Melanie joined the Job Accommodation Network staff as a consultant on the Cognitive / Neurological Team in February 2008. She has a fourteen year history of teaching and advocating for students with disabilities in the public school system. Melanie holds a master's degree in special education, a bachelor's degree in english, and has earned sixty hours above masters' level. Her post-graduate work has been primarily focused on special education. She most recently completed a graduate certification in Career Planning and Placement for Youth in Transition, and became a certified brain injury specialist in December 2014. As the lead consultant on the Cognitive / Neurological Team, Melanie specializes in learning disabilities, mental impairments, developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and brain injuries. She presents nationally on these topics as well as authors publications.

### **Stephen Wheeler, Ph.D., OTR/L, CBIS:**

Dr. Steven Wheeler is a professor of Rehabilitation Sciences and Occupational Therapy Program Director at the University of Cincinnati. He is also a consultant for the NeuroRestorative community based brain injury rehabilitation programs in Kentucky. Dr. Wheeler has more than 20 years of experience in brain injury related teaching, research, and clinical work, has presented nationally and internationally, and has numerous publications, including co-authoring the American Occupational Therapy Associations *Practice Guidelines for Adults with Traumatic Brain Injury*. Prior to his appointment with the University of Cincinnati, Dr. Wheeler served as Associate Chair of Occupational Therapy at the West Virginia University School of Medicine. He is a past recipient of the Elizabeth Devereaux Service Award by the West Virginia Board of Occupational Therapy, the Excellence in Teaching Faculty Award by the West Virginia University Injury Control Research Center, and the Outstanding Mentor Award by the American Occupational Therapy Association.

### **Rick Yount, MS:**

Rick Yount is the executive director with Warrior Canine Connection in Boyds, Maryland. He has served in the field of social work for more than 25 years. He has involved Animal Assisted Therapy in his practice for the past 15 of those years. Rick holds a bachelor's degree from West Virginia University and a master's degree in Assistance Dog Education. He combined his social work knowledge and experience with his service dog training background to develop a novel intervention to help Service Members with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Rick pioneered the first therapeutic service dog training program at the Palo Alto, CA Veterans Hospital in 2008.