

# *The Langston*

Vol 25 Iss 3

Tabor 100 Newsletter

## *Joanne Harrell First Lady of Seattle*

Distinguished.

Educated.

Leader.

Mentor.

**Embracing the female  
leaders in our own  
community in recognition of  
Women's History Month**

MARCH 2025

  
**Tabor**

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*Photo credit: image by Freepik*



## Tabor Neighbors!

This is one of the best times of the year for me. We are shaking off our winter doldrums and heading into Spring, a magical time in the Pacific Northwest.

For many of us, the change in season this year does not bring the joy it usually does. The aggressive attacks on DEI, a tilt toward revitalization of Jim Crow, and the real fear of deportation many immigrants and other people of color face.

While we cannot do everything, Tabor 100 intends to work diligently to ensure the health and wealth of our members.

We welcome you to the HUB for the use of our office space and meetings rooms.

We offer technical assistance to help grow your business. We have many local and state government partners who hold “office hours” at our building and are anxious to talk with you about opportunities in their respective institutions. We have provided grant and no “payback” loans to businesses and are looking to do more in 2025.

While the horizon at the federal level looks bleak, we have local governments here who

**“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”**

**– Galations 6:9**

value ensuing that everyone get an opportunity to benefit from the tax monies they contribute. We also intend to align more with the private sector and give you access to opportunities offered in that arena.

Locally, there has been much “pushback” to much of what we are seeing from the federal government. Ensuring that all of us prosper is an important objective of our local leaders many of whom are people of color.

And talking about local leaders, I want to applaud DeSean Quinn in his appointment to the King County Council. DeSean has been a long-time supporter of Tabor 100 and was at our last general membership meeting, ensuring he heard from us about how to make the county an even great ally

to Tabor and your business. Let me end by letting you know that regardless of what you hear from the national government, we are working to help you and your business thrive and will continue to do so. I invite you to become a member, use our services, and, if you are so inclined, volunteer to serve in a Tabor 100 leadership position. It is true that when you give of yourself, you are rewarded.

**Ollie Garrett | CEO and President**



# Door Swings

March 2025 Visits | 704  
Since Opening | 25,879

*Happy Women's  
History Month!*



We must stand together –  
Still, we Rise!

We are not  
going back!!

## SAVE the DATE

- 12 APRIL** OSHA 30 Certification Class  
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
@ The Hub
- 19 APRIL** OSHA 30 Certification Class  
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
@ The Hub
- 22 APRIL** Bookkeeping Clean Up  
6:00 - 8:00 PM  
@ The Hub
- 26 APRIL** OSHA 30 Certification Class  
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
@ The Hub
- 10 MAY** OSHA 30 Certification Class  
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
@ The Hub

## New Members – MARCH

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Hans BITEGHET</b><br>Golden Trade<br>International LLC          | <b>Dominique Remy</b><br>1DROP                |
| <b>Robin Strom</b><br>Mortenson                                    | <b>Gurdev Mann</b><br>SKRA LLC                |
| <b>Felicia Bell, CPCM</b><br>Bechtel Infrastructure<br>Corporation | <b>Vananh Vuong</b><br>S&A Financial LLC      |
| <b>Alfred White</b><br>TLOEP LLC                                   | <b>Mie Kim</b><br>Fronza & Francis LLC.       |
| <b>Brooke Gibson</b><br>Washington Trust Bank                      | <b>Tory Crawford</b><br>Fronza & Francis LLC. |
|  | <b>Walter Terry</b><br>Nat Turner Revolution  |

Have a question related to  
labor laws?  
Scan this QR code or email:  
zene.hall@tabor100.org



Seattle Office of  
Labor Standards

# NEW EMPLOYEE Darold Bivens

*By Darold Bivens*



**I am grateful and excited to join the Tabor 100 team as its newest**

program coordinator! I have spent the last three years as a project coordinator for a human services organization that helped provide subcontracted and in-house services towards providers and community members within Washington State DDA/DSHS, King County and Snohomish County. My academic background is within Journalism/Media Production (BA) and Organizational Leadership (MAOL). I also have multiple years of customer service experience, pride myself on building relationship building and consider myself a servant leader. Born and raised in Battleground, WA, I spent the majority of my life living in all parts of the Evergreen state and currently reside in Renton, WA. Growing up, I was fortunate enough to have two loving parents who did everything

they could to provide me a stable upbringing and opportunities to set me up for success. Therefore, I have a personal mantra- leave people better off than when you found them. We are in very turbulent times and I've seen people I care about express fear, uncertainty and decided I can't just stand by and do nothing. Thus, I aim for dealing with such uncertainty by using my gifts and privileges to support others, inspire others and give them the ability to be successful and pay it forward towards others. This is why I joined Tabor 100 – I admire it's mission to setup minority-owned businesses for success and believe my professional background, academic background and drive can help make a meaningful impact towards this mission. In my freetime, I love watching standup comedy, and pursuing standup comedy on a local level as a passion project. My aspirations

are to pursue a career in project management by day and standup by night. My main hobbies are playing the latest video game on PS5 or Laptop, or having date nights with my wife. I am humbled to have an incredibly supportive and talented team at Tabor 100 and am looking forward to learning how I can grow and improve to best support our community members. If you have any questions, or would like to introduce yourself, please feel free to contact me at darold.bivens@tabor100.org or my direct line at (425)-528-0117

# Joanne Harrell: A Legacy of Excellence, Empowerment, and Community Impact

By Crystal Wright



**In a world where success is often measured by titles and accolades, Joanne Harrell stands as a testament to something more**

profound—the power of vision, self-belief, and community service. As we celebrate Women's History Month, Harrell's journey from a young girl in Washington DC and Tacoma to becoming one of Seattle's most influential leaders offers valuable insights for entrepreneurs and community builders alike.

## Foundations of Excellence

Growing up in an achievement-oriented household, Harrell was "programmed for success" from an early age. Her mother, a teacher who passed away when Joanne was around 11, instilled in her children the importance of education and visualization.

"We have to put the visions in our kids' heads," Harrell emphasizes, reflecting on how her mother would have the children map out their educational journeys years in advance. This early programming created a foundation where college wasn't just a possibility—it was an expectation.

After her mother's passing, Harrell's father, a disciplined military veteran, continued to reinforce these values. When faced with being the only African-American student in her calculus class, her father advised her to "learn to make yourself heard"—advice that would serve her throughout her impressive career.

"If you tell a four or five-year-old kid that they are crap, they're going to believe it. If you tell them, 'Wow, you can learn anything. You're beautiful. You're brilliant,' they're going to believe it."

## Breaking Barriers with Practical Wisdom

Harrell's approach to life and career is refreshingly practical. After earning her B.A. in Communications-

Advertising and an M.B.A. in Marketing from the University of Washington, she embarked on a journey that would include becoming the first Black CEO of United Way of King County and spending 20 years at Microsoft, retiring as Senior Director for USA AI, Sustainability & Market Development Strategy.

What's striking about Harrell's perspective is her refusal to see herself as disadvantaged. "I never felt disadvantaged. I never saw myself as disadvantaged at all," she shares. "I never focused on what I didn't have. I just figured I could learn it."

This mindset, coupled with her mother's early teaching that "as a woman, you always need to be able to take care of yourself," has guided her approach to both personal and professional relationships.

"Relationships are better when each person brings something to the table."

## Community Impact and Future Vision

Now semi-retired, Harrell continues to make significant contributions as an Adjunct Professor at the UW Foster School of Business and through her service on multiple boards, including Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center and Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS).

Her work with EOS particularly reflects her commitment to educational equity, ensuring all children have access

to advanced educational opportunities regardless of background. This passion stems from her own experiences in tracked educational systems that weren't always equitable.

As the wife of Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell, she embraces her role as a partner in community building: "My goal is to look around the community in the various places that I participate... and make sure that I do the best I can to drive the greatest impact."

## Embracing Authenticity

Perhaps one of the most powerful aspects of Harrell's journey is her embrace of authenticity. From her decision to wear her hair natural to her choice to let her gray hair show, she exemplifies the liberation that comes with self-acceptance.

"Our self-acceptance is so important as part of our identity to feel good about ourselves," she notes,

touching on how these personal choices connect to larger issues of identity and representation for Black women.

For the Tabor 100 community, Harrell's journey offers valuable lessons in resilience, practical wisdom, and community impact. Her story reminds us that success isn't just about individual achievement—it's about creating pathways for others and using our talents to benefit the community.

As we continue working to promote economic power, educational excellence, and social equity, Joanne Harrell's example shows us what's possible when vision meets determination, and when personal success becomes a platform for community empowerment.

"We don't need a DEI focus to be successful. We just need to continue to work to make sure the landscape is fair, and remove institutional barriers. And our children have to have resilience, fortitude and strength."

## MATT JONES is defying convention as DES' new interim director

**Long-time Department of Enterprise Services leader Matt Jones** was recently appointed as DES interim director. Jones has been with DES since its creation in 2011, including leading security and visitor services for Washington's Capitol Campus, and most recently as DES' interim chief operations officer.

In that role, Jones led DES' broad portfolio of services, including facilities, real estate, print and mail, capital projects, risk management, small agency services, and care and custody of the Capitol Campus.

Pamela Duncan, DES' chief transformation officer, has worked closely with Jones. Pamela has been attending Tabor 100 regularly since joining DES and holding office hours once a month to answer questions about DES and hear from the business community.



"When I started at DES, Matt took the time to come get me and take me on a tour of the Capitol Campus. He explained the role of his division and helped me have context for the importance of our work to care for the Capitol Campus," Pamela shared. "I observed how Matt shows up in agency meetings as a white man fully aware of his privilege and willing to do the hard work to make sure we advance equity in all the

spaces we have influence. He is an active, not passive, participant in that space."

When asked about his priorities for DES, Jones shared, "DES must focus on mission-critical services that directly benefit the people and businesses of Washington and embrace our value to defy convention. We must listen to our communities, hear and understand their needs, and implement improvements. Now is the time to take action."

You can learn more about the actions DES is taking by attending a DES Tabor 100 drop-in session:

Third Friday of each month from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Last Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

**J**oe Nguyễn is the Director of the Washington State

Department of Commerce, where he is leading the charge to build a more inclusive, sustainable, and dynamic economy for all Washingtonians. A proud son of Vietnamese refugees who fled war and persecution, Joe was born and raised in White Center, where his lived experience navigating poverty and opportunity shaped his values around equity, service, and community.

Before his appointment, Joe served as a State Senator representing South Seattle and the 34th Legislative District, where he championed legislation to support working families, invest in clean energy, and expand access to opportunity. He also spent over a decade in the private sector working in technology and innovation, bridging the gap between cutting-edge solutions and real-world needs.

As Commerce Director, Joe is focused on delivering fast,

## Joe Nguyễn – Director of the Washington State Department of Commerce

affordable solutions to our state's biggest challenges—like affordable housing, infrastructure, workforce development, and economic mobility. His approach centers on breaking down silos, accelerating implementation, and making sure that communities who have been historically left out—especially communities of color and small businesses—are front and center in the state's economic future.

Joe's leadership reflects a core belief: that Washington's

strength lies in its diversity, its entrepreneurial spirit, and the resilience of its people. He is committed to partnering with organizations like Tabor 100 to ensure Black-owned businesses and entrepreneurs of color have equitable access to capital, procurement opportunities, and state investments.

With deep roots in the community, a record of results, and a bold vision for inclusive growth, Joe Nguyễn brings both urgency and optimism to his work at Commerce—and invites partners across Washington to help build a future where everyone can thrive.



## Empowering Through Motherhood and Entrepreneurship:

An interview with Grace Perez, owner of Noah's Trucking LLC

**G**race Perez, the owner of Joah's Trucking LLC,

started her entrepreneurial journey to create a better balance between motherhood and career. After the birth of her second child, she left her corporate job to build a business that would allow her to be more present with her family while maintaining financial independence.

"Motherhood was a huge motivator for me," Grace explains. "I wanted more control over my time. The corporate life was exhausting, especially after having two young children, so I knew I needed a change."

With a background in accounting and consulting, Grace teamed up with a partner to launch Noah's Trucking LLC. What began as a behind-the-scenes role quickly evolved as Grace took on operations, compliance, and marketing responsibilities. Over time, she became the public face of the company, while her partner handled day-to-day operations.

Grace's presence in the male-dominated trucking industry

has become an inspiration for many. "At first, I didn't see it as a male-dominated field—I just wanted to make it work for my family. But over time, I realized the impact I could have as a woman in this space."

Her passion for empowerment extends beyond her business. Grace is dedicated to uplifting minorities, particularly women of color, and creating opportunities for others. "My children will never have less than I had," she says. "As a business owner, I can give others the same chances and inspire a ripple effect of empowerment."

Being a member of Tabor 100 has been a significant source of support for Grace. "Being around like-minded people, especially those who look like me, has been incredibly inspiring," she says. Through Tabor's technical assistance program, Grace refined her business vision, with help from consultants like Estrella Sung, who guided her along the way.

Grace's advice for aspiring entrepreneurs is clear: "Do your research and go for it. It's always scarier in your mind than in reality." She stresses the importance of calculated risks and staying true to one's purpose.

Grace hopes her legacy will be one of inspiration, kindness, and empowerment. "I want to inspire others to believe in themselves," she says. "Success comes through compassion, intelligence, and confidence."

Grace Perez's story proves that entrepreneurship can offer financial freedom and the power to inspire and empower others. With determination and support, anyone can achieve their dreams.



# March Highlights



# Membership Meeting





# Access to Equal Opportunity

The Port of Seattle is committed to building a strong, inclusive economy. With the Diversity in Contracting Resolution, we're making sure that includes businesses like yours.

Our goal is to triple the number of women and minority-owned businesses that contract with the Port by 2024 and remove barriers to expand the development of other disadvantaged business enterprises.

## **GROW YOUR BUSINESS AND SKILLS WITH THE PORT:**

### **1. Bid on open contacts**

Register your business in our database, and search and apply for contracts through a clear and fair process on <http://bit.ly/Facts19>.

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<http://bit.ly/Facts19>