



## President's Letter 2021:

Founded in 1996, the Greater Houston Business & Ethics Roundtable (GHBER) is the oldest local ethics and compliance organization. I hope you will renew your membership in 2021 so that GHBER can continue to lead the discussion on ethics and compliance in Houston and help train the next generation of ethics and compliance professionals through our scholarship program.

Before I reflect on 2020 and tell you about our plans for 2021, I'd like to thank Tom Fox, our past president, on behalf of myself and the entire GHBER board. Tom's leadership as GHBER president elevated the organization and we are forever grateful for his guidance and his passion for the compliance profession. Thank you Tom!

Because of the global pandemic, like many professional organizations, we had to quickly pivot from our in-person sessions to a webinar format. Our capable board, compliance vendors that donated their webinar platforms and expert speakers who were willing and ready to alter their presentations for a virtual experience made the transition possible. With this format we continued to have world class experts speak on advanced and timely topics. We also provided CLE hours for every online session at no extra cost to members. Our 2020 programming had a slate of national experts speak on the following topics: OFAC Sanctions, Data Analytics & Compliance Programs, Compliance Issues Related to the Pandemic and Global Risk Survey (by Control Risk). Our summer member workshop was held virtually over 5 days with one-hour webinars from five different speakers on different topics related to "Building or Enhancing a Compliance Program During a Pandemic". The members workshop and all webinars were very well-attended. We were pleased to provide such valuable content to our members.

We are proud to say that GHBER received some national recognition in 2020. Because of Tom Fox' renowned stature as a compliance thought leader, prolific compliance publisher and podcaster and his involvement in GHBER, he was selected to be part of the U.S. team to meet with the OECD for the Phase 4 report on U.S. anti-bribery/anti-corruption efforts. It was a well-deserved post and a bonus recognition for GHBER.

Our 2020 Bette Stead Leadership award was given to Natalia Shehadeh. Obviously, we could not hold our annual awards dinner last May and honor Natalia in person. The compliance community in Houston is very aware of Natalia's esteemed compliance career and the decision to bestow the award on her was an easy one. One of the criteria for the award is not just a successful compliance career but also giving back to the compliance community. Natalia has long promoted a compliance program at South Texas College of Law and last year that became a reality. With the support of Dean Cherie Taylor and Natalia's guidance, STCL now has one of the few official compliance programs at a U.S. law school. Students are already enrolled! Our own Tom Fox and local Ethics & Compliance Officer, Ryan Rabalais, are already committed as professors. Join us in celebrating and supporting this achievement in compliance education.

The education mission of GHBER is to assist bringing the next generation of compliance and ethics practitioners into our profession. Each year, GHBER provides \$2,500 individual scholarships to graduate students at five Houston colleges: Rice University, the University of Houston, Houston Baptist University, the University of St. Thomas and Texas Southern University. In 2020, STCL was added to the list. A scholarship in the name of Natalia Shehadeh will be awarded each year to a law student in the STCL compliance program.

Our 2021 plans:

- Continue to host great educational compliance programs as webinars with an optimistic hope to have live sessions at the end of the year if we can provide a safe setting for our members.
- Continue our scholarship program.
- Re-design our website to better showcase our resources for our members.
- Continue to offer CLE hours for members.
- Continue to lead the ethics and compliance discussion in Houston and beyond.

We hope to see all of our members back in 2021 and welcome new members as well.

Please join our GHBER LinkedIn page [here](#).

Our website is <https://greaterhoustonbusinessethicsroundtable.wildapricot.org/>

Thank you.

Vanessa Rossi  
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