

Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette's career spans engineering, IT, public service, and more than two decades in higher education. She is a staunch believer that education is the great equalizer and not an option. In August of 2022 she became the first female and African American to serve as President & CEO of Newfields.

Prior to her assignment at Newfields, Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette retired as the President and CEO of Huston-Tillotson University—Austin's oldest institution of higher learning and only Historical Black College and University (HBCU). She devoted her time in Austin to a singularly focused mission—ensuring that any and all barriers to her students' success are elucidated, deconstructed, and ultimately, obliterated. Her unwavering commitment to that mission resulted in Huston-Tillotson University forging strong reciprocal and sustainable partnerships such as Apple, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Indeed, Bank of America, Independent School Districts, and other sister institutions of higher education in the Central Texas region. Her roots of community engagement for the City of Austin run deep. She proudly served on the boards of E3 Alliance, Austin Community Foundation, Leadership Austin, Austin Transit Partnership, Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce, the Austin Area Urban League, DISCO, and Waterloo Greenway. Dr. Pierce Burnette has also served as the Chair of the Board of the Central Texas Collective for Racial Equity.

Dr. Pierce Burnette has received many accolades throughout her career. To name a few – she received the Barbara Jordan Legacy award, the DIVINC Champion of Change award, she was named the 2021 Austinite of the Year by the Austin Chamber of Commerce for her work and engagement in the Austin community. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the Indianapolis Chapter of The Links, Incorporated.

Born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, Dr. Pierce Burnette is a mother, a wife, an engineer, a lover of music, dogs, books, and champagne. She received her high school diploma in Cleveland, Ohio, from John F. Kennedy High School, a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from The Ohio State University, and a Master of Science in Administration from Georgia College. She is a graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Management Development Program and received her Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration from the University of Pennsylvania. She is married to retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Daarel Burnette, and they have two adult children, Daarel II and Daana.

Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette is thrilled to be a part of this community. She has a vision for Newfields coupled with a commitment to continuing the work of the board approved 2018-2028 Strategic Plan. She's a true vessel for change on a mission to build a "beloved community" within the city of Indianapolis and beyond.