

**Amanda K. Edwards** is a native Houstonian and a former At-Large City Council Member with a passion for empowering our community. Her hands-on, results-oriented servant leadership is focused on providing information and resources to residents and obtaining results with impact. Amanda is an accomplished attorney with extensive public finance experience, a grassroots public servant, and an effective community advocate. Amanda is also the founder of a community non-profit with a particular focus on seniors and women. Amanda is now running to serve the historic 18th Congressional District in the United States Congress.

Amanda's father was diagnosed with cancer when she was a child. By witnessing her father's battle with cancer, as well as her mother's much later on, Amanda learned firsthand that public service and policy could be a matter of life or death in many households. Her appreciation that policy matters, and can have substantial impacts on families, has given her serious purpose in her mission to craft meaningful policy and serve communities with a sense of urgency.

As a City Council Member, Amanda initiated and led Houston's Technology & Innovation Task Force to build a more robust and innovative Houston economy. The Task Force, led by Edwards, recommended the creation of an Innovation District. Phase One of the Innovation District, The Ion, a multi-use tech space, is complete and serves as a hub for Houston's technology and innovation ecosystem. Her work in tech and innovation helped contribute to an increase in investment in Houston's start-ups by nearly ten-fold.

While on City Council, Amanda initiated The City of Houston Women and Minority-Owned Business Task Force in response to prior data illustrating that minority-owned businesses are three times less likely to gain access to capital. Edwards helped form BEAMW, which supports women and minority small businesses by reducing barriers they face when seeking to access capital. BEAMW has furthered a vision for helping the mom-and-pop shops of Main street to thrive. Financial preparedness counseling is an example of the work they have provided to women and minority small businesses.

Amanda's experience as a public finance attorney proved invaluable during her tenure on the City Council as the city grappled with budgetary deficits and pension reform. Amanda served as the Vice Chair of the Budget & Fiscal Affairs Committee, authored numerous measures to ensure more accountability and good stewardship of the city's limited resources, and helped lead budgetary sessions analyzing the city's \$5.1 billion budget. Amanda also served on the Economic Development Committee.

While on City Council, Amanda initiated Houston's High-Capacity Transit Task Force as part of the Transportation Policy Council to lay the groundwork for a regional transit system that can serve an expected population increase of 4.2 million people between now and 2045. Edwards served on the Board of Directors for the National League of Cities and successfully advocated to prevent substantial federal cuts in CDBG funding, which supports housing and economic development in cities.

When Hurricane Harvey resulted in 51 inches of rainfall in Houston in 2017, Amanda organized hundreds of volunteers to provide ongoing relief efforts for Houston's most vulnerable. Her work focused on hundreds of households in areas with high concentrations of low-income seniors.

Amanda graduated from Eisenhower High School in Aldine ISD. She earned a B.A. in Political Science from Emory University in 2004. While at Emory, Amanda served as a Community Building and Social Change Fellow, and she worked in six Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to achieve comprehensive community-based results. She served as president of the undergraduate student body and was inducted into the Emory University Hall of Fame. After graduating from Emory, she worked for Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee in Washington, D.C., before earning her Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School, where she was a student attorney for the Criminal Justice Institute. While at Harvard, Amanda was awarded the Elaine Osborne Jacobson Award for serving underserved populations in the healthcare law arena.

Compelled by the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Amanda relocated to New Orleans. While in New Orleans, Amanda

served as a judicial law clerk for Federal District Court Judge Ivan Lemelle and founded Project NOW: The New Orleans Writing Project, which inspired New Orleans youth to empower themselves and their community through the power of writing.

Amanda returned to Houston with a broadened perspective and an interest in impacting her community. Amanda practiced law for years as a public finance lawyer, where she solved complex issues relating to tax-exempt bond financings, public-private partnerships, and non-profit organizations. As a result of her practice, she has extensive knowledge of funding public projects at every level of government. She has practiced law at both Vinson & Elkins LLP and Bracewell LLP. She helped her clients navigate challenges and issue over 2 billion dollars in tax-exempt debt to build hospitals, universities, and public infrastructure and facilities.

Amanda resides in the core of Houston and attends St. Monica Catholic Church in Acres Homes. Amanda serves on the Advisory Council of Accelerator for America and has served on boards ranging from the National League of Cities to Houston Exponential and Project Row Houses. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., as well as the Houston Chapter of The Links, Inc. Amanda has been named a Rising Texas Star by Super Lawyers, 40 Under 40 Nation's Best Advocates by the National Bar Association, Top 30 Influential Women of Houston, Houston Woman Magazine's 50 Most Influential Women, Emory University's 40 Under 40 Award, the Houston Lawyers Association Aloysius Wickliiff Community Service Award, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. 68<sup>th</sup> Boule Vanguard Award, Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Leader Award, National Bar Association Power 50 List, and Houston Area Urban League Young Professionals Advocacy Award, among others. Amanda has been featured by multiple media outlets, including: NBC, ABC, CNN, MSNBC, Fox Business, Essence, Black Enterprise, The Root, The New York Times, NPR, Politico, The HILL, The Houston Chronicle and The Texas Tribune, among others. While Amanda has received many accolades for her legal and community work, she finds empowering communities to be her greatest reward.