

# 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Arkansas Safe Schools Conference

Wyndahm Riverfront Hotel

#2 Riverfront Place

North Little Rock, AR

**July 18-20, 2022**

## Keynote Speakers:



### Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman

*“Safe Schools and Healthy Students”*

Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, has five patents to his name, has published four novels, two children’s books, and six non-fiction books to include his “perennial bestseller” *On Killing* (with over half a million copies sold), and a New York Times best-selling book co-authored with Glenn Beck. He is a US Army Ranger, a paratrooper, and a former West Point Psychology Professor.

Col. Grossman’s research was cited by the President of the United States in a national address, and he has testified before the U.S. Senate, the U.S. Congress, and numerous state legislatures. He has served as an expert witness and consultant in state and Federal courts. He helped train mental health professionals after the Jonesboro school massacre, and he was also involved in counseling or court cases in the aftermath of the Paducah, Springfield, Littleton and Nickel Mines Amish school massacres.

Col. Grossman has been called upon to write the entry on “Aggression and Violence” in the Oxford Companion to American Military History, three entries in the Academic Press Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict and has presented papers before the national conventions of the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Since his retirement from the US Army in 1998, he has been on the road almost 300 days a year, for over 19 years, as one of our nation's leading trainers for military, law enforcement, mental health providers, and school safety organizations.

In his presentation, Lt. Col. Grossman turns his research on the psychology of violence inside out, applying the lessons he has learned into a presentation with a core thesis everyone can agree on: We must protect the children who have been entrusted to our care. That means facing some uncomfortable facts, including violent children, terrorists, and the lagging security systems when something does happen. Taking into context the tragedies of school massacres from Jonesboro to Columbine and further, Col. Grossman outlines a series of strategies to help keep our kids safe, including immediate and long-term solutions.



## **Molly Hudgens**

### ***“Saving Sycamore: The School Shooting That Never Happened”***

Molly Hudgens is currently completing her twenty-first year as an educator in the Cheatham County School System where she serves as a school counselor at Sycamore Middle School in Pleasant View, Tennessee. In addition to her counseling role, Mrs. Hudgens also currently serves on SMS's Crisis Management and Leadership Teams as well as sponsoring the Jr. Beta Society at her school.

After a personal experience in college, her interest in violence prevention and safety sparked a desire to educate others who work with intervening in the lives of potentially violent teenagers. Her in-depth study on school shootings and the teenagers who commit these acts, “Recognizing Red Flags,” has been utilized nationally to train professionals in the fields of education, law enforcement, juvenile probation, and juvenile court. The training focuses on understanding the three types of school shooters and how to use threat assessment tools as an intervention to prevent violent acts in a school and community setting.

Mrs. Hudgens put her training to use on September 28, 2016, when she talked a student with a loaded handgun out of committing a mass shooting at Sycamore Middle School. Hudgens, the 2004-2005 and 2016-2017 Sycamore Middle School and Cheatham County Middle School Teacher of the Year, became a Congressional Medal of Honor Citizens

Honor Citizens Honor recipient for a Single Act of Heroism from the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation in March of 2017. She is also the 2017 recipient of the Tennessee School Counseling Association's Phoebe White Award for Excellence in School Counseling and the 2019 Mental Health of the Midsouth's I.C. Hope Award for bringing mental health awareness to schools.

Hudgens is a member of the Professional Educators of Tennessee and the American School Counseling Association. Mrs. Hudgens is the owner of Molly B. Hudgens Communications and is a national motivational speaker as well as a violence prevention specialist.

In her presentation, Molly shares the story of how she prevented a school shooting on September 28, 2016. When a student with a fully loaded semi-automatic handgun came to her with a plan to kill people on the school's campus, he told her, "I came to you because you're the only person who can talk me out of this." After a ninety-minute intervention, the student relinquished the weapon to Hudgens with no shots fired and no lives lost. Hudgens' retelling of the event walks the audience through the specifics of the incident that took place in her office and highlights previous training that affected her decision-making process during the event. Hudgens speaks boldly of her faith throughout and challenges those in attendance to remember that every human interaction matters and that one life can make a difference. Hudgens became the first Tennessean and only the tenth woman to become a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation's Citizens Medal of Honor for her efforts that day.



## **Thomas Pennington**

***"Constitutional Issues: How to Successfully Navigate First and Fourth Amendment Issues That Arise in Public Schools"***

Thomas W. Pennington has served as University Counsel for Arkansas Tech University since 1996. He is also a Professor of Legal Studies. He has taught Business Law, Introduction to Criminal Justice and Hospitality Law at the undergraduate level as well as School Law courses at the graduate level. Mr. Pennington has presented at conferences and school districts throughout the state on a variety of topics including legal implications of social media and First and Fourth Amendment Issues that arise in public schools. In 2004, 2012, 2014, and 2016 he was selected as Professor of the Year by the Arkansas Tech University student body.

## Motivational Speaker:



### Steve Roberts

Steve has spent more than a decade as the head football coach for several college universities. He earned his Master of Education degree from Southern Arkansas University (SAU) and also served as the head football coach there from 1994-1999. While at SAU, he was a member of the SAU Hall of Fame. In 200-2001, Steve was the head football coach at Northwestern State University where he was a finalist for the Eddie Robinson National Coach of the Year award and had multiple players selected in the NFL draft. Steve was the head coach at Arkansas State University (ASU) from 2002-2010. During his time as coach at ASU, he was named SunBelt Coach of the Year, was nationally recognized for the team's graduation rates, had multiple players to be selected in the NFL draft, and had the most D1 wins in school history. Steve came to ASU and brought with him a fresh enthusiasm, energy and an "I Will" philosophy that was adopted by everyone associated with the program.

Steve was the Director of Athletics at the Cabot School District from 2011-2016 and is currently an Associate Executive Director of the Arkansas Activity Association.