

## Colette Pierce Burnette

Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette is the President and CEO of Huston-Tillotson University—Austin’s oldest institution of higher learning and only Historical Black College and University (HBCU). Born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio she is a mother, a wife, an engineer, a lover of music, dogs, books, and champagne. Dr. Pierce Burnette has combined her entrepreneurial spirit and technical knowledge to forge successful careers in engineering, information technology, and higher education. She is a staunch believer that *education is the great equalizer and not an option*. Since President Pierce Burnette’s 2015 arrival to Austin, she has been a woman on a singularly focused mission—ensuring that any and all barriers to her students’ success are elucidated, deconstructed, and ultimately, obliterated. Her unwavering commitment to this mission has 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 for she currently or proudly has served on the boards of E3 Alliance, Austin Community Foundation, Leadership Austin, Austin Transit Partnership, Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce, and the Austin Area Urban League, DISCO, and Waterloo Greenway. She is the Chair of the Board of the Central Texas Collective for Racial Equity. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the Austin Chapter of The Links, Incorporated. She received the Barbara Jordan Legacy award, the DIVINC Champion of Change award, and was named the 2021 Austinite of the Year by the Austin Chamber of Commerce for her work and engagement in the Austin community.

President Pierce Burnette 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.

President Pierce Burnette is married to retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Daarel Burnette, and they have two adult children (Daarel II of Washington, DC and Daana of Los Angeles, CA).