

RODNEY AHART

Rodney Ahart is a third generation Austinite, a product of the Austin Independent School District and the first and only of five children to obtain a college degree.

As a Presidential Achievement Scholar, Rodney graduated from Texas A&M University in 1992 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. After graduation, Rodney worked as a judicial assistant and a successful salesman in the retail industry.

In 1997, Rodney began what would become nine years and five legislative sessions of experience in the Texas Legislature. While working at the Capitol, Rodney gained valuable experience on diverse issues such as education, health, business & industry, appropriations and the environment. Relating to higher education, Rodney was directly involved with the ten percent automatic admission legislation and its implementation at Johnston and L.B.J. High Schools in Austin, secured funding for a distance learning consortium among Huston-Tillotson College, Jarvis Christian, Paul Quinn, Texas and Wiley Colleges and partnered with the Governor's office on the Statewide Reading Initiative, "Read to Succeed."

Currently, Rodney serves as the Regional Government Relations Director for the American Cancer Society, Central Texas (ACS). As a public health policy specialist, Ahart works to ensure that local state and national elected officials are informed and engaged in the fight against cancer. Ahart also serves on the ACS School Health, Constituent Relationship Management and Diversity statewide strategic planning teams. Most notably, Rodney spearheaded the citizen-driven ballot initiative to make all restaurants, music venues, bars, bowling alleys and billiard halls smoke-free September 1, 2005. He received the Texas ACS "Excellence in Advocacy Award" for passing this citywide public health law. Rodney was also ranked fifth in the *Capitol Inside's* "Second Annual Texas Lobby Power Rankings" for Non-Profit Organizations. In 2006, Rodney accepted the Austin Business Journal's Health Care Hero Award on behalf of the ACS for leading the effort to make public places and worksites smoke-free. Earlier the same year, Ahart was named 2006 Exemplary Austin Toastmaster. In 2008, Rodney received the prestigious Austin Under 40 award in the category of medical and healthcare.

Rodney's volunteer work includes teaching recent immigrants English as a Second Language for Literacy Austin, counseling families through crisis for the Texas Runaway and Youth Hotline, providing scholarship opportunities for high school students as a member of The University of Texas at Austin Community Advisory Board and ensuring mental health services for hundreds of individuals affected by HIV/AIDS as a member of the Waterloo Counseling Center Board. Rodney also serves as a greeter for his community congregation - Ebenezer Baptist Church, a member of the Zachary Scott Theatre Board of Directors and president of the Windsor Park Neighborhood Association.

Ahart is a graduate of Leadership Austin. He currently is Vice Chair of the City of Austin Environmental Board, the 2006 Bond Election Advisory Committee serving on the facilities and open space subcommittees and has served on the Urban Transportation Commission. Rodney weight trains regularly, enjoys spending time with his twin brother and wants to visit South Africa again real soon.