



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 7, 2026

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SPEAKERS AT THE TEXAS CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN REVEAL WOMEN ARE MEETING FAST-CHANGING TIMES WITH CONFIDENCE AND COLLABORATION

America Ferrera, Hoda Kotb, Ilona Maher, Codie Sanchez, and Tunde Oyeneyin Addressed More Than 9,000 Attendees

AUSTIN, Texas, Oct. 7, 2026 — For anyone who thought navigating today's fast-changing world is weighing women down, the speakers, the crowd, and the mood at this week's Texas Conference for Women would have made them think again.

While the rapid pace of today's change is undeniable, keynote speakers who took to the Moody Center stage emanated boldness, collaboration, and a commitment to becoming all they can be and owning it.

More than 9,000 women attended the 27th annual Texas Conference for Women in Austin on October 5. The Conference attracted attendees from across a wide range of industries, organizations, career stages and backgrounds to gain practical skills, explore new possibilities and build relationships to help them move forward.

Ilona Maher, two-time Team USA Rugby Olympian and Olympic Bronze Medalist, said, "What's been interesting to me recently is seeing the women around me who—you know, how insecure sometimes we can all be—and I'm recognizing, wow, what a brave thing we could do: we could all choose to just be confident and enjoy ourselves for who we are."

Known for her "beast energy," Maher added that she originally thought that meant, "Can I be the best, toughest rugby player? Now, it's about putting myself out there in many other ways."

Hoda Kotb, former longtime co-anchor of the Today Show, *New York Times* bestselling author, and founder and CEO of Joy 101, a new wellness-focused community and platform, also reflected on the spirit that fuels successful transitions.

"I think whenever you're on the verge of a jump, whatever it is, it's totally and completely scary. To leave something you've known your whole life and say bye to it is hard," she said.

But many transitions are possible, she added, encouraging attendees to “Play out all your chapters. Don’t live in one and go ‘Well. That’s it.’ There are multiple chapters ahead.”

Other keynote speakers included **America Ferrera**, the award-winning actor, director, and producer best known for roles in *Ugly Betty*, *Real Women Have Curves*, and *Barbie*; **Codie Sanchez**, founder and CEO of Contrarian Thinking and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Main Street Millionaire*; and **Tunde Oyeneyin**, *New York Times* bestselling author, and elite Peloton cycling and bike bootcamp instructor.

Beyond the keynote stage, attendees took part in Power Talks on career growth, leadership and wellbeing; accessed career coaching, résumé reviews and professional headshots; met authors; and connected through interactive experiences. The day concluded with a networking meetup on the Moody Center arena floor.

ABOUT THE TEXAS CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN

The Texas Conference for Women is part of CFW, the nation’s premier nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to accelerating leadership, career growth and wellbeing. For more than two decades, CFW has empowered over 1 million professionals at every stage and across every industry to reach their full potential.