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New Orleans  
**CITY BUSINESS**  
2009  
of the  
Year

2009  
Woman of the Year

*Kim Boyle*

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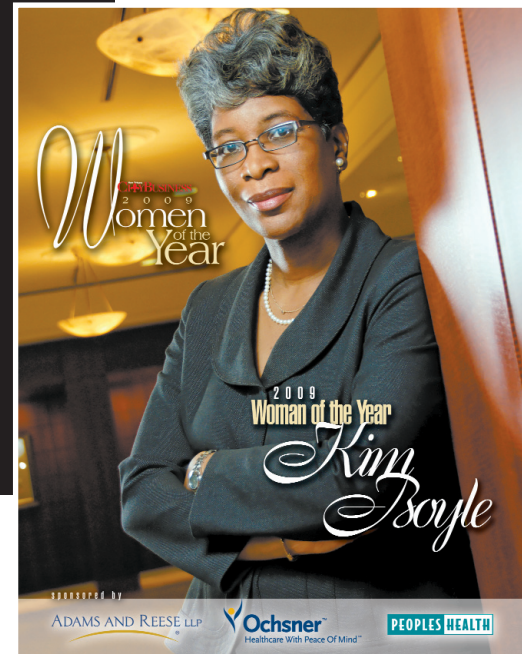
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# WOMEN of the Year

CityBUSINESS  
2009  
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## AN OUTSTANDING HONOR FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN



Congratulations to Carla Major on being named "Woman of the Year" by *New Orleans CityBusiness*. At Harrah's New Orleans, we've had the pleasure of having Carla Major on our team since we opened our doors 10 years ago. Over the years, Carla has proved to be a model citizen, an incredible community advocate, a compassionate coworker and a friend to so many of us here.



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& passionate  
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the lives of our patients while being  
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her patients is one reason we can say,  
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MARY GENOVESE, RN  
*Vice President of Critical Care  
East Jefferson General Hospital*

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## Boyle leads Women of the Year honorees in breaking barriers



Christian Moises

**K**im Boyle, the 2009 New Orleans CityBusiness Woman of the Year, is used to breaking barriers.

She was the first African-American woman to head the New Orleans Bar Association and the first to lead the Louisiana State Bar Association when she became president in June.

And while diversity in the legal profession is dear to her heart, one of her top priorities is helping people.

“There are a number of people in our state who need legal services for things such as wrongful evictions, divorces and child custody matters,” Boyle said. “We’ve seen situations where our elderly citizens are being abused financially as well as physically.”

The LSBA’s Access to Justice Committee works to identify attorneys who can help. And when it comes to pro bono work, Boyle leads by example.

For more than two years, she has served as lead counsel on the post-conviction appeal of a death penalty case, along with other members of her law firm, Phelps Dunbar. She also has provided pro bono legal counsel to Covenant House of New Orleans.

In the 11th year of Women of the Year, Boyle is one of 50 outstanding women recognized for their professional and

community achievements. They have shared their greatest challenges — professionally and personally — and the stories of how they overcame those difficulties to become leaders.

This year’s honorees have broken barriers across the business spectrum, from health care and construction to law and education. Their forward thinking, determination and effort extend beyond the workplace to community contributions that shape and improve the New Orleans area.

This year, CityBusiness welcomes five honorees to the Hall of Fame. Debra Bowers, Kim Boyle, Mignon Faget, Angela O’Byrne and Kim Sport join five members of an elite group of women who have been honored three times as Women of the Year.

Even though they are no longer eligible to be selected as honorees, they — and all of the honorees — will continue to drive New Orleans forward and serve as outstanding representatives of the community.

CityBusiness thanks each of them for their professional and civic efforts and the difference they make. •

*News Editor Christian Moises can be reached at 293-9249 or by e-mail at christian.moises@nopg.com.*

### Hall of Fame

*Women of the Year are inducted in the Hall of Fame when they are honored for a third time.*

#### 2006

**PK. Sheerle**  
Honoree 1999, 2000, 2006

#### 2008

**Julia Bland**  
Honoree 2000, 2006, 2008

**Donna Klein**  
Honoree 2001, 2006, 2008

**Priscilla Lawrence**  
Honoree 2006, 2007, 2008

**Carol Solomon**  
Honoree 2004, 2006, 2008

#### 2009

**Debra Bowers**  
Honoree 2006, 2007, 2009

**Kim Boyle**  
Honoree 2005, 2008, 2009

**Mignon Faget**  
Honoree 1999, 2006, 2009

**Angela O’Byrne**  
Honoree 2000, 2006, 2009

**Kim Sport**  
Honoree 1999, 2004, 2009



McGLINCHEY STAFFORD PLLC

**congratulates**

**and honors**

**Our Woman of the Year**

**Deborah D. Harkins**



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This ad has been approved by McGlinchey Stafford attorney Michael Ferachi.

# Past Honorees

## 1999

Phyllis Adams  
Jan Boatright  
Patricia Denechaud  
Maura Donahue  
Betsy Dresser

Lana Duke  
Nanci Easterling  
Midge Epstein  
Mignon Faget  
Donna Fraiche

Patricia Habeeb  
Connie Jacobs  
Leslie Rosenthal Jacobs  
Alice Kennedy  
Ti Martin

Judy Perry Martinez  
Elise McCullough  
Ruth Ann Menutis  
Siomonia Edwards Milton  
Phala Mire

Margaret Montgomery-Richard  
Karyn Noles  
Ruth Owens  
Sharon Perlis  
Nellie Stokes Perry

Leaudria Polk  
Kay Priestly  
Jan Ramsey  
Marguerite Redwine  
P.K. Scheerle

Flo Schornstein  
Janet Shea  
Kim Sport  
Carroll Suggs  
Barbara Turner Windhorst

## 2000

Tonia Aiken  
Lauren Anderson  
Carol Asher  
Judy Barrasso

Diane Barrilleaux  
Suzette Becker  
Elodia Blanco  
Julia Bland

Cindy Brennan  
Maureen Clary  
Sally Clausen  
Dr. Elizabeth Terrell

Hobgood Fontham  
Joni Friedmann  
Joanne Gallinghouse  
Brenda Garibaldi Hatfield

Paulette Hurdick  
Maureen Larkins  
Gay LeBreton  
Saundra Levy  
Londa Martin McCullough

Linda Mintz  
Judith Miranti  
Angela O'Byrne  
Rajender "Raj" Pannu  
Kay Priestly

Kat Rice  
P.K. Scheerle  
Eileen Skinner  
Bettye Parker Smith  
Sherry Walters

## 2001

Julie Condy  
Sherie Conrad  
Sheila Danzey  
Judy Dawson  
Ann Duplessis

Patti Elish  
Jean Felts  
Patricia Gray  
Beverly Gianna  
Sheilah Auderer Goodson

Norma Grace  
Deborah Ducote Keller  
Donna Guinn Klein  
Roselyn Koretzky  
Corvette Kowalski

Jennifer Magee  
Barbara Major  
Laurie Vignaud Marshall  
Suzanne Mestayer  
Nancy Morovich

Barbara Motley  
Roberta Musa  
Iona Myers  
Rickie Nutik  
Tina Owen

Sharon Rodi  
Wanda Sigur  
ChiQuita Simms  
Katherine Harlan Sippola  
Julie Skinner Stokes

Ruby Sumler  
Nancy Bissinger Timm  
Ollie Tyler  
Pam Wegmann  
Ann Wills

## 2002

Ann Cassagne Anderson  
Annie Avery  
Tribby Barnes  
Ginger Berrigan  
Dianne Boazman  
Donnie Marie Booth

Christine Briede  
Kay Brief  
Stephanie Bruno  
Kimberly Williamson Butler  
Jane Cooper  
Shirley Trusty Corey

Kay Dee  
Eugenie Jones Encalarde  
Alethia Gauthier  
Clem Goldberger  
Patricia Green  
Judith Halverson

Barbara Johnson  
Barbara Kaplinsky  
Ruth Kullman  
Sharon Litwin  
Ana Lopez  
Barbara MacPhee

Deborah Mavis  
Marguerite McDonald  
Cheryl Nickerson  
Danette O'Neal  
Jimmie Phillips  
Catherine Pierson

Jane Raiford  
Rhonda Robichaux  
Julie Rodriguez  
Judy Shano  
Sandy Shilstone  
Susan Spicer

Suzanne Thomas  
Deborah Villio  
Kay Wilkins  
Elizabeth Williams

## 2003

Donna K. Alley  
Dianne Baham  
Gaynell Bellizan  
Ruth Berggren  
Lolita Burrell  
Jeanette C. Butler

Vanessa Claiborne  
Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson  
Elaine E. Coleman  
Katherine Conklin  
Lisa Crinel  
Susan G. D'Antoni

M. Christine D'Antonio  
Sandra Dartus  
Camilla Q. Davis  
Catherine C. Dunn  
Carol Etter  
Peggy A. Feldmann

Susan K. Fielkow  
Deborah Duplechin Harkins  
Deborah C. Keel  
Patricia A. Krebs  
Mary Landrieu  
Janet E. Leigh

A. Kelton Longwell  
Charlotte Connick Mabry  
Laura K. Maloney  
Eve Barrie Masinter  
Elsie Mendez  
Eileen F. Powers

Tonnette "Toni" Rice  
Deborah B. Rouen  
Dionne M. Rousseau  
Diane M. Roussel  
Kim Ryan  
Grace Sheehan

Andrea Thornton  
Keeley Williams Verrett  
Dawn Wesson  
Charlee Williamson

## A salute to Whitney Banker Denise Williams.



Whitney Bank wishes to congratulate our own Denise Williams on being named one of *CityBusiness*' 50 Women of the Year. With more than 25 years of banking experience specializing in trust and investments, Denise is an excellent example of what it means to be a Whitney Banker. Congratulations, Denise, on this well-deserved honor.

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## Congratulations Marie!

for being chosen as an honoree for the

## CityBusiness 2009 Woman of the Year

Marie Moore  
Attorney at Law

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2004

Names in bold indicate individual Woman of the Year award winners

**Philomene "Missy" Allain**  
Rita Benson LeBlanc  
Barbara C. Booth  
Lally Brennan  
Valerie Cahill  
Karen Carter  
Audrey Cerise

Hallema Sharif Clyburn  
Dorothy M. Clyne  
Sandra Corrigan  
Elizabeth Coulon  
Virginia Davis  
Stephanie Dupuy  
Anita Gilford

Dana Meeks Hansel  
Lane Hindermann  
Andrea Huseman  
Ellen Kempner  
Laura Lee Killeen  
Janice Kishner  
Dr. Susan Krantz

Angelique LaCour  
Janet E. Larson  
Diane Lyons  
Carla Major  
Marilyn Maloney  
Lisa Maurer  
Mary L. Meyer

Kathleen Mix  
Michelle Montz  
Carole Cukell Neff  
Dr. J. Coller Ochsner  
Stephanie Prunty  
Dr. Felicia Rabito  
Ann Rogers

Gail Roussel  
Peggy Scott  
Tara Shaw  
Jaye Berard Smith  
Kathryn Smith  
Carol Solomon  
Kim Sport

Liz Tahir  
Donna Taylor  
Fran Villere  
Ann Wallace  
Barbara B. Waller  
Bonnie K. Wibel  
Carol B. Wise  
Ellen Yellin

2005

**Laura Maloney**  
Danica Ansardi  
Anne Babin  
Margarita Bergen  
Wendy Beron  
Elizabeth Boh  
Jennifer Bollinger

Tracie Boutte  
Delisha Boyd  
Kim Boyle  
Jaye Calhoun  
Anne Cochran  
Beth Cristina  
Tina Dandry-Mayes

Gayle Dellinger  
Rosemary James DeSalvo  
Margo DuBos  
Kim Dudek  
Kirsten Early  
Donna Fraiche  
Carol Gniady

Ruby Bridges Hall  
Dr. Jodie Holloway  
Kathy Lynn Honaker  
Tonja Koob  
Mary von Kurnatowski  
Michele Shane L'Hoste  
Angelle LaBorde

Mary Helen Lagasse  
Susan Laudeman  
Belinda Little-Wood  
Babs Mollere  
Joan Mollohan  
Leann Moses  
Beverly Nichols

Julie Noto  
Vera O'Brien  
Rajender Panu  
Lisa Roth  
Diane Roussel  
Martha Ann Samuel  
Miriam Schulingkamp

Lynda Nugent Smith  
Raylyn Stevens  
Phyllis Taylor  
Cheryl Teamer  
Polly Thomas  
Sharon Toups  
Nancy Trosclair  
Anne Witmer

2006

**Doris Voitier**  
Donna Alley  
Theresa Anderson  
Florence André  
Terry Birkhoff  
Julia Bland  
Virginia Boulet

Debra Bowers  
Bonnie Boyd  
Katie Brasted  
Betsy Brien  
Sister Camille Anne Campbell  
Karen Troyer Caraway  
Tiffany Chase

Nancy Claypool  
Virginia "Ginger" Crawford  
Katherine Crosby  
Klara Cvitanovich  
Karen DeSalvo  
Mary Ehret  
Mignon Faget

Regina Hall  
Yvette Jones  
Donna Klein  
Kathleen Laborde  
Priscilla Lawrence  
Patricia LeBlanc  
Lynn Luker

Sandie McNamara  
Suzanne Mestayer  
Kerry Milton  
Cindy Nuesslein  
Angela O'Byrne  
Diana Pinckley  
Patricia Prechter

Kelly Ranum  
Amy Reimer  
Patricia Riddlebarger  
Sally-Ann Roberts  
Judge Karen Roby  
Sandra Rosenthal  
Pamela Schafer

P.K. Scheerle  
Florence Schornstein  
Holly Sharp  
Adrienne Slack  
Carol Solomon  
Becky Spinnato  
Stacey Stemke  
Carol Wise

2007

**Illone "Toni" Wendel**  
Rachelle Albright  
Carmen D. Baham  
Debra D. Bowers  
Jane S. Brooks  
Simone Bruni  
Naydja Domingue Bynum

Caitlin Cain  
Sharon Latten Clark  
Gina Cortez  
Darlene Cusanza  
Nancy Davis  
Gayle B. Dellinger  
Maura Donahue

Laura Drumm  
Melanie Ehrlich  
Jane Ann Frosch  
Michelle Gobert  
Jenny Hamilton  
Paula Hartley  
Marvalene Hughes

Natalie A. Jayroe  
Jacqueline Carroll Jones-Soulé  
Christy Kane  
Molly Kimball  
Rachel Kincaid  
Stacy Horn Koch  
Phyllis Landrieu

Priscilla Lawrence  
Maureen Lichtveld  
Rebecca Mackie  
Elizabeth W. Magner  
Sandy Ha Nguyen  
Kristin Gisleson Palmer  
Marian Pierre

Brenda Reine-Bertus  
Ann Rogers  
Denise Shinn  
Dolly Simpson  
Lisa Stockton  
Shelly Stubbs  
Michele Kidd Sutton

Elizabeth M. Teague  
Cecile Tebo  
Suzanne C. Thomas  
Denise Thornton  
Sarah Newell Usdin  
Laurie White  
Catherine Wilbert  
Sara W. Woodard

2008

**Carol Solomon**  
Jacqueline Alexander  
Heather Alleman  
Sandra Andrieu  
Therese Badon  
Jesyka Bartlett  
Lauren Baum

Penny Baumer  
Dottie Belletto  
C. Lynn Besch  
Julia Bland  
Kim Boyle  
Cindy Brennan  
Christine Briede

Debbie Brockley  
Nancy Cassagne  
Jacquelyn Clarkson  
Michelle Craig  
Kim Boyle  
Elizabeth Dannewald  
Nancy Scott Degan

Dell Dempsey  
Johnette Downing  
Patti Elish  
Cathi Fontenot  
Elizabeth Futrell  
Jocelyn Greely  
Samantha Griffin

Jayne Gurtler  
Kristine Hatfield  
Laura Held  
Donna Klein  
Priscilla Lawrence  
Deborah Lea  
Nancy Marshall

Anne Milling  
Cheryl Mintz  
Beverly Nichols  
Michelle Nugent  
Beth Payton  
Tara Richard  
Jade Russell  
Elizabeth Scheer

Rachael Schorr  
Stacy Seamon  
Pamela Senatore  
Kristin Shannon  
Jessica Soileau  
Charlee Williamson  
Rachel Wisdom  
Ellen Zakris

## Top 10 ASI Federal Credit Union accomplishments under Mignhon Tourné's leadership:

1. ASI Federal Credit Union became the first credit union in the state to offer two fully bilingual (English/Spanish and English/Vietnamese) branch locations.
2. ASI was named the #1 brand in its asset category last year by Bancography.
3. ASI launched a Subprime Refinance & Rescue Program to affordably refinance subprime mortgage loans made by predatory lenders preying on borrowers post-Katrina.
4. ASI has continually expanded its VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program which provides free tax returns for low income individuals in the Metro Area each tax season.
5. Through a partnership with the Louisiana Recovery Authority and Louisiana Economic Development Department, ASI has deployed several hundred grants and loans to disadvantaged and minority-owned small businesses post-Katrina to promote job retention and creation in the metro area.
6. ASI has continued to be recognized by nonprofits and other credit unions nationwide for its innovative low-cost alternatives to predatory payday lending.
7. All ASI employees are encouraged to actively volunteer in their communities...and she leads by example: Mignhon volunteers her time to Boys Hope/Girls Hope, a residential program for children, and also serves as a board member for the New Orleans Women's Shelter.
8. The credit union's nonprofit affiliate has implemented a highly successful HUD-certified Homebuyer Education, Foreclosure Prevention and Credit Counseling Program.
9. The credit union's nonprofit affiliate redeveloped a blighted former office building into a fully redesigned, state-of-the-art community center in New Orleans's Upper Ninth Ward.
10. ASI enjoys a reputation as one of the premier mission-based Community Development Financial Institutions in the nation!



*Congratulations Mignhon!*

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## Congratulations Touro Woman of the Year

Touro congratulates *CityBusiness* Woman of the Year honoree **Lori Dean, RN, Cancer Care Navigator**.

Lori gives cancer patients and their families much needed support, guidance and assistance with the myriad of emotional, medical and financial issues that accompany a cancer diagnosis.

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*Kim  
Boyle*

*Hall of Fame*





Phelps Dunbar partner Kim Boyle reviews journals in the firm's library. Inset: Boyle chats with Phelps Dunbar association Maryjo Roberts in the firm's lobby.

**Position:** Phelps Dunbar partner, employment law group

**Age:** 47

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree in politics and teaching certificate in secondary education, Princeton University; juris doctor, University of Virginia School of Law

**What did you want to be growing up?** A lawyer.

**What was your first job?** Working part-time at the old Mayfair clothing store.

**What's the last book you read?** "Team of Rivals," by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Travel to South Africa.



PHOTOS BY FRANK AYMAMI

One of Kim Boyle's top priorities as the new president of the Louisiana Bar Association is helping to provide legal services to those who cannot afford them.

"There are a number of people in our state who need legal services for things such as wrongful evictions, divorces and child custody matters," Boyle said. "We've seen situations where our elderly citizens are being abused financially as well as physically."

The LSBA's Access to Justice Committee works to identify attorneys who can help. And when it comes to pro bono work, Boyle is leading by example.

For more than two years, she has served as lead counsel on a post-conviction appeal in a death penalty case, along with other members of

her law firm, Phelps Dunbar. Her work on the case helped the firm earn the Camille Gravel Award at the annual meeting of New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association in August. She has also provided pro bono legal counsel to Covenant House of New Orleans.

Boyle, who is the first African-American woman to lead the LSBA, said diversity among the association's active participants — in terms of race, ethnicity, gender and geography — is another important focus of her administration.

A partner in the employment law group at Phelps Dunbar, Boyle handles cases involving labor and employment law, civil rights, constitutional law, commercial law, tort law and general business litigation.

As a member of the Louisiana Recovery Authority and a former member of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission, Boyle has been active in the region's post-Katrina recovery effort. She said the experience has inspired her — personally and professionally — like no other.

She notes that while Phelps Dunbar's offices were spared during the storm and its aftermath, many of her colleagues in the legal profession were not so fortunate.

"Watching their struggle, and hopefully helping them a little bit, and watching them come back has had a profound impact on me," she said. "I think that in many ways our recovery has been a bottom-up effort as opposed to a top-down effort.

"Our citizens made the determination that they were going to come back, they were going to fight for their neighborhoods, for their schools, for their churches, regardless of government intervention and assistance. What we've seen take place over the last four years really is a grass-roots effort at its very best."

Boyle, who often works 16-hour days when preparing for a trial, said she's wanted to be a lawyer since she watched episodes of "Perry Mason" as a child. Her gratitude for the opportunity to fulfill that childhood dream has led her to support many nonprofits throughout her career.

"My parents taught me that 'to whom much is given, much is expected.'"

— Sonya Stinson

# Carol Asher

*Two-time honoree*

**Position:** nonprofit consultant; 504connect director

**Age:** 54

**Family:** husband, Harold; children, Allison, 29, Jeffrey, 26

**Education:** bachelor's degree in business, Tulane University

**What did you want to be growing up?** A successful business executive.

**What was your first job?** A real estate administrator at Hibernia National Bank.

**What's the last book you read?** "The Help," by Kathryn Stockett.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Take college courses for pure enjoyment.

All of Carol Asher's goals have to do with helping someone else achieve success. She's already made it.

"For the first time I am really where I want to be, doing what I want to do," said Asher, who has found a goldmine of satisfaction in improving the lives of others through nonprofit outreach.

Asher is passionate about the community causes that comprise her professional and civic work. She's working to help cancer survivors, open charter schools access to all children and encourage the city's new crop of young professionals to stay in New Orleans.

The Tour de Lis cycling fundraiser for cancer survivors, which she co-founded and presides over, has raised more than \$400,000 since 2006.

She's also a champion for charter schools, serving as chairwoman of the board of ReNew Charter Schools, a charter management group aimed at rescuing failing charter schools in New Orleans.

"I'd like to see New Orleans be a positive role model for the rest of the country in education reform. I think we're on that path if we don't blow it," Asher said. "It's such a snowball effect. When children are better educated, there is less crime. There's a more qualified work force. Your whole community is a better place to live."

Her current full-time outreach is through 504ward, running its 504connect initiative to retain young professionals drawn to the city's post-Katrina rebuilding efforts. She's working to keep them engaged in the community through networking.

"They're here because they want to be here. They've made a choice to be here," Asher said. "While we have limited opportunities career-wise, we're doing better than the rest of the country."

Asher said she has succeeded in her journey by making the right moves at the proper time.

"I wouldn't have traded any of the stepping stones I've taken to get where I am today," Asher said. "Everything I've done has been a building block. My strengths are in seeing the big picture and delivering what was needed to meet those goals and move on to the next challenge."

Asher credits her skill in fundraising to a family history of retailing.

"People give to people. If they trust you and believe in you, they know you would only support something that was dear to you."•

— Diana Chandler



**KIM M. BOYLE**

Partner, Phelps Dunbar LLP



*Congratulations Kim!*

*2009 New Orleans CityBusiness Women of the Year*

We salute your contribution to our community and the profession, and are proud to honor you for recognition truly deserved.

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# Magdalen Bickford

**Position:** Jackson Lewis partner

**Age:** 48

**Family:** husband, Ken Bickford; children, Caroline, 14, Sydney, 12, Katherine, 10

**Education:** bachelor's degree in political science, Loyola University; juris doctor, Loyola University School of Law

**What did you want to be growing up?** I have known that I wanted to be an attorney since I was about 4, except for a brief period when I thought I wanted to be an actress. And I am not sure they are all that different.

**What was your first job?** I was a shampoo girl at the Fantasy Beauty Salon in Metairie. I can still give one heck of a shampoo today.

**What's the last book you read?** "Madame Bovary," by Gustave Flaubert.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Live in New York City.

Magdalen Bickford's biggest career hurdle is one that is undoubtedly shared by many modern professional women.

"I have always felt that I have just not had enough time to get done all of the things that I want and need to. I balance a lot of balls: practicing law, raising children, serving on the boards of various institutions and nonprofits," said Bickford, who is a partner with the national labor and employment law firm of Jackson Lewis LLP in New Orleans.

If she had extra time, Bickford said she would probably expand her already extensive community activities. She has been treasurer and served for more than a year on the board of St. Anna's Residence, a nonprofit nondenominational nursing home in the Garden District.

"The building that they are in is an incredible historic property, but their mission is the care of the elderly," Bickford said. "So by being involved with them ... I am able to do my own part for preservation and historic New Orleans, while balancing that with the interest I have in caring for the elderly.

"We have an incredible and hardworking employee base, and I have drawn on my work skills in human resources and employment law in that respect, and an amazing group of residents who are supported by their families," she said. "It takes up a lot of time, but it is very much worth it."

Bickford has also led the community affairs group for the Junior League of New Orleans, bringing its message to community leaders. She's currently leading the group's largest-ever provisional class with 151 members.

Bickford also has served on the board of the Women's Professional Council of New Orleans.

"It is not as time-consuming as the other two, but I enjoy that board tremendously. They are such a well-educated group and well placed in the city that it has been a tremendous learning experience for me to be with them," she said.

"Then put on top of all that being married and the fact that we have a 14-year-old, 12-year-old and 10-year-old, all daughters. I like to think that I am serving as a role model for them to be both a working woman and involved in the community?"

— Garry Boulard



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# Debra Bowers

*Hall of Fame*

**Position:** Barrister Global Services Network Inc. president and CEO

**Age:** 54

**Family:** husband, John Bowers II; sons, John, 31, Jared, 29

**Education:** attended Soule Business College in New Orleans and the University of New Orleans

**What did you want to be growing up?** A lawyer or a journalist.

**What was your first job?** I worked for a dry cleaner since I was 15. My first real job was at a company called Carruth.

**What's the last book you read?** "The Secret Life of Bees," by Sue Monk Kidd.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** To be in a position where I could give more back to people that need help. I'd like to feel that I did some good work in my life.

At the beginning of her career, Debra Bowers never would have imagined she would head the largest woman-owned computer services company in the United States.

Bowers worked in the banking and mortgage industry before starting her own business in office services. Not long after she took a job working as a controller for Advantage Innovation, Barrister Global Services Network bought the company. Less than a year later, Bowers found herself with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to buy a controlling interest in the company.

"It was really more about chance and circumstance," she said. "It just happened. I probably didn't know a thing about computers when I started this."

Maintaining warranty authorizations with more than 20 manufacturers and repair certifications for another 200 manufacturers, Barrister has a network of more than 15,000 certified technicians that can provide on-site service in the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada.

At the time of the acquisition, Bowers' two sons worked in similar industries and were eventually hired by Barrister just before she bought the controlling interest. Bowers took Barrister from a publicly traded company to a private business. With son John heading the sales team and son Jared working as vice president of

operations, they brought an entrepreneurial spirit to the company and focused on consolidation and efficiency.

Like many proprietors in family businesses discover, Bowers said there were certain challenges in drawing the line between personal and business time.

"We all had to discover where we fit. I think a lot of family businesses struggle with taking the work home with you."

Bowers has used her position at Barrister to help the surrounding community. She successfully oversaw construction of the company's 80,000-square-foot headquarters in Hammond and engaged with the state and Tangipahoa Parish to receive an \$800,000 community development block grant to improve the roads and infrastructure near the building.

Bowers has committed to adding another 100 jobs by 2012 and gotten Barrister involved in community outreach projects that include food bank donations, recycling projects and helping provide schools with computer equipment.

She also plays an active role in the Women's Business Enterprise National Council's Southern chapter.

"I really have this sense of wanting to help people and I like the opportunities that the business has provided to do that."•

— Craig Guillot

# Caitlin Cain

*Two-time honoree*

**Position:** New Orleans Regional Planning Commission economic development director

**Age:** 33

**Family:** husband, Kurt Weigle; daughter, Eva, 4

**Education:** bachelor's degree in political science and environmental studies, University of Toronto; master's degree in urban planning, University of Michigan

**What did you want to be growing up?** A foreign correspondent or Indiana Jones.

**What was your first job?** A legal assistant at a law firm.

**What's the last book you read?** "Outliers," by Malcolm Gladwell.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Travel the world in three months by myself and just explore.

Caitlin Cain appreciates a good challenge. As director of economic development for the Regional Planning Commission, she faces many of them.

"I love challenges, and I don't like easy projects," Cain said. "I like what's difficult and complicated."

It's her "tenacity of spirit," she said, that enables her to put in the years needed to see a project to completion.

"There are no quick fixes in my position," she said.

A certified Economic Development Professional, Cain oversees RPC initiatives in Orleans, Jefferson Plaquemines, St. Tammany and St. Bernard parishes. She was the interim coordinator for the Greater New Orleans Biosciences Economic Development District, in which she secured the \$1 million needed to implement a master plan and economic recovery strategy for the New Orleans Medical District.

Through her position with the RPC, she helped coordinate how other organizations could get involved in the bio-science movement, helped appoint board members and aided in moving the process forward.

"My job is very challenging, but I like knowing that I can go to work every day, learn something new and apply that knowledge in a way that enhances the region's quality of life," Cain said.

A member of the Veterans Affairs Hospital's executive advisory committee, Cain is overseeing the development of the new VA hospital in New Orleans. She is helping the city coordinate land preparations and social services associated with the hospital's construction and has helped with environmental clearance, home relocation, public relations and infrastructure management.

"Everything is a challenge," Cain said. "It's knowing that if you stick to that long-term vision and chip away, you'll eventually get there. It's a vision the community still deserves and it's achievable."

In addition to her work with the biosciences movement and a number of organizations, Cain also is involved with the Women's Professional Council. She said she has a strong interest in networking and mentoring to encourage women from all disciplines and generations to take leadership roles.

"I really want the next generation to benefit from this diversity and experience," she said.

While Cain said her husband, Kurt Weigle, and her daughter, Eva, are her personal motivators every day, her parents were the first to encourage her to consider a life of public service.

"My parents instilled upon me the significance of giving back and making things better than how you originally found them."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora

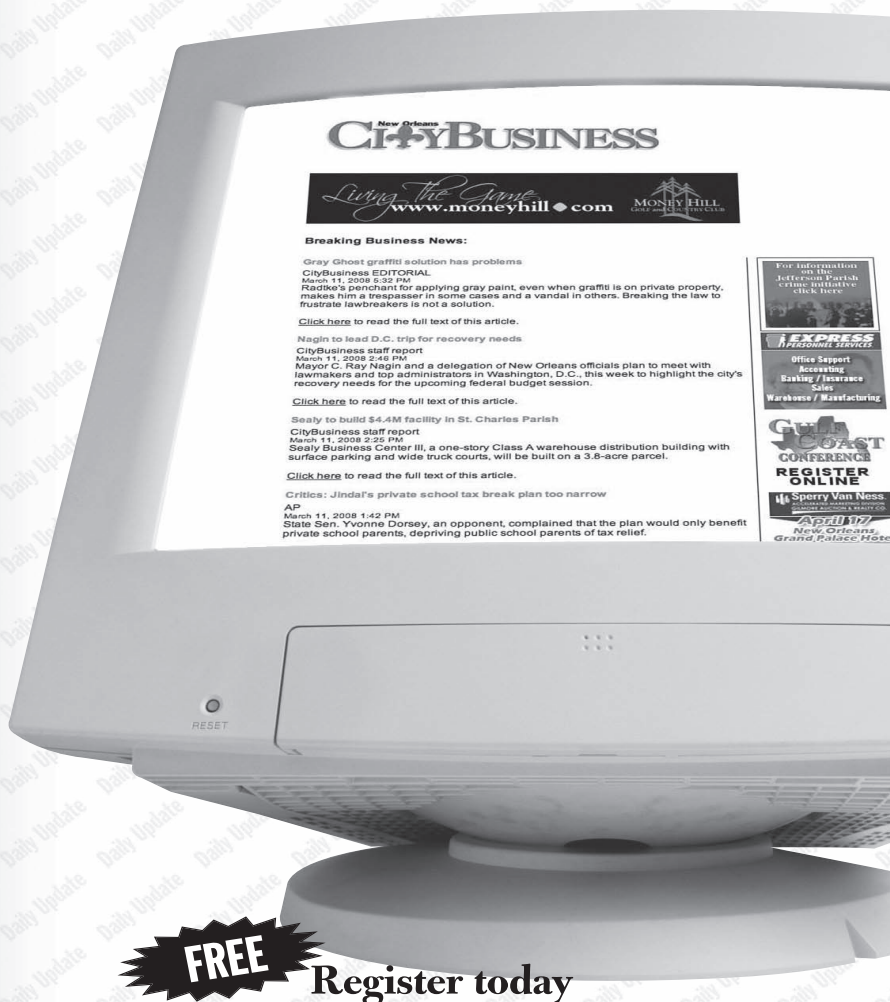




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# Mary Len Costa

**Position:** Arts Council of New Orleans interim president and CEO

**Age:** 63

**Family:** husband, Louis; daughter, Lenora, 26

**Education:** bachelor's degree in weaving and textile design, Memphis College of Arts, 1971

**What did you want to be growing up?** I have always wanted to be an artist.

**What was your first job?** Doing research and restoration at the Louisiana State Museum in the curatorial department.

**What's the last book you read?** "Perdita: The Life of Mary Robinson," by Paula Byrne.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Be an artist 24-7.

Mary Len Costa believes an artist's work is never done. "You spend your time working on your art, and then you have to market and sell your work, and the second part is the biggest challenge for any professional artist," said Costa, interim president and CEO of the Arts Council of New Orleans. "I experienced that in my professional life, and now I spend every day teaching young artists what I have learned and helping them make it in this field."

In 2007, Costa stepped up to serve as interim president and CEO of the Arts Council of New Orleans, an organization she has been involved with since 1997. In its 33rd year, the nonprofit arts council is the city's official arts agency, working with community groups, governmental agencies and other arts nonprofits to meet the arts and cultural needs of the New Orleans community.

Costa recently led an initiative to apply for National Endowment for the Arts stimulus funds, securing a \$250,000 grant for the Arts Council of which \$200,000 will be re-granted to local nonprofits to preserve jobs facing cuts because of financial challenges.

In addition, the council this year premiered 19 large-scale public art pieces throughout the city honoring New Orleans neighborhoods.

"Being on this side is just as valuable as being on the other side as an artist," Costa said. "When you are requesting and writing grants and marketing art of any form, you really have to seek out the mutual relationship between the buyer and seller — how can something fulfill their goals and needs and how does that relate to our goals as a foundation."

In addition to her community work with the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts and the Contemporary Visual Arts Association of New Orleans, Costa is most proud of her work in the Lower Garden District, where she and her husband, Louis, bought an 18th-century Greek revival home in 1971. Costa worked to get that neighborhood on the National Register of Historic Places.

She also helped bring the Margaret Haughery statue to Camp and Prytania streets as a remembrance of Haughery's work in the 19th century opening orphanages in New Orleans and feeding the poor and hungry.

Costa also helped create the Sophie B. Wright project, an Enrique Alferez sculpture recognizing Wright for her contributions to the city.

"I value art and I value our historic neighborhoods in New Orleans," she said. "When we can combine both and place tremendous art in these neighborhoods, it has a special meaning to me."•

— Tommy Santora



# Angela Daliel

**Position:** Save Our Schools NOLA executive director

**Age:** 39

**Family:** divorced; children, Cade, 13, Austen, 10, Aiden, 8

**Education:** bachelor's degree in general studies, University of New Orleans

**What did you want to be growing up?** An actress.

**What was your first job?** I convinced my stepdad to hire me to answer phones at his cabinet shop when I was 12.

**What was the last book you read?** "Babylon Rolling," by Amanda Boyden.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Skydive.

Angela Daliel faced a decision in the summer of 2007: Stay at her job as a financial adviser or follow her passion and start an advocacy group for New Orleans public schools.

She chose the latter and launched Save Our Schools NOLA. Her interest stemmed from having three sons in New Orleans public schools and believing in a strong public school system. Growing up in West Monroe, she went to public schools and said she cherished the experience.

"It was a good look at what a community was all about, people of all races and economic backgrounds working and interacting together," Daliel said.

She wanted her children to have the same experience, but New Orleans public schools were in a perilous position after Hurricane Katrina. Daliel planned to enroll her children at Hynes Elementary in Lakeview but was told after the storm the school would not reopen until 2010 at the earliest.

"After Katrina, people were making decisions without really consulting the public and without really listening to the public," Daliel said. "They're our schools. They're publicly owned and they should be publicly accountable."

After rallying support for Hynes, Daliel was able to help get the elementary school reopened in August 2006. But she felt the entire city needed a grass roots nonprofit that informed, organized and served as an advocate for the parents of public school students.

One of Daliel's proudest accomplishments so far has been creating the School Close-Ups database that gives interested parents basic profile information on New Orleans public schools that are open. It includes updated contact info for the school and principal, demographic information, standardized test scores and Google maps of the campus.

Daliel believes a city's public schools are a reflection of the community. The better the public schools are, the better the city will be as a whole.

"All of the ails of our city are directly related to our poor public education system," Daliel said. "If you live in a neighborhood in New Orleans, public schools affect your life."

Daliel wants these schools to thrive so the New Orleans her children and grandchildren live in will be a better one. When she looks back on the decision she made in 2007, she has no regrets.

"The hardest decision I ever made was to turn my back on my career and do this full time, and it's the best decision I've ever made."•

— Fritz Esker



# DeAnna Davis

**Position:** Ochsner Medical Center-West Bank chief operating officer

**Age:** 39

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree polymer chemistry, University of Southern Mississippi; master's degree in business administration, TiasNimbas Business School

**What did you want to be growing up?** When I was about 8 or 9 years old, I not only knew what an anesthesiologist was but I knew I wanted to become one.

**What was your first job?** A lifeguard at a country club when I was 15. I negotiated a cash deal so I could work underage.

**What's the last book you read?** "Eat, Play, Love — One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia," by Elizabeth Gilbert.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Have children and start a family. I just haven't found the right person yet to do that with.

As chief operating officer at Ochsner Medical Clinic-West Bank, DeAnna Davis sees the problems and potential of Algiers — a historic community that, like other parts of New Orleans, has economic and health care challenges.

"I've thought it was important for me to understand the community surrounding Ochsner, not just because of my work but also because I believe in getting involved to make things better, particularly from the economic development perspective," said Davis, who lives in another historic New Orleans neighborhood, the Irish Channel, to which she is also similarly committed.

"This is a part of New Orleans that is often forgotten about and has been through so much," Davis said of Algiers. "That's why I am always telling my friends to come to the other side of the river and at least visit."

In regards to helping business interests in the neighborhood, Davis is a member of the Algiers Economic Development Foundation and the Harvey Canal Industrial Association. She also takes part in a weekly get-together at Algiers Point for local businesses and residents.

To tackle pressing health care matters, Davis has become involved in access issues at Ochsner, pushing for quicker physician responses to the needs of patients who live in Algiers and throughout the city.

"If a person has been diagnosed with a disease but they can't see a physician for three or four weeks, that can create difficulties," Davis said.

Long waits, adds Davis, also have a depressing effect on preventive care.

"We have a large population of people who might avoid seeing a physician if they think it is going to be a big hassle for them," she said. "And we know that better preventive care makes for better health care overall, which is why we are committed to reducing wait times overall."

On the other side of the river, Davis is committed to the revival of the Irish Channel, although her civic engagement remains limited so far.

"I want to do more and will as time goes by. But the neighbors do get together and talk about things to improve the area, and we support each other," she said. "Some of us have even gone out and acted like cheerleaders when the neighborhood kids are playing basketball."

Davis' community philosophy is simple.

"You are always going to see things in your neighborhood that you don't like. But you can only really begin to change things for the better once you get involved and try to help in your own way."•

— Garry Boulard



# Lori Dean

**Position:** Touro Infirmary patient navigator

**Age:** 38

**Family:** husband, Kenneth; daughter, 7; son, 4

**Education:** associate's degree in nursing, Charity School of Nursing; pursuing master's degree in nursing, Louisiana State University School of Nursing

**What did you want to be growing up?** A forensic pathologist.

**What was your first job?** Working at an ice cream parlor at the mall.

**What's the last book you read?** "It's Just My Imagination," by Rick Keeling, to my children.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Learn to play the piano.

Lori Dean says her father's battle with cancer inspired her to become an oncology nurse. Seeing her mother treated for the disease at the hospital where she later worked helped make her a better one.

"It made me not only focus on the patients' medical condition, but also other aspects of their lives: their family dynamics, their support system," said Dean, patient navigator at Touro Infirmary's Cancer Center. "That really helped me in this job, because that's what this job is all about."

Dean admits it wasn't easy to separate her feelings as the patient's daughter from her professional role as an oncology nurse. But in the end, the experience helped her develop a better understanding of the patient as a person.

Founded just more than a year ago by Dr. Robert Gardner, a psychosocial oncologist, Touro's patient navigator program is modeled after one at a New York hospital in the Harlem neighborhood. The idea behind the program is to take a holistic approach to cancer treatment, addressing patients' emotional needs as well as their medical care.

Much of Dean's work involves helping patients overcome barriers to getting the health care they need, whether it's financial constraints, the maze of insurance forms or transportation to and from their appointments and treatments.

She also gives new patients tours of the cancer center, introduces them to staff members, schedules appointments, escorts patients to chemotherapy and radiation treatments, and facilitates several cancer support groups. She is part of a three-person team that typically sees about 20 patients a week.

Dean devotes a significant amount of time volunteering with the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and the American Cancer Society's Look Good, Feel Better program, which provides female patients tips on things such as selecting and styling wigs and applying makeup.

Dean's decision to start a nursing career came after she abandoned a childhood dream of becoming a forensic pathologist — an ambition inspired by the TV show "Quincy" — and spent several years working as an X-ray technician.

"I wanted to be more involved in caring for the patient than just seeing them once and letting them be on their way," she said. "I always wondered what became of that patient."

Now, Dean gets to be part of her patients' ongoing care during what often is the most challenging time of their lives, and she finds that compassion is as important as clinical skills.

She said she has come to realize it's the nonclinical or, as she calls them, "warm and fuzzy" aspects of her job as a nurse she finds most rewarding. •

— Sonya Stinson



# Renette De Joie-Hall

**Position:** The Louisiana Weekly executive editor, vice president and acting publisher

**Age:** 55

**Family:** husband, James Hall; children, Brandon, 25, Christopher, 24, Lauren, 22

**Education:** bachelor's degree in mass communications, Boston College

**What did you want to be growing up?** A television sportscaster. I was a daddy's girl and he was into sports, so I became real good at knowing my sports and sports statistics.

**What was your first job?** I delivered The Louisiana Weekly on my bike in my neighborhood.

**What's the last book you read?** "Captured," by Beverly Jenkins. For pleasure, I am a romance fanatic.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** My kids have gotten me gift certificates for blowing-glass lessons in New Orleans, and I'm going to try to do that during the holiday season.

Renette Dejoie-Hall admits to being a daddy's girl. She remembers riding her bike in her neighborhood at age 8 and delivering The Louisiana Weekly newspapers for her father, Henry Dejoie Sr., who at the time was vice president and treasurer of the African-American publication. Her grandfather, Constant Charles Dejoie Sr., founded the paper in 1925.

When Dejoie-Hall graduated from college in 1976, her father asked her to join the newspaper. She did as the social editor.

In 1986, Dejoie-Hall left The Louisiana Weekly to pursue a radio career. Ten years later, her father became publisher and she returned to fill the role of news editor.

"I just always seemed to come back to him and this business. He introduced it to me and I just felt right here and with him."

Dejoie-Hall helped her father run the newspaper until Hurricane Katrina. Her parents' house was damaged in the storm, forcing them to move to Pennsylvania. Dejoie-Hall temporarily ran the paper from Houston before returning to the Gentilly home office in July 2006.

While in Pennsylvania, her father took care of her mother who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. But on Dec. 31, 2007, while waiting for his home to be rebuilt, Henry Dejoie Sr. suffered a heart attack and passed away.

As a third-generation family member, Dejoie-Hall is executive editor, vice president and acting publisher. She has maintained the family tradition with her husband, James, serving as circulation manager and her son, Christopher, working in marketing and as Web editor.

"I am inspired every day to keep the family legacy intact as well as my dedication and commitment to this community. Both have gelled with each other to lead me to where I am," she said.

Dejoie-Hall said the biggest challenge for The Louisiana Weekly is surviving as a newspaper in these tough economic times and in a city where companies are still working to return physically and financially.

"Being 55 and 'old school,' the challenge is learning how valuable the Web can be in this business and how to use it," she said. "I'm still a newspaper, tangible-in-print woman, and we are inspired and encouraged to always get the news out any way we can about our courageous community that we live in."•

— Tommy Santora



# Marguerite Doyle-Johnston

**Position:** Doyle and Doyle Business Development president and CEO

**Age:** 51

**Family:** fiancé, Charles Young; children, Danyelle Doyle-Frank, Chivas Doyle (deceased)

**Education:** associate's degree in business administration, Southern University at New Orleans; mortuary science, Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service

**What did you want to be growing up?** I wanted to be like my mom and help others.

**What was your first job?** Accounting for CFB Dredging Co.

**What's the last book you read?** "Becoming a Woman of Purpose," by Cynthia Heald.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** I wanted to see my children grow up.

Two days after her son, Chivas, turned 24, Marguerite Doyle-Johnston found him fatally shot in the head. The Jan. 13, 2007, murder remains unsolved.

But Johnston does not let that stop her drive and determination to help those around her succeed in life.

"His death has not affected my stamina," Doyle-Johnston said. "His death has made me want to do more."

Johnston has always been in the business of helping people, so it was only natural she start a business that does just that. Doyle and Doyle Business Development makes sure other small businesses are operating correctly. Doyle-Johnston serves as a "behind-the-scenes" operator, making sure her clients have their accounts set up properly and are registered to do business within the city and state. She also helps them determine eligibility for Small Business Administration and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise certification if they are minority- or woman-owned.

"By being a community activist, I saw a lot of people didn't know about these things," she said. "If your ducks aren't in order, they're going to keep rejecting you."

Doyle-Johnston said she understands business owners do not have time to stop their day-to-day operations to keep everything in order. That's where her business comes in, and she enjoys being able to help businesses within her community.

"My community depends on me, and I depend on my community."

Doyle-Johnston, a recipient of the 6 On Your Side Making a Difference and YMCA Women's Leadership awards, is the acting president of the Upper 9th Ward/Florida Desire Community Association. She also is working to reopen the Old Club Desire at 2604 Desire St. in the Upper 9th Ward.

The goal of Doyle-Johnston and her son was to resurrect the club as a community center, gym, senior citizen and after-school center — anything that would help unite and rebuild the community.

"This building has so much. It wants to give back to the community. If we build this community center, our community will come back."

Doyle-Johnston's efforts to bring back the club are a testament to her faith in her community, as well as her determination to fulfill her and her son's dream.

"Me and (Chivas) together, we were a powerhouse," she said. "Now, it's just one. It's not two anymore. I won't let his death stop me."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora



# Mignon Faget

*Hall of Fame*

**Position:** Mignon Faget president and CEO

**Family:** single; children, William, John, Jacqueline

**Education:** bachelor's degree in fine arts, Newcomb College; post-graduate studies, L'Atelier de la Grande Chaumiere in Paris and the Parsons School of Design in New York

**What did you want to be growing up?** An artist.

**What was your first job?** I was a fashion model for a number of years.

**What's the last book you read?** "Ragtime," by E.L. Doctorow.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Climb a very high mountain.

From her beginnings as a budding fashion model, Mignon Faget has followed her passions to become not only a well-respected jewelry designer but a household name throughout much of the South.

Faget modeled in college for department stores such as D.H. Holmes, but with each passing show she became more interested in clothing design. Having learned to sew and design garments from her mother at an early age, Faget started making her own clothes and produced her own ready-to-wear line in 1969.

Within a year, she created a jewelry collection to accompany that line and found a new calling in precious metals.

"My first jewelry collection was really just a way of accessorizing the apparel collection that I was doing. I had majored in sculpture in college and that first collection was just based on some sea shells I had," Faget said.

The jewelry quickly took off and before long, Faget was selling collections wholesale to stores in New York, Houston and New Orleans. By 1972, she had outgrown her cottage on Dublin Street, purchased a building next door and hired staff.

Today, Mignon Faget has about 95 employees with galleries in New Orleans and Baton Rouge. She sells her products to boutiques throughout the country.

Faget encountered many challenges along the way including a streak in the '80s when she faced financial difficulties and banks unwilling to lend. She eventually found financial backing and said the key to her success has been to simply follow her passion.

In contrast to rigid business types who build companies according to potential markets and extensive business plans, Faget said she let her artistic drive lead the way to profitability.

"My life has never been run according to a business plan. It has been about the things that I have a passion for and that I just kind of fall into," Faget said.

Faget has kept close to the local art community and has been involved with the Contemporary Arts Center since its inception in 1976. She's also active on the board of the Newcomb Art Gallery.

Throughout the years, she has used designs and unique collections to benefit the Preservation Resource Center, the New Canal Street Lighthouse restoration, the Woodlands Trail and Park, New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, the Ogden Museum, Project Lazarus and the NO/Aids Task Force.

She also has been an avid supporter of the Louisiana Cultural Economy Foundation and helped raise more than \$200,000 to bring the arts back to New Orleans. •

— Craig Guillot





# Mary Genovese

**Position:** East Jefferson General Hospital vice president of critical care

**Age:** 52

**Family:** husband, Terry; children, Natalie, 28, Sean, 26, Derek, 21

**Education:** bachelor's degree in nursing, Louisiana State University; master's degree in nursing, Loyola University

**What did you want to be growing up?** A nurse.

**What was your first job?** I worked at Roy Rogers as a cashier and waitress.

**What's the last book you read?** "My Sister's Keeper," by Jodi Picoult.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Travel to Europe.

The health care profession has always been a very personal thing to Mary Genovese. It was her childhood dream to become a nurse, a dream she fulfilled, and she even experienced the patient perspective when she was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 35.

Those experiences have contributed to make her a compassionate, effective administrator at East Jefferson General Hospital.

While she always loved caring for patients, the breast cancer diagnosis gave her a completely different perspective on the health care system.

"It helped me to understand how patients have to navigate the health care system," Genovese said. "It made me appreciate people even more."

Her affinity for nursing came from a love of caring for people in need. But after more than 20 years as a bedside critical care nurse, the time came for her to move into an administrative position, which was difficult because she enjoyed the patient interaction so much.

"When you care for patients, you get immediate recognition," Genovese said. "But I told myself, 'Now you're taking care of the staff instead of the patients.' I make sure they have what they need so they can take care of the patients."

Now, Genovese oversees the care of the most acutely ill patients at EJGH, including the intensive and coronary care units and the step-down nursing floors.

Genovese was instrumental in helping the hospital earn the designation as a magnet for nursing excellence in 2006 and a gold award from the American Heart Association for treating heart attack patients. Now, she focuses on maintaining those levels of excellence while improving East Jefferson's treatment of stroke patients.

She's also involved in the community, organizing donations for the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, volunteering at medical treatment areas for Celebration in the Oaks and organizing holiday care packages for a battered women's shelter.

While the designations and community work are important, Genovese feels the key to her job is having a personal relationship with her staff.

"In this day and age, when we're moving nonstop, people need to feel supported," Genovese said. "Everyone on staff can call me if they ever need me, no matter what level employee they are."

Genovese said she has an open-door policy so her staff can feel that their voices are heard and taken seriously. She also makes gestures to show her appreciation. Recently, she brought homemade jambalaya, salad and desserts to the hospital for employees who worked the night shift. •

— Fritz Esker



# Megan Guy

**Position:** Adams and Reese partner

**Age:** 35

**Family:** husband, Matthew; children, Charlie, 2, Elizabeth, 8 months

**Education:** bachelor's degree in political science, Vanderbilt University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

**What did you want to be growing up?** A lawyer. We had a moot court, I think it might have been with "The Three Bears," in fourth grade, and I got my first taste for the law.

**What was your first job?** Retrieving stray golf balls out of water hazards at a golf course and selling them back to the golf club.

**What's the last book you read?** "The Girl Who Played with Fire," by Stieg Larsson.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Write a book.

Looking at the challenging circumstances for children growing up in New Orleans, Megan Guy sees possibilities.

"I think children deserve all of the opportunities that they can get," said Guy, a partner at Adams and Reese. "And I don't think that there is any doubt about it — children in our city oftentimes endure a lot. But they also deserve a lot, at least as many of the same opportunities as children in other places have."

To that end, Guy serves on the board of directors for Junior Achievement and, through her membership in the Junior League, has worked for New Orleans Outreach, a group that works to improve the quality of public education at partner schools.

Through the Power Ties program sponsored by New Orleans Outreach and Junior League, Guy interacts with young New Orleanians in a way she hopes will provide abundant future dividends.

"The idea is to go into the classroom and teach things like entrepreneurialism, financial responsibility and economic skills to students," said Guy, adding that those topics are not usually covered in most school curriculums.

"It may seem like most eighth-graders are too young to be thinking about such things, but the idea is that you have to start somewhere, and doing it at this level implants ideas, making the children think that they can have a future and what they might want to do with it."

Some of the lessons include learning how to write a resume and teaching basic business etiquette. It all culminates with a job site visit, when the students are taken to places that will hopefully be in line with their interests.

Guy believes such exposure gives children a chance to visualize a career that may have previously been regarded as impossible to attain.

"Before they actually see these different work places in person, it is sort of abstract for them," she said. "Afterwards, it is more of a reality, and I think has a real impact on them."

Guy said her community involvement, on top of a busy family and professional life, is nothing less than energizing.

"What could be more exciting than to be involved with bringing to the children of our city opportunities that they might not otherwise have?" she said. "And providing these kinds of opportunities is not just good for the children, it's good for business, it's good for the city and, in the end, it's good for everyone."•

— Garry Boulard



# Deborah Harkins

*Two-time honoree*

**Position:** McGlinchey Stafford partner

**Age:** 58

**Family:** husband, Corkey; son, Choupique, 7; stepsons, Gregory, 43, Jason, 39

**Education:** bachelor's degree in political science, University of Southwestern Louisiana; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

**What did you want to be growing up?** A lawyer or a stewardess.

**What was your first job?** Head of the sports department at Red Lerille's Health and Racquet Club in Lafayette.

**What's the last book you read?** "The Edwardians," by Roy Hattersley.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Take an extended immersion course in French.

**D**eborah Harkins realized her desire to travel when she was in the fourth grade and hoped to become a stewardess one day.

Somewhere along the way, though, her seemingly contrasting dream of becoming an attorney steered her career in another direction, but not without compromise and fulfillment.

Harkins made it through law school by launching a ski travel business, Lift Tickets Unlimited, scheduling quarterly ski trips for doctors and lawyers each year.

"I told the dean I had to go skiing four times a year," Harkins said. "I think it was that passion and drive that helped me finish law school, and I finished law school so I could travel."

Harkins, 58, is now a partner at McGlinchey Stafford where she practices in areas such as education and gaming. She also leads the office's governmental relations division and supervises about 20 associates.

Harkins is also involved in Louisiana's charter school system, providing counsel to new charter schools as they seek establishment.

In the community, Harkins serves as chairwoman of the French Market revitalization committee and as secretary of the French Market Corp. board. She recently oversaw an eight-year renovation project at the market and said she hopes to continue helping it provide historic value and vitality to New Orleans.

Gov. Bobby Jindal appointed Harkins to the board of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities this year.

As she looks forward, quality of life has become more important to Harkins, who seeks to create a greater balance in life by further pursuing her traveling ambitions and by "wiping down some of the intensity of the work environment."

Harkins, who travels with her husband, has already visited Thailand. She said she would like to hike in Patagonia and revisit the Middle East, where she's developed a fondness for "the region's people, artifacts, history and overall mystique."

With all the talk about travel, Harkins admits she wants to be more creative at articulating that passion through other mediums.

"I'd like to pursue getting in some major travel magazines," said Harkins, who has had travel articles published in local and regional publications.

As she seeks to live her dreams, Harkins offers pro bono advice to others who are in similar pursuit.

"Put your eyes on the goal, and keep going until you get there. Don't give up."•

— *Nayita Wilson*



# Nakia Jones

**Position:** Nikki's Printing and Nikki's Foundation Inc. founder and CEO

**Age:** 35

**Family:** children, D'Juan, 18, Destiny, 16, Hakeem, 9

**Education:** certificate in business studies, Delgado Community College; certificate in residential mortgage lending, Donaldson Educational Services

**What did you want to be growing up?** A teacher or a lawyer.

**What was your first job?** Working in a summer youth program.

**What's the last book you read?** "Rich Woman," by Kim Kiyosaki.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Get away occasionally, maybe to Hawaii.

Six years ago, Algiers business owner Nakia Jones started a nonprofit aimed at giving kids some straight talk about the tough realities of being a teenage parent.

She started Nikki's Foundation Inc. with a focus on reducing teen pregnancy and enhancing the educational, emotional and social development of teens. Jones lends an authority to the mission that comes from her own experience as a teen mother.

"I've had a lot of struggles, but I worked hard and was determined to accomplish a lot regardless of ... that situation," Jones said.

That determination helped Jones start her own business, Nikki's Printing. The seven-year-old company with two employees provides copies, signs, business forms and banners, as well as packing and shipping services. Hurricane Katrina displaced the business to Baton Rouge for two years, then Gustav came along and destroyed the new headquarters. She's now operating at a temporary site until she can rebuild.

Through the foundation, Jones offers two elective, school-based programs: a pregnancy prevention program for teenage girls called Project WISE (for wisdom, integrity, strength and excellence) and the iRead Literacy Project, a literacy program for sixth- through eighth-graders with below-average reading skills. Community service projects also are part of the curriculum, along with an emphasis on communication skills and character building.

"We come together in groups where they are able to express themselves," said Jones, who also conducts a summer program at her business location. "We talk about things that they are curious about, things that they may have seen or that have happened to them. We also have parent workshops designed to give parents tools to better communicate with their children and build a relationship with them."

Jones is a member of the Urban League Young Professionals, which conducts college and career preparation programs at local schools. She also is an active member of the Algiers Economic Development Foundation.

Jones wants children who take part in the foundation's programs to set goals for themselves, work hard to achieve them and be aware of the consequences of their choices.

"Think about what you are doing," she said she stresses to her young protégés. "Think about your future."

Jones said her faith and "and people along the way who have helped me tremendously, just by encouraging me and telling me to keep pushing" are responsible for her success.

She is determined to pay it forward and already has experienced the rewards of doing so.

"Hearing the children I work with tell me, 'You're inspiring me to do better,' that makes me feel good."•

— Sonya Stinson



# Sun Kim

**Position:** Crown Products Inc. executive director

**Age:** 62

**Family:** husband Kee Lee; sons David Lee, 27, Peter Lee, 25

**Education:** bachelor's degree in music, violin performance, New England Conservatory of Music; master's degree in music, violin performance, State University of New York, Stony Brook

**What did you want to be growing up?** A violinist.

**What was your first job?** A violinist with the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra.

**What's the last book you read?** "The Calligrapher's Daughter," written by her sister, Eugenia Kim.

**What's one thing you've always wanted to do but haven't?** Become a professional photographer.

Sun Kim was just a baby when her parents came to the United States for her father's job as a translator with the U.S. Army, leaving her with extended family in Seoul, South Korea. The Korean War spoiled her parents' plans to send for her, delaying their reunion until she was 11.

The transition was difficult, but Kim remembers it as having uniquely shaped her for the cross-cultural professional and civic contributions she makes today.

"At the time ... the U.S. was like a dreamland. Everybody, they all envied me. That was a little comfort," Kim said.

Joining her immediate family in Silver Spring, Md., Kim found solace in learning to play the violin, which she considered a treat.

"When you have to overcome such a big challenge, then everything else, consciously or unconsciously, is easier," Kim said. "That's what made me what I am. I am fluent in both languages and both cultures."

She's been successful cross-culturally as a board member of the newly formed Asian Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana and the Asian Pacific American Society, the latter having raised \$500,000 in New Orleans for victims of the 2004 tsunami in Indonesia.

"We were really surprised that we were able to raise that much money, that the people really care," she said.

Kim has high hopes for the Asian Chamber, working to attract more Asian businesses that can in turn network with the greater business community.

She entered the international business arena nearly 20 years ago, joining her husband in his Crown Products agricultural exporting business and assuming the accounting responsibilities when an employee left after Hurricane Katrina.

"Now I know accounting," she said. "I learned."

Music has occupied much of her life. When she came to New Orleans as a newlywed in 1979, she started the music contracting business Sun Music and specialized in jazz violin as a member of Jasmine, which performed extensively and recorded.

Kim has taught music at Southern University and several private schools and played for years with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra.

"Two years ago, I retired from music. The music business is hard, not physically but (contractually)," she said. "I don't miss it at all. Someday, I'll take it back up when I retire from Crown Products."•

— Diana Chandler



# Amy Kirk

**Position:** French Market Corp. director of marketing

**Age:** 38

**Family:** husband, Andre Duvoisin; stepsons Andre, 12, Michael, 10

**Education:** bachelor's degree in creative writing, Prescott College; master's degree in English, San Francisco State University

**What did you want to be growing up?** A journalist.

**What was your first job?** A tomato picker at an Ohio greenhouse.

**What's the last book you read?** "Intimate Enemies: The Two Worlds of the Baroness de Pontalba," by Christina Vella.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Work overseas.

Amy Kirk hasn't felt inspired lately to write a play. Instead, the creative writing and English major is bringing her creativity to life in New Orleans.

"My theater love has turned into love of the city. The life here is theater," said Kirk, a Joan of Arc enthusiast who this year organized the St. Joan of Arc Krewe, a parade and a secular celebration of the heroine on Twelfth Night, replete with period costumes.

The result has been more interest from secular and religious groups than Kirk anticipated. She's organized a book club and is planning a one-day conference around Joan of Arc, who is the patron saint of domestic violence victims, with help from the Metro Battered Women's Shelter.

"I've loved Joan of Arc for years. I was always fascinated by her," said the Cleveland, Ohio, native.

Kirk came to New Orleans in 2004 with a friend and found an atmosphere that challenged her type-A personality and taught her to relax.

"Moving here is the best thing for someone like me who takes herself too seriously. You just can't survive here with an attitude like that," she said.

Kirk came to New Orleans as promotion manager for Pelican Publishing Co., where she worked from 2004-07 to promote local authors and chefs.

In 2007, she became an executive producer at WRNO, 99.5FM, where she produced several talk shows before taking over as marketing director of the French Market in June. She coordinates, manages and publicizes all events at the market.

Kirk's most recent challenge has been revitalizing the French Market, which she calls a "hip scene in a historic setting."

"A huge part of my passion is getting locals to re-embrace this part of the city," she said. "We are a real testament to the vitality of the city."

Some of the events she's behind include "Let Them Eat Cake" on Bastille Day, Free Fruit Friday at the Farmers Market, as well as Fridays at the French Market and a new festival, Boo Carre, in the week before Halloween.

Kirk also volunteers as a board member of the Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival.

And while life in New Orleans has satisfied her longings for a theater project, the playwright hasn't totally given up on the craft.

"Someday maybe I'll write a play again. I hope so," she said. "It's cliché, but the theater is in the streets and bars here."

She describes New Orleans as deeply grass roots and the French Quarter as the most authentic place she has lived, surpassing San Francisco and New England.

"Here, they want to know your high school or who's your mama."

She found San Francisco "serious in a certain intellectual, stodgy way," while New England was too "serious in a political, ideological way."•

— Diana Chandler



# Ann Koppel

**Position:** Adams and Reese partner

**Age:** 36

**Family:** husband, Mark Schreiner; children, Edward, 9, Caroline, 6, Harry, 2

**Education:** bachelor's degree in history, Dartmouth College; juris doctor, University of Wisconsin Law School

**What did you want to be growing up?** A lawyer. There was a running joke in my family that I was always going to be a lawyer because I would analyze every issue.

**What was your first job?** I babysat a lot.

**What's the last book you read?** "Slummy Mummy," which is a like a British chick-flick book.

**What you have always wanted to do but haven't?** There are just lots of places I'd love to travel to such as Asia and Africa.

While her professional life is filled with major achievements, perhaps one of Ann Koppel's biggest accomplishments is raising three children while juggling a successful law career.

Before coming to New Orleans, where she is a partner at Adams and Reese, Koppel worked at the New York office of a large national firm. But when she had her first child, she and her husband thought hard about their future.

Although she was on the fast track to the top in the Big Apple, she took a pay cut and moved to New Orleans to take a job with Adams and Reese. While the firm here had high-profile clients and offered a great career, it would also allow her to spend more time with her family.

"I think many women will say that one of the biggest challenges is to have kids and a successful career because both of them take so much time. The truth is that can be a struggle for dads, too," she said.

Koppel credits her success as a mother and attorney to having similar mentors around the office, people she has always looked up to who have managed to do both jobs well.

At Adams and Reese, Koppel is a litigator who focuses on the defense of class actions and product liability cases in federal and state courts. Having made partner at the age of 31, she has been involved in many high-profile class-action cases defending chemical companies, underwriters, and medical and pharmaceutical manufacturers.

Throughout it all, Koppel said her diverse client mix has allowed her to learn about everything from the scientific inner workings of prescription drugs to geology and gold mining in Indonesia.

"It's the ability to learn about different industries or some particular scientific area. Every case offers the opportunity to learn something different. It's just about figuring out what your client needs and solving a problem for them," Koppel said.

Outside of work, Koppel serves on the board of directors for the New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association. She also leads the Junior League of New Orleans' Power Ties Committee and is a member of the New Orleans Regional Leadership Institute's class of 2009.

Koppel also serves on the board of directors for the Young Audiences of Louisiana, a nonprofit arts-in-education organization that serves about 200,000 students each year.

"They have pioneered innovative ways to teach kids core literacy and incorporate arts. That is just something that I feel strongly about and I'm proud to be a part of it."•

— Craig Guillot



# Susan Krinsky

**Position:** Tulane University Law School associate dean and lecturer

**Age:** 57

**Family:** husband, Hugh Long; children, Kira, 25, Benjamin, 20

**Education:** bachelor's degree in English, Kirkland College; master's degree in public health, Tulane University; juris doctor, Yale University

**What did you want to be growing up?** A trapeze artist in the circus.

**What was your first job?** A summer job editing manuscripts for private psychiatric hospital on Long Island.

**What's the last book you read?** "Run," by Ann Patchett.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Travel more than I have and really engage in the places I travel.

One of Susan Krinsky's jobs as associate dean of Tulane University Law School is to talk to interested students about why they should attend law school and spend four years living in New Orleans.

Because about 85 percent of Tulane University Law School's 800 students come from outside of Louisiana, it helps that Krinsky sits on several boards with ties to New Orleans' cultural arts community.

"It's a perfect combination. I have a love for the arts and when I talk to students about coming to Tulane, I already know a lot about the life, culture and atmosphere of living in this city," said Krinsky, who is active with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra and Southern Repertory Theatre boards, as well as working with Lusher Charter School and the Louisiana Mental Health Advocacy Services.

"It helps in my position to be knowledgeable about this city and the great things it has to offer," she said. "I talk to students about that every day and try to get them involved in community work when they get here."

After spending a year and a half in private practice at Baker Hostetler concentrating in health law, First Amendment litigation and banking litigation, Krinsky joined Tulane University Law School in 1982 as assistant dean.

She became associate dean in 1990 and is responsible for the school's admissions process, financial aid and career development. Krinsky said her biggest professional challenge was taking an administrative role in the early 1980s and proving herself in that position.

"Women were not taken seriously back then in leadership positions, so I had to work hard to establish myself among my colleagues and prove to them I deserved this role," Krinsky said. "Nowadays, the major difference is numbers. Women are being put into leadership positions more regularly and there are more opportunities out there."

Krinsky is co-author of a volume of legal writings on intersection of law and medicine and has served as a mediator in Equal Employment Opportunity Commission cases and as an arbitrator in homeowner insurance cases. In addition to her role as associate dean, Krinsky has taught courses in health care law and regulation, and bioethics.

"My students are usually those who become immersed in bioethics law, and it's a great feeling as a teacher when they become passionate about the law they study," she said. •

— Tommy Santora





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**2010 EDITORIAL CALENDAR**

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Liz Baldini 293-9213 liz.baldini@npg.com	Jeanne Farrell 293-9731 jeanne.farrell@npg.com	Cassie Foreman 293-9222 cassie.foreman@npg.com	Coco Evans Judd 293-9288 coco.judd@npg.com	Monique Brignac 293-9268 monique.brignac@npg.com
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# Angela Lacour

**Position:** Stewart Enterprises vice president, corporate controller and chief accounting officer

**Age:** 37

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree in accounting, University of New Orleans

**What did you want to be growing up?** A teacher.

**What was your first job?** Working at a concession stand.

**What's the last book you read?** "The State of Fear," by Michael Crichton.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Travel to Europe.

After three years of being swamped with implementing new accounting and contract processing software at Stewart Enterprises, Angela Lacour is finally able to come up for air.

"It's exciting that we've got it up and running, and it's working," said Lacour, who as the company's chief accounting officer had a key role in designing the new systems.

Of course, if a hurricane didn't stop Lacour's department from meeting a financial report deadline four years ago — despite being scattered all over the country — they weren't about to be conquered by the challenge of installing a new computer system. Still, it was a daunting project.

"You had to make sure that you set up the accounting for each product that we sell, and there are thousands," Lacour says.

The Metairie-based death care company has operations in 24 states and Puerto Rico, including 219 funeral homes, 140 cemeteries and sales of pre-arrangement plans and merchandise.

Lacour, who joined the company in 1997, previously was director of financial reporting and assistant corporate controller. She also spent four years as an auditor with KPMG LLP.

"Most of my duties revolve around preparing the public statements and making sure that our board, our executives and the managers of our business have the financial data they need to assess how the business is doing," Lacour said.

Another regular duty for Lacour is attending the monthly meetings of Stewart's senior executive committee, along with the CEO, the chief financial officer and the heads of marketing, sales and operations.

"We set the vision for where the company is headed and (determine) the steps we need to execute on that vision."

Lacour is a member of the Young Leadership Council, though she admits the demands of her most recent work project have kept her from participating with the organization as much as she would like. When she was more active, she enjoyed working with the YLC's Angel's Academy, a Saturday morning program for underprivileged kids.

"We'd play games, do crafts, give them hugs," Lacour said. "I really miss that. After Katrina, that just didn't come back the same."

As someone whose career has benefited from mentors, Lacour understands how important it is to have that kind of moral support.

"I've been fortunate throughout my career to work with some wonderful mentors who not only taught me a lot but who took big risks on me and gave me some opportunities early in my career," she said.

Lacour said the lessons she learned from those relationships were simple but enduring.

"Doing the right thing, treating people with respect, working hard to get stuff right. That sounds like basic stuff, but it's stuff that I've found holds true."•

— Sonya Stinson



# Annie LaRock

**Position:** United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area director of national philanthropy

**Age:** 54

**Family:** husband, Dennis; children, Sarah, 25, Charlie, 24

**Education:** bachelor's degree in history and women's studies, University of Rochester

**What did you want to be growing up?** A cowgirl.

**What was your first job?** Helping my father, a brassiere salesman, sort through re-orders.

**What's the last book you read?** "Zeitoun," by Dave Eggers.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Take a hot air balloon trip over the Serengeti and "eavesdrop on what the rest of the world looks like."

Annie LaRock "kicked cancer's ass." Diagnosed in July 2008 with Hodgkin's lymphoma, LaRock not only survived the treatments, which included 12 cycles of chemotherapy and more than 30 treatments of radiation, but, as of March, she has survived the disease.

Throughout her treatment, LaRock, director of national philanthropy for the United Way for the Greater New Orleans, managed to help bring in \$6.3 million for the organization's campaign last year.

"I felt bad," LaRock said of the treatments, "but not bad enough not to work. I just wasn't flattened by the treatment."

LaRock joined United Way in October 2006. From that time to 2009, she raised \$15 million in alternative funding from local and national corporate, private and family foundations. That money supplements what is raised through the organization's workplace campaigns.

LaRock moved from Manhattan to New Orleans post-Hurricane Katrina, having sold her home of 25 years four days before the storm. She and her husband, Dennis, had been planning the move since early 2005. Despite the hurricane and its after effects, they continued with their plan and came to the city, where LaRock took on the task of driving an emergency relief vehicle for the Red Cross before joining the United Way.

"The thing that attracted me (to the United Way) is they are very serious about measuring the impact," LaRock said. "It helps to raise money if you have data, and they were collecting data."

LaRock hopes her 22 years in development, public relations and strategic planning for nonprofits will help her continue to raise money for the United Way.

"I bring my New York assertiveness," LaRock said. "I really try not to lose my edge, my extreme attention to detail."

LaRock has been staying busy in her new home city. She belongs to a number of organizations and, despite cancer, she continues her activism in the community, a feat she credits to the new friendships she has formed in New Orleans.

"There really were people who were just on my A-team, people who I hadn't known when I moved here ... who really stepped up for me in a way I could never."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora



# Rose LeBreton

**Position:** The Steeg Law Firm partner

**Age:** 57

**Family:** husband, Edward; children, Eddie, 28, Julie, 25, Amelie, 22

**Education:** bachelor's degree in French and music, Newcomb College; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

**What did you want to be growing up?** An opera star or a lawyer.

**What was your first job?** A pool stand girl at Dellwood Country Club in New City, N.Y.

**What's the last book you read?** "The Girl Who Played with Fire," by Stieg Larsson.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Win the lottery.

Rose LeBreton, a third-generation attorney, grew up in an era when women dominated the education field and essentially were foreigners to the practice of law.

But she said her family structure shielded her from the potentially career-crippling side effects of the gender bias by treating male and female family members equally.

"I wasn't one of the ones just catching on (to practicing law). It was a part of my family dynamic," LeBreton said. "It was the question of 'what are you going to do?' that formed me."

LeBreton has since blazed trails as a civically engaged attorney, earning stakes in systems men once dominated.

After receiving her law degree from Tulane in 1976, LeBreton was named assistant dean of admissions and financial aid at the law school, becoming the first female to hold that position.

Subsequent to that, she worked as a clerk in U.S. District Court. She also has worked in real estate, as well as in private practice focusing on resolution trust.

LeBreton joined The Steeg Law Firm in 1994 after taking a 10-year leave from full-time practice to raise a family and care for her mother. She's the only female among the firm's five partners and handles various facets of commercial real estate law such as title insurance defense, curing complex title issues, and assisting developers and owners with land acquisition and development.

"I like to think of myself as the legal architect of the deal," she said.

LeBreton is representing Steeg as lead attorney on the Tulane RiverSphere Center for Excellence for Sustainable Energy Systems project. The initiative seeks to create an institute on New Orleans' downtown riverfront for the purposes of studying "culture, physical aspects, energy and commerce of the Mississippi River."

In that project, LeBreton has the challenging task of uniting parties with competing interests: the Port of New Orleans, Mardi Gras World, the city of New Orleans and the New Orleans Morial Convention Center.

Fortunately, being able to find the middle ground is a professional strength LeBreton acknowledges and applies. As a connector, she has found similar success in civic engagements.

LeBreton is president of the New Orleans chapter of Commercial Real Estate Women, a national organization that links women with business endeavors. She also leads the local chapter of Tulane Law Alumni, an organization she revived in 2002. Under her leadership, 3,000 alumni have been identified and many have reconnected through chapter events. •

— *Nayita Wilson*



# Kathy Lowrey

**Position:** Northshore Harbor Convention Center general manager

**Age:** 51

**Family:** husband, Bruce; children, Heather, 25, Megan, 22, Shepherd, 22, Chelsea, 21

**Education:** attended University of New Orleans and Delgado Community College

**What did you want to be growing up?** A dancer.

**What was your first job?** Clerical work for a plumbing repair business when I was 17.

**What's the last book you read?** "Rising Tide," by John Barry

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Slow down.

I think one of my weak points is that I am always on the run pushing myself.

**K**athy Lowrey eagerly takes on projects for which some may think there is no need: helping the impoverished in St. Tammany Parish.

"It may surprise many, but we really do have a wide range of incomes and people at all economic levels here," Lowrey said. "And some of these people, particularly with the most recent economic downturn, need assistance."

As general manager of the Northshore Harbor Convention Center, Lowrey has a particularly good insight into how the economy of St. Tammany is holding up.

"We have a lot of different community groups coming in for their fundraisers at our facility, and many of them are working a little bit harder these days to get the revenue they need. Sponsorships have dropped significantly."

The result is that the unemployed or underemployed in St. Tammany have been hit hard by the national recession and Lowrey is doing what she can to lessen their burden.

As a member of the Slidell Women's Civic Club, Lowrey has taken part in a variety of fundraisers the group hosts throughout the year. She's also involved in the club's visits to area nursing homes, working in soup kitchens and doing trash pickups for the club's cleanup campaigns.

Lowrey also volunteers for My Girlfriend's Closet, an upscale resale shop in Slidell that gives all of its proceeds to the Rainbow Childcare Center.

"The center is open one weekend a month, so the week before that we go in and sort through the clothes and get everything ready for sale," she said.

Lowrey also volunteers with the Marine Corps Toys for Tots Program, an effort that is a direct result of her Northshore Harbor Convention Center management.

"The Marines actually came to our center and wanted to hold a concert that would be used to collect toys," she said. "As they talked to us about their experiences and their relationships with the children, we — myself and my staff — decided to get involved and really ran with it."

That meant helping establish collection boxes throughout St. Tammany and connecting children with the toys.

"It's a beautiful experience. The kids can pick out their own things and it's just a great thing to see them being so happy."

Although Lowrey said her duties at the Northshore Harbor Convention Center are fulfilling, requiring her to coordinate dozens of events with any number of groups and organizations, her volunteer work gives her a particular satisfaction.

"It's just something that makes me feel like I may be making a difference — I hope I am," she said. "Even when I am busy with other things, I like giving back to the community."•

— Garry Boulard



# Carla Major

*Two-time honoree*

**Position:** Harrah's New Orleans Casino and Hotel vice president of human resources and community relations

**Age:** 55

**Family:** husband, Rudy; children, Keesha, 33, Kyle, 24

**Education:** bachelor's degree in management, University of New Orleans

**What did you want to be growing up?** I have always wanted a career where I could make a difference in somebody's life from the time I get out of bed to the moment I go to sleep at night.

**What was your first job?** I worked as a cashier at Baker's shoe store on Canal just to get a discount on the shoes.

**What's the last book you read?** I reread "How You Leave Them Feeling," by Jesse Ferrell.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** I want to have a 24-hour shopping excursion in the largest outlet mall in America.

Harrah's New Orleans Casino and Hotel employees call Carla Major the "Idea Fairy."

"My favorite feedback is when somebody says, 'Man, you never know what's gonna happen next at this place?'" said Major, vice president of human resources and community relations. "We're New Orleans; we celebrate everything. And we're a casino, so we're supposed to have fun here. My goal is to make employees want to come to work, and it's only a job around here because we get paid for it."

From renaming "Employees of the Month" to "Who Dats of the Month" to holding brass band performances outside the casino, Major tries to make sure her employees are having fun.

A New Orleans native, Major has been with Harrah's since it opened in 1999. Before that, she was the assistant chairwoman of the business department at Xavier University and human resources manager at BellSouth, where she worked for 18 years.

Major said her biggest professional challenge was making the switch from running human resources for a traditional, well-known company such as BellSouth to joining a casino and introducing a new brand to the community.

"In the beginning, we really looked at our image within the community and we knew that to gain respect, we had to be a dynamic corporate citizen and the best place to work for employees," she said. "That was my job to accomplish both things."

When she joined Harrah's, Major created Harrah's Employees Reaching Out, an employee volunteer program in which about 200 staff members have taken part in walks for the Susan G. Komen Foundation and the American Diabetes and Heart associations. HERO participants also have donated time to Meals on Wheels, the New Orleans Council on Aging and Rebuilding Together New Orleans.

For its employees, Harrah's has its own health center, convenience store, Internet cafe, game room and soap opera TV room. Plans are in place for a fitness area.

"I want to make their lives better professionally and personally," Major said. "My main goal for employees is how do I make you better, and how do I make you enjoy your job better so you can serve our customers in the best way?"

Major serves on several New Orleans boards and committees, and she is chairwoman of the city's Board of Zoning.

"I have no real estate background, but I have a skill of listening to people and their needs. I have a vested interest in the community and its citizens and the continued progress of this city."•

— Tommy Santora



# Eve Masinter

*Two-time honoree*

**Position:** Lemle and Kelleher partner

**Age:** 51

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree in political science, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center

**What did you want to be growing up?** An attorney.

**What was your first job job?** Working at McDonald's.

**What's the last book you read?** "The Great Homes of New Orleans," by Curt Bruce.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Travel to Eastern Europe and Asia.

Structure brings freedom to Eve Masinter's life.

Three days a week, she wakes up at 4:30 a.m. to feed her two miniature dachshunds, Wilhelm and Fielding, before attending a 5:30 a.m. boot-camp fitness class in Audubon Park and heading to work after to take part in conference calls, meetings and hearings.

To Masinter, the early morning sit-ups, push-ups, squats, weight work, lunges and running set the tone for the coming day.

She describes herself as a morning person and embraces her passion for animals by helping draft the bylaws and raising money for NOLA City Bark, a dog park opening soon in City Park. She's a member of the founding board.

"I love animals. Should I have been a vet or done something with animals?" she asked. "If I could have chosen another path, that may have been it."

The oldest of four children, she developed a fondness for law through her father, Milton Masinter. She spent 24 years at McGlinchey Stafford before switching to Lemle and Kelleher two years ago. She considers the move a mid-life career change but maintains friendships at both practices.

"I'm not the type of person that likes change. I like structure, to be in a comfortable situation," she said. "When you have a career change like that, it's almost as if you're starting anew in a lot of ways. It's makes you fall in love again with the practice of law."

Masinter said she has a two-fold love affair with law.

"I love the law itself, the concept and ... the structure of the law, which is to have order," she said. "I also love the people part of it, which captures the face and heart of the case."

Masinter said she has always appreciated structure and self-discipline, and always strives to do better and achieve more.

But there's also a desire to color outside the lines, figuratively, as she grew to appreciate her mother, Shirley Rabe Masinter's, creativity as an artist specializing in photorealism.

"I would love to have her talent and be able to create as she does," she said, adding that her mother describes her legal work as creative.

Her mother's craft of painting architectural and street scenes in oil perhaps influences Masinter's love of architecture and history, but she said she looks forward to continuing to practice law with an eye toward retirement.

"I have no other real goals in sight as far as changing paths."•

— Diana Chandler



# Grasshopper Mendoza

*Two-time honoree*

**Position:** Latter & Blum Inc. Realtors commercial broker

**Age:** 39

**Family:** partner, Steve Picou

**Education:** bachelor's degree in international business, San Francisco State University

**What did you want to be growing up?** A doctor or open a small business.

**What was your first job?** A newspaper delivery girl.

**What's the last book you read?** "Hot, Flat and Crowded," by Thomas Friedman.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Go to a Saints game.

After growing up in San Francisco, Grasshopper Mendoza moved to Tecate, Mexico, to continue her studies in international business while opening her own café. Although life south of the border was pleasant for Mendoza, something called her back to the United States and specifically to New Orleans.

"I came to New Orleans for a weekend trip, then went home and packed my bags," she said. "Everything about this city was aligned with who I am."

An interest in architecture and business led Mendoza to pursue a career in real estate sales and development. She acquired her real estate license in 2003 and went to work as a residential agent and broker for Latter & Blum. Within two years, she found commercial development was the best fit for her skills.

"I enjoy the commercial side of the business because I like working with small businesses and entrepreneurs to help them develop their business," she said. "There's an urgent need for this in our community."

For Mendoza, it was impossible to separate her work in real estate from her environmental conscience. She soon began working with a Latter & Blum team to expand the U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Environmental and Engineering Design standards in the marketplace.

With the need for rebuilding after the 2005 hurricane season, Mendoza saw a critical opportunity to campaign for the construction of cleaner, more energy-efficient buildings.

In September, the USGBC chose Mendoza to travel to Washington, D.C., to meet with Louisiana senators and representatives to advocate for energy efficiency labeling for buildings and "green schools," which are healthier for students and teachers, better for the environment and cost less to operate and maintain.

"Energy efficiency is a win-win for everyone," she said. "This means a major economic as well as environmental opportunity for our city and state."

As chairwoman for the Horizon Initiative's water committee, a think tank of experts and regional leaders with connections to water resources, Mendoza works to develop and promote an integrated water management plan for the region that incorporates proven Dutch models and low-impact development practices.

"Water is our most abundant resource, one that dramatically impacts our quality of life," she said. "Our group works on realistic ways to improve our infrastructure to make our quality of life even better."

Although Mendoza has achieved sales goals at Latter & Blum Inc. for the past few years, she regards her ongoing environmental work as her biggest achievement. •

— Thomas Leggett





# Kristi Mirambell

**Position:** K-Belle Consultants owner

**Age:** 29

**Family:** husband, Craig

**Education:** bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering, University of New Orleans

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?** A child psychologist.

**What was your first job?** I worked at Winn-Dixie in the florist department when I was 15.

**What's the last book you read?** "A Letter to My Daughter," by Maya Angelou.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Make a difference. I guess I will always second-guess myself, wondering if I could do better at whatever I am doing.

By the time Kristi Mirambell received her master's degree in civil engineering from the University of New Orleans in 2007, she was, as she puts it, "ready for my next challenge."

Never mind that shortly after graduation Mirambell was laying the groundwork to start her own company, K-Belle Consultants, an engineering and construction consulting group providing project management services.

That "next challenge" turned out to be volunteering for the National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association, a challenge Mirambell said she instantly liked because she was helping children.

CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to assist children who have been abandoned by parents. When those parents, who often are substance abusers, are out of the picture, the children are at risk of getting lost in large, bewildering social service and legal systems.

Although many of the children eventually end up in foster homes, stability is still elusive, as they sometimes don't stay in such a setting for very long.

"You are the eyes and ears for children in foster care," she said. "The volunteers come into the picture after the children are removed from their homes. At that point, they are placed in a foster home."

The idea is to provide some stability in a young life of upheaval, Mirambell said. Even the caseworkers and lawyers who make it their mission to help such children are never a permanent presence for the children.

"But when you sign a (CASA) contract, you sign to finish out your case, so you will always be with them."

Establishing an ongoing relationship between CASA volunteers and the children they are assigned to is vital, Mirambell said, because CASA children very often don't have anyone to depend on.

"So we try to offer them the stability that they are lacking in their lives."

While the volunteer work for CASA is obviously beneficial to the children in question, Mirambell said the work has been rewarding for her.

"It teaches you to look at things in a different perspective. Before I was involved in the program, I probably had a negative view of alcoholics. But now I understand addiction more and can understand what an addict is and why they do the things they do."

Mirambell considers herself lucky.

"I've had three cases — two adoptions and one child that aged out — and I've had wonderful foster families that I have dealt with. They made the difference in the children's life."•

— Garry Boulard



# Tess Monaghan

**Position:** Build Now executive director

**Age:** 25

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree in history, Yale University

**What did you want to be growing up?** A veterinarian and an entrepreneur.

**What was your first job?** Working in the summer programs office at Yale.

**What's the last book you read?** "Dr. Mary's Monkey," by Ed Haslam.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Travel through Central and South America.

Last year, at age 24, Tess Monaghan traded life as a management consultant in the Big Apple for a new job in the Big Easy. You could hardly pin her new hometown's nickname on her current workload.

As executive director of Build Now, a nonprofit home-builder established in 2008, Monaghan might start her day by meeting her construction manager at a job site to make sure the homeowner's checklist is being followed. She might then head to the office, check messages and meet with a community leader. Working with just four full-time staff members, she coordinates marketing, oversees legal compliance and does her own accounting.

Founded by her father, William Monaghan, an architect and contractor who grew up in New Orleans and wanted to help the area rebuild after Katrina, Build Now has helped more than a dozen families, including three who already have moved into their new homes.

Creating those success stories meant overcoming two major challenges.

"The first is the obvious one, which is money. There's not enough of it," said Monaghan, who helps clients find sources to fill the gap when Road Home money and insurance proceeds run out.

The second challenge is to help clients get over what Monaghan calls "the psychological hurdles."

"For many of our clients, it's been a long road, and it's sort of hard for them to put it all in perspective and see the light at the end of the tunnel," she said. "People are very worn out. Part of what we do as a nonprofit is to try to take as much of the burden off them as possible."

When she's not busy mastering the art of multitasking at Build Now, Monaghan is studying to become a yoga teacher.

"Working with people who've lost everything can be a stressful endeavor, so being a part of a community of people involved in yoga has been a great counterpoint."

Monaghan said being director of Build Now can be the most challenging yet rewarding experience.

"You take someone who's not used to a construction site into a house that's just framed, and they can't see what it's going to look like," Monaghan said. "But when you go back with them at the final walk-through — I just did one with a couple in Pontchartrain Park and they were just walking around speechless — those are the moments that make it all worth it."•

— Sonya Stinson



# Marie Moore

**Position:** Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klein and Hilbert member

**Age:** 56

**Family:** husband, William Just; sons Sam, 21, Will, 19

**Education:** bachelor's degree in English and political science, University of Alabama; juris doctor, University of Alabama School of Law

**What did you want to be growing up?** A great novelist.

**What was your first job?** I worked at a shoe store.

**What's the last book you read?** I read about a book a week, and that's everything from history to trash. "Scarpetta," it's a murder mystery, and "Cat's Eye" which is good literature.

**What you have always wanted to do but haven't?** I still want to write a great novel.

Whether it's drafting and negotiating business documents or making a business deal, Marie Moore serves the needs of her commercial clients with integrity.

"It's about helping people achieve their business goals and finding the commonality between the two, three or more interests," Moore said. "It's trying to make a business deal work for everybody and putting that in writing."

As a member of Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klein and Hilbert law firm, Moore practices real estate law in the areas of commercial leasing, construction, lending and general commercial transactions.

She serves as chairwoman of the American Bar Association's Retail Leasing Committee and has served as a member of the Louisiana State Law Institute's committee to revise the Louisiana Civil Code Articles on Lease.

Outside of her business with the firm, Moore has been involved in pro bono and community activities such as serving as a poll commissioner in Orleans Parish and helping start New Orleans Commercial Real Estate Women. She also helps with education programs for the New Orleans Bar Association and serves on the diversity committee of the property section of the American Bar Association.

Moore also has been involved in several political campaigns and has spoken on real estate matters before the International Council of Shopping Centers, the American Bar Association and several other organizations.

Since she was a student, Moore has also enjoyed writing and says it is an excellent way to share her legal knowledge with others. She is an editor of the American Bar Association's Probate and Property magazine and has contributed to various publications including the State by State Guide to Commercial Real Estate Leases, Retail Law Strategist and Urban Land.

"I have just always enjoyed writing. When I was in college, I would always outline my courses, and for me, it has just been about sharing what I have learned," Moore said.

When it comes to challenges, Moore often prefers to look past them, saying that dwelling on hurdles only makes things more difficult. Growing up, she had always heard women should be secretaries or teachers, but she never took it seriously and just looked forward.

While she's reluctant to identify any particular professional challenges, Moore said she did have trouble speaking before large audiences, a problem she rectified through practice.

When Moore isn't working, she enjoys reading, traveling and shopping, so much so that she refers to herself as a "sport shopper" who is always in search of bargains. •

— Craig Guillot



# Jeanne Nathan

**Position:** Creative Alliance of New Orleans president; Creative Industry president

**Age:** 66

**Family:** husband, Robert Tannen; stepchildren, Erica, 50, Billy, 51, Snow, 47

**Education:** bachelor's degree in labor and industrial relations, Cornell University

**What did you want to be growing up?** A nurse, teacher or film editor.

**What was your first job?** A training supervisor for Gimbel's, a department store in New York.

**What's the last book you read?** "Collapse," by Jared Diamond.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Go around the world.

Whether through her business or nonprofit work, Jeanne Nathan is committed to building a thriving creative community in New Orleans.

As president of Creative Industry USA, Nathan works in public relations, marketing and economic development to help clients improve their businesses and enrich the community with creative work.

Nathan is also president of the Creative Alliance of New Orleans, which represents professionals such as visual artists, film and theater workers, musicians and architects. The alliance helps promote events, facilitates networking between artists and helps develop creative projects.

"There is no other organization that brings all of these disciplines together," Nathan said.

In the fall of 2007, Nathan and Creative Alliance partnered with Prospect.1 to create the Studio at Colton in a school building in the 2300 block of St. Claude Avenue. Within 60 days, the building was remediated and turned into a studio and exhibition space for artists and organizations in the New Orleans area. Arts education was provided for local students as well.

The building is being converted back to its original use as a school, but the Creative Alliance is in negotiations with the Recovery School District to secure a new space.

Nathan and Creative Alliance are now working on a poll to gauge activity in the city's creative industries so a more detailed economic analysis can be completed. That information will allow the alliance to lobby the city and state government for more support.

"We want to make sure New Orleans and Louisiana invests in what has been shortlisted as one of the fastest emerging industries," Nathan said.

In addition to her work with Creative Alliance, Nathan co-founded the Contemporary Arts Center on Camp Street. The CAC is now one of the city's pre-eminent artistic venues, housing visual arts exhibitions, concerts and movie screenings during the New Orleans Film Festival.

Nathan's work also extends to the environment. Immediately after Hurricane Katrina, she worked with Global Green to help rebuild New Orleans in a sustainable, environmentally friendly way. Global Green is building a green village in the Lower 9th Ward and helped Brad Pitt come up with the idea for his Make It Right Foundation.

Nathan and Global Green also are working with the Recovery School District on plans for green schools.

"People didn't think about building green in New Orleans before Katrina," Nathan said. "Now, people are asking about it."•

— Fritz Esker



# Kathy Nieland

**Position:** PricewaterhouseCoopers managing partner and site leader of the New Orleans office

**Age:** 41

**Family:** husband, Chris; children, Sarah, 10, Christopher, 8

**Education:** bachelor's degree in accounting, University of South Alabama

**What did you want to be growing up?** An astronaut.

**What was your first job?** Telemarketing.

**What's the last book you read?** "Outliers," by Malcolm Gladwell.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Cruise the Mediterranean Sea for two weeks.

The old adage "behind every good man is a good woman" has progressed.

Kathy Nieland says it's her husband, Chris, who's responsible for 60 percent of her career and success. He took a step back in his own career to devote more time to raising their children so Nieland could develop her career as the site leader for PricewaterhouseCoopers' New Orleans office.

"Without his support and understanding, I could not have come close to where I am at in my career," Nieland said.

Nieland is partner-in-charge at the New Orleans office and has more than 19 years of experience serving Securities and Exchange Commission registrants and other multinational companies, solving their complex business problems from accounting and human resources to compensation strategies.

A member of the firm's leadership team for climate change and sustainability assurance, Nieland is raising awareness for the need for consistent corporate reporting of social responsibility information, including greenhouse gas emissions data.

Nieland began her career at PricewaterhouseCoopers in 1990. She received significant training from the firm as she progressed through the ranks, but it was after Hurricane Katrina that her career really took off. Nieland said it was from her "tour of duty" with the leadership team in strategy that she worked her way into the position for climate change and regulation.

Nieland also is responsible for advocating the progression of women and minorities within the firm. She said the Diversity Team identified her for the job because it recognized she wasn't afraid to voice her opinions. Nieland was recognized for her efforts with the firm's Assurance Diversity Champion award.

She said she hopes to be an advocate for the progression of women outside the firm as well through her work with the Louisiana International Women's Forum and the United Way Women's Leadership Initiative in New Orleans.

Nieland is arranging for a gender-awareness expert to meet with the women of H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College Institute at Tulane University.

"Women have a reasonable amount of emotion," she said. "Once you understand that, you can take advantage of that in the workplace."

Being the only woman in the room is sometimes a significant challenge, Nieland said.

"They can't miss you. One, you need to participate, and two, you need to have impact."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora



# Angela O'Byrne

*Hall of Fame*

**Position:** Perez APC president and CEO

**Age:** 49

**Family:** children, Christina, 29, Alexandra, 24, Frederick, 20

**Education:** bachelor's degree in architecture, Tulane University; master's degree in real estate development, Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture

**What did you want to be growing up?** An architect.

**What was your first job?** Babysitting and detasseling corn in Minnesota.

**What's the last book you read?** "Kabul Beauty School: An American Woman Goes Behind the Veil," by Deborah Rodriguez and Kristin Ohlson.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Travel to Africa and Asia.

Working in the field of architecture has been a lot like climbing into the car of a wild rollercoaster and holding on for dear life for Angela O'Byrne.

"The biggest challenges in my professional life were the huge upturns and downturns in the firms where I worked," said O'Byrne, an award-winning architect who is head of the New Orleans-based firm Perez APC. "I've lived through about four or five big swings and some smaller ones, all of which involved either growing fast or shrinking fast. And of course shrinking fast is a lot more painful because it involves layoffs."

O'Byrne often was the one letting people go, but one time she got the pink slip. Fortunately, the outlook seems promising now at Perez, whose design credits include the New Orleans Morial Convention Center and new projects such as the Patrick Taylor Science and Technology Academy in Jefferson Parish.

"We've gone from zero employees after Hurricane Katrina to 55 today, and we're continuing to get work despite the global (economic) crisis," she said.

Riding out the steep curves of her career has taught O'Byrne to be "very fiscally conservative and very careful." She meets monthly with the board of directors at Perez to keep tabs on the economic indicators affecting the firm's ability to make payroll, pay its bills and minimize debt.

Before becoming CEO at Perez, she was the firm's operations manager and previously held positions at architecture and engineering firms in New York. In New Orleans, she has established herself as a noted expert in historic preservation and adaptive re-use of historic buildings.

After Katrina, O'Byrne started CityWorks, a nonprofit that educates the community about good urban planning and design to make the rebuilt New Orleans a model for the nation.

CityWorks volunteered to assist the city of New Orleans with its public awareness campaign on the master plan and comprehensive zoning ordinance when money ran out for that effort. Next year, the group will host two conferences focusing on the city's progress toward recovery, one in February and the other in August on the fifth anniversary of the storm.

O'Byrne recently traveled to a London for an architecture festival sponsored in part by CityWorks that she wants to replicate in New Orleans. After the conference, she spent some time in Barcelona and Paris and continued on with business trips to Dubai and Afghanistan.

"We have contracts in Afghanistan to build and design two hospitals, and we're hoping to get more work there," she said. •

— Sonya Stinson



# Kira Orange-Jones

**Position:** Teach For America-Greater New Orleans executive director

**Age:** 31

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree in journalism, Louisiana Tech University; master's degree in education, Harvard University

**What did you want to be growing up?** An actor, or be involved in the performing arts.

**What was your first job?** I was a camp counselor at a performing arts camp and I loved it.

**What's the last book you read?** "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success," by Carol Dweck.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Hike the GR-10 route through the Pyrenees.

**K**ira Orange-Jones lives a life that mirrors the principles her mother instilled in her, a life that places value on community service and involvement.

Each day, she executes such principles in ensuring equity and excellence are provided to youth in schools throughout the region in her role as executive director of Teach for America-Greater New Orleans.

"My mother definitely has had the greatest impact on my life," Orange-Jones said. "As a child I saw my mother sacrifice so that I could be given an excellent education and experience new things. Every day her actions and words drove home the idea that once you have an education, it is yours for life and no one can take that away from you."

Throughout her life, Orange-Jones said she has had intimate experiences with education that helped her identify and cultivate strengths and address challenges.

Orange-Jones said her experience as a ninth-grade student provided a life-altering lesson that she seeks to share with others in similar situations. The start of her high school career proved difficult. Although she was a straight-A student before, she found herself unprepared for the rigorous curriculum at her new school.

"Overcoming my own place in the achievement gap and subsequently getting accepted into college was an extraordinary personal success," Orange-Jones said. "Seeing how the achievement gap played a role in my own life really influenced me to become involved in helping others to overcome this challenge as well."

Under Orange-Jones' leadership, the Greater New Orleans chapter of Teach For America has provided regional public schools with 500 corps members in the past two years. She also recently completed a documentary to recruit more educators and leaders to the region and to promote Teach for America's stake and success in redesigning the region's educational landscape.

Orange-Jones has received local and national recognition for her work with Teach For America. Her contributions have been featured in New York Times Magazine, Time magazine and Ed Magazine, a publication of the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

The Young Leadership Council recently named Orange-Jones a 2009 Role Model, and she serves on the board of directors for Educate Now, a New Orleans-based organization that seeks reforms in public schools.

"While you can't do everything, you certainly can do your part to leave things better than where you found them. That is what I hope to do in whatever endeavor I undertake."•

— Nayita Wilson



# Patricia Powell

**Position:** Lockheed Martin Space Systems-Michoud director of operations

**Age:** 56

**Family:** daughter, Jennifer, 33

**Education:** bachelor's degree in math, University of New Orleans; master's degree in engineering management, National Technical University

**What did you want to be growing up?** I've always wanted to be in aerospace. I remember how exciting it was when I was a little girl to go outside, look at the moon and just think about working in science.

**What was your first job?** An assistant to a counsel general between my sophomore and junior year at UNO. I helped translate Spanish spoken by visitors when their ships would come in.

**What's the last book you read?** "Honesty Works," by Stephen Gaffney.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** To see every state in the United States. I am up to 42.

Patricia Powell is most proud of her ability to help young, aspiring Hispanic students land jobs in engineering and science.

When she is part of that kind of success story, it reminds Powell of herself almost 30 years ago and the journey she went through to eventually become the director of operations for Lockheed Martin Space Systems' Michoud Operations in eastern New Orleans.

Powell, who was born and raised in Panama and immigrated to the United States in the 1970s, started at Michoud in 1980 as an entry-level industrial engineer. In March, Lockheed Martin named Powell the first female director of operations at the NASA Michoud assembly facility.

"A woman in leadership now is not as foreign a concept as it was 10 or 20 years ago, but this has been a rewarding journey with this company and I am happy for the opportunities I have been given."

Powell has spent the latter part of her career helping younger Hispanic students realize the opportunities as well, serving as Lockheed Martin's executive ambassador to the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Conference, an organization focusing on science, technology, engineering and mathematics educational awareness for Hispanic students from kindergarten through college.

Powell spends a lot of time at career fairs and works with students on the interview process, resumes and seeking out career opportunities in engineering and science. Powell also has supported the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, reviewing and rating its applicants.

"Anytime I talk to young people, I call it the elevator speech, and they have to tell me why they want to work in this field and why should I or somebody else in this industry hire them," Powell said. "If I can help them get their foot in the door, then that is very satisfying to me."

Powell is also helping her employees brand themselves. She has about 160 people who report to her, a number that may soon shrink because Lockheed Martin is downsizing its Michoud operations with the space shuttle program's phase-out in 2010.

"I am helping to guide employees to their next place in their career if they are unfortunately part of the cuts, and helping them realize they can do anything if they prepare and brand themselves the right way." •

— Tommy Santora





# Eboni Price-Haywood

**Position:** Tulane School of Medicine Community Clinics chief medical officer; Tulane University Community Health Center at Covenant House medical director; Tulane University School of Medicine assistant professor of medicine; Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine adjunct assistant professor of epidemiology  
**Age:** 35

**Family:** husband, Anthony

**Education:** bachelor's degree in pre-professional science, University of Notre Dame; doctor of medicine, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine; master's degree in public health, general studies, Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health

**What did you want to be growing up?** A doctor.

**What was your first job?** A research lab assistant at the University of New Orleans' Department of Biochemistry during high school.

**What's the last book you read?** Medical journals. I don't have time for pleasure reading but enjoy history books.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Take a safari.

**D**r. Eboni Price-Haywood developed an appreciation for the medical profession while watching her father, Harry Lee Price, lose his battle with cancer when she was a child.

"He was diagnosed in May and died in November of that year," she said. "We never really knew what kind of cancer it was. The physician ... and the nurses, everyone appeared to genuinely care about him as a person. Even being a kid, I was able to pick up on those things. If you've not experienced it personally, you may not be able to relate to it."

Price-Haywood is using that keen appreciation for the doctor-patient relationship through her work to teach doctors the importance of understanding a patient's cultural perspective while encouraging a proactive approach to health care.

"I tend to be very sensitive to health care for men. I think a lot of men, regardless of their culture, are not going to go to the doctor," she said. "Men, and just people in general. Some of us, we're taught you don't go to the doctor until you're sick."

As a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Harold Amos Faculty Development Program scholar, she will conduct research on the disparities minorities face in health care and work to incorporate her findings into school curricula and practicum education. Price-Haywood is also working to make sure doctors understand the cultural peculiarities and communicate with patients in a way to promote the best health outcomes.

Balancing her interest in research with her clinic responsibilities as medical director of Tulane University's Community Health Center at Covenant House challenged her in new ways. The position allowed her to remodel health care in post-Katrina New Orleans, shifting to a community focus.

Price-Haywood turned to mentors to help her make the transition to clinic administration after building a background heavy in research.

Her life seems to evolve around medicine, but she considers her recent marriage to Anthony Haywood an important event this year.

"Put that as my top accomplishment this year," she said. •

— Diana Chandler



# Mary Beth Romig

**Position:** New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitor's Bureau director of communications and public relations

**Age:** 50

**Family:** husband, Cecil Haskins; daughter, Lindsay, 26

**Education:** bachelor's degrees in English and secondary education, University of New Orleans

**What did you want to be growing up?** I wanted to be a sports writer.

**What was your first job?** Teaching English at Rummel High School.

**What's the last book you read?** "The Hotel at the Corner of Bitter and Sweet," by Jamie Ford.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** I really want to do a half-Ironman.

Over the past four years, the rebuilding and renewal of New Orleans has been the result of a lot of love and hard work from many people, natives and outsiders alike.

Mary Beth Romig is one of those people. She's immensely proud that her work with the New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitor's Bureau has been a vital part of the renewal.

"I'm proudest that my position at the bureau allows me to serve my city," Romig said.

After the storm, Romig, like so many New Orleanians, had to deal with personal issues — the destruction of her home as well as her parents' home in Lakeview.

Professionally, she was faced with a number of challenges. The first was helping the Ogden Museum publish its book, "Missing New Orleans," and the second was how to attract visitors and conventions the city desperately needed to resuscitate its economy.

Fortunately, the visitors came and Romig worked as a liaison between visiting groups who wished to participate in "voluntourism" with local businesses, individuals or organizations that needed volunteers.

One of her biggest projects was working with the international company Konica-Minolta and KIPP McDonough 15 Elementary School in the French Quarter.

Konica-Minolta planned to host a meeting in New Orleans in the spring of 2007 and wanted to do some volunteer work in a place that needed help, but was not as obvious as some higher-profile areas. Romig had just spoken with a friend who worked at McDonough 15 who told her the school needed updated bathroom facilities.

Konica-Minolta executives toured the school and not only did they agree to help fix the bathrooms, they decided to start the Colorful Tomorrow Foundation, which aims to maximize charity dollars donated for the educational needs of local children.

The foundation's first project was to create three high school scholarships that would be given to deserving children for academics, performing arts and visual arts.

"We thought a little bit out of the box and we really created something special," Romig said.

Aside from helping coordinate volunteer work to help rebuild the city, Romig is a board member for several groups, including the French Quarter Festival and Crimestoppers.

She also was part of the creative team that worked to bring the 2013 Super Bowl to New Orleans, as well as the 2012 NCAA Men's Final Four and the 2013 NCAA Women's Final Four.

"It's been challenging and tough, but it's been very rewarding. •

— Fritz Esker



# Cheri Saltaformaggio

**Position:** St. Charles Surgical Hospital and the Center for Restorative Breast Surgery CEO

**Age:** 45

**Family:** children, Tony, 23, Christian, 20

**Education:** associate's degree in nursing, Charity Hospital School of Nursing

**What did you want to be growing up?** I really wanted to be a math teacher.

**What was your first job?** It was at Baptist Hospital. I was a nurse tech.

**What's the last book you read?** I can't even remember the name, but it was a book that a doctor gave to me about business.

**What you have always wanted to do but haven't?** To be in a position where I can educate people on health care and help people fight cancer.

While directing the medical practice of Drs. Frank DellaCroce and Scott Sullivan for more than a decade, Cheri Saltaformaggio couldn't have imagined she'd someday be CEO of a specialty hospital. When the two doctors founded the Center for Restorative Breast Surgery in 2006, Saltaformaggio was asked to take the reins.

Shortly thereafter, an expansion led her to oversee the conception, development, construction and opening of St. Charles Surgical Hospital, the only hospital in the world dedicated to reconstructive breast surgery.

The \$30 million hospital is a 60,000-square-foot facility that features 90 employees and provides state-of-the-art care from initial consultation through recovery. Although it has only 17 beds, the hospital treats patients from around the world and is attracting national and international attention.

"In 2003, we just started with a goal and a plan to create something unique. We saw all the issues that women were having related to breast reconstruction and we knew we could have a big impact," Saltaformaggio said.

Constantly motivated by a drive to help others, Saltaformaggio said her job gives her the opportunity to make a difference every day.

She has taken a recent strong interest in educating patients on their rights when it comes to dealing with insurance companies. Her general overview of insurance and patient care has given her a fresh look on the health care system, she said.

Saltaformaggio credits her success with the hospital to a strong and supportive team, but said building a hospital from the ground up has been one of the biggest challenges she has faced in her life.

"I just took it one day at a time and piece by piece until we accomplished it. You face an obstacle, come up with a solution and then just move on to the next one," she said.

Saltaformaggio also is strongly committed to the community and has led the hospital to be an active supporter of the American Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the Louisiana Breast Cancer Task Force. She is on the governing body of the Women's Leadership Council of the United Way and helps with the group's Nurse Family Partnership. The public policy initiative connects a registered nurse with a young expectant mother and her family until the child is 2 years old, leading to decreased risk-taking behaviors during pregnancy and improved child health and economic self-sufficiency.

"If I can just help one person per day, educate them on issues or do something to make their life easier, that motivates me and it lets me know we're making a difference."•

— Craig Guillot



# Monica Sanchez

**Position:** Cochran-Latino Sanchez Firm managing partner

**Age:** 36

**Family:** husband, Jeff Mitchell

**Education:** bachelor's degrees in economics and political science, Ohio University; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law; master's degree in international and comparative law, Tulane University Law School

**What did you want to be growing up?** A lawyer.

**What was your first job?** In Panama, my first job was at my mother's pathology clinic. In the United States, my first job was as a law clerk at the Murray Firm.

**What's the last book you read?** "Angels and Demons," by Dan Brown.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Open a pro-bono clinic.

Even though she manages her own law firm and recently planned her wedding, Monica Sanchez makes it a priority to spend time at Hispanic-related events to offer free counsel.

"Because I'm Hispanic, I know how difficult it can be to communicate in a second language," said Sanchez, who moved from Panama to attend college at Ohio University.

"It's my goal to inform the Hispanic community who are recently here what rights they have in America," she said.

Sanchez said she worries about the Hispanic workers who have been coined "walking ATMs" because they keep all of their earnings in their pockets. They are targets for robbers and, because most of them do not understand this country's law, they do not try to legally fight against the thieves.

Sanchez attends local soccer matches, church services, festivals and other events that attract Hispanics to educate them about their rights while they live in the United States.

"My goal is for the Hispanic community to get to the point where they trust the legal system," she said. "I want to educate as many people as I can. I want to make justice available and accessible to everybody."

The daughter of a pathologist, Sanchez immigrated to America to further her education.

"I chose law because my parents said I was too argumentative," Sanchez said. "I love it because I get to help people and assist the 'little person.'"

But earning advanced degrees in the United States didn't come without challenges.

"I learned English when I was in Panama, but in college it was my second language," she said. "When you're 18 and in a foreign country by yourself, it proves difficult."

Sanchez persevered past the language barrier, earning a double major in political science and economics. Even with her numerous degrees, she said she is still reminded of the challenge of being a female attorney.

"It's still a guy's world out there," she said.

Even so, Sanchez continues to bring the law to those she feels are the most vulnerable. She travels along the Gulf Coast with the Mexican Consulate's mobile clinic to offer free legal advice to Hispanics. She also serves as vice president of the Hispanic Lawyers Association in New Orleans, a group that pushes for positive changes for Hispanics in the law.

"I'm here in America because I can make more of a difference as a bilingual attorney than I could in Panama, where everyone speaks Spanish."•

— Amy Ferrara Smith



# LaVerne Saulny

**Position:** Sen. Mary Landrieu's regional manager

**Age:** 49

**Family:** children, Edie, 28, Mary, 26, Timothy, 21, John, 18; grandson, Jordan, 8

**Education:** studied forensic psychology, Louisiana State University at Shreveport; Institute of Politics fellow, Loyola University

**What did you want to be growing up?** A lawyer.

**What was your first job?** A runner at Commercial National Bank.

**What's the last book you read?** "Creative Mind," by Ernest Holmes.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Travel to South Africa.

LaVerne Saulny answers to the needs of constituents in 15 south Louisiana parishes in her New Orleans-based job as regional manager for Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-New Orleans.

Last winter, supporters of President-elect Barack Obama hoping for presidential inauguration tickets besieged her.

"We had 350 tickets and got 20,000 requests for them. I couldn't walk down Poydras Street, where I work or through Wal-Mart without being stopped. People were hollering out their car windows at me."

Her office phone has been ringing off the hook for months about Obama's health-care reform proposals. Saulny said Landrieu's town hall meeting on health care held in August turned loud and tense at the Louisiana National Guard building in Reserve. More than 500 people attended, but only 400 seats were available, and Landrieu left with the debate still heated after two hours.

In her career, Saulny has been a longtime advocate for women, children and the disadvantaged. As chairwoman of the New Orleans chapter of Dress for Success, she organized the Savoir Faire fashion show and fundraiser at Republic in August with celebrities such as Kim Kardashian and Wendell Pierce in attendance. The event attracted 525 guests and raised \$85,000. A special cocktail, LaVerne's Suitini, was served.

"Money we raised from Savoir Faire went directly to the local Dress for Success operation and makes sure our hard-working staff of two gets paid," Saulny said.

The local office of the global organization has provided career attire and tools to more than 1,000 women since it reopened in 2008 after Hurricane Katrina.

Saulny brings public speaking and professional writing skills to her congressional-staffer job. Before joining Landrieu's office in 2002, she started Write For You, a firm offering management consulting to nonprofits and corporations. She's also penned two books: "Tips on Successful Grantwriting" and "Steps on How to Run a Profitable Home-based Business."

In her heavily penciled schedule, she's an active member of the Greater New Orleans Junior League, a board member of the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation and an advisory board member with KidSmart and the Foster Grandparent Program.

"Over 30 years ago, I was voted 'Most Likely Not to Succeed' by my high school classmates in 1978," she said. "What a difference the decades can make."•

— Susan Buchanan



# Aimee Smallwood

**Position:** Slidell Memorial Hospital Foundation executive director

**Age:** 47

**Family:** divorced; children Lane, 20, Thomas, 19, Caroline, 13

**Education:** bachelor's degree in anthropology, Louisiana State University

**What did you want to be growing up?** A movie producer.

**What was your first job?** At age 5, I was a librarian's assistant.

**What's the last book you read?** "Bel Canto," by Ann Patchett.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Visit Italy.

Aimee Smallwood learned the value of work early in life, when her father Philip Thomas paid her 5 cents an hour to glue pocket envelopes in the backs of library books at the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Lexington, Ky.

Only 5 at the time, Smallwood would rush up the stairs to the vending machine to buy a 25-cent chocolate bar when her nickels added up.

"They didn't know what to do with me, so they hired me," Aimee tells the story today, explaining her parents' lack of access to day care at the time. But the humorous experience helped shape her as a successful professional.

"I can say it certainly taught me really early the value of money and the value of work," she said. "It's certainly important, I think especially for girls, to pass on the need to take care of yourself and not rely on others."

Smallwood has worked most of her life, becoming even more self-sufficient post-Katrina. The storm found her newly divorced with three children who lost their father's and mother's homes.

"What it makes you realize is you can survive just about anything," Smallwood said in retrospect of Katrina. "Your priorities change and you start to feel like whatever has to be done, you can do it."

For Smallwood, that has meant balancing her career with her status as a single mother.

A Slidell resident, Smallwood switched from her longtime job at the Contemporary Arts Center to her current position at Slidell Memorial Hospital, closer to her North Shore home.

Her niche, though, is fundraising, a central theme of her career since volunteering in 1983 to raise money for the Special Olympics at Louisiana State University.

"I had no idea at that time that was going to be my future career. I just like raising money. I have to like my cause and that makes it easier."

The nonprofit Metropolitan Women's Shelter she helped start in 1984 in Jefferson Parish is still in operation. At the time, she saw the need for the shelter while working with the battered women's program at the YWCA and worked without a salary to get the shelter established.

Smallwood's latest challenge is raising money for various projects at Slidell Memorial Hospital through the foundation she was hired to establish just two years ago. She started from scratch, hiring a staff and establishing a board of directors.

She plans to continue to develop a culture of philanthropy in Slidell as she works to find funding to build a regional cancer center there and support other projects. Her ultimate goal has little to do with work, but the rest that comes when all business is said and done.

"Eventually, I will live at the beach," she said, perhaps the North Carolina coast. •

— Diana Chandler



# Kim Sport

*Hall of Fame*

**Position:** attorney, community activist

**Age:** 54

**Family:** husband, Mike; stepchildren, Debi, Sheri and Ross; nine grandchildren

**Education:** bachelor's degree in health sciences, Our Lady of Holy Cross College; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

**What did you want to be growing up:** An X-ray technologist like my father.

**What was your first job?** I worked in the "accident room" at Charity Hospital by day and worked nights as a cocktail waitress at Steak and Ale.

**What's the last book you read?** "First, Do No Harm," by Lisa Belkin.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** I'd love to hear "The Blue Danube" waltz played by a philharmonic orchestra in Vienna.

Since retiring from her law career in 2000, Kim Sport has been busier than ever. That's because she has devoted virtually all of her time to volunteering with charitable groups, making hundreds of presentations on behalf of nonprofits throughout the region.

And she's done it while facing serious personal challenges — beating breast cancer not once, but twice.

In November 2008, Sport planned and hosted a major United Way gala honoring Chef Emeril Lagasse one night, then underwent a mastectomy and reconstructive surgery the following morning.

"Surviving breast cancer showed me how much I have to be grateful for," she said. "I have a great support system and good health insurance, but so many people do not have these things and therefore need the community's help."

Sport's resume as a community activist includes founding and leading Jefferson Dollars for Scholars and becoming the first female chairwoman of the New Orleans Regional Chamber of Commerce's West Bank Council.

Sport also has held board positions with the New Orleans Public Schools Scholarship Committee, the University of New Orleans' Business Higher Education Council, Dress for Success, Meadowcrest Hospital, the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center Foundation, WYES and served as local survivor chairwoman of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's Race for the Cure.

In 2002, Sport became the first female chairwoman of the United Way's regional fundraising campaign, whose efforts have become her primary focus over the past several years.

"I started by asking 49 other women to join me in helping the United Way by donating at least \$1,000 with a focus in early childhood education, and I've been working on this effort ever since," she said.

Sport leads United Way's Alexis de Tocqueville Society, which includes individual and private foundations that donate \$10,000 or more annually to the United Way.

In 2007, Sport joined Ochsner Baptist Medical Center's governing board and last year was selected to deliver the board perspective on the state of health care to 500 employees at Ochsner's Leadership Symposium.

In her leadership role on the Women's Leadership Council, Sport has positioned United Way as the premier way for engaging women as philanthropists, inspiring women to make a difference in resource development, leadership and advocacy. •

— Thomas Leggett



# Dana Stumpf

**Position:** Samson LLC owner and CEO; AMID/Metro Partnership president

**Age:** 34

**Family:** single

**Education:** bachelor's degree in mass communications and political science, Louisiana State University

**What did you want to be growing up?** A teacher.

**What was your first job?** Counting sand tickets and dispatching dump trucks for family's construction company at age 13.

**What's the last book you read?** "Seabiscuit: An American Legend," by Laura Hillenbrand.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Go on an English fox hunt.

**D**ana Stumpf, founder and CEO of Samson LLC, last year bought the New Orleans Shockers' soccer team and renamed it the Jesters.

South Louisiana is football country, but Stumpf wants to raise awareness for soccer, which she notes is the most popular sport worldwide. She also wants to offer the city reasonably priced, family-oriented entertainment.

Through Samson LLC, Stumpf organizes soccer camps, clinics and youth programs throughout south Louisiana and said the Jesters' players are good role models for local children. During the year, players make appearances at schools and regional events.

Stumpf is president of AMID-Metro Partnership LLC, which operates the Gentilly Landfill for the city of New Orleans. She's also a director for Durr Heavy Construction, run by her father, Stephen Stumpf Sr.

AMID manages the city's only landfill and handled as many as 3,000 trucks of debris daily during Hurricane Katrina recovery.

"Three months before Katrina, I was asked if I'd like to take on the job at AMID," said Stumpf, who grew up in the construction and landfill business. "The job expanded after the storm, particularly as I dealt with government agencies," including the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"The recovery effort gave me a sense of purpose, as it did many people. Construction and landfill activities are male-dominated, and the guys are always warning me about safety."

Because of her business acumen and community experience, Stumpf was named a board member of the Urban League of Greater New Orleans in 2008 and the Young Leadership Council in 2007. Last year, she was chairwoman of the New Orleans/Bayou Chapter of the Associated Builders and Contractors.

"I took on too many things, both personally and professionally, last year, and my biggest challenge has been the process of managing it all while maintaining some sanity" she said, adding that she avoids over-contemplating everything by having faith in herself and trusting her gut instincts.

"After all, it's not only the good decisions that are responsible for success. Bad decisions translate into experience, and experience is the foundation for my future."

Stumpf is an award-winning, world-class equestrian rider and is active in Stumpf Stables, a family business.

Being around horses as a child taught her "to get back on," she said. •

— Susan Buchanan





# Lizette Terral

**Position:** JP Morgan Chase Bank New Orleans region president

**Age:** 45

**Family:** husband, David "Brett" Terral; children, Lauren, 16, Megan, 14, David, 12

**Education:** bachelor's degree in management, Louisiana State University; master's degree in business administration, University of New Orleans

**What did you want to be growing up?** A computer programmer or business consultant.

**What was your first job?** Dusting items in my mother's French Quarter store, Things Inc., for 25 cents a day.

**What's the last book you read?** "Rise of the Cajun Mariners: The Race for Big Oil," by Woody Falgoux.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Travel the world.

Lizette Terral's eternal optimism has helped her succeed not only in her career, but in her community activism and in her family.

"I believe there is always a glass half-full to everything," Terral said. "That's the way I look at it, and that's very helpful."

Terral, president of JP Morgan Chase Bank's New Orleans region, has been in the banking industry for more than 20 years. An industry not known for its high-ranking female colleagues, Terral did not let her gender affect her outlook on her career.

"I think early on it made me stand out more in that they had women in banking, but not as many as men," Terral said. "Over the years, that's changed."

Terral credits her fellow female colleagues and mentors who helped her succeed personally and professionally.

"They looked after you and pointed out opportunities and corrected you when they saw you can do better," Terral said.

Terral's success is not limited to the banking industry. She is president of the New Orleans Salvation Army, a past president of the Louisiana Children's Museum and a board member with Greater New Orleans Inc.

But she knows her limits.

"I learned a long time ago you can be too thinly spread," Terral said. "You can have a lengthy resume and no accomplishments if you're not careful."

As chairwoman of the Salvation Army's board, Terral was instrumental in organizing relief efforts in the Houma area after hurricanes Gustav and Ike. She said Lafourche and Terrebone parishes are not a part of what many consider the local area, but they are part of the bank's market and she knew how badly they needed help.

"They would not have known to reach out to us," said Terral, who took it upon herself to organize additional relief efforts.

Terral said balancing her career, activism, friends and family is her greatest accomplishment and her greatest challenge.

She is proud of the fact she's gotten to the position she is in with the bank while maintaining three children with "incredible grades, who are all good athletes and getting involved with their own philanthropic endeavors."

"We model for our children," Terral said. "I'm very proud at watching how that's developed. ... I hope that this city and this area is a place our children want to come back to. Anything can be done if you want to do it badly enough. I guess that ties back to the eternal optimist in me."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora



# Mignhon Tourné

**Position:** ASI Federal Credit Union president and CEO

**Age:** 56

**Family:** French bulldog, Tank

**Education:** bachelor's degree in political science, Southeastern Louisiana University; graduate work in public administration, English literature and music, Drake and Louisiana State universities and Delgado Community College; associate's degree in risk management, Insurance Institute of America

**What did you want to be growing up?** Rock star.

**What was your first job?** In high school, I wrote a weekly article for the "Campus Comments" section of the Bogalusa Daily News.

**What's the last book you read?** "The Awakening," by Kate Chopin.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** I'd like to take one really incredible black and white street photograph, one of those earth-shattering photos.

ASI Federal Credit Union CEO Mignhon Tourné often sits at her desk with Converse sneakers on her feet and her 10-month-old French Bulldog in her lap. At company functions, employees sometimes find her behind a set of drums, where she jams with the energy and drive of the rock star once dreamed of becoming.

Those unique traits along with her strong intellectual capabilities have helped Tourné become an innovative leader who strives to eliminate poverty not only through her role at ASI but also as a community volunteer.

"This work is outside of ourselves," Tourné said of her employment with ASI, a low-income designated community development credit union.

Before becoming CEO and president in January 2007, Tourné served on ASI's board for 20 years. She is also CEO of A Shared Initiative Inc., a nonprofit affiliate of the credit union.

"Our egos cannot get in the way of the mission, which is to serve others."

Under Tourné's leadership, ASI has opened a community center in the Upper 9th Ward as well as two bilingual credit unions in New Orleans. One branch, at 4646 Michoud Blvd. in Village de L'est, was the first known credit union in Louisiana to offer full service and Vietnamese-English materials to the community.

A second location, which opened in Mid-City in March, provides bilingual services and Spanish-English materials.

"I like helping people create wealth in their lives," Tourné said. "The day-to-day revolves around something meaningful to me. It's rewarding."

Tourné's desire to help facilitate communication between English and foreign language speakers has carried over to her volunteer efforts.

A conversational French language speaker, she is helping to open Lycée Français de la Nouvelle Orléans, a new public, pre-K through 12th-grade French immersion charter school that visionaries are still working to make official. The school, which will be accredited by the French government, will allow students to graduate with a high school diploma and a French baccalaureate.

Through her volunteer efforts, Tourné also remains true to her mission of eliminating poverty. In addition to serving as an honorary board member for Boys Hope Girls Hope, she is also on the New Orleans Women's Shelter board.

"The volume and needs of indigent women and children in the area continue to grow," she said, "and this program offers them a safe home-style environment in which to transition from poverty and homelessness to future independent living."•

— Amy Ferrara Smith



# Colleen Toye

**Position:** WeHaveContractors.com owner

**Age:** 61

**Family:** husband, Wayne; children, Lara, 41, Jennifer, 37, Kelly, 31, Bryan, 27

**Education:** attended Mankato University

**What did you want to be growing up?** Either a horse trainer or an archaeologist.

**What was your first job?** Frosting doughnuts in a bakery.

**What's the last book you read?** "Emily Post's Etiquette," by Emily Post.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Go on a cruise, visit Ireland, go snow skiing and sailing.

Mandeville resident Colleen Toye, who at the time was working as a designer for California Closets, kept hearing stories about friends who were getting ripped off for work done on their houses by contractors. At the same time, Toye knew there were a number of decent, hardworking contractors in the area who needed work, especially during difficult economic times.

"It was just a multitude of my friends telling me about all the problems they had," Toye said.

In August 2008, Toye launched WeHaveContractors.com, a Web site that put homeowners in touch with licensed, reputable local contractors. A homeowner goes to the site and fills out a form describing what work needs to be done. Then Toye sends out the information to her network of 42 local contractors.

Once a contractor has been assigned, Toye keeps in touch with both parties through the duration of the project. When the work has been completed, the customer fills out a satisfaction survey to make sure the contractor did exactly what he said he would do.

All of that is free.

"I do the research so you don't have to," Toye said. "It's to give peace of mind to the homeowners."

While Toye plans to expand and improve the site by adding more contractors to the list, she also works with the St. Tammany Parish West Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Advisory Council's outreach programs with public and private schools. She is putting together several presentations for students on business etiquette with the goal of providing life skills such as how to get and keep a job, and how to balance a checkbook.

One of Toye's main sources of motivation is not having a bachelor's degree, which she said made it more of a challenge to find her place in the working world. But Toye said she feels she is stronger for overcoming that.

"Not finishing college has made me have to work harder, but it's also made me a stronger person because of it," Toye said. "My family has been very supportive. ... I'm very tenacious, I'm very curious about people and I have a positive attitude. If I set out to do something, I'm going to do it."•

— Fritz Esker



# Wendy Warden

**Position:** Louisiana Restaurant Association vice president of communications

**Age:** 34

**Family:** husband, Drue Deshotels

**Education:** bachelor's degree in media arts, Tulane University

**What did you want to be growing up?** An artist.

**What was your first job?** Worked at Zack's Frozen Yogurt.

**What's the last book you read?** "Gumbo Tales: Finding My Place at the New Orleans Table," by Sara Roahen.

**What have you always wanted to do, but haven't?** Travel to Italy for the food, architecture and scenery.

Wendy Warden was thrust into community work after a vacant home next to the Creole cottage she and her husband share on Annunciation Street was set on fire last year.

Warden, vice president of communications at the Louisiana Restaurant Association, quickly contacted the city's Office of Housing Code Enforcement and "cc-d everyone I could think of in City Hall to have something done about that burnt house" and other derelict properties nearby.

In October, Warden was elected vice chairwoman and program coordinator of the Irish Channel Neighborhood Association, which represents part of the city's "sliver by the river." She produces a quarterly newsletter called "The Channel" but said finding time for it, along with her job at the LRA, is challenging.

Gathering information, writing, photographing, editing, designing and distributing the group's newsletter is a big task and "requires a lot of input from the board of directors and committee chairs," she said. The first issue in February focused on District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro, who discussed problems in the courts' witness protection program.

In addition to battling housing blight, Warden helped ICNA get a cultural-district designation for the Irish Channel in September that provides tax credits for owners renovating historic homes and eliminates sales taxes on original art sales.

She helped promote the association's basketball program by encouraging media coverage of the new youth league at Clay Square. Warden, along with other ICNA members, pressured the New Orleans Recreation Department to open the city's long-neglected Lyons Center swimming pool in June.

At the LRA, Warden handles media inquiries and is executive editor of the quarterly "A La Carte Magazine," the official publication of Louisiana's food service industry, along with a monthly newsletter called "Restaurant Report."

Listening to restaurant industry members' needs and finding new ways to meet them has been her biggest recent challenge.

"If someone calls with a question that could benefit the entire membership, we share by writing an article, updating the association's Web site, posting an article on Twitter and sending a message to the Facebook group."

The recession has been tough on LRA members, who find it harder to turn a profit now, Warden said, but keeping communication channels open has been key to helping them. •

— Susan Buchanan



# Denise Williams

**Position:** Whitney Bank vice president

**Age:** 58

**Family:** husband, Jerry Williams; daughter, Alexis Williams, 28

**Education:** attended University of Texas; certification in nonprofit management and nonprofit fundraising, University of Pennsylvania

**What did you want to be growing up?** A ballerina, United Nations ambassador or a professional in the medical field.

**What was your first job?** Physical therapy assistant when I was 17.

**What's the last book you read?** "The Crescent City Market Cookbook"

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Travel to Africa because it's the whole cradle of civilization.

For 12 years, Denise Williams has followed a "holistic approach" to financial services, developing trust with her clients and acting as a mentor to younger bank employees at Whitney Bank where she is a vice president.

But it isn't only at Whitney where Williams strives to better the lives of those around her. As a community volunteer, she has taken on leadership roles to improve the quality of life for local women and children.

"I want to make the community a better place for all of us to live," Williams said. "Our communities are what we make of them."

One of Williams' passions is reaching out to young women who have "many balls in the air at any given time." For Williams, the changing role of women in society to be caretakers and business leaders also has proved to be one of her greatest challenges.

"The changing role of women is noteworthy," said Williams, who juggles a family and a career. "It's a great opportunity for women to create and embrace change. We need to make sure we bring the next generation of women with us."

That passion has led to her involvement as a board member for United Way's Women's Leadership Initiative. She and other volunteers advocate for women and children, linking them to legislative initiatives that can help their interests.

As a board member for Communities in Schools of New Orleans Inc., she works to facilitate services in local schools that bring about positive change, such as violence prevention and conflict resolution.

"Children are our future. If you want to be a successful businessperson, you need to have a great work force. If you want to have strong communities, you need to have good neighbors."

She is also a board member for the Youth Rescue Initiative, where the mission is to create structured opportunities and discipline to build the leadership skills and confidence of at-risk youth.

While Communities in Schools focuses on improving children's quality of life in schools and families, the Youth Rescue Initiative focuses on the social and legal woes that often plague at-risk children. It strives to curb trends such as the growing population of youth in prison.

"We really do have to take care of children and build our communities," she said. "They will be our successors."•

— Amy Ferrara Smith



# Ellen Yellin

*Two-time honoree*

**Position:** Bourgeois Bennett tax and employee benefits director

**Age:** 56

**Family:** husband, Marc Yellin; children, Jeffrey, 28, Brian, 26

**Education:** bachelor's degree in political science, Newcomb College of Tulane University; master's degree in business administration, Tulane University Graduate School of Business

**What did you want to be growing up?** A doctor with her father's practice.

**What was your first job?** An office clerk for her father

**What's the last book you read?** "The Associate," by John Grisham.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Take a cruise around the world.

Ellen Yellin left her hometown of Chattanooga, Tenn., to attend Tulane University. After graduating, she decided her career, her volunteerism and her family would be made complete in New Orleans.

"I feel I've been able to manage a career, manage volunteer activities ... raise a family, be a wife and enjoy a wonderful life in the New Orleans community," Yellin said.

As a tax and employee benefits director at Bourgeois Bennett, Yellin works with clients from an array of professions and advises on tax compliance, retirement and employee benefit planning.

Yellin has been in accounting for 34 years, a period of time that hasn't been without a few hurdles to overcome to get to where she is today.

Being a woman in a male-dominated field was one of her most difficult challenges to date, Yellin said. While there were no high-ranking women in public accounting when she began her career, she said she didn't let that stop her from pursuing her goal.

Bourgeois Bennett was the first public accounting firm in New Orleans to bring in women partners, Yellin said. The firm now has 18 partners, five of whom are women, including Yellin, who hopes to assist other women "to achieve the most that they can in their careers, to basically say, 'I can do it.'"

As founder and first president of the Women's Professional Council, Yellin feels she has started to accomplish that.

The organization, dedicated to promoting and supporting the interest of women professionals in the Greater New Orleans area, promotes continuing education and community involvement.

"It's a combination of networking and education for women," said Yellin, who also is a member of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans and the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana.

Yellin also is co-chairwoman of Create a Jewish Legacy, a quest and endowment development initiative for the Jewish community. The initiative asks Jewish locals to bequest in their wills a percentage of their estate or a dollar amount they can leave to their Jewish community for future use.

Yellin maintains her commitment to her career and the organizations to which she belongs because she believes it will benefit her family.

"I do what I do because I feel like we have to make New Orleans a place where we want to live, where we want to stay, where we want our children to grow up and stay and, if they leave, to return."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora



# Ana Zorrilla

**Position:** Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals CEO

**Age:** 35

**Family:** husband, Jose; daughter, Isabela, 4

**Education:** bachelor's degree in business administration, Loyola University; master's degree in education, University of New Orleans

**What did you want to be growing up?** An architect. I used to sketch dream houses and cruises ships with my sister at our dad's engineering office.

**What was your first job?** During college, I was a sixth- and seventh-grade teacher with Summerbridge.

**What's the last book you read?** "Mutts Shelter Stories: Love. Guaranteed," by Patrick McDonnell.

**What have you always wanted to do but haven't?** Complete a distance race and travel more.

Mid-City resident Ana Zorrilla has knitted together her long-standing interests in the community, education, families and pets in her role as CEO of the Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

She spent part of the past year hammering out an operating contract with city officials, who agreed in January to provide \$2.35 million to the organization.

But, she said, it's still a big challenge to meet the group's \$4 million annual budget because the rest of its funding comes mainly from donations, which aren't as plentiful as they were right after Hurricane Katrina.

New Orleans struggles with animal overpopulation, strays and a shortage of dog parks. But unlike most municipalities, which manage animal control, the city depends on the LA/SPCA for its services. While donations to the LA/SPCA are ebbing a bit, the group has seen an increase in public interest, Zorrilla said.

"That interest is of course adding more to our plate."

Zorrilla oversees 52 full-time employees, including animal control officers, cruelty investigators and veterinarians. In the spring, she successfully lobbied the Legislature to increase penalties for owners of animals that attack humans and for humans who hurt animals.

She oversaw the evacuation of 1,000 animals to partner shelters in Shreveport and Texas before Hurricane Gustav in 2008 and later participated in a "lessons learned from Gustav" panel at a Humane Society of the United States Conference.

Zorrilla created and worked with a team of volunteers between 2007 and 2008 to raise \$12 million to build a permanent LA/SPCA facility on Mardi Gras Boulevard in Algiers.

Since she took over as LA/SPCA's director in late 2007, Zorrilla has reinstated summer programs and workshops for children on humane animal treatment.

She's on the board of directors of New Orleans Outreach, which taps community resources to improve public schools. Before joining the LA/SPCA in early 2006 as vice president of development, Zorrilla worked for seven years as director of the Summerbridge New Orleans education program for fifth- to seventh-graders from low-income homes.

A recent personal challenge has been trying to do a really good job at the LA/SPCA, while responding to her family's needs, especially those of her 4-year-old daughter, and finding time for friends, Zorrilla said.

She's also busy squeezing in her hobbies — running, music, cooking, reading, gardening and movies — and training her two Jack Russell terriers in agility. •

— Susan Buchanan



# “Thanks to Peoples Health...”



## “I’m living a great life now.”

– Lisa Burton, *Peoples Health Member* –

At 41 years old, Lisa Burton faced an illness that would take away her ability to walk and her ability to work. “I was going downhill,” she says. “It wasn’t until I got on with Peoples Health that my health began to get better.” She was eligible for a Peoples Health plan because her disability made her eligible for Medicare.

“Had I not been with Peoples Health,” she says, “I would not have been able to afford all of the medications my neurologist prescribed. The medications are very expensive – in the thousands – and I just didn’t have that type of money. Peoples Health saved my life. Really. Literally. I would not have been able to afford the drugs to treat my illness without it.”

With her medications in hand, her treatment in order, Lisa was able to get a foothold on her future. She took advantage of the fitness center benefit – a benefit she didn’t get with Original Medicare – to rebuild her physical strength.

Soon she built up the mental strength she needed to reclaim her health, her future, her very life. “I determined that either I can overcome this, or it can overcome me,” she says. “I made a decision to get better – to keep on living – and Peoples Health was very instrumental in that. It gave me the courage and the momentum to get up in the morning.”

“I’ve gotten better,” she says. “Going from sick to not being able to walk to being mobile to being able to be productive in life, doing the things that I need to do on a daily basis. Peoples Health has given me my life back.”

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