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Year

Ti Martin

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Congratulations to Senior Chief Compliance Officer Marsha Crowle on being selected as one of the 2011 CityBusiness Women of the Year.



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Debbie Maniglia

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Debbie Maniglia, International Council of Customer Service Organizations' 2010 Customer Service Manager of the Year

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*Congratulations to our colleague
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for being named to CITYBUSINESS'
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Melissa Cresson



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Casey Faucon



Theresa Hagen



Maureen Harbourt[†]



Jamie Henry



Amanda Howard



Kimberly Hymel



We are proud to recognize Lisa A. Easterling, New Orleans CityBusiness Woman of the Year, and the 50 women attorneys of Kean Miller across Louisiana.



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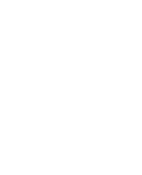
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[†] 2011 Leadership in Law Honoree

[†] 2010 Influential Women in Business Honoree

[§] 2008 Influential Women in Business Honoree

^{**} 2005 Influential Women in Business Honoree

^{**} Admission Pending

Intro

Ti Martin works to keep New Orleans front and center



Christian Moises
News Editor

TI MARTIN IS MORE than just a foodie.

The co-proprietor of Commander's Palace has used the legendary Garden District restaurant as a way to help promote New Orleans and south Louisiana during some tumultuous times.

She rallied local chefs and other restaurateurs to defend the city and Louisiana seafood after last year's devastating Gulf of Mexico oil spill led people throughout the country to question the safety of one of our major economic drivers as well as the city's health.

Martin has been instrumental over the years in attracting national television broadcasts to the city to showcase what makes New Orleans unique — and why the city matters.

But her work keeping New Orleans in a favorable light doesn't stop at food. She is also a driving force in improving the first impression many tourists have of New Orleans — Armstrong Airport — by serving as chairwoman of the airport board's finance committee.

A former member of the Tulane Entrepreneurial Council, Martin still informally advises startups and inventors. She has no plans to stop helping the influx of hopeful business owners achieve their goals.

As overall Woman of the Year, Martin is one of 50 outstanding individuals who have been recognized for their professional and community achievements. They shared their greatest challenges, professionally and personally, and how they overcame those difficulties to become leaders in their field.

This year's honorees, who join 12 previous years of Women of the Year, continue to break barriers across the business spectrum: health care, construction, law, education, media and hospitality, just to name a few areas of impact.

Their forward thinking ways, determination and effort go beyond the workplace and extend to the community where they continue to shape and improve our region.

Simply put, they are the essential fabric that makes up the metropolitan New Orleans area.

While there are no three-time Hall of Fame inductees this year, four honorees are being recognized for the second time. They are Sandra Levy, Martin, Patty Riddlebarger and Kathryn Smith.

These women — and all of the honorees — will continue to drive our region forward and serve as outstanding representatives in the community.

Several honorees say they live by the John F. Kennedy quote, "To those whom much is given, much is expected." Their stories show they follow that mantra to the word.

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 christian.moises@nopg.com.



Carol Anne Luttrell, MD
Radiologist



Christe Brewton
Director of Corporate Education

Women of the year

EVERY YEAR & EVERY DAY

East Jefferson General Hospital is home to more than 3,000 team members and more than 700 physicians. The overwhelming majority of our staff is comprised of women. These compassionate, professional caregivers exemplify the best of our profession and our community.

Today, we congratulate Christe Brewton and Dr. Carol Anne Luttrell, but every day we celebrate the outstanding levels of care and the contributions made by the outstanding women of East Jefferson General Hospital.

EJGH

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Past honorees

Names in bold were overall Woman of the Year award winners



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
Siomonie 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 Fonham
Joni Friedmann
Joanne Gallinghouse
Brenda Garibaldi Hatfield
Paulette Hurdlick
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 Ellish
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
Trilby 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 Alley
Dianne Baham
Gaynell Bellizan
Ruth Berggren
Lolita Burrell
Jeanette Butler
Vanessa Claiborne
Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson
Elaine Coleman
Katherine Conklin
Lisa Crinel
Susan D'Antoni
M. Christine D'Antonio
Sandra Dartus
Camilla Davis
Catherine Dunn
Carol Etter
Peggy Feldmann
Susan Fielkow
Deborah Duplechin Harkins
Deborah Keel
Patricia Krebs
Mary Landrieu
Janet Leigh
Kelton Longwell
Charlotte Connick Mabry
Laura Maloney
Eve Barrie Masinter
Elsie Mendez
Eileen Powers
Tonnette "Toni" Rice

Deborah Rouen
Dionne Rousseau
Diane Roussel
Kim Ryan
Grace Sheehan
Andrea Thornton
Keeley Williams Verrett
Dawn Wesson
Charlee Williamson

2004

Philomene "Missy" Allain
Rita Benson LeBlanc
Barbara Booth
Lally Brennan
Valerie Cahill
Karen Carter
Audrey Cerise
Hallema Sharif Clyburn
Dorothy 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
Susan Krantz
Angelique LaCour
Janet Larson
Diane Lyons
Carla Major
Marilyn Maloney
Lisa Maurer
Mary Meyer
Kathleen Mix
Michelle Montz
Carole Cukell Neff
Dr. 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 Waller
Bonnie Wibel
Carol Wise
Ellen Yellin

Past honorees

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 Pannu
 Lisa Roth
 Diane Roussel
 Martha Ann Samuel
 Miriam Schulingkamp
 Lynda Nugent Smith
 Raylyn Stevens
 Phyllis Taylor
 Cheryl Teamer
 Polly Thomas
 Sharon Touns
 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
 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

Ilone "Toni" Wendel
 Rachele Albright
 Carmen Baham
 Debra Bowers
 Jane Brooks
 Simone Bruni
 Naydja Domingue Bynum
 Caitlin Cain
 Sharon Latten Clark
 Gina Cortez
 Darlene Cusanza
 Nancy Davis
 Gayle Dellinger
 Maura Donahue
 Laura Drumm
 Melanie Ehrlich
 Jane Ann Frosch
 Michelle Gobert
 Jenny Hamilton
 Paula Hartley

Marvalene Hughes
 Natalie Jayroe
 Jacqueline Carroll Jones-Soule'
 Christy Kane
 Molly Kimball
 Rachel Kincaid
 Stacy Horn Koch
 Phyllis Landrieu
 Priscilla Lawrence
 Maureen Lichtveld
 Rebecca Mackie
 Elizabeth 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 Teague
 Cecile Tebo
 Suzanne Thomas
 Denise Thornton
 Sarah Newell Usdin
 Laurie White
 Catherine Wilbert
 Sara Woodard

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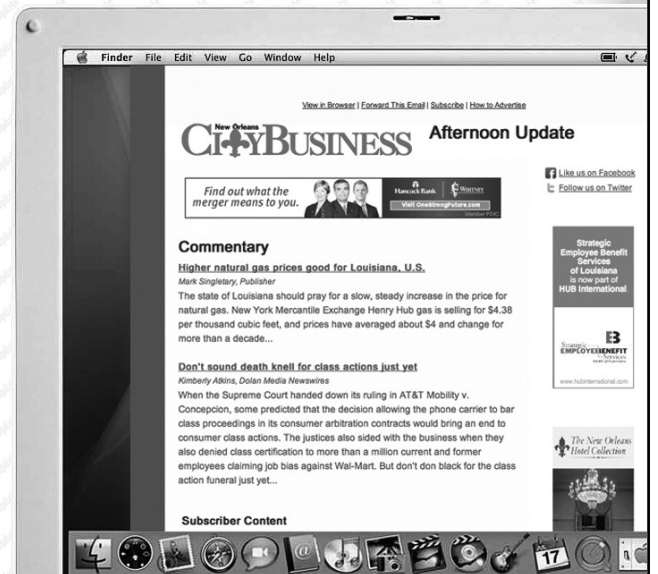
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Past honorees

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 Brechtel Clarkson
Michelle Craig
Bernie Cullen
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

2009

Kim Boyle

Carol Asher
Magdalen Bickford
Debra Bowers
Caitlin Cain
Mary Len Costa
Angela Daliat
DeAnna Davis

Lori Dean
Renette DeJoie-Hall
Marguerite Doyle-Johnston
Mignon Faget
Mary Genovese
Megan Guy
Deborah Harkins
Nakia Jones
Sun Kim
Amy Kirk
Ann Koppel
Susan Krinsky
Angela Lacour
Annie LaRock
Rose LeBreton
Kathy Lowrey
Carla Major
Eve Masinter
Grasshopper Mendoza
Kristi Mirambell
Tess Monaghan
Marie Moore
Jeanne Nathan
Kathy Nieland
Angela O'Byrne
Kira Orange-Jones
Patricia Powell
Eboni Price
Mary Beth Romig
Cheri Saltaformaggio
Monica Sanchez
LaVerne Saulny

Aimee Smallwood
Kim Sport
Dana Stumpf
Lizette Terral
Mignhon Tourne
Colleen Toye
Wendy Warren
Denise Williams
Ellen Yellin
Ana Zorrilla

2010

Rita Benson-LeBlanc

Charmaine Allesandro
Jennifer Bordes
Dawn Brackett
Susan Brennan
Patricia Brister
Holly Callia
Brenda Case
Phyllis Cassidy
Martha Castillo
Andrea Chen
Lucy Chun
Ann Cohen
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Leslie Keen
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Marie Lamb
Mary Landrieu
Phyllis Landrieu
Annette LeBlanc
Patricia LeBlanc
Laurie McCants
Marjorie McKeithen
Deborah Moench
Alina Olteanu
Carol Osborne
Yvette Pacaccio
Sonia Perez
Debbie Rouen
Gayle Sloan
Dottie Stephenson
Lizette Terral
Lacey Toledano
Nicole Tygier
Lara White

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Peggy Mendoza

City Year New Orleans Executive Director

Norma Jane Sabiston

City Year New Orleans Board Member

Patty Riddlebarger

City Year New Orleans Champion

on being selected as CityBusiness Women of the Year



City Year is an education-focused nonprofit organization that unites young people of all backgrounds for a year of full-time service to keep students in school and on track to graduation.

To learn more visit cityyear.org



W
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Two-time Honoree

Ti Martin



Ti Martin, left, and her cousin, Commander's Palace co-proprietor Lally Brennan, mix drinks during lunch at the Garden District restaurant.

Title: Commander's Palace and Café Adelaide co-proprietor; Bistro Alex and Brennan's of Houston co-partner
Age: 51

Family: mother, Ella Brennan; aunt, Dottie Brennan; brother, Alex Brennan-Martin; cousin, Lally Brennan

Education: bachelor's degree in business, Southern Methodist University; master's degree in business administration, Tulane University A.B. Freeman School of Business

The only time Ti Martin wondered about the Gulf Coast surviving last summer's oil spill was during a town hall meeting when she noticed a Vietnamese fishing family, huddled with a translator.

"They were desperately trying to explain their situation, and with a major language barrier," Martin said. "Entrepreneurs like me understand financial risk. It keeps you up at night. It was hard to watch."

State tourism agencies rallied Martin, as well as chefs Tory McPhail and Chris Lusk and other restaurateurs, to defend New Orleans, in particular, from rumors that it was awash in oil.

"The biggest challenge was fighting the overwhelming amount of negative media," said Martin, who countered it with personal appearances on cable news networks such as CNN and MSNBC.

In one episode of "The Rachel Maddow Show," she served up Sazeracs during the live broadcast from the French Quarter.

"I was raised to be an ambassador for this city," said Martin, who grew up in a restaurant family and helped steer its flagship restaurant to its 130th anniversary last year.

As the Gulf region scrambled to recover from the oil spill, Martin hosted visiting chefs, hoping they would see New Orleans seafood was abundant and had undergone "unprecedented testing, and then go back and do interviews in their home markets," she said.

Recognizing the power of visitor buzz, Martin sits on the New Orleans Aviation Board, the body that governs Armstrong International Airport. One of her goals in that capacity is to add a new terminal to handle increasing numbers of flights.

"Dreaming up a billion-dollar asset for the city that is our gateway is exciting," Martin said.

As chairwoman of the NOAB finance committee, she helped rein in the board's travel and entertainment expenses and led the charge for renovated restrooms, which were finished earlier this year.

As well known as her family and its restaurants in New Orleans and beyond, so is Martin's business savvy. A former member of the Tulane Entrepreneurial Council, Martin still informally advises startups and inventors.

"My intent is to help them go forward, or to scare them out of doing it and wasting their money," Martin said.

Two partners in their 20s recently visited her office with a prototype for a restaurant product they had invented. Martin gently pointed out "fixable" problems and suggested they set up an advisory board.

"You want to get as many good people as you can to give you advice," Martin said. "I see New Orleans becoming a hub of entrepreneurial activity. I see it nonstop." •

—Anne Berry

PHOTOS BY FRANK AYMAMI



Top: Kitchen manager Ernest Williams reviews the day's menu with Ti Martin. Above: Commander's Palace co-proprietor Ti Martin, center, visits with courtyard diners Morgan Trulen, left, and Chad Ortis.



GIBBS CONSTRUCTION

Congratulations! Melissa Gibbs



2011 CITYBUSINESS WOMEN OF THE YEAR

Gibbs Construction congratulates Melissa Gibbs for being selected as a 2011 CityBusiness Women of the Year. We salute your untiring commitment to partnership, opportunity for all, community and business leadership. Thank you for your great work on behalf of Gibbs Construction and the New Orleans community. We salute all of this year's honorees for their dedication and leadership.



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Way To Go, Helen!

Congratulations to Helen Siegel,
2011 Women of the Year honoree.

Your commitment to the community of New Orleans through your work with Girls First, NO/AIDS Task Force and Gulf Coast Family Services is truly amazing. We are so grateful to have you on our team.



Corporate Realty salutes Helen and all of the 2011 Women of the Year!

Corporate Realty is a Full Service Commercial Real Estate Company headquartered in New Orleans. We have been handling New Orleans' real estate deals since 1991.



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Frilot LLC takes pleasure in congratulating
Christine Guillory



for being honored among the
2011 Women of the Year
by New Orleans CityBusiness

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Congratulations Haley! No one is more deserving of this honor than you. To many more...

Michael H. Harty
Chef Michael Gottlieb
- Red Fish Grill

Congratulations on this well-deserved honor, we are all proud of you.

Chip Flanagan
Chef Chip Flanagan
- Ralph's on the Park

*Congratulations Haley!
What an honor.*

Steven Marsella
Chef Steven Marsella
- Heritage Grill

*Congratulations Boss,
well deserved*

Chris Montero
Chef Chris Montero
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2011 CityBusiness Women of the Year Honoree

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Peggy Adams

Title: Liskow and Lewis shareholder and partner

Age: 60

Family: husband, Thomas; children, Margaret, 27, Claire, 25

Education: bachelor's degree in speech, Auburn University; master's degree in communication disorders, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

Peggy Adams is a woman with a purpose. With a successful legal career and an active role in the community, Adams says she is driven by a desire to not only do the best work possible for her clients but also in her civic interests.

Lenders, business owners and real estate developers are just some of the clientele Adams represents as a partner at Liskow and Lewis. Her workload consists of acquisitions, real estate sales, lease preparation and all the details that come these transactions.

Adams was instrumental in the sale of the Windsor Court Hotel in 2009, representing a subsidiary of Orient Express that sold the property to a group of local investors that include The Berger Co. and the Manning family.

She also represented Equastone in the sale of the Pan-American Building and Chevron in the sale of its Central Business District building in the fall of 2010.

She also was involved in the sales of the Kaiser Aluminum plant, the Gaylord Chemical manufacturing business in Bogalusa and Plaza Tower.

Adams also prepares wills and trusts and advises clients on business matters, estate taxes and estate planning matters.

Adams' industry knowledge proved crucial after Hurricane Katrina when she provided legal counsel to Providence Community Housing in connection with several projects throughout the New Orleans area, including the redevelopment of the Lafitte housing project.

Outside of the office, Adams is a member of the Archdiocese of New Orleans' Finance Council, serves as a member of the city of New Orleans' Master Plan community advisory group and is a founding member of the local chapter of Commercial Real Estate Women.

She's also a fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel and a board-certified estate planning and administration specialist.

Adams is also president of the Audubon Riverside Neighborhood Association, a member of the Greater New Orleans Foundation Cornerstone Council and volunteers at her alma mater, Academy of the Sacred Heart, where she is a member of the alumni board.

"It's a rewarding thing to do. I've always tried to make time for that, my community involvement," Adams said. "I look at it as using the talents you don't use every day you go to work." •

— Kyle Jackson





Glenda Allen-Jones

Title: Southern University at New Orleans early childhood department chairwoman

Age: 44

Family: husband, Peter; son, Xavier, 17

Education: bachelor's degree in applied psychology, University of Illinois-Chicago; master's degree in education and Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

When it was time to qualify for her doctoral degree, Glenda Allen-Jones, who was teaching in Chicago at the time, made the roughly 100-mile trip with her family to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

She arrived in a snowstorm and the lights were out on campus, but she still took her exams.

"You're determined and now here I am," she said. "It was an accomplishment for my entire family."

She said she hopes her achievement will inspire other married women with families.

Soon after moving to lead Southern University of New Orleans' early childhood development department, Allen-Jones began another type of education. The family knew few people in the city and was unfamiliar with hurricane preparedness, but two of her students took her under their care leading up to Hurricane Gustav.

Allen-Jones' first year in New Orleans was spent working to gain accreditation for her department at SUNO from the National Council of Teachers and Educators. After reaching that goal, she realized her community engagement was lacking. So she volunteered with Mayor Mitch Landrieu's transition team for youth and families, which was responsible for determining best practices that would engage youth to become successful and future leaders.

She pays close attention to the effort to overhaul local education reform and regularly attends Recovery School District meetings.

"As a professor, I feel it's absolutely incumbent on me to know what going on on the ground and to bring that to my students so they can realize the interconnection of people schools and communities," she said.

Allen-Jones has become involved with local efforts that have evolved into service with the Young Audiences of New Orleans program, where she is a board member, and as adviser for Total Community Action, which provides early childhood development and comprehensive family support, work force development, homeless prevention, free tax preparation assistance and financial consulting.

"You see the immediate result and you are impacting generations, not just the child but also their family."

She's involved with the Greater New Orleans Women's Breakfast Board, where she networks with other women from diverse backgrounds. She has also worked with the Greater New Orleans Rebuild Childcare Collaborative, where she helped create a report about creating quality spaces for at-risk children in the area. •

— L. Kasimu Harris

Congratulations Jacqui!

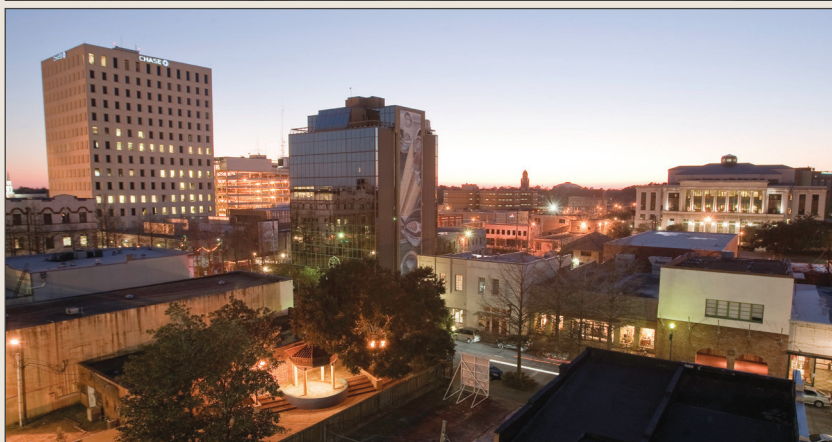
Your Cox family, of more than 1600 Louisianians, congratulate you on being recognized as a 2011 CityBusiness "Women of the Year" honoree. We salute you for your continued focus, passion and commitment in leading Cox Louisiana!



Jacqui Vines
General Manager
and Senior Vice-President

Today, CityBusiness recognizes you – but to us, you are the Woman of the Year, every year!

Cox would also like to congratulate all 2011 Women of Year honorees. *Thanks for your support and service in the greater New Orleans area!*



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Stephanie Barksdale

Title: Tulane University Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives director

Age: 34

Family: husband, David

Education: bachelor's degree in theater, Scripps College; master's degree in public administration, New York University Wagner School of Public Service

Would-be entrepreneurs often need a steppingstone or pipeline to convey their messages to the rest of the world. Students at Tulane University can turn to Stephanie Barksdale.

Barksdale moved from New York to New Orleans to become special assistant for social innovation to Tulane University President Scott Cowen. She also serves as the assistant director for the Center of Engaged Learning and Teaching Social Innovation.

"I'm a really good assistant. I know how to get people from point A to point B," Barksdale said. "It's not my ideas I'm launching. (It's me) letting them know they have the resources and opportunity to take a leap of faith. If you have a great idea, you can take that risk."

Barksdale said it's that ability to take a risk that has gotten her to where she is today. She moved to New Orleans in 2009 after meeting Cowen and discussing his vision for launching a social innovation program at the university.

To reach that goal, Barksdale created a support network at Tulane to help people create new social ventures. She defines social entrepreneurship as solving society's challenges with sustainable, innovative ideas.

"We want to inspire change-makers," Barksdale said, adding that student projects include alternative farming techniques, after-school youth programs and urban revitalization. "I feel completely inspired and impassioned to make (their ideas) happen on a daily basis."

Through the Changemaker Institute at Tulane, Barksdale launched a speaker series exploring concepts of social innovations. She has also helped launch a series of business plan competitions to fund social entrepreneurs, including the NewDay Social Entrepreneurship Challenge that provided a \$20,000 prize for a venture developed by Tulane students.

Barksdale uses her role at the university to learn about students' thoughts on social change and to help them implement those ideas.

"The role I play is very much a catalyst in inspiring our students and community partners to launch their ideas," she said. "I connect the dots, whether it's providing resources or researching opportunities. ... (I am) a conduit to provide student in our community with the resources they need to take an idea and launch it."

She's also a board member of the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts Institute and an advisory board member for the non-profit Market Umbrella, which helps promote the growth of local farmers markets. •

— Whitney Pierce Santora

Janet Bean

Position: Choice Foundation trustee

Age: 69

Family: husband, Jim; children, James Jr., 46, Katherine, 44, Margaret, 44, Jennifer, 37

Education: bachelor's degree in secondary education, Louisiana State University

Janet Bean doesn't hesitate a second when asked to name a connecting link between the two worlds she knows the most about: business and education.

"The similarities have to do with leadership," Bean said. "If the leadership in either situation knows how not only to hold people accountable, but also places them in positions where they can reach their potential, then they will meet with success."

Bean has repeatedly applied that principle during her duties overseeing the sprawling C.F. Bean LLC, a Belle Chasse conglomerate that includes four operating units: Bean Dredging, Bean Stuyvesant, Bean Environmental and Bean Excavation.

Beginning in 1987, Bean served as president and vice president of the company, overseeing its growth for the next two decades.

Her leadership has also come into play as a trustee for the Choice Foundation, which was founded in 2004 and promotes school choice initiatives in Louisiana. A longtime devotee of public education, Bean said she was troubled by the top-heavy public school system in New Orleans that was bureaucratic and discouraged innovation before Hurricane Katrina.

That's why she embraced the charter school movement.

"The best thing about this kind of educational entrepreneurship," Bean said, "is that it gives the schools a freedom to try different things and see what works and what doesn't. And that is a freedom that wasn't there before."

A self-described "product of public education," Bean also subscribes to what she calls the multiplier effect.

"Yes, educational success is about the individual child," she says. "But it is also about raising the whole community because that's what happens when a child succeeds."

A longtime member and former president of the Junior League of New Orleans, Bean has more recently been involved with the Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans, a nonpartisan initiative founded after Katrina that works to make government more responsive and efficient.

Bean has also served as chairwoman of the Community Ministry of the St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church and has worked with her church's Westminster Foundation, an outreach program targeting seniors in nursing homes throughout southeastern Louisiana.

"I have always thought that the most vulnerable parts of our population are our children and the elderly," Beans said. "I've never gotten involved in these things for recognition, but because they are the things I think we should do."•

— Garry Boulard





Jennifer Bechet

Title: Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann member

Age: 46

Family: husband, Leon; twin daughters, Noelle and Nicolette

Education: bachelor's degree in mass media arts, Hampton University; juris doctor, Harvard University School of Law

As a member of American Mensa, Jennifer Bechet is in the top 2 percent of the nation's population smartest people. She also preceded Barack Obama as president of the Harvard Law Review and counseled him to seek that post.

Bechet recalls hosting a social at Harvard, which Obama attended and sat on the floor. She encouraged her guests to run for the law review presidency.

"Finally, he said, 'I think I'll throw my hat in the ring' and then he ran and he won," she said.

Bechet said she was attracted to law because of its magnitude and influence on every aspect of life, including death.

"Nobody can get away from laws and their consequences, effects and requirements," she said.

Bechet touches the lives of many as an attorney and mentor, praising her parents as the inspiration behind her passionate participation in life. She promotes a high moral code, having tackled white-collar crime as a U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York before joining Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann as a litigator. She's largely responsible for the firm's New Orleans office donating space to the nonprofit Vera Institute of Justice, which works to improve the area's criminal justice system.

"They're really, really super smart folks," she said of the Vera staff. "That's a good contribution for our firm to try to help with a bad situation in New Orleans, trying to get the crime in check. My piece is making sure they (Vera) stay here."

She also offers her services pro bono to Safe Streets/Strong Communities, Critical Resistance New Orleans and Orleans Public Defenders.

Bechet's work to improve the city doesn't stop there. She was appointed to serve on Mayor Mitch Landrieu's Blight Task Force in 2010.

She enjoys serving as a mentor to young girls through Big Brothers Big Sisters, making sure she is accessible and sets a good example. Her primary object is to show participants that their goals are achievable.

"Mentoring allows me an opportunity to debunk a myth," she said. "It's kind of cool to be smart, but who wants to be a nerd? You've got to also make it desirable." •

— Diana Chandler

Haley Bittermann

Title: Ralph Brennan Restaurant Group corporate executive chef and director of operations

Age: 45

Family: husband, Russell; children, Auden, 5, Alexandria, 15

Education: Culinary Arts Academy graduate

Haley Bittermann's career path didn't always point to becoming corporate executive chef and director of operations for one of the better-known restaurant groups in the United States.

Bittermann, born in New York and raised in Cincinnati, at one point was a medical student, following in the footsteps of her British-born mother who worked as a cardiac researcher.

But after working at a family-run eatery, serving as a busser, server and eventually ending up in the kitchen during med school, she said cooking just felt like the right thing for her.

"You come to forks in the road in your life and you don't realize they're forks. And you may never realize how different your life would've been if you had chosen differently, and you may never know," she said. "But it's been an amazing run and I'm glad I made the choices I made."

That run started in New Orleans with an externship at Mr. B's Bistro, where Bittermann was later offered a full-time position as a line cook. That led to her being tapped to lead Bacco's kitchen in 1993 at age 27.

"I'd never been to New Orleans and ... was glad I stayed because (the Ralph Brennan Restaurant Group) never had a woman as head chef, and I was honored to be offered the position," Bittermann said. "The job changed my life."

That position took her all over the world and earned her appearances on "Today" and The Food Network. She has cooked meals for two U.S. presidents and foreign dignitaries, and contributed to the "Ralph Brennan's New Orleans Seafood Cookbook" in 2008.

In 2000, Bittermann was promoted to corporate executive chef of the Ralph Brennan Restaurant Group and most recently was a driving force in opening three new businesses this year — Café B on Metairie Road, Heritage Grill in Metairie and Ralph Brennan Catering and Events.

She played an integral role in selecting the site, developing the concepts, renovating and designing the spaces, and staffing.

In addition to her culinary contributions, Bittermann has collected clothes and toys for Covenant House, prepared Thanksgiving meals for Salvation Army shelters and participated in a gingerbread house-building workshop for patients at Children's Hospital with staff from Red Fish Grill.

"Cooking is great," Bittermann explained. "You're nourishing people. You're feeding them. It's a different kind of connection. Feeding people is comforting to me ... and I get as much joy out of cooking the meal as the person eating it gets."•

— Kyle Jackson





Christie Brewton

Title: East Jefferson General Hospital director of education and research
Age: 45

Family: husband, Joe; children, Maddie 18, Sam, 15

Education: bachelor's degree in occupation therapy, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center; master's degree in business administration, University of New Orleans

Christie Brewton started her career at East Jefferson General Hospital in 1984 as a staff occupational therapist and 19 years later was given the opportunity to become director of education and research with one stipulation: she had to earn her master's degree.

She enrolled in the University of New Orleans' executive MBA program. Just before she was getting ready to return to school, Brewton's high school-aged daughter looked at her mother with empathy.

"I feel sorry for you because you have more homework than I do," her daughter said.

For Brewton, being able to balance work, family and volunteering while going back to school full-time was paramount.

"When the kids went to bed, I stayed up and wrote papers because I didn't want them to suffer," she said. "I wanted everything to remain normal."

In her new role, Brewton directly manages 100 people and is responsible for educating 3,000 EJGH team members at various levels, ranging from cafeteria workers to physicians. But education doesn't stop at the workplace. For example, employees are offered computer classes.

"A custodian won't use computers at work, but if it helps with paying bills or a parent helping a child with homework, that is the benefit," Brewton said.

Brewton has also implemented an in-house pharmacy technician program after state and federal regulations changed because schools could not graduate enough students to meet the demand.

"My true love is working with people, but more specifically leadership development," she said.

Brewton recently became an associate of Emergentics, a personality profiling system that determines how employees think and behave. She also designed a new matrix for the nursing unit to improve nurse-to-patient ratios along with many other processes the hospital has adopted to improve employee effectiveness and patient care.

Outside of work, Brewton's dedication is just as prevalent.

She's a member of Mount Carmel Academy's alumni board and has led the school's Spring Fling and Career Day.

Her love of the theater led her to being a volunteer usher at the Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts, and she lends her time and talents frequently to her church parish and to other organizations.

"Giving back was learned from her parents and schools. I feel that I have received much more," Brewton said. "I give because I can."•

— L. Kasimu Harris

Dominique Bright-Wheeler

Title: Capital One Bank vice president and assistant general counsel

Age: 45

Family: divorced; children, Travis, 23, Joey, 20, Jaelyn, 16

Education: bachelor's degree in political science, University of New Orleans; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law

Dominique Bright-Wheeler was taught by her late mother that “to whom much is given, much is required.” That’s why, following in her mother’s footsteps, she says her volunteer work with nonprofits is second nature.

Bright-Wheeler is an attorney by trade, serving as Capital One Bank’s vice president and general counsel where she concentrates on criticized assets in the bank’s commercial division. In addition to providing legal support to the commercial risk management group, she also manages litigation portfolios and prosecutes lawsuits on behalf of the bank.

When she’s not protecting the bank’s assets, Bright-Wheeler offers her time to the community. She’s a member of the Pro Bono Project’s board of directors and volunteers with Project HELP (Homeless Experience Legal Protection), where she serves as a notary at various homeless facilities in the New Orleans area.

She’s also a member of Capital One’s pro bono legal committee.

As a member of the Corporate Counsel Women of Color and the Louisiana State Bar’s minority involvement section, Bright-Wheeler works to help black female attorneys advance and succeed in their careers while promoting diversity in the legal industry.

Bright-Wheeler also lends her legal expertise to up and coming attorneys at the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court’s Teen Court program. Teens who have committed a nonviolent crime have the opportunity to be tried among a jury of their peers. Students serve as prosecutors, defense attorneys and jurors.

Bright-Wheeler has played the role of judge and assistant prosecutor, guiding the student prosecutor in directing his or her case.

“I am very moved that (the defenders’) peers are very interested in why these teens made the decisions they made,” she said. “To watch the prosecutors defend the state of Louisiana and then to watch the defense defend another student so passionately, I just think (it’s) amazing to be there to mentor these young kids who volunteer with the court, who are interested in the legal system.”

Bright-Wheeler is a former director of the St. Philip Community Center and is a member of the Desire Florida Area Community Council and Amachi Charter School Association board of directors.

“I’m just passionate about helping underprivileged individuals,” she said. •

— Whitney Pierce Santora





Carolyn Chandler

Title: Metairie Park Country Day School head of school

Age: 62

Family: children, Dan, 35, Richard, 32

Education: bachelor's degree in English, Vanderbilt University; master's degree in secondary education, University of Tennessee

As the first woman head of school, Carolyn Chandler in many ways represents Metairie Park Country Day School's idea of the well-rounded student.

An English and French teacher for nearly 20 years at the Girls Preparatory School in Chattanooga, Tenn., Chandler went back to school in the mid-1990s to earn her master's degree in secondary education with a specialty in mathematics.

"I loved going to school and took classes in English, French, history, psychology and mathematics," she said. "I was interested in many things."

That enthusiasm for learning was one of the things that eventually brought Chandler to Country Day in 2003 as the assistant head of school. She said it was the school's strong sense of community that originally attracted her.

"I saw a respect for the teachers and students here that I very much admired," she said.

Chandler was appointed associate head of the school in 2005 and became Country Day's head of school the following year.

"I thought it would be an adventure," she said, adding that she took the job right after Hurricane Katrina when the school was facing financial challenges. Nearly \$10 million was needed to pay for new construction, money that was eventually raised, Chandler said, because donors throughout the country didn't want to see the school fail.

Country Day has remained fiscally sound ever since, even during the recession. It has also added a pre-kindergarten program.

"We've managed our money carefully and paid off a large bond five years early," Chandler said. "In the fall of 2008, we determined that we would not take a drawdown from our endowment, which is our savings account. For the last three years, we have tightened our belts by reducing our budget and are still in good shape financially."

The enrollment picture under Chandler has been equally positive, growing from 582 during her first year as head of school to 721 today.

Chandler also serves on the board of the charter school organization Crescent City Schools, which was granted a charter to reopen Harriet Tubman Charter School on the West Bank. She is also a board member with Longue Vue House and Gardens and the National Association of Principals of Schools for Girls, and she works with the Vincent Memorial Legacy Fund, which provides money for community projects.

She also co-authored a chapter in the book, "The Head's Handbook," a guide for aspiring and experienced school administrators. •

— Garry Boulard

Vivien Chen

Position: Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center Louisiana Tumor Registry director

Age: 66

Family: husband, Richard

Education: bachelor's degree in biology, Hong Kong Baptist College; master's degree of public health in community health, University of Oklahoma; Ph.D. in epidemiology, University of Oklahoma School of Public Health

When Vivien Chen took over as director of the Louisiana Tumor Registry in 1991, the program was up against the wall. Its federal funding had lapsed, it was no longer recognized by the National Cancer Institute and its data collection was running nearly four years behind.

These were hard times for the registry that started in 1974 and had received national recognition for its cataloguing of cancer data on patient demographics, primary tumor sites, stage of diagnosis and survival.

Chen said it was her stubbornness that helped get the Louisiana Tumor Registry back on track.

"We needed to prove that we could do a good job of restoring our cancer registry and build it back to high excellence," she said. "It was my personal mission to make us effective again."

The work of Chen and her staff started paying off in 1994 when she applied for and received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 1995, the program was transferred from the state Office of Public Health to the LSU Board of Supervisors and the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans. At that point, Chen became fully responsible for the program.

In 2001, the National Cancer Institute approved federal funding for the program, and the registry was returned to its Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results program, a gold standard for registries in the cancer research industry. The Louisiana Tumor Registry is one of only 19 registries in the nation to be designated as a SEER registry.

The registry receives \$3.5 million in federal funding a year and covers the entire state of Louisiana, researching 23,000 cancer patients per year. The data, which was once four years behind, is now collected within a year of actual occurrence.

"Our data guides cancer control and planning, and if we can help our state even have one less cancer death or pick up an early sign of cancer in one person earlier than we have before, then we're doing our job," she said.

Chen knew she wanted to be an epidemiologist and collect cancer research when she was studying for her master's degree at the University of Oklahoma, where she helped lead an early breast cancer detection project and later oversaw cancer registries for four hospitals at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

"I am very proud of our efforts to revive this registry and provide such crucial data in Louisiana that is used for national cancer research," Chen said. "I am motivated by helping people through the data we collect."•

— Tommy Santora





Jaimmé Collins

Title: Adams and Reese partner

Age: 33

Family: single

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

Jaimmé Collins doesn't make major moves without checking with her "personal board of directors."

Though not a formal group, Collins said the group of eight friends and mentors have made and continue to make her who she is today.

"I would probably say that God is the chair and my mom is the co-chair," Collins said. "She may be the only person physically on earth that I fear."

"I would not be the woman I am today had I not had strong women in my life, strong African-American women," Collins said, adding that two men are among her respected core.

When she began her career in politics, it was President Clinton who advised Collins during a White House internship to establish grass roots as a foundation. As she traveled throughout Louisiana, she determined that helpless children bore the brunt of political dysfunction and decided she could do the greatest good in the legal profession.

"When I was young, I thought I was going to be the first female president. I probably thought that all throughout college," Collins said. "I traveled the state and I saw a lot of suffering. I decided there has to be a better way for me to help these children. Your best politicians are attorneys."

Outside of the office, she mentors young women as a dance teacher at Art in Motion Dance School, twice a week throughout the year and each evening in June in advance of the school's annual recital. It's a chance to inspire young girls, she said, adding that she enjoyed camaraderie while learning ballet as a child.

Perhaps Collins' most passionate goal is to help local educators establish a facility to meet the needs of special education students, as she believes Louisiana has failed to meet the needs of that population since Hurricane Katrina.

She participates in the Junior League of New Orleans' Power Ties program every year, hosting students from Samuel J. Green Charter School. The experience exposes the students to how a law firm works and various legal careers. Collins also sits on the board of the Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society and the Children's Bureau of New Orleans.

Promoted to partner with Adams and Reese in October, Collins looks younger than her age and is often perceived as a first-year associate, battling sexism more than racism. But she practices resilience grounded in faith and wisdom learned from predecessors.

"My faith keeps me filled with joy and focused," she said. "I'm here for something bigger than myself."•

— Diana Chandler

Belinda Constant

Title: Gretna councilwoman

Age: 54

Family: husband, Ronald; children, Blair, 29, Brennan, 26, Cambre, 24

Education: attended Louisiana State University

As the first woman elected to the Gretna City Council in 2005, Belinda Constant is no stranger to serving her community. A lifelong resident of the West Jefferson community, she has always served the area in some fashion.

Sworn into office on July 1, 2005, Constant faced a trial by fire when Hurricane Katrina hit just two months into her term.

"It was an eye-opening experience," she said. "My family has lived here all their lives, and I have to say Katrina was a crash course in public service for me."

One of her goals upon election was to revitalize Gretna's downtown area by adding more outdoor events and a farmer's market to create a livelier district after hours. Soon after Katrina, Constant reached out to Baton Rouge-area farmers market vendors to bring their goods to Gretna since many of the city's grocery stores hadn't reopened yet.

"The farmer's market in Gretna helped bring people together and rebuild a sense of community," she said, adding that the market remains open and successful.

She then organized downtown Gretna's Artwalk, held every second Saturday of the month with art festivals held in May and December.

"They stimulated a lot of growth in Gretna and made people look at what they could really do downtown. Before that, our downtown was a ghost town after 5 p.m. or on the weekend," Constant said.

Prior to her role in city government, Constant owned and operated a court reporting school, an endeavor that came about after she spent 20 years as a court reporter in Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

Another contribution to come out of her time working in the courts was the creation of the Jefferson Parish Drug Court program in 1996.

She serves as the program's administrator. To help get it off the ground, she created a nonprofit to increase public awareness of the drug court and raise \$100,000 annually for the program.

The drug court is now federally funded with a budget of \$1.8 million, helping more than 500 people in Jefferson Parish, she said.

Constant also is a member of the Gretna Historic Society, works with the Gretna Heritage Festival volunteer committee and the Gretna Economic Development Association and sits on the boards of St. Joseph Church and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. •

— Kyle Jackson





Marsha Crowle

Title: First NBC Bank senior executive vice president and chief compliance and operations officer

Age: 50

Family: husband, Michael; children, Kyle Martin, 25, Shannon Martin, 23

Education: St. Charles (Mo.) West High School graduate

Marsha Crowle, chief compliance and operations officer at First NBC Bank, turned down the first banking job offer she received, thinking she would instead pursue a career as an occupational therapist. But when the candidate the bank settled on was fired two weeks later, management made another plea to Crowle.

Her timing was impeccable. The Missouri bank where she went to work needed help comprehending the details of the Truth in Lending Act, and Crowle said her natural curiosity made her well suited for the task.

“I was always asking ‘why?’” she said.

Crowle has been in the New Orleans-area banking market since going to work for the former Delta Bank in Belle Chasse in 1980. In 1995, she took a job at First Bank and Trust where Ashton Ryan would become CEO in 1998.

When Ryan formed First NBC Bank in 2006, Crowle was one of his key hires. The challenges of launching a financial institution in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the levee failures were considerable but not enough to deter her or the fledgling bank’s staff.

“It’s probably the most emotionally rewarding service that I can give to the community,” Crowle said.

Crowle is a board member of First NBC Community Development, an entity that has invested in residential developments targeting low- and middle-income homeowners and renters. In the process, it has helped revitalize blighted portions of the city.

Most of its efforts have concentrated on Central City, including the \$15 million Crescent Garden Homes development that includes 141 single-family residences.

Having made her career climb while a single mother, Crowle said she appreciates the chance to give a helping hand to others who are trying to provide a comfortable home for their families.

“It’s personally rewarding,” she said. “You realize that you’re part of a team that’s making a difference in someone’s life.”

Crowle applies the same passion to her involvement with Operation Homefront, a nonprofit that provides emergency assistance for military members and their families. Her husband, Michael, is a staff sergeant with the Mississippi Army National Guard and returned from a year’s deployment in Afghanistan in July.

While the public is inundated with news and images of the impact of war on troops, Crowle said people often forget the effect on their families back home.

“I don’t think they understand the emotional toll,” she said. “They’re facing life alone for the first time.”

In addition to organizing care packages for soldiers serving abroad and support services for their families, Crowle has also started a program to provide medical assistance and vocational training to homeless veterans. •

— Greg LaRose

Karen DeBlieux

Title: Capital One Bank U.S. corporate banking senior vice president

Age: 51

Family: husband, Peter; sons, Joshua, 17, Zachary, 11

Education: bachelor's degree in finance, Louisiana State University

Karen DeBlieux believes true leaders emerge when people aren't looking. She learned this from the years she participated in the Greater New Orleans YMCA leadership programs built around character development.

"They taught me how to be a leader in the categories of spirit, mind and body," DeBlieux said.

DeBlieux leads Capital One Bank's U.S. Corporate Banking team, a division focused on national and regional companies. Having managed a portfolio of loans exceeding \$1 billion in commitments and more than 300 depository clients, DeBlieux now mentors young bankers. She led the restructuring of her division, resulting in double-digit sales and revenue growth per full-time employee.

The YMCA leadership programs DeBlieux took part in were cancelled in the late 1980s. As immediate-past chairwoman of the Greater New Orleans YMCA, she was integral in reviving the Leaders' Club, which a YMCA staff member leads under DeBlieux's direction. The program provides participants with leadership skills and teaches them about active, healthy lifestyles and community service.

"My (cause) is teen-youth development, anything that has an impact on teens who would otherwise be on the streets," DeBlieux said. "I want them to understand their dreams can be real. There are no dead ends. With a lot of hard work, everybody has a chance."

DeBlieux also sits on the board of trustees of the Blue Ridge Leaders School in North Carolina, where students from the GNO YMCA Leaders' Club participate in its annual eight-day leadership workshop. DeBlieux, who has been a member of the Blue Ridge staff for more than 20 years, said the school is built around physical fitness, spirituality and community values.

"The point of that school is to teach kids to be leaders in their community," she said. "I grew up at YMCA and Blue Ridge for 30 years. It's ingrained in what I do."

DeBlieux also helped develop the outreach program at Wilson Charter School, a YMCA-funded after-school program staffed by Leaders' Club participants that helps elementary students with homework and provides healthy-living education and character development programs. DeBlieux said the program takes all of the YMCA character-building techniques and applies them at the school.

"It's about making New Orleans better by ensuring the future leadership of the city by working with (its) youth," DeBlieux said. •

— Whitney Pierce Santora





Monique Gougisha Doucette

Position: Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak and Stewart shareholder

Age: 34

Family: husband, Jason

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

In the workplace, few things matter as much as the crucial but often delicate employee-employer relationship. Monique Gougisha Doucette tries daily to provide clarity in situations that are often clouded by misunderstanding.

"Employers today are making tough decisions," said Doucette, who joined Ogletree Deakins as an associate in May 2009 and became a shareholder in the firm earlier this year.

In a down economy, employers are faced with having to make reductions in force, she said. At the same time, there are also a lot of disgruntled employees — current and former — creating a challenge in terms of what employers are going to do for workers they may have to let go.

"In those kinds of situations, many people often decide that they are going to get back at their employers for doing so," Doucette said.

Doucette, who was a labor and employment attorney at McGlinchey Stafford for five years, represents employees and management primarily in matters dealing with the federal Title VII, which prohibits discrimination in hiring, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act.

"I think labor lawyers are looked at by many as glorified HR managers," Doucette said. "But our jobs are to weed out the complicated issues between employers and employees. It really is a field that is always changing, requiring you to stay on your toes in terms of knowing your practice and honing your skills."

Doucette serves as a board member for the labor and employment section of the National Bar Association, the nation's oldest and largest association of black lawyers and judges. She also is the co-chairwoman of the American Bar Association's diversity outreach initiative task force.

"For the first time in a decade, the numbers of minorities at law firms have leveled off," she said. "For many reasons, many law firms have also cut back on their diversity programs."

In her role with the ABA task force, one of the issues she focuses on is diversity in law firms.

"The task force is to encourage diversity, not only in our own committee but also within the ABA itself, while we are also tackling the issues of diversity outreach for law firms."

Outside the legal industry, Doucette serves as a member of the New Orleans Ballet Association's board of directors, for which she provides pro bono legal assistance for its educational program that offers year-round, tuition-free dance instruction to area youth.

She has also served three terms as an advisory board member for the New Orleans Film Society and as a film juror for the New Orleans Film Festival in 2008.

"I really think that caring about those kinds of things goes back to my training at Loyola," Doucette said. "The Jesuits talk about developing the full person. It's not just about work and the personal life, but the mind and spirit. It's a responsibility, but also good for the mind and spirit." •

— Garry Boulard

Bernadette D'Souza

Title: Southeast Louisiana Legal Services Corp. managing attorney

Age: 57

Family: husband, Terence; children, Lloyd, 32, Vanessa, 30, Christine, 27

Education: bachelor's degree in psychology, University of Bombay, India; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

For Bernadette D'Souza, community service and career have always been inseparable, bound closely by a battle-tested sense of commitment and leadership in her fight to aid victims of domestic violence.

After moving to the United States from her native India in 1978, D'Souza began volunteering with organizations such as Tulane University Women's Association and the YWCA of Greater New Orleans, where she helped domestic violence victims gain refuge and access counseling and eventually became president of both organizations.

That work, with the awareness of the need for legal resources to help represent the interests of domestic violence victims in court, shaped her career path.

"Early on, I realized there were many women who needed a voice," D'Souza said. "Organizations like the YWCA offered counseling for victims, but most could not afford to hire attorneys."

With her youngest child entering kindergarten, D'Souza enrolled in Tulane University Law School, graduated and eventually began working at Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, which offers low-income clients free legal aid for civil issues, and founded its domestic violence unit in 1999.

Soon after, D'Souza's perspective on her work changed. On May 16, 2000, she stood in broad daylight outside the Jefferson Parish court complex in Gretna with a client who had just won an injunction against her estranged husband. At a meeting to inspect potential property damage, D'Souza watched as the husband pulled out a handgun and fatally shot her client. He then turned the gun on himself, fired and died instantly.

D'Souza was inspired by the incident and became involved in even more domestic violence organizations.

While serving as chairwoman of the New Orleans Family Justice Center's service delivery component, she became aware of a \$3 million Department of Justice grant to help domestic violence victims. U.S. Attorney Jim Letten landed the grant from the DOJ's Violence Against Women Office for the center, and D'Souza won a separate \$268,000 grant, which she said helped the center hire two additional attorneys to provide free legal services to domestic violence victims.

The Supreme Court appointed D'Souza to serve on the Pro Se Litigants Task Force in 2009, which streamlines the legal process for litigants who can't afford attorneys, and created easily accessible legal forms for public use.

She ran as a judicial candidate in 2004 on a platform to create a family court that would guarantee knowledgeable, experienced judges who handle domestic cases. Despite losing the election, D'Souza still considers the campaign a success.

"I didn't win the election, but I helped raise awareness for the need to stop the revolving door of litigants ruling on the family docket," she said. "I'd like to think I've helped make a difference."•

— Thomas Leggett





Lisa Easterling

Title: Kean Miller partner

Age: 44

Family: single

Education: bachelor's degree in journalism and American studies, University of Southern Mississippi; juris doctor, University of Mississippi School of Law

Lisa Easterling was working as a journalist when a story she covered on the kidnapping of a newborn from a hospital nursery turned her toward law. The kidnapper took the child across state lines, which brought certain legalities into play.

"I just got really interested in (law) from seeing it in action up close," she said. "In some ways, it is similar to journalism. I know a fair number of former journalists that are lawyers."

Although it was a criminal case that grabbed her interest, Easterling specializes in construction and litigation law, taking a particular interest in rebuilding New Orleans. She's often the champion for subcontractors caught in the middle of litigation issues.

"They are the folks who get all the construction done in New Orleans," she said. "I am drawn to construction, I think, because it helps create a sense of place. Renovating and re-purposing old buildings helps retain the history of the city while letting us move forward into the 21st century."

She's driven equally in her commitments to her profession and the community, reaching out to the homeless and volunteer construction crews as the 2011 chairwoman of Mobile Loaves and Fishes, a feeding ministry based at Trinity Episcopal Church.

"It offers a great opportunity ... to talk with the volunteers who are rebuilding and the homeless," she said. "I really appreciate the ability as a professional to have the time to devote to civic endeavors."

She encourages others to support construction through her work as a member of the National Association of Women in Construction, offering scholarships to local women preparing for careers in the industry.

Easterling said she focuses on daily tasks, but the Mississippi native and former West Virginia journalist sees herself in New Orleans for the long haul.

"I hope I'm still right here representing local companies in construction litigation and I hope that the city continues to come back," she said. "I think New Orleans is the most important city in America. I think it's the soul of America."•

— Diana Chandler

Heather Evans

Title: Gulf Coast Bank and Trust assistant vice president, commercial lender and branch manager

Age: 34

Family: children, Dakota, 16, Lauren, 13

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

Heather Evans is all about relationships. "I'm a relationship banker and a lot comes with that," she said. "People don't just bank with a bank. They bank with the banker and with everything I do, the same principle applies to how I live my life."

Evans essentially built her banking career from the ground up, beginning at AmSouth Bank where she worked as a teller for two years. From there, she obtained her investment license to add to her skill set and earn a promotion.

She stepped away from banking for a brief time to work at Met Life Insurance but soon returned to the industry.

Now, as assistant vice president, commercial lender and branch manager at Gulf Coast Bank and Trust, she serves as the bank's liaison to the Jefferson Economic Development Commission. She also represents the bank at The Idea Village's monthly banker-client meetings to help emerging entrepreneurs with lending questions and needs.

Aside from work and family, Evans divides her time between singing in her church choir, which she's done for the past five years, and helping Bridge House with fundraising.

She's co-chairwoman of this year's Mr. Legs pageant, and she served as a committee member in 2009 and 2010.

"Being a single mom was not a reason to stop being successful or stop living my dreams," she said. "If anything, it pushed me. I felt like I had to walk the walk in front of my kids, and my kids supported everything I wanted to do and did."

Evans also is active in Court Appointed Special Advocates, where she represents children going through the legal system. Being a CASA volunteer, which she has done since 2008, can require a lot of time but is worth the investment, Evans said.

"It's important to show a child the strength of your character and stand by them all the way," she said. "It's important to know that someone depends on you ... and that you can come through for them."

Evans has represented children who were being taken away from drug-addicted parents or who needed to be removed from abusive home lives.

"These kids have never been able to trust someone or love someone," she said. "I want them to know that someone cares. ... It's time consuming, yes, but it's worth it because you know that somehow, you're going to make a difference."•

— *Kyle Jackson*





Melissa Gibbs

Title: Gibbs Construction business development and small/disadvantaged contractor outreach director

Age: 41

Family: father, Larry; stepmother, Marian; siblings, Brian, Lauren, Hillary, Gillian and Emerson Gibbs; mother, Janelle Landry; stepfather Mick Mondello

Education: bachelor's degrees in journalism and French, Boston University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School; master's degree in business administration, Tulane University A.B. Freeman School of Business

Associated Builders and Contractors Bayou chapter member
Melissa Gibbs attended a group meeting in 2010 where then-Lt. Gov. Mitch Landrieu was campaigning for mayor. She was front and center.

"I brought up the shortcomings of the city's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, and that I'd like to help rewrite the plan," Gibbs said. "He pointed to me and said, jokingly, 'You're hired.'"

After Landrieu was elected mayor, he named Gibbs to his city contracting task force, where she focused on revamping the city's DBE program.

"At the time, it was worthless, a façade," she said. "You'd call the city and say, 'I want a list of DBEs', and they'd say, 'Just go to the Water Board or the airport and get their lists.'"

And for a business, becoming certified a DBE is often an onerous and invasive process, Gibbs said, with the government asking for a business owner's detailed family and financial history.

"As a society, we're failing our people," she said.

On the advice of his city contracting task force, Landrieu created an Office of Supplier Diversity. Gibbs is part of its advisory committee and is eager to help certified DBEs navigate the process to obtain contract work from the city.

Through working at her family-owned construction company, Gibbs is aware of the needs of the smaller contractors.

"You can be a carpenter, a master craftsman, and not know how to run a business," Gibbs said.

And her small-business acumen is one reason why subcontractors frequently call her for advice.

"They expect to be brushed off," Gibbs said, "but we're known for being accessible."

She's also responsible for the launch of Gibbs University, which began as a free quarterly seminar that brought in topical experts. The seminar has since expanded to a multiweek program with an instructor and lesson materials.

In the summer of 2009, she hosted the first Gibbs University seminar at an Elmwood hotel and was surprised by the turnout: about 60 contractors, suppliers, concrete workers, plumbers, painters and electricians came to hear about public works contracting.

It's a subject Gibbs knows well, lobbying in Baton Rouge for a law that would stop public agencies from forcing "union-only" rules on companies that bid on publicly funded construction contracts. She helped activate local business groups in support of the measure, which Gov. Bobby Jindal signed into law in June.

"I believe in free and open competition," Gibbs said. "We rise and fall together, so why not rise?"

— Anne Berry

Christine Guillory

Title: Frilot associate

Age: 29

Family: single

Education: bachelor's degree in international studies and Italian, Emory University; juris doctor, University of Southern California Gould School of Law

When Christine Guillory wants to be a part of something, she makes it happen.

"I have marched up to people with every kind of influence and power, smiled and said, 'I want to be a part of this,'" Guillory said.

As an associate attorney at Frilot, Guillory concentrates on medical malpractice defense and health care law. Though she said she feels she's just starting her journey, she's not afraid to stand up for what she wants.

As Frilot was preparing a proposal to procure the Orleans Parish Hospital Service District as a new client, Guillory approached her superiors and told them she wanted to lead the project. She was given the reins, put together a team and directed the proposal.

Frilot's bid was accepted and the firm will provide medical malpractice defense as needed for the district, which will govern the former Methodist Hospital site in eastern New Orleans once it reopens.

Guillory's passion for education led her to the New Orleans Public Library Board and its foundation. Making the appropriate connections, Guillory declared her intent to serve on the library's board of directors, where she serves as vice chairwoman and is helping supervise the construction of new libraries in Lakeview, eastern New Orleans, Gentilly, Algiers and Mid-City.

"One great thing about being on the board is most of the board is relatively new and passionate about the success of public libraries," Guillory said.

She is also supervising the marketing campaign to reinvigorate interest in the existing programs offered at New Orleans' libraries. Her role in the campaign is to "wear many hats" in getting out the message of the libraries' revitalization.

"There's still a massive group of people who don't have computers and still utilize (public libraries)," Guillory said, referencing Internet use and its benefits.

Guillory, who is involved with the Preservation Resource Center and Louisiana Creole Historical Society, is also involved in the Youth Rescue Initiative, helping children 9 to 13 and participating in book drives.

As an avid reader, Guillory makes time for herself.

"You have to protect your time and make time for things you want to do," she said. "There's a stack of books on my nightstand, regardless of when I'm going to get to read them."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora





Leslie Hepting

Title: Churchill Downs Louisiana Horseracing Co. off-track betting operations senior director

Age: 42

Family: husband, George; children, Alexis, 16, Bailey, 13

Education: bachelor's degree in communications, University of Northern Iowa

Leslie Hepting's background in video work comes from her job as a marketing specialist for Video Services Inc., a company that Churchill Downs Inc. purchased in 2004. Today, her job is largely video oriented as senior director of CDI's off-track betting operations in southeastern Louisiana.

"It's exciting because you never know what each day will bring," said Hepting, who oversees operations at the company's Kenner, Metairie, Elmwood, Gretna, Chalmette, Boutte, LaPlace, Covington, Houma and Thibodaux OTB locations.

She oversees a staff of nearly 160 people, including 10 managers who report to her.

"To prevent their jobs from becoming mundane day-in and day-out tasks, we've made it possible for them to work on projects outside of the main office," Hepting said. "That way they are being exposed to new things all the time and constantly learning."

Hepting is a fan of employee cross-training. No matter what position someone is hired for, they will eventually know how to run the entire facility, she said. The approach not only makes for more stimulating work for OTB employees, but opens the door to them for promotions.

"We try to place people inside the company into slots as they become available," Hepting said. "As we open more OTB parlors in the area, we want to be able, for example, to move our assistant managers into managers' positions."

Rising in a traditionally male-dominated industry, Hepting said her gender has never been an obstacle to advancing her career.

"Did anyone have a problem with me being a woman? Well, not to my face," she said, laughing. "The more that I came to understand how to handle operational issues and branch out in terms of my knowledge base, the less it mattered to anyone that I was a woman."

Hepting said she easily puts in more than 50 hours at work each week, taking calls as late as 3 a.m. But she makes certain to leave time for her family.

"Particularly when it comes to being there for my kids, I can't imagine doing things differently."

And she's also making time for involvement in the community, having volunteered with organizations such as St. Jude Hospital, Cabrini High School and Salem Lutheran School. Hepting is also active with breast cancer and muscular dystrophy awareness events. •

— Garry Boulard

Alicia Irmscher

Title: Notification is Prevention Foundation executive director; Watch Systems business development director and state account manager
Age: 57

Family: husband, Eric; daughter, Campbell, 4

Education: bachelor's degree in psychology, Northwestern State University; graduate student in quality management, University of Alabama

When it comes to informing residents that convicted sex offenders are moving into their neighborhood, Louisiana has emerged as a frontrunner. Few have done more to advance the cause than Alicia Irmscher.

"Louisiana is the benchmark state regarding sex offender management," Irmscher said. "This is the result of our organization's work."

Irmscher was working in the auto industry before joining the non-profit Notification is Prevention Foundation, a group that increases public awareness of registered sex offenders through grass-roots efforts.

In her third year as executive director, Irmscher has been involved in amending legislation to support proactive and broad-based community notification.

"The first thing I did was to consolidate legislation in different areas," she said. "From a logistical standpoint, we brought all these various agencies together so everyone's looking at the same sheet of music."

Last year, having identified a problem with understaffed agencies, including law enforcement in New Orleans, Irmscher added grant writing to the NIPF's repertoire. She hired another grant writer and, with their help, secured \$1 million in funding.

Her expertise in Louisiana recently led her to serve as business development director for Watch Systems, a technology company that partners with and consults law enforcement to provide sex offender registration, management and community notification.

Irmscher also travels to Ohio, Indiana and Illinois to share Louisiana's success in sex offender notification, helping those states install sex offender watch technology in each county.

"Through the foundation, I get one or two emails or handwritten letters a month thanking me for providing this service," Irmscher said. "Knowing that I can contribute some sense of peace and safety to people in my community really keeps me going."

The response hasn't always been so appreciative. She said one of the biggest challenges remains resentment and misunderstanding about her work, often from the perpetrators themselves. She still gets phone calls and emails from offenders who are angry about her work and even faced a stalker who wouldn't stop contacting her.

"I get through these challenges from the supportive feedback from the community," she said.

In addition to a career that provides a direct community service, Irmscher serves as chairwoman of the Children's Advocacy Center, where she helped raise more than \$60,000 in the past two years.

When she became aware of a friend with cystic fibrosis in his family, she became involved in fundraising for the CF Foundation. Through social media, guest bartending and sending letters to friends and family, Irmscher raised \$3,150 for the organization's Louisiana chapter.

"What appeals to me the most about my job is that the rewards are greater for me personally than what I would find in another job," she said. •

— Thomas Leggett





Kathy Keene

Title: Sun Belt Conference senior associate commissioner for sports administration

Age: 37

Family: husband, Chris; children, Madelyn, 10, Mayson, 9, Christopher, 4, Katie, 2

Education: bachelor's degree in biology and psychology, University of Mississippi; master's degree in counseling education and Ph.D. in counseling, University of New Orleans

Kathy Keene has a front-row seat for 19 championship games per year as senior associate commissioner for sports administration with the New Orleans-based Sun Belt Conference. The feeling of watching the winning team celebrate and hoist the trophy never gets old, she says.

"It's the most exciting time of the year for these athletes and schools. Every tournament is different. The underdog could rise up. The favorite could continue their magical season," Keene said. "I'm there celebrating every moment with them. It's an honor to see their hard work come to fruition."

The conference tournaments are a byproduct of Keene's hard work as she manages all 19 games, preparation of conference schedules and all other activities associated with the administration of sports on campus. The Sun Belt Conference has 12 member schools representing Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Tennessee and Texas.

Keene has served as associate commissioner for the past year and worked previously with the conference as associate commissioner for compliance from 2006-10, advising schools on NCAA rules.

Before joining the Sun Belt, Keene spent nine years with the University of New Orleans athletics department, including a five-year stint as its senior woman's administrator and director of student-athlete support services.

Keene found her calling while working on her master's degree in counseling education at UNO. She was working as a graduate assistant in disability services when her supervisor asked her to help counsel the men's basketball team on academics and student life.

She worked one-on-one with the athletes and did well enough that the university created a student athlete services department. She was named the department's director in 1999 and worked with nearly 200 athletes every year.

Keene said her athletic background helped her in her first academic position. She competed in the heptathlon on the Ole Miss track team, earning All-Academic honors from the Southeastern Conference for three straight seasons.

"I knew what it was like to be a college athlete and when I ended my career, I wanted to do something on the college campus scene," Keene said. "College sports prepares us for what we can do in life, building our character, making us react in pressure times and learning to interact with one another through teamwork."

Keene serves on the NCAA's Legislative Council, the primary legislative body in the NCAA Division I governance structure. The council considers about 100 proposals a year, deciding which ones go before the NCAA board of governors for a vote.

"One of the biggest topics we're always looking at is academic reform, putting in rules and regulations for students to be successful academically while playing athletics," she said. "That steady and successful balance is the heart of intercollegiate athletics."•

— Tommy Santora

Karen Kersting

Title: Alane Design owner

Age: 54

Family: son, Ian, 20

Education: bachelor's degree in interior design, LaRoche College

Karen Kersting wasn't born or raised New Orleans, but she's leaving a mark on her adopted hometown through her work, volunteer contributions and admiration for the city.

The Pittsburgh native relocated to New Orleans in 1982 with no real assurances of a full-time job, fulfilling her lifelong dream to live in the Big Easy. Within a short period of time, she found herself working for Tulane University as the in-house campus designer, a position she would hold for the next 12 years.

Her job included approving space planning, finish selections and construction management for work on Gibson and Dinwiddie halls, the Norman Mayer building and many other campus facilities.

"The administration (Tulane University) realized they hadn't done anything with the university since the 1960s," she said.

Kersting formed Alane Design in 1987, her own interior design business that she operated on a part-time basis until Hurricane Katrina. The storm and levee breaches led her to assist other firms and individuals with insurance claims related to renovation work and project management.

"I always try and find the silver lining in every cloud. I'm an optimist," she said.

Even after an accident more than 10 years ago confined her to a wheelchair and required a year of rehabilitation, Kersting never stopped working.

But work isn't the only thing that keeps her on the go. Her list of volunteer work includes serving as a pro bono design consultant for the Orpheum Theatre and technical adviser for the Preservation Resource Center's Rebuild America project, which involved rehabbing more than 200 homes.

Kersting is also an executive board member for the New Orleans chapter of Meals on Wheels.

"This community has accepted me with open arms, and I feel I should give back in some way," she said. "It's important to remember that."

Kersting is also a volunteer for the Women of the Storm and works as a volunteer painter for the restoration of National World War II Museum's PT 305 boat. In addition to painting, she also bakes cookies for the other volunteers.

"I'm known as the cookie lady," Kersting said. "I decided to bake the guys cookies as it just seemed a nice gesture for their work. I deliver a four to five dozen batches on most Saturdays."

Kersting admits her journey hasn't been an easy one but considers it fun.

"There's no trust fund, no family here. It's just me and my son. I have to find the work and make connections," she said. "I've been grateful for advice and people who've connected me to the work. It's been an amazing journey."•

— Kyle Jackson





Katie LeGardeur

Title: JP Morgan Chase private wealth management managing director and market manager

Age: 40

Family: husband, Wendell; children, Estelle, 5, Ace, 3

Education: bachelor's degree in communications, Ohio University; master's degree in business administration, Tulane University A.B. Freeman School of Business

At JPMorgan Chase, Katie LeGardeur works with high net worth individuals, endowments and foundations, and oversees more than 30 staff members in her role as New Orleans-area managing director and market manager for private wealth.

An Ohio native, she made her way to the Crescent City via Lafayette where she worked for United Way after college.

"I was thrilled with the idea of warmer winters," LeGardeur said. "I knew ultimately I wanted to go to business school, but you're always told to get a few years of good work experience."

She enrolled in Tulane University's A.B. Freeman School of Business, during which time she worked at Premier Bank before Bank One purchased it and merged with JP Morgan Chase in 2004. She weathered those transitions and in mid-2008 was named market manager for the company's private client business in New Orleans, where she has hired 20 people in the past 18 months.

LeGardeur said her bachelor's degree in communications from Ohio University has helped her banking career.

"I'm in a people business and have spent many years working with clients, where being able to communicate counts," she said. "A lot of communication is about group dynamics, and as a manager I have to think about collaboration in business. With 30 to 40 employees, I have to consider the dynamics of a team approach."

Away from the bank, LeGardeur is involved in youth activities in the city.

"I've always loved working with kids, and as a mother of two, I realize the importance of early childhood education," she said.

This year she was appointed treasurer of Junior Achievement of Greater New Orleans, a nonprofit that helps kindergartners to high school students learn how to earn and save money.

She's a board member of the Louisiana Children's Museum and Boys Town Louisiana, and serves as a public policy committee member with the regional economic development agency Greater New Orleans Inc. •

— Susan Buchanan

Two-time Honoree

Saundra Levy

Title: Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana executive director

Age: 64

Family: children, Lauren, 31, Jonathan, 27

Education: bachelor's degree in business and public administration, University of Arizona

Saundra Levy is celebrating her 20th anniversary with the Jewish Endowment Foundation, and she has much to celebrate.

During that time, she has helped grow the foundation's cash on hand from \$8 million to \$40 million to help a variety of organizations in and outside New Orleans' Jewish community.

Levy said the foundation distributed more than \$4 million to various Jewish organizations in 2010 alone.

"Our donors are very generous to both the Jewish community and to other organizations, particularly in the New Orleans area, whether it's universities, hospitals or theaters," she said.

Levy and the foundation doled out more than \$1.5 million after the storm to help restore the area synagogues that sustained damages, in addition to helping the Jewish Federation and other non-Jewish causes.

Levy also started the Create a Jewish Legacy initiative this year, a program to create a rainy-day fund born out of the Hurricane Katrina experience.

"The purpose ... is to provide funding for the future," Levy said. "If anyone had told us what Katrina would do to devastate not just the Jewish community but everything, our entire city, I think we would have been shocked at how much money it takes to overcome. The better you can plan for the rainy day, the better off your organization is."

Part of the plan is not setting a goal for the amount of money to be raised. The initiative has raised \$3 million thus far, but Levy said she wants to raise more, and everyone is encouraged to participate.

"It's something everyone can participate in," she said. "If you can give \$500 or if you can give \$500,000, we believe everything is important."

Levy said she's proud of what the foundation has been able to do and has no plans to leave anytime soon.

"This is a wonderful job that I have," Levy said. "It's really a calling as much as it is an occupation."

Her work has extended beyond the foundation. As an urban policy specialist for the city of New Orleans in the mid-1970s, she was responsible for drafting and obtaining the approval of an ordinance that established the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission. She went on to serve as the commission's executive director — and later led the Central Business District Historic District Landmarks Commission — for 15 years, creating nine districts between both agencies that represent a total of 9,125 structures. •

— Travis Andrews





Carol Anne Luttrell

Title: East Jefferson General Hospital Breast Care Center medical director
Age: 48
Family: husband, Henry
Education: bachelor's degree in medical technology, Radford University; doctor of medicine, Medical College of Virginia

Even before she established the radiology group at East Jefferson General Hospital and became the medical director of its Breast Care Center, Dr. Carol Anne Luttrell had what she describes as a “passion for women’s health.”

“I have always read each mammogram like I am reading my own — or my best friend’s or my mother’s or my sister’s,” said Luttrell, who joined EJGH in 2000 after serving as an assistant professor at Tulane University Medical Center and a radiologist at Southern Baptist Hospital.

“I know that behind each mammogram is a woman,” she said.

That’s why maintaining accuracy in reading those mammograms is crucially important, prompting her to usher in digital mammography at EJGH.

“Digital mammography allows us to have instant access to the images that we are taking,” Luttrell said. “Before, you had to develop the film in a darkroom and wait. And even then you would get a film screen image, which was all you had to work with.

“Now we can instantly transfer the image to a computer monitor and if we see an area of concern, we can magnify it and alter the contrast.”

Such advances may seem to be technological nuance to outsiders, but to the health care field they are significant strides in effective detection and treatment.

“The statistics are that one in seven women will develop breast cancer in their life time,” says Luttrell. “But studies also show that through early detection the mortality breast cancer rate can be reduced by 30 percent, which for us is huge.”

That’s why Luttrell, understanding the lifestyles of today’s woman, has expanded the center’s hours of operation and offers appointments on Saturday.

“A lot of women have jobs and kids to take to schools and just find it difficult to take time out in the middle of the week to stop and have a mammogram,” Luttrell said.

Luttrell also has been instrumental in the ongoing growth of EJGH’s Cancer Navigator Program, which helps cancer patients coordinate treatment schedules, offers support groups and assists patients in all aspects of their care.

“The nurse navigators follow the patients that have been diagnosed with breast cancer from the time of their diagnosis to their treatments to their recovery,” Luttrell said.

The program has proven so successful that EJGH now has site-specific navigators concentrating on patients with breast, lung, prostate and colon cancers.

“Through early detection and care we can make a difference,” she said. “And I just feel fortunate to be a part of that.”•

— Garry Boulard

Debbie Maniglia

Title: Intralox global customer service and commercial operations manager

Age: 60

Family: husband, Carlo; children, Angela, 35, Philip, 32

Education: bachelor's degree in business management, University of Phoenix

Always put the customer first and hire people who are smarter than you. These are Debbie Maniglia's golden rules of being an effective customer service manager.

She should know, with more than 30 years as a manager in customer service. Maniglia works as the global customer service and commercial operations manager at Intralox, an international manufacturer of modular plastic conveyor belt products, related services and solutions.

Maniglia oversees 130 employees who speak a combined 15 languages to help customers around the world. She keeps tabs on workers at Intralox headquarters in Harahan, the Europe-Middle East-Africa regional office in Amsterdam and the Asia-Pacific office in Shanghai.

Maniglia started at Intralox in 1981 as a customer service representative. The company had just two staff members in the department and annual revenues of \$4 million. It took just one year for Maniglia to join the management team and be put in charge of customer service.

By 1990, she became global customer service manager. There were 20 customer service representatives and revenues were \$25 million. Since then, those numbers have grown to more than \$300 million and 80 representatives, plus another 20 technical support engineers who service more than 60,000 customers worldwide.

"All positions I have ever held are focused on customer service, and I have always been passionate about customer service as a career," Maniglia said. "We are in the business of helping people be successful, and our commitment to customers is to improve customer effectiveness and minimize customer downtime."

Maniglia and her team developed customer service systems and processes that allow Intralox to turn around 99 percent of quotes and orders within the same business day and deliver 99.6 percent of orders accurately.

In 2000, Intralox implemented industry specialization in its customer service department. Call routing technology uses industry-specific toll free phone numbers to increase knowledge, expertise and customer familiarity.

In the community, Maniglia worked with her husband, Carlo, when he was a Kiwanis member volunteering at Metairie Manor with the elderly and supporting abused and abandoned children through the Methodist Home. She also took a child home to her family for the holidays.

When Maniglia hears of others' needs, such as people without coats at Ozanam Inn, she acts to meet them.

She and Carlo have worked on Notre Dame Seminary's gala and auction committee, for which she served as chairwoman in 2010.

"My husband taught me the ropes of community service and he taught me that you have to give back to the community," she said. "It means a lot when you can do something special together like that."•

— Tommy Santora





Rhonda McMillan

Title: Liberty Bank and Trust senior vice president and chief credit officer

Age: 41

Family: husband, Brian; daughter, Rayne Alexa, 7

Education: bachelor's degree in accounting, Southern University; master's degree in business administration, Clark Atlanta University

Rhonda McMillan would tell you she's an ordinary woman. Her peers would tell you she's being modest.

The Chicago native is involved in the children's ministry of her church, devoted to her husband and daughter and has distinguished herself in the banking industry with nearly 15 years in the credit and finance sector.

"I feel like I'm regular," McMillan said. "This is what I do. I'm a regular person and I like helping other people. The joy to me is helping other people but not getting recognition. I just do my job."

McMillan worked at IBM in its human capital development department after graduation before serving as the merchandise manager for Walt Disney World Parks. She went on to oversee literacy programs for community-based organizations in Chicago.

"My mom was a teacher and my dad was the executive director for the YMCA in Chicago, so I grew up knowing that helping people is, or at least should be, a big part of life," McMillan said.

She then worked for Comerica Bank in Dallas as a senior credit analyst and later for Guaranty Bank, also in Dallas.

It was at Guaranty, where she began as a senior credit analyst, that she rose to become vice president of the credit department.

But she "quit everything" to get married and start a family, McMillan said.

"I met the man of my dreams and dropped everything, got married and moved to a new city, New Orleans, and had a baby," she said. "And not a year later Hurricane Katrina happened."

While raising a daughter in a rebuilding city, McMillan felt the bug to return to work and began seeking out employment at area banks.

"I applied to different places but I heard I was overqualified a lot. Then Liberty Bank took a chance on a young girl new to New Orleans, and it was up to me to prove myself."

She joined the bank as vice president of credit administration and within two years became senior credit officer handling loan portfolios.

She also managed the loan administration process for the Liberty Fast Track Road Home project, which helped more than 200 people receive money to rebuild their homes after Katrina.

"I think the biggest thing for me is that when come into banking as a woman and get into this position, you're constantly fighting the 'little girl' factor," McMillan said. "I was right out of grad school when I jumped into banking and I have to say, it's a challenge to be a woman in this industry, be smart and to let that show without being a fire-spitting demon that people might think you are." •

— Kyle Jackson

Peggy Mendoza

Title: City Year New Orleans executive director

Age: 43

Family: husband, Rene; children, Christopher and Alessandro

Education: bachelor's degree in political science, Tulane University

Peggy Mendoza oversees a local staff of eight as executive director for City Year New Orleans, a national organization employing 17- to 24-year olds for a year of service in city schools.

Her job involves recruiting, training and working with staff to plan programs for every school day with the help of the City Year advisory board

“Our goal is to support students and keep them on track to graduate,” Mendoza said. “In a typical week, I’m working in and outside of the office, trying to make the most of every minute.”

Mendoza started at City Year Louisiana in 2008 with 60 corps members. There are now 72 participants in the state, with 31 in New Orleans, which split from Baton Rouge in 2010 to concentrate more on the city.

“It allows me to focus on New Orleans ... to do that we need to have members in the schools with the biggest dropout rates, and the biggest culprits are in New Orleans. But there’s a lot of possibility.”

Under Mendoza’s direction, members in the New Orleans division boost school attendance, raise English and math performance scores, and help students with behavior problems. The graduation rate at Walter L. Cohen High School, which employs CityYear participants, jumped from 33 percent in 2006 to 96 percent in 2010.

Her recruiting has helped place more City Year volunteers into schools and expanded the program’s partnership with the Recovery School District to lower its dropout rate.

“Just about everything we need to do to improve the city — from generating jobs and higher incomes to reducing crime — hinges on the quality of our educational system,” Mendoza said.

Outside of CityYear, Mendoza has worked with T-Mobile’s Huddle Up Program, aimed mostly at children from single-parent families, and with battered women’s shelters in New Orleans and Mexico City.

She’s a board member of the Jefferson Chamber Foundation Academy in Harvey and has served on Mayor Mitch Landrieu’s Youth and Families Task Force.

Mendoza was born in New York to Honduran immigrants. Her parents and siblings have been engaged in nonprofit work and community service, so she considers it a family tradition.

“I’m a first-generation American. My husband’s from Honduras, and heritage and family are very important to me,” she said.

She’s involved in the Honduran American Emergency Fund, which her mother and friends started in response to Hurricane Mitch, which devastated the Latin American country in 1998, to build medical clinics and schools in rural parts of the country. •

— Susan Buchanan





Rebecca Metzinger

Title: Southeast Louisiana Veterans Healthcare System chief of ophthalmology; Tulane University School of Medicine associate professor of ophthalmology

Age: 40

Family: husband, Stephen; children, Fritz, 19, Cameron, 8, Pete, 5

Education: bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences and doctor of medicine, University of Michigan

Dr. Rebecca Metzinger has developed the ophthalmology training program at the Veterans Affairs Hospital into one of the top 25 of its kind in the country as recognized by Harvard University. She teaches at Tulane University School of Medicine and performs a vast amount of research with stem cells to treat various eye diseases.

But none of that is her first priority, which is reserved for her three children and her husband.

Metzinger has always been a family person. In fact, she said part of her passion for ophthalmology comes from her grandfather, a veteran who suffered with severe macular degeneration and eventually lost his sight.

"He was an attorney who did The New York Times crossword puzzle every day, and when he couldn't do the things he loved anymore, he kind of gave up," she said.

There was no treatment at the time, but Metzinger's interest and research is in finding cures for eye diseases that have long been considered untreatable.

"My interest is in working with stem cells to treat various severe eye diseases and put together a model to see if stem cells can help those with alkali chemical burns to their eyes," Metzinger said, adding that this particular type of burn is currently not treatable.

Her research is on adipose derived stem cells for orbital and corneal injuries, and it could change current treatment protocols.

But Metzinger's interest with the eye goes even further. She said there are many health problems that can be diagnosed from the eye such as diabetes, leprosy and various autoimmune diseases.

Her work led to her recent selection for a national leadership program within the Veterans Healthcare Administration. That was after she came out of semi-retirement to help the VA Hospital's ophthalmology department become one of the best in the nation.

Metzinger has also been asked to serve on the faculty for an annual ophthalmology course at Harvard.

Outside of medicine, she volunteers at her children's schools — Jesuit High School, St. George's Episcopal School and Louise McGeehee School — and works with the Junior League of New Orleans and the Women's Opera Guild. •

— *Travis Andrews*

Anna Monhartova

Title: A's & Aces president; Tulane University Law School Payson Center for International Development instructor

Age: 33

Family: single

Education: bachelor's degree in political science and Russian; Ph.D. in international development, Tulane University

Growing up in then-communist Czechoslovakia, Anna Monhartova says she didn't see the social and economic castes of capitalism until she came to Tulane University on a tennis scholarship.

"Why do I see all the nice homes and great schools around Uptown, and why do I go somewhere else and see a different picture?" she asked. "That's a very profound disparity."

Disturbed by the inequalities and the dearth of opportunities available to disadvantaged public school children, she's using her gifts as a tennis player and college instructor to make a difference in the lives of hundreds of area youths.

"When you have the ability to help, you do it. It's a social responsibility," she said. "I like to take on challenges and see what can be accomplished."

Monhartova co-founded A's and Aces, a nonprofit outreach for area public school children, in 2008. She uses tennis as a tool to teach them life skills and encourage integrity and academic excellence. Here on a work visa, she joined forces with David Schumacher, a U.S. citizen who shares her dream.

"We started with nothing," she said, "not seed money or permanent tennis courts."

Instead, she taught the children using Quick Start tennis courts with portable nets. Today, she reaches 500 children annually through partnerships with several area universities and groups such as the United Way.

Monhartova doesn't buy into the notion that disadvantaged children simply aren't interested in certain sports and hobbies that attract the more affluent.

"(If) children don't play tennis in the 9th Ward, it's because they don't have access to it," she said. "The solution is to expose them (to tennis) and provide them with choices."

A Tulane University Athletic Hall of Fame member and Conference USA Women's Tennis Player of the Decade, Monhartova said she would love to play tennis professionally but doesn't have time. She teaches full-time at the Payson Center for International Development at Tulane University Law School, using that platform to teach social responsibility through service learning classes.

She spends the rest of her time with A's & Aces, maintaining the nonprofit's website, writing and managing grants, and overseeing human resources for the outreach that has four full-time paid staff and more than 100 volunteers a year.

Monhartova sees A's & Aces as a viable model for other communities and hopes to inspire others to conduct similar initiatives to address other societal ills.

"I intend to finish what I started," she said. •

— Diana Chandler





Pauline Patterson

Title: Finn McCool's Irish Pub co-owner

Age: 44

Family: husband, Stephen

Education: art degree, University of Ulster, Belfast, Ireland; postgraduate degree in education, University of Ulster in Jordanstown, Ireland

Football or fútbol. Either way is acceptable to Pauline Patterson as long as you're watching the game on the big screen at Finn McCool's Irish Pub, the Mid-City neighborhood bar she and her husband, Stephen, own.

And when the game's not on, it's trivia night, pool and darts, Scrabble and board games, drunken spelling bees or customer cook-offs for the winning-prize, a Golden Druids sculpture, a ceramic piece constructed by Patterson.

She's taken the bar to a new level, a community center of sorts.

"We like to think every day is a party here, and I'm always facilitating some kind of idea that we came up with for the bar and our community," said Patterson, who opened Finn McCool's with her husband in 2002.

"I wake up with attitude and gratitude for doing what we do. We bring smiles to people's faces. They feel like they're a part of a community, and they feel like they're at home amongst friends and family."

Most of it, though, is fun with a purpose.

Patterson regularly holds fundraisers for various New Orleans organizations. A Christmas karaoke fundraiser was held for Toys for Tots. Finn's was one of the headquarters for St. Baldrick's Day, where patrons raised money to fight children's cancer by shaving their heads.

New Orleans Saints coach Sean Payton was a guest at trivia night and raised money for his charity, Payton's Play it Forward Foundation.

Patterson has also held raffles and events to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network.

She serves as secretary of Irish Network New Orleans, a group of Irish Americans living in the city who network through cultural and philanthropic events. The group is working to bring an Irish film and music festival to New Orleans next year.

"It's a way for young professionals in the Irish community to come together and network with each other," she said, "for them to realize the opportunities available to them and live their own dream in our community."

Born in Northern Ireland, Pauline and Stephen moved to New Orleans in 1990. She attributes their move to the influence of Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire" and the book's depiction of New Orleans.

"The culture of New Orleans, with its love of food, music and family, really welcomed us and reminded us of home in Belfast," she said.

In 2002, they bought a worn-out old bar on Banks Street and turned it into Finn McCool's.

"When you live in Ireland, you often dream of opening a pub or a bar, and so we did it," she said. •

— Tommy Santora

Rachel Piercey

Title: The Pro Bono Project executive director

Age: 58

Family: son, Sean, 29

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

Rachel Piercey has guided The Pro Bono Project's growth and evolution from the ground up since the Louisiana Bar Foundation started the organization in 1986 and named her executive director.

The New Orleans-based volunteer lawyers agency provides free legal services to indigent south Louisiana citizens. Its estimated 1,800 rotating volunteer lawyers handle about 1,400 cases each year to resolve legal issues related to housing, family matters, employment, insurance and succession.

"You definitely see the impact you're making," she said. "For many of our clients, we're the last stop on the train. I like to think that we help mend lives and get people back on track."

Clients are not the only ones who benefit from the program's presence. Piercey said she enjoys seeing the positive impact working with clients has on volunteers.

"It reconnects lawyers with what they went to school for," she said. "After they've completed a case and see the difference that it made, they're hooked."

The Pro Bono Project relies heavily on volunteers and financial donations to fulfill its mission. For Piercey, securing the two is an ongoing challenge, and community need often exceeds available resources.

From day one, however, coworkers and volunteers say her work ethic, tenacity and ability to solve problems has kept the agency going.

The nonprofit lost many of its volunteers, funding and clients after Hurricane Katrina. In the following years, Piercey reached out to law students, schools and other legal professionals throughout the country, promoting The Pro Bono Project as a legal learning ground and attracting much needed manpower and funds.

Implementing innovative programs reshaped the agency and enhanced its ability to address the area's evolving legal needs.

"One of my best skills is my resourcefulness," Piercey said. "You have to be creative to resolve problems. That's how I direct the organization and how I encourage volunteers to approach each situation."

In recognition of her contributions to the legal field, the Young Leadership Council named Piercey a 2011 Role Model. In 2008, she received the Liberty Bell Award from the New Orleans Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section, which recognizes someone outside the law profession who works for good government and promotes respect for the law and courts.

Piercey's passion and insight stem from her past experience in social work. Before starting with The Pro Bono Project, she managed social programs for the Office of Family Services at Catholic Charities and the St. Vincent's Parenting Resource Center.

"As we say in social work, I was down in the street knocking on doors," she said. "I developed a great deal of respect for the resourcefulness my clients have."•

— Tamara Moffett





Lisa Plunkett

Title: Susan G. Komen New Orleans executive director

Age: 44

Family: husband, Lawrence; daughters, Tucker, 17, Analise, 6

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

Lisa Plunkett often thinks about close friends, her mother-in-law and two unrelated sisters-in-law who died of breast cancer.

"It's horrible to lose someone, and it's horrible that we still have to deal with breast cancer deaths," said Plunkett, executive director of the Susan G. Komen organization's New Orleans chapter. "At the end of the day, I know that what we're doing makes a difference."

True to the Komen mission, Plunkett works not only for those fighting to overcome the disease but also for those who have lost the battle.

During her tenure as executive director of the New Orleans affiliate, which started in 2000, participation in the Race for the Cure has quadrupled from 2,000 to almost 12,000, leading to a nearly 200 percent increase in revenue.

The goal of the local Race for the Cure is to keep 75 percent of the money raised in the New Orleans area. The local chapter has granted nearly \$2 million in the past 11 years to help women and their families with breast cancer prevention, treatment and education.

The organization announced in April it was awarding \$500,000 in grants to support breast cancer screening, treatment and educational programs for under- and uninsured patients at Louisiana State University School of Public Health, the St. Thomas Community Center, the Leonard C. Thomas HOS Foundation, West Jefferson Medical Center, St. Charles Community Health Center and the Cancer Association of Greater New Orleans.

Plunkett's office is filled with pink, the official color of the Komen effort to raise breast cancer awareness. Board members know to expect emails from her in the wee hours of the morning as October and the annual Race for the Cure approaches.

"It's a passion because the people I work with are all volunteers," she said. "It's fulfilling to help them volunteer in the community."

Plunkett said she thinks of herself as a background worker and ensures the volunteers are the face of the organization.

She's also active in the community as a founding member of the Metropolitan Women's Republican Club and has served on its board of directors for two years.

Her efforts have not gone unnoticed by her youngest child, Analise, 6.

"My daughter says when she grows up, she wants to Run the Race for the Cure. I say, 'No baby, you want to be a doctor or a cancer researcher.'" •

— L. Kasimu Harris

Rita Reed

Title: FFC Capital Management chief financial officer and senior financial analyst

Age: 30

Family: single

Education: bachelor's degree in accounting, Xavier University; master's degree in business administration, University of Pennsylvania

Rita Reed understands the local economy and the way the rest of the world sees New Orleans.

"I also understand what it means to be sophisticated in a global economy," she said.

As chief financial officer and senior financial analyst at FFC Capital Management, Reed focuses on keeping urban entrepreneurs and business owners fiscally robust. Her goal is to launch an urban business incubator and investment fund to provide opportunities for growth-stage urban and minority-owned businesses along the Gulf Coast.

Reed has nearly 10 years of experience in asset and financial management, as well as strategic and financial counseling. At FCC, she's involved in the development, execution and supervision of enterprise-level strategic plans, optimization of company finances and oversight of the company's team of analysts dedicated to client portfolios.

Reed said while she's accomplished quite a bit in her career already, she thinks her next accomplishment — driving the urban economy — will be her big accomplishment.

"I've always performed at a high level. I think all of that is preparing me for the next level, which is the fund and being in a position to develop businesses and bring money to the table in this economy," Reid said.

To help create the fund, she sits on the board of the Hume Child Development Center and Pride College Prep.

"My involvement in these (organizations) is altruistic but also self-serving," Reed said. "If you don't get the critical skills in the ability to read and think critically and you don't perform math at an early age, it limits you later in life. If we're going to build an urban investment fund, we need employees. We need a smarter work force."

When she's not crunching numbers to assist businesses in need, Reed serves as commissioner of Bi-Coastal Trash Talkers, a fantasy football league with 12 teams. Her team name: "Don't Call on Sunday."

Reed said she uses her everyday skills in drafting her team.

"I'm a numbers person, so I base (my team) on that," she said. "I look for skill producers who have been dependable in the past. You have to watch a lot of football."

While she takes a conservative approach in finance, Reed said she has an open mind and appreciation for life.

"I live and breathe business development," she said, "but I always take out time for fun."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora





Two-time Honoree

Patty Riddlebarger

Title: Entergy Corp. director of corporate social responsibility

Age: 48

Family: husband, Phil; sons, Matthew, 15, Joshua, 14

Education: bachelor's degree in journalism, University of Texas; master's degree in business administration, Tulane University

Patty Riddlebarger's career is best described as a puzzle that's fitting together perfectly.

She's the director of corporate social responsibility for Entergy Corp. Her time with Entergy started in 2000 as a communications manager in Texas before she moved to her current position in New Orleans in 2003. Before that, she was communications director for a Houston-based health care system that included 13 hospitals.

"All of the pieces of my career along the way led me here, although I wouldn't have thought it looking back 20 years ago," she said. "Everything just kind of fit together."

She oversees volunteer efforts among the company's 15,000 employees throughout the country and manages Entergy's philanthropic efforts, such as the donation of more than \$17 million to more than 3,000 various nonprofits in several states, with at least \$4.1 million devoted to New Orleans-area nonprofits.

Within 48 hours after Hurricane Katrina hit, Riddlebarger launched the Power of Hope Fund that raised \$4.2 million to provide grants to help more than 4,000 people and 67 nonprofits.

"It's been amazing to be part of the city's revitalization and re-birth," she said. "It started by chance but became a passion because you really get to see the impact."

Riddlebarger said she couldn't be more pleased with the work she does, and others have noticed her effort. Corporate Responsibility Magazine recently named Entergy to its list of the top 100 corporate citizens.

The credit goes to Entergy's "tremendously generous" employees, Riddlebarger said, who logged more than 53,000 volunteer service hours last year, according to Independent Sector, a coalition of nonprofits, foundations and corporate giving programs.

Riddlebarger has recently led the Entergy's Power to Care campaign, which aims to feed the hungry. As part of Hunger Action Month in October, Entergy shareholders donate \$2.50 to the Second Harvest Food Bank for every "like" on the effort's Facebook page.

As of mid-October, the campaign had raised enough money for 10,000 meals with the goal to reach 20,000.

Riddlebarger has also served as vice chairwoman of the United Way of Greater New Orleans' Women's Leadership Initiative and Campaign Cabinet. She's also spent time on LatinoLA's executive committee and was an advisory board member for Tulane University's Institute for the Study of Race and Poverty. •

— Travis Andrews

Cheryl Rodrigue

Title: New Orleans Tours, Destination Management Inc. and New Orleans Paddlewheels director of sales

Age: 61

Family: divorced; children, Mark, 32, Gia, 30

Education: bachelor's degree in business administration, Loyola University

Cheryl Rodrigue says she was stubborn before she entered the world, proven by the fact that her mother, Gerry, went into labor on April 1, thinking she would have an April Fools Day delivery.

Rodrigue was born 13 hours later the next day.

"I'm as stubborn now as I was then," she said. "I usually do the opposite of what people want me to do. It usually turns out right."

Before assuming her current role as director of sales for New Orleans Tours, Destination Management Inc. and New Orleans Paddlewheels, Rodrigue's road to her dream job of creating priceless memories for vacationers in New Orleans began with seven years in retail as a buyer for D.H. Holmes.

Her motivation was born during childhood buying trips to New York with her mother and their neighbor and Holmes employee Augustine McMahon. Years later, after leaving D.H. Holmes to stay home and raise her children, she received a call from Warren Reuther to work in reservations for Airport Shuttle and moved up from there.

"I think I've come far, from running a reservations department . . . to becoming director of sales for so many of our companies," Rodrigue said.

Despite working in a recovering economy, Rodrigue wants to double the travel company group's bottom lines to include raises for all employees.

"I want to be able to say, 'Yes, we did it,'" she said. "I would like to create new and innovative ways to bring tourists into our beautiful city."

Much of Rodrigue's life is centered on improving the lives of others, which shows through her work at Jesuit Boys Hope, the Fore Kids Foundation and Cancer Crusaders.

"My motivation is simply that I am blessed with a wonderful family and friends and also my health," she said. "I want to be able to make it a better life for those who have none of the above. Seeing a smile from someone in need that you just helped is something that money can't buy."

Recently, she said, she saw a homeless man begging for a drink outside a Burger King restaurant but realized a deeper need.

"He wanted to be proud enough to be able to sit down with other people and have a meal," she said. "I not only bought him a drink, I bought him a meal."•

—Diana Chandler





Elizabeth Roussel

Title: Adams and Reese partner

Age: 34

Family: husband, John; children, Sophie, 5, Blair, 3

Education: bachelor's degree in political science, University of North Carolina; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

In January 2009, attorney Elizabeth Roussel's record of wins and commitment to community service earned her a position as partner at law firm Adams and Reese.

"I'm very proud of making partner and of being deemed worthy of that recognition," Roussel said. "I feel I've been given a great opportunity to advance and show my abilities."

Roussel specializes in labor and employment litigation, commercial litigation and officer liability claims litigation. She represents employers involved in contract disputes and handles claims for injunctive relief. She also advises employers and nonprofit boards regarding statutory compliance and corporate governance.

Since starting with Adams and Reese in 2002, Roussel has worked and won many major cases. In February, her team scored a seven-figure judgment in a breach of contract case before a jury. In May 2009, she and her team spent six months preparing a defense case for their client, Bruce Foods, against fraud allegations. The plaintiff, who was seeking \$24 million in damages, had to pay a \$1.1 million counterclaim for breach of contract.

"Approaching legal problems with honest, objective evaluations and acting in a professional manner has enhanced my credibility with the attorneys and courts, and that translates to just results," she said.

Roussel hopes her work helping managers and nonprofit boards conduct business more efficiently impacts the local economy in a positive way.

"I'm optimistic that more and more companies will recognize the benefits of doing business in this part of the country," she said. "I hope that will mean economic growth and a good market for the legal community."

Roussel also works to improve the community outside of the courtroom. She helps obtain financial and community support as chairwoman of the board for the Children's Bureau of New Orleans, a nonprofit that provides mental health counseling and other services to area children and families in need.

Roussel supports the organization through her firm's community outreach Hope, Understanding, Giving and Support (HUGS) program.

She said she feels strongly about the importance of engaging in volunteer and pro bono work, which helped her earn the Adams and Reese Pro Bono Volunteer of the Year Award this year.

"I think all lawyers have an obligation to use the skills we're lucky enough to have to give back and help people who don't have the resources," she said. "I think that going above and beyond just providing legal services to paying clients is something that I've been recognized for here." •

— Tamara Moffet

Norma Jane Sabiston

Title: Sabiston Consultants president and founder

Age: 56

Family: single

Education: bachelor's degree in political science, University of New Orleans

It was 1973 when Norma Jane Sabiston, a senior at Abramson High School, was on a school bus headed to Natchitoches for the Louisiana Youth Seminar, a summer leadership camp for high school students. On the six-hour trip, she became acquainted with Mary Landrieu.

The two girls formed a friendship, which 23 years later blossomed into a political tag team that catapulted their careers.

Landrieu chose the visible side of politics, being elected Louisiana state representative and state treasurer.

Sabiston's political career was behind the scenes, working as field coordinator for President Jimmy Carter and Vice President Walter Mondale, state director for Gov. Michael Dukakis' presidential bid and state adviser to President Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996.

In 1996, Landrieu asked Sabiston to manage her Senate campaign.

"I knew it would be a tough election, but we were fearless. We locked arms and jumped into it together," she said. "It's the campaign I was most proud to be a part of."

Sabiston served as Landrieu's chief of staff in Washington, D.C., from 1996 to 2006, during which time she was instrumental in helping the senator secure Outer Continental Shelf revenue sharing for the Gulf Coast. She was also key in other legislative issues, primarily in the energy and environmental areas.

Sabiston returned to New Orleans in 2006 to work for public affairs and communications firm Marmillion and Co., where she represented the America's Wetland Campaign to Save Coastal Louisiana. Her work led her to help create Women of the Storm and Coast Guardians to advocate for funding to restore Louisiana's coastline and provide hurricane protection.

After more than two years at Marmillion, Sabiston formed her own public affairs and political consulting company, Sabiston Consultants, which she has run since 2009.

Sabiston has built her client list to include more than 20 entities, including the cities of New Orleans, Alexandria and Vidalia, the town of Lafitte, Houston-based offshore infrastructure company Cal Dive International, AT&T, HRI Properties, New Orleans Federal Alliance and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra.

"They depend on me to go to bat for them and get the funds they need or the issues they need resolved," Sabiston said. "I spend two weeks out the month at home hearing their issues, and then the other two weeks out of the month I'm in D.C., representing them."

Outside of the office, Sabiston serves on the advisory board of the Louisiana Youth Seminar, where she's a member of its Hall of Fame.

"It's a program that helped me get where I am, and it does some amazing things in terms of leadership for current and past members," she said. •

— Tommy Santora





Marci Schramm

Title: French Quarter Festivals Inc. executive director

Age: 41

Family: husband, Scott; daughter, Tallulah, 1

Education: associate degree in business, Siena College; bachelor's degree in business, Wayne State University

Marci Schramm says people often ask her during festivals how she doesn't get stressed out. Her response is simple.

"Everything is a problem and you just have to fix it," she said.

Schramm honed her calm temperament working in the opera industry for 15 years. During that time, she said she learned to own her mistakes and, more critically, raise money.

Her biggest challenge was saving an opera company in California on the brink of bankruptcy. It was her responsibility to sell tickets to a weary and distrustful fan base, and she succeeded by emphasizing the need to preserve the cultural outlet.

"A lot of people think some times think the arts are disposable, they're really not," she said. "They're a part of the cultural life of the city."

A friend from her opera network suggested Schramm, who was serving as executive director of the New Orleans Opera Association, take the same position with French Quarter Festivals Inc., which includes its namesake event, Satchmo Summerfest and Christmas New Orleans Style.

Her immediate goal after taking over in 2008 was to get the festival on sound financial footing. She lead the charge to land Capital One as the festival's first presenting sponsor and agreed to multiple year sponsorships with other companies, including Abita Brewing Co.

According to a University of New Orleans study, the French Quarter Festival has a \$316 million economic impact on the city, ranking third behind Mardi Gras, with a \$468 million impact in 2010, and the Super Bowl, which drew \$292 million when last held in New Orleans in 2002. The event is predicted to bring in between \$350 million and \$400 million in 2013.

"It started out as a local festival and now tourists have found out about it," Schramm said, adding that 500,000 people attended the four-day event earlier this year.

Her biggest challenge, she said, is to continue growing the festival while maintaining its appeal to locals.

Most of Schramm's volunteer pursuits are with French Quarter organizations, but she also speaks to students in Loyola University's arts administration program about the realities of her business.

"You would never think a festival could have such a noble cause," she said.

Her devotion to making sure the show runs smoothly was evident last year when she had her first child the week before Satchmo Festival. She returned to the office three days later to make sure her staff had the support they needed.

"I asked my husband if he could he come to work with me and hold the baby while I do some stuff," Schramm said, adding that she didn't take maternity leave until after the festival. "Everyone makes pregnancy so dramatic. ... That's probably why I'm good at this job — I don't freak out about things."•

— L. Kasimu Harris

Kelly Schulz

Title: New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau vice president of communications and public relations

Age: 37

Family: single

Education: bachelor's degrees in mass communications and psychology, Louisiana State University

New Orleans hosted the highest number of visitors it has had since Hurricane Katrina in 2010, bringing in 8.3 million tourists. Those guests spent more than \$5 billion, the highest tourist spending in the city's history.

As vice president of communications and public relations for the New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau, Kelly Schulz has played a role in bringing those visitors back to New Orleans.

"My job is to improve New Orleans' reputation and image," Schulz said, adding she is responsible for convincing visitors and decision-makers in the travel industry to choose New Orleans. "I get to be a voice for the tourism industry."

Schulz led the public relations campaign to preserve 70,000 local tourism jobs and address misperceptions of the city after Katrina and last summer's Gulf of Mexico oil spill. She said her primary targets are members of the media and local reporters, and her main focus is securing positive press coverage for New Orleans as a destination of choice.

"We've had a lot of challenges in terms of reputation and destination. Tourism is based on image and perception. A lot of visitors didn't realize New Orleans (was) 100 miles inland (from the oil spill). We had to dispel myths that were out there. All of those concerns are very much influenced by the national and international media."

The \$1 million public relations campaign Schulz led to save the tourism industry after the oil spill was named one of five national finalists for PRWeek Magazine's Crisis Management Campaign of the Year. The campaign was also one of 105 finalists selected from more than 800 entries for the Cannes Lions Awards for the International Festival of Creativity.

"With the combined marketing effort, New Orleans ended 2010 as the best year since Katrina," Schulz said. "We showed that because of our marketing campaign, the third quarter was off the charts."

Schulz was selected in 2010 as one of the "Top 25 Most Extraordinary Minds in Sales and Marketing" by the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International, an honor based on innovation, vision and achievement in hospitality sales and marketing.

"I was very honored to receive that because it was 25 of my peers around the country in the tourism industry," she said.

Schulz has often been invited to speak to other tourism professionals on how to perform effective public relations campaigns in the wake of disaster. •

— Whitney Pierce Santora





Helen Siegel

Title: Corporate Realty director of special projects

Age: 51

Family: partner, Missie McGurie

Education: bachelor's degree in English, Loyola University

Liquor shots and gambling are generally discouraged when it comes to the professional scene, but they helped launch Helen Siegel's career.

The Corporate Realty director of special projects, who also is active in the New Orleans nonprofit world, said she became a stockbroker by accident. She was enjoying shots at a bar with a woman who worked in human resources for brokerage firm Howard Weil Labouisse Friedrichs. Bonded by the experience, Siegel was offered a job in a world she said she never expected to work in but fell in love with.

"I'm a gambler at heart, so to me it was a safe, legal way to gamble," she said. "I got in there and just fell in love with it."

Siegel worked for Howard Weil for six years before breaking off and starting two brokerage firms of her own. In 1991, she joined Corporate Realty as director of special projects.

"My job is to make sure all the offices run smooth," said Siegel, who is responsible for property management, financial analysis for property sales and lease transactions, marketing and supervising all support personnel. "They keep me busy here, but I'm all behind the scenes. I'm kind of like the middle man; everyone comes to me and I make it happen."

Siegel said one of the best parts about working for Corporate Realty is the freedom she has to follow her other passion: philanthropic nonprofits.

In 1997, she co-founded Girls First, a nonprofit that provides inner-city girls opportunities in sports and exercise. Its goal is helping girls build self-confidence and lower the possibility of high-risk behavior, Siegel said.

"Every time we introduce them to something new, it gives them more confidence," she said.

Siegel is also co-chairwoman of the NO/AIDS Task Force board of directors and led the group's annual walk fundraiser, which raised \$1 million under her leadership.

She works with Gulf Coast Social Services, which helps people with mental, physical, behavioral and other challenges improve their quality of life and live independently.

Siegel also volunteers with the United Way of Greater New Orleans.

Sometimes, she said she gets to mix her professional and nonprofit career.

"Corporate Realty was a water-stop spot ... for the NO/AIDS Walk, so they donate some money for that, and I had a group of staff from different offices who manned the booth," she said. •

— *Travis Andrews*

Two-time Honoree

Kathryn Bankston Smith

Title: Advanced Imaging Solutions Inc. owner

Age: 55

Family: husband, Lynne; children, Brian, 37, Samuel, 31, Kevin, 34, Summer, 28

Education: Tara High School graduate

Mesmerizing is rarely used to describe digital document storage systems, but for Kathryn Bankston Smith, it describes her opinion of such a device that drew her to the field of records management 20 years ago.

“I was mesmerized by it and knew immediately this was going to have a major business impact on the way people stored and retrieved their documents,” she said.

Smith, who was selling copiers for Associated Business Equipment at the time, tracked down the local dealer for the device and asked for a job. She proceeded to become one of the company’s top 5 percent sales representatives in the country and eventually a dealer herself.

“My success was founded in my belief in this technology and the future of this technology,” she said.

Today, Smith operates her own imaging and documents management company, Advanced Imaging Solutions, with offices in Metairie and Baton Rouge, dividing her time between the two cities.

Business is only one of Smith’s talents. She’s also a folk artist, inventor, writer, inner-city ministry volunteer and champion for retired and homeless veterans. Never once in her adult life, she said, has she passed a person asking for money on the street without giving a dollar.

The wife, daughter and granddaughter of military veterans started the nonprofit Beads for the Brave, creating artwork for auctions to help homeless veterans. Her artistic medium is the beads she and her family collect from Carnival parades and store in their attic.

She has already created canvasses representing several crews and is in the process of launching her website and identifying beneficiaries for the inaugural auction.

“A doctor friend has already offered me \$1,000 for Bacchus,” she said. “I’ve told him he has to bid like the rest.”

She hopes the auction provides money to pay for housing, employment assistance, drug abuse rehabilitation and spiritual counseling.

An occasional writer, she self-published a Southern cookbook in 1999 and is working on a second one and a novel. •

— Diana Chandler





Susan Talley

Title: Stone Pigman Walther Whittman attorney

Age: 54

Family: husband, James; son, George, 23

Education: bachelor's degree in education, Louisiana State University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Susan Talley's work in real estate development, leasing, financing, purchasing and sales helps fuel and facilitate New Orleans-area rebuilding efforts and economic expansion.

Coming from a family of small business owners, Talley understands the economic impact major commercial real estate transactions have on cities.

"You can't have a city without real estate development," she said. "It's important for bringing in business and for the growth of the economy."

During her 30-year tenure at Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann, Talley has worked on economy-boosting commercial and industrial real estate development projects throughout the state. In October 2010, the group Commercial Real Estate Women awarded Talley the Economic Improvement Impact Award for her work on the Benson Tower and Champions Square project.

Talley's team handled the web of contract negotiations for the acquisition and financing of the former Dominion Tower and New Orleans Centre. The negotiations led to the New Orleans Saints extending their lease through 2025 and helped the city win its bid to host the 2013 Super Bowl.

Talley said the multiplicity of parties and property interests involved made the Benson Tower and Champions Square projects especially challenging.

When dealing with complex cases, she said she relies on patience, diligence and ingenuity to generate creative legal solutions.

"In my practice area, I get to see the end product," she said. "I get to actually see the buildings built, renovated or put to new uses."

Along with her main law practice, Talley also supervises, mentors and trains young lawyers as co-chairwoman of Stone Pigman's real estate practice group.

She speaks at legal trade organization events nationwide and writes for national publications and continuing legal education programs.

Talley serves as real property vice chairwoman of the American Bar Association's 25,000-member real property trust and estate law section.

She also devotes time to helping organizations outside of the legal arena. As co-chairwoman of the Mastersigners, the New Orleans Opera Association's major individual giving program, she helps host functions for major donors.

"Performing arts are important to a community for a number of reasons," she said. "It's enriching and we all learn something from being exposed to it. It's also important for attracting business to a community."•

— Tamara Moffett

T.J. Thom

Title: Energy Partners Ltd. senior vice president and chief financial officer

Age: 39

Family: husband, Michael; daughters, Olivia, 7, Anabelle, 3

Education: bachelor's degree in engineering, University of Illinois; master's degree in business administration, Tulane University

TJ. Thom had a very understanding husband on Valentine's Day this year when she had to work late.

Thom, senior vice president and chief financial officer of Energy Partners Ltd., was in the midst of finalizing a \$200 million contract for her company to acquire three complexes and field areas in the Gulf of Mexico that contained about 8 million barrels of oil. The transaction complemented EPL's existing reserve profile and increased its oil-producing reserve, Thom said.

To close the acquisition, EPL entered into a new \$250 million revolving credit facility with a syndicate of lenders and closed its previously announced offering of \$210 million aggregate principal amount of 8.25 percent senior notes due in 2018.

Sound technical? So does "enhanced liquidity," "cash on hand" and "debt metrics," but they are terms Thom deals with every day, and she says it's all about keeping a "pristine balance sheet."

"It's a very proud feeling to show your investors return on investment and to make your employees feel good about the job your company is doing, and that Anglo Suisse transaction at the beginning of the year was probably one of the most satisfying transactions I have been a part of since working at (EPL)," she said. "It took our company to a position of strength so that we can do well moving forward."

Thom began her career with EPL in 2000 as a senior asset management engineer. She worked her way to director of corporate reserves in 2001, followed by vice president, treasurer and investor relations in 2008.

In 2009, she was designated as the principal financial officer and appointed senior vice president. She was named senior vice president and chief financial officer in June 2010.

In her first year as principal financial officer, Thom helped EPL emerge from bankruptcy, a process that took just four months from filing in May 2009 to solvency in September 2009.

Thom has more than 15 years of energy industry experience, working with ExxonMobil for eight years as a senior project reservoir engineer and completions engineer.

Outside of EPL, Thom has been a board member with the Bureau of Governmental Research, which studies government policies, finance, management and administration issues and relates those issues to the public.

"I want to be a part of change and involved in issues that affect the community," Thom said. "These are call-to-action items that make a difference in our city."•

— Tommy Santora





Jacqui Vines

Title: Cox Louisiana senior vice president and general manager

Age: 52

Family: daughters, Breyanna, 10, Maya, 9, Raven, 7

Education: bachelor's degree in business administration and management, University of Redlands

Jacqui Vines was 40 when she graduated from college. It wasn't indolence but because opportunity was always knocking on her door with a moving truck parked outside.

Her career at Cox Communications began 30 years ago as a receptionist, and her career growth took her across the country with stops in Ohio, Milwaukee, California and Louisiana.

"I'll always get older and could get the degree, but I won't always have the (job) opportunity," she said she told herself.

She now leads Cox Communications of Louisiana, which was previously a three-person job, as senior vice president and general manager.

In 2006, Vines led the merger of the six-parish Acadiana region and the Baton Rouge market to form Cox Greater Louisiana. She then merged the New Orleans market into the fold in 2009 to create Cox Louisiana, now the company's fourth largest market. It includes 18 parishes, more than 1,600 employees with a combined \$140 million payroll.

Vines said she didn't always aspire to run a company and in the beginning, her only professional influence was a television character.

"I visualized myself as Mary Tyler Moore and became Lou Grant," Vines said.

Her experience during the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks led to another important move. She was in Atlanta, deeply engaged in preparing the company's budget, when the second plane crashed into the World Trade Center. Her colleagues rushed to call loved ones, but she had no one to contact.

On the drive back to Louisiana, she remembers thinking, "What's my legacy? A great cable lady?"

Soon after, she raised two of her nieces for several years, which eventually led to her adopting three girls, all sisters.

"That's one of my proudest moments, overcoming the foster care system and then paying it forward," Vines said, adding that she was a part of Connecticut's foster care system as a teenager.

Vines is also active in the community, serving on a special commission of the Louisiana Board of Regents that's studying post secondary education and the efficiency of having multiple oversight panels.

In addition to serving as president of the Baton Rouge chapter of The Links Inc., one of the oldest black women's service organizations, she also created Cox's Benevolent Fund, established to help employees and their families in times of need.

"I tell my girls, 'Giving is not an option if you're a Vines.'"

— L. Kasimu Harris

Sharonda Williams

Title: City of New Orleans chief of litigation

Age: 39

Family: single

Education: bachelor's degree in biology, Xavier University; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law; doctor of medicine, University of North Carolina School of Medicine

Sharonda Williams was a cheerleader at Xavier University, but that's the extent of her dance background. Unless, of course, you count her performance with Rockin' with the NOLA Stars.

Williams, who left Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klein and Hilbert late last month to become chief of litigation for the city of New Orleans, participated in the local version of "Dancing with the Stars" which raised money for Bridge House/Grace House.

In addition to serving as a fundraising committee member, she's also president of the board of directors for Bridge House/Grace House. Having been on the board since 2004, Williams decided early in her career she wanted to work with the organization that helps people recover from substance abuse.

"I wanted to put myself in the nonprofit world so I could focus on the community," Williams said. "Drug and alcohol abuse is something that affects so many people in our community."

She has also been instrumental in fundraising for programs that help women, such as the Feminists Women Health Center and the Domestic Violence Victims program, and children, including the Truancy Intervention Program.

Williams said Bridge House/Grace House provides its clients with jobs as a part of treatment and teaches them how to work again. The nonprofit provides a holistic approach to substance abuse rehabilitation but also deals with the medical aspects. Williams, who graduated from the University of North Carolina School of Medicine, wanted to work with a nonprofit that would give her a connection to medicine.

"My parents for a long time asked me when I was going to do a (medical) residency," Williams said, joking. "I sincerely believe people who practice medicine sincerely love it, and I didn't love it. I have passion for the law, for the spirit of the law and the reasoning of the law and the concept of the law being at the core of how our country works."

As an attorney, Williams is satisfied when her clients are satisfied.

"I really enjoy when a case comes to an end, and it has a conclusion that was really the right one," Williams said. "I think that to make this system work, people have to find some way to seek recourse when they have been wronged or defend themselves when they've been wrongly accused."

Williams' achievements to date are just a start, she said.

"I think that there's so much more to do. The biggest accomplishment is yet to come."•

— Whitney Pierce Santora





Bonnie Wyllie

Title: LaPorte vice president of tax consulting services

Age: 57

Family: husband, John; sons, Bill, 26, Thomas, 24

Education: bachelor's degrees in biology and music, Tulane University; juris doctor, Loyola University College of Law; master's degree in tax law, Georgetown Law Center

Work is more than just a job for Bonnie Wyllie. It's a mission. As vice president of tax consulting services at LaPorte CPAs and Business Advisors, she's responsible for the niche of the tax department that services nonprofit clients.

"I help organizations improve their performance, and that's my way of making them more effective in the community," Wyllie said.

Wyllie, who joined LaPorte in 2005, said the nonprofit sector is a satisfying way to use her law background, adding that she was drawn to tax work because it allowed her to mix her natural ability at arithmetic with her knowledge of the law.

"I like numbers and I like working with puzzles, so that's basically what I do," she said. "I tell people I'm a professional guardian angel. I take problems and solve them, and I help people steer through some pretty difficult statutory situations."

Wyllie's profession allows her to do what she enjoys personally: helping New Orleans-area organizations that make a positive impact in the community.

When the Internal Revenue Service announced a new tax reporting procedure in 2007, she launched a series of training seminars and developed guides for nonprofits to take the necessary preparations to comply with the new regulations. She teamed up with the United Way to help their partner agencies with compliance and held 16 seminars throughout the state.

Though she said couldn't detail her work for legal reasons, her clients span every type of philanthropic institute.

"It covers so many different things in the community — health care, schools, so many facets of life in the community — so to me it's very rewarding to be able to work in all these different areas."

She has also helped local nonprofits by developing the framework for management training manuals and built a database of private foundation contacts to help them with fundraising.

Wyllie said she also tries to teach others in the firm the importance of working with the community.

"I teach the younger people who are coming up to have concern for our community and to help in whatever way you can," she said. "Just because you're working in a firm doesn't mean you have to turn your back on the community. There's much that you can do and should do."•

— Travis Andrews

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 2011 "Women of the Year" Honoree



ELIZABETH A. ROUSSEL
 2011 "Women of the Year" Honoree

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