

# 2018 Top 10 Outstanding Citizens

## **Cynthia Chauvin**



Cynthia is Executive Director of CASA Hancock County, which provides abused and neglected children with quality advocacy in the court system and secures a safe, permanent, and nurturing home for them by recruiting, training and supporting a diverse network of Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers. Cynthia has gone above and beyond the call of duty, creating a community wide outreach of volunteers to improve the quality of life for the children of Hancock County. A graduate of Leadership Hancock, she is involved in events, fundraisers and drives to benefit children and contributes greatly to the community through advocacy for abused and neglected children.

## **Janita Cole**



Janita Cole is known as an energetic “go getter”. If you have something important that needs to get done on time, within budget, she is the go to person you need on your team. Janita can be seen “on the ground” at the St. Rose Heritage Fair, where she served as chair for two years. She also works “behind the scenes” through the St. Rose Outreach and Recovery Group started after Katrina. Volunteers decided to keep this group in action as a way to continue to help those in need including victims of other disasters. After the floods in Louisiana, they put together a team to pay it forward. Together they sent truckloads of supplies to Baton Rouge and fed more than 1,500 people.

## **Jim Collins**



You never know when you will run in to Jim Collins. He volunteers his time as Executive Director of the Hancock County Food Pantry but you may also find him at the Hospital greeting patients or at Dunbar Village just visiting with the residents. This New Orleans native has called Bay St. Louis home for more than 50 years. He worked for 27 years as CEO of Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Louisiana and another 17 years working in marketing for Goodwill of South Mississippi before retiring in 2015. An avid member of the Rotary Club, Jim is now applying his leadership and financial skills for the Food Pantry, which has helped tens of thousands in need.

## **Bernie Cullen**



Bernie is known for leading by example and using her many talents to get things done wherever she sees a need. As co-chair of Relay for Life, she secured a new venue this year at the OLG Crab Fest grounds and helped make the annual fundraiser a great success. She is secretary on the board of Waveland's Ground Zero Museum, board secretary of The Arts Hancock County and serves on the boards of the Hancock County Library and its Foundation. She also serves on the Guild of the Bay St. Louis Little Theatre and is a founding member of Waveland's Beautification Committee. She is a skilled organizer and a quiet, caring leader who gets things done with ease and grace.

## **Rick Fayard**



Rick has been described as a true believer in the Bay-Waveland area and Hancock County community. He was a first responder during Hurricane Katrina who carried on his duties in spite of losing his own home and continued to support EMS responders in the county afterwards, all with the goal of helping the citizens of Hancock County. He has served the county for more than 20 years, helping with emergency management and hosting seminars and sessions to prepare the community to plan in advance of any disasters. A member of the Chamber Board of Directors, Rick has been instrumental in forging positive relationships between the business community and elected officials as chairman of the Hancock Chamber Governmental Relations Committee.

## **Ashley Mayley**



Ashley Mayley has committed her time and resources to many community organizations, committees and programs, demonstrating her passion for helping others. She serves on the board of the Rotary Club and is an active participant in numerous Rotary projects. This year she played host to a Rotary foreign exchange student from Russia. She organized and chaired the Hancock County Relay for Life in 2017 which raised more than \$50,000. She volunteers for the Adopt a Highway cleanup, the Coast Electric Glow Run committee and at Loaves and Fishes community kitchen. She is a graduate of Leadership Hancock and is pursuing a master's degree in business.

## **Karen Rice**



Karen Rice moved to Diamondhead after a successful 20-year teaching career. She heads up Keep Diamondhead Beautiful, an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, and also enjoys serving in leadership roles in organizations including the Diamondhead Community Church and the Krewe of Diamondhead. Keep Diamondhead Beautiful, through its dedicated volunteers and partners, has a long record of accomplishments, including the planting of close to 50 live oak trees throughout Diamondhead. The group has received the President's Circle award from Keep American Beautiful, recognizing exemplary performance in creating a clean, green and beautiful community. Karen and the team plan to complete more beautification projects this year and beyond.

## **Samantha (Sam) Walley**



Sam Walley is the owner of Comcepts, LLC, an independently owned company that serves the medical industry across the Mississippi Coast and nationwide with after-hours answering services, secure text messaging, nurse triage and medical transcription. Since moving to Bay St. Louis, Sam has become involved in many community organizations like The Krewe of the Mystic Seahorse where she reigned as queen to attract visitors to Old Town and help support local charities. As president of the Rotary Club, she has encouraged more participation in club activities and led successful fundraisers for local charities. A graduate of Leadership Hancock, she embodies what community volunteerism is all about through her authentic and unselfish spirit of giving.

## **Ed Wikoff**



Ed gives quietly and generously of his time to the community. He has been a Scout Master for six years because he believes scouting provides youth with an opportunity to provide service to others, build self-confidence, and reinforce ethical standards. Ed knows that these opportunities not only help them when they are young but also carry forward into their adult lives to improve the values by which they live. And, he practices what he preaches. A longtime member of the Bay St. Louis Historic Preservation Commission, when residents and new homeowners have questions concerning zoning and permitting processes, he goes above and beyond. He is there to provide them with additional help and consultation, sharing his experience and background as an architect.

## **Brian Wilemon**



Brian created the Bay Rats Marching Battery, a drumline for children which teaches them discipline, teamwork, performance skills and coordination. This drum line has become a coast-wide phenomenon. With very little resources, he searches out underused instruments and encourages donations, identifies performance venues, manages transportation and performs right alongside the Ratz and Mice. Brian demands dedication, good grades and attendance from the young performers, who are all from Hancock County. They practice and share their talents with the community, and the fruits of their labor - good grades, focus and diligence - will serve them, and everyone, well in the future.