

May 2024



THE LEAD Story



Dear Alumni,

'Wow' is all I can say! It feels great to **celebrate the good**, doesn't it?

Last month we honored community trustees Wade Barnes (LJ 1995), Debbie Buckland (LJ 2009), and Eric Mann (NLS 2012) at **Celebration 2024** and heard inspiring words from NextGen 2023 alumna Gabrielle and YLJ 2024 alumni Seila, Kinley, Esha, Sayan, and William at our annual Youth Leadership Jacksonville (YLJ) program fundraiser.

For those of you who could not make it, take a moment to watch the honoree video [here](#) and check out the event photo album [here](#).

A huge shout out to our many **event sponsors** and **LJ class challenge** participants - this was our most successful fundraiser to date. **Together, we raised more than \$183,950** in support of **Youth Leadership Jacksonville!**

Other exciting updates:

- We are preparing to launch our **new alumni directory** this July. All alumni will be asked to reset their password to log in into the new site. We will also test email communications through our Neon database instead of Constant Contact.
- We are excited to share information about our **new strategic plan**, and we will host various in-person and virtual meetings to share more broadly with you and include time for Q&A. We can't wait to get you involved!

- Lastly, we are finalizing our **LJ 2025** and **NextGen 2024** classes this week, which continue to be one of the most challenging parts of the job. We have so many talented and worthy candidates! The class rosters will be formally announced after their respective opening retreats later this year.

We hope to see you at a future **Leadership Connect gathering** soon.

Warmly,
Gracie and team



**LEADERSHIP
JACKSONVILLE**



**JOB
OPPORTUNITY**

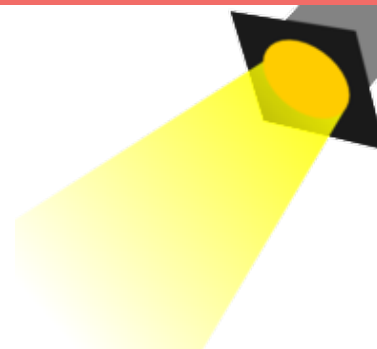
**Our awesome team is looking for an Office Manager.
Do you know anyone who may be a good fit and
has a heart for Jacksonville?
Applicants must love our community!**

PLEASE SHARE: Leadership Jacksonville is growing!

We are looking for an organized Office Manager to join our small, but mighty team. Please take a look at the job description and share within your networks. **[To learn more and apply, click here.](#)**



On May 2, **LJ 2024** enjoyed Arts and Culture Day focused on understanding the influence of arts and culture on economic development and leadership. Participants engaged with speakers at various cultural institutions and enjoyed a reception sponsored by The Douglas Anderson School of the Arts Foundation at The Jessie. Thank you to Program Day Sponsor **PNC Bank** and to all of the volunteers, speakers, and organizations for their time and talents.



Alumni Spotlight: Rudy Jamison (LJ 2021)

"Leadership Jacksonville gifted me with connections that I would have never established if not for LJ 2021. It continues to serve as a point of entry into opportunities for my personal and professional growth and development", shared **Rudy Jamison** (LJ 2021).

"During my program year, I enjoyed learning more about Jacksonville's community issues, having networking opportunities, and hearing from community trustees. I particularly liked the program days, Leading With Equity Day and Leading From Within Day, so much so, that I currently co-chair

both days with **Terri Lewis** (LJ 2018).

"Leadership Jacksonville has established itself as the ultimate space to learn about Jacksonville, construct robust developmental networks, and do 'the work' needed to be a better Jacksonville," said Rudy.

Dr. Rudy Jamison is the Executive Director of the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission with the City of Jacksonville – a municipal agency that handles discriminatory complaints related to housing, employment, public accommodations, and community relations. He is also the Executive Director of Leadership is for Everyone, Inc. (LIFE) – a non-profit leadership development utility for community and academic advocates.

When Rudy is not diligently working in these capacities, he enjoys time with his daughter Lauryn, playing tennis, or community(ing) OutEast.

Leadership Connect



With breakfast, lunch or happy hour options, our alumni are connecting, engaging and fostering connections across Northeast Florida each month.

Sign up to attend an Upcoming Alumni Gathering:

Lunch with Darren Brownlee (LJ 2023) and Ashley Pratt (LJ 2022), May 16

Happy Hour with Meg Folds (LJ 1999), May 22- Reservations full

Leadership Connect Happy Hour with Jason Perry (LJ 2014), June 6

Happy Hour with Tim Johnson (NLS 2017/ LJ 2019), June 13

Please note: LJ 2024 class members are eligible to attend upon graduation this month.

Would you like to host a Leadership Connect gathering?
Please email Manisha Joshi at manisha@leadershipjax.org.

Upcoming LJ Events & Program Days

LJ 2024 Closing Retreat

Friday and Saturday, May 17 and 18

NextGen 2024 Meet the Class Reception

Thursday, May 30

LJ 2025 Opening Reception

Tuesday, June 4

NextGen 2024 Opening Retreat

Friday and Saturday, June 7 and 8

Leadership Jacksonville Annual Board Meeting

Monday, June 17

NextGen 2024 Creating A Caring Community Day

Tuesday, June 18

NextGen 2024 Exploring Our Community Day

Tuesday, June 29

Class Socials

The following classes are invited for a LJ-sponsored class social in recognition of their Celebration 2024 fundraising efforts benefiting the Youth Leadership Jacksonville (YLJ) program:

LJ 2018 Happy Hour: Tuesday, May 14, 2024, from 5 – 6:30 pm at [King Maker Brewing](#).

LJ 2019 Happy Hour: Wednesday, May 29 from 5 - 7 pm at [Midtown Table](#).

LJ 2021 Happy Hour: Friday, June 21 from 6 - 8 pm. Location TBD.

LJ 2012 Happy Hour: TBD

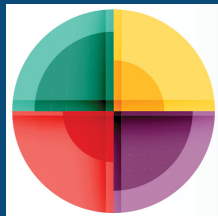
Earning the annual "Best Class" distinction at the Fall Alumni Luncheon:

LJ 2022 Happy Hour: TBD



LJ 2021 hosted a Happy Hour at The Posting House in San Marco.

Pictured: **Kaci Honeycutt Barnes, Madelen Salter, Erik Kasper, Jason Kirk, and Tim Page.**



Alumni Class Notes

Submit your news to
manisha@leadershipjax.org

1998

Karen Mathis (LJ 1998) became the Editor-At-Large at the Jacksonville Daily Record with a sole focus on commercial real estate and economic development in Jacksonville and Northeast Florida.



1999

Beverly (Bev) Jennings (LJ 1999), former Head of Global Supplier Diversity & Inclusion at Johnson & Johnson, launched her debut book: ***See and Believe: Inclusion and Vivid Transformation for Individuals and Companies***, in Denver, CO, and served as the VIP Speaker for Women Thrive Global Virtual Summit and at the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) Summit.

2001

John Zell (LJ 2001) has been promoted to Senior Vice President of Development at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, having recently celebrated 27 years of service in a variety of roles.

2007

Vickie Cavey (LJ 2007) was appointed as the Interim CEO at JEA.

2008

Kim Wheeler (LJ 2008) joined JEA in a newly created position as Vice President of Operations. She will lead the systems and processes that support JEA's electric, water and wastewater operations.

2009

Amy Crane (LJ 2009) has been promoted to Vice President of Programs at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida where she will oversee the foundation's discretionary grantmaking as well as donor-advised grantmaking.

Taylor Smith (YLJ 2009) starred as "Freddy" in 'Picasso at the Lapin Agile' written by Steve Martin, at Theatre Jacksonville.

2012

Melissa Nelson (LJ 2012) has filed to run for reelection as State Attorney. Melissa serves the 4th Judicial District, which covers Duval, Clay and Nassau counties.

2014

Khalilah Jamall (NextGen 2014) joined The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida as an inaugural Civic Leadership Impact Officer, offering programmatic and administrative support to the foundation.

2015

Jessica Evans (LJ 2015) joined PNC Bank as Senior Vice President of Commercial Banking covering both Jacksonville and Gainesville markets.

Christina Parrish Stone (LJ 2015) announced her retirement as St. Johns Cultural Council's Executive Director effective September 30 after overseeing the St. Augustine-based nonprofit's growth over the past five years.

2018

Asghar Syed (LJ 2018) was appointed as the new Board Chair for the Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville.



2019

Marcus Isom (NextGen 2019) has filed to run for Duval County Judge, Group 9.

2020

Sara Pomposo (NLS 2018/LJ 2020) joined BHRS Companies as Vice President, Marketing and Brand Strategy.

2021

Carlton Robinson (LJ 2021) was a guest speaker on "Keys to Starting a Successful New Business" at the Brad D. Smith Center for Business and Innovation, part of the Dean's Speaker Series at Marshall University's Lewis College of Business in Huntington, WV.

2022

Tyler Oldenburg (LJ 2022) was appointed Chairman of the 2025 Players Championship receiving his Red Coat.

Congratulations to **Ashley Szczukowski** (LJ 2022) on her new role as Vice President at Workscapes.

Kawanza Humphrey (NLS 2022) was honored as one of the 2024 Jacksonville Business Journal Women of Influence Honorees. Our apologies: In the April issue of the LEAD Story, her name and alumni program were both incorrect.

Mario Barrozo (NextGen 2022) and his team won first place at the 2nd Annual UNF Brooks College of Health Interprofessional Experience Case Competition, which included studying various programs, learning about the value of collaborative healthcare, and creating the best course of treatment for a given patient. Mario was also a panelist at the annual Taylor Leadership Awards and shared about his leadership journey as a UNF student and community member.

Congratulations to **Kyla George** (NextGen 2022) on passing the Florida Bar.



Corie Posey (NextGen 2022) was awarded Rookie of the Year from the State Attorney's Office, 4th Judicial Circuit of Florida.

2023

Congratulations to **Austin Belet** (NextGen 2023) on his new position as Government Affairs and Community Relations Specialist with UF Health St. Johns.

George Boston (YLJ 2018/NextGen 2023) began a new role as the Change Manager for Information Technology Services at the University of North Florida.

2024

Congratulations to **Dane Bennett** (LJ 2024) on his promotion to Vice President of Government Relations at Baptist Health.

Annabel Kaye (YLJ 2024) and **Sage Peterson** (YLJ 2024) were part of a team that won the annual **UNF MedNexus Challenge** on April 11th. Their team presented a design for an app that would monitor and limit how much time a person was spending on social media platforms. Each team member won a \$1,000 scholarship.

In Sympathy

Our condolences to the friends and family of **Judy Smith** (LJ 1993) on the passing of her husband, Captain **Chester (Chet) Smith** (LJ 1994) on April 2. During his Navy career, Chet was one of the few enlisted personnel selected to command one of the Navy's first Patrol River Boats in the Mekong River and became one of the most highly decorated Brownwater Sailors of the Vietnam War, the Gamewardens. He received a Navy Cross, a Silver Star, a Purple Heart and a variety of other decorations during the conflict. In 2017, Chet was inducted into the Navy Surface Warfare Association Hall of Fame. His 39 years of naval service included the command of several towing and salvage ships and a shore station. He retired from active duty as Executive Officer of Naval Station Mayport in 1993, and in 1995, Chet was appointed to serve as the Chief of Veteran Services for the City of Jacksonville and the Mayor's liaison to the area's military bases. Chet and Judy permanently relocated to Wisconsin in 2016 to create CopperFox Farm on the family's land.

Our thoughts are with **Chris Ball** (LJ 2018) on the passing of his mother, Donna Christopher Butler Ball on April 7.

Our sympathy to the family and friends of **Pilar Willis Dixon** (LJ 2019) on the passing of her father, Charles Samuel Willis on April 21.

Stay Connected!

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[Facebook](#)

[LJ Alumni Facebook Group](#)

[NextGen Alumni Facebook Group](#)

[YLJ Alumni Facebook Group](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Twitter](#)



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