



A Message from 2024-2025 Board President Cynthia Griffin (LJ 2011)

As I step into the role of Leadership Jacksonville Board President, I am filled with excitement and anticipation for the year ahead. Our organization has a rich history of developing and connecting community leaders, and I am honored to be a part of it. Under the leadership of our Immediate Past President, **Linda Lindenmoyer** (LJ 2018), the board facilitated a refresh of our strategic plan. This plan outlines our goals and objectives for the next three years, and I am excited to share that it includes a focus on impactful alumni engagement, expanding public/private partnerships, and growing our leadership development initiatives to name a few.

I want to express my gratitude to Linda for her stellar leadership and to Michael Howland, Strategic Planning Committee Chair, and the many LJ alums who participated in the process. Their dedication and commitment to our organization have been invaluable.

I am also happy to welcome the newly appointed board members and announce the new Executive Committee as well as the Committee Chairs for this fiscal year. The Executive Committee is comprised of **Will Smith** (LJ 2011), President-Elect, **Michael Huskey** (LJ 2016), Secretary/Treasurer and **Linda Lindenmoyer** (LJ 2018), Immediate Past President. The Committee Chairs include **Sunny Gettinger** (LJ 2012), Governance Committee, **Bryan Taylor** (LJ 2021), Development Committee, and **Michael Huskey** (LJ 2016), Finance Committee. I look forward to working with this leadership team as we remain committed to representing diverse perspectives and creating a welcoming environment for all members.

As we begin to implement the new strategic plan, I am excited to work with our dynamic CEO Gracie Simendinger and her team. Together, we will continue to have a significant impact on our beloved community.

Thank you for your continued support of Leadership Jacksonville. I look forward to a successful year ahead.

Sincerely,
Cynthia

Celebrating the Leadership Jacksonville Board



The Leadership Jacksonville Board of Directors enjoyed their Annual Meeting on June 18 at The River Club. We celebrated our recent successes and recognized outgoing board members **Vicky Basra** (LJ 2017), **Thanh Hogan** (LJ 2019), **Michael Howland** (LJ 2012), **Sarah Mannion** (LJ 2023), **Mincy Pollock** (LJ 2020) and **Sheila Pressley** (LJ 2019).



We also welcomed the following new board members: **Lawrence Luksha** (NextGen 2019), **ReGina Newkirk Rucci** (LJ 2024), **Lori Smith** (LJ 2017), **Sabrina Marcos Smith** (NextGen 2019) and **Tina Wirth** (LJ 2016). Thank you to everyone on the Board for continuing to support the mission and vision of Leadership Jacksonville.

LJ Past Presidents' Breakfast



The LJ Past Presidents' Breakfast was held on June 18 at The Jessie. Board President **Linda Lindenmoyer** (LJ 2018) gave an update on the organization's recent successes and Immediate Past President and Strategic Planning Chair **Michael Howland** (LJ 2012) presented the newly adopted strategic plan. CEO **Gracie Simendinger** addressed the group and answered questions about the future direction of the organization. The energy in the room was electric!



Leadership Jacksonville 2025 Meet the Class Reception



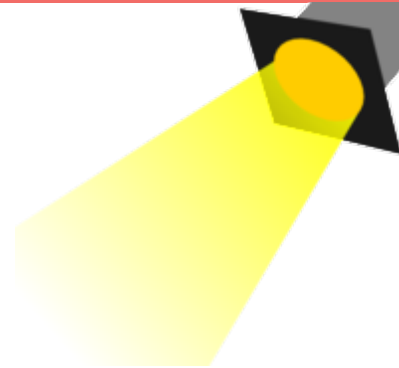
The LJ 2025 class came together for the Meet the Class Reception at the Jessie Ball duPont Center on June 4. The participants were excited to meet one another for the first time. Please note the formal roster will be announced after successful completion of the Opening Retreat in August. We look forward to an engaging program year ahead with these talented and diverse individuals!

Next Generation 2024 Program Update





NextGen 2024 kicked off their summer program in early June and participated in Creating a Caring Community Day on June 18 and Exploring Our Community Day on June 29. Class members gained a greater understanding of Northeast Florida's assets and potential and were inspired by various local leaders. Through discussions and activities with speakers and community trustees, participants learned how poverty, education, crime and other social influences are interconnected. They also explored root causes alongside potential solutions. It's hard to believe this summer program is already halfway completed!



**LJ Alumni Spotlight on Linda Lindenmoyer (LJ 2018)
LJ 2023-2024 Immediate Past President**

I first heard about Leadership Jacksonville while on a JAX Chamber Leadership Trip many years ago, as numerous people enthusiastically and spontaneously shared their personal LJ experience and encouraged me to apply. I was accepted into the Class of 2018, which expanded my perspective about the assets and opportunities within our community, and began the alignment of my goals with LJ's mission to "educate, connect, and inspire diverse leaders to build and strengthen their communities". Every program day was very impactful, as I discovered the connectivity between poverty, education, justice, healthcare, economic growth, etc. The Poverty Day simulation was particularly powerful as it shined a bright light on the challenges and implications of balancing the needs of housing, employment, transportation, childcare, and food scarcity on families with an extremely limited budget.

After my class graduation, I stayed involved in LJ as my class's co-liaison and as a member of the alumni committee. I was invited to join the Board in 2019 and admired how the staff and Board pivoted quickly and creatively, due to the need for virtual events during the early years of the pandemic. I was later invited to extend my Board term and served as President-Elect in fiscal year 2022-2023. I then served as President for the 2023-2024 fiscal year where we received input from the Board, alumni, volunteers, staff and the community for a new strategic plan.

I am excited to remain on the Board for the 2024-2025 fiscal year as Immediate Past President, and I know that with **Gracie Simendinger** as CEO and **Cynthia Griffin** (LJ 2011) as President, and with our highly engaged Board, staff, and volunteers, the implementation of our new strategic plan will be extremely successful and will provide for innovation and growth to further increase LJ's impact on its participants and our community.

I plan to devote my time and resources to LJ for many years to come and am so very grateful for these experiences as a class participant, volunteer and Board member.

LEADERSHIP CONNECT





Our alumni are fostering connections across Northeast Florida each month with breakfast, lunch, and happy hour options.

Sign up to attend an Upcoming Alumni Gathering:

Breakfast with Linda Lindenmoyer (LJ 2018), July 18

Lunch with Anna Valent (LJ 2011), July 23

Happy Hour with Annie Grogan (LJ 2016), August 1

Lunch with Deloris O'Neal (LJ 2018) and Derrick Mitchell, Sr. (LJ 2019), August 8

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

2024 UPCOMING EVENTS AND PROGRAM DAYS

**NextGen 2024 Exposing Our Community's Culture Program Day
Wednesday, July 10**

**NextGen 2024 Building Bridges to the Future Program Day
Monday, July 22**

**LJ 2025 Opening Dinner
Tuesday, July 30**

**NextGen 2024 Closing Retreat
Saturday, August 3**

**LJ 2025 Opening Retreat
Thursday and Friday, August 15 and August 16**

**YLJ 2025 Opening Retreat
Friday and Saturday, August 23 and August 24**

LJ CLASS SOCIALS

LJ 1993 is hosting a Class Social on Thursday, July 11 from 4:30 - 6:30 pm at the **River and**

Post Rooftop. To RSVP, email Janice Donaldson (LJ 1993) at donaldsonjanice@gmail.com.



LJ 2020 met for a Class Social on June 25 at Blue Orchid Thai restaurant.

Additional upcoming LJ 2020 Class Socials:

- Wednesday, July 24 from 5 - 7 pm at [Prati Italia](#)
 - Thursday, August 15 from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm, Avondale/San Marco location TBD
- To RSVP, email Sunil Ancha (LJ 2020) at anchatm@gmail.com.

The following classes are planning an LJ-sponsored class social in recognition of their Celebration 2024 fundraising efforts benefiting Youth Leadership Jacksonville (YLJ):

LJ 2019 Happy Hour: Wednesday, September 11 from 5:30 - 7:30 pm at [Midtown Table](#)

LJ 2012 Happy Hour: Thursday, September 12 from 5:30 - 7:30 pm, San Marco location TBD

LJ 2021 Happy Hour: Tuesday, October 8 from 5:30 - 7:30 pm, location TBD



ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

Submit your news to manisha@leadershipjax.org



1995

Tonyaa Weathersbee (LJ 1995) joins the University of Memphis' Department of Journalism and Strategic Media this fall as the new Hardin Chair of Excellence. Tonya is the first woman to hold the Chair of Excellence position.

2002

Congratulations to **Sam Inman** (LJ 2002) on his promotion to President and Chief Executive Officer at Community First Credit Union.

2004

Julia Burns (LJ 2004) is presenting "[Why Retention & Succession Belong in Your Strategic Plan](#)" with the Nonprofit Learning Lab on August 12. This is a free national webinar geared towards those that run or are part of nonprofit organizations.

2008

Susan Burns (LJ 2008) announced her retirement from EverBank as Vice President, Sales and Service Manager effective August 1, 2024.

2010

Carl Patten, Jr. (LJ 2010) was elected to the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) as a Public Member.

2016

Chris Hoffman (LJ 2016) has filed for re-election as Mayor of Jacksonville Beach.

2017

Alex Alston (LJ 2017) is the new Executive Director at the Office of Sports and Entertainment at the City of Jacksonville.



Georgette Dumont (LJ 2017) has filed to run for Mayor of Jacksonville Beach.

2019

Sel Buyuksarac (LJ 2019) has been appointed as a Historian for the Soil and Water Conversation District Group 5.

Kevin Carrico (LJ 2019) was named Political Director for the Republican Party of Florida for the 2024 election cycle.

Congratulations to **Jennifer Nelson Brown** (NLS 2019) on her new position as Regional Superintendent at the KIPP Foundation.

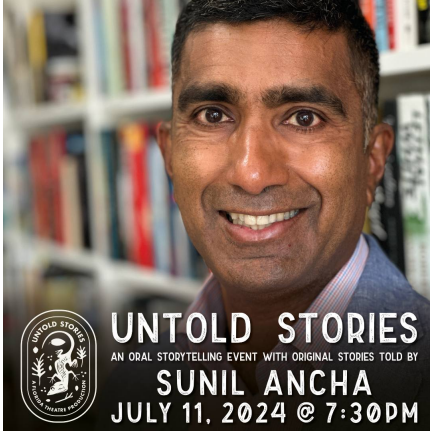
Marcus Isom, Jr. (NextGen 2019) was recognized by the Florida Bar Young Lawyer's Division as the Outstanding Government Lawyer for the 2023-2024 year, and was also awarded the Young Lawyer of the Year by the Virgil Hawkins Bar Association.

Congratulations to **Javon Knight** (NextGen 2019) on his promotion to Principal with the Husch Blackwell Strategies Federal Team in Maryland. Javon is also beginning a career as a Maryland Federal and State Lobbyist.

Sabrina Marcos Smith (NextGen 2019) was appointed to the Mayor's Hispanic American Advisory board by Mayor Donna Deegan.

2020

Sunil Kumar Ancha (LJ 2020) was elected as the Jacksonville Advisory Council Chair for the [Florida Diversity Council](#). Sunil is also one of the six



storytellers at [Untold Stories](#) at the Florida Theatre on July 11.

Chris Kalin (LJ 2020) was featured as an Alumni Spotlight in the [UNF College Coggin of Business online newsletter](#).

Wendy Norfleet (LJ 2020) published an article in [Brainz Magazine](#) about scaling a business through effective leadership strategies.

Kelley Shaw (LJ 2020) joined Alliant Insurance Services and BCI Insurance Solutions as Vice President, Employee Benefits.

Congratulations to **Darnell Smith** (LJ 2020) on being named a [Men of Honor Honoree by ONYX Magazine](#), which celebrates black men who excel in their professions and community work, and inspire others to follow their lead. The awards event will take place on September 28 at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando.

Taylor Richardson (YLJ 2020) was featured on [First Coast News](#) about her goal to build 3D printed schools in Madagascar. A passionate advocate for equal access to education, she has already raised more than \$80,000 in partnership with the nonprofit organization 'Thinking Huts'.

2021

David Thompson (LJ 2021) was appointed as the Co-Chair of The Florida Bar Leadership Academy Class 12 through 2026.

Adina Pollan (LJ 2021) joined Hakimian Holdings as General Counsel.

2022

Kenzie Horton (NextGen 2022) spoke on News 104.5 WOKV celebrating the new Jacksonville University and OCEARCH partnership. Kenzie was also featured on [Action News Jax](#) sharing about her career journey and the partnership.



2023

Congratulations to **Paula Bides** (LJ 2023) on her new role as Director of Community Engagement at UF Health.

Daniel Bradley (LJ 2023) was promoted to Vice President, Working Capital Optimization at Rayonier Advanced Materials (RYAM).

Darrin Eakins (LJ 2023) was featured in [Forbes magazine](#) on the philanthropic mission of his company, DuBlasé Whiskey.

Congratulations to **Greg Hayes** (LJ 2023) on his new role as Chief Financial Officer at the

Melinda Powers (LJ 2023) recently launched M. Powers Law, PLLC. Melinda also completed the Cornell Certification for Women's Entrepreneurship.

Millicent Leeds (NextGen 2023) began a new position as Youth and Young Americans Vote Director at Biden for President.

2024

Dogan Tozoglu (LJ 2024) was honored as one of the Stop the Violence Recognition Honorees awarded by the El Beth El Development Center at the Stop The Violence Recognition banquet on June 19.

Brian Verkamp (LJ 2024) was named one of Jacksonville Business Journal's **2024 Ultimate Tech Leaders**.

COMBINED CLASSES & HONORARY



Alumni members came together to celebrate the appointment of **Kimberly Allen** (LJ 2023), **Lee Brown** (LJ 2006), **Dawn Curling** (LJ 2025), **Barbara Darby** (LJ 1993), **Kiara Nixon** (LJ 2024) and **Errol White** (LJ 2023) as inaugural board members to the Mayoral Advisory Board for African Americans by Mayor Donna Deegan.

LJ Alumni members joining the Leadership Florida Cornerstone Class 42, Northeast Region include: **Sang Cho** (LJ 2022), **David Johnson** (LJ 2023), **Trina Medarev** (LJ 2013), and **Alicia Somers** (LJ 2018). Joining Connect Class 14: **Darrin Eakins** (LJ 2023); and joining Education Class 9: **Sel Buyuksarac** (LJ 2019) and **Jen Vihrachoff** (LJ 2019).

Andrea Barnwell Brownlee (LJ 2023) was selected as the 2024 READ to Heal Award Honoree. Andrea will be honored at the **Peace in the Pages luncheon** on October 2 at EverBank Stadium. The READ to Heal Award recognizes an individual who embodies the importance of healing intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, and is named in honor of **Roseann Duran** (LJ 1998).

Congratulations to the following LJ Alumni members on their **Baptist Health appointments**. Appointed to Baptist Health's Board of Directors are **Kristi Garside** (LJ 2006) as Vice Chair, and **Diane Raines** (LJ 2002) as a member. Appointments to Baptist Jacksonville include **Asghar Syed** (LJ 2018) as Chair, **Rachael Tutwiler Fortune** (LJ 2022) as Vice Chair, and **Nat Ford** (LJ 2014) as a member. **Cleve Warren** (LJ 1985) was appointed to the Baptist Health Foundation as Chair.

Gabriel Hackney (LJ 2023), **Marcus Isom, Jr.** (NextGen 2019), **Darian Jackson** (LJ 2024), **Andrea Williams** (LJ 2019), and **Gabrielle Williams** (NextGen 2023) were recognized among the "Top 20 Under 40" at the Florida Black Excellence Fest on June 19 at WJCT Studios.



Several Alumni members were spotted at the JAX Chamber Destination Downtown trip to Phoenix, Arizona in June including **Russell Baker** (LJ 2023), **Mark Bennett** (LJ 2017), **Lori Boyer** (Honorary), **Michael Corrigan** (LJ 1997), **Daniel Davis** (LJ 2015), **Jake Gordon** (NLS 2016), **Katherine Hardwick** (LJ 2020), **David Johnson** (LJ 2024), **Chris Kalin** (LJ 2020), **Kelly Pourciau** (LJ 2019), **Carlton Robinson** (LJ 2021), **Jason Roth** (LJ 2022) and **Aundra Wallace** (NLS 2014).

Camille Sheppard (NextGen 2010) and **Austin Sherman** (NextGen 2016) were elected to the Young Lawyers Section group within the Jacksonville Bar Association. The group is for attorneys 35 years or younger or who have been practicing under five years.

Steven Halverson (Honorary) will become Non-Executive Chair of the Gilbane, Inc. [Board of Directors](#) effective January 1, 2025.

NOTES OF SYMPATHY

Our condolences to the family and friends of **Harry B. (Monty) Horner** (LJ 1994) upon his passing on May 30. Monty was a graduate of Virginia Tech and later received a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering and Business Administration at Old Dominion University. Monty came to Jacksonville in 1972 to work at Offshore Power Systems and later served as President of Charter Oil Company's Riffe Petroleum. He was part owner of the Environmental Recovery Group and retired as Executive Vice President and CFO of Florida Rock Industries. Monty was a United States Army veteran, and a dedicated member of Resurrection Catholic Church, Knights of Columbus, St. Matthew's Catholic Church, and the Meninak Club of Jacksonville.

Our sympathy is with the family and friends of **Sandra G. (Sandy) Hansford** (LJ 1985) upon her passing on June 7. Sandy received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Florida State University and earned her doctorate in Education from the University of Florida. She was a teacher and guidance counselor with Duval County Public Schools for 12 years, after which she served as Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of North Florida. Sandy was a founding member and generous supporter of the Women's Center of Jacksonville, and as a Ponte Vedra resident, she was active in the community with memberships at the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club, the First Coast Cultural Center, and the Ponte Vedra Croquet Club.

Condolences to the family and friends of **Francis I. (Rip) duPont III** (LJ 1982) upon his passing on June 9. Rip received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Richmond before joining the United States Army where he was stationed in South Korea for a year. After working in New York and Atlanta, Rip moved with his family to Ponte

Vedra Beach and joined Southeast Bank. He went on to serve as President and CEO of SouthTrust Bank, Regional President of First Florida Bank, and Chairman and CEO of First National Bank of Manatee in Bradenton. Rip was active at Christ Church in Ponte Vedra Beach, Boys and Girls Club, Episcopal School of Jacksonville, and the JAX Chamber.

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