

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Central Louisiana 4-Under-40 Announced

ALEXANDRIA, LA – The Young Professionals Group of Cenla (YPG) is excited to announce the 2023 class of CENLA 4WARD and central Louisiana’s 4 Under 40. The program is an initiative of YPG and the Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce to honor those under 40 years of age who are making an impact and improving communities in the central Louisiana region and beyond.

“We want to say congratulations to this year’s winners and nominees,” says 2023 YPG President, Dustin Campbell from Procter & Gamble. “It is so very important to reward and recognize the achievements of individuals such as these to not only encourage continued excellence but also to motivate future young leaders in our area.”

CENTRAL LOUISIANA’S 4 UNDER 40

Dr. Abbey Bain - Vice Chancellor for Enrollment and Student Engagement at LSUA.

Dr. Erin Stokes - Superintendent of Grant Parish Schools

Jordan Alford - President of DIS-TRAN Packaged Substations, a Crest Industries Company

Mikelle Kimsey - Assistant Vice President, Branch Manager at Red River Bank

YPG and the Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce presented several other awards during this year’s event including:

- 2023 Outstanding Volunteer – Michael Silver, Turner Teleco – Alexandria
- The Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce Emerging Leader – Britni Lilley, Louisiana Central
- 2023 YPG Member of the Year - Loren Ryland, Glass Act Recycling
- YPG Cenla Champion – Sherry Gentle, Ignite the Mic Cenla

CENLA 4WARD is dedicated to recognizing individuals who exhibit the 4 pillars that move communities forward: community involvement, industry impact, leadership and professional distinction, and passion and perseverance. Find more information about the winners and the program below and at www.ypgcenla.org.

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The Young Professionals Group of Central Louisiana is a committee of the Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce and a motivated, educated and community-conscious group of individuals. By connecting diverse young professionals across the area, we create a force that will both strengthen and grow Central Louisiana.



L to R: Stacy Castaneda (accepting on behalf of Dr. Erin Stokes), Mikelle Kimsey, Jordan Alford, Dr. Abbey Bain



L to R: Mikelle Kimsey, Jordan Alford, Dr. Abbey Bain

CENLA 4WARD 4-Under-40 – About the Winners

Dr. Abbey Bain - Vice Chancellor for Enrollment and Student Engagement at LSUA.

With her work at LSUA, Abbey is fully committed to fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment, ensuring all 5,104 students feel valued and supported. One of her nominators shared that “While many people are committed to their job, very few have the infectious enthusiasm she possesses.” That commitment and enthusiasm bleeds into her passion for CenLA. She is an advocate for professional development and empowerment, especially for women, in the central Louisiana

business community through her various volunteer and board member positions. As a young leader in the academic realm, it's unusual for someone of Abbey's age to be in a Vice Chancellor position, however, her age has not stopped her from being recognized as a state-wide benchmark of success within the LSU system and beyond. She has had a transformative impact on LSUA and, by extension, the state of Louisiana. Her leadership, student-centric approach, and initiatives have propelled the university to new heights, ensuring a brighter future for its students and the area as a whole. Abbey enriches the communities and teams she is a part of, and we are excited to celebrate all she has done for our community here is CenLA.



Dr. Erin Stokes - Superintendent of Grant Parish Schools

Dr. Stokes has had an impact on the lives of students, parents, teachers, and administrators in Rapides and Grant parishes. Her collaboration with organizations like the United Way, CLTCC, the Sheriff's Office and the Strong Neighborhood Project Team, turned the schools under her leadership into a place of hope and education for families. Under her leadership, these schools began hosting adult

education courses, parent support seminars, mental health services, and other resources for at-risk families and students. Her nominator shares that while she herself has earned multiple state-wide awards, the true testament to her leadership and passion for education and the community is the involvement, collaboration, and accomplishment of the faculty, staff, and students she serves. Dr. Stokes was also invited to serve on the K-12 Education Transition Committee for governor-elect Landry's transition team. Judges commented that Erin is an outstanding young professional who showcases all four pillars for this award program. Her recognitions as Louisiana Teacher of the Year and Principal of the Year show her diversity of strength in her field.



Jordan Alford - President of DIS-TRAN Packaged Substations, a Crest Industries Company

Serving as an executive for a multi-million-dollar, industry-leading organization is time consuming; however, Jordan takes time to personally invest in the lives of his people and the communities around him. According to the evaluation committee, Jordan seems to be the definition of leadership by

example. He is a humble leader who is willing to do whatever it takes to make the team successful. This type of commitment and intentional leadership is rare within the manufacturing industry, and the positive impacts to his business and industry are evident in many ways. He is never one to shy away from a challenge and is always committed to doing the right thing. He has a unique ability to identify areas for improvement and take steps to achieve it while putting ego aside and focusing on the greater impact of his actions. Jordan knows and understands that things never quite go according to plan, and that perseverance is a key part of leadership and life. His example in leading the team and his family teaches everyone across Crest Industries what it means to be intentional, to celebrate our milestones, to put others before ourselves, and to persevere even in the face of the unknown.



Mikelle Kimsey - Assistant Vice President, Branch Manager at Red River Bank

Mikelle has a keen desire to excel in all she does. After moving to the area in 2017, she quickly immersed herself in the community through volunteer work. The evaluations committee noted how

her trustworthiness, attention to detail and determination have benefitted the many organizations and initiatives she is a part of. Her work with the Junior League of Alexandria, Rotary, the Food Bank of Central Louisiana, Girls on the Run, the Salvation Army, Relay For Life, and other organizations showcases that passion for the community and love of volunteerism. Her love of volunteering is matched by her passion for her team and customers at Red River Bank. One of her nominators shared that Mikelle “ came to Red River Bank as a bright eyed, smart, vivacious woman that was beyond her years. She began her career as a teller and was a fast learner who would often help even the most seasoned of her peers with any issues that arose.” That spirit and dedication led to her promotion to a Personal Banker, and then to Manager of the largest Red River Bank branch in the state where she is now leading her team to success through poise, self-driven motivation, and her commitment to continuous improvement.



CENLA 4WARD 4-Under-40 – MORE PHOTOS



CENLA 4WARD 2023 Nominees and Recipients

Front Row (L to R): Dr. Abbey Bain, Britni Lilley, Katherine Jennings, Ashley Love, Sarah Swain, Brittany O’Neal, Carolyn Hines, Mikelle Kimsey

Back Row (L to R): Kel Bonton, Chase Dyess, Jordan Alford, Jared Price, Michael Silver

Not Pictured: Dr. Erin Stokes, Timberly Deville



L to R: Michael Silver (2023 Outstanding Volunteer recipient), Dustin Campbell (2023 YPG President)



L to R: Dustin Mathews (Chamber of Commerce Board Member), Britni Lilley (2023 Emerging Leader), Deborah Randolph (Chamber of Commerce President)



L to R: Loren Ryland (2023 YPG Member of the Year), Dustin Campbell (2023 YPG President), Sherry Gentle (2023 Cenla Champion)