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**Leadership Florida® Presents Chris Hand and Lori Kifer Johnson with the  
“but for Leadership Florida” Award**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** — Chris Hand and Lori Kifer Johnson are the 2019 recipients of the “but for Leadership Florida” Award.

The “but for Leadership Florida” Award was created in 2017 in recognition of former Leadership Florida President and CEO Wendy Walker’s 28 years of devotion to creating “but for Leadership Florida” experiences for members. Its purpose is to recognize Leadership Florida members who have used specific knowledge gained and/or relationships built through his or her Leadership Florida experience to improve the lives of fellow Floridians. In addition to the honor itself, Leadership Florida will make a donation of \$2,500 to the recipient’s organization of choice, subject to the approval of the Awards Committee.

Hand and Kifer Johnson were honored at Leadership Florida’s 2019 Annual Meeting held at Disney’s Grand Floridian Resort in Orlando on June 23.



Chris Hand and Lori Kifer Johnson, winners of the 2019 “but for Leadership Florida” Award.

Hand and Kifer Johnson launched a campaign in 2018 to clear the names of the “Groveland Four,” by raising awareness, educating influencers, and forcing change. Their efforts helped bring closure to a 70-year-misjustice: in 1949 Samuel Shepherd, Walter Irvin, Charles Greenlee and Ernest Thomas were hunted, beaten, and brutalized as they were charged on scant evidence in a racially-charged prosecution in Groveland, Florida.

Chris and Lori researched and coordinated with those whose work had already paved the way for change, such as *Devil In The Grove* author Gilbert King, who launched a 2017 petition to demand justice. They initiated a full advocacy plan and leveraged their connections with Leadership Florida



Cornerstone Class 36 classmates and their networks to educate the Florida State Board of Executive Clemency, seeking posthumous pardons.

The case gained momentum early January, 2018, and despite late signs of another delay, Governor Ron DeSantis led the unanimous vote to pardon all four men on January 11.

“Chris and Lori have been quick to shift credit for this monumental accomplishment to the countless others who played key roles,” said nominator Matthew Pinzur, Vice President & CMO of Jackson Health System. “Nonetheless, it is easy to see the catalytic impact Chris and Lori have had in the name of justice.”

Leadership Florida is proud to recognize Chris Hand and Lori Kifer Johnson, both of Cornerstone Class 36, winners of the 2019 “*but for Leadership Florida*” Award.

**About Leadership Florida**

For thirty-seven years, Leadership Florida has developed a reputation as a builder of a stronger, diverse statewide sense of community. A respected non-partisan convener of committed individuals, Leadership Florida enhances the knowledge and leadership abilities of Florida’s leaders through educational programs and by encouraging collaborative work for the betterment of our state. Leadership Florida provides Floridians essential information and a meaningful forum for their opinions, and creates opportunities for shared experiences that are inviting, inspiring and of lasting value. Leadership Florida is a federally registered trademark.

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