



LEADERSHIP FLORIDA®

e-Cast

September 2022



FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Greetings, Leadership Florida Members!

Our new year is well underway with the start of all three Class programs with 145 new members: Cornerstone (over 40 years of age), Connect (25-39 years of age), and Education (no age requirement, but for professionals in the education sector). We recently hosted our annual Leadership Team Retreat at the fabulous new World Equestrian Center in Ocala and enjoyed some very productive learning and planning sessions. We have an [outstanding Leadership Team](#) this year who are already working on some new and exciting experiences for you to enjoy in your Regions. Look for more details of events in your Region Council soon! Are you not sure which Region you belong to? Check out our Region Finder on our website [here](#).

This month's e-Cast includes a reminder to update your information for our annual Membership Directory, the latest Movers & Shakers news, Leadership Florida member and staff spotlights, and a Save the Date reminder for next year's Annual Meeting.

From personal and professional connections to unforgettable events and experiences, the value of your Leadership Florida membership is immeasurable. If you are not already, we encourage you to [become a Lifetime Member](#) and ensure this value for the rest of your life!

All the best,

Wendy Spencer
Cornerstone Class 24
President & Chief Executive Officer

LEADERSHIP FLORIDA NEWS & UPDATES



Update Your Information!

We're gearing up for the publication of our Annual Membership Directory! This directory is one of the most valuable benefits of your membership and we need your help to ensure your information is accurate. Please verify your profile information below and [make any necessary updates here](#) by **November 1, 2022**.

First Name:

Last Name:

Title:

Company:

City:

Region:

Phone:

Contact Email: twarrington@leadershipflorida.org

Please view and update your profile image by clicking [here](#).

You must be logged in to view and make changes to your profile. To upload a new profile picture, scroll to the image section on your profile page, and click or tap

"Replace File." After uploading the new image, click or tap "Edit Crop" and use the slider to adjust the size of the picture. Click or tap "Save" to save your changes.

RETIRED MEMBER FEATURE



MARGARITA CASTELLON

Education Class 2

Gold Coast Region

In general, how are you spending your time during retirement?

Service, travel, learning! I love that I'm able to continue to give back and remain engaged during retirement by serving on several community nonprofit boards and their committees. Traveling is a gift to the spirit and

the mind! This year alone, I have spent eight days experiencing Portugal and taken a Rhine River cruise which visited Switzerland, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. I'm on my way to Arizona next week with friends to raft the Colorado River and learn about fabulous geological formations! I'm having a ball taking lifelong learning classes at our local university.

What was the most valuable thing you learned during your career that prepared you for retirement?

I don't know if I learned this during my career or just through experience and upbringing, but remaining active and vital and finding ways to serve others in all stages of your life is for me a responsibility and a joy. Throughout my career, a great part of my work was establishing and nurturing relationships to achieve positive results. This allowed me to partner with individuals and organizations whose mission was to better some aspect of this world. All of this prepared me for the work I do during retirement.

Are you involved in activities to support anyone or any group from a younger generation?

Mentoring has always been important to me. I have mentored high school girls for a number of years and continue to mentor at Monarch High School in Broward County. It is very satisfying to know that you have helped to open young girls' eyes to their own capabilities, to the many opportunities available to them, and to how they can take advantage of those opportunities. For many years, I have served and continue to serve on the Broward Education Foundation Board where we offer several programs that support and enhance student learning and provide scholarship opportunities.

Have you experienced a “*but for Leadership Florida*” moment during your retirement (i.e., something that would not have occurred without your engagement as a Leadership Florida member)?

I experience a “*but for Leadership Florida*” moment every time I attend a Leadership Florida event and engage with our great members. Two specific instances of “*but for Leadership Florida*” experiences that put me in close touch with wonderful fellow members and staff were participating in the planning and execution of two flagship events featuring great presenters and topics: “Riding the King Tide: What we are doing about Sea Level Rise” and “Empowering Ourselves to Create a More Equitable Florida.”



AARP proudly recognizes Leadership Florida's Retired Members



If you are retired or planning to retire soon, [please let us know here!](#)



JAMAL SOWELL

College Class 5
President of Business Solutions,
Indelible Solutions
United States Marine Corps, United
States Navy Reserve
Northwest Region

When were you enlisted?

United States Marine Corps: 2006 - 2011

United States Marine Corps Reserve: 2011 - 2018

United States Navy Reserve: 2020 - present

Why did you choose the service branch you joined?

In 2006, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were becoming increasingly unpopular. I knew that there were American troops overseas fighting for my freedom, so I felt compelled to serve and repay the country that gave me so much. I wanted to be where the action was, so I joined the Marines because they are known as the “First to Fight.” I now proudly serve in the United States Navy Reserve.

How did your service and experiences affect your personal and/or professional life?

It taught me the importance of merit and integrity. In the military, you are judged by your performance and work ethic, because those can't be faked. One either has a perfect physical fitness score or not; one can swim for one hour or not; one is able to shoot a target from 500 yards away or not; one empowers their teammates or not. Integrity and work ethic are life metrics that I use today.

What was the most valuable thing you learned during your service?

I learned that it isn't about me. My desires and feelings are secondary to the mission and well-being of those I served with. The concept of service before self, allowed me to understand how to endure discomfort without complaint for a greater purpose.



Truist proudly honors Leadership Florida's Veterans and Military Members



If you are a veteran or active duty member and are not listed in our [directory](#), please let us know [here](#).



JENNIFER VIGNE

Education Class 4

President & CEO

Education Foundation of Sarasota
County

Calusa Region

Lifetime Member

As a Lifetime Member of Leadership Florida, what are some of the ways you enjoy your membership the most?

The greatest joy I get from being a lifetime member is being able to connect with long-time friends and meeting new colleagues from across the state through both formal and informal gatherings. From baseball games to holiday socials to the annual conference, being a lifetime member means being a lifetime friend to so many outstanding individuals.

What are some examples of how becoming a Lifetime Member has affected your career?

The old adage "it's not what you know, it's who you know" holds some merit. While I still believe knowledge is power (I'm in education, for goodness sakes!), I have learned and come to appreciate the collective effort needed in building thriving communities. Progress happens at the speed of trust, so taking the time to develop and nurture meaningful relationships is the foundation to build and sustain strong communities and a thriving state.

Have you experienced a "but for Leadership Florida" moment, in which the experience could not have happened without Leadership Florida?

I think it's important to acknowledge the impact these "but for" moments create. I credit Leadership Florida with providing me a multitude of "but for" moments that have either opened doors I couldn't have done on my own or expanded opportunities I could not have previously imagined. At the same time, and I think most of us would agree, that what you're willing to put into it will also exponentially increase what you get out of it.

Do you have a favorite memory from your class year?

I have so many great memories it's hard to land on one. However, I am truly grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from and get to know one of our classmates, Tammy Jerkins, who passed away in 2021. Tammy's leadership

was infectious and influential. She led by example and left an indelible imprint by the many lives who were touched by her, including my own.

Thank you, Jennifer, for your support and commitment to Florida!



BANK OF AMERICA

Bank of America thanks Leadership Florida's Lifetime Members

BECOME A LEADERSHIP FLORIDA

LIFETIME MEMBER!

Joining as a Lifetime Member is a significant commitment that yields great dividends for the future of Leadership Florida - **454** Leadership Florida Lifetime Members agree!

- **No more dues for life!**
- Unlike annual dues, this gift is entirely tax-deductible
- Invitation to a special Lifetime Members-only Reception for you and a guest for all future Annual Meetings
- Special recognition at each Annual Meeting
- Special recognition in our e-Cast newsletter
- Social media posts announcing your new Lifetime Membership
- Future social media shout-outs indicating Lifetime Member status
- Introduction at the next Leadership Florida Board of Directors Meeting
- Prominent listings in the Annual Membership Directory, including name, photo, information and special icon indicating Lifetime Member status
- Early registration opportunities for the Annual Meeting when possible
- Occasional advance notice to "*but for Leadership Florida*" offerings, including trips and exclusive events
- A special Leadership Florida Lifetime Member lapel pin

Lifetime Membership Gift: \$5,400

Payment plans are available in the amount of \$6,000

Learn more about becoming
a Lifetime Member at
leadfla.com/lifetime



Ready to join?
Scan the QR code
to submit your
Lifetime Member
Pledge Form



Click to learn more about Lifetime Membership!

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



KELLY JONES

Executive Assistant to the President & CEO

How long have you been with the Leadership Florida Team, and what is your primary role? I've been with Leadership Florida for nine months as executive assistant to the president & CEO.

For which projects or programs would you be a member's contact person? I handle administrative needs, Board of Directors/Leadership Team needs, and coordinating meetings with Wendy Spencer.

Regarding working with Leadership Florida, do you have any favorite moments you would like to share? My favorite moment so far is the Veterans Program we held during the Annual Meeting in Orlando this past June. It was an honor recognizing our Leadership Florida members who have served our country.

Would you share a little about life outside of Leadership Florida? I was born and raised in Tallahassee and graduated from FSU. I'm married and have an 11-year-old son. I enjoy spending weekends at the coast with my family and friends.

And just for fun, if you were to write a book about yourself, what would you name it? My book would be titled, "How can I help you?"

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Check out the latest news from your fellow Leadership Florida members on our blog [here!](#)



Chris Dawson
Connect Class 6
East Central Region

Chris Dawson was featured in an article that appeared in the **Summer 2022 issue of INFLUENCE Magazine**. [Read more](#)



Terin Barbas Cremer
Connect Class 3
West Central Region

Terin Barbas Cremer was recognized as a Rising Star by Florida **Super Lawyers**. [Read more](#)



Sean Pittman
Cornerstone Class 21
Northwest Region
Lifetime Member

Sean Pittman received the Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr. Civil Lawyer of the Year award and a Power 50 award from the **National Bar Association**. [Read more](#)



Callie Neslund
Connect Class 3
West Central Region

Callie Neslund began a new position as the chief operating officer of the **GiveWell Community Foundation**. [Read more](#)



Clay Henderson
Cornerstone Class 17

Clay Henderson received the president's lifetime achievement award for historic preservation from Florida Secretary of State Cord Byrd. [Read more](#)



James Richardson
Cornerstone Class 17
Northeast Region

James Richardson received the President Award from the **Florida Local Environmental Resource Agencies (FLERA)**. [Read more](#)



Ben Dachepalli
Cornerstone Class 31
West Central Region
Lifetime Member

Ben Dachepalli was added as a partner to **Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP's** Construction Practice Group.
[Read more](#)



Christina Cornwell
Education Class 6
Northeast Region

Christina Cornwell began a new position as coordinator of professional development for **Bradford County Schools**.
[Read more](#)



Sam Kearns O'Lenick
Cornerstone Class 37
East Central Region

Sam was promoted to vice president of community engagement at **Workscapes**.
[Read more](#)



Sabeen Perwaiz
Connect Class 8
Northeast Region

Sabeen Perwaiz, president and CEO of the **Florida Nonprofit Alliance**, was named to the **NonProfit Times (NPT)** Power & Influence Top 50.
[Read more](#)



Henry Mack
Connect Class 9
Northwest Region

Henry Mack, senior chancellor at the **Florida Department of Education**, was appointed to the **Education Commission of the States** by Governor Ron DeSantis.
[Read more](#)



Braulio Colón
Cornerstone Class 39
West Central Region

Braulio Colón, vice president of Florida Student Success Initiatives at **Helios Education Foundation**, was recognized by **Tampa Hispanic Heritage, Inc.** as an outstanding Hispanic leader in the

Tampa Bay Community in
the public service sector.

[Read more](#)



Heather Hanks
Education Class 4
West Central Region

Heather Hanks began a new position as assistant principal at **Rampello Downtown Partnership School** in Tampa.

[Read more](#)



Kim Moore
Cornerstone Class 33
Northwest Region

Kim Moore, vice president for workforce innovation at **Tallahassee Community College**, was selected to join the next class of the **Aspen Institute's Rising Presidents Fellowship for College Excellence**.

[Read more](#)



Mildred Coyne
Cornerstone Class 37
Gold Coast Region

Mildred Coyne was appointed to the Commission for Independent Education by Governor Ron DeSantis and will serve as chair.

[Read more](#)



Grasford Smith
Cornerstone Class 40
Gulfstream Region

Grasford Smith received a Power 50 award from the **National Bar Association**.



Irela Bague
Cornerstone Class 25
Southeast Region

Irela Bague, chief bay officer for Miami-Dade County, was among this year's inductees



Greg Haile
Cornerstone Class 30
Gold Coast Region
Lifetime Member

Greg Haile, president of Broward College, was selected for the **YWCA's**

[Read more](#)

for YWCA South Florida's
"First But Not The Last"
Women Leaders of
South Florida.
[Read more](#)

inaugural First But Not
The Last Man-Kind
Award.
[Read more](#)



Will Robinson
Cornerstone Class 29
Calusa Region

Will Robinson, attorney
with Blalock Walters,
received the Best Lawyers
in America® 2023 Real
Estate Law "Lawyer of the
Year" award for the
Sarasota metro area.
[Read more](#)



Lauren Vickroy Purdy
Connect Class 8
Northeast Region

Lauren Vickroy Purdy,
shareholder at Gunster,
was included in the Best
Lawyers in America® 2023
listing.
[Read more](#)



Holly Goodman
Connect Class 12
Gulfstream Region

Holly Goodman,
shareholder
at **Gunster**, earned board
certification in Labor and
Employment Law.
[Read more](#)



Roger Feicht
Connect Class 2
Gulfstream Region

Roger Feicht,
shareholder at **Gunster**,

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 **LEADERSHIP
FLORIDA**

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Have news to share? [Click here](#) and let
us know! You could be featured in next
month's Movers & Shakers blog, our

earned board
certification in Business
Litigation.
[Read more](#)

social media channels, and our e-Cast
newsletter!



Save the Date!
June 15-18, 2023

Leadership Florida Annual Meeting
The Boca Raton Resort
Boca Raton, Florida

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