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Awards Presented to Members at LSBA Annual Meeting

NEW ORLEANS—Several Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) members received awards June 6 during the association's 2024 Annual Meeting in Destin, Fla.

*All award recipients are listed below. Photos of award recipients are available online at:
<https://www.lsba.org/NewsAndPublications/PressPhotos.aspx?PRPA=116>.*

President's Awards

Two LSBA members received 2024 President's Awards. Recipients were chosen by 2023-24 LSBA President Shayna L. Sonnier and were recognized for services to the association. Recognized were attorney **Robert A. Kutcher** of Metairie and attorney **Edward J. Walters, Jr.** of Baton Rouge.

Kutcher was recognized for his leadership of the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program (he is currently serving as president) and his overall support of the President and the LSBA. He is the managing partner in the law firm of Kutcher Tygier & Luminais, LLP, in Metairie. He received his undergraduate degree in 1972 from Cornell University and his JD degree, *cum laude*, in 1975 from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. He served as 2019-20 LSBA president, president of the New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association and chair of the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board. For many years, he has been designated a *Louisiana Super Lawyer* and was named to *Best Lawyers*, Commercial Litigation and Real Estate, Bet-the-Company Litigation and Closely Held Companies and Family Businesses Law, including Lawyer of the Year in 2013, 2019 and 2023.

Walters was recognized for his exceptional support of the President and the LSBA. He is a partner in the Baton Rouge firm of Walters, Thomas, Cullens, LLC. He received a BS degree in accounting in 1969 from Louisiana State University and his JD degree in 1975 from LSU Law Center. He is serving as the 2024-25 LSBA president-elect and will continue his service as 2025-26 LSBA president. In 2012-13, he served as the LSBA's secretary and editor-in-chief of the *Louisiana Bar Journal*. He was appointed by the Louisiana Supreme Court to serve as a member of the Judiciary Commission of Louisiana from 2017-21 (Commission chair in 2020). He received the LSU Law Center's Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2015, the LSBA's President's Award in 2011, the Louisiana Bar Foundation's Distinguished Attorney Award in 2008 and the Baton Rouge Bar Association's President's Award in 1995, 1998 and 2014. He is a member of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the International Academy of Trial Lawyers. He is board certified in Civil Trial Advocacy by the National Board of Trial Advocacy.

Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson Trailblazer Award

Associate Justice Piper D. Griffin of New Orleans received the 2024 Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson Trailblazer Award.

Justice Griffin was elected to serve on the Louisiana Supreme Court in 2020, representing District 7 (Orleans and Jefferson parishes). She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame and her JD degree in 1987 from Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center. She began her legal career in New Orleans, focusing on casualty litigation. In 2001, she was elected to the Orleans Parish Civil District Court and served as its chief judge from 2008-10. Prior to joining the court, she was active with the Juvenile Court's Teen Court Program, the Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. and the New Orleans Bar Association (the first African-American female chair of the Young Lawyers Section). She was appointed by the Louisiana Supreme Court as the Constitutional Law bar examiner for the Louisiana Bar Exam. She is the secretary of the American Judges Association (also chair of its Diversity Committee) and the secretary of the Louisiana Judicial Council Foundation/National Bar Association. She also serves on the Louisiana State Law Institute Council.

Guardian of Diversity Award

The **U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana** in New Orleans received the 2024 Guardian of Diversity Award.

Led by the court's first African-American Chief Judge Nannette Jolivette Brown, the court presents thought-provoking programs about diversity, conducts naturalization ceremonies highlighting the diversity of new citizens, and has improved diversity in its workforce and jury pool. Recent programs featured the women leaders of local law enforcement agencies; Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice (Ret.) Bernette Joshua Johnson discussing the civil rights movement; and the lost community of Fazendeville and other threatened communities of color. The court holds other programs promoting diversity issues in the legal profession, including a dramatic reenactment of the legal events leading to the integration of the University of Mississippi. The court has expanded recruitment efforts to diversify its workforce. The Clerk's Office DE&I Committee presents celebrations of different cultures and holds events that spotlight court employees' diversity.

Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education's Judge Benjamin Jones Judges in the Classroom Award

Judge Karelia R. Stewart of Shreveport received the 2024 Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education's Judge Benjamin Jones Judges in the Classroom Award.

Judge Stewart was elected, without opposition, to Section 1, Division D of 1st Judicial District Court in August 2014 and took the bench in October 2014. She is currently serving in the Family Court Division. She is a 2001, *cum laude*, graduate of Dillard University and a merit scholar and 2004 honor graduate of Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. Prior to serving on the bench, she was an assistant district attorney for Caddo Parish and maintained a civil practice. At the time of her departure, she was section chief of the Drug Division and was instrumental in reviving the rehabilitation program of Drug Court and in implementing a Veterans Court. She is an active member and officer on the National Bar Association's Judicial Council and is an executive committee member for the Louisiana Judicial College. She is a member of the National Association of Women Judges and the American Judges Association, and is a Master of the Bench in the Harry V. Booth/Judge Henry A. Politz American Inn of Court. She is a mentor judge and works with New Judge Training as a member of the Louisiana Judicial College. She also teaches real estate law as an adjunct professor for the paralegal

program at LSU-Shreveport. She was recognized by Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice John L. Weimer in his address to the Louisiana Legislature about the hours she has contributed to the Judges in the Classroom Program in Caddo and Bossier Parish Schools.

Stephen T. Victory Memorial Award

Adrienne K. Wheeler and **Laura Tuggle**, both of New Orleans, received the 2024 Stephen T. Victory Memorial Award, recognizing outstanding contributions to the *Louisiana Bar Journal*, the LSBA's bimonthly magazine. They were recognized for their article, "Louisiana's Tangled Titles: Best Practices," published in the February/March 2024 issue of the magazine.

Wheeler is the executive director of Louisiana Appleaseed. She earned a BA degree from Sarah Lawrence College, a MA degree from New York University and her law degree from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. She is a member of the Louisiana State Bar Association's Criminal Justice Committee and the Access to Justice Committee. In 2011, she founded the Justice & Accountability Center of Louisiana that focuses on re-entry and the criminal justice system and currently serves on its board of directors. She is the 2014 recipient of the Gillis Long Poverty Law Center Public Service Award.

Tuggle has served as the executive director of Southeast Louisiana Legal Services since 2014. She received her undergraduate degree in 1984 from Louisiana State University and her JD degree in 1987 from Tulane University Law School. She serves on the board of the New Orleans Family Justice Center and co-chairs the Legal Services Corp.'s National Disaster Task Force Relationship-Building and Integration of Legal Services into the Nation's Emergency Management Infrastructure Committee. She is a member of the Louisiana Access to Justice Commission's Building Bridges Committee and the Louisiana State Bar Association's Access to Justice Committee.

John A. "T-Jean" Hernandez III Memorial Award

Bernard F. Duhon of Abbeville received the 2024 John A. "T-Jean" Hernandez III Memorial Award, presented for achievements in Francophone leadership.

Duhon, with Bernard F. Duhon, Ltd. in Abbeville, graduated from Louisiana State University with a BS degree in political science in 1974 and a JD degree in 1977. His law practice is focused on successions, wills and estates, property, personal injury, health care, government and business. He is experienced in oil and gas matters and is licensed to practice law in all Louisiana state and federal courts. He has chaired and represented municipal Civil Service boards. He was a city magistrate from 1988-98 and a prosecutor from 1979-88. He is a member of the Million Dollar Advocate Society for achieving a jury verdict in excess of \$1 million. He is a sponsor and lecturer for "The Peoples Law School." He is a charter member and former board member of the Louisiana Society of Hospital Attorneys and a member of the Louisiana Association for Justice. He is a board member for the French-Acadian Music Festival and CODIFIL and is a former president of the Abbeville Rotary Club.

LSBA Young Lawyers Division Bat P. Sullivan, Jr. Chair's Award

Quinn K. Brown of Baton Rouge and **Jennifer Gordon Lampton** of New Orleans received the 2024 LSBA Young Lawyers Division's Bat P. Sullivan, Jr. Chair's Award.

Brown was recognized for her work with the LSBA Young Lawyers Division's (YLD) Wills for Heroes Program. She is an associate in the Baton Rouge office of LaFleur Laborde, LLC. She received her BA degree, *cum laude*, in 2013 from Louisiana State University and her JD degree and graduate diploma in comparative law in 2017 from LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. She will serve as the 2024-25 secretary of the LSBA YLD Council. She previously served as the District 5

representative on the YLD Council and chaired the Wills for Heroes Committee. She currently serves as chair-elect for the Baton Rouge Bar Association's Young Lawyer's Section.

Lampton was recognized for her work as chair of the LSBA Young Lawyers Division's (YLD) Louisiana Young Lawyers Conference. She is the research attorney for Judge Nakisha Ervin-Knott with the Louisiana 4th Circuit Court of Appeal, Division A, in New Orleans. She received a BS degree in management in 2009, with a focus on legal studies in business and political science, from the A.B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University and her JD degree (Civil Law Division, Common Law Certificate) in 2012 from Loyola University College of Law. She is currently serving as one of the District 1 representatives on the YLD Council. She served on the LSBA's Diversity Committee and Outreach Committee and was a member of the 2019-20 Leadership LSBA Class. She is a member of the New Orleans Bar Association (current Young Lawyers Section vice chair; 2022-23 YLS secretary; and 2021-22 YLS treasurer), the Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. and the A.P. Tureaud American Inn of Court (current board member).

Louisiana Bar Foundation's Curtis R. Boisfontaine Trial Advocacy Award

Edward J. Walters, Jr. of Baton Rouge received the 2024 Louisiana Bar Foundation's Curtis R. Boisfontaine Trial Advocacy Award.

Walters is a partner in the Baton Rouge firm of Walters, Thomas, Cullens, LLC. He has been an active courtroom lawyer for more than 45 years. He received a BS degree in 1969 from Louisiana State University and his JD degree in 1975 from LSU Law Center, where he is a member of its Hall of Fame. He is board certified in Civil Trial Advocacy by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. He is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the International Academy of Trial Lawyers. As an adjunct professor of law at LSU Law Center, he has taught a trial skills course for more than 30 years. He has been a member of the faculty of the Law Center's yearly Trial Advocacy Program since its inception 25 years ago. He will serve as the LSBA's president-elect for the 2024-25 term and will become the LSBA president in 2025-26. He is the recipient of the Louisiana Bar Foundation's Distinguished Attorney Award.

The Louisiana State Bar Association assists its more than 23,000 members in the practice of law. The statewide association, as part of its multi-faceted mission, promotes and maintains access to justice initiatives for the state's residents, assists the Louisiana Supreme Court in its regulation of the practice of law, upholds the honor of the courts and the profession, and supports programs that increase public understanding of and respect for the law.