



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Photo of Jane Fonda; plus jpegs of honorees via link below

YWCA GREATER BATON ROUGE TO FEATURE AMERICAN FILM ICON JANE FONDA AT MARCH 5 “EMPOWERING THE W” BRUNCH; *10 Baton Rouge Leaders and Two Organizations to be Honored*

Baton Rouge, LA—An American film icon, author, and women’s advocate will be the featured speaker at the YWCA Greater Baton Rouge annual fundraising event on Sunday, March 5, in Baton Rouge.

The high-profile event entitled “Empowering the W” Brunch will be held in Baton Rouge at the prestigious LSU Stadium Club. Fonda’s astonishing career on stage and screen spans decades of major honors and continues today with her latest movie, “80 For Brady” being released this month. Fonda has published numerous books and inspired the fitness era in America. More importantly, she is an avid advocate for women.

The fundraising brunch will honor 10 outstanding community leaders and two community organizations who have worked to advocate for women in their various roles.

Sponsorships, tables, and individual tickets are available at YWCA-br.org or bontempstix.com. Only 500 tickets are available for the event. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana and Healthy Blue are major sponsors of the event. The LSU Stadium Club features a panoramic view of the LSU campus and a spectacular view of LSU’s Death Valley.

Join with many organizations, leaders and women’s advocates in learning from Jane Fonda’s six decades of experience in the national and Hollywood spotlight and saluting the remarkable achievement of the following YWCA 2023 Honorees.

YWCA 2023 Award Recipients

Barbara K. Beckmann-ExxonMobil, Senior Economic Associate- Beckmann was the first female engineering student to graduate from the University of Mississippi in chemical engineering and the first hired in Baton Rouge by Humble Oil and Refining Company (now ExxonMobil). She is the first employee of the global company to celebrate 60 years of service. She mentors young professionals, especially women, advocating for STEM careers.

Gaylynne Mack, Big Buddy, Executive Director-Through a lifelong career in youth development, Mack motivates and guides children and teens to creative, healthy, and positive living. Her career with Big Buddy started as an intern while at LSU, now 30 years later reaching thousands of youths in after-school programming. She is a 2012 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Angel Award recipient.

Melissa Flournoy-10,000 Women-State and Local Advocacy Organization- Flournoy is a leader and advocate for women and good government causes in Louisiana, promoting and advocating for women in leadership. She is Chair of the Board of Directors of Louisiana Progress and a former member of the Louisiana House of Representatives. She founded the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations (LANO) and currently serves as chair of Louisiana Progress

Nial Patel, Cornerstone Governmental Public Affairs- Patel is a recognized government and public policy leader having served for many years in the Jindal administration. His volunteerism has been recognized as a Volunteer Activist in 2019, LABI's State Business Champion in 2020 and Jensen D. Holiday BRAC Awardee in 2021. He is chairman of Emerging Leaders Council, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry. He is chair of New Schools for Baton Rouge.

Michael Tipton, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation, President, and Director of Community Relations, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana- Tipton is recognized for his impassioned leadership and his ability to connect Foundation resources to communities and organizations to bring positive community change. Over the last two years, Michael has led BCBSLA Foundation in its \$22M + in community investments, dedicating five times the normal giving to improve health and life outcomes.

Debbie Mire, Home Bank, Senior Commercial Relationship Manager-Through her perseverance, expertise and dedication to the YWCA and other non-profit organizations, Mire has vigorously advocated for women and families. Without her guidance the new much-needed YWCA domestic violence recovery apartment community would not be a reality.

Wendy Daniels, Beechwood Residential President/CEO -During the last five years, Daniels dedicated her real estate development services as a volunteer, leading to the successful new construction of the YWCA domestic violence housing community to serve greater Baton Rouge. In her career, she has facilitated the development of 3,000 units of multifamily real estate valued at over \$250 million.

Alaina Boothe Bloodworth, Black Public Defender's Association- Bloodworth is an attorney in the Baton Rouge Office of the Public Defender. She has bolstered the office through initiatives raising awareness on the importance of public defense. During Christmas of 2021, she raised funds for the YWCA's Bail Fund through her volunteer efforts with the Black Public Defender's Association to release ten women incarcerated for nonviolent offenses.

Gerri Hobdy-Baton Rouge Community College, Director of Development, Office of Institutional Advancement. As an advocate for higher education and women's advocacy, Hobdy has strengthened the community through 30 years of experience in the nonprofit and government sectors. Her expertise is in management, fundraising, grant-making, and capacity building. Hobdy is also owner of Pleroma LLC, a consulting firm offering coaching and consulting to aid in investment or sustainability for individuals or organizations.

Special Awards

Roberta Madden Achievement Award- Christel Slaughter, Ph.D., SSA Consultants, Chief Executive Officer-Through her inspiration and abilities in leadership development, change management and wise corporate counsel, Slaughter has uplifted women across Baton Rouge to new heights throughout her highly successful career. She is nationally recognized for leading corporate and organizational transformations involving strategy, growth, cultural change, and performance improvement. She is highly recognized for her work in Louisiana for enhancing workforce development initiatives. She currently serves on the board of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Community Collaboration Awards-La Capitale Links, Incorporated and the Baton Rouge Chapter of The Links, Incorporated work together to enrich, sustain, and ensure the culture and economic enhancement of African American women. The organizations work collectively on initiatives and programs to fulfill the mission and needs of the community. On behalf of their members, the awards will be accepted by Sancerie O'Rourke Allen, DDS, La Capitale Links, Incorporated. and Cheryl Hall-DeRouen, Baton Rouge Chapter of The Links, Inc. Both chapters are affiliated with The Links national organizations founded in 1946.

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Photos of YWCA 2023 Honorees

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Lv2Y2kpDzIFQSJC6X5R_c_livcBViSIZ?usp=share_link