

October 2023



You are cordially invited to the Annual Alumni* Luncheon 2023

Join us in celebration of the **2023 Honorary Alumni member Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole.**

Wednesday, November 29, 2023
11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Schultz Center

4019 Boulevard Center Dr, Jacksonville, 32207

Also meet the new graduates from the Leadership Jacksonville Class of 2023, Next Generation 2023, and hear the announcement of the annual LJ "Best Class" distinction.

Register here

*This event is for alumni only. Current LJ class members are welcome to participate in the Annual Alumni Luncheon upon completion of the program.

Invitation for Feedback

We invite you to participate in one of our LJ Alumni Focus groups this month. Your feedback will provide great insight into Leadership Jacksonville's next chapter as we embark on a new strategic planning process.

The small group discussions will take place in-person downtown at The Jessie on Wednesday, October 11 from 5:30 - 6:45 pm or Monday, October 16 from 5:30 - 6:45 pm.

Register Here



Nominations are now open for the Leadership Jacksonville Class of 2025!

Online nominations are open now through midnight December 15, 2023.

[Nominate here](#)

The LJ Swag Shop

For a **very** limited time only, order your LJ Swag items [here](#).

Select the pick-up option as items will be brought to the Leadership Jacksonville office in Downtown Jacksonville for easy distribution.



Leadership Jacksonville Ladies Triblend T-shirt
From \$15.00
[More options](#)



Leadership Jacksonville Performance Cap
\$15.00



Leadership Jacksonville Triblend T-shirt
From \$15.00
[More options](#)



Leadership Jacksonville Ladies Performance Polo
From \$25.00
[More options](#)



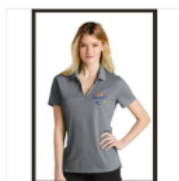
Leadership Jacksonville Performance Polo
From \$25.00
[More options](#)



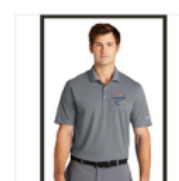
Leadership Jacksonville Ladies Performance 1/4 Zip
From \$27.50
[More options](#)



Leadership Jacksonville Performance 1/4 Zip
From \$27.50
[More options](#)



Leadership Jacksonville Ladies Nike Performance Polo
From \$50.00
[More options](#)



Leadership Jacksonville Nike Performance Polo
From \$50.00
[More options](#)



Leadership Jacksonville 2024 Leading From Within Day

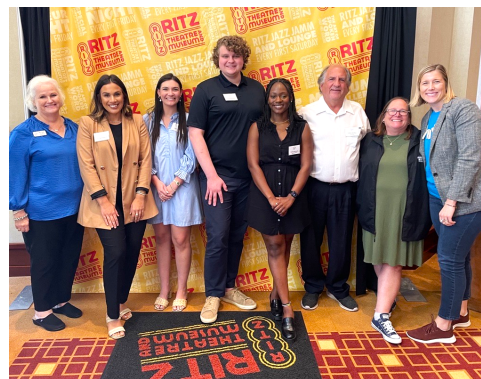
LJ 2024 participants engaged in Leading From Within Day on September 21 at the Jewish Community Alliance. Activities focused on understanding each other better and increasing one's appreciation for other's differences and similarities. Thank you to our Program Day Sponsor [University of North Florida](#), our lunch sponsor [WGI](#), and to the speakers and facilitators for their time and talents.



Youth Leadership Jacksonville 2024 "In Living Color" Day



YLJ 2024 enjoyed "In Living Color" Day on Thursday, September 7 at the Ritz Theatre and Museum in LaVilla. Participants engaged in various activities focused on family heritage, diversity, stereotyping, and civil discourse including discussions with faith-based community leaders. They also enjoyed a tour of the museum and learned about its rich history in Northeast Florida. Thank you to our Program Day sponsor [FSCJ Foundation](#), and to our volunteers and community leaders for sharing their experiences with the class.



LJ Alumni Spotlight: Jana Ertrachter (LJ 2003)

As a native of Jacksonville, **Jana Ertrachter** (LJ 2003) is passionate about the growth and success in the community. "I found out about Leadership Jacksonville through friends that had been through the program, and witnessed the impact it had on their commitment to be the best ambassadors. It provided an extraordinary opportunity to connect with diverse perspectives on things that matter in our community. I built relationships that allowed me to give back in ways that I had not imagined."

"Although there were nuggets that I took from each program day, Poverty Day has stayed with me to this day. It helped me identify and name 'meaningful work' as a core value. One of my favorite volunteer opportunities has been with Youth Leadership Jacksonville. I recently facilitated a small group civil discourse conversation on a topic of importance for our youth. I always leave those opportunities feeling very hopeful for our future."

Upcoming Leadership Connect Dates

Leadership Connect continues to build relationships and foster new alumni connections across Alumni members. Reserve your spot for an upcoming Leadership Connect breakfast, lunch, or happy hour meetup.

Upcoming Alumni Leads include:

- Kimberly Allen (LJ 2023), October 10
- Kristie Kirschner (LJ 2002), October 20
- Eric Mann (NLS 2012), October 25
- Chris Kennelly (LJ 2016), December 5
- Dawn Lockhart (Honorary), December 14

[Sign Up Here](#)



2023 EVENTS & PROGRAM DAYS

LJ 2025 Online Nominations

Open now through midnight, Friday, December 15

YLJ 2024 "Inside the System" Day
Thursday, October 5

LJ 2024 Poverty Day
Thursday, October 19

YLJ 2024 "Leading For A Lifetime" Day
Thursday, November 2

LJ 2024 Justice Day
Thursday, November 9

Annual Alumni Luncheon 2023

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

YLJ "Everyday Creativity" Day
Thursday, November 30

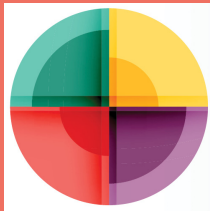
Upcoming Class Socials

Do you have an upcoming LJ Class social? Please email Manisha Joshi at manisha@leadershipjax.org and we will include it in the monthly newsletter.

LJ 2016 class members **Mike Huskey, Lawson Carr, Vickie Robinson, and Chris Kennelly** met for lunch at Anejo's on October 2.

LJ 1993 will have their 30th year Class Reunion on Thursday, October 12 from 5:00-7:00 pm at Midtown Table. RSVP to **Janice Donaldson** at donaldsonjanice77@gmail.com.

LJ 2021 is hosting a "Friendsgiving" on Thursday, November 2 from 6:00-8:30 pm at OES in San Marco. RSVP to **Madelen Salter** at msalter@oesjax.com.



Alumni Class Notes

Submit your news to
manisha@leadershipjax.org

1986

Michael Korn (LJ 1986) was recognized in the 30th Edition of the Best Lawyers in America for 2024 in the field of appellate practice.

2008

Kyle Reese (LJ 2008) has joined First Baptist Church of Savannah in Georgia as Senior Minister. He will stay in his role as Executive Director with OneJax through December 31.

2010

Daniel Bean (LJ 2010) was selected as Chair to the JAXPORT Board of Directors.

Cleve Ferguson III (LJ 2010) has been promoted to Executive Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer at Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA).

2011

Brooks Dame (YLJ 2011) was [featured in The Resident News](#) as one of Jacksonville's aspiring young leaders.

2012

Brenda Ezell (LJ 2012) was appointed to the Executive Committee of the Real Property Probate & Trust Law Section of The Florida Bar.

2013

Nicole Saunders (NextGen 2013) was appointed as an Administrative Law Judge at the Division of Administrative Hearings in Tallahassee, Florida.

2015

Congratulations to **Jeff Winkler** (LJ 2015) on his new position as Executive Director of Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry (BEAM).

2016

Chris Kennelly (LJ 2016) celebrated 20 years with his company Kennetic Productions in August.

Sabeen Perwaiz Syed (LJ 2016) was selected by [City & State Florida's inaugural list of women](#) who go above and beyond for Florida. The list features trailblazers who have distinguished themselves in government, business, nonprofits, media, healthcare and other high-profile fields.

2020

Laura Bennett (LJ 2020) earned the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace Certificate from University of South Florida Muma College of Business.

Chris Kalin (LJ 2020) joined Bosses for Babies, a statewide initiative of The Children's Movement of Florida, designed to engage business leaders in boosting their workforce and contributing to community prosperity through family-focused practices.

Congratulations to **Bernard Schmidt** (LJ 2020) on his new position as Vice President, Power Generation Division at NextEra Energy, Inc. Bernard also began a new role as a faculty member at LEAD360's WYN Academy for the 2023-2024 cohort at Georgetown University.

2022

Basma Alawee (LJ 2022) has been promoted to Deputy Executive Director at the Community Sponsorship Hub.

Amanda Polematidis (LJ 2022) joined Hanson Professional Services as an Associate Project Manager.

Heather Schatz (LJ 2022) joined the City of Jacksonville as the Assistant Director of Public Affairs for the Office of the Mayor.

Jaclyn Barnett (NextGen 2022) began a new position as Regional Vice President at Make-A-Wish Central and Northern Florida.

2023

Jaynae Johnson (LJ 2023) was welcomed back to the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Florida Board of Directors.

Melinda Powers (LJ 2023) joined UNF's Coggin College of Business as an Adjunct Professor.

Austin Belet (NextGen 2023) joined Riverside Avondale Preservation as the new Development Manager.

Gabrielle Williams (NextGen 2023) has written a book: *[Bonds Beyond Scars: Unveiling the Tapestry of Sisterhood, Friendship, Trauma and Healing.](#)*

2024

Ashantae Green (LJ 2024) led a roundtable discussion on sustainability and social equity at the Greenbuild Conference & Expo in Washington, D.C. on September 28.

Congratulations to **Keshan Hargrove** (LJ 2024) on receiving the Meritorious Service Medal by the Florida Air National Guard at her retirement ceremony after serving more than 33 years.

Desiree Jones (LJ 2024) was inducted into the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Greater Jacksonville Chapter.

Combined Classes and Events

Moné Holder (LJ 2023) and **Tina Meskel** (LJ 2020) were appointed to Mayor Donna Deegan's Planning Commission.

Megan Hayward (LJ 2023) and **Patricia Gillum Sams** (LJ 2021) were appointed to the Jacksonville Transportation Authority Board.

The World Affairs Council of Jacksonville welcomed the following NextGen 2023 Alumni members to its 2023-24 Council EDGE mentorship program: **Austin Belet, Hugh Chapman, Joel Masters, and Stacia Richard**. The program pairs young professionals with members of the World Affairs Council Board of Directors and Advisory Council to provide professional guidance and foster leadership.



Community Leaders Rally to Honor Victims and Drive Change

Three weeks after the racially motivated shooting in Jacksonville, the Jaguars and their foundation honored the victims at the first home game of the 2023 season. The team presented a \$1.1 million check, including \$300,000 from the Jaguars' and NFL's foundations, to the First Coast Relief Fund. The fund was activated to support the families of the victims and go toward fighting food insecurity and community advocacy in the New Town neighborhood. For more information, click [here](#).

L to R back row: Jane Badger, Isaiah Oliver, **Mark Bennett** (LJ 2017), Haley Trager, Lee Smith, **Kemal Gasper** (LJ 2019), **David Miller** (LJ 2008), Lisa Palmer, Sean Pelkey, Tabitha Furyk, and Mayor Donna Deegan. L to R front row: **Melanie Patz** (LJ 2006), **Darnell Smith** (LJ 2000), Antonio Bailey, **Pat Geraghty** (NLS 2013), **Whitney Meyer** (LJ 2022), and **Wanda Willis** (LJ 2002).



LJ Alumni members **Cindy Watson** (LJ 2014), **Ju'Coby Pittman** (LJ 1993), **Dawn Gilman** (LJ 2018), and **Cindy Funkhouser** (LJ 2014) were among the panelists at the NextUp JAX Homelessness on the First Coast Panel discussion on September 5.

The Groundwork Jacksonville Board welcomed **Debbie Johnson** (LJ 2011) as Vice Chair and **Kerri Stewart** (LJ 2006) as Board Chair both serving two-year terms.

The United Way Stein Fellowship Class of 2024 welcomed the following Alumni members: **Conrad Jennings** (NextGen 2022), **Lawrence Luksha** (NextGen 2019), and **Brandie Stallings** (YLJ 2001). Founded by **David Stein** (LJ 2012) and **Linda Stein** (Honorary), the Stein Fellowship is a yearlong immersive leadership and mentorship experience for young professionals ages 21 to 40 living in Northeast Florida.

EVENTS

Alumni members **Adam Chaskin** (LJ 2021) and **Eric Mann** (NLS 2012) announced a new partnership to take an active role in educating and inspiring our neighbors to build a more inclusive Northeast Florida. Together Against Hate: Promoting Unity in Our Community is a speaker series that will address topics impacting our area including prejudices in faith, race, antisemitism, ethnicity, LGBTQ+, gender, and diverse abilities. The next session of the series will take place on October 10. For more information, [click here](#).

The TEDxJacksonville Leadership Team including **Allishia Bauman** (NextGen 2012), **Mario Barrozo** (NextGen 2022), **Doug Coleman** (LJ 2013), **Stacy Ellison** (LJ 2024), **David Johnson** (LJ 2024), **Sabeen Perwaiz Syed** (LJ 2016), and **Ale'ta Turner** (NextGen 2012) is preparing for the TEDxJacksonville 2023 Human/Nature Conference on Saturday, October 14 at WJCT Studios. LJ Alumni members include speaker **Diana Greene** (Honorary) and emcee Hope McMath (LJ 2006). For more information, [click here](#).

IN SYMPATHY



Our thoughts are with the family, friends and classmates of **Cheryl Godwin Grymes** (LJ 1994) who passed away on September 11.

STAY IN TOUCH!

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)



[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)



[LJ Alumni Facebook Group](#)

[NextGen Alumni Facebook Group](#)

[YLJ Alumni Facebook Group](#)

MAKE A LEADERSHIP JACKSONVILLE DONATION

[DONATE NOW](#)

Many companies sponsor matching gift programs that match the charitable contributions made by their employees. Check with your employer for details.

[This is a great way to enhance the impact of your giving.](#)

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