

2026 TOP 10 OUTSTANDING CITIZENS

Chad & Jill Barnett

Chad and Jill Barnett bring energy, creativity, and enthusiasm to nearly every corner of Hancock County. Whether volunteering at community events, supporting local nonprofits, or transforming celebrations with imaginative costumes and decorations, they inspire others to join in and give back.

Together, Chad and Jill devote countless hours to Rotary, the Mystic Krewe of the Seahorse, and a wide variety of community events like the Waveland Halloween event that enrich life across Hancock County. Chad also entertains audiences as a member of the local band Assumed Risk. Jill, a retired Keesler Federal Credit Union executive, shares his passion for service, and together they create memorable experiences that celebrate the spirit of the Coast. This year, while working full-time at Hollywood Casino Gulf Coast, Chad is serving as Captain Longbeard and Jill is at his side at every event with the Mystic Krewe of the Seahorse.

Wherever people gather to celebrate, volunteer, or support a worthy cause, chances are Chad and Jill are already there. Their joyful spirit, generous hearts, and unwavering commitment to their community continue to make Hancock County a more vibrant place to live.

Penny Elkins

For more than three decades, Penny Elkins has dedicated her life to improving the lives of others through healthcare, compassion, and community service. As the founder and leader of Coastal Therapy Services, she has helped thousands of Hancock County residents recover from illness, injury, and disability, restoring independence and hope to patients of every age.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Penny has generously supported numerous civic, educational, and charitable initiatives, quietly making a lasting impact throughout our community. She serves as secretary on the board of the Hancock Health Foundation, is a long-time volunteer for the OLG Crab Fest and active member of the Krewe of Nereids. She also supports the Bay Waveland Yacht Club Women's Auxiliary. Alongside her husband Tommy, she plays an active role in Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) fundraisers lending her time and energy to benefit the entire community.

One of her passions is working with "Misfits and Underdogs" fostering dogs while they await transport to their forever homes across the USA.

A member of the board for Caiden's Corner - The Ausome Families Foundation, she leads with generosity, humanity and a servant's heart. She quietly gives her time to the people and organizations that enrich Hancock County, stepping forward whenever help is needed and never asking for recognition in return. Penny makes a difference through her kindness, dependability, and unwavering commitment to others.

2026 TOP 10 OUTSTANDING CITIZENS

Sissy Favre

Sissy Favre is a dedicated community volunteer whose generous spirit and tireless work ethic have strengthened Bay St. Louis and Hancock County for years. Known for rarely turning down an opportunity to help, Sissy consistently steps up for local children's organizations, churches, schools, and nonprofits, as well as a wide range of community events that bring people together.

Sissy has worked for Calgon Carbon for close to 35 years and is a founding force behind some of the city's most beloved traditions. She helped establish the Bay St. Louis Christmas in the Bay parade and celebration at the Depot, Lights in the Harbor, the Santa Stroll, the New Year's Eve Oyster Drop, and the Bay St. Louis Community Easter Egg Hunt.

Sissy provides financial support and shares her talents to numerous fundraisers and community gatherings. She contributes her cooking skills and resources to the OLG Crab Fest, the Boys & Girls Club Taste of the Future, the Taste of Hancock, the CASA Mardi Gras Gala, CCA's Sunset on the Bay and First Friday events. She also supports numerous fundraisers and countless events for all the local schools, the Rotary Club Chili Cookoff, and King's Kitchen. Some of her signature dishes include Shrimp & Grits, Pecan Pie Bread Pudding, White Beans and Shrimp, Gumbo, and more.

Through countless hours of quiet service and financial support, Sissy Favre has made a lasting difference in the quality of life across Bay St. Louis and Hancock County.

Nell Frisbie

For decades, Nell Frisbie has served Hancock County with remarkable energy, leadership, and dedication. At 90 years old, she continues to help clients as a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Alfonso Realty while remaining actively involved in civic life, proving that a lifetime of service never goes out of style.

Throughout the years, Nell has strengthened her community through both professional and volunteer leadership. As a cheerleader and ambassador for Hancock County, she has guided countless families through buying and selling homes, contributing significantly to the economic vitality and quality of life for Hancock County. Nell served as chair of the Hancock County Republican Executive Committee, led the Hancock County Republican Women's Club, and devoted decades to grassroots civic engagement. Her passion for public service, strong work ethic, and commitment to Hancock County have earned the respect of neighbors, colleagues, and community leaders alike.

Nell's enduring commitment to serving others continues to inspire generations and reminds us that leadership, generosity, and community spirit have no age limit.

2026 TOP 10 OUTSTANDING CITIZENS

Sally Isaacs

Sally Isaacs strengthens Hancock County by helping its organizations grow, thrive, and serve others more effectively. A quiet but influential leader, she approaches every challenge with humility, professionalism, and a steadfast commitment to making her community better.

As president of the Library Foundation of Hancock County, Sally transformed the Foundation's vision into action by researching, planning, and launching the Second Line Used Bookstore, creating a sustainable source of funding for literacy initiatives. She also guides donor development, strengthens volunteer engagement, and helps shape the Foundation's long-term future. Her service extends to The Arts, Hancock County, Story Slam, the Bay St. Louis Little Theatre, the Hancock Medical Patient Advisory Board, and 100 Men Hall, where she supports scholarships and historic preservation. During her years at the Hancock Chamber of Commerce, Sally earned the trust of colleagues through her steady leadership and unwavering dependability, prompting former Executive Director Tish Williams to affectionately call her "the calm amidst the storm."

Sally doesn't seek recognition for her work. She simply leaves every organization—and every community she serves—stronger than she found it.

Derek Necaie

Derek Necaie believes the strongest communities grow through service. Whether volunteering with local schools, supporting community events, or serving his parish at Sacred Heart Dedeaux, he gives his time generously and leads by example.

Derek pairs that servant's heart with decades of leadership experience. After a distinguished 40-year career in the offshore energy industry, he returned home to invest his knowledge and leadership in Hancock County. Today, he serves as president of the Hancock County Port & Harbor Commission, which leads economic development and oversees the growth of the county's ports and industrial assets. He also owns Neco's Family Market and Necaie Consulting Services, and continues to champion initiatives that strengthen the county's economy and quality of life.

Friends and neighbors know Derek as someone who quietly steps forward whenever help is needed. Through his volunteerism, civic leadership, and unwavering commitment to Hancock County, he continues to make a lasting difference in the community he proudly calls home.

Mary Ann Pucheu

Mary Ann has spent a lifetime serving Hancock County with faith, generosity, and a steadfast commitment to her community. Whether leading nonprofit organizations, supporting local traditions, or volunteering behind the scenes, she consistently gives her time and talents to make life better for those around her.

She built a distinguished 42-year career with Hancock Whitney where she retired as Vice President and was recognized for professional excellence through the Mississippi Bankers Association's 40-Year Club. After she retired, Mary Ann devoted herself even more fully to community service. Her greatest legacy is her selfless service to the people and organizations that make Hancock County a special place to call home. She is a devoted member of St. Clare Catholic Church, where she has served as Seafood Festival Co-Chair for 12 years while

2026 TOP 10 OUTSTANDING CITIZENS

contributing to numerous ministry and leadership roles including Finance Council, Altar Society Treasurer, CCD Teacher and lector.

She also served as President and board member of CASA, helping advocate for children and families in need. A past Queen of the Krewe of Nereids, Mary Ann has chaired the Mermaids Arts & Crafts Show, serves as treasurer of the Misfits Street Krewzers, volunteers each year during Cruisin' the Coast, and currently helps shape the City's future by serving on the Holy Trinity Catholic School Advisory Council and contributing to Waveland's Compass 2046 Comprehensive Plan Advisory Group.

Mary Ann's lifelong dedication to serving others has enriched Hancock County and reflects the very best of community leadership.

Doug Seal

Doug Seal has never sought recognition for his efforts, choosing instead to quietly serve his community and "pay it forward" whenever the opportunity arises.

Doug discovered his passion for volunteering in the early 90s as a Cub Scout Leader. He has also been involved with Bay Area Youth Soccer since 1999, first as a coach and he continues to help maintain the fields and facilities. He has represented Ward 1 on the Bay St. Louis City Council for 25 years while continuing to serve his church and community. An active member of Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church, Doug has volunteered at the annual Crab Fest for more than 27 years, directed the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi's LIFT boys retreat, and supported the Dedeaux Bazaar. He has been active with the Krewe of Nereids and serves as a Past King.

Following the loss of his son, Cayce, Doug and his family established the Cayce Seal Foundation, which provides scholarships for Hancock County students pursuing careers as linemen as well as soccer scholarships at Pearl River Community College.

Doug's life reflects a simple belief: serve others, give back, and leave the community better than you found it.

Cheryl Thompson

Cheryl Thompson leads with compassion, vision, and an unwavering commitment to serving others. After a distinguished career in healthcare, she brought those same qualities to Gulfside Assembly, where she continues to strengthen one of Hancock County's most treasured historic and cultural institutions.

Following her retirement as Chief Nursing Officer at Garden Park Medical Center, Cheryl stepped in to lead Gulfside Assembly, expecting to serve for only a short time. Instead, she embraced the organization's mission and continues to guide its growth years later. Cheryl has strengthened community partnerships, expanded youth programming, celebrated Gulfside's centennial, supported the production of an award-winning documentary, and advanced efforts to preserve Gulfside's legacy as a nationally significant center for faith, education, civil rights, and social justice. She also serves numerous community organizations, as Vice President of the Library Foundation of Hancock County and as a member of the Board for the Hancock Resource Center.

Through her thoughtful leadership and steadfast dedication, Cheryl is making a difference for Hancock County.

2026 TOP 10 OUTSTANDING CITIZENS

Ray Wesson

Ray Wesson has spent a lifetime strengthening South Mississippi through leadership, generosity, and a deep commitment to serving others. Whether supporting charitable organizations, mentoring community initiatives, or quietly helping those in need, he leads with humility and a genuine desire to make a difference.

After a distinguished 35-year career as a regional banking executive, Ray continues to invest his time and talents in Hancock County and across the Coast. As President of the Hancock County Community Development Foundation, he helps advance initiatives that improve quality of life by supporting more than 20 charitable and community causes. He has served for 35 years on the Board of The Salvation Army, helping provide emergency assistance, disaster relief, and support for families in need. As Chairman of Gulf Coast Community Ministries, he helps guide an organization dedicated to assisting individuals and families facing hardship. He also serves as Secretary of the Hancock County Port & Harbor Commission, which leads economic development and oversees the growth of the county's ports and industrial assets, and is a board member of Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District, a regional organization that promotes economic growth, infrastructure, workforce development, and community planning. His lifelong commitment to service earned him the prestigious John R. Blossman Humanitarian Award from the Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA, recognizing a lifetime of putting others first.

Many of Ray's greatest contributions happen behind the scenes. He quietly supports philanthropic efforts such as the Hancock Resource Center and numerous other community initiatives without seeking recognition leaving a lasting impact on communities across the Mississippi Gulf Coast.