

Central High School's 112th Graduating Class

Central Class of 2024



350 Graduate from Central High, While 36 Set to Graduate From Central Private

Woody Jenkins
Editor

BATON ROUGE — More than 3,000 packed the Baton Rouge River Center Wednesday night, May 15 for the 112th Annual Graduation Ceremony of Central High School.

A total of 350 seniors crossed the stage and received their diplomas.

Leading the way were valedictorian Madison Lumpkin and salutatorian Samatha Vaughan. Among the graduates was National Merit Semi-Finalist Austin Elliott.

Meanwhile, 36 Central Private seniors are expected to receive their diplomas at 7 p.m., May 17 at Greenwell Springs Baptist Church.

Anne Rash is the valedictorian at Central Private, while Ben Pennington is salutatorian. Andrew Dugas will be recognized as a Killin Scholar.

Central High principal Brandon LaGroue said the Class of 2024 is one of the most well-rounded and involved classes in recent memory. The class has some of the highest ACT scores in the state.

LaGroue himself is a semi-finalist for Louisiana Principal of the Year. Finalists will be announced soon.

CENTRAL HIGH GRADUATION — Valedictorian Madison Lumpkin and salutatorian Samatha Vaughan with their classmates. A total of 350 seniors walked across the stage to receive their diplomas Wednesday, May 15 at the River Center in downtown Baton Rouge.

Central Provides Road Map for St. George

5 Years after Voters Approved St. George, State Supreme Court Okays Incorporation

Woody Jenkins
Editor

CITY OF ST. GEORGE — Nearly five years after citizens of the proposed City of St. George voted to incorporate, the Louisiana Supreme Court gave them a historic victory.

On Friday, April 26, the high court ruled organizers of the proposed city had met all requirements for incorporation, and the City of St. George officially came into existence. On Tuesday, May 14, Gov. Jeff Landry appointed Dustin Yates as the city's first mayor and Major Todd Morris as police chief.

See ST. GEORGE on Page 3

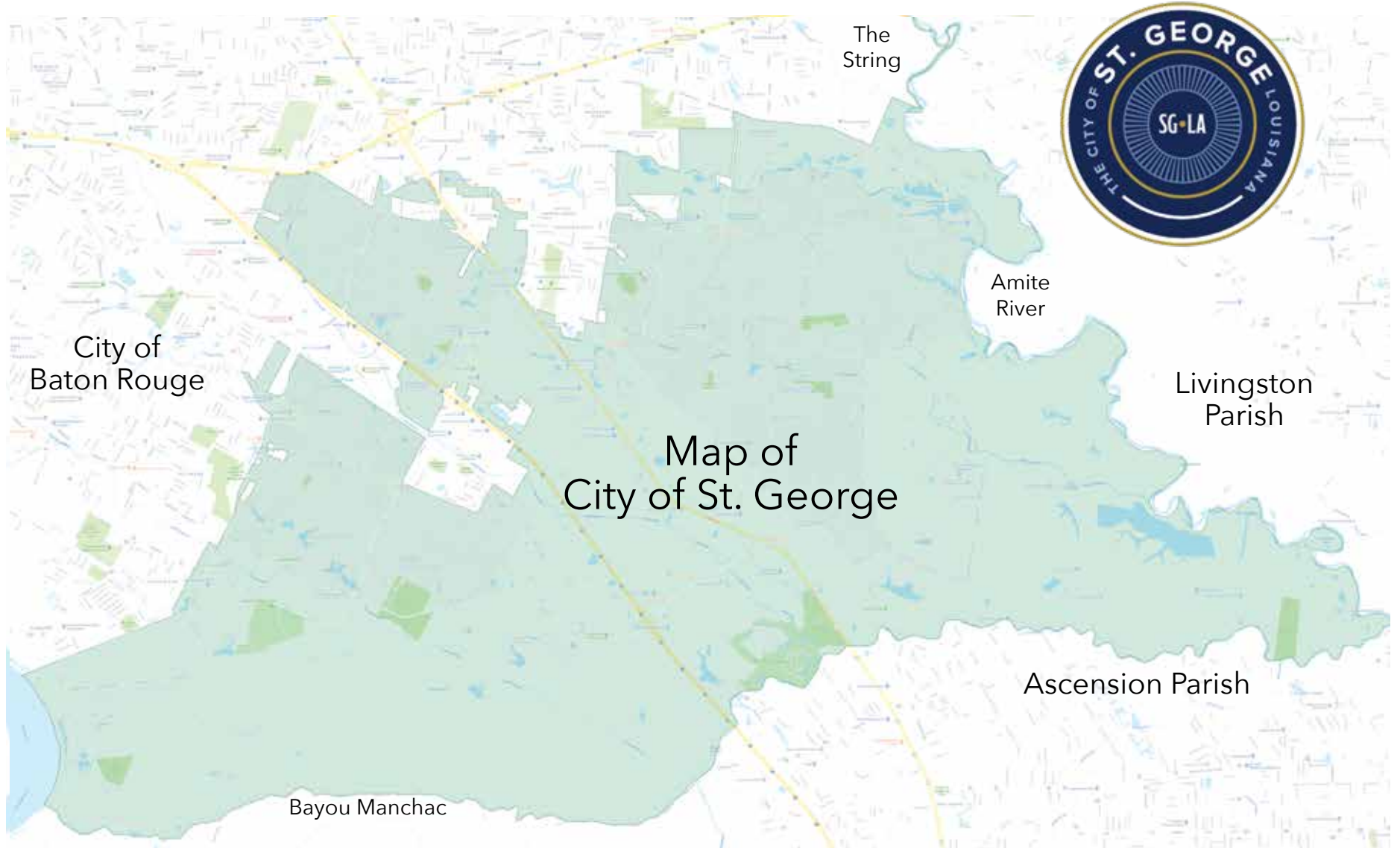


A JOYOUS VICTORY — Jim Talbot celebrates victory for City of St. George in the newly-created City of St. George. With 86,000 people and household income of over \$90,000, St. George will be the 5th largest city in the state and the wealthiest.

Photo by Stacy Hudson

What City Will Look Like When New Mayor Sworn in

Facts About New City of St. George



Map of New City of St. George, Louisiana

Things to Know About Louisiana's Newest City

Population: 86,000 • **Rank in LA:** 5th largest after New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Shreveport, and Lafayette. St. George is larger than Monroe, Lake Charles, Alexandria, Kenner, and Houma

Land Area: 60 Sq. Miles • **Location:** Southeast portion of East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

Median Household Income: Mid-\$90,000 • **Median Income Rank in LA:** 1st or 2nd in State. Others are Youngsville in Lafayette Parish (\$95,395). Next: Zachary (\$85,949), and City of Central (\$83,947)

Demographics: 79 percent white; 12 percent black, 8 percent Latin, Asian, and other (2018)

Voter Registration: 27,124 Republicans, 13,375 Democrats, 14,141 other party or no party
54,680 Total Registered Voters (2018)

City Officials: Mayor, Police Chief, and 5 to 7 members of City Council (Lawrason Act)
Initially appointed by the Governor • Special election to be held within six months.

Estimated Tax Revenue: \$57-58 million • **Source of Revenue:** Existing 2% parish sales tax plus existing occupational license fees • **Estimated Expenses** \$36 million • **Estimated Surplus:** \$21 million

Law Enforcement: East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office will continue to provide law enforcement (funded by existing property tax millage)

Fire Protection: St. George Fire Protection District will continue to provide fire protection (funded by existing property tax millage)

Roads and Streets: Existing parish roads will be allocated between the Parish of East Baton Rouge and the City of St. George by an intergovernmental agreement between the two. St. George will assume maintenance of an estimated 354 miles of city roads allocated to it. The State of Louisiana will continue to maintain state roads located in the City of St. George.

Drainage: Existing waterways, bayous, creeks, and other drainage will be allocated between the Parish of East Baton Rouge and the City of St. George by an intergovernmental agreement. St. George will assume maintenance of waterways allocated to it.

Public Works, Planning and Zoning, Building Codes, Issuances of Permits, and Occupational Licenses: Will be administered by the City of St. George.

Garbage & Trash, Sewer Fees, Animal Control, and Mosquito Abatement: Will be unchanged

St. George Leaders React to 4-3 Decision By Supreme Court on City of St. George

Media Bias Against City of St. George Has Been Intense For Past 13 Years

Continued from Page 1

Now the hard work of creating a functioning city begins. Fortunately, leaders of St. George have a good road map to follow — the experience of the City of Central.

The incorporators of St. George — Norman Browning and Chris Rials have made clear they hope St. George will follow Central's example, especially on privatization.

The City of Central contracts out almost all city services to a private company, making it the only privatized municipality in the State of Louisiana and one of the few in the United States.

On Monday, April 29, leaders of the St. George incorporation movement met the media at St. George Fire Dept. located at 14100 Airline Highway.



Photo by Jolice Provost

ST. GEORGE LEADERSHIP FACES MEDIA — Leaders of the St. George incorporation movement faced the media and members of the general public on Monday, April 29 to react to the Louisiana Supreme Court's 4-3 ruling recognizing the incorporation of the City of St. George. Shown are Chris Rials, Dustin Yates, Norman Browning, Andrew Murrell, and Metro Councilman Dwight Hudson.

On Tuesday, May 7, citizens of St. George met at Woodlawn Baptist Church to celebrate their victory. See Page X. It was an emotional event, which recounted 13 years

of hard work, personal sacrifice, and unwavering determination, especially by the two incorporators, Norman Browning and Chris Rials. Browning and Rials also serve on

the St. George Transition District, which was created by the Louisiana Legislature to help bring about a smooth transition, if the City of St.

See ST. GEORGE on Page 4



Read Supreme Court Decision on St. George



News Conference on St. George April 29, 2024

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St. George Residents Fought Hard To Create City, Then Had to Wait

Baton Rouge Coffers Benefitted for 5 Years After Referendum as Court Case Lingered

Continued from Page 3

George was approved by the courts. Other speakers included St. George spokesman Andrew Murrell, Dustin Yates, and Metro Councilman Dwight Landry. Murrell and Yates also serve on the transition district board.

While some decisions can now be made by the transition district, most of the major decisions will have to await the swearing in of the Mayor, City Council, and Police Chief.

Those appointed will serve until a special election can be held. That could happen this fall. However, the legal deadlines for calling the election are fast approaching. One pending issue is the boundaries of the new city.

After the petition for incorporation was filed, the City of Baton Rouge annexed several important properties, which were inside the proposed city limits of St. George. The City of St. George is expected to contest those annexations, and the result would affect the boundaries of both cities.

Fortunately, all of the annexed properties are commercial, and reportedly no registered voters reside in the area affected. So a decision on the exact boundaries would not necessarily delay an election.

The remaining plaintiff in the suit against St. George, East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor Pro-Tem Lamont Cole, has announced he intends to ask the Supreme Court for a rehearing on the case. While that is a legal option, the chances of his motion resulting in a rehearing are remote. Even if a rehearing were granted, it would not likely result in an injunction to keep the new city from functioning.

The St. George Transition District reportedly has a well-defined plan of action. The Mayor-designate, Dustin Yates, is chairman of the transition district and would presumably follow that plan.

A major tenet of the organizers of St. George is privatization. Depending on who the governor appoints as members of the City Council, that model seems likely to be followed to one degree or another.

The day-to-day work of managing the City of Central has been done from the beginning by private contractors. Currently, the master contractor is a non-profit, IBTS.

Organizers of the City of St. George say they would like the new city council to divide the city into three districts, which each district being served by a master contractor that provides most city services.

Besides Central, organizers of St. George have studied Sandy Springs, GA, the first major city in the country to be privatized.

One advantage of using one or more private contractors is major cost savings.

The Opposition

The campaign against incorporating the City of St. George began almost as soon as the movement it-



ST. GEORGE LEADERS — Those delivering 4,630 additional petition signatures during the first petition drive were Sen. Bodi White, Lionel Rainey, Norman Browning, Dustin Yates, and Josh Hoffpauir.



(Left to right) Sign waving for St. George, signing a petition, delivering petitions, and delivering withdrawals.

“ Obviously, the City of St. George is not breaking away from the City of Baton Rouge. It’s not part of the City of Baton Rouge. We’re talking about the unincorporated areas that the City of Baton Rouge never wanted to annex. Suddenly, the fact that the people there want to have their own city is ‘dividing us.’ How ridiculous! St. George is going to be right next door to Baton Rouge. It will still be in East Baton Rouge Parish! Everyone will travel from one city to the other freely and seamlessly. There won’t a 10-foot-high wall or checkpoints. Having a great new city right next to Baton Rouge can only make Baton Rouge better. ”

self began. In January 2014, then-Mayor-President Kip Holden spoke to the Baton Rouge Rotary Club. Holden condemned supporters of the proposed City of St. George and described them as a “small group of people.” He made that statement even though more than 10,000 people had already signed St. George petitions as he spoke.

Since then, the propaganda campaign against the proposed City of St. George has continued in earnest. The campaign has been led by the **Baton Rouge Advocate** newspaper, which has published scores of false and misleading articles and columns. *The Advocate* has been joined by the far-left group Together Baton Rouge, organized by Saul Alinsky’s Industrial Areas Foundation. Also strongly opposing St. George have been the Baton Rouge Area Chamber and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, which critics say “never met a tax they didn’t like.”

In that first speech in January 2014, Mayor-President Holden poured out a litany of carefully-

crafted cliches designed to end the discussion about incorporating the City of St. George:

- It will break up Baton Rouge.
- It will impose a burden on future generations.
- It will bankrupt our future.
- It will cripple one of the strongest economies in the nation.
- It will divide us.
- It will take a major financial toll.
- It will take Baton Rouge taxes.
- They’d have to provide police, fire, garbage, and public works.
- They would have to elect city officials.
- It would duplicate existing government services.
- Duplicating services means duplicating costs.
- It will mean higher taxes!
- It will mean loss of funding for the D.A. and other officials.
- It will hurt public safety.
- It will hurt our bond rating.
- We’re being held hostage in a disagreement over schools.
- It will turn back the clock on racial harmony.

Only One Thing Was True. Ev-

“ Yes, big companies may put an office in Baton Rouge, but where are employees going to live? You can bet that, unless something changes, they will be headed to Livingston and Ascension! But St. George will provide people with a great place to live right next door to the City of Baton Rouge in the southern part of THIS parish — in a city that will have good schools and safe neighborhoods. ”

Interim Leadership City of St. George

— Incorporators —

Norman Browning
Chris Rials

St. George Transition District

Created by Act 361 of 2020 Session

Dustin Yates
CHAIRMAN

Norman Browning
VICE CHAIRMAN

Andrew Murrell
SECRETARY

Chris Rials
TREASURER

William Porter
APPOINTEE OF MAYOR-PRESIDENT

ery single thing the Mayor-President told the Rotary Club about the proposed City of St. George was false, except for one thing: If the new city is created, there will be an election for Mayor, Police Chief, and City Council. That’s true!

The other things he said were simply talking points but they were not true, and he could not back them up then or now. Since 2014, the opponents of St. George really haven’t come up with a single new argument against St. George.

A Basic Principle of Our Law. The basic principle at issue here is that people living in unincorporated areas of Louisiana have the right under Louisiana law to organize a new city (La.R.S. 33:1 et seq). Furthermore, the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 has a specific provision (Art. 6

See **CELEBRATING** on Page 6

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The Leader was founded April 30, 1998. The Central City News was founded April 21, 2005. They merged May 4, 2006. The South Baton Rouge Journal began publication in 1989. It resumed publication as the Capital City News on Aug. 16, 2012, with Vol. 21, No. 1. It has become the St. George Leader. The North Baton Rouge Journal began on August 11, 1966 and went on hiatus in 1976. It resumed publication as the Istrouma Journal on April 6, 2017.

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NEW MEDICAL SCHOOL — Dr. Leo Seoane, dean of the state's new medical school, the Xavier Ochsner College of Medicine in New Orleans, was in Baton Rouge promoting the new college. Xavier, the only Historic Black College and University affiliated with the Catholic Church, will receive its first class in 2026. Welcoming him was international attorney Saul Newsome of Baton Rouge. Both of their families fled persecution in Castro's Cuba in the 1960's.

Hearing on Civil Suit Set May 28 in 19th Judicial District Court

Claims of Immunity by ex-Gov. JBE Unlikely To Stop Suit by Rev. Spell on Religious Liberty

Violation of Church's Religious Liberty Could Go to Trial After Court Hearing

Woody Jenkins
 Editor, Central City News

CITY OF CENTRAL — Tuesday, May 28, 2024, could be an important day in the history of the First Amendment in this country — especially for Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Assembly, and Freedom of Speech. That is the day when Rev. Tony Spell will appear in the 19th Judicial District Court to determine whether the civil suit by Life Tabernacle and Rev. Spell will be allowed to go to trial.

In May 2020, Life Tabernacle filed suit against then-Gov. John Bel Edwards and Central Police Chief Roger Corcoran for violating their religious liberties under the Louisiana Constitution.

These individuals worked together to threaten the pastor with arrest if they held in-person worship services and then to have the pastor arrested and put in prison. After being released from prison, the pastor was fitted with an ankle monitor and placed under house arrest for several months.

The members of the congregation were subject to illegal surveillance, including license plate readers and facial recognition devices. They were followed and harassed. This resulted in some of the members being fired from their jobs. Members of Life Tabernacle and the general public were ordered not



PASTOR ATTESTED — Central Police Chief Roger Corcoran arresting Rev. Tony Spell in March 2020 for the crime of holding in-person worship services.



HOUSE ARREST — Rev. Spell being fitted with an ankle monitor and placed under house arrest. The pastor defied the order and continued holding church.

to attend the church, and they were held up to constant ridicule, threats, and intimidation by the state and local government. The FBI got into the act, even though there were no allegations of any federal crime being committed and took the lead in the surveillance and harassment of the congregation. The surveillance has continued for four years!

Life Tabernacle has waited since 2020 for a trial date, so that they can present the facts as they occurred. They want the opportunity to confront those who took it upon themselves to violate their constitutional rights with such impunity.

The criminal charges against Pastor Spell were thrown out two years ago by the Louisiana Supreme Court, which ruled everything these officials did against Life Tabernacle, the members of the congregation, and Rev. Spell was illegal and unconstitutional.

However, there has never in four years been a hearing in state court to allow a trial in the civil case.

Will justice ever be done for one of the greatest violations of Freedom of Religion in the history of this country?

The ex-Governor and the police chief will undoubtedly claim immunity. They will say, Oh, it was an emergency situation and we did the best we could under the circumstances. They will say it was wrong but it was necessary.

But wait! How can they claim that it was "necessary" when just a mile east on Hooper Road from the church, they were allowing thousands of people to mingle without limit at the Neighborhood Wal-Mart and the Winn Dixie? All while the church was limited to 10 people!

See CLAIMS on Page 14

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500 Gather to Honor the Founding of St. George

Celebrating America's Newest City



500 ST. GEORGE RESIDENTS gathered to celebrate the creation of the city at Woodlawn Baptist Tuesday, May 7. Almost everyone was reading the St. George Leader.



SPEAKERS AT THE CELEBRATION included St. George incorporators Norman Browning and Chris Rials, Dustin Yates of the St. George Transition District, St. George spokesman Andrew Murrell, and (seated) Yates, Browning, Rep. Emily Chenevert, State Treasurer Dr. John Fleming, Rials, Metro Councilman Dwight Hudson, and Sen. Rick Edmonds

Continued from Page 5 §2), which repealed a part of the City-Parish Plan of Government, which

had prohibited the formation of new cities in East Baton Rouge Parish. The law is clear — people have

a right to file an incorporation petition with 25 percent of the registered voters and then vote on whether to incorporate. If the ayes have it, the incorporation can still be challenged but the likelihood of such a challenge being upheld is extremely small.

Virtually all of the issues which are likely to come up in any legal challenge to the incorporation of St. George have already been decided by the courts. One of the most important cases is *Devall v. Starns*, which challenged the incorporation of the City of Central.

For example, the notion that voters outside the proposed city should get to vote on the incorporation of a new city was dealt with in *Devall* and disposed of as without merit.

A Tale of Two Cities. Instead of trying to go through Mayor-President Holden's ill-advised and over-the-top remarks one by one, you should realize something.

We don't have to guess how incorporating a new city in East Baton Rouge Parish would work. It's already been done! The City of Central (population 29,000) was incorporated in 2005. We know that the City of Central has NOT raised taxes since it was incorporated in 2005. In fact, it doesn't impose a city property tax at all. Yet, Central has had budget surpluses year after year and has an accumulated surplus of \$70 million. This success can be attributed largely to privatization of city services — the same plan proposed by the leaders of the St. George.

St. George will not be run the way Baton Rouge is run. It will be run on a 21st century model of privatization.

The simple way to understand what is being proposed is to compare two cities right here in our area — the City of Hammond (pop. 20,000) and the City of Central (pop. 29,000). They are two nice cities which were founded on two very different models of

WATCH
 Celebration of
 City of St. George
 at George's
 April 26, 2024

WATCH
 Community Meeting
 City of St. George
 May 7, 2024

government. Hammond was founded in 1818 and follows the same model as cities in the 1800's. Central was founded in 2005 and follows a 21st century model.

In Hammond, with a population smaller than Central, city government costs four times as much! There are 325 employees in Hammond, compared to five full-time and 19 part-time employees in Central.

Privatization and Central's frugal government are why Central has a surplus of \$70 million on hand, which can be used for capital improvements and emergencies.

Central: A Conservative, Cost-Conscious City Government.

City Employees. With only five employees, the City of Central has no bureaucracy, and the public is not accruing vast unfunded liabilities for hundreds of city employees who may want to retire in the future. This obligation simply doesn't exist in Central.

Law Enforcement. Like other residents of East Baton Rouge Parish, the people of Central pay a law enforcement tax to fund the Sheriff's Office. Before Central was incorporated in 2005, the East Baton Rouge Parish

See CELEBRATE on Page 7

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Celebration of New City of St. George
 May 7, 2024 • Woodlawn Baptist Church
 Photos and Video by Woody Jenkins

Central Is Role Model for St. George

Continued from Page 6

Sheriff's Office was the primary law enforcement agency. Now 19 years after incorporation, the Sheriff is still the primary law enforcement agency in the City of Central. The tax has not been increased, and Sheriff Sid Gautreaux says he has no additional costs because of the City of Central. Logically, why would he? He's providing the same services he has in the past.

Sheriff Gautreaux said, "If the City of Central wants additional patrols or services over and above, then they have to provide the funding." In recent years, the City of Central has paid the Sheriff's Office for additional patrols.

The City of Central has no reason to create its own full-time police department. That would duplicate the services already provided by the Sheriff. But Central does have a part-time, largely volunteer Central Police Force which assists the Sheriff's Office. They function similar to Reserve Sheriff deputies. Every police officer in the Central Police Department is fully certified. Central police patrol neighborhoods and work traffic accidents, freeing the Sheriff from that responsibility. They are also available for any emergency that may occur.

Sheriff Sid Gautreaux has said he will continue to provide the same level of law enforcement protection after incorporation of St. George that he did before incorporation. He also said that, as in Central, if the city wants extra patrols or other special services, it will have to pay the Sheriff's office the cost of doing so.

Fire Protection. Before incorporation, the people of Central funded the Central Fire Protection District through property taxes. The district was providing excellent service. So there was no reason to create a new duplicatory fire department in the City of



CELEBRATING COURT DECISION — Upon hearing the Supreme Court had upheld the incorporation of St. George, some of the city's loyal supporters gathered at George's to celebrate including Jim Talbot, Bodi White, Norman Browning, and Darnell Browning

Central. Similarly, the St. George Fire Dept. currently provides excellent fire protection in St. George. It is a completely separate governmental agency from the city and will be unaffected by the incorporation of St. George.

Sewer Services. Central was part of the parish sewer system before incorporation, and it still is. The people pay the same sewer user fees as residents of Baton Rouge. The same is true in St. George.

Garbage Collection. Garbage collection is parishwide. So the people of Central receive the same garbage service that they did before incorporation, and they pay for it with the same monthly user fee as in Baton Rouge. So will St. George

Parks and Recreation. Parks and recreation in Central are provided by BREC which levies the same property tax in Central that it does in Baton

Rouge. So the incorporation of Central made no change in parks. That will be true in St. George as well.

Not Complex, Not Duplicatory, Not Expensive. The creation of the City of Central was really quite simple — not complex or duplicatory — with respect to police protection, fire protection, sewer, garbage collection, and parks. All those services are the same now as they were before incorporation. The only difference is that Central has added a volunteer Central Police Force to supplement the Sheriff's Office.

What Did Change in Central? Three major areas did change: 1) public works, 2) planning and zoning, and 3) plan review, permits, inspections, and Code enforcement. These are very important areas of local government, and all require considerable expertise. However, these services can readily

be contracted out to private providers.

The City of Central contracts with IBTS, a non-profit organization established by the National Governors Association to provide these city services, along with a variety of other things, such as personnel to answer citizens complaints and problems.

IBTS provides the Public Works Director for the City of Central, engineering services, personnel to staff the planning and zoning commission, clerical staff, and building officials to do inspections.

Unlike inefficient local governments, which may send out four or five inspectors to one job site, IBTS sends a Certified Building Inspector — one person who performs all inspections, including building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical.

In addition to the 20 employees See **COMPARING** on Page 10

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3rd Annual Louisiana Health Freedom Day

3rd Annual Louisiana Health Freedom Day

Click QR Codes to Watch Conference



Music by Rev. Tony Spell and Sister Shaye Spell



Welcome by Former Rep. Woody Jenkins and Jill Dillingham Hines of Health Freedom Louisiana



Michael Lunsford of Citizens for a New Louisiana



Lawyer Jeff Whittenbrink Represented Pastor Tony Spell



Music that America Loves with Jim Hogg and James Linden Hogg

Louisiana Health Freedom Day is hosted by Life Tabernacle Church and Central City News.

Goal: Promote Freedom of Choice in Health Care



Keynote speaker Dr. Peter McCullough, renowned physician, spoke on vaccines and medical research.



Pastor Tony Spell
Life Tabernacle Church



Michael Lunsford
Citizens for a New Louisiana



"We the People" Bayou Chapter posed for a photo with speakers.



Deidra Perkins and Diane Jenkins welcomed guests and distributed Dr. McCullough's book *The Courage to Face Covid-19*



Jill Dillingham Hines of Health Freedom Louisiana gave an update on the current legislative session, key bills to watch, and how to contact your legislators.



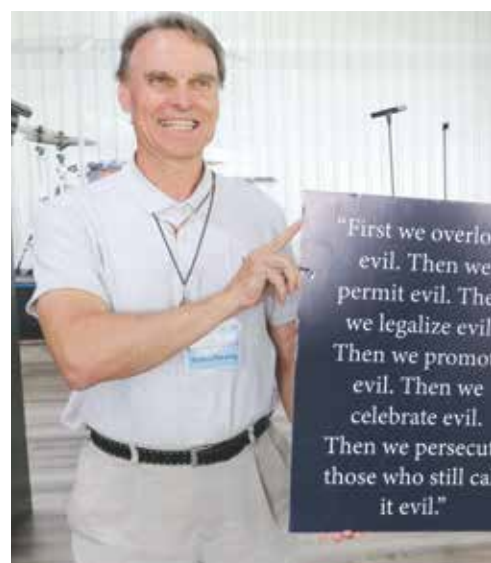
Peggy Wiltz posed with Dr. McCullough after having her book signed.



Ruth Gaspard of Lafayette asked a question of Dr. McCullough



Dr. Evelyn Griffin, Dr. Joe Griffin with Dr. Peter McCullough



Pro-life leader Richard Mahoney and P... overlook evil. Then we permit evil. Then we persecute those who still call it evil." Isaiah 5:20, "Woe unto them

Freedom Day at Revolution Square



Rep. Kathy Edmonston and Rep. Beryl Amedee with Dr. Peter McCullough



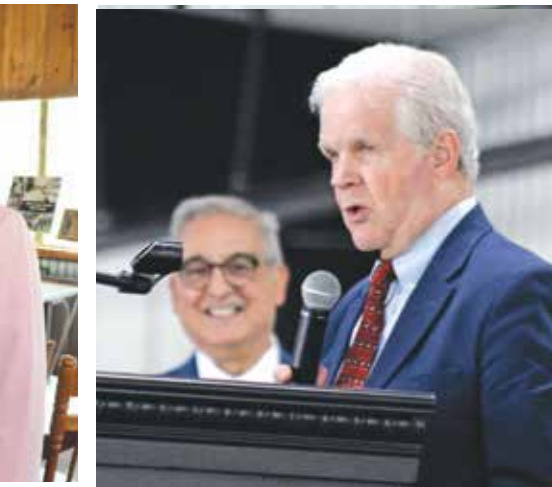
Constitutional lawyer Jeff Wittenbrink who represents Pastor Spell



Dr. Evelyn Griffin, OBGYN, told why doctors are not speaking up.



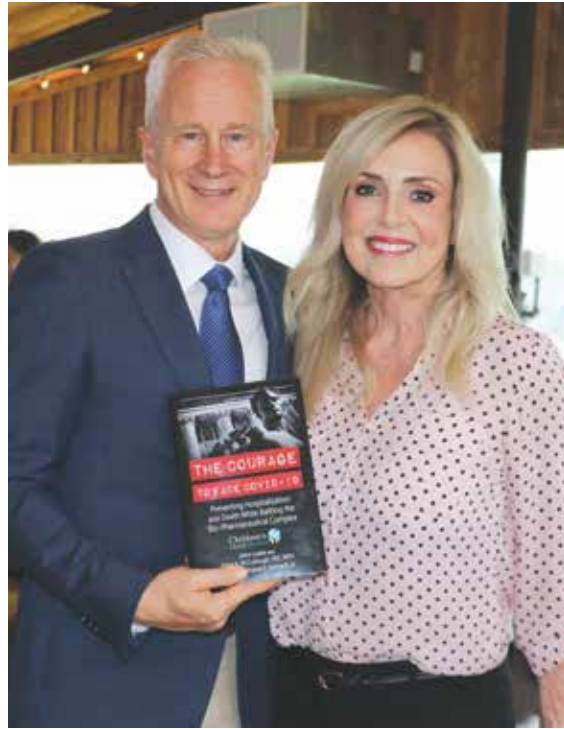
James Linden Hogg and Jim Hogg performed music that America loves!



Conference chairman Woody Jenkins, editor of the Central City News, introduced attorney Jeff Wittenbrink.



Talk show host and syndicated columnist Jeff Croure



Dr. McCullough autographed his book, *The Courage to Face Covid-19*, for Libby Adams



Pastor Tony Spell hold sign that says, "First we legalize evil. Then we promote evil. Then we glorify it evil", with the scripture verse from Isaiah 5:20 "Woe unto them who call evil good, and good evil."



Dr. Peter McCullough and David Doiron of Convention of States



Steve Spell and Rev. Tim Harris of Indianapolis enjoyed the music performed by Pastor Tony Spell and his wife, Sister Shaye Spell

3rd Annual Louisiana Health Freedom Day
Click QR Codes to Watch Conference



The Church That Never Closed
Pastor Tony Spell



Renowned Physican Dr. Peter McCullough on vaccine research



Talk Show Host & Syndicated Cloumnist Jeff Croure



Dr. Evelyn Griffin on Why Doctors Don't Speak Out



Legislative Panel with Reps. Beryl Amedee and Kathy Edmonston, chaired by Woody Jenkins, editor, Central City News, 28-year veteran of Louisiana House



Many Thanks to Hosts Rev. Tony Spell and his wife, Sister Shaye Spell, of Life Tabernacle

Should Republican Area Be Allowed To Incorporate, Forming New City?

Continued from Page 7

that IBTS provides to staff the Central Municipal Services Center, IBTS contracts with general contractors to repair potholes and provide street overlay. It uses sub-contractors who work at pre-negotiated prices. Some services such as lot cutting are done at a fixed rate per linear foot, rather than by the hour.

Taxes. Municipal taxes in Central have NOT gone up with incorporation. In fact, they are LESS than municipal taxes in Baton Rouge. For one thing, the Central City Council has staunchly refused to levy a municipal property tax.

Since the City of Central is run so efficiently and is compiling large surpluses, there is no thought of a tax increase by the City of Central. Instead, the city fathers have been considering where to use some of its accumulated surplus for capital improvements without incurring debt.

Experts in privatization we interviewed estimated that the City of St. George could run the entire city with fewer than 20 employees, while utilizing a private contractor such as IBTS to provide city services. They estimate the contractor would need to utilize roughly 50 staff members and certainly no more than 70 to provide the services that citizens will expect.

Charges That St. George Is Breaking Away, That It Is Divisive, or That It Is Racist. These allegations are intended to inflame passions but have nothing to do with reality.

Obviously, the City of St. George is not breaking away from the City of Baton Rouge. It's not part of the City



ST. GEORGE TRANSITION DISTRICT members gathered for a news conference Monday, April 29 — Chris Rials, Dustin Yates, Norman Browning, and Drew Murrell.

of Baton Rouge. We're talking about the unincorporated areas that the City of Baton Rouge never wanted to annex.

Suddenly, the fact that the people in St. George would want to have their own city is "dividing us." How ridiculous! St. George is going to be right next door to Baton Rouge. It will still be in East Baton Rouge Parish! Everyone will flow from one city to the other freely and seamlessly.

There won't be a 10-foot-high wall or checkpoints.

Having a great new city right next to Baton Rouge can only make Baton Rouge better.

Yes, big companies may put an office in Baton Rouge, but where are the employees going to live? You can bet that, unless something changes, they will be headed to Livingston and Ascension! But St. George will provide

people with a great place to live right next door to the City of Baton Rouge in the southern part of THIS parish — in a city with good schools and safe neighborhoods.

The real racism in this debate has been the knee-jerk reaction against St. George. Somehow if an area is majority white, conservative, and Republican, it shouldn't be allowed to incorporate and have a city. That is a racist position to take.

It is also racist to assume that blacks and whites are looking for something totally different in a city. Will blacks, Latins, and Asians want to live in St. George? Of course they will!

A few years ago, a black political leader from Baton Rouge made a statement on WAFB-TV about what a racist community Central is. At the *Central City News*, we believed that was false but we wanted to find out what the black people living in Central thought about the Central community. We wondered if they saw it as a racist place to live.

So members of our newspaper staff went to the Central Wal-Mart to survey black customers as they came out of the store. The first question we asked was, "Do you live in Central?" If they said no, we thanked them and ended the interview. If they say yes, we proceeded with the next question, which was, "Since you have lived in Central, have you experienced any acts of racism or been made to feel uncomfortable out here?"

We got looks of puzzlement, laughter, and a lot of "Are you kidding? We

See CAN ONLY on Page 13

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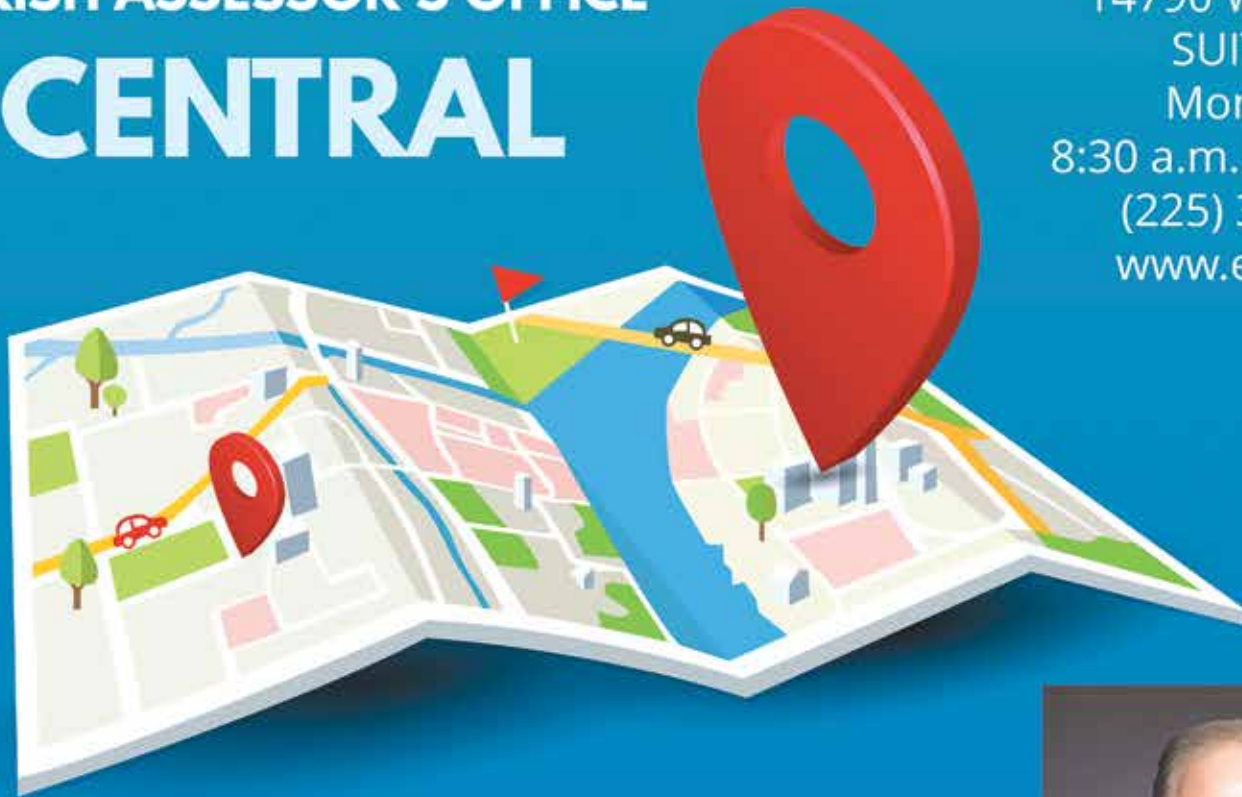
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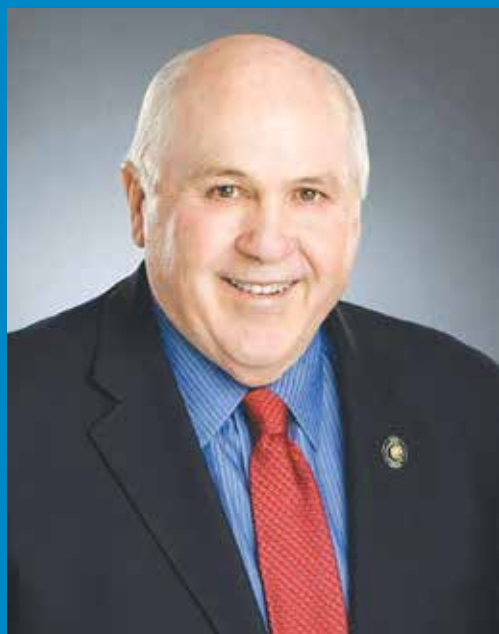
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PARISH ASSESSOR



Brian Wilson, EBR Assessor

Congratulations, Grads!

A Tale of Two Cities: Central and St. George



BODI WHITE
Representative • 2004-2012
Senator • 2012-2024

LOOKING BACK AT HISTORIC TIMES

- In the early 1990s, several East Baton Rouge Parish legislators came to believe that we should pursue the Texas model and have independent community school districts in East Baton Rouge Parish. They were successful in creating the Baker school system and the Zachary Community System, which is the No. 1 school system in the state. We have continued that effort in Central and St. George...
- In 2004, I was elected to the Louisiana House representing the Central Community.
- April 2004 - I introduced a bill to create the Central Community School System - It failed. Other legislators told me that, while it was not a legal requirement, they would only support creating a school district for Central if Central became a city first. Our community decided that we should incorporate, not only to have a school system but for the many benefits that it could bring to an unincorporated area.
- 2004 - I worked with Central leaders to organize a petition drive to create the City of Central - This effort failed when the courts found the petition invalid.
- Feb. 2005 - Worked with people of Central on a second petition to create the City of Central - This petition was ruled valid and a referendum was called.
- April 2005 - Central voters went to the polls and approved creation of the City of Central.
- May 2005 - Suit was filed to

block creation of the new city, and we opposed that suit.

- June 2005 - Rep. Donald Ray Kennard and I recommended to the governor those to be appointed mayor, city council, and police chief of City of Central.
- July 2005 - Swearing in of new Mayor, Council, and Police Chief of the City of Central and beginning of the city's day-to-day operations. Mayor-President Kip Holden refused to transmit sales taxes collected in Central to the new city until the suit was resolved. In a compromise, 10% of sales tax collections were transmitted to Central, which allowed the city to operate on a limited basis.
- February 2006 - I introduced a Constitutional amendment to create the Central Community System.
- May 2006 - The legislature approved by a 2/3 vote sending a Constitutional Amendment creating the Central School System to the voters in November.
- November 2006 - The Constitutional amendment to create the Central Community School System was approved by vote statewide, in East Baton Rouge Parish, and in Central.
- December 2006 - Governor Kathleen Blanco appointed the seven initial members of the Central school board.
- January 2007 - The new Central school board was sworn in and began the process of searching for a superintendent.
- February 2007 - Central Community School Board named Coach Sid Edwards as first employee and Mike Faulk as first superintendent.
- March 2007 - The Central school system began hiring teachers and support staff.
- July 2007 - Members of the Central community were allowed into the five EBR public schools in Central to begin the process of cleanup and renovation. All were volunteers.
- August 2007 - The Central school system began its first year of operation. Within three years, it was named the No. 2 school system in the State of Louisiana.
- March 2008 - The Louisiana Supreme Court ruled that the City of Central was lawfully incorporated. The city began to receive 100% of its right-ful sales taxes and started full

operations.

- March 2008 - The City of Central became the first city in the state to be fully privatized.
- Central has only a handful of employees and operates with large surpluses.
- Since Central was incorporated in 2005, there have been no tax increases for the operation of city government.
- The Central Community School System remains one of the best school systems in Louisiana.
- In 2011, I was elected to the Senate. The new district included Central and St. George. People in St. George expressed their desire to have a community school system and a new city.

ST. GEORGE

- 2012 - I introduced a Constitutional amendment to create the Southeast Community School District - It failed.
 - 2012 - I introduced a bill to create Southeast Community School District - It passed, contingent on the passage of a Constitutional amendment in the future to authorize the district.
 - 2018 - The people of St. George began a petition drive to launch the City of St. George - The petition was invalidated.
 - October 2019 - After a successful petition drive, the people of St. George went to the polls and voted to create the City of St. George.
 - 2020 - I introduced legislation to create the St. George Transition District, in order to smooth the transition if the Supreme Court approved the City of St. George.
 - 2019 - Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome and Councilman Lamont Cole sued to stop incorporation of the City of St. George.
 - District Court ruled against incorporating City of St. George.
 - First Circuit Court of Appeal ruled against incorporation.
 - April 2024 - Louisiana Supreme Court upheld the incorporation of the City of St. George.
 - The next step will be the appointment by the governor of the first mayor, city council, and police chief of the new St. George.
- The rest of the story will be written by you! It is your city! Make the most of it.
Remember: Never give up!

Look Out! Central's Sullivan Theater Sprouts First Summer Musical *Little Shop of Horrors*

CENTRAL — It's safe to say The Sullivan Theater in Central has put down roots in the Baton Rouge community theater scene. Last June, the brand new theater opened its first show with a Sherlock Holmes mystery.

Four more plays and one musical later, just in time for its one-year anniversary, an all-volunteer cast and a killer production team are trading 8849 Sullivan Rd. for the mean streets of Skid Row. That's right — Seymour, Audrey, and one very hungry plant are on stage May 31 through June 9 for *Little Shop of Horrors*.

When the show begins, audiences will be transported to the famous failing flower shop on Los Angeles' Skid Row. Here, they meet Seymour (played by Warren Douglas), a hapless florist with big dreams, and Audrey (played by Carole Moore), his co-worker and crush.

Seymour soon reveals to Audrey and his irritable boss, Mr. Mushnik (played by Robby Wilson), that he has happened upon a strange and unusual plant that he calls Audrey II. With an insatiable — and diabolical — appetite, Audrey II grows into a sensational spectacle that brings big business and fame to Mushnik's flower shop. This leads Seymour down a dark and hilarious path of outrageous twists and dangerous dilemmas.

The cast features a mix of familiar faces and, dare we say, new blood. Among those returning is director Chelsea Gidden who said, "This show holds a very special place in my heart, and I'm thrilled to bring it to the Sullivan stage for our first spectacular summer musical."

When asked what makes this show perfect for The Sullivan, she said, "We wanted something dynamic yet familiar with a powerhouse score to make a splash and *Little Shop of Horrors* perfectly fit that bill. We cannot wait to show the community what The Sullivan can do from amazing actors and a talented production team to impeccable set design and flashy technical elements, all comparable to professional theater."

Gidden previously directed last season's production of *Clue On Stage*, and has performed, choreographed, and directed music at the theater as well.

Chad Harelson is back for his fifth show since The Sullivan's inception as the maniacal dentist Orin, while Sharonda Morris



THE SULLIVAN THEATER PRESENTS *Little Shop of Horrors* May 31 to June 9 at 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and a 2 p.m. matinee on Sundays. There will be one Sunday evening showing at 7:30 p.m. on June 2, featuring the understudy cast.

makes her debut in Central as the voice of the ever-demanding plant Audrey II.

Dee Carter, Kyra Cavalier, Kelsey Mack, and Mallory Luckett share the stage for the first time as the show's own Greek chorus (better known as The Urchins).

JT Fussell and Cadee Murray will puppeteer the plant. Richard Baker is musical director, Landon Corbin is assistant director, and Delilah Guilbeau is stage manager.

Secure your seats now for what's sure to be a dazzling sold-out run! Whatever you do, just remember: Don't feed the plants!

ABOUT THE THEATER

The Sullivan Theater first opened in the summer of 2023 and performed four shows in its inaugural year. These included a sold-out run of *Miracle on 34th Street* and the 2024 season opener *Nunsense*. Now the fan favorite *Little Shop of Horrors* is set to open as its first major summer musical.

As a community theater, all performers are local volunteers from the Central community and surrounding areas.

Three more shows will take the stage in the remainder of 2024; Agatha Christie's thrilling mystery *The Mousetrap*, the romantic comedy musical *She Loves Me*, and the Christmas classic *It's a Wonderful Life*.

SHOW INFORMATION

Little Shop of Horrors runs May 31 thru June 9 with a 7:30 p.m. curtain Thursday through Saturday and a 2 p.m. matinee on Sundays. There will be one Sun-

day evening showing at 7:30 p.m. on June 2, featuring the understudy cast.

Tickets are on sale now at www.sullivantheater.com/tickets. Tickets are \$30 each.

The Sullivan Theater is located at 8849 Sullivan Rd. in Central.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Book and Lyrics by: Howard Ashman
Music by: Alan Menken
Director: Chelsea Gidden
Assistant Director: Landon Corbin
Music Director: Richard Baker

Stage Manager: Delilah Guilbeau
Puppeteer Consultant: Frawg Wilson
Photos Courtesy of: Carson Dodd and Arden Hale

CAST

Audrey: Carole Moore
Audrey U/S: Abrielle DeCuir
Seymour: Warren Douglas
Seymour U/S: Stephen Atkins Mr.
Mushnik: Robby Wilson
Mr. Mushnik U/S: Keith James Orin; Chad Harelson
Audrey II: Sharonda Morris
Audrey II U/S: Mabry Spinks
Crystal (6/6-6/9): Dee Carter
Crystal (5/31-6/2): Kyra Cavalier
Ronnette: Kelsey Mack
Chiffon: Mallory Luckett
Ensemble and Puppeteers: JT Fussell, Cadee Murray

BOX OFFICE: 225-778-8990

Website: www.sullivantheater.com
Instagram: www.instagram.com/sullivantheater
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Rest in Peace Jerry Starkey

CENTRAL — Jerry Dan Sanders Starkey, 79, of the City of Central passed away on Monday, April 29, 2024, surrounded by her family.

Jerry and her identical twin sister were born on Christmas Day, 1944. Jerry met the love of her life, David Morgan Starkey, while attending Southeastern Louisiana University. She and David married on November 23, 1963, and went on to have three children.

Against all odds, Jerry survived a brain aneurysm at the age of 45. She never complained, she never gave up, and she always managed to smile through her adversity.

She was preceded in death by her father, Ernest Walker Sanders, Sr., who died on her birthday, Christmas Day, 1967, and by her mother Mary Dell Thames Sanders Graves.

She was also preceded in death by her beloved identical twin, Mary Ann Sanders Starkey; her brothers-in-law, Robert H. Starkey and Kirk E. Starkey; father-in-law Abe H. Starkey; mother-in-law Donna E. Starkey, and stepfather, James Graves.

She is survived by her husband David Morgan Starkey, who promised God he would take care of her if she survived the aneurysm. He kept his promise, caring for her until the day of her death. Their love and their dedication to each other during their 60 years of marriage was inspiring.

Jerry is also survived by her children and their spouses, Jeffery Todd Starkey and wife Karen; Sha-



Jerry Dan Sanders Starkey

ron Starkey Whitlow and husband Stephen, and Russell Edwards Starkey and wife Wendy; and her brother, Ernest Sanders, Jr. (Sue).

Jerry is also survived by 10 grandchildren: Nicole Purvis Breedlove (Ryan), Heather Purvis Lockhart (Michael), Brittany Starkey Bouligny (Christian), Dr. Sarah Whitlow Kirk (Austin), Morgan Starkey (Meaghan), Samuel Whitlow, Logan Starkey, Caidyn Chiasson (fiancé Aleece), Hayden Starkey and Jackson Whitlow.

She is survived by six great-grandchildren: Adalyn Stoltz, Natalie Breedlove, Jude Lockhart, Molly Breedlove, Ellis Lockhart

and Ellie Mae Bouligny. She is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews.

Finally, Jerry is survived by Jessica Snowbarger, Brooklyn Dar Dar, Jennifer Gremillion Glissman, Samantha Campo Temple, Abbey Wootan, Lenzi Zito and more than 30 other caregivers who lovingly cared for her through the years, becoming part of her family.

Services were held at Blackwater United Methodist Church on

Saturday, May 4, 2024 and burial was at Roselawn Cemetery. The funeral service was conducted by Mark Jones, Fr. Mike Moroney, and Deacon Robert Kusch.

Pallbearers were Ryan Breedlove, Morgan Starkey, Logan Starkey, Caidyn Chiasson, Hayden Starkey and Jackson Whitlow.

Honorary Pallbearers were Michael Lockhart, Christian Bouligny, Austin Kirk, and Samuel Whitlow.

Special thanks to The Hospice of Baton Rouge Palliative and Hospice teams, Pinnacle Home Health, Camille Carmena and the Blackwater UMC community.

Can Only Liberals Start Cities?

Continued from Page 8

love it out here! People treat us great!" Out of 100 interviews, not a single black resident of Central said he had been discriminated against or felt uncomfortable in Central because of race.

We then proceeded to the next question, which was "Why do you live in Central?"

Here were the top three answers: 1) Great schools: "We want a good education for our children, and we couldn't get it in Baton Rouge!" 2) Low crime: "Out here we can let our children play in the yard without fear of anything happening to them!" and 3) Rural setting: "We love the country atmosphere." "It makes us feel at home!"

But the most interesting part of our survey was yet to come. We decided to poll the white people coming out of Wal-Mart and ask them the same question: "Why do you live in Central?"

Amazingly, the whites answered the question the same — good schools, low crime, and country atmosphere. And in exactly that order!

The black people and the white people wanted the same things!

The opponents of St. George who holler "Racism!" are doing such a grave injustice to St. George and to its people. St. George isn't about race. It's about creating a city where people of ALL races can go to public school and get a good education and where people of ALL races can live in their home or shop at the store without fear of being robbed or murdered. It's about creating a city where the people control their own destiny, and decisions are not made from afar.

I have a challenge to the people who are opposing St. George based on accusations of racism. The challenge is this: Go out to Central and ask black people how they enjoy living in Central and having their children attend the Central School System. Then maybe you will be able to speak with some authority about what having its own city and school system will mean to St. George.

The bottom line is, it was up to the people of St. George to decide if they wanted a city or not. The people made their decision, and the Supreme Court upheld it. Now the journey begins!

Congratulations, Graduates!



MARK MILEY

Attorney at Law
Justice of the Peace

Governor Names Dustin Yates as Mayor, Maj. Todd Morris as Chief in St. George

Governor Jeff Landry announced the appointment of the Interim Mayor and Chief of Police for the city of St. George.

Gov. Landry said, "Chief Morris and Mayor Yates have the experience needed to fill these roles—especially during this important time of transition. I look forward to the work they will do to ensure St. George is a safe and thriving community."

Mayor Dustin Yates responded, saying, "I am extremely humbled to be appointed by Governor Landry to lead this newly created city as the interim Mayor. Our goal will be to ensure a timely transition that will set up the City of St. George for long term success."

The new Chief of Police, Todd Morris, said, "I would like to thank Governor Landry for this appoint-



Dustin Yates



Todd Morris

ment and trusting in me. I am honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve as the first Chief of Police for the City of St. George. I have called this community home for the past 40 years. I am excited to bring my 34 years of law enforcement experience to serve the citizens of St. George. I am committed to working collaboratively with our residents, business owners, Sher-

iff Gautreaux and the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office, as well as the community leaders to ensure St. George is a safe, welcoming, and thriving city for all."

Mayor Dustin Yates

Dustin Yates, 44, was born and raised in New Orleans where he graduated from Jesuit High School and UNO where he earned a B.A. in education. He taught and coached in public school for four years before entering the fire service with the St. George Fire Department.

The new mayor is currently serving his 19th year with the Fire Department where he has held the positions of Firefighter/Operator, Lieutenant, and Chief Administrative Officer. He continued his education with an Associate's Degree in Fire Science, and also graduated from the Executive Fire Officer

Program at the National Fire Academy in Maryland.

He has been involved with the City of St. George beginning with the original petition drive in 2013. He is married to Allison for 18 years, and they have two children, Avery, 16 and Bennett, 14. They are parishioners at St. George Catholic Church.

Chief of Police Todd Morris

Todd Morris has 34 years' experience in law enforcement. He serves as the Chief of Crimes against Persons and Special Operations for East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office. The Divisions he oversees include Homicide/Violent Crimes Unit, General Detectives, Sex Offender Registration, Crime Scene, DNA Analysts, Rapid DNA, NIB-IN Technicians, Intelligence, Evidence, Homeland Security, SWAT, Mobile Field Force, Marine Search & Rescue, EOD, and Aviation.

Judge John Guidry Planning to Run for La. Supreme Court



Chief Judge John Michael Guidry

BATON ROUGE — Chief Judge John Michael Guidry has announced his candidacy for election to the Louisiana Supreme Court. The primary election will be November 5, 2024.

Judge Guidry is in his 26th year as an appellate court judge on the Louisiana 1st Circuit Court of Appeal. On January 1, 2023, he made history when he became the 15th Chief Judge on the 1st Circuit and the first African American to hold that position in the more than 100-year history of the court.

Claims of Immunity

Continued from Page 5

No, they knew exactly what they were doing! They targeted churches and especially Life Tabernacle for harassment and persecution.

In the hearing before the Louisiana Supreme Court, Justice Will Crain hit the nail on its head. He asked counsel for Gov. John Bel Edwards why Life Tabernacle was targeted. Was Life Tabernacle was just a little too defiant, he asked? Maybe a little too public in its decision to stay open? Yes, the counsel for the governor admitted, the pastor was drawing too much attention!

So on May 28, a District Judge will decide if Pastor Spell can have a trial on the merits and plead his case.

To the Class of 2024,

We are incredibly proud of your accomplishments and the individuals you have become. As you step into the next chapter of your lives, remember the lessons learned, the friendships made, and the values instilled in you during your time at Central Private School.

As you embark on this new journey, we share the words of Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Trust in God's plan for you, and may His blessings guide you every step of the way.

While we may be saying goodbye for now, please know that you will always have a home here at Central Private School. We are confident that you will go on to do amazing things, and we cannot wait to see all that you achieve.



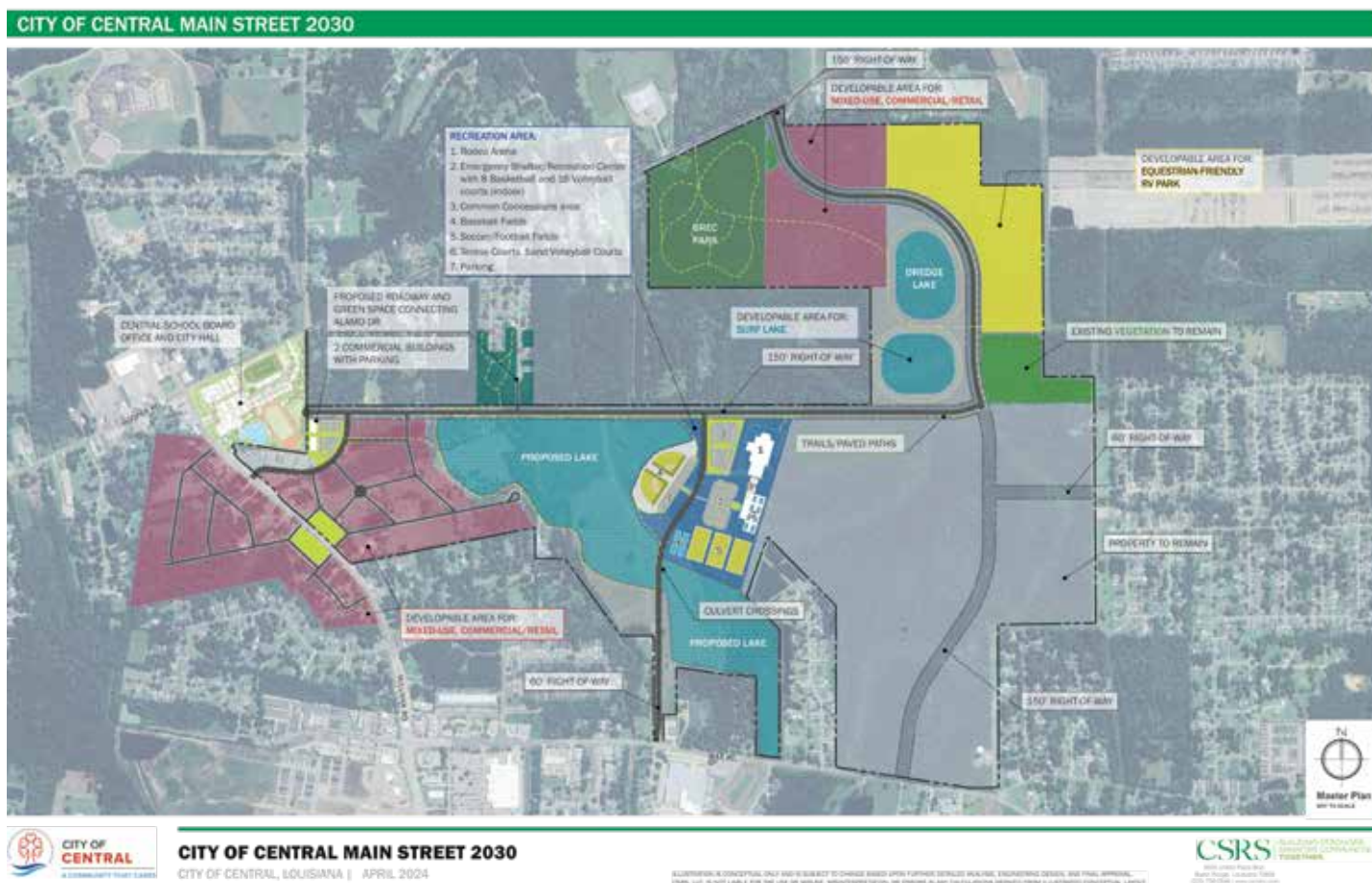
Mayor Evans Shares Plans at ChamberEBR Luncheon

Will Central's Landscape Change Soon? Mayor Unveils *Main Street 2030 Plan*



CENTRAL'S MAYOR HAS BIG VISION FOR THE CITY OF CENTRAL — Mayor Wade Evans (left) explained his Main Street 2030 plan at the Chamber of Commerce of East Baton Rouge Parish's monthly luncheon at Café Américain. At center, Mayor Evans with Chamber president Woody Jenkins and Gary Rispono of Central. Former Rep. Barry Ivey (right) explained why he objects to Gov. Jeff Landry's plan to rewrite the Louisiana Constitution in less than a month.

Goal: Make Central a Destination City for Sports



that project. Mayor Evans is working with FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program on an indoor Emergency Shelter/Recreational Center (BRIC). The Emergency shelter/recreation center would include eight basketball courts and 16 volleyball courts.

The plan would include an equestrian-friendly RV park, a new BREC Park, and opportunities for commercial development. A hotel would be planned on the northern portion of that area.

New roads are also part of the plan. These inner city roads would connect the heart of the city's commerce.

The plan includes a connector road from the light at Central High School north toward Hooper.

Other ideas include creating Central's downtown area with Sullivan Road north of Hooper Road the main street corridor. The intersection of Hooper Road and Sullivan Road along with the School Board Office and City Hall would anchor the downtown area.

Mayor Evans envisions Central's downtown area with ribbon driveways and bungalow style homes along the Sullivan Road's downtown area.

The mayor said the City of Central has an area of 62.8 square miles, which is similar to the size of Baton Rouge which has 88 square miles.

Mayor Evans said the City of Central has room for an inner city area, a suburban area, and a rural area.

To view the map, click on the QR code below.

MAYOR EVANS' CITY OF CENTRAL MAIN STREET 2030 PLAN

BATON ROUGE — Central Mayor Wade Evans spoke to the Chamber of Commerce of East Baton Rouge about his Main Street 2030 plan.

The mayor's vision includes a proposed flood detention project that would create a 130-acre lake in the heart of Central. This man-made lake would bring 310 homes near Beaver Bayou out of the 100-year flood plain.

In addition, the city would purchase the red and yellow tracks of land to relocate the dirt from the

project. The plan is to build up areas that have not been brought into commerce because of flooding. Hopefully, this would allow these areas to be developed and thrive. Public/private partnerships would provide financing to make new investments possible.

The city is working with a real estate investment trust and hopes to build Surf Lake, a man-made 800 foot lake that would rise and fall, creating seven-foot tall barrel roll waves, multiple waves per hour at

a rate of two waves per minute.

Mayor Evans said that as soon as the City of Central is able to purchase the property, the city would sign a non-disclosure agreement with the developer and get started on the plan for this project.

The mayor hopes the Main Street 2030 Plan for the City of Central will promote Central as a destination for sports tourism.

There are already plans for a rodeo arena. Former Sen. Bodi White secured \$12 million to build

Chamber East Baton Rouge Luncheon • April 23, 2024 • Café Américain
Photos by Jolice Provost • Video by Woody Jenkins for Central City News

Watch Central's Mayor Wade Evans and Rep. Barry Ivey at the ChamberEBR Luncheon



View Central's Mayor Wade Evans' Proposed Main Street 2030 Map





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Central High School 2024 Senior Class Photos by Eric Frank Photographer

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Gage Duczer



Myles Dufrene



Riley Duncan



Emma Dupuy



Presley Dupuy



Madison Ealy



Kamryn Eaton



Donald Edwards



Dyani Edwards

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JAY PAYNE
Central High School
Class of 1985



ZACK PAYNE
Central High
Class of 2008
with Principal
Ronnie Devall



Most Athletic
Kaylee Sharpe
and
Michael Gremillion
Central Private
Class of 2024



Most Athletic
Damon Blocker
and
Julie Stevens
Central High
Class of 2024



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Central High School Class of 2024



Austin Elliott



Heavenly Erwin



Tamara Evans



Brantley Everett



Paislie Fairley



Brooklyn Falcon



Emma Farris



Millen Fehr



Haylee Feierabend



Nicholas Ferrington



Koby Fitch



Maycee Folmar



Rachel Ford



Gevon Forest



Bradyn Fornea



Tyler Fortney



J'Nyla Foster



Arlen Francois



Kade Furr



Hannah Gafford



Jordyn Gallant



Titus Galloway



Braelen George



Alex Giles



Iveth Vanessa Gomez



Johanna Gonzalez



De'Iryah Green



Blaise Gregoire



Jacen Guardado



Bonilla Anivar Guevara



Ella Guidry



Harley Guin



Mallory Hall



Landon Hamilton



Zyon Hardy



Alex Hargrave



Collin Harris



Grayden Harris



Jalen Harris



Aliyah Harvey



Bryson Hastings



Daron Heatly, Jr.



Julia Hebert



Aralyn Helmke



Samuel Hemmings



Manyelin Hernandez



Ja'Quan Hickman



Brooke Hicks



Kate Hill



Travis Hill



Stratton Hinton



Akiera Hogan



Alajiah Holmes



Bryce Hunter



Cole Jeter



Ethan Johansen



A'Nara Johnson



Ellis Johnson, Jr.



Jayla Johnson



Kaylan Johnson



Lauriel Johnson



Madison Johnson



Morgan Johnson



Anyla Jones



Graduation season brings together the joyful memories of the past, the excitement of the present and the promise of the future in a hard-earned and well-deserved celebration like no other.

-Doug Welborn, Class of 1972

To Our Graduates:

I know how hard you have worked toward the goal you have just realized and the future holds tremendous promise for all of those who have reached this important moment. I still remember the excitement that we had on the stage that night. We were a little nervous but very optimistic and excited about the road ahead of us and I am blessed to have so many of my fellow Central schoolmates as close friends even today.



Years later, I was filled with even more pride as I watched my daughters graduate from Central and they have continued to make me just as proud throughout the years as they did then. I know I join countless parents over the years to realize and appreciate what great schools and community can help to build. My heartiest congratulations are with you all.

In 1991, I had the privilege of becoming the first parish-wide elected official from Central. As Clerk of Court in the years since, I have come to realize how many of the services and holdings in our office will be of use or possible interest to those, like you, who are entering an exciting new phase of life. Just a few of the ways that you might interact with us in the future include:

- Obtaining a marriage license.
- Recording the purchase of your first home or other important legal matters.
- Cancelling the mortgage upon completion of payment on the property.
- Receiving assistance in applying for a passport for international travel.
- Obtaining an official copy of your Louisiana Birth Certificate.
- Attending one of our community outreach events such as the popular Kids ID Program.
- Engaging in the election process by becoming an Election Commissioner at the polls.
- Studying the history of the parish through documents dating back to the early 1800s.
- Registering Clergy Members, Notary Oaths of Office and Military Discharges
- Responding to an official summons to serve as a potential juror in a court trial.



My staff and I are proud to be entrusted with each one of these important duties and so many others and we hope that you will have the opportunity to visit us when you need us. Until then, I hope you enjoy a wonderful summer and the bright future that lies ahead!

Doug Welborn
Clerk of Court
East Baton Rouge Parish

*Offices in City Hall, 19th JDC Courthouse,
 Archives Building and Airline Branch
 (225) 389-3950
 www.ebrclerkofcourt.org*



Central High School Class of 2024



Central High School Most Courteous
Kyle Veal and Audrey Usher



Central High School Most Talented
Cole Sindelar and Kaylynn Knippers



Central High School Most Photogenic
Cameron Patterson and Kate Hill



Ava Jones



Evan C. Jones



Evan G. Jones



James Jordan



Mya Keller



Joshua Kelly



Gabriella Kenney



Lexi Khemmanyong



Luke Kimball



Sydney Klinkhammer



Kaylynn Knippers



John Kravitz



Michael Kravitz



Henry Lagattuta



Mason Lasseigne



Aaliyah Lasyone



Stephen Lato



Alexa Law



Addie Lawless



Jacob LeBlanc



Triston Licciardi



Catalina Lilly



Skylar Lindley



Nickalos Logan



Madison Lumpkin



Daviana Luu



Ellyana Manson



Terry Marcotte



Mason Martin



Anly Martinez



Ashley Martinez



Julio Lorenzo-Matos



Kaci McCaskill



Jaden McCurnin



Macie McElwee



Wesely McElwee



Carli Mills



Carianne Milton



Aanya Mims



Brody Mitchell



Lexi Montagnino



Logan Montagnino



Cha'Kya Montgomery



Breelyn Moore



Hailey Mounce



Jasmyn Murphy



Gavin Newman



Grace Neyland

Class of 2024 You Did It!

You've Made Central Proud!



Judge Tiffany Foxworth
19th Judicial District Court

Heartfelt congratulations to the graduates and their families for your many accomplishments! Great job! All your hard work has paid off!

The road ahead can seem scary but with determination and dedication your next chapter can also be a huge success!

Winston Churchill once said, "Continuous effort — not strength or intelligence — is the key to unlocking our potential."

Keep pushing forward as you strive towards your goals. God Bless you!

CONGRATS ALL GRADS!



Central High School
Most Likely to Succeed
Lauriel Johnson and
Blaise Gregoire



Central Private High School
Most Likely to Succeed
Ben Pennington and
Anna Rash

Central High School Class of 2024



Brooklyn Nicholson



Clare Norwood



Jessica Palizada



Clark Parker



Taylor Parker



Cameron Patterson



Robert Payne



Meghan Peek



Adrian Penilla



Grant Penton



Jaylin Perez



Bria Pitts



Lundyn Plain



Janya Posey



Mallorie Pourciau



Kyleigh Powell



Jack Pruyn



Phoebe Quinn



Garrett Rabalais



Rachel Rains



Destiny Ramos Rodriguez



Gabrielle Reed



Presley Reeves



Anna Claire Riley



Breanna Rhodus



Joshua Ricard



Andrew Richard



Michael Richard



Chloe Richardson



Delani Richardson



Javier Rios Moctezuma



Ethan Rispone



Sury Rivera



Isabella Roberie



Keller Roberson



Cole Robertson



Dylan Robertson



Reagan Robertson



Elizabeth Robichaux



Brelyn Robinson



Luke Robinson



Dai'Shawn Rogers



Dalton Rufini



Taylor Sagely



De'Andre Sanders



Jacqueline Santiago



Bryce Schlatre



Cayman Scott



Samuel Seidel



Marley Shaffer



Tobious Sherwin



Mason Shows



Juliaan Shuff



Ty'Reona Sibley



Gabriel Silman



Morgan Simpson



Cole Sindelar



Brady Smith



Emily Smith



Hayden Smith



Kaden Smith



Kaila Smith



Kaitlyn Smith



Kasey Smith

Congratulations Graduates!



It's time to celebrate your accomplishments!

Be proud of yourself! Graduating from high school is an incredible accomplishment! You worked hard and you did it! Take time to celebrate this milestone with your friends and family.

My advice moving forward is to set high goals. Write them down. Andrew Carnegie once said, "If you want to be happy, set a goal that commands your thoughts, liberates your energy and inspires your hopes." Goals help you stay focused no matter what path you choose. Challenging goals will set a high standard for your life, keep your eyes on the stars, and help you become the best person you can be!

Keep pushing forward, stay strong and never give up! The Bible says in Philippians 4:6-7 "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome

Central High School Class of 2024



Riley Smith



Tanner Smith



Valley Smith



Wynter Snow



Kaden Snowbarger



Dennis Urruita Sorto



Gabrielle Sparks



London Spillers



Seth Staton



Edward Stepter



Julie Stevens



Errol Stevenson



Jaci Stevenson



Alvin Stewart



Jai Swift



Alec Sylve



Camille Temptet



Caroline Temptet



Kaden Thomas



Bryson Flowers-Thomas



Morgan Thompson



Owen Tillman



Jason Tolibas



Gabriel Townsend



Nguyen Ho Tran



Maggie Tullier



Angel Underwood



Audrey Usher



William Usher



Samantha Vaughan



Kyle Veal



Gabriel Vega



Garrett Ventress



Rylee Vickry



Samuel Wagoner



Dutchess Walker



Taytum Ward-Roberts



Jett Watson



Landon Wegner



Connor Weimer



Kyan Weimer



Evan White



Adyn Wilkinson



Logan Wilkinson



Jaylen Williams



Keith Williams



Samuel Williams



Sha'Myah Williams



Taylor Williams



Bailey Williamson



Julia Wilson



Elizabeth Wise



Julia Wolfe



Saige Wolfe



Ta'Nyjah Worthy



Terrance Wyatt



Aubrey Young

2024 Graduates not photographed: Eliel Beltran, Dakota Bergeron, Lizzy Blair, Christian Bowlin, Kelyn Butler, Kohlby Clements, Porter Davis, Zachary Day, Toren Dixon, Yaazh Duncan, Jayson Francois, Levell Gant, Nicholas Gilmer, Alyssa Griffin, Corey Hawthorn, Savannah Hawthorn, Manyelin Hernandez, Dan Tran Ho, James Hussey, Kenzaria Jack, Malachi James, Daneah Johnson, Lillian Johnston, Jordan Jones, Jett Kuehne, Mia Kuehne, Braiden Lala, Jake LaLonde, Shawn Landry, Amiyah Lang, Samiya McCullam, Casey McDonald, Joshua Merzbacher, Jaylin Mills, Cole Mushinsky, Andrea Padilla-Pena, Abimael Perez, Michael Pizzalato, Nathan Plank, Landon Propes, Tomas Reynolds, Huey Ridgell, Izaia Ruiz, Alaina Scott, Angel Scott, Cody Scott, Anderson Sandoval Seb, Denim Smith, Alex Sonnier, Emily Stockstill, Terrell Tate, Denis Sorto, Alaina Ward, Christian Whittaker, Louis Willis

Central High School 2024 Senior Class Photos by Eric Frank Photographer

Congratulations **GRADUATES!**

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Central High School 2024 Superlatives



Central High School Most Likely to Succeed
Lauriel Johnson and Blaise Gregoire



Central High School Most Intelligent
Austin Elliot and Madison Lumpkin



Central High School Most Talkative
Alex Giles and J'Nyla Foster



Central High School Best All Around
Keller Roberson and Kaylen Dillard



CHS Most Likely to Get Married
Andrew Richard and KK



Central High School Best Style
Riley Duncan and Alexander Dang



Central High School Class Comedian
Adyn Wilkinson and Dyani Edwards



Central High School Most Talkative
Jacob LeBlanc and Phoebe Quinn



Central High School Most Dependable
Alaijah Holmes and Clark Parker



Central High School Most Talented
Lexi Khemmanyvong and Ethan Currie



Central High School Most Athletic
Damon Blocker and Julie Stevens

Central High School Class of 2024 Superlatives

Photos by Eric Frank Photography • 12416 Hooper Road • 225-262-5500

Central High School SPED Awards



Hayden Smith
Best Personality



Samuel Seidel
Best Smile



Savannah Hawthorn
Most Attentive



Keagan Chenier
Most Infectious Smile



Alex Hargrave
Most School Spirit



Evan White
Best Laugh



Seth Staton
Most Unforgettable



Central High Senior Class Awards



Hailey Mounce



Garret Ventress and Madison Lumpkin
Chamber of Commerce Award



J'Nyla Foster • Lt. Terry Carter
Memorial Scholarship Award



Phoebe Quinn
Outstanding Volunteer Award



Central High Football Coach David Simoneaux and Athlete Scholars
Logan Montagnino, Ethan Rispono and Madison Lumpkin

2024 Charles T. Kinsley Award Recipients



Kaylen Dillard



Julie Stevens



Cameron Patterson

Senior Award Photos
By Eric Frank Photography

Central High Senior Class Awards



Phoebe Quinn
Academic Excellence
In DE English



Taylor Williams
Excellence in College
Composition Award



Jordan Brooks
Exceptional Student Award



Michael Kravitz
Future Engineer Award



Andrew Richard
Advanced Math Award



Casey McDonald
Most Dependable Award



Meghan Peek
Best New Editor Award



Brooke Hicks
Certified Medical Assistant
Award



Miles Dufrene
Community Climate Award



Damon Blocker
Most Genuinely Kind and Re-
spectful Student I Have Never
Taught Before Award



Jayden Debetaz
Smartest, Most Considerate and
Genuine Student Who Slays
All Day Award



Lauriel Johnson
The Limit Does Not Exist Award



Bradyn Fornea
Class Comedian Award



Heidi Bailey
Above and Beyond Chemistry 2
DE/AP Award



Edward Stepter
Perseverance Award



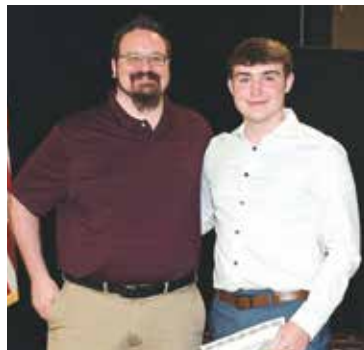
Alex Hargrave
Student of Integrity Award



Keagan Chenier
Most Infectious Smile



Madison Lumpkin
Understood the
Assignment Award



Logan Wilkinson
Academic Weapon Award



Garrett Ventress
Golden Arm Award



Bradyn Fornea
Golden Arm Award



Chris Denicola
Golden Arm Award



Maggie Tullier
Do THEY Really
Need Me Award



Hayden Smith
Best Personality



Emma Dupuy
Whatever You Need Award

Senior Breakfast Award Ceremony • April 29, 2024
Central Middle School
Photos by Eric Frank Photography • 12416 Hooper Road • 225-262-5500

The Valedictorian of Central High Class of 1913

Message to Graduates from Across Time

A Young Woman Said We Will Build Future Through Hard Work, Courage, Intelligence, And Determination

CENTRAL — In May 1913, Pearl Elizabeth Felps walked to the podium as the valedictorian of the first graduating class of the new Central High School, located at the corner of Canal (now Hooper) and Sullivan roads. A copy of her speech was discovered in 2009 and given to the *Central City News*.

It is a timeless message that resonates as well today as it did 111 years ago. She spoke of the importance of hard work, courage, intelligence, and determination. Pearl Elizabeth Felps earned her place as Central's first Valedictorian seven years before women got the right to vote in United States on Aug. 26, 1920. Imagine this young woman rising to the podium in front of the high school at Canal and Sullivan. It was not the busy intersection it is today. Children played in these roads and were known to lay down and take a nap in the street without the slightest fear of a motor car coming along. Horse-drawn buses called "hacks" carried students to school, and people generally walked or rode on horseback wherever they needed to go.

On this day, the entire Central community gathered for the graduation ceremonies, and Miss Felps was ready. Here's what she said:

NO VICTORY WITHOUT LABOR

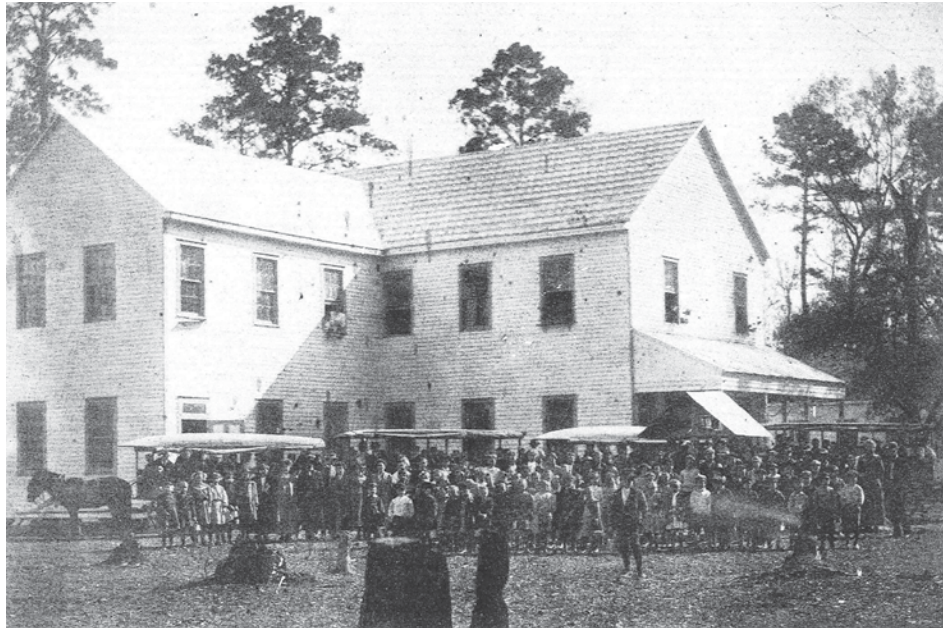
by Pearl Elizabeth Felps
Central High Valedictorian 1913

The boys and girls of today are standing with reluctant feet **where the brooks and rivers meet**; ready to step out into the busy world, each to seek his vocation in life.

We might hold to the past, were it possible, and let our famous men and women of this day and time still carry on the progress of nations. But ever since the dawn of civilization, God has so willed it that each generation has its part to contribute to the great revolving cycle of progress. This is the period of our lives where, at last, the round of changes has carried us to **the vast river whose current is moving steadily and surely into the mystic future**.

Can we proudly stand and meet the responsibilities thus forced upon us? To do so, we must buckle on **the armor of labor**. Fortune smiles only on those who, with up rolled sleeves and willing hands, put their shoulders to the wheel and brave the storms. There is no other road to success.

Fortune is a fickle goddess, and one must woo long and patiently



CENTRAL SCHOOL in the early 1900's. In May 1913, Pearl Elizabeth Felps was the Valedictorian of the first graduating class. Her Valedictory address, No Victory without Labor, counseled hard work, courage, intelligence, and "invincible determination." This advice by a young woman was tendered seven years before women got the vote.

Profile: Pearl Elizabeth Felps (Ott)

Born: 1893 • Died: 1980 • High School: Valedictorian, Central High Class of 1913 • College: Silliman Institute in Clinton. • Teaching career: Central High and Live Oak. • Husband: Rev. Albert D. Ott, who was an early minister at Amite Baptist Church. • Children: Five. One of them, Jodie Lee Ott (who was named after Central's Jodie Edwards) married Amos Ponder Jones. They had four girls: Lynne Jones, CHS 1965; Carolyn Ann Jones Sanchez, CHS 1968; Susan Harris, CHS 1970, and Beverly Jon Bonnebel, CHS 1975. Susan provided Pearl's Valedictory Address for this article to Roxanne Atkinson who provided it to *Central City News*.

“We must remember that one week of life now has almost as much possibility in it as the year had a century ago! See if the greatest men and women who have ever lived cannot be the men and women of tomorrow.”

— Pearl Elizabeth Felps, Central High's 1st Valedictorian

who would win her smiles. “When you start upon a road, keep a comin’, Throw away your prop and goad, but keep a comin’, Though the way seems hard and long, Bear in mind you must be strong, lend a hand to all the throng, and keep a comin’.”

Adam and Eve were thrust from the garden of Eden with these words, “By the sweat of thy brow, thou shall earn thy bread.” There was divine eternal love in this seemingly harsh command, for labor has ever been the workshop from which has evolved models of pure gold, refined and tempered by the conflict in which even “the stars in their courses seemed to fight against **Sisera**.”

History tells us of no advance that has been made over the plain of progress, except by labor. If we have intelligence, slowly and steadily moves earth, sea and time, onward, still onward and upward is the **clarion call**.

Our graduation day may be compared to a horse race, each with an equal start, each bound for the goal; one, two, three years pass; one or two ahead, three or four close behind, some slothful, others diligent and some dropped out entirely. But **the race is “not to the strong,”** but to the one who labors long and earnestly and trust-

fully. There is no boy or girl, if he has the element of ability about him, who cannot make some success in life. Where there is a will, there is a way.

What has labor done for our grand old America since our first discoverers landed here in such frail and unsafe boats? It has leveled the cliffs to build upon; smoothed the plains and felled the forests; seized disease and throttled its venom. Not only converted it from the desert abode of savages to the beautiful houses of civilization, but has gone down into **the bowels of the earth** and revealed the wonderful treasures hidden there.

It has converted the little unsafe boats of our discoverers into steel ships a thousand feet long, carrying hundreds of passengers. Not only have **our oceans been underlaid with cables**, but this majestic steamer is outfitted with **wireless telegraphy**. The railroads and telegraphy bring the ends of the earth together.

In 1914, labor will again give to us one of the most wonderful changes in commerce, the completion of **the Panama Canal**, where the waves of the broad Atlantic will flow to meet those of the deep Pacific. And where will the nation gain her victory? All will answer by labor.

It is no doubt true that the boys and girls of today have the advantage of our forefathers, for we have so many models from which to fashion our patterns. But **we must remember that one week of life now has almost as much possibility in it as the year had a century ago.**

We are living in one of the most wonderful ages in the history of the world. There has never been an age when such great things were in the making, and the call is for boys and girls willing to labor in the coming contest.

Never before has there been such opportunities for boys **and girls**, and the boys **and girls** of today will be the citizens of tomorrow. Let us pick up Daniel Webster's quotation in his **eloquent oration at Bunker Hill**: “Let our age be an age of improvement. Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up and promote all of its great interests. Let us extend our ideas over the whole of the vast field in which we are called to act.”

See if the greatest men and women who have ever lived cannot be the men and women of tomorrow.

Labor is the rainbow of promise to every aspiring youth, and the hope of our world's greatest nation.

★★★

LOOKING BACK 111 years, do you understand Miss Felps' speech?

Consider these questions:

1. What is the place **where brooks and rivers meet**?
2. Why does she talk about a **river whose current is moving us into the future**?
3. When she urges buckling on **the armor of labor**, why would her audience be familiar with a similar phrase?
4. Who was **Sisera**?
5. When she says the race is **“not to the strong,”** where did she get that quote?
6. What are **the bowels of the earth** where wonderful treasures are hidden?
7. Why were the **oceans underlaid with cables** and when?
8. What is **wireless telegraphy**?
9. Why would **the Panama Canal** give us “wonderful changes in commerce”? How did she know it would happen in 1914?
10. Why was it possible to do in **one week** what would have taken a year a century before?
11. Why does she specifically mention opportunities for **girls**?
12. What was the significance of **Bunker Hill** and when did Daniel Webster give his speech?
13. Why is **labor the rainbow of promise for aspiring youth**?

Questions by Woody Jenkins, editor, *Central City News*

We Build on the Shoulders of Those Who Came Before Us! Thank You for Creating A Great Tradition at Central High School!

Central Private School Class of 2024



CENTRAL PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL REDHAWKS CLASS OF 2024



Central Private 2024 Most Athletic
Kaylee Sharpe and Michael Gremillion



Central Private 2024 Class Officers
President Katelyn Easley, Vice President Ben Forbes, Secretary Hunter Pourciau,
Treasurer Dawson Glover, and Reporter Greysen Schaeffer



Central Private 2024 Best Personality
Andrew Dugas and Marigny Hailey

Central Private High School Who's Who



Miley Carl



Andrew Dugas



Gavin McManus



Julia Myers



Kaylee Sharpe



Anna Watson



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Central Private School Class of 2024



Emerson Aucoin



Grant Austin



Central Private 2024 Mr. and Ms. CP, Luke Browning and Anna Claire Sharpe



Katherine Breaux



Kaiden Broussard



Luke Browning



Miley Carl



Emma Daigle



Andrew Dugas



Katelyn Easley



Ava Edwards



Ben Forbes



Dawson Glover



Anna Claire Gremillion



Michael Gremillion



Marigny Hailey



Levi Jacobs



Wyatt Johnson



Addison Kiger



Stephen Lambert



Madison Magherini



Ethan McCarty



Gavin McManus



Braiden Morgan



Julia Myers



Maddix Naquin



Aiden Norris



Ben Pennington



Cale Peterson



Hunter Pourciau



Anna Rash



Jaycee Richard



Ryne Sandifer



Grey Schaeffer



Kaylee Sharpe



Riley Stebbing



Anna Walton



Central Private 2024 Most Dependable
Riley Stebbing and Ben Forbes



Central Private 2024 Most Likely to Succeed
Ben Pennington and Anna Rash



Central Private 2024 Most Unforgettable
Hunter Pourciau and Emerson Aucoin

2024 St. Joseph Academy Graduates From the City of Central



Amelia Cate Allemond



Braelyn Renee Estave



Ana-Grace Elizabeth Garcia



Amelia Ann Johnson



Olivia Gabrielle McLin



Isabella Magee Record



Annabelle Marie Sheets

2024 Catholic High School Grads From the City of Central



Jaycen Pi'er Hulbert



Reed Scott Moise



Javan Christian Patton



Blair Lee Rousseau



Bobby Brockman Rudy



Kohl Daniel Oliver Thomas



Landry Paul Turner



Jackson Nicholas Whitlow

**Catholic High
Photos by
Brad Messina
Photography**

Carney Christian Academy Class of 2024



Brandt Abbott



Alleigh Albarado



Sagen Babin



Jonathan Free



Tori Forrester



Kyle Hernandez



Cameron Martin



Austin McMorris



Sydney Parker



Lucas Thornhill



Mya Watson

CARNEY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY • HOMESCHOOL • CLASS OF 2024

2024 Parkview Baptist Grads from Central



Tori Baudry



Cooper Dupuy



Ethan Hebert

2024 Zachary Christian Academy Grads



Emma Manuel



Alaina Mellenthin



Ally Perry

2024 St. Michael the Archangel Grads From the City of Central



Josiah Bolton



Julianna Broussard



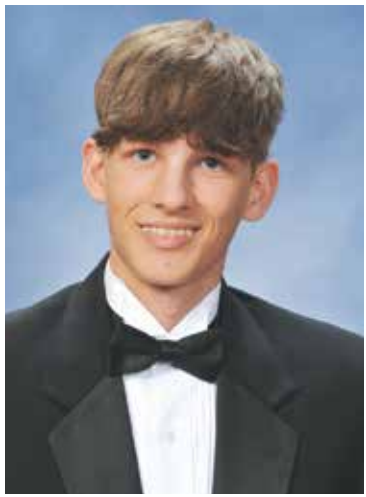
Hadley Carter



Makenzie Clark



Mary Kathryn Covington



Cole Davis



Gavin Knapps



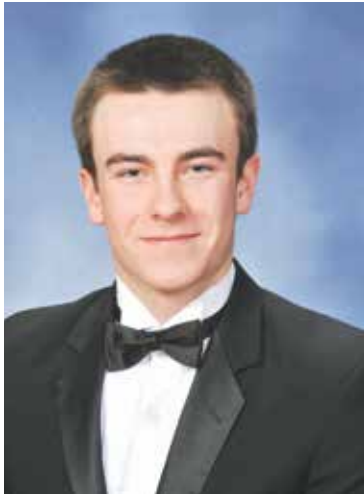
Alexander Neal



Baylie Patt



Andrew Richard



Cooper Shannon



Olivia Thibodeaux



Jack Thompson



Justin Thornhill

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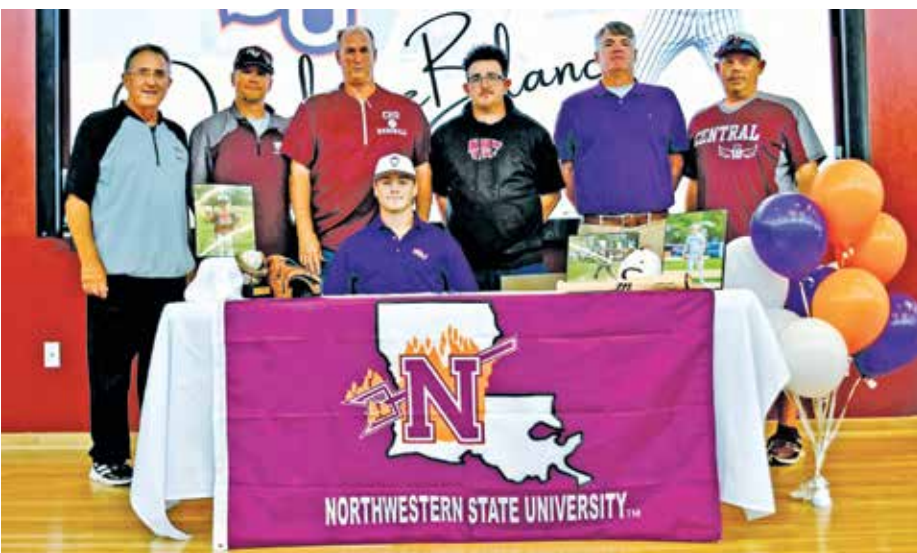
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL'S ARLEN FRANCOIS (left) signed a letter of intent with Catawba Valley Community College as he makes plans to continue his education and his fishing career with the CVCC Red Hawks. Catawba Valley is in Hickory, North Carolina, and Arlen is excited for the opportunity to take his love for fishing to the next level. Central High's BASS Team is known for winning big, and Arlen has been a part of that success for the past four years. His family, friends and teammates celebrated with him recently and he expressed his deep appreciation for his mom, grandfather, aunt, and teammates including his fishing partner, Hinsley Bryant.

Millen Fehr Signs Commits to William Carey



CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL'S MILLEN FEHR COMMITTED TO WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY — Millen will continue his education and his passion for swimming on the next level as he becomes a part of William Carey University's history-making inaugural swim team. On March 19, Central High School celebrated the official signing with Millen's family and friends gathering in support of Millen's accomplishments. At left, Millen Fehr with his parents and at right with his coach

LeBlanc to Pitch at Northwestern State University



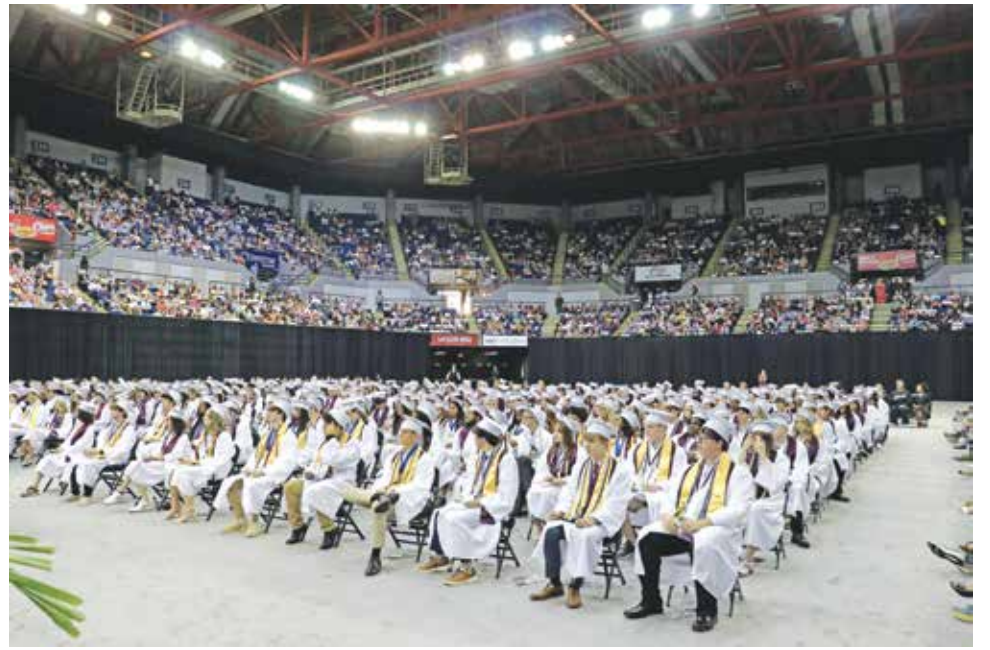
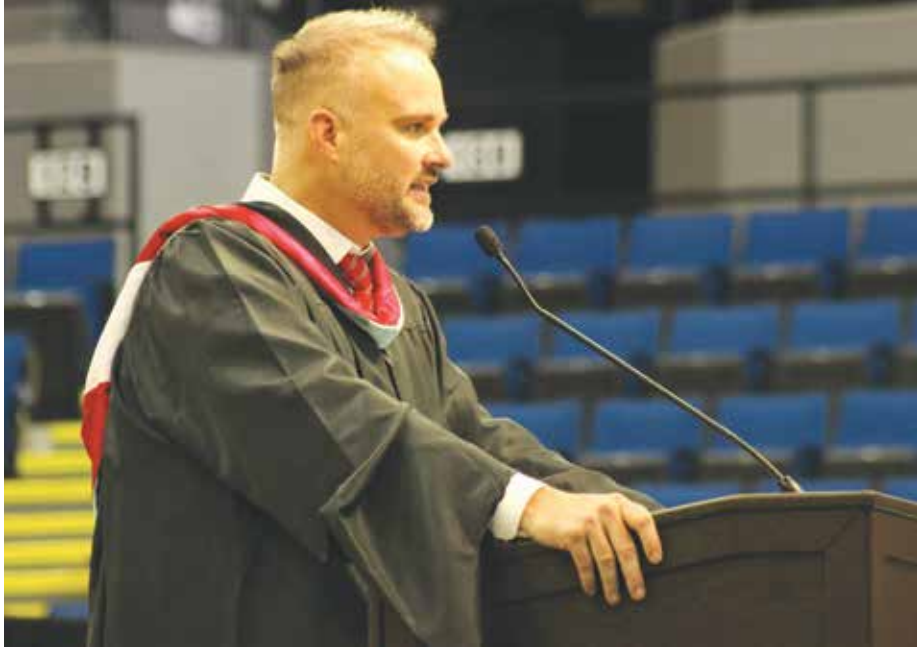
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL'S LEFT-HANDED PITCHER JACOB LEBLANC signed with Northwestern State University on April 11 committing to play baseball. Jacob is a left-handed pitcher. He will be pursuing a degree in Industrial Engineering. In addition, Jacob was recognized by The Advocate recently as Player of the Week for the first week of April after he shut out Zachary. In that game, he pitched six innings and hit a two RBI single to secure the win for the Wildcats.0

Central City News

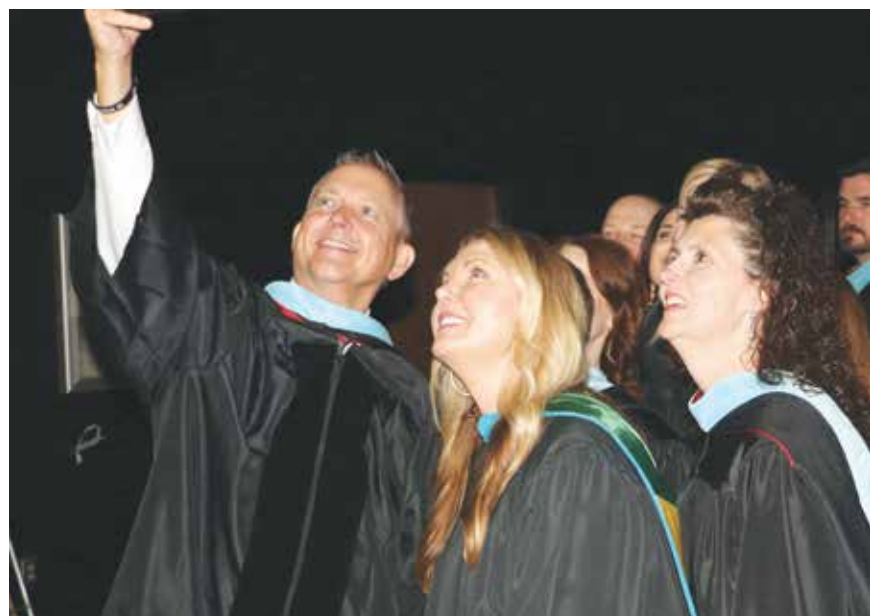
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Scenes from Central High Graduation



CENTRAL HIGH CLASS OF 2024 heard from principal Brandon LaGroue, semi-finalist in Louisiana's Principal of the Year competition. Ceremonies were held at River Center



MEMBERS OF THE CLASS hauled away many honors and scholarships including National Merit Semi-Finalist. Administrators (right) also enjoyed the festivities.

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Why BRPD Officers Live Outside Baton Rouge: They Seek Good Public Schools, Safe Streets

The Ungarnished Truth: Working Families Move Where Crime is Low and Public Schools Are Good; That's Not Baton Rouge!

Woody Jenkins

Editor

Statistics from the Baton Rouge Police Department show that 58 percent of all police officers live in Central, Zachary, or parishes other than East Baton Rouge Parish.

Many people complain that many police officers live outside Baton Rouge but no one seems to want to ask why? In reality, only 20 percent of the force actually resides in Baton Rouge. But Why?

When you say the words, "middle income working people," that describes virtually every member of the Baton Rouge Police Department. They work for a living. They are not abjectly poor, but they certainly don't make a lot of money. Even with husband and wife working, few Baton Rouge Police officers can afford to send their children to private or parochial schools. Yet, they want a good education for their children.

So like most of the rest of the "middle income working people," in the Capital region, they live in Central, Zachary, Livingston, and Ascension parishes, where crime is low and public schools are good.

The problem really began back in the 1960's and 1970's during integration. In the late 1960's, the parish had a system of neighborhood schools. Some were overwhelmingly white, some overwhelmingly black, and quite a few were racially mixed. However, Federal District Judge John Parker, unhappy with the rate of integration, ordered cross-town forced busing in order to achieve a targeted racial balance in each school.

His court orders, which extended more than three decades, left the East Baton Rouge Parish school system less integrated. Today, almost 90 percent of students in the system are black. We have *de facto* segregation if not segregation by law. Now the EBR school board is once again pursuing neighborhood schools. There is no longer forced busing, although there are plenty of buses crisscrossing the parish.

The current EBR school board inherited a Byzantine system of magnet schools, gifted and talented, charter schools, and neighborhood schools.

This system insures that most neighborhood schools will be failing or near failing schools. Why? First, the magnet schools pull away the best students (and often the top leaders) from the neighborhood schools. The gifted and talented programs pull out most of the other top students. Then many parents who pay attention to their options sign up for charter schools.

That leaves the rest of the kids — who have been left out of the sweepstakes — to attend their neighborhood school. There are of course a few good neighborhood



LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS from many jurisdictions honored a fallen comrade. Few police officers live in Baton Rouge.

schools in this parish but very few.

The thing to realize about Baton Rouge is that things are not "normal" here. They are not normal because we are missing one important segment of the population — "middle income working people with children." They are not going to send their children to poor public schools and they can't afford private schools. So they don't live here. A few do, but not many.

East Baton Rouge Parish, but especially the City of Baton Rouge, consists of retired people, poor people, wealthy people, students, single people, and married people without children. But what's missing is "middle income working people with children." It's not that there's an exodus going on. They already left! Long ago.

That's why only 20 percent of the Baton Rouge Police Department lives in the City of Baton Rouge. You could take a cross section of any other category of "middle income working people" and probably find about the same percentages.

How can we bring those middle income working families back to East Baton Rouge Parish?

You will never do it with the current Byzantine structure of schools in East Baton Rouge Parish where neighborhood schools are deprived of the top 50 percent or so of their students.

But there IS a way to bring "middle income working people" back to East Baton Rouge Parish — a way that is almost certain to work!

But you may not want to hear it. We KNOW how to do it because it's already been done — in Zachary and Central, the No. 1 and No. 2 school systems in Louisiana.

An analysis of enrollees in the Central school system shows that *more families move to Central from Livingston Parish than from Baton Rouge!* They come back to East Baton Rouge Parish for the good schools in Central!

Who are the people who have moved to Central from Livingston Parish? Mostly, they are former residents of Central who moved to Livingston for good public schools. They didn't want to be in Livingston. They wanted to be in Central.

So when Central got control of its schools and it became one of the top school systems in the state virtually overnight, people started returning to Central.

That's what the proposed City of St. George is all about. It's about returning people to public schools in East Baton Rouge Parish by creating a city with its own new *independent community school system* — a system like Zachary and Central, which are free of the Byzantine structure of schools in the EBR system where true neighborhood schools are virtually impossible.

It's not about "dividing" the City of Baton Rouge. The City of St. George is exclusively in unincorporated areas of the parish that the City of Baton Rouge doesn't want and never annexed!

The new Southeast Baton Rouge School System will bring people back to this parish from Livingston and Ascension by the tens of thousands, because our former residents would rather be in EBR, *if the schools are good!*

So, yes, most Baton Rouge Police officers do not live in Baton Rouge. It's because of high crime and poor public schools. But offer good public schools here, and people will pour back into this parish, especially to Central and St. George where crime is low.

Like Zachary and Central, the proposed Southeast Community School System will bring middle income working people with children back to the parish and make it once again a "normal" community. Police officers will come too!



FEW EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH sheriff deputies live in the City of Baton Rouge.

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Leaders Outline Reasons For Creating St. George

BATON ROUGE - During the campaign to incorporate St. George, Chris Rials and Andrew Murrell, two leaders of the St. George movement, explained the goals of incorporating the new city.

Murrell cited the top five reasons for the City of St. George as:

1) **Fighting Crime.** The 193 murders in 2017 and 2018 were the highest two-year total in East Baton Rouge Parish history. St. George will increase East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's office coverage of St. George.

2) **Holding Down Taxes.** A total of 23 new taxes have passed in the parish since 2003. That totalled \$53 million in additional taxes in 2018 — more than the total proposed budget of St. George. Since 2009, Baton Rouge has increased spending by more than the cumulative total budget increases of Lake Charles, Lafayette, New Orleans, Alexandria, and Shreveport.

In 2017, JP Morgan identified Baton Rouge as the 5th most over-leveraged city in the U.S. They said the city must raise taxes 24 percent to meet its 30-year liabilities. There are no documented plans by the administration or the Baton Rouge Area Chamber to address this financial reality.

Rials said Central has not raised its taxes since they incorporated in 2005, and neither will St. George.

3) **Improving Drainage.** The City-Parish administration would not prioritize \$2 million in a nearly \$1 billion budget to obtain \$255

million in federal monies secured by Congressman Garret Graves. The City-Parish administration asked the governor and state taxpayers to pay for East Baton Rouge Parish drainage improvement. Look at your ditches — overgrown with grass, trash, sediment-filled culverts. The City of St. George will address drainage.

4) **Creating a Great New School System.** The East Baton Rouge Parish School System ranked 58th out of 70 statewide school districts, with the lowest performance scores among large municipalities. There have been five school closures since 2014, while surrounding school districts have expanded their schools and economies. St. George's future majority minority school district will compete with Zachary and Central.

5) **Reversing the Unprecedented Exodus from E Parish.** Residents have been voting with their feet. There are 6,000 fewer residents in East Baton Rouge Parish now than in 2016.

An East Baton Rouge Parish School System study forecasts a further loss of nearly 20,000 residents by 2030. An EBR Parish Land Use Study confirms that by 2030 there will be fewer residents in EBR Parish, residents over 60 years of age will increase by 50 percent, and residents over 70 will double.

However, Rials and Murrell agreed that the City of St. George will turn this around and grow the city and East Baton Rouge Parish.

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Mrs. Florence “Tenny” Williams Celebrates Her 103rd Birthday

CENTRAL — Born May 11, 1921 in Baton Rouge, Mrs. Teeny will celebrate 103 years this May 11, 2024. She was born to Lillian George Bernard and Walter Joseph Bernard, the second of eight children.

To put her 1921 birthday in perspective, the year she was born insulin was discovered, Chanel No. 5 perfume was launched, and Roosevelt was diagnosed with polio. The population of Baton Rouge was 22,000.

Mrs. Teeny has fond memories of growing up as a child in the early 1900's. She says that she and her siblings spent a lot of time playing outdoors, making up their own games, and even making their own toys, like using clothes pins for guns to play cops and robbers. She says that she learned to swim in the Comite River, and enjoyed playing marbles, baseball, and “pop the whip” just swinging each other around the yard.

Her family had a garden, growing watermelons, canteloupe, Irish potatoes, and sweet potatoes. Mattresses in their home were made of moss, corn shucks, or feathers. The family did not have electricity



Teeny as a young lady in her early 20's

until Mrs. Teeny was elementary school age. She attended Central schools from the first through the fifth grade. Then her family moved to Baton Rouge and eventually to Baker where she graduated from Baker High School in 1941.

During her senior year at Baker High, Mrs. Teeny excelled. She was a cheerleader, served on the yearbook and school newspaper staffs, was a member of the French and Journalism Clubs, played basketball, and was a “Baker Belle.”

One of her classmates at Baker High was Ossie Brown, who later became District Attorney for East Baton Rouge Parish. Ossie was the drum major for Baker High School's first band in the 1940-41 school year.

After high school, Mrs. Teeny went to Business College for one year, before going to work as a civilian at Baton Rouge's Harding Field. The airfield had been put in use in 1941 by the United States Army Air Corps for much needed pilot training during World War II.

The field had a hospital complex, barracks, dormitories, a chapel, and a large swimming pool. Today the old Harding Field site is the location of the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport.

While employed at Harding Field, Mrs. Teeny met her first husband, Lee Roy Koon, who was a master mechanic for airplanes at the field. They married and had three children — Walter Joseph Koon, Charles Gordon Koon, and Lee Roy Koon, Jr.

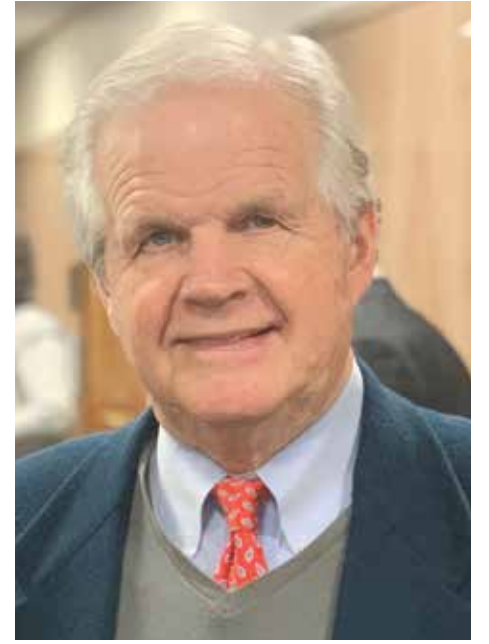
Mrs. Teeny later worked as a bookkeeper for 17 years at the State-Times, Morning Advocate newspapers and 17 years as a bookkeeper at Grand Pelican Furniture before retiring.

Mrs. Teeny and Roy Koon were married until 1985 when he passed away. After six years as a widow, she married Mr. Loyd Williams who passed away in 1997.

Since 2010, Mrs. Teeny has been back in Central where she lives with her son Lee and his wife Amy. She is amazingly fit, sharp as a tack, and very witty.

She has outlived all of her siblings, who include Ethel Waller, Margie Fleming, Walter Bernard, Morris Osborn Bernard, L. Jay Bernard, Rev. Tony Elton Bernard, and Rosemary Bernard.

She is a member of First Pentecostal Church in Denham Springs and is their oldest member.



Former Rep. Woody Jenkins

GOP Re-elects Woody Jenkins As Republican EBR Chairman Party Names Leaders, Takes Stand on Issues

BATON ROUGE — Fresh off their election during the Presidential Primary, members of the Republican Party's Parish Executive Committee met Sunday, April 28 to elect its leaders for the next four years and take a stand on some current issues.

The 17-member body unanimously re-elected former Rep. Woody Jenkins to his fourth four-year term as Parish Republican chairman.

Other officers elected were:

- Former Sen. Dan Claitor, vice chairman

- Political consultant Scott Wilfong, secretary
- Crisis pregnancy center leader Barbara Thomas, treasurer

The committee took positions on a number of issues facing the state.

These included resolutions:

- Supporting State Supt. of Education Cade Brumley on his stand against the Biden's administration's radical rules attempting to accommodate gender identity in schools.
- Congratulating the City of St. George on the Supreme Court decision recognizing its creation.

- Supporting Rep. Emily Chenevert's HB 6, which could speed up the Southeast school district.

- Supporting reapportionment of malapportioned judicial subdistricts in the 19th Judicial District.

- Opposing HB 800, which calls for a “drive-by” Constitutional convention.

- Opposing the Congressional reapportionment plan passed by the legislature to remove a Republican seat and add a Democratic seat.

The public is invited to the Ronald Reagan Newsmaker Luncheon at 12 noon on the 2nd Tuesday at Café Americain, 7323 Jefferson.

Website: capitalrepublican.com



The birthday girl Mrs. Florence “Teeny” Bernard Koon Williams



Lee and Amy Koon, son and daughter-in-law of Mrs. Teeny, holding copy of a Proclamation by Central Mayor Wade Evans declaring May 11, 2024 as “Florence Bernard Williams Day” in honor of her 103rd Birthday.

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Four to Represent Central on RSCC



Nick Carmena



Brandon Ivey



Wayne Messina



Tony Perkins

Republican State Central Committee Governs State GOP

CITY OF CENTRAL — Four Republicans from Central were elected to represent parts of State Senate District 6 on the Republican State Central Committee in the March 23 presidential primary election. Businessman and Central School

Board member Nick Carmena will represent northern Central and parts of Zachary in District 6F. Central contactor Brandon Ivey will represent the eastern part of Central in District 6E. Retired educator and former Cen-

tral City Council member Wayne Messina will represent western Central District 6D. Former Rep. Tony Perkins, who serves as President of Family Research Foundation, will represent Pride and St. Helena in District 6G.



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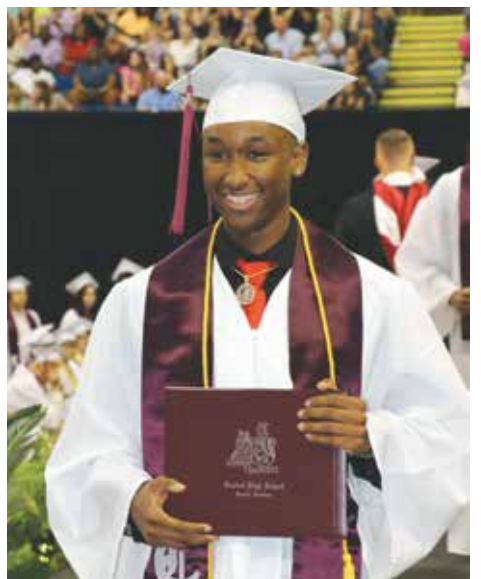
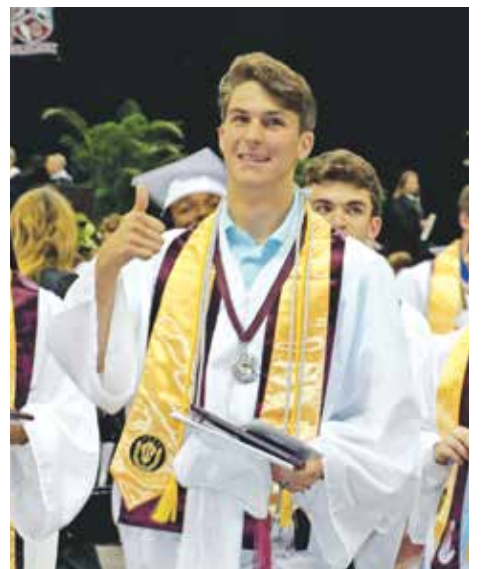


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Central High Graduation



Central Private's Softball Team Handled Hanson Memorial 15-5



THE LADY REDHAWKS DEFEATED HANSON MEMORIAL in the first round of the LHSAA Division IV (Select) Bi-District Playoffs. In the second round Regional Playoffs, Central Private traveled to Natchitoches to play St. Mary's Catholic School where they lost 9-2. The team had an incredible year, wrapping up their season with a 17-3 overall record, ranked 10th in the state and winning the District Championship!



#27 IVA MARTEL HOLDS HER HOMERUN BALL (left) after the Redhawk win against Hanson Memorial in the first round of the playoffs. Martel's homerun hit (center) went over the corner of right field. **#8 Briley Sullivan** (right) walked back to first base after a foul ball.



#14 MIRIAM REYNERSON (left) at bat for Central Private. Motivation gathering of the Lady Redhawks (left/center). **#16 Kiley Piper** (right/center) goes up to catch a pop fly. Central Private pitcher **#20 Bree Crawford** (right) with the win for the Redhawks.



#22 ALLIE GIBBS AND #21 KYLIE ODENDAHL (left) supporting each other with a high five. **#1 Avery McCartney** (left/center) Central Private's catcher. **#2 Blakely Sumerall** (right/center) heading to home plate with a run for the Redhawks. Central Private Lady Redhawk dugout (right). Members of the 2023-2024 Team: **#1 Avery McCartney, #2 Blakely Sumerall, #3 Allie Petit, #5 Hollyn Paxton, #7 Jayde Scott, #8 Briley Sullivan, #12 Gracelyn Hart, #14 Miriam Reynerson, #16 Kiley Piper, #20 Bree Crawford, #21 Kylie Odendahl, #22 Allie Gibbs, #23 Kurstyn Kirkwood, #27 Iva Martel.** Managers: Kaylee Mannino and Anna Walton. Coaches: Julie Hawkins, Brent Lax, Chris McCaskill and Chris Piper

Former Central Wildcat Myrissa Eisworth Named Louisiana State University Tiger12



BATON ROUGE —Since 2003, LSU has presented the Tiger Twelve honor to 12 students graduating each calendar year. Students selected as members of the Tiger Twelve are undergraduate seniors who contribute positively to the life of the campus, surrounding community, and society and who demonstrate commitment to intellectual achievement, inclusive excellence, leadership in campus life, and service. All must carry at least a 2.5 cumulative grade-point average. This year's class GPA average is 3.763.

Central's Myrissa Eisworth was one of this year's recipients of the Tiger Twelve honor. Myrissa Majors: Dual Degree in Sociology and Anthropology. Minor: French; College of Humanities & Social Sciences and the Roger Hadfield Ogden Honors College.

2020 CENTRAL HIGH GRADUATE MYRISSA EISWORTH (left) was selected as one of LSU's Tiger Twelve Seniors. At right, father and stepmother Drs. Seth and Hillary Eisworth, Myrissa Eisworth with her tiger, brothers Sam and James Mayo, grandmother Di-anne Clark, mother Myranda Mayo, sister Myrielle Eisworth, and grandmother Marcia Eisworth. Not shown are sister Rayne Eisworth and deceased grandfathers, Dr. Walter Eisworth and Dr. George Clark.

SAS CLASS OF 2024!

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11



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Congratulations Class of 2024

To the graduates of 2024: As you receive your high school diploma, you will commence a new chapter in your life. Our schools in Central have well prepared you for the next step. Once your formal education is complete, you will get a good job or start a business. Hopefully, you will become a property owner, and that will bring you into contact with the Assessor's office. Our job is to assess property fairly and equitably in accordance with the law. We want you to know that when you become a property owner, our door is always open to assist you! Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve you!



Brian Wilson
Assessor of EBR

Istrouma High Class of 1955 Reunion



ISTROUMA CLASS OF 1955 ENJOYS THE FOOD AT DUKE'S IN WATSON — Bonnie Van Osdell Smith, B.L. Fairchild, and Jerry Steele (left) look through Istrouma memorabilia. Leroy Owens, Walter Imahara, and Carroll DiBenedetto (right) at the head table during the opening of the 69-year class reunion of the Istrouma High School Class of 1955.



ISTROUMA HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1955 HELD ITS ANNUAL REUNION at Duke's in Watson. Edith Autry McCon and Merelin McCon (left). Tanaya Hernandez, Bonnie Van Osdell Smith, and Beverly Babin (left/center)) pose for a picture. Kahne Dipaolo, Jimmy Langlois, and Billie Langlois (right/center). Lulu Langlois (right).



ISTROUMA HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1955 HOLDS ANNUAL REUNIONS — John Hunter (left) waves to the camera. Janice and Billy Guitreau (left/center). Fred Ray Hogeman and Rochelle (right/center). Carol Weems (right) was happy to see everyone at the reunion! Walter Imahara is responsible for organizing the annual reunions.



ISTROUMA CLASS OF 1955 STILL STRONG AFTER 69 YEARS — Ruth Prichard (left) has fried fish. Kathleen Brunson and Howard Taylor (left/center). Buddy Harger (right/center) with the red beans and rice and fish. Sonny Jane Smart and Teresa Blanchard (right).

Istrouma High School Class of 1955 Reunion
 Duke's in Watson • By Woody Jenkins for the Central City News

Get QR Code Reader from App Store and Watch Reunion Here

