



LEADERlines

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF LEADERSHIP MARTIN COUNTY ALUMNI



INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS & SUPER RAFFLE DRAWING

LEADERShip Martin County Alumni celebrated the annual Installation of Officers on June 5 at Stuart Boathouse, presented by HBK CPAs & Consultants.

The swearing-in ceremony was officiated by Sheriff John Budensiek (30). Outgoing Board President Chelsey Matheson (30), successfully passed the gavel to incoming President Kate Muscarella (29) and Vice President Christina Hunter (32). The board also welcomed four new directors: **Lisa Conway** (32), **Patrick Nolan** (33), **Christen Spake** (33) and **Sally Waite** (33), along with Class 34 Representative **Chris Vaccaro**.

Five outgoing board members were recognized for their years of service to LEADERShip Alumni: **Sarah Baker** (29, Past President), **George Dzama** (30), **Frank Fender** (29), **Cindy Groover** (30, Past President), and **Jeremy Harris** (28).

The board also marked the retirement of **Cindy LaConte** (7), who retired from her role as LEADERShip Martin County Program director after 10 years at the helm, plus many more years as a board member and past president of LEADERShip Alumni (2000-2001). Her contributions to LEADERShip are innumerable, and she will be greatly missed by all.

[More →](#)

INSTALLATION CONT'D

The festivities continued with the Super Raffle drawing, LEADERShip Alumni's fundraiser for Martin Youth LEADERShip. Congratulations to the winners!

- 50/50 Raffle - Laura Barbone (who donated her winnings back to Martin Youth LEADERShip!)
- Lifetime Membership - Carolyn Timmann
- Just Gold Jewelers gift certificate - Jason Berger
- GRAND PRIZE Pearl, Diamond & Gold Jewelry set - Kate Muscarella



Many thanks to all who entered the raffle. The event raised over \$2500 for the Youth program. Special thanks to Just Gold Jewelers for donating the gift certificate and to the anonymous donor who gave the gorgeous jewelry worth over \$7,000!



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow Alumni:

I am delighted to address you as the newly appointed President of Leadership Martin County Alumni Foundation for Youth. It is with great enthusiasm that I step into this role, committed to fostering a strong and engaged alumni community.

Our alumni network is a testament to the dedication, resilience, and leadership that each of you has demonstrated throughout your journey.

As a valued member of our alumni community, your leadership journey does not end—it evolves. Leadership Martin County Alumni is designed to keep you connected, engaged, and empowered alongside fellow leaders who continue to shape the future.

Our mission is to Inspire Continuous Professional and Personal Growth in the LEADERShip Martin County Community.

To support this mission, we are placing a renewed emphasis on broadening opportunities for involvement, professional development, continued education, team building, initiatives, and creating enriching events. These efforts are designed to ensure that every alumnus has access to meaningful ways to connect, lead, and make a lasting impact within our community.

We ask that you stay engaged so that we can continue to build a dynamic network of leaders. We welcome your ideas, insight, and expertise. We look forward to seeing how your leadership continues to inspire.

So, whether you're looking to give back, grow, or simply reconnect, we'd love to have you as an active member of LEADERShip Martin County Alumni.

Warm Regards,
Kate Muscarella
President, Leadership Martin County Alumni



Meet the New Board Members!



SALLY WAITE, CLASS 33
Emergency Management Director,
Martin County Fire Rescue

Hometown: Boonton, New Jersey

Current City: Palm Beach Shores

How long have you lived in the area? **50 years**

Tell us about your current organization and your position.

As the Emergency Management Director for Martin County, I oversee all phases of emergency management, including preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. I lead the coordination of disaster planning and interagency response efforts to ensure public safety during hurricanes, wildfires, floods, and other emergencies. I also manage the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), develop emergency plans and training programs, and serve as the county's liaison with local, state, and federal partners.

Why did you volunteer to serve on the LEADERShip Martin County Board of Directors?

I wanted to make a difference and guide others through the process that I went through, so that they have the experience that I had.

Where are we most likely to find you when you're not at work?

At the beach, on my boat, or spending time with my 12 grandchildren.

Fun Facts

Favorite Local Restaurant:

Speakeasy

Favorite Place in Martin County:

Bathtub Beach

Favorite TV Show and/or Movie:

Law and Order

Favorite Band or Music Genre:

Country Music

Favorite Sport: ***Football***

Pets: ***1 dog named Tequila***



WELCOME AMBER DUCOTE
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The Stuart/Martin County Chamber of Commerce welcomed Amber Ducote as the new LEADERShip Program Director. Ducote stepped into the role June 1st after Cindy LaConte announced her retirement after 10 years as Program Director (32 years total with the Chamber).

A native of Martin County and a graduate of Class 20, Ducote brings a dynamic blend of entrepreneurial experience, deep community involvement, and a strong personal connection to the program she now leads.

Ducote will join the LEADERShip Alumni Board of Directors as an ex officio member. We look forward to having her on the team!

All Alumni are invited to a special welcome event on July 31 at the 10th Street Community Center. Flip to page 9 for more details!

Meet the New Board Members!



CHRISTEN SPAKE, CLASS 33 Attorney, Gunster

Hometown: Cape Coral/Fort Myers
Current City: Martin County

How long have you lived in the area? **9 years**

Tell us about your current organization and your position.

I am a Florida Bar-Certified Real Estate attorney focusing on land development and real estate law at Gunster, in Martin and St. Lucie counties and beyond. Gunster, one of Florida's oldest commercial law firms (we are celebrating our 100-year anniversary this year!), has a deep bench of legal counselors serving top-tier companies, high-net-worth families, and leaders across a multitude of industries. The firm's strong leadership and vision, collaborative, personal approach to client service, and maybe most importantly, its people, make it a fantastic place to practice law.

Do you participate with any other nonprofit organizations?

Yes! I might sound biased, but I'll still say it: I am fortunate to serve some of the best organizations in town. Operation 300, Helping People Succeed, Coastal Life Church, Martin County Community Land Trust, and the Economic Council of Martin County have my heart.

What advice would you give to the incoming LEADERShip class?

Suspend your prejudices and assumptions, and listen with an open mind. Your beliefs will probably be challenged, and that's a good thing!

Fun Facts

Favorite Place in Martin County:

The beach

Favorite TV Show and/or Movie:

Homeland

Favorite Band or Music Genre:

I like a little bit of everything, from country to house to classic rock

Favorite Sport: ***To watch: college basketball & golf; To play: tennis (though it's rare!)***

Alma Mater: ***Go 'Noles!***

2025-2026

LEADERSHIP ALUMNI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Kate Muscarella

Vice President: Christina Hunter

Treasurer: David Sarno

Recording Secretary: Jon Milton

Corresponding Secretary: Charlene Lyons

Directors

Lisa Conway, Joanna Greene,
Patrick Nolan, Christen Spake, Sally Waite

Ex Officio

Chelsey Matheson,
Immediate Past President
Amber Ducote,
LEADERShip Program Director
Chris Vaccaro,
Class 34 Representative

Meet the New Board Members!



PATRICK NOLAN, CLASS 33

Director of Utilities & Public Works, Village of Indiantown

Hometown: Albany, New York

Current City: Okeechobee

How long have you lived in the area? **Since October 2021. My wife, Maria, and I moved to Florida to be closer to her parents.**

What was your favorite part about doing LEADERShip Martin County? **Networking with other leaders in the community and learning about the history of Martin County.**

Do you participate with any other nonprofit organizations?

Tykes and Teens, Treasure Coast Regional Utilities Organization and Florida Rural Water Association

What does "leadership" mean to you?

Helping people around me succeed.

Where are we most likely to find you when you're not at work?

Building something at home. I enjoy carpentry as a hobby.

Fun Facts

Favorite Local Restaurant:

Lightsey's

Favorite Place in Martin County:

Indiantown!

Favorite Sport: **Football**

Kids: **4 daughters and 1 son**

Pets: **A 9-year-old Havanese named Ollie**



LISA CONWAY, CLASS 32

Owner/Operator Affordable Choice Cremation

Hometown: Miami

Current City: Palm City

How long have you lived in the area? **25 years in Martin County**

If you came from elsewhere, what brought you to the Treasure Coast?

We chose the Treasure Coast, and specifically Martin County, because it is a great place to raise a family. Lots of opportunities, great schools, lots of things to do & explore.

Tell us about your organization.

The Conway family has been in the funeral service since 1862. Three of my children have chosen to work with us in the family business. They are 5th generation. We have a total of six locations, four full-service funeral homes and two cremation-only facilities. I am one of the directors and also do a lot of the pre-need, outreach and education.

What advice would you give to the incoming LEADERShip class?

Participate - get out of your comfort zone.....Just Do It!!!!

Fun Facts

Favorite Band:

Michael Franti & Spearhead

Favorite Sport: **Lacrosse**

(I coached in Martin & St. Lucie counties over 20 years and was one of the founders of the Martin County Pioneers.)

College Alma Mater:

Miami/Dade College

COMMUNITY CORNER

By: Joanna Greene (Class 32)



Hi LEADERS! I'm excited to kick off this Community Corner in our July 2025 LEADERlines issue. It's a chance for me to brag about the great work your county does in supporting some of its most vulnerable residents.

In my department, Martin County Human Services, we also have two other LEADERShip graduates: our Director, Michelle Miller (Class 31), and Phil Ratchford, our Grants Manager (Class 34).

I'm the Human Services Manager at Martin County Human Services. In this role, I supervise the case management of Adult Drug Court and Mental Health Court, as well as the Juvenile Civil Citation, REACH, and Delinquency Diversion programs. In addition, I supervise our Martin County Drug Lab, the Martin County Community Action Coalition, our IRSC interns, and management of the county Opioid Settlement Funds. You may not have even known that we have these programs—but wait, there's more!

In addition to the 10 people I supervise, we have employees dedicated to housing-related concerns such as the Community Services Block Grant and the SHIP program. We are dedicated to reducing the incidence of homelessness in Martin County through a variety of programs, such as electricity bill assistance, water bill assistance, even indigent cremation services. We also implement the Tobacco-Free Florida and Mental Health First Aid grants. Our Veterans Services do a phenomenal job of helping our veterans connect to the benefits they deserve. We also offer free trainings to the community: Mental Health First Aid, QPR (suicide prevention), and WISE—a curriculum for senior citizens and their caregivers. Let me know if you'd like any of these trainings for your community or business!

If that sounds like a lot, you're right—it is! As a team, we regularly help each other so that the response to our citizens is fast and effective. If we don't provide the service you need, we enjoy connecting you with a resource that can help. We also enjoy any excuse to bring treats for a staff breakfast or lunch. If you visit—be assured that there's an ample supply of chocolate somewhere close by!

Hopefully, this gives you a snapshot of what your Human Services Department does daily. You can always reach us online at <https://www.martin.fl.us/HumanServices> or by phone at 772-288-5786. Looking forward to our next Community Corner spotlight!

Do you have an update to share about a community initiative? Are you a current Alumni member? We want to hear from you! Contact us at info@leadershipmcalumni.com for more information.

I Got An 'A' In LEADERship

By: Tim Kinane (Class 1)

On June 19, members of LEADERship Martin County Class 34 got together to enjoy some wine from Tim and Sharon Kinane's collection, and share their perspectives on their LEADERship year.



This was part of an optional exercise that was offered to the class back in September of 2024 titled - "Dear Tim, I got an 'A' in LEADERship because...".

The exercise is meant to provide the participants with an opportunity to compare initial expectations with the actual experience. Class members shared what they really enjoyed about the program, their favorite days, and their most meaningful activities. They are all inspired and motivated to continue growing as leaders and helping to make our community an even better place.

I would tell you more, but you already know that LEADERship is confidential and if you were not there – you will never know.

COMING SOON

In the Biz

A monthly business update from our current Alumni members!

This is your opportunity to share your expertise, special updates about how your business, and how you can be an asset to your fellow members.

Contact us at info@leadershipmcalumni.com for more information. *Must be a current member to participate.*

JULY 2025

Upcoming Events



WHO IS AMBER DUCOTE?



You're Invited!

Join us for a special gathering
as we welcome
Amber Ducote, the new
Program Director of
LEADERSHIP Martin County!

July 31st 8:30 - 9:30 am

REGISTER TODAY

\$15 -Refreshments provided

10th Street Community Center
724 SE 10th Street Stuart, FL 34994

www.leadershipmcalumni.com



**Scan to
register.**



Or visit: bit.ly/40zrnWC

Bulletins

After 15 years in Palm City, The Firefly Group moved to a new location in Stuart.

2676 SE Willoughby Blvd.
Stuart, FL 34994
www.fireflyforyou.com



Angela Hoffman (Class 22) recently earned her Institute for Organizational Management (IOM) certification. IOM a professional development program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.



Congratulations!

To the new
Mr. and Mrs. Connor Mortell!
(Class 30)



Cindy LaConte (Class 7) retired as the LEADERSHIP Martin County Program Director after 10 years and 32 years total at the Stuart/Martin Chamber of Commerce.

Class Gatherings



CLASS 29



CLASS 33

We want to share your news!
Contact us at
info@leadershipmcalumni.com.

Save the Date!

**SimSoc
Social**

**SATURDAY
AUGUST 23**
Location TBD

Stuart/Martin Chamber of Commerce

JULY EVENTS

July 8 Business Before Breakfast
Dr. Ted's Slim Laser Spa

July 9 Legislative Wrap-up Luncheon
Crane Club at Tesoro

July 15 Business Before Breakfast
Plantation Storage

July 16 Business2Business Expo
Wolf Technology Center - IRSC

July 22 Business Before Breakfast
10th Street Community Center

**Happy
4th of July**