



Merry Christmas from the Staff of The Plaquemines



# GAZETTE

SERVING PLAQUEMINES PARISH SINCE JULY 28, 1928

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## Plaquemines Leaders Mourn Death of Carol Roberts, Reminisce on Fond Memories

By Justin Walton  
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On Wednesday, December 7, the Plaquemines Parish community was confronted by a sudden tragedy when longtime teacher, administrator, and public servant Carol Roberts was struck by a car during her daily walk along the Woodland Bridge.

At 74 years of age, Roberts led a life that was both busy and impactful, leaving a lasting impression on everyone she came across. For the

majority of her career, Roberts was employed in the parish public education system, working as both a teacher and administrator at different points in time. But regardless of her role, whether she was an English teacher at Belle Chasse High School (BCHS) or an administrator at Boothville-Venice High School, Roberts was dedicated to improving the school system so students could thrive.



Carol Roberts

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## Inside this Week's Issue:

The Gazette's Annual Christmas Special Section



## Plaquemines Historical Association Holds Christmas Party, Swears in 2023 Officers



Pictured are the 2023 Officers of the Plaquemines Historical Association. Pictured, from left: Tommy Solis, Parliamentarian; Mark Cognevich, President; Stacey Mattison, Secretary; Richard Stringfield, Vice President; Rod Lincoln, Historian; and Roger Solis, Treasurer.

On December 6, the Plaquemines Historical Association (PHA) held its annual Christmas dinner and installation of officers at L'il G's Restaurant in Belle Chasse.

At the dinner, *The Plaquemines Gazette's* Graphic Designer Brandi Rollo was recognized as a special guest and recipient of our Certificate of Recognition for all of the support she provides during the year with editing and graphic assistance.

Officers installed for 2023 are Mark Cognevich, President; Richard Stringfield, Vice President; Rod Lincoln, Historian; Roger Solis, Treasurer; Stacey Mattison, Secretary; and Tommy Solis, Parliamentarian. Senior association member Benny Rousselle swore the officers in.

President Mark Cognevich announced that he had been in touch with US Representative Steve Scalise about Fort Jackson. Mark is trying to gather interest with Scalise to re-open discus-

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Pictured is Brandi Rollo (center), with PHA President Mark Cognevich (left), and PHA Historian, Rod Lincoln (right). Rollo was recognized with a Certificate of Recognition by the Plaquemines Historical Association at their Christmas Party held on December 6.

## Plaquemines Parish Seafood Fest Queen to Appear in 2023 Rose Parade

By Amber Prattini Wallo  
reporter@plaqueminesgazette.com

Belle Chasse resident and the 2022 Miss Seafood Queen, Catherine Blondiau, will represent her home parish and its rich seafood industry aboard the paddlewheel Louisiana Feed Your Soul Float in the 2023 Rose Parade on Monday, January 2.

The 134th Rose Parade presented by Honda is part of the Pasadena Tour-



2022 Seafood Queen Catherine Blondiau

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## Gardner Wins 2022 Hike-A-Thon



Pictured is Corey Gardner, the 2022 Hike-a-Thon winner, with Woodlands Conservancy Board Member Jonathan Olson.

Hikers and outdoor enthusiasts of all ages hit the trails throughout the month of October for Woodlands Conservancy's 2022 Hike-A-Thon. The annual event is an effort to raise funds and awareness for local land conservation. The Hike-a-Thon challenges participants to hike, walk or run a marathon, 26.2 miles during the month of October. Couvillion Marine Services was the presenting sponsor of the 2022 Hike-a-Thon along with Power System Specialists and 89.9 WWNO being Team

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MAILING INFO HERE

## Plaquemines Parish 4-H Program Receives Donation from Chevron



With the generous contribution from Chevron Oronite Oak Point's XYZ Network, it will continue to help offer Aquatic Education Clinics for the youth of Plaquemines Parish. These funds will help replace fishing rods that are over 15 years old.

The Chevron Oronite Oak Point Plant's XYZ Employee Network, made a \$1,250 contribution to support the 4-H Aquatic Education Clinics held in Plaquemines Parish. Shaun Sockwell, XYZ network site lead, recently presented

the check to LSU AgCenter 4-H Agent Derek Landrum and Louisiana Sea Grant Agent Dominique Seibert as well as club members at South Plaquemines Elementary School.

The 4-H Program is de-

signed for youth ages 9 to 19 based on the principle of "learning by doing." At the Aquatic Education Clinics, youth learn to fish by practicing tying knots, baiting hooks,

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## 4-H

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casting rods, and learning fishing regulations. They also learn about fisheries biology. For many kids, the Aquatic Education Clinic is where they catch their first fish.

"We are deeply grateful for this generous contribution as this will help us continue to offer Aquatic Education Clinics for the youth of Plaquemines Parish. These funds will help replace fishing rods that are over 15 years old and have been used hundreds of times," said 4-H Agent Derek Landrum.

"The XYZ Employee Network is one of five networks located at Oak Point. Our employee networks are groups of volunteer employees focused on nurturing a work environment that fosters inclusiveness and respect and encourages and supports the uniqueness and varied perspectives of every individual," said Sockwell.



Senior association member Benny Rousselle (pictured on the far right) swears in the new officers.

## HISTORICAL

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

sions with the National Park Service to establish Fort Jackson as a National Park. This will both open Fort Jackson to the public, relieve some debt from the parish that now maintains the facility, and bring in additional resources to the lower part of the parish. In addition, Mark is working with several groups and individuals to raise money to do much-needed work

on the fort.

Rod Lincoln, Parish Historian, announced the next historical association meeting on January 3 should be a really interesting one. Dr. Alfred Lemmon with the Historic New Orleans Collection will be speaking about Louisiana during the Spanish era (1763-1800) with some emphasis on Juan Ronquillo. The historical association hopes the meeting will be a mini-reunion for all the descendants of Juan Ronquillo (Ronquillo, Solis, Perez, Gior-

dano, etc. families) of Plaquemines. If Ronquillo is in your family tree, try to attend this meeting. It starts at 6:30 p.m. at the Belle Chasse American Legion Hall on Hunt Street.

The Spanish era was a unique time for Plaquemines because the Balise at the mouth of the river was flourishing and for a time the de facto capital of all of Louisiana. English Turn was a significant warehousing and river port transporting goods to New Orleans. Other than Pointe-a-la-Hache and Belle

Chasse, there were very few other communities. One of the most powerful government officials during the period was Juan Ronquillo, the Chief River Pilot, and owner of the Mississippi River concession. This meant he could charge a tax on every vessel coming or going into the river. His taxes were a primary supporter of the Spanish territorial government in Louisiana. As a relative to the King of Spain, Ronquillo was immune from much of the local politics.

## HIKE

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Sponsors.

Participants of the Hike-a-Thon recorded their own mileage while walking, running or hiking alone or with like-minded friends to complete the challenge. Miles were accumulated at Woodlands Trail or anywhere of the participants' choice. Woodlands Conservancy kicked off the month-long event with a festive picnic in the park, complete with nature-themed activities for all ages.

This year's Hike-a-Thon winner was Corey Gardener, who clocked a whopping 248.33 miles of running, walking and hiking over the course of one month. Corey received a set of Woodlands Conservancy's Mignon Faget Palmetto glassware, a Parks-for-All Hydroflask, a one-year membership to Woodlands Conservancy and a wet sack provided by the National Wildlife Federation.

In addition to Corey, the top 10 finishers included: Zana Curley 196.74, Jen Staley 150.20, Jennie Merrill 144.58, Donna Bailes 132.80, Tracy Albert 132.80, Lisa Houser 117.50, Shah Tanvi 107.69, and Kristen Melton 98.75. Each of them received their choice of a Parks-for-All Hydroflask or a Save Our Sponge t-shirt. All registrants who completed the 26.2 miles received a "May the Forest be With You" hat. Funds raised from the event will help complete restoration activities at Woodlands Preserve.

## ROBERTS

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

But Roberts wasn't just a teacher or school administrator. After her retirement from the education system, she worked in the Plaquemines Parish Clerk of Court's Office later in her life, using her administrative skills to assist in their operations. While there, she was promoted to Chief Deputy Clerk of Court, serving under former parish Clerk of Court Dot Lundin and current Clerk of Court Kim Turlich-Vaughan until 2020.

Both of whom stated that they cherished their friendship with Roberts deeply.

"She was excellent in the [clerk's office]. She was great with details, always looking to see how we could improve, and was just genuinely enthusiastic about what she did.

That's the type of person Carol was; she made the world a better place everywhere she went," Lundin stated in an interview. "While she was great in the clerk's office, at her heart, she was an educator. I mean she really cared for her students, and she always remembered their names and faces."

As a teacher, Roberts worked at BCHS for 25 years beginning in 1972. She taught and mentored multiple generations of students, many of whom would go on to be leaders within Plaquemines themselves. One of those students was none other than current superintendent Denis Rousselle, who stated that Roberts was his teacher for one year.

"I remember she had really high expectations of each student, and she made sure that you met those standards.

She was incredibly organized and smart. If you had her as a teacher, she made sure that you not only understood the concepts, but thrived in the classroom," Rousselle stated in an interview, explaining that when he eventually became principal of BCHS, she still worked there. "She and her coworkers made my job really easy because they were such great teachers. Carol really helped lay the foundation for so much greatness within our school system."

"She was very dedicated and cared so much for her students. She really did set the tone for our school system for 20 years. Where she went, she had an impact," he added.

While Roberts's dedication to her students and public service was certainly admirable, Lundin prefers to remember Roberts as a close

friend.

"More than anything else, she just cared about everyone she met. She was still having lunches with coworkers she had 25 years ago. Everyone loved her. There's a hole in my heart, and there is definitely a hole in the community. We all miss her," Lundin stated, explaining that at the memorial service held at Woodland Presbyterian Church on December 11 "might have had around 400 people" attend. "You know, we're all in mourning. Carol and I did so much together. She means so much to all of us."

"She loved to go on adventures, nothing frightened her. If she wanted to do something she did it. It's hard to find the right words to say when you lose someone like this," she added.

Current Clerk of Court

Kim Turlich-Vaughan also had fond memories of Roberts—who remained as the Turlich-Vaughan's chief deputy until her first term ended in 2020. But even after Roberts retired, she kept providing assistance in whatever way she could.

"She was just a great person, and anyone who got to know her was better off for it," Turlich-Vaughan stated, referring to Roberts as the "busiest retired person" she ever knew. "She was always willing to lend a helping hand, and she loved doing it."

"Carol did so much in her life. She was a mentor, a teacher, an administrator, a leader, and, most importantly, my friend. She was a huge inspiration to me and I already miss her," she concluded.

# Happy Holidays!


from the Belle Chasse Bridge & Tunnel Replacement Project!


**Bridge construction is reaching new heights on both sides of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway!**

Early next year, plan on seeing:



- ▶ Concrete placement on bridge decks
- ▶ Waterline relocation along LA23 near Dr. Bowen Street
- ▶ Closure of a portion of X Street to allow the new bridge approach to be constructed

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