



ACG Louisiana Announces Sixteenth Annual ACG Louisiana Award Winners

Recognizing Growth Companies, Business Professionals and Noteworthy Transactions Throughout the State of Louisiana

For Immediate Release

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ACG Louisiana to Host 16th Annual Awards Dinner Honoring Business Excellence and Leadership

New Orleans, LA – April 3, 2025 – The Association for Corporate Growth (ACG) Louisiana Chapter proudly announces its 16th Annual Awards Dinner, celebrating the region's outstanding business achievements and leaders. The prestigious event will take place on May 8, 2025 at The Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans and will bring together top businesses, deal makers, and professionals from across Louisiana's business community.

The ACG Louisiana Awards Dinner honors exceptional growth companies, business professionals, and noteworthy transactions throughout the State of Louisiana in various categories, including Corporate Growth, Emerging Growth, and Lifetime Achievement.

"This event is a testament to the resilience, innovation, and dedication of our local business leaders," said Todd Giustiniano, President of ACG Louisiana. "We are honored to celebrate their accomplishments and contributions to the economic success of our state."

The categories and award winners are as follows:

Lifetime Achievement: Mrs. Gayle Benson

Gayle Benson, Owner of the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans, is a dedicated business leader and philanthropist focused on enhancing the Gulf South region. As Owner of the Saints, Mrs. Benson has overseen multiple winning seasons, including three consecutive NFC South division titles (2018-20). Her leadership also contributed a \$180 million investment to the \$560 million renovation of the Caesars Superdome, ensuring a world-class experience for fans and players, which was on full display during Super Bowl LIX this year. She continues to lead the effort to secure future Super Bowls in New Orleans. Since acquiring the Pelicans in 2012, Mrs. Benson has led facility upgrades and helped establish New Orleans as a premier basketball market. The city hosted NBA All-Star Weekends in 2014 and 2017 during her tenure, and she actively serves on the NBA's Labor Relations Committee and Foundation Board of Directors, supporting local non-profits.

Under her leadership, both the Saints and Pelicans have maintained success on the field, on the court, and deepened their community impact. A passionate philanthropist, Mrs. Benson has donated millions to disaster relief, social justice, education, and healthcare. The New Orleans native has been a leader in the automotive industry, owning seven dealerships and three collision centers across Louisiana and Mississippi. She also owns Benson Capital Partners, Corporate Realty, GMB Racing Stables, and co-owns the Hyatt Regency New Orleans. A lifelong New Orleanian, Mrs. Benson continues to champion her city, ensuring her husband's legacy endures through leadership, investment, and community dedication.

Outstanding Corporate Growth - Globalstar, Inc.

Globalstar provides a wide range of mobile satellite services to retail, business and government customers through its global satellite network monitored through a state-of-the-art satellite operations control center (SOCC) located in Covington, Louisiana, where the company recently hosted the SOCC's grand opening. Globalstar has experienced significant growth since 2021, doubling its revenue from \$124.3 million to \$250.3 million in 2024. The company also recently announced an agreement with its wholesale capacity customer to provide expanded mobile satellite services directly to consumer devices over a new satellite constellation. Additionally, Globalstar established strategic collaborations with Parsons Corp. to leverage its Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites for enhanced communications and with Peiker Holding GmbH to introduce satellite-based emergency services and telematics to the European automotive market. Further cementing its market presence, Globalstar transitioned its stock listing from NYSE American to Nasdaq in February 2025. These achievements position the company for sustained long-term growth.

Emerging Corporate Growth - Louie Louie

Since launching operations in April 2023 as a producer of THC/CBD seltzer beverages, Louie Louie grew revenue +272% year-over-year ending 2024. With production in New Orleans, Louie Louie has expanded distribution to include more than 1,200 locations across the South including Louisiana, Texas, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi. The company has recently quadrupled production output to meet demand, and has introduced a steady stream of innovation including new flavors that celebrate local ingredients and collaborations that celebrate New Orleans culture. Louie Louie has four co-founders, and now one full-time employee and four part-time employees, and will be scaling its workforce in New Orleans in the coming year.

Deal Maker of the Year - Mike Eckert, Chairman of Gulf South Angels

Mike Eckert is the founder and chairman of the New Orleans-based Gulf South Angels (GSA), a group of 140 high-net-worth individuals who invest in earlier stage companies. From its beginning in 2014, the GSA has grown into one of the top 20 angel investing organizations in North America. Driven by investor interest throughout the region, in early 2024 the group rebranded as the Gulf South Angels. It now has members in 14 states. Also, in 2024 alone, GSA members invested in 19 investing rounds in 18 companies, with Mike as the deal lead on these. Since GSA's inception, its members have invested in 127 investing rounds in 72 companies. GSA also has two sidecar investing funds, The Pelican Angels Funds I and II. The Gulf South

Angels play an important role in Louisiana's growth capital ecosystem, investing above the very early-stage state-sponsored SSBCI capital, and just below and alongside venture capital, thus providing an important capital layer that limits the need for entrepreneurs to seek out-of-state capital.

Young Deal Maker - Jonathan de Lauréal, Managing Director at Bernhard Capital Partners

Jonathan de Lauréal is a Managing Director at Bernhard Capital Partners (BCP) where he has been involved in all areas of the firm's investment activities since 2013. He currently serves on the board of several BCP portfolio companies, including United Weld Holdings (d/b/a Epic Piping), United Utility Services, Arena Solutions Group, Optimum Energy, and Gray Surety. He has extensive investing experience, having been involved in more than 75 private equity investments, capital markets financings, and corporate advisory transactions, including the more recent BCP acquisition of Optimum Energy, a Seattle-based software and technology firm focused on energy efficiency and HVAC optimization and the Arena Solutions Group acquisition of Apogee, which specializes in the acquisition, integration, engineering, and modernization of digital and physical technology across the space, cyberspace, land, air, and maritime domains.

Jonathan also is working with Delta Utilities, a regulated natural gas utility based in New Orleans, on several transactions that have closed or are expected to close in 2025, including the acquisition of three gas utilities from CenterPoint in Louisiana and Mississippi which closed in March and the gas utility businesses from Entergy New Orleans and Entergy Louisiana, expected to close later this year.

Since joining BCP, Jonathan and the BCP team have raised over \$4.4 billion in equity capital and have closed over 70 acquisitions across 20 portfolio companies.

Deal of the Year - E.N. Bisso & Son, Inc.'s Acquisition of Seabulk Towing

E.N. Bisso & Son, Inc., a leader in marine towing and harbor services, completed the strategic acquisition of Seabulk Towing, significantly expanding its operations along the Gulf Coast and East Coast. This acquisition strengthens E.N. Bisso's fleet and service capabilities, allowing for enhanced operational efficiency and expanded service coverage in key U.S. ports. The transaction marks a major milestone in the company's long-standing history, reinforcing its commitment to providing best-in-class marine services. The deal reflects a shared vision for innovation and operational excellence, benefiting customers, stakeholders, and the broader maritime industry.

ACG Louisiana invites business professionals, investors, and community leaders to attend this premier networking event. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available at <https://www.acg.org/louisiana/events> or by contacting Mary Hill, 504-610-7441, acglouisiana@acg.org.

About ACG Louisiana

ACG Louisiana is a chapter of the Association for Corporate Growth, a global organization focused on driving middle-market growth. ACG Louisiana provides networking, thought leadership, and educational opportunities to business leaders, investors, and professionals in the region.

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