

Angela S. Davis

First Grace Community Alliance Executive Director

Project Ishmael Founder

Hagar's House Co-Founder, Executive Director

Angela Davis has spent her career putting her beliefs into action.

While at Princeton Theological Seminary she took to heart the potential of liberation theology and volunteered in Palestine to learn from and work with displaced people.

It was there that Davis had an inkling she would do well in the legal industry. She is modest and speaks softly, but her actions have had a dramatic benefit on those around her.

“Good people and community are what I enjoy the most,” she said.

It was from this axiom that Davis entered Loyola School of Law and became a champion of immigrants’ rights. She considered immigration law the best way for her to help at-risk populations, especially women and children in the New Orleans area.

Davis continues to work in social justice through First Grace Community Alliance. There she co-founded Project Ishmael, a

pro bono immigration legal program, and Hagar’s House, an intentional community for homeless women and children.

“From the children and youth I represent, to other social justice and movement lawyers, to activists and organizers in the city .. it is a gift to work and learn among so many beautiful people,” she said.

Davis brings missionary zeal to common societal concerns, and says the “challenge is the absolute lack of respect for human rights in the current US immigration system.”

But Davis remains hopeful of the future and the impulse toward reform.

It should come to no surprise that Davis believes potential is the word that best applies to her.

“Keep learning,” she said. “Learning about parenthood, about justice, about kindness.”

—Edwin Smith



PROFESSIONAL

Troy Gilbert

*Founder, Executive Director
Chef's Brigade*

The story of Chef's Brigade reaches back to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Troy Gilbert, executive director and co-founder, conceived the idea of putting local restaurants into a formation to feed EMS paramedics and office staff.

Chef's Brigade became a reality last year, providing a beneficial service for restaurateurs, essential workers and food-insecure individuals as they struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We crowdsourced funding. This was a total startup. The first meal was on March 26, and it took off like a rocket," Gilbert said.

A little over a year later, Chef's Brigade had pushed out about 2 million meals and

helped its 85 restaurants retain or employ some 500 employees.

By May 2020, the \$80,000 Chef's Brigade had crowdfunded had all been spent.

"The next month, the City of New Orleans and FEMA submitted a request for proposal, but the problem was we could not be reimbursed until 30 days or longer, and Chef's Brigade didn't even have a checking account," Gilbert said. Chef's Brigade wanted to feed up to 30,000 people a day and continue to pay its workers.

"We were approached by Revolution Foods, and we built this huge coalition," Gilbert said. Through an amalgamation of forces, Chef's Brigade was able to scale up



from feeding only first responders to the variety of groups it services today.

"We are starting now to pivot," Gilbert said. "For restaurants, the financial health is definitely improving."

— Edwin Smith

Kelly Ransom

*Partner
Kelly Hart Pitre*

In addition to her thriving practice on coastal law and energy, oil and gas and environmental litigation, Kelly Ransom is on the board of New Harmony High School, a charter school that educates students through the lens of coastal restoration.

"At this point in my career there really isn't a very big distinct line between my personal and professional life," Ransom said.

Her law career began as a young file clerk, a first step into the profession that would land her as a partner at Kelly Hart Pitre in New Orleans.

"Working as a file clerk for a year after college allowed me to become familiar with what the profession entailed on a daily basis and how law firms function," Ransom said. "Because the facts and issues of every case are different, each case presented an opportunity to learn something new."

She began working on coastal zone litigation matters with her practice group in 2014 and represents independent oil and gas companies in legacy litigation.

Ransom is an advisory board member for the Institute for Energy Law, an editor for the Institute for Energy Law's publication and a member of the group's Young Energy Professional organization.

She maintains her passion with help from her colleagues, who are leaders in their field.

"I am lucky enough to work with a group of talented and diverse attorneys in Kelly Hart's New Orleans office who really enjoy one another's company and truly encourage everyone in our office to just be themselves," she said.

—Edwin Smith



Lisa McKenzie

*Founder & Executive Producer
You Night Empowering Events*

After surviving a particularly challenging time in her life, Lisa McKenzie wanted to help others do the same. It led her to create You Night Empowering Events, a program that helps women embrace life beyond cancer.

"When I was in a dark place, someone came along and helped me. I didn't believe at that time that I would ever be able to find joy and happiness again because I was that depressed," McKenzie said. "Because I was in that situation, I want to help others recognize that the same is possible for them."

McKenzie is an entrepreneur dating back to 2013, when she was a finalist in "The Big Idea," the culminating competition of New Orleans Entrepreneur Week. That same year, she made it to the finals of the Urban League's "Women in Business Challenge" and received a \$10,000 grant for the Sales-

force Challenge.

You Night has gifted events to 300 local women through its nonprofit since it was created in 2013. Sometimes they are painting parties; others include fashion shows. A September event ended with fireworks.

"It was always at those precarious moments that something major would unfold, such as a sponsor stepping forward to offer the financial support we needed, or the State Fire Marshall calling and giving us approval for our plans," she said.

In the wake of tragedy, McKenzie learned the importance of sisterhood. It's why she identifies with the word "power" and its significance when people are at their most vulnerable.

"God is good," she said.

—Edwin Smith



BANKING

Joey Donaldson

*Relationship manager
IBERIABANK First Horizon*

Joey Donaldson loves helping people find solutions that help grow their businesses.

He was able to do that in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic brought many businesses to a halt. Donaldson and his co-workers at First Horizon — which acquired IBERIABANK last year — worked tirelessly to help customers secure loans from the federal Paycheck Protection Program and other initiatives.

“Everyone in our bank was working around the clock, seven days a week when that was going on,” said Donaldson, who runs two offices on the North Shore. “One of the biggest things that affected me last year was to see the appreciation and the smiles we’re putting on people’s faces when

we were able to give them the help they needed.”

Donaldson entered the banking industry shortly after graduating from Louisiana State University in 2001.

“I always wanted to learn as much as I could about the different parts of the bank, and over the years lending was one of my favorite things to do,” he said.

Donaldson said colleagues Cindy Martin and Tom Mabon have been especially important in getting him to where he is today.

In 2020, Donaldson had the highest production of SBA loans and was nominated for the bank’s Diamond Circle award.

“My mother was a small business owner, which gives me an insight when I work



with them,” he said. “I understand that to a small business owner, their business is an extension of them.”

— Edwin Smith

INVESTMENT

Sarah Bomhoff

*Investment Strategist
ThirtyNorth Investments LLC*

In a short time, Sarah Bomhoff has made a big splash for ThirtyNorth Investments. During the volatility of 2020, the financial analyst was instrumental as the investment advisory firm retooled its Women Impact Strategy.

Born and raised in Kansas, Bomhoff moved to New Orleans with her family two years ago.

"Even with the COVID experience, I'm really thankful we spent it in New Orleans. There is such an amazing community here," she said.

Bomhoff's mentor is ThirtyNorth managing principal Suzanne Mestayer, who has created opportunities for women in

finance and social causes.

"I'm also having my first mentor experience with someone who is living life in a way that I hope and aspire to live life," Bomhoff said.

Juggling family and work demonstrates how she approaches the unique needs of her clients.

"My job is to get to know our clients and what their needs are, and then help propose and build portfolios with the appropriate amount of risk and return for what they need," she said.

Bomhoff describes her work as "solving a Rubik's Cube."

"Each client is unique in a way that



makes this job really exciting, so it's exciting to get to match what is meaningful for each client," she said. "I love that I am constantly taking it back up and tweaking it."

— Edwin Smith