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BGR MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release – August 5, 2020

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BGR Honors Excellence in Government

Today, the Bureau of Governmental Research announces the recipients of the BGR Excellence in Government Awards 2020 honoring extraordinary local and state government employees and private citizens in the New Orleans area.

The seven individual or team honorees will be recognized in a one-hour program on WYES-TV that is scheduled to air Sept. 18 and replay on Sept. 20.

“Dating back to 1994, the Excellence in Government Awards program is one of our proudest traditions at BGR,” said Amy L. Glovinsky, BGR President & CEO. “Pressing for excellence in government is at the core of BGR’s mission. The citizens we honor conduct their work without expectation of recognition, and we are pleased to shine a light on their success in finding new pathways to better outcomes in local government.”

A committee of BGR board members selected the BGR Excellence in Government Awards 2020 honorees, listed below, through a competitive process. BGR solicited nominations from government officials and employees and the general public in four categories.

The honorees, by category, are:

Merit Award. The Merit Award recognizes outstanding performance by public sector employees. Awards will be presented to:

- **John White**, Former Louisiana Superintendent of Education, for his initiatives as superintendent on curriculum reforms, career and technical education and financial aid applications.

- A team of **Jefferson Parish Juvenile Services (JPJS) employees** for its outstanding administration of the Alternatives to Detention (ATD) program. The team includes:
 - **Roy L. Juncker, Jr.**, Director, JPJS
 - **Joan Ruiz**, Probation Manager
 - **Matt Villio**, Juvenile Justice Reform Coordinator
 - **Colleen Conley**, Probation Officer III, ATD program
 - **Lashaunda Thomas**, Probation Officer III, ATD program
 - **Luis Bustamante**, Probation Officer II, ATD program
 - **Trista Duplessis**, Probation Officer II, ATD program
 - **Erin Ronquille**, Probation Officer II, ATD program

- A team of **City of New Orleans employees** for its outstanding performance in securing state legislative approval for the Fair Share funding initiative. The team includes:
 - **John Pourciau**, Chief of Staff for the Mayor of New Orleans
 - **Monika Gerhart**, Director of State Affairs for the City of New Orleans
 - **Liana Elliott**, Deputy Chief of Staff for the Mayor of New Orleans
 - **Art Walton**, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
 - **Tara Richard**, Director of Local Relations
 - **Josh Zuckerman**, Director of Policy and Research
 - **Beau Tidwell**, Communications Director
 - **Ray Bolling**, Director of the Neighborhood Engagement Office
 - **Sunni LeBeouf**, City Attorney
 - **Jonathan Harris**, Assistant City Attorney
 - **Joshua Cox**, Director of Strategic Initiatives
 - **Deborah Vivien**, former City Economist

Innovation Award. The Innovation Award recognizes public employees who have implemented creative solutions to pressing problems. The award will be presented to:

- **Dr. Patty Glaser**, CEO/Head of School for Kenner Discovery Health Sciences Academy and Dr. John Ochsner Discovery Health Sciences Academy, for her work to secure construction financing for the two academies.

Lifetime Achievement Award. The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes sustained performance over a career in public service. Awards will be presented to:

- **Ernest Gethers**, Director of Business Services, City of New Orleans Office of Economic Development (retired), for his outstanding career of public service to the City of New Orleans.
- **Cynthia “Cindy” Connick**, CEO, New Orleans Building Corporation, for her outstanding career of public service to the City of New Orleans.

Citizenship Award. The Citizenship Award recognizes private citizens who have worked to improve the quality of government. The award will be presented to:

- **Melanie Bronfin**, Early Childhood Care and Education Advocate and Founder, Louisiana Policy Institute for Children. The award recognizes her work to improve early care and education in Louisiana.

“This year, rather than an awards luncheon, we are working with WYES to produce a one-hour television program to feature the BGR Excellence in Government Awards 2020 honorees,” said Glovinsky. “We are excited that this televised format creates broader visibility and understanding of the extraordinary work of these individuals.”

BGR extends its gratitude to Canal Barge Company, Inc., for its sponsorship of the Excellence in Government awards.

BGR is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization. Since its founding in 1932, it has been dedicated to informed public policy-making and the effective use of public resources in the Greater New Orleans area. For more information, call 525-4152 or visit BGR’s website, <https://www.bgr.org/>.