

# OUR PURPOSE

*"The purpose of the West Baton Rouge Historical Association shall be to foster interest in history, particularly that of West Baton Rouge Parish, and to encourage and pursue research, collection, and preservation of materials illustrating past or present activities of the parish."*

Vol. LIV No.1

WINTER  
2022

# NEWSLETTER ÉCOUTEZ



A PUBLICATION OF THE WEST BATON ROUGE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

“  
CALLING  
ALL HISTORY  
ENTHUSIASTS!



SAVE THE DATE

*On Thursday February 16, 2023, the West Baton Rouge Museum is set to host the Baton Rouge Regional History Day Competition. The campus will be full of junior high and high school students presenting projects, and we are looking for judges and volunteers to help facilitate the day.*

*This year's theme is **Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas**. Students choose a topic and create projects in one of five categories: exhibit, website, documentary, performance, and research paper. Students are competing for the chance to represent their schools at the state competition, held at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans. Please join us and share your passion for knowledge and learning with our competitors.*



ANNUAL MEETING

Mark your calendars for Monday January 9, 2023. The West Baton Rouge Historical Association will be hosting its Annual Meeting at 1:30 PM, at the West Baton Rouge Museum in the Brick Gallery. Committee Chairs will be presenting their end-of-year reports. There will also be a vote on new board members and officers.

If you can't attend, please mail your proxy vote to Amanda Moak at 845 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen, LA 70767. A small reception will immediately follow the meeting.



*A lovely reception hosted by the WBR HA's Hospitality Committee*

The West Baton Rouge Historical Association hosted its annual Ethel Claiborne Dameron Lecture Series on Sunday, November 13, 2022 at the West Baton Rouge Museum. Board members, museum staff, and the general public welcomed guest speaker, Elizabeth Chubbuck Weinstein who presented a talk on "Angela Gregory: Doyenne of Louisiana Sculpture." A lovely reception hosted by the WBR HA's Hospitality Committee led by Andrea Normand followed. Contributing committee members included Donna Badon, Kim Callegan, Ashley Coco, Beth Kleinpeter, Debbie Martin, and Ruth Stanley. This event is offered annually in memory of West Baton Rouge Historical Association and West Baton Rouge Museum founder, Ethel Claiborne Dameron affectionately known as "Puffy."



WINTER 2022 ÉCOUTEZ letter

## Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année!

WEST BATON ROUGE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

TOM ACOSTA Board President



It is hard to believe that 2022 is almost over. We have so very much to be thankful for this year, and much to look forward to for 2023.

As I reflect on the events and accomplishments of the WBR Historical Association for 2022 – especially our successful property millage renewal election this past Spring – it must be properly acknowledged that none of our efforts would have been achieved without the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, Board members, and professional museum staff. It is truly a privilege and blessing to be part of such a fine community-minded organization which contributes so much to the historical preservation and cultural life of West Baton Rouge Parish, and indeed the entire region!

Sugar Fest 2022 was a wonderful event. It was so nice to see so many people turn out to enjoy our traditional Chicken Dinners, the always popular Sweets Booth, and so many other Sugar Fest music and craft activities. Thanks so much to all of our WBRHA members/volunteers who helped support this enjoyable community event!

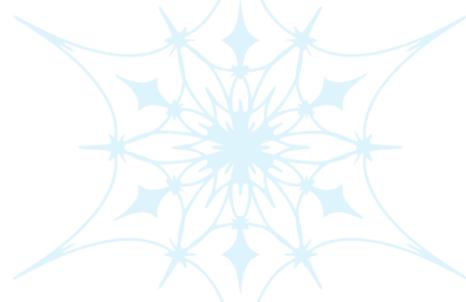
For the past two years, I have been privileged to serve as President of the West Baton Rouge Historical Association. This will be my final Association President letter for the Écoutez, but I look forward to continuing to serve on the Board of the WBRHA for another three-year term.

Please join us at our Annual Meeting at the Museum at 1:30 PM on Monday, January 9, 2023, as we plan for the coming year. I am looking forward to a rewarding 2023 and hope you will consider getting involved.

As always, please keep up the good work, stay safe, join us and encourage your friends and neighbors to join us at the WBR Historical Association and WBR Museum events when able, and help celebrate West Baton Rouge at OUR Museum!

*Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année!*

Tom Acosta  
WBRHA President



FALL 2022 Director's Letter



WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM  
CULTURE CULTIVATED • LA CULTURE CULTIVÉE • LA KILTIR KILTIVÉ

ANGÉLIQUE BERGERON, PH.D. Executive Director

As I reflect on 2022... oh, what a year! While we mourn those whom we have lost, especially former West Baton Rouge Museum Director, Caroline Kennedy, we are grateful for all that we have and have had.

In 2022, not only did the community renew our millage for another decade, we have had some tremendous exhibits, including The Pelican State Goes to War, Aliento a Tequila, Sugar to Rum, Women of the Blues, Courting Style, and Billie Holiday at Sugar Hill. We debuted two new semi-permanent installations, Rooting Metal: The Trahan Gallery and Angela Gregory: Doyenne of Louisiana Sculpture, and were featured in two LPB documentaries. Look for a publication coming out soon on Angela Gregory thanks to a grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. We've hosted dynamite programs, including our largest SugarFest to date, a Barn Demonstration Day that ended with an old-fashioned barn dance, the stellar Blues After School Program now in its fourth year, some amazing Historical Happy Hours, as well as ongoing workshops, jams, and community yoga in the gallery. Check out the Blues After School kids' debut music video on our YouTube channel.

Next year promises to be awesome, too!

In 2023, you can expect more great art coming your way starting with Ron's Retro and The Black Artists' Network, followed by Talented Student Art. This Spring, we'll

tackle difficult subjects with The Art of Addiction by Ben Peabody. In Summer 2023, we are pleased to host George Rodrigue: The River Is the Road (Summer Camp and Teachers' Institute will be centered around the Rodrigue exhibit!). Our next slice of the Angela Gregory story will open in August and cover her portraits and process. We'll close out the year pondering nature and art with Small Wonders and Wooden Imposters.

Beginning in February, we will debut a new monthly program in our Big Red Barn. Join us the 1st Sunday of the month for Barn Hands and enjoy demonstrations and hands-on activities for all ages. In addition to the on-demand blacksmith apprenticeships and woodworking workshops, we are now offering workshops in spinning, weaving, sewing and other textile arts.

Our monthly events will continue: Le Café Français (1st Fridays at 1PM), the Old Time Jam (2nd Sundays 3-5PM), Historical Happy Hour (3rd Fridays 6-8PM), Le Jam with the Cajun French Music Association (3rd Sundays 3-5PM), and Yoga (last Tuesdays at 6PM).

Be sure to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter for the latest updates.

*With all that we have going on, we hope to see you at the museum!*

Angélique Bergeron, PH.D.  
Executive Director



# Caroline Kennedy: Forever Young and Forever in our Hearts

West Baton Rouge Museum and West Baton Rouge Historical Association mourn the loss of Caroline Kennedy but her presence is unforgettable. It lives on in lasting stories, countless contributions, and her tireless efforts. Her energy is everywhere. One cannot look around the West Baton Rouge Museum or the community without reminders of her fourteen years of service at the museum or her dedication to local organizations, and friends and neighbors she met along the way. We are left with joyful memories, tremendous growth, and a determination to honor her vision and work toward maintaining the goals she set in place.

From Alexandria to West Baton Rouge and beyond, Caroline enriched, inspired, and left an indelible impression on the Louisiana museum community. Caroline recently retired from the Louisiana Old State Capitol Museum where she served as the Educator. There, she designed special tour activities on democracy for all ages, organized several successful family fun events at the museum, created new partnerships, recruited volunteers and interns, and was instrumental in helping the LOSC get reaccredited with the American Alliance of Museums. She began her museum career in 1985 at the Yale Center for British Art in Connecticut. She brought her talents to Louisiana several years later, working at the Alexandria Museum of Art as its Curator. After a year-long stint in France, she returned to the Louisiana Museum community and became the Education Curator, then Director of the West Baton Rouge Museum upon the retirement of Karen Babb.

As Director of the WBRM for thirteen years, she oversaw its transition from a small parish museum to a regional history center with a full-time professional staff, outstanding programming, and changing exhibits. She worked to help secure the first parish millage tax pass to provide annual funding to the museum and ten years later she worked tirelessly for its renewal. She was instrumental in the West Baton Rouge Museum and the City of Port Allen's participation in the 1999

Congrès Mondial. She helped the museum hone its focus and brand itself. It is because of Caroline that West Baton Rouge Museum is often referred to as "the sugar museum," and it was her creative vision that sparked SugarFest. She not only worked within the confines of the museum walls, she went out into the community. She was active with the area Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club of Port Allen, the Leadership West program, and the West Baton Rouge Tourist Commission (now Convention and Visitors Bureau.) She visited with locals and embraced their stories so she could weave them into the fabric of the museum's exhibits, growth, and offerings.

Under her leadership, WBRM's campus continued to evolve with the construction of a new gallery space and administrative wing and the addition of three historic buildings. She also served the larger Louisiana museum community through the Louisiana Association of Museums: as a mentor to any museum professionals requesting help, as a faculty member of the New Museums program, and as the organization's President. Additionally, she was Louisiana's State Representative for the Southeastern Museum Conference (SEMC) from 2004-2006.

Caroline was a humble and charitable soul hailing from the historically rich area of Philadelphia who fell in love with the Louisiana landscape, its people, its diverse history, and its culture. She came with a global perspective and a fresh lens. She saw what was special in each person and place. In her efforts to celebrate the unique and vibrant past of the Bayou State along with the artists, tradition bearers, scholars, political leaders, and the neighbors down the street, unknowingly, she endeared herself to so many people in her path.

Caroline made people feel valued no matter their position. She formed connections where ever she went and she strengthened the museum community through collaboration. She always said that museums do not compete. Rather, they share

resources for the greater good. She worked with folk artists, fine artists, performing artists, farmers, factory workers, industry professionals, political figures, and top leaders in the museum world. She created educational experiences for visitors of all ages and taught museum professionals working alongside her how to advocate for best practices in museums, share a love of history and culture, and think outside the box to educate the public.

Recently, before her passing, Caroline was awarded with the Louisiana Association of Museums Lois Wyatt Bannon "Heart and Soul" Service Award for her long list of achievements and her ever so creative and giving spirit.

Our sincerest condolences to Caroline's family and friends. We miss her dearly. May she live on in all of the good work she inspired us all to do.



## Youth Volunteer of the Year Award



### KAHLILA BANDELE

The West Baton Rouge Museum is pleased to present the Youth Volunteer of the Year Award to Kahlila Bandeale! Kahlila has been a volunteer with us for the last 5 years, and she is always willing to help with any event. Most notably, she is a favorite counselor for our Blast from the Past summer campers.

Kahlila is currently a senior at Baton Rouge High, and is getting ready for graduation in the spring. We don't know what we are going to do when she leaves us, because she is someone we can always rely on to attend events and help in whatever capacity. Throughout the years she has led games at SugarFest, dressed up and volunteered for Halloween, recruited extra help for summer camp, and this year she actually learned how to play tennis with her group of campers. If that's not dedication, then I don't know what is.

We are certainly sad to see Kahlila go next fall. Wherever she goes, however, we know she will do something great.

## Volunteer of the Year Award



### LUIS INTERIANO

The West Baton Rouge Museum is pleased to present the Volunteer of the Year Award to Luis Interiano. Luis works at the West Baton Rouge Parish Library, and over the years he has consistently made himself available to volunteer for joint functions, as well as museum programs. Our favorite is when he emcees the events!

Luis is a special volunteer for us because he was recently appointed to the board of the West Baton Rouge Historical Association, and Luis has jumped in with both feet. He has joined the PR committee, among others, and is more in-the-know than ever. Even before he joined the board, Luis was known to share our posts on his personal Facebook page- so this was really a perfect match. These days during board meetings when we discuss upcoming events, both museum and HA related, Luis is always one of the first to volunteer.

It is for these reasons we are honored to give him this award. He always goes the extra mile, and he always seems to be working with a smile on his face.

**RON'S RETRO**  
Honoring Ronald Kennedy with pieces by local Black Artists.

JANUARY 19 THROUGH MARCH 19, 2023

WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM

featuring  
Keith Douglas  
Malaika Favorite  
Randell Henry  
Michael Howes  
Philip D. Louis  
Darlene Moore  
Felicia Noelle  
Clifton Webb

## Curators' Corner

### Ron's Retro

It's a brand new year for the exhibit galleries at West Baton Rouge Museum. While new and exciting things are to come, we will take time and space to honor the past. Ronald Kennedy was a Professor of Visual Arts and Photography at Southeastern University as well as a beloved friend of the West Baton Rouge Museum. He displayed at numerous SugarFests and was known by many artists in the area. With the main focus on Kennedy, we will also highlight artists from the greater Baton Rouge community. Artist on display will include Keith "Cartoonman" Douglas, Malaika Favorite, Randell Henry, Michael Howes, Phillip D. Louis, Darlene Moore, Felicia Noelle, and Clifton Webb will all have mesmerizing pieces displaying their talent as veteran artists. Join us as we give flowers to established artists who are also teachers, juried show winners, board members, and more.

### Artistry in Iron: Blacksmiths of New Orleans

The exhibition Artistry in Iron: Blacksmiths of New Orleans will be on display in the Big Red Barn on the museum grounds starting December 3, 2023. Artistry in Iron tells the often overlooked story of New Orleans' blacksmiths of color who built much of the French Quarter's iconic iron work. The exhibit beautifully reveals the sources and inspiration behind wrought iron designs in New Orleans and the world of the blacksmiths who created them.



FERIN JONES LAUREN HAWTHORNE

January 20 Smokehouse Porter, Miss Mamie, and the Gutbucket Blues Band

February 17 Sariah Storm & The Mysteries

March 17 Lazarro Nettles

Historical Happy Hour

ONGOING WORKSHOPS

Inquire about classes in  
Blacksmithing, Woodworking, and Fiber Arts  
offered year round.

# PICS FROM THE PARISH

## To Honor our Veterans: Veterans' Day in WBR

The West Baton Rouge Veteran's on Parade took place this year on Sunday, November 6. Local leaders Pee Wee Berthelot, Gary Hubble, and Charlene Gordon were in attendance and addressed the crowd with opening words and prayer. The West Baton Rouge Parish Veterans On Parade committee honored three veterans as the 2022 Grand Marshalls

of the parade, Mr. Henry Russell Eidson, Jr., Mr. Harold C. Hill, Jr. "Coley", and Mr. Calvin Howard McClinton, Sr. Congressman Garret Graves gave a tribute to each honoree and presented their families with an American flag that had been flown over the U.S. Capitol. Thanks to WAFB for the media coverage!



## October Fun Halloween

Every year, the West Baton Rouge Museum and the West Baton Rouge Public Library join forces to put on one of our favorite events: Merry-Not-Scary Halloween! This was a busy year with almost 400 visitors walking the grounds, playing games, getting creative, etc. In addition to our traditional games we added a slime station with the Coalition of Black Women Engineers from LSU, and stargazing with the Baton Rouge Astronomy Club- I am happy to say we saw both Jupiter and Saturn!

We were also able to bring back the fan-favorite, Brusly Lions Club, for eye testing. There was something for everyone. The grand finale was a spooky magic show with Chris Miller Magic. Guests were invited to buy dinner from the food truck on campus, sit back, and enjoy! We love hosting this special Halloween celebration for our community, and can't wait to see what exciting venture 2023 brings.



## SugarFest: Another Sweet Success



West Baton Rouge Museum's 27th annual SugarFest was held on Sunday, October 2, 2022. This sweet celebration of the sugar cane harvest has been growing strong since 1995, and thanks to beautiful weather and the generous support from the local community, surrounding areas across the state, and beyond, this year's event was the biggest yet with record breaking attendance of approximately 4,000 visitors. Being named as part of Le Grand Reveil Acadien 2022, a multi-parish experience celebrating the lasting cultural impact of the Acadian people designed to encourage Acadians from around the world to continue to advance their unique lifestyle through shared memories, French speaking events, bonding and fellowship over Cajun food, music, and culture, attracted SugarFest visitors from around the globe. The staff of the West Baton Rouge Museum would like to thank Alma Plantation, the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area Foundation, Harry L. Laws and Company, the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, Louisiana Nursery, LSU Sugar Research Station, Oxbow Rum Distillery, Port Allen/Sugah Rush Bakery, the West Baton Rouge Garden and Civic Club, the West Baton Rouge Historical Association, numerous volunteers, all of the artists, musicians, and tradition bearers who shared their time and talent, and all who came out to spend the day with us. See you again next year, SUGAR on the first Sunday in October!

## November Historical Happy Hour with Mikhala Iversen

On Friday, November 18th, the museum welcomed storyteller and jazz singer, Mikhala "Jazz Muffin" Iversen, for a special Billie Holiday & Lester Young Tribute. Guests spent the evening with Mikhala and her four-piece band as she performed legendary tunes from the iconic Lady Day. It was a night to remember.



**Blast from the Past**  
SUMMER HISTORY CAMP

ages 6-12

Two one-week sessions to choose from  
June 19 - 23 & June 26 - June 30

Registration opens March 1  
\$125 for WBR Parish residents and/or members of the WBR Historical Association and \$150 for all other participants. For more information, call 225.336.2422 or visit [www.WestBatonRougeMuseum.org](http://www.WestBatonRougeMuseum.org)

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NEWSLETTER  
**ÉCOUTEZ**



A PUBLICATION OF THE WEST BATON ROUGE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

**WBR HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
 BOARD MEMBERS 2022**

- Tom Acosta
- Donna Badon
- Kim Callegan
- Ashley Coco
- David Couvillion
- Glen Daigle
- Brian Falcon
- Ellis Gauthier
- Luis Interiano
- Beth Kleinpeter
- Stacy Krebs
- Drew Maciasz
- Debbie Martin
- Andrea Normand
- Michelle Owens
- Ruth Stanley

**WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM  
 BOARD MEMBERS**

- Sue Blanchard
- JoAnn Busse
- David Couvillon
- Lauren Jung
- William Kleinpeter
- Scot Rhodes
- Lorry Trotter
- Sadie Payne Woods
- Chris "Fish" Kershaw  
*ex-officio*

**Monthly Programs**

**1ST FRIDAYS, 1PM:** *Le Café Français*. GRATUIT

**2ND SUNDAYS, 3PM:** *Old Time Country Music Jam*. FREE

**3RD FRIDAYS, 6PM:** *Historical Happy Hour*. FREE

**3RD SUNDAYS, 3PM:** *CFMA Cajun Jam*. FREE

**LAST TUESDAYS, 6PM:** *Yoga*. FREE