

## Doctor's gift supports students pursuing science degrees at LSUS

**LSU Shreveport alumnus Dr. Jon Cheek wants to help students pursue their college and career goals without worrying about money.**



Jon (class of '87) recently endowed the Dr. Jon Cheek College of Sciences Scholarship, creating an

enduring legacy for LSUS students and continuing his years of support for LSUS. The scholarship is open to juniors majoring in biology, chemistry or physics who meet grade point average requirements and demonstrate service to the campus and community. He started funding an annual Dr. Jon Cheek College of Sciences Scholarship in 2005 and continued that until creating the endowment.

His experience as a student at LSUS

in the 1980s prompted him to fund the scholarships.

"Before the start of my junior year, I was informed that my state-funded scholarship was being discontinued due to budget cutbacks," he recalled. "No big tragedy (for me). I just worked a summer job to make up the shortfall, but it did make me more aware...of the political short-sightedness that state government takes. It planted the seed to fund a scholarship so that wouldn't happen to a future student."

Jon applied to big-name universities around the United States as he prepared to graduate from Bossier High School. LSUS was the only university that told him he qualified for what amounted to a full ride: a tuition waiver and a scholarship to help cover books and supplies.

"Staying local would save on expenses and I could graduate college with no debt," he said. "Later, I found out how big a deal that was when talking with classmates upon medical school

graduation – and how some had \$100,000 debut, which was a big sum back then – and now."

He said some of his fondest memories are from Spring Fling, Fall Fest and intramural sports. He was also a member of the Baptist Student Union. In 1986, he was part of at Louisiana Baptist State Basketball Team that toured the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe to play local teams and perform mission work.

Jon attended medical school at LSU School of Medicine in Shreveport, graduating in 1991, and finished his residency in anesthesiology at LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport in 1995. He practiced anesthesiology in Shreveport until 2018, when he moved to Knoxville, Tennessee.

"The best career highlights were when doctors and nurses I worked with would specifically ask for me to take care of them and their family," Jon said. "There isn't a better honor or endorsement."

**"While LSUS is still relatively young, we should be soon reaching a point of family tradition, with successive generations graduating, and legacy philanthropy from highly successful alumni," Jon said. "Having recently moved to a city that has those characteristics in its university, it is easy to see how that advances and benefits both the school and the community."**

# Graduation brings students from all over the globe

## Online graduate brunch participation surges at another record-setting commencement

Graduates in LSU Shreveport's online degree programs traveled from all corners of the globe to participate in the 2019 fall graduation.

The university recorded its largest online student brunch and reception ever, with 700 people at a garden party-themed event under one of the biggest event tents available in Louisiana. Chancellor Larry Clark and faculty members visited with the graduates, who flew from Australia, Russia, and Columbia to be part of commencement.

More than 2,143 people received diplomas at the graduation. During the ceremony, LSUS staff and graduates paused to remember LSUS student Lia Kazan, who was slain in 2017. Chancellor Larry Clark presented a degree to Kazan's parents, Ali Kazan and Ebony Medlin.

LSUS alumna Laurie Boswell was the keynote speaker. Boswell (class of '77) is CEO of Holy Angels Residential Facility, a nonprofit organization that serves individuals with developmental disabilities. She shared some of her experiences while at LSUS and described her career path.

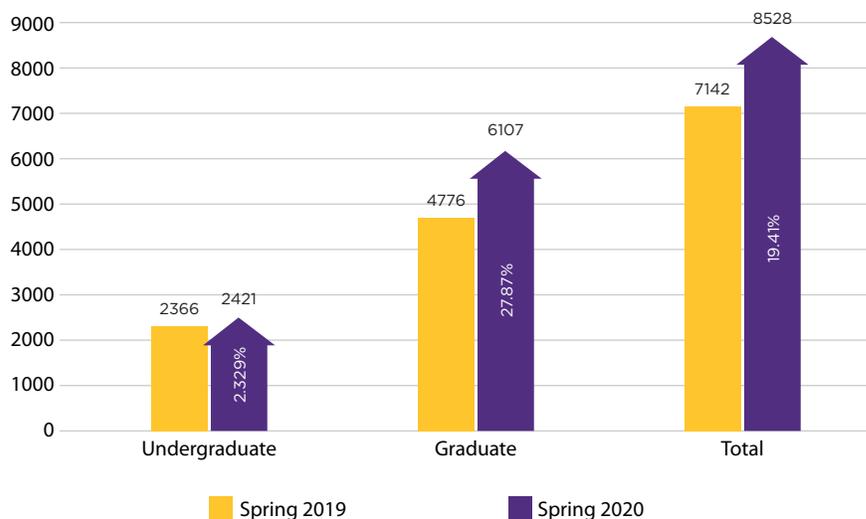
"LSUS gave me a wonderful, strong foundation, the key to my success," Boswell said. "My climb to success at Holy Angels started at LSUS."

The mood lightened as the ceremony wrapped up, with the Shreveport Second Line Brass Band leading graduates out of the CenturyLink Center. Band member Allen Omenka Webb took time out from his saxophone to receive his MBA during the ceremony, then rejoined the band to lead fellow graduates. The second line has become a tradition that provides a taste of our unique Louisiana culture.

With the fall graduation, LSUS now has more than 27,000 alumni around the world.



SPRING ENROLLMENT



# Spring Street Museum Founders named Pilots of the Year during River Bend Revue gala

**Three organizations that founded the Spring Street Museum in Shreveport have been named 2020 Pilots of the Year by the LSUS Foundation.**

The National Society of Colonial Dames of America Shreveport and Red River Parishes; the Helen Mann Memorial Fund Committee; and the Friends of the Spring Street Museum were honored during the foundation's RiverBend Revue gala in January.

In October, those three groups donated the museum to the LSUS Foundation, which is now operating the museum on behalf of LSU Shreveport. Located in Shreveport's oldest building, the museum is a cultural crown jewel. The Shreveport and Red River Parishes Colonial Dames chapter opened the museum in 1976 to preserve and showcase the city's history.

Accepting the awards were Ellen Alley, representing the Colonia Dames of Louisiana Shreveport and Red River Parishes Chapter; Janie Richardson, representing the Helen Mann Memorial Fund Committee; and Lissa Grounsell, president of the

Friends of the Spring Street Museum. LSUS Chancellor Larry Clark, LSUS Foundation Executive Director Laura Perdue and LSUS Foundation President Steve Yancey presented the awards.

Nearly 200 people celebrated in speakeasy style. Proceeds from the event support the scholarships that benefit LSUS students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college.



Getting into the speakeasy spirit of RiverBend Revue are, from left, Dr. Felice Williams, Stefanie Y'Barbo and Barbie Cannon.



Ellen Alley (second from left) accepts the Pilot of the Year Award on behalf of the National Society of Colonial Dames Shreveport and Red River Parishes Chapter. Riverbend Helen Mann Fund Award



Lissa Grounsell (second from left) accepts the Pilot of the Year Award on behalf of the Friends of the Spring Street Museum.



Janie Richardson (second from left) accepts the Pilot of the Year Award on behalf of the Helen Mann Memorial Fund Committee.

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

- AEP SWEPCO
- Steve and Lynn Yancey
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- The Colonial Dames of America Shreveport
- The Friends of the Spring Street Museum
- Quintin and Susan Hardtner
- The Helen Mann Fund Committee
- Sybil Patten
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- Dr. Lacy and Edie Williams

# LSUS Cultural Trail preserves regional history, showcases research resources open to all

LSU Shreveport's newly unveiled Cultural Trail offers a collection of resources and repositories to preserve Northwest Louisiana's history and culture.

The Cultural Trail consists of the Pioneer Heritage Center, the James S. Noel Collection, Red River Radio and the LSUS Northwest Louisiana Archives on the LSUS campus, as well as the Spring Street Museum in downtown Shreveport.

The Pioneer Heritage Center is a living history museum composed of seven restored buildings that showcase from several time periods. The center offers visitors a glimpse into the everyday lives of people who lived in the region from 1830 to 1930.

The James S. Noel Collection is one of the largest private collections of antiquarian books, prints and maps in the United States. It covers diverse subjects, including religion, travel literature, natural history and 19th century American and British literature. It's on permanent loan to LSUS. The collection is open to the public for research.

The LSUS Northwest Louisiana Archives collects, preserves, and makes available to researchers historic documents, manuscripts, photos and other records related to not only Shreveport but the Ark-La-Tex.

Red River Radio, now in its 36th year, is the regional public radio station for northwest Louisiana, southern Arkansas, east Texas and



LSU Shreveport's cultural gems include, from left, Maestro Kermit Poling; Dr. Laura McLemore; Dr. Cheryl White; Marty Young; and Dr. Alex Mikaberidze, who manage the university's Cultural Trail centers

southeast Oklahoma. The network serves one of the largest coverage areas for public radio in the United States with national programming and local news, culture and entertainment programming.

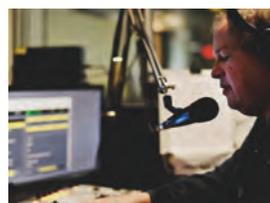
The Spring Street Museum joined the LSUS cultural initiatives in 2019. Housed in Shreveport's oldest existing building, it displays artifacts tracing Shreveport's early history as a port city. The museum also sponsors a community lecture series.

The university will work with other museums and cultural organizations in Shreveport-Bossier City to offer learning opportunities to students of all ages, according to LSUS Chancellor Larry Clark.

"We see the addition of the Spring Street Museum as a way to further of our mission of being a community leader," said Clark. "But through these partnerships we need to do more to recognize the history of this region through all of its diverse voices and points of view. We want our offerings to be representative of the rich demographic and cultural makeup of the region."



James S. Noel Collection



Red River Radio



LSUS Northwest Louisiana Archives



The Pioneer Heritage Center



Spring Street Museum



JOIN US AS WE

# CELEBRATE YOU!

Donor Appreciation and  
Campaign Update Fair

April 30, 2020  
LSUS University Center  
5:00pm-7:30pm

# Navigators chart new courses after graduation

## Three of the LSUS Foundation Navigators are setting out on new adventures after receiving their degrees from LSU Shreveport.

**JASMINE CARR**, of Benton, graduated summa cum laude with a degree in psychology. She has been accepted to the LSUS Master of Nonprofit Administration online program. Her other future goal includes earning a master's degree in school counseling and becoming a school counselor.



She is working at the Bossier Parish Library System's Plain Dealing branch, where she was recently promoted to assistant branch manager. She joined the library system three years ago as a library aide.

Besides serving as a Navigator while at LSUS, Carr was active in Fall Fest, Spring Fling, Psi Chi, and the Greek Council and served as president of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority. She also has been active in the community, volunteering with a teen mentoring program and Toys for Tots.

Carr considers LSUS the best of both

worlds when it comes to a traditional college experience.

"I chose LSUS because I wanted to stay in town, but I also wanted the feel and the adventure of campus life. Here at LSUS it's small enough that I feel comfortable and it's big enough to give me the college experience of walking around on campus, plus it's a great place to learn and it has wonderful helpful professors," Carr said.

She hopes to someday "pay it forward" by funding a scholarship for LSUS students. She plans to maintain her ties with the university.

"I have actually made some lifetime friends, thanks to the small intimate atmosphere at LSUS. I plan on coming back on campus to volunteer and to say hello," Carr said.

**WISE WORDS:** "It is what it is."



**HARPER MCKNIGHT**, of McLeod, Texas, earned a degree in mass communications with a public relations focus. She is the first person in her family to attend and graduate from college.

She is the community engagement and creative coordinator for the United Way of Northwest Louisiana in Shreveport. She works with community and

corporate volunteers and is the in-house graphic designer for the nonprofit organization. An internship with the United Way last fall led to the job.

"I love the work I do, and every day I use skills I learned during college," she said. "I'm so thankful for my experience at LSUS!"

Besides serving as a Navigator she was active in Lambda Pi Eta, the Mass Communications Honor Society at LSUS.

McKnight earned an associate degree from Texarkana College before transferring to LSUS. She says LSUS offered her a priceless opportunity – a scholarship just for transfer students – and gave her the courage to look beyond the tiny East Texas community where she grew up. "I also chose LSUS because it has small classes, is affordable and has strong degree programs," she said.

McKnight believes in being connected to the campus. She plans to keep in touch with the friends she made on campus and participate in events sponsored by the LSUS Alumni Association and the LSUS Foundation. She notes that a campus tour sealed the deal when she was thinking about transferring to LSUS.

"By being involved on campus, students learn new social, leadership, and time management skills. I also think it's important that students show administrators and those in leadership positions at LSUS that we care about the community built on campus and that we will take advantage of the opportunities

*Each year, the LSUS Foundation selects student Navigators who give tours, help host special events and talk with community supporters. These ambassadors wear the coveted purple jacket, a symbol of leadership. For more information about the Navigator program, contact Executive Director Laura Perdue.*

given to us,” McKnight said.

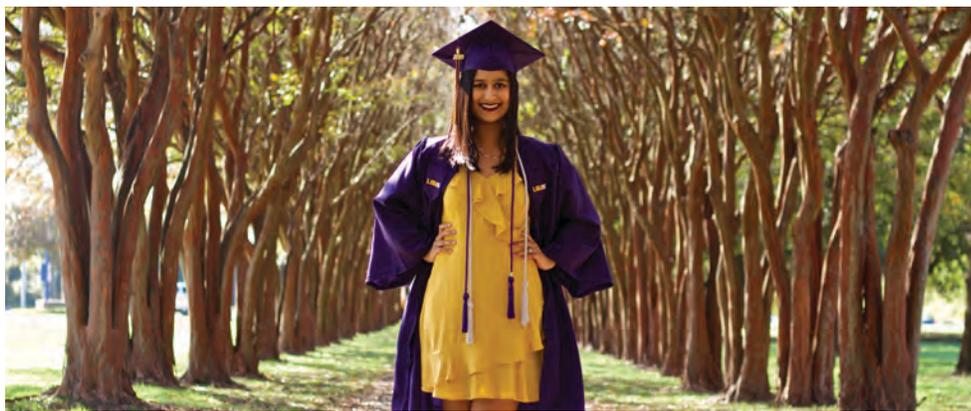
**WISE WORDS:** “Reach for the moon and you’ll land among the stars.”

**MILLIE PATEL**, of Bastrop, graduated with a bachelor of science degree, majoring in cellular and molecular biology with a minor in chemistry. She is preparing for the MCAT and plans to apply to medical school this summer.

She’s working as a medical scribe in a local hospital emergency room to gain real-world experience. Medical scribes record information as doctors and other healthcare providers interact with patients. They sometimes help with other routine administrative jobs in medical offices.

Patel says LSU Shreveport gave her a strong foundation to pursue her chosen career.

“You can come to LSUS from the smallest town nobody has ever heard



of and step out of your comfort zone and become a completely new person,” she said. “LSUS truly cares about their students. Just take a look at the student to professor ratio, it speaks for itself!”

Besides serving as a Navigator, Patel was active in Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED), serving as vice president of public service; the Minority Association Pre-Health Students (MAPS); the Chemistry Club and a member of American Chemical Society (ACS).

She plans to stay connected to LSUS

and her classmates through the LSUS Alumni Association.

“I am so proud of being a Pilot and for choosing to invest my education here at an affordable and caring college,” Patel said. “Because of all the opportunities LSUS has given me, I will give back in order for more students like me to be able to experience what I was able to experience.”

**WISE WORDS:** “It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.”

## Scholarship Appreciation Luncheon set for April 8

### Generous donors are helping LSUS students map out a more prosperous future.

More than 200 privately-funded scholarships totaling \$400,000 have been awarded to students for the 2019-2020 academic year. Some awards ease the financial pressure for first-generation college students, while others support students working toward undergraduate and graduate degrees in many disciplines. LSUS even offers scholarships to transfer and graduate students to encourage life-long learning and career enhancement.

Your gift strengthens the community

while changing the lives of individual students. Research shows that 75 percent of the people who earn a bachelor’s degree will own their homes. They’ll make an average of \$1.1 million more over their lifetimes than someone who only graduated from high school. Fewer than 5 percent of those who earn a degree will fall below the poverty line.

On April 8, the LSUS Foundation will share that “Million Dollar Secret” when it brings together scholarship recipients and donors at its annual Scholarship Appreciation Luncheon. Students will share first-hand how scholarships have changed their lives, and the foundation will thank the community supporters who make our scholarships possible.

“Creating a scholarship provides for a rare opportunity in philanthropy; the donor can actually meet the recipient and hear from the student the importance of the gift,” said Laura Perdue, LSUS Foundation executive director. “Rarely can you make a donation and have that kind of first-hand experience.”

### TO SHARE LSUS NEWS

contact newsletter editor

Melody Brumble

at 318-780-5926 or

mbrumble@lsus.edu

# New LSUS Alumni Association director is dedicated to higher education, local theater and the community

**Laura Beeman Nugent is ecstatic to join the LSUS family (again) as the newly appointed director of alumni affairs. Laura is a 2011 graduate of the Masters of Liberal Arts program at LSUS. She is also a graduate of Louisiana Tech and Bossier Parish Community College.**

When asked what drew her back to LSUS, Laura said, “The family I discovered here during grad school was one that I would have never thought possible. I still keep in close contact with many of my fellow graduates from the MLA class of 2011. I think fondly of my time with them and in the halls of Bronson and I was eager to have the opportunity connect other alum from various programs and years to reinvigorate the Alumni Association.”

LSUS isn't the only college campus where you will see her. She is in her

12th year as an adjunct instructor for the BPCC Performing Arts program.

“Both LSUS and BPCC played pivotal parts in my higher education experience and it is very important to me to make certain I give back my talents to both campuses,” Laura said.

Knowing that an integral part of an undergraduate and graduate program is connection with alumni, Laura hopes that she is able to connect current students enrolled at LSUS with alumni as mentors.

Laura has deep roots in the nonprofit arts scene in northwest Louisiana. She came to LSUS from Robinson Film Center, where she served as education coordinator, teaching film education to students in Caddo, Bossier, Webster and Desoto parishes.

She began her involvement at Shreveport Little Theatre in 1997

and in 2007 co-founded the Shreveport Little Theatre Academy, an arts training academy for kindergarten through 12th grade students.



Laura Beeman Nugent

Laura also is the director and choreographer for SLT's summer Main Stage musical. She has directed and choreographed sold-out shows Mamma Mia, Chicago and Shrek the Musical, among many others for SLT. She also served as front of house manager at The Strand Theatre.

**To touch base with Laura, email her at [alumni@lsus.edu](mailto:alumni@lsus.edu) or call 318-797-5190**



The LSUS holiday tree lighting ceremony is growing each year. The 2019 celebration featured a choir and a student dinner that drew more than 150 people. Long-time LSUS supporters Dr. Lacy and Edie Williams flipped the switch to turn on the dazzling holiday tree, which they donated to LSUS. This year, hundreds of lights also adorned the signature crepe myrtles lining sidewalks on campus. This year, hundreds of lights also adorned the signature crepe myrtles lining sidewalks on campus, adding even more sparkle to LSUS during the holidays.



# Faculty Highlights

**Your generous donations support LSUS faculty members as they create connections in the classroom, in the community and around the globe.**

Associate Professor Kevin Jones is creating LSUS Flight School to offer a service to families coping with autism. The program will provide social skills opportunities to children with autism while giving students in the LSUS school psychology program field experience. Jones, director of the LSUS Specialist in School Psychology Program, has offered similar community programs since joining LSUS in 2008. He expects LSUS Flight School to start this fall. “It’s about launching children into the mainstream,” Jones said. “Children will be engaged in games and group and individual social learning experiences.”



Dr. Dorie LaRue is releasing a book of poetry, “An Enemy in Their Mouths,” that examines how addiction affects families. “An Enemy in Their Mouths” will be available from Finishing Line Press May 15. All proceeds from the book will be donated to the Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse of Northwest Louisiana. An English professor at LSUS, she has written several volumes of poetry and a novel, “Resurrecting Virgil.” She is working on a second novel. She joined the LSUS faculty in 1991 and has also taught at Grambling State University and LSU in Baton Rouge.



Dr. William Pederson, director of the International Lincoln Center at LSUS, helped bring together scholars and students at the Association of Global South Studies (AGSS) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in December to promote research on Lincoln’s legacy abroad. For the first time, the AGSS—the oldest and largest such professional organization on “Third World Studies”—held its annual international conference in Argentina’s capital. In another first, the conference featured two Lincoln panels—one with Dr. Pederson on it and the other organized by a past president of the organization, Dr. Michael R. Hall. The panel with Pederson also featured an LSUS student, Tyler B. Maizels, a senior majoring in criminal justice at LSUS. Maizels delivered a paper on “Lincoln’s Legacy in Guatemala.” The paper will be published later this year.



Dr. Cay Evans has been named head of the School of Education at LSUS. She has been part of the LSUS faculty more than 25 years, serving as a professor and director of graduate programs, among other responsibilities. Her area of specialization is in reading and literacy, with a doctorate from the University of Georgia. She has been instrumental in program development by designing programs and certifications in a variety of subjects, including English as a Second Language, computer science education and STEM.



Leadership Studies Instructor Trey Gibson has been appointed by Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards



to join a new, statewide palliative advisory council focusing on quality-of-life care for cancer patients and others with chronic diseases. Gibson is the father of Emilie Gibson, who was diagnosed with a rare brain tumor at age nine and passed away at age 10. Gibson and his family helped Emilie battle cancer with treatment in Shreveport, Memphis, Houston and San Francisco while trying to provide everyday experiences and happiness for her. After Emilie lost the fight in 2017, her family created a nonprofit foundation to raise awareness about childhood cancer.

Gifts to establish endowments are legacy gifts that will continue on for perpetuity. The endowments are invested and managed so as to ensure sustainable returns dedicated to professors’ professional development and research. The LSUS Foundation manages 62 endowed professorships and chairs on LSU Shreveport’s behalf. If you would like to learn more about endowments and the matching gift opportunities from the Louisiana Board of Regents, please contact LSUS Foundation Executive Director Laura Perdue at 318-797-5257

# LSUS names new head baseball coach

## Brad Neffendorf is the new LSUS Pilots head baseball coach.

Brad Neffendorf is the new LSUS Pilots head baseball coach.

Neffendorf replaces Brent Lavallee, who left LSUS in December to take a management position with the Toronto Blue Jays minor league system. Neffendorf has more than 15 years of experience in collegiate coaching, including four years at Tennessee Wesleyan, the 2019 NAIA National Champion. Before joining

the LSUS coaching staff, Neffendorf was pitching coach at Division I Southern Illinois University.

During his time working in professional baseball, Neffendorf was a scout for the Miami Marlins from 2007-10. He also has experience working in collegiate summer leagues, coaching for the Winchester Royals in 2011 and Front Royal Cardinals in 2014 and 2015. Prior to his collegiate coaching, he worked as a prep coach in Oregon from 2005-10.

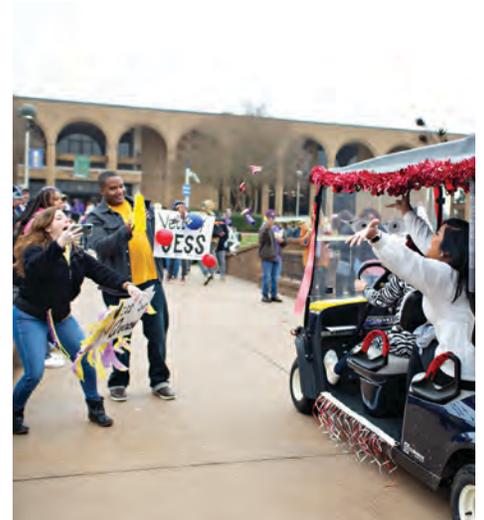
Neffendorf is a native of Oregon and graduated from Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, with a bachelor's degree in education in 2010. He earned his master's degree in organizational leadership from Campbellsville University in 2012.



Brad Neffendorf

## Homecoming 2020

**Pilots basketball and baseball dominated opponents during Homecoming Weekend February 1 and 2. The men's and women's basketball teams blew the Texas College Steers out of the water, giving each team another conference win. The Pilots baseball team swept Kansas Wesleyan in the season opening weekend. Homecoming activities included a tailgate party sponsored by the LSUS Alumni Association and a parade.**



# LSUS students earn credit, build resumes through Spring Street Museum programs

**The Spring Street Museum is providing real-world experience for current and former LSUS students.**

Three LSUS students -- Natalia Muller, Dominick Mercer and Claudia Finley – are interning at the museum this semester. They're undergoing training, and once trained, they'll participate in day-to-day operations, including giving tours.

LSUS alumna Katelyn Woodel (2018), who is pursuing a master's degree program at the University of New Orleans, is setting up a special exhibit at the Spring Street Museum as part of her master's degree work. In addition to her classes at UNO, Woodel interns at the World War II Museum in New Orleans.

LSUS professor Dr. Gary Joiner is incorporating the museum into some of his classes. Students are visiting the museum to critique its displays as part of their project-based learning experiences.

The museum continues offering tours and programs to a diverse audience, ranging from elementary school children to senior citizens.

In February, the museum provided a tour to clients with the Louisiana Association for the Blind, among other tours. Museum Director Maria Markell



says she and Curator Marty Loschen tailor their tours to fit visitors' needs and interests.

"We talked about the different textures of the items in the cases for the visitors from the Association for the Blind," Markell said. "We have a glass poison bottle dug up in Shreveport's red light district. I took it out and got them to touch it. I explained that the special texture on the corners of the bottle was to warn people it contained poison because people weren't as literate then."

Visitor numbers continue to grow at the Spring Street Museum. The museum had 3,087 visitors in 2019, up from 3,068 in 2018. Visitor numbers also are trending up for 2020.

The Spring Street Museum, located at 525 Spring Street in Shreveport, is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Admission is free.



## SAVE THE DATE

**What:**  
Shreveport Downtown Artwalk

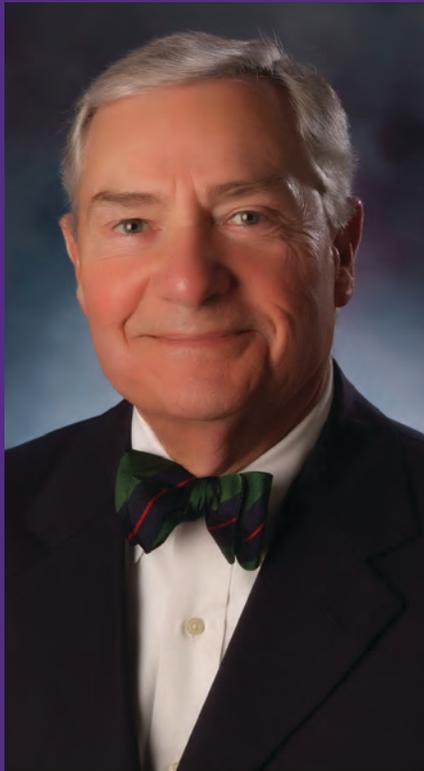
**When:**  
5 p.m. – 8 p.m. March 5

Two artists will display their works at the Spring Street Museum, one of the stops on the March Artwalk. The family-friendly event gives people a chance to explore downtown Shreveport.

**Interested in supporting the Spring Street Museum? Contact the Friends of the Spring Street Museum, P.O. Box 53095, Shreveport, LA 71135 or LSUS Foundation Executive Director Laura Perdue at 318-797-5257 or [laura.perdue@lsus.edu](mailto:laura.perdue@lsus.edu).**

## A LETTER FROM YOUR LSUS FOUNDATION BOARD PRESIDENT

# Steve Yancey



**STEPHEN R. YANCEY II of  
Cook, Yancey, King & Galloway  
Law Corporation**

Mr. Yancey's practice involves real estate and commercial transactions, energy matters, and probate and estate planning. He received his undergraduate degree from Washington & Lee University, his masters degree in Business Administration from Louisiana State University, and his law degree from Louisiana State University.

I enjoy celebrating the success of LSUS with its largest enrollment ever and sound financial condition. However, it is also important to recognize what our regional/national university is doing for the longer term.

We are all aware and proud of the LSUS Archives, the Noel Collection, the Pioneer Heritage Center, and Red River Radio. These are all wonderful programs that focus on cultural outreach. We have now added another cultural gem to the collection. The LSUS Spring Street Historical Museum located in the oldest building in downtown Shreveport, marks a fitting addition to the LSUS cultural outreach program.

The Spring Street Museum saw its beginnings in the 1970s with the Louisiana chapter of the Colonial Dames receiving the property as a gift with the stipulation that it be preserved for its historical interest and kept on display for the benefit of the public. The Colonial Dames has faithfully and skillfully managed the Spring Street Museum so that when the museum was donated to the LSUS Foundation in 2019 it was running smoothly and in excellent condition.

The Spring Street Museum is a perfect fit in the cultural outreach efforts of LSUS and promises to be a worthy addition to the LSUS history department curriculum and an enduring presence for LSUS in downtown Shreveport. The Spring Street Museum is one more reason why LSUS will play a leading role in the cultural scene of the Shreveport-Bossier area for many years to come.

## LSUS Foundation Board of Directors 2019-2020

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