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## NEWS RELEASE

### **TWENTY-FOUR GRADUATE FROM LEADERSHIP OUACHITA**

Monroe- Thursday evening, twenty-four participants graduated from Leadership Ouachita, a program of the Monroe Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Council. A celebration reception was held at the Ouachita Grand Plaza. This was the Leadership program's 28<sup>th</sup> graduating class.

The purpose of Leadership Ouachita is to develop and empower the emerging leaders of Northeast Louisiana to transform the region into a place recognized as one of the best places to live and do business. Class members engage in a series of sessions focused on education and workforce development, economic development and infrastructure.

The program also provides insight on public decision making, practical and in-depth discussions on public issues pertinent to Ouachita Parish, an expanded knowledge and understanding of the community in which we live, and the opportunity to develop lasting relationships with growing and established leaders in a neutral environment. Since the class inception twenty-eight years ago, over 725 people have graduated from the program.

The 2016 Leadership Ouachita graduates are: Andrea Adam, Specialty Management Services of Ouachita; Ashley Andrews, Origin Bank; Tarya Bell, City of Monroe; Avius Carroll-Zimmerman, NE Delta Human Services Authority; Laura Clark, P & S Surgical Hospital; Cecilia Costanza, MOEBiz; Julie Emory, Children Coalition; Janice Garrison, JP Morgan Chase; Herb Guillory, Hi-Def Marketing & Film Group; Jamaro Hill, The Cookout; Antoinette Hoard, Children's Coalition; Philip Ingram, CenturyLink; Donald Johnson, CenturyLink; Meleah Jones, Keller Williams Realty; Leigh Ann Kingrea, Origin Bank; Ashley Kirby, Heard, McElroy & Vestal; Julia Letlow, University of Louisiana at Monroe; Beverly Lewis, University Health Conway; Amanda Mass, Origin Bank; Amanda Mayo,

Origin Bank; Dianna Poindexter, Monroe West Monroe Convention & Visitors Bureau; John Turner, LA Delta Community College; and Michael Wilkes, Progressive Bank.

During the Ceremony, James W. Moore III was named the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual James M. Shipp Jr. Memorial Young Business Leader of the Year. This prestigious award is presented annually to a young man or woman in Ouachita Parish who has displayed outstanding leadership and service. The award was named in honor of James M. Shipp, Jr. Jim was the IMC general manager that was tragically killed during the explosion at the IMC plant in Sterlington in 1991. He was a Monroe Chamber board member and an active leader in the community.

Past recipients of this prestigious award include: Brent Henley, Tom Nicholson, David Cattar, George Cummings, Harvey Hales, Ed Major, Debbie Sawyer, Mike Ryan, Bruce Hanks, Dr. David Uth, Terry Baugh, Jerry Daigle, Taylor Cagle, Jim Crotwell, Judge Manning, LJ Holland, Aimee Kane, Christian Creed, Stephen Harrison, Kevin Woods, Stewart Keyes, Michael Echols, Laura Kilpatrick Marchelos, Ashley West and Jeff Laudenheimer.

Donald Johnson, with CenturyLink was given the Charlie Mac “Twice as Much” Award. Donald was selected by fellow classmates as the participant who displayed twice as much caring, giving and respect throughout the year. Previous winners were Stephanie Rivers, Staci Albritton, Christie Messinger, Andrew Osakue, Terry Blakeney and Jake Wilson.

Sponsors for the 2016 class are: CenturyLink, IberiaBank, PPM Consultants, P & S Surgical Hospital, Strauss Interests, Tom and Sue Nicholson, Lagniappe Broadcasting, Patty Stewart Photography, The Radio People and *The News-Star*.

2017 Leadership Ouachita class nominations are being accepted now and are encouraged from all segments of the community. Individuals may apply or nominate those they feel best exemplify the philosophy of Leadership Ouachita. The application deadline for the 2017 class is December 31, 2016. Applications may be picked up at the Monroe Chamber of Commerce or interested parties may contact Daphne McClish at 807-4018 or [dmcclish@monroe.org](mailto:dmcclish@monroe.org) for more information.