

## PAST IMPACT AWARD WINNERS

### 2016



**Mark McNeely** founded MP&F PR in 1987 and has since grown the company from a one-person consultancy to one of the nation's largest and most award-winning independent communications agencies.

As senior partner, Mark is responsible for staff development and client relations. Strategic planning, senior counseling and regional media relations are his specialties, and the majority of his client work is in special events, technology, education, health care and public affairs.

Mark founded MP&F following a career in journalism and politics, including four years as capital bureau chief for The Knoxville News Sentinel and service as then-U.S. Sen. Al Gore's first state director. He is a 1970 journalism graduate of the University of Tennessee–Knoxville, and has been a member of the board of visitors to the College of Communications and Information since 2001, and chaired the group from 2009 to 2011. In 2015 he was honored with The Donald G. Hileman Distinguished Alumni Award, which is given each year to a college alumni who has made notable contributions to the field of communication and information.

Mark has been recognized by the Nashville Women's Political Caucus in its annual "Good Guys" Awards, is a member of the board of directors of the Nashville Downtown Rotary Club and the Nashville Downtown Partnership, and has been active in the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and the local Public Relations Society of America chapter, which honored him in 2007 with the chapter's annual Hercules Award for professional contributions to public relations.

He is a native of Knoxville, a 1967 graduate of Fulton High School and has lived in Nashville since 1976.

### 2015



**Colby B. Jubenville**, PhD is an accomplished author, speaker, professor, entrepreneur and inventor. He holds an academic appointment at Middle Tennessee State University as special assistant to the dean for student success and strategic partnerships, and is principal of Red Herring Innovation and Design, an agency specializing in helping people and organizations become better known, better understood, and better understand the unique value they deliver.

In 2015, Jubenville accepted an invitation from the Washington Times to write about self-reliance and developing the entrepreneurial mindset, teaching people how to "go their own way." He regularly speaks on his book *Zebras & Cheetahs*, which teaches people how to look different, run faster and stay agile in order to survive in the "business jungle." During his tenure in higher education, Jubenville has published more than 35 peer-reviewed and professional trade articles and founded *The Journal of Applied Sport Management*.

## 2014



**Dr. Jesse Register** became director of Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) in January 2009, having earned a national reputation for his work in urban education reform. When he arrived, MNPS was facing the threat of state takeover due to low performance. Due to Register's transformative leadership, MNPS reached Tennessee's second-highest accountability category in 2013, and is now in the top 27 percent of Tennessee school districts.

The district continues its steady improvement against Tennessee's performance standards, which are now considered among the toughest in the nation. In August, the board of education unanimously approved a strategic plan called Education 2018: Excellence for Every Student that sets ambitious goals, including becoming the nation's top-performing urban school district.

Register has made it a priority to provide leadership and growth opportunities for new teachers. He has directed the creation of MNPS' Teacher Leadership Institute, led the effort to increase starting pay for teachers to third in the nation and implemented the New Teacher Induction Fellows Program. Register's vision and leadership will shape young professionals and the city for years to come.

## 2013



**John Grady** is a former high school history teacher from Nebraska who has had a 37-year career in the music industry. He is currently the owner-operator of Nashville-based Crush Music Management.

After a 15-year stint in pop music that included turns as a radio promotion man in the Midwest and the vice president of marketing for Capitol Records in Los Angeles, Grady moved to Nashville, where he was senior vice president of marketing, sales and promotion for Mercury Records Nashville. At that point, he joined famed producer T-Bone Burnett and filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen to form DMZ Music in Nashville and L.A. He later became president of Sony Music Nashville, presiding over Columbia, Epic and Monument Records. In this role, he signed such artists as Gretchen Wilson, Miranda Lambert and Ashley Monroe. Grady served as chairman of the Academy of Country Music for three years; was on the CMA board and executive committee for eight years; is a trustee of the Country Music Hall of Fame; and served on the boards of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and University School Nashville.

"This business has always been about young people, and young people need to step up and guide the music business through current and future pitfalls," said Grady. "I am extremely fortunate to have made my living in a business that requires passion. I can't imagine doing anything else." Grady and his wife, Susan, have two daughters, Shannon and Karina.

## 2012



**Jacky Akbari** is employer services director with the Nashville Career Advancement Center. She is also co-founder and board chair for the Middle Tennessee Diversity Forum, a collaboration that builds and recognizes best practices of employers seeking to advance diversity in the workplace. An active member of the Middle Tennessee community, she is involved in Downtown Kiwanis, is an alumna of Leadership Middle Tennessee and serves on a variety of local boards, including the Ronald McDonald House, Leadership Middle Tennessee and the Center for Nonprofit Management.

Akbari has launched several initiatives in the Middle Tennessee community to advance the interests of young professionals. Les Femmes Du Monde is a professional organization of young professional women with a mission to network and build business alliances with YPs seeking to advance in their careers and in the community. She was also instrumental in the development of a young professionals men's organization, The Greenwood Pact.

## 2011



**Joel Sullivan** is the Regional Chief Executive Officer of the Nashville Area Chapter of the American Red Cross. His leadership experience over the past 22 years included serving as the CFO of SouthTrust Bank, as well as leading numerous entrepreneurial startups and contributing to community leadership positions across a number of diverse businesses. Sullivan continues to actively mentor young professionals in the Nashville Junior Chamber and connect the community to needs in Nashville. A past president of the NJC, Sullivan volunteered eight weeks of his time in 2010 to mentor and teach NJC members, amidst managing relief for the May 2010 flood. In 2010 Joel received the highest honor in the Nashville Junior Chamber- the Community Leadership and Service Award.

## 2010



**Ron Samuels** is a career leader, executive, marketer and banker. He is currently chairman, president and CEO of Avenue Bank, a new signature bank for Nashville. Prior to Avenue Bank, he served as group president for Regions Bank in Middle Tennessee. Samuels has served in leadership roles on numerous boards and committees in the Nashville area, including Nashville's Agenda, Adventure Science Center, Nashville Sports Council, the Gaylord Music City Bowl presented by Bridgestone, and the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. In the 2007 founding of Avenue Bank, Samuels established a core team, composed largely of young professionals, to develop the strategy and business plan for the company. Samuels leads by example in his professionalism, volunteer efforts and community leadership.

## 2009



**Pat Collins** is president and chief operating officer of SESAC, the nation's fastest-growing performing rights organization. He is recognized as one of the leading performing rights experts in the United States. Throughout his career, Collins has been a staunch supporter of young professionals having a seat at the table, and always looks for ways to offer opportunity to rising stars.

Collins has been one of the biggest supporters of Society of Leaders in Development (SOLID), a non-profit organization comprised of developing young music business professionals dedicated to improving the future success of the industry. SESAC employees have been consistent members of SOLID for the past five years, and they have also been active in numerous other nonprofit and leadership development organizations.

## 2008



**Diane Hayes** has more than 30 years' experience in program development, special project management and event production. Since 1995, she has served as director of the Young Leaders Council, an organization that trains young professionals to serve on the boards of directors of nonprofits.

She currently serves in leadership roles with Orchestra Nashville, Friends of Radnor Lake, Dismas, Inc. and the Mental Health Association of Middle Tennessee. She is a member of CABLE, the Tennessee Society of Association Executives, and is a graduate of Leadership Tennessee.

## 2007



**Liz Allen Fey** is co-owner of Management Solutions Group, LLC. Fey's work ranges from conducting organizational assessments, writing curriculum and providing training, to coaching and mentoring executives and leaders, to facilitating both small and large groups.

Fey is a trustee of the United Way of Nashville, is past president of the board of Book'em and a member of CABLE. She has served in an advisory capacity for such organizations as the Nashville Area Chamber and KraftCPAs. She is strategic planning chair for the Nashville League of Women Voters, and sits on the advisory board of All About Women.

## 2007



**Debra Grimes** is co-owner of Management Solutions Group, LLC. She mentors and coaches businesses owners/managers and budding facilitators. Grimes is a 2000-2001 graduate of Leadership Nashville. She has served on and led numerous non-profit boards and committees, including CASA, Hands On Nashville, the Downtown Rotary, Watkins Park Centennial Project, Junior Achievement and Artists for Oasis.

Grimes has received honors such as Volunteer of the Week (Oasis Center and The Tennessean, 1999); being nominated for the Mary Catherine Strobel City-wide Volunteer Award (2006) and the Women of Influence Award for Community Supporter (2007).