Metro Council Candidates

Eric Lewis

If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much
In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
For me, I believe the arts adds to the culture landscape and offerings in our community. I also believe that it often provides a critical outlet for the those who are artist, especially in these stressful and trying times.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
As a member of Forum 35, I advocated for an increased focused on the arts. As a small business owner/developer I have often advocated for in the infusion of art in various spaces.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
As a web and app designer myself, I know first hand the importance of these specialities to our economy. As an elected official, I will advocates for the growth of these skills and professions as a way to diversity our economy.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
I plan to collaborate with each of our four public school systems and independent or private schools in the community to increase access to arts education through partnerships with after-school programs and community centers, specifically thought in serving largely minority populations.

How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?
One of my daughters, was gifted arts student while in middle/high school. One of the most beautiful things that I saw was a piece that she completed for the grandmother of one fo her older sisters friends. Again, I believe the work provided her with an outlet and but it was also an opportunity for her to bless multiple people through her work.

With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?
Music has been my favorite. Music has helped me because of its multitude of forms (genres)and because it touches and is relatable is every aspect of my life.

The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?
I believe that the tax incentives/tax breaks are responsible ways that we can support those in the art community. I also believe that designated arts districts/neighborhood are policies that we must consider as well.

If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
Overall individual development - proven to show increased cognitive and non-cognitive skills which improves overall quality of life.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
Absolutely. As a former violin player and spoken word artist, I advocate strongly for increased arts opportunities in schools and beyond. During school board meetings and any other opportunity I get, I often share data I learned from Adam Grant's book, "The Originals" which documents the likelihood of scientists being Nobel recognized scientists based on their arts
activities. When the arts was cut from education, it was a huge mistake. Our students and society are paying a huge price.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
I am not familiar but am eager to learn about opportunities I can get behind and spearhead.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
I have already begun to address the disparity by delivering millions of dollars in resources for schools in my area which is predominately children of color to receive not just STEM programming but STEAM - Science Technology Engineering ARTS and Math programming like music development and recording studios, film, graphic design and more. I am eager to learn ways that same goal translates in my capacity as Metro-council member.

How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?
I use different types of art like experiencing literature, drawing, and writing to process my own personal experiences. I also listen to music that brings joy and excitement as I work during the day.

With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?
Poetry. I wrote my first poem at the age of 7 and got into spoken word poetry in my mid twenties. It has always been a transformative means of expression for me.

The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?
I want to develop my area into an "Arts, Culture and Industry" District. In doing so, I hope that we can be partners in making that happen.

LaMont Cole
If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector? Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH? No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts? Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth? Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts? Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society? Opening the creative center of the brain allowing people to explore other options in life.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say? Yes. We need Arts programs in our schools during the day as well as in our after school programs to ensure we are reaching the whole-child. Without the Arts our society would be lost in the forest without a compass. In essence the Arts is the compass for universal direction.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields? Well I’d like to work with those interested in those opportunities to discuss ways we can attract that industry to our city. I then would like to work with my elected colleagues to create legislation to support and attract new job creating businesses to our community.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
Well that’s a tough question, because most black and brown kids attend public school. In my role as city councilman we have no jurisdiction over the public school system, however we can advocate for them, by requesting a report be provided to use relative to how may schools have comprehensive Arts programs.

**How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?**
We have been creative in our time together to engage in Arts activities like, painting, coloring, singing and dancing. Creating family skits and videos.

**With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?**
Computer graphics is my favorite. I like to create flyers.

**The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?**
Creating and Arts and entertainment district with tax incentives to restore buildings for creative Arts spaces.

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*Dr. Vincent Jemison*

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**If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?**
Yes

**Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?**
No

**Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?**
Yes

**Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?**
Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
The freedom of expression. The arts provide a cognitive form of tranquility that inspires society to cope and even overcome.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
No

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
In my opinion, Louisiana arts organizations stimulate business and economic growth in our community. I believe that one of the most extraordinary things about art is its capability of turning any part of our community into a choice tourism destination. Taking the post-pandemic era into consideration, I would advocate for funding from the Division of the Arts office and seek appropriations from the City-Parish that would support the expansion of art jobs.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
There are different approaches to arts education, characterized by different pedagogical strategies, and with many distinct purposes and objectives. In my view, the goal would be to determine what kinds of arts education experiences would have the greatest the effect of inspiring Black and Hispanic students in order to get them to pursue further or deeper engagements with the arts. If those experiences can be identified and made widely available, then arts education may have the potential to play a vital role in changing patterns of arts participation for Black and Hispanic.

How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?
With much of the world under lock down even in Phase 3, many people especially those who live by themselves are getting more time alone with their thoughts than they may be used to. For me personally, I have given a lot of thoughts to Arts, especially because I am unable to visit the
museums and other places of Arts. I am sincerely hopeful that like other organizations, being creative to expand the Arts is welcomed.

**With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?**

I have gotten into design work. However, I believe that the arts have crystallized in an era of this post-pandemic. I deeply believe that the unique power of the arts is to pull aside the fabric of our everyday life by showing everyone a different perspective that is often never considered. I personally, believe that helping others to appreciate that is more important now than ever. But I can do this most effectively from an advocate perspective and community leader, where I can make a measurable and positive impacts on the everyday lives of the people in my district and city-parish as a whole.

**The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?**

It is my heartfelt promise to support the Louisiana Decentralized Arts Funding Program. I will advocate for appropriations to ensure the Arts industry in Baton Rouge is well supported. In addition, I believe that participation in development practice specifically from donor agencies is equally important. For me, the greatest importance here, is to increase understanding of the growing importance of the Arts, and greater potential for, youth participation in its development: Especially in this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital.

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*Laurie White Adams*

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If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes
Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?  
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?  
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?  
Recent events have reminded us that art plays a healing and unifying role in society. I am thinking specifically about the Andrea Bocelli concert and the way it drew millions across the world together and lifted us out of our current circumstances into the beauty of music and the gift of talent during the COVID quarantine.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?  
I have and continue to be a supporter of the arts. I regularly attend theatre and art events and encourage others to support these events as well. I am an advocate on campus for our arts programming, facilities, and arts-focused students.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?  
The best way we can support our arts community is by reducing barriers to entry for new businesses, building an entrepreneur friendly environment, being fiscally responsible with tax revenues, and cleaning up/maintaining our city. An economically stable and well planned city creates a foundation for artists and creative businesses to flourish!

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?  
To address disparity, you have to first understand where disparity exists and what the root of the disparity is. I am encouraged to see organizations such as Kids Orchestra leading efforts to bring the love of music to all children in our parish. I would love to work alongside others in our community to identify other areas of disparity and collaborate for increased arts education opportunities.

How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?
I am not sure if what I did during the quarantine would be considered art, but my daughter and I decoupaged and gold leafed oyster shells to share with friends and loved ones. These simple projects brought us together, lifted the weight of difficult circumstances, and brought us joy!

**With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?**

Music, singing in particular, is the art form I participate in most regularly through the worship team at my church. Wednesday worship team rehearsals refresh and renew me. The feeling of working with others to harmonize and create beautiful music restores my soul.

**The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?**

A health, local economy is by far the best thing we can offer all residents and especially the arts and artists in our community. As our city grows and prospers, the arts community will flourish with it. As a Metro Councilperson, I want to have a meaningful and productive relationship with arts and culture leaders in our parish to listen, address concerns, and create a favorable environment for growth.

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**Andrea Nicole Cosey**

If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?

Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?

No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?

Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?

Very much
Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
Life imitates art, and Art imitates life and that fact demonstrates the role that art plays in Modern Society

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
In my personal life, I am a Barber School Co-owner and everyday I advocate on behalf of the Arts and Sciences within the barber industry, and the significance of the industry throughout history. The arts and sciences ate embedded with the craft of barbering and has the ability to bring forth positive changes to a person's self esteem.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
Tech related arts jobs are extremely vital during this post pandemic era. Artist in this field in jobs such as graphic design, photography and web design need support from web based businesses and consumers. These artist need additional marketing and exposure to people who could from their services. I Believe web based events and advertising would offer support

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
I will actively advocate for training institutions and programs in District 10 and throughout the City to meet the needs of minority students

How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?
The arts and sciences of the barber industry that I am very passionate about helped my loved ones and myself to cope. Based on the long history of the profession, many examples of art are represented through various mediums. These mediums allowed us to keep our minds actively and engaged and provided hope for the future of the arts and sciences of hair.

With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?
As an instructor of the arts and sciences of hair care, the profession has allowed me to see many men and women move from poverty to being able to provide for themselves and their family.
The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?
I would pursue policies that encourage grants for people who choose to pursue educational training in any of the many arts and sciences available for study.

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Erika Green

If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
In Modern society, the role

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
Absolutely, my platform includes support of citywide culture and arts. I have hosted, organized, and advocated for more artistic support in the North Baton Rouge Area. Through my nonprofit,
Imagination Leads and Iwe Festival, I specifically have set in meetings with the city's administration, Visit BR, and the Art Council with the sole purpose of getting funding for the festival which features african american authors, artists and entrepreneurs. Specifically, I demanded a space for the festival and for its vendors and participants to receive the same funding as other programs. I also discussed with the Mayor to continue the allocating funding for the Arts.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?

As a city councilperson, It is imperative that we support tech related artists as creators. In the event that any city agencies have job opportunities and RFP we should provide access. Support can also mirror featuring/showcasing these artists and talents with programs in the city.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?

My nonprofit, Imagination Leads, has helped me address this disparity. In the past two years, I was able to connect two NBR schools and students to programs hosted by Opera Louisiane . In particular, they attended a live performance at the school and at the Shaw Center. I also hosted a Hispanic Heritage Month event in which musicians and performers were able to participate including students.

How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?

The truth is I am a true lover of the arts. I have used music and movies to keep my mind at ease.

With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?

Though I am a lover of music and live concerts, I am a collector of African American art.

The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?

On the local level, I would support continued allocation of funding.

Quentin Anthony Anderson
If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
The arts have given traditionally marginalized communities not only a voice but a voice that people listen to. There's something different - and powerful - about a performance, a display, a creative demonstration - that separates statements therein from the blunt force of a protest or a boycott. The poetry of art allows truth to be digestible. As a young man, organizations like WordCrew and City @ Peace gave me and my fellow teenagers a voice to articulate stories and perspectives that normally got ignored. Art - in all of its forms - gives people the liberty to be honest and the accessibility to potentially make a difference. It has historically been the most constant theme of all social movements - the support & platform of art and artists for the plight of the unheard and the vulnerable. It's an invaluable part of the fabric of a free society.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
Yes. As organizer of the My Louisiana Equality & Equity Summit, it was paramount to me that the role of the arts be prominently featured as integral in not only helping identify the causes of social injustice, but being a part of the solutions to addressing it. In our first summit, we featured a panel of poets and musicians to talk about the role & importance of artists in leading social movements. That was because we felt that at a policy-focused conference, the role of artists could not be left out or understated because of its historical importance to movements for social change.
In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?

This is maybe one of my favorite questions. I've paid many a bills on the strength of my graphic design, web design, and photography skills. These are skills that - once acquired - require very little cost and can be a sustainable career - lucrative even - for a lifetime. That's why I think it's crucial those skills be prioritized critical job skills in so-called "at risk" zip codes. That means providing grants to non-profits and schools that are willing to provide graphic design, web design, and photography courses to the public. These are skills that have allowed me to advance in my career, but have also saved me when I've lost a job or been in a financially precarious situation. These are universally needed skills and, as I mentioned, they have almost no overhead. These skills, particularly in traditionally marginalized communities, could be transformative in the new economy.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?

As I mentioned above, much like my prioritization of creative technology as a career building necessity, I would support city-parish funding of grants to non-profits and schools willing to expand their artistic offerings, with a particular focus on funding initiatives that are provided free of charge to the public.

How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?

You know, I've been better about writing during this time. Not public writings, like blog posts, but more journaling and reflections that I normally didn't feel I had the time to properly dedicate to producing. I think the ability to write my thoughts and feelings has always been liberating - it lets me almost talk to myself, critique my own opinions & assumptions. Writing allows me to be honest and I think during a period like this where introspection and reflection are inevitable due to the circumstances, writing has been a really valuable tool for helping me organize that reflection and introspection.

With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?

It would probably be poetry. I've always loved the lack of rules. I've always loved the forced willingness of a reader or audience, when told they're about to read or hear a poem, to figure out what the deal of the poet is. It's always been a form I sometimes find even my prose drifts off into. But poetry - particularly the written word, but with heavy influences of my background in spoken word - is the form I think I have had the longest and deepest relationship with. Honorable
mention: photography. I'm not a professional, but I know what a good photo looks like and I try to take good photos as an ode to history.

The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry? As I mentioned, I would absolutely support increased funding for grants that expand the opportunities for young people in Baton Rouge to have access to creative technology jobs trainings and arts programs. Both are critical to developing our workforce and an informed citizenry.

Brandon Robertson

If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
The most powerful role that art plays in society is influence. Art influences society by changing opinions, instilling values and translating experiences across space and time.
Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
No

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
I will support Louisiana artist by sharing event announcements and building a space to where artist can come and express personal talent through art.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
I will address this disparity by engaging art with life reality in communities where Black and Hispanic students reside.

How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?
Yes, art has been a great stress reliever. My cousin utilize art as a coping mechanism.

With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?
The art of home design and decor is what we enjoyed the most during relationship. Having the ability to paint, refurbish and change furniture around has been an amazing tool.

The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?
I will pursue to support more funding and accessibility to students in underprivileged areas. I have identified great potential in communities where art funding isn’t available.

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Pamela Smith

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If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes
Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
Arts bring us joy and help us express our feelings and bridge the gap between Cultures

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
Encouraged my daughter, Katrina during her time in middle and high school to play clarinet and take art classes.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
I have always supported the arts throughout my high school, college and adult life. I will continue to do so when and if the opportunity presents itself.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
Although I understand the disparity among blacks and Hispanics as it relates to the arts and believe we have to find ways to eliminate this issue. We need to invest in our students and not cut programs. I believe if the arts is important to you and your family, you will can find ways to be involved.
How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?
As I don’t go out much due to Covid. I still enjoy my music and online concerts at my home and find ways to invest in the arts. I have purchased music online from locals and other artists.

With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?
Concerts and plays

The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?
At this time I don’t have any policy, but will willingly work with the Arts Council and others in the Arts and Culture industry to draft policies.

Eugene Collins

If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much
In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society? Our society is losing their creativity, who better to rebuild that than artists.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say? I have in many functions, mostly around the need to expose minorities to the arts at a heightened level.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields? Let’s build youth groups that filter into these efforts.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity? Let’s walk the streets. Reach the people door to door if we need to.

How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine? Music, it keeps you going.

With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why? Music & Poetry

The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry? I would support policies that help to fund/maintain museums, after-school programs, and encourage businesses to contribute to local institutions that encourage art as a gateway to opportunities.

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Cleve Dunn, Jr.
If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
As a 16 year “Dance Dad” and an 8 year dance studio owner, its my opinion that there are several powerful roles that the art plays in modern society. Two ways that come to mind is, data has shown that students who are actively involved in the arts are more likely to take their studies more seriously and produce better outcomes in the class room than they would if they were not actively involved in the arts. Also, educators have utilized the arts in the class room as a creative way to gain and keep the attention of their students. I’ve personally heard from teachers who have said that, students are much more likely to care about their studies if the arts is incorporated in their learning experience.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
In 2008 the dance studio that my two daughters attended (MOKA) decided to close. That left a void in preforming arts education for students from North Baton Rouge like my daughters. So with no preforming arts experience or back ground, my wife Stacy and I made the decision to fill that void and open Danse Noir Studio. We invest our time and money into creating a haven of the arts where children can learn the technic and terminology foundations of performing arts. Danse Noir Studio was also a place of professional culture for collegiate performers who want to perfect their craft, develop as a dance instructor, and take their skills outside of Louisiana. We became the
largest black owned dance studio in Baton Rouge in our second year, reaching enrollments of over 150 students. Ironically, we became a victim of our success. As the word spread about our growth of the business and the student demand, other black owned studios started to open in Baton Rouge. Many of our dance instructors even open dance studios utilizing our business model. The East Baton Rouge Parish School System even started offering more preforming arts in school for free. We promoted, advocated for, and invested in the preforming arts for a long time. As a result, we feel the Baton Rouge area industry grew, the culture grew; but the market got saturated. After some 8 years of operating the studio, we no longer had the profit margin to keep the doors open as a non instructor dance studio owner. So yes, I have spoken out on the behalf of the arts by my actions of investing in the arts.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
As a owner of multiple businesses, we are constantly promoting products, projects or services. We heavily rely on graphic designers, web designers, and photographers to do that work. My father is also a videographer and photographer, so I am invested in those professions and will be a strong supporter of those industries.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
I think I've addressed this question in a previous questions. Danse Noir Studio was 99.9% enrollment of black students. Our goal with opening the studio was to maintain and increase access to the arts for black students.

How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?
We have utilized some good R&B or Jazz music to help reduce stress in my home.

With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?
Preforming arts, mainly because of our involved with the dance industry.

The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?
Yes.
If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
As a teacher, I witness daily the impact of the arts on our youth. It allows them to express themselves and serve as a safe haven for many.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
Yes, over the last several years, I have advocated for arts to be an outlet for my students. I am responsible for putting on various cultural productions at my job and I enjoy incorporating the arts from ballet, spoken word, and painting to tell our rich history.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
By supporting programs that educate people in that space. I will support additional funding to organizations like the Art Council to ensure we are providing opportunities for future artist to perfect their craft and share with the world.

**Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?**
Allocate more funding to communities for Art Education. I will partner with local churches, schools, and community centers to make sure we address any disparities of access.

**How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?**
I am a fan of the arts, and turn to the arts as a way to cope with stress. Many don't know this, but I enjoy painting and creating in my spare time or when I need a mental break. During the self quarantine its the arts that kept all of us sane, from the dance routines on tik tok to the amazing skits; the arts is what is helping me get through this pandemic.

**With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?**
Dance. I took tap dance as a kid and over the years has always garner an interest in the various positions the body can move in. To this day, I work with choreographers to create material for school productions I produce throughout the year.

**The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?**
I will support policies that address disparities of the arts in low income areas.

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*Darryl W. Hurst*

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**If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?**
Yes

**Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?**
No
Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
The Arts play major roles in our society, but I believe its impact on our children is especially powerful because they are the future leaders of the world. When young people are involved in the arts, their sense of innovation, creativity, problem solving, confidence, and math skills are stronger. The arts bridge cultural and racial divides and that is incredibly valuable to our global society.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
Yes. I encouraged many of my private sector partners to donate to the arts as a means of supporting our children’s futures. In the future I will also include the economic and social impacts of the arts when given an opportunity to speak out again.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
I believe tech-related arts jobs are important to our economy and training in these areas makes our state attractive to employers that may locate here. I will push for financial resources to provide training and internship opportunities from middle school to technical colleges and universities. If my office is able to bring grant opportunities to organizations that provide arts education to inner city youth, I will fight to make sure they are aware and included. This will help build the skilled pipeline of future artists.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
I will work with BREC to help close the digital divide by bringing greater internet access to local parks and I will work with local organizations to bring funding for Arts Education to areas that are underserved. I've worked with young people since I was a teen and I've had my own non-profit for the past 5 years. I have seen the barriers to access like transportation, the obligation to babysit younger siblings, and the need to earn money. I will work with youth organizations to help young people navigate these issues. I believe that our partners at CATS or EBR schools may be able to provide transportation, we can find locations to provide daycare for younger siblings after school at the site of the arts education, and even pay young people as interns to gain real world experience as they learn.

**How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?**

My family and I love the outdoors. We often take the boat out onto the water while listening to great music and painting our faces. My daughter especially enjoys this.

**With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?**

I enjoy museums, but music is a love of mine. My family enjoys live performances.

**The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?**

The arts represent over 52,000 jobs in the Louisiana economy and represent 2.5% of our total gross state product, so I would definitely incentize companies that bring arts and culture jobs to our state. I would support the creation of arts-focused tourist attractions and increased tax deductions for charitable donations to the arts.

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*Markeda Ann Cottonham*

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**If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?**

Yes

**Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?**

No
Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
Art today is a major expression of opinions, politics and the sign of the times. Art is essentially, and has always been, a time capsule of sorts. Without art, we loose history. The role art plays in the expression of our generation is the most important thing art does for society. That expression teaches generations, present and future, what is/was important to many, where society stood in a particular period of time and how that reaction effeced our world. Art is our silent teacher.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
No, I never had to.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
I'd ensure that they are given a platform just like any other art medium. I'd also advocate for more tech companies geared in graphic design and web design to occupy our downtown area. Additionally, I believe the city can use artists in these fields in ad campaigns, and Beautification projects.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
I'd implement more and support already existing non-profit organizations that cater to students in a public school setting. I also have plans to have a lot more public space art projects. By having more art opportunities in the communities gives students more opportunity to participate. Turning our public schools into pop up art galleries filled with our children’s art, exhibitions of dance and film will not only address the disparity, it will create a sense of pride and instill confidence.
How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?
Art and science go hand and hand at my house. Art has allowed my children and I to have a fun alternative to tv or outdoor play. Drawing nature, sculpting volcanos, paint made from rocks... its two lessons in one! And this allows us not to go stir crazy while self-quarantine.

With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?
Photography has always been one of my favorite forms of art. Photography has this special ability to capture a moment from your perspective. And no matter how many eyes are looking no one has your exact angle. Its art from my eyes only. Thats fun to me. Angles, lighting, moments... its history or in my case HERstory, in a millisecond. A picture is worth a thousand words.

The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?
Grants and tax incentives for non profits in arts and arts advocacy. More Parish sponsored public arts and Beautification projects. More art programs in public schools, creation of arts district. Real estate incentives as well.

Reginald L. Pitcher, Sr.

If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

**Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?**
Somewhat

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
Preserving History, it provides space for Artistic Expressions.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
It should be uses as a means of promoting social justice and equality.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
Pledge to work to preserve and/or increase funding for the arts.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
By forming groups within the specific communities to encourage

How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?
We have visited a couple of museums and watched Hamilton as a family.

With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?
Drama. One of my sons is an actor who lives in Chicago and has won several awards.

The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?
Educating the public and encouraging others to get as much information as possible in order to intelligently support the growth of Arts and Culture.
Mayoral Candidates

Matthew Jacob Watson

If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?
Yes

Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?
No

Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Somewhat

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
getting people to think outside of the obvious and appreciate beauty in all forms.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
yes. As Councilmember I worked with Mark Biletnikoff to expand the Cultural District in District 11 and I am currently working to help expand the Perkins Road Cultural District.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
As a member of the Baton Rouge Film Commission I am always striving to bring productions to our community. Moreover, I think it is essential to bring permanent post production jobs to Baton Rouge. If I ever miss a beat, my visual effects brother, Martin Toby Watson, keeps me pushing.

**Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?**

I would pursue grant funding to assist the arts both in bringing collections created by American individuals of color and works from around the world.

**How have the arts helped you and your loved ones to cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?**

I paint and play guitar which has helped keep the creative side of my mind engaged. My son is learning how to use video production as a means to entertain himself as well as a creative challenge to push his abilities. My daughter has been writing a play online with a friend from school which has helped her stay in touch with friends outside of the class room, challenge her abilities and is a great source of pride.

**With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?**

It's hard to pick between music and painting. Music is both a creative outlet and a discipline for me. Painting is pure joy and I've got a house full of paintings to show for it.

**The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?**

more public art installations. assist in grant acquisition to support the arts

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*Sharon Weston Broome*

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**If elected, do you plan on increasing support for the arts and the charitable sector?**

Yes

**Are you in favor of cutting funding to the NEA or the NEH?**

No
Would you continue to protect tax deductible incentives for individuals working in the nonprofit Arts and Culture industry, donate to nonprofit arts charities, and/or protect tax credits for local designated cultural districts?
Yes

Is it important that Louisiana make arts programming accessible to all of our youth?
Very much

Do you feel that you have a responsibility to advance the economic impact of the arts?
Very much

In your opinion, what is the most powerful role that art plays in modern society?
While art undoubtedly has a multifaceted impact on society, I believe one of the most powerful roles is to creatively interpret human experiences, thus adding value to our quality of life.

Have you, in your professional life, spoken out on behalf of the arts? If so, what did you say?
I am a firm believer that the arts can play an innovative role on how to address and conquer important issues in our community. During my current tenure as Mayor, I launched the first Poet Laureate initiative that sparked cultural conversation to bridge the gap between our residents. Baton Rouge has put the Arts forward as a vital component to our city’s health and positive growth. Last July, we held the Annual Arts Summit, which allowed artists and arts organizations to identify and address issues statewide, as well as throughout our city parish, through an artistic lens. Our festivals have grown in size and quality – attracting people from around the globe while remaining accessible to our residents.

In this post-pandemic era, tech-related arts jobs like graphic design, web design, and photography are becoming much more vital. How would you support Louisiana artists in these types of fields?
As Mayor my administration led the effort to secure the Arts Council's new home. A portion of this space will assist in creating some start up space for these groups. Assisting in the development of art incubator space can help us grow this sector building upon the talent in our community much of which comes from our universities. I believe strongly in the Arts contribution to the quality of life of our community.

Black and Hispanic students have less access to Arts Education than their White peers. How would you address this disparity?
Research has shown that the arts prepare students for success in school, work and life by boosting math and literacy achievement, developing creativity and critical thinking skills. As a public servant, fostering an environment of unity is what I work for every single day. There is no simple formula to achieve unity, but there are steps we can all take to unite so that everyone’s voice and stories may be heard.

**How have the arts helped you and your loved ones cope with the stresses of our recent mandate to self-quarantine?**
Music, film and the spoken word have been destressors for me during the mandate to self-quarantine.

**With which form of art have you enjoyed the most enduring relationship? And why?**
I've had an enduring relationship with music. Undoubtedly, my ten years of classical piano lessons nurtured my love and relationship with music. For a season, I was also a praise and worship leader at my church. I love all types of music - gospel, jazz, soul, classical, vocal, instrumental, etc.

**The arts contribute over $760 billion to the U.S. economy. What policies would you pursue to support the dynamic growth of our Arts and Culture industry?**
I support the further creation of Cultural Districts which benefits the development of the arts where applicable.