



Media Contact

Bárbara Rivera Holmes
Awards Chair, Leadership Georgia
229.886.3484, bholmes@albanyga.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 5, 2019

LEADERSHIP GEORGIA ANNOUNCES 2019 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Organization Recognizes Steve Wrigley, Gary Black, Rodney Bullard, Stephanie and Jeb Stewart

ATLANTA – The Leadership Georgia Board of Trustees today announced the recipients of the organization’s most prestigious awards, presented to Georgians who exemplify the principles of Leadership Georgia and whose impact through leadership and stewardship has helped shaped communities and the state.

“It is our honor to recognize these exemplary leaders who have given so much to help create a stronger, healthier Georgia,” said Matt Bishop, chair of the Leadership Georgia Board of Trustees. “The Leadership Georgia network of alumni and supporters includes some of the state’s most well-known leaders, as well as many who are quietly making a significant impact in their communities and their fields. This year’s honorees serve as inspiration to us all.”

The honorees – University System of Georgia Chancellor Steve Wrigley; Rodney Bullard of Chick-fil-A; Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black; and Stephanie and Jeb Stewart of Xana Management – will be officially recognized during the Leadership Georgia Gala and Awards Presentation on November 16 at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta. The annual black-tie event draws more than 700 alumni and guests, and helps support the organization’s programs, enabling Leadership Georgia to continue its legacy of developing and inspiring leaders from all walks of life and all corners of Georgia.

The Leadership Georgia Awards Committee is chaired by Trustee Bárbara Rivera Holmes, president and CEO of the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce in Albany, Ga.

2019 LEADERSHIP GEORGIA AWARD RECIPIENTS



The J.W. Fanning Award: Chancellor Steve Wrigley, University System of Georgia

An award presented in memory of J.W. Fanning to a Georgian whose statewide contributions through progressive leadership and service have been broad in scope and rich in achievement.

Chancellor Steve Wrigley's statewide contributions through progressive leadership and service have been broad in scope and rich in achievement and have, ultimately, helped shaped Georgia. As the 13th chancellor of the University System of Georgia, Wrigley leads initiatives to create a more educated Georgia that is prepared for the global, knowledge economy by increasing degree completion, ensuring academic excellence, spurring research and creativity, driving business creation and making effective and efficient use of resources.



The University System has a \$16.8 billion economic impact. It is governed by the Board of Regents, which oversees the state's 26 public colleges and universities, and has oversight of the Georgia Archives and the Georgia Public Library System.

Prior to his work within the University System, Wrigley worked as chief of staff for Gov. Zell Miller, during which time he helped create the HOPE (Helping Outstanding Students Educationally) Scholarship and the Georgia Lottery Corp. Since its creation, HOPE, through proceeds from the Georgia Lottery, has enabled more than 1.8 million students to enroll in Georgia's public colleges and universities. The Georgia Lottery also benefits the state's Pre-K program, in which half of the state's 4-year-olds are enrolled. The education money has become a successful model for other lotteries, including the South Carolina Education Lottery.

Prior to his appointment as Chancellor, Wrigley served as executive vice chancellor of administration for the University System of Georgia. At the University of Georgia, Wrigley served as senior vice president for external affairs and as vice president for government relations. He also served as Director of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Wrigley has also worked on campus consolidations.

Wrigley earned his undergraduate degree from Georgia State University and his doctorate in history from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. He and his wife, Lynne, have two children and reside in Clarke County.

The H.G. "Pat" Patillo Honorary Membership Award: Commissioner Gary Black, Georgia Department of Agriculture



Presented to an individual who has never participated in a Leadership Georgia class in appreciation for the support demonstrated during outreach to Leadership Georgia.

First elected in 2010, Gary W. Black is the 16th commissioner of the Georgia Department of Agriculture, established in 1874 to advance what is now a \$74 billion agriculture and provide oversight of agriculture, food safety, animal health, grocery store regulation, food processing plants, gasoline quality and pest control licensing. One of the department's signature programs is Georgia Grown, which partners with hundreds of Georgia agribusinesses to promote and market Georgia Grown products throughout the state, country and world. In 2017, Black was named "Georgian of the Year" by *Georgia Trend*.

Throughout his 40-year career in agriculture, Black has championed sound state and federal policies impacting food safety, science-based environmental stewardship and agricultural marketing. Prior to the department, he worked with the Georgia Farm Bureau and the Georgia Agribusiness Council, a powerful advocacy force at the Georgia Capitol.

Black earned a degree in agricultural education from the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. He is married to Lydia and they have two grown children, Ward and Caroline. The family raises commercial beef cattle on their 72-acre family farm in Commerce. Commissioner Black serves in the Sunday school and music ministries of Maysville Baptist Church.

The E. Dale Threadgill Community Service Award: Rodney Bullard



An award presented in honor of E. Dale Threadgill to Leadership Georgia members who have taken the principles learned in Leadership Georgia and put them to work in their communities.

Rodney Bullard, a 2015 graduate of Leadership Georgia, immediately put into practice within his community the principles learned through the program.

-more-

Bullard is vice president of community affairs at Chick-fil-A and the executive director of the Chick-fil-A Foundation. At the foundation, Bullard leads the company's corporate community and philanthropic strategy, which is focused on fostering youth and furthering education. Prior to his work at Chick-fil-A, Bullard served as an assistant United States attorney prosecuting complex criminal cases. For his service, the United States attorney general presented him with the U.S. Department of Justice Director's Award. Bullard served a White House Fellow, the nation's most prestigious public service fellowship. As a White House Fellow, he was placed at NASA working directly for the agency's administrator. Bullard, a decorated veteran, served in the United States Air Force Judge Advocate General Corps eventually working at the Pentagon as a Congressional legislative liaison in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force.

Bullard is the author of "Heroes Wanted: Why the World Needs You to Live Your Heart Out." He and his wife, Silvette, have one son and live in Atlanta.

The Frederick B. Kerr Service Award: Stephanie and Jeb Stewart, Xana Management



An award presented in memory of Frederick B. Kerr to Leadership Georgia members who have demonstrated enthusiastic and active support of Leadership Georgia on a continuing and consistent basis.

Stephanie and Jeb Stewart were members of the Leadership Georgia Class of 2011 and served as program chairs for the Moultrie program in 2012. Jeb Stewart later served on the Board of Trustees from 2015-2017, chairing the Selections Committee during his last year on the board. The Stewarts have been consistent in their enthusiastic support of Leadership Georgia, donating with their time, talent and treasure to strengthen the statewide leadership organization. Whether through their financial generosity, hosting special events such as Linger Longer or consistently nominating strong applicants for the program, the Stewarts' unwavering support of Leadership Georgia is exemplary and a model for alumni engagement and its long-term impact. The Stewarts live in Duluth and have two sons.

###

Leadership Georgia is the country's most prestigious statewide leadership organization. Leadership Georgia was founded in 1971 and graduated its first class in 1972. Since then, more than 4,000 leaders – from elected officials to business owners to policy makers – have participated in the program. Leadership Georgia is a volunteer-run organization governed by its Board of Trustees. It is an affiliate of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce. Learn more at leadershipgeorgia.org.