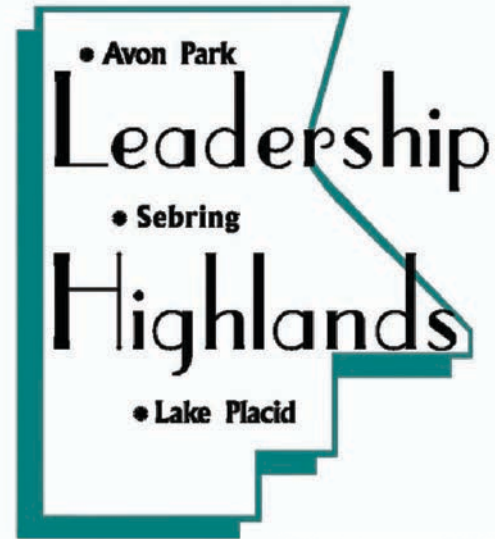


LEADERSHIP HIGHLANDS



Alumni
2000 - 2026

A network of leaders deeply connected to Highlands County—committed to its growth and inspired by the diversity that makes our community strong.

History

Beginning 1999

Morris Adams was a highly respected civic leader and the visionary behind Leadership Highlands—a program created to cultivate informed, engaged leaders across Highlands County, Fla. Inspired by his experience with Leadership Florida, Adams recognized the need for a formal initiative to strengthen local leadership. He played a key role in bringing together the Sebring, Avon Park, and Lake Placid Chambers of Commerce to launch the program in 2000. His leadership helped secure early support from area businesses and community leaders, establishing a strong foundation for lasting impact.

In addition to his contributions to community leadership, Adams owned and operated Morris Adams Capital, a business started by his father in Avon Park, until 2004.

In 2008, South Florida State College joined the initiative, providing essential support in coordination, registration, and business operations—further expanding the program’s reach and sustainability.

Though Morris Adams is no longer with us, his vision and dedication continue to shape Leadership Highlands and inspire future generations of leaders throughout Highlands County.



Help Us Capture the Story of Leadership Highlands!

If you have any Leadership Highlands photos, class leadership themes, class project details, or other memorable highlights or changes you'd like to see included, please email them to Tina.Gottus@southflorida.edu. If your contact information has changed, please scan the code below or visit southflorida.edu/leadership-highlands and click the update link.



Connect with us on Social Media:



facebook.com/leadershiphighlands



linkedin.com/company/leadership-highlands

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2000

Alumni

Allon Fish
Carl Cool
Dr. Catherine Cornelius
Cathy Albritton
Dan Dorrell
David Greenslade
George Hensley
Hal Morris
Howie Godwin
Jerry Hill
Jim Hyatt
Jim Stanfill
Joel Lowman
John Barben - Class President*
John Martz
John Shoop
Lonnie Wells
Melissa Russell
Morris Adams - Founder**
Pete McDevitt
Robert Saffold
Tim Thompson

Employer

Sebring Chamber of Commerce
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
South Florida Community College
Ridge Area ARC
The NCT Group, LLP
Avon Park Chamber of Commerce
Heacock Insurance Group
Highlands Systems
Highlands County Sheriff's Department
10th Judicial Circuit
Highlands Today/The Tampa Tribune
ECD/IDA of Highlands County
Lake Placid Chamber of Commerce
Barben Fruit Company
Florida Power Corporation
Highlands Independent Bank
Wells & Associates Insurance Agency
Russell Realty, Inc.
Morris Adams Capital
Coldwell Banker Highlands
Florida Sportsman Association
News-Sun



*Recognized for continued leadership and support, earned the Leadership Highlands President Emeritus title in 2025.

** Leadership Highlands Advisory Chair 2000-2003

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2001

Alumni

Bill Benton
Chuck Oakes
Craig Johnson
Daniel Andrews
Danielle Daum
Dee McDonald
Dr. Fred Keiber
Grace Owens
Gregg Stupinski - Class President
Hazel Steedley
Herbert Murphy
Janice Walker
Jeff Carlson
Jeff Roth
Kenneth Burke
Linda Warner
Lisa Burley
Mason Smoak
Ramon Gavarete
Renee Bennett
Tina McClelland Gottus*
Tom Dettman
Tracy Lehman
Wade Taveniere

Employer

The NCT Group CPA's, LLP
Southern Living
Heacock Financial Group
D&S Cycling
Happiness Farms, Inc.
Highlands County Family UMCA
Surgical Center of Central Florida
Good Shepard Hospice
Salomon Smith Barney
Highlands Independent Bank
Boys & Girls Club of Highlands County
Heartland National Bank
Carlson Statler Accountants
HICO: Children's Advocacy Center
Lakeshore Mall
Sebring International Raceway
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Smoak Groves, Inc.
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Management Experts, Inc.
Highlands Today/The Tampa Tribune
Sebring Police Department
Wachula State Bank
Huntington National Bank



*Serving as Leadership Highlands Program Director beginning in 2025

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2002

Alumni

Bob Terrell
Debbie McCullough
Glenn Little
Janet Keck
Jeanne Warner
Jerry Miller
Jerry Whidden
John Scherlacher
Julie Fowler
Kevin Brown
Kim Heintz
Kim Sapp
Margie Rhoades
Mary Foy
Ray Royce - Class President
Rhonda Beckman
Ronnie Carter
Russell Melendy
Scott Crutchfield
Vincent Liles

Employer

Wachovia Mortgage Corporation
Century 21 Compton Realty
South Florida Community College

Coldwell Banker
Progress Energy
Heartland National Bank
Lakeshore Mall
The NCT Group
South Florida Community College
Highlands Independent Bank

Sebring Middle School

Highlands County Citrus Growers Association

Century 21 Advance All Service Realty

Highlands Today



Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2003

Alumni

Andrew Bible
Ann Pollard
April Cowan
Barbara Carnahan
Clay Kinslow
Lauri Kinslow
Debbie Carter
Donna Smolarick
Eileen May - Class President
Gary Nichols
Gerald Secory
Greg Reynolds
Gwen Tondee
Jan Sturgeon
Jim Otterman
Ken Wells
Leslie Woods
Lynn Topel
Mike Eastman
Dr. Mike McLeod - Chair LH Advisory 2003-2025
Robert Crews II
Sharon Gunthorp
Susie Bishop
Tim Eures
Yvette Mehling

Employer

Heartland National Bank
Century 21, Compton Realty
Hidden Acres Nursery, Inc.
Bank of America
McDonalds
McDonalds
Carter Insurance
Highlands Today/The Tampa Tribune
Lake Placid Chamber of Commerce
Town of Lake Placid
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Reynolds Farms, Inc.
Sebring International Raceway
Cross Country
Coldwell Banker, Highlands Property
Wells Motors
Cross Country
Florida's Heartland REDI
City of Sebring
South Florida Community College
Crews Groves & Ranches
SunTrust
United Way of Central Florida
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Ridge Area ARC



Class Project:

Junior Achievement - Served as JA program leaders in local classrooms for one year (and several after), on many occasions, sharing responsibilities across the class.

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2004

Alumni

Andy Tuck
Angi Taylor
Annie Alexander-Harvey
Betsy Carnevari
Bill Nichols - Class President
Bob Swaine
Brian Annett
Brian O'Connor
Carol Beverly
Darlene Phypers
Dave Simpson
Debbie Malloy-Thorpe
Denise Grimsley
Donna Vinson
Frank Mercurio
Jason Andrews
Jesse McClelland
Mary Birge
Mike Averyt
Mike Carter
Mike Eisenhart
Pam Karlson - Vice President
Phil Williams
Robin Scheck
Sandra Bauer
Susan Bible

Employer

Crews Groves & Ranches
Highlands Today
South Florida Community College
Century 21, Compton Realty
Highlands County Emergency Management
Swaine, Harris & Sheehan, PA
Annett Bus Lines

Happiness Farms, Inc.
Lake Wales Charter Schools JROTC
CS Edwards Real Estate
Florida House Representative/Grimsley Oil

Avon Park Police Department

Sebring International Raceway
Highlands Independent Bank
Highlands County School Board

Eisenhart Nursery
Pamela T. Karlson, PA
Police Department - Town of Lake Placid
SunTrust

Sebring Florist

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2005

Alumni

Angela Bollinger
Becky Barley (Troutman)
Darrell Jensen
Don Elwell - Class President
Eric Keiber
Erin Hess
Gail Roebuck
Jack Edgemon
John Brown
Karina Luevano
Dr. Leana Revell
Melinda Saxon
Michelle Delaney
Pam Roebuck
Richard Hensley
Stephen Carr
Tony Qualls
Tresa Handley
Vicki Spires
Zbigniew Nawrocki

Employer

Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
Davis Citrus Management

Raymond James Financial Services

Heartland Metals, Inc.

South Florida Community College

Sebring International Raceway

Highlands Today
Sebring Police Department
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Highlands Independent Bank
Florida Hospital Heartland

Class Motto:

"Leaders are visionaries with a poorly developed sense of fear, and no concept of the odds against them."

- Robert Jarvik

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2006

Alumni

Anita Kovacs
Arlene Tuck
Art Harriman
Brittany Phypers
Cliff Yeazel
David Flowers - Class President
David Leidel
Gregory Arnone
Jeannie Snively
Jeff Brewington
Jenny Stupinski
Johanne Lauchman
Kathleen Border
Kathy Waggoner
Mark Cox
Michelle Drake
Mike Kirouac
Ralph Bush
Rebecca Sroda
Scott Leconey
Scott Noethlich
Spencer Thomas
Susan Jones
Toni Kopp
Travis Wortinger

Employer

South Florida Community College
Town of Lake Placid
American Red Cross

Highlands Today
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Highlands Independent Bank Investment Services
Arnone Consulting, Inc.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters
Henscratch Farms & Winery
Highlands Regional Medical Ctr.
SunTrust Bank
Wicks, Brown & Williams
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
First Impression Printing Solutions, Inc
SCMG
South Florida Community College
Swaine, Harris & Sheehan
City of Sebring

Riverside National Bank

Bank of America Investment Services



Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2007

Alumni

Alicia Dyce
 Bradley Batz
 Brian Miller
 Claudia Bishop
 Corine Burgess
 Deborah Bell
 Diane Davies
 Gary Freeman
 Gary Pinnell
 Jennifer Williams
 Julie Diaz-Nichols
 Lana Puckorius
 Linda Wells
 Mario Trevino
 Mark Martin
 Megan Klootwyk
 Ramon Gavarette
 Rebecca Rousch*
 Robert Rapp
 Sarah Pallone
 Sherri Cooper
 Tami Cullens - Class President
 Vicki Pontius
 Wini Quesenberry

Employer

Seacoast National
 City of Sebring
 Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
 Riverside Bank
 Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
 South Florida Community College
 Bank of America
 Town of Lake Placid
 Highlands Today
 Highlands Independent
 Sunshine Staffing
 South Florida Community College Board of Trustees
 Ridge Area ARC

 MidFlorida Credit Union

 Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
 South Florida Community College

 Sebring Chamber of Commerce

 South Florida Community College Board of Trustees
 Highlands County Board of County Commissioners

*Served as Leadership Highlands Program Director 2007-2009



Class Project:

Cemetery Clean-Up Honoring a WWII Soldier - In preparation for a World War II soldier's remains returning to Highlands County, one class led a cemetery restoration effort, working with veterans' groups to ensure a respectful and dignified welcome home.

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2008

Alumni

Angeline DeShazo
Bernis Gainer
Bruce Borkosky
Deanne Shanklin - Class President
Debra Worley
Derek Carlton
Dusty Johnson
Felix Garcia
Gabriel Read
Greg Love
Jacqueline Haynes
Jeff Barfield
John Minor
John Rousch
José Pomaes
Kari Long-McGrath
Katherine Waters
Kimberly Anderson
Dr. Kimberly Batty-Herbert
Marty Mielke
Merideth Wohl
Michele Bednosky
Nancy Davis
Paul McGehee
Robert Brown
Sarah Adelt
Sheri Smith
Tameesha Hudson
Will Bennett - Vice President

Employer

Highlands Independent Bank
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
South Florida Community College Foundation
Highlands County Health Department
Heacock Insurance
Highlands Regional Medical Center
Retired
First Baptist Church
Town of Lake Placid
Highlands County Sheriff's
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
The School Board of Highlands County
Cross Country Automotive
Long's Air Conditioning, Inc.
Highlands Today
Ace Homecare
South Florida Community College
Rep. Denise Grimsley
The NCT Group, Inc.
Heacock Financial Group
Lake Placid Feed/Western Wear
Glades Electric
Sun Trust Bank
City of Avon Park
Highlands Regional Medical Center
Big Brothers, Big Sisters
Management Experts



Class Project:

Donated time on the construction of two Habitat for Humanity homes.

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2009

Alumni

Austin Arnone
Celia Falk
Cheryl Sharp
Chris van der Kaay
Clell Ford
David Paepflow
Debbie Orlos
Derek Brooks
Donna Stayton
Eric Zwyer
Holly Chamberlain
Jane Hancock - Class President
John Bertram
Jordan Marra
June Fisher
Kara Watkins
Keith Loweke
Lisa Carter
Lisa Stark
Lori Miller
Mark Schrader
Mitch Collins
Peggy Becerra
Sandra Fantauzzi
Sara McGann
Sophia Peavy
Tenille Lee
Trisha Banis

Employer

Adelaide Shores
Career Source Heartland
South Florida State College
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
MidFlorida Credit Union

Florida Department of Health
Highlands County Tax Collector's Office

Ables and Hancock Law
Lykes Brothers
Sebring International Raceway
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners

South Florida Community College
Hicks Oil
Glades Electric
Highlands Regional
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Highlands Today
Girl Scouts of America

Highlands Independent Bank
Riverside Bank
Kenilworth Lodge



Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2010

Alumni

Amber Davis
Andrew Fells
Andrew Hughes
Booker Johnson
Carl Canevari
Chad McWaters
Chris Miller
Cour Curatolo
Courtney Nickerson
Dan Murphy
Donna Pontius
Emily Reynolds
Flint Johns
John Barcinas
Julie Burg - Vice President
Justin Aeder
Kevin O'Leary
Kris Juve (Schmidt) - Class President*
Kyle Green
Laura Andrews
Dr. Lindsay Lynch
Lorrie Key
Matt Elliot
Shareenlynn Childs
Steve Grunkemeyer
Terry Collier
Tracy Reed
Travis Carter
Win Stephens V

Employer

River Greens Golf Course
Glisson's Animal Supply, Inc.
Wauchula State Bank
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
C & C Plumbing
Farm Bureau Insurance
All-Star Builders
Lykes Land Investments, Inc.
Florida Hospital Home Health Care Svc.
Highlands County Economic Development Commission
Southern Lifestyle ALF
Reynolds Farms, Inc.
Lykes Bros. Inc. - Ranch Division
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Highlands Ridge
Highlands Independent Bank
Management Experts, Inc
South Florida State College/RSVP
Highlands County Road & Bridge
Highlands County Library System
South Florida Community College
South Florida Community College
Highlands County Farm Bureau
United Way Central Fl/Highlands Co.
Heartland Workforce
Reliable Sanitation, Inc.
ACE Homecare
Hicks Oil Co.
M.E. Stephens & Sons Fruit Co., Inc.



Class Project:

Highlands Hometown Hoedown - Partnered with local civic clubs to host a community celebration on the Sebring Circle. The event featured pulled pork and swamp cabbage dinners, live music, family friendly activities, and a "Bring a Can if You Can" food drive. Funds and food donations were contributed to the Heartland Food Bank.

*Served as Leadership Highlands Program Director 2010-2025

Leadership Highlands Alumni Class of 2011

Alumni

Alfred "Bob" Massaum
Bobby Green
Brian Quinlin
Elius Nortelus
Eva Cooper Hapeman
Georgeann Singletary
Jerome Kaszubowski
Julie Fells
Kami Harmeling
Larry Shoeman
Laura Barben - Class President
Martile Blackman
Michelle Myers
Nell Hays
Paul Koukos
Rachel Murphy
Rebecca "Becky" Nichols
Stacy McCullough
Susan Crum-Norris
Susan "Susie" Hale
Sylvia Turner
Terrance "Terry" Dolan
Thomas T.J. Wohl
Tina Braungardt

Employer

Hurricane Orthopedics
Highlands County Sheriff's Department
The NCT Group CPA's, LLP
Highlands County Engineering Department
Highlands County Economic Dev. Comm.
Highlands County Health Department
Highlands County Clerk
United Way of Central Florida
Highlands Regional Medical Center
Avon Park Housing Authority
Barben Fruit Company
Blackman Properties, LLC.
Florida Hospital Heartland
Highlands County Sheriff's Department
Heartland National Bank
Palms Home Care
Pamela T. Karlson, PA
Farm Credit of SW Florida
Central Florida Neuropsychology
South Florida Community College
South Florida Community College
Lykes Land Investments, Inc.
Swaine & Harris, P.A.
Hope Hospice



Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2012

Alumni

Amanda Sherley John
Brittney Stricklin
Christina "Kris" Wheelock
Christopher Shoemaker
Colleen Dukes
Colleen Rafatti
Dawn Simpson
Edward Smoak Jr.
Elizabeth Lenihan - Class President
Federico "Kiko" Vazquez
Gail Judah
Gloria Rybinski
Harold Roebuck III
Howard "Chad" Pritchett
Jared Revell
Joseph "Brad" Millsap
Kristian Sottile
Kristina Anderson
Linda "Maritza" Ayala
Luz "Lucy" Mull
Manuel Cortazal
Mason "James" Cobb
Nicole Barben
Patrice Ayala
Randall Austin
Robert "Rob" Bullock
Steven Nyhan
Travis Turner

Employer

Drug Free Highlands
Florida Hospital
Highlands Today
Lykes Bros., Inc.
Heartland Workforce
South Florida Community College
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Smoak Groves, Inc.
J. Ross Macbeth
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Self-Employed
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Highlands County Road & Bridge
Pritchett Real Estate Group, Inc.
Howard Fertilizer & Chemical Company
Highlands Ridge
Sebring Chamber of Commerce
Highlands County EDC
MidFlorida Credit Union
Peace River Center
South Florida Community College
Carl Cool Engineering, PA
Barben Fruit
Highlands County Health Department
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Bullock Farms
Highlands Regional Medical Center
Turner Furniture



Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2013

Alumni

Aisha Alayande
Amanda Reynolds
Autumn Egan
Benjamin "Ben" Mayworth
Bradley "Brad" Myers
Carol West
Cynthia "Cindy" Kinser
Darlene Crook Pigman
Elizabeth "Liz" Barber
Eric Marshall
Eric Wade
Ingrashere "Ingra" Gardner
James "Darrin" Simmons
Jennifer Rhynes
Johanna Johnston
Kari Bolin
Kenneth Willis
Laura Wade
Marcia Davis
Mary Ann Andrews
Micah Scanga - Class President
Michael Yeazel
Dr. Michele Heston
Rob Reed
Ron Layne
Shawn Lenihan
Thomas Beiner
Thomas "Tommy" Haralson
Travis Brown
Trevor Murphy - Vice President

Employer

Drug Free Highlands
Reynolds Farms
Cornerstone Hospice
Self employed - new AG business
Lykes Bros.
Highlands County Emergency Operation Center
South Florida State College
Front Porch Dogs
Hodges University
Cool and Cobb
Sherwin Williams
Nu-Hope Elder Care Services, Inc.
Lykes Bros.
Mid Florida Credit Union
Highlands Today
Highlands Regional Medical Center
Heartland Workforce
Webber International University
School Board of Highlands County
Florida Hospital
Mason G. Smoak Foundation
TD Bank
South Florida State College
Highlands County Sheriff's Office

Client Centricity
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Lykes Bros.
Murphy Solutions, Inc.

Highlands County Days, March 26, 2013



With best wishes

Class Project:

Raised funds to bring motivational speaker, Marc Mero, to speak to all Highlands County middle schools on bullying and leadership.

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2014

Alumni

Brandon Craig
Brenda Longshore
Brian Krpata
Charlene Edwards
Chris Benson - Class President
Humberto Ambriz
Jason True
Jessica Migenis
Jordan Shannon
Kristin Handley
Laketra Hills - Vice President
Leonard O/Mara
Lori Ashworth
Monica Powers
Nicky Dilday
Penny Ogg
Robert Jordan
Sarah Cleveland
Sarah Albritton
Sherry McCorkle
Suzanne Tate
Tim Lethbridge
Dr. Tina Adams (Cardenas)
Tori Trinder
Wendy Turner

Employer

Clifford M Ables III P.A.
School Board of Highlands County
Highlands Ridge
Redlands Christian Migrant Association
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Lykes Bros, Inc
Midflorida Credit Union
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Just Like Home Pet Hotel
United Way of Central Florida - Highlands County Division
Highlands County Tax Collector
A2B Consulting Inc
Florida Hospital
South Florida State College
Highlands Independent Bank
Supervisor of Elections
Highlands County Sherrif's Office
Sebring High School
Clifton Larsen Allen
Office of Congressman Thomas J Rooney FL-17
Lykes Bros, Inc
Highlands County Sherrif's Office
South Florida State College
Avon Park Chamber of Commerce
Wauchula State Bank



Class Theme:

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader."
- John Quincy Adams

Class Project:

The 7 Habits of Highly Successful Families

"Year of Love" - This class designed a year-long campaign featuring 12 one-day volunteer projects benefiting a different organization or cause in Highlands County. Members were encouraged to sign up for at least one project per quarter, promoting continuous engagement, teamwork, and community outreach throughout the year.

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2015

Alumni

Amy Smith
Andrew Lethbridge
Betzaida Cruz
Brandon Ball - Vice President
Cathy Truelove
Christene Griffin
Cora Schwingel
Courtney Green
Cynthia "Cindy" Weed
Debra Falk
James Fansler
Jeannine West
JoAnn Pacheco
John "J.C." Shoop
Karen Healy
Loretta Jackson
Merritt O'Brien
Randy Vosburg
Rebekah "Becky" Tyson
Sarah Albritton
Susan Compton
Dr. Timothy Wise
Wayne Zahn - Class President

Employer

Mason G. Smoak Foundation
The School Board of Highlands County
MidFlorida Credit Union
Florida State Fire Marshall's Office
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Florida Hospital Heartland
Change of Pace, Inc.
South Florida State College
Highland County Tax Collector
Adelaide Shores RV Resort
Lake Placid Police Department
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Career Source Heartland
Heacock Insurance
Highlands County Supervisor of Elections
South Florida State College
Retired Business Owner
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Compton Realty
South Florida State College
Lykes Brothers, Inc.



Class Project:

"Year of Love" - This class designed a year-long campaign featuring 12 one-day volunteer projects benefiting a different organization or cause in Highlands County. Members were encouraged to sign up for at least one project per quarter, promoting continuous engagement, teamwork, and community outreach throughout the year.

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2016

Alumni

Andrea Summers
Colin Nicholas
Cynthia "Cindi" Dassinger
David Ontermaa
Giselle Acevedo
Jessica Hart-Howard
Katherine Renfro
Kimberly Cloud - Class President
Kristina Himrod
Melissa Finger Hayes
Michele "Shelly" Johnson
Michelle Boylan
Phillip Amos
Rebecca McIntyre
Robert Diefendorf Jr. - Vice President
Robert Hampton
Shannon Nash
Dr. Sidney Valentine Jr.
Steve Hickox

Employer

School Board of Highlands County
South Florida State College
Highlands County Clerk Of Courts
Highlands County Clerk Of Courts
Supervisor of Elections Highlands County
Edward Jones
Heacock Insurance Group, Inc.
Highlands County Tax Collector
Clifton Larsen Allen LLP
Avon Park Chamber of Commerce
MidFlorida Credit Union
Highlands County IDA/EDC
Florida Hospital Heartland
Florida Hospital Home Care
Highlands County Engineering Dept.
South Florida State College
Tenth Judicial Circuit (State of Florida)
South Florida State College
Copy Life Inc.



Leadership Highlands Alumni Class of 2017

Alumni

Belinda Decker
Blake Steedley
Christen Johnson
Curtis Ludden
Debbie Schoonover
Debra Snyder
Eve Brock
Garrett Roberts - Class President
Haydeliz High
Janet Barber
Jocelyn Skipper
Jodi Lee
Kelley Baker
Michael Austin
Preston Tubbs - Vice President
Sally Hood
Sandra Bernardo
Shawn Bray
Tasha Morgan
Tessa Hickey
Tracey Rudy
Victoria Caraballo
Wendy Amos
Zachary Foster

Employer

Highlands County Clerk Of Courts
Allen & Company of Florida, Inc.
Florida Hospital Heartland
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Highlands County Supervisor of Elections
Ridge Area ARC
Lake and Land Realty of Highlands
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Highlands County Tax Collectors Office
Delray Plants CO.
Swaine & Harris P.A.
The School Board of Highlands County
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
South Florida State College
Turner Furniture
Highlands County Clerk Of Courts
Florida Hospital Heartland
Big Brothers and Big Sisters
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Florida Department of Health
Avon Park Housing Authority
4 A.M. Farming, LLC
Drug Free Highlands
Harris Moran Seed Company



Class Project:

Career Fair - Launched an annual high school career fair, now sustained by Class President Garrett Roberts and community partners

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2018

Alumni

Alison Hancock
Allison Huggins
Anastasia Fuchser
Blair Pakowski
Brigitte Ward
Heather Stephenson
Jamie Gallo
Jon Larkin III
Justin Brock
Kathy Hill
Kimball Brock
Leah Sauls
Lisa McClelland
Luzed Cruz
Manuel Gonzalez
Marc Valero
Melissa Blackman
Melony Culpepper - Class President
Michelle Ramirez
Neal Hotelling
Rebekah Kogelschatz
Richard "Scott" Dressel - Vice President
Shannon Kuen
Sreenivas Challa
Stanley Perry
William "Kyle" Thompson

Employer

Farm Credit of Florida
Clifton Larsen Allen LLP
Swaine & Harris P.A.
Highlands County Habitat for Humanity
Highlands County Tax Collector
Samaritan's Touch Care Center
Greater Sebring Chamber of Commerce
Laye's Tire Service
CJCLDS - Vero Beach Stake
Lake & Land Realty
Rider & Thompson, P.A.
South Florida State College
Supervisor of Elections
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Highlands News-Sun
The School Board of Highlands County
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
One Hope United
Pebble Beach Company
Heartland Christian School
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Career Source Heartland
Florida Hospital
Perry Brothers
Rider & Thompson, P.A.



Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2019

Alumni

Ariel Starling
Carissa Marine – Class President
Daniel Blowers
Dayna Carlton
Donnette LaFarge
Dustin Wells
Gary Brown
George Karos II
Henry “Hank” Crutchfield
Jason Bianca
Jennifer “Lori” Driggers
Jennifer McGee
Joedene Thayer
John Varady III
Judith Galm
Julie Whitmire
Karen Clogston
Keith Startling
Kelly Dressel – Vice President
Kelly Ann Catanzariti
Kenya Anderson
Mark Sevigny
Marybeth Soderstrom
Michaela Tomova
Muriah Davis-Deuth
Priscilla Preece
Roy Butler
Shameema Challa

Employer

Sun n' Lake Improvement District
Champion for Children Foundation of Highlands County, Inc.
Supervisor of Elections
Highlands County Habitat for Humanity ReStore
Highlands County Clerk's Office
10th Judicial Circuit Court of Florida/Court Administration
Heartland Christian Academy
Avon Park Chamber of Commerce
Henry Crutchfield, Inc.
J. Bianca Financial
Tax Collector
Davinci Healthcare
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
The School Board of Highlands County
Retired Educator/ Past District Gov. – Lions Club
Wauchula State Bank
Highlands News Sun
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Children's Museum of the Highlands
Suncoast Credit Union
Highlands County Engineering Dept.
Sevigny & Associates Eye Care
Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization
South Florida State College
One Hope United
Samaritan's Touch Care Center
Florida Hospital Heartland Division/Lake Placid
The Tutoring Center



Class Theme:

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader." John Quincy Adams

Class Project:

Promoting Mental Health First Aid throughout the county – Class members took the Mental Health First Aid course, many held a training with their staff/teams, and all committed to promote Mental Health First Aid among their businesses and contacts. A side project that also came from our time together as a class is the annual Champion for Children Youth Awards, a partnership between the School Board of Highlands County and the Champion for Children Foundation of Highlands County, highlighting and honoring youth for their service to others and meaningful impact on our community since 2020.

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2020

Alumni

Angela Lightfoot
Arthur Wolfe
Austin Maddox
Brian "Kyle" Conklin
Caroline "Carly" Carden
Christopher Gunter
Danielle Ochoa
Doritza "Dory" Monzon Lobozzo
Earl Ploche Jr.
Elsie Sellers
Jessica Skitka Carlson
Jonathan Harrison
Jonathan Stern
Kirsten Scarborough
Kyle Albritton
Laurent Lollis
Meghan DiGiacomo - Class President
Michael Keiber
Mikaela Talley
Nathan Nichols
Paula Ritenour
Ryne Hartt
Tasha Morales
Timothy Thompson
Tricia Riffle
Twila Mitchell

Employer

Heartland Christian
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
City of Sebring, Fireman
Harplyn Irrigation
Peace River Center for Personal Development
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
South Florida State College Foundation
MidFlorida Credit Union
Apex Communication Group
CenterState Bank
Hardee Chamber of Commerce
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
South Florida State College
Advent Health/Foundation
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Archbold Expeditions
Highlands County Economic Development Commission
Keiber Law
Pure Grit
Boca Raton/Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Highlands County Tax Collector
Livingston & Livingston
South Florida State College
The School Board of Highlands County
Advent Health
Highlands County Clerk of Courts



Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2022

Alumni

Anna Richard
Ashley Tinker - Vice President
Candace Ray
Christopher Smith
Daniel Schumacher
Elsie Graves
Joanne Webb
Joy Bogaert
Kirsten Pindar
Layla Haynes
Michael Abell
Morgan Norris Taylor - Class President
Nicole Garlinghouse
Pamela Milkowski
Robert Brown
Tahlia Warrick
Tammi Artz
Tanya Cannady
Teresa Aviles
Timothy Leeseberg
Vikki Brown

Employer

Kahn Citrus Management
Champion For Children Foundation
Heal By Touch Massage
Advent Health
Berkshire Hathaway
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Highland County Tax Collector
Advent Health
Wauchula State Bank
Karlson Law Group
Peace River Center
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Taylor Oil
Highlands Regional Medical Center
Supervisor of Elections
Glades Electric
Alico
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
The School Board of Highlands County
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners



Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2023

Alumni

Alfredrick "Tyrone" Tyson
Amanda Mazzocchi - Vice President
Amanda Thompson
Andrew Santos
Angel Nowling
Dr. Brent Ferns Sr.
Caleb Lambeth
Carla Ball
Charles Bullock
Cynthia Acevedo
Dawn Ritter
Deborah Summers
Deena Wright
Elizabeth Worley
Emily Bridjnath
Erin White
Heather Upchurch
Jamie Davidson
Jennifer Bush
Kamla Achaibar-Long
Dr. Mark Bukowski
Melody Sauerhafer
Nancy Dodd
Pamela Gamez
Rachel Barry
Robert McNeilley II
Theodore "Theo" Watts - Class President

Employer

Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Highlands County Tax Collector
Coldwell Banker
AdventHealth
Kahn Citrus
South Florida State College
Coca Cola
The School Board of Highlands County
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Self Employed
Smook Foundation
Sebring International
Sun N' Lake Improvement District
HCA Florida Highlands Hosp.
AdventHealth
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Lake Placid Chamber of Commerce
Retired
South Florida State College
City of Avon Park
Duke Energy
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Heartland Food Reservoir, Inc
Highlands County Clerk's Office



Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2024

Alumni

Addlyn Teague
Atama Dindyal
Benjamin Wyatt
Christian Hardman
Christine Lopez
Coral Benka
Cynthia "Cyndie" Carman Kramer - Vice President
David Perez-Campos
Elisabeth "Liz" Prendergast - Class President
Elizabeth Lind
Emily Sheffield
Hope Dunihue
India Craske
Jacqueline Hilts
Jeffrey Fennell
John Higgins
Dr. John McLaughlin
Julie Stark
Dr. Kathleen Cappel
Mark Schneider
Mason "Gabe" Smoak Jr.
Michael Brod
Michael Napper
Monique Romanik
Nicholas Sawyer
Patricia Dobiecki
Scott Morgan
Sheryl "Sherry" Sutphen

Employer

HCA Healthcare
HER- Cottage Farm and Market
VP Commercial Lending Crews Banking
City of Avon Park
Berkshire Hathaway
Sun 'n Lake Improvement District
Sun 'n Lake Improvement District
Mortgage Loan Administrator
Champion for Children
United Way of Central Florida
Deputy Supervisor of Elections
Tax Collector Office
Kahn Citrus Management LLC
The Mosaic Company/ Volunteer Firefighter
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Coca Cola Florida
South Florida State College
Advent Health
South Florida State College
Lake Placid Police Department, Chief
Smoak Groves
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Advent Health
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
The School Board of Highlands County
County Attorney - Highlands



Class Theme:

Learning, Leading, Leaving a Legacy

Class Project:

We are proud to have partnered with the Champion for Children Foundation, Sun 'n Lake Improvement District, and United Way's Success By 6 to install Highlands County's first Born Learning Trail in Sun 'n Lake.

This trail offers families a fun and engaging way to turn outdoor play into valuable early learning moments. We were honored to dedicate the trail to Tim Lind, the husband of our classmate Liz Lind, who tragically lost his life in a car accident during the middle of our class. This project not only serves the community but also stands as a lasting tribute to Tim's memory and the strength of the Lind family.

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2025

Alumni

Alexa (Hinojosa) Chappa
Alicia Dean Chynoweth
Alicia Delizaira Santos
Allan Ayala
Amanda Helms
Amiramis Desueza
Andrew Bennett
Anjelica Ramos-Tinajero
Caleb Jones
Dana Riddell
Heather Carter-Harris
James Hawker
Jessica Hendrie – Class President
Joanna Cochlin
Joshua Joseph
Justin Evans
Kalah Tyler – Vice President
Katie Houlihan
Kelly Ashworth
Kim Piesik
Larry Pepper III
Leticia Arceo
Michael Ahrens
Michael Delaney
Michele Hall
Monica ONeill
Robert Zuckerman
Samuel Aguilar
Stuart Troutman
Tina Gottus*

Employer

Sebring Community Redevelopment Agency
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Without Borders Worldwide
HCA Highlands Hospital
Coca-Cola
Habitat for Humanity
Sebring Airport
The School Board of Highlands County
SouthState Bank
Stonehenge Land Development Consultants
Central FL Property Management
South Florida State College
Farm Bureau
The School Board of Highlands County
Camp Wingman
AdventHealth
Layes Tire Service
Highlands County Assistant Attorney
AdventHealth
Retired
Pepper Natural Health & Wellness
Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
Highlands County Sheriff's Office
South Florida State College
Heartland Core Wellness
NorthPointe Bank
Raymond James
Lake Placid Police Department
South Florida State College



Class of 2025 pictured with John D. Couriel, the 90th Justice of the Florida Supreme Court.

Class Theme:

Lead with Vision, Act with Courage, Serve with Heart

Class Project:

Leadership Highlands Build Day with Highlands County Habitat for Humanity, where participants helped build a home for a local family.

*Serving as Leadership Highlands Program Director beginning in 2025

Leadership Highlands Alumni

Class of 2026

Alumni

Benny Aguilar Marrero
Jamal Baskin
Lisa Branca
Brooke Britt
Louis Canevari
Dina Capuano
Allie Crews
Yarima Cuencas
James Kelly Duppenthaler
Kaitlyn Durham
Dustin Fitch
Deborah Gutierrez
Stephanie Hanks
Jessica Hartline
Fred Hayes
Yessenia Irizarry
Sam Labrador
Berenice Lopez
Kayla Nickerson
Kerry Owens
Chantel Parris
Sierra Pautke
Alannah Payne
Emma Rapp
Janice Rearick
Penny Robinson
Rebecca Stone
Michelle Tauchen
Scott Williams

Employer

Highlands County Clerk of Courts
Sun 'n Lake of Sebring Improvement District
Highlands County Supervisor of Elections
Brooke Britt Insurance Agency Inc
Farm Credit of Florida
South Florida State College
AdventHealth Sebring
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
AdventHealth Sebring
Highlands County Board of County Commissioners
South Florida State College
The School Board of Highlands County
Allstate/Hartline Insurance Inc
South Florida State College
Sunshine Staffing
HCA Florida Highlands Hospital
SouthState Bank
Highlands Soil and Water Conservation District
MIDFLORIDA Credit Union
Champion For Children Foundation
IOU Health Exchange
The School Board of Highlands County
Highlands County Fair Association
Boys & Girls Club of Highlands County
City of Sebring
KORE Wireless
Bank of America Merrill
Highlands County Sheriff's Office



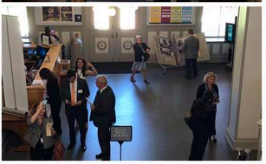
Class of 2026 Florida Supreme Court

Class Theme:

“Strengthening Leaders, Empowering Community”

Class Project:

Beautification of New Testament Church and Mission property located on 604 Lemon Ave, Sebring, FL 33870.















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**For more information on
Leadership Highlands, including
how to apply, visit:**
southflorida.edu/leadership-highlands

*Deepen your knowledge of Highlands
County, enhance your leadership skills,
and connect with fellow leaders.*



**For more information on short-
term and customized training
programs, visit:**
southflorida.edu/corporatetraining

*Designed to help grow your business and
close skills gaps among your employees.*