

WHAT'S HOT

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19th GAA Gala Announces Winners July 9 & Honors Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient, Michael Hickerson

The 19th annual Gay Appreciation Awards (GAA) Gala will announce winners in all award categories Sunday, July 9, 8pm prompt, at the Marigny Theatre, 1030 Marigny St. in New Orleans. The 19th Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Michael Hickerson, better known as "Fish" in the community. He is a native New Orleanian, raised uptown, one block off Magazine Street. Hickerson has contributed significantly to the betterment of our community. For years, he worked as a bartender in many of the favorite watering-holes in the French Quarter and the Marigny. He chaired the Gay Pride Festival in 1981. Hickerson was a co-founder of The Krewe of Polyphemus and reigned as Queen Polyphemus I. Polyphemus was the first gay carnival organization to actively encourage African-American participation. He has been a member of the Krewe of Amon-Ra serving as Ball Captain in 1988 and Queen Amon-Ra XXXIX in 2004. He was also responsible for staging several of Amon-Ra's Miss and Mr. America Pageants. In 1985, Hickerson was Southern Decadence Grand Marshal XIII. Hickerson has also served on the Board of Directors of the New Orleans Gay and Lesbian Community Center where he originated the very successful "Feast of Love" fundraiser.

In the mid 1990's, after a long hiatus, Hickerson decided to return to college where he received both his bachelors and Master's degrees in Social Work from Southern University at New Orleans.

With all that, it is Hickerson's involvement with HIV/AIDS that he is most proud of and committed to. He was a founding board member of Belle Reve, a residential facility for PLWA's and, he was an early member of the New Orleans Regional AIDS Planning Council, appointed by Mayor Sidney Barthelemy. He has proudly served as a board member of the William J. Fanning Foundation, better known as Buzzy's Boys and Girls, which is an HIV/AIDS service organization, staffed entirely by volunteers, where every single dollar raised goes to directly serve those living with HIV/AIDS. Annually, with the help of many dedicated community volunteers, he produces Turn-A-Bout. Turn-A-Bout has consistently been one of Buzzy's biggest and best-attended fund-raisers.

In October of 2004 Hickerson founded In This Together, Inc. (ITT) a 501(c)3 non-profit agency. ITT provides case management, client advocacy and housing resource coordination to HIV+ individuals and their families. ITT also serves as a Medicaid enrollment site. During Hurricane Katrina Hickerson relocated to Baton Rouge where he actively provided services to dislocated HIV+ members of the community. After receiving numerous calls from clients and friends still in New Orleans, after the storm and in need of services, Hickerson returned to reopen ITT in early October.

Hickerson lives in Tremé with David, his partner of 14 years. They live in a New Orleans storefront currently under renovation since being flooded in the storm. The storefront was formally known as Warren's Bar and Isadora's Cozy Corner. Now it's just Fish's Place - go figure!

Past Lifetime Achievement Award recipients include Jimmie Callaway, Dan Fountain [Betty Buttons], the late Andy Boudreaux, the late Buzzy Fanning, the late Dirty Dottie, the late Miss Fury, Rip & Marsha Naquin-Delain, the late Dan Romero, the late Miss Do, Louise McFarland, Miss Dixie Fasnacht, Alice Brady & John Dodt, Gene Adams, Charlene Schneider, Steve Mettner, Marty Curtin & Koo Gaffney, Donnie Jay and Kitty Blackwell.

The gala benefits the William Fanning Foundation, aka Buzzy's Boys & Girls. There are some VIP Tables of four for \$100 still left. Please contact Rip Naquin-Delain for table reservations at 504.522.8049 or info@ambushmag.com.

Board Members Lisa Beaumann and Teryl-Lynn Foxx will emcee the gala once again. The festive evening presents the talents of all Show Bar of the Year Finalists performing production numbers. Special entertainment includes former Entertainers of the Year, the Austin Babbist Women and GAA Founder Marcy Marcell.

Winners will be announced in each Top 5 Finalist category including:

Circuit Party/Event of the Year - Abracadabra/Pensacola, Halloween/New Orleans, Gay Easter Parade/New Orleans, One Mighty Party/Orlando, Southern Decadence/New Orleans;

Hair Salon of the Year - Bobby Blue, Hair Asylum, Headquarters, Mickey Nolan Salon, Salon d'Malta;

Gay Carnival (Mardi Gras) Ball of the Year - Krewe of Amon Ra, Krewe of Armeinius, Krewe of Petronius, Lords of Leather, Mystic Krewe of Satyricon;

Neighborhood Bar of the Year - Corner Pocket, Cowpokes, Friendly Bar, Good Friends, Phoenix;

Buzzy Fanning AIDS Award - Austin Babbist Women/Austin, Eric Crabtree/Austin, Michael "Fish" Hickerson, NO/AIDS Task Force, Ursuline Burgundy;

Bitch of the Year - Michael Decote, Bianca Del Rio, Glenn Fonte, Rusty LaRoux, Madam Adam;

Show Bar of the Year - Corner Pocket, Cowpokes, Golden Lantern, Oz, Starlight By The Park;

Performing Arts Award - Austin Babbist Women/Austin, Capital City Men's Chorus/Austin, New Orleans Carnival Kings, New Orleans Gay Men's Chorus, Slutpuppies;

Restaurant/Deli of the Year - Bywater Bar.B.Que, Clover Grill, Katz Deli/Austin, Mona Lisa, Quartermaster: The Nellie Deli;

Dance Bar of the Year - Bourbon Pub/Parade, Cowpokes, Oilcan Harry's/Austin, Oz, Rain/Austin;

Bartender of the Year - Aletha Bryant/Cafe Lafitte In Exile, Randi Holmes/Oz, Lance Pippin/Cowpokes, Clint Taylor/Phoenix, Wayne White/Big Daddy's;

DJ of the Year - Tony Beverage/Phoenix, Jayskee/Bourbon Pub, Jason Lanoux/Oz, Tim



Michael "Fish" Hickerson
(Photo: GrahamStudioOne.COM)

SDGM Announcement, GAA Winners Out: July 18 DEADLINE: Tues., July 11

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Pflueger/Oz, Richie Rich/Cowpokes;

Leather Bar of the Year - Chain Drive/Austin, Cowpokes, Phoenix, Rawhide, Ripcord/Houston;

GLBT Business of the Year - Alternatives, American Aquatic Gardens, Pet Asylum, Queen Fashions, Tapelenders/Austin;

Leather Person of the Year - Dr. Alan Bowers, Todd Cole, Mina Hernandez, Jim Johnson (CORRECTION: a typo in the last edition named Tim Johnson instead of Jim Johnson as a finalist), Wally Sherwood (post-humously);

Transgender of the Year - Regina Adams, Vivica Devereaux, Marcy Marcell, Rikki Redd, TT Thompson;

Lesbian of the Year - Marty Curtin, Ms. Doc, Mina Hernandez, Mary Pappas, Red Velour;

Gay Man of the Year - Todd Cole, Michael "Fish" Hickerson, Lance Pippin, David Weick, Jason White;

Entertainer of the Year - Austin Babbist Women/Austin, Donnie Jay, Savanna DeLorean, Bianca Del Rio, Princesse Stephanie.

The Board of Directors will present the winner in the following categories:

Cheridon Comedy Award - Barry Bareass, T. Paul Dodson, Persana Shoulders, Princesse Stephanie, Tittie Toulouse;

Fly Fashion Glamour - Electra City, Tyriq Davenport Kennedy, Tahtianah Kresha, Savanna DeLorean, Ava Synclair;

Fly Victim Awards - Coca, Jaded Jade, Ursuline Burgundy, Kabrina Watson, Tamia Watson.

The Marsha Delain Award of Excellence will be presented by Marsha Naquin-Delain.

The Board of Directors includes Lisa Beaumann, Teryl-Lynn Foxx, Toni Pizanie and Rip and Marsha Naquin-Delain.

The Gay Appreciation Awards are presented each year by *Ambush Mag* thanking those in the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Community who are often not recognized for the outstanding services and efforts they per-

form. These individuals and businesses have made the GLBT Community into the viable, successful and powerful community it is today across the Gulf South.

For additional information visit AmbushMag.COM/GAA.

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