



The Mobile Area Chamber Honors Minority-Owned Businesses

Keynote Speaker, **Carla Harris**

FAST facts

2016 Gulf Coast Business Diversity Conference & Eagle Awards Luncheon

DATE: Tuesday, Oct. 4

TIME: 8:30 to 10:45 a.m. – Business Leadership Forum
10:45 to 11:15 a.m. – Networking
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Awards Luncheon

Location: The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa

Keynote Speaker: Carla Harris with Morgan Stanley, motivational speaker, gospel recording artist and author

Cost: \$50 per person/\$500 Table of 10 for Mobile Area Chamber members
\$60 per person/\$600 Table of 10 for potential members
*includes both the Business Leadership Forum and Awards Luncheon

Registration deadline: Tuesday, Sept. 27 with payment due at registration.

To register: 251-431-8607, brembert@mobilechamber.com or www.mobilechamber.com.

PRESENTING SPONSOR



The Mobile Area Chamber's annual program to recognize minority-owned businesses will be held Tuesday, Oct. 4, at The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa. The Gulf Coast Business Diversity Conference kicks off with a Business Leadership Forum from 8:30 to 10:45 a.m.

Titled "Success Does Exist! Small Business Entrepreneurs Tell You How," the forum includes panelists **Clarence Johnson**, president of Bama Pest Control; **Mary Taylor**, owner of Elegant Knights Limo-Party Bus; **Larry Dorsey**, president and CEO of Dorsey & Dorsey Engineering; and **Christopher Davis**, president of Davis Transportation.

The 19th annual Eagle Awards luncheon follows the conference at 11:30 a.m. Nichols Financial Services and Perfecting That Cleaning Service are this year's recipients. (See pages 13-14 for more information.)

Also at the luncheon, the Chamber will recognize Muskogee Technology with the Rev. Wesley A. James Minority Business Advocate award, presented for its efforts in advocating for and supporting minority-owned businesses.

These awards are part of the Chamber's strategy to ensure all segments of the business community are prosperous and continue to grow, said **Darrell Randle**,

vice president of small business development.

"In honoring these companies, we are hoping to encourage this generation and the next generation of entrepreneurs to follow in their successful footsteps."

Carla Harris, vice chairman, wealth management, managing director and senior client advisor at Morgan Stanley, will be the luncheon's keynote speaker. Harris was appointed by President Barack Obama to chair the National Women's Business Council in 2013, and was recently named to *Fortune* magazine's list of "The 50 Most Powerful Black Executives in

Corporate America." She was also recognized by *Essence* magazine as one of "The 50 Women Who are Shaping the World" and *Ebony's* list of the "Power 100" and "15 Corporate Women at the Top."

Beyond her professional career, Harris is a motivational speaker, gospel recording artist and author. She has released three CDs, was featured on the CBS Evening News with Dan Rather in his "American Dream" segment and has performed five sold-out concerts at Carnegie Hall.

Her books, published by Hudson Press, are *Strategize to Win* and *Expect to Win*.

"Carla is amazingly well-rounded, and that's an inspiration," said Randle.

Registration includes both the business leadership forum and the awards luncheon.

In honoring these companies, we are hoping to encourage this generation and the next generation of entrepreneurs to follow in their successful footsteps.

Darrell Randle
vice president of small business development,
Mobile Area Chamber
of Commerce

2016 Eagle Awards Announced

Presented by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

Nichols Financial Services



Cheryl and Larry Nichols with their daughter, Ketusah.

Twenty years after he started Nichols Financial Services, a seasonal income tax preparation company in Detroit,

Dr. Larry Nichols opened his Alabama office and current Mobile headquarters in September 1996.

The company's clients include individuals, small businesses and churches, and its offerings have expanded to include payroll tax services and retirement planning.

The challenges Nichols faces are common to small businesses – balancing time between locations, increasing the company's production and having limited money for advertising. He overcame these issues by adding an employee who eliminated the need for accounting contractors, creating a client reward program for referrals and reducing his time in the Michigan office to two weeks during each summer month.

What's ahead? Nichols says he expects to continue the company's annual income growth and hire an additional employee.

Nichols has a long-standing policy of community involvement on both a personal and organizational level, supporting area churches, schools and the American Cancer Society.

Years in business: 40
Number of employees: 3
Address: 3925 Michael Blvd., Ste. B

Perfecting That Cleaning Service



Left to right, Keanecha Dockery, owner and Shanevia Sylvester, assistant.

Keanecha Dockery started her business as the sole employee serving one county. Over the years, she added employees and expanded to serve three counties.

Perfecting That Cleaning Service provides residential, commercial, construction and event clean-up to clients in Mobile, Baldwin and Clarke counties. In 2017, Dockery is planning to add a second location in Monroeville.

The key to growing her business is word-of-mouth and networking at Mobile Area Chamber events, says Dockery. She has taken advantage of the Chamber's business-to-business forums and several other events, resulting in long-term contracts.

The business is challenged with finding workers with essential skills, employee retention and a consistent client base. Yet the company has steadily grown since its one-woman beginnings, logging in both revenue and employee growth, she said.

The company actively partners with Alabama Rehabilitation, Housing First and The Salvation Army of Coastal Alabama. In addition, Perfecting That Cleaning sponsors low-income families through the Department of Human Resources during the holidays.

Years in business: 14
Number of employees: 11
Address: 273 Azalea Rd., Ste. 1-401

High-Tech Company Honored for its Commitment to Pay It Forward

Muskogee Technology

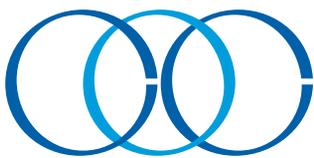


Muskogee Technology's Sarah Stacey, quality control manager, and Steven Fisher, quality specialist, measure for precision. The Atmore-based manufacturer will be honored as the Mobile Area Chamber's 2016 Rev. Wesley A. James Minority Business Advocate on Tuesday, Oct. 4.

CELEBRATE

INNOVATE

PARTICIPATE



MOBILE AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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"Muskogee Technology is progressive, innovative and growing. But, more importantly, the company is focused on more than themselves," said **Darrell Randle**, the Mobile Area Chamber's vice president of small business development.

"Their commitment mirrors the African proverb, 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'"

Muskogee Technology will be honored at the Chamber's annual Eagle Awards luncheon as the recipient of the Rev. Wesley A. James Minority Business Advocate for its outreach, supplier diversity programs and community involvement specifically geared to help minority-owned companies.

Located in Atmore, the manufacturer serves the aerospace, defense, heavy machinery, wind energy, utilities and oil and gas industries and specializes in precision machining, fabrication, electronics and carbon composites. Among its clients are global competitors including Airbus, Boeing, GE Aerospace, Honda and Lockheed Martin.

Owned by the Creek Indian Enterprise Development Authority, the economic development arm of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, the company is itself a small disadvantaged business enterprise.

"We have been privileged to be a part of two department of defense mentor/protégé programs, and have learned a great deal as a protégé. It is only fair we pass the knowledge

we have learned to other minority-owned businesses," said **Mal McGhee**, the company's director of marketing.

The tribe bought the company in 1988 for its government contracts, gave it the Muskogee name and expanded its services and industry sectors. In 2014, the company expanded its footprint with a new 12,000-square-foot facility and hired additional employees.

Recently, Muskogee hired its first procurement manager to help secure its commitment to growth and inclusion.

McGhee has been a mentor to those referred to him by the Chamber, and he has helped them further develop their businesses, says Randle. He has served as an advisor to the Chamber's diversity advisory board and is a member of the Chamber's diversity business outreach committee.

In addition, McGhee helps local companies learn how to do business with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians through Chamber business-to-business forums and has hosted a similar forum onsite. The company has also participated in programs led by the Alabama Small Business Development Center Network and University of South Alabama to improve the local small business environment.

The company has numerous designations and awards, including a Chamber Eagle Award in 2008.