



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

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## **Mobile Chamber to Honor Minority-owned Businesses at the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Eagle Awards**

**MOBILE, Ala.** – The Mobile Chamber’s 28th Annual Eagle Awards and Eagle Business Forum, presented by the Mobile Area Water and Sewer System, will celebrate the accomplishments of outstanding local minority-owned businesses and their contributions to our local economy and community.

The day includes the Business Forum, a professional development program and culminates with the annual Eagle Awards.

**Who:** Mobile Chamber

**Presenting Sponsor:** Mobile Area Water and Sewer System

**What:** 28th Annual Eagle Awards and Eagle Business Forum

**Where:** The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa  
26 N. Royal Street, Mobile, AL 36602

**When:** Friday, October 17, 2025



### **9 a.m. – Eagle Business Forum**

“From Curiosity to Capability: AI in Life and Work”

Dr. Thomas E. Nelson, PhD, Associate Professor of Management, University of South Alabama



### **11:30 a.m. - Eagle Awards Luncheon & Ceremony**

The Eagle Awards Luncheon will recognize the 2025 Eagle Award Winners and includes a keynote from Kalisha Dessources Figures, Ph.D, is Founder and Chief Strategist of KDF Strategies, a social impact firm specializing in organization-wide strategic planning and strategic partnerships. Dr. Figures has served in two presidential Administrations and has a passion for developing and connecting the next generation of emerging leaders.

## **Eagle Award Winner – Rice & Reece Funeral Home**



Rice & Reece Funeral Home has been a trusted name in the Prichard community for nearly 50 years. Founded in 1975, the family-owned business provides compassionate care through funerals, memorial services, military honors, cremation options and grief support, ensuring every family receives the attention they deserve during life's most difficult moments.

Beyond their services, Rice & Reece is deeply involved in the community, providing Thanksgiving meals, sponsoring school supply drives, supporting local students on college tours and partnering with the Sickle Cell Center for blood drives. Their long-standing commitment to compassion, service and outreach has made them a true pillar of support, strengthening families and neighborhoods alike.

## **Eagle Award Winner – Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM)**



Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM) has been building stronger, more sustainable communities across the Southeast since its founding in 1995. What began with two friends from Prichard, Alabama, has grown into a nationally recognized firm delivering engineering, environmental and program management solutions. From transportation and water systems to environmental compliance and federal facilities, CERM brings expertise and innovation to projects that improve daily life.

The firm's commitment extends beyond its work sites through internships, mentoring and scholarships, as well as toy drives, neighborhood cleanups and partnerships with local organizations.

Grounded in integrity, innovation and service, CERM continues to make a lasting impact in Mobile and throughout the region.

## **Soaring Eagle Legacy Award – Major General Jerome Gary Cooper, USMC (Ret.) (1936-2024)**



Major General Jerome Gary Cooper, USMC (Ret.) was a decorated Marine, businessman and public servant. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame, he became the first Black officer in Marine Corps history to lead an infantry company into combat during the Vietnam War.

For his heroism, he earned the Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts, the Distinguished Service Medal and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry three times. Rising to the rank of Major General, he later served as Commanding General at Camp Lejeune and as Director of Personnel at Marine Corps Headquarters.

Beyond military service, General Cooper was Vice President and Senior Vice President of Volkert & Associates, U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica and Assistant Secretary of the Air Force under President George H.W. Bush. He also chaired Commonwealth National Bank and CNB Bancorp, Inc., Alabama's first minority-owned national bank. His career blended courage, leadership and lasting impact in both military and business arenas.

**Sponsors:**

The Mobile Chamber's 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Eagle Awards are possible thanks to presenting sponsor, the Mobile Area Water and Sewer System; gold sponsors, Alabama Power Company, Ball HealthCare Services Inc., Keesler Federal Credit Union, Mobile Airport Authority, Regions Bank, and State Farm Insurance – Makeda Nichols; silver sponsors, Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM), Easy Heating and Cooling, Inc, Franklin Primary Health Center, Infirmary Health, Rice & Reese Funeral Home, and Spire; bronze sponsor, ArcelorMittal Calvert and Commonwealth National Bank; and media sponsors, Cumulus Broadcasting, Inc., Steppin' Out and WALA Fox 10.

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**About the Mobile Chamber:**

The Mobile Chamber is a private business organization with nearly 1,700 members and the economic developer for the City of Mobile and Mobile County. The Mobile Chamber's focus is to provide members with networking, marketing and professional development opportunities, expand jobs in the area, develop the local workforce, advocate legislative priorities and offer resources to help small businesses grow. Additional information is on the Chamber's [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).