



Joe & Gina Sanford St. Mary Parish

Nominated by: Lisa Parsiola

Joe and Gina Sanford are the recipients of the 2021 Leaders In Philanthropy Award for St. Mary Parish.

Joe and Gina were both born, raised, and continue to be lifelong residents of St. Mary Parish and have been married since 1993. Joe is the retired business owner of Morgan City Rentals and Gina is a retired teacher.

Gina attended Nicholls State University for 2 years and graduated from Samford University in 1991, playing tennis for both universities and ultimately winning conference at Samford her senior year.

Joe graduated from LSU in 1991 with a BA in Political Science. Joe has served as a board member for numerous organizations as well as President of the local boards for the St. Mary Industrial Group and American Petroleum Institute. Joe was a founding board member of the St. Mary Foundation, an Affiliate of Community Foundation of Acadiana. He also spent numerous years giving back to his community as a coach for the Dixie Youth.

The Sanfords basis of giving goes back to both of their families teaching the Christian values of giving back to the community and those less fortunate. Joe said it was his father who inspired him to give back, he was a generous man and Joe wanted to follow in his path. Before and especially after the sale of his company, Joe has continued to make generosity a top priority. Gina credits her parents for her inspiration as they helped so many throughout their lives, and Gina shares the same values.

Joe and Gina strive to lead by example, knowing that someone must lead the giving movement. They feel an obligation to support charities and organizations when so many others cannot afford to give. The Sanfords prefer to give anonymously, but recognize that public acknowledgment of gifts may lead others to follow.

This list of organizations that Joe and Gina have supported over the past 20 years is long. A few that are near and dear to their hearts are Morgan City, Berwick, Central Catholic, and Patterson High Schools (all local to the Morgan City area). The couple has also been avid supporters of Project Graduation at the local high schools. They have funded numerous scholarships for Louisiana State University, Samford University, and Nicholls University. The Sanfords have been longtime supporters of Pharr Chapel United Methodist Church, the East St. Mary Parish Chapter of Junior Auxiliary, and their local police and fire departments. They have supported Bethel Church Women's Home, First Baptist Church Morgan City, Holy Cross, Acadiana flood relief, and numerous other organizations.

According to Joe and Gina, "God has blessed us immensely and it feels good when helping those in need!"