

# FRENCH Fêtes

The recent Bastille Day celebrations in the Crescent City recalled France's National Day, a holiday associated with liberty. Because of our town's Gallic affinity, the day is hailed with élan. And rounds of gatherings.



PHOTOS BY JEFF STROUT

Joseph Dunn, Greg Lambousy, Nathalie Beras, Bret Clesi

## French Fanfare

A depiction of the Eiffel Tower in Paris appeared on the invitation extended by Consul General of France in Louisiana **Nathalie Beras** for a two-hour Bastille Day 2023 reception. The French Residence, her home, sported the "bleu, blanc et rouge" tricolore in various manifestations: table runners, flowers and the French flag itself. The circular tables for stand-up eating, drinking and conversation were bound in white and sashed either in blue or red. Additionally, there was a small exhibition titled "European Footprints in New Orleans" of photos taken by NOCCA students of walking excursions in the French Quarter and Faubourg Marigny.

Chez Nous catered and several of the featured wines were appropriately labeled LIBERATION de Paris. Guests socialized within the Garden District residence, as well as on the decked area outside, behind the house.

Representatives of the Francophone and Francophile communities figured on the guest list, as did members of the Louisiana Consular Corps, which has Honorary Consul General of Albania **Bret Clesi** (joined by spouse **Patrice**), as its dean, and, as the vice dean, **William H. "Bill" Hines**, Honorary Consul of Portugal. Others present and the countries they represent were **David P. Schulingkamp**, Brazil; **Susan E. Harper**, Canada (in Dallas); **John F. Fay Jr.** (with **Christina**), Denmark; **Gary J. Mannina**, Luxembourg; and **Conny Willems** (with **Casey**), retired Honorary Consul of the Netherlands. Further notables were **Joseph Dunn**, Louisiana Foundation for Francophone Affairs; New Orleans Jazz Museum Director **Greg Lambousy**; Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans CEO **Chase McLaurin**; Degas House founder **David Villarrubia**; and sign artist **Simon Hardeveld**.

In her address to the assembly, Consul General Beras thanked those organizations and individuals involved with the December 2022 visit of French President **Emmanuel Macron**, as well as supporters of French schools, businesses and culture. She also announced her departure. According to Conny Willems, "All attendees were sorry because she has been a very active and productive consul general, beloved by the people of Louisiana. She accomplished a great deal during her tenure."

The evening concluded with a heartfelt playing by the combo of "La Marseillaise" and the robust singing of the crowd.



Chase McLaurin, Tiguida Mathieu, Jacques Baran



David Villarrubia, Simon Hardeveld