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Early Education Community Leaders and Activists Recognized at Clover's 127th Annual Meeting

At its 127th Annual Meeting, Clover's Board of Directors highlighted key agency accomplishments and recognized individuals and organizations that empowered children and families during Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

Award Highlights

Community leader and professional fundraiser **LaVerne Toombs** was the recipient of the **McMain Citizenship Award**, which is named for the great Eleanor McMain, who was Clover's CEO from 1901 to 1934 and the very first professional social worker and professor of Social Work in the state of Louisiana. A former Clover Board Member for nearly a decade, LaVerne continues to be a passionate advocate for the agency's mission and, as Co-Chair, was instrumental in the success of the organization's 125th anniversary gala, raising vital unrestricted funds to support Clover's life changing programs and services.

In recognition of their extraordinary advocacy on behalf of Louisiana's youngest citizens, **Libbie Sonnier**, Ph.D., Executive Director of the **Louisiana Policy Institute for Children**, and **Jen Roberts**, Chief Executive Officer of **Agenda for Children**, received the inaugural **Melanie Bronfin Advocacy for Children Award**, named after Melanie Bronfin, one of Louisiana's most fervent advocates for young children and their families, and a champion for the early learning workforce. A former Board President of Clover, Bronfin helped launch the first Educare School in the Deep South in 2013 and founded the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children that same year. Louisiana has seen unprecedented increases in local and statewide funding for early childhood development and education, enabling access to quality care for thousands more young children, thanks in large part to the combined efforts of the Louisiana Policy Institute and Agenda for Children.

Named after Reverend Beverley Warner of Trinity Church and founder of Clover, the **Rev. Beverley Warner Award** is the most prestigious award that Clover presents. Susan Porche, a cherished Clover employee and early childhood educator, received the honor this year for her 51-year legacy of service. Susan has been a friend and mentor to dozens of teachers and staff, and has guided hundreds of Clover's youngest learners into independent thinkers.

Angie Shorty-Belisle, School Director of Educare New Orleans, renowned early learning administrator and a seasoned educator with three decades of continuous service to children and families, was the recipient of the **Libby Milton Champion for Children Award**, named for Elizabeth "Libby" Milton, who served as a member of the Clover staff leadership team for 50 years. The award is presented to members of our community who have made significant accomplishments on behalf of children.

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Troylynn Bush, Educare New Orleans teacher, received the **Eleanor McMain and Bonita Godchaux Book Award**, which is named for the first chief executive officer of Clover and a well-respected former Clover board member, and granted to a staff person who is enrolled in college or planning to continue his or her education beyond the high school level. In addition to implementing innovative teaching practices, Troylynn is a junior in college and pursuing a degree in early childhood education.

About Clover

Founded in 1896 with a mission to educate children, strengthen families and build community, Clover (formerly known as Kingsley House), envisions a city and region where all young children are ready to succeed, and all citizens are healthy and economically stable. Recognizing that vulnerable families are at risk of being caught in an intractable cycle of poverty, the organization is committed to ensuring that individuals and families have the support necessary to be successful at all stages of life. To accomplish its goals, the historic nonprofit joins forces with dedicated community partners to collectively work with families to fuel economic growth and social change in our city, state, and region. For more information, visit www.clovernola.org.

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