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John Deshotel Selected Honorary Grand Marshal of 2017 BR Pride

The Baton Rouge Pride team has selected community leader John Deshotel to serve as the honorary grand marshal of the 2017 Baton Rouge pride festival on June 17 at the Raising Cane's Baton Rouge River Center.

Deshotel, who has served in leadership roles for the Krewe of Apollo Baton Rouge and the Baton Rouge Pride team for many years, was the overwhelming selection of this year's Baton Rouge Pride team.

"We couldn't think of anyone better qualified to serve as the honorary grand marshal for the 11th annual celebration of the Baton Rouge Pride festival," said Christopher Bradford, co-chairman of the Baton Rouge Pride festival organizing team. "John is much more than a great community leader. He's a friend to almost everyone he meets and a tremendous asset to any organization he joins."

Deshotel joins a distinguished list of grand marshals of Baton Rouge Pride, which began recognizing community leaders as honorary grand marshals for the third year of its celebration in 2009. The former grand marshals include the late Richard Dykes, owner of George's, in 2009; the late Larry Fremin, a founder of the Krewe of Apollo Baton Rouge, in 2010; James Chinn, also known as Trixxie LaRue, a longtime entertainer and activist, 2011; Daphne Mushatt, longtime entertainer and community supporter, 2012; Carol Frazier and Jody Huckaby, leaders of PFLAG locally and nationally, 2013; Cami Miller and Joe Traigle, early organizers and leaders of Capital City Alliance, 2014; Rev. Keith Mazingo, pastor of MCC of Baton Rouge and one of the founders of Baton Rouge Pride, and Whitney Vann, TV personality and longtime community friend, 2015; and Kayla Mulford, president of Capital City Alliance and a diligent community activist, in 2016.

A native of Baton Rouge, a graduate of Southeastern Louisiana University, and a nurse by profession, one of Deshotel's interests in his spare time is cake decorating. As a result, he has been responsible for the elaborate creations displayed for the blessing of relationships at BR Pride since 2011.

"While everyone is in the midst of the hectic activity of getting ready for BR Pride every year, John is doing his part for the Pride team, working his regular job, and staying up nights and weekends to produce those huge cakes," said Tom Merrill, chairman of Baton Rouge Pride Inc. "He's just an amazing person!"

Deshotel has served eight years on the BR Pride team, most of those as its vice chairman. In addition, his involvement in the Krewe of Apollo Baton Rouge also includes an impressive

record of leadership – serving two terms as its president, twice as its bal masque captain, its king in 2012-13, and multiple times as a board member, officer or bal lieutenant. He also has been recognized with a variety of honors including being named the 2016 recipient of “The One Award” from Pride 1 for his “outstanding accomplishments and commitments to better the lives of the Baton Rouge LGBT community.” He also has been inducted into the Apollo Hall of Fame, recognized twice by other Apollo president’s with the Hal S. Philips Jr. Memorial President’s Award for service to the Krewe of Apollo Baton Rouge; awarded the Apollo Truman May Memorial Captain’s Award twice, and honored with Apollo’s Founder’s Brotherhood Award.

The Baton Rouge Pride festival is the largest indoor family friendly GLBTQ pride celebration in the South.

To learn more about this year’s Baton Rouge Pride festival from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, June 17, at the Baton Rouge River Center Arena, visit BRPride.org or follow Baton Rouge Pride on Facebook at [Facebook.com/BRPride](https://www.facebook.com/BRPride).

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