

## Coastal restoration advocate King Milling wins T-P Loving Cup

Posted by [beggler](#) March 21, 2009 22:22PM



Chris Granger / The Times-PicayuneR. King Milling is the 2009 Loving Cup recipient.

About a decade ago, R. King Milling had a meeting that changed his life.

As the president of Whitney National Bank and the member of countless commissions and boards, he already had plenty on his plate. But three environmentalists, including a prep school classmate, wanted Milling's advice on getting support from the business community for saving Louisiana's coast, a topic that had first grabbed Milling's attention during his years of hunting in Louisiana's marshland.

Midway through their pitch, Milling cut them off.

"I said, 'This is not just about the environment,'" he recalled last week. "'It's about culture, commerce and survival.'

"They looked at me and smiled, and I knew that I had been had."

Thus began Milling's involvement in saving the wetlands and restoring the coastline that was steadily being eaten away, making New Orleans more vulnerable to storms. He is chairman of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal Restoration and Conservation, America's Wetland Foundation and the Committee of the Future of Coastal Louisiana, and he is a board member of five other coast-related organizations.

Once Milling started getting involved, he said, he couldn't stop.

"It took on a life of its own," he said. "You end up grabbing the alligator by the tail, and you can't let him go because he'll bite the devil out of you."

For his activity in coastal restoration, as well as decades of work in a long list of organizations, Milling, 68, has been chosen to receive The Times-Picayune Loving Cup for 2008.

The Loving Cup has been awarded since 1901 to men and women who have worked unselfishly for the community without expectation of public recognition or material reward.

### **An honor doubled**

It's not the first Loving Cup for the Milling household. Milling's wife, Anne Milling, the activist who founded Women of the Storm, received the honor 13 years ago.

The only other couple to achieve this distinction were the philanthropists Edith and Edgar Stern.

"I always thought one Loving Cup was all that one family could bear," Milling said, chuckling.

The Millings, who have three sons and five grandchildren, sat in the paneled, sunlit den of their Uptown home. He had just driven in from a Baton Rouge meeting of the state Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. Still wearing his black suit, with his curling white hair brushed back from his forehead, Milling wore a red tie with a shrimp pattern, one of several neckties whose sales benefit America's Wetland Foundation.

"I'm shocked and overwhelmed to some degree," Milling said. "It's a wonderful honor to be recognized by the city in which you grew up."

"King, to me, is the essence of what one person can do to make a difference," said Sidney Coffee, the authority's former chairwoman.

"He gives of himself with no thought to the amount of time," she said. "He gives of himself for free and expects nothing in return. ... He puts his heart and soul in it. It is countless the number of trips he's taken to wherever he has to go to meet with whoever will listen."

One of the people who started Milling down this path was Mark Davis, director of the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy, who was at that fateful meeting in Milling's office.

"We got something we were not at all prepared for: He's committed to making a difference," Davis said. "The world is filled with people who will help you point out a problem. There aren't many people who will roll up their sleeves and help you find a solution."

Milling is quick to dismiss any hint of praise.

"It's not what I've done," he said. "It's the coalescing of the efforts of a lot of well-meaning individuals who began to focus on the problem in a different light and generate a sense of urgency."

"We had a lot of common interests gather at the table. I helped pull those interests together."

Besides, he said, "it doesn't take a genius to understand the infrastructure is at risk, the future is at risk. That's what we will lose if we don't do anything."

He paused, then said, "I think that used to shock some people, but it doesn't anymore."

### **A busy civic life**

Even though Milling has become a passionate advocate for restoring the coastline -- an issue that Hurricane Katrina helped force people to acknowledge -- it is only the latest in a long list of civic activities.

In addition to being chairman of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts Institute, he is the treasurer of Dillard University's board of trustees and a trustee of the LSU Health Sciences Center Foundation and the Louisiana Civil Service League. He also is on the advisory board of Tulane Law School, of which he is an alumnus.

Milling, who retired at the end of 2008 after 24 years as Whitney Bank's president, has been chairman of the Upper Pontalba Commission and the Downtown Development District. He has sat on the Audubon Park Commission and the boards of the United Way, Isidore Newman School and Gallier House. In 1993, he was Rex, king of Carnival.

Most recently, Milling is the chairman of the capital campaign of Neighborhood Housing Services of New Orleans.

"He's phenomenal," said Lauren Anderson, the organization's chief executive officer.

"When you see King, he's got this very patrician persona," she said, "but when he spoke to our national organization, he spoke the language of community development, so people were just amazed because they weren't expecting someone who had his background to speak our language, and he very much did."

Because of his connections in the business world, "King Milling can open doors that a lot of people cannot, all over the country," Coffee said. "He never would say it, but I know it for a fact."

### **Staying power**

Milling -- he never uses his first name, Roswell -- earned a bachelor's degree at Washington and Lee University. He dates his and his wife's board activities to the administration of his friend Mayor Moon Landrieu, who appointed him to the Upper Pontalba Commission and Anne Milling to the Sewerage & Water Board.

"You get involved and wrapped up in what you're doing," Milling said, "then those jobs terminate, and you move on to something else."

But the issue of coastal restoration was something different, although, he said, he felt lonely early on.

"He was going to all these meetings," his wife said, "and people were saying, 'Ho, hum,' but after Katrina, everyone began to realize that he was onto something."

Since the storm, the issue "takes on a little more gravitas, no doubt about it," he said.

Although Milling says he is optimistic about post-storm developments, including the proliferation of civic groups, the charter-school network and the creation of the post of city inspector general, he acknowledges that recovery will take a long time and that the New Orleans that will result will not be the same New Orleans that existed before Katrina roared through on Aug. 29, 2005.

But his patience has limits.

"I'm probably less patient after Katrina," he said, "because I think that this is a time when, if you're going to live in this community, it's time to put every effort you can toward rebuilding ... to the point when it can be and will be what we've all hoped it can be."

### **Past recipients**

Previous Loving Cup winners are:

Frank T. Howard, 1901; Isidore Newman, 1902; Sophie B. Wright, 1903; Dr. A.W. DeRoaldes, 1904; Charles Janvier, 1905; W.R. Bloomfield, 1906; Ida Richardson, 1907.

No awards were presented in 1908 or 1909.

Dr. Sara T. Mayo, 1910; Hugh McCloskey, 1911; R.M. Walmsley, 1912; Leon C. Simon, 1913; Deborah Milliken, 1914; W.B. Thompson, 1915; W.R. Irby, 1916; Mrs. John Dibert, 1917; Eleanor McMain, 1918; Mrs. James Oscar Nixon, 1919; Charles Weinberger, 1920; Jean Gordon, 1921; Rudolf S. Hecht, 1922; Simon Schwartz, 1923; Frank B. Williams, 1924; Rabbi Emil W. Leipziger, 1925; W.J. Warrington, 1926.

J.P. Butler, 1927; Brig. Gen. Allison Owen, 1928; Mrs. A.J. Stallings, 1929. Edgar B. Stern, 1930; B.C. Casanas, 1931; Thomas F. Cunningham, 1932; Felix P. Dreyfous, 1933; Charles A. Favrot, 1934; Warren Kearny, 1935. Nicholas Bauer, 1936; Col. L. Kemper Williams, 1937; Samuel Zemurray, 1938; Joseph A. Airey, 1939; Dr. Rudolph Matas, 1940; Charles E. Dunbar Jr., 1941; William G. Zetzmann, 1942; Sister Stanislaus Malone, 1943; A.B. Paterson, 1944; Dr. Alton Ochsner, 1945; Mrs. Joseph E. Friend, 1946; Mrs. Charles F. Buck Jr., 1947; Charles E. Fenner, 1948; Mrs. James Weak's Reily, 1949; Harry Latter, 1950.

Harry McCall, 1951; Joseph H. Epstein, 1952; Mrs. Ernest A. Robin, 1953; Carmelite Janvier, 1954; A.B. Freeman, 1955; Clifford F. Favrot, 1956; Capt. Neville Levy, 1957; Crawford H. Ellis, 1958; James Gilly Jr., 1959; Martha Gilmore Robinson, 1960; Leon Heymann, 1961; Mrs. Robert Laird, 1962; Percival Stern, 1963; Edith Stern, 1964; Darwin S. Fenner, 1965; Edgar A.G. Bright, 1966; Rabbi Julian B. Feibelman, 1967; Harold Salmon Sr., 1968; Lucile Blum, 1969; Lester J. Lautenschlaeger, 1970; the Rev. J.D. Grey, 1971; Clayton L. Nairne, 1972; Norma Monnin Hynes, 1973; William B. Burkenroad Jr., 1974; Francis C. Doyle, 1975; Albert W. Dent, 1976; Richard West Freeman, 1977; the Rev. Peter V. Rogers, 1978; Harry McCall Jr., 1979.

James J. Coleman Sr., 1980; Armand LeGardeur, 1981; Archbishop Philip Hannan, 1982; Ed Rowley, 1983; Rosa Freeman Keller, 1984; Bryan Bell, 1985; Michael J. Molony Jr., 1986; Mary Pumilia, 1987; A. Louis Read, 1988; Dave Dixon, 1989; Carolyn Gay "Blondie" Labouisse, 1990; Norman Francis, 1991; Diana Lewis, 1992; John F. Bricker, 1993; Betty Wisdom, 1994; Anne Milling, 1995; Lester Kabacoff, 1996; Leah Chase, 1997; Sunny

Norman, 1998; Herschel L. Abbott Jr., 1999; Alden McDonald, 2000; Waldemar Nelson, 2001; C. Allen Favrot, 2002; Fran Villere, 2003; Moise Steeg Jr., 2004; Louis Freeman, 2005; Ruthie Frierson, 2006; and Bob Brown, 2007.

Categories: [Environment/Coastal erosion](#)

## Comments

### **martyfed says...**

Oh WOW!!

Who uptown hasn't received the TP Loving Cup??? Gee I am impressed.

Now let's see, King. How many murders can fit into that cup?

How many unwed mothers can fit into that cup?

How many failed schools can fit into that cup?

How many inmates in Angola from New Orleans can fit into that cup?

How many fortune 500 companies can fit into that cup? (trick question)

How many college graduates who are leaving New Orleans can fit into that cup?

How many corrupt politicians can fit into that cup?

How many New Orleanians living below the poverty level can fit into that cup?

And you are proud of this little cup? Oh I am sure you and the other recipients have done great things for the city. It's a shame they don't endure.

You and your kind have let a great city decay beneath your feet. While you and your debutants were swinging away to the beat of "I will never cease to love," the city has decended into the abyss. Congratulations on your great honor.

Posted on 03/21/09 at 11:15PM

### **greenmoney says...**

I'll think that the Loving Cup means somkething when a moderate income white woman who works with the homeless wins it.

The Loving Cup is the height of what is wrong with the disjointed New Orleans social scene.

Posted on 03/21/09 at 11:24PM

### **Campstblue says...**

Marty and Green, I totally agree. It is long past due that this crap be heaped into the dumpster of New Orleans history. Loving Cups???. Mr. Milling thanks for stopping coastal restoration. I will sleep better tonight knowing that this hurricane season will have no effect on New Orleans. You have done a great job.

Now, tell us, have you ever gottn' off your butt to go see the our coast erode? I think not. This self-congratulatory bovine effluvia is exactly whats wrong with this city. People who have the means to change this place, stroke themselves with baubles like Loving Cups.