

# THE INFORMED DEMOCRAT OF SWFL



LeeCountyDems.org

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LEE COUNTY

## Lee County Dems Gala February 1, 2024

*By Jim Goodale*

This year's Annual Fundraiser Gala honored the outstanding individuals leading the progressive charge and also served as a powerful reminder of our collective commitment to advancing democracy for all. Approximately 85 of our fellow Democrats attended, and the event raised approximately \$10,500. Participants gathered at the Broadway Palm on January 13 to share camaraderie and a buffet dinner. They enjoyed the infectious dedication and the energy of the evening's speakers.



The keynote speaker was Angie Nixon, a Member of the Florida House of Representatives District 13. Angie is a trailblazing leader, dedicated public servant, and fierce advocate for the people of Florida. A Jacksonville native and former union organizer, she has spent her career fighting for workers' rights, equity, and opportunity for all. She emphasized the importance of her district-wide door-knocking, which enabled her to win office despite the money raised by Republicans.

The guest speaker was Jayden D'Onofrio, Chairman of Florida Future Leaders PAC. Jayden is a dynamic and inspirational leader in youth organizing and political advocacy. As a college freshman, Jayden made history by raising record-breaking donations to blanket Florida's college campuses and register young Democrats. Now a sophomore, he remains steadfast in his mission to improve the lives of local community members and amplify youth representation across the Sunshine State. Jayden listed the economy, choice, and climate change as key issues of importance to his young demographic.

Several Dems received special recognition for their contributions to the work of the Lee County Democratic Party. Denise Merello received the "Postcard Powerhouse Award." Ellen Faun-Wood was named "Precinct Powerhouse." Dennis Raube was recognized as "Phone Bank Champion." Amy Blakely earned the title of "Canvassing Champion." Renard Biltgen's received the "Innovation Award." The many contributions of longtime Lee County Democratic activist, Sharon Davies, were recognized with the "Lifetime Legacy of Leadership" award.