

The JASAN spotlight is on...KATHY ARNES!

WE ASKED KATHY A FEW FUN QUESTIONS. HERE IS WHAT SHE SHARED...

Kathy's JA career...

Former President with JA of Greater Baton Rouge, Inc.



Share your JA career highlights...

I started my JA career in 1976 as a part-time center manager for the JA Company program in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, my hometown. At that time, the student company program was the only Junior Achievement program. The JA Companies met four nights per week from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm. Within five months, my position was made full-time, and I stayed in Baton Rouge for my 40 year career.

I went through several job titles as JA added programs, first the middle school Project Business program, then the elementary school Business Basics program. In 1985 we added the high school Applied Economics program, which used computers that JA provided.

After working for four different Executive Directors/Presidents, I was promoted to the position of President in 1999. During my 17 years as President, the organization changed and grew, both in programs offered and special events. (I may be the only person who attended 35+ Bowl-A-Thons!) In 2001, we established the Louisiana Legacy Golf Event, which was a high-level corporate marketing and client appreciation event. This became the premier golf event in our area.

In 2008, we had the opportunity to host the mobile JA Finance Park. This was an annual event which hosted approximately 3,000 eighth graders each year.

In 2016, my grandchildren (who live in Texas) were growing up so fast, so I decided the only way to spend more time with them was to retire. I retired in early 2017, but JA is still in my heart.

What was the BEST part of working for JA??

My favorite part of working for JA, is, of course, the people I've met along the way. Peers from across the country, and other countries as well. I had the opportunity to work with the JA Student Company program and developed friendships with both the adult Advisors and the High School Students, as the program met weekly for 30 weeks during the school year! I am still in touch with many of them today, both in person and on social media. It really makes you feel old when your "Achievers" became grandparents before you did!

It was very interesting to meet with all levels of individuals from Kindergarteners to CEOs of our sponsor firms. I was able to work with the school system, both in administration and in the schools. Our volunteers came from all different careers, and it was truly rewarding when the volunteers said they enjoyed the program so much, and often felt that they gained more than their students.

What was your first concert??

I will date myself by saying that the first concert I attended was Herman's Hermits, and the opening band was The Who! I may have been 15 at the time. And of course, Beatlemania hit hard!

What advice would you give to current JA staff across the country??

I would encourage current JA staff to participate in as many state, regional and national conferences as are offered, and any Leadership opportunities. Meet people in the same position as well as others. This will become your peer group, whom you can call for insight, information and sometimes just to vent. You will develop treasured friendships that will last a lifetime, long after you leave JA.