



# Biloxi Lions Club

## LIONS ROAR



Founded February 18, 1924  
<http://biloxilionsclub.org>

1st Edition

July 2020

### 2019-2020 OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT**  
MATT BONEY

**1ST VP**  
THOMAS QUAVE

**2ND VP**  
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**3RD VP**  
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**LION TAMER**  
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**ROAR EDITOR**  
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**2 YR DIRECTORS**  
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**3 YR DIRECTORS**  
HARVEY NIXON  
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**EX OFFICIO**  
WAYNE ROSS

The Lions of Biloxi  
present

*Biloxi's  
Mother of the Year  
2020*

66th Annual  
Award Presentation



July 1, 2020  
Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum



Mrs. Melissa Batia Williams  
Biloxi's Mother of the Year  
2020

## UPCOMING DATES, EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

<b>JULY 8</b>	Jessica Johnson, Infinity Science Center
<b>JULY 15</b>	Installation and Awards Luncheon, Seafood Museum Noon Luncheon
<b>JULY 16</b>	Board Meeting, Location TBA
<b>JULY 22</b>	Board Minutes Review, No speaker
<b>JULY 29</b>	Dr. Lawrence Bourgeois, Stem Cell Treatment
<b>AUG 12</b>	Tom McDougal, Merit Health

*The Biloxi Lions Club meet each Wednesday at noon*  
**The Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum, 1st floor**  
 115 E. 1st Street, Biloxi, MS 39530

## July 1, 2020 Club Meeting Recap

### 2020 Mother of the Year PROGRAM

Call to Order & Introduction of Master of Ceremonies  
Song: God Bless America  
Pledge of Allegiance  
Invocation  
Welcome Remarks & Introductions

Lion Matt Boney, *President*  
Lions Darrell Galey / Jerome Dodge  
Lion Penny Edwards  
Lion Rev. James 'Bo' Roberts  
Lion Cindy Bamburg, *Emcee*

### PAUSE FOR LUNCH

Introduction of Recipients in attendance  
Announcement of 2019 Mother of the Year  
Remarks by Nominator:  
Proclamation

Mrs. Pamela Bozeman  
Honorable Andrew "FoFo" Gilich  
Mayor, City of Biloxi  
Lions Cindy Bamburg/ Matt Boney/  
Penny Edwards  
Mrs. Melissa Batia Williams  
Lion Matt Boney

Presentation of Crystal Vase

Acceptance and Remarks  
Closing Remarks



**Top Left: L-R:**  
Lion Penny Edwards presenting Melissa Batia Williams the 2020 Mother of the Year Crystal Vase joined by Emcee Lion Cindy Bamburg and Biloxi Club President Lion Matt Boney

**Top Right:**  
Biloxi Mayor 'FoFo' Gilich proclaiming July 1, 2020 as Melissa Batia Williams Day as Biloxi's Mother of the Year.

**Far Left:**  
2020 Mother of the Year Presentation Emcee Lion Cindy Bamburg

**Left:**  
Melissa posing with her Aunt, Pamela Bozeman, who submitted her niece's name as the 2020 Biloxi's Mother of the Year.



## Mother of the Year Recipients

2020 Mrs. Melissa Batia Williams	1987 Mrs. Vetsie Sekul Gabrich
2019 Mrs. Heather Altman	1986 Mrs. Elizabeth Joachim
2018 Mrs. Alicia T. Tarrant	1985 Mrs. Patricia Caillavet
2018 Mrs. Lehwmon R. Skrmetti	1985 Mrs. Louella Arguelles
2017 Mrs. Paula April	1984 Mrs. Mary Margaret Wade
2016 Mrs. Amiee Gautreaux	1983 Mrs. Lou Broussard
2015 Mrs. Helen G. Ross	1982 Mrs. Betty Comstock
2014 Mrs. Geraldine Blessey	1981 Mrs. Florris Savarro
2013 Mrs. Jeanette Capuano	1980 Mrs. Alena Sekul Cerenich
2012 Mrs. Gwen H. Gollott	1979 Mrs. Una Broussard
2011 Mrs. Nicole Burgess Smith	1978 Mrs. Jacobina Sekul Gilich
2010 Mrs. Cecilia Gollott Schmidt	1977 Mrs. Betty Sekul
2009 Mrs. Barbara Lyons	1976 Mrs. Eula Switzer
2008 Mrs. Shannon R. Sablich	1975 Mrs. Della McCaughan
2007 Mrs. Donna Cruso	1974 Mrs. Irma Parker
2007 Mrs. Claudette Quigley	1973 Mrs. Audrey Murray
2006 No Award Given	1972 Mrs. W. F. McDonnell
2005 No Award Given	1971 Mrs. Charles Duggan, Jr.
2004 Mrs. Pat Smolcich	1970 Mrs. Fred Haise
2003 Mrs. Rosemary Sabbatini	1969 Mrs. Ovadia Gollotte
2002 Mrs. Clare "Susie" Bass	1968 Mrs. Marguerite Agregaard
2001 Mrs. Charlotte Breal	1967 Mrs. Claudia Gazzo
2000 Mrs. Angelina Mihojevich	1966 Mrs. Connie Tisdale
1999 Mrs. Margaret Pavlov Kuluz	1965 Mrs. Robert L. Miller
1998 Mrs. Georgia K. Lawrence	1964 Mrs. James P. Starks
1997 Mrs. Kay Simon Bankston	1963 Mrs. John Atkinson
1996 Mrs. Ursula M.S. Skrmetti	1962 Mrs. John Leonard
1995 Mrs. Jacqueline L. Wilson	1961 Mrs. Viola Davidson
1994 Mrs. Michelle Gruich Logan	1960 Mrs. Clare Sekul Hornsby
1993 Mrs. Lillie Lancon	1959 Mrs. Joseph Rusk
1992 Mrs. Opal Fehr	1958 Mrs. Eugene Peresich, Sr.
1991 Mrs. Nellie Cobb	1957 Mrs. Eugene Redding
1990 Mrs. Theresa Fountain	1956 Mrs. Catherine Clower
1989 Mrs. Beverly Romeo	1955 Mrs. Myriam LeBlanc
1988 Mrs. Juliet Wheeler	

**Special recognition was given to our 25th year recipient, Mother of the Year 1995 Mrs. Jacqueline L. Wilson, and our 50th year recipient Mother of the Year 1970 Mrs. Fred Haise, Sr.**

Photos courtesy of Lion Greg Crapo. Additional photos and videos of the Mother of the Year Presentation Program can be viewed on the Biloxi Lions Club website: [biloxilions.org](http://biloxilions.org)

## The Gift of Love

Dear Mr. Ross and Esteemed Members of the Biloxi Lions Club,

Melissa Batia Williams is, in my opinion, Mother of the Year. I am nominating my niece because, truth be told, she should be declared Mother of the Year for the last 18 years!

Melissa's first child, John Grayson, was born on April 28, 2002 at just 26 weeks gestation, weighing less than two pounds. After an excruciating four months in the hospital and suffering multiple life-threatening scares and medical emergencies, "Grayson" was discharged to his home and the care of his loving parents. As a practicing attorney with a passion for excellence, truth, and perfection, Melissa poured herself into her fragile child with the same fervor with which she approached the intricacies of her law practice. Under her loving care Grayson thrived, grew stronger, overcame still more challenges resulting from his extremely premature birth, and is now a junior in high school and a member of the BHS Golf Team. His younger brother, Brayden, came along when Grayson was just 7 and still confronting some of the troubles that resulted from his prematurity. Both boys grew strong in faith, character, and physique under their parents' care. Melissa has instilled a strong faith in her children and exemplifies all a mother should be while creating and maintaining a cohesive and supportive family unit.

Even though her law practice is demanding, Melissa's children are her first priority and constant source of pride. While she has litigated many successful legal proceedings, if you ask Melissa what is her proudest accomplishment she will no doubt say her boys. She has been an active volunteer at Nativity BVM Elementary school since Grayson first began school in 2008. Melissa has not only been a homeroom mother and volunteer for 12 years, she has served on the School Board for quite a few years, and is currently in her second term as President. Melissa is a long-time member of the Nativity Parent Association and served as President for multiple years. Melissa is a past member of the Biloxi Lions Club, relinquishing her membership only to concentrate more fully on her boys' activities. She may have more volunteer activities, awards, and accolades than I am aware of or have listed on the nominating form, but quite honestly when I look to her activities as a mother, the others escape my memory.

Both Grayson and Brayden have maintained active sports lives alongside their academics. Melissa, without fail, attends all of their events, has been a team mom for both, and assists the coaches as and when needed, on and off the field. She is truly a marvel and an example to us all for how to raise a family through both times of adversity and clear skies. Her understanding, love, and empathetic nature, along with her steady demeanor and fair and equal treatment of all she encounters, demonstrate to her children how a person of character lives. Throughout all of these years and dedicated involvement in her children's schools and sports endeavors, Grayson and Brayden have remained her top priority and their formation as children, adolescents, and eventually adults her true mission in life. As Grayson approaches adulthood and Brayden adolescence, we can truly look to Melissa and say "Job well done."

For all of these reasons and those that remain unspoken but are evident in the eyes of her boys, Melissa Batia Williams should be selected as the Biloxi Lions Club's 2020 "Mother of the Year!"

Respectfully,

Pam Bozeman