

Biography of the late Mayor Mark A. “Tony” Gulotta



The Bayou Plaquemine Waterfront Park was re-named the Mark A. “Tony” Gulotta Bayou Plaquemine Waterfront Park by the Plaquemine Board of Selectmen in late 2015, after the untimely death of Mayor Gulotta on September 11, 2015.

Mayor Gulotta had the vision for the Waterfront Park, and worked for some 13 years to obtain the millions in funding for various phases of the award-winning park, which is now the jewel of Plaquemine. Following is a brief biography on Mayor Gulotta:

Plaquemine Mayor Mark A. “Tony” Gulotta was born in Plaquemine on September 2, 1958. He graduated in 1977 and was the owner and manager of Shotgun Construction. He was married to the former Mary Sue Varnell, and is the father of two boys – Jeremy and Brad.

Mayor Gulotta was elected to his first term in 1992, and was sworn in on January 1, 1993. He was serving his sixth straight term as mayor, when he died in 2015. Some of his major accomplishments include:

Establishment of Bayou Plaquemine Waterfront Park – Mayor Gulotta worked tirelessly for some 13 years to obtain more than \$7 million in federal and state funding to help fund the creation and development of the Waterfront Park, and the freshwater pumping system that diverts water from the Mississippi River into the bayou. This is the centerpiece of Plaquemine, the pride of Plaquemine residents and is the only recreational park fronting the water in Iberville Parish.

COPAC - Under the Mayor’s leadership, the City acquired the vacant former Plaquemine High School (c. 1948) located in the heart of Plaquemine. The site was renamed the City of Plaquemine Activity Center (COPAC) in 1996 and has been developed into a recreational facility for public use and events. It includes a walking track, football field and gym, which are used for a wide variety of activities by individuals and teams.

Plaquemine City Park Improvements – Mayor Gulotta has led significant improvements to the park, including the Water Spray Park, a very popular water park used by kids throughout the summer, a Skateboard Park completed in 2008, increased parking, and other improvements. In addition, a master plan for the park was developed under his leadership, and further improvements were being planned at the time of his death.

Road overlay project - Completed a \$15 million road reconstruction and overlay project that included almost every street in Plaquemine in 2012.

Infrastructure improvements - Completed numerous infrastructure improvements to the city’s sewer and water system, including a new trunk line to send effluent from the city’s sewer system to the Mississippi River, instead of Bayou Plaquemine; and construction of a new \$11 million wastewater treatment plant.

Electrical system improvements – Directed more than \$4 million in improvements to the city’s electrical system (City Light & Water), which has resulted in greater reliability and efficiency for residents.

Louisiana Energy and Power Authority (LEPA) involvement- Mayor Gulotta was a board president and was serving as a board member at the time of this death. Plaquemine utilities are publicly-owned. It receives its electrical power from the Louisiana Energy and Power Authority, which is an 18 Louisiana city member utility organization that provides electric power to its member municipalities. His involvement in LEPA was critical to reducing and stabilizing electrical rates in the city.

Law enforcement - Increased funding to Plaquemine Police Department to provide for additional patrols in high crime areas.

Economic development - Worked with developers to annex the new development - The Island Country Club – into the city, the first major annexation project for Plaquemine in 20 years; and worked with parish and state agencies to promote economic development, including retail businesses, in the city.

Historic preservation - Assumed responsibility for maintenance of the Plaquemine Lock facility for several time periods when the state boarded up the building, in order to keep it operational. At the present time, the city is sharing responsibility for its maintenance with Iberville Parish and the State. Mayor Gulotta took a leadership role in historic preservation in the city, including restoring the old City Hall building (circa 1848) which now houses the Iberville Museum, the circa 1848 building that now houses the city’s state-of-the-art Plaquemine Police Department, and restored the old parish courthouse that now serves as Plaquemine City Hall.

Plaquemine Depot Market Project - Revitalization of the Depot into a unique downtown shopping area utilizing the Main Street Four Point Approach®. Opened in October 1998, the project is managed under the Plaquemine Main Street Program. The railroad depot was built in 1926 under Huey P. Long administration, acquired by the City in 1968 and used as the City Police Department until 1996.

Beautifying Plaquemine – Added landscaping and sidewalks along W.W. Harleaux and Capt. T.T. Harris streets; and obtained funding and developed a plan for ornamental street lighting and new street signs.

Main Street Program - Led the development of the Plaquemine Main Street Program, which holds annual July 4 and Christmas festivals, and promotes the downtown district.

LMA involvement - Has served as a state leader within the Louisiana Municipal Association and National League of Cities Small Cities Council.

ORGANIZATIONS

Mayor Gulotta was a member of the following organizations:

- Plaquemine Jaycees
- Elks Home Lodge #1398
- Krewe du Roi - past Board member
- Order of Alhambra Meuter
- Iberville Chamber of Commerce Executive Board Member - 1993 - 1997; 1999 to 2001
- Iberville Municipal Association - charter member since 1994
- Louisiana Energy and Power Authority (LEPA) - board member since 1993