

Keithley Johnson Barton

2009 King of Carnival

As Carnival Memphis celebrates our 78th Anniversary, Keithley Johnson Barton has been chosen to reign as King as we honor one of the most important industries in the Mid-South. The Community Service and Non-Profit industry is an integral part of not only the areas economic base, but also provides services to thousands of needy people. These organizations have become very close to our King's heart over his lifetime and it is with great pride that he represents the industry this year. King Keith states: "I am humbled to follow in the footsteps of my Father and my Grandfather as only the second third generation King of Carnival. More importantly, I am honored to represent the Civic and Community Service sector of our city. I have seen what an impact Carnival has had on local charities and I am excited about being a part of it."

King Keith Barton is an Officer and Director in Barton Ag Center, a John Deere farm equipment distributor with locations in Marion and Marked Tree, Arkansas. Our King is also involved in several farming operations in Arkansas. He is a partner in Barton Brothers Farms, a farming operation in Crittenden County; Bruins Plantation in Crittenden County; and New Hope Farms in St. Francis County. King Keith spent eleven years in various management roles with Barton Equipment Company and Barton Freightliner. He also was actively involved in the property and casualty insurance business for almost two decades.

King Keith continues the incredible royal legacy of the Barton family, which traces its Carnival roots to the inception of the organization. In 1934, just the fourth year of Carnival's existence, Keith's grandfather, Frank Barton, Sr. served as King. His father, Frank, Jr., was King in 1971 and four years later he presided over Carnival as President in 1975. King Keith's uncle, Jim, also served as King in 1987, and his cousin Coleman was Queen of Carnival in 1992. Keith's Carnival Memphis involvement started in 1969 when he served as a Royal Page for Queen Lee Willey



Julie, Keith and John Barton

along side the father of this year's Queen, John Phillips IV. Both of his brothers were also Carnival Pages as was Keith's son John.

Our King and his family have also been very involved in the Grand Krewe of Osiris for many years. Keith's father, Frank Barton, Jr., was Chairman of Osiris in 1965. Later, in 1970 he represented Osiris as their King. Keith served Osiris as Chairman in 1991 and then became their King in 1995. He has stayed involved with Osiris over the years and looks forward to their 75th anniversary celebration this year.

After graduating from The Webb School, Keith attended the University of Alabama. He is an avid Tide fan and has been known to sing "Sweet Home Alabama" on occasion. King Keith is married to the former Julie Davidson. They have been married for 28 years and have a son, John who is a sophomore at the University of Alabama. John will be a Scarab in the Royal Court of Carnival this year.

King Keith has been involved in many civic and community service organizations throughout the Mid-South and state. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of The Webb School in Bell Buckle, Tennessee and is also Chairman of its Building and Grounds Committee. Keith is a member of the 100 Club of Memphis, which is a support group for families of Memphis policemen and firefighters that have been killed in the line of duty. Over the years, our King has enjoyed volunteering for several Habitat for Humanity projects. Currently, King Keith spends much of his free time giving back to the community as a volunteer tutor at Downtown Elementary School. This has become one of his great passions that he looks forward to every week.

King Keith is a member of the Memphis Country Club and the Memphis Hunt and Polo Club. He is an avid golfer, hunter and runner and competes in numerous 5K races throughout the Mid-South. This year he received the Gold Medal in the 5K at the West Tennessee regional for the State Senior Olympics.