

Welcome to Carnival

"So, when does Carnival start?" That is probably the most common and predictable question I am asked each year, and the questioner, while betraying a certain detachment from our organization's true activities, is obviously thinking of that one event-filled week in June when traffic is stopped for motorcades and the Boll Weevils are in full merriment mode. That's a little like thinking that the 2016 presidential election season will begin the first week of November.

With this being the 85th Anniversary year for Carnival Memphis and the 50th for the Boll Weevils, we might find it instructive to view the calendar as a way of telling the bigger picture story of what Carnival is really all about. When I can quell my inner smart-aleck and not answer the question by saying, "it never ends," I would claim August as the starting point for the new year, as that is when we convene our Charity Selection Committee. In terms of the "Party with a Purpose," the purpose comes first, both philosophically and chronologically.

Following the selection of new charities, we have the announcement of our new Carnival King and Queen, then all of the new Royalty we celebrate at the individual Grand Krewe Coronations, and Krewes for Kids and other fund-raising activities. If our children's charities make up one pillar of Carnival's purpose, the other pillar involves our tribute to commerce in our city, manifest just a few weeks ago at our Business and Industry Salute Luncheon.

Ever since its beginnings 85 years ago, Carnival has recognized and celebrated the contributions of business and industry to the economic life of Memphis. For many years that was the cotton industry, but today we celebrate a different sector of the economy each year. This year we salute the automotive industry, represented by our Carnival King, Jay Keras. The bigger picture is that we spotlight the invaluable contributions of commerce to our city's vitality, the wealth-creating and job-creating power of entrepreneurship in a



Left to right: Lawrence Taylor Elliott and Eliza Elliott; Tim Elliott; Courtney Taylor Humphreys and Annie Humphreys; Jim Taylor; Mimi Taylor; Semmes Humphreys; Selden Humphreys; Margot and Chandler

free market economy. And just as the story of a city doesn't end with the close of the working day, our focus in Carnival Memphis continues beyond economic achievements, as we seek an alchemy that transforms success into service.

It is then—and I believe only then—that we realize our true potential as a city, a community that is hitting on all cylinders. That is what the compelling multi-generational story of the automotive sector, and the opportunities at Best Buddies, The Exchange Club Family Center and Stax Music Academy have in common. And every year, our selected children's charities and our chosen industry give us a roadmap to how we can become a greater city, the Memphis of our dreams. Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines!

President