

A Man for All Seasons:

Eugene Green excels in business and community service

By Dean M. Shapiro



Photo courtesy of Eugene Green

“It’s a big world out there and there’s a lot of opportunity. I don’t want to hear that something can’t be done. If it’s something I feel is productive that can be rewarding for me and also rewarding for the community, I will do it.”

With these words, Eugene Green Jr. sums up the guiding principles that have defined both his business and personal lives. They reflect nearly four decades of public service, as well as volunteer community service in his native New Orleans while presiding over a successful real estate firm that manages or owns several hundred properties.

Over his long career, Eugene has directed former Mayor Marc H. Morial’s Division of Economic Development for four prosperous years in the 1990s, and followed it up by heading the largest

- area-wise – urban industrial district in the nation.

He currently serves on several boards and commissions that enhance economic development in the city, including the Industrial Development Board and the Lakefront Management Authority. In his spare time, he coaches youth sports programs and has been an active leader in organizations ranging from the Boy Scouts to the Orleans Parish Democratic Executive Committee.

Most recently, Eugene was elected as a Joe Biden delegate to the Democratic National Convention.



Eugene Green and Eugene Sr.

Raised in Gentilly and New Orleans East, Eugene was a model student at St. Augustine High School, playing baritone in the school's renowned "Marching 100" band and excelling in both music and academics. He won some of the school's highest honors, including election as student body president and receiving the Purple Knight Award as the best all-around student. His extracurricular activities, plus graduating as salutatorian of his class, paved the way for his acceptance at Harvard University, the nation's oldest and most prestigious institution of higher learning.

After graduating from Harvard in 1980 with a B.A. in Economics, Eugene worked with a bank in Boston and with the Xerox Corporation before returning to New Orleans where he dedicated his life to "getting involved with making our city a better place."

Elaborating, he added, "I came back here because I'd seen a lot of progress in the city and I wanted to a part of it. I liked being

part of some of the positive things I was seeing at the time and still see going on right now."

New Orleans East, in the late 1970s/early 1980s, was booming as the fastest-growing area in Orleans Parish. In addition to shopping centers, hotels and many other types of businesses, new residential subdivisions were popping up in previously uninhabited sectors. This is where Eugene found his niche.

"I got involved with an organization called General Homes Corporation," Eugene recalled. "I was a manager and a salesperson for a subdivision (Oak Island) they were building in New Orleans East. That's where my career began in terms of my interest in real estate."

In the late '80s, Eugene started his own firm, Eastern New Orleans Real Estate. A year later he created Nationwide Real Estate Corporation, over which he still presides and runs, along with his wife, Jennifer, who he met at Harvard University.

Over the next half-dozen or so years, Eugene's success in his own business drew the attention of the newly-elected mayor, Marc Morial. On the first day of Morial's administration in 1994 Eugene was appointed to head the Office of Small and Emerging Business Development.



Eugene Green & Joe Biden (Elected Delegate to the 2020 Democratic National Convention)



"What we were able to accomplish in that office was a directory of minority- and women-owned businesses that we shared with the rest of the business community," Eugene explained. "We had ongoing seminars on how to do business with various public agencies like Entergy, the Convention Center, the Superdome and others. We also facilitated participation by minority- and women- owned businesses in the development of some major projects in New Orleans."

Two years later, Eugene was promoted by Morial to head the Mayor's Division of Economic Development, which consisted of eleven separate departments and more than 30 directors and employees. The division serves largely as a liaison between the mayor and the private sector, helping businesses prosper and directing revenue into the city's treasury.

"During my tenure, the division's profile was raised substantially in the business community," Eugene proudly noted. "We successfully facilitated the development of some major projects in New Orleans and we assisted thousands of business owners and entrepreneurs. Working within the offices of Neighborhood Commercial



Eugene Green & Mayor LaToya Cantrell

PHOTOS COURTESY OF EUGENE GREEN



Jennifer & Eugene Green

Revitalization and Urban Development, we were able to assist in the development of business corridors along Freret Street, Magazine Street, Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard and others.”

Also during his term at the helm of Economic Development, Eugene helped resurrect the Industrial Development Board. “It had been dormant for a while but I got city council members to make appointments to it and today that agency is still busy in the economic development of our city.”

In 2000 Eugene was selected to head up the New Orleans Regional Business Park. The industrially zoned district, centering along Almonaster Boulevard and Old Gentilly Road in New Orleans



East, comprised several thousand acres that had been largely undeveloped.

The district today includes nearly 90 businesses that generate billions of dollars and employs several thousand people. According to Eugene, many of those businesses were attracted to the park during his tenure and are still doing business there. Also under his leadership there was a significant expansion of the Folgers



Jonathan, Eugene & Eugene Green III

Coffee plant, thanks to an electrical substation he was instrumental in obtaining for them.

As he explained, “Back then we were having a lot of rolling brown-outs and blackouts. In a plant that size we’re talking millions of dollars in lost production time when equipment goes down. The Folgers people were talking about relocating out of New Orleans. So we got together with MetroVision, the city and the state and we met with Entergy and got them to build the substation. It’s been working well for them ever since.”

Since stepping down from his top

position at the industrial district, Eugene has kept busy with his company and his civic and political activities. Along with his two sons, they publish and disseminate, online, an informative newsletter titled “The Green Business Report.” The newsletter presents timely articles and aims to help people find jobs by running an up-to-date resource list of government agencies and private businesses looking to fill openings, along with those entities’ contact information.

In addition to his two sons, Eugene and his wife also have a daughter who recently finished her pre-med program at LSU and expects to be attending medical school in the near future. The couple, who have been married for 37 years, also have a three year-old granddaughter who they enjoy spending time with.

Acknowledging the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic which has been wreaking havoc on the New Orleans economy for the past several months, Eugene expressed confidence for New Orleans’ recovery, as well as remaining afloat with his business. “We’ll still be standing and there will likely be some long-term gains from the response to the economic challenges that many businesses and investors will overcome,” he declared.



Jonathan, Eugene, Melanie, Jennifer, Eugene III, and granddaughter Chloe

PHOTOS COURTESY OF EUGENE GREEN