

Leadership Pearland Class of 2026 Graduation Luncheon

Pearland, TX – June 18th, 2026 – The Pearland Leadership Class of 2026 attended the Pearland Chamber of Commerce state of Leadership Luncheon. This event was presented by TDECU and featured Four-time WNBA Champion and MVP Cynthia Cooper as the keynote speaker for the luncheon.

The State of Leadership luncheon started with opening words from Dr. Daniel Combs (Alvin ISD) and Chair Elect for the Executive board of the Pearland Chamber.

WNBA Star Cynthia Cooper delivered an incredible and motivational keynote presentation. Cynthia detailed her journey in basketball, which led her from California to Italy and eventually to the WNBA where she would go on to lead the Houston Comets to the Championship. Cynthia detailed the trials that she faced and overcame along with her mindset of resilience. Cynthia's speech was a testament to *the never give up spirit* that it takes to become a Champion. This keynote was moderated by Patti Smith.

The 2026 Leadership Class was honored as officially graduating from the Leadership Program. The 2026 Class speaker was Katya Copeland. Katya recapped the year 2026 in Pearland Leadership which started at a camp retreat. The experience of the Leadership program was summarized for its building not just networks and professional colleagues but long-lasting friendships. Katya spoke on all the various leadership days and impact of the graduates, seeing how the Pearland community functioned and why it is truly the best place to live and work in. The 2026 class Graduates were, Adrian Perez, (Pearland Economic Development) Ann Vo, (Endress+Hauser) Clint Pledger (Pearland Police Department), Greg Neail (TDECU) Katya Copeland (City of Pearland) Lambrini Nicopoulos (San Jacinto College), Kim Barfield (Pearland ISD Education Foundation), Mercy Woods (The Right Choice Financial and Tax Service), Norma Guerra-Martinez (Gulf Coast CASA), Raquel Hammond (Pearland Chamber of Commerce), Shameya Ceasar (Memorial Hermann), Tricia Groth (Alvin College) and William Trevino (Alvin College)

The Leadership luncheon also saw the first presentation of the Silver Pear Award, which recognized a Leadership Pearland graduate for their continuous contributions to the Pearland Community. The Inaugural recipient of the Silver Pear Award was Ruby Sandars. Ruby spoke on the importance of giving back to the community and the journey that is leadership and learning.

The luncheon closed with words from Jim Johnson Pearland Chamber President/CEO thanking all the event sponsors and attendees. The Pearland Chamber also encouraged future applicants to the Leadership program as the enrollment for the 2027 class is now available.