

DISCLOSURE DIVISION

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- ☒ **WAIVER REQUEST**
☐ **ANSWER**
☐ **RECONSIDERATION REQUEST**
☒ **UNTIMELY**

DATE: 1/29/2021

DOCKET #: 2021-088

Ashley Wimberley, Director
Disclosure Division

FILER INFORMATION

Name: Rodneya Melene' Hart
Address: 926 Rittiner Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70806
Office/Position: State Arts Council
Dates of Service: 2017-2019 (2019 Final)
Number of Disclosures and/or Amendments Filed with Agency: 3

REPORT INFORMATION

Name of Report: Tier 2.1 Annual Personal Financial Disclosure covering calendar year 2018
Report ID: PFD20001232
Original Due Date: 5/15/2019
NOD Received: 1/15/2020 - Phillip Hart (Husband)
PFD/Answer Due Date based on NOD: 1/27/2020
PFD/Answer Filed: 2/27/2020

LATE FEE INFORMATION

Amount of Late Fee: \$1500
Days late from receipt of NOD: 31
Total days late from initial due date: 288
Late Fee Order Received: 3/14/2020
Payment/Waiver Request Due Date: 7/6/2020 (Covid-19 Extension)
Waiver Request Received: 1/11/2021

COMMENTS:

Mrs. Rodneya Hart stated "a series of extenuating circumstances that predicated her resignation from the LSAC", contributed to her late filing. On 11/7/2019, she officially resigned from the council, as she was not allotted the time from her work schedule to attend the LSAC Meetings. When she resigned she thought all of the responsibilities associated with the board, would also cease. Her husband, Phillip Hart, usually filed their taxes. However, became disabled in 2019. She had to take on tasks that Mr. Hart would historically complete without her, as he "cannot reliably pay bills on time or complete most household tasks". Their 2018 taxes were filed 11/20/2019. Mrs. Hart was announced as the Mid-City, Grand Marshal of Mardi Gras on 1/6/2020. This was a much more enormous undertaking, than she realized; She had to make many appearances and attend associated events. She stated her husband signed for the NOD-FF (on 1/15/2020), but did not give her the mail until 1/18/2020, when he pulled it from a stack of mail held in a box for days- that he had forgotten to give to her. Her best friend since college, Alex Becnel, died on 1/19/2020, from an apparent overdose. She stated she was in a "fog and focused on keeping up appearances" for her Mardi Gras duties and work; All while consoling the grieving family, helping with the arrangements as much as she could from Baton Rouge, writing his eulogy, working her full-time job running 4 museums as the Director for the LA State Museum, and closing out the last month of her position as the Curator for the Healthcare Gallery. She stated she "absentmindedly" put the NOD-FF in her purse. An on 2/27/2020 when she found it, she filed the missing PFD. She then spoke with LSAC employee, Cheryl Castille about filing and Ms. Castille agreed to help Mrs. Hart with submit a Waiver or Appeal. Unfortunately, Ms. Castille passed away on 9/20/2020 and she was unable to get the help Ms. Castille offered. *The LA State Arts Council and Office of Cultural Development, submitted as letter on Mrs. Hart behalf, requesting the Ethics Board consider Mrs. Hart's Untimely Waiver Request.

OTHER LATE FEE INFORMATION

Disclosure Statements:

- Other Outstanding Statements: No
- Other Outstanding Late Fees: Yes: 2019 \$1500
- Prior Late Fees: No
- Reassessed Late Fees: No

Campaign Finance:

- Outstanding Late Fees: No
- Prior Late Fees: No



BILLY NUNGESSER
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF THE ARTS

KRISTIN P. SANDERS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

January 7, 2021

Ashley Wimberley
Personal Financial Disclosure Director
Ethics Administration
P. O. Box 4368
Baton Rouge, LA 70821
Via email to Ashley.Wimberley@la.gov

Dear Ms. Wimberley:

On behalf of the Louisiana State Arts Council and the Office of Cultural Development, we respectfully request the Louisiana Board of Ethics consider an untimely waiver request for Rodneya Hart. In the enclosed letter, Ms. Hart outlines the circumstances that led to her missing the 2018 personal financial disclosure deadlines and her failure to respond to the notices of delinquency. Please do not hesitate to contact our office at 225-342-8200 if you require additional information.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristin P. Sanders
Assistant Secretary

Mary Lee
Chair, Louisiana State Arts Council

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JAN 14 '21 PM3:00

To Who It May Concern
Mary Lee et al:

These are the series of extenuating circumstances that predicated my early departure from the LSAC. Mostly three contributing factors, disabled husband, and traumatic and meaningful life events contributed to my tardiness timeline.

I resigned:

- I started as Division Director at Capitol Park Museum under the DCRT office of State Museums on January 2, 2019. I was a member of the Louisiana State Arts Council in good standing at that point.
- Soon after I started the position, we had an LSAC meeting. I was not given the time off by my supervisor to attend, I had just started this job and did not have any time saved, so I missed the meeting. When I talked to Cheryl Castille about this, she said she would speak with Julie Sampson about the importance of allowing me to attend the quarterly meetings and remain active with the council.
- This was an ongoing conversation where Cheryl, Kristen, and I were supposed to speak with my supervisor about my attendance, but it did not come to fruition. Eventually, I told Cheryl that I would leave the council because I could not pull my weight in attendance and did not want to be an unreliable member. This conversation occurred around June. She asked me to hold off from withdrawing.
- Nothing changed in the coming months. On 11/7/2019, I officially resigned from the council and thought all of my responsibilities in association with it would also go away.

My husband didn't file the taxes in time:

- My husband, Phillip Hart, usually takes care of the taxes in a timely fashion. He did not complete the 2018 taxes in 2019. He is disabled, and I have had to take on tasks he historically met without me. Through the depression and physical pain, he cannot reliably pay the bills on time, complete most household tasks, and now we are outsourcing the taxes.
 - We did finally file our 2018 taxes on 11/20/2019

I was a Grand Marshal:

- I also was announced as the Grand Marshal of MidCity Gras on January 6
 - This was a much more enormous undertaking than I had realized, with many appearances, performances, and events associated with the events.
- The first notice my husband signed for it was received on 1/10/2020. I finally got it from him on 1/18/2020 when he pulled it out of a stack of mail that had been sitting in a box for days that he forgot to give me.

My best friend died:

- January 19, 2020, my best friend since college, Alex Becnel, was found dead in his room from an apparent overdose. <https://www.moethefunerals.com/obituaries/Richard-Becnel-2/#!/Obituary>
 - I was in a fog. I focused on keeping up appearances for the Mardi Gras duties, work and consoling his family, helping with the arrangements as much as I could from Baton Rouge, and writing his eulogy. I worked my full-time job running four museums as the

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Louisiana State Museum Division Director and closing out the last month of my position as Curator for The Healthcare Gallery.

I turned in my paperwork late:

- I noticed that I absentmindedly put the last letter in my purse. Upon finding it on February 27, 2020, and immediately turned in the form.

Cheryl died

- I spoke with Cheryl about the late date, and she said that she would help me with the request for a waiver or appeal
- I received the 3/14/2020 letter after I had turned in the paperwork
- I spoke with Ashley Wimberley, Ethics Administration Personal Financial Disclosure Director, on September 14, 2020, about my filing and CC'd Cheryl.
- I did talk to Cheryl Castille about all of this, but due to her untimely illness and later death on September 20, 2020, we have not been able to find a reconciliation.

Please consider these things in assessing a possible waiver for the fee and reinstatement of good standing with the State.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

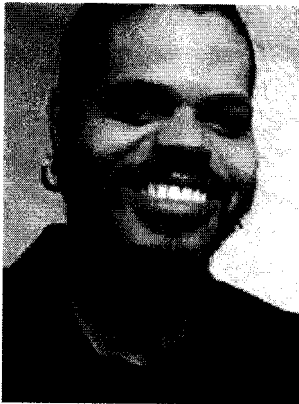
Rodneya Hart

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rodneya Hart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rodneya" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Hart".



Richard Alexander "Alex" Becnel

1984 - 2020



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Richard Alexander Becnel 'Alex', 35 of Harvey, Louisiana departed this earthly world on January 18th 2020. He was born April 23, 1984 in Marrero. The son of James and Melanie (Ivie) Becnel. He was a graduate of Brother Martin High school where he was a member of NJROTC and an actor/singer in the drama club. He travelled to Wales, Scotland, Ireland and England as a Student Ambassador for the United States. He attended Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. A lifelong interest in the culinary arts, Alex was an accomplished chef working in the restaurant industry in and around New Orleans. He is survived by his parents James

on Monday morning from 9 am until 11 am. Family and friends may view and sign the online guest book at www.mohefunerals.com.

To Plant Memorial Trees in memory, please visit our [Sympathy Store](#).

Published in The Times-Picayune from Jan. 24 to Jan. 27, 2020.

MEMORIAL EVENTS

JAN Visitation

27 09:00 - 11:00 AM

[Mothe Funeral Home Harvey](#)



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JAN Funeral service

27 11:00 AM



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Funeral services provided by
Mothe Funeral Home Harvey
[2100 Westbank Expressway](#)
[Harvey, LA 70058](#)
[\(504\) 367-3920](#)

[View Printed Guest Book](#)

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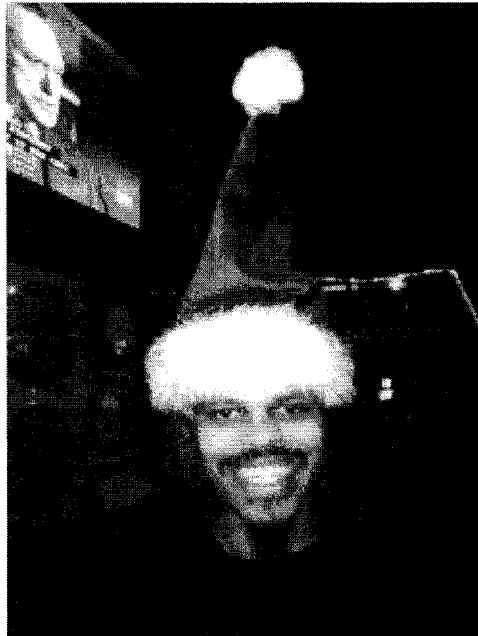
16 entries

February 18, 2020

James and Melanie we are truly sorry for your loss, if there is anything we can do please let us know. Keep your head to the sky.

Alton & Lynn Alexis

February 1, 2020



February 1, 2020