



Mystic Krewe of Femme Fatale

NEWS RELEASE

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Mystic Krewe of Femme Fatale Kicks Off 2026 Mardi Gras Season with Annual Reveal Party

New Orleans Culture Bearer Queen Tahj to serve as 2026 Grand Marshal

NEW ORLEANS – The Mystic Krewe of Femme Fatale officially launched its 2026 Mardi Gras season Saturday, July 12, 2025, with its annual Reveal party, announcing the parade theme, grand marshal, queen selection and float positions. The event took place in the Great Hall at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

The 2026 theme, “Mystic Krewe of Femme Fatale presents Femmes Just Want to Have Fun,” was unveiled to krewe members in a high-energy celebration that included performances by New Orleans artist Rude Jude and MKFF’s own CherChez La Femme.

Leading the parade as grand marshal will be Queen Tahj — Tahj Williams, a 27-year-old cultural ambassador, Mardi Gras Indian, and cybersecurity professional. Williams, known as Queen Tahj in the Black Masking Indian community, has participated in the tradition since 2009 as a member of the Young Eagles Tribe. A Tulane University graduate with honors, she balances her professional career with mentoring youth on the art of suit-beading and preserving New Orleans’ cultural heritage.

Queen Tahj was selected for her dedication to community engagement, cultural education, and representation of the vibrant spirit of New Orleans. She was the creator of the official logo for Super Bowl LIX, hosted by New Orleans on February 9, 2025. Her appearances include performing at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, Teen Vogue features, and the Grammy-winning Jon Batiste “Freedom” performance.

“We are beyond thrilled to have Queen Tahj as our grand marshal,” said Founding Visionary Dr. Gwendolyn V. Rainey. “Her artistry and leadership embody the essence and mission of Femme Fatale — strength, community, and cultural pride.”

Kimberly Early, president of the Mystic Krewe of Femme Fatale, added: “We are proud to showcase the remarkable talent and spirit of Queen Tahj. She truly embodies the ideal Femme through her community service, achievements, and dedication to preserving our culture. This year’s theme— ‘Femmes Just Want to Have Fun’ is more than a song lyric, it’s

all about joy and empowerment. It's a celebration of the strength, beauty, and diversity of the women who represent Femme Fatale across the country."

The most anticipated moment of the evening came with the announcement of the 2026 Queen-Select. Among the distinguished candidates – financial professional Deidre Carraby, law enforcement professional Lisa Ballard Jackson, and project manager Yeariska Smith. But in the end, there could be only one and Jackson took home the prize.

Lisa Ballard Jackson is a dedicated law enforcement professional, youth mentor, community leader and history maker whose life is defined by service, purpose, and passion. Her extensive credentials include certification from the American Correctional Association in Adult and Juvenile Corrections. She is a 1993 graduate of the Louisiana State University Police Officer Standards & Training (POST) Academy, and has completed ongoing professional development through the Juvenile Justice Governor's Conference and the St. Bernard Basic Training Academy. After Hurricane Katrina devastated the New Orleans region in 2005, Jackson shifted her focus towards building youth programs. She launched Friday Night Mentoring and late-night basketball, then spearheaded the revival of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program in St. Bernard Parish. Lisa has taught the program since 2010, and currently serves as Supervising Commander.

A 1994 graduate of Francis T. Nicholls High School, Lisa attended Southern University in New Orleans, where she played basketball for two years before following a lifelong calling to become a police officer. In 1992, she began her law enforcement career with the St. Bernard Sheriff's Office, becoming one of the first officers hired at the newly opened Juvenile Detention Center. From 2004-2005, she served as co-commander of the Juvenile Detention Center and was nominated for Deputy of the Year.

Lisa has been married to Richard Leon Jackson Jr., for 37 years. Together, they have one son, Richard Leon Jackson 111, and are blessed with three beautiful granddaughters: Richelle Lisa Marie Jackson, Richaune Jonee' Marie Jackson, and Rikki Tyrireal Jackson.

As part of the Reveal, krewe lieutenants participated in float selections with a vote for the best "Boots on the Ground," igniting the crowd and highlighting the creativity behind each boot's design.

Preceding the Reveal, MKFF inducted 353 new members. As if by divine order, the 2026 parade season will see MKFF's membership soar to 2,026 members across 26 states. Femme Fatale, voted best Mardi Gras parade by [nola.com](https://www.nola.com) in 2024, will roll Sunday, February 8, 2026, at 11 a.m., following the traditional Uptown route.

About the Mystic Krewe of Femme Fatale

Established in 2013, the Mystic Krewe of Femme Fatale's mission is to offer women of all creeds and colors a unique opportunity to promote and support New Orleans' cultural landscape through participation in the annual Mardi Gras season, while uplifting the community through various endeavors of engagement, awareness and social enhancement in order to further the growth of the organization. With current membership of over 2,000 women, it was formed for social purposes, to establish between its members ties of friendship, sociability and esteem, for the promotion of good fellowship.