



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Greenville Society for Human Resource Management Recognizes Chapter Award Winners**

**Greenville, SC** — The Greenville Chapter of SHRM (the Society for Human Resource Management) recently announced their 2020 HR Award recipients, which include four awards received by chapter members John Serpa, Leslie Hayes, April Simpkins and Debra McAlister Ham.

“Each year, our HR Awards celebrate the best of HR through our Greenville chapter,” said Leanne Fuller, Board President of GSHRM. “Each of these men and women have shown continuously their dedication and support of practices and efforts that go beyond the scope of a typical HR professional, and are changing the field for the better. We are honored to recognize each of them for their work in this industry.”

The award winners are as follows:

### **HR Rising Star Award**

**John Serpa, Director of Human Resources, TPM**

After retiring from the United States Marine Corps in 2018, John Serpa joined a TPM as the Director of HR and helped the company earn its first Best Places To Work designation in 2019 and 2020. As a volunteer leader, Serpa works tirelessly with veteran organizations to address gaps in military to civilian career transition preparation. Inspired by his insights, GSHRM will launch a new veteran education program called, “Cracking the Code: HR Intel on Civilian Employment” in 2021.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Unsung Hero Award**

**April Simpkins, Chief Human Resources Officer, Totalhr**

While April Simpkins’ human resources career has spanned three decades, her work has focused on DEI over the last five years. She has worked with numerous executives, managers, and community leaders as a DEI consultant to assist in establishing sustainable programs and fostering buy-in from decision makers. As Chief HRO of Totalhr, Simpkins believes that every person should be celebrated for their differences and given an opportunity to contribute to their organization’s success.

**Human Resources Professional of the Year Award**  
**Leslie Hayes, President & Managing Partner, The Hayes Approach**

After serving as a human resources executive in the corporate world, Leslie Hayes was inspired to create The Hayes Approach, a business leveraging top-level human resources to small and mid-sized businesses. She has been active in supporting the business community, launching the Kim S. Miller Family Enterprise Institute of South Carolina at Anderson University and serving as its inaugural advisory council chair. Hayes also served on an advisory group for the City of Greenville to provide guidance on reopening businesses safely in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Lifetime Achievement Award**  
**Debra McAlister Ham, Director of Human Resources for the County of Greenville**

Debra Ham has led an exemplary career in human resources and is continuously sought after for her wise counsel on all things HR. Ham has overseen the implementation of several technological advancements for The County of Greenville's HR System, coordinated and supported the County's COVID response efforts, and helped provide uninterrupted services throughout the pandemic by working with administration, department heads, elected and appointed officials to ensure a safe environment for employees, including over 1200 first responders. Ham has successfully managed change over the years and has given her time in service on the board of SC Business Coalition on Health, the United Way, Leadership Greenville and through mentorship.

**About GSHRM**

Greenville SHRM (GSHRM) is the area's premier human resource organization. With over 500 members, the chapter provides a forum for leadership and learning discussions that impact Greenville's business environment. Our work helps attract and retain world class companies and talent in the Upstate community. GSHRM provides tremendous value to human resource and business professionals through educational opportunities, networking with community leaders and peers, and developing meaningful relationships that aid in professional and personal growth. Learn more at [Together4HR.org](https://www.together4hr.org) and on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/gshrm).

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