

James “Pepper” Rutland Inducted into Greater Baton Rouge Business Report Business Hall of Fame

Pepper Rutland was honored by Business Report and Junior Achievement at the 2022 Business Awards Hall of Fame Gala for his contributions in leading MMR Group, the largest privately-owned electrical and instrumentation contractor in the US.



Baton Rouge, Louisiana Mar 24, 2022 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - [MMR Group](#) is proud to announce that the Greater Baton Rouge Business Report has named MMR Founder and President/CEO James B. “Pepper” Rutland as its 2022 Hall of Fame Laureate. As the founder of the largest open-shop electrical and instrumentation company in the nation, Rutland’s determination and entrepreneurial spirit have undeniably shaped the industrial construction industry and provided thousands of careers for families across the globe.

Pepper Rutland was featured in [Business Report’s March 2022 issue](#) and recognized on March 9th by the Greater Baton Rouge Business Report and Junior Achievement at the 38th annual Business Awards and Hall of Fame gala dinner. The sold-out event, held at the Crowne Plaza Executive Center, included a [special video tribute](#) to Pepper’s life and legacy, highlighting his upbringing in the Capital City, his journey through academics and athletics, and how lessons learned that have been key ingredients to

maintaining a successful business for the last 30 years.

“The most important lesson of success was given to me by my mother before her passing,” said Pepper Rutland, as he addressed the audience. “Be understanding with the young, compassionate to the aged, sympathetic to the striving, and tolerant of the weak because during your lifetime, you will have been all of these.”

Pepper has encountered numerous challenges throughout his life and career, stressing that in addition to the strong upbringing from his mother, it was these hurdles that pushed him to strive harder to achieve success. “You know, I never learned anything from winning, but everything from losing,” he shared.

Pepper Rutland was born in Baton Rouge, La. in 1950. He attended Baton Rouge High School, where he was a two-way football player under legendary coach, Leon McGraw. Rutland continued his athletic career at Louisiana State University, playing outside linebacker and serving as defensive team captain in 1972.

After graduating from LSU as a member of its construction technology program’s first class, Rutland ran the instrument division at his first job under Leonard Matthews and Bob McCracken, aiding in growing the small business to nearly \$40 million in annual revenue.

McCracken was soon ready to retire, and he sold the company to a private equity firm in the 1980s, appointing Rutland as CEO and COO of the newly renamed MMR Holding. The New York-based firm decided to go public, and at the hands of a corporate outsider without knowledge of the company culture and genuine care for its employees, MMR Holding went into bankruptcy. Leaving thousands of employees without a job, Pepper learned quickly what happens when money replaces the employee at the heart of an organization.

In the years that passed, Pepper recalls that his friends and former employees would contact him wanting to know what “we were going to do next.” In 1991, Rutland decided to bring the company back, but under his terms, establishing MMR Group.

“It was more of a cultural thing that pulled us back. MMR has a unique kind of culture that you’re just not going to find anywhere else,” recalls MMR Shareholder and Vice President Leeland Kilpatrick.

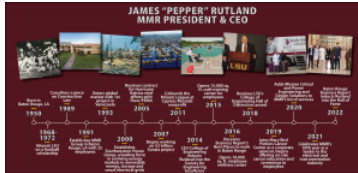
“He (Pepper Rutland) has built a culture that I’m not sure many places have,” says MMR Vice President and Estimating Manager Jeramiah Blum. “MMR treats its employees like family – because they are.”

Under Rutland’s governance, the company achieved early, rapid success, pursuing international projects and aiding in Hurricane Katrina restoration efforts in contract with Fluor/FEMA. MMR continues to prosper under Pepper’s same values, innovative spirit, and unwavering drive to succeed, with revenues of \$768 million a global workforce of 5,500 employees. MMR has garnered numerous national awards, consistently named top specialty contractor by Engineering News-Record (ENR), top performing electrical contractor by Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), and Best Places to Work in Baton Rouge by the Baton Rouge Business Report and the Greater Baton Rouge Society for Human Resource Management.

As a Baton Rouge native, Pepper Rutland remains adamant about keeping MMR’s Headquarters in his hometown and supporting philanthropies and academic programs within his community. Pepper supports [Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center through a corporate sponsorship](#) that includes a gift to

expand and advance cancer care for its employees and the community at large. His passion for mentoring [young construction and engineering students](#) is also evident in his support of the LSU College of Engineering, establishing two new engineering laboratories, and [being inducted into the LSU Society for Engineering Excellence](#).

Pepper does not recognize his success without mentioning the love and support of his wife, Connie, and children, Kennan and Michael.



Media Contact

MMR Group

aleach@mmrgrp.com

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