

Tuscaloosa Mayor Receives New National Disaster Leadership Award

Walt Maddox Recognized for Leading 2011 Tornado Recovery

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox was humble as he accepted a new nationwide award to honor city and county officials who lead their communities well through a major disaster.

"I am not deserving," said the five-term mayor who was recognized for his leadership after a monster EF4 tornado devastated the Alabama city in April 2011, killing 41 and damaging or destroying more than 5000 homes and 600 businesses.



Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox receiving the Tommy Longo Disaster Leadership Award from LeadersLink Founder Kathleen Koch and members of Longo's family.

The Tommy Longo Disaster Leadership Award was created by [LeadersLink](#), a nonprofit that harnesses and shares elected officials' disaster lessons learned to help other communities better prevent, prepare for and recover from crises.

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*Kathleen Koch, LeadersLink
Founder and Executive
Director*

Nominations for the award came from around the country, with nominees leading recoveries from wildfires, floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes. The three-judge panel praised Maddox, saying, “While it took almost ten years, as it often does in large disasters, the community is so much better for Mayor Maddox’s leadership in the disaster and in the recovery of his community.”

LeadersLink Founder and Executive Director Kathleen Koch explained that after a cluster of tornadoes swept through

the university town of Bowling Green, Kentucky in 2021, Maddox and his staff volunteered to speak with them about Tuscaloosa's tornado experience. "He really epitomizes the spirit of this award," she said. "Giving, sharing, passing on what he's learned to help others in need."

The award is named after the late mayor of Waveland, Mississippi, John "Tommy" Longo. He led the city's successful recovery from Hurricane Katrina and volunteered to serve as one of LeadersLink's first mentors, sharing what he had learned with other mayors whose towns had been damaged by hurricanes.

Koch presented the award November 8 at the Municipal Leadership Institute in Orange Beach, Alabama, organized by the [Alabama League of Municipalities](#) which nominated Maddox.

"We're all going to face a crisis. Be ready for that moment," Maddox told the audience of mayors and city leaders. "If you're ever in trouble, just know we're going to be there for you." Mayor Longo's sisters, daughter and son-in-law joined in the award presentation. LeadersLink is now accepting nominations for the 2023 Tommy Longo Disaster Leadership Award [on its website](#).

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