

# Illuminate the Rock

Rotary  
La Petite Roche 

## Rotary Club 99: Tuesday, March 7, 2023

### About The Program: Arkansas Commerce Secretary Hugh McDonald with Club 99er Jay Chesshir

Building and maintaining an economy that will create a "brighter, more prosperous future for all Arkansans," is the stated goal of new Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders. Hugh McDonald, former Entergy Arkansas CEO, is the man tasked with carrying out Sanders' vision as Secretary of Commerce.

McDonald will join Club 99er and Little Rock Regional Chamber President and CEO Jay Chesshir on Tuesday for a moderated discussion about the future of the Arkansas economy. McDonald and Chesshir will talk about economic development recruitment efforts of the Sanders administration, provide an overview of the new super site at the Little Rock Port and discuss the types of industry Arkansas is best positioned to attract in the future.



**Hugh T. McDonald** was appointed Secretary of Commerce of Arkansas by Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders in 2023.

He served as president and chief executive officer of Entergy Arkansas, Inc. from 2000 until his retirement in 2016. Entergy Arkansas is the largest electric utility in the state, serving over 700,000 customers with annual revenues exceeding \$2 billion. Hugh joined Entergy in 1982 as an engineer at Waterford 3 nuclear generating plant in Louisiana. He held various management positions in the distribution, transmission, customer service, retail marketing and regulatory business functions in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas. Prior to working for Entergy, Hugh was employed by Black and Veatch Consulting Engineers in Overland Park, Kansas.

Hugh is a past Board member of the United States Chamber of Commerce, the University of Arkansas Sam Walton College of Business Advisory Board and the University of Arkansas Little Rock College of Business Advisory Council. He also served as past Board Chairs of the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, the Little Rock Regional Chamber, Fifty for the Future, the Arkansas Research Alliance, the Arkansas Career Education and Workforce Development Board, the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences Board of Advisors and the Nature Conservancy of Arkansas. Hugh currently serves on the board of Trustees of The Nature Conservancy of Arkansas and the North Dakota State University Foundation.

Hugh holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Construction Management from North Dakota State University, 1980; and earned an MBA from the University of New Orleans in 1987. Hugh and his wife, Michelle, have three children.

**Jay Chesshir, CCE** is the 15th President and CEO of the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce in its 153-year history. He began his career at the Little Rock Regional Chamber in February 2005 serving as their Economic Development Vice President, Senior Staff Executive for Fifty for the Future and Executive Director of the Metro Little Rock Alliance, an eleven-county economic development marketing coalition.

Under his leadership, the Chamber has directly worked projects accounting for over \$4.1 billion in new and expanded capital investment, more than 25,900 jobs and \$933 million in new annual payroll for the metro Little Rock region.

In 2016, he was elected national chair of the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) Board of Directors, representing more than 7500 chamber

professionals from over 1300 chambers of commerce across the United States and Canada. In August 2017, he became the only person in ACCE's 103-year history elected to serve a second term as their Board Chair. In addition, Jay currently serves on the UA Little Rock College of Business Advisory Board, UA Little Rock College of Engineering & Information Technology Leadership Council, Little Rock Technology Park Authority Board, Venture Center Board and U.S. Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100. He is also a Ford Foundation Fellow of the ACCE Regionalism and Sustainable Development Program.

Jay was selected to serve on the Arkansas Task Force on Non-Baccalaureate Postsecondary Education to study workforce development issues facing the state as well as the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Higher Education. He is a former chairman of the Arkansas Economic Developers. The Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce and Associated Industries of Arkansas recognized him for his outstanding representation of the Arkansas business and economic development community during the 83rd Legislative General Assembly.

Jay served as Amendment 2 Campaign Committee Secretary for the statewide campaign which successfully led a constitutional amendment to create a "super project" incentive program for Arkansas. He has since been instrumental in helping lead two additional statewide election campaigns to maintain the competitiveness of Arkansas' incentive programs. He was also selected as the Arkansas Economic Developer of the Year by the Arkansas Economic Developers Association.

He received his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Arkansas. Jay has been designated as a Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives and is a graduate of both the Institute for Organization Management and Economic Development Institute.

## Did You Miss the Every Child Arkansas Launch?





Nearly 30 organizations across Arkansas, including state government agencies and nonprofit groups, are collaborating to recruit and retain foster parents.

Every Child Arkansas was announced Tuesday by Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders and in a follow-up presentation to Club 99 members, panelists outlined the technology-driven approach that will help connect children and families.

Panelists included Dr. Phil Goad, chairman of the Every Child Arkansas executive leadership council; Mischa Martin, deputy director for youth and family services; Jerome Strickland, executive director of The Contingent Arkansas; Paul Chapman, director of Restore Hope; Lauri Currier, Restore Hope's liaison to Every Child Arkansas; and Judge Joyce Williams Warren.

Every Child Arkansas will use a statewide digital advertising campaign to encourage more Arkansas families to provide foster care. Interested families will be organized in a database that will then help connect children based on interest and fit. More info at <https://www.everychildarkansas.org/>.

Watch the entire meeting [here](#).

#### **Introducing Jerome Strickland!**

We also welcomed our newest member, Jerome Strickland sponsored by Angela Shirey and Denver Peacock. Welcome to Club 99, Jerome!

**You're Invited: The Ottenheimer International Scholars Program 75th Anniversary Celebration!**



**LOCATION:**  
Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts (AMFA) Cultural Living Room  
501 East Ninth Street

**DATE/TIME:**  
Tuesday, May 23, 5-8 p.m. (No Noon Meeting)

**SCHEDULE:**  
5 p.m. AMFA Galleries Open  
5:30 p.m. Cash Bar Open / Hors d'oeuvres  
6 p.m. International Food Stations Open  
6:30 p.m. 75th Anniversary Ottenheimer International Scholars Program Program & Video  
7 p.m. AMFA Galleries Remain Open  
8 p.m. Event Concludes / AMFA Closing  
**COST:** Prepaid members included; Rule of 85, Emeritus, Lifetime, Honorary and all guests (\$75)

**INTERESTING FACTS:** Based upon the idea of Past President Gus Ottenheimer, the Ottenheimer International Scholars Program was established in 1948 and remains Club 99's longest-standing service project. Over its first 75 years, Club 99ers have hosted 141 scholars from 41 countries.

**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:** A limited number of \$1,000 sponsorships are still available. Please contact Karen Fetzer, T. Martin Davis or Jana Cohen if interested.

## Upcoming Programs and Events

**March**  
**3** SOCIAL: Club 99 Day at the Races (Oaklawn Jockey Club); RSVP Required  
**7** Arkansas Commerce Secretary **Hugh McDonald** with Club 99er **Jay Chesshir**  
**14** Business and Professional Leader of the Year Award Recipient **Scott Ford** & Our Annual College Scholarships Program  
**21** **Earle Mayor Jaylen Smith** with Little Rock Mayor **Frank D. Scott, Jr.**  
**28** Little Rock Police Awards

**April**  
**4** Heartland Forward's **Ross DeVol**  
**11** SOCIAL: Arkansas Travelers Opening Night Reception (NO NOON MEETING); RSVP Required

SAVE THE DATE: May 23 / 75th Anniversary Reception for Ottenheimer International Scholars Program at Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts (NO NOON MEETING)

## Zoom Login for March 7, 2023

Topic: RCLR Weekly Meeting  
Time: Mar 7, 2023 11:30 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82060611416?pwd=cWI5ZGxWNXZUVVhEUGtIQWxkdUhpUT09>

Meeting ID: 820 6061 1416  
Passcode: 684616  
One tap mobile  
+16469313860,,82060611416#,,,,\*684616# US  
+19294362866,,82060611416#,,,,\*684616# US (New York)

Dial by your location  
+1 646 931 3860 US  
+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)  
+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)  
+1 305 224 1968 US  
+1 309 205 3325 US  
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)  
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)  
+1 689 278 1000 US  
+1 719 359 4580 US  
+1 253 205 0468 US  
+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)  
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)  
+1 360 209 5623 US  
+1 386 347 5053 US  
+1 507 473 4847 US  
+1 564 217 2000 US  
+1 669 444 9171 US

## 2022-2023 Club Leadership



**President Denver Peacock**  
The Peacock Group



**President Elect Natalie Ghidotti**  
Ghidotti Communications



**President Nominee Jason Chacko**  
The Chacko Group at Morgan Stanley



**Past President Kristina Bolhouse**  
Arkansas Financial Group, Inc.



**Treasurer Leigh Ann Biernat**  
Stephens Public Finance



**Treasurer Elect Don Cole**  
Methodist Family Health



**Secretary Tammie Davis**  
BancorpSouth



**Sergeant At Arms Greg McCarroll**  
Centennial Bank



**Foundation Chair Bill Booker**



**Mitch Bettis**  
Arkansas Business Publishing Group



**Eilon Cockrill**



**T. Martin Davis**  
Davis Law Firm



**Lena Hayes**  
Baptist Health Foundation



**Wanda Hoover**  
Bowen Law School



**Tanya James**  
Arvest Bank



**Kevin Newton**  
CBM Construction



**Jessie Wilson**  
Dale Carnegie Training



**Kenny Gibbs**  
Assistant District Governor