



## Rotary Club 99: Tuesday, September 6, 2022

### About the Program:

On Tuesday, you can hear directly from new Little Rock School District Superintendent Dr. Jermall Wright as he outlines his vision for our urban school district and provides details from his 100-Day Plan (see link). We will also hear updates about our Dunbar Project and Literacy Lab initiatives. If you care about our community and our city's future, you should care about the success of our Little Rock School District and the ones leading the way. So please join us Tuesday in support of fellow Club 99er Dr. Jermall Wright and to learn how you can get more involved with our signature focus initiatives with the district.

### [Dr. Jermall Wright 100 Day Plan](#)



### Dr. Jermall Wright, Superintendent, Little Rock School District

Since building makeshift blackboards and teaching neighborhood children in the backyard of his childhood home in Florida, Dr. Jermall Wright knew from an early age that teaching and education were his passion and calling. From 1997, when he began his professional career, through 2001, Wright served as a 5th grade and middle school social studies teacher in Jacksonville, FL. He transitioned to an administrative role as assistant principal with Alachua County Public Schools (Gainesville, FL) before establishing a ten-year track record as elementary and secondary school principals with The Potter's House Christian Academy (Jacksonville, FL), Duval County Public Schools (Jacksonville, FL), and the District of Columbia Public Schools (Washington, D.C.).

Successfully establishing himself as an experienced turnaround school principal, Dr. Wright led two elementary schools out of turnaround status through strategic partnerships, community and parental engagement, data-driven instruction, student and adult culture, and a focus on early literacy. In 2013, he joined Denver Public Schools as an Instructional Superintendent responsible for leading the turnaround efforts of chronically underperforming elementary schools. By 2016, 75% of Denver's turnaround schools under Dr. Wright's leadership improved by at least two performance tiers, moving off the district's intervention list.

In 2017, Dr. Wright joined the Birmingham (AL) City School District as the Chief Academic and Accountability Officer, where he led the school improvement process. Under his leadership, the system decreased the number of "F" rated schools from 22 to six and increased the number of schools rated "C" or above from six to 17. On April 11, 2019, the Mississippi State Board of Education appointed Dr. Wright as the Founding Superintendent of the Mississippi Achievement School District, serving Yazoo City and Humphreys County. In three years, graduation rates improved from 67% to 85% in Yazoo City and from 78% to 91% in Humphreys County. Additionally, state accreditation violations were cleared, restoring accreditation for both districts. In 2023, the Mississippi Achievement School District will graduate the first group of students in the Mississippi Delta who will earn both their high school diploma and their Associate of Arts degree from Mississippi Delta Community College.

In addition to his work as an accomplished school and central level educational leader, Dr. Wright is also an experienced college/university instructor, having served in teacher preparation programs at Florida State College at Jacksonville (FL) and Trinity University (Washington, D.C.); affiliate faculty of special education and educational leadership at Regis University (Denver, CO); and contributing faculty in Walden University's Ed.D./Ph.D. program in early childhood.

Wright earned a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science Secondary Education and a Master of Education degree in Educational Leadership from the University of North Florida; a Specialist degree in Special Education from the University of Florida; and a Doctor of Education degree in Leadership for Educational Equity with a specialization in Early Childhood Special Education from the University of Colorado Denver. His research interests center on system transformation, issues of equity and leadership in high-performing/high-poverty schools, over-representation, and early intervention for young students of color with or at risk for behavioral-related disabilities.

Most importantly, Wright is the proud father of Jaydon Jermall, Trinity Jael, and Joshuwa Jermall.

## Did You Miss the 30 Crossing Design Competition Winning Ideas Program?







A big blue dinosaur climbing wall, an Arkansas River canal walk, lilypad lighting, a pond, sculpture garden, amphitheater, a safe place to be...these were just some of the unique elements included in studioMAIN's Envision 30 Crossing Design Competition winning entries. Club 99er architect Mason Ellis introduced the program and explained more about the nonprofit established in 2012 with architects, engineers, designers, and contractors who share a passion for good design in our city. The competition received twenty-one entries, including one from a high school student and another non-professional public entry. In all, the entries garnered more than two thousand public votes, and all twenty-one boards were on display and available for attendees to view. Presenters Chris East, Brittani Mitchell, Nikki Crane, Heather Davis and James Meyer provided explanations of their firms' design ideas, including public vote winners for Establishing Connections by Cromwell Architects; Placement by Polk Stanely Wilcox; Wild Card by AMR Architects; and jury selection Professional Entry of the Year by Taggart. Special thanks to all of them for joining us at the Clinton Center, with dramatic views of the 20-acre space that was the focus of the competition. If you missed the program, check out the links from our YouTube channel [here](#) and THV-11's feature [here](#).

#### Who Was James Smith McDonnell?

In my weekly Illuminating the Rock story, we learned of aeronautic giant James Smith McDonnell's strong roots to Little Rock and Arkansas. McDonnell's father moved the family from Alabama to Arkansas in 1881, when he moved them to Altheimer to open a general store and begin a farming operation? Desiring a better educational opportunity for his children, he later moved them from the rural farming community to Little Rock. Did you know the young James S. McDonnell, the leading aerospace industrialist of the 20th century, grew up on Hill Road in Little Rock, delivered the *Arkansas Gazette* by horseback and eventually graduated in 1917 from Little Rock High School (now Little Rock Central)? From there, McDonnell went on to Princeton and eventually transformed the world of military aviation and space exploration through the 1938 founding of McDonnell Aircraft, the predecessor of McDonnell Douglas, now a major division of Boeing.

#### Bon Voyage!

We so loved having Annae' and Manon with us this year as our 2022 Ottenheimer International Youth Program participants. Thanks again to Mary and Ed Levy for hosting a relaxing farewell reception at their beautiful Arkansas River home.





Welcome to Club 99!





Let's keep the streak going... We're now up to eight straight weeks of introducing new members with membership recruitment chair Molly McNulty's introduction of CEO Marge Betley of the Arkansas PBS Foundation. Welcome to Club 99, Marge!

As always, I hope you will join us on Tuesday at the Clinton Center!

Denver

## Club 99 | Social

Next Up on the Rotary Social Calendar...

We are preparing for Rotary's big night out on September 27, 2022 - Club 99 Dinner Parties. Ellon Cockrill the chair for the event is in process of securing homes. This evening event will replace our regular Tuesday luncheon for the day. Help us out with planning by letting us know you will participate: [\[RSVP link\]](#)



**SAVE THE DATE**

**Club 99 Dinner Parties**

*Small dinner gatherings hosted by members*

**Tuesday, September 27, 2022**

**Evening Event | No Noon Meeting**

## Upcoming Programs

September 2022

**6** Superintendent Dr. Jermall Wright, Little Rock School District  
**13** Showtime's The Circus Contributors Mark McKinnon & Jennifer Palmieri  
**20** Commissioner Greg Sankey, Southeastern Conference  
**27** Club 99 Dinner Parties (evening event replacing Tuesday noon meeting)

## October 2022

**4** CEO Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, Feeding America

**11** Annual Little Rock Fire Awards Presentation

**18** District Governor David Menz, Rotary International District 6150

**25** Author Sam Quinones, *Dreamland* and *Least of Us*

**27** District 6150 Foundation Banquet featuring Club 99 Farmers Feed the Children project in Romania (with partners Ovidu Spinu and Viorel Bunea from Cluj-Napoca Romania) (evening social)

## Zoom login for September 6, 2022

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88669340290?pwd=RFVqdnRpbXM5bVQ1QUFTQy9yL1ZmUT09>

Meeting ID: 886 6934 0290

Passcode: 015395

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,88669340290#,,,,\*015395# US (Washington DC)

+13092053325,,88669340290#,,,,\*015395# US

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 309 205 3325 US

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 931 3860 US

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 386 347 5053 US

+1 564 217 2000 US

+1 669 444 9171 US

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 719 359 4580 US

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 886 6934 0290

Passcode: 015395

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88669340290>

## 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



**Ellen 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