



The Rotary Club of Macon

❤️ **THROBS**

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April 14, 2025

Georgia Supreme Court Justice Verda Colvin



We're pleased to have Georgia Supreme Court Justice Verda Colvin address our club April 14. While she was born and raised in Atlanta and began her career in Athens and Atlanta, her Macon roots are now firmly planted. She's active in the community and is a member of the Downtown Macon Rotary Club.

Though she doesn't like to bring this up, Justice Colvin is the first African-American female appointed by a Republican governor to the state's high court, being appointed on July 20, 2021, by Gov. Brian

Kemp. Previously, she served on the Court of Appeals, having been appointed by Gov. Kemp in April 2020. Her time as judge also includes nearly six years as a Superior Court judge in the Macon Judicial Circuit, during which she served on the Council of Accountability Court Judges.

Justice Colvin discovered her love for trial work early in her career as an Assistant Solicitor in Athens-Clarke County. From there, she went on to serve as Assistant General Counsel to Clark Atlanta University and then as Assistant District Attorney in Clayton County. Before becoming a judge, Justice Colvin was an Assistant United States Attorney in the Middle District of Georgia, where she prosecuted a wide range of offenses from drug trafficking to white collar crime.

Link for Zoom Recording

Click here to view the recording of our April 7 meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/25z7xjnn>

FUTURE MONDAY PROGRAMS AND CLUB EVENTS:

April, 2025

15	Board Meeting	
21	Cherokee Brick	Kate Sams Peavy, President
28	No Meeting	

May, 2025

5	Spring Picnic at Otis Redding Center for the Arts – no regular meeting	
12	GRSP Student	João Victor Verçosa Vilela
19	Performances by Morning Music Club's Maerz Award winners	
20	Board Meeting	
26	No Meeting	

June, 2025

2	No Meeting	
9	Mercer Medical School	Dean Jean Sumner
16	AI (Artificial Intelligence)	Brandon Haddock
17	Board Meeting	

MEETING April 7, 2025

Attendance: 63.3% - 62 in person, 20 Zoom, plus 22 guests (incl. one on Zoom)

The above figures do not reflect attendance from the other three clubs, which was considerable.

No Raffle, CART \$74

Club Membership: 153

Despite the stormy weather, it was a very full house for our special joint meeting with the Downtown Macon, Macon North, and Jones County Rotary clubs. President Danny Gibson rang the bell, and after a very brief greeting called on Jeffery Monroe to lead the singing and pledge. Jeffery complimented Danny for ringing the bell on key, then led the club in *God Bless America* as only he can. Susannah Maddux then offered the prayer, a wonderful call for inclusion and praise to the God of all people.

President Danny thanked Jackie Riley for her piano playing, and announced that she will be retiring soon but will be making her skills available free of charge to any charity event. Jackie was applauded for her gesture.

Danny then welcomed our guests, and acknowledged Blair Train, Karen Hix and Donna Ingram, who are the presidents of the Downtown Macon, North Macon, and Jones County Rotary Clubs. He said he's had the privilege and pleasure of working with the other presidents, and thanked them for all they do for Rotary.

We didn't have club CART brags, in order to leave more time for the speaker, but Danny said Charles Olson should watch carefully because "you're going to see this Georgia boy do something you've never seen him do before, and probably never will again. But all I'm going to say is, 'go, go, Gators', I'm pulling for you this time." He even did the silly arm chomping action.

All those in attendance were asked to contribute to the blue CART buckets, which benefit Alzheimer's research.

President Danny then called on Dr. Wendy Pooler of Rutland High School to introduce her student, Ryan Rogers, who is president of the senior class. Dr. Pooler said Ryan is one of their leaders, and is finishing his fourth year as ambassador with our Sister City of Kurobe, Japan. He's been representing not only Rutland and the Macon-Bibb County school district but all of Macon and Bibb County.

Ryan said he serves as the Senior Class President and Student Council President, and is also the CTAE Student of the year. "My college dreams and goals are going to Morehouse College, where I'll be attending in the fall, majoring in political science on a pre-law track, and also my goal is to be a corporate attorney."

President Danny then called on Past President Bob Hatcher to introduce our speaker, Dr. Sonny Perdue. Bob said it was a pleasure and honor to introduce the Chancellor of our university system to the combined Rotary Clubs. He noted Perdue's lifelong dedication to public service, saying that many Georgians have benefited from his leadership over the years. Perdue's distinguished career includes 10 years in the Georgia State Senate, eight years as Governor of Georgia, four years as the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, and now serving as Chancellor of Georgia's university system.

Bob reflected on Chancellor Perdue's transformative impact on Georgia's political and governmental landscape, especially following his election as governor. He credited Perdue with initiating a significant political shift in the state, changing the composition of the legislature and how the state conducts its business. During his tenure, Perdue led Georgia through the 2008 recession and created the Commission for a New Georgia, which applied business principles to state government operations. This initiative saved the state hundreds of millions of dollars and helped establish Georgia as one of the best-managed and most business-friendly states in the country—a reputation that has continued under subsequent governors.

As the 31st Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Perdue led a department of 110,000 employees. He played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to stabilize the food supply chain and launching the Farmers to Families Food Box Program.

Currently, Perdue serves as Chancellor of the University System of Georgia, which includes 26 colleges and universities and over 360,000 students. Despite his other high-profile roles, Bob said Perdue believes this may be the most impactful position he has held. Given the ever-changing student population and the long-term effects of education on communities and the state, the Chancellor's influence extends far into the future. He then invited Sonny Perdue to speak before the Rotary Clubs.

Commissioner Perdue thanked Bob for the introduction, saying his wife would appreciate it and his mother would have believed it. He remarked that this was the fanciest Rotary Club he had ever addressed, noting the beautiful flowers, the great meal and his many good friends in the audience. He



also said it was obvious we must not have many Baptist members because they wouldn't venture out in the rain. "I'm a Baptist, so I can say this. They don't get out when it rains because they're afraid they'll get sprinkled."

Dr. Purdue reflected on his journey back to public service after initially intending to retire following his time in Washington, D.C. He humorously mentioned updating his LinkedIn profile from "dirt farmer" to "Chancellor of the University System of Georgia," a position he now considers perhaps the most impactful of his career. His role, appointed by the Board of Regents, involves leading the system's 26 institutions and shaping policy implementation for over 364,000 students and 45,000 faculty and staff.

He emphasized the transformative power of higher education in Georgia, describing the university system as a vital driver of individual opportunity and state prosperity. He recalled his time as chair of the Higher Education Committee in the Georgia Senate, a role that cemented his long-standing belief in the value of education. His personal connection to education was underscored by his mother's 42-year career as an English teacher.



Perdue discussed the structure of the Board of Regents and how its unified governance model supports consistency and equity across all institutions in Georgia. He praised the Board and university presidents for focusing on student outcomes and adapting quickly to changes in the educational and employment landscape.

A central theme of the speech was student success, which he framed through the concept of the "FIO Degree"—"Figure It Out." He explained that today's workforce demands problem-solvers with critical thinking skills, not just technical knowledge. He argued that students should be educated to think on their feet and adapt to rapidly evolving industries and technologies. Using OpenAI's market value as a symbol of rapid innovation, he stressed the importance of preparing students for jobs that may not yet exist.

He addressed the growing skepticism about the value of a four-year degree, countering it with data: college graduates earn about \$1.4 million more over a lifetime than those with only a high school diploma. While acknowledging rising college costs, he pointed out that Georgia has kept tuition

increases low—only three in the last nine years—and recently removed a special institutional fee, making 2024–2025 tuition lower than it was in 2017.

Perdue emphasized the importance of aligning academic offerings with workforce needs. He celebrated Middle Georgia State University (MGSU) as a leader in this area, especially its launch of the University System’s first Bachelor of Science in Applied Artificial Intelligence. This program will train students to apply AI practically in fields such as healthcare, business, and logistics. He also noted MGSU’s contributions to alleviating the nursing shortage and its strong nursing program outcomes.

He reiterated that Georgia institutions are becoming more responsive and nimble, with a growing emphasis on economic competitiveness and workforce development. Technical college partnerships and new programs are helping bridge gaps between education and employment needs.

Perdue closed by expressing confidence in the University System’s direction. He acknowledged federal funding challenges and reaffirmed his belief in states’ responsibility for education, provided the resources return appropriately. He reiterated that the system’s ultimate goal is to support students in achieving success and prosperity—ensuring they are not just employable, but able to drive innovation and growth in Georgia’s economy.

The members had several questions for Chancellor Purdue, and he stayed behind after the speech to talk with individuals and the press. President Danny closed the meeting with the Four Way Test.



Donate to Rotary Foundation and CART

Club members can make donations to The Rotary Foundation or the CART Fund online line using credit cards or EFT. These can be made in memory of, honor of, or personal donations. They can be setup as recurring or one-time. These online donations qualify as a tax deduction (but ask your accountant). Follow these easy steps:

The Rotary Foundation: Go to <https://rotary.org/> If you have never signed in you will need to register so it credits your Paul Harris Fellow account and our club. You may need our District number 6920 and club number 4202. Once registered you can SIGN IN to MY ROTARY then click DONATE button in upper right. Check the area ANNUAL FUND, DISASTER RELIEF FUND, or POLIO PLUS to donate, then just follow easy steps to make payment.

CART FUND: <https://mycartfund.org/Login.cfm> follow the online instructions. You will need our **Club number 4202** and **District number 6920**. (This link requires logging in to DACdb. If you have trouble with that, use <https://mycartfund.org/NewUser.cfm> instead.) All donations to CART go to support cutting-edge research on Alzheimer's.

Approved Makeups-Family of Rotary Events:

**Reminder - Makeups can only be used two weeks before or after a missed meeting
(There are no meetings in December)**

Anytime	Rotary Project or Rotary Committee meeting
Anytime	Volunteer at Macon Volunteer Clinic
Anytime	Viewing of Monday meeting recorded on Zoom - See current or past <i>Throbs</i> link.

HOW TO MAKE UP MISSED MEETINGS

Please make up missed meetings to help our club's attendance percentage rank with District 6920 and Rotary International. **Members are encouraged to maintain an attendance average of 60%.**

Missed meetings must be made up **14 days before or after the meeting you miss.**

See list above of approved makeups. You can make up from the comfort of your home or office online at <http://rotaryclubone.org/> They will email a notice of the makeup to the Club Administrator and you will be credited. Also, attendance at another Rotary Club is a great option when you are traveling!

When you make up using the **Zoom link** of our meetings listed in meeting summary above or makeup in person at another club please send an email immediately afterwards to the Club Administrator, steve@eggmedia.com so your makeup can be recorded. Do not expect the club you visit to report to our club.

Excused Absences

Members have the opportunity to receive a board approved Excused Absence during a long-term family, health, or business crisis. When a member realizes they have a situation that will keep them from attending Monday meetings for an extended period they can contact the Club Administrator or President with the reason. This contact needs to be immediate and not after the crisis. The board can approve a beginning and ending date and attendance is excused on club and district level. Short term absences are best made up online.

Club Membership Applications

Our club continues to grow! To sponsor a prospective candidate to join our membership, contact Membership Chair Gene Dunwody gdunwodyjr@dunwodybeeland.com or any member of the Board of Directors to ensure a vocational classification is available for your candidate. Once the Classification Committee approves the classification, invite your new member candidate to a weekly meeting. If the candidate expresses interest in joining our club, then ask the Membership Chair to send the candidate an invitation to apply online. Applications are reviewed by the Board and then announced in Throbs, after which any member can express an objection.

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