



# Rotaripost

12:00 NOON  
ZOOM  
Meeting  
June 9, 2020

**Keynote**

## Financial Empowerment Center

### Wear Your Favorite Hat—Theme For Tuesday’s Zoom Meeting

A partnership with the City of Shreveport and United Way of Northwest Louisiana, the Shreveport Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) provides professional, one-on-one financial counseling and coaching as a free public service to local residents.



At the Shreveport FEC, professionally trained FEC counselors help individuals and families manage their finances, pay down debt, increase savings, establish and build credit, and access safe and affordable mainstream banking products.

At the core of the FEC model is the integration of counseling into other social services, such as housing and foreclosure prevention, workforce development, prisoner reentry, benefits access, domestic violence services and more.

On Tuesday we will hear from Bruce Willson, President and CEO of United Way of Northwest Louisiana and from Rashida Dawson, Vice President of Financial Stability. Bruce is a long term Rotarian in our club and served Rotary District 6190 as District Governor in 2008-2009. Rashida has been a member of the Rotary Club of South Shreveport for several years and will serve that club as President beginning in July 2020. Another Rotarian in our club, Tori Thomas, serves United Way of Northwest Louisiana as Vice-President of Resource Development.



Bruce Willson, Jr.



Rashida Dawson



Tori Thomas

Tuesday,  
Noon

12:13 p.m.  
Historical Start

Shreveport  
Convention  
Center

### Club Officers (Executive Board)

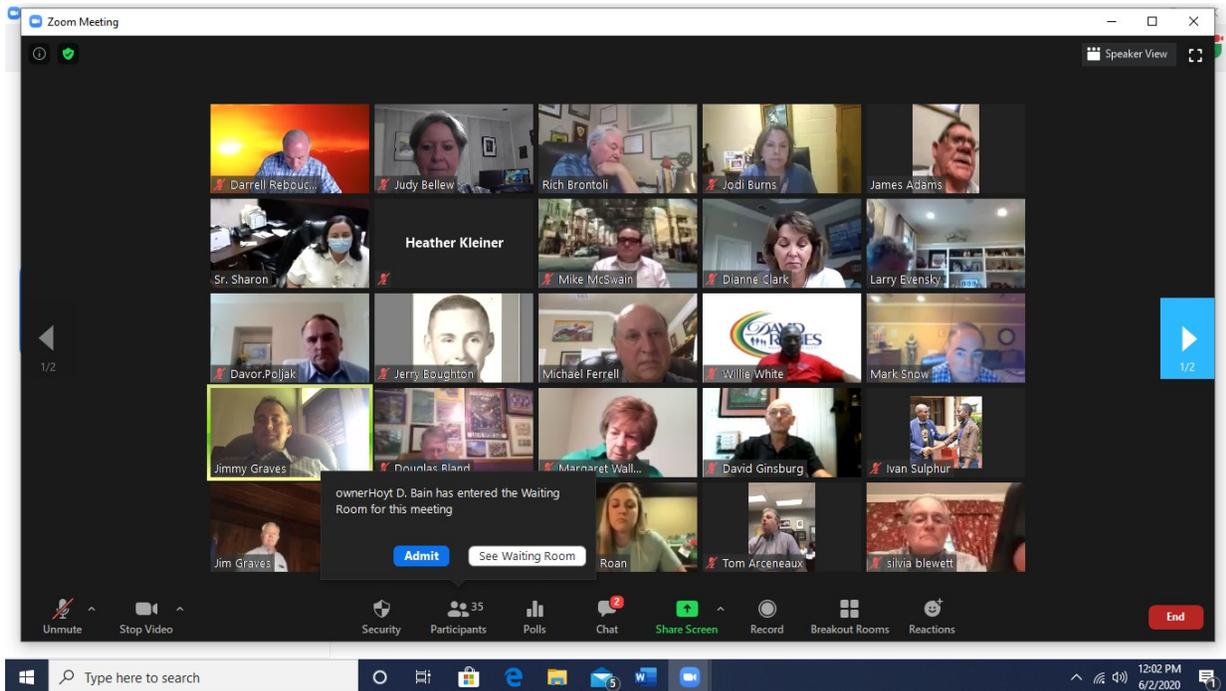
Richard Brontoli President

Laurie Boswell President-Elect

Lawrence Calhoun Vice-President

David Cromwell Secretary-Treasurer

Joe Littlejohn Immediate Past President



### **Zoom Meeting Attendance**

April 7, 2020 - 68 Attending  
 April 14, 2020 - 64 Attending  
 April 21, 2020 - 59 Attending  
 April 28, 2020 - 71 Attending

May 5, 2020 - 61 Attending  
 May 12, 2020 - 56 Attending  
 May 19, 2020 - 67 Attending  
 May 26, 2020 - 59 Attending

June 2, 2020 - 64 Attending

### **Return to Shreveport Convention Center and our face-to-face meetings**

We remain in touch with Erika Wysong, the general manager of the Shreveport Convention Center. There has been no date set for our return to the Convention Center. We are all awaiting the guidelines of the City of Shreveport who owns the property and SMG Management who manages the facility.

Your club's Board of Directors will be exploring the possibility of continuing with Zoom options for our in-person meetings.

Rest assured that we are all anxious to return to normalcy but we plan to do it safely. Please contact President Rich or Judy Bellew if you have questions.

## Messages from President Rich Brontoli

Several of our members have already taken advantage of the club and district matches to your donations to The Rotary Foundation.

Our Club and the District will use our points to match your donation; EXAMPLE: If a member, who between now and June 19, donates \$335, we will match that with 330 club points, district will match with 335 points and you get a PHF or a level up.

We will take any amount and match it, i.e. - you give \$100, Club gives 100 and District 100.

You must send a check to Judy **before June 19**, payable to "The Rotary Foundation".  
If you are interested in this match contact Judy for details; [shreveportrotary@gmail.com](mailto:shreveportrotary@gmail.com), Cell: (318) 294-8385.

**EVERY DOLLAR HELPS NO MATTER HOW SMALL!**

## Civic Grant Awards

Last Tuesday we heard from the organizations who received our civic grants this year. The checks were mailed since we had our meeting via the Zoom platform. However, President Rich happened to deliver COVID-19 masks to Sci-Port so he was able to meet with their Executive Director Dianne Clark (also a Rotarian in our club) to personally present Sci-Port's grant check.



## Did You Know?

The Rotary Club of Shreveport supported the formation of the Federated Charities of Shreveport in 1921. This organization was the forerunner of the present United Way of Northwest Louisiana.

## A Rotarian You Should Know: Merrill Wautlet

Rotarian since 2013 plus 4 years in Covington, LA Rotary (past president there)

**Profession:** Relationship Manager in the Commercial Banking Division of [Regions Financial](#).

**Background/Education:** I'm from New Orleans; three year varsity letterman and a two year starter on our state runner up and state championship basketball teams; lead off runner for our relay track team; sports editor of the school newspaper; graduate of Centenary College where I was sports editor of the school paper and a basketball coach at Southfield School.

**Fun Stuff:** I was recruited by my high school dance teacher to fill out her folk dancing troupe and we took first place in a competition; I was "discovered" after being on Romper Room which led to starring as a child in a local bakery commercial which probably led to me being selected as Bob Barker's assistant for his Fun and Games Traveling Show.

**Other Things You Probably Don't Know:** I recently published my first novel, *The Rat*, available in print at [lablind.com/therat](http://lablind.com/therat) and in ebook format on Amazon; I have a blog at [merrillwautlet.com](http://merrillwautlet.com). I've been president or chairman of 9 different non-profits and served on boards of 14 non-profits.

**Awards:** Top 40 Under 40 in New Orleans, Board Member of the year twice for the St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce.

**COVID-19 Activities:** I have two sons, ages 29 and 27, both residents at Holy Angels. The hardest part of COVID-19 has been not being able to see my sons since mid-March.

*(Clockwise from right):*

\* "*The Rat*" book cover

\* Merrill on a float in New Orleans

\* Merrill receiving his PHF

\* Merrill with his two sons



## A Rotarian You Should Know: Nita Cook

Rotarian since 2012

**Profession:** President/Executive Director of [Junior Achievement of North Louisiana](#)

**Background:** Shreveport native, B.A. in recreation and outdoor education from Northwestern, have 4 children and 3 grandsons.

**Hobbies:** Grand-parenting, gardening, swimming, walking, sharing meals with family.

**Some Things You Probably Don't Know:** Married for 35 years to Clay Cook who graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY (he does all the cooking!); for 9 years I was the Wine Manager for a wholesale company, wrote wine lists for local restaurants, taught wine service to staff at LA Downs before opening the track. I love to swim & have taught swimming lessons since I was 12; became Scuba certified in 1976 and worked as a Dive Master in the late 1970's. I was on the NSU tennis team and one summer I taught Harry Connick, Jr. at Kehoe-France Day Camp in New Orleans.

**COVID-19 Activities:** Moved to transitioning all the JA USA programs to online. In May 2020, our JA team, Traceline Tracking, competed against three other teams to win the state pitch competition of the Drew Brees Dream Foundation, "Trust Your Crazy Idea Challenge". This is a partnership between Louisiana Junior Achievement offices and Drew Brees. Check out our FaceBook for a video from Drew Brees.

*(Clockwise from top right)*

-Nita with the winning check from Brees Dream Foundation

-Donating blood during COVID

- Nita and Clay in an earlier year

-Nita presiding at the J.A. Business Hall of Fame luncheon.





## Rotaripost

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[www.rotaryclubofshreveport.org](http://www.rotaryclubofshreveport.org)

Call Judy Bellew if you have any  
questions about the club.

Follow us on Facebook



### Upcoming Zoom Program

June 16, 2020

Chris Jay

Shreveport-Bossier Convention  
& Tourist Bureau

If you have a suggestion for a program please inform Jesse Gilmore (2019-2020 program chair) or Doug Bland (2020-2021 program chair)

### Throw Back Tuesday Contest

*Thanks to Andy Shehee (well, his chickens) and to Rose-Neath Florist for the prizes!*

The Mystery Rotarian pictured in last week's Rotaripost was **Joe Littlejohn!** Here are the winners of the quickest correct answers emailed to

[shreveportrotary@gmail.com](mailto:shreveportrotary@gmail.com):

1st place: David Ginsburg  
(\$50 Rose-Neath gift certificate)

2nd place: Martha Marak  
(wins 30 count egg carton)

3rd place: John Tuggle  
(wins 12 count egg carton)

Email answer to [shreveportrotary@gmail.com](mailto:shreveportrotary@gmail.com)

The person in the picture is not eligible, of course.

Andy will either deliver the eggs to you or he can make arrangements for you to pick them up at Rose-Neath.

The Mystery Rotarian and the three winners will be identified in the Rotaripost the following week



**Who is this Rotarian? Hurry with the answer!**