



# THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

August 22, 2023

## 2023-2024 Board Members

President Edwin Peacock

Pres Elect Kim Brattain

Past Pres William Bradley

Secretary John Cantrell

Treasurer Craig Field

Exec Sec Christine Cipriano

### Directors 2022-2024

Will Barnhardt

Glenn Bouley

Margaret Donovan

Laura Little

Mark Norman

Diego Ramon

Robert Shaw

### Directors 2023-2025

Patrick Baker

Linwood Bolles

Terri DeBoo

Andy Dinkin

Donna Dunlap

David Head

Joel Ford

Membership Terri DeBoo

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Andy Dinkin



## *Mark Robinson, Lieutenant Governor of the State of North Carolina*

by **Susie Bunch-Masotti**

Mark Robinson served as this week's speaker at the Charlotte Rotary Club meeting. Born and raised in Greensboro, he is a proud Army veteran. He and his wife have two children and two grandchildren.

In July of 2019, Mark launched his campaign for Lieutenant Governor. In the primary election, he achieved a strong victory in a crowded field of eight candidates and garnered just over thirty-two percent of the vote, thereby avoiding a runoff. After winning in the general election Mark became the first Black American elected as Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina.

Mark opened his remarks by thanking God for the opportunities afforded him throughout his life. Having grown up in downtown Greensboro, he faced many trials and found that it gave him encouragement to better himself. His life has given him the opportunity to travel, learn, and grow, but he found that he always returned to North Carolina.

In his personal life, just ten years ago he and his family were struggling to pay bills. He had to tighten up, work hard, and make a comeback so that they are now in the position of being able to help others in their family. Mark stated that, just like his own personal circumstances, ten years ago North Carolina was in the same situation ~ no teacher pay increases for six years, deeply in debt, and unable to sustain our State on its own. Through hard work, our State has applied those same principles that his

family practiced. We now have a three-billion-dollar surplus that he would like to use to increase the pay of our state workers. North Carolina has been proud to be the number one destination for business in the country for the last two years.

There is, however, always room for improvement. While Charlotte, Greensboro, and Raleigh are among the areas that are thriving, there are many places in the eastern and western counties of North Carolina that are in great need of financial boosting within the business sector. Mark would like to make a substantive investment from Murphy to Manteo so that all in North Carolina share in the surplus. As the current Lieutenant Governor and Governor-hopeful, Mark hopes that decisions are made correctly for the entire state, and he dreams of not finding it necessary to raise taxes.

He believes that State agencies must serve businesses and cannot be allied with any political entity. State agencies should serve as guardrails, keeping everyone honest and providing a red carpet to success.

Mark would like to make substantive changes to the North Carolina Education System. The entire budget for North Carolina is twenty-seven billion dollars of which fourteen billion is spent on education so the resources are there. The purpose of education should be to prepare our children for their future, and he believes we must return to classical education - specifically in grades one through five - which focuses on reading, writing, and math. In the higher grade levels - six through twelve - he believes that children should be taught how our government works and how capitalism can work for them. Currently, children are not as successful as their parents or grandparents and that needs to change so that those children will be career-ready, whether it be college, trade school or straight to work. Mark believes that parents, not bureaucracy, need to oversee children's education.

Ultimately, his substantive issues are the economy of our state being built on providing infrastructure to help businesses succeed and education positioned as the foundation of our state's future.

President Edwin Peacock asked the first question regarding today's political climate and how Mark has found working with those on the other side of the aisle. Mark praised the professionalism and courtesy of the North Carolina Senate members to each other, and the respect shown to everyone when working on State business.

When asked how he would affect change in education in year one should he be elected Governor, he stated that while working with superintendents he would impress the need for reading, writing, and math as foundational skills, not just to pass standardized tests.

One member spoke as a sexual assault survivor during the late nineties and quoted Mark's own admission of having paid for an abortion thirty years ago. How could Mark, she asked, state that he would work to eliminate all abortions without exceptions for rape, incest, or health/life of the mother? Mark replied that as he has said publicly, the abortion he paid for was for his current wife and to this day they live with regret for that decision. He refuted the quote as false and incomplete and said he would never support a total ban on abortion without provisions for the special circumstances to which she referred.

Another member asked about his stance on the LGBTQ community, specifically the transgender community (reading from a quote attributed to Mark) as well as his issue with the Pride Flag. Mark stated that the question asked did not include the entire statement he made and that he

stands by his position that sexuality should not be discussed in early childhood education. As far as the rainbow flag is concerned, he feels that the rainbow is God's symbol and he's sure that the Muslim community would not stand for the Crescent and Star being utilized in this way nor would the Jewish people stand for the Star of David being used in a similar fashion.

To a question about his plans for aiding communities in eastern and western North Carolina which are not as popular as other business destinations, Mark replied that turning that around is a difficult task and will take longer than four years to accomplish, however, it must be a primary focus for North Carolina to be successful and it's more likely a long-term plan that must be addressed.

A recording of the video can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/856945114>  
The speaker's introduction begins at approximately 23:55.