



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

June 3, 2025

2024-2025 Board Members

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Pres Elect Patrick Baker
Past Pres Edwin Peacock
Secretary Bill Gill
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Sergeant at Arms
Mike Wollinger
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Membership John Cantrell

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Luther Moore



*Rory Wall
General Chairman
Charlotte St. Patrick's Day
Committee*



*Shelley Dean
Owner, Founder, and CEO
Crossway Pediatric Therapy and
Crossway Academy*



*Jonathan Justice
Chief Strategy Officer
Atelier 4, LLC*



*David Erdman
Attorney
Erdman Law PLLC*

HIGWIA: Stories of Service, Resilience, and Purpose

by Layne McGuire

One of the most anticipated meetings of the year happened on Tuesday. Our recent Rotary meeting was a celebration of extraordinary journeys, heartfelt storytelling, and the enduring spirit of service. Four inspiring speakers shared how their life paths, often marked by challenges, triumphs, and unexpected turns, led them to Rotary and a life of giving back.

Rory Wall: A Life of Service and Serendipity

Rory Wall, a longtime Rotarian and community leader, reflected on his upbringing in Brooklyn, his 30-year career with IBM, and the values instilled by his immigrant father, who was a Marine and NYC firefighter. Rory's story was filled with humor, humility, and heartfelt moments, including a chance encounter with IBM's CEO that taught him the power of gratitude. That gratitude leaves an amazing legacy, including his work as the General Chairman of the Charlotte St. Patrick's Day Parade. His message: service is a lifestyle, not a ledger.

Dr. Shelley Dean: Following the Yellow Brick Road

Dr. Shelley Dean, pediatric occupational therapist and founder of Crossway Pediatric Therapy and Academy, shared her journey from childhood theater to becoming a leader in pediatric stroke care. Her story of resilience—especially in supporting her son through mental health challenges—was deeply moving. Shelley reminded us that community service is a calling, and Rotary offers a place to live that calling with purpose.

Jonathan Justice: Finding Clarity Through the Fog

Jonathan Justice, Chief Strategy Officer for Atelier 4, LLC, is a seasoned speaker and community advocate. He took us through a personal story with a historical lens, comparing life's challenges to the artistic technique of "sfumato" which means blurring that brings depth. He shared how his family's history of loss and perseverance shaped his drive to serve. His message: our past informs our purpose, and Rotary is where that purpose finds community.

David Erdman: A Life of Firsts and Foundations

Our final speaker, **David Erdman**, is no stranger to speaking at our club. David, born on the 4th of July, has been an eyewitness to history. He shared some things we might not know about his amazing career and a life rich in innovation, leadership, and music. From founding a national legal job-matching system to playing guitar in courtrooms, David's journey has been as unique as it has been impactful. He closed with a powerful lesson from a Supreme Court Justice: no matter how high you rise; family and service are what matter most.

Each speaker reminded us that Rotary is more than a club. It's a community of people who turn life's twists into opportunities to serve. Whether through professional achievements, personal trials, or lifelong passions, their stories inspire us to keep walking our own paths with purpose, compassion, and a commitment to others.

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

This one is without the slides: <https://vimeo.com/1091028697>

This one has slides: <https://vimeo.com/1090536262>

The program's introduction starts at 21 minutes 35 seconds.