



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

August 12, 2025

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*Carolyn Carlburg
Retired Civil Litigation*



*Trina Fullard
President & CEO,
Charlotte Rescue Mission*



*John Cantrell, CIC
President
H.B. Cantrell & Co. Insurance*

How I Got Where I'm At (HIGWIA)

*featuring Trina Fullard,
Carolyn Carlburg, and
John Cantrell*

by **Bill Bartee**

The “How I Got Where I Am (At)” (HIGWIA) program is always a delight as it features the personalities, accomplishments, and interests of members within Charlotte Rotary.

This meeting featured **Trina Fullard**, President and CEO of the Charlotte Rescue Mission, **Carolyn Carlburg**, Retired Civil Litigator, and **John Cantrell**, CIC, President of H.B. Cantrell & Co Insurance. **Robert Shaw** coordinated and introduced each participant.

Trina Fullard took to the podium with energy that masked any jet lag from her recent return from a trip to Finland during which she and her husband celebrated their 27th wedding anniversary. They met as students at Washington and Jefferson College (W&J), where Trina received her BA in Psychology. She then attended the University of Maryland and received her MA in Rehabilitation Counseling. Trina and Kevin have three children: Dwayne, Destiny, and Daelyn.

However, it was during her youthful years in Arnold City, Pennsylvania (Population 392), 45 miles outside of Pittsburgh, where her foundation was built. Her (step) father, a Golden Glove boxer and steel mill worker, married her mother in 1973 and raised her. Her biological father had other children, and when counting all siblings and ½ siblings, there is a tally of thirteen, “depending on who I’m talking to”, Fullard added.

She attended First Christian Church of Wickham, PA, and began multiple interests where she succeeded. Piano at age four, clarinet, ballet, tap, and baton were some of the pursuits. She also delivered the newspaper for the Mon Valley Independent. During these years, she practiced her delegation skills by hiring her sister to help.

It was when a friend asked her to play on the basketball team in tenth grade that changed her life. Success in sports brought college recruiting, and Fullard chose to attend and play at W&J College. It was here that a new mentor came into her life: Coach Vicki Staton. Staton passed away a few weeks prior on July 30, 2025, and Trina is speaking as a representative of the student-athletes’ lives Staton impacted.

She moved to Charlotte in 1997 and worked at the Rehab Center before moving over to the Charlotte Rescue Mission in 2019. She replaced former CEO Tony Marciano after a national search. When asked, “Why Rotary?” Her answer is “Because it is a part of me. It is who I am.”

Carolyn Carlburg began her presentation with a reference to her trip to Charlotte Rotary’s Tuesday lunch. Her route from Matthews to the Fairfield Suites ballroom included traffic on Independence Boulevard, detours, rainy weather, and closed streets. “Finally, I arrived,” she stated before pausing and saying, “That’s How I Got Where I Am” to laughs and applause from the audience.

Carlburg then went into detail about the influence of her father, Thomas Hopkins, Sr., on her life. Although he didn’t receive high degrees, he was self-educated and successfully encouraged his relatives and children (including young Carolyn) to pursue education.

She recounted that her bedroom was in close proximity to the kitchen, and her father was an avid reader, conversationalist, and cook. Many times, she would hear him arrive in the kitchen, and she’d hastily join him, where he would cook breakfast while discussing news, events, opinions, and thoughts with his young daughter.

He shared his challenges and the early death of his own father and mother, “but he never focused on the negative,” said Carolyn.

This taught her the value of education and “serious conversations at an early age”, she shared. However, she still played outside, climbing trees, playing kickball, and trying to outdo the boys in the neighborhood. She did this to prove to herself that she could be equal or better than them, but also to prove it to them.

She continued to challenge herself after her acceptance into UCLA as an undergraduate and later into the UCLA Law School. Carlburg then began a career as litigation counsel at major law firms in Los Angeles and the U.S. She also spent twenty years as a Director at Wesco Financial, owned by the Berkshire Hathaway Company.

Carolyn Carlburg has made her father, Charlotte Rotary, and her peers proud by proving that she could “keep up with the boys” in all her pursuits.

John Cantrell recognized people in the audience who helped him become the person that he is: His mother and father (Charlotte Rotary member, **Henry Cantrell**), his wife, Ashley, and son, Jacob, were on hand for his presentation. They, along with his two daughters, not in attendance, all impacted his life positively.

He then spoke to the importance of participation in life, work, and the community. “Networking works”, he stated. “Rotary, the Chamber, EO, Church...Be active, be on committees, journal, and do stuff”, he implored, showing why he was the most recent membership chairperson for the Club.

Cantrell noted his own many activities that enabled him to be the person that he is. A spin teacher at the YMCA, a real estate investor, a scout leader, a soccer coach, a church leader, and a completed Ironman alum. Lastly, he recognized the importance of faith.

“Jesus is what has developed me”, John recognized. “I had the good fortune to be born in the U.S.A., live in Charlotte, and be supported, molded, and developed. All through Jesus.” John attended Covenant Presbyterian Church, where he met his wife. He was also mentored by members (including members of the Barnhardt family and Club Member **Herb Harriss**).

Cantrell concluded with the recommendations that we all write, reflect, and focus on goals and objectives. He then wrapped up his comments with succinct bullet points:

1. Have a Moral Compass (higher power)
2. Think right (good decisions)
3. Discipline (follow through)
4. Be with good people

In the audience, Harriss, who acted as Cantrell’s church league basketball coach, commented afterwards that, “John never met a three-point shot that he wouldn’t take.” Then with a smile, “Not necessarily make.”

Fortunately for those in attendance, Fullard, Carlburg, and Cantrell’s comments were all a Slam Dunk for Charlotte Rotary and our community.

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

This one is without the slides: <https://vimeo.com/1109536008?fl=pl&fe=sh>

This one is with the slides: <https://vimeo.com/1109535038?fl=pl&fe=sh>

The program introduction starts at 25 minutes and 20 seconds.