

Leading with Purpose:

A Journey of Service, Change, and Commitment in 2026



It is truly an honor to serve as your National President for 2026, but I would be remiss if I did not recognize the unwavering support of my family, as well as the mentors, Past National Presidents John Hancock, Richard Weakley, and Braxton Bell, who encouraged me to take this journey. These men believed in me. They encouraged me, guided me, and shared profound and lasting wisdom throughout my time at the District and National levels. More than leaders, they were true friends and outstanding Ruritans. I am deeply grateful for the influence they had on my

life and my journey.

I would like to start with my “Why” story. Why am I a Ruritan? As a teenager, I was part of the United Methodist Youth at my church. Our youth group was very active in our community. We did more than meet, eat, study the Bible, and sing songs. I was fortunate to have two ladies (Glenice Townsend and Phyllis Williamson) who mentored and guided our group and helped us understand the true importance of helping others and serving our community. As a fourteen-year-old, I did not fully grasp the significance of what we were doing, but helping shut-ins, the elderly, and the sick with small projects around their homes left a lasting impression on me that still resonates today. I am so grateful to Glenice and Phyllis for instilling those values in me and giving me the opportunity to serve. That volunteerism followed me into adulthood, where I worked with the volunteer rescue squad and earned EMT certification. I later volunteered to coach numerous sports and eventually joined Ruritan once my children were older. I hope I have made a difference, but most importantly, the journey of serving has been incredibly rewarding for me.

My focus this year is Project FOCUS. I encourage every District, Club, and member to host projects and fundraisers to support Project Focus. Project Focus was there to help those devastated by Hurricane Helene, but we need to replenish those funds, so we are prepared for the next disaster.

My expectations for 2026 are simple: I ask each of you to embrace change. As Maya Angelou once said, “Without change, we would not have the beauty of butterflies.” We all agree that change is necessary. We talk about it. We acknowledge it. Yet when it is time to implement change, it can feel difficult and uncomfortable. Over the past several years, the Board has initiated important changes, and yes, some of those changes were met with resistance, which is natural. But the good news is this: the change is working. We are growing clubs. We are adding members. Most importantly, we have stopped the drastic decline in membership that has challenged our organization. We will continue making the adjustments necessary to strengthen and grow Ruritan, but it takes all of us. I ask each of you to embrace the change, support it, and give it the opportunity to succeed. Our Long-Term Plan is working. We must remain steadfast in our commitment to “3+5 Keeps the Dream Alive” as we move forward together.