



Dr. Michele Wright

Nations of Women Change Makers 2021
Global Leadership Award Recipient



By Ayana Bryant
Photos by Dr. Michele Wright

Who is Dr. Michele Wright. The best way to describe her is to say that she is loving and has a special place in her heart to serve others. She is also an engineer, best-selling author, former CEO of the American Red Cross, entrepreneur, and Executive Director for National Cystic Fibrosis for African Americans. This is a businesswoman who has continuously strived for success and pushes herself to new heights. A native of Tuskegee, Alabama now based in Little Rock, Arkansas, Dr. Wright is continuing to build her legacy and uplift younger generations while doing so.

A graduate of Tuskegee University with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering Dr. Wright decided to continue her education post-graduation. Receiving her master's in engineering management and industrial engineering from the University of Tennessee Space Institute becoming the first African American full-time student to earn this degree. She then went on to earn her doctorate from the University of Arkansas in public policy with a double specialization in health and leadership policy.

Raised by two loving parents Dr. Wright was always taught to work hard and push herself to be successful. Her father, being the provider of the household is the one who encouraged her to become an engineer and inspired her to always strive for greatness. Today he still works at Tuskegee University helping students in the biology department get into medical school. Her mother also played an integral role in her upbringing, nurturing her and her siblings and making sure that they all did what they needed to do to reach their full potential. Both working in synergy to raise her is what she says has made her into the successful person she is today.

“The biggest challenge that I have faced in my career is being taken seriously and valued as an African American female and moreover as an African American female leader You know the saying take lemons and make lemonade? I took my lemons and grew a lemon farm.”

Dr. Wright values the impact of service within her community, her engineering background is what inspires her to support underrepresented students in the STEM field. She serves as the President and board chair of the Milton Pitts Crenshaw Aviation Training Academy which aids young people in looking for opportunities to pursue careers in the aviation and aerospace industry. She is also a board member of the Arkansas Mentoring and Networking Association which is another nonprofit organization that helps to promote opportunities for underrepresented STEM students in the state of Arkansas.

Dr. Wright has started a very important business, My Water Buddy Inc. and foundation. The mission of My Water Buddy is to promote the benefits of drinking water to children and their families for a more fulfilling quality of life through a healthy body. The vision of this company is what inspired her to author and create her very own children's book *The Water Tales: Life Lessons from My Water Buddy and Family*. Along with this book Dr. Wright launched a podcast which won the 2021 Accolade Global Film competition award. Alongside her husband she has also started the National Organization of African Americans with Cystic Fibrosis which was established in 2019.

Along with success comes challenges and downfalls and Dr. Wright has had her fair share. “The biggest challenge that I have faced in my career is being taken seriously and valued as an African American female and moreover as an African American female leader,” she says. Overall, she still believes in embracing what comes because the struggles that we endure will always present bigger and better opportunities. “You know the saying take lemons and make lemonade? I took my lemons and grew a lemon farm.”

When asked who or what has impacted her life the most, her immediate response was her relationship with God. She also feels that everyone around her has collectively impacted her life like pieces to a puzzle. Her parents instilled her with training, values, and beliefs that she feels has transformed her into the woman she is today. She also recognizes the influence and support of her husband. The last 20 plus years of their marriage has provided her with balance and a partner to “pick up the baton”. “Without the support of my husband I wouldn't be the wife and mature woman of God that I am today,” she shares.

In the future she is looking forward to continuing her growth and becoming overall wiser, better, and stronger. Ultimately, she says that she looks forward to making an impact in the lives of others. Her mission in life is to make a difference in the world that will not simply last for today but for generations to come. Dr. Wright believes in the significance of paying it forward and says that is what she was put here to do. 

