



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sherece West-Scantlebury, Ph.D., to Retire as President & CEO of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation in October 2025

Little Rock, AR – [Date] — After 18 years of leadership at the helm of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation (WRF), President and CEO Dr. Sherece West-Scantlebury will retire in October 2025, concluding a distinguished 33-year career in philanthropy.

Since 2007, Dr. West-Scantlebury has guided WRF through a period of significant impact, co-founding initiatives such as Excel by 8, ForwARd Arkansas, Why AR?, and ALICE in AR (**A**sset-**L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed), while strengthening opportunities for Arkansas families and communities to thrive. Her leadership has positioned WRF as a trusted statewide partner and a respected voice in the philanthropy sector.

“Sherece did not just lead WRF—she strengthened it,” said Cedric Williams, WRF Board Chair. “She demonstrated how philanthropy can be a powerful tool for addressing systemic challenges and building communities where everyone has a fair shot at success. Her vision, commitment, and deep connection to Arkansas will have a lasting impact.”

Education as a Pathway to Opportunity

Under Dr. West-Scantlebury’s leadership, WRF elevated education as essential to opportunity and long-term stability. The Foundation co-funded Excel by 8, helping ensure that children reach key developmental milestones by the third grade, and expanded support for grade-level reading, a foundation for academic and lifelong success. WRF invested in Achieving the Dream, which helped community colleges improve student retention and completion, and launched ForwARd Arkansas, a statewide collaboration aimed at strengthening K–12 systems. The Foundation also advanced career and technical education programs and expanded scholarship access for first-generation college students, linking education to economic mobility.

Strengthening Economic Foundations

Dr. West-Scantlebury introduced the Arkansas Enterprise Capital Grant Fund, a \$50 million initiative that helps nonprofits expand capacity, pay competitive wages, and deepen their impact. She also broadened support for entrepreneurs and small businesses through partnerships with organizations such as Remix Ideas and the CDFI Coalition, and the Dela-Owned initiative.

Under her leadership, WRF became a national example of values-aligned investing, directing more than 80% of its endowment to firms with strong community commitments.

Advancing Systemic Solutions for Working Families

Through ALICE in AR and ALICE@Work, WRF showed the financial reality of many Arkansas households, which, despite holding jobs, remain one emergency away from hardship. These initiatives led to practical solutions grounded in data and community knowledge, fostering stronger alignment among employers, civic leaders, and families as they navigated rising costs and limited safety nets.

Elevating Arkansas on the National Stage

Throughout her tenure, Dr. West-Scantlebury helped attract tens of millions of dollars in national philanthropic investment to Arkansas. She spoke on national platforms, shared stories of community resilience, and amplified the voices of rural Arkansans whose contributions and challenges are often overlooked. Her advocacy placed the state and the rural South at the center of conversations about progress and possibility.

“From day one, I believed WRF could be a catalyst for meaningful change,” said Dr. West-Scantlebury. “This role has been the highlight of my career—collaborating with communities, supporting leaders, and serving alongside an extraordinary staff and board. As my time at WRF comes to a close, the mission endures. The Foundation is well-positioned to advance systemic solutions that expand justice and equity. I am deeply grateful for the journey and excited for what’s ahead.”

The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation Board will launch a national search for its next President and CEO in Q2 2025, partnering with [BoardWalk Consulting](#), which was selected through a competitive request for proposals (RFP) process. Individuals interested in the WRF President & CEO position are invited to contact BoardWalk Consulting at WRF@BoardWalkConsulting.com to express interest.

About the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation exists to relentlessly pursue economic, educational, social, ethnic, and racial equity for all Arkansans. Building pathways to opportunity requires broad systemic change. This comprehensive approach may take longer to prove impact, but it has a greater chance of being impactful and sustainable. We seek levers that offer the greatest promise of increasing prosperity from one generation to the next.

For more information about the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, please visit wrfoundation.org or follow them on social media.

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