

Green begins to work with Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

Former superintendent Maurice 'Mo' Green discusses new position with local organization

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

After completing his tenure as Superintendent of Guilford County Schools, Maurice "Mo" Green officially assumed his role as executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

Based here in Winston-Salem, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation (ZSR) is committed to improving the quality of life of all North Carolinians by investing in community-based organizations throughout the state that are dedicated to building an inclusive, sustainable and vibrant state.

For more than 80 years, the foundation has provid-

ed grants for charitable organizations throughout the state.

Green's selection was the result of a national search led by ZSR Board of Trustees following the retirement of former executive director Leslie Winner earlier this year. Foundation president and member of the search committee Jock Tate said the board is confident that Green will provide a fresh perspective and new approach to the work they do across the state.

"Mo' brings with him great knowledge of the depth and breadth of issues affecting our state, as well as significant management experience," Tate said.

During a recent sit-down with *The Chronicle*, Green said he is extremely excited about the opportunity to join an organization that has such a rich history of improving the quality of life for residents across the state. While sitting in his new office, he said what

intrigued him most about the position with ZSR was their track record of working in and for the communities most in need.

"Given its legacy, Z. Smith Reynolds has really been North Carolina's foundation. I am honored to be a part of this organization," Green said.

As the superintendent of the fourth largest school district in the state, Green made it his mission to include parents in the decision-making process in Guilford County. Upon arrival in 2008, he launched a "Listen and Learning Tour" to get input from parents, students, principals and community members. The "Mo Wants to Know" campaign received more than 3,000 responses from stakeholders within the community. On January 27, 2009, the responses were incorporated into the county's first-ever strategic plan.

Green said he plans to use the same kind of

approach when working with ZSR.

"Indeed there may be some better ideas out there than mine," laughed Green. "I think it's very important to get out in the community and get to know what the people want."

"For me, interacting with residents and community leaders makes the most sense."

Prior to joining Guilford County Schools, Green held several positions with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS). He joined the district in 2001 as its general counsel and in 2006 he was named chief operating officer. Upon his departure, he held the additional title of deputy superintendent. His duties included running the day-to-day operations of the district, which boasted 135,000 students, nearly 18,000 employees and a \$1.17 billion budget.

Green said his experiences with Guilford County and Charlotte-

Mecklenburg Schools will help him as they look to make decisions on where to make investments. As director he plans to build on the five focus points of the foundation already in place, one of which is public education.

"I am very knowledgeable about the issues currently impacting public education," he continued. "That will help me when making decisions as executive director."

"This organization's main goal is to elevate the dignity of all North Carolinians through a number of different ways, including public education and social justice," Green noted.

Other focus points include community economic development, strengthening democracy, and environment. He said, "By focusing on those issues and including input from community members, the foundation will continue to evolve and grow."

This week Green will attend his first board of trustees meeting as executive director. Green will work with the board to make decisions on where the foundation should make investments. The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation will host a welcome reception this evening May 19, at the new Kimpton Cardinal Hotel located downtown to introduce Green to the community.

Green said he has already begun to build relationships with members of the Winston-Salem community and is eager to get to work.

"I've started to have some conversations and doing some listening. Winston-Salem seems like a place that seems to be making a positive transition in a number of different ways."

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