

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce
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George Russell Named Eugene's Next First Citizen Eugene Chamber will honor him at annual meeting

Eugene, OR, Dec. 6, 2023 _ Widely known for his service as Superintendent of the Eugene 4J School District for over a decade (1999-2011), George Russell always finds time to be involved in state, local, and civic activities. He's one of 4J's longest-serving superintendents.

His tireless commitment to children and to the local community earned him the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce's 2023 prestigious **First Citizen Award**, which will be presented at the Eugene Chamber's annual Celebration of Business, on January 30, 2023, at the Graduate Eugene.

After he retired from 4J, Russell continued his focus on improving the health and development of children by serving on the Oregon State Board of Education, Children's Institute Board, Looking Glass Community Services Board and on United Way of Lane County's Advisory Board. He also serves as a mentor for new school superintendents in Oregon.

He received the United Way Alton F. Baker Award in 2017 for his leadership on children's issues. He helped launch United Way's Success by Six initiative and its Early Learning Alliance to improve kindergarten readiness in Lane County.

Russel served NAACP as board member and chaired its Education Committee. He was also an executive board member with Blacks in Government (BIG).

In 2005, Russell was named Oregon's Superintendent of the Year. He assisted in forming the National Superintendent's Roundtable and was its chair in 2010. By invitation, he participated in Danforth Foundation's Forum for the American School Superintendent and Harvard University's Superintendent Leadership program.

Russell has a keen focus on how we can work to make all children successful, and he's recognized for his ability to listen to all perspectives to integrate them into his thinking. His way of connecting people to explore how to move forward proactively has served children, this community and K-12 education well.

As the area's leading business advocate, the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce works to create an environment in which business will thrive. The Chamber works with partners in business, government and education to improve the quality of life for local residents. For more information, call 541-484-1314 or visit www.eugenechamber.com.

The First Citizen Award is given annually to an individual who has made notable contributions to our community through business and community service efforts. The Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce has presented the award each year since 1938. A panel of former First Citizen honorees selected Russell as this year's honoree.

The Eugene Chamber of Commerce proudly honors Russell's passionate commitment to our community and his career achievements with the First Citizen Award. The 70th Annual Celebration of Business is an energetic night recognizing the unique contributions of our local businesses in making the Eugene metro area a world class place to live. To view more about this event, please visit [The 70th Annual Celebration of Business \(eugenechamber.com\)](http://eugenechamber.com). Table and ticket reservations are available on a first come, first serve basis. For more information, please call 541-484-1314. For media inquiries, please reach out to Director of Marketing and Communications, Samantha Roberts at samanthar@eugenechamber.com.

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