ADVERTISEMENT

MICHAEL-ANGELO **JAMES**, EdD

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MARQUIS Who's Who®
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INDUSTRY LEADER



For Michael-Angelo James, EdD, civic life is not driven by personal aspirations. Rather, he views government as a way of bringing people together in the service of a common goal. Dr. James is in the midst of his second term as the honorable mayor of Waycross, Georgia, a role he has held since 2020.

With a population of nearly 14,000, Waycross serves as the county seat of Ware County, Georgia. Under the leadership of Dr. James, the city has seen economic growth, decreased crime and a reinvigorated image as a central location for the region. These results spring from a philosophy focused on listening to citizens and encouraging engagement. Dr. James endeavors to give his constituents the power and agency to work alongside him to solve problems and improve the community for everyone. His goal is to make the best of everyone's individual gifts without micromanaging. He is often heard repeating his favorite mantra: "Teamwork makes the dream work."

While he has experienced many noteworthy accomplishments during his time as mayor, Dr. James finds his most significant impact in one of his latest projects: addressing homelessness in Waycross. He notes that homelessness is often overlooked in rural communities, but he is committed to actively working to improve the situation in his city. Demonstrating that commitment, Dr. James recently completed a six-course public leadership credential at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, culminating in a capstone project to reflect and implement new homelessness initiatives in Waycross. Importantly, he emphasizes a holistic approach, aiming not just to increase access to emergency shelter and affordable housing but also to ensure greater opportunities for professional training and long-term employment in the area.

Dr. James has also taken a direct role in creating those opportunities through education and ministry. Concurrently with his work as mayor, he has contributed as a professor of sociology and job acquisition skills at Coastal Pines Technical College since 2018 and as a bishop at two churches, one since 2010 and one since the mid-1990s. Across each of these roles, Dr. James relies on four key values: integrity, respect, service and excellence. These traits have helped bring the Waycross community together and continue to guide each decision he makes as a mayor, teacher, father, coach, great-grandfather, and faith leader.

MENTORS AND INSPIRATIONS

Dr. James credits his career path to the incredible support he has received throughout his life, beginning with his parents. He expresses gratitude for how his parents encouraged him to pursue whatever he wanted, and for how his mother, an English teacher, helped give him confidence with words and public speaking. Additionally, Dr. James was greatly inspired by his pastor, Reverend Dr. Eugene James Menefee, and by other ministers who guided him. Finally, he was urged to run for mayor thanks to a group of friends and family who pledged their support.

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