



Ernest E. Garrett III is the former executive director and chief executive officer of the Deaf Empowerment Awareness Foundation, Inc., located in Webster Groves, Mo. He is also the founder and owner of Garrett LCSW & Consulting, a deaf-owned and operated limited liability company headquartered in Jefferson City, Mo., licensed by the City of Jefferson and accredited by the Better Business Bureau (A+). In addition, Garrett LCSW & Consulting, LLC, established in 2011, holds certification as a Minority-Owned Business Enterprise by the State of Missouri's Office of Equal Opportunity as well as the State of Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program.

Garrett, a doctoral candidate at Walden University, is in the data analysis stage of his dissertation journey. The title of his dissertation is "Hiring and Retaining Persons with Disabilities for Leadership Positions: A Phenomenographic Study." He holds the distinction of serving as the first Deaf and African American superintendent of the Missouri School for the Deaf. While serving as superintendent, Garrett was appointed and commissioned by then-governor Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon to serve as a member of the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, where Garrett had previously served as executive director. As superintendent, he championed the idea of "education without limits" and was instrumental in leading the school through a change management process, resulting in a new mission, vision, motto, and strategic plan that was unanimously approved by the school's board of advisors. A former president of the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA), Garrett is a recipient of the "Advocate of the Year Award" from NBDA, the "Lasting Impression Award" from Special School District of St. Louis County, and the "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. He was also a finalist for the Paul G. Hearne Leadership Award from the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD).

Garrett received an Associate of Arts degree in general studies and dual Bachelor of Arts degrees in history and professional and technical writing from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He then earned a Master of Science degree in Administration, with a concentration in Change Leadership in Education, as well as a Master of Social Work degree, with a specialization in School Social Work, both from Gallaudet University. In addition, he has an advanced research qualification, the Master of Philosophy in Management, with a Leadership and Organizational Change specialization, from Walden University.

Garrett is licensed as a clinical social worker in Missouri and Wisconsin. He is a certified school social work specialist, certified advanced social work case manager, certified advanced children, youth, and family social worker, and admitted to the Academy of Certified Social Workers.

Garrett is a lifetime member of the Gallaudet University Alumni Association, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Alumni Association, the Walden University Alumni Association, and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. He also holds memberships in a number of other professional, social, civic, and advocacy organizations including NBDA, AAPD, National Association of Social Workers, National Association of the Deaf, National Society of Leadership and Success, The Network for Social Work Management, American Society of Association Executives, Saint Louis Club, and Rotary Club of Webster Groves.

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