

## **JUDGES:**

### **Brigadier General Olen (Chad) Bridges**



Brigadier General Bridges was appointed by Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders as the Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Military and the 55th Adjutant General of Arkansas on August 5th, 2024.

He enlisted in the Arkansas Army National Guard in August 1991 and commissioned in August 1998 as a graduate of the Arkansas Military Academy Officer Candidate School, Class 41.

Brigadier General Bridges assumed command of the 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in September 2021, leading a 2023-2024 deployment to Grafenwoehr, Germany to train Armed Forces of Ukraine Soldiers. His unit, as the Joint-Multinational Training Group – Ukraine (JMTG-U), partnered with over 107 different U.S. and international organizations to train 7,500 Ukrainians involving 26 different U.S. platforms totaling 80 different training iterations.

His other two operational deployments include commanding an infantry company during a 2004-2005 tour to Baghdad, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II and as a platoon leader during a 2001-2002 deployment to Sinai, Egypt in support of the Multinational Force and Observers Mission after the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Brigadier General Bridges served multiple tours in the Pentagon. He was the Chief of the National Guard Bureau's representative on the 2022 National Defense Strategy Core Development Team. Before that, he served as the Director of Integration and Army National Guard Programs for the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and as the Military Assistant for Readiness and Integration for the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

Brigadier General Bridges served in various other assignments at the tactical, state, and national levels.

He is a graduate of the Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, U.S. Army Command and Staff College, U.S. Air Force Command and Staff College, U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and the Joint Forces Staff College. In 2017, he completed the United States Army War College as a distinguished graduate obtaining a Master of Strategic Studies degree.

He is an MIT Seminar XXI fellow, a Harvard Kennedy School fellow for Leadership in Homeland Security, and a Syracuse University Maxwell School National Security Studies fellow.

His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Defense Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, Combat and Expert Infantryman Badges, and various other awards and badges.

### **Senator Jamie Scott**



Senator Jamie Scott represents District 12, which includes parts of Pulaski County on both the south and north sides of the Arkansas River. She was elected to the Senate in November 2024 and took the oath of office on the first day of the 2025 session. She is the youngest African-American female to be elected to the Arkansas Senate and to the Arkansas House of Representatives in 2018. She is the Senate vice-chair of the Joint Performance Review Committee and a member of the Senate Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development Committee. She also serves on the Senate Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs Committee, the Senate Ethics Committee and the Legislative Joint Auditing Committee.

Senator Scott is a graduate of North Little Rock High School and received a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Sociology and a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice from Arkansas State University. Senator Scott is a graduate of the John F. Kennedy Harvard School of



## Arkansas State Finals 2025 – Judges and Emcee

Government Executive Education Authentic Leadership Program, the Council of State Government Henry Toll Fellowship Program, the Little Rock Chamber's Leadership Greater Little Rock Class XVII, the Lead Arkansas Class XIII Leadership Program, and the distinguished Presidential Leadership Scholars Program hosted by the Clinton Foundation, George W. Bush Foundation, and Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation.

Senator Scott is the Executive Director of Youth Services. During the 94th General Assembly, she sponsored the "Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair (Crown) Act." Act 514 of 2023 prevents discrimination based on hair styles in public schools and state colleges and universities. She sponsored Act 506 of 2023 that assists foster care and homeless students to transition to college by waiving fees for documents. In past years, Senator Scott sponsored Act 1107 of 2021 that requires correctional and detention facilities to provide mammograms and prostate screenings to inmates and Act 991 of 2021 that ensures bail bond data transparency. She sponsored Act 635 of 2021 that allows colleges to designate a liaison to homeless and foster students. Act 622 of 2021 requires school resources officers to complete specialized training in de-escalation and youth mental health. Act 422 of 2021 prohibits solitary confinement for pregnant inmates and new mothers in correctional and juvenile facilities. Senator Scott sponsored Act 1020 of 2019 that protects children who are being trafficked from being prosecuted for prostitution and Act 971 of 2019 limits isolation or solitary confinement for juveniles.

Senator Scott is a 2019 Arkansas Business 40 under 40 honoree and Little Rock Soiree 2020 Women to Watch. Senator Scott is the 2021 recipient of the Council of State Governments 20 under 40 National Legislative Leadership Award, Arkansas Education Association Human and Civil Rights Special Achievement Award, Millennial Action Project's 2021 Rising Star Award, Courageous Collaborator recipient from Americans for Prosperity, and Arkansas State University's Living Legend Award. Senator Scott is the Vice-Chair of Arkansas Legislative Black Caucus, and the Executive Committee of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) as the Regional Chair for Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana.

Senator Scott is a member of the Worship Center Church of God in Christ. She is an active Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority member.

**Gretchen Conger**

Gretchen Conger serves as Chief of Staff to Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders in Arkansas. Prior to this role, she served as a senior advisor to the Governor's campaign after serving 7 years in Governor Ducey's administration in Arizona as Legislative Director and completing her tenure there as Deputy Chief of Staff. Gretchen has more than a decade of experience in politics and advocacy supporting candidates, elected officials, and policy positions that align with her personal values of a smaller, more efficient government, lower taxes, protecting individual freedoms, and an education system that values the individual rights and choices of parents, and that ensures that students receive a high-quality education.

Some of her proudest accomplishments include the passage of the largest, most comprehensive education reform in Arkansas history, the Arkansas LEARNS Act, significant income tax reductions in both Arkansas and Arizona, including making Arizona the lowest flat-tax state in the country, and passage of Universal Licensing Recognition in both states, to ensure that individuals who have the necessary experience to go to work aren't subjected to additional unnecessary government red tape. Gretchen resides in Little Rock, Arkansas with her two pit bulls, Brutus and Tiberius.

**Jacob Garrett**

Jacob Garrett is a visionary leader renowned for his innovative strategies in operational excellence, relationship-building, and community engagement. With over two decades of experience at AT&T, Jacob has consistently delivered transformative solutions that have elevated organizational performance and streamlined processes across the company's global operations.

## Arkansas State Finals 2025 – Judges and Emcee



Jacob's journey with AT&T began in 1999 as a Call Center Service Representative, where his dedication to customer service and sales excellence earned him multiple accolades. His enthusiasm for training and development soon propelled him into leadership roles, including Training Coordinator and Manager of multiple call centers. In these positions, he equipped service representatives with the skills to thrive, earning recognition from then-CEO Ed Whitacre for his contributions to employee development.

As Operations Manager, Jacob demonstrated exceptional leadership by overseeing telecommunications installation and repair while maintaining rigorous safety, productivity, and quality standards. His outstanding performance earned him the prestigious Lineman Award, recognizing his ability to drive best-in-class results.

Jacob's innovative mindset emerged as a Principal Manager on AT&T's National Staff. In these roles, he spearheaded the creation of corporate tools and initiatives, including AT&T's quality plan, resulting in over \$1B in annualized savings. His efforts impacted over 120,000 field technicians and 250,000 employees worldwide, revolutionizing processes and enhancing efficiency throughout AT&T's operations.

Currently serving as Director of External Affairs, Jacob leverages his extensive experience to foster relationships with local elected officials, promote philanthropic initiatives, and strengthen AT&T's reputation as a community leader in Arkansas. His expertise in legislative tracking, regulatory filings, and community engagement ensures the company remains at the forefront of public trust and advocacy.

Jacob's academic credentials include a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations from Arkansas Tech University and multiple certifications from AT&T University, such as IT Agile Bronze Certification and Lean & Six Sigma Green Belt. His Harvard Leadership Transformation Program participation underscores his commitment to continuous learning and professional development.





## Arkansas State Finals 2025 – Judges and Emcee

Beyond his professional achievements, Jacob is deeply committed to community service. He has chaired the Arkansas Tech University Advisory Board and ARKUPS. He serves on the following boards: AT&T Pioneers, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arkansas, the Sherwood Chamber of Commerce, and the Academies of Central Arkansas Foundation. His contributions to mentoring and volunteerism have earned him multiple volunteer service awards.

Jacob enjoys spending time with his family, fishing, and pyrotechnics. He resides in Faulkner County near Vilonia with his wife, Jaime, with whom they enjoy spending time with their three children, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and grandson. Jacob Garrett's career reflects his unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and community impact. His leadership inspires progress at AT&T while positively influencing the communities he serves.

### **Ebony Mitchell**



Ebony is a dedicated professional from Harrison, Arkansas, with a strong academic, arts, and leadership background. She grew up dancing and performing throughout the United States. Ebony graduated from the University of Central Arkansas in December 2019 with a degree in Business Marketing and went on to earn a Master of Business Administration with an emphasis in Health Administration from John Brown University in May 2022.

Ebony's commitment to service and advocacy has been evident throughout her career. She proudly served as Miss Arkansas 2022, representing the state at the Miss America Competition. Over the past nine years, she has worked tirelessly to raise awareness about online safety, collaborating with the Arkansas Department of Education and elected officials to provide crucial training for educators and students across the state.

In recognition of her dedication, Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders appointed Ebony to the Arkansas 250 Commission. Her professional experience spans marketing, teaching,



## Arkansas State Finals 2025 – Judges and Emcee

sports marketing, and nonprofit sectors, but she is most known for her unwavering advocacy for children across Arkansas.

Currently, Ebony serves as the Director of External Affairs for the Arkansas Advanced Energy Association, where she continues to make a meaningful impact in the community and beyond.

### EMCEE:

#### Roby Brock



Roby Brock is the CEO of Natural State Media, parent company for Talk Business & Politics and The Northwest Arkansas Business Journal.

Brock is the host and executive producer of Talk Business & Politics, a 19-year old multi-media news organization reporting on business and politics in Arkansas.

Under Brock's direction, content is driven through many channels such as the Talk Business & Politics TV show, which airs Sunday mornings at 9:30 am on KATV Channel 7, 10 am on KAIT's NBC affiliate, and

10:30 am on KFSM Channel 5 in Northwest Arkansas.

Brock also moderates radio programs on NPR affiliates statewide and a daily digital newscast at TalkBusiness.net. In partnership with Hendrix College, Talk Business & Politics conducts statewide polling on political and business issues throughout the year.

TB&P also reports through a subscription magazine, daily e-newsletters and web reports featuring state business profiles, industry developments and current political discussions.

In September 2016, Natural State Media acquired the Northwest Arkansas Business Journal and is expanding its coverage in this region of the state. In March 2018, Talk Business & Politics will launch a new print publication in Northeast Arkansas.



## Arkansas State Finals 2025 – Judges and Emcee

### **About National Civics Bee®**

The National Civics Bee, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's The Civic Trust, is an annual nonpartisan competition aimed at improving civics education and literacy among middle school students, their families, and communities. The National Civics Bee helps elevate civics as a national priority through a network of state and local chambers across the country. The National Civics Bee is made possible through the generous support of its founding partner, the Daniels Fund, Citizen Travelers, and other funders.