

## **Opening Speaker**

**Monday, December 4**

**Mark Anthony Garrett**



Mark Anthony Garret grew up in the tough inner city of Dayton, Ohio as a foster child and was then later adopted. Throughout his childhood he faced many hardships such as poverty, neglect, homelessness, abandonment, and abuse, both physical and sexual. At 14, he lost his adopted mother to cancer, dropped out of school, joined a gang and was in and out of juvenile jail.

Although his surrounding were negative, Mark was encouraged by his third grade special education teacher to never give up on life and to always strive for excellence. He knew he had to take destiny into his own hands. After receiving guidance from influential mentors, Mark enrolled in college and majored in wildlife biology and went on to become a two-time U.S. Achievement Academy Award Winner, recipient of the National Collegiate Minority Leadership award and received the highest honors given by his college, which were the President and Trustee awards.

This experience inspired him to dedicate his life to helping troubled youth and adults overcome the negative challenges within their own lives and discover that they have greatness within them. Mark is extremely passionate about helping raise the mental consciousness of people all over the world.

For over 20 years Mark Anthony Garrett has motivated audiences through his electrifying speeches, trainings, and transformational seminars. Mark is a leading expert within the Child Welfare and K-12 educational industry on such topics as Teacher Leadership, Cultural Pedagogy, Staff Retention, Motivational Empowerment, Leadership, Service Excellence, Overcoming Adversity, Youth Empowerment, Building Relationships, and Maximizing Human Potential.

He is best known for his premium professionalism, high-energy programs, humor, enthusiasm, and the ability to captivate audiences of all types. He has contributed and published articles for various newspapers and publications around the country and was recently featured as a celebrity expert in Forbes Magazine.

Mark is leading columnist for Fostering Family Today Magazine and the author of Teachers Are Heroes – 7 Success Principles for Transformational Teaching. Mark's story and Teaches Are Heroes message has been featured on ABC, NBC, CBS and FOX.