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Michele Wise Wright, Ph.D. is USA TODAY Women of the Year for Arkansas 2022. A native of Tuskegee, Alabama, she is the recipient of the Nations of Women Change Makers 2021 Global Leadership Award and a nominee of the EveryLife Foundation of Rare Diseases' RareVoice 2021 Award for Diversity Empowerment.

Dr. Wright is a multi-dimensional Senior Executive with experience providing dynamic leadership in diverse roles, including pharmaceutical/biotechnology sales, healthcare administration, and business development to Fortune 100 companies and an international non-profit organization.

She is the CEO and Founder of My Water Buddy® and My Learning Buddy® corporations.

My Water Buddy, Inc. is a multi-faceted enterprise that uses edutainment and, through its engaging cast of creative, fun, relatable, and aspirational characters fashioned as anthropomorphic organs, entertainingly promotes the benefits of drinking water and educates children and their families about the benefits of achieving a more fulfilling quality of life through a healthier lifestyle.

My Learning Buddy, Inc. is an edutainment platform featuring My Water Buddy and Family® animated characters that provides unique opportunities for elementary and special education students to grow, excel, and succeed. The platform inspires total body participation in the classroom, while helping children learn to express their feelings and engage with the world outside of the classroom. My Learning Buddy, Inc. offers Social-Emotional and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) edutainment curriculums.

Dr. Wright is also the author and creator of THE WATER TALES: Ten Life Lessons from My Water Buddy and Family podcast and children's book, an adventurous collection of ten short children's stories that tell different tales centered around the importance of water, in addition to tapping into life topics that are important to children: autism, bullying, fears, self-esteem, peer pressure, etc. THE WATER TALES Podcast won "Best Edutainment Podcast" at the 2021 Baltimore Next Media Web Fest; awarded "Best Children's Podcast" at the 2021 Urban Mediamakers Festival; and received the "Award of Recognition" as the winner for both Best Podcast: Episode and Best Podcast: Series at the 2021 Accolade Global Film Competition.

She received Equanimity's "Visionary Voice Award" for showcasing her innovative strategies and technological advancements as the creator of My Water Buddy® and My Learning Buddy®. She is also the recipient of the Sister Friends United, Inc. "Women of Excellence Business Award" and their inaugural "Five-Year Service Award."

With advanced degrees in engineering and public policy, she is fully committed to diversity and inclusion with a special emphasis on health equity. She has championed a diverse range of health equity initiatives as the Co-Founder, Board Chair, and Senior Executive Director of the National Organization of African Americans with Cystic Fibrosis (NOAACF).

Through widespread involvement, partnerships, engagement, and outreach, under her leadership, NOAACF has strategically helped to ensure that communities of people who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are well informed of cystic fibrosis (CF)'s existence, prevalence, and impact on underrepresented communities. Dr. Wright co-founded and co-chairs the annual Blacks, Indigenous, and Other Minority Ethnicities with Rare and Genetic Diseases (BIOMERGD) Conference, an annual event hosted by NOAACF that coincides with Rare Disease Day and Black History Month, with a mission to help increase awareness of rare diseases in BIPOC communities by focusing on one genetic disease and one rare disease each year.

Dr. Wright also led the development of The Wright Cystic Fibrosis Screening Tool© - in both patient and provider versions and English and Spanish translations – to help people self-identify symptoms that *could be related to CF* as well as help medical providers identify people who may have CF, especially those who are BIPOC.

Simultaneously, She developed and launched the Advocating for Health Equity and Addressing Disparities© (AHEAD) Initiative with a mission to increase awareness of health disparities in minority and underserved communities and to introduce a successful roadmap and advancement strategies toward achieving health equity in healthcare, clinical treatment, medical diagnosis, and clinical trials across a multitude of disadvantaged populations.

Dr. Wright is also using her rare voice within the rare disease space to advocate for "Terry Wright's Law", written in honor of her husband and which will require that all known CF-causing gene variants (also called mutations) be used for newborn screening and diagnostic testing for cystic fibrosis. This will markedly improve equity in newborn screening for BIPOC individuals, while also benefiting all people with CF who may have delayed or missed diagnosis due to the presence of rare CFTR variants.

She also wrote, directed, and produced the 2022 Black Reels Awards "Outstanding Short" nominated film, 54 YEARS LATE, a docudrama which has already received more than 50 accolades from various film festivals and competitions. This multiple global award-winning film that tells the gut-wrenching true-life story of her 59-year old husband Terry Wright's late diagnosis of cystic fibrosis at the age of 54 despite being seen by an array of healthcare practitioners, enduring countless hospitalizations and surgeries, and having all the classic symptoms of CF – a progressive and genetic disease that's often perceived to affect only the Caucasian population. In her various health equity roles, Dr. Wright helps to highlight and drive diversity, inclusion, and equity and remains fully committed to increasing awareness of health disparities in minority, underserved communities, and disadvantaged populations while helping to bring valuable resources, knowledge, empowerment, and support to patients, families, healthcare professionals, and the community.

Dr. Wright is a nationally recognized motivational speaker. She was a featured speaker at the inaugural “World Woman Summit,” which included representatives from more than ten different countries. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of receiving her Bachelor’s degree from Tuskegee University, she returned to her alma mater and served as the keynote speaker for the “Order of the Engineer” Spring Commencement Ceremony, which is held in honor and recognition of all Engineering student graduates.

She was the guest speaker and the first recipient of the “Outstanding STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Leadership Award” presented by the Area Development Director of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) on behalf of the South Metro Atlanta Tuskegee Alumni Club (SMATAC) during their inaugural “Signature Scholarship Gala.”

Dr. Wright is the President and Board Chair of the Milton Pitts Crenshaw Aviation Training Academy (MPCATA), an organization whose mission is to provide young people opportunities to pursue careers in aviation and the aerospace industry. She concurrently serves as a Board Member and the Technical Executive Officer for the Arkansas Mentoring and Networking Association, Inc. (AMNA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting opportunities for historically underrepresented STEM students in Arkansas, including opportunities to gain valuable access to STEM scholarships, internships, professionals, and careers.

She is a national and international multiple award-winning corporate leader who has worked with several top-ranked corporations including Genentech Biotechnology Company, Novartis Pharmaceuticals, Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, and The Procter & Gamble Company. She also has served with the American Red Cross as Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Ozarks- Arkansas Region (GOAR).

Dr. Wright holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, with a double specialization in Health and Leadership Policy; a Master of Science degree from the University of Tennessee Space Institute (UTSI), where she chartered the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and was UTSI’s first African-American full-time student to earn a Master’s degree in Engineering Management/Industrial Engineering; and a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from Tuskegee University, where she was Miss Engineering, President of the Engineering Representative Council, and graduated as Electrical Engineering Student of the Year.

Her life mantra is “The Best Is Yet to Come,” which she plans to extend towards helping and positively impacting children, women, and underrepresented populations worldwide. Dr. Wright and her husband Terry reside in North Little Rock, Arkansas.