



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Editorial Contact: Jeralyn Richardson, Director of Communications
Phone: (901) 426-3041
E-mail: Jeralyn@seeding-success.org

July 31, 2019

First 8 Memphis Welcomes Interim Executive Director

Regina Walker Continues Nonprofit Leadership in Early Childhood Development

MEMPHIS, Tennessee – First 8 Memphis recently welcomed Regina Walker as its Interim Executive Director, where she will supervise the implementation of Shelby County’s first comprehensive early childhood system. Walker brings 36 years of nonprofit leadership to her new role at First 8.

First 8 is a new nonprofit serving Shelby County children ages 0-8 and their families. Its mission is to support families with comprehensive programs that prepare children for kindergarten readiness, third grade literacy, and beyond. First 8’s early childhood system is the first to align the county’s pre-k, home visitation, childcare and K-3rd programs.

As Interim Executive Director, Walker will oversee the distribution of public and private funds, the delivery of early childhood services, and the fulfillment of success metrics. She will also manage the integration of home visitation, childcare, pre-K, and K-3rd programs provided by First 8’s partner agencies.

“I have spent over 36 years advancing educational opportunity, economic mobility and strong communities,” said Walker. “Service has defined my career, and I am excited to start my next chapter with First 8 Memphis.”

Walker graduated from Virginia State College in Petersburg, Virginia with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, and in 1978 she started her career with VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) in Portsmouth, Virginia. She then joined the United Way of the Portsmouth Area as a statistician and later transferred to the United Way of Southampton Roads in Norfolk, Virginia, where she became Director of Allocations.

Walker relocated to Memphis as the Associate Director of Fund Distribution with United Way of the Mid-South, with subsequent promotions to Director for Community Initiatives, Vice President for Community Initiatives, Senior Vice President for Community Impact and most recently Executive then Senior Vice President of Community Engagement and Alignment. Her tenure with United Way of the Mid-South spanned 29 years. Walker has also served on and continues to participate in numerous public and private boards across the state.

After her retirement, Walker founded R. D. Walker & Associates, LLC in 2015. The consulting agency leverages her skills and successes as an organizer, facilitator, implementer, speaker and fundraiser to help revitalize local communities. As an avid reader and mother, she advocates for literacy in the lives of children and families. Both of her daughters, attorney Rashida Watkis and accountant Jamie Walker, were graduates of Memphis City Schools.

About First 8 Memphis

First 8 Memphis is a 501c3 devoted to serving Shelby County children 0-8 and their families through high-quality early childhood programs. Through comprehensive home visitation, childcare, pre-K, and K-3rd programs, First 8 successfully prepares children for kindergarten readiness, third-grade literacy, and beyond.