



TANISHA'S TAKE

Compassion In Action Hosts 9th Annual Roast & Toast Honoring Former Sen. Tracy Steele

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by Tanisha V.



Community leaders, supporters, and guests gathered at Chenal Country Club on June 25, 2026, for the 9th Annual Compassion In Action Roast & Toast fundraiser honoring former Arkansas State Sen. Tracy Steele. The annual event raised funds to support Compassion In Action's reentry program, which provides education, mentorship, life skills, and resources to individuals preparing to successfully transition back into society.

Master of Ceremonies DJ Williams opened the evening by sharing why the organization's mission is meaningful to him and emphasizing the importance of supporting individuals seeking a second chance. His remarks set the tone for an evening centered on hope, accountability, and community service.

One of the evening's featured speakers, Erick Ray, shared his personal journey and reflected on how Compassion In Action helped him take responsibility for his actions while developing self-discipline, accountability, and integrity. His testimony highlighted the impact that mentorship and guidance can have on rebuilding lives.

Keynote speaker Sheriff Eric Higgins addressed the importance of second-chance initiatives and criminal justice reform. During his remarks, Higgins emphasized the role hope plays in successful rehabilitation, stating, "We can't do accountability without hope. We have to give people hope." His message resonated with attendees and reinforced the organization's mission of restoring lives through compassion and opportunity.

As the evening continued, Auctioneer Mark Hobby led the live auction, where guests enthusiastically bid on artwork and other donated items to raise additional funds for Compassion In Action. Among the featured items was a painting of legendary rapper Tupac Shakur, which was purchased by the evening's honoree, Tracy Steele.

The program concluded with the Roast & Toast honoring Steele's decades of public service and commitment to the people of Arkansas. Dr. T Alesha Dokes, District 72 Representative-elect, introduced Steele by recognizing his lifelong dedication to serving others and his lasting



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impact on communities throughout the state. Several speakers shared heartfelt stories and humorous memories, celebrating his leadership, mentorship, and unwavering commitment to helping others.

During his closing remarks, Steele reflected on each speaker with gratitude, humor, and humility. He also expressed heartfelt appreciation for his wife, Cassandra Steele, saying, “Everything I accomplish is because of her, her love and her support.”

The evening celebrated not only the legacy of Tracy Steele but also the mission of Compassion In Action, reminding attendees that second chances, hope, and strong community partnerships can change lives.



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About Tanisha V.

Tanisha V. is a visual storyteller whose work lives at the intersection of culture, elegance, and legacy. As the voice behind Tanisha's Corner, she captures and chronicles moments that celebrate Black excellence with intention and style. 💜