

NCWorks Commission Membership - The Governor appoints all members



Chris Arabia is the newly appointed Regional Vice President for TD Bank in North Carolina. He is responsible for providing leadership to TD Bank's Consumer, Small Business and Commercial banking operations and lending services for North Carolina.

Chris joined Commerce Bank (TD Bank predecessor) in 1998 as a Credit Analyst. Over his 28 year career, Chris has held several positions within the Commercial Bank. In 2006, Chris was promoted to Regional Vice President and relocated his family to Northern Virginia to help expand the bank's operations in the region. Subsequent to the purchase of Commerce Bank by

Toronto Dominion Bank in 2009, Chris was promoted to Senior Vice President with responsibility for Community Banking Operations in Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia.

In 2023, Chris was promoted to lead the expansion efforts in North Carolina encompassing the entire State. He is in the process of relocating his family to North Carolina with this mandate. Chris, his wife Deborah and daughters Abigail (23) and Janssens (18) will live in Wake Forest, NC.

Chris earned his bachelor's degree in Economics from Moravian College and a Masters in Business Administration from LaSalle University. In 2013, Chris graduated from the Stonier Graduate School of Banking.

Chris was a member of numerous professional organizations, including board seats on Washington DC Economic Partnership, Washington Airports Task Force, Byte Back, Inc., and Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce. Other affiliations include member of National Italian American Foundation, and an advisor to ABA Stonier Graduate School of Banking.



Daniel L. Briggs is the President of the Davidson Funeral Home and the Piedmont Funeral Home in Lexington and Winston-Salem, NC, and the Vice President of Briggs Funeral Home in Denton, Candor and Troy, NC. The Briggs Group also operates other funeral homes across the NC central piedmont.

He has previously served as Commissioner of the NC Social Services Commission, Commissioner of the NC Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission, Chairman of the Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of the Davidson County Department of Social Services Board, President of the Lexington Jaycees, Member of the Triad Leadership

Forum of the NC Leadership Council, Member of the Board of Directors of Uptown Lexington, Inc. (NC Main Street Program) and Member of the Lexington City Schools Board of Education. In 2003, Mr. Briggs was named one of five Outstanding North Carolinians by the NC Jaycees.



Shawn R. Brown is the Vice President of Safety Cargo Transporters, Inc. and is the Mayor of the City of Claremont. Shawn has served in many management roles within Cargo Transporters including Fleet Ops, Recruiting and Customer Service among others. He was first elected to public office in 2009 as a City Councilman and was elected Mayor in 2013. Shawn has served in various municipal related roles including as a member of the Claremont Parks and Recreation Committee, the Claremont Rescue Squad Board of Directors, and the Claremont Youth Council. In the transportation industry he is active in the NC Trucking Association, American Trucking Associations,

Truckload Carrier Association and serves as Chairman of the Research and Advisory Committee(RAC) of ATRI, a transportation research organization.



Sherry Carpenter is responsible for the regional workforce development services in the counties served by Goodwill Industries of Northwest NC, Inc. in her current position as Vice-President of Workforce Development Services. She has over twenty years of experience with Goodwill and has a background in human services and education. The scope of services provided in her current position includes training and job placement programs for approximately 30,000 individuals as well as being a member of the executive team that supports over 1,100 employees. Sherry serves on the Piedmont Triad Regional Workforce Development Board, the North Carolina Employment and Training Association Board, the High Country

Workforce Development Board, the NCWorks Commission, and the Forsyth Technical Community College Foundation Board.

Sherry has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Virginia Tech and a Master's Degree in Organizational Psychology from Appalachian State University. She is a graduate of Goodwill's Executive Leadership Program and has completed classes toward the pursuit of a doctoral degree in Organizational Leadership. She has been honored by the Business Journal as an award winner for Women in Business and was featured in Forsyth Woman magazine. Also, Sherry is a previous recipient of the YWCA's "Women of Vision" award and she received the Watson Award for Mission Advancement through Goodwill Industries International.



Rodney Carson joined the Capital Area Workforce Board in 2016 and currently serves as the Vice Chair. In 2017 Rodney was nominated into the NCAWDB and currently serves as its President.

In addition to holding a double major bachelor's degree from the University of Hawaii in International Business & International Finance, he has a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill and he is a Certified Economic Developer.

Rodney has enjoyed living in a variety of areas throughout the world. He has a passion for the ocean, so he opened a dive shop that allowed him to dive into some extremely remote areas of the world. He sold his dive shop and other business, left

his job with an international bank, and moved to North Carolina in 1996 where he began a 20+ year career in economic development starting with the Wake County Economic Development Program. His career in economic development has been focused on three key areas: 1. International business (industry and people diversity are key to community success), 2. community business strategy development and 3. reshaping of economic development programs.

He has been blessed to travel the world for work and this experience has provided him the opportunity to see economic development programs from the public, public/private, and private sector perspectives including leading the privatization efforts of a public sector economic development program and being on the board of the Polk County Workforce Board in Florida.

Since returning to North Carolina in 2013, he has had the opportunity to help create and launch a Fortune 50 University on campus branding and recruitment initiative and now work with SAS Institute where he has had the privilege of developing a new role within SAS focused on managing government client relations where new to market implementations are occurring.

Currently he is working with a team on the creation of a new business vertical in our Justice and Public Safety sector while supporting multiple project implementations in other key government market sectors.



Dr. Jeffrey A. Cox is the 11th president of the North Carolina Community College System. Cox is a native of Alleghany County, North Carolina and brings three decades of academic and leadership experience to the System Office. Cox graduated from Appalachian State University in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science in English-secondary education. He later received his Master of School Administration degree from ASU and then his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

He began his teaching career in Greensboro and Sparta, where he was awarded the North Carolina Principal Fellows Scholarship.

He served as assistant principal at Indian Trail Elementary School from 1998-2000, and then as principal at Benton Heights Elementary from 2000-2003. From 2003-2005, Cox served a successful stint as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction with Lee County Schools in Sanford, NC. In 2005, he took on the role of Superintendent of Schools for Alleghany County, where he served until 2014. During his tenure, he helped lead the district to its highest academic achievement in the district's history. He was appointed by former Gov. Bev Perdue to serve on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission in 2011 and was also appointed to the Governor's School of North Carolina Board of Governors in 2013. In July 2014, Cox became the fifth president of Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro. Cox was also appointed by the N.C. State Board of Community Colleges to serve on the MyFutureNC Commission.



Wesley Davis is a native of Winston-Salem, NC. He has lived, studied, or worked in Massachusetts, France, Texas, Georgia, California, Chile, Argentina and China. He is fluent in Spanish, proficient in French, and has basic Portuguese skills.

Wesley has served as Director & Client Advisor at Alex.Brown (formerly Deutsche Bank, now a division of Raymond James) since 2008, where he manages investment portfolios for private and institutional clients on a team of four. He previously worked with RBC in a similar capacity. Prior to that, he held sales and marketing positions with Aon, Nextel and several other consulting firms. He has also taught English in a number of capacities.

Wesley is a proud graduate of Groton School, Davidson College (BA) and holds an MBA from the Goizueta Business School at Emory University. He is married to a lovely Argentine and is the proud father of two boys (currently 9th and 6th grade).

His interests include (but are not limited to): music, film/cinema, exercise, hiking, golf, racket sports, reading, politics and gourmet cooking. He is the current chair of board the YMCA of NWNC; a member of the Board of Trustees of the Summit School where he chairs the Investment Committee; and a member of the Board of Directors of Leadership NC where he chairs the Finance Committee.



Robert Doreauk is the Executive Director of External & Legislative Affairs for AT&T North Carolina. In this role, in which he has held since 2021, Robert is responsible for statewide government and business relations support to bridge relationships between community and elected officials. He also works closely with statewide economic development organizations and community leaders to help encourage private investment in next-generation broadband infrastructure, bring new technology jobs to the state, and to improve the overall quality of life in North Carolina.

Robert brings a diverse perspective to his external affairs role having joined AT&T's predecessor company, Bellsouth, in 1998. He began his career as an outside installer/maintenance technician in the network organization and was promoted to supervise this group after a brief period. Robert supervised various network groups, including construction linemen, digital technicians, and electronic technicians, before moving into the engineering organization of the company. As a fiber engineer, he oversaw the Raleigh area BIC (Building Industry Consultant) group and worked closely with key stakeholders outside the company. Robert also served as the President of the North Carolina chapter of the AT&T Pioneers and led various employee volunteer opportunities in communities around the state.

In addition to his responsibilities within AT&T, Robert serves on the Board of Directors of Communities in Schools of NC and is on advisory boards for the NC Chamber of Commerce Workforce Readiness Committee and the Poole Family YMCA.

Robert, a native of eastern North Carolina, is a second-generation employee of AT&T. He and his wife Kim live in Raleigh, NC, with their two children. He is a member of Fairview Baptist Church, where he has held several roles, including deacon, middle school boy's

leader, adult bible teacher, and was on the selection committee that hired three of the church's current pastors. Robert enjoys most of his free time outdoors; on the baseball field, gardening in his yard or hiking in NC state parks.



Gabe Esparza has over 25 years of experience leading both public and private entities. He was previously the Associate Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration and has served as a Commissioner on the Civil Service Commission. He was Vice President of Global Business Development at American Express and a senior executive at an innovative tech start-up. He is currently a Trustee at Central Piedmont Community College. He is a graduate of Stanford University and Harvard Business School. Esparza lives in Charlotte with his wife and two teenage children. He will be North Carolina's first Latino cabinet member.



Jeffrey Frederick is the Past President -NC Association of Workforce Development Boards. NC. Jeff is a native of North Carolina. He matriculated through the Duplin County school system and received his bachelor applied science, business administration and management from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Jeff has also served on boards for Communities in Schools of Davidson County as well as Child Care Connections. He is also a Trustee for New Life Christian Center in Warsaw, NC.



Christopher Gergen is CEO of Forward Impact that unleashes the impact potential of next generation entrepreneurial leaders. This work includes launching community-based strategies to develop and scale high-impact entrepreneurs including Bull City Forward in Durham, NC, Queen City Forward in Charlotte, NC, Moore Forward in Moore County, NC, HQ Raleigh, and Think House - an entrepreneurial living community in Raleigh. Forward Impact also helps schools, universities, and communities develop transformational entrepreneurial leadership experiences with partners such as the Center for Creative Leadership, where Christopher is Innovator in Residence. Forward Impact also consults with state and national clients including helping

launch and scale the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Foundation's Social Entrepreneurship Initiative, Carolina CAN, and the NC Charter School Accelerator. This work complements Christopher's role as a social entrepreneurship fellow with Duke University's Innovation & Entrepreneurship initiative. Christopher is co-author of the nationally acclaimed book *Life Entrepreneurs: Ordinary People Creating Extraordinary Lives* and co-authors a bi-weekly column on social innovation for the *Raleigh News & Observer* and the *Charlotte Observer* titled "Doing Better at Doing Good." Christopher received a Bachelor of Arts with honors from Duke University, a Master's Degree in Public Policy from the George Washington University, and his M.B.A. from Georgetown University. He lives with his wife and two children in Durham, NC.



Maurice “Mo” Green’s vision for North Carolina public schools can be summed up in three words: Achieving Educational Excellence. The son of a special education teacher, Green is a lifelong champion of public education and has seen first-hand its ability to transform both lives and communities.

As North Carolina’s State Superintendent of Public Instruction, he is committed to ensuring all students in public schools have access to a high-quality education. He strongly champions greater support and resources for public education, striving to create a brighter future for students, educators and communities across the state.

After doing two United States judicial clerkships and working as a lawyer in private practice, Green served as general counsel for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), the second-largest school district in North Carolina, starting in 2001. In 2006, he was named its chief operating officer and later moved into the role of deputy superintendent.

In 2008, he became superintendent for Guilford County Schools (GCS), the third largest district in North Carolina. During his more than seven years of leadership, he was widely recognized for his innovative approach to education and impactful reforms. Under his guidance, the district achieved significant improvements in academic performance, increased graduation rates and prioritized character development, earning both state and national acclaim for these successes.

After leaving GCS, Green served as the executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, an influential North Carolina foundation that supports various causes including public education, from 2016-2023. During his tenure, he led a strategic assessment and planning process that resulted in All For NC, a framework for grantmaking and learning that centers efforts to strengthen democracy, advance public education, foster a healthy and sustainable environment and promote social and economic justice.

Green has served on numerous boards focused on educational issues including homelessness, athletics, policy, media, arts and community support. He is a double Duke University graduate, with a bachelor’s degree in political science and economics and a law degree. Green is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha and Sigma Pi Phi (the Boulé) fraternities. He is married and has two adult children, both of whom graduated from North Carolina public schools.



Peter Hans became the President of the University of North Carolina, June 19, 2020. He brings decades of leadership experience in higher education policy and governance to the position. Hans has been a leader on North Carolina’s two governing boards for higher education. The N.C. House of Representatives elected him to a six-year term on the State Board of Community Colleges in 1997. He served as vice chair of the board and chair of the Policy Committee. The N.C. Senate elected Hans to the University of North Carolina Board of Governors in 2003, 2007 and 2011, and he led that board as chair from 2012-2014.

He was honored by UNC-Wilmington in 2014 for his role in improving collaboration between the community college and university systems. From 2016-2018, Hans advised UNC System President Margaret Spellings on issues such as technology, health care, strategic planning and K-12 education. Han's career also includes serving as senior policy adviser to U.S. Sen. Lauch Faircloth (1995-1999) and then-U.S. Rep. Richard Burr (1999-2001). He also advised Elizabeth Dole during her successful run for U.S. Senate in 2001-2002. Later, Hans and former Lt. Gov. Dennis Wicker built a government relations practice at a series of regional law firms, most recently Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough. The team counseled private-sector companies on public affairs, including clients in the health care, technology, retail and manufacturing sectors. Hans grew up in Southport on the coast and Hendersonville in the mountains. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from UNC-Chapel Hill and a Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies from Harvard University. He is a trustee of Rex Hospital and a member of the International Advisory Board of public relations firm APCO Worldwide. He is a former board member for Urban Ministries of Wake County, where he co-chaired a \$5.5 million capital campaign.



Jim Hartman is the founder/owner of Secret Garden Bees, an upscale honey and jelly farm in Cumberland County, NC with sales across 24 states and in over 170 stores. The farm is an SBA Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business and a NC Historically Underutilized Business. Jim was selected as the 2024 NC Small Farmer of the Year, 2023 American Farm Bureau Ag Innovation People's Choice, and has won numerous other awards. Before starting the farm, Jim served ten years in the Army first in the Field Artillery and then as an EOD (Bomb Disposal) Technician. Jim left the army in 2008 after his second tour in Iraq and began a 14-year career as a Project Manager with Booz Allen Hamilton. He is a registered Project Management Professional

and holds an MBA. Jim volunteers his spare time with the county "Boots to Agriculture" program and with the Veterans Farm of NC teaching other Veteran Farmers how to get started. He also serves on the NC Farm Bureau state Apiary advisory committee, and on the advisory board for the NC CEFS Apprenticeship Program.



Steven Con Hunt is the COO of Metcon Construction Inc. Prior to joining RCC on October 1, 2018 he accumulated twenty-nine years of experience in various leadership roles with increased levels of responsibility with international, national and local corporations such as Lumbee River EMC, Scotland Health, Tredegar, Campbell Soup, Unilever and WestPoint Stevens. During these roles, Hunt gained extensive analytical reasoning using metrics as the foundational block for creating performance-based teams. Prior to his corporate career, Hunt served as a Captain in the United States Air Force. Hunt earned his B.S. in Chemistry in 1988 at UNC Pembroke. Hunt and his lovely wife, Nicole,

have four children and four grandchildren. Hunt enjoys farming, motorcycle riding and is active in his church as an associate minister.



Suzanne Johnson joined Grifols in 2011 when Grifols acquired Talecris Biotherapeutics, Inc. Prior to working for Talecris, Ms. Johnson also worked for Bayer Healthcare. In total she has worked for over 20 years in human resources for biopharmaceutical companies based in Clayton, North Carolina and is a lifelong resident of Johnston County and resides in Smithfield, North Carolina. For her undergraduate studies, Ms. Johnson attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Education from Barton College in Wilson. She also possesses a Master's of Business Administration with a concentration in Human Resources through the University of Phoenix.



Himanshu Karvir was appointed to the commission as a business representative. Karvir is the President & CEO of Virtelle Hospitality in Asheville. He is the current Chair of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, Vice-Chair of the United Way of Asheville & Buncombe County and on the Board of Trustees of the Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College.



Paul Lawler North Carolina native Paul Lawler grew up in Charlotte and now lives in Wilmington with his wife Patricia. This proud Wolfpacker has used his NC State accounting degree in a variety of auditing, accounting and management positions throughout his career. He lived in Raleigh after graduation and included a stint leading the NC Economic Developers Association which has led to a lifelong interest in how people's lives and opportunities can be improved with access to better jobs. NC Works provides an opportunity to expand those opportunities with a better prepared workforce. Lawler served one term on the Wilmington City Council and now serves on the WAVE transit board as well as the NC Works Commission.



Lee Lilley's service as North Carolina's Secretary of Commerce began on January 1, 2025. Appointed to the office by Governor Josh Stein, Secretary Lilley brings extensive economic development experience to the role.

Immediately prior to joining the department, Secretary Lilley served as the Director of Economic & Pandemic Recovery for Governor Roy Cooper. In that position, he coordinated statewide pandemic recovery efforts, served as State Infrastructure Coordinator, and led economic development initiatives for the Cooper Administration. Lee also advised Cooper Administration leadership on strategy and communications.

Lee joined the Governor's Office in 2018 as the Director of Legislative Affairs, where he led all Gubernatorial and Executive Branch engagement with the North Carolina General Assembly and served as the principal advisor to the Governor on policy and legislative strategy. Lee was previously senior vice president and deputy director of federal practice at McGuireWoods Consulting, LLC, based in Washington, D.C. There he represented a diverse group of clients including Fortune 500 companies, start-ups, trade associations, and non-profits before Congress and the federal Executive Branch. He led public affairs strategies for clients facing political and regulatory scrutiny of international mergers and acquisitions, litigation, and trade disputes. Prior to joining McGuireWoods, Lee served as legislative director for Congressman G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), a member of U.S. House Democratic leadership and the Energy & Commerce Committee, and the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. He served as the Member's senior legislative strategist and policy advisor. Lee is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill, where he serves on the Board of Visitors.

A native of Williamston, North Carolina, Secretary Lilley lives in Raleigh with his wife and daughter.



Marti Matthews Martin is the Director of Training Delivery, Clario, a pharmaceutical company that develops, manufactures and market medications and consumer health products to meet the evolving needs of healthcare professionals, patients, consumers and caregivers. Mart is also the Founder of Director Talent Management. She received her BA from Emmanuel College, her Masters in Public Health from Boston University, and her Doctorate in Adult Education, Workforce and Human Resource Development from North Carolina State University



Darla McGlamery is a native of North Carolina. She grew up in Greensboro on a family farm. Throughout middle and high school, she played soccer, baseball and basketball. After her mother's death, Darla moved to Raleigh to attend NCSU, where she majored in Communications.

She says she looked up one day and realized that she was old enough to make her own decisions and that was the day she became actively engaged in politics. As a woman, she was astutely aware of pay and gender inequality, and so it is only natural that she would lean into workers rights, which is where she remains active today, advocating for worker's rights and livable wages.

Although her involvement in politics and worker's rights has taken her from east to west coast, Darla currently resides in Wilmington, North Carolina with her wife Sonya, who is an imaging Technician; their precious four year four-year old, Grayson.(who keeps them vigilant in protecting his future) and an amazing Australian Shepherd named Tahoe. When asked what she does in her spare time, Darla will say, "What spare time" Yet, she calls herself "low key".



Nikki Nissen is a master's prepared registered nurse with experience in cardiac services, intensive care, orthopedic, neurology, emergency services and ambulatory care. She is passionate about delivering on the quadruple aim by designing the space in which quality and safety intersect with reality; framing opportunities for our bedside teams, while supporting their solutions to reduce clinical variation.

Of her 23 years as a nurse, 16 have been in progressive leadership roles, including nurse manager, hospital administrative supervisor, emergency services director and nursing director. Currently, she is the Vice President of Clinical Operations and Chief Nursing Officer for Novant Health Medical Group (NHMG). Her role provides leadership in clinical strategy and standardization and has oversight responsibility for the provision of effective high quality and safe clinical care, which is consistent with the health system's mission, goals, values and strategic plan across Novant Health Medical Group.



Olalah Njenga is the chief executive officer of YellowWood Group, a strategy development firm she founded in 2003. Olalah and her team partner with private and public sector leaders to transform ideas into objectives and objectives into outcomes. Prior to founding the firm, Olalah worked in a number of enterprise operations, administration, legal, human resources and technology roles with broad responsibilities. A lifelong learner, Olalah completed a master levels certification program at Cornell University with distinction and a management degree program at East Carolina University with honors. She is also a proud graduate of North Carolina Institute of Political Leadership

Fellows programs. Olalah is appointed to the NC Works Commission to represent the interest of the state's nearly 900,000 small business owners. .



Sharene Pierce is chief diversity and inclusion officer and vice president of talent acquisition for Duke Energy. She is responsible for developing and executing strategies that continue to build on the company's culture of diversity and inclusion and enhance its ability to execute one of the industry's largest clean energy transitions. She also leads the cross-functional team responsible for building a strong and diverse recruitment pipeline.

Duke Energy has made strong progress hiring diverse candidates and advancing diverse leaders, and hosting events where employees can have safe and honest conversations. The company also has an increased focus on outreach to historically Black colleges and universities, as well as social justice and racial equity philanthropy.

Before assuming her current position in December 2022, Pierce served as vice president, customer experience and services operational transformation for Duke Energy. In this role, she focused on delivering customer value, employee engagement and diversity and inclusion initiatives within the customer experience, solutions and services organization.

Pierce joined the company in 2000 and has held a series of engineering and operations leadership roles during her career. Her previous roles also include vice president of engineering for the distribution grid in the western Carolinas.

A native of North Carolina, Pierce earned a Bachelor of Science degree in chemical engineering from North Carolina State University and an MBA from Wake Forest University School of Business. She is a registered professional engineer in North Carolina.

Pierce currently serves on the North Carolina State University Park Scholarship Regional Selection Committee. She is also a member of the Wake Forest University Engineering External Advisory Council and a Project Scientist STEM superstar speaker.



Tom Rabon draws on more than thirty years of experience in the public and private sectors in his role as Chairman at New Kind. He appreciates the relationship between good design and good business and knows what it takes to achieve success in both.

Throughout his career, Tom has worked extensively with governments around the world to create market opportunities for US companies in emerging markets. Having served in various executive positions at AT&T and Lucent Technologies, he was later recruited to become the Executive Vice President of Corporate Affairs of Red Hat. There, he played a key role in building the organization from a little-known startup into a highly successful global technology company. After eight wonderful years at Red Hat, Tom joined New Kind as Chairman and Partner, where he helps guide New Kind's strategic decision-making and keeps us connected to the business world at large. Tom received his B.A. from UNC Chapel Hill and completed executive management programs at Harvard University. He has served on various boards in leadership positions, including Chairman of the Board of Trustees of UNC Wilmington and Chairman of the Board of MCNC. At age 24, he was one of the youngest persons ever elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives. He is also an active investor and advisor in a number of early stage technology companies.

Tom's curious spirit keeps him busy. On weekends you're likely to find him scanning the pages of The Wall Street Journal or fishing with his son off the coast of North Carolina



Rebecca Axford currently serves as an International Representative for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), where she plays a pivotal role in facilitating education, workforce development, and strengthening opportunities for workers. With a strong commitment to fostering inclusive growth, Rebecca introduces initiatives that promote diversity and equity in the trades. As a former director of a registered apprenticeship, she led groundbreaking initiatives to recruit non-traditional apprentices, including women, minorities, and veterans, while establishing a pre-apprenticeship program to further enhance equitable workforce pipelines. Rebecca

now continues her work at a national level, advocating for the long-term success and growth of workers through strategic partnerships and education.



Dr. Cheryl L. Richards was recently named CEO of Catapult, the new statewide employers association formed following the merger of Capital Associated Industries (of Raleigh) and The Employers Association (of Charlotte). Catapult partners with and serves more than 2,300 employers across the region. Prior to Catapult, Dr. Richards served as the first female president of Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte overseeing a residential campus that provides bachelor's and master's degrees to 1,400 students pursuing degrees through 5 academic colleges.

Dr. Richards has a long and distinguished career in North Carolina serving as CEO & Regional Dean of Northeastern University's first regional campus in Charlotte. She was a trailblazer successfully establishing Northeastern's campus in North Carolina, paving the way for a global network of campuses in the US, Canada and London. Committed to developing strong community partnerships, her leadership led to the university's first military partnership at Ft. Bragg and the institution's first forays into building stackable customized solutions for corporate learning & professional development. Prior to Northeastern, Dr. Richards worked at Central Piedmont Community College serving as Dean of the Cato Campus and Middle College High School, Associate Dean of Corporate & Continuing Education, and Director of Business & Industry Learning.



Mark Richardson is currently serving on the Rockingham County Board of Commissioners. He was originally elected to the Board in 2012 and served as Chairman and Vice-Chairman three times. He is also Chairman of the Piedmont Triad Regional of Counsel of Government and the regional Manpower Development Commission.

Commissioner Richardson is married to the former Kathryn Idol of Colfax. They reside in Rockingham County near Stokesdale and have three children and seven grandchildren. He was raised on a Rockingham County tobacco farm and has a BS from N.C. State University, MS/MA degrees from Webster University and post graduate work with Peabody University. He joined the USAF immediately after graduating from college.

He is a graduate of the Royal Air Force Air Staff College, the USAF Air War College, the Advanced Nuclear Weapons Course and USAF Fighter Weapons Instructor school. He retired after 24 years in the USAF as a Colonel and Command Fighter Pilot with over 5000 hours in various fighter aircraft. His assignments included: director of leadership training for Air Command and Staff College, Chief of Counter Drug Plans for U.S. Southern Command, operational test pilot, Operations Officer of 524 TFTS and Commander of the 428th Fighter Squadron.

After leaving active duty, Colonel Richardson started the Junior AFROTC program at Rockingham County High School. Within two years that program grew to be the largest in the Southeast Region. He has concurrently operated private developments as part of limited liability partnerships and commercial business as an executive.

Commissioner Richardson has represented Rockingham County as a member of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' Educational Steering Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Mental Health Task Force and the Health and Human Services Committee. He is a graduate of the North Carolina School of Government Advanced Leadership Course.

Commissioner Richardson has a diverse and extensive background as an educator. He was both a platform and inflight instructor in the USAF. His teaching experience includes liberal arts, technical and scientific subjects. He has taught in North Carolina public schools at the middle and high school level. He has been a teacher at the undergraduate and graduate level of post-secondary education. As an administrator, he has been a middle school principal of a charter school for five years and a middle/high school principal of an alternative school for eight years.

As Commissioner, Colonel Richardson has been involved in connecting the local Rockingham Community College with collaborative occupational training programs that include the local LEA. He has also assisted in promoting the community college training programs to successfully entice industrial investment in the county.

Commissioner Richardson also serves on the executive Board of the N.C. Association of County of County Commissioners and chairs the Administrative Counsel of Stokesdale United Methodist Church.



Devdutta Sangvai, MD, JD, MBA is a professor of family medicine, pediatrics, and psychiatry at the Duke University School of Medicine. He recently served as president at Duke Regional Hospital and vice president for Population Health Management at Duke University Health System. Dr. Sangvai has served as president of the North Carolina Medical Society and has been a member of the North Carolina Medical Care Commission. He is currently president of the North Carolina Medical Board. Dr. Sangvai is a graduate of the Ohio State University and earned his M.D. at the Medical College of Ohio, his J.D. from North Carolina Central University, and M.B.A. from the Fuqua School

of Business. Dr. Sangvai lives in Durham with his wife and two children, both studying at Duke. He will be North Carolina's first Indian American cabinet member.



Tammy Simmons is Vice President of Marketing & Culture at Machine Specialties Inc. (MSI) in Greensboro NC, a producer of machined parts for the Aerospace, Medical, Military, Commercial and Energy Industries. MSI has parts on the Mars Rover, the space station, and multiple aircraft programs. They also manufacture surgical replacement parts. Tammy has been instrumental in designing and implementing Guilford Apprenticeship Partners (GAP) in Guilford County, NC and RockAtop in Rockingham County, NC. She uses apprenticeships in her business to hire and train for highly skilled advanced manufacturing positions. Her

company currently has 74 registered youth apprentices. Tammy is an original member of the Triad Workforce Solutions Collaborative where she also served as Chair.

Tammy is also a speaker throughout the country promoting apprenticeships and advising other apprenticeship programs. She has served as a panelist nationally for Apprenticeships for the Aspen Institute, Jobs for the Future and New America Institute as well as been asked to speak to the U.S. Congress in 2017 and 2018 on behalf of apprenticeships.



Cynthia Speight is the Director of the NC Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) within the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Her career in the human services field spans more than 36 years. Cynthia is passionate about DSB's mission to provide essential, high-quality services to help individuals who are blind, deafblind, or have low vision achieve their independent living and employment goals. Her career with DSB began in 2000 as an Independent Living Rehabilitation Program Specialist where she focused her efforts on enhancing the program and services. She was promoted to the Chief of Rehabilitation Programs and Field Services in 2009 and served in that role until 2012 when she was promoted to Assistant Director.

Cynthia was appointed Division Director in 2017 and has been dedicated to expanding services, resources and opportunities for consumers and building stronger collaborative partnerships with communities, businesses, and organizations in support of DHHS' and DSB's missions. Throughout her employment with the division, Cynthia has served on various committees and boards that most recently include the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Executive Committee, National Council of State Agencies for the Blind Executive Committee, Center for Innovative Training in VR Advisory Board, Older Individuals Who Are Blind Technical Assistance Center Advisory Council, NC Reading Service Board, and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Professional Network, Co-Chair.

Cynthia's work with individuals who have significant vision loss, blindness, or deaf blindness began with the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. While at DBVI, Cynthia also served as the Assistant Regional Manager and Regional Manager of the Fairfax Regional Office.

Cynthia received both her Master of Science in rehabilitation counseling and Bachelor of Arts in psychology from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.



Governor Josh Stein is the 76th governor of North Carolina. A member of the Democratic Party, he served from 2017 to 2025 as the 51st attorney general of North Carolina and from 2009 to 2016 in the North Carolina Senate. Governor Stein was called to public service by his faith and his family. His faith teaches him that we are all called to make a difference, and his parents Adam and Jane raised his brother Eric, sister Gerda, and him to try to do what is right. They grounded him in our shared values of freedom and opportunity for everyone.

As Governor, Stein's focus will be on creating a safer, stronger North Carolina. He will bring people together to help western North Carolina recover from Hurricane Helene, create economic opportunity for all North Carolinians, invest in public schools, and keep people safe.

Stein spent the past eight years serving as North Carolina's Attorney General. During that time, he and his team worked to clear the nation's largest backlog of untested rape kits and hold accountable the big drug companies that created and fueled the opioid crisis, securing more than \$50 billion in settlement funds, including nearly \$1.5 billion for North Carolina to help people struggling with addiction. They held e-cigarette manufacturer Juul accountable for sparking a teen vaping epidemic – the first state in the country to do so – and protected vulnerable North Carolinians from fraudsters and scammers, including going after companies that price-gouged customers in the wake of natural disasters. Stein advocated for fully funding North Carolina's public schools through the Leandro Plan and defended people's right to vote and women's right to choose.

Before his time as Attorney General, Stein served in the state Senate and was a champion for public education, clean energy, and public safety. Between 2001 and 2008, he served as senior deputy attorney general for consumer protection in the North Carolina Department of Justice, where he helped run the payday lenders charging loan shark interest rates out of the state and helped enhance people's privacy protections.

Stein earned law and public policy degrees from Harvard University and graduated from Dartmouth College and Chapel Hill High School. After college, he taught high school English and economics in Zimbabwe for two years. As a young lawyer, Stein worked with the Self-Help Credit Union to develop affordable single-family homes in Durham and with the North Carolina Minority Support Center to raise capital to invest in small businesses across North Carolina.

Josh and his wife Anna live in Raleigh and are members of Temple Beth Or. They are the proud parents of Sam, Adam, and Leah, who all attended North Carolina public schools, just like they did.



Gregory Thompson was born and raised in Ellerbe, NC, and currently reside in Aberdeen NC with my wife, Mary Neil. He graduated from University of North Carolina at Charlotte with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology. He is the Operations Support Manager/Manufacturing Engineering Manager at Railroad Friction Products located in Maxton NC.

We manufacture brake shoes for the rail market and are part of the Wabtec Corporation. Greg manages all manufacturing engineering projects slated to improve quality, throughput, and/or safety and oversee the facilities engineering/maintenance.



Sandra M. Thompson serves as the Associate Vice President for College and Career Readiness and the North Carolina State Director for WIOA, Title II, for the North Carolina Community College System Office. She began in this role June 2023 and after serving as the Assistant State Director for Title II since January 2022. Prior to joining the system office, Sandra served as Associate Dean of College and Career Readiness at Central Carolina Community College. She also has experience leading adult education programs in Virginia. Sandra holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Radford University and a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Longwood University.



Kim Toler is the Training Manager for Nutrien, the world's largest fertilizer company by capacity, producing potash (K), nitrogen (N) and phosphate (P). Nutrien-Aurora recently received statewide recognition for its apprenticeship program for employees. Toler received her Bachelor of Business Administration from Mount Olive College.



Pam Townsend is the senior vice president and Southeast region business manager for the transportation and infrastructure sector at WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, a global engineering and professional services organization. Ms. Townsend is responsible for strategic business development, client service delivery and financial performance for the firm's Southeast region. She is based in the Raleigh office. Prior to joining WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, she was a senior vice president of a large consulting engineering firm with strategic planning and growth responsibilities for all market sectors in the Southeast. She

also held several positions over 24 years with an international consulting organization, including senior vice president and southern states district general manager. A licensed professional engineer in several states, Ms. Townsend earned bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from North Carolina State University. Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship at the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University. Kevin has served as the Social Entrepreneur in Residence and The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; she's on the External Advisory Council.



Dr. Hope Williams joined NCICU in 1986 and has served as president since 1992. She is an advocate on state and federal public policy issues, represents independent higher education with other education sectors, seeks scholarship and program support for students and campuses, and fosters collaborative partnerships among campuses. She received her postsecondary degrees from Duke University, NCSU and UNC-Chapel Hill.