



Leadership North Carolina Class 31

Duke Energy Economic Development Session

March 5 – 7, 2024

Speaker Directory

Mr. Stuart Hair

Commercial and Community Engagement Director
City of Charlotte, Aviation Department
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Stuart P. Hair serves as the City of Charlotte Aviation Department Director of Commercial and Community Engagement. He leads a staff responsible for planning, managing, and overseeing the activities and operations regarding commercial development, community engagement, real estate, and airplane noise at the Charlotte Douglas International Airport. His primary duties include identifying opportunities to increase Airport revenues through creative and innovative development solutions and to lead in the Airport's engagement as a good neighbor. Hair has been on the job since April 2015.

He has worked in economic development since 2006 throughout the Charlotte region with local and state organizations, following a career in private sector administrative operations. Hair is a graduate of Oklahoma University Economic Development Institute (OUEDI) and a Certified Member (CM) of American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE)

He holds a BA from Queens University of Charlotte and an MA from UNC Charlotte. Along with his wife and child, Hair lives in southeast Charlotte.

Ms. Melissa Treadaway

Community Engagement Manager
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Melissa M. Treadaway serves as Charlotte Douglas International Airport's Community Engagement Manager. She is responsible for developing, planning, and implementing strategies designed to connect the Airport with the community and to make positive contributions to the community. Her primary focus is the creation and planning of programs that engage and support the community, as well as developing and expanding relationships with community organizations and leaders.

Treadaway has been employed by the City of Charlotte since 2008 and joined the Aviation Department in 2019. She previously worked on the Communications/Public Information teams at both the Airport and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. Before that, she worked as a reporter for The Charlotte Observer.

She holds a BA from UNC Charlotte and is a graduate of Leadership Charlotte. In her personal time, she is a "Big" to Sanaa through Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Central Carolinas and on the board of directors for the Center for Community Transitions, a nonprofit organization that works to strengthen the community by helping people with criminal records and their families find a healthier and more productive way of living.

Ms. Christina Jibrin

Community Engagement Coordinator
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Christina Jibrin is the Community Engagement Coordinator of Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT). She has worked at CLT since 2021. Christina's role and responsibilities include the day-to-day coordination and planning of programs, events, and tours for the Aviation Department's Community Engagement Team. Before working at CLT, Christina served the Mecklenburg County Manager's Office for nearly three years coordinating communications, events, and a committee for the Consolidated Human Services Agency as well as served for over ten years coordinating communications, marketing, and large-scale events in the non-profit sector. Christina is a proud HBCU graduate and has a bachelor's degree in Communications and a master's degree in Strategic Communications Management from Morgan State University.

Ms. Amy Strecker

President
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LNC Class 24 Alumna

Amy Strecker serves as president of the Duke Energy Foundation and leads the company's philanthropic strategy and employee engagement programs. Previously, she led the company's North Carolina

philanthropy and worked on the company's Corporate Communications and Local Government and Community Relations teams.

Amy joined the UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School in 2013 as an adjunct instructor and teaches business and professional communications for the UNC School of Government's Master of Public Administration and UNC-Kenan Flagler Business School's Master of Business Administration programs.

She has also worked in the public policy arena, focusing on affordable higher education. Amy started her career with Teach for America as an English teacher in Warren County, NC. Strecker earned a BA in English from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Public Administration from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Amy is active in nonprofit board service and serves on the Board of Directors for the Central Piedmont Community College Foundation. She has chaired the United Way of the Greater Triangle's Board of Directors and served on the executive committees of Marbles Kids Museum's Board of Directors and the NC Theatre's Board of Directors. She grew up in South Texas and lives in Charlotte, NC, with her wife, Emmy.

Ms. Janet LaBar

President and Chief Executive Officer
Charlotte Regional Business Alliance
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LaBar joined the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance® as CEO in April 2019 through a national executive search. A seasoned regional economic development leader with strong communications, strategy, and operations skills, she is leading the CLT Alliance in a new direction to ensure the Charlotte region is the most vibrant, innovative, and healthy economy in the nation. Through collaboration, the CLT Alliance is advancing a region that creates economic opportunities and prosperity for all.

LaBar's regional economic development experience spans 20 years, including serving as CEO at Greater Portland Inc from 2014-2019, and a decade at the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC). LaBar started her economic development career in 2002 at the Center for Workforce Development at the Maricopa Community Colleges in Tempe, Arizona.

LaBar serves on the boards of Charlotte Center City Partners, Charlotte Sports Foundation, Central Piedmont Community College, and UNC Charlotte's College of Computing and Informatics Dean's Advisory Board. She is also a member of the Charlotte Industrial Roundtable for the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, IEDC's Equitable Economic Development Playbook Advisory Committee, and she is the Charlotte market lead for Southern Communities Initiative.

She earned a bachelor's degree in communication arts from the University of West Florida and an MBA in marketing from the University of Phoenix. LaBar and her husband are proud parents to an older daughter and younger daughter/son twins.

Mr. Dan Gerlach

Owner
Dan Gerlach LLC
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Dan Gerlach is an experienced leader in the government, nonprofit, philanthropic, and education sectors, including 25 years in North Carolina serving as senior fiscal advisor to the NC governor, president of a \$1 billion foundation, founding director of a public policy research organization, and interim leader of a research university.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and English from the University of Notre Dame and a Master's of Public Administration from Syracuse University.

Through Dan Gerlach LLC, he now strives to provide strategic counsel on finance, public policy, and other issues.

Mr. Wit Tuttell

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Wit Tuttell was named Executive Director of Visit North Carolina in November 2013. He oversees the strategic planning, policy development, and marketing initiatives for North Carolina's official state tourism office and the industry sectors it serves. North Carolina's state tourism office, formerly the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development, was transferred to the non-profit Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina in October 2014 and renamed Visit North Carolina.

Tuttell has been in North Carolina tourism since 2006. During this time, the office has been recognized with numerous national awards for excellence in marketing and advertising. He has served as chair of the board of directors of Travel South USA and serves on the board of the US Travel Association. In 2022, Tuttell was named State Tourism Director of the Year by the National Council of State Tourism Directors.

He has more than 30 years' experience in the tourism industry including working for Universal Studios Florida and the Orlando/Orange County Convention & Visitors Bureau Inc. He graduated from the University of Florida and was also a reporter for the Anchorage (Alaska) Times.

Mr. Greg Walter

Executive Vice President and General Manager
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Greg Walter is the Executive Vice President and General Manager of Charlotte Motor Speedway. He was promoted to his current position in October of 2018 after working for Speedway Motorsports since 1999, initially as Director of Sales for Atlanta Motor Speedway. During his time as general manager of Charlotte, Walter has been selected as promoter of the year four times.

Before his tenure with Speedway Motorsports, Walter worked in sports media with companies such as Raycom Sports, ESPN Regional, and Capitol Broadcasting.

Currently, he serves as the chair of the Cabarrus County CVB, the North Carolina Motorsports Association, and is past chair of the Cabarrus County Economic Development Corporation. In addition, Walter is the NC Senate's appointee to the State's Travel and Tourism Board and Governor Roy Cooper's appointee to the Board of Trustees for the NC Museum of Art.

Walter graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a degree in Journalism.

Caroline Wright

SVP and Chief Venues Officer
Tepper Sports & Entertainment
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Caroline Wright joined Tepper Sports & Entertainment in February 2023. In her role, Wright leads all aspects of Bank of America Stadium's day-to-day operations, including operational sustainability, grounds, security compliance, maintenance, IT, technical production, defining service standards and ensuring best in class operational performance. Additionally, she oversees booking concerts and events at Bank of America Stadium as well as food and beverage concessions and merchandise programs.

Prior to coming to TSE, Wright spent 27 years with Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment (MLSE), most recently as the Vice President and General Manager, Venues. She led the management of all facility and event operations across MLSE's owned and operated venues, including Scotiabank Arena, BMO Field, Coca-Cola Coliseum, Ford Performance Centre, BMO Training Ground and OVO Athletic Centre and Lamport Stadium. These venues are home to the Toronto Maple Leafs (NHL), Toronto Raptors (NBA), Toronto FC (MLS), Toronto Argos (CFL) and a world-leading live entertainment business.

Prior to her appointment as Vice President & GM, Wright held leadership roles in the areas of Venue Strategy, Capital Projects, Creative Agency Production, Marketing, Fan Loyalty, Retail and Global Partnerships & Ticketing.

Since 2004, Wright has served on the Durham College Sports Management Advisory Board, previously volunteered with the MLSE Foundation, and was a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans in the post-Hurricane Katrina cleanup.

A native Canadian, Wright grew up north of Toronto, Ontario, and graduated from Durham College with a diploma in Sports Business. She recently completed a certification in Holistic Nutrition. Wright and her husband, Chris, have two sons, Mason and Brendan.

Ms. Kimberly Williams

Founder and CEO, NC for Military Employment (NC4ME)
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Kimberly is a visionary executive leader working with North Carolina's State Government, military installations, and organizations at the state, national, and global levels to drive business results with military talent. She is a nationally recognized thought leader in human capital, workforce development, and military talent acquisition. Kimberly is a catalyst for positive change in the veteran employment environment and is recognized for her focus on driving bottom line results with high performing talent. With over 30 years of experience in Human Resources at the executive level, Kimberly is currently the Chief Human Resource Officer for the City of Jacksonville, NC, and is the Founder & CEO of the North Carolina statewide military employment initiative, **NC4ME**, *North Carolina for Military Employment*. Kimberly has twice been presented the Seven Seals Award for meritorious leadership and initiative in support of the Department of Defense as well as the 2022 Defense Community Champion award from the Association of Defense Communities.

Mr. Jacob Key

Program Manager, Military Outreach and Veterans Engagement (M.O.V.E)
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Jacob joined NCBiotech in June 2023 as Program Manager for the Military Outreach and Veterans Engagement (M.O.V.E.) initiative. His role consists of raising awareness and connecting the NC military community to the thriving life sciences industry. Jacob and his team do so by delivering training programs through industry partnerships and the NC Community College network to enhance the soft skills all service members possess. Jacob also enhances connectivity between participants in the program with career placement for in-demand jobs.

Jacob is a combat veteran who retired as a Master Sergeant after serving over 20 years in the military. He has a track record as an outstanding program manager and human resources manager since 2007. Jacob completed his B.S. degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, Business and Religion at Liberty University. As a recent transitioning service member, he possesses a deep passion for continuing his service by connecting veterans to their newfound purpose after leaving the military. Jacob continues to interact with the veteran community through his new career at NCBiotech but also personally with his local church as a small group and serve team leader.

Before joining NCBiotech, Jacob held various roles such as a human resource manager, operations manager, project manager, talent acquisition manager, and recruitment specialist. Jacob enjoys time with his family, supporting his local church, camping, hiking, and the Carolina Panthers “Keep Pounding.”

Mr. Blake Bourne

Executive Director

Veterans Bridge Home

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The Executive Director of VBH, [Blake Bourne](#) is a former Army Infantry Officer who utilizes his 18+ years of experience leading diverse, cross-functional teams to collectively overcome challenges and address systems change. He is passionate about the opportunity to strengthen local communities by engaging and empowering our veterans. Blake joined [Veterans Bridge Home \(VBH\)](#) in 2013 and was named the Executive Director in 2016.

Founded in 2011, VBH was a small Charlotte based non-profit organization connecting military & veteran families to community-based resources to assist them in achieving their unique goals. Since then, Blake and the Team of VBH have built VBH into a regional leader in Veteran services and a national model of Community Integration and Collective Impact. VBH is focused on achieving outcomes that build *“A Stronger Community, one Veteran at a time.”*

Prior to joining VBH, Blake completed a Public Service Fellowship with the Mission Continues after having served in the US Army from 2006-2012, leaving at the rank of Captain. Earning his commission through Officer Candidate School he was stationed in Georgia, Germany, and North Carolina. Deployed to Iraq twice, Blake is Ranger and Airborne qualified and he earned the Expert Infantryman’s Badge, Combat Infantryman’s Badge, and Bronze Star. He held leadership positions at the Platoon, Company, Battalion and Brigade levels. Prior to his military service, Blake worked on Capitol Hill, in the US House of Representatives.

Originally from Central Pennsylvania, Blake holds an undergraduate degree in Political Science from the University of Pennsylvania. In 2019 Blake was recognized as one of [Charlotte’s 40 Under 40](#) by the CLT Business Journal and has been a volunteer Board member for several local organizations. When he is not advocating for Veterans, Blake enjoys spending time with his wife LeeAnn, a Pharmacist at Carolinas Medical Center, and their two children Thomas (11) & Wren (8).

Mr. Kevin Dick

President and Chief Executive Officer
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Kevin Dick began as President & CEO with the Carolina Small Business Development Fund (CSBDF) in February 2020 after decades of professional experience working in economic, community, and workforce development at the local government level. He leads a team of approximately 37 full-time employees and has accountability for a \$20m loan portfolio with \$34m in assets under management. Since joining CSBDF, Kevin has helped to bring about a resurgence of the organization as a community and economic development entity with a statewide focus. During his tenure, CSBDF has deployed over \$40m in capital and provided loans, grants, and technical assistance to over 2000 North Carolina-based small businesses from primarily underserved communities. CSBDF has also conducted economic policy research that has informed government officials, philanthropic organizations, financial services institutions, and other key stakeholders. He has worked with the Board and staff to devise a streamlined Strategic Plan, perform an organizational realignment, and lead the organization to become the #1 SBA Community Advantage Lender in NC for 2022 and the #1 community development financial institution (CDFI) for SBA (7a) lending in NC (#22 overall). CSBDF has also become a go-to agency for the administration of public sector loan and grant programs, which has brought relief to thousands of small businesses throughout NC that were adversely impacted by the global pandemic.

Prior to joining CSBDF, Kevin held high-level community, economic, and workforce development roles with the City of Charlotte, City of Durham, the Broward (FL) Workforce Development Board, and the City of Dania Beach, FL. Initiatives under Kevin's management have been nationally recognized by the International Economic Development Council, the NC Sustainable Business Council, National League of Cities, US Conference of Mayors, Walmart Foundation, the US Department of Labor, and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Kevin holds board and committee positions with the International Economic Development Council, the United Minority Contractors of NC, the North Carolina Economic Development Association, and the Garner Chamber of Commerce. He holds a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from Florida Atlantic University and a Bachelor of Science in International Business from Georgetown University. He has also been designated as a Certified Economic Developer (CEdD) by the International Economic Development Council.

Originally from Montclair, NJ, he enjoys watching sports, listening to music, and spending time with his family and friends in his spare time.

Mr. Donny Hicks

Executive Director

Gaston County Economic Development Commission

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Donny Hicks graduated from UNC Charlotte in 1983 with a degree in political science. The next year, while working on a master's degree in public administration from UNC Chapel Hill, Hicks joined Gaston County Economic Development. He was promoted to the director's job the following year and continues to help bring jobs and investment to the county just west of Charlotte.

This year, Hicks received the President's Award, given at the discretion of the group's president, Chris Platé, who is executive director of Monroe-Union County Economic Development.

Gaston's recent successes have included CaroMont Health's plans to invest \$325 million, much of it for a new hospital opening in 2024 in Belmont. Gastonia built a downtown stadium, which attracted a independent league baseball team. Gaston County has seen 5 million square feet of industrial space built in the past two years, and expects the same amount to be built in the next two years. A total of 7 million square feet of industrial space was built during Hicks' first 37 years. Companies adding industrial space include Amazon and the U.S. Postal Service.

Hicks chairs the North Carolina Community College Foundation, which promotes workforce development. He is a past president of the North Carolina Economic Developers Association (NCEDA).

Mr. Brent Christensen

President and CEO

Greensboro Chamber of Commerce

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In June 2015, Brent Christensen joined the Greensboro (NC) Chamber of Commerce as its President and CEO, where he leads the organization that includes Greensboro's lead economic development organization as well as Launch Greensboro and Action Greensboro.

Under Christensen's leadership, the Chamber worked with the High Point Economic Development Corporation to form the Guilford County Economic Development Alliance, uniting the county's economic development efforts under one organization for the first time.

Over the past five years, the Chamber's economic development efforts have resulted in the announcement of more than 8,800 new jobs and \$5 billion in private capital investment in the Greensboro area. In 2022, the Chamber was awarded a 5-star Accreditation by the US Chamber of Commerce, placing it among the top two percent of chambers of commerce nationwide.

Before arriving in North Carolina, Christensen served for three years as the Executive Director of the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), the state's lead economic and community development agency. In this capacity, Christensen oversaw the agency's services, ranging from traditional business recruitment, retention, and expansion assistance to developing unique state assets, such as the creative economy, and implementing programs that support community development, small business growth, tourism, disaster recovery, and other federal programs vital to Mississippi.

Prior to joining MDA, Christensen was the President and CEO of the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce in Gainesville, FL. There, he directed the operation of the chamber, the Council for Economic Outreach, which is the chamber's economic development arm, and the Gainesville Technology Enterprise Center, the community's high-tech business incubator. During his tenure, the chamber was awarded its 5-Star Accreditation by the US Chamber of Commerce.

Christensen holds an MBA from the University of South Florida and a bachelor's degree in Economics and Public Policy Studies from Duke University.

Mr. Kevin Franklin

President

Randolph County Economic Development Corporation

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Kevin Franklin moved to Randolph County in 1992 and spent a dozen years as an educator before becoming engaged in community and economic development while employed as the Ramseur, NC, town administrator from 2006-2012. In 2013, he entered the economic development profession full-time when he joined the Randolph County EDC as Existing Business & Industry Coordinator. He was promoted to Vice President in June of 2017 and to President in June of 2019. The highlight of Franklin's economic development career is serving as part of the incredible team that brought Toyota Battery Manufacturing to Randolph County. To date, Toyota has announced \$13.9 billion in new investment and creation of 5,100 new jobs.

Franklin remains actively engaged in the community and has served on a variety of nonprofit boards. He is a current board member of the Community Foundation for Randolph County. He also serves on several community advisory committees and is an active Rotarian and officer with the Asheboro Rotary Club.

In addition to his position with the Randolph County EDC, Franklin serves part time as associate pastor at Faith Baptist Church in Ramseur. He resides in Ramseur with his wife, Julie, and two sons, Ethan and Tyler.

Ms. Carolyn Coia

Vice President of Real Estate
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Carolyn Coia serves as the Vice President of Real Estate for the Research Triangle Foundation of North Carolina, the overseeing entity of Research Triangle Park. In her role since 2016, Carolyn has spearheaded critical financial planning and modeling initiatives, as well as played a pivotal role in overseeing feasibility assessments, due diligence processes, tenant improvements, and leasing activities spanning over 700,000 square feet of office, laboratory, and retail space. Under her guidance, these comprehensive efforts have transformed the Foundation's financial landscape, propelling it from a substantial annual deficit to a sustainable revenue stream that effectively covers operational expenses.

In addition to her involvement in revenue-generation, Carolyn has taken the helm in project management and tenant coordination for Boxyard RTP, an innovative cargotecture project. She also provides critical support for Hub RTP, the mixed-use master plan development spanning 100 acres, representing a future potential of 6 million square feet and serving as RTP's new downtown.

Before her tenure with the Foundation, Carolyn's professional journey included working with a group of private equity-owned companies, where she specialized in acquisition pro forma analysis, financial projections, and a wide range of financial modeling. Carolyn holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Outside her professional commitments, Carolyn demonstrates her dedication to the community by volunteering as Chairman of the Research Triangle High School Board of Directors.

Mr. Bryan Thompson

Assistant County Manager
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Receiving a BA in Government/Public Administration from Campbell University and a MPA from Appalachian State University, Bryan is an eighteen-year veteran in North Carolina local government management, having served as town manager in the communities of Mount Gilead, Erwin, and Siler City. Since July of 2019, Bryan has served as an assistant manager in Chatham County and is responsible for overseeing several departments, including finance, budget, tax, emergency communications, emergency management, information technology, GIS, and parks and recreation. Bryan is a graduate of the Duke North Carolina Leadership Forum, University of North Carolina School of Government's Public Executive Leadership Academy (PELA), and the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Institute (REDI).

Ms. Sharon Decker

Alumna LNC Class 1

President, Carolinas Operations, Tryon Equestrian Partners
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Sharon Decker is President, Carolina Operations for Tryon Equestrian Partners, whose properties include Tryon Resort and Tryon International Equestrian Center, one of the premier equestrian centers in the world. Decker has proven that her extensive experience and impressive background are an ideal fit to execute the vision for this innovative and groundbreaking development.

As President of Carolina Operations, Decker is managing development of the Tryon Resort brand. In addition to ongoing expansion at Tryon International Equestrian Center, Decker is spearheading the multi-use development of the 1600 acre Tryon Resort located in the Foothills of Western North Carolina. She also manages the day-to-day operations associated with running this organization, which includes an extensive spring, summer, and fall equestrian competition calendar and a year-round event schedule of entertainment and family fun.

A graduate of University of North Carolina Greensboro, Decker began her career with Duke Power Company, now formally recognized as Duke Energy, where she was named the first female vice president in the company's history. Since that time, she has held significant leadership roles in public, private, and non-profit corporations, with a focus on economic development and job creation, new business start-ups, historic preservation, and rural community development.

In one of her most recognizable positions, Decker, a North Carolina native, was appointed Secretary of Commerce for the state of North Carolina in 2013 by Governor Pat McCrory, serving the state government for two years. During her time as Secretary of Commerce, Decker oversaw the creation of The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, responsible for marketing the state of North Carolina on a global scale. She also took a large leadership role in developing the Rural Division of the Department of Commerce, dedicated to creating and aiding economic growth in the rural areas of the state. Decker also serves on the board of Coca-Cola Bottling Consolidated, Culp, Inc., and The Weisiger Group (Carolina Cat).

Sharon is a lay pastor in the Presbyterian Church, USA, a student of contemplative prayer and meditation, a wife, and mother of four adult children. Her daily goal in life is to "be love" in all places and to encourage and equip others to do the same. Her life goal is to make North Carolina a State where all people have the opportunity to thrive.

Class 31 Duke Energy Economic Development Session Planning Committee

The following members of LNC Class 30 make up the planning committee for the Class 31 Duke Energy Economic Development session.

Mrs. Natasha Austin Iredell

Chief Operating Officer
Dogwood State Bank
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Natasha is a Founder and the Chief Operating Officer of Dogwood State Bank, a North Carolina state-chartered community bank headquartered in Raleigh with over \$1 Billion in total assets. Prior to her position with Dogwood, she was the Marketing Director of the Carolinas for First National Bank following its acquisition of Yadkin Bank in 2017. She joined Yadkin Valley Bank and Trust in 2011 as Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications, leading the rebrand effort to Yadkin Bank as well as VantageSouth Bank's rebrand to Yadkin Bank.

She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and she earned her Certified Financial Marketing Professional designation from the American Bankers Association in 2010. She currently serves as a faculty member at the NC School of Banking sponsored by the NC Bankers Association as well as a panelist at the NCBA Women in Finance Conference. Natasha is a member of UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School's Foundation Board, which oversees the management of the school's endowment and student-run investment funds.

Natasha is passionate about providing women with opportunities to grow personally and professionally. She is a former participant in the Miss North Carolina Scholarship Program and regularly volunteers her time to local scholarship organizations in the Miss America Program. She is an active member of Kenan Flagler Business School's 100 Women Movement, which seeks to grow the number of women pursuing business degrees across UNC's campus and beyond.

Dr. Monica Carpenter Yancey

Associate Vice President of Workforce Development
Mayland Community College
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Dr. Monica S. Carpenter has worked in the NC Community College system for over 23 years in various roles. She is currently serving as the Associate Vice President of Workforce Development and Continuing Education at Mayland Community College. She holds a doctorate and master's degree in community college leadership from Western Carolina University, a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Gardner Webb University, and an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Business from Mayland Community College. Dr. Carpenter is also an alum of the 2021-22 Education Policy Fellowship Program offered through the Institute of Educational Leadership.

As a first-generation college graduate, Dr. Carpenter is passionate about helping others achieve their dreams of obtaining a college degree and serving her community and state by helping to prepare a highly qualified workforce. She has added numerous programs in the Workforce Division at Mayland

Community College including a paralegal program, a certified dietary manager program, and a dialysis tech program. She serves on the board for the local SECU, Yancey Fund, and WNC Search, and she is a licensed real estate agent. Monica currently lives in Burnsville with her two children, a 14-year-old girl and an 8-year-old boy, who keep her active and on the go.

Mrs. Allyson Colaco Mecklenburg

VP and Director, Customer Experience

E4E Relief

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Allyson joined E4E Relief in 2021 as Vice President of Customer and Applicant Experience. She works with a team of compassionate professionals to deliver relief to tens of thousands of individuals who experience difficulties around natural disasters and personal hardships. This role builds on 18 years of experience across various industries and roles, including Director of Operations for an independent textile and homewares company, corporate executive recruiter at a generalist firm, and crisis communication and CSR consultant focused on infrastructure, public works, education, and philanthropic initiatives.

Allyson finds great enjoyment in giving back to the Charlotte community. Over the last decade, she has served on the board of Hands on Charlotte, Junior League of Charlotte, and Theatre Charlotte. Today, she is Co-President of the Georgetown Club of Charlotte and Vice-Chair of WFAE's Community Advisory Board (CAB). She and her husband call Charlotte their home with their forever dog, Carter; the family volunteers for Carolina P.A.W.S. and has welcomed 55 dogs, mostly pit bulls, into their home to rest and recover on the road to finding forever homes.

Originally from Baltimore, MD, Allyson grew up in Pittsburgh, PA, before heading to Washington, DC, where she earned a BSBA in Accounting and International Business from American University and an M.B.A. from Georgetown University.

Ms. Veronica Creech Wake

Chief Economic Development and External Engagement Officer

Advance Community Health

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Veronica serves as Chief Economic Development & External Engagement Officer at Advance Community Health—the largest of 42 NC based FQHCs—serving Wake and Franklin Counties. Veronica, a seasoned social worker and public administrator, comes to Advance with twenty-five years of experience leading community and economic investments for public and nonprofits entities. A few NC career highlights include raising over \$3 million for Saint Augustine's University, crafting the City of Raleigh's equitable economic development strategy, and leading the creation and distribution of a \$1.6 million COVID relief fund to support small businesses.

Before her tenure in Raleigh, Veronica invested her education, diverse skills, and passion in two DC-based nonprofits that increase equity, access, and wealth building especially for low-resourced families and communities. Veronica readily admits, "Mission-driven work is where my heart and head are most engaged, while creating a more equitable world is my calling." During her time away from the mission, Veronica enjoys gardening, traveling, and discovering foods from around the world. As a child, Veronica

immigrated from Guyana, South America, to the US and is a first-generation college graduate earning a master's in social work (MSW) from the University of North Carolina and a master's in public administration (MPA) from Saint Louis University. With her husband Martin Evans, Veronica also owns and manages a diverse real estate portfolio.

Ms. Katy Crosby *Out of State*

Chief of Community Engagement and Institutional Accountability
National Community Reinvestment Coalition
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Catherine "Katy" Crosby is NCRC's Chief of Community Engagement and Institutional Accountability. Before joining the NCRC staff in 2023, Katy was Town Manager for the Town of Apex, NC, where she led a staff of approximately 600 employees and a budget that exceeded \$200 million, and served as the NCRC board chairperson.

Prior to that, she served as the Chief of Staff to Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz and the City of Toledo, providing leadership to approximately 2,700 employees and overseeing day-to-day operations that included administering a budget of more than \$800 million.

Katy's expertise includes enforcing local civil rights ordinances in the areas of housing, employment, public accommodation, and credit; overseeing contract compliance and capacity building programs for socially and economically disadvantaged businesses; and community relations programs that focus on immigrant integration, reducing violence, and improving the relationship between the community and police.

She is a member of the Higher Learning Commission board, one of six institutional accreditors in the United States and The Root Cause Coalition, a national coalition of organizations addressing health inequities through cross-sector partnerships.

Dr. Latasha Ellis *Mecklenburg*

Regional Behavioral Health Clinical Lead, Marathon Health
Owner, Couples Alliance
Founder, Couples Alliance Leadership Mission
info@couplesalliance.com

Dr. Ellis is an entrepreneur and psychotherapist with over 23 years of postgraduate experience in the field of mental health and integrated care. She currently serves as the Regional Behavioral Health Clinical Lead with a national employer healthcare company, Marathon Health. She provides clinical leadership for the company's multiple metropolitan areas, including Charlotte, Cincinnati, Columbus, Indianapolis, and Richmond. Dr. Ellis works closely with primary care providers and other healthcare professionals to coordinate and integrate behavioral health services that bridge the gap between physical and mental health disorders.

As a psychotherapist, Dr. Ellis has had the privilege of working with diverse populations in a multitude of settings, including Maryland Department of Corrections, Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-disabled, community hospitals, and community mental health and medical clinics. In her private practice, she works with couples to help build strong relationships resulting in stronger families. She also

founded Couples Alliance Leadership Mission (CALM), a charitable organization focused on empowering couples to walk confidently and competently in their roles as leaders in their families and their communities.

In addition to her clinical roles, Dr. Ellis is an adjunct faculty member at the University of North Carolina, School of Social Work. She works particularly closely with the school's Integrated Behavioral Health (IBH) program.

Dr. Ellis' formal education includes a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree from Morgan State University, a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from the University of Maryland at Baltimore, and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from the Institute for Clinical Social Work in Chicago, IL. Her MSW degree holds a primary specialization in Mental Health and a secondary specialization in Management and Community Organization. Dr. Ellis also holds a Certificate of Clinical Supervision from the National Association of Social Workers, a Certificate in Integrated Behavioral Health in Primary Care from the University of Michigan School of Social Work, and a Certification in Oncology Social Work from the Board of Oncology Social Work.

Mr. Kristian Forslin Johnston

GIS Project Manager, Project and Portfolio Management
Wake County
kkcreek@gmail.com

Kristian Forslin is a geospatial professional with experience in project management, business development, surveying, photogrammetry, unmanned aerial systems, and geographic information systems (GIS).

He is currently leading the Wake County GIS Division's Project & Portfolio Management team, which is responsible for all aspects of GIS project definition, execution, and best practice project management methodology at NC's most populous county. The team provides GIS solutions to meet the enterprise business needs allowing Wake County staff and residents to visualize, analyze, and interpret data to understand relationships, patterns, and trends contained within location-based data.

Previously, Kristian managed a GIS and survey program for the North Carolina Railroad Company in support of economic development, real estate, and engineering initiatives. This role oversaw the creation and management of a full-scale GIS and survey program covering 170+ years and 317 miles of historical land, utility, and infrastructure data. which. Kristian's work sustained land acquisitions, encroachment management, engineering projects, and economic development initiatives, including a 1,700+ acre property acquisition for the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite. Additionally, he innovated a first-in-the-state NC811 railroad inspection program, led the implementation of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology as a subject matter expert and licensed remote pilot, and coordinated an educational outreach program increasing awareness of NCRR policies.

Kristian has a long history of recognized geospatial community involvement including serving as an executive, board, or committee member for the NC Geographic Information Coordinating Council, NC Society of Surveyors, and NC Chapter of Urban & Regional Information Systems Association. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Geography from UNC Wilmington and has a commitment to continuing education.

Kristian and his family spend as much time as possible walking a rescued Jack Russell terrier, hiking, working in the yard, or spending time in Beaufort. All this takes place when they're not on a soccer field with an unrelenting youth soccer schedule all year long!

Dr. Sara Imhof Wake

Senior Director

North Carolina Biotechnology Center

saraimhof@gmail.com

Sara is an interdisciplinary and collaborative leader; a catalyst and opportunity creator; a strategic organizer; an impactful messenger and facilitator; and a health and life sciences policy advocate. Professionally, Sara serves as Senior Director and a leader of the Focused Initiatives Team (FIT) for the North Carolina Biotechnology Center. Her primary responsibilities include conducting Federal Affairs Outreach and Engagement, leading interdisciplinary and multi-institutional collaborations, and leading the North Carolina Precision Health Collaborative (NCPHC).

Critical recent Federal Affairs efforts include successfully leading a multistakeholder Coalition to receive \$25M federal dollars under the Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge. Sara also secured the advancement by both Senators Burr and Tillis of a Directed Congressional Spending request for NCBiotech's Military Outreach & Veterans Engagement (MOVE) program. Finally, Sara is facilitating a multistakeholder effort to house the newly created federal Advance Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) in North Carolina. With the NC Precision Health Collaborative, Sara champions a growing statewide precision health ecosystem that delivers leading technology innovation and proven thought-leadership in the field, across North Carolina and the U.S.

Sara formerly served as Director of Education and Grassroots Advocacy for The Concord Coalition, Senior Analyst, Health Care, at the Government Accountability Office, Executive Director of the Iowa Counties Public Health Association, and Assistant to the Director for the Center for Macular Degeneration at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

Sara earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing, a Master of Arts degree in Health Promotion, and a Doctorate in Health Management and Policy, at the University of Iowa. She is a graduate of Leadership North Carolina Class 30, program chair for Leadership North Carolina Class 31, and a member of the Leadership North Carolina Board of Directors.

Mr. Ryan McAward Wake

Principal Strategy & Planning Manager

Duke Energy

ryan.mcaaward@duke-energy.com

Ryan McAward is the Principal Strategy & Planning Manager supporting the Carolinas for Duke Energy. He is responsible for supporting both North Carolina and South Carolina State Presidents and their leadership teams' ownership of state and local regulatory and government relations, and community affairs. Ryan is responsible for navigating internal requirements and ensuring the team effectively communicates and produces high quality deliverables and presentations to internal and external

stakeholders. In addition, he provides valuable insight to ensure Duke Energy's comprehensive strategy is aligned across the enterprise and communicated effectively.

Before assuming this position in November 2018, Ryan served in a similar capacity supporting Customer Delivery. He also spent time in the Products and Services organization where he focused on the transition of Duke Energy's Outdoor Lighting business from older lighting technologies to LEDs and led the early development of the company's customer facing mobile application. Prior to joining Duke Energy, Ryan worked at an engineering, procurement, and construction firm supporting the development of power plants and other large infrastructure projects around the world.

Ryan received a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Michigan State University and a Master of Business Administration from Wake Forest University. Ryan and his wife Abbie, have two children, Gavin (7) and Kate (4), and live in Raleigh. They enjoy being outdoors, exploring new parts of town, and are actively involved in the autism community. Ryan is also an Eagle Scout.

Mr. Jeremy Moseley Forsyth

Area Vice President, Community and Faith Health, Southeast Region
Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist
mmoseley@wakehealth.edu

Jeremy Moseley is the Area Vice President of Community and Faith Health of the Southeast Region for Atrium Health. He provides leadership to nearly 100 teammates and several departments across the southeast region, including Community Health and Prevention, Mobile Health, Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Benefit Reporting, Faith Community Health Ministry, and Faith Partnerships and Programs. At the enterprise level, he has a leadership role in the integration of enterprise health equity and social impact bodies of work and programs related to community health. He is currently a member of several boards including the North Carolina Medical Journal Editorial board, North Carolina Community Health Worker Association, The Foundation for a Healthy High Point, and others. He holds a Bachelor's of Science in Public Health degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he majored in Health Policy and Administration. Also, he holds a Master's of Public Health degree from East Carolina University with a major in Public Health Analysis and Management.

Mrs. Julie Roper Gaston

Economic Development and External Affairs Manager
Dominion Energy
julieroper37@gmail.com

Julie is the Economic Development and External Affairs Manager at Dominion Energy. She works with local government leadership on local affairs and economic development. She has a Master's of Public Administration from Appalachian State University and an NC and SC broker-in-charge license.

Julie is very involved in her community and has been for many years. She currently serves as the Chairman of the Gaston County Economic Development Commission and on the Board of the Montcross Area Chamber of Commerce, Montcross Foundation, and the NC Heroes Fund. She is a veteran of the Air Force and has served as a Board Chairwoman of the NC Heroes Fund, Habitat for Humanity of Gaston County, Montcross Area Chamber of Commerce, and Crime-stopper's of Gaston County. Julie spent

many years on the Schiele Museum Board, the NC Homebuilder's Association, and the Gaston County Homebuilder's Board.

Ms. Lisa Sheppard Mecklenburg

Lead Operational Risk Officer

Wells Fargo

lsheppard365@gmail.com

Lisa Sheppard is a banking lawyer and a lead operational risk officer at Wells Fargo. She enjoys teaching lawyers and law students about leadership, civility, workplace ethics, and legal professionalism. Her enthusiasm for mentoring and helping others has been put to use by her team at the bank: she is an organizer of team-building events designed to encourage and motivate her teammates and enhance their professional development.

Lisa graduated from Duke University with a BA in Political Science, obtained her law degree at Emory University School of Law, and then received an L.L.M. in International Comparative Law at the Institute for European Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in Brussels, Belgium.

Prior to joining Wells Fargo, Lisa served in two state government roles: briefly, as an Assistant Attorney General with the NC Department of Justice and as the Executive Director of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, which is part of the NC Judicial Branch. She began her career in the private practice of law in New York City before returning to North Carolina in 1998. In addition to working at Wells Fargo and Bank of America at various junctures, she has also worked at both small and large law firms during her career.

Over the years, Lisa has had the opportunity to serve on several small non-profit boards of directors and trustees, as well as on judicial commissions and in leadership roles at bar-related organizations.

Lisa splits her time between Charlotte and Deep Gap, NC. She is passionate about spending time with friends lingering over a great meal, viewing and making art, music (ask her about the house concerts she co-hosts!), outdoor activities (golfing, hiking, and kayaking), and exploring the world—close by and in faraway places.

Ms. Kathie Sidner Wake

Director of Military Partnerships

University of North Carolina System Office

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Kathie is a member of the Economic Development and Military Affairs team at the University of North Carolina (UNC) System Office. She connects research, innovation, and other resources across the 16 UNC institutions with military needs. She works with UNC faculty, students, and staff; U.S. Department of Defense; federal and state government agencies; and industry partners to help solve critical technology challenges for national security and to grow the state of North Carolina's economy. She also leads initiatives to support the 21,000+ military affiliated students attending UNC System institutions.

Prior to joining the UNC System, she worked in the US Intelligence Community as a chemical/biological weapons analyst and counterterrorism analyst. Additionally, she served as an assistant program manager for two Army university affiliated research centers (UARCs) in nanotechnology and biotechnology, managing technical projects and advisory boards for a combined \$20 million annual research portfolio. Ms. Sidner earned her B.S. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Virginia and her M.S. in Chemical Engineering from North Carolina State University.

She especially enjoys days at the beach with her two young children, grilling out with neighbors, a good workout, playing guitar, kayaking, and just about any outdoor live music.