



Leadership North Carolina Class XXIX

Government Session

November 2-4, 2021

Speaker Directory

Dr. Henry C. McKoy Jr.

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Henry McKoy is a seasoned professional in business, community, and economic development, policy, government, finance, philanthropy, and the academic worlds. He is a faculty member and Director of Entrepreneurship at NC Central University in the School of Business. He is also on the faculty of the Kenan-Flagler School of Business at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he is Professor of Practice in Strategy and Entrepreneurship. In addition, he teaches in Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy and is part of the faculty of Duke's Executive Leadership Institute, where he teaches on Public-Private Partnerships. Henry has been a Fellow of the Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise at UNC-Chapel Hill, as well as an Aspen Institute Scholar. He was a Senior Municipal Innovation Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School from 2019-2021.

Henry served from 2010-2012 in the North Carolina Department of Commerce, where he was appointed by the Governor as Assistant Secretary of Commerce. At Commerce he was the top Community Development official and representative in NC government. He has worked extensively with federal, state, and local government agencies and officials. He has been an innovative policy maker conceiving of, crafting, designing, and implementing economic policy at all levels of government.

Before entering state government, Henry was a successful business and banking leader. He spent more than a decade as an executive with Central Carolina Bank, National Commerce Financial, and Suntrust Bank.

Since leaving banking in the mid-2000s, Henry has served as founder and Chief Executive of a national consulting and financial advisory firm. He is considered a national thought leader in those areas and their connections to community and economic development. He has worked both nationally and internationally in these areas, and his research has formed the basis for several national initiatives. Henry has been involved with nearly 200 nonprofits since 1993, serving on boards and volunteering at the local, state, national, and international level.

Dr. McKoy has a BSBA from Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a Master's degree in policy and leadership from the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University, and a PhD

from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Department of City and Regional Planning program with a concentration in entrepreneurship and economic development.

Mr. John N. Davis

Editor

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John Davis is a non-partisan political analyst whose 45-year career includes campaign work at all levels, from presidential and congressional to state executive and legislative races. From Maine to Montana, from Maryland to New Mexico, Davis has worked with business groups in half of the states in the country establishing political research operations.

From 1986 – 2008, Davis served as President of NCFREE, providing political analysis to business, professional and medical organizations. He was founding editor of NCFREE's *Almanac of North Carolina Politics*, and he is recognized as one of the state's leading authorities evaluating candidates and forecasting political races.

Today, Davis continues his work as a political analyst through public speaking and as author of the [John Davis Political Report](#), now in its 13th year of publication.

A native of Graceville, FL, Davis is a graduate of William Carey University in Hattiesburg, MS. He and his wife, Kathy, live in Raleigh. They have five grown children.

Ms. Kara Millonzi

Albert and Gladys Hall Coates Distinguished Term Professor of Public Law and Government

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Kara Millonzi is the Robert W. Bradshaw Distinguished Professor of Public Law and Government at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government. She specializes in local government finance law, general county law, school finance, utilities finance, capital finance, and incorporation. She administers the Coates' Canons Local Government Law Blog and has authored well over 100 posts on issues related to local government law and finance. She also has authored numerous publications, including *A Guide to Billing and Collecting Public Enterprise Utility Fees for Water, Wastewater, and Solid Waste Services*, *Introduction to Local Government Finance* (now in its 4th edition), and *The Governance and Funding Structure of North Carolina Public Schools*. She teaches several core finance and local government courses.

Kara is the faculty lead for Lead for North Carolina, a fellowship program that aims to recruit, train, and place the state's most promising young leaders in paid local government fellowships as a means of strengthening our public institutions, supporting our local communities, and cultivating a new generation of public service leaders. Before joining the School, Millonzi practiced law with Testa, Hurwitz & Thibeault, LLP in Boston and clerked for a federal judge. She is a member of the North Carolina State Bar and the Bar of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Millonzi earned a BA in economics, summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, from the University at Buffalo and an MA in economics from the University of Maryland at College Park. She earned a JD, with highest honors, Order of the Coif,

from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she served as editor in chief of the North Carolina Law Review.

Mr. Jeff Sural

LNC Class XXVII

Senior Broadband Policy Advisor
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Jeff Sural is Senior Broadband Policy advisor at the US Department of the Treasury, a role he began in August 2021. Prior to that, Jeff Sural served as director of the Broadband Infrastructure Office for the NC Department of Information Technology, heading up the office that leads the statewide initiative to expand high-speed internet access for all North Carolinians, focusing its resources on underserved rural communities.

A native of Greensboro, Jeff has more than 20 years of experience as an attorney and public policy expert working at the state and federal levels. Prior to joining NC DIT, he was a member of the Legislative and Public Policy Group at Alston & Bird LLP in Washington, DC. Jeff previously served as a deputy assistant secretary for the US Department of Homeland Security and as assistant administrator for the US Transportation Security Administration. He also served as legislative counsel to US Congressman Vernon Ehlers and as assistant majority counsel for the Michigan House of Representatives.

Jeff earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his J.D. from Western Michigan University's Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing.

The Honorable Dean Arp

Representative, District 69
North Carolina General Assembly
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Dean Arp has represented Union County's District 69 in the North Carolina state House since 2012. He currently serves as a Senior Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and Co-Chairman of the Energy & Public Utilities Committee. Prior to his election to the state House, he served on the Union County Board of Education for 12 years, including six as board chairman. Born and raised in the Charlotte area, Representative Arp graduated from North Mecklenburg High School, where he participated in the Air Force JROTC program. He attended The Citadel: The Military College of South Carolina, where he earned his undergraduate degree in civil engineering. As a Company Commander at The Citadel, Representative Arp led over 100 men to receive the President's Cup and claim the title of Honor Company. Due to an accident, his dream of a life of military service would not become reality, but Representative Arp considers the military training he received at The Citadel to have been invaluable. Representative Arp went on to earn a master's degree in civil engineering from UNC Charlotte, where he currently serves on the Advisory Board for the College of Engineering. In 2003, Representative Arp founded Arp Engineering, located in downtown Monroe. He has been married to his wife, Anne, for 33 years. They have two children and two grandchildren.

Ms. Erin Wynia

Director of Government Affairs
NC League of Municipalities
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Erin leads the NC League of Municipality's advocacy team as the Director of Government Affairs. In this role, she represents and lobbies for the League members' interests throughout the legislative process and in negotiations with legislators, legislative staff, and interest groups. She also oversees the team's grassroots outreach and political communications activities. While she has gained experience with numerous municipal issues, she has developed knowledge in land and economic development-related issues such as land use, planning, transportation, development approvals, code enforcement, utilities, telecommunications, environment, housing, and community development.

As part of her advocacy responsibilities, Erin co-authored a broadband report entitled Leaping the Digital Divide, published in March 2018. She serves as a liaison to the N.C. Association of Resort Towns and Convention Cities, a League affiliate organization. In addition, she held a past appointment to the N.C. Bar Association's Government & Public Sector Section Council.

Erin earned a bachelor's of music performance from UNC-Chapel Hill, a master's of music performance from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and a juris doctor from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Ms. Denise Weeks

Former Principal Clerk
North Carolina House of Representatives
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Denise Weeks is a native of Wake County. She grew up in Willow Spring and attended Fuquay-Varina High School and NC State University. Denise began working with the General Assembly in 1977 in the Office of the House Principal Clerk. In 1993 Denise was elected by the members of the House to her first term as principal clerk and was re-elected each session until retiring in 2017.

Denise served as member of the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries (ASLCS), a staff section of the National Conference of State Legislatures, serving as president in 1999. Denise was awarded the National Conference of State Legislatures Legislative Staff Achievement Award in 2003.

Denise served on the commission for revision of *Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure* starting in 1996 and also served as the vice chair of the commission.

The Honorable Regina Parker

Chief Judge District Court
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Judge Regina R. Parker graduated from Williamston High School in 1985 and thereafter received the Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from East Carolina University in 1989. Following undergraduate school, Judge Parker earned the Juris Doctor degree from the North Carolina Central University School of Law. Following law school, Judge Parker clerked on the North Carolina Court of Appeals for the Honorable Clifton Johnson. In 1993, she became a partner with the law firm of Smallwood, Rodgers and Hayes where she worked as a trial attorney until 1997. Judge Parker joined the law firm of the esteemed, late Attorney Earl T. Brown where she worked from 1998 until 2001, practicing juvenile and real estate law.

In 2001, Governor James B. Hunt appointed Judge Parker to the District Court bench in the Second Judicial District, comprising Beaufort, Hyde, Martin, Tyrrell, and Washington County. This historic appointment made Judge Parker the first woman and African American judge in the Second Judicial District. Early in her tenure on the District Court, Judge Parker initiated the Teen Court program in the Second Judicial District, diverting teen offenders to a specialty, educational but non-judicial proceeding. During her time on the bench, Judge Parker has been pleased to serve on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Committee for Martin, Beaufort, and Washington County and by appointment to the North Carolina Courts Commission. Serving for more than 20 years, Judge Parker has been re-elected to the District Court by the citizens of the Second Judicial District without opposition.

On March 1, 2018, Chief Justice Mark Martin of the North Carolina Supreme Court appointed Judge Parker to the position of Chief District Court Judge for the Second Judicial District. As the first female and African-American Chief District Court Judge in this judicial District, Judge Parker has begun to tackle head-on the mental health and opioid epidemics, which impact the lives of thousands of families in eastern North Carolina. As the founding member of the Opioid Crisis and Mental Health Coalitions, she has convened a multi-disciplinary alliance of professionals to address these crises. Currently, she is developing a Drug Court and Truancy Court to provide drug-addicted offenders with the intensive, individualized treatment they need to become healthy, law-abiding, and productive family and community members. With the School to Justice Partnership North Carolina, Judge Parker has taken the lead to assemble community stakeholders in the Second Judicial District to develop and implement strategies to keep youth in school and out of court in Beaufort, Hyde, Martin, Tyrrell, and Washington County. Recently, she started a collaborative to address domestic violence issues in her district and community.

Judge Parker serves on numerous community and professional boards. Her passion, however, continues to be serving the Lord, Jesus Christ, and her community. She is a member of Believer's Fellowship Conference Center where Rick Carson is the pastor. Judge Regina Parker is married to Dr. Norris Parker, and they have two daughters, Maya, 22, and Morgan, 16.

Mr. Kevin Leonard

LNC Class XXVI

Executive Director
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Kevin Leonard is the Executive Director of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), which represents all 100 North Carolina Counties. Kevin has worked with the NCACC since 2009 serving in multiple roles including: Legislative Coordinator, Director of Government Relations, and Deputy Director. Previously, Kevin was Senior Government Relations Manager at Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice; Director of Government Affairs for the North Carolina Department of Labor; Chief of Staff for a member of the North Carolina General Assembly; Legislative Assistant for a Member of the United States House of Representatives; and Production Assistant with C-SPAN.

Mr. Schumata Brown**LNC Class XXVI**

Town Manager
Town of Maysville
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Schumata Brown is currently Town Manager for Maysville, NC. In this role, he organizes, manages, directs, and implements the goals and objectives of the Town Board of Commissioners. His responsibilities also include the day-to-day administration of a full range of municipal law enforcement; public works utilities, fiscal, and other systems; staffing the organization; and providing budgetary direction and guidance. He previously served seven years as Mayor Pro-Tem for Maysville before transitioning to the manager's role.

Before becoming the Town Manager in 2016, Schumata worked at Hatteras Yachts for 20 years in New Bern, NC. He is a graduate of the NC Rural Economic Development Institute (REDI XIV) and a UNC School of Government Fellow graduate. He received an honorable discharge from the Army National Guard after six years of service. Schumata is a recent graduate of Leadership NC class XXVI (best class ever) and received the Stanley Frank Class Award.

Schumata is a native of Maysville and resides there with his wife, Lateashe. They are the proud parents of three sons.

The Honorable Nimasheena N. Burns**LNC Class XXII**

County Commissioner
Durham County
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Commissioner Nimasheena Burns was sworn in on December 7, 2020, for her first term. She previously served as the Director of Public Affairs for North Carolina State Farm Service Agency. As a member of senior staff, she was responsible for planning, developing, and implementing the crisis communications, grant management, public affairs, media relations, community relations, regulatory technical assistance, social responsibility activities and government relations programs. She directed the statewide software change management initiative Bridges to Opportunity. She was also added as a consultant to the USDA's national team for Customer Relationship Management and Small Farms Grant Review.

Nimasheena led collaborative programs and community engagement/development projects between multiple agencies and partners in an effort to improve local rural economies that are persistently impoverished. She was named to the national coordinating team for USDA/White House Rural Council on Opioid Epidemic and served as Congressional External Affairs Liaison for FEMA and USDA for RD, FSA, and CRS during Hurricane Matthew. While a Public Affairs and Project Management Officer at the NC Department of Justice, Burns was asked to serve as a guest consumer analyst for various media outlets and has made over 1000 keynote, presenter, and consultative appearances, speaking on issues from Opioid Abuse to Financial Literacy to Child Internet Safety to Business Identity Theft.

Nimasheena currently serves on the North Carolina Community College Foundation Board, the NC Association of County Commissioners Executive Board, Joint City-County Planning Committee, the NC Museum of Life and Science, the Library Board of Trustees, the Carolina Theatre Board, the Juvenile Crime Prevention, Memorial Stadium Authority, the Durham Workforce Development Board and Serves as the Secretary for the Triangle

Transportation Special Tax Board. She has served on boards for the NC Women's Empowerment Conference, State Employees Combined Campaign, Health Fraud Prevention Re-victimization Project, USDA Strikeforce Taskforce, Rural Economic Development Loan Enterprise Taskforce, the NC Recidivism Taskforce, Green Rural Development, and H.A.P.E. (Helping All People Excel).

Nimasheena was awarded an Albert Schweitzer Public Health Fellowship in 2013. She used the funding to start the Don't Kid Yourself Foundation, for the early detection of kidney failure. She partnered with UNC Hospital's Kidney Bus to travel to distressed areas in the African American community. For eight years she served as a member of the Governor's Multi-Discipline Grant Review Team for the state of North Carolina. She is the winner of the following awards: the 2019 UNC Chapel Hill Harvey Beech Outstanding Young Alumni, 2017; 40 under 40 for the Triangle Business Journal; 2016 Triangle Business Journal Women in Public Policy Award; 2016 Wells Fargo/Blue Cross and Blue Shield Young Executive of the Year Award; and the 2016 Spectacular Magazine Emerging Leader of the Year.

Ms. Shelley Read Curran

LNC Class XXVI

Assistant Town Manager
Town of Cary
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Shelley Curran is Assistant Town Manager in Cary, NC. She specifically oversees intergovernmental affairs, transportation, transit, and real estate but is involved in all town matters as a part of the Town Manager's office. Shelley was formerly General Counsel and Vice President of Strategic Partnerships at GoTriangle and managed the agency's key governmental and business relationships. In addition, Shelley served as GoTriangle's Interim CEO and was General Counsel at the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Shelley has extensive experience building partnerships among public and private stakeholders and working for public agencies. She is a graduate of UNCW and obtained her law degree at North Carolina Central University. Shelley was a member of the Leadership North Carolina Class XXVI and serves on the Board as the alumni representative.

Ms. Martha Paige

LNC Class XXV

Town Manager
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Martha Paige, an ICMA Credentialed Manager with more than 22 years of North Carolina local government experience, was appointed Town Manager for Morrisville in September 2013. She has shepherded this town on the outskirts of Raleigh through explosive growth and significant capital investment and expanded program and service delivery. In 2021, Morrisville was named an All-America City and regularly receives "best place to live" accolades. Prior to moving to the Triangle, Martha worked for the City of Winston-Salem since 1999 and served as Assistant City Manager from 2006 - 2013.

Originally from Newport News/Hampton, VA, she holds a BS in Accounting from Christopher Newport University and an MPA from UNC Greensboro. She is a graduate of the UNC School of Government Municipal Administration Course, the UNC Public Executive Leadership Academy, and the UVA Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service Senior Executive Institute (SEI). She has served in a variety of roles in several professional organizations including the ICMA, NCLM, and NCCCMA. She is currently Past President of the North Carolina City & County Management Association (NCCCMA).

The Honorable Weyling White

LNC Class XXVI

Mayor, Town of Ahoskie
Executive Director, Care Share Health Alliance
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On December 10, 2019, Weyling was sworn in as the first African American Mayor for his hometown of Ahoskie, NC. He attended Winston-Salem State University, where he would become a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., and receive his B.S. Degree in Exercise Science. Upon graduation, Weyling returned home to Ahoskie with a mission to give back and use his education and training for the betterment of his community. He obtained his Master of Business Administration in Healthcare Management from the University of Phoenix in 2010. He is currently the Executive Director for Care Share Health Alliance and a Class XXVI graduate of Leadership North Carolina.

Ms. Lydian Altman

Senior Manager of Leadership Curriculum Development
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Lydian Altman works with and across various public sector organizations to diagnose, design, develop, and deliver leadership programs and services for public officials through the School's Center for Public Leadership and Governance. Since she joined the School in 1999, her work has included consulting with elected and appointed leaders to create strategic plans, teaching leadership topics, and facilitating retreats for governmental and nonprofit organizations and cross-sector community groups to help them plan and work together to solve public problems. Many of her project-generated articles have been published in ICMA's IQ Report and PM Magazine, the American Review of Public Administration, Popular Government, and PA Times. Altman holds a BS in industrial relations and an MPA from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Ms. Julie M. Brenman

Adjunct Instructor, MPA Program
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Julie Brenman joined the School of Government as adjunct faculty in 2008. She has over 15 years of municipal executive experience and currently works as a management consultant to governments and nonprofits. Previously, she served as director of strategic initiatives, assistant city manager, and director of budget and management services for the City of Durham. Before moving to North Carolina, Julie worked for the city and county of San Francisco, CA, as director of planning and budget, budget and fiscal operations manager, and budget manager with the Department of Human Services, and as budget/policy analyst in the Office of the Mayor. Her publications include Local Government Budgeting: A Guide for North Carolina Elected Officials and a chapter on Using Trained Observer

Ratings in the Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation. She is a member of the International City/County Management Association and a Credentialed Manager and has served on the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Local Government Budget Association. Julie holds a B.A. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.A. in public policy from Harvard University.

XXIX Government Session Planning Committee

The following members of LNC Class XXVIII made up the planning committee for the Class XXIX Government session.

Conitsha Barnes, Session Co-Chair *Cabarrus*

Regulatory Affairs Manager

Duke Energy

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Conitsha Barnes serves as the regulatory affairs manager in the Regulatory Affairs and Policy organization for Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC. In this role, she leads and supports regulatory matters, including the development and support for regulatory initiatives such as new customer programs and offerings, special tariffs, cost recovery proceedings, and implementation of the company's service regulations in North Carolina. She has more than 20 years of experience in the energy industry. Her experience includes testifying in regulatory proceedings, leading regulatory strategic initiatives, managing a \$100 million portfolio of customer product offerings, vendor and contract management, customer data analysis, and process improvement implementation.

She is proud alum of North Carolina State University and LNC Class XXVIII. Her community service includes the NC Chapter of the American Association of Blacks in Energy (President), the Academic Learning Center (Board Member), Progress in Education, Inc. (Board Member), and Cabarrus College of Health and Science (Finance Committee Community Member).

Ercel Carter *Yadkin*

Vice President

First National Bank of Pennsylvania

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Ercel is the commercial lender serving Yadkin and Davidson counties for First National Bank of Pennsylvania. For those counties, Ercel draws on nearly twenty years of banking experience to provide a full range of financial solutions to local, regional, and national firms.

A graduate of Queens University of Charlotte with degrees in Philosophy and History, he also holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the McColl School of Business. He is a mentor for current McColl MBA students and participates in the Wild Acres leadership initiatives with the School. Ercel is a Lay Servant for the United Methodist Church and is walking a long road to ordination. He serves his broader community through boards promoting the arts, business, and health.

When not involved in banking or with the community, Ercel enjoys spending time with his wife, their two children, and their local relatives. Ercel and his family live in a renovated 114-year-old farmhouse with three dogs on acreage that provides wonderful views and many outdoor activities.

Jenn Eberhart *Wake*

Director of Member Engagement

North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation

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Jennifer (Jenn) is an experienced Director of Member Engagement with a demonstrated history of working in the electric utility industry. Her strengths are in sales, account management, and customer service. She considers herself a strong distribution channel professional with nine years industry experience. Previously, Jenn worked for Wesco Distribution as a Senior Account Representative in Eastern North Carolina for public power utilities. Currently, she is working for the North Carolina Electric Cooperatives and their membership. She strives to provide the best service for

the North Carolina electric cooperatives while also managing vendor relationships that support their business.

A native North Carolinian, Jenn was born and raised in Cabarrus County. She attended UNC-Chapel Hill where she earned a double major in Political Science and History, graduating in 2011. She has spent the last nine years living in the Raleigh area. Currently she resides in Knightdale, a small suburb east of Raleigh. Her personal hobbies include volleyball, traveling, hiking, reading, and spending time with her twelve-year-old Cockapoo, Coal. She greatly enjoys everything North Carolina has to offer from the mountains to the coast and everywhere in between.

Kentreal Farrar *Durham*

Director, Vendor Services Delivery
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina
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Kentreal is an enthusiastic and dedicated leader from Durham, NC, with experience across areas of vendor management and strategic business operations who is passionate about being a motivator and helping to develop others to achieve targets and personal goals. He has over ten years of experience in management consultation, team building, continuous improvement, professional development, implementation of strategic initiatives, and company collaboration.

As a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and Certified Outsourcing Professional, Kentreal takes pride in driving continuous improvement in the healthcare industry. He currently holds the position of Director of Vendor Services Delivery for Blue Cross NC where he is responsible for identifying strategically aligned and value-driving opportunities with vendor business partners to support operational functions.

In his spare time he can either be found hiking in the western mountains, fishing in the Outer Banks, coaching youth soccer, or participating in an athletic competition such as a Spartan Race or Mixed Martial Arts.

Drew Haddock *Wake*

Partner
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Drew Haddock is an experienced tax and accounting professional in DMJ & Co., PLLC's Sanford, NC, office where he handles tax planning and compliance for corporations, partnerships, and individuals, especially closely held and family-owned businesses. Drew also has significant experience with multi-state tax compliance, advising clients on complicated transactions including Section 1031 like-kind exchanges, opportunity zone incentives, and mergers and acquisitions.

Drew, his wife, and two sons reside in Apex, NC. When Drew is not serving clients and crunching numbers, he enjoys playing golf, attending sporting events (Go Pirates, Wolfpack, and Panthers!), and traveling with his family. He is an active member of The Summit Church in Apex, NC.

Tammie Hall *Durham*

Director, Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses
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Tammie serves as Director for the Office of Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) and Assistant to the Secretary for HUB Outreach for the State of North Carolina. She is responsible for developing policy and guidelines for the State's HUB program and is the authority in the field of minority business development and public sector

M/WBE and HUB Programs. Tammie previously worked in corporate America as the Senior Regional Supplier Diversity Manager for Lend Lease Construction, overseeing the HUB/MWBE program and compliance oversight for North Carolina; Washington, DC; Los Angeles; and San Francisco. Tammie has over 30 years of experience in state government and spent eight years as a Congressional Staffer.

Meredith Houston *Wake*

Director of Operations

American Council of Engineering Companies of North Carolina

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Meredith serves as the Director of Operations for the American Council of Engineering Companies of North Carolina, a trade association for engineering firms. She brings to this role more than 15 years of experience in the not-for-profit and hospitality industries. Meredith studied Communications at Elon University.

Meredith has been married for eleven years to the love of her life, Chuck Houston. In her free time, she enjoys yoga, learning to play golf, reading, and cooking. She also enjoys the television shows Yellowstone and Animal Kingdom.

Naomi Irvin, Program Chair *Wake*

Chief of Staff - Government Markets

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina

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Naomi Irvin is a California native who began calling North Carolina home in 2006. She earned her BSBA with a Management concentration and MBA with a Marketing certificate from East Carolina University (ECU). With nearly 15 years of health insurance experience, Naomi currently serves as Chief of Staff – Government Markets for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina.

An avid public speaker, Naomi has been invited to speak at various industry conferences nationwide on an array of topics including embedded compliance programs, effective oversight programs, brand and marketing compliance, leadership, and relationship building. In addition to speaking, she also chairs conferences and participates on conference committees and advisory boards.

When not working, Naomi enjoys spending time with her kids (Josh, Hayley, and Milena) and pup (Juliet Bean). One of the most rewarding things Naomi does with her family is volunteering with the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle and KABOOM!. A devourer and collector of books, Naomi retreats to her home office and packed bookshelves when she needs a break.

Jodi Phelps, Session Co-Chair *Cumberland*

Chief Communications and Marketing Officer

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke

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Jodi Phelps joined UNC Pembroke in May 2016, bringing nearly 2 decades of experience in marketing, communications, and organizational leadership. A member of the Chancellor's Cabinet, she leads the Office of University Communications and Marketing whose primary role is to establish strategic internal and external communication and marketing programs that enhance the institution's visibility and reputation. In this role, she led the university successfully through a number of crisis situations, a rebranding and reimagining efforts, aggressive marketing campaigns contributing to three successive years of enrollment growth, and the establishment of internal communications processes. She is also responsible for the operation of the university's in-house printing and the Givens Performing Arts Center.

Jodi came to UNC Pembroke after a successful career in non-profit management, most recently serving as the chief operating officer for Action Pathways, Inc., managing a more than \$15 million human services operation including social service programs like Second Harvest Food Bank, Head Start, Consumer Credit Counseling, and ASPIRE. While there, she also served as the agency advancement and communication director. Prior roles include the director of communications and marketing for the Georgia Nurses Association and Foundation and director of alumni relations at Thomas University.

Jodi is passionate about building and strengthening communities, particularly those in rural North Carolina. With experience as a military spouse, with civic and volunteer organizations, and professional associations across multiple states, she hopes to bring experience and perspective to making a contribution to the solutions for economic and education challenges that face North Carolina's communities.

Selina Rodriguez-Guzman *Harnett*

US Probation Officer

US Probation Office—Eastern District of NC

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Selina is currently a United States Probation Officer for the Eastern District of NC. The years spent working in the criminal justice field simply highlight that she is driven to help others achieve their goals and improve their quality of life, regardless of their current circumstance or their past. By providing the right tools and guidance, she has been able to guide and encourage others to make great decisions. In all, Selina is open-minded and always ready to learn new things that can be used to help others, whether it's one person at a time or an entire community.

As a first-generation college student, Selina received her B.S in Criminal Justice at the University of North Texas. She began her professional career as a Correctional Officer in North Carolina. Shortly after, she became a Probation and Parole Officer (PPO) for the Department of Public Safety. During her four years as a PPO, she was chosen to handle several leadership roles when conducting special operations and she became an instructor and a mentor to new hires. She also joined the NC Probation/Parole Association where she met with officers from across the state to discuss issues and solutions that affected their day-to-day jobs. Selina was also a member of the State Employees Association of North Carolina (SEANC) where she was an active member as her district's treasurer and a member of the Emerging Leaders, volunteering in community outreach projects.

Jonathan Russell *Beaufort*

City Manager

City of Washington

jrussellecu@gmail.com

Jonathan is currently the City Manager of Washington, NC, where he oversees the management and operation of all city departments and services, as well as city-wide projects. He is responsible for overseeing a city staff of 296, and an annual operating budget of \$90 million dollars, including seven enterprise funds. Before joining Washington, he spent the past 13 years working in a local government leadership positions in both Virginia and North Carolina.

In addition to his management experience Jonathan has remained dedicated to professional development through educational opportunities, holding an MS in Geography and Planning, a Master's in Public Administration, and a Graduate Certificate in Economic Development from East Carolina University as well as a Certificate in Human Resource Management from Duke University.

Jonathan is an International City Management Association (ICMA) Certified Manager and an alumnus of the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Institute (NC REDI), University of North Carolina School of Government Municipal and County Administration Course (MCA), and Public Executive Leadership Academy (PELA).

Jonathan is an active member of the Rotary Club, serving in a variety of leadership positions including past Club President, and was honored as a Paul Harris Fellow Award recipient with Rotary International. He currently holds a seat on the East Carolina Alumni Board of Directors and was a 2019 recipient of the 40 under 40 Alumni Leadership Award for ECU. Jonathan and his Wife Shannon have two children, Lilly (7) and Grover (4), and reside in Washington.

Owen Thomas Robeson

Senior Account Executive

Dial Insurance

othomas@ci.lumberton.nc.us

Owen grew up in Cary, NC. He enrolled at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke in 2006 for his undergraduate in business administration. Owen spent five years on the UNCP football team and a year and a half working on his Master of Business Administration degree (completed May 2013). Owen remains involved on campus, recently finishing his term as President of the Alumni Association.

Owen is a senior account executive at Dial Insurance Agency, serving clients throughout North and South Carolina. He is serving his first term on the Lumberton City Council. He serves on the NC League of Municipalities Board of Directors and is also currently serving on a few boards appointed by the legislature.

Owen was named Kiwanian of the year in 2015 and he was named young insurance agent of the year in 2018. Owen won the United Way Dancing with the Stars in 2018. He was named one of the Fayetteville Observer's 40 under 40 in 2020.

During the hours when he is not working, Owen enjoys service to his community through Kiwanis (supporting youth) and the local chambers of commerce, supporting the local Masonic lodge and Shrine temple, giving back to his alma mater, running/working out, live music, cooking, and all sports and recreation.