



# **POWER**

**LIST**  
2023

NORTH CAROLINA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL LEADERS

presented by

**BUSINESS**  
NORTH CAROLINA



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## DON'T MISS THE POWER LIST INTERVIEW SERIES

Each month, High Point University President Nido Qubein hosts a Power List Interview, a partnership for discussions with some of the state's most influential leaders featured in *Business North Carolina's Power List*. Since its inception in January 2023, Qubein has interviewed Lee-Moore Capital's CEO Kirk Bradley, Hoke Hospital's President Roxie Wells, Front Street Capital's Managing Partner Robin Team, Retired Truist CEO Kelly King, and Piedmont Triad Partnership's President Michael Fox, an attorney and chairman of the NCDOT Board.

INTERVIEW VIDEOS ARE AVAILABLE AT [BUSINESSNC.COM](https://businessnc.com).



















## WHO'S NEXT?

You won't want to miss the next Power List Interview. Subscribe to the Daily Digest and get the latest business news from all around North Carolina straight to your inbox, including Nido Qubein's next powerful interview. Visit [businessnc.com/daily-digest](https://businessnc.com/daily-digest) to subscribe. To view the Power List Interviews scan the QR code below.





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# PACKING A PUNCH

**W**elcome to *Business North Carolina's* annual snapshot of the state's most influential private-sector leaders. It's our chance to spotlight power brokers with the stroke to make things happen at their enterprises and in their communities.

The nation's ninth-most populous state, and among the most economically dynamic, relies on great leadership to excel. Having among the nation's most favorable business climates and fastest population growth rates doesn't just happen. With the benefits of power comes great responsibility, of course.

North Carolina has thousands of talented leaders, making this a small sampling of those with noteworthy power. It's based on nominations, talking with many sources, undertaking considerable research and enjoying years of experience covering North Carolina's business community from the magazine's unique statewide perspective. We love to hear feedback from readers reminding us of omissions. Political leaders are not included.

In compiling the list, it's fascinating to consider the different ways that powerful leaders exert their influence. The examples of two North Carolina iconic businessmen, who died earlier this year, reflect that dichotomy. While leading with contrasting styles, their impact will extend for generations.

- Bob Ingram joined Glaxo in Durham in 1990 and became CEO of Glaxo Wellcome. Over more than three decades, he played a pivotal role in promoting the Triangle area's life sciences and tech sectors, including his post-retirement work with the Research Triangle Foundation, other nonprofits and an investment partnership. He helped sustain North Carolina as a globally important research center.
- Rockingham native Leon Levine opened his first Family Dollar store at age 21 in 1959, then worked for

four decades building a 4,300-store discount chain. His hard-driving, detail-oriented approach was legendary. After retiring in 2003, he spent two decades giving away \$450 million to hospitals, universities, arts groups and other nonprofits. He died at age 85, leaving a \$600 million foundation that will keep sharing his blessings.

Beyond the capsule biographies, we have found that readers enjoy learning about the philosophies and personalities of Power List members. This year, we asked them to share some thoughts on family traditions, favorite hobbies, career highlights and a few other matters. The responses inevitably provide some insight and humor.

## Our personal favorites:

You can fake sincerity, but you can't fake showing up. You have to be present and engaged. It takes time to build relationships but it is worth the effort. You never know when you'll need to call on those people to help get a deal done, to collaborate on a project or to solve a problem.

— *Adrienne Cole, president, CEO, Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce*

Make a plan. The business does not just come to you.

— *Perry Safran, Safran Law Offices*

Always be open to the "A-Ha" moments that can change the course of your life and career.

— *Wesley Burks, CEO, UNC Health*

Recognize when to stop digging a hole. Sometimes things don't go as planned and it's OK to walk away.

— *Jim Goodnight, CEO, SAS Institute*

Stay grounded in your "why" and don't let what you can't do get in the way of what you can do.

— *Cecilia Holden, CEO, myfutureNC*



Contact David Mildenberg at [dmildenberg@businessnc.com](mailto:dmildenberg@businessnc.com).



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Congratulations to our President and CEO, Aaron Thomas, for being named in North Carolina Business Magazine's Power List 2023. Your leadership, vision, and innovation has carved the way for our company's growth and success.







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## Congratulations, Anita

### Named to the 2023 Business NC Power List

Anita Bachmann, CEO UnitedHealthcare Community Plan NC has been driving change in North Carolina for decades, helping people live healthier lives and helping the healthcare system work better for everyone.

**We celebrate the leader she is and the continued work she does to make a difference in the lives of North Carolinians.**

**United  
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The Power List, **Business North Carolina's** annual report, is a showcase of the most influential people in North Carolina. This year, we will travel across the state to celebrate the 2023 winners. Look for more information about the Power Trip coming to your area soon.



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## LINWOOD H. SCOTT III

vice president, co-owner | Scott Farms  
Lucama

Scott works with his father, Linwood Scott Jr., and his brother, Dewey, at a six-generation Wilson County farm. It's among eastern North Carolina's largest farms, with more than 14,000 acres. He was named U.S. National Young Farmer of the Year in 2000. Sweet potatoes and tobacco are key businesses for the Scotts.

**Favorite family tradition:** Every year, we take a break from the hustle and bustle of the farm at the beach. Having this time with my wife, children, and grandson is always a special time for us to recharge and connect with one another.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** We have a place where we stay at Emerald Isle that is somewhat secluded and allows our family a chance to get away and share some quality time going to the beach, fishing, and other activities.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** My favorite podcasts are "Grain Markets and Other Stuff" with Joe Vaclavik and "The Scene Vault Podcast" with Rick Houston. They provide information and entertainment while I am focusing on the opportunities of the day.

**Major inspiration:** My mom and dad. Alice and Sonny Scott. Through the tough times, they never wavered in their dedication and determination to our family, the farm, employees, and community. Their tireless efforts and guidance have set the standard that our family and business follow today.

**Career highlight:** At the age of 31, I was honored with being named National Young Farmer of the Year.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Running eight to 12 miles per week gives me the time to think and reflect on the days past and plan the days to come. Running allows freedom to just simply be.

**Key industry change over the next five years:** There will be forms of consolidation that will occur. From consolidation of land to business operations, having to do more with less. These are major factors agriculture is facing now and will continue to face in the future.







## MOHAMED AHMEDNA

**dean, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences | North Carolina A&T State University**

Greensboro

Ahmedna has doctoral and master's degrees from Louisiana State University and UNC Chapel Hill MBA. He joined N.C. A&T, the nation's biggest historically Black university, as an assistant professor in 2000. He became a full professor in 2009, then spent eight years at Qatar University before returning to A&T as dean in 2018.



## TREY BRASWELL III

**president | Braswell Family Farms**  
Nashville

Braswell is the fourth-generation president of a family farm established in 1943. It has become the second largest Eggland's Best franchise in the U.S. An N.C. State University graduate and Nash County native, his farm supplied 20,000 eggs for the annual White House Egg Roll in Washington, D.C. in March.



## JOSE 'PEPE' CALDERON

**international sales director | Farm Pak**  
Spring Hope

The Costa Rica native joined Barnes Farming in Nash County as a H-2A worker in the early 2000s, starting as a harvester of tobacco and sweet potatoes. He rose in the company, which exports more than a third of its sweet potatoes. He was the first Latino on the N.C. Board of Agriculture.



## JOHNNY BARNES

**president | Barnes Farming and Farm Pak**

Spring Hope

Barnes Farming started in the early 1960s and now ranks among the largest U.S. sweet potato producers, managing more than 6,000 acres. Barnes is president of the American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute. His wife, Lisa, is a state senator. He has a bachelor's in agricultural economics from N.C. State University.



## BRYAN DOBSON

**CEO | Quality Equipment**

Fuquay-Varina

The Scotland Neck native and East Carolina University graduate joined his family's John Deere tractor dealership, Farmland Tractor, in 1997. With about 36 locations and 650 employees, it ranks among the 12 largest U.S. farm equipment dealers, according to a trade publication. In December, Quality bought Laurinburg-based Southeast Farm Equipment, which has six locations.



## BRYAN BLINSON

**executive director | N.C. Cattlemen's Association**

Fuquay-Varina

Blinson grew up on a farm near Lenoir where his parents still raise cattle. He and his wife, Beth, manage a farm in Buies Creek, while his oldest daughter and her husband have a farming operation in Kansas. His alma mater, N.C. State University, honored him as a distinguished alumni last year.



## RUSSELL ESTES

**co-owner | Peak Farms**

Jefferson

Peak Farms started in 1979 and has grown more than 400,000 Christmas trees in Ashe County. Peak Farms' trees have served as the official White House Christmas trees four times, most recently in 2021. Russell, who has been a golf course superintendent, works at the farm with his wife, Ann, and son, Beau.





## STEVE EVANS

**vice president, community development | Smithfield Foods**  
Raleigh

The N.C. A&T State University graduate joined Smithfield in 2019 after working in a variety of public and private-sector community development jobs, much of which focused on rural areas. A Knightdale City Council member, he promotes the giant food company's strategies, including environmental and workforce development efforts.

**Favorite family tradition:** Summertime cookouts

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Our beautiful mountains

**What do you listen to on your commute:** "Society and Culture" podcast with a sprinkling of true crime.

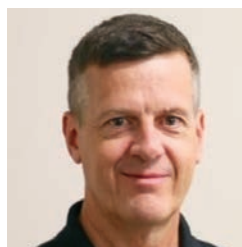
**Major inspiration:** My two beautiful granddaughters are my biggest inspiration. It is incumbent upon me to do everything I can in removing barriers and creating pathways for their future.

**Career highlight:** Creating a program to support and encourage greater diverse participation in agriculture.

**Favorite hobby:** Sit on my deck and listen to music. My hobby is fishing, although I haven't been able to do much of it lately.

**Best advice to industry newcomers:** It will change!

**Key industry change in next five years:** I see more agriculture moving from the fields to the labs, greater overall environmental stewardship and more diverse farmer participation.



## CRAIG HAGOOD

**president, CEO | House-Autry Mills**  
Four Oaks

Hagood, who earned a doctoral degree in business administration last year from Indiana Wesleyan University, has been CEO of the breeding, spice and batters companies since 2010. He joined the business in 2001 after working for Cargill and Conagra. In March, the company unveiled a refreshed packaging design for its seasoned coating mixes.



## BOBBY HAM

**owner | Ham Farms**  
Snow Hill

The East Carolina University graduate has led the business since the 1980s, creating one of the largest U.S. sweet potato farming businesses and an exporter to 16 nations. The company also produces processed foods, including vegetable and fruit purees. And it sells sweet potato vodka under the Covington brand.



## SHAWN HARDING

**CEO | N.C. Farm Bureau**  
Raleigh

He's been president of the state's largest general farm group since 2019. The N.C. State University graduate and Beaufort County farmer oversees an insurance subsidiary with annual revenue topping \$1 billion. The not-for-profit group is owned by more than 500,000 member families.



## VERN HAWKINS

**president | Syngenta Crop Protection**  
Greensboro

The Temple University MBA graduate has become an ag chemicals industry leader after more than 35 years at the company, which was acquired by ChemChina for \$43 billion in 2017. It was China's biggest foreign takeover. Syngenta provides seeds, seed treatment, crop protection and traits to growers. He also has a bachelor's degree from Purdue University.



## MICHELLE GRAINGER

**executive director | North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission**  
Benson

Grainger joined the trade association in 2020 after about 20 years as a manager at N.C. State University, including its Executive Farm Management program. She has two bachelor's degrees from the Raleigh university. The trade group represents more than 400 growers in the No. 1 sweet potato producing state.



## DAVID HERRING

**vice president | Hog Slat**  
Newton Grove

The N.C. State University graduate and his brothers Tommy and Mar lead the business that employs more than 2,000 to make and sell containment equipment and other products for hog and poultry farmers. It has more than 90 retail locations in eight nations. Herring's father, Billy, founded the business in 1969.





## EVAN KLEINHANS

CEO | AgCarolina Farm Credit  
Fayetteville

Kleinhans is an East Carolina University MBA graduate who oversees the member-owned enterprise that is part of the Farm Credit System, the largest provider of credit to U.S. agriculture. AgCarolina has about \$3 billion in loans to more than 6,000 members. He has worked for the organization since 2011.

**Favorite family tradition:** Breakfast at home with family on Christmas morning.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Crystal Coast

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Podcasts and audiobooks on leadership, spirituality, business and agriculture.

**Major inspiration:** The sources of inspiration in my life are faith, family and Farm Credit. Faith: Living and leading in a way that honors God. Family: Loving and supporting my family so we may all flourish. Farm Credit: Working with great people to serve agriculture and rural communities to yield a more prosperous future for all.

**Career highlight:** The opportunity to work side-by-side with great men and women at AgCarolina Farm Credit to provide constructive credit and financial services to grow the success of our members, one local relationship at a time.

**Favorite hobby:** A walk outside with my family after a long day of work. Our favorite hobby is fishing together as a family.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Grow meaningful relationships with people that are built on mutual respect, trust and integrity. No matter what line of work you are in, make a point to be in the business of building relationships with great people. The people we choose to surround ourselves with ultimately shapes who we are to become. Choose them wisely.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The convergence and rapid advancements in technology, data analytics and automation could have a profound impact on how food, fuel and fiber are produced, processed and marketed over the next five years. The agricultural industry and supporting industries will need to evolve to find new and improved ways to add value to these ecosystems.



## ANGIE MAIER

principal | Valley View Insights  
Raleigh

The McDowell County native is a key lobbyist for trade associations representing the cattle, dairy and pork industries. She worked at the N.C. Pork Council for nearly 16 years, including as director of government affairs and sustainability. She has bachelor's and master's degrees from N.C. State University.

**Favorite family tradition:** Theatre in the Park's version of "A Christmas Carol" at Raleigh Memorial Auditorium or DPAC.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Listen more than you talk. Ask questions. Resist any urge to make others think you are the smartest person in the room — even if you are.

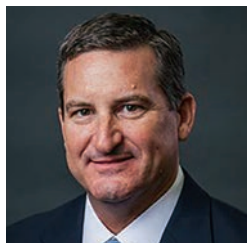
**Key industry change in next five years:** Growth in our urban centers presents many challenges for farmers. North Carolina ranks second for the amount of farmland converted to a developed use since 2001. Despite that trend, agriculture remains the state's biggest industry. A growing population results in high-density neighborhoods being built adjacent to working farms. This loss in farmland is also not just taking land out of production, it is literally changing the topography of eastern North Carolina.



## WENDELL 'DELL' MURPHY JR.

CEO | Murphy Family Ventures  
Rose Hill

In 1962, Murphy's father and grandfather started a pork production business that became a national leader before merging with Smithfield Foods in 2000. In 2004, Murphy Family Ventures united the family's businesses, which include farm management, golf courses and sales of cars, boats and real estate. His wife, Wendy, is on the UNC System Board of Governors.



## JAY JANDRAIN

CEO | Butterball  
Garner

The Cornell University graduate gained his current post in 2020 at the largest U.S. turkey producer with six plants in four states. He started at Butterball in 2002 as director of research and development after working at Cargill and Plantation Foods. The company is jointly owned by Goldsboro-based Goldsboro Milling and Merriam, Kansas-based Seaboard.

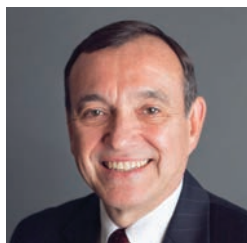




## LOREND OVERMAN

**co-owner | Overman Farms**  
Goldsboro

The past chair of the N.C. Pork Council and her husband, Harrell, operate a third-generation swine farm and hog finishing operation in Wayne County. Overman is a leading advocate for women in agriculture at the local, state and national levels, including service for the American Farm Bureau. She has a bachelor's degree in biology from Mount Olive College.



## MIKE POPOWYCZ

**CEO | Case Foods**  
Troutman

A graduate of Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Popowycz joined Case in 1987 and was its longtime chief financial officer. He was promoted to CEO in 2022. The 3,000-plus employee company was founded in 1986 and is owned by Thomas Shelton of Eden, Maryland.



## PAUL REA

**senior vice president for agricultural solutions, North America | BASF**

Raleigh

A native of New Zealand, Rea joined BASF in Australia in 2001 and worked in Singapore before taking his current role in 2014. He oversees the German-based company's crop protection, seed, turf and pest management businesses in the U.S. and Canada. He has an MBA from the University of Sydney.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Lake Gaston

**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
NPR

**Major inspiration:** The customers of BASF. Farmers have the biggest job on earth, and it is getting more complex, and more important.

**Career highlight:** Various international assignments I've embarked on have been the most rewarding. With BASF, I've had multiple opportunities to travel abroad, enabling me to experience new places, people and cultures.

**Favorite hobby:** Exercising is the perfect addition to my day. I recently started packing a jump rope in my suitcase when I travel. I love water sports.

**Best advice to industry newcomers:**  
Be curious. Develop a passion for learning that will allow for constant growth over your lifetime.

**Key industry change in next five years:**  
Digitalization is changing the farming industry. It's enabling farmers to make better decisions that enhance their productivity and their sustainability.



## LYNWOOD VICK

**partner, general manager | Vick Family Farms**  
Wilson

The N.C. State University graduate's parents, Jerome and Diane, founded the business with 25 acres in 1975. It now encompasses 9,000 acres across three counties with stakes in sweet potatoes, tobacco and cotton. Vick works with his sister, Charlotte, who is a partner and president of sales and marketing.



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A photograph of the North Carolina State Capitol building in Raleigh. Two flagpoles in the foreground hold the United States flag and the North Carolina state flag. The building is a large, white, classical-style structure with a prominent portico. Trees and a paved walkway are in the foreground.

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Valerie Hillings  
Michael Jordan  
Nina King  
Steve Malik  
Steve O'Donnell  
Jim Phillips  
John Probst  
Dan Rajkowski  
Marcus Smith  
Gary Sobba  
Ben Sutton  
David Tepper  
Bill Vassar  
Greg Walter  
Fred Whitfield  
Jeff Wise

## JEFF WISE

CEO | Whitewater Center

Charlotte

Staying out of the public eye and employing an unusual marketing strategy, Charlotte native Jeff Wise has led development of the self-described "World's premier outdoor center."

More than 1 million visitors show up annually at the not-for-profit enterprise in west Charlotte that sports the world's largest recirculating artificial whitewater river. Complementing the rafting are hiking and biking trails, climbing challenges, ropes courses, live music, concerts and various athletic competitions.

Though not the center's original visionary in the early 2000s, Wise used his business acumen to turn an idea into a thriving enterprise that employs about 1,000 full- and part-time workers. The project was initially financed with \$38 million from local government and private sources, led by the late Alan Dickson, whose family controlled the Harris Teeter supermarket chain that is now owned by Kroger.

The center also operates independently of Mecklenburg County's parks department and the VisitCharlotte tourism bureau, reflecting Wise's focus on running it as a business. Revenue soared from \$16.9 million in 2020 to \$28 million last year, he says. Net income was about \$9 million in 2022, slightly lower than the previous year, partly because of higher labor costs.

The center opened a lodge in Mills River, about 30 miles from Asheville, and four houses in a rural area 30 miles from Charleston, South Carolina. Charging from \$350 to \$450 per night, the lodging targets outdoor enthusiasts who want to explore either the western N.C. mountains or South Carolina's Lowcountry.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** "Good Fellows" (A podcast sponsored by the Hoover Institute.)

**Career highlight:** Working with Alan Dickson (the late CEO of Charlotte-based Ruddick Corp.)

**Favorite hobby after work:** Biking or running

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Drive and positive attitude are under our control. Make them your focus.





## TERA BLACK

**COO | Charlotte Checkers**

Charlotte

The California native joined the team as a vice president in 2006 before taking her current post in 2008. She was the first female to have her name on the American Hockey League's championship trophy when the team won in 2019. Her husband, Jamie, is a former pro hockey player and the team's director of finance.



## BOO CORRIGAN

**athletic director | N.C. State University**

Raleigh

Running a 23-team athletic department isn't his only job. Corrigan also chairs the College Football Playoff selection committee. The son of former ACC Commissioner Gene Corrigan, he took his post in 2019 after working at the U.S. Military Academy, Duke University and Notre Dame University. He has degrees from Notre Dame and Virginia Commonwealth University.



## MARK BRAZIL

**CEO | Wyndham Championship / Piedmont Triad Charitable Foundation**

Greensboro

After directing Greensboro's annual Professional Golf Association tournament since 2001, the Baylor University graduate was named CEO in 2021. He also oversees the Piedmont Triad Charitable Foundation, which raises money through the Wyndham Championship for regional philanthropies.



## BUBBA CUNNINGHAM

**athletic director | UNC Chapel Hill**

Chapel Hill

Cunningham has been an AD for 19 years, working at Ball State and Tulsa universities before coming to Chapel Hill in 2011. The Tar Heels have won 18 national titles since then. Cunningham, who grew up in Naples, Florida, has bachelor's and master's degrees from Notre Dame.



## RICHARD CHILDRESS

**owner | Richard Childress Racing**

Lexington

Since founding his stock-car racing team in 1969, the Winston-Salem native has become an integral part of NASCAR. His team has revived this year with the addition of Kyle Busch, who won in his second race for RCR. Childress, 77, also built Childress Vineyards into one of the state's largest wineries. It opened near Lexington in 2004.

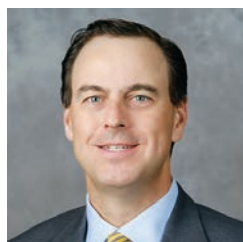


## KRISTI COLEMAN

**president | Carolina Panthers**

Charlotte

Owner David Tepper named Coleman to her post in February 2022, succeeding Tom Glock. The NFL's second-ever female team president, she had previously worked in the team's finance department since 2014. With accounting degrees from Clemson University, she previously worked for Deloitte.



## JOHN CURRIE

**athletic director | Wake Forest**

Winston-Salem

The former AD at Kansas State University joined his alma mater in 2019 after working in college sports for 18 years. Deacon backers gave a record \$37.5 million to athletics in 2021, while other sports-related funds reached a record \$13.7 million. He has a master's degree from the University of Tennessee.





## TOM DUNDON

**owner | Carolina Hurricanes**

Raleigh

The Dallas investor and Southern Methodist University graduate started a subprime auto lender that was bought by Spain's Banco Santander. In 2018, he became majority owner of the NHL hockey team. He took 100% control two years later. The team has made the playoffs for five straight years after nine years on the outside.



## TOM GABBARD

**president, CEO | Blumenthal Performing Arts**

Charlotte

The nonprofit's CEO since 2003 manages 110 employees and six Queen City theaters that host more than 1,000 performances annually. Charlotte has become a top 10 market in North America for touring Broadway shows. The lifetime Tony Award voter has a bachelor's from Pepperdine University and an MBA from Golden Gate University.



## JOE GIBBS

**owner, founder | Joe Gibbs Racing**

Huntersville

The Mocksville native, 82, started his racing team in 1992 and has overseen five NASCAR Cup Series championships. He led the Washington Redskins (now Commanders) to three Super Bowl wins. His son and vice chairman, Coy Gibbs, 49, died in November, four years after his other son, J.D., then 49, died of a neurological disease.



## VALERIE HILLINGS

**director, CEO | North Carolina Museum of Art**

Raleigh

The Duke University graduate took the N.C. post in 2018 after 14 years with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation in New York City. The museum, which employs about 200, has received state funding since 1947. It unveiled a rebranding last year that spotlights its outdoor space and community focus.



## MICHAEL JORDAN

**chair | Charlotte Hornets**

Charlotte

Reports emerged in March that Jordan, 60, is considering selling his majority stake in the team to a group that includes Wall Street investor Gabe Plotkin. Jordan is the first former NBA player and sole Black person to control a league team. The Wilmington native won an NCAA championship with UNC Chapel Hill and six NBA titles with the Chicago Bulls.



## NINA KING

**athletic director | Duke University**

Durham

Duke named King to her post in 2019 after 13 years on the athletic department's leadership team and four years at Notre Dame University, her alma mater. She has a law degree from Tulane Law School. She chairs the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee and teaches a sports business course.

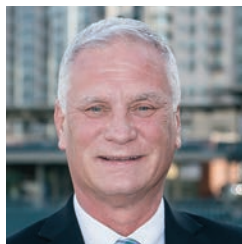


## STEVE MALIK

**owner, chair | North Carolina Football Club**

Raleigh

The Kinston native has led several medical technology companies, including Greenlight Health Data Solutions and Medfusion, which was sold in 2019. He's known for his passion for soccer. He bought the Carolina Railhawks in 2015 and rebranded them as North Carolina FC, and he relocated a National Women's Soccer League team to Cary, the North Carolina Courage.



## DAN RAJKOWSKI

**COO | Charlotte Knights**

Charlotte

A veteran of more than 35 years in baseball, he joined owner Don Beaver's minor-league team in 2006, then became chief operating officer in 2012. Since moving to a downtown Charlotte stadium in 2014, the Knights routinely score among the top attendance in minor league baseball, drawing about 600,000 fans a year.

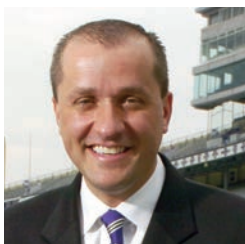


## MARCUS SMITH

**CEO | Speedway Motorsports**

Charlotte

The son of company founder Bruton Smith started at the Charlotte speedway picking up trash. He became president in 2008, then assumed his current title in 2015. The company, which went private in 2019, operates 11 speedways, including Charlotte and Atlanta tracks. He spearheaded plans for the NASCAR All-Star Race at North Wilkesboro Speedway in May.



## JAMES PHILLIPS

**commissioner | Atlantic Coast Conference**

Charlotte

The former Northwestern athletic director, who took his post in 2021, moved the conference headquarters from Greensboro last year, aided by \$15 million from state lawmakers. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee, a master's from Arizona State University and a bachelor's from the University of Illinois.



## JOHN PROBST

**senior vice president, chief racing development officer | NASCAR**

Sherrills Ford

Probst has engineering degrees from both Penn State and the University of Michigan-Dearborn, and a physics degree from Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania. He moved from Earnhardt Ganassi Racing to NASCAR in 2016 and is credited with helping launch the NextGen car, which debuted in 2022.

**Favorite family tradition:** Annual family trout fishing trip to Cherokee, Easter vacation to the beach with extended family, and Christmas Day festivities at home with friends and family.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Our land just north of Asheville.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Podcasts on personal finance, fly fishing or other outdoor activities.

**Major inspiration:** My family members are the ones that have sacrificed to allow me to pursue my dream in racing.

**Career highlight:** Working on development and launch of the NextGen car for NASCAR Cup Series.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Trout fishing

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Your time will not come in eight-hour chunks, five days a week. Embrace that and enjoy the experiences.

**Key industry change in next five years:** More use of sustainable fuels, varying levels of electrification, and possibly even hydrogen.



## GARY SOBBA

**tournament director | Wells Fargo Championship**

Charlotte

The Kansas MBA has run day-to-day operations of the PGA Tour event since 2017. Sobba had spent the previous 15 years at Learfield Communications, including as general manager of Tar Heel Sports Marketing in Chapel Hill. The Charlotte tournament is among the PGA Tour's elite events with one of its highest purses.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Pinehurst

**What do you listen to on your commute:** PGA Tour Radio

**Career highlight:** Leading the nation in increasing attendance for several college sports.

**Favorite hobby after work:** A cardio workout or golf with great group of friends.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Outwork the competition.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Revenue is going to be even more paramount, if that's possible.





## BEN SUTTON

**chair, CEO | Teall Capital**  
Winston-Salem

After building a major sport marketing company and selling it to industry leader IMG College, the Murfreesboro native has focused since 2017 on his private-equity firm that invests in sports, media and entertainment companies. His REVELxp game-experience business has signed up 62 of the 63 major college football programs. He's a key backer of Wake Forest University athletics.



## GREG WALTER

**executive vice president, general manager | Charlotte Motor Speedway**  
Charlotte

The UNC Chapel Hill graduate worked in sports business before joining Speedway Motorsports in 1999 at the Atlanta track. He became executive vice president in 2016. He chairs the N.C. Motorsports Association, which promotes the industry that has an annual economic impact of \$6 billion, according to a UNC Charlotte study.



## DAVID TEPPER

**owner | Carolina Panthers;  
Charlotte Football Club**  
Charlotte

Hope springs eternal for the billionaire's efforts to turn around the performance of his NFL team, acquired for \$2.2 billion in 2018. The Carnegie-Mellon University graduate paid \$325 million for a Major League Soccer franchise, Charlotte FC, in 2019. He's pleased music fans and hotel owners by adding major concerts at Bank of America Stadium.



## FRED WHITFIELD

**president, vice chair | Hornets Sports and Entertainment**  
Charlotte

The Greensboro native runs the team's business operations and has kept the region interested in the NBA despite missing the playoffs for seven straight years. The former talent agent joined longtime friend Michael Jordan's team in 2006. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees at Campbell University and a law degree at N.C. Central University.



## BILL VASSAR

**executive vice president | EUE/  
ScreenGems Studios**  
Wilmington

Vassar joined the New York-based company in 1998 and has been part of Wilmington's film business since 2004. The firm's N.C. studios hosted filming of Amazon's hit "The Summer I Turned Pretty" in 2021-22 with a second-season release this summer. He has been a director of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.



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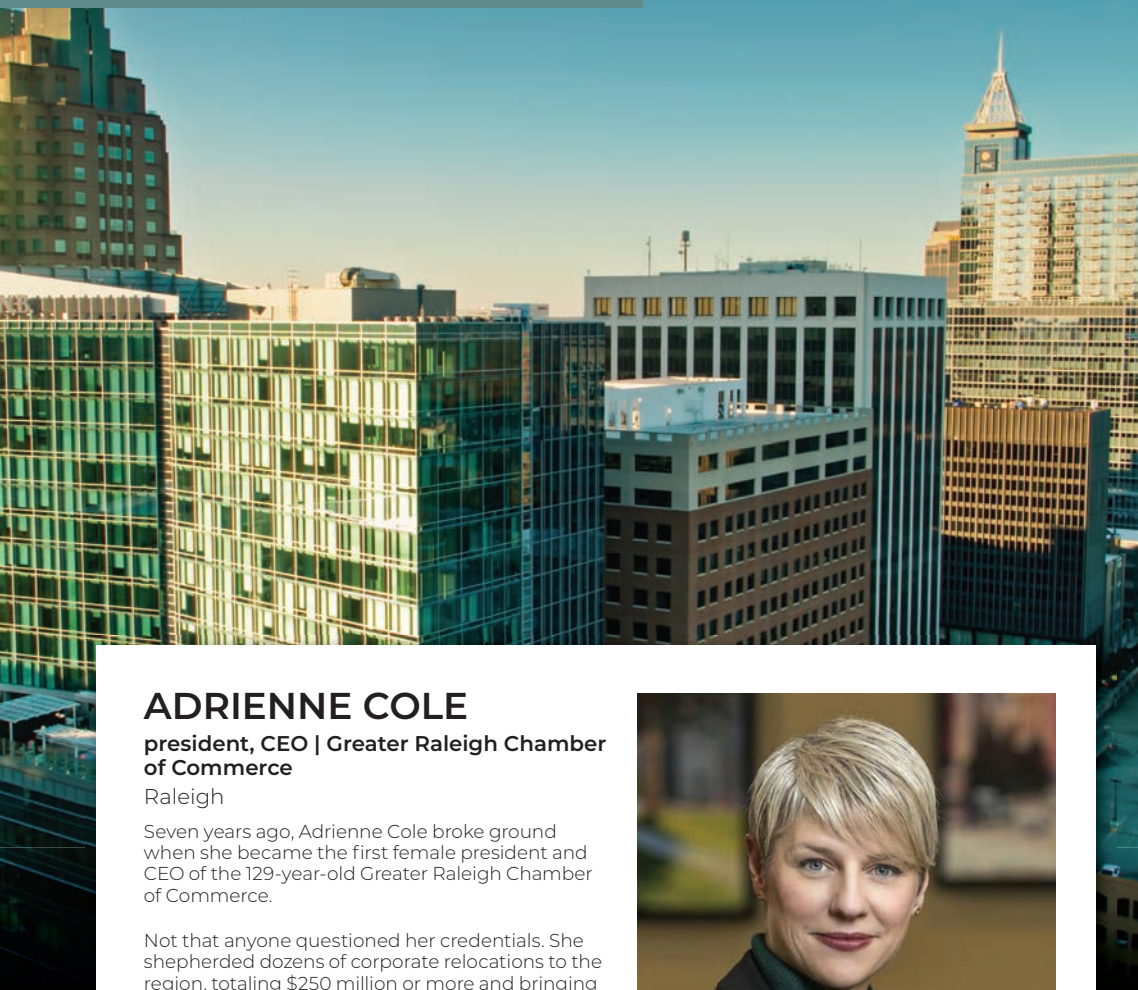
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### ADRIENNE COLE

**president, CEO | Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce**

Raleigh

Seven years ago, Adrienne Cole broke ground when she became the first female president and CEO of the 129-year-old Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce.

Not that anyone questioned her credentials. She shepherded dozens of corporate relocations to the region, totaling \$250 million or more and bringing 5,000 or more jobs during her previous role as head of Wake County economic development.

Key highlights included steering the Campbell University law school campus to downtown Raleigh and helping Raleigh-Durham International Airport land a flight to Paris.

During her tenure leading the chamber, the Triangle's reputation as a center for tech and life sciences jobs has soared. So has Raleigh's attraction as a great place to live, as cited in repeated national surveys. The chamber's 2,200 members represent more than two-thirds of the private sector employment in the state's largest county.

Cole majored in political studies and American civilization at Raleigh's Meredith College, then earned a master's in public administration at Appalachian State University. She started her economic-development career as director of the Carteret County Economic Development Council in the late 1990s.

**Favorite family tradition:** We have a tradition of going to Holden Beach in the summer for two weeks — one week with my husband's sister and her family and the other week with my cousin from Austin and her family. We cook seafood, read, play Putt-Putt, swim, walk, collect shells, roast s'mores and just enjoy being with family. We've been going since our oldest kids, now 21, were babies.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** I love the North Carolina mountains. Ashe and Watauga counties are two of our favorites to visit.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Lately I've been listening to Billy Strings. He's amazing.

**Career highlight:** The opportunity to lead the chamber and work with our talented team and the business community. I am always blown away by the generosity of really busy people who dedicate their time, energy and expertise to the organization.

**Favorite hobby after work:** I love to walk at the N.C. Museum of Art park. It is a wonderful asset in our community.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** You can fake sincerity, but you can't fake showing up. You have to be present and engaged. It takes time to build relationships, but it is worth the effort. You never know when you'll need to call on those people to help get a deal done, to collaborate on a project or to solve a problem. I also think it's important to keep your cool. I've yet to find a situation that freaking out helped.



Page Castrodale  
Brent Christensen  
Chris Chung  
Adrienne Cole  
Kit Cramer  
Tracy Dodson  
Geoff Durham  
Natalie English  
Don Flow  
Kevin Franklin  
Scott Hamilton  
Kevin Howell  
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C. Michael Smith  
Melissa Smith  
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Robert Van Geons  
Patrick Woodie  
Steve Yost



## PAGE CASTRODALE

**executive director | Cabarrus County Economic Development Commission**

Concord

The suburban Charlotte county has become a hot development site with pharma giant Eli Lilly planning a nearly \$1 billion plant in Concord that is expected to employ about 600 people. Another major expansion involves Austrian beverage maker Red Bull and Rauch North America, which plans a \$740 million distribution center with about 400 staffers. The UNC Chapel Hill graduate joined the commission in 2018.



## CHRIS CHUNG

**CEO | Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina**

Raleigh

Chung came to North Carolina from a similar post in Missouri in 2015. He has gained widespread respect for helping the state win competitions for Toyota Motor and other big corporate investments, aided by a more robust incentives program approved by state lawmakers. The public-private group works closely with the N.C. Commerce Department.

**Favorite family tradition:** Annual weeklong house rental in Duck and decorating our home for the holidays by Nov. 1 if we can.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** The Outer Banks, where my wife and I got married.

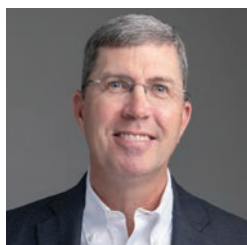
**Career highlight:** Being East Carolina University's fall 2020 commencement speaker.

**Favorite hobby after work:** With a toddler and an infant, just enjoying the post-workday routine of getting them fed and ready for bed offers a sense of accomplishment. Cooking dinner resembles a hobby.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Hone your communication skills. Listen and ask questions so that you continue learning as much as you can about different issues, situations, and subjects.

**Key industry change in next five years:**

Only in recent years has the economic development profession started seeing the linkage between workforce availability and issues like the availability/affordability of housing, child care, dependent care, and transportation.



## BRENT CHRISTENSEN

**president, CEO | Greensboro Chamber of Commerce**

Greensboro

Christensen has headed the Chamber of Commerce since 2015, after similar stints in Mississippi and Florida. The Gate City has gained national attention because of the nearby Toyota Motor battery plant and plans by Colorado-based Boom Supersonic for a \$500 million aircraft assembly plant.

**Favorite family tradition:** We have birthday cake for breakfast on everyone's special day.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Grandfather Mountain

**Major inspiration:** My "why" is simply the people who have gotten a first job, a new job or a better job because of our economic development efforts. At the end of the day what drives me is working to help provide a better quality of life in our community.

**Career highlight:** The recruitment of Toyota Battery Manufacturing North Carolina and Boom Supersonic.

**Favorite hobby after work:** After a long day of work you will often find me on the driving range, mindlessly practicing my golf swing. Maybe one day it will get better. Still, it remains my favorite hobby.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Don't be afraid to take risks. Standing out in a crowd is the key to success.

**Key industry change in next five years:**

Success in economic development will require more and more regional collaboration. I am proud that we are at the forefront of that trend in the Piedmont Triad.



## KIT CRAMER

**president, CEO | Asheville Area Chamber**

Asheville

Cramer worked at the Charlotte Chamber and International Downtown Association before taking her post in Asheville in 2010. Since then, the city has become an international tourist mecca, which has bolstered business while creating tension with residents preferring slower growth.

**Favorite family tradition:** Setting a beautiful table for family gatherings. Also love opening two gifts on Christmas Eve, always a book and a new pair of pajamas.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Charlotte, because of the friends we have there, as well as our son and his wife.

**What do you listen to on your commute:**

Books from my Audible account: dystopian science fiction, murder mysteries, fiction, etc. Or yacht rock.

**Major inspiration:** Working with a group of volunteers and seeing things come together energizes me.

**Career highlight:** Winning the national Chamber of the Year award from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives in 2019.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Take the time to listen and test your assumptions before moving forward.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Social issues crossing over with economic development.





### TRACY DODSON

**assistant city manager, economic development director | City of Charlotte**

Charlotte

Dodson leads key areas for the state's biggest city, including workforce development and economic expansion. She's helped recruit jobs promised by Honeywell, Lowe's and other companies. The UNC Charlotte graduate worked for real estate group Lincoln Harris before moving to her current post in 2018.

**Favorite family tradition:** Every year my family goes to dinner at the restaurant where my husband and I dined the day before our daughter was born.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** The mountains

**Major inspiration:** The work and ability to have a positive impact in our community drives me every day.

**Career highlight:** The past five years. We have accomplished so much — from Fortune 100 headquarters or expansions (i.e., Honeywell & Lowe's) to our Corridors of Opportunity and securing and extending the Hornets lease to 2045.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Family time, whether it is good conversation over dinner or a family walk. It takes my mind off of work and centers me.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Don't be afraid to be creative. Bold ideas get bold results. Be nimble.



### NATALIE ENGLISH

**CEO | Wilmington Chamber of Commerce**

Wilmington

The N.C. State University graduate spent a decade with the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce before moving to Wilmington in 2017. She helped convince local leaders to approve the \$1.5 billion sale of New Hanover Regional Medical Center to Novant, which led to creation of a \$1.2 billion community foundation.



### DON FLOW

**chair | Golden LEAF Foundation board**  
**CEO | Flow Automotive**

Winston-Salem

Flow's companies include 45 dealerships in North Carolina and Virginia. The foundation was established in 1999 to invest proceeds from the state's legal settlement with big U.S. tobacco companies to mainly benefit rural areas. It had assets of \$1.1 billion in early 2023 and has provided combined annual grants topping \$60 million recently. The University of Virginia graduate and Wake Forest University MBA is often called Winston-Salem's most influential civic leader.



### GEOFF DURHAM

**president, CEO | Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce**

Durham

Durham has been in his role since 2016, during which the Bull City has seen continued economic growth both downtown and at Research Triangle Park. The Randolph-Macon College graduate formerly led Downtown Durham for nearly three years and was director of economic development in Fairfax, Virginia.

**Favorite family tradition:** We throw seeds and berries on the roof of our home Christmas Eve to feed Santa's reindeer.

**Career highlight:** Relocating to Durham was a great decision. The Research Triangle Region is built on an ecosystem of innovative talent and high-growth industry that thrives on collaboration. There is no better place in the country to be engaged in this line of work.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Rain or shine, I take my dog for a mile walk each evening. It has become a therapeutic routine that I have grown to depend on over the past three years.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Improvements in mobility, both physical and economic. There are environmental and productivity benefits in providing alternative working spaces and transportation solutions to enhance labor market accessibility. Economic mobility represents equitable opportunity for current and future generations.



### KEVIN FRANKLIN

**president | Randolph County Economic Development Commission.**

Asheboro

A former town administrator in Ramseur, Franklin took on his current role in 2019 after a decade at the commission. The profile of the Bob Jones University graduate and Randolph soared when Toyota Motor selected the county for a massive electric-battery plant.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Ocracoke Island

**Major inspiration:** My faith in Jesus motivates me to love God and others, to do everything to the best of my ability, to treat others with dignity and respect, and to strive to lead by serving.

**Career highlight:** On Dec. 6, 2021, Toyota announced a \$1.29 billion investment and creation of 1,750 jobs in Randolph County; since then, those numbers have already grown to \$3.8 billion and 2,100 jobs. The Toyota announcement will ultimately have a positive impact on thousands of families and many businesses in the county and region.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Sitting down with a good book, generally nonfiction.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Economic development, at its core, is about helping businesses thrive so that individuals in the community can have access to better jobs, enjoy greater career advancement opportunities, increase their buying power, and generally improve their quality of life.



## SCOTT HAMILTON

**CEO | Golden LEAF Foundation**  
Rocky Mount

The UNC Greensboro graduate joined the group in 2019 after spending five years leading the Appalachian Regional Commission. Golden LEAF invests money from the federal tobacco settlement, then allocates millions of dollars to economic development projects, mainly in rural areas. The fund provided \$40 million for road improvements at the Toyota Motor site in Randolph County.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** During my time at Golden LEAF, I have visited all 100 counties in North Carolina, but as someone who calls western North Carolina home, our North Carolina mountains and my hometown of Boone is hard to beat.

**Career highlight:** Leading the talented and dedicated team at Golden Leaf Foundation truly the highlight of my career.

**Favorite hobby after work:** I like to unwind by cooking or grilling.

**Best advice for industry newcomer:** Networking, collaboration and follow through are keys to success in economic advancement. We all like to work with people we know and trust.



## GENE MCLAURIN

**chairman | Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina**  
Rockingham

McLaurin's diverse experience led to Gov. Roy Cooper's assignment as chair of the EDPNC in 2021. He was Rockingham's mayor from 1997 to 2013. The UNC Charlotte graduate was also a state senator for one term. Since 2007, he's been president of Swink-Quality Oil, a petroleum products distributor.

**Favorite family tradition:** Thanksgiving at our home in Rockingham. Our three children, spouses, six grandchildren are always there, and any other family that can attend.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** A tie between Montreat and Wrightsville Beach.

**Major inspiration:** My faith, my family and my co-workers. Together, they give me guidance, love and purpose.

**Career highlight:** Balancing private life of 42 years in business with public service of almost 25 years in elective or appointive office.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Donna and I enjoy playing nine holes of golf at Pinehurst CC and then dinner overlooking the 18th green of Pinehurst No.2.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Get involved, volunteer to serve and help make a difference in your community and/or in an organization that supports your business.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Transition to more renewable energy, nimble ability to adapt to change and a more inclusive and diverse workforce.



## KEVIN HOWELL

**vice chancellor, external affairs, partnerships, economic development | N.C. State University**  
Raleigh

The UNC Chapel Hill law graduate focuses his efforts on partnerships with government and industry to boost his alma mater, N.C. State, where he was a student body president. He's a past chair of the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce and on the boards of UNC Rex Healthcare and myFutureNC.



## SCOTT MILLAR

**president | Catawba County Economic Development Commission.**  
Hickory

Millar has led the EDC since 1997, helping the county diversify as its textile and furniture jobs declined. The University of Tennessee graduate was awarded the inaugural Lifetime Service Award from the N.C. Economic Development Association in 2022. In 2010, he was named the trade group's Developer of the Year.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Mountains.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** My thoughts

**Major inspiration:** Sir Edmund Hillary, who first climbed Everest, but preferred to be called "an ordinary person with ordinary qualities" and whose life "was marked by grand achievements, high adventure, discovery and excitement." That's humility.

**Career highlight:** Being effective in securing a resilient economy across Catawba County by helping secure and grow many companies in Hickory and Catawba County.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Trail running.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Cultivate informed team partners and advance confidently in the direction of your well-planned dreams.



## JANET LABAR

**president, CEO | Charlotte Regional Business Alliance**  
Charlotte

LaBar assumed her role in 2019, after leading a similar group in Portland, Oregon. She's helped make leadership of the alliance more diverse and worked to unite the 15 counties backing the group. She has a bachelor's degree from West Florida University and a University of Phoenix MBA.

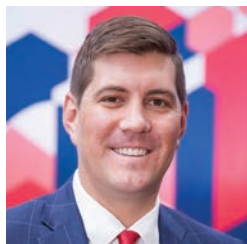


## SCOTT LEVITAN

**president, CEO | Research Triangle Foundation of North Carolina**  
Durham

Before coming to the RTP overseer in 2017, Levitan held real-estate management posts aimed at spurring development at Johns Hopkins and Georgia Tech universities. He's helping shift RTP to more of a work-live-play environment than its historic office-oriented design. He has a master's in urban design from Harvard University.



**MARK OWENS****president, CEO | Greater Winston-Salem Inc.**

Winston-Salem

After serving at the Greer, South Carolina, chamber for nearly 10 years, Owens moved to the Triad in 2018. The Presbyterian University graduate serves on the Piedmont Triad Partnership and Goodwill Industries of Northwest North Carolina boards.

**Favorite family tradition:** Christmas Eve with my wife, Melody, and our 5-year-old son.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Old Edwards Inn in Highlands.

**Major inspiration:** Knowing our team's work in economic and community development can change people's lives through economic mobility. Job announcements are not just numbers; they represent families who have better opportunities to provide for themselves and their families. That fires me up every day.

**Favorite hobby after work:** The front porch swing with our son, Luke. Having a smiling boy on a swing just brings joy.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Meet as many people as you can and not just the people who are happy with your organization. Find a mentor to challenge you and not just tell you what you want to hear.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Watching how many companies and individuals want to go back to an office setting. Not purely from an economic standpoint, but also how that affects restaurants and retail that have traditionally been around high office density areas.

**JIMMY RANDOLPH****CEO | Sanford Area Growth Alliance**  
Sanford

Randolph's profile keeps rising as Lee and Chatham counties attract major investments from Pfizer, Bharat Forge and others. He became CEO in 2020 after two years as industry development manager. The UNC Chapel Hill graduate was president of professional employer organization Payroll Edge for nearly eight years.

**Favorite family tradition:** Eating a meal together each night. When our children were younger, dinnertime provided a chance to reconnect via stories and experiences at school and work.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Blowing Rock and along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

**Major inspiration:** A lifelong passion for nature and the natural world inspires and informs my approach to economic development.

**Career highlight:** Highlights become the norm if you are passionate and purpose-driven and make a positive difference in the lives of others.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Go for a hike with my camera at San-Lee Park.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Invest in your network and don't hesitate to ask for help. Economic development is the ultimate team sport.

**Key industry change in next five years:** I think we will see a significant renormalization of manufacturing as a rewarding and desirable career pathway.

**CHRIS PLATÉ****executive director | Monroe-Union County Economic Development**

Monroe

Platé, who has had his post since 1999, is president of the N.C. Economic Development Association. He's a 1993 Clemson University economics graduate. Union is the only Charlotte-area county that isn't an investor in the 15-county, bistate Charlotte Regional Business Alliance, reflecting a desire for independence.

**GARY SALAMIDO****CEO | NC Chamber**

Cary

While staying out of the headlines, the University of Texas graduate is a key player in North Carolina business affairs, having led the business-promotion group's lobbying efforts for nearly a decade before gaining the top post in 2019. He previously spent nearly 20 years in the pharmaceutical industry.

**Favorite family tradition:** Playing Scopa, a traditional Italian card game we enjoy over the Christmas holiday.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Bald Head Island

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Depends on my calendar. My go-to's are Rat Pack and Bocelli.

**Major inspiration:** My family keeps me focused on the most important things in my life, working on and building long standing relationships.

**Career highlight:** Serving eight years on Wake Tech board of trustees.

**Favorite hobbies after work:** Attending Carolina Hurricane hockey games and collecting Italian wines.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Write handwritten thank you notes to people you meet and for kindnesses they afford you.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Reimagining and aligning education and talent supply systems to be employer demand driven meeting today's needs and be predictable for the future in order to maintain our No. 1 state for business ranking.

**JULIE ROPER****economic development, local government manager | Dominion Energy North America**

Mount Holly

With decades of utility industry experience, the Appalachian State University graduate and U.S. Air Force veteran manages community engagement and communications with government officials for the Richmond, Virginia-based electric utility. It provides natural gas service to more than 600,000 customers in North Carolina.



## SCOTT SATTERFIELD

CEO | Wilmington Business Development

Wilmington

The UNC Wilmington graduate is among the state's most veteran economic developers, having led the not-for-profit group since 1995. He's also among the highest paid with compensation topping \$430,000 annually, reflecting strong support from the group's board. He previously was a district executive for the region's Boy Scouts of America council.

**Favorite family tradition:** My wife is a fanatic when it comes to the Christmas holidays, a time of year when family, close friends and co-workers come together over food and laughs to reflect on all the things we're truly grateful for — mainly each other.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Wilmington is my home.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Typically on the phone with members, clients, consultants or staff.

**Major inspiration:** Years ago, I developed a strong affinity for Bob Marley. His 'one-world, let's-get-together' message resonates with me as American culture grows more divisive.

**Career highlight:** The work we did in recruiting GE's Nuclear Energy Division headquarters in 2003. The win gave us the confidence to never back down when big opportunities arise.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Walking into my house and being greeted by my lovely wife, Twyla, and my adoring black-lab mix, Gibney.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Never underestimate the power of strong customer service. This is key both when recruiting new companies or supporting existing industry. They need to know you care and that starts with good listening skills.

**Key industry change in next five years:** We're already seeing re-shoring in the wake of the pandemic and the drive toward more reliable supply chains.



## C. MICHAEL SMITH

president | Chatham Economic Development Corp.

Pittsboro

The East Carolina University graduate and industry veteran moved from neighboring Lee County to his Chatham post in late 2020. Since then, two Chatham megasites have attracted massive investment pledges from WolfSpeed and VinFast, attracting global attention. He worked at the N.C. Department of Commerce and is a past president of the N.C. Economic Development Association.

**Favorite family tradition:** Holiday season oyster roasts with our family in Eastern N.C.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Beaufort County and the Pamlico River.

**Major inspiration:** Abraham Lincoln. I got a copy of his list of significant life challenges early in my career. An important reminder that persistence can overcome many obstacles.

**Career highlight:** Our team had the largest jobs announcement in N.C. history last March with VinFast. In September, we had the largest investment in state history with WolfSpeed. Combined, almost 10,000 jobs and \$9 billion for Chatham County.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Spending time at home with our recently rescued Blue Tick/TWC mix, Reba.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Economic development is about people and persistence. Make connections and never give up. Be grateful to be in a fun and rewarding career, where you get to make a difference.



## ANDREW TATE

director, economic development | Duke Energy

Raleigh

The former vice president of the N.C. Railroad Co. has been in his role since 2021, leading a team of five senior managers. The electric utility often plays a vital, unpublicized role in major economic development recruitments. He's a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill.

**Favorite family tradition:** Gathering in early August each year, around my grandfather's birthday, with my mother's family, the Jetts, in Stafford County, Virginia, to pick steamed blue crabs. What started as a birthday celebration has morphed into a family reunion and a reminder of who we are and where we come from.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** My parents' home south of Fuquay-Varina and the woods and creek that my brothers, sister and I grew up running around. Now my children run around in the same places, catching fish in the creek and rehabilitating forts that we built many years ago.

**Favorite hobby after work:** The simple act of closing the laptop, cooking and winning on the tennis court.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** If you don't have the experience yet, outwork and outsmart the other folks. Listen intently, act with purpose and authenticity, and always pay attention to the horizon.



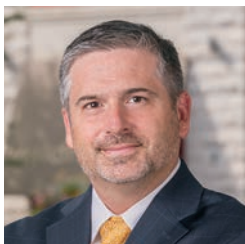
## MELISSA SMITH

vice president, business recruitment and development | Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina

Greensboro

Smith has courted businesses for the state for 25 years and had her current post leading a staff of 15 since 2020. Last year, the state had 174 projects that will create 23,000 jobs, including the \$4 billion VinFast auto factory in Chatham County and a \$1 billion Eli Lilly drug plant in Concord.





## BEN TEAGUE

**VP strategic development | Biltmore Farms**

Fletcher

Since 2018, the University of Mississippi MBA graduate has led strategic planning for the Cecil family-owned real estate development company. Previously, Teague led the Asheville-Buncombe County Economic Development Coalition.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Montreat or Wrightsville Beach. Both lower my blood pressure.

**Major inspiration:** Statesmen of all kinds and at all levels. I truly admire people who selflessly work to create a better day for their community and have no thought of their own self-interest.

**Career highlight:** Being selected as a Presidential Leadership Scholar in 2022. Four presidential foundations select 60 leaders across the nation each year and work with them for six months to make them better leaders and people.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Be humble. Never let what you accomplish get in the way of who you are.



## PATRICK WOODIE

**president, CEO | N.C. Rural Center**  
Cary

The Wake Forest University graduate joined the group in 2006 and has led it since 2013. The Rural Center, which has a staff of more than 40, is distributing \$50 million in financing for early-stage, high-growth small businesses. Previously, Woodie led a nonprofit business development center and ran Alleghany County's chamber.

**Favorite family tradition:** Cutting the Christmas tree from an Alleghany County farm around Thanksgiving Day.

**Major inspiration:** The legacy of my predecessor, Billy Ray Hall. Without Billy Ray, I would not have the privilege of serving rural North Carolinians.

**Career highlight:** Walking into a random meeting of rural leaders, such as one I dropped in on recently in Sylva, and being completely at home and among friends. That is an unbeatable feeling.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Exercise to work off daily stresses and then decompress with a book.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Deliberately and consciously work at building, expanding, and strengthening your network of colleagues and partners.

**Key industry change in next five years:** For the first time in a decade, rural North Carolina saw population increases from 2020-2021. One year does not make a trend, but we are on the cusp in this post-COVID world of seeing a resurgence of rural places?



## ROBERT VAN GEONS

**president, CEO | Fayetteville Cumberland Economic Development Corp.**

Fayetteville

Since 2017, the University of Southern Mississippi and Catawba College graduate has helped raise the Fayetteville area's profile, helping attract \$600 million-plus in new investment pledges. Van Geons previously worked in economic development in Rowan and Stanly counties. He notes that he has 14 guitars.

**Favorite family tradition:** Fireworks on the Fourth of July, especially at Fort Bragg.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Outer Banks

**Major inspiration:** The quiet heroes I meet in Fayetteville, who have sacrificed so much for our country.

**Career highlight:** Raising Fayetteville and Cumberland County's profile with super-regional and national developers, who are building millions of square feet in our community.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Play my guitar on the front porch while my two girls dance in the yard.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Lead with empathy for those you serve and never stop looking for the next great innovation.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The increase in automation and the rise of advanced AI platforms will significantly alter how we market and communicate our value proposition to external audiences.



## STEVE YOST

**president | North Carolina's Southeast**

Elizabethtown

Yost has been at the helm since 2009, promoting a region stretching from Wilmington to Anson County. He previously worked for the N.C. Department of Commerce's south-east region as a senior developer and regional manager. Yost holds degrees from UNC Chapel Hill and Appalachian State University.

**Favorite family tradition:** Formerly attending the UNC-Duke football game every year.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Anywhere on the Black River for paddling trips.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** News, audio books, or silence.

**Major inspiration:** Right now, it is caregivers who are taking care of our elderly, sick and disabled. There is no more challenging job. Their empathy, dedication and work ethic at caring for others is a daily inspiration.

**Career highlight:** Transforming North Carolina's Southeast into a thriving public-private partnership organization.

**Favorite hobbies after work:** Gardening, landscaping, hanging out with family, walking, and reading.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Act strategically and pay attention to the small things that lead to the big things. Have patience, as results do not happen overnight. Develop and use collaborative engagement skills because nothing gets accomplished going solo.



**WILMINGTON  
CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE**

**2022 CACCE Chamber of the Year**

**2022 CACCE Chamber Executive of the Year**

## **Thank you for leading the way, every day.**

Thank you for leading our organization in a way that gets results and moves our community forward in a dynamic and engaging way.

Your dedication to our community has led to more opportunities for business, new investment, and new jobs that have benefitted all members of our community.

Your example inspires us all to work toward a better future, and we are honored to have you as a leader in Wilmington.



**ONGRATULATIONS, NATALIE ENGLISH!**





Darrell Allison  
David Boliek  
Connie Book  
Kelli Brown  
J. Bradley Creed  
Eric Davis  
Kandi Deitemeyer  
Sheri Everts  
James Ford  
Sharon Gaber  
Franklin Gilliam Jr.  
Kevin Guskiewicz  
Peter Hans  
Jennifer Haygood  
Tamika Walker Kelly  
Harold Martin Sr.  
Vincent Price  
Nido Qubein  
Scott Ralls  
Randall 'Randy' Ramsey  
Jenna Robinson  
Philip Rogers  
Douglas Searcy  
Randy Woodson

## RANDY WOODSON

chancellor | N.C. State University

Raleigh

It ain't bragging if you can do it, and N.C. State University Chancellor Randy Woodson has demonstrated he can lead a big university.

Since moving from Purdue University in 2010, the plant molecular biologist has spearheaded N.C. State's growth to 37,000 students, raised \$2.1 billion in scholarships, boosted its \$2 billion endowment, and helped gain national recognition in engineering, agricultural and manufacturing research.

The university's board rewarded him with the nation's highest compensation among the U.S. doctoral-granting public universities in 2021. His total pay of \$2.3 million included a \$1.7 million bonus tied to his successes. (Many private college presidents, including some in North Carolina, receive more annual compensation than Woodson.)

Notably, he has pledged about \$1.5 million to support scholarships and other worthy causes at the state's largest university, which has a \$1.6 billion annual budget.

Some of those students, Woodson noted, are in food crisis, so part of his donation will help fill dorm refrigerators.

**Favorite family tradition:** Sunday night dinner with the kids and grandkids.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Ashe County on the New River

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Back to Bluegrass

**Major inspiration:** My father. His work ethic and compassion for others continues to set a high bar for me.

**Career highlight:** Serving the people of North Carolina as chancellor of N.C. State University.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Garden or play guitar, depending on the weather.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Listen and learn: listen to your stakeholders and learn the culture of the organization.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Move to more flexible educational outcomes. The B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. will continue, but increasingly people are looking for industry-specific certificates.





## DARRELL ALLISON

chancellor | Fayetteville State University

Fayetteville

The Kannapolis native took his post at the historically Black university in March 2021, after serving on the UNC Board of Governors and leading a K-12 school-choice nonprofit in Raleigh. The graduate of N.C. Central University and UNC Chapel Hill School of Law champions community engagement, student retention and increased scholarship opportunities.



## KELLI BROWN

chancellor | Western Carolina University

Cullowhee

The Southern Illinois University graduate came to Western Carolina in 2019 after serving as provost at Georgia College & State University. Her initiatives include promoting the state's only public engineering college west of Interstate 77. Campus enrollment declined marginally to about 11,640 students in the fall of 2022.

**Favorite family tradition:** Getting the horses ready on a Thursday or Friday night and heading out for a weekend at a quarter horse show. We had a tradition of attending horse shows almost every weekend.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** I love all the beautiful creeks and waterfalls in western N.C. You can be driving along and suddenly tucked away will be a beautiful waterfall and when you roll down your window, you can hear the sounds it makes. Nothing better than this!

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Local Blue Ridge NPR and anything country western, from Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn to Brooks & Dunn and Garth Brooks.

**Major inspiration:** My mom taught me so much despite the fact she was not college educated. I learned from her that hard work pays off, to never give up on your dream, to follow your passion, and to always do the right thing no matter how hard it may seem at the time. She was beautiful, graceful, and cared for others. To this day she inspires me to follow my dream, be true to myself and to be mindful of my everyday actions.

**Career highlight:** When Western Carolina University students, faculty, staff, retired employees, alumni and community members rallied to stand up for a COVID vaccine center in rural western North Carolina that served more than 17,000 people at the height of the pandemic. I could not have been prouder and humbled by the actions of WCU during a time of uncertainty, yet their actions revealed the humanity in us all.

**Favorite hobby after work:** After a long day, I must admit there is nothing like a nice hot bath with fragrance salts.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be true to yourself, follow your passion and do what makes you happy.

**Key industry change in next five years:** More shared services across the higher education sector.



## DAVID BOLIEK

chair | UNC Chapel Hill board of trustees

Chapel Hill

Boliek, elected in 2019, is a partner at a Fayetteville law firm focused on litigation and health care issues. He previously worked in journalism, public relations, government contracting and as a Cumberland County prosecutor. He has a bachelor's degree from UNC Chapel Hill and law and MBA degrees from Campbell University.

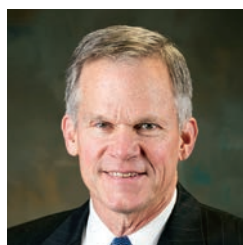


## CONNIE BOOK

president | Elon University

Elon

Book became Elon's first female president in 2018 after serving as provost of The Citadel. She previously spent 16 years at Elon as a professor and provost. She has degrees from Louisiana State and Northwestern State universities and a Ph.D. in mass communications from the University of Georgia.



## J. BRADLEY CREED

president | Campbell University

Buies Creek

Texas-born Creed, 66, began as Campbell University's fifth president in 2015, after serving as religion professor and provost at Samford University as well as the dean of Baylor University's seminary. He received his master's of divinity and doctor of philosophy from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.





## ERIC DAVIS

**chair | State Board of Education**  
Charlotte

Davis, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and an engineer, joined the board in 2015 and became its chair in 2018. It helps set education policies for K-12 public schools. He previously served on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board and on the U.S. Green Building Advisory Council's Charlotte chapter board.



## KANDI DEITEMEYER

**president | Central Piedmont Community College**  
Charlotte

Deitemeyer worked at College of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City for six years before joining the state's second-largest community college in 2016. The University of South Florida graduate serves on the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council and Novant Health's Charlotte board. The college raised a record \$66 million in a fundraising campaign completed last year.

**Favorite family tradition:** Friday nights: dinner, dialogue and TV

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Mountains, including Blowing Rock

**What do you listen to on your commute:** K-Love or news

**Major inspiration:** My daughter Zoe. She is incredibly talented, thoughtful and humble. Seeing life through her experiences and perspective recalibrates my thinking, gives me hope for a greater future, and inspires me to be a better person, wife, mother and leader.

**Career highlight:** Leading Central Piedmont. I am very proud of the work we do each day to impact lives. This past year finalizing a transformative comprehensive campaign allows the college to impact even more lives, deliver innovative programming and meet emerging needs. It has been a highlight in my career to work alongside many fantastic campaign volunteers, staff, and donors to power a stronger future for the college.

**Favorite hobby after work:** I enjoy the drive home after a long day of work. It gives me time to reflect on the day and change my focus to family time for when I walk through the door at home. My favorite hobby is spending too much time on real estate apps. Just looking! A better one is hiking.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be willing to be a servant leader. I promise you will get back more than you give to this work. Every aspect of what we do at the community college is serving others. You will absolutely be blessed by the impact you see happening through the lives of our students.

**Key industry change in next five years:** More flexibility in time to credential or degree with accountability toward the value proposition of higher education and job placement.



## SHERI EVERTS

**chancellor | Appalachian State University**  
Boone

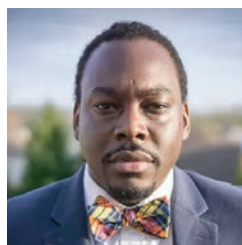
Everts received a master's and doctorate at the University of Nebraska in her native state. The former vice president and provost for Illinois State University became ASU's eighth leader in 2014. She has facilitated rapid growth for the university, including a new Hickory campus set to welcome students this fall.

**Major inspiration:** I am a first-generation college graduate and my major inspiration has been my mother, who had an eighth grade formal education. Providing access to higher education has always been a driving force for me. I came to App State in 2014 because I was inspired by App's founding mission of providing access to higher education to the people of the region. This mission has led us to focus our recent efforts on increasing the number of rural and first-generation students who attend and graduate from App State. Approximately one-third of our undergraduate students are first-generation college students and about one-third come from rural areas.

**Career highlight:** In my view, our Hickory campus, opening this August, could be the most significant advancement in App State history since the university became a UNC System institution in 1967. I'm tremendously proud of the work being done by our faculty and staff to carry forward App State's founding mission to expand educational access in the western region of our state. Our work to open a new campus in Hickory has been met with tremendous support from the Hickory community, and we are excited to expand our services into the Hickory metro area and beyond.

**Best advice to industry newcomers:** Believe in yourself, but know your own strengths and weaknesses. Hire to your weaknesses.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The higher education landscape has seen significant changes in recent years, and it will continue to change. The core mission of teaching, research, and service remain the same. Institutions of higher education serve their communities and their regions. If we serve well, listening to the needs of our communities, we'll expand student and community opportunities. In so doing, our communities, our state, our nation and our world will be the beneficiaries of our service.



## JAMES FORD

**member | State Board of Education**  
Charlotte

The education consultant was appointed by Gov. Roy Cooper in 2018 to the board and has been an outspoken advocate for greater spending on public schools. He was the state's 2014-2015 Teacher of the Year and has chaired the Governor's Teacher Advisory Committee. He is pursuing a Ph.D. at UNC Charlotte in urban education.



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## SHARON GABER

**chancellor | UNC Charlotte**  
Charlotte

The Southern California native came to Charlotte in 2020 after leading the University of Toledo for five years. She's pushing for more research at the campus of nearly 30,000 students. This year, the university added Ohio State University administrator Alicia Bertone as provost, succeeding Joan Lorden, who had the post for nearly 20 years.

**Favorite family tradition:** Whenever we are all together we try to have a family game night – trivia, Jenga, cards.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** UNC Charlotte's Richardson Stadium on game day, and a beautiful Mecklenburg County park any other day!

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Since I live on campus, I have a very short commute. I can usually get in one or two good "pump-up" songs.

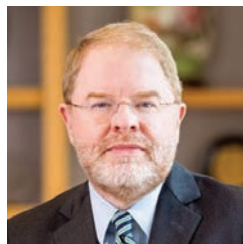
**Major inspiration:** My mom. She was a hard-working, single parent who encouraged and believed in me.

**Career highlight:** Being appointed the chancellor of UNC Charlotte

**Favorite hobby after work:** Depending on the day, I enjoy getting together for a social activity or just going out and walking my dog! Favorite hobbies include travel, spending time with family, and enjoying the outdoors.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Listen, pay attention, work hard and understand that everyone comes to the table from a different place.

**Key industry change in next five years:** We have to be able to clearly articulate the value of higher education, and we must be nimble to meet the needs of students and the state.



## PETER HANS

**president | UNC System**  
Chapel Hill

The UNC Chapel Hill graduate, who grew up in Southport and Hendersonville, has kept a low public profile since taking the leadership post of the 17-campus system in 2020. The system kept in-state tuition flat for the seventh consecutive year as enrollment ebbed at 12 universities. Hans is stepping up UNC's online learning options through the \$97 million Project Kitty Hawk program. He previously led the 58-campus community college system.



## JENNIFER HAYGOOD

**senior vice president for finance, CFO | UNC System**  
Greensboro

Haygood joined the \$10 billion system in 2020 after 12 years as a top financial executive at the N.C. Community College System. She has a bachelor's from Rice University and a master's in public policy from Duke University. She is a director of the \$50 billion State Employees' Credit Union.



## FRANKLIN GILLIAM JR.

**chancellor | UNC Greensboro**  
Greensboro

Gilliam has focused on improving students' social mobility since moving from a deanship at UCLA to his N.C. post in 2015. The Millennial Campus designation has enabled growth in the university's health, wellness, and performing arts programs. He has master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Iowa.



## KEVIN GUSKIEWICZ

**chancellor | UNC Chapel Hill**  
Chapel Hill

The neuroscientist and concussion researcher became the university's 12th chancellor after serving on faculty since 1995. He is a Kenan Distinguished Professor of Exercise and Sport Science, and co-director of the Matthew Gfeller Sport-Related Traumatic Brain Injury Research Center. Guskiewicz earned his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia.



## TAMIKA WALKER KELLY

**president | North Carolina Association of Educators**  
Raleigh

A music teacher in Cumberland County for 15 years, Kelly has led the National Education Association affiliate since July 2020. Holding bachelor's and master's degrees from East Carolina University, Kelly is passionate about representing public school workers and inspiring successful educators.

# Congratulations

**to Chancellor Sheri Everts**  
**on being named to the Business NC Power List**



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Board-Certified Teachers

**#3** in the UNC System for retention  
and graduation rates

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**HAROLD MARTIN SR.****chancellor | N.C. Agricultural and Technical State University**

Greensboro

Through expanded research and grant funding, increased student performance and enrollment, Martin's alma mater has become the nation's largest historically Black university since he took the job in 2009. His previous 30 years of experience had included 16 as an A&T professor and administrator and a stint as chancellor of Winston-Salem State University.

**SCOTT RALLS****president | Wake Technical Community College**

Raleigh

The leader of North Carolina's largest community college and former president of the statewide system returned to the Triangle in 2019 after two years at a Washington, D.C., area college. He's focused on delivering trained workers in industries suffering labor shortages, while also meeting the needs of emerging employers such as VinFast and Wolfspeed.

**Favorite family tradition:** Family

Thanksgivings — favorite family foods, being with family and friends who are like family. Long naps during boring Detroit Lions football games.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Lake Junaluska.

Spent most of my summers there growing up. It's my happy place.

**What do you listen to on your commute:**

Music and podcasts

**Major inspiration:** Community college

students. I am continuously inspired by their drive to succeed and grit in overcoming obstacles.

**Career highlight:** Joining the North Carolina

Community College System as director of economic and workforce development in October 1999. I never would have had my career across multiple colleges and as president of the North Carolina Community College System without that first opportunity.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Unwind with a book.**Best advice to industry newcomer:**

Know your why and always put the mission first. When the job gets you down, walk the hallways and find inspiration from the students.

**Key industry change in next five years:**

Higher education institutions that are not relevant and meeting the goals of students will fall by the wayside.

**VINCENT PRICE****president | Duke University**

Durham

Leader of the university since 2017, political scientist Price has expanded Duke's local and global presence, including a campus in Kunshan, China. He was previously provost at the University of Pennsylvania. He's seeking a provost to succeed Sally Kornbluth, who is now president at MIT. He has master's and doctoral degrees from Stanford University.

**NIDO QUBEIN****president | High Point University**

High Point

The Lebanese native came to the United States as a teenager with \$50, then built a successful entrepreneurial career. He has led his alma mater for almost 20 years as enrollment skyrocketed by 250%, seven academic schools were added and more than 100 buildings erected. Qubein, 73, is a Trust director and a member of the Horatio Alger Association for Distinguished Americans.

**Career highlight:** Investing a significant portion of my time and energy in being a servant leader. At High Point University. In my city. And boards I serve across our nation.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Be with my family and friends. Thanking God for a productive day.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:**

Leaders need to be armed with faithful courage, focused on rendering value for their clients, setting high standards for their organization, and doing it all with authenticity. Authenticity over charisma, every day.

**Key industry change in next five years:**

In business and in education, disruption is the new norm. Leaders must be prepared to execute on meaningful visions and solid strategies to create innovative transformation in a globally changing world.

**RANDALL 'RANDY' RAMSEY****chair | UNC System Board of Governors**

Beaufort

Ramsey's entrepreneurial skills led to co-founding a boat construction and repair company, Jarrett Bay Boatworks, and serving as partner of Bluewater Yacht Sales. The graduate of Carteret Community College's marine diesel mechanics programs has been chair of the 24-member board since 2019. He's focused on keeping UNC campuses affordable and promoting expanded research.



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Congratulations to President Douglas N. Searcy for being named to the 2023 Business North Carolina Power List!

## THEY'RE READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT

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## JENNA ROBINSON

**president | James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal**

Raleigh

With a bachelor's from N.C. State University and a doctorate from UNC Chapel Hill, Robinson joined the higher education research group in 2007, four years after it was started with the Pope family's support. She directs a team that produces a steady stream of conservative, free market-oriented stories and studies about the UNC System.



## DOUGLAS SEARCY

**president | Barton College**

Wilson

Searcy's Barton Bold strategic plan has led to the college's largest enrollment in three decades, more than a dozen building renovations, an athletic complex and a fiber optic ring around campus. The doctoral graduate from the University of Nebraska came to Barton in 2016.

**Favorite family tradition:** When your children are adults building their own lives, any time together is treasured. So, traditions shift. Yes, it's still the fried turkey at Thanksgiving and treasure hunts for gifts on Christmas morning, but now, it's also the unexpected phone calls for advice about locking in an interest rate or pursuing an internship opportunity. Knowing our family relies on one another and makes time to connect is both the culmination of traditions and the new tradition itself.

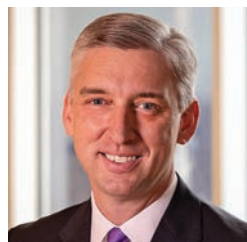
**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** I have lived in or have ties to Hendersonville, Mars Hill, Boone, Davidson, Shelby, Elon, Monroe, Wilson, Emerald Isle, Currituck, Chapel Hill and Winston-Salem, so there's not an inch of this state I don't appreciate. Picking a favorite place would be like picking a favorite child. It's hard to beat the first glimpse of the mountains of my childhood in their fall splendor, the peace of crossing the bridge to a respite in Emerald Isle, or a new housing development in Raleigh where my son just bought his first home. My favorite place is wherever my people are and I can live out my purpose.

**What do you listen to on your commute:**

My commute is a brisk walk by the bell tower which might involve a quick wave to a faculty member heading into the bistro for coffee, a consultation with a physical-plant team member about a renovation in progress, or a greeting to a group of students on their way to an early class. When I do commute, I use time in the car to return phone calls or listen to NPR, podcasts, or audio reruns of "West Wing."

**Major inspiration:** Clearly, my wife. She's smart and accomplished on her own yet consistently pays attention to the goings-on in my world, particularly noting subtleties and relationships that matter. I rely on her insight and candor to be my best. Also, I'm motivated by the friends of the college who believe in and support what we do and the students who are the core of our mission. Our students come to us with so many different experiences and challenges, and I am inspired by their drive, their curiosity, their work ethic, and their boldness.

**Career highlight:** I've had a fair share of "pinch me" moments in my career, and when a bad day comes along, I enjoy the highlight reel of the good ones that I can play in my mind, such as fundraising successes, new buildings, new programs and new partnerships. But nothing compares to standing on the graduation stage in full academic regalia greeting students who have earned their diploma. Every single handshake — or fist bump or hug — is a promise fulfilled, a life changed, and for me, a confirmation of a calling.



## PHILIP ROGERS

**chancellor | East Carolina University**

Greenville

Rogers has come full circle at ECU as a former policy analyst and chief of staff who left for a higher education trade association job in Washington, D.C., then returned to Greenville in 2021 as chancellor. He's grappling with declining enrollment and a closer partnership between ECU's medical school and the not-for-profit ECU Health group.



## SUSAN RAE WENTE

**president | Wake Forest University**

Winston-Salem

The former Vanderbilt University provost came to Winston-Salem in July 2021 as school's first female leader in its 189-year history. She's rarely made any news in her first two years. She is on the 20-member board of Advocate Health, which is affiliated with Wake Forest's medical school. She has a Ph.D., in biochemistry from the University of California, Berkeley.



# FSU CHANCELLOR DARRELL T. ALLISON, J.D. INVESTING IN STUDENT SUCCESS & ECONOMIC IMPACT

Fayetteville State University congratulates Chancellor Darrell T. Allison, J.D., on being named to Business North Carolina's Power List for the **second consecutive year!**

*"This is an extraordinary time for our university, our city, county and region. The new enterprises underway at Fayetteville State University are much more than new buildings on campus and popular restaurants — they are significant investments in our local economy that will create new employment and revenue opportunities, offer welcoming and vibrant gathering places for families, and further enriching our student experience. These are tangible symbols of FSU's economic leadership, partnership and commitment to this community."*

- Chancellor Darrell T. Allison, J.D.

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Daren Parker  
J. Eric Pike  
Brian Savoy  
Jay Wileman  
Markus Wilhelm

## CARSON HARKRADER

CEO | Carolina Solar Energy III

Durham

With project names like Turkey Creek, Horseshoe Bend and Flat Run, Harkrader might be expected to head a small family company. Wrong. With her father, solar energy pioneer Richard Harkrader, she is building one of the Southeast's largest utility-scale solar energy developers, with nearly 50 projects pumping out renewable energy in North Carolina, Kentucky and Virginia. Another 10 are under development.

The Durham-based company is family owned, and built on the foundation Richard Harkrader laid in 2007 when he built the first utility-size solar farm in the Southeast, at N.C. State University.

Harkrader joined in 2012 after working for GE Energy. She became CEO in 2018 upon her father's retirement. She's pushed Carolina Solar expansion into western North Carolina and Kentucky, working with Duke Energy, to help the state become the second-biggest producer of solar power behind California. With degrees from Brown University and New York University, she is also active in the Carolinas Clean Energy Business Association.

**Favorite family tradition:** My son, 5, loves to travel and is very adventurous. I just took him skiing for the first time. Introducing him to new things and seeing his excitement and eagerness to learn about the world is my favorite thing to do with him.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** The great outdoors — whether the beach, mountains or rivers. We're lucky to have it all here in N.C.

**Major inspiration:** I am inspired by the enormity of the challenge we face in attempting to reduce the impacts of climate change on our planet.

**Top career highlight:** Since the summer of 2020, Carolina Solar Energy has hired undergraduate interns remotely in the fall, spring and summer. It has been really exciting to see some of our interns go on to get jobs working in clean energy. Working in renewables is so rewarding, and I love playing a part in helping get young, smart people into our industry.

**Favorite hobby after work:** I enjoy cooking a new or favorite recipe, or going for a walk outside.

**Best advice for industry newcomer:** You're in the right place. The clean energy industry will only continue to grow, and it's a great place to grow a career.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Sourcing challenges and tariffs, community engagement, and the urgent need to holistically upgrade our country's transmission system to accept new renewable energy are my top three concerns.





## JOE BRANNAN

**executive VP, CEO | North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives**

Raleigh

Brannan worked as chief operating officer for six years before taking the helm in 2012. The group is owned by its 26 not-for-profit co-ops that serve 2.5 million people in North Carolina. He has degrees from Pennsylvania State University and Lehigh University.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Hatteras Island and Grandfather Mountain. Both of these places showcase the unique and natural beauty of our state.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Financial news on Bloomberg Radio and the classic vinyl music station on SiriusXM.

**Best advice for industry newcomer:** Grow your intellectual and critical thinking capabilities while absorbing as much knowledge as possible. Then you can pursue practical paths toward new opportunities.

**Key industry change in five years:** As energy use increases, greater coordination will be required at all levels between energy supply and delivery to ensure reliable electric service.



## MICHAEL GRAY

**country holding officer, U.S. | ABB**

Cary

The company, with 20,000 employees worldwide, makes everything from electric motors to robots, generators and power transmission systems. Gray joined in 2008, after previous stints with AutoZone and International Paper Co. He holds business and international finance degrees from the University of Memphis and a master's in taxation.



## JULIE JANSON

**executive vice president, CEO | Duke Energy Carolinas**

Charlotte

Janson, 58, began her career with Duke predecessor Cinergy in Cincinnati. She currently leads regulatory affairs and legislative initiatives in the Carolinas after previously overseeing external affairs and serving as president for the Carolinas. She has a bachelor's degree from Georgetown College in Kentucky and a law degree from the University of Cincinnati.



## BEN CATT

**CEO | Pine Gate Renewables**

Asheville

The provider of utility-scale solar and storage sites operates in 21 states and through partnerships feeds clean energy into the electricity grid. An Indiana University alum, Catt was previously finance director at Asheville's FLS Energy. Last June, Pine Gate received \$500 million in funding from San Francisco-based Generate Capital.



## LYNN GOOD

**CEO | Duke Energy**

Charlotte

Ranked among "The World's 100 Most Powerful Women" by *Forbes*, Good has led the giant utility since 2013. The Miami University of Ohio graduate joined Duke predecessor company Cinergy in Cincinnati in 2002. She had total compensation of \$21.3 million last year, a 30% bump from a year earlier. Earlier this year, she and other Duke execs moved into a new corporate tower in downtown Charlotte.

**Favorite family tradition:** Gathering with family during the holidays.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** The mountains.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** News.

**Favorite hobbies after work:** Reading, travel and golf.



## ROY JONES

**CEO | Electricities North Carolina**

Raleigh

In 2015, the LaSalle University graduate became CEO of the group made up of about 90 community-owned electric systems in the Carolinas and Virginia. With a degree in electrical engineering from LaSalle University, he has more than four decades of experience in the electrical utility industry.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Hiking in the Appalachian Mountains.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Absolutely nothing. I enjoy the silence.

**Major inspiration:** My father. He was one of the most kind-hearted individuals I've ever met.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Spending time with family on the lake.





## MIKE KILPATRICK

**founder | STG Solar**

Pisgah Forest

Kilpatrick has built his business into one of the Southeast's largest solar contractors. He was formerly an electrical subcontractor, laying electrical lines for projects like hotels. The company has 200 employees, and has completed more than 200 solar farms in six states.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Mostly country music.

**Major inspiration:** My drive has been to do the best I can to provide for my wife and our three boys. Today, we have been blessed and our family has grown to include others that I love and continue to work hard for.

**Top career highlight:** Solar Power World recognized my company as one of the Top Solar Contractors in 2022, and being nominated for North Carolina employer of the year in 2022.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Hiking, mountain biking, camping. Watching a good campfire burn, while listening to the tree frogs and crickets is a perfect way to end your day.

**Best advice for industry newcomer:** Decide what it is you want in your career. Write it down. Realize everything in life has a price, and you must pay that price to enjoy those rewards. Lastly, don't put money in front of the things that matter most. God, family, friends, and then your profession.



## MARIA KINGERY

**chief impact officer | Southern Energy Management**

Raleigh

Kingery calls on her experience to help others attain financial, social and environmental sustainability in their similar efforts. The N.C. State University graduate has experience in solar- and green-building industries. She and her husband, Bob, founded the business in 2001.



## KATHERINE KOLLINS

**president | Southeastern Wind Coalition**

Raleigh

Based in the Triangle since 2012, the organization lobbies for the wind energy industry in the Carolinas, Virginia and Louisiana. Kollins, who worked for RTI International before joining the coalition in 2015, earned a bachelor's in environmental management and an MBA at Duke University.



## ERIK LENSCH

**CEO | Leyline Renewable Capital**

Durham

After more than a decade working for financial institutions, Lensch acquired his first company, a distributor of solar equipment. After selling it to an investment company in 2014, the Radford University graduate started his business to fund biogas and solar projects nationwide.



## CHARLOTTE MITCHELL

**chair | N.C. Utilities Commission**

Raleigh

Appointed by Gov. Roy Cooper in 2017, Mitchell leads the agency that regulates utilities that provide electricity, telephone, natural gas and other services. She came to UNC Chapel Hill from Texas as a Morehead Scholar and varsity soccer player. She later earned a law degree at UNC and a master's degree at Duke University.



## USMAN NOOR

**owner | 8MSolar**

Wake Forest

Noor's company has installed more than 1,000 residential, commercial and other solar energy systems since 2015. He has engineering degrees from the National University of Sciences & Technology in Pakistan and Cleveland State, and a 2015 MBA from Case Western University.



## TYLER NORRIS

**VP of development | Cypress Creek Renewables**

Durham

Norris joined the San Francisco-based renewable energy developer in 2017 after working in various public policy posts. He was a White House appointee to the U.S. Department of Energy from 2012-15, focusing on technology transfer. Named "Clean Energy Leader of the Year" by the N.C. Sustainable Energy Association in 2019, he has a bachelor's degree from Stanford University.



## BRIAN SAVOY

**CFO | Duke Energy**

Charlotte

Savoy succeeded Steve Young as chief financial officer in August after serving as chief transformation and administrative officer. He joined Duke in 2001 as a manager in its trading unit. He previously worked as a manager at Deloitte & Touche, an international accounting firm. He has a bachelor's degree from Lamar University in Texas and a Duke University MBA.

**Favorite family tradition:** We host my wife's sister and her family at Thanksgiving and enjoy a fantastic meal and rich conversation.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Two favorites — Grandfather Mountain and PNC Arena watching Carolina Hurricanes hockey.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Business news. CNBC "Squawk Box" in the morning and "Fast Money" in the evening.

**Favorite hobby:** Golfing with my wife or friends or soaking up rays at the beach or at the pool.

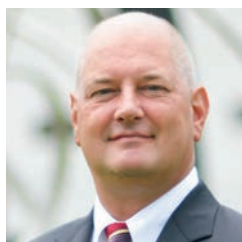


## DAREN PARKER

**owner | Parker Gas Co.**

Fayetteville

Parker's company, which was founded in 1958, provides propane delivery, appliance sales and service in southeastern and central North Carolina. The Rapid Xchange division provides cylinder exchanges to thousands of mid-Atlantic state retailers. Parker has a business degree from East Carolina University.



## JAY WILEMAN

**president | GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy**

Wilmington

The company provides nuclear reactors and other services worldwide. He came to this position in 2015, after decades in sub-Saharan Africa, Japan, Italy, Australia and South Africa, often in oil, rail and coal. He has degrees in business and nuclear engineering from Mississippi State University and the University of Alabama.



## J. ERIC PIKE

**CEO | Pike Corp.**

Mount Airy

With 100 offices and 10,000 employees, the 75-year-old company provides engineering, maintenance, construction and other services for electric and utilities, and similar work for telecommunications clients, wired or wireless. Pike has been chairman and CEO since 1998, and holds a 1990 history degree from Emory University.



## MARKUS WILHELM

**co-founder, CEO | Strata Solar**

Durham

After 25 years in publishing, media and direct marketing, the German native started a construction company building environmentally green homes. That morphed into Strata Solar in 2009, a privately held, pioneering solar energy developer in North Carolina. Clients have included the U.S. Department of Defense, Bayer and GSK.





## JAMES SILLS

**president, CEO | M&F Bancorp**  
Durham

Since coming to North Carolina in 2014, the Morehouse College graduate has turned around the second-oldest minority-owned U.S. bank, which has offices in Durham, Raleigh, Charlotte, Greensboro and Winston-Salem. It's among about 20 remaining Black-owned banks in the U.S.

His father was a politician in Delaware and he tried his hand at state government there, serving as chief information officer for the state. But he believed he could have a greater influence in banking.

M&F struggled financially early in his tenure, reporting cumulative losses totaling about \$2 million in 2016 and 2017.

But its fortunes have turned in the past few years, aided by the U.S. Treasury's Emergency Capital Investment program, which enabled M&F to exchange 80,000 shares of preferred stock in return for \$80 million in capital. That enabled a pledge to lend at least \$30 million annually to minority borrowers affected by the pandemic, over the next 10 years.

In 2022, M&F Bancorp reported a \$4.3 million profit, following net income of \$2.7 million in 2021. "We ended the year with more capital than in any other time in the history of the company, with the recent \$80 million investment," Sills said in March.

Assets totaled \$451 million at the end of 2022, versus \$365 million a year earlier.

**Favorite family tradition:** My wife has two sisters, and they like to rotate hosting Christmas with all the families and relatives coming together. We have a great time and we look forward to traveling to the different cities each year. It's a blast in terms of food, fun, games and family.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Asheville in the fall.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Satellite radio. My favorite stations are CNBC, CNN and ESPN.

**Major inspiration:** My family. I am so proud and thankful for all the many blessings that have been bestowed upon my family over the years. It motivates me to give back and do more for the community.

**Career highlight:** This past year, I served as the chairman of the N.C. Bankers Association. It was a great experience to work with the association leadership team, board of directors and bankers from around the state to help move our industry forward in the areas of DEI, leadership development and improving access to capital for small businesses.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Tennis. I have played for more than 50 years.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** The banking industry is changing very rapidly. Embrace technology in all forms: AI, mobile, digitization, and application development.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Community banks like M&F Bank have a tremendous opportunity to pursue innovation in the delivery of financial services through relationships with fintechs that will level the playing field with the larger banks. These advances in technology present a vast array of self-service only options and AI interactions that will make banking simpler and more efficient.



Anita Hughes Bachmann  
Jim Bostian  
Jeffrey Brown  
Richard Bryant  
Rick Callicutt  
Kieth Cockrell  
Beau Cummins  
Matt Davis  
Ron Day  
Jim Dunn  
Rob Edwards  
Lee Fite  
Mike Freno  
Charles Grigg  
Peter Gwaltney  
Todd Hall  
Jim Hansen  
Jim Hayes  
Frank Holding Jr.  
Tom Hoops  
Patrick Jordan  
Jim Kelligrew  
Jonathon King  
Curt Ladig  
Doug Lebda  
Mary Mack  
James S. 'Chip' Mahan  
Mike Mayer  
Brian McCarthy  
Ed McMahan  
Fielding Miller  
Richard Moore  
Suzanne Morrison  
Robert 'Bob' Newell  
Cathy Pace  
Michael Painter  
Art Pappas  
Bill Pappas  
Edwin Poston  
David Rea  
Lee Roberts  
William 'Bill' Rogers Jr.  
Jim Rose  
Jason Sandner  
James Sills  
Tunde Sotunde  
Eric Steigerwalt  
Clay Thorp  
Neal Triplett  
Kevin Walker  
Thad Walton  
Hunter Westbrook  
Mary Willis  
Dontá Wilson



## ANITA HUGHES BACHMANN

CEO | UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of North Carolina

Greensboro

Bachmann joined the largest U.S. health insurer in 2005 after working at Greenville, South Carolina, hospitals. She has held her current post since 2017. The Medical University of South Carolina graduate is a trustee at UNC Greensboro, a member of NC Works Commission, and past chair of the Greensboro Chamber.

**Favorite family tradition:** Cooking North Carolina Brunswick stew with the family every November after the weather gets cool.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** I love every part of the state, from the beaches to the mountains. If I had to pick one place, it's Wrightsville Beach.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Podcasts about true crime, politics and comedy.

**Major inspiration:** My daddy was always an encourager and always emphasized that I could be the best at whatever I wanted to be. Persistence and perseverance were key.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Running is a great way to start or end the day. It is always good for improving physical and mental health!!!

**Best advice for an industry newcomer:** Because change is inevitable, flexibility and openness to new ideas and perspectives is key to success. Also, collaboration is critical to success. No one can do it alone; it takes teams to make great things happen.



## JIM BOSTIAN

president, MidSouth | Aetna

Cary

The Salisbury native and UNC Chapel Hill graduate turned heads by persuading the 740,000-member N.C. State Health Plan to switch its contract to the Connecticut-based insurer, starting in 2025. He has worked in N.C. health care for more than 30 years, including stints at Aetna and Duke University Health.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** My wife and I are UNC grads, so Chapel Hill is our favorite go-to for dinner and a walk through campus or family gatherings for UNC games.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** I count on a dose of classic rock on my morning commute to set the stage for a successful day.

**Major inspiration:** My parents provided a strong foundation for my personal and career goals, and thanks to my wife and kids, I've been blessed with the love, support and purpose to achieve them.

**Career highlight:** I'm still working toward that, but the day I started this job as market president with this incredible team was certainly a career milestone for me.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Manning the backyard grill, and anything that can coax my kids away from their video games!

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Health care is an exciting and rewarding industry, but prepare to be humbled by its depth and complexity.



## JEFFREY 'JB' BROWN

CEO | Ally Financial

Charlotte

Brown became CEO of the digital financial services company in 2015 and has led significant growth, though net income dipped nearly 50% last year to \$1.6 billion as interest rates rose. Previously the treasurer of Bank of America, Brown is a Clemson University graduate with an MBA at Queens University, where he is board chair.

**Favorite family tradition:** Taking first day of school photos year after year to see the growth of our three children.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** We love Charlotte and our sports teams, including Charlotte FC, NASCAR, the Panthers, the Hornets, and more. Shout out to the great parks, arts, Queens University, and amazing health care.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Generally country, although I love all music.

**Major inspiration:** Rick Hendrick and Hugh McColl. Through hard work, they accomplished success and shared that success with their communities.

**Career highlight:** Ally's CEO. It is a huge honor to lead such a great group. I'm proud we award employees with stock to ensure we all act as owners.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Cooking anything from Italian delights to smoking ribs/wings/BBQ, to making pizzas. It usually involves a great glass of wine. This is what I do to relax.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be a lifelong learner. Also appreciate that you can learn from anyone.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Digital migration will help all consumers establish banking relationships.



**RICHARD BRYANT****CEO | Capital Investment Cos.**

Raleigh

Bryant heads a team of more than 180 financial planners, advisers and others. The Gastonia native says Capital Investment can offer wealth management and services similar to large Wall Street-based companies with a hometown touch. The N.C. State University grad founded the firm in 1984.

**Favorite family tradition:** New Year's Day "good luck" meal with collards, black-eyed peas and pork.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Morehead City/Atlantic Beach

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Pre-1990s music.

**Major inspiration:** My dad was not only an exceptional businessman, he was also very kind and generous.

**Career highlight:** Staying in business for 40 years.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Nothing beats hard work and determination. Show up, stick to it and give it at least three years.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Companies' ability to manage cyber risk and adopt technology changes and artificial intelligence.

**RICK CALLICUTT****chair, Carolinas & Virginia | Pinnacle Financial Partners**

High Point

Callicutt joined Nashville-based Pinnacle in 2017 after it bought BNC Bancorp, where he started in 1991 and became CEO in 2013. He began his career working for Wachovia and First Union banks. He's a High Point University alum and trustee and former board chair of the N.C. Bankers Association.

**KIETH COCKRELL****president | Bank of America**

Charlotte

After 10 years at IBM, Cockrell joined BofA 30 years ago. The Long Island, New York, native became Charlotte market leader in 2021. His civic roles include chairing the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance. His son, Ross, plays in the NFL, while daughter Anna ran track in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

**HUGH 'BEAU' CUMMINS****vice chair | Truist**

Charlotte

The Michigan MBA worked at Bank of America before joining Truist predecessor SunTrust in 2005 as head of debt capital markets. He became head of the bank's corporate and institutional group in 2019 and took his current post two years later. He oversees much of the bank's non-retail operations.

**MATT DAVIS****president, regional banking director | TowneBank**

Raleigh

Davis spent 15 years at Paragon Bank before TowneBank's acquisition in 2018. After working as chief strategy and risk officer at the Virginia headquarters, he returned to lead the N.C. bank in December. A certified executive coach, he has bachelor's and master's degrees from N.C. State University.

**RON DAY****founding director, president, CEO | First Carolina Bank**

Raleigh

First Carolina Bank has expanded into Columbia, South Carolina, and Atlanta in the past two years. A Rocky Mount operations center is under construction. A 1987 UNC Chapel Hill graduate, Day previously worked at Bank of Hampton Roads in Virginia and RBC Bank in Raleigh and Atlanta.

**Favorite family tradition:** Christmas/holiday meal at the Angus Barn

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Wrightsville Beach

**What do you listen to on your commute:** PGA Tour on Sirius XM Radio

**Career highlight:** Starting First Carolina Bank in 2012.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** To get to the job that you want, excel/be the best at the job you currently have.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The further digitalization of the banking business.



## JIM DUNN

**chief investment officer, CEO | Verger Capital Management**

Winston-Salem

The Villanova University graduate created the investment firm in 2014 after previously working as chief investment officer at Wake Forest University's endowment fund. The business, which focuses on nonprofit organizations, manages \$2.3 billion in assets.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Being born in a city and then living in L.A. before moving to Winston-Salem, the North Carolina mountains have been a spot to recharge and get outside. From scenic drives, summit hikes, small towns, festivals, family and dog-friendly adventures, to great food, there is something for everyone. I'm particularly fond of Cashiers, Arden, and Asheville.

**Major inspiration:** Captrust CEO Fielding Miller once told a group of Wake Forest University students that "leadership is harder to master than management. It takes soft skills and big-picture thinking." I believe the best leaders lead by example. It all starts with you.

**Favorite hobby:** Cheering for the Wake Forest Demon Deacons. My son, Kevin, is on the basketball team. I'm proud of him and his teammates.

**Best advice to industry newcomers:** Humility and self-discipline, no matter the industry or where you are in your career. Ignore the noise of what your peers are doing. Focus on the fundamentals and stay true to your mandate. That has meant avoiding herd mentality and creating an all-weather portfolio designed to perform over the long term. I'm very proud of how our mantra, to Protect, Perform, & Provide, continues to deliver for our nonprofit investors.



## MIKE FRENO

**chair, president, CEO | Barings**

Charlotte

The Wake Forest MBA joined a predecessor of the global investment management firm in 2005 and became CEO in 2020. He is on the executive leadership team of owner MassMutual Insurance. Barings managed about \$350 billion in assets and had 1,800 employees at the end of 2022.



## CHARLES GRIGG

**managing partner | Carousel Capital**

Charlotte

Since 1996, the private-equity group has invested in 45 companies. Grigg joined in 1997 after working with Orion Partners in Boston and Smith Barney in New York. He has degrees from Yale and the University of Pennsylvania. Carousel has more than 100 current and former CEOs as investors.



## PETER GWALTNEY

**president, CEO | NC Bankers Association**

Raleigh

Gwaltney has led the bankers' group since 2015 after having a similar post in Louisiana. He also led a foundation that promoted ways to block housing-related crimes against senior citizens. He's a graduate of Louisiana State University.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** North Carolina mountains

**What do you listen to on your commute:** I toggle between music, news and podcasts. I grew up searching the AM/FM dial and I appreciate the wide variety of options we have today.

**Major inspiration:** My father. I could not have asked for a better example for all aspects of my personal and professional life.

**Career highlight:** Accepting my current job. As I was building my career in Louisiana, I admired North Carolina's great banks, the innovative work of the NCBA, and the leadership of my predecessor, Thad Woodard, from a distance.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Go home for a quiet dinner with my wife and our dog. We raised six children and became empty-nesters not long ago, so the quiet of our house and the ability to just sit and relax is still a bit of a novelty.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Strike a balance between running the organization and spending time away from the office, building relationships with members and learning about their needs and challenges.



## ROB EDWARDS

**managing partner | Ridgemont Equity Partners**

Charlotte

Edwards co-founded Ridgemont, a private-equity company that raised \$2.35 billion last fall, following a \$1.65 billion raise in 2018. The group was part of Bank of America until 2010. The UNC Chapel Hill and Harvard University grad has also worked for McKinsey & Co. and Allied Capital.



## LEE FITE

**Carolinas regional president | Fifth Third Bank**

Charlotte

The Cincinnati-based bank continues to expand, planning 30 to 35 branches in the Southeast over the next few years. Fite is a 16-year bank veteran who is a graduate of Appalachian State University and Wake Forest University. He previously worked for RBC and First Union.



**TODD HALL****president, CEO | Truliant Federal Credit Union**

Winston-Salem

Truliant continued its expansion into the Greenville, South Carolina, market with three planned branches this year. The University of South Carolina graduate joined as chief operating officer in 2012 and became CEO in 2020. Truliant has 290,000 members, more than 35 branches and about \$4 billion in assets.

**JIM HAYES****CEO | State Employees' Credit Union**

Raleigh

The California native succeeded Mike Lord in 2021 at the second-largest U.S. credit union, with \$50 billion in assets. He previously led a Maryland credit union. He vowed to improve digital services, while ending a policy of charging the same interest rate to all members, regardless of credit scores.

**FRANK HOLDING JR.****CEO, chair | First Citizens Bancshares**

Raleigh

Holding has led the largest U.S. family-controlled bank since 2008. His sister, Vice Chair Hope Holding Bryant, and brother-in-law, President Peter Bristow, are the bank's other top leaders. First Citizens became one of the 25 largest U.S. banks by buying Silicon Valley Bank from the FDIC in March.

**JIM HANSEN****regional president, Eastern Carolinas | PNC**

Raleigh

Hansen has been a senior leader for PNC and its predecessors in North Carolina and Alabama since 2001. He has chaired the Research Triangle Regional Partnership and Raleigh Chamber.

**What do you listen to on your commute:**

I use my time to pick up coffee, listen to the radio and perhaps place a quick phone call.

**Major inspiration:** Growing up in Winston-Salem in the 1980s and 1990s, I had a front-row seat to banking during a time of tremendous growth. I was able to see firsthand the impact the industry had on customers and our community. That influenced my decision to major in business at N.C. State, get an MBA at UNC Chapel Hill, and start my banking career in a training program.

**Career highlight:** The opportunity to contribute to PNC's growth in my home state, which has translated to growth for North Carolina's business landscape during a period of innovation and economic development. It is difficult to put into words what it means to me to create impact in a region that has inspired and shaped me.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:**

Periods of economic downturn provided the greatest opportunities for learning, asking questions and understanding how our industry operates. Be open to taking on new roles; the opportunities are endless.

**Key industry change in next five years:**

Companies will need to make large-scale technology investments and focus on innovation.

**TOM HOOPS****CEO | New Republic Partners**

Charlotte

The former Legg Mason and Wells Fargo executive helped start the wealth management and banking business that is backed by the Belk, Bowles and Close families. He has a bachelor's degree from Duke University and a UNC Chapel Hill MBA.

**Favorite family tradition:** Christmas Day is a day when time stands still, and it's just me, Kristina, and our two sons. We spend the entire day together opening gifts, playing board games, watching sports, and eating lots of food. For one day, life slows down.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** I love the beach and mountains, but nothing beats stepping inside Cameron Indoor Stadium.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Bloomberg's "Surveillance" on Sirius XM. Tom Keene, Jonathan Ferro, and Lisa Abramowicz — nobody covers the world of finance better.

**Career highlight:** One of the coolest things I've experienced was ringing the opening bell at NASDAQ on the day we launched our new ETF range at Legg Mason.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Spend your early years finding good mentors who can help you build your toolkit of softer skills around communication, problem-solving, and developing relationships.

**Key industry change in next five years:**

We have come through a 40-year period where interest rates in the U.S. have been in near-constant decline. That era is over and that has profound effects on the investment industry and how investment portfolios need to be constructed.



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**PATRICK JORDAN****managing partner | NovaQuest Capital Management**

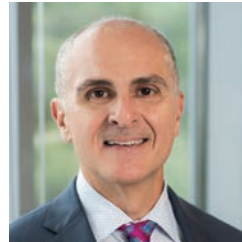
Raleigh

In 2010, the Duke University MBA graduate joined famed Triangle investor Dennis Gillings in forming Quintiles Transnational (now IQVIA) offshoot NovaQuest to help finance clinical trials for humans and animals. He has more than 25 years in the biopharma industry. The firm has raised more than \$2.5 billion.

**JONATHON KING****CEO | UNC Management Co.**

Chapel Hill

The Dartmouth College MBA joined the not-for-profit investment firm in 2005, three years after it was formed by UNC Chapel Hill. The group manages more than \$10 billion in assets, mostly for UNC campuses. He previously spent 16 years at Dartmouth and also worked at New England Mutual Life Insurance.

**CURT LADIG****CEO, president | Delta Dental of North Carolina**

Raleigh

The dental insurer's customer base has increased by more than 500% since Ladig joined in 2011. He previously was CFO of the Delta Dental plan in Kentucky and has also worked for Ernst & Young and Anthem. The University of Indiana graduate is immediate past chair of the board of Leadership North Carolina.

**Favorite family tradition:** Playing card games around the dining room table. I'm a pretty good Euchre player, but my sons think my strategies are too risky!

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** All of it. North Carolina is filled with a diverse, dynamic and beautiful mosaic of people and culture.

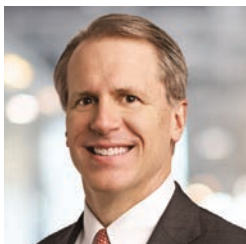
**What do you listen to on your commute:** My thoughts about the day ahead.

**Major inspiration:** My parents, Robert and Sue, were public servants in our small Indiana town: my dad was police chief and my mom was a nurse. They taught their three sons the importance of faith, work, family, and a commitment to serving others.

**Career highlight:** Taking a failing company and using my ideas and methods to help a team turn it into the fastest-growing company in our industry in the state. I came to disrupt the industry and create true change. I'm pleased to say that the market responded to our message of broader access to more affordable oral health care.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Spending time with my wife, family and friends.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Shortage of health care practitioners at all levels will expedite advancement in the robotics delivery of care.

**JIM KELLIGREW****vice chair, head of corporate and commercial banking | U.S. Bancorp**

Charlotte

Kelligrew joined the Minneapolis-based bank in 2009 and was named to his current post in 2016. The 1987 University of Michigan graduate is on the company's 14-member management committee and leads 3,000 bankers across the U.S.

**Favorite family tradition:** Vacations at our family's house in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The house overlooks the bay where we enjoy spending time together watching the amazing sunsets.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Wrightsville Beach

**What do you listen to on your commute:** '80s music including Queen, Elton John, Billy Joel, Bruce Springsteen, Rolling Stones, Jimmy Buffett, and many others.

**Major inspiration:** My parents have been happily married for almost 60 years. They taught their four children the importance of staying true to our values and treating people with respect.

**Career highlight:** It's a tie: working for four years in London from 1989 to 1993 and experiencing the diversity of cultures there. Also, building the U.S. Bank corporate bond business "from the ground floor" in 2009.

**Favorite hobby after work:** I enjoy relaxing with my wife, Libby, enjoying a glass of chardonnay or cabernet sauvignon.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Build close relationships both internally with your peers and partners and externally with clients.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The continued evolution and digitization of traditional capital markets products such as loans, bonds and foreign exchange.

**DOUG LEBDA****founder, chair, CEO | Lending Tree**

Charlotte

Frustrated while arranging a mortgage for his first house, he launched his own company in 1996, becoming an entrepreneurial success story. The company employs about 1,000 and moved into a new Charlotte headquarters last year. He is a graduate of Bucknell University and the University of Virginia.

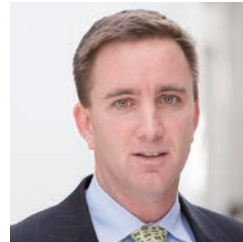


## MARY MACK

**CEO, consumer and small business banking | Wells Fargo**

Charlotte

The Davidson College graduate, who heads vital business units with 67,000 staffers, is retiring this summer after nearly 40 years at the company. Her successor, Saul Van Beurden, will be based in New York. Her job has included branch and small business banking, marketing, data, strategy and innovation, and diverse consumers. The fourth-most powerful U.S. female banker, according to *American Banker*, she joined a Wells Fargo predecessor in 1984. In April the bank said it would invest \$500 million over five years on capital improvements in Charlotte, its biggest employment center.



## BRIAN MCCARTHY

**principal, chief risk officer, retail investor group | Vanguard Group**

Charlotte

McCarthy moved to his current post last June, having formerly led global investment operational risk and, earlier, personal investor services. The company has \$7 trillion under management and 18,000 employees. He has degrees from St. Joseph's University, Boston College and Duke University.

**Favorite family tradition:** Our family travels to Florida every Christmas. While there, we host an annual pickleball tournament, a tradition my mom started. It's a great way to reconnect.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Anytime I go to the beach I discover my new favorite place.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** In the morning, an audiobook or podcast. On the ride home, 100% music.

**Major inspiration:** His grandkids call my dad a legend. He started his career as an office administrator and became CEO, never changing who he was.

**Career highlight:** I am proud of individuals whose careers I helped support. I have also benefited from mentorship at Vanguard.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Watching activities my kids are involved in.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** If you are new to a role or industry, ensure you are immersing yourself in the domain you are in, building skills and competencies for the future.

**Key industry change in next five years:** How organizations recruit, assess, and fill talent needs.



## JAMES 'CHIP' MAHAN

**founder, chair, CEO | Live Oak Bancshares**

Wilmington

The financial technology pioneer announced plans in September to add 204 jobs over the next five years and invest \$25 million at the company's campus. The company focuses on small business loans and doesn't have traditional branches. Assets doubled to \$9.9 billion from 2019-22. He's a co-founder of software vendor nCino and the Canapi Ventures investment firm.



## MIKE MAYER

**president, First Bancorp CEO | First Bank**

Southern Pines

The Clemson University graduate and former Bank of America executive has led the state's biggest community bank since 2014. First Bank added eight branches in South Carolina with the purchase of Greenville-based GrandSouth Bank. It had 118 branches as of March.

**Favorite family tradition:** Gathering together at the beach.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Pinehurst

**Career highlight:** Helping build our culture at First Bank.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Walking a few holes of golf in Pinehurst or a couple of miles on the beach. Either is perfect.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Take a look around at all the options available to you. There's so many different opportunities for someone to find the right fit in the financial services space.



**ED MCMAHAN****managing partner | Falfurrias  
Capital Partners**  
Charlotte

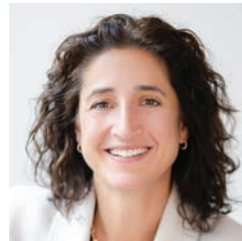
A UNC Chapel Hill and Northwestern University grad, McMahon has led the private-equity company for five years after co-founding the business with Hugh McColl Jr. and Marc Oken in 2006. It specializes in middle-market businesses in a wide range of industries. It's raised nearly \$2 billion through five funds.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Grandfather Mountain**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
Sirius XM JamOn**Major inspiration:** My family keeps me working and entertained.**Career highlight:** Building the team we have built at Falfurrias.**Favorite hobby after work:** Playing guitar and golf.**Best advice to industry newcomer:** There is no replacement for hard work.**FIELDING MILLER****co-founder, CEO | Captrust**  
Raleigh

Miller keeps building the investment management business he cofounded in 1997. It has more than \$775 billion under advisement across 75 locations. Chicago-based GTCR bought a 25% share in 2020. Miller previously was a senior vice president at Wachovia Bank's Interstate/Johnson Lane brokerage business.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Banner Elk.**Major inspiration:** I love the underdog and the sentiment is perfectly captured by Mark Twain in the quote: "It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog."**Career highlight:** Launching Captrust 25 years ago. We were breaking the mold of what it meant to be an investment and financial advisory firm by serving as fiduciaries to our clients. And that is still a core part of our model today.**RICHARD MOORE****CEO | First Bancorp**  
Southern Pines

He's the only former N.C. state treasurer to lead a major North Carolina bank. First Bank has grown to \$12 billion in assets since the former elected official took his post in 2012, expanding into North Carolina's bigger cities and South Carolina. He has degrees from Wake Forest University and the London School of Economics.

**Favorite family tradition:** Thanksgiving Day. Because it really is all about family and food and realizing how blessed we are. And the leaves still have a bit of color, perfect for our tradition of an afternoon hike on the farm.**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** My beautiful hometown of Oxford.**What do you listen to on your commute:** Recently I have started enjoying audiobooks. I just finished "Great Expectations" and "The Red Badge of Courage." Great books!**SUZANNE MORRISON****executive vice president, division  
executive for commercial banking |  
Wells Fargo**  
Charlotte

The UNC Chapel Hill finance graduate joined Wachovia Bank in Winston-Salem in 1993. She took her current post in 2019, having spent much of her career in middle-market banking. She oversees commercial banking for businesses with \$5 million to \$2 billion in annual revenue.



Matt Davis, 919-280-7431  
President, North Carolina

## A Community Asset.

It's no wonder Matt Davis is on the *Business North Carolina* list of community leaders. He is actively helping businesses and families throughout our state.

Heart-led leaders like Matt make TowneBank a true community asset.



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## ROBERT 'BOB' NEWELL

**president | Franklin Street Partners**  
Raleigh

Newell leads marketing and business development at one of the state's bigger investment management firms while also serving on investment groups at his alma mater, N.C. State University, and the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. He joined the wealth manager in 2009 after 27 years with Wachovia.

**Favorite family tradition:** Boating at the N.C. coast.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Ocean Isle Beach

**What do you listen to on your commute:** The Daily Drive, WSJ, Mobituaries by Mo Rocca, lots of Spotify playlists.

**Major inspiration:** I have always admired the way George W. Bush faced adversity, stood in the face of relentless personal criticism, and came out a whole man, family intact, and prospered. He is just real.

**Career highlight:** Leading the finest group of talented wealth managers in N.C. We are by N.C., for N.C., and N.C. born and bred.

**Favorite hobbies after work:** Golf and fishing, but I like teasing my grandchildren to make them giggle!

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Find a mentor and hustle, always hustle, and pay attention to the details! Learn to read the room.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Wealth is accumulating more rapidly and requires more attention from the most qualified and credentialed advisers.



## ART PAPPAS

**founder, managing general partner | Pappas Capital**  
Durham

A decorated Vietnam War veteran and former GlaxoSmithKline and Abbott Laboratories executive, he started his firm in 1994. He's invested more than \$800 million in 90 companies. He's on the board at N.C. Biotechnology Center. He has a biology degree from Ohio State University and an Xavier University MBA.



## BILL PAPPAS

**executive vice president, head of global technology and operations | MetLife**  
Charlotte

The former head of operations for Bank of America's consumer, small business, wealth management and private banking units joined MetLife in 2019. He also worked at General Electric Capital Services. He has a bachelor's and MBA from Bentley University.

**Favorite family tradition:** I have run the Chicago marathon five years in a row, and each time my family joins me to cheer me on.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Wrightsville Beach's breathtaking sunsets and picture-worthy views.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** I listen to music when I run.

**Major inspiration:** My four daughters are confidently forging their own paths using the life lessons my wife and I taught them. They inspire me to lead by example.

**Career highlight:** Those moments when I didn't achieve my goal help me grow, and they've taught me how to persevere, pivot and get better at what I do.

**Favorite hobby after work:** It's important to create balance in your life, whether it's spending time with family, reading a book or catching up with a friend.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** An adaptation of Mahatma Gandhi's famous quote: "Be the change you wish to see in this world." You are either going to drive the change, or somebody is going to dictate that change for you.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Customers' expectations have changed dramatically and will continue to evolve over the next five years.



## CATHY PACE

**president, CEO | Allegacy Federal Credit Union**  
Winston-Salem

While attending High Point University, she joined the credit union as a switchboard operator 30-plus years ago. She became CEO in 2013. Started to serve R.J. Reynolds Tobacco workers in 1967, Allegacy has expanded to 18 locations with more than 170,000 members and \$2 billion in assets.



## MICHAEL PAINTER

**co-founder, managing partner | Plexus Capital**  
Raleigh

Painter's firm has raised \$1.7 billion for middle-market investments with most companies having less than \$150 million in annual revenue. Plexus, with offices in Charlotte and Raleigh, has more than 140 investments managed by a staff of about 40. The UNC Chapel Hill grad previously worked at RBC.



# It's not just business. It's personal.

Your business means everything to you—it's your passion, your family's income, your employees' livelihood. And that's why it means so much to us. The critical work you do as a local business owner is essential to helping our community thrive. And we're here to support you.

Whether you need a simple business checking account, lending options, or advice on business and personal finances, we're here for you. And, we're here for the long-haul.



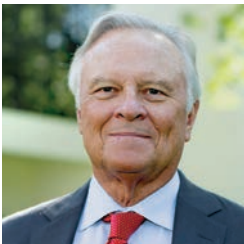
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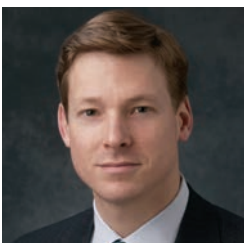


**EDWIN POSTON****co-founder, general partner |**  
**Truebridge Capital Partners**  
Chapel Hill

He and partner Mel Williams have been raising money for their investment firm since 2007, including a January filing for a potential \$750 million fund. They now have \$5.5 billion of assets under management. Dallas-based P10 Holdings acquired Truebridge in 2020.

**DAVID REA****president | Salem Investment**  
**Counselors**  
Winston-Salem

The Wake Forest University law graduate and Indiana University MBA joined Salem in 1984. Now with \$2.5 billion under management after nearly 40 years in business, Rea's firm has been ranked first or second in CNBC's Financial Advisor 100 for three consecutive years.

**Favorite family tradition:** Summer beach week**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Lake Norman**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
Contemporary jazz**Major inspiration:** My family and my clients.**Career highlight:** Salem Investment Counselors being ranked the best investment in the U.S. by CNBC.**Favorite hobby after work:** Cooking and talking with my wife.**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Work hard, listen, be patient and treat people with respect.**LEE ROBERTS****managing partner | SharpVue Capital**  
Raleigh

The former state budget director has led the money management firm since 2016. It has spun off from its original sponsor, Curi Capital, which remains a partner. He's a Duke University graduate with a Georgetown University law degree and a member of the UNC Board of Governors.

**WILLIAM 'BILL' ROGERS JR.****president, CEO | Truist Financial**  
Charlotte

The UNC Chapel Hill graduate joined SunTrust Banks in 1980 and became CEO of the Atlanta-based bank in 2011. He and Kelly King cooked up the 2019 merger with BB&T that created Truist. He's a member of the Emory University board and Charlotte Executive Leadership Council.

**JIM ROSE****state president | United Community**  
**Bank**  
Raleigh

The Wake Forest University graduate joined Greenville, South Carolina-based United Community as N.C. president in 2017. It added a Triad management team last fall, complementing its Charlotte, Raleigh and Western N.C. operations.

**Favorite family tradition:** Christmas and Thanksgiving meals.**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Atlantic Beach**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
CNBC, Joel Osteen, or '90s hip-hop**Major inspiration:** Family, because they see me at my worst and love me anyway.**Career highlight:** PPP during COVID was very meaningful. Long hours with my teammates and really delivering for clients during a time of uncertainty. It was transformational.**Favorite hobby after work:** Talking with family after work, especially over a meal (that includes dessert). Playing guitar is one of my favorite things, even though I am not very good.**Best advice to industry newcomer:** We live in anxious times, and people feel more connected to their phones than other people. Work to become known as an encourager and a connector of people. And, put in the extra hours — shortcuts are a myth.**Key industry change in next five years:**  
The herd believes technology is the primary differentiator. Those who figure out how to build personal relationships, internally and externally, will stand out.



# We proudly celebrate **Jim Hayes** on being named to the 2023 Power List by Business North Carolina Magazine!

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**JASON SANDNER****CEO | Curi**

Raleigh

Curi, formerly called Medical Mutual of North Carolina, agreed to merge with Edina, Minnesota-based Constellation, another medical liability insurance company. Regulators must approve the deal. The combined firms will be owned by 50,000 physicians and other providers. Sandner will remain Curi's CEO. He joined the company 12 years ago.

**CLAY THORP****general partner | Hatteras Venture Partners**

Durham

The veteran biotech executive co-founded the private equity firm in 2000 and has since helped manage \$800-plus million in life sciences investments. He co-founded Xanthon and Novalon Pharmaceutical. Thorp has a bachelor's degree from UNC Chapel Hill and a master's in public policy from Harvard University. Thorp's longtime Hatteras Ventures partner Bob Ingram, a former CEO of Glaxo Wellcome, died in March. He was 80.

**NEAL TRIPLETT****president, CEO | Duke University Management Co.**

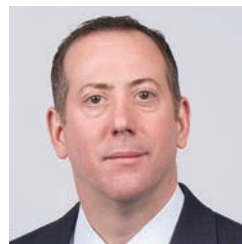
Durham

A former credit officer at Wachovia Bank, Triplett has been an investment manager at his alma mater, where he earned an MBA, since 1999. He became president in 2007. DUMAC has about 55 employees and manages nearly \$30 billion in assets, including the university's \$12 billion endowment.

**TUNDE SOTUNDE****president, CEO | Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina**

Durham

The Nigeria native earned a degree from the University of Ibadan College of Medicine there and added an MBA from the University of Memphis. He took his current post in June 2020 after managing Medicaid services for another company. Blue Cross provides coverage to 4.3 million members.

**KEVIN WALKER****managing director | Credit Suisse**

Morrisville

Walker has been a managing director since 2018 at the Swiss banking giant, which was acquired in March by UBS in a sale assisted by Switzerland's government. It's unclear how the transaction will affect Credit Suisse's tech and operations center in Research Triangle Park.

**ERIC STEIGERWALT****president, CEO | Brighthouse Financial**

Charlotte

Steigerwalt has held his post at the annuity and insurance provider since 2017, when the company split from MetLife. He worked at the predecessor company for 18 years. Brighthouse had revenue of \$8.2 billion in 2022. It has consistently reported annual losses, reflecting sluggish sales of life insurance.



## Leading with Impact

Congratulations to our colleague Kieth Cockrell, president, Bank of America Charlotte, for being named to the *Business North Carolina* 2023 Power List.

Kieth's leadership continues to make Bank of America a better company for our customers, clients, teammates and communities we serve.



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## Congratulations to our dedicated CEO Hunter Westbrook

on his selection to  
the 2023 Power List.

Hunter's leadership has been integral to HomeTrust's transformation to a thriving regional community bank.



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## THAD WALTON

**Charlotte market executive |  
Regions Bank**  
Charlotte

The Rowan County native and UNC Chapel Hill graduate worked as an intern with RBC Centura before joining First Citizens Bank. He joined Regions in 2011 and began his current role as Commercial Banking leader for North Carolina in 2019. He was named market executive for Charlotte in 2022.



## HUNTER WESTBROOK

**president, CEO | HomeTrust Bank**  
Asheville

Westbrook joined the bank in 2012 as chief banking officer, then got his current post in 2021. Assets have more than doubled to \$3.6 billion in that period. HomeTrust operates in five states. He's a graduate of West Virginia University with an MBA from the University of Minnesota.

**Favorite family tradition:** The summer family beach trip. It's the highlight of my year. All five kids, two in-laws and now two grandchildren all under the same roof for a week. I savor every moment of the trip.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** My favorite podcasts are: "The Ed Mylett Show;" "Diary of a CEO;" "Street Talk: S&P Global;" "Ascension Press;" "Game Changers with Molly Fletcher"

**Favorite hobby after work:** I enjoy meeting my wife and playing nine holes and being outside surrounded by Asheville's beauty.

**Best advice you can give to industry newcomers:** Be curious and a life-long learner. Too many people spend time proving they belong in their job when that time would be better spent on self-development. If you didn't belong, you wouldn't have gotten the opportunity. Keep learning and growing. The biggest differences in anyone (at any age) one year from now will be the books they read and the people they meet. We have a Book Club at HomeTrust wherein we provide a book to any interested employee each month, so we can all grow and learn together.

The HomeTrust team lives by 33 fundamentals (behaviors) and one of those is "Invest in Relationships."

Relationships matter and a key relationship is with yourself. Self-doubt kills most dreams, but confidence and continuous learning will overcome self-doubt so people can become their greatest versions of themselves.



## MARY WILLIS

**president, CEO | Fidelity Bank**  
Fuquay-Varina

The East Carolina University graduate became a teller at age 17 in 1987 at the bank where her father worked. She moved up to lead accounting and later, finance. In 2010, she became CEO. Assets now top \$3.7 billion with nearly 60 offices in the Carolinas and Virginia.



## DONTÁ WILSON

**chief retail and small business  
banking officer | Truist**  
Charlotte

Wilson started at BB&T as a UNC Charlotte student in 1995. He's now a trustee at the university and leads 22,000 teammates at Truist, having taken his current post in February 2022. He previously was chief digital and experience officer. He has a University of Maryland MBA.

**Major inspiration:** Without a doubt, my grandfather was my role model for purpose, community and conviction. His positive energy and optimism lit a fire in me to always let my purpose be my guide as I seek what's possible.

**Career highlight:** It's the privilege of witnessing and sharing in the career and life successes of others. It doesn't get more rewarding than working with our incredible teammates who accomplished both while building what is Truist today — a company created to inspire and build better lives and communities.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Watch or shoot hoops with my sons. A second favorite would have to be enjoying a marathon of "Sanford and Son."

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Live your purpose, stay client-centric, and embrace innovation.

**Key industry change in next five years:** I see behavioral science-based artificial intelligence creating real-time digital financial advisory and AI-enabled banker advisory becoming increasingly important. We've only begun to see how the intersection of AI, behavior science, digital, and human expertise can help clients achieve financial happiness.

# CONGRATULATIONS, JIM KELLIGREW

VICE CHAIR AND HEAD OF  
CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL BANKING  
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**JIM,  
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**Congratulations to Bill Pappas,**  
our head of Global Technology  
and Operations, for his selection  
to Business North Carolina's  
2023 Power List.

Thank you for your  
leadership and impact.

**#AllTogetherPossible**







Carl Armato  
Chip Baggett  
Ebony Boulware  
Wesley Burks  
Mary Jo Cagle  
Bruce Cohen  
Mickey Foster  
Julie Freischlag  
Jag Gill  
Donald Gintzig  
Tina Gordon  
Ken Haynes  
Steve Lawler  
Greg Lowe  
Mike Nagowski  
Dale Owen  
Cristy Page  
Alec Parker  
Chris Peek  
Michael Waldrum  
Roxie Wells  
Gene Woods

## GENE WOODS

president, CEO | Advocate Health  
Charlotte

Since being recruited to lead North Carolina's biggest health care system in 2016, Woods, 58, has become one of his industry's most powerful and active leaders. Woods has more than doubled Atrium Health's size by arranging partnerships with Winston-Salem-based Wake Forest Baptist Health and Advocate Aurora Health Care, which has major market shares in the Chicago and Milwaukee markets. In both instances, little money changed hands as Atrium leadership gained control by emphasizing long-term benefits from combining rather than making a major upfront investment.

Upon arriving in Charlotte, Woods made clear that building one of the nation's largest health care systems was vital to make capital investments, improve technology and negotiate payment contracts with increasingly large insurers.

Some of his merger efforts didn't pan out, such as Atrium's efforts to combine with UNC Health, which remains independent, and acquire Wilmington's system, which is now owned by Winston-Salem-based Novant Health.

But newly formed Advocate Health has annual revenue topping \$27 billion, 67 hospitals and more than 150,000 staffers in six states. It dwarfs other N.C. systems and is the fifth-largest U.S. not-for-profit hospital system.

The Penn State University graduate helped Charlotte fulfill a long-term goal with Wake Forest University's plan for a medical school campus slated to open in 2024. A board director at Best Buy, he's also leading efforts to attract more medical companies to Charlotte and Winston-Salem.

**Favorite family tradition:** Cooking together

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Grammy Award-winning Gat3 Recording Studio in southwest Charlotte.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** NPR

**Major inspiration:** My parents. They worked hard so that I could be the first college graduate of the family.

**Career highlight:** Coming together with Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist and launching the creation of our new Innovation District, The Pearl, in Charlotte – which will house the second campus of Wake Forest University School of Medicine and train the next generation of world-class clinicians.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Catching up with family and friends. Playing guitar and writing music.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be the type of leader you would want to be led by.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Eliminating health care disparities across the country.





## CARL ARMATO

**president, CEO | Novant Health**  
Winston-Salem

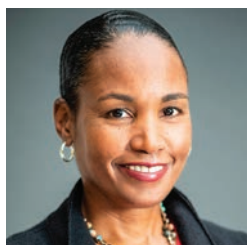
The CPA heads a health system that employs 35,000 people, including 1,800 physicians, mainly in the Charlotte, Triad and Wilmington areas. He joined Novant in 2008 and became CEO in 2012. Novant has revenue of about \$7.6 billion annually. Armato holds degrees from Norwich University and Southwestern Louisiana University.



## CHIP BAGGETT

**CEO | N.C. Medical Society**  
Raleigh

Baggett ensures the collective voice of 10,000 doctors and medical professionals is heard by state lawmakers. He has been with the association since 2007, becoming CEO in 2020. He is a graduate of Appalachian State University and earned a law degree at N.C. Central University.



## EBONY BOULWARE

**dean, chief science officer | Wake Forest School of Medicine**  
Charlotte, Winston-Salem

Boulware succeeded Julie Freischlag as dean in October after nine years at Duke University Health System, where she was vice dean for translational science. Her role comes as Wake Forest expands its medical school to Charlotte. She started her career at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. She has degrees from Vassar College, Duke University School of Medicine and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

**Major inspiration:** I am inspired and driven by the principles of fairness, humanity, and justice. These core principles are what have compelled me to study and teach ways to achieve health and health equity for all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds or where they live.

**Career highlight:** My current role as dean and chief science officer at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. I love working with students, faculty, and staff who are all motivated to do everything possible to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities we serve.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Find your motivating "north star" (the reasons you decided to pursue a career in health care) and use that as your inspiration to make a difference.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Many social factors — including education, employment, housing — are the major drivers of health and well-being. This is changing how we think about delivering health care. I anticipate many of our treatments will not only focus on providing medications or other therapies, but they will also focus on addressing an individual's social needs, such as poverty.



## WESLEY BURKS

**CEO | UNC Health**  
**dean | UNC School of Medicine**  
Chapel Hill

Burks, 68, joined UNC Health in 2011 as chairman of the department of pediatrics. In 2019, he was named CEO of the system, which has 11 hospitals and nearly 30,000 employees. The graduate of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences previously worked at Duke Medical Center.

**Favorite family tradition:** Our family has a traditional Christmas celebration, sharing a meal and opening presents in an unhurried fashion.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** North Carolina's mountains remind me of my childhood in Arkansas and my grandparents' house. We particularly like Grandfather Mountain and Linville areas.

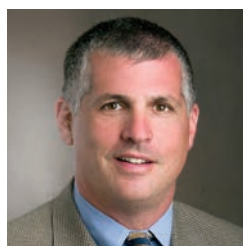
**What do you listen to on your commute:** Nice days offer me a 20-minute walk to work. I enjoy thinking and planning for the day ahead those mornings.

**Major inspiration:** I met Shelley, who had severe eczema and food allergies, in training. She was constantly itching and not sleeping. I could treat the condition, but she inspired me to think about changing the ways we cared for patients like her. That led me on a more than 30-year path studying peanut allergy and developing new treatments.

**Career highlight:** Watching our frontline teammates — people who had taken care of the sickest COVID-19 patients — receive their first vaccine shots.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Watching British mystery shows, following and playing sports, especially golf.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Always be open to the "A-Ha" moments that can change the course of your life and career.



## BRUCE COHEN

**CEO | OrthoCarolina**  
Charlotte

The foot and ankle surgeon joined OrthoCarolina at its founding in 2005. Cohen leads one of the nation's largest independent orthopedic networks — more than 300 providers and 1 million annual patient visits at more than 30 sites from Boone to Pembroke. He's a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill and Medical College of Georgia.





## MARY JO CAGLE

**CEO, president | Cone Health  
Greensboro**

A five-story tower at Moses Cone Hospital should open in 2025 to aid heart and vascular patients. The health system employs 13,000 workers. The University of Alabama graduate joined Cone Health in 2011 and became the first physician and female CEO in 2021. She had previously been chief operating officer.

**Favorite family tradition:** Jigsaw puzzles during the holidays

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Asheville

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Sports radio channel and ESPN

**Major inspiration:** My major inspiration is the Bible and Christian music because it grounds me spiritually on what's really important in life.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Sit on my back porch with a good book and watch the birds at my bird feeder.

**Career highlight:** Serving Cone Health

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be ready for change. It's constant. Keep a sense of humor.

**What is the key industry change you see occurring over the next five years:** More movement to outpatient and home care.



## JULIE FREISCHLAG

**CEO | Atrium Health Wake  
Forest Baptist**

**chief academic officer |  
Advocate Health  
Winston-Salem**

Freischlag took on her Atrium role when it combined with Wake Forest Baptist in 2020. Former head of surgery and chief surgeon at Johns Hopkins, she earned a bachelor's degree from University of Illinois and a medical degree from Rush University. She's helped lead Wake Forest's plans to expand its medical school to Charlotte.

**Favorite family tradition:** Taking vacations to a different spot each time.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Asheville

**What do you listen to on your commute:** '80s and '90s music.

**Major inspiration:** My mother because she told me to get educated, saying, "No one can take it away from you."

**Favorite hobby after work:** Talking to my husband and having a glass of wine. Crafting.

**Career highlight:** Becoming CEO of Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist, CAO of Advocate Health, and executive vice president for health affairs, Wake Forest University.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Take chances and keep directed to the North Star.

**Key industry change in next five years:** More telehealth; more preventative care; better equity for all.



## MICKEY FOSTER

**CEO | FirstHealth of the Carolinas  
Pinehurst**

A former hospital president for Cone Health, he joined the four-hospital system in 2019. He oversees 5,300 employees serving patients in 15 counties. He has a community-health degree from East Carolina University and a master's degree from Central Michigan University.

**Favorite NC place to visit:** From the mountains to the coast. Fortunate to live in the heart of American golf. Nothing beats the ECU football experience.

**Major inspiration:** Tim Rice, a retired Cone Health CEO. I learned from and admired his leadership style. He taught me how to run a health system effectively and instilled in me the importance of employee engagement.

**Career highlight:** FirstHealth being named to the Fortune/Merative 100 Top Hospitals list for the second consecutive year. FirstHealth is the only community hospital in North Carolina to be named to this prestigious list. Success of our health system built on exceptional employees, providers and volunteers.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Positive organizational culture drives employee engagement, patient safety and quality outcomes.

**Key industry change in next five years:** North Carolina faces an estimated shortage of nearly 12,500 registered nurses and more than 5,000 LPNs by 2033. A key focus for hospitals and health systems will continue to be a broad approach to expanding and strengthening the health care workforce.



## JAG GILL

**CEO | Charlotte Eye Ear Nose  
and Throat**

**Charlotte**

In its centennial year, the multispecialty practice has more than 150 providers at 18 locations in both Carolinas. Gill, CEO since 2013, has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Columbia College, a master's in health-systems management from the University of Missouri, and a doctorate in health-systems management from Tulane University.

**Favorite family tradition:** Watching football together

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Asheville

**What do you listen to on your commute:** NPR

**Major inspiration:** Too many to name. I have been blessed with numerous mentors.

**Career highlight:** Helped build the first rural children's hospital, Janet Weis Children's Hospital, in Danville, Pennsylvania, since the 1920s.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Unwind with friends and family. Attending college football games.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be a sponge and ask lots of questions.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Reimbursement changes.

IT  
TAKES

# leadership.

Engaging health systems and hospitals, business leaders and policy makers to improve healthcare for all North Carolinians is no easy task. It takes leadership that reflects values like integrity, accountability, teamwork and perseverance.

The North Carolina Healthcare Association congratulates Steve Lawler on recognition by the *Business North Carolina* Power List for effectively leading the association's work to advocate for sound public policy and collaborative partnerships to make healthcare better and more equitable for everyone in our state.







## DONALD GINTZIG

**president, CEO | WakeMed Health and Hospitals**

Raleigh

A retired Navy rear admiral, Gintzig, 64, began his current role with WakeMed in 2013, first on an interim basis. WakeMed won state approval this year for a 150-bed behavioral health hospital in Knightdale and a 45-bed acute care hospital in Garner. He is a George Washington University graduate.

**Favorite family tradition:** Thanksgiving

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** My home

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Classic rock on the way to work, classical on the way home.

**Major inspiration:** I saw my parents devoting their lives to making a difference to others.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Stay focused on a greater good and less about your role in making that happen.



## STEVE LAWLER

**president, CEO | North Carolina Healthcare Association**

Raleigh

Lawler, 63, previously worked at Carolinas HealthCare System (now Atrium) and Vidant Health (now ECU Health), where he was president of the main Greenville hospital from 2007-14. He has led the hospital industry association since 2017. The Citadel graduate has an MBA from Georgia Southern University.

**Favorite family tradition:** My side of the family always has an Italian Christmas dinner. My mother's parents were from Italy.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Crystal Coast

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Either e-books or 70s and 80s music.

**Major inspiration:** I am humbled by those in health care whose calling is to care for others.

**Career highlight:** At Bertie Memorial Hospital, now ECU Health, in Windsor, we helped that community rethink how health care was planned and delivered. We built a critical access hospital and invited community partners to share our campus.

**Favorite hobby after work:** A long walk. Golf combines my favorite elements - outdoors, building relationships, having a short memory, and self-improvement.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be courageous, ask good questions. If we are to solve complex problems and make the lives of others better, we have to be able to listen to the people we serve.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The health care industry will continue to transform itself, moving from a destination for people who are sick and/or critically ill to being a partner and navigator for patients, families, and communities so that all can reach their full health and potential.



## TINA GORDON

**CEO | NC Nurses Association**

Raleigh

Founded in 1902, the North Carolina Nurses Association represents all 122,000 registered nurses in the state. Gordon previously led external relations for N.C. Association of Realtors and was a communications assistant in the N.C. General Assembly. She holds degrees from Duke and N.C. State universities.



## KEN HAYNES

**president, southeast region | Advocate Health**

Charlotte

Haynes, 54, joined Atrium in 2017 and oversees surgery centers and free-standing emergency departments in addition to services including Levine Cancer Institute, Sanger Heart and Vascular Institute, Musculoskeletal Institute, Neuroscience Institute and Levine Children's Hospital. He previously was CEO for San Antonio's CHRISTUS Health's Santa Rosa Hospital System.

**Favorite family tradition:** Christmas Eve candlelight service with family.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Pinehurst

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Sirius XM 63 The Message Radio

**Major inspiration:** My parents, because of the sacrificial loving environment they created, exhibiting authentic Christian values.

**Career highlight:** The amazing response our team had during COVID-19 for the Greater Charlotte region.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Outdoor activities including golfing, hunting and attending sports events.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Stay focused on how your decisions impact the patients, caregivers and communities.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The rebuild of our patient-facing clinical talent.

# CONGRATULATIONS

To our NC POWER LIST honorees



**Eugene A. Woods**

Co-Chief Executive Officer,  
Advocate Health



**Ken D. Haynes**

President, Southeast Region  
Advocate Health



**Dr. Julie Ann Freischlag**

Chief Academic Officer and Executive  
Vice President, Advocate Health  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist  
Executive Vice President for Health Affairs,  
Wake Forest University



**Dr. L. Ebony Boulware**

Dean, Wake Forest University  
School of Medicine  
Chief Science Officer and  
Vice Chief Academic Officer, Advocate Health



**Dr. Anthony Atala**

W.H. Boyce Professor and  
Chair of Urology  
Director, Wake Forest Institute  
for Regenerative Medicine

Your visionary leadership  
is expanding research,  
education and life  
science partnerships  
across the nation. As  
we provide health, hope  
and healing—for all—your  
commitment to drive social  
and economic impact  
through discovery and  
growth inspires us on  
our journey.



**Atrium Health**



**Wake Forest University**  
**School of Medicine**





## GREG LOWE

**president | North Carolina division,  
HCA Healthcare**

Asheville

He joined Mission Health in 2019 when HCA Healthcare completed its \$1.5 billion acquisition of the Asheville-based hospital. The University of Utah graduate has an MBA from the University of Minnesota. He earlier led Lake Norman Regional Medical Center in Iredell County and was CEO of HCA hospitals in Richmond, Virginia, and Fort Pierce, Florida.

**Favorite family tradition:** Spending July Fourth on the lake with my wife, four teenage boys and extended family and friends. We refer to our family as Team Lowe!

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Downtown Asheville for the food, boutiques, and street performers. Blue Ridge Parkway for lookout points and hikes.

**Major inspiration:** Motivated daily by thirst to improve. Inspired by the Mission Health team as they improve the lives of those who come to us for care.

**Career highlight:** Being part of the team to improve health care in the community.

**Favorite hobby:** 5 a.m. bicycle rides on Blue Ridge Parkway or in Bent Creek Forest. It's dark outside, but the peace that exists when very few people are up is amazing. Early morning activity mentally prepares me for the day.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Quote from [retailer James Cash Penney], "The art of effective listening is essential to clear communication and clear communication is necessary to management success."

**Key industry change in next five years:** Artificial Intelligence and machine learning to better support clinical decision-making will be the future of healthcare.

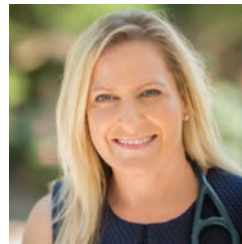


## MIKE NAGOWSKI

**CEO | Cape Fear Valley  
Health System**

Fayetteville

He made news by announcing a partnership with Methodist University for a new medical school to open in 2026 and train 80 physicians annually, then grow to 120. The health system has eight hospitals and annual revenue topping \$1.2 billion. Nagowski has been CEO since 2008.



## CRISTY PAGE

**executive dean | UNC School  
of Medicine**

Chapel Hill

A Morehead Scholar at UNC Chapel Hill, Page became executive dean in 2019. She also graduated from UNC School of Medicine. She created the FIRST Scholars program designed to train family physicians for underserved populations.

**Favorite family tradition:** My children love playing the guitar and drums and enjoy singing together at home and at church.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** As a Wilmington native, I love the coast.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Contemporary worship music puts my heart in the right place.

**Major inspiration:** My faith provides a calling to be a force for good. Also grateful to many mentors that I have had, especially the late Dr. Jeffrey Houpt, who was a role model.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** First, always remain focused on doing what is best for our patients and our teammates. Second, build your skills to their peak. Be the person your colleagues trust to solve difficult problems.

**Favorite hobby after work:** CrossFit workouts and pickleball.

**Career highlight:** Working alongside Novant Health to expand pediatric specialty care in the Wilmington region. We recruited specialists to provide care that was previously not available within 100 miles.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Increased partnerships and consolidation, and innovations to help people navigate our healthcare system. New partnerships to train providers and help eliminate the workforce shortages across health care.



## DALE OWEN

CEO | Tryon Medical Partners  
Charlotte

The independent physician-owned practice formed in 2018 has about 100 doctors caring for about 150,000 patients using an approach that Owen says cuts costs and improves care. The group added Gaston Medical Partners in 2021 to expand beyond Mecklenburg County. Owen, 62, has degrees from UNC Chapel Hill and Wake Forest University School of Medicine.

**Favorite family tradition:** Traveling to the coast of Maine

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Outer Banks

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Rock 'n' roll (Stones, Beatles, Eagles)

**Major inspiration:** Put patients first at the head of the line. Everything else will work itself out.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Boating of all types

**Career highlight:** Being CEO of Tryon Medical Partners

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Stay the course and prioritize your training to take care of others. There will be many distractions from inside and outside the practice of medicine.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Primary care is the foundation of health care. Every sector will try to control it.



## ALEC PARKER

executive director | N.C. Dental Society Foundation  
Raleigh

He operated a solo practice in Asheville for 28 years, before he sold his business in 2006 to take a job with the N.C. Dental Society. He took his current post in 2008 at the association, which represents 3,900 dentists. The group provides free, two-day dental clinics across the state and provides professional services for dentists.



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Emergency  
Department





## CHRIS PEEK

**CEO, president | CaroMont Health**  
Gastonia

The Gaston County native has helped 4,400-employee CaroMont remain independent as it invests more than \$300 million in a new hospital in Belmont expected to open later this year, an expansion at its Gastonia campus, and health clinics in Cleveland, Gaston and Mecklenburg counties. Peek holds degrees from Gaston College, UNC Charlotte and Amberton University.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** North Carolina's small towns have the best of everything. A day exploring a small town is a day well spent.

**Major inspiration:** I have the distinct privilege of experiencing daily inspiration from the more than 4,000 employees at CaroMont Health. There is no greater inspiration than seeing their expertise and care in action.

**Career highlight:** Nothing has been more meaningful than leading CaroMont Health through the most significant expansion and capital investment in the history of the organization.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Listen more than you speak. Trust and empower the experts around you. Inspire conviction to deliver your mission. Create an environment that others want to join and protect it at all costs.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Health care will continue to see new competitors enter the market, new regulatory changes influence the business model as well as the continuation of mergers and acquisitions.



## ROXIE WELLS

**president | Cape Fear Valley Health**  
**Hoke Hospital**  
Raeford

Wells, 53, joined Fayetteville-based Cape Fear Valley as a physician in 2010 and took her current post in 2014. She's past chair of the N.C. Healthcare Association. She has degrees from Fayetteville State University and East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Asheville/Blue Ridge Parkway in the fall.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Podcasts

**Major inspiration:** My daughter, Jalyn Reid Wells. She is a member of Gen Z and true to form, she is highly collaborative, self-reliant, and pragmatic. She values diversity in her circle of friends and colleagues and she has found and continues to fashion her own identity.

**Career highlight:** Building a culture at Cape Fear Valley Hoke Hospital that embodies our belief that people are at the center of all we do. Our team believes in caring for our patients, their families, our community, and each other by ensuring that we practice at the top of our license and experiences in a compassionate and consistent manner.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Spend the evening with my spouse. My favorite hobby is traveling.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be your authentic self. If they don't like you for who you are, you will not like you for who you are not.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Health care will become more dependent on technology, artificial intelligence.



## MICHAEL WALDRUM

**CEO | ECU Health**  
**dean | ECU Brody School of Medicine**  
Greenville

Waldrum, 61, oversees an agreement between the 12,000-employee system he has led since 2015 and the state-owned medical school, where he became dean in 2021. ECU Health has rebranded from Vidant Health. He has a medical degree from the University of Alabama and a University of Michigan MBA.

**Favorite family tradition:** Thanksgiving family dinner

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Highlands

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Rock 'n' roll music

**Major inspiration:** The nurses, doctors and other professionals that work to care for other humans. This is hard work intellectually, emotionally and physically, and has such an impact for the patients, their families and our communities.

**Career highlight:** Being dean and CEO at ECU Health

**Favorite hobby after work:** Dinner with my wife. Golf.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Take the time to gain experience and learn about the complexities of health care.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Payment reform that drives value.



# BUSINESS NC NAMES DR. JAG GILL A 2023 POWER LIST MEMBER

**For ten years, CEENTA CEO Jag Gill, ScD., FACHE, FACMPE has cultivated a mindset of growth across our practice through his steadfast leadership.**

- Growth in the number of offices across North and South Carolina.
- Growth in the variety and quality of eye, ENT, allergy, audiology, and facial plastic services we provide.
- Growth in our workplace environment that has led CEENTA to be named one of the Top Workplaces in the United States.

Congratulations to Dr. Gill on being recognized as a member of Business North Carolina's Power List for 2023, and thank you for continuing to grow CEENTA as it celebrates A Century of Care in the Carolinas.

**CEENTA.COM**





Jose Armario  
 Bill Boddie  
 Bill Cecil Jr.  
 John ` Jack ` Cecil  
 Ashley Christensen  
 Greg Collier  
 Mark Craig  
 Dennis 'Denny' Edwards  
 John Harris  
 Victoria Isley  
 Mohammad Jenatian  
 Mark Laport  
 John McConnell  
 Cam McRae  
 Lynn Minges  
 Tom Murray  
 Kathie Niven  
 Doyle Parrish  
 Tom Pashley  
 Nayan Patel  
 Jay Raffaldini  
 Jeremy Reaves  
 Andrew Schmidt  
 Richard Sneed  
 Lance Trenary  
 Wit Tuttell

## KATHIE NIVEN

CEO | Biscuitville

Greensboro

When Kathie Niven joined family-owned Biscuitville as brand officer in 2011, she began to make her mark on the North Carolina-based chain that opened its first restaurant in 1975 across the Virginia line in Danville.

She oversaw the brand's positioning itself as "Fresh Southern," as well as new menu options such as the popular spicy chicken and honey biscuit. The Elon University graduate, who has a degree in English, drew upon her earlier marketing experience with Arby's, Burger King, Krispy Kreme and Quizno's to build a team within Biscuitville responsible for communications and marketing initiatives, public relations and social media. She started a collegiate summer internship program to develop talent.

In 2018, the company named her president, and in 2021 she became CEO, succeeding Burney Jennings, who is executive chair. He is the son of the late company founder Maurice Jennings.

When Niven became CEO, the brand opened for opening at 5 a.m. and closing at 2 p.m. had about 62 stores, mostly in the Triad and eastern North Carolina, as well as Virginia. It now has 74, with two more planned in the South Carolina towns of Hartsville and Florence, its first in the Palmetto State. The recent growth has come from initial restaurants in Fayetteville, Greenville and Winston-Salem, along with some suburban towns near Charlotte.

Since Niven joined Biscuitville's executive leadership, annual revenue has increased from \$55 million to \$150 million. She also has helped grow the average sales per restaurant to more than \$2 million annually, according to the company.

In March, Elon University added Niven to its Distinguished Alumni list.

**Favorite family tradition:** Camping with the entire extended family. (A 45-year tradition)

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** New Bern, Beaufort & Wrightsville Beach

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Lifestyle books or TV streaming shows — don't shame me!

**Major inspiration:** Brene Brown

**Career highlight:** Rebranding 100% of Biscuitville's facility portfolio

**Favorite hobby after work:** Cook with the family, gardening and travel

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Keep a long-term view of success and be careful not to get sidetracked on short-term losses or environmental shifts.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Gas stations becoming viable restaurant options. More ghost kitchens and reduced brick-and-mortar restaurant brands.





## JOSE ARMARIO

**CEO | Bojangles**

Charlotte

The spicy-chicken chain founded in Charlotte in 1977 is growing aggressively under the University of Miami graduate's lead since he took the post in 2019. He has pressed for expansions into Ohio, New York and Texas. The chain's 800th store that opened last year marked the first in Louisiana. The company launched alcoholic sweet tea in the Carolinas with Appalachian Mountain Brewing.

**Favorite family tradition:** Cuban tradition involves throwing a dirty bucket of water out at midnight New Year's Eve to forget the bad. We eat 12 grapes to bring good luck in each month of the new year. We toast the new year with Cidra, a Spanish-apple sparkling cider.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Bojangles for biscuits, chicken and tea.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** News

**Major inspiration:** My Mom sacrificed bringing up two boys, and as Cuban immigrants, it reminds me of how our country provides opportunities if you work hard. I have been blessed with an incredible family, and would never want to let them down.

**Career highlight:** Becoming Bojangles' CEO and moving to Charlotte.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Spending time and playing golf with my wife, Mary. My best supporter and critic.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Folks in the restaurant are your most important assets. Take care of them and business will do well.

**Key industry change in next five years:** More digital convenience and access to allow customers to interact with business. Labor is more precious and valuable.



## BILL BODDIE

**president, CEO | Boddie-Noell Enterprises**

Rocky Mount

He's been at the helm since 1990, when he succeeded his father, Mayo, a prominent civic and philanthropic leader. Formed in 1962, the family-owned business remains the largest Hardee's franchisee, with 334 sites in four states as of November 2022. Boddie-Noell also develops real estate such as the Currituck Club at the Outer Banks.



## BILL CECIL JR.

**president | Biltmore Co.**

Asheville

Cecil oversees the 250-room Biltmore House, the centerpiece of the estate developed by great-grandfather George Vanderbilt. It welcomes about 1.4 million tourists annually, and includes a winery. Cecil heads a staff of more than 2,000. "A Biltmore Christmas" will be part of the 2023 Hallmark movie lineup.



## JOHN 'JACK' CECIL

**president, CEO | Biltmore Farms**

Asheville

The UNC Chapel Hill graduate presides over real-estate projects such as a shopping mall, medical offices, hotels and a 1,000-home development. He joined Biltmore Farms in 1984 and was named president and CEO in 1992. The company's legacy dates back to George Vanderbilt, scion of industrialist William Henry Vanderbilt.





## ASHLEY CHRISTENSEN

**owner | AC Restaurants**  
Raleigh

The N.C. State University graduate has been named one of the nation's best chefs multiple times. Raleigh restaurants include Poole's Diner, Beasley's Chicken + Honey, and Death & Taxes. She authored "Poole's: Recipes and Stories from a Modern Diner." She has been a vocal critic of sexual harassment in the industry.

**Favorite family tradition:** I really love holiday meals, especially Easter and Thanksgiving.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** The N.C. coast. I love Wrightsville Beach in the off-season especially.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** NPR/WUNC

**Major inspiration:** I love to call my friends across the country in the industry and bounce ideas. The wealth of knowledge that can be celebrated when folks are generous and open with experiences is incredible and wildly inspiring. It's one of my favorite things about our expansive shared culinary community.

**Career highlight:** Becoming a restaurant owner. Many wonderful things have happened over the course of my career, but that is the highlight that shines on any accomplishment since.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Take my shoes off and hang out with my wife and our wonderful puppy dogs. Cooking remains my favorite hobby, but I've become more interested as of late in baking and framing artwork at home.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be patient. The opportunity to learn in the field of culinary hospitality is endless. Take your time and soak it up. There is a lesson in every experience, even the lesson of how not to do something.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The growing shift in industry compensation models is extremely important, and I feel confident that we will continue to see this grow in the next five years and beyond.



## MARK CRAIG

**president | R.H. Barringer**  
Greensboro

The fourth-generation, family-owned distributor of Anheuser-Busch products and dozens of other brands added Wake County to its central N.C. operations in a 2019 acquisition from Goldsboro-based R.A. Jeffreys Distributing. Craig's great-grandfather founded his namesake company in 1933. The company now has branches in Greensboro, Hickory, Linwood, North Wilkesboro, Raleigh and Winston-Salem.



## DENNIS 'DENNY' EDWARDS

**president, CEO | Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
Raleigh

Edwards markets Raleigh/Wake County with a staff of 32 and a \$9.2 million annual budget. A University of Northern Iowa graduate, he has led the bureau since 2007. He held similar jobs in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Palm Springs, California.

**Favorite family tradition:** Spending a week at the beach with the entire family

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Anywhere with water

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Local news or sports radio

**Major inspiration:** My former boss in Palm Springs and Houston. I respected his work ethic, drive to succeed and ability to think five steps ahead.

**Career highlight:** Ability to work with the community and our partners to shift Wake County from a relatively unknown tourism destination nationally, to a sought-after location for leisure travel, sporting events and conventions.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Riding the Peloton bike. Spending time with the family and golf. I like to explore restaurants and breweries in the area.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Have long-term goals and work every day with passion. Be respectful to everyone you work with and do business with.

**Key industry change in next five years:** How electric vehicles may impact travel and how destinations need to be ready for demand for charging stations. How technology is impacting travel. From more hybrid meetings, mobile check-in at hotels, and the ease travelers have to research and obtain information on destinations.



## GREG COLLIER

**restaurateur | Bayhaven Restaurant Group**  
Charlotte

A semi-finalist in the James Beard Foundation Restaurant and Chef Awards in 2019 and 2020, Collier opened Leah & Louise, a self-described modern juke joint serving Southern dishes in 2020. *Esquire Magazine* named it one of the best new restaurants of 2020. He has paused plans to open three other restaurants.



## CONGRATULATIONS!

to our president and CEO—

**DENNIS  
EDWARDS**

We are grateful for your steady leadership guiding Wake County and its burgeoning tourism economy.



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# THANK YOU

to our franchisees, team members, and guests who have helped us achieve this honor as we celebrate 50 years of Making Pleasurable Dining Affordable.

*Here's to the next 50 years!*

—LANCE TRENNARY

PRESIDENT & CEO, GOLDEN CORRAL CORPORATION







### JOHN HARRIS

**CEO | Kitty Hawk Kites**

Nags Head

History says Harris was the first to hang glide from Grandfather Mountain in 1974, when he started his business. Since then, he has turned his passion for unpowered flight into Kitty Hawk Kites, selling hang gliders and giving lessons at nearly 20 East Coast locations that employ 350 people. He's a Missouri University of Science and Technology graduate.

**Favorite family tradition:** Getting together with family for Christmas.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Grandfather Mountain

**Major inspiration:** Serving and continuing to see smiling, happy and excited faces on our customers.

**Career highlight:** Staying in business for almost 50 years and teaching the world to fly.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Flying

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Work hard and find an area you really enjoy serving in.

**Key industry change in next five years:** High labor costs in the service/tourism industry will force the industry to automate and do more with less labor.



### VICTORIA ISLEY

**president, CEO | Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau**

Asheville

A Rockingham County native, Isley was appointed to the post in 2020 after stints promoting Bermuda, Washington, D.C., and Tampa Bay, Florida. Buncombe County expects \$700 million in 2024 fiscal year lodging revenue, 50% higher than pre-pandemic levels. That kicks off about \$40 million in occupancy taxes. She is a UNC Chapel Hill graduate.

**Favorite family tradition:** Annual multi-gen trip to Outer Banks.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Blue Ridge Public Radio or WFUV

**Major inspiration:** Sunrises and sunsets

**Favorite hobby after work:** Walking, cooking, live music.



### MOHAMMAD JENATIAN

**president, CEO | Greater Charlotte Hospitality & Tourism Alliance**  
Charlotte

The UNC Charlotte graduate, 63, has headed the 900-plus member alliance since it was created nearly 30 years ago. Hotels and industry suppliers dominate the nonprofit group's membership. In recent years, he's spoken against what he sees as the state's lack of support for the movie industry.

**Favorite family tradition:** Traveling

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Boone and Blowing Rock areas

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Telephone messages on my phone

**Major inspiration:** Making a positive difference

**Career highlight:** Helping with the massive growth of the Charlotte region's hospitality business.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Walking

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Believe in yourself and surround yourself with people who believe in you.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Technology will continue to dictate changes in our industry and make business less labor intensive.



### MARK LAPORT

**president, CEO | Concord Hospitality Enterprises**

Raleigh

He started the business in 1985 and expanded it to more than 90 hotels under management through its sale of a majority interest to New York-based Alleghany Capital in 2018. The company signed a development deal last year to build 15 new Extended Stay America Premier Suites hotels in Colorado, Arizona, Utah and Nevada.



### JOHN MCCONNELL

**CEO | McConnell Golf**

Raleigh

The Virginia Tech graduate founded two medical software companies that sold for a combined \$1.4 billion. He bought Raleigh Country Club in 2003. McConnell Golf now owns or has long-term leases with 15 courses in the Carolinas, Virginia and Tennessee. It may buy the Donald Ross-designed Lakeside Park Club near Richmond, Virginia, according to a March report.



No. 8 was built to celebrate Pinehurst's Centennial.  
Its renovation was done to honor it.

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina | 866.975.3044 | Visit [pinehurst.com](http://pinehurst.com)







### CAM MCRAE

**president, CEO | Tands**  
Kinston

McRae opened his first Bojangles' location in Kinston in 1980. He has since grown to become one of the chain's largest franchisees, operating nearly 70 restaurants throughout eastern North Carolina and the Richmond, Virginia, area. Over the years, the former N.C. Transportation Board member has also invested in real estate, golf courses and minor league baseball.



### LYNN MINGES

**president , CEO | North Carolina**  
**Restaurant & Lodging Association**  
Raleigh

Minges' group represents more than 20,000 restaurants and lodging establishments, which represent \$27 billion in annual sales and employ 11% of the state's workforce. A former N.C. Commerce Department marketing executive, the Bladen County native has degrees from N.C. State University and Peace College.

**Favorite family tradition:** Our family enjoys quality time together along the North Carolina Crystal Coast.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Crystal Coast

**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
Audiobooks

**Major inspiration:** My father was an incredible leader and strong influence in my life. He believed that I could do anything and his confidence and belief in me from an early age has stayed with me my entire life.

**Career highlight:** Helping the restaurant and lodging industry navigate evolving business conditions during Covid-19. It was one of the most challenging times of my professional career.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Spending time with my four precious grandchildren who live close by.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Build and nurture relationships within your professional circle. I learn new things and grow professionally through every interaction with colleagues and peers.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Worker shortages will continue to challenge our industry. Successful owners and operators will adapt their business models accordingly with a renewed focus on fostering positive workplace cultures and by embracing new and emerging technologies.



### TOM MURRAY

**CEO | Charlotte Regional Visitors**  
**Authority**  
Charlotte

The Villanova University graduate has promoted Charlotte as a tourism destination since 2011. The authority-run Charlotte Convention Center completed a \$130 million expansion in the last year. He previously worked at Marriott, InterContinental and other hotel groups.

**Career highlight:** For years, we nurtured relationships with community partners and industry leaders. The importance of those connections were never more essential than during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Together, we kept people working and got the Charlotte hospitality industry back on its feet when it was safe to do so.

**Major inspiration:** My team members inspire me. I believe success comes from the individual, and every single person at the CRVA plays a part in those achievements. We have developed great trust collaborating across all departments and venues to work toward a common goal.

**Best advice for an industry newcomer:** Developing others is the most important role that leaders have. When I speak to recent graduates and MBA students, I tell them their "learning has just begun." Instead of setting your gaze on the highest salary opportunity or dream city to live in, visualize your career through the lens of learning.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The power of strategic events to bring people together in-person is undeniable. Business travel will continue to blend with leisure travel, not only supporting economic importance but elevating societal experiences for residents and visitors alike.



### DOYLE PARRISH

**founder, CEO | Summit**  
**Hospitality Group**  
Raleigh

Parrish started the business in 1988 and now operates 18 hotels in North Carolina, including properties with Hilton, Hyatt and Marriott brands. The company has 700 employees and \$250 million in assets. The Wake Forest University and UNC Chapel Hill graduate is a former UNC Board of Governors member.



## TOM PASHLEY

**president | Pinehurst Resort**  
Pinehurst

The Duke University MBA joined the resort in 2000 and has had his current post since 2014. Construction on a new Tom Doak-designed golf course began in early 2023 and will open in 2024 to coincide with the return of the U.S. Open to the resort's famed Pinehurst No. 2 course.



## NAYAN PATEL

**president | CN Hotels**  
Greensboro

Patel's family immigrated from India and bought a small California hotel in 1976. He moved to North Carolina a couple of years later and has built a chain of about 30 hotels in the Southeast. CN Hotels will open a dual-brand hotel in downtown Raleigh later this year, combining a Tempo by Hilton and Homewood Suites.

## JEREMY REAVES

**CEO | Cook Out**  
Thomasville

His father, Morris Reaves, opened the first Cook Out in Greensboro in 1989. It now ranks among the fastest-growing restaurants nationally with more than 300 restaurants in 10 states from Georgia to West Virginia. Known for milkshake flavors from banana pudding to watermelon, Cook Out employs about 13,000.



## ANDREW SCHMIDT

**president and CEO | Greenville-Pitt County Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
**president | North Carolina Travel Industry Association**  
Greenville

Schmidt has a master's degree in public administration and hospitality from East Carolina University, where he taught classes for many years. He's spent virtually his entire career at the Greenville trade association. In his trade association role, he stresses the importance of tourism in local and state economic development.

**Favorite family tradition:** On Christmas Eve, we have an open house. Family and friends come by and visit, share a meal, and engage in gift giving. Christmas games get everyone's competitive spirit flowing.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** If there's sand and water in the same place, I'm happy.

**Major inspiration:** Our Dad passed away when we were kids, and my big brother was a father figure for me growing up. He showed me that challenges turn into opportunities. He still sets the right example for everyone that he cares about.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Concentrate on the art of public speaking. Although the majority of our daily communication occurs electronically, it's imperative that tourism professionals feel comfortable speaking in front of clients and large groups.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Greater connectivity and the growing number of people that are no longer in the workforce will combine to increase travel numbers on both a domestic and international level. I also think we will see "bleisure travel," the blending of business and leisure travel together continue to extend trip times.



## JAY RAFFALDINI

**owner | Raffaldini Vineyards**  
Winston-Salem

Raffaldini started in Wall Street in 1985, and now he and his partners manage a \$45 billion hedge fund affiliated with UBS. In 2000, he bought a Wilkes County farm to grow wine grapes. Raffaldini Vineyards now attracts 25,000 visitors annually. The New York University MBA graduate moved to Winston-Salem in 2008.





### RICHARD SNEED

**principal chief | Eastern Band,  
Cherokee Nation**

Cherokee

The graduate of Universal Technical College in Arizona oversees one of the most powerful Native American tribes, which has major investments in gaming and medical marijuana. He stresses education, cultural preservation and economic opportunity. The son of a former Cherokee tribal council member is a licensed industrial-arts teacher in North Carolina.



### WIT TUTTELL

**vice president of tourism |  
Economic Development  
Partnership of North Carolina**

Raleigh

Last year, the U.S. Travel Association named Tuttell its State Tourism Director of the Year for his work in the sixth-most visited state. The University of Florida graduate has led the state's marketing of tourism, film-making, sports development and other ventures since 2014. He previously promoted tourism in St. Petersburg, Florida.



### LANCE TRENARY

**president, CEO | Golden Corral**

Raleigh

The leader of the largest U.S. buffet operator became CEO in 2015, having joined the business in 1986. A Mississippi State University graduate, he chaired the National Restaurant Association board in 2022 and received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the N.C. Restaurant and Lodging Association earlier this year.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** I enjoy fly fishing and our beautiful mountains, but I also like spending time at the beach in the Outer Banks.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Talking with our independent franchisees. Our team takes a very collaborative approach to decision-making, and this tends to be a great time to discuss new ideas and initiatives with key operators.

**Career highlight:** Celebrating our company's 50th anniversary after battling through the business impact of the pandemic. As a buffet concept, we had to overcome nearly impossible odds. I credit our ability to survive and now thrive, to the incredible resilience of our franchisees and our people, who demonstrated their steadfast commitment to Golden Corral and each other.

**Key changes in next five years:** Innovation and technology will continue at an even faster rate and with broader applications across our industry. Second, maintaining a solid value position with today's consumers will be more critical than ever. Lastly, we must continue identifying new ways to hire and retain great talent.



Explore or expand your career in North Carolina restaurants, hotels and hospitality businesses with our **FREE** training.



More than 46,000 jobs are projected to be added to North Carolina's Accommodations and Food Services sector by 2028—nearly 11% growth over a 10-year period.

## Congratulations to NCRLA's 2023 Stars of the Industry!

*These winners have all thrived in their careers in the hospitality industry and have risen to become leaders, business owners, operators, and CEOs.*

The North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association (NCRLA) Foundation has contracted with the N.C. Department of Commerce to administer a \$1.1 million hospitality workforce training program. The program provides **FREE training courses, certifications and educational resources** to help attract, expand and retain talent needed to fuel North Carolina restaurants, hotels and other hospitality-related businesses.



VIEW COURSES  
& APPLY NOW

Learn more at [www.ncrla.training](http://www.ncrla.training)





Spencer Baird  
Jud Bowman  
John Bradford  
Robert Bruggeworth  
Michael Capps  
Chris Downie  
David Evans  
David Gardner  
Jim Goodnight  
Timothy Humphrey  
Deverre Lierman  
Jesse Lipson  
Robert Mallernee  
David Morken  
Jillian Munro  
Pierre Naude  
Todd Olson  
Michael Praeger  
Ryan Pratt  
Brooks Raiford  
Amit Sharma  
Jeff Shealy  
Kamala Subramaniam  
Tim Sweeney  
Scot Wingo

## JIM GOODNIGHT

CEO | SAS Institute

Cary

North Carolina's best-known tech executive isn't slowing down after 47 years of leading one of the state's most consistently successful businesses. The Salisbury native, who turned 80 in January, continues to work toward an IPO for Cary-based SAS Institute in 2024. Plans call for offering about 15% of company shares to the public. SAS has reported an annual profit every year since its inception in 1976.

Taking the company public, Goodnight has said, will better allow employees and customers to share in the company's success, while also attracting new talent. The data management, analytics and AI company employs more than 12,000 people and reported \$3.2 billion in 2022 revenue.

Over his career, Goodnight and his wife Ann, have championed education. He has earned several professorships at N.C. State University, where he earned bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in mathematics and worked as a professor from 1972 to 1976. Ann Goodnight has been an N.C. State trustee since 2015.

In 1997, the Goodnights and SAS co-founders John and Ginger Sall opened Cary Academy, a college preparatory day school with grades six through 12.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** The Boone and Blowing Rock areas, as well as Wrightsville Beach. I always recommend visiting the N.C. Museum of Art, taking in an N.C. State basketball game at the PNC Arena or a football game at Carter-Finley Stadium.

**Major inspiration:** At the most basic level, we exist in order to help others. We're here so that our customers are not alone in the battle to solve tough problems. Our purpose is to make analytics easy and friendly for them. We exist for all the folks who are working to make their corner of the world a better place — whether that corner is a bank, a hospital, a store; or a nonprofit, or a university, or a government. Without us, their road would be harder.

**Career highlight:** I'm very proud of being a pioneer of workplace culture, based on my belief that if you treat employees like they make a difference they will make a difference. A highlight for me was having SAS recognized as the top workplace in the U.S. by Fortune magazine, and as the top workplace in the world by the Great Place to Work Institute.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Recognize when to stop digging a hole. Sometimes things don't go as planned and it's OK to walk away. Let go of your pride or investment if a product or venture isn't succeeding.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Disruption will continue to challenge us, but it will also help drive innovation. Advancements across areas like conversational AI, natural language processing, predictive modeling, and computer vision help organizations be prepared for whatever is next.





## SPENCER BAIRD

CEO | Inmar Intelligence  
Winston-Salem

He was named to the top post last September after getting the interim role earlier in 2022 following the retirement of David Mounts. The Virginia Wesleyan University graduate joined the company in 2020 after having leadership roles with food-industry companies including Dannon, Kellogg and Ahold.



## JUD BOWMAN

CEO, founder | Sift Media  
Durham

He formed his first company, Motricity, while attending the N.C. School of Math and Science, then later left Stanford University early to help the smartphone-app company grow to \$100 million in annual revenue. Sift is the third startup for Bowman, 41. The company uses data from phone apps to help businesses target ads.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** A tie between the beach and the mountains. We love Bald Head Island, where my wife and I were married. We also love visiting Roaring Gap in the mountains.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** "Symphony Hall" on SiriusXM Channel 76

**Career highlight:** Selling my last company, Appia, to Digital Turbine in 2015.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Giving my two daughters, Edith and Graylyn, big hugs.



## BOB BRUGGEWORTH

president, CEO | Qorvo  
Greensboro

The graduate of Wilkes University in Pennsylvania joined RF Micro Devices in 1999 and was CEO when it merged with TriQuint Semiconductor to form Qorvo in 2014. The business, which makes parts for mobile phones and other communications products, had \$4.1 billion in revenue last year. He was named to the board of Fremont, California-based data storage company Seagate Technology.

**Favorite family tradition:** We still hide Easter baskets for our two boys, ages 27 and 29, when they are home for the holiday.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** My dad in New Bern.

**Major inspiration:** Good friends and family, because they support us in good and bad times. We thank them!

**Career highlight:** Moving to Hong Kong in 1995.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Enjoying a nice red wine.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Never stop learning; our industry continues to innovate.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The world will continue to be more wirelessly connected. But the good thing about our industry is that it's hard to predict the future; you have to invent it!



## JOHN BRADFORD

CEO | PetScreening  
Huntersville

The Clemson engineering graduate is founder and CEO of two start-up companies. Park Avenue Properties is a residential management firm. PetScreening helps property owners develop pet policies. The Republican is in his fourth term in the N.C. House and has said he may run for state treasurer.



## CHRIS DOWNIE

CEO | Flexential Corp.  
Charlotte

Downie, who has had his post since 2017, leads a datacenter and cloud computing company with more than 3 million square feet of space in 19 markets. He grew up in Paris and Barcelona and has a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth and an MBA from New York University.

**Favorite family tradition:** Vacations, exploring the world and meeting new people.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Asheville

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Classic rock on Pandora

**Major inspiration:** The New Zealand All Blacks, most dominant, consistently highly functioning team in the world. Rugby has a great ethos to inspire belonging.

**Career highlight:** Creation of Flexential in 2017 and driving its improving growth.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Relax and enjoy time with my family. My favorite hobby is cooking.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Check your ego at the door and focus on making good, logical business decisions. They lead to great results.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The criticality and increasingly limited availability of raw materials.



## MICHAEL CAPPS

CEO | Diveplane  
Raleigh

A former top Epic Games executive, Capps started his artificial intelligence firm in 2018. His expertise leads to frequent appearances on Discovery, Military, and Science channels. The company raised \$25 million last fall, including investments from soccer stars Mia Hamm and Megan Rapinoe. He has a doctorate from the Naval Postgraduate School.



**DAVID EVANS****CEO | Passport**  
Charlotte

The former Cardlytics executive succeeded Bob Youakim as CEO at Passport in January 2021. The company, which has raised more than \$200 million, provides transportation software mainly to cities. A Georgia native, Evans worked in investment banking at Wells Fargo and has degrees from Auburn and Emory universities.

**TIMOTHY HUMPHREY****North Carolina senior state executive;**  
**RTP senior site executive | IBM**  
Raleigh

Humphrey has worked for IBM or Lenovo since earning his electrical engineering degree at N.C. State University in 1996. He became IBM's senior state executive in 2018. He is active in the OneTen project, which has a goal of hiring 1 million Black Americans in family-sustaining jobs.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Carolina Beach. I love Britts Donuts, and there's nothing more relaxing than watching the ocean.

**Major inspiration:** My father, may he rest in peace. He always told me to "stay focused," and that's advice I follow every day.

**Career highlight:** Taking the role of RTP senior site executive and N.C. senior state executive following the retirement of my good friend and mentor Fran O'Sullivan. It's an honor to work across all lines of the IBM business and represent our company externally.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Playing poker — it lets me practice critical thinking skills while spending time with friends and building relationships.

**DAVID GARDNER****founding partner | Cofounders Capital**  
Cary

The venture capital firm, led by Gardner and Managing Partner Tim McLoughlin, closed its third fund for \$50 million earlier this year, following previous rounds of \$31 million and \$12 million. The self-described serial entrepreneur started his company to combat a lack of early stage capital. He has founded or co-founded a total of seven companies.

**Favorite family tradition:** The last gifts at Christmas are dart guns and we spend the next hour shooting at each other in a battle royal. Been that way since I was a child.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Wilmington and Blowing Rock

**What do you listen to on your commute:** NPR or streaming book

**Major inspiration:** Steven Covey

**Career highlight:** I've had a lot of great exits from my own startups and portfolio companies and I've raised a lot of money for my investment funds and charities, but I feel like now is my career highlight.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Since I've taken up the cello, it has become my cure for a hard day.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Show up, listen and get to know smart people. Your network of advisers and business associates is by far your most valuable resource.

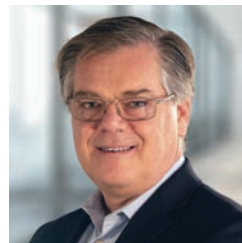
**Key industry change in next five years:** From scheduling a trip to driving us there, we are going to say what we want and our favorite AI will figure out how best to accomplish it.

**DEVERRE LIERMAN****head of US delivery, Southeast region | Infosys**  
Raleigh

Lierman helped open the India-based information technology company's Raleigh Technology and Innovation Hub in 2018. The Rutgers University graduate worked for IBM for 23 years, including as a digital commerce leader, before moving to Infosys.

**JESSE LIPSON****CEO, founder | Levitate**  
Raleigh

Lipson continues to grow Levitate, which builds software products that help insurance, real estate and other companies stay in touch with their customers. Levitate has 3,000 customers and about 150 employees at its Raleigh office. The Duke University graduate sold ShareFile to Citrix in 2011.

**ROBERT MALLERNEE****CEO | Eton Solutions**  
Morrisville

Eton Solutions provides software to help ultra wealthy families manage home offices. The company raised \$38 million in a 2022 fundraising round. Mallernee teaches a graduate-level course in wealth management at his alma mater, UNC Chapel Hill. He also has an MBA from the University of Chicago.



## DAVID MORKEN

**CEO, co-founder, chairman | Bandwidth**

Raleigh

The Notre Dame law school graduate founded the communications software company in 1999 and took it public at \$20 per share in 2017. It has grown rapidly with revenue of \$573 million in 2022, a 17% annual increase. But shares have tumbled in the past two years on fears of slower growth.



## JILLIAN MUNRO

**group head of data and analytics technology | Envestnet | Yodlee**

Raleigh

After working for Fidelity and other large financial services companies for more than 25 years, Munro joined the Berwyn, Pennsylvania-based financial-data services company in 2020. She holds an accounting degree from Bucknell University and master's in East Asian studies from George Washington University. She began her career as a telecommunications consultant.



## TODD OLSON

**co-founder, CEO | Pendo**

Raleigh

In 2013, Olson launched Pendo, which uses analytics to help managers optimize software development. The company has 900 employees, a \$2.6 billion valuation, and Olson says it may go public within a year. Olson's plan to build a 30-acre family compound on Topsail Island awaits a zoning decision.



## MICHAEL PRAEGER

**CEO, chairman, co-founder | AvidXchange**

Charlotte

Started in 2000, the company has grown to more than 1,500 employees and 7,000 customers for its payments system software. It went public in 2021 and reported a net loss of \$101 million on revenue of \$316 million last year. Praeger has a finance degree from Georgetown University.

**Favorite family tradition:** Spending the Fourth of July on Lake Norman with family and friends.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Lake Norman

**Major inspiration:** Seeing members of my team grow into leaders within AvidXchange. My teammates work hard, and seeing them achieve their goals and dreams is rewarding for me.

**Career highlight:** Building AvidXchange from a local software startup company in Charlotte to becoming a public company and becoming the industry leader in delivering accounts payable and payment automation to middle market companies and growing to be the largest software company in Charlotte.

**Favorite hobbies after work:** Tennis, boating, watersports, including wake surfing and e-foiling.

**Best advice to an industry newcomer:** Work hard to understand the ecosystem of players within the industry and what their role is and then spend time building relationships and identifying ways that you can add value to these relationships.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Significant impact of efficiencies, cost savings and productivity increases through the use of technology to automate manual and paper-based processes. Reduction of paper checks and adoption of electronic payments will replace the traditional bill-payment process for business-to-business payments.



## PIERRE NAUDÉ

**CEO, chairman | nCino**

Wilmington

A former SI and Unisys executive, Naudé helped found the cloud-banking firm in 2012 and led the 2020 IPO that valued the company at \$3 billion. While revenue gained 34% to \$274 million in 2022, the company reported a net loss of \$90 million over the past two years. The South African-born Naudé has a bachelor's degree from Upper Iowa University.

**Career highlight:** When I see individuals at nCino do great things, I feel an incredible sense of pride in the company we've built. If you create a culture where people can thrive and grow, it doesn't matter what educational or social background they have. The only thing that matters is what they can accomplish today, and how we as a company can give them the tools and support to succeed.

**Favorite hobbies after work:** Boating and golf

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Famous management consultant Peter F. Drucker said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." This idea is foundational to how we've built, grown and led our teams at nCino. A strong culture is critical to success, and nCino proves that.



**RYAN PRATT****CEO, founder | Guerilla RF**  
Greensboro

After working for Qorvo predecessor RF Micro Devices, the N.C. State University graduate founded the business in 2013 to make semiconductors for use in cameras, smartphones and other uses. Guerilla RF was listed at 81st on the *Financial Times* 2022 list of America's fastest-growing companies ranked by revenue growth.

**Favorite family tradition:** Having the whole family over for Christmas dinner.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Wrightsville Beach

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Punk rock music on SiriusXM

**Career highlight:** Getting Guerrilla RF's stock traded publicly. (GUER is ticker symbol.)

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Put in the time to learn all of the different parts of the semiconductor business (sales, product development, marketing, operations, quality, etc.)

**AMIT SHARMA****CEO | CData Software**  
Chapel Hill

The data connectivity business led by the Duke MBA and master's graduate of N.C. State University received \$140 million in funding last year and earned a spot on the Deloitte Technology Fast 500 list of rapidly growing companies. Sharma launched CData 13 years ago. Updata Partners of Washington, D.C., is a key investor.

**JEFF SHEALY****CEO | Akoustis Technologies**  
Huntersville

Another veteran of Qorvo predecessor RF Micro Devices, Shealy cofounded the chip manufacturer in 2013. Revenue more than doubled to \$15.4 million in 2022, but startup costs have led to annual losses and a declining stock price in the past two years. He has master's and doctoral degrees from UC Santa Barbara.

**KAMALA SUBRAMANIAM****engineering site lead | Google**  
Durham

Subramaniam left India and enrolled at N.C. State University for master's and doctoral degrees in electrical and computer engineering. She landed jobs with Microsoft and other technology companies. She began her career with Google in 2016 and was picked to lead its engineering hub in Durham in 2021.

**BROOKS RAIFORD****president, CEO | North Carolina Technology Association (NC TECH)**

Raleigh

Raiford has led the tech industry advocacy group since 2008, helping focus the spotlight on one of the state's most impactful sectors. The N.C. State University graduate previously worked for Balfour Beatty, Leadership NC and the state's private-college trade association. He's vice chair of Guilford College's trustee board.

**Favorite family tradition:** Spending the July 4 holiday at Lake Junaluska near Asheville with extended family.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Crystal Coast.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** NPR

**Major inspiration:** My parents. Their ethics, energy, positivity, and unconditional love and support have shaped me and they continue to be role models for me.

**Career highlight:** Reaching my 15th anniversary as CEO of NC TECH, which is itself 30 years old this year, and seeing how far the organization has come.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Hard skills and soft skills are not mutually exclusive. Develop them both early, and nurture them often. In your career, you'll stand out among your peers and have greater opportunities.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The integration of artificial intelligence/machine learning in our work and personal activities.

**TIM SWEENEY****founder, CEO | Epic Games**  
Cary

Fortnite, Epic's mega-franchise, shows little signs of cooling. The company reported 68 million monthly active users in 2022, up from 62 million a year earlier. Epic continues to challenge Apple and Google in court over their app store policies. The billionaire is one of the state's largest private landowners, mostly in conservation easements that will preserve those lands in perpetuity.

**SCOT WINGO****CEO | Spiffy**  
Durham

The veteran Triangle entrepreneur's mobile vehicle-maintenance company raised \$30 million in February to spur further growth as it adds franchisees in six new states. He also launched the Tweener Fund to support promising new Triangle businesses. He attended the University of South Carolina and N.C. State University.



Let's create a more  
diverse, equitable  
and inclusive future  
for everyone.



Congratulations Tim Humphrey,  
IBM Chief Analytics Officer and  
Senior State Executive for IBM  
in NC, for his recognition on  
Business North Carolina's 2023  
Power List and for being one of  
IBM's greatest catalysts for change.

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## DEVON WILLIAMS

**co-managing director | Ward and Smith**  
Raleigh

Devon Williams regularly counsels human resources executives and C-suite officers to keep them out of costly litigation and help them create a more positive workplace culture.

Williams serves with Bradley Evans as co-managing partners of the law firm, which has about 90 attorneys with offices in Asheville, Greenville, New Bern, Raleigh and Wilmington. The firm traces its roots back to 1895 and now includes more than 30 practice areas.

Williams' practice is focused on labor and employment issues, including terminations, federal contractor compliance, employment discrimination, harassment, and retaliation claims. She is also part of the firm's Hemp Law practice group, where she helps clients in the agribusiness, hemp and CBD industries navigate changing rules amid increasing legalization.



The Campbell University Law School graduate was a standout high school and college athlete. In 2022, the Salisbury-Rowan Sports Hall of Fame selected her to be the 13th woman to enter the group. At West Rowan High School, Williams pitched and played third base on the Falcons' softball team, earning MVP honors while leading the team to 2002 and 2003 state championships. The team finished runner-up in her senior year. She also was a four-year starter at the University of Maryland.

**Favorite family tradition:** Enjoying my mom's breakfast pizza with my entire family on Christmas morning.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Asheville and anywhere on the coast are always favorites, as is my family's farm around Cleveland, North Carolina, where I grew up.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** I bounce back and forth between country, pop, and news podcasts.

**Career highlight:** Having the trust and confidence of my law partners to co-lead our 270+ employee, five-office, statewide law firm.

**Favorite hobby:** Watch "Jeopardy" with my husband and our daughter.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Find a good mentor, work hard, and actively develop good working relationships with colleagues, clients, and opposing counsel.

**Key industry change in next five years:** For law firms, that change is the successful integration of AI into law practice, while acknowledging its limitations and privacy and security concerns.

Kerry Abrams  
Stacy Ackermann  
Sherrod Banks  
Catherine Barnes  
Steve Berlin  
Ashley Brathwaite  
Dan Cahill  
Lois Colbert  
Nathan Duggins  
Bradley Evans  
Todd Eveson  
Kimberly Bullock Gatling  
Stuart Goldstein  
Clark Goodman  
Thomas N. Griffin III  
Denise Gunter  
Robert Harrington  
Terry Hutchens  
Beth Tyner Jones  
Byron Kirkland  
Paul Lawrence  
Valecia McDowell  
Tom Mitchell  
Jared Mobley  
Clayton Morgan  
Reid Phillips  
Allen Robertson  
Perry Safran  
Jason Solomon  
Wyatt Stevens  
Marshall Wall  
Mona Lisa Wallace  
Kevin Williams  
Devon Williams  
James Wyatt III



## KERRY ABRAMS

dean | Duke University School of Law  
Durham

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor has cited Abrams' work in her rulings. The English major at Swarthmore College received a law degree from Stanford University. She was vice provost and a professor at the University of Virginia before joining Duke in 2018. The school enrolled 225 first-year students last year and 285 during the previous year.



## STEVE BERLIN

partner | Kilpatrick Townsend  
Winston-Salem

Berlin's 35-plus years at his firm includes service in various areas of environmental law. The Wake Forest University graduate serves on the UNC School of the Arts board of trustees and chairs the Winston-Salem and Forsyth County Arts Council board of trustees.

**Favorite family tradition:** Lovefeast during the Christmas season.

**Favorite place to visit in North Carolina:** North Carolina Zoo or Blue Ridge Parkway.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Audiobooks, podcast, and ESPN radio.

**Major inspiration:** People who collaboratively, mobilize to get things done.

**Favorite hobby:** Anything outside, gardening and hiking.

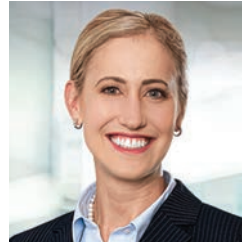
**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Get involved and stay involved in your community.



## STACY ACKERMANN

partner | K&L Gates  
Charlotte

Ackermann is the finance practice leader at the national law firm, representing investors, lenders, servicers and other market participants. She is a frequent lecturer on commercial real-estate financing. The Furman University graduate earned her law degree at the University of South Carolina. She joined the firm in 2012.



## ASHLEY BRATHWAITE

president | North Carolina Association of Defense Attorneys | Ellis & Winters  
Raleigh

Brathwaite leads the trade group representing defense attorneys, reflecting her experience representing clients in the insurance, health care, real estate and manufacturing sectors. The Furman University graduate worked in marketing and public affairs for a large South Carolina hospital before attending Campbell University School of Law.



## SHERROD BANKS

founder | Banks Law Group  
Durham

The UNC Chapel Hill grad practices law in commercial and real estate, business litigation, partnerships and private placement stock options. He previously chaired the Governing Committee of the American Bar Association Forum on Affordable Housing and Community Development Law. He is an adjunct law professor at UNC Chapel Hill, where he earned bachelor's and law degrees.



## DAN CAHILL

managing partner | Poyner Spruill  
Raleigh

The lifelong Raleigh resident, who chairs the Greater Raleigh Area Chamber, represents banks, companies, and local governments in commercial disputes in state and federal courts and alternative dispute resolution. He is a Wake Forest University School of Law graduate and has an undergraduate degree from UNC Chapel Hill.



## CATHERINE BARNES

managing partner | James, McElroy & Diehl  
Charlotte

Barnes works with clients involved in business continuation planning, mergers and acquisitions, and other issues ranging from real estate negotiations with lenders, commercial leases, zoning issues and non-compete agreements. She has a law degree from UNC Chapel Hill. Her most famous partner, Bill Diehl, died at age 78 in December.





## LOIS COLBERT

**partner | Kilpatrick Townsend and Stockton**

Charlotte

The University of Michigan law graduate is leader of the national law firm's employee benefits practice group. She has been recognized by Super Lawyers, Best Lawyers in America and other professional journals and has been singled out as one of Charlotte's most influential women.



## NATHAN DUGGINS

**managing partner | Tuggle Duggins**

Greensboro

The Wake Forest University law graduate leads the law firm formed by his father, Jim, and Richard Tuggle in 1974. He represents clients in construction, real estate and complex business disputes. He's on the board of the Guilford Merchants Association, Greensboro Chamber of Commerce and Wake Forest School of Law.



## BRADLEY EVANS

**co-managing director | Ward and Smith**

Greenville

Evans grew up in Ahoskie and earned bachelor's and law degrees at Wake Forest University. He litigates cases and advises clients involving intellectual property disputes and commercial, business, estate and professional licensing issues. He is a certified Superior Court mediator who says there's no place better to live than eastern North Carolina.

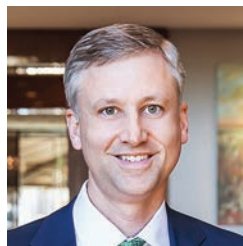
**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Warm months — Emerald Isle; Cool months — our cabin in Bertie County.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** A combination of public radio news and the Grateful Dead channel on Sirius XM.

**Major inspiration:** Our firm has about 250 employees that are my daily inspiration. Every day I am driven to work hard to help provide professional satisfaction and security for them and for their families.

**Favorite hobby:** Offshore fishing. There is no better escape from daily life than trolling the Atlantic Ocean well out of cellphone range.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Look for meaning in your life's work that energizes and motivates you. The practice of law is a profession, not simply a job. We have opportunities to help people during some of the most challenging times in their lives. Finding the reward in those opportunities for service makes the challenge worthwhile.



## TODD EVESON

**managing partner | Wyrick Robbins Yates & Ponton LLP**

Raleigh

The Duke University graduate earned his law degree at UNC Chapel Hill. His work centers on securities law, mergers and acquisitions, corporate law and banking law. Eveson, 47, also chairs the firm's executive committee. He joined Wyrick Robbins after it bought his former firm, Gaeta and Eveson, in 2013.

**Favorite family tradition:** There are several, and they are all food related.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Being back home in Charlotte will always be my favorite.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** I'd love to say it's Bloomberg or NPR, but the truth is that it's usually classic rock.

**Major inspiration:** My parents are two of the hardest-working, most grounded people I ever encountered.

**Career highlight:** At Wyrick Robbins, we're working on significant matters for vibrant clients on a daily basis. It's more like a team highlight reel.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Find yourself a good mentor and make yourself indispensable.



## KIMBERLY BULLOCK GATLING

**partner, chief diversity and inclusion officer | Fox Rothschild**

Greensboro

The George Washington University law graduate focuses on protecting clients' ideas in intellectual property and data security issues. She's the firm's chief diversity and inclusion officer. Gatling has an electrical engineering degree from N.C. A&T State University. She is a director at Cone Health and Truliant Federal Credit Union.

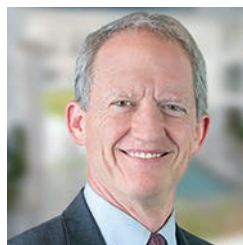


## STUART GOLDSTEIN

**managing partner | Cadwalader**

Charlotte

Goldstein's practice focuses on structured finance. A graduate of the University of California-Berkeley law school, he co-chairs the firm's capital markets practice and is a management committee member. He received the 2019 Alzheimer's Association Award of Excellence for his continuous support of the organization's Western Carolina chapter.



## THOMAS GRIFFIN III

**managing partner | Parker Poe**

Charlotte

A University of Virginia law school grad, Griffin says in environmental law, results count more than venue. Early in his career, he was an attorney with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Since then, he has handled water, endangered species, wetlands and similar issues in the last 30 years, often collaborating with federal agencies.

## BUSINESS NORTH CAROLINA'S 2023 POWER LIST

### TOM MITCHELL

*Managing Partner*

*Management Committee Chair*

Nationally recognized financial services lawyer, Chair of the firm's Management Committee, and member of the firm's Diversity Committee



### VALECIA MCDOWELL

*Practice Co-head, White Collar, Regulatory Defense & Investigations*  
*Practice Head, Civil Rights & Racial Equity Assessments*

Nationally recognized investigations lawyer, member of the firm's Management Committee, and Co-head of the firm's Diversity Committee



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**CLARK GOODMAN****managing partner | Latitude Legal**  
Charlotte

A Harvard Law School graduate, Goodman left a top post at the giant Womble Bond Dickinson firm to join the national company that supplies lawyers to many Fortune 500 companies and others. He also teaches law at Wake Forest University.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Topsail Island.**Major inspiration:** I'm inspired by individuals who have chosen to protect, defend, and save human lives and liberty, such as first responders, medical professionals, law enforcement, and those who serve in the military.**Favorite hobby after work:** Anything with my family. My hobbies are golf and guitar.**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Take time to understand, as much as possible, the full scope of the profession so that you can find the right place in the profession for you.**Key industry change in next five years:** The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence tools will force the industry to find the proper balance between tasks that can be completed more efficiently through the use of technology/AI and tasks that require human judgment, nuance, and creativity.**ROBERT HARRINGTON****partner | Robinson Bradshaw**  
Charlotte

The Duke University law school grad is a past Mecklenburg County Bar president who was named Lawyer of the Year by N.C. Lawyers Weekly in 2017. He represents corporate clients in trade, contract and various business disputes. Harrington co-chairs the firm's litigation department.

**Favorite family tradition:** Summer vacation at Kiawah Island, South Carolina.**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Duke University's campus**What do you listen to on your commute:** Jazz**Major inspiration:** My two granddaughters because they represent the future.**Key industry change in next five years:** Further application of artificial intelligence to law practice and greater need to differentiate between AI and human services.**BETH TYNER JONES****managing partner | Womble Bond Dickinson**  
Raleigh

Jones' former role as a human-resources executive for a large pharmaceutical company and as a college faculty member was a good prep for leading Womble Bond Dickinson's education, school-law and employment and pensions service teams. She has bachelor's and law degrees from Campbell University.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Mountains**What do you listen to on your commute:** Making calls to family members to catch up or NPR.**Major inspiration:** My clients are predominantly colleges and universities. They do transformative work. It's a privilege to play a small role in support of that critically important work.**Favorite hobby after work:** Cycling and shooting hoops.**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Focus on understanding, deeply, the law from several excellent attorneys.**DENISE GUNTER****managing partner | Nelson Mullins**  
Winston-Salem

The George Washington School of Law grad handles a variety of cases involving antitrust matters, government investigations, and mergers and acquisitions. Nelson Mullins has more than 1,000 lawyers at 30-plus offices. She's the former board chair of The Fellowship Home of Winston-Salem, which provides transitional housing for men with substance use disorders.

**PAUL LAWRENCE****managing partner | Hedrick Gardner Kincheloe & Garofalo**  
Charlotte

Lawrence is known for handling workers' compensation, civil litigation, professional negligence and premises liability and employment-law cases. Included in the Best Lawyers in America listings since 2016, the Villanova law school grad is a former assistant district attorney. He joined Hedrick Gardner in 1994.

**VALECIA MCDOWELL****partner | Moore & Van Allen**  
Charlotte

The Duke University School of Law graduate serves as co-director of the firm's white collar, regulatory defense and investigations practice, often leading sensitive reviews for major institutions. She also heads the firm's civil rights and racial equity assessment work. She is a recipient of the Mecklenburg County Bar's Julius Chambers Diversity Champion Award.



## TERRY HUTCHENS

managing partner | Hutchens  
Law Firm

Fayetteville

Hutchens graduated from N.C. State University and has law and MBA degrees from Wake Forest University. His firm employs about 250 people in about 10 offices. Hutchens focuses on business law, often representing banks and mortgage firms. He's a member of the UNC Board of Governors.

**Favorite family tradition:** Rosalind and I have four children and nine grandchildren. It's a real crowd when we all get together for holidays. The grandchildren are amazing and hilarious. I don't think I am ever happier.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Lake Waccamaw

**Major inspiration:** Showing that I can when I am told I can't.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Drink old single malt and even older Bordeaux's.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Always be prepared. Be civil and trustworthy in your interactions with other lawyers. Engage in your community. Don't worry about how much money you are or aren't making. Instead, concentrate on doing a good job for your clients and the money will come.

**Career highlight:** In my law practice, I represented a fellow in an age-discrimination case against the state forestry department. My client was poor, had little formal education and worked on farms until he got his state job. He looked much older than his 57 years.

During the government's direct examination of my client's supervisor, the witness testified that my client didn't have enough sense to run a lawn mower. A juror on the front row leaned over the railing and in a loud voice said "bull@#\$." Very few people in the courtroom could stop laughing.

The judge took a recess and back in his chambers said, "Well Terry, I think you have juror No. 7." It got worse for the defendants from there.

At the end of the trial, the jury returned after a relatively short time. They awarded my client every dime and benefit that could legally be recovered. At the bottom of the jury sheet, the foreman wrote, "More on back." It was a list of additional damages sought by the jury, including raises, bonuses, money and benefits beyond what I had requested, an apology and the dismissal of my client's supervisor.



## BYRON KIRKLAND

managing partner | Smith Anderson  
Raleigh

Kirkland's 35 years in practice includes handling mergers and acquisitions, private-equity transactions, and general securities and corporate law matters. He's been managing partner since 2020. The UNC Chapel Hill law and MBA grad is a director of the NC TECH trade association.

**Favorite family tradition:** Family gatherings at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Mountains

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Radio

**Major inspiration:** I find inspiration every day and everywhere whether it be from co-workers, family, books I am reading or life experiences.

**Career highlight:** Being asked to lead Smith Anderson.

**Favorite hobby after work:** I really love going home and spending time with my wife, Ginny. My favorite hobby is cooking.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Invest your time and energy in developing and enjoying relationships.



## JARED MOBLEY

managing partner | K&L Gates  
Charlotte

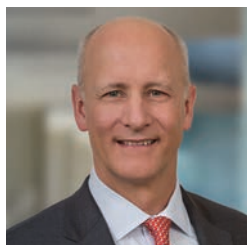
Mobley advises clients on federal, state and local tax matters, as well as private equity, mergers and acquisitions and joint ventures. He holds degrees from both the University of South Carolina School of Law and New York University School of Law. He joined a K&L Gates predecessor in 1999.



## CLAYTON MORGAN

associate general counsel | Duke Energy  
Raleigh

This year's president of the N.C. Bar Association, Morgan joined the utility in 1996 and began his role as associate general counsel in 2004. He has a law degree and MBA from Wake Forest University and an undergraduate degree in radiologic science from UNC Chapel Hill. Duke Energy's chief legal officer is Kodwo Chartey-Tagoe.



## TOM MITCHELL

chairman and managing partner |  
Moore & Van Allen

Charlotte

Before becoming a managing partner in 2018, he headed the firm's financial services group, which consists of more than 100 attorneys. The Washington and Lee University law graduate joined the firm in 1993. He is a member of the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council and serves as a volunteer high school basketball coach.





## REID PHILLIPS

**managing partner | Brooks Pierce**  
Greensboro

Phillips works on antitrust, copyright and other cases as a litigation lawyer, while leading the law firm that has 109 lawyers with offices in Greensboro, Raleigh and Wilmington. He has a bachelor's degree from UNC Chapel Hill and a law degree from the University of Texas.

**Favorite family tradition:** Seeing extended family at the Hancock County Fair in Findlay, Ohio, where we enjoy watching livestock shows.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** No better place for a summer vacation than Cashiers.

**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
NPR

**Major inspiration:** My mother instilled great values in me, including the joys of hard work and service to others. "Anything worth doing is worth doing well," she said.

**Career highlight:** Successful trial of complicated business case. The trial lasted nine weeks but took two years of preparation.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Reading on the terrace behind our house. Favorite book last year was one everyone in North Carolina should read — "Wastelands" by Corbin Addison.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Never think of anything as merely a task to be completed. Think of it as the start of finding new ways to help the client in all the ways you can. Always relate the task to the bigger picture. That mindset makes work assignments interesting and of greater value to the client.

**Key industry change in next five years:** With preferences for remote working, opportunities for collaboration and interaction are reduced. How will we compensate so that young lawyers are trained the right way?



## PERRY SAFRAN

**principal | Safran Law Offices**  
Raleigh

Safran has practiced law for more than 40 years, focusing on construction law. He has lectured on construction topics as an adjunct professor at Campbell School of Law and N.C. State University. He is a trustee at N.C. State University, a Centennial Authority director and a former Raleigh City Council member N.C. Turnpike Authority director.

**Favorite family tradition:** Dinner with our family.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** The coast

**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
News

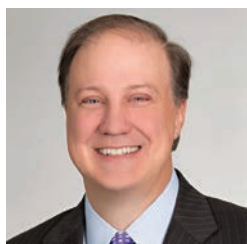
**Major inspiration:** Working with our great universities — my very own N.C. State.

**Career highlight:** Starting my own business/firm and keeping it going for 40-plus years.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Long walks with my wife, Susan, to clear my mind.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Make a plan. The business does not just come to you.

**Key industry change in the next five years:** Continuing virtual connecting, more conversation and adjusting to the client's needs, not just how all was done in the past.



## ALLEN ROBERTSON

**managing partner | Robinson**  
**Bradshaw**  
Charlotte

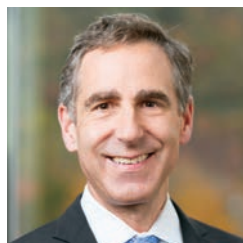
A UNC Chapel Hill Morehead Scholar and Harvard Law School graduate, he is one of only two North Carolina lawyers to serve as president of the National Association of Bond Lawyers. His public finance clients include financial institutions and health care systems.



## JASON SOLOMON

**partner-in-charge | Alston & Bird**  
Charlotte

Solomon has a bachelor's degree from UNC Chapel Hill and a law degree from Washington and Lee University. He practiced corporate law in Delaware before moving to Charlotte. He represented the trustee and agents in a \$1.3 billion debt offering for a telecommunications giant. Alston & Bird has more than 800 lawyers globally.



## WYATT STEVENS

**partner | Roberts & Stevens**  
Asheville

The Asheville native and UNC Chapel Hill graduate has more than 25 years of experience in personal injury and commercial litigation. The firm was formed in 1986 by a merger led by his father, Jack Stevens. He is a member of the Association of Ski Defense Attorneys.

**Favorite family tradition:** Dinner with our family.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Big Yellow Mountain in the Roan Highlands.

**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
Blue Ridge Public Radio.

**Major inspiration:** My parents lived their lives with integrity and goodness.

**Career highlight:** Making shareholder status at Roberts & Stevens.

**Favorite hobby:** Run or walk with friends.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Try your best and do the right thing every time.

**Key industry change in the next five years:** Massive growth and competition.



## KEVIN WILLIAMS

**president | Bell Davis Pitt**  
Winston-Salem

A Wake Forest University law graduate who grew up in Elizabeth City, Williams has practiced at the firm since 1998, representing corporations and individuals in contract disputes, professional negligence, product liability and trademark infringement. The firm has more than 30 lawyers in Winston-Salem and Charlotte.



## MONA LISA WALLACE

**founding partner | Wallace & Graham**  
Salisbury

The Rowan County native and Wake Forest School of Law graduate is a nationally known personal injury lawyer who says she has a "relentless quest for justice." Her work on behalf of neighbors of Smithfield Foods' Bladen County plant was featured in the book "Wastelands." She has specialized in representing victims of occupational-related cancers.



## MARSHALL WALL

**managing partner | Cranfill Sumner**  
Raleigh

The Raleigh native was part of the first class to be certified by North Carolina State Bar as a specialist in privacy and information security. He is a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill and Campbell University School of Law. The firm has more than 75 lawyers with offices in Charlotte, Raleigh and Wilmington.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Ocean Isle Beach

**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
Podcasts, mostly nerdy ones about things like economics.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Running.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** You don't know much yet. Take any opportunity to learn and listen.



## JAMES WYATT III

**managing partner and founder | Wyatt & Blake**  
Charlotte

Wyatt, a graduate of Vanderbilt University and Duke University School of Law, specializes in whistleblower, class-action and white collar defense litigation. Early in his career, he worked with Bobby Lee Cook Sr., the Summerville, Georgia, lawyer who was the inspiration for the "Matlock" television series featuring Andy Griffith.

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 Martine Rothblatt  
 Ravish Sachar  
 R. Jude Samulski  
 Scott Uknes  
 Eric Ward  
 Richard West

## KEVIN O'BRIEN

president for North America | Merz Therapeutics

Raleigh

O'Brien joined the German-owned Merz company in 2017, having spent 16 years at Allergan, the producer of Botox. Since then he's led significant growth as Merz has expanded its research and development of various therapeutic products for patients suffering various neurological conditions including Parkinson's disease, ALS and cerebral palsy.

His expertise in product launches and leading teams has helped build the Merz brand in the U.S. and Canada. He's also worked on various advocacy partnerships to promote awareness of movement disorders.

O'Brien has a bachelor's degree from St. Mary's University in California and a law degree from Western State College of Law in California. He worked for Johnson & Johnson and Boston Scientific earlier in his career.

Friedrich Merz founded a chemical business in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1908. The company is now led by a fourth generation of the Merz family and employs more than 3,700 globally, including several hundred in Raleigh. The capital city is home to the Merz Therapeutics unit led by O'Brien and Merz Aesthetics, whose CEO is Bob Rhatigan.

**Favorite family tradition:** Snow skiing — we've skied all over the world including indoors in Dubai.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** My wife and I went to Beaufort during the pandemic and it was beautiful. I'd love to go back now that more places are back open.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Anything upbeat to start the day — but I live just a few miles from my office, so it's a pretty short playlist.

**Major inspiration:** The people of Merz Therapeutics. Every day they commit to bringing better outcomes to more patients living with movement disorders and have created an amazing culture of care and trust. I am excited to work with our employees!

**Career highlight:** Having job opportunities that allowed me to live around the world — working across continents, countries, and cultures has shaped my management style and who I am today.

**Favorite hobby:** If the weather is nice, evening walks on the Capital Area Greenway.

**Best advice to someone new in your industry:** Take on a lot of different responsibilities — be curious and open to learning.

**Key industry change over the next five years:** An increased need for digital tools and solutions to aid health care providers in effectively diagnosing and treating patients.



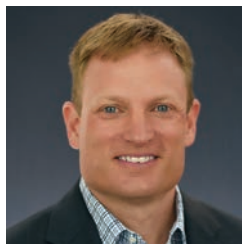


## ANTHONY ATALA

**director | Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine**

Winston-Salem

The veteran professor's research includes creating the 3D bioprinter and leading the team that produced the first lab-grown bladder to be implanted in a human patient. The graduate of the University of Louisville's medical school has edited 25 books and authored more than 800 scholarly articles. The Peru native is a recipient of the Christopher Columbus Foundation Award, honoring Americans working on discoveries significantly affecting society.



## BRIAN CAENEY

**chief medical officer, president | Labcorp Diagnostics**

Burlington

Caveney joined Labcorp in 2017 after stints as chief medical officer of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina and as a physician and professor at Duke University Medical Center. A graduate of West Virginia University School of Medicine with a master's from UNC Chapel Hill, he promotes regular testing to avert colon cancer and other diseases.

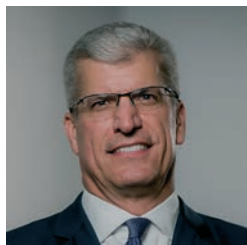


## TIM CONDRON

**president, COO | BestCo Inc.**

Mooresville

Condrón became the top executive at BestCo in 2014 after a long career in manufacturing at GE and other firms. He's presiding over the company's \$177 million expansion of its Mooresville facility, where it makes lozenges and chewables used in over-the-counter pharmaceuticals. Condrón is a Michigan State University graduate.



## JACK BAILEY

**CEO | G1 Therapeutics**

Durham

Bailey took the reins of publicly traded G1 in January 2021. A negative report on the third-phase trials of its colon cancer drug last year sent shares sharply lower. Before joining G1's board in 2020, the UNC MBA graduate worked for Eli Lilly and GlaxoSmithKline, where he was president of U.S. pharmaceuticals for five years.



## GINGER DOSIER

**CEO | BioMason**

Durham

Krieg Dosier founded BioMason in 2012 inventing an ecologically friendly process for making biologically created bricks and concrete. Bolstered by a \$65 million capital raise, BioMason is ramping up production in North America and Europe. Customers include Swedish retailer H&M, which is installing BioMason floors in some locations. The Huntsville, Alabama, native has a bachelor's degree from Auburn University.



## DOUG BURNS

**president | Grifols Therapeutics**

Clayton

Burns presides over the ongoing expansion of the company's Johnston County campus. The Spanish company makes medicines derived from human plasma and has more than 18,000 employees in the U.S., including more than 2,000 in Clayton. Burns has a bachelor's in chemical engineering from Purdue and a PhD. from the University of Delaware.



**FRED ESHELMAN****founder | Eshelman Ventures**  
Wilmington

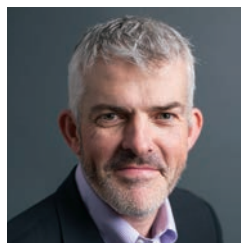
Eshelman is among North Carolina's best-known entrepreneurs and philanthropists. His investment company focuses on private health care companies. He started the contract research organization Pharmaceutical Product Development and the drug developer Furiex Pharmaceuticals, which Forest Laboratories bought for \$1.4 billion in 2014. He has a bachelor's degree from UNC Chapel Hill, where the pharmacy school bears his name, and a doctorate from University of Cincinnati.

**ROGER JEFFS****CEO | Liquidia**  
Durham

The UNC Chapel Hill Ph.D., who co-founded gene therapy developer Kriya Therapeutics, took his current post at publicly traded Liquidia in early 2022. Jeffs retired in 2016 as co-CEO of United Therapeutics, where he worked for 18 years. United and Liquidia remain entangled in a patent lawsuit, although a settlement is expected soon. Liquidia arranged \$100 million in financing from Healthcare Royalty Partners earlier this year.

**PAUL GAROFOLO****CEO | Locus Biosciences**  
Morrisville

The University of Arizona graduate co-founded the company, which treats bacterial diseases, in 2015 after working as chief technology officer and global head of operations at Patheon's pharmaceutical development services unit. Lotus raised \$35 million last year from J&J Innovation, Tencent and other investors. It has partnerships worth more than \$1 billion.

**JAMIE MACDONALD****CEO | Parexel**  
Durham

Scotsman Macdonald was named to his post in 2018. The clinical research company was acquired by the EQT private-equity group and Goldman Sachs for \$8.5 billion in November. He previously led Morrisville-based INC Research, which merged with inVentiv Health to create Syneos Health in 2017.

**MARTIN MEESON****CEO | Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies**  
Morrisville

Meeson gained his post in April 2020 following a 15-year career with the Japanese-owned manufacturing company. Meeson joined the company as a finance officer after graduating from the University of Newcastle. Fujifilm Diosynth has launched a major expansion of its U.S. manufacturing capacity, including a \$2 billion factory in Holly Springs slated to open in 2025. Plans call for 725 employees.

**CHAD HENRY****corporate vice president, general manager | Novo Nordisk**  
Clayton

The N.C. State University graduate has led operations at the Danish company's insulin factory in Clayton since 2017. Novo Nordisk just purchased an additional 104 acres at the Johnston County site. A Novo manager for more than 15 years, he oversees 800-plus employees.



## GUSTAVO PESQUIN

**CEO | AskBio**  
Durham

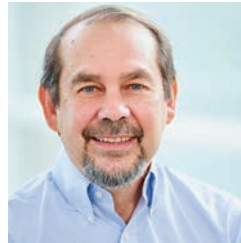
The Argentina native took the post in March after CEO and co-founder Sheila Mikhail stepped down for health reasons. AskBio grew to more than 800 employees under her leadership since 2017. Pesquin had been chief commercial officer at Amneal Pharmaceuticals, following senior posts at Sanofi, Abbott and Pfizer. He is a Northwestern University MBA graduate.



## RAVISH SACHAR

**CEO | Contego Medical**  
Raleigh

The cardiologist founded Raleigh-based Contego, which manufactures devices designed to control embolisms, and hence, reduce strokes, during cardiovascular procedures like stents. The company raised \$15 million last year, following a \$22 million raise in 2020. He is physician-in-chief at UNC Rex Healthcare's N.C. Heart and Vascular unit.



## R. JUDE SAMULSKI

**co-founder, president, chief scientific officer | AskBio**  
Durham

The acclaimed scientist is inventor on over 480 total U.S. and foreign patents and patent applications, including active, expired, and abandoned cases. He directed UNC Chapel Hill's Gene Therapy Center for 25 years before leaving in 2016. Samulski's work was instrumental in creating two important bio startups: Bamboo Therapeutics, which Pfizer bought for \$827 million, and AskBio, which Bayer acquired for \$4 billion.



## LAURA HELMS REECE

**CEO | Rho**  
Durham

Helms Reece started at the Research Triangle-based contract research organization as a data processor and has been CEO since 2011. Her parents, Paul and Mary, founded the company in 1984. A major supporter of Durham public schools, she has bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from UNC Chapel Hill, where her father was a professor.



## SCOTT UKNES

**co-founder, co-CEO | AgBiome**  
Durham

Uknes and Eric Ward were among the co-founders of the biotech that has raised more than \$250 million from Synenta, Bayer and others. The Ph.D. graduate of Washington University has written more than 40 scholarly works and previously helped start Cropsolution and Paradigm Genetics.



## MARTINE ROTHBLATT

**chair, CEO | United Therapeutics**  
Durham

Before starting the pharma company in 1996, Rothblatt was co-founder of SiriusXM radio. She turned to biotech in 1996, teaching herself high-level biology so that she could help her daughter, who was suffering from pulmonary hypertension. She is the author of seven books, has directed two movies, and is a licensed airplane and helicopter pilot. She holds law and MBA degrees from UCLA.



## ERIC WARD

**co-CEO | AgBiome**  
Durham

Ward is a molecular plant biologist with more than 30 years of ag-biotech experience and more than 35 patents and 75 scientific publications to his name. He's a graduate of Duke University and like co-founder Scott Uknes, earned his Ph.D. at Washington University.



## RICHARD WEST

**CEO | Baebies**  
Durham

West founded the pediatric screening company with Vamsee Pamula in 2014 and raised \$37.5 million last year, bringing its total funding to \$130 million. The NCBI board member and Duke University graduate previously led Advanced Liquid Logic, which was sold to Illumina for \$96 million in 2013.





## BOBBY FRYE

**CEO, president | Mt. Olive Pickle Co.**  
Mount Olive

Family history says Bobby Frye's grandmother, Birdie Robinson, was a star sales representative for Mt. Olive Pickle Co. when it started in its namesake community in the 1930s. He's doing her proud today as leader of the company, which packs more than 130 million jars of pickles, relishes and similar products annually. It operates from a 150-acre campus intersected by Cucumber and Vine streets in this eastern North Carolina town.

Frye, who started as a pickle peddler in 1980 after graduating from Lenoir-Rhyne College, has not rested on tradition. In 1984, he became district manager, six years later, regional sales manager, and in 1997, head of national sales. He became president in 2015 and has pushed company growth. Last year, he announced Mt. Olive would spend more than \$35 million to expand manufacturing, warehousing and other operations in Goldsboro with two new sites totaling almost 300,000 square feet and adding 170 jobs.

The new plants will accommodate more growth in the future, he says. Altogether, Mt. Olive has more than 1 million square feet of production space, employs more than 500 and has sales topping \$220 million annually.

**Favorite family tradition:** Christmas Eve dinner

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Pinehurst

**What do you listen to on your commute:** CNBC

**Major inspiration:** Building a great team to lead Mt. Olive that continues to innovate and grow our company.

**Career highlight:** The Mt. Olive team executing our plan to become the No. 1 brand of pickles sold in the United States.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Exercise and golf.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Surround yourself with talented teammates.



Leah Wong Ashburn  
Lynn Bamford  
Jamie Bartholomaus  
Michael Bell  
Alex Bernhardt Jr.  
Stephen Bratspies  
Jim Bryan  
Wes Carter  
Ted Doheny  
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Bobby Frye  
Matt Gregory  
Hooper Hardison Jr.  
Frank Harrison III  
Stan Jewell  
Vimal Kapur  
Gregg Lowe  
Eugene Lowe III  
Robert Luddy  
Kent Masters  
Guy Meldrum  
Thomas Nelson  
Ward Nye  
Leib Oehmig  
Jordan Schindler  
Glenn Sherrill  
Alex Shuford  
Jim Shuford III  
Eddie Smith  
Harry Smith  
Sean Suggs  
Leon Topalian  
Anderson Warlick  
Howard Woltz III



## LEAH WONG ASHBURN

**owner, president, CEO | Highland Brewing**  
Asheville

Ashburn, 53, leads the city's original craft brewery and was named president in 2015. Her father, Oscar, founded the company in 1994 amid a successful engineering career. He initially nixed his daughter's request to work at Highland, so the UNC Chapel Hill journalism school graduate worked for a Charlotte yearbook publisher before signing on. She has been a leading promoter of Asheville and expanded opportunities for women in business.

**Favorite family tradition:** Sunday brunch. Slow food on a slow morning.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Wilmington

**What do you listen to on your commute:** NPR

**Major inspiration:** Oscar Wong, my father. He enjoys life fully and has that rare quality that brings people together with joy and purpose — true charisma.

**Career highlight:** Being a James Beard Award semi-finalist in the Beer, Wine and Spirits Professional category.

**Favorite hobby:** Sand volleyball

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** It really is collegial with fun benefits, fascinating science and great relationships. It's also not an easy road.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Beverages will continue to divide into smaller subsegments, such as adding alcohol to traditionally alcohol-free beverages, removing it from alcohol beverages, using non-traditional ingredients, and blending beverage categories.



## MICHAEL BELL

**senior vice president, general manager | Corning Optical Communications**  
Charlotte

Bell joined the fiber maker in Hickory in 1991 and became cable manufacturing manager for Corning Cable Systems America in 2004. He moved to his current post in 2012. After graduating from West Virginia University, he served four years as a Navy submarine officer. He has an MBA from UNC Chapel Hill.



## ALEX BERNHARDT JR.

**president, CEO | Bernhardt Furniture**  
Lenoir

He's the fourth generation to run the 134-year-old North Carolina furniture company. It's now one of the oldest family-run furniture companies in America. Bernhardt employs more than 1,500 people at eight N.C. factories and has manufacturing reps in 50-plus countries.



## STEPHEN BRATSPIES

**CEO | HanesBrands**  
Winston-Salem

The University of Pennsylvania MBA joined the 59,000-employee apparel maker in 2015 after senior management posts at Walmart and Frito-Lay. He became CEO in 2020. Shares have declined sharply over the last two years with a net loss of \$127 million in 2022. Bratspies is also a graduate of Franklin & Marshall College.



## JIM BRYAN

**president | Fairystone Fabrics**  
Burlington

Bryan managed Fairystone for more than a decade before buying the business from the founder's son, Tom Bobo, in 2011. Bryan spent 17 years with Burlington Industries prior to moving to Fairystone. The Burlington-based company makes a variety of fabric products, including materials for automobile interiors.



## LYNN BAMFORD

**chair, CEO | Curtiss-Wright**  
Davidson

The 30-year company veteran became CEO in 2021, then chair last year. The maker of high-tech components for aerospace, defense and power generation uses has \$2.6 billion in annual revenue. She has a master's in electrical engineering from George Mason University. The company's share price has doubled in the past three years.



## JAMIE BARTHOLOMAUS

**co-owner | Foothills Brewing**  
Winston-Salem

A North Carolina craft brewing pioneer, Foothills has three Winston-Salem locations including a brewing facility that churns out 40,000 barrels a year. Bartholomaus started brewing as a student at the University of Georgia, where he majored in anthropology.





## WES CARTER

**president | Atlantic Packaging**  
Wilmington

The UNC Chapel Hill graduate, 44, became president in 2016. He started working at the company, which was founded by his grandfather, at the age of 14. His father, Rusty, led rapid growth at the company, which is one of the biggest privately held U.S. packaging firms.

**Favorite family tradition:** We always travel to somewhere special for Christmas. We have Christmas morning in places that inspire us.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Wrightsville Beach and Cape Hatteras

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Usually the Grateful Dead.

**Major inspiration:** My father built an amazing business rooted in family values, ethics and culture. He has been able to maintain that culture even as the business has grown to global levels of influence.

**Career highlight:** Launching and building our sustainability initiative, A New Earth Project.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Playing the guitar. Nothing sets the tone and allows me to relax like playing music.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Be yourself. Regardless of the industry or organizations, we all need the unique talents and passions that only you can bring. Diversity of talent and collaboration is the secret to success in business and in life. Find something you are truly passionate about, learn it, drive it and then bring that passion to your industry. Inspire other people with your dedication to your talents and vision.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Massive shift away from environmentally problematic packaging to sustainable packaging.



## GEOFF FOSTER

**president, CEO | Core Technology Molding**  
Greensboro

Foster and his wife, Tonya, formed the company in 2006. The N.C. A&T State University industrial technology graduate also has an MBA from Wake Forest University. The former Corning Life Sciences manager has a patent for an electric-motor part that has been used in more than 31 million vehicles.

**Favorite family tradition:** Celebrating holidays with family.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Coastal for tourism and activities, and Outer Banks for peaceful purposes.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Music from the 60s to the 90s on Satellite XM radio.

**Major inspiration:** Dr. Harold Martin, chancellor at N.C. A&T State University. Leads the largest HBCU but does not settle and wants his faculty, students and alumni to continue to strive to be better. It's what Aggies do.

**Career highlight:** Ernst & Young Southeast Entrepreneur of the Year winner

**Favorite hobby:** Swimming

**Best advice for industry newcomer:** Stay focused and block out the outside noise.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Sustainable materials and energy sources



## MATT GREGORY

**chief customer officer, senior vice president of health and beauty | Clorox**  
Durham

Gregory has led 500 employees at the company's Durham office and Morrisville factory since 2017. A third location, housing the company's technology, finance and supply chain teams, opened in Durham earlier this year. Clorox bought Durham-based Burt's Bees, for \$1 billion in 2007.



## TED DOHENY

**president, CEO | Sealed Air**  
Charlotte

The packaging company's board extended Doheny's contract through 2027. He joined the company in 2017 and was named president and CEO four months later. Sealed Air is best known for Bubble Wrap, but it makes other packaging-related products. The Cornell University graduate previously worked as CEO of Milwaukee-based Joy Global.



## E. HOOPER HARDISON JR.

**CEO | Charlotte Pipe & Foundry**  
Charlotte

The UNC Chapel Hill graduate became CEO of Charlotte Pipe in 2022 in his 34th year with the pipe manufacturer. The Dowd family's 122-year-old company expects to open its new 500-employee Stanly County plant in August. He is on the boards of Queens University and Central Piedmont Community College.



## FRANK HARRISON III

**chair, CEO | Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated**

Charlotte

Harrison has chaired and been CEO of the nation's largest Coca-Cola bottler since 1996 after joining the family business in 1977. His great-grandfather introduced the soda to North Carolina in 1902. Revenue increased 13% to \$6.2 billion in 2022.



## GREGG LOWE

**president, CEO | Wolfspeed**  
Durham

In six years as CEO, Lowe has shifted Wolfspeed's focus from lighting products to semiconductors. The company is building plants in Germany, New York and Chatham County, entailing investments of more than \$9 billion. The former Texas Instruments executive is a former chair of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.



## STAN JEWELL

**president, CEO | Renfro Brands**  
Mount Airy

Jewell oversees a 2,000-employee, century-old sock manufacturing company with brands including Polo and Fruit of the Loom. Jewell joined as CEO in 2017 after spending 10 years at VF Corp. He's a Georgia Tech University graduate.



## ROBERT LUDDY

**president | CaptiveAire Systems**  
Raleigh

The kitchen-equipment company that Luddy founded in 1976 includes operations in eight states, 90 sales offices and more than 1,400 employees. It has continually added new facilities in recent years. The U.S. Army veteran is a LaSalle University graduate.



## VIMAL KAPUR

**chair, CEO | Honeywell**  
Charlotte

The native of India is succeeding Darius Adamczyk as the diversified company's top executive in June. He's been at the company for more than 30 years and was appointed president and chief operating officer last year after leading units in Houston and Atlanta. Adamczyk will become executive chair.



## KENT MASTERS

**chair, president, CEO | Albemarle Corp.**  
Charlotte

The Georgia Tech University graduate has led the largest U.S. lithium producer since 2020, a golden position as demand has skyrocketed for batteries for electric vehicles and devices. The former CEO of Foster Wheeler joined Albemarle's board in 2015 and became lead director in 2018. The company employs 5,400 employees in 100 countries, and is planning to reopen a Cleveland County mine in the next few years.



## EUGENE LOWE III

**president, CEO | SPX**  
Charlotte

The former Milliken & Co. executive leads about 4,500 employees in 17 countries. Revenue in 2022 was almost \$1.5 billion. SPX makes heating and air conditioning products. He has a bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech University and a Dartmouth MBA.



**GUY MELDRUM****president, CEO | Reynolds American**  
Winston-Salem

The New Zealand native has worked for Reynolds' parent, British American Tobacco, since 1998, including stints in Australia and Hong Kong. He moved to the top N.C. post in 2020. The Macquarie University graduate oversees about 4,300 employees, down 11% from a year earlier.

**THOMAS NELSON****chair, CEO | National Gypsum**  
Charlotte

The Harvard MBA graduate has run the wallboard manufacturer since 1999. The business had been acquired four years earlier by his late father-in-law, Charlotte investor C.D. Spangler Jr. A former member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond's board, Nelson also serves as board chair of Advocate Health, the parent of Atrium Health, and is a director at Yum! Brands, Bechtel and Milliken.

**WARD NYE****chair, CEO | Martin Marietta Materials**  
Raleigh

The Wake Forest University law graduate has led the 9,000-employee construction-supplies company since 2010. Annual revenue increased from \$1.5 billion to \$6.2 billion during his tenure. He practiced law in Raleigh before entering the aggregates industry in 2006.

**LEIB OEHMIG****president, CEO | Glen Raven**  
Burlington

Oehmig joined Glen Raven after graduating from Clemson University. He became CEO in 2017. Glen Raven is making a \$250 million capital expansion at plants in the Carolinas. Glen Raven produces the Sunbrella and Dickson fabric lines.

**JORDAN SCHINDLER****CEO, founder | Nufabrx**  
Conover

Starting from a dorm room at the University of Washington in 2011, Schindler founded the health-wear manufacturing company. The business ranked eighth on Deloitte's list of fastest-growing U.S. companies in 2021. He chose North Carolina for his operation because of its textile heritage and business-friendly climate.

**Favorite family tradition:** Summer trips together no matter what's going on and even though we're on separate coasts. Travel allows us all to get out of the daily routine and just enjoy spending time together.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Divine Llama Vineyards. Wine and llama in a beautiful North Carolina mountain setting, what's not to like?

**What do you listen to on commute:** "How I Built This" NPR podcast and audible books. Currently listening to "Worth Doing Wrong" by Arnie Malham, a great book about building a great culture and thinking about what truly matters to employees.

**Major inspiration:** All entrepreneurs, at any stage, in any industry. It is not easy making a choice to build something from scratch and laying it all on the line.

**Best advice to industry newcomers:** The intersection between traditional clothing and pharmaceuticals has a lot of challenges. Find people that have "been there and done that," network, get your hands dirty. Send that extra email, text or LinkedIn message; you are always one action away from a life-changing conversation.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The rise of smart materials, apparel and clothing to help simplify people's health and well-being; we call it HealthWear.



## GLENN SHERRILL

chairman, CEO | SteelFab

Charlotte

The N.C. State University graduate leads the family-owned steel fabrication business founded by his grandfather after World War II. He became CEO in 2017 after leading its Atlanta and Alabama divisions. Many of the tallest buildings in Charlotte and Atlanta have SteelFab steel. Sherrill chairs the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond's Charlotte board.

**Favorite family tradition:** Christmas Eve dinner at my mom's house.

**Favorite NC place to visit:** Too many places in our great state that I love to visit to pick one.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Playlist from Spotify or I am on the phone.

**Major inspiration:** My Dad, who passed in October of 2021. He believed in me and took the time to teach me the steel business. I think about him every day.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Have a nice dinner with family or friends.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Learn how to do everything you can in your chosen career. No job is too menial should be your approach. Avoid working from home, if you want to rise in your career you need to have "in person" interactions with your bosses and colleagues. Putting it another way, out of sight is out of mind.



## JAMES SHUFORD

chair | STM Industries

Hickory

In 1994, only two years after receiving an MBA from UNC Chapel Hill, Shuford joined the family's Shurtape division. He's steered the expansion of brands such as Painter's Mate and Duck. The Shuford family has run Catawba Valley area businesses since 1880.

**Favorite family tradition:** Beach trip with extended family each summer.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Figure 8 Island

**What do you listen to on your commute:** CNBC

**Career highlight:** Seeing my brother, Stephen, take over as CEO.

**Major inspiration:** My grandfather Harley Shuford — a serial entrepreneur.

**Favorite hobby:** Surf and snow skiing

**Key industry change in next five years:** Normalization of hybrid work



## ALEX SHUFORD III

CEO | RHF Investments

Hickory

Shuford is the third generation to lead Rock House Farm, started by his grandfather, and part of a prominent family of Hickory businessmen. The company, which bought the Classic Leather and St. Timothy Furniture companies last year, employs 1,750 at eight North Carolina factories.





## EDDIE SMITH

**owner, CEO | Grady-White Boats**  
Greenville

The UNC Chapel Hill graduate, 80, runs the boat-building company that he and his late wife, Jo Allison Smith, bought from its founder in 1968, nine years after its founding. About 450 workers turn out 26 models of boats from 18 feet to 45 feet long. He's a former chair of the National Marine Manufacturers Association.



## SEAN SUGGS

**president, N.C. plant | Toyota**  
**Battery Manufacturing**  
Liberty

The Auburn University graduate is director of the company's newest North America site in Randolph County. Suggs, 57, supervises construction of the project that entails an investment of more than \$3 billion. The plant will have four production lines and plans to hire 1,750 North Carolina employees. He joined the company in 2013.

**Favorite family tradition:** Creation of our annual Christmas calendar with all of my six kids and four grandkids.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Pinehurst. I love playing golf.

**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
Tony Evans

**Major inspiration:** I am a spiritual man, so my major inspiration is God.

**Career highlight:** Being able to lead this new project in North Carolina. We will be the first battery plant in North America.

**Favorite hobby after work:** I am a golf fanatic; I have now played golf in all 50 states.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Have a "I can, and I will" mentality. This industry requires inspiration and dedication. We need people that want to make a difference.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Electrification will require agility and speed. This market is growing rapidly and our ability to flex and adjust will be critical for our future success.



## HARRY SMITH

**CEO | Pamlico Air, Rise Capital**  
Washington

The former CEO of publicly traded Flanders Filters leads the filter manufacturer and his diversified investment company. In 2022, the 22,000-employee German industrial firm Mann + Hummel bought Pamlico, which had more than 1,600 employees. The East Carolina University graduate is a former chair of the UNC System Board of Governors.

**Favorite family tradition:** Spending time outdoors.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Atlantic Beach

**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
Business podcasts

**Major inspiration:** Warren Buffett — he's had enormous success but remains humble and lives simply.

**Career highlight:** Fixed or founded companies that now employ approximately 8,000 employees.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Boating with friends.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Be strong enough, do the right things and be very careful who you let in your inner circle. Do your homework on people.

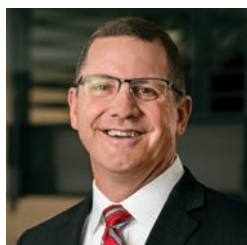
**Key industry change in next five years:**  
Automation and artificial intelligence.



## ANDERSON WARLICK

**chair, CEO | Parkdale Mills**  
Gastonia

Long among the most prominent U.S. textile executives, the 1979 Citadel graduate joined Parkdale in 1984. He later succeeded his father-in-law, Duke Kimbrell, as the company's CEO. Last year, he received a top award for service, leadership and ethics from his alma mater.



## LEON TOPALIAN

**president, chairman, CEO | Nucor**  
Charlotte

Topalian joined the company in 1996, became CEO in 2020, and was named board chair last year. The largest U.S. steel company saw profits rise to a record \$7.6 billion last year as revenue soared 14% to \$41.5 billion. He's a graduate of Massachusetts Maritime Academy.



## HOWARD WOLTZ III

**chair, president, CEO | Insteel**  
**Industries**  
Mount Airy

Woltz has been CEO at the company his grandfather founded since 1991 and has helped build Insteel into the largest U.S. maker of steel wire reinforcing products. Company revenues totaled \$827 million last year. Woltz holds both a bachelor's and an MBA from UNC Chapel Hill.

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Keith Holden  
Paola Jaramillo  
Afrique Kilimanjaro  
Leigh Ann Klee  
Ohavia Phillips  
Albert 'Trey' Rabon  
Whitney Shaw  
Brian Stading  
Marie Torres  
Ted Williams

## BRIAN STADING

CEO | Lumos Fiber

High Point

The 30-year telecommunications industry executive joined Lumos Fiber last year to help lead expansion of its broadband fiber network, which serves about 200,000 residences and small and midsize businesses in North Carolina and Virginia.

Lumos has said it will spend more than \$100 million to expand service in the Spartanburg and Columbia metro areas in South Carolina. It has a goal of reaching about 1 million new homes with fiber broadband within the next five years.

Lumos was formed by the 2021 merger of High Point-based NorthState Telecommunications and Waynesboro, Virginia-based Lumos Networks. Its principal owner is the EQT investment and private-equity firm headquartered in Sweden.

Stading previously was chief operating officer of Zply Fiber, a Kirkland, Washington-based company created when Frontier Communications spun off its local exchange carrier operations in several states.

He's a 30-year industry veteran with degrees from Aurora University and Northwestern University.

**Favorite family tradition:** Italian dinner on Christmas Eve

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Lake Norman

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Talk radio

**Major inspiration:** My dad. Because he is the most honest person I know.

**Career highlight:** I am living it now at Lumos

**Favorite hobby after work:** I truly enjoy playing golf.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be confident and always willing to try new things.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Improved access for our communities to high-speed internet. People need it to handle the demands of evolving digital life. And our mission is to bring high-speed fiber-optic internet into as many homes as possible.







## TIM BOYUM

anchor, 'Capital Tonight' host |  
Spectrum News 1

Raleigh

The Minnesota native and St. Cloud State University graduate is an anchor for Spectrum 1 News and hosts "Capital Tonight" for the dominant cable TV network. *The Washington Post* mentioned Boyum as one of the state's best political reporters, reflecting his ability to attract top newsmakers on the show, which airs on weekdays.

**Favorite family tradition:** The many family vacations we take together.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Outer Banks. I got married there.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Comedy podcasts — "Smartless Conan Needs a Friend."

**Major inspiration:** Everyday people — I find inspiration in taking political topics and traveling our state.

**Career highlight:** Interviewing a sitting president.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Watching sports with my family.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Listening is much more valuable than talking.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Continual migration to digital platforms and creating content specifically for those platforms.



## DAVID CRABTREE

CEO | UNC Public TV

Raleigh

Crabtree assumed his current role last year, replacing Lindsay Bierman. He's responsible for strategic direction, the organization's operation and overall leadership. He became one of the state's best-known journalists while working as an anchor and reporter at Raleigh's WRAL from 1994 to 2022. He was named to the N.C. Media Journalism Hall of Fame in April.

**Favorite family tradition:** Visiting the coast of North Carolina for holidays.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** All along the coastline.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** The Beatles' Channel on Sirius XM.

**Major inspiration:** William Friday. He was a friend and mentor who encouraged me to reach beyond myself.

**Career highlight:** There are too many to narrow the list to one.

**Favorite hobbies after work:** Listening to music, talking with friends, attending live performances of music and theater.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Never let anyone steal your dreams.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Difficulty staying true to the mission of one's business. Preventing the loudest voice from dominating decision-making.



## MICHELLE BUTT

president, general manager | WXII-12,  
The Triad CW

Winston-Salem

Butt was named president and general manager of WXII-TV in 2015 and assumed the same responsibilities at sister station WCWG/The Triad CW in 2018. WXII and WCWG are part of Hearst Communications, which had 2022 revenue of about \$12 billion. She is a graduate of Old Dominion University.



## JIM GOODMAN

CEO | Capitol Broadcasting Co.

Raleigh

After attending Duke University and serving in the U.S. Navy, Goodman learned the Capitol business from his grandfather, founder A.J. Fletcher. As CEO since 1979, he has shifted day-to-day leadership to his sons, Jimmy and Michael. Capitol continues to diversify beyond broadcasting with real estate, private equity and Minor League Baseball investments.



## DONALD CURTIS

chair, CEO | Curtis Media Group

Raleigh

He started selling radio ads at age 15 and had his own show before he graduated from Bessemer City High School. His company now owns more than 60 AM and FM signals across North Carolina and ranks among the biggest independent U.S. radio operators. A major donor to UNC Chapel Hill, he still hosts his own shows on his WPTF AM station in Raleigh.

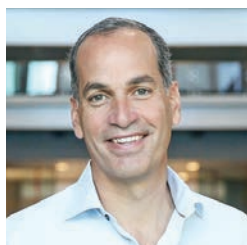


## KEITH HOLDEN

CEO | Focus Broadband

Shallotte

Holden became CEO of one of the state's largest, member-owned communications services companies in 2018 and is presiding over continued expansion. Focus, formerly Atlantic Telephone Membership Cooperative, expanded into Pender County last year and received a \$24.6 million grant to extend services in Robeson County.



## RIC ELIAS

CEO | Red Ventures

Indian Land, South Carolina

Elias has built one of the nation's most valuable media companies, headquartered in a Charlotte suburb. He's famous for surviving the "Miracle on the Hudson" Flight 1549 plane crash and for being a philanthropist, including helping raise money for Charlotte's historically Black Johnson C. Smith University. Red Ventures has more than 3,500 employees.

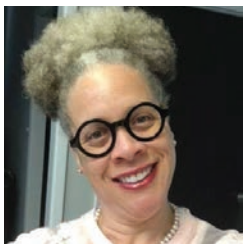


## PAOLA JARAMILLO

co-founder, executive editor, Enlace  
Latino NC

Raleigh

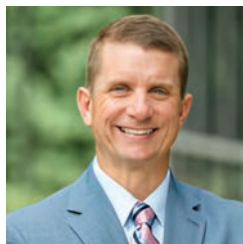
The veteran journalist has worked for Spanish language media outlets across North Carolina. She co-founded the non-profit Enlace Latino five years ago to bring news in Spanish to rural North Carolina. Jaramillo is a native of Colombia and a graduate of Universidad Autonoma de Occidente in California.



## AFRIQUE KILIMANJARO

**editor, publisher | Carolina Peacemaker**  
Greensboro

Kilimanjaro edits and manages the paper her father founded in 1967. It's the longest-running weekly in Guilford County and one of the better-known African American papers in the state. Kilimanjaro graduated from North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro and earned a master's in health care from Emory University.



## ALBERT 'TREY' RABON

**North Carolina president | AT&T**  
Wake Forest

Rabon is a longtime employee of AT&T and its predecessors, including eight years leading the media giant's public policy efforts in Raleigh. He was named to his current post in 2019. The Camden, South Carolina, native has bachelor's and MBA degrees from the University of South Carolina.



## WHITNEY SHAW

**president, CEO | American City Business Journals**  
Charlotte

In 2009, the Wake Forest University graduate succeeded his late father, Ray, at the chain of 44 local business newspapers. ACBJ's publications employ 1,400, including outposts in Charlotte, Greensboro and Raleigh. Shaw started *Business North Carolina* in 1981 before joining his father. He has a master's from UNC Chapel Hill.



## LEIGH ANN KLEE

**president | Pace Communications**  
Greensboro

Klee joined Pace Communications in 1997 after working for Ernst & Young and Walt Disney Co. She is in charge of finance, IT, legal, print production and human resources. Pace Communications is the largest woman-owned, independent, full-service marketing agency in North America. She is a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill.



## OHAVIA PHILLIPS

**CEO | 'The Oh Show'**  
Charlotte

The Walden University graduate has been a successful media personality and was named Best Local Celebrity and Best Activist by Queen City Nerve. Phillips hosts "The Oh Show," and serves as an in-arena host with the Charlotte Hornets and Greensboro Swarm.

**Favorite family tradition:** We are starting one with a first family cruise.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** I am a fan of the Harvey B. Gantt Center, The Mint Museum, the Levine Museum of the New South.

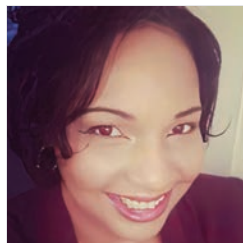
**What do you listen to on your commute:** Everything from Jay Z to Drake, reggae, calypso, Afrobeat, and Amapiano.

**Career highlight:** Bringing on two teammates for my media company. My favorite part of it is being able to pay them in money and experiences.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Put on Lofi chill beats, drink tea, check in with loved ones and online shop.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Take the limits off. Recognize that the media is broad, and there are so many ways to thrive in your own uniqueness. Be fluid as you are building your business, collaborate intentionally, do it all to find what gels with your authenticity.

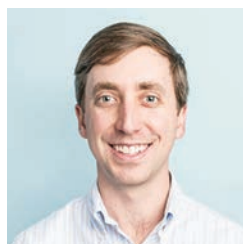
**Key industry change in next five years:** More diversity on television from skin tones, to backgrounds, hair textures, and individuals breaking the status quo on how people in television and/or media should look.



## MARIE TORRES

**managing editor, TV News Spectrum Networks**  
Raleigh

The UNC Greensboro graduate is a veteran TV producer who joined the cable TV network in 2016. She was named to her new post in January, and now directs news coverage for Spectrum's North Carolina operations. She previously worked in TV news jobs in eastern North Carolina and Virginia.



## TED WILLIAMS

**general manager | Axios Local**  
Charlotte

Williams launched the *Charlotte Agenda* digital newsletter in 2015, then sold it to private-equity-based Axios for \$5 million in 2020. The Washington & Lee University graduate helped lead Axios' U.S. local news expansion. In March, he said he'll leave the company to focus on his young children. Last year, Cox Media paid \$525 million for Axios.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** High Point. My in-laws live there.

**Career highlight:** Axios acquired the *Charlotte Agenda*. The teams then used the model to quickly expand to 25 U.S. cities.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Throwing the baseball with my son and doing pretend shows with my daughters. It's a reminder of how much more rewarding strong relationships are than any type of business success.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Go build something. There's never been a better time to start something new.

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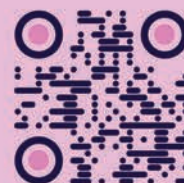
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Michael Blackwell  
Elizabeth Brazas  
Richard Brunson  
William Buster  
Amy Cabbage  
Keith Fishburne  
Laura Gerald  
Franklin Graham  
Cecilia Holden  
Lenora Jarvis-Mackey  
Thomas Lawrence  
Rhett Mabry  
Brian Maness  
Jim Melvin  
Susan Mims  
Mary Claudia 'MC' Belk Pilon  
Julie Porter  
Pilar Rocha-Goldberg  
LaTida Smith  
Charles Thomas  
Bob Wagner  
Jennifer Tolle Whiteside

### WILLIAM BUSTER

**CEO | New Hanover Community Endowment**  
Wilmington

It was a cross-state move, from Asheville to Wilmington, but William Buster, president and CEO of the New Hanover Community Endowment, remains on familiar turf — helping health care organizations make fundamental transitions in how they serve the public.

In the west, he was senior vice president of Dogwood Health Trust, which managed the proceeds of Mission Health System's \$1.5 billion sale to Nashville, Tennessee-based HCA Healthcare, and on the coast, juggling the public's share of New Hanover Regional Medical Center's \$1.5 billion sale to Winston-Salem based Novant Health.

Named to his role a year ago, his mission is to improve health, education, safety, and economic opportunity for the region.

Buster, over a span of nearly a decade beginning in 2007, earned degrees in public policy and administration from N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro, the University of New Hampshire and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

He put his education to work in positions such as executive vice president of community investments at the St. David's Health Foundation, which works for health equity in central Texas; with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and as a program officer for the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation in Winston-Salem.

He's been active all along in racial justice roles, including serving on the Minority Farmer Advisory Committee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.





## MICHAEL BLACKWELL

**CEO | Baptist Children's Homes**  
Thomasville

Under his 40 years of leadership, ministries and services have expanded to include North Carolina and parts of South Carolina. He has authored six books, some on the history of his institution, others on leadership in nonprofit organizations.

**Favorite family tradition:** Thanksgiving dinner

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Black Mountain

**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
Pandora. It gets the energy flowing and I sing along.

**Major inspiration:** My wife, Catherine Blackwell, because of her enduring patience and infinite wisdom.

**Career highlight:** Forty years as president/CEO of the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina.

**Favorite hobby:** Assuming my alter ego of Big Daddy Cool.

**Best advice for industry newcomer:**  
Be curious, compassionate, courageous, courteous

**Key industry change in next five years:**  
More emphasis on foster care, adoption and foster care leading to adoption.



## AMY CUBBAGE

**president | NC Partnership for Children**

Raleigh

Cubbage was a teacher after earning a degree from Brown University. She went on to earn a law degree from Northeastern University. She gained her current position in 2020, overseeing Smart Start, North Carolina's comprehensive system that prepares kids to enter school.



## KEITH FISHBURNE

**president, CEO | Special Olympics North Carolina**

Morrisville

About 40,000 individuals with disabilities participate annually in Special Olympics programs through the group he's led since 1997. He joined the nonprofit in 1989. It has an annual budget of about \$6.5 million and relies on thousands of volunteers.



## ELIZABETH BRAZAS

**president, CEO | Community Foundation of Western NC**

Asheville

Brazas joined the foundation following a career in wealth management at Wachovia/Wells Fargo and the Threshold Group. The Davidson grad has a law degree from the University of South Carolina. The foundation, with \$400 million in assets, provides grants of about \$10 million annually across 18 western North Carolina counties.



## LAURA GERALD

**president | Katie B. Reynolds Charitable Trust**

Winston-Salem

After graduating medical school from Johns Hopkins University Dr. Gerald began her career as a pediatrician in her hometown of Lumberton. She has bachelor's and master's degrees from Harvard University. She joined the Reynolds trust in 2016. It makes annual gifts averaging \$24 million and has more than \$500 million in assets.



## RICHARD BRUNSON

**executive director | NC Baptists on Mission**

Cary

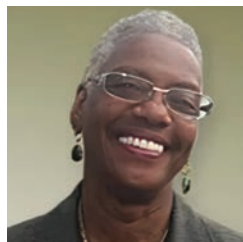
Brunson has served in his current role for 30 years. The group is currently supporting Ukrainian refugees through volunteer teams in countries surrounding the conflict. He has degrees from Gardner-Webb University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.



## FRANKLIN GRAHAM

**president, CEO | Samaritan's Purse**  
Boone

The son of famed evangelist Billy and Ruth Bell Graham is a key voice among evangelical Christians. Boone-based Samaritan's Purse, with revenue about \$900 million annually, provides food, medicine and other assistance to more than 100 countries through a variety of mission and disaster relief programs. It employs more than 4,000 on a full- or part-time basis. He has a bachelor's degree from Appalachian State University.



## LENORA JARVIS-MACKEY

**president, CEO | River City Community Development Corp.**

Elizabeth City

The Elizabeth City State University graduate has led the nonprofit for 30 years. It serves northeastern North Carolina with programs focused on job development, youth engagement, and wellness. Last year she was named to the foundation board at her alma mater. In 2021, the university awarded her an honorary doctorate degree.



## CECILIA HOLDEN

**CEO | myfutureNC**  
Raleigh

Holden was named myfutureNC's first CEO in late 2019. The nonprofit's clear goal is to help 2 million North Carolinians earn a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by 2030. She holds degrees from UNC Wilmington and Duke University. She previously was chief of staff at the N.C. Department of Commerce.

**Favorite family traditions:** Beach time with family and friends, birthdays at my mom's, and Thanksgiving with my in-laws.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Wrightsville Beach

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Gospel singer Emily Ann Roberts

**Major inspiration:** My faith and family keep me grounded.

**Career highlight:** Some rewarding highlights and defining moments include: (1) worldwide recognition for technology that fully automated Wake County's criminal justice system; (2) global leadership for IBM technical support centers; (3) chief of staff at N.C. Commerce under the late Secretary John Skvarla III; (4) legislative director at State Board of Education and (5) leading the state's charge to increase educational attainment alongside the myFutureNC team and our strategic partners.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Relax in front of a fire in the winter or on the front porch in the summer.

**Best advice for industry newcomer:** Stay grounded in your "why" and don't let what you can't do get in the way of what you can do.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Use of artificial intelligence and data will play a transformative role in most industries.



## THOMAS LAWRENCE

**president | The Leon Levine Foundation**

Charlotte

The former Arthur Andersen staffer has worked at the foundation since 2002. Its assets total nearly \$600 million, with annual grants of about \$25 million to charitable interests in Charlotte and beyond. The University of Richmond graduate previously worked in family wealth planning. Leon Levine, who died April 5, founded the Family Dollar discount-store chain.

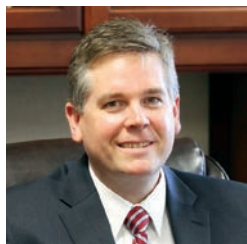


## RHETT MABRY

**CEO | Duke Endowment**  
Charlotte

The Greensboro native joined the 99-year-old foundation in 1992, becoming the top executive in 2016. It had assets of \$5.9 billion in 2021 and provides nearly \$200 million in annual grants. Mabry earned a bachelor's degree at UNC Chapel Hill and a master's of health administration at Duke University.





## BRIAN MANESS

**president, CEO | Children's Home Society of North Carolina**

Greensboro

The UNC Greensboro MBA joined the society in 2002 and became CEO in 2014. During his tenure, he has helped expand the society's mission of helping foster and adopt children to a variety of programs focused on strengthening families.



## JIM MELVIN

**president | The Joseph M. Bryan Foundation**

Greensboro

Greensboro's mayor from 1971 to 1981 eventually earned the informal title "Mr. Greensboro" for his decades of civic leadership. The retired banker joined the foundation funded by a Jefferson-Pilot Corp. executive and heir. His latest coup was helping to recruit Toyota's massive electric battery plant to nearby Randolph County.



## SUSAN MIMS

**CEO | Dogwood Health Trust**

Asheville

Mims was named interim CEO at Dogwood in 2020 and permanent CEO and president in 2022. Dogwood formed after the 2018 sale of Asheville's Mission Health and has \$1.5 billion in assets. It has approved multiyear grants of \$102 million. Mims holds a medical degree from UNC Chapel Hill. She held executive posts at Mission Health before its sale.

# A leader with a compass in his mind and a magnet in his heart!

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### MARY CLAUDIA 'MC' BELK PILON

**president, board chair | John M. Belk Foundation**

Charlotte

The Roanoke College graduate has made the \$450 million foundation a force in N.C. educational improvement efforts since 2012. She previously worked in retail management. She is the granddaughter of William Henry Belk, who founded the department store chain, and daughter of Claudia Belk and former CEO and Charlotte Mayor John Belk.



### PILAR ROCHA-GOLDBERG

**president, CEO | El Centro Hispano**  
Durham

Since 2009, Rocha-Goldberg, 55, has led El Centro, which provides health, advocacy and economic development to Hispanic/Latinx communities throughout the Triangle. She was previously a nutritionist at Duke University Medical Center.

**Favorite family tradition:** Getting together for Thanksgiving.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Bald Head Island

**What do you listen to on your commute:** NPR

**Major inspiration:** My mom, because she was a strong, dedicated woman.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Folkloric dancing

**Best advice for industry newcomer:** Set up time for yourself to be able to manage the stress.

**Key industry change in next five years:** More inclusion of community members in general.



### JULIE PORTER

**president | DreamKey Partners**

Charlotte

Porter has led the nonprofit housing group, which was formerly named Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, for 10 years. She graduated from Wichita State University. She left the banking industry in 2000 to start working in community development in the Kansas City area.

**Favorite family tradition:** Annual trout fishing vacation

**Major inspiration:** Grassroots organizations that advocate every day to bring resources to their communities to improve the quality of life for ordinary residents.

**Career highlight:** Being trusted with the reigns of DreamKey Partners.

**Favorite hobby after work:** The commute home. It's when I decompress and reflect on "what's next."

**Key industry change in next five years:** An overhaul of how subsidy works.



### LATIDA SMITH

**president | The Winston-Salem Foundation**  
Winston-Salem

Smith became the first woman and person of color to head the 104-year-old foundation in 2021. She has a degree from Ohio Wesleyan University and a master's from Ohio State University. The foundation, with assets of \$500 million-plus, focuses on inclusivity and equity in education. She had been president of the Pennsylvania-based Moses Taylor Foundation.



## CHARLES THOMAS

**director | Knight Foundation**  
Charlotte

A photographer with a Duke University economics degree, Thomas joined the Knight Foundation as director in 2016 after leading Queen City Forward, an entrepreneurial collective, for six years. The Knight Foundation supports democracy and free expression through programs in cities where the Knight family once published newspapers, including *The Charlotte Observer*.



## BOB WAGNER

**executive director | Mountain True**  
Asheville

The Wake Forest University grad came to the environmental group 10 years ago after 12 years with Habitat for Humanity, where he supervised house-building programs in Africa; and a nine-year stint with the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina. Mountain True champions resilient forests, clean waters, and healthy communities in the Southern Blue Ridge.



## JENNIFER TOLLE WHITESIDE

**president, CEO | North Carolina Community Foundation**  
Raleigh

Whiteside became CEO in 2007 and since that time has led the organization to doubling its assets and grant-making. She previously led Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina. Whiteside is past chair of the N.C. Child Fatality Task Force.

**Favorite family tradition:** Both sides of my family love enjoying a good sunset with a cocktail and dry-roasted peanuts.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** In my backyard with my family and three dogs.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** My husband's radio show show, "Under the Influence." It previews musical acts coming to the Triangle and airs on community radio station WCOM (103.5FM).

**Major inspiration:** North Carolinians who work with us every day to build community through philanthropic giving.

**Career highlight:** Becoming the second CEO/president of the North Carolina Community Foundation and getting to lead this organization during a period of growth.

**Favorite hobbies after work:** Walking my dogs or paddleboarding on a nearby lake.

**Best advice for industry newcomer:** The work is not about you — it is about the mission and how you support others to be successful and contribute to the mission. Also, hire people who know more than you and then get out of their way.





Natalie Batten  
Tripp Beacham  
Joseph Budd  
Tom Calloway  
Jim Canfield  
Malcomb Coley Sr.  
Neil Deans  
Mark Dirks  
Caroline Helwig Dudley  
Rick French  
John Giannuzzi  
Eric Grindley  
Terri Hall  
Paul Koch  
Anna Lynch  
David Mullen  
Jeffrey Paine  
Kent Panther  
Joe Paradise  
Chad Parker  
Jim Parker  
Katherine Peele  
Crawford Pounds  
Brandon Rucker  
Matt Ryan  
Lee Sisco  
Matt Snow  
Willy Stewart  
Randall Taylor  
Donald Thompson  
Michelle Thompson

## NATALIE BATTEN

managing director | Accenture  
Raleigh

Batten leads the 900-plus employee Raleigh office of Accenture, the Ireland-based consulting firm that has 738,000 staffers in more than 120 counties.

Her job involves managing the state of North Carolina account. Batten chairs the N.C. Technology Association's board of directors and helps encourage more students to enter science and technology careers. She's also a longtime volunteer and former board member with Dress for Success Triangle NC, which helps women achieve economic independence for themselves and their families.

The North Carolina native has degrees in political science and communications from UNC Chapel Hill. She's fond of biking and running on Raleigh's extensive greenway system. Favorite N.C. place to visit: I don't love running, but running on the Wilmington boardwalk by the river on a sunny day will almost convince me that I do. That and an ice cream afterward.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** What I listen to depends on when: "Start Here" in the morning to catch up on key news stories; midday maybe a bit of an audio book (I'm alternating between "Give and Take" and "How Women Rise"); and to close out the day, anything that makes me laugh.

**Major inspiration:** My teams. Watching them come together, do the right things for our clients, and support each other along the way inspires me every time.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Cooking dinner at home while catching up with my family on how the day went. I love to cook and to try out new dishes across all cuisines — it's my creative outlet.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Consulting is all about learning fast, adapting to change, and making an impact; that can be overwhelming at times. My advice is to remember the knowledge you're bringing with you, soak up the new pieces like a sponge, and give yourself grace as you're combining the two. Inevitably, you'll think back on your past self and be blown away by how much more you know. Trust the process.





## TRIPP BEACHAM

managing principal | BB+M  
Architecture

Charlotte

With degrees from UNC Charlotte, Beacham leads an architectural group with partners Brian Bunce and Roger Manley that employs more than 70. Beacham joined in 2005 after working for Jenkins-Peer Architects. The group has a focus on mixed-use housing and office buildings.

**Favorite family tradition:** Traveling to new places with my wife and kids.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Wrightsville Beach

**What do you listen to on your commute:** My Apple Music Playlist on Shuffle.

**Major inspiration:** My father for his selflessness and my mother for her tenacity.

**Top career highlight:** The talented team we have built at BB+M. Never in my wildest dreams would I have guessed we would have worked our way into partnering with such great clients on such great projects. Every once in a while we pause to look back at the last 18 years. It is just humbling.

**Favorite hobbies after work:** Glass of wine, good music in the kitchen, and figuring out how to make a great meal out of whatever is in the refrigerator. Anything outdoors, preferably with family — boating, hiking, golf, fishing and beach chair.



## MALCOMB COLEY SR.

Central Region private leader,  
Charlotte managing partner | EY

Charlotte

The 30-plus year Ernst & Young veteran has been an active civic leader since his move to Charlotte in 2013. The UNC Wilmington MBA graduate is a trustee at his alma mater, past chair of the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance and co-chair of the Mayor's Racial Equity Initiative.

**Favorite family tradition:** Thanksgiving

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Wilmington

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Rap music

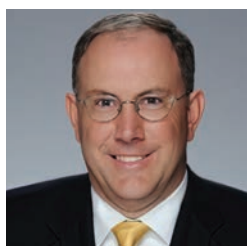
**Major inspiration:** Former Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson. He truly had the courage to lead.

**Career highlight:** Leading the Mayor's Racial Equity Initiatives.

**Favorite hobby:** Relaxing and playing chess with my daughter, Tana.

**Best advice to industry newcomers:** Persistency, perseverance and willingness to make mistakes and learn from them.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Further diversification of service offerings in consulting and technology.



## JOSEPH BUDD

CEO | The Budd Group

Winston-Salem

In 2001, Budd bought the janitorial and facility services business from his father, Richard Budd. His brother is U.S. Sen. Ted Budd. The Wake Forest graduate started in the company's sales department after college. It now has 4,000 employees and operates in 12 states and Washington, D.C.



## NEIL DEANS

senior vice president | Kimley-Horn

Raleigh

Deans began working part time for the planning and engineering firm in 1993 before he graduated from N.C. State University. He now leads business development and growth strategies for the company's 10 sites in the Carolinas, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee. Kimley-Horn has about 100 offices and more than 6,000 employees.



## TOM CALLOWAY

principal | CJMW Architecture

Winston-Salem

One of nine principals at CJMW Architecture, Calloway leads on projects throughout the Twin City. An N.C. State University graduate, most recently he's been a leading force behind YWCA Gateway, Hilltop House and Forsyth County Public Safety Building.



## JIM CANFIELD

president, CEO | WithersRavenel

Cary

The N.C. State University graduate was hired by civil engineering firm WithersRavenel in 1990, just four years after the company hired its first employee. Now the firm is 100% employee owned and has nine locations across the state.



## MARK DIRKS

CEO, co-founder | BeaconTechnologies

Greensboro

Dirks co-founded the digital marketing firm in 1998 after working for AT&T for 15 years. Beacon clients have included Google and Accenture. He has a bachelor's from Wake Forest University and a master's in computer systems from Kansas State University. He's an executive committee director at the NC Tech Association.



## CAROLINA HELWIG DUDLEY

**managing director, global lead, talent & human potential/talent acquisition | Accenture**

Charlotte

The Duke University graduate, who played collegiate field hockey, joined the consulting firm in 2000. She was a client account lead for major financial businesses before taking top roles in recruiting in North America, then globally. She's been active in the Charlotte Urban League, Charlotte Regional Business Alliance and Women's Impact Fund.



## TERRI HALL

**president | Clark Nexsen**

Raleigh

The founding member of the design firm's Raleigh office, Hall has more than 26 years of engineering and project management experience. She was named president in 2016, four years after becoming the Virginia Beach, Virginia-based firm's first female board member. She has an engineering degree from Old Dominion University.



## JOHN GIANNUZZI

**Carolinas managing partner | Deloitte**

Charlotte

This Duke University graduate oversees nearly 1,800 people and has been with the company for 20-plus years. He's responsible for strategy and direction of Deloitte's client service, corporate citizenship, and inclusion efforts. He has been a board member at Blumenthal Performing Arts, Opera Carolina and other groups.

**Favorite family tradition:** Dinner table debates, primarily over holiday meals. My wife and our four sons learn, connect and exchange different ideas and opinions during our meals.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Holden Beach

**What do you listen to on your commute:**

When I ride my bike, the busy sounds of Uptown Charlotte.

**Major inspiration:** My 95-year-old parents instilled in me strong values, a good work ethic, and a love for learning. Coach K is a close third.

**Career highlight:** Getting to lead our Carolinas practice and represent Deloitte in the Charlotte community that I love. It's an honor to work with such a talented and dedicated group of professionals and to have the opportunity to make a positive impact in our community.

**Favorite hobby after work:** A bike ride or walking my dog.

**Best advice to industry newcomers:** Make a good first impression. Be agile and adaptable.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Increasing importance of artificial intelligence.



## RICK FRENCH

**chairman, CEO | French/West/Vaughan**

Raleigh

The Oakland University graduate founded the marketing agency in 1997 and now employs more than 130 people. In early 2023 he acquired Detroit's The Millerschin Group, a transportation-focused marketing agency. He's a trustee of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum and part owner of a Minor League Baseball team in Daytona Beach, Florida.

**Favorite family tradition:** Attending Carolina Hurricanes hockey games together.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** North Topsail Island

**What do you listen to on your commute:** "The Highway" on SiriusXM

**Major inspiration:** My father, who has always acted with kindness and integrity.

**Career highlight:** Being named PR Agency Leader of the Year five times.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Playing ice hockey, which I do several times a week. Or playing in a men's fast-pitch baseball league on weekends.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be fearless in putting forward smart, creative ideas.

**Key industry change in next five years:** AI may replace some of the work we are doing, but it isn't a substitute (just yet) for breakthrough ideas that shape beliefs or change minds.



## ERIC GRINDLEY

**CEO, founder | Esquire Advertising**

Raleigh

The University of Florida law graduate founded the marketing agency in 2012 to help furniture and mattress retailers attract clients. In April, the business was named Partner of the Year by the Home Furnishings Association. He co-owned a race horse, Three Technique, that won a race last year at Kentucky's famed Churchill Downs.



## PAUL KOCH

**vice president | Stantec Consulting Services**

Raleigh

This N.C. State University graduate joined the Edmonton, Alberta-based company in 1997 after working for N.C. Department of Transportation. He is regional leader for five Southeast states, helping oversee project management. He cites the improvements of College Road in Wilmington as among his favorite projects.





## ANNA LYNCH

**CEO | Lynch Mykins**

Raleigh

The N.C. State University graduate has been with Lynch Mykins since 2004, when it was known as Stroud Pence. Current leadership purchased the structural engineering firm in 2017, rebranding it and growing to more than 70 staff members. She's also an avid dancer, from the foxtrot to the salsa.



## JEFFREY PAINE

**managing principal | Duda|Paine Architects**

Durham

Paine has helped design millions of square feet of projects across the nation since founding his architecture business with Turan Duda in 1997. He has a bachelor's degree from Syracuse University. In 2016, he spent eight weeks as a visiting scholar at the American Academy in Rome.



## DAVID MULLEN

**CEO, partner | The Variable**

Winston-Salem

After joining the marketing business in 2013, the University of South Carolina graduate became president in 2017 and CEO last year. Its growth and workplace strategies have won national honors. Last year, the agency created the "Woombie," a pink plushie in protest of the Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade.

**Favorite family tradition:** Instead of getting our four daughters presents for Christmas, they draw a sister's name and buy presents for that sister. Each girl gets excited for their sister to open the presents they picked out.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Montreat and Black Mountain's laid-back vibe, great restaurants and the ability to walk out of the door and right onto a trail.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Jay-Z, Jeezy and Wayne to Meek Mill, J. Cole and Drake. On the way home, I wind down with The National Parks, Drew Holcomb and Luke Combs.

**Major inspiration:** My wife and kids saying they're proud of something I'm a part of means the most to me.

**Career highlight:** Being part of the team that built The Variable.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Laughing with my wife and friends while telling stories from the day.

**Best advice to industry newcomers:** You have to be curious and self-driven. That means your first idea is rarely your best idea.

**Key industry change in next five years:** AI will change access to information, create efficiency, and help deliver starting points that help talented, creative people develop big ideas faster.



## KENT PANTHER

**president, CEO | Wray Ward**

Charlotte

Panther succeeded Jennifer Appleby as CEO of the marketing agency in January, 19 years after joining the company. He previously ran his own marketing business. The Miami University graduate helped Wray Ward make inroads into various home improvement industries, which form a key anchor for the agency.



## JOE PARADISE

**Carolinas managing partner | KPMG LLP**

Charlotte

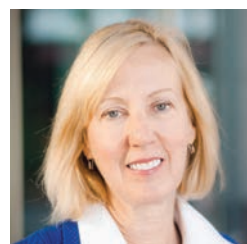
In his role with the accounting agency, Paradise oversees about 10 offices with more than 1,000 employees in the Carolinas. The Florida State University graduate became a partner in 2005 and led the Raleigh office before taking his current post in Charlotte in 2016.

**CHAD PARKER****managing director | Gensler**  
Raleigh

This N.C. State University architecture graduate joined Gensler in 2011 after a merger with a business he founded. His Gensler projects for corporate headquarters and mixed-use developments have won industry awards. He's a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity and a past president of N.C. State's Young Alumni Council.

**JIM PARKER****CEO | Summit Design and Engineering Services**  
Hillsborough

The N.C. State University graduate and former DOT engineer joined land surveyor Alois Callemyn to start their business in 1997, then rebranded in 2004. Summit now employs 400 people across eight offices in the Carolinas and others in Colorado, Florida and Virginia. Parker grew up in Durham.

**KATHERINE PEELE****chair, principal, chief practice officer | LS3P**  
Cary

This N.C. State University graduate joined the architecture firm in 1988 at a predecessor firm, Boney Architects. In October 2022, she was named board chair. She has managed more than \$1 billion worth of construction. LS3P has five N.C. offices, plus others in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

**CRAWFORD POUNDS****managing partner, southeast market | PricewaterhouseCoopers**  
Charlotte

The University of Alabama graduate has been with PricewaterhouseCoopers for more than 30 years and in his current role since 2014. He oversees more than 1,000 employees and key client relationships. He is active with civic organizations including YMCA of Greater Charlotte and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation.

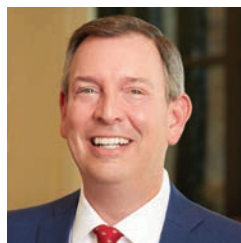
**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Bald Head Island. For a place that is so close, it feels like we are really getting away and there is nothing like the excitement we feel when we get on the ferry to the island.

**Major inspiration:** I am so inspired by the countless acts of care and support I see from our employees every day supporting each other, our clients, and our communities. On a personal note, my mother was the most faithful servant of others I have ever known.

**Career highlight:** The opportunity to work with incredible people and see them come together to serve our clients and communities in such an impactful way.

**Best advice to industry newcomers:** Have a great attitude, be the best team player you can be, and take every opportunity you can to learn from others.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Issues related to environmental, social governance.

**BRANDON RUCKER****partner, audit practice leader | RSM**  
Charlotte

Rucker joined the London-based consulting firm in 1996 and became a partner 10 years later. He oversees more than 700 audit professionals. He's a first-generation college graduate with a degree from Western Kentucky University. RSM, which rebranded from McGladrey in 2015, has offices in Charlotte, Greensboro and Raleigh.

**MATT RYAN****president, CEO | S&ME**  
Raleigh

The George Mason University graduate was named president and CEO in 2018, drawing on his 30-plus years of experience in engineering and construction to lead the employee-owned company. Last year, the company expanded into the Memphis, Tennessee, market. He was a longtime HDR manager before moving to S&ME.



## RANDALL TAYLOR

**senior vice president, chief operating officer - U.S. and Latin America | Aecom**

Raleigh

The 26-year company employee was promoted to his current rank in October after previously leading the company's eastern U.S. region. He's an N.C. State University graduate. The Dallas-based engineering and consulting company had revenue of \$13.1 billion last year and a market value of about \$11 billion.



## LEE SISCO

**East Region federal director | HDR**

Charlotte

Sisco was a Navy executive officer of a nuclear submarine in Hawaii before joining the Omaha, Nebraska-based company in 2016. He manages the architectural and engineering company's federal business in the eastern U.S. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Arizona and a master's from the National Defense University.



## DONALD THOMPSON

**CEO | The Diversity Movement chair | WalkWest**

Raleigh

Since its formation in 2019, Thompson's diversity consulting firm has attracted more than 100 clients seeking a more equitable working environment. He's led two Triangle tech firms that were sold to large companies and helped build the WalkWest marketing agency. The highly ranked racquetball player left East Carolina University early to start working full time.



## MATT SNOW

**chair | Forvis**

Charlotte

The Wake Forest University graduate was CEO for Charlotte's Dixon Hughes Goodman before it merged with Missouri-based BKD last year and rebranded as Forvis. The name stands for "forward vision." The two companies have combined annual revenue of \$1.4 billion and 5,700 employees. Forvis added a south Florida office in March.



## MICHELLE THOMPSON

**CEO | Cherry Bekaert**

Raleigh

Thompson, who joined the tax and advisory firm in Fayetteville in 1998, was named CEO in 2018. An industry group included her in its Most Powerful Women in Accounting list in 2022. Boston-based Parthenon Capital made an investment in the business last year. She has a bachelor's from UNC Chapel Hill and a master's from the University of South Carolina.



## WILLY STEWART

**chairman, CEO | Stewart**

Raleigh

The Colombia native and N.C. State University graduate founded his engineering practice in 1994 in a one-room office and now oversees about 200 employees at eight offices in the Carolinas. He chairs the WakeMed Hospital board of directors.





## AARON THOMAS

CEO | Metcon

Pembroke

Aaron Thomas credits his late grandfather, Curt Locklear, with teaching him what it takes to be successful.

The Lumbee Indian businessman started a one-room hardware store in Pembroke after serving in World War II. That small business would grow to become one of the largest True Value-franchised retail centers and lumber yards in the eastern U.S., Thomas says. "He made sure that any minute I was not in school, I was at work with him," says Thomas.

Sparked by his grandfather's mentoring starting at age 10, Thomas started his general contracting firm at age 24 in 1999. It has completed more than 700 projects and become one of the state's fastest-growing major contractors. It's the largest minority-owned construction company in the Carolinas with offices in Charlotte, Fayetteville, Pembroke and Raleigh, along with Columbia and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and National Harbor, Maryland.

Thomas has forged close relationships with state political leaders and serves on the executive board of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

"[My grandfather] taught me the value in a hard day's work and how to always take care of your customers and your community, which he did, and is at the heart of our mission at Metcon." Thomas has a bachelor's degree from UNC Pembroke and a master's in construction management from East Carolina University.

**Favorite family tradition:** Lumbee homecoming

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Whether in a duck blind, fishing, or toes in the sand with family and friends, the Carolina coastline is my favorite place to visit.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Calls on my iPhone.

**Career highlight:** The many amazing landmark buildings our team has been able to construct across the Carolinas. The great thing about the building business is we are able to take a blank canvas and partner with stakeholders to paint a masterpiece that can be admired and utilized throughout a lifetime of service.

**Favorite hobby:** Big game hunting across the U.S. and world.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Learn to be the best builder you can be first. After that, you will have a skill that can take you to whichever part of the industry you want to go to. True builders are a dying breed.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Shortages in global and regional supply chains as well as trained manpower will cause the industry as a whole to create new approaches to both.



Brian Allen  
 Andy Andrews  
 Rob Barnhill  
 Kirk Bradley  
 Andrea Bushnell  
 Tommy Camp  
 Roy Carroll II  
 Walker Collier  
 Pat Dean  
 Lili Dunn  
 Brett Gray  
 Clay Grubb  
 Neal Hanks  
 Johnno Harris III  
 Greg Hatem  
 Sam Hunter  
 Mark Johnnie  
 David Jones  
 Johnathan Kane  
 Greg Keith, Jr.  
 Fred Klein  
 Ted Klinck  
 Mike Lancaster  
 Pete Lash  
 Steve McClure  
 Tino McFarland  
 Tim Minton  
 Chase Monroe  
 Compie Newman  
 Greg Peele  
 Gregory Poole, III  
 Bob Portman  
 Gary Rabon  
 David Ravin  
 Pat Riley  
 Pat Rodgers  
 Edwin Rose  
 Arthur Samet  
 Greg Sanchez  
 Dave Simpson  
 Tim Smith  
 Thomas Taft Jr.  
 Robin Team  
 Aaron Thomas  
 Eddie Vannoy  
 Ed Weisiger Jr.  
 Paul Zarian



## BRIAN ALLEN

**president | Precision Walls**  
Cary

The Cary native and Campbell University graduate joined the family business after graduating in 1996. The now-employee stock owned business has more than 1,000 employees and 11 offices in four states.



## KIRK BRADLEY

**CEO | Lee-Moore Capital**  
Sanford

The Duke University graduate's career has been spent in convenience retail and motor fuels distribution, venture capital and real estate development. The member of the UNC Board of Governors also developed the Governor's Club golf course and real estate project. He's helped attract key investments to Lee and Chatham counties.

**Favorite family tradition:** Holiday meals with extended family.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Too many to pick a favorite. It's the variety of great places I love about N.C.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Audiobooks, news or music.

**Major inspiration:** Abraham Lincoln was constantly underestimated, yet had a grasp of how to navigate the most complex and challenging political situation of our nation if not ever, then certainly since the founding itself. He was brilliant yet accessible and, most importantly, humble. He was a Level 5 Leader in "Good to Great" parlance.

**Career highlight:** Assisting in the positive economic development trajectory of the city of Sanford along with Chatham and Lee counties.

**Favorite hobby:** Reading

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Network, network, network. Understanding every stakeholder in your industry and how they approach the market and problem-solving is essential.



## ALEX 'ANDY' ANDREWS

**chairman, CEO | Dominion Realty Partners**  
Raleigh

Andrews leads the company in its commercial and residential projects throughout three states. Since inception, Dominion Realty Partners has acquired and developed more than \$3.5 billion worth of Certified Green projects. A former World Professional Tennis Tour pro for five years, he has raised more than \$9 million to bring tennis programs to underserved communities.

**Favorite family tradition:** Playing golf together.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Atlantic Beach.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Music

**Career highlight:** Playing in all four grand slams in singles and doubles and creating Dominion Realty Partners.

**Favorite hobby:** Golf

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Work hard, know your product better than anyone and know your competition.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Rising interest rates must level off and lower for our industry to keep up with demand.



## ROB BARNHILL

**president | Barnhill Contracting**  
Raleigh

He's the third generation of his family to lead the contracting company. The company's work on the Greg Poole Jr. All Faiths Chapel at Raleigh's Dorothea Dix Park was named a "Best Building Project" by the Carolinas Association of General Contractors last year.



## ANDREA BUSHNELL

CEO | NC Realtors  
Greensboro

Bushnell is at the helm of the state's largest trade association, with more than 57,000 members. The Montana State University graduate worked at Oregon's Realtors association for 14 years before joining the N.C. group in 2010.

**Favorite family tradition:** Traveling as a family. Hawaii has been our favorite destination.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Anywhere in the mountains. Blowing Rock, Boone, Banner Elk — you name it.

**What do you listen to on your commute:**  
NPR

**Major inspiration:** Jacqueline du Pre was my idol as a young cellist growing up in Montana. She was a young woman who reached the pinnacles of music performance as a solo cellist. I learned from her that persistence, practice and determination would allow me to accomplish whatever I wanted to accomplish in my life. Additionally, I had amazing parents who taught me those same lessons and who supported my early music career and subsequently, my legal and executive careers.

**Favorite hobby:** Tennis. It is the best stress relief imaginable.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** First, listen and learn your organization inside and out. Know your customers and the challenges they face and be empathetic! Then, don't be afraid to innovate and bring new ideas to the table. There is nothing more valuable or exciting for an organization than new, fresh insights, perspectives and ideas.

**Key industry change in next five years:**  
Changes to how the Multiple Listing Service operates is likely to cause volatility in the industry.



## WALKER COLLIER

managing partner | Trinity Capital  
Partners

Charlotte

Collier has led the acquisition of about \$2.3 billion in assets in multiple markets. He joined Trinity Capital in 2008. Prior to joining his current team, the MIT and UNC Chapel Hill grad previously led acquisitions for Boston's BayNorth Capital. He is an Urban Land Institute member.

**Favorite family tradition:** Gathering with extended family from Tennessee and Alabama to celebrate Thanksgiving and honor our grandparents, who instilled in us the family values that we all live by today. The real highlights are two competitions: an intense game of charades and a barbecue-rib cooking contest to honor my late grandfather, who always cooked ribs on the Friday after Thanksgiving.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Concord, where I grew up.

**Major inspiration:** My father, Chuck. I'm grateful to learn life's important lessons by his example, not just his words. His strong work ethic, empathy, and accountability can be seen every day in his commitment to his family and community.

**Career highlight:** Working with our team to acquire the Duke Realty suburban office portfolio. This set Trinity Capital on the path to where we are now, and opened the door for us to bring on my partner, Jeff Sheehan, a critical component of our success.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Meet and develop genuine relationships with the most active participants in the market. A keen understanding of the business along with strong relationships will set you up for success.



## TOMMY CAMP

president, CEO | Berkshire Hathaway  
Homeservices Carolinas Realty  
Charlotte

Camp is responsible for more than 900 agents across 15 offices, which cover residential real estate across the Carolinas. The firm previously operated as Prudential Carolinas Realty before it was purchased by Warren Buffet's company in 2015.



## PAT DEAN

senior vice president, national  
operations | Balfour Beatty  
Charlotte

This Kansas State University graduate is responsible for all U.S. operations of the London-based contractor. The company has worked on office towers for SPX, MetLife, Bank of America and other N.C. employers and reported about \$10 billion in revenue in 2022.



## ROY CARROLL II

founder, CEO | The Carroll Companies  
Greensboro

The Greensboro native either owns or has under development 13,000 apartments, about 30 self-storage facilities and other real estate valued at more than \$5.2 billion. In December, *Forbes* estimated his net worth at \$2.9 billion. Carroll, 60, serves on multiple nonprofit and civic boards while enjoying racing Ferraris.



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Business North Carolina's Power List 2023



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MOSAIC at Chatham Park, Pittsboro



Triangle Innovation Point West, Moncure



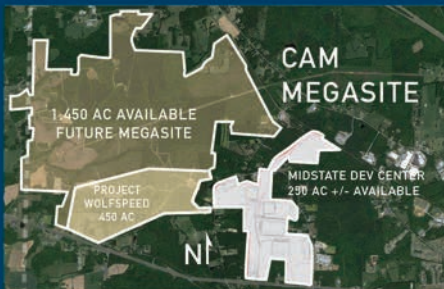
Central Carolina Enterprise Park, Sanford



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Northwood Landing, Pittsboro



Mid State, Siler City



Elite Storage, Sanford/Greensboro



## LILI DUNN

**CEO | Bell Partners**

Greensboro

After seven years as the company's president, Dunn was named CEO of the Bell family-owned real estate company last year. She helps lead all aspects of the business, with a focus on transaction activity, capital raising and overall company strategy. She's a University of Michigan graduate.



## BRETT GRAY

**managing principal | Cushman & Wakefield**

Charlotte

Gray has had his post at the real estate services company since 2017 after joining the business five years earlier. He was president of the Charlotte Regional Commercial Board of REALTORS last year. The UNC Chapel Hill grad serves on Charlotte Regional Business Alliance's International Advisory Council.

**Favorite family tradition:** A trip to the beach with my entire family.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** I always have a soft spot for Chapel Hill and anywhere on the coast.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Varies based on my mood but always some kind of music to get the day started.

**Major inspiration:** My grandfather. He taught me about hard work, investing and helping others

**Career highlight:** Being selected to my current role, expanding my coverage to include the majority of the Carolinas and significantly scaling our business.

**Favorite hobby:** Eating dinner with my family and playing a game together.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Find someone to be your mentor and educate yourself through courses and internal company offerings.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The implementation of more advanced technology to better inform our clients to quicker and more data rich solutions.



## CLAY GRUBB

**CEO, chair | Grubb Properties**

Charlotte

The Tulane University and UNC School of Law graduate took over the family business 30 years ago, leading the company's overall strategic vision. Grubb Properties was founded by Grubb's father more than 50 years ago and now focuses on multi-family housing and commercial properties. His book, "Creating the Urban Dream" analyzes affordable-housing solutions.



## NEAL HANKS

**principal owner, president | Allen Tate/ Beverly-Hanks, Realtors**

Asheville

The Alabama native was named president in 1999, after joining the company 12 years earlier. Charlotte-based Allen Tate, which operates about 70 offices, acquired Beverly-Hanks last year. The Appalachian State grad speaks at real estate conferences and participates in real estate forums and CEO groups.

**Favorite family tradition:** Breakfast with my kids on their birthdays.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** North Mills River.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** News radio.

**Major inspiration:** My wife demonstrates daily what it looks like to live with a servant's heart.

**Career highlight:** Building a team of people I admire and respect.

**Favorite hobby:** Get outside. I am an avid outdoorsman and enjoy hunting, fishing, skiing, shooting and most anything outdoors.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Never stop learning.



## JOHN 'JOHNO' HARRIS III

**president | Lincoln Harris**

Charlotte

Harris took over as president of the company in 2015 after serving as chief operating officer and working for Fortress Investment Group. His father, Johnny, chairs the Lincoln Harris partnership with Dallas-based Lincoln Property Group. It has developed the Legacy Union complex in downtown Charlotte that includes Honeywell's headquarters.





Dominion Realty Partners provides green-certified development and redevelopment of urban and suburban locations with a mix of property types. Throughout the development process we are focused on the end result: **a high-quality, high-value asset with eco-friendly design principles.**

**Congratulations to our  
Power List 2023 recipient,  
Andy Andrews!**



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## GREG HATEM

**founder, managing partner |  
Empire Properties**

Raleigh

The N.C. State University graduate has led the company to own 70 plus buildings with more than 1 million square feet of office and retail space in downtown Durham and Raleigh. Hatem's efforts to revitalize downtown Raleigh have received national recognition. He also founded the Empire Eats restaurant group.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Fort Macon. I have been going there since I was 2 years old. It's amazing how it is still as captivating as it ever was. It's just gotten better through the years. I love that we've been taking our children there since they were babies and I hope they will do the same.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Birds. I usually walk to work.

**Major inspiration:** My family. Remembering how hard our family had to work as immigrants in the early 1900s. I even remember my grandparents and parents talking about life during the last pandemic, The Great Depression, and world wars. It gives me confidence that we can adapt to the future and even influence it. I'm excited to see how our children make a difference.

**Top career highlight:** Our next project, The Orson.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Work hard and give back to your community. No matter where you are in life, you can make things better for someone else.



## DAVID JONES

**CEO | Coldwell Banker Howard  
Perry Walston**

Cary

Jones, 63, has more than 30 years of experience with the agency, starting in the company's accounting department in 1987. He took his current role in 2019. The Wake Forest University graduate also serves on the HPW Foundation, which provides financial support to the company's agents' and employees' charitable giving and outreach efforts.



## JOHN KANE

**CEO | Kane Realty**

Raleigh

The Wake Forest University graduate started his company in 1978 and has become Raleigh's best-known developer with his North Hills and Downtown South projects. Earlier this year, he withdrew a request for a zoning change that would have allowed for towers of more than 37 stories.



## SAM HUNTER

**chairman, CEO | T.A. Loving Company**  
Goldsboro

A Virginia Tech graduate, Hunter became CEO of the contracting company in 1990 and chair in 2014. He's a staunch advocate of the construction industry, having previously been president of both Carolinas AGC and AGC of America.



## GREG KEITH JR.

**president, CEO | The Keith Corp.**

Charlotte

With more than 40 years of real estate experience, Keith has helped develop 450-plus projects totaling more than \$4.5 billion and 50 million square feet. He founded his business with his father, Graeme, in 1989. It is working with JLL on a 104-acre project at Research Triangle Park.



## MARK JOHNNIE

**senior vice president, civils  
southeast region | Balfour Beatty**  
Charlotte

The Oregon State University graduate joined Balfour Beatty in 1998 after several years of experience at other construction and development companies in Oregon. He's been a key player in securing the \$242 million design build contract from the N.C. Department of Transportation to update Interstate U.S. 70 in Craven County.

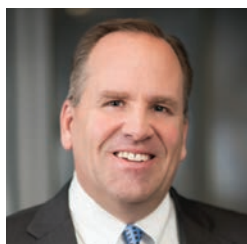


## FRED KLEIN

**senior managing partner |  
Childress Klein**

Charlotte

This Navy veteran formed his real estate business in 1988 with Atlanta's Don Childress. Since then, it's grown to more than 250 employees and has developed over 450 projects, including several large Charlotte towers. The newest one, 40-story Duke Energy Plaza, houses the utility's headquarters.



## TED KLINCK

**CEO, president | Highwoods Properties**

Raleigh

A University of Georgia graduate, Klinck, 57, assumed his role in 2018 after joining the publicly traded REIT in 2012. During the past decade, he has overseen the closing of more than \$15 billion of transactions. He is the chair of the First Tee of the Triangle and a member of the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce board.

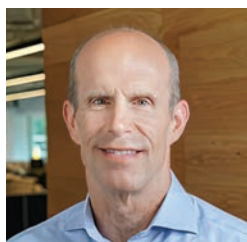
**Favorite family tradition:** Spending summers at the lake boating, wake surfing and relaxing. We have been going to Lake Oconee in Georgia for about 20 years and have made a lot of family memories there.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** CNBC during the morning commute and country music (The Highway) on my way home.

**Career highlight:** Becoming CEO of Highwoods. I became CEO six months before the pandemic began and while it has been a challenging time, our team and company became stronger and more resilient.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Do something you enjoy and make you happy. Work hard and have a great attitude. These are two things that are within your control. Focus on building relationships. Real estate is a relationship business.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The pandemic changed the way office space will be used in the future. While almost all companies believe being together in the office is critical to their success, flexible working arrangements and space utilization will continue to evolve over the next several years.



## PETE LASH

**managing partner | Beacon Partners**

Charlotte

Lash co-founded Beacon Partners in 1989 alongside Ed Weisiger, and has since helped grow the business to 30.4 million square feet of space developed and acquired. He holds a master's degree from the University of Virginia and a bachelor's degree in engineering from the United States Military Academy.



## MIKE LANCASTER

**CEO | Frank L. Blum Construction**

Winston-Salem

The Lexington native joined the construction company in 2003 after earning a degree in construction engineering and management from N.C. State University. He became CEO in 2018. Last August, the 100-year-old company, which has grown rapidly in recent years, announced a \$3.8 million expansion of its Winston-Salem headquarters.

**Favorite family tradition:** Candlelight Christmas Service

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Mountains

**What do you listen to on your commute:** On most days my commute is only 15 minutes – one of the great quality of life things about living in Triad. But lately, Chris Stapleton has been on my playlist.

**Major inspiration:** My parents. They always kept life simple and modeled love, kindness, faithfulness, and humility.

**Career highlight:** Everyday is a new highlight. It's never as good as it is right now. I do like to celebrate the successes of the past and there are lots of highlights. Most of my personal ones are not a singular moment, but more a reflection on the journey and the teamwork along the way.

**Favorite hobby after work:** I have three young kids so most days after work center around them, but I get a lot of satisfaction out of watching them get joy out of playing a sport, learning an instrument, or being in the school play. Aside from that, I like playing racquet sports with my wife.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Outwork the next person and over-prepare for the task at hand.

**Key industry change in next five years:** There has been a labor shortage in construction for decades. In the next five years, we will see big steps in prefabrication to alleviate the labor shortage.



## STEVE MCCLURE

**CEO | The Spectrum Cos.**

Charlotte

McClure, 42, has led the company since 2017, implementing strategy, overseeing operations and guiding team leaders. The graduate of Wake Forest and Duke universities is president of the Charlotte chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties and a past president of the N.C. Board of Architecture.

**Favorite family tradition:** Spending Thanksgiving with my family at the beach every year.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Audiobooks

**Career highlight:** Developing Vantage, our 633,000-square-foot mixed-use project in the South End neighborhood of Charlotte.

**Favorite hobby:** My favorite hobby is exercising and challenging myself to stay healthy.



## TINO MCFARLAND

**CEO | McFarland Construction**  
Charlotte

McFarland has more than 20 years experience in business, planning and project management. The Indiana University MBA graduate started his business in 2010. He's been involved with the Charlotte Arts and Science Council, National Black MBA Association and Leadership Charlotte.

**Favorite family tradition:** Traveling with family.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Pinehurst.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Hip-hop

**Major inspiration:** Family because of the history, possibilities and legacy.

**Career highlight:** Seeing my daughter work at McFarland Construction.

**Favorite hobby:** Golf.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Your name is your most important asset. Protect it with everything you have.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The labor/talent constraints will require further diversification of the industry's candidate pool.



## CHASE MONROE

**Carolinas market director, Charlotte brokerage lead | JLL**  
Charlotte

Monroe was a founding member of Keystone Partners, which was acquired by JLL in 2011. He oversees JLL's Carolinas business and works on office transactions related to tenant representation, strategic initiatives, acquisition and disposition. He's a University of Virginia graduate.



## TIM MINTON

**executive vice president | N.C. Home Builders Association**  
Raleigh

Minton, 58, has held his current role since 2021. He oversees legislative programs and advocacy. The Elon University and UNC Chapel Hill grad previously served as the assistant executive vice president.

**Favorite family tradition:** Prime rib at Christmas.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Sports

**Major inspiration:** Many people including Freddie Bazen Sr., Jim Bichsel, Jack Hawke and Mike Carpenter. They all taught me the value of working hard and being the best at what you do.

**Career highlight:** Helping others including 1) Founder of Operation Coming Home that builds houses for injured combat veterans and 2) Annual scholarships in the total amount of \$300,000 for Beyond Academics and other like programs which is two- or four-year university level program for young adults with special needs and finally 3) Be Pro Be Proud - two semi-tractor trailers with virtual reality and simulators that participate with middle and high schools to educate them about the trades.

**Favorite hobby:** Collecting old comics.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Always do your best.



## COMPIE NEWMAN

**managing director | CBRE**  
Charlotte

Newman, 62, oversees the company's service offerings with a focus on integrating departments to ensure comprehensive real estate solutions are provided. The Charlotte native has almost 30 years of industry experience and has placed more than \$3.5 billion in real estate capital during that time. He was previously a naval aviator flying P-3C Orions.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Goose and Yes

**Career highlight:** Working with nonprofits who serve our community.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Workplace will be a hybrid of home/office environment and workers/employers will move toward smarter mobility options.





## CONGRATULATIONS

to our CEO, **Eddie Vannoy**,  
on being named once again to the  
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[trinitycapitaladvisors.com](http://trinitycapitaladvisors.com)



## GREG PEELE

**general manager, executive vice president | Skanska USA Building**  
Durham

Peele, 57, joined the Sweden-based contractor in 2000 and now leads the North Carolina and Virginia regions. He has a bachelor's from N.C. State University and an MBA from UNC Greensboro. In fall 2022 the company completed a science building expansion and renovation at Western Carolina University.

**Favorite family tradition:** We have a long-running tradition of the entire family converging on the Outer Banks for the week of Thanksgiving. It is a great opportunity to catch up with extended family, cook great meals and laugh a lot!

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** This one is a toss up between the beach and the mountains. We take a vacation to both each year as they are ideal for getting our fix of the great outdoors.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame channel is usually on during my commute.

**Major inspiration:** Too many but they all revolve around seeing a vision, believing in that vision and working hard to accomplish that vision.

**Career highlight:** Being named executive vice president of Skanska and running both the North Carolina and Virginia regions. It has allowed me to do two of the things I love and that is strategy and growing our people. We have worked hard to make our region the second largest in all of Skanska U.S. Building – and had fun along the journey.

**Favorite hobby:** Anything outdoors — golf, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, etc.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Be honest, work hard and respect others.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The continued increase in technology and data. We are just scratching the surface on how powerful these tools are in creating a safer, more efficient process from inception, design and construction.



## GARY RABON

**president, CEO | Coldwell Banker Advantage**  
Raleigh

The Raleigh native and East Carolina University graduate started his business in 1995 with nine agents and has built it into one of the region's biggest agencies with 1,700 agents and 55 offices across the Carolinas.



## DAVID RAVIN

**president, CEO | Northwood Ravin**  
Charlotte

Ravin formed his business in 2011 with New York-based Northwood Investors and now leads more than 400 employees and oversees development projects across the southeast and southwest. The architectural graduate of UNC Charlotte and the University of Michigan has developed more than 75 multi-family communities with a market value exceeding \$6 billion.



## PAT RODGERS

**president, CEO | Rodgers Builders**  
Charlotte

Rodgers Builders was formed by Rodgers' late husband in 1963. She started as an administrative assistant before working her way up to president and CEO in 1987 after obtaining her general contractor's license. She's been among Charlotte's major civic leaders for decades.



## GREGORY POOLE III

**chairman, president, CEO | Gregory Poole Equipment**  
Raleigh

This family-owned Caterpillar franchise has grown from 40 people in Raleigh to 1,250 employees across five states. Poole purchased the company from his father in 1999 to become the third Poole generation to run it.



## EDWIN ROSE

**president, CEO | Shelco**  
Charlotte

This N.C. State University graduate has been CEO of the contractor company since 2000. He's managed more than 6.5 million square feet of construction and oversees the Shelco's three offices in Charlotte, Winston-Salem and Raleigh. He's an advisory board member of the UNC Charlotte Center for Real Estate.



## BOB PORTMAN

**president, CEO | Southern Industrial Contractors**  
Raleigh

Portman is responsible for the company's range of industrial construction services. He is a Boise State University alumnus and Army veteran. Norwalk, Connecticut-based Emcor Group bought Southern Industrial in 2011.



## ARTHUR SAMET

**chair, CEO | Samet Corp.**  
Greensboro

Since Samet took control of the family-owned business in 2000, he's become one of the most well-known CEOs in the Triad and expanded aggressively across the state. Samet is a University of Georgia graduate with a UNC Chapel Hill MBA.





## PAT RILEY

**president, CEO | Allen Tate**  
Charlotte

Riley has been in his current role since 1992. In 2020, the company had more than \$6.15 billion in transactions through 70 offices. It partners with Pittsburgh-based Howard Hanna Real Estate Services, the largest privately held U.S. retail real estate broker. Riley has raised more than \$5.5 million for the Tate Cares philanthropy over two decades.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Highlands/Cashiers.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** I love Kenny Chesney.

**Career highlight:** Bringing together so many North and South Carolina family-owned real estate businesses under one roof.

**Favorite hobby:** Walking, boating, and playing tennis. At the end of the day, it's relaxing to sit and enjoy a view from the porch.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Be the most knowledgeable Realtor in your particular market. Stay active with clients throughout the 10-year homeownership journey between the purchase and the sale of their home with annual insurance reviews, market trends, and decorating and remodeling advice to help their home retain maximum value.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The next five years will see normalization for residential real estate. We will get back to interest rates in the 6-8% range, with annual appreciation of 3-5%. The Carolinas will always perform better than most markets because of in-migration of business and individuals.



## DAVE SIMPSON

**president, CEO | Carolinas AGC**  
Charlotte

The former journalist has been with the trade association for more than 30 years and has served as president since 2014. He's a University of Missouri graduate who has received the James J. Lowry Award for Outstanding CEO from the Association Executives of North Carolina.

**Favorite family tradition:** Eating meals together.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** The beach.

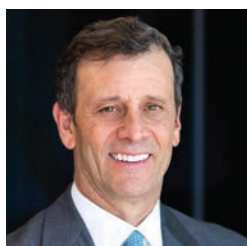
**What do you listen to on your commute:** The phone, tunes, news, business, talk shows and sports.

**Major inspiration:** My wife, Denise, is my better half for good reason.

**Favorite hobby:** Wordle, crossword puzzles, guitar, music and sports.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** "When people talk, listen completely. Don't be thinking about what you're going to say. Most people never listen. Nor do they observe." - Ernest Hemingway

**Key industry change in next five years:** Getting young leaders into the construction industry who are good and want challenging and rewarding careers.



## GREG SANCHEZ

**CEO | TRI Properties**  
Raleigh

The UNC Chapel Hill graduate and world-class master's-level swimmer has helped develop 4.5 million square feet of space while leading the business since 1994. In 2021, NAI Carolantic Realty and TRI Properties merged after a couple years of discussion.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** UNC's Dean Dome.

**Career highlight:** The 4.7 million-square-foot development of Imperial Center, one of the largest mixed-use business parks in the Southeast.



## TIM SMITH

**owner | Preston Development**  
Cary

Smith, 74, and his co-owner Bubba Rawl are veteran N.C. developers now focused on the massive Chatham Park project near Pittsboro. Previous projects include The Arboretum at Weston in Cary. He grew up in Salisbury, where his father, Wilson, was a co-founder of Food Lion.

**Favorite family tradition:** Christmas Eve church

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Figure Eight Island.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Talk radio



## THOMAS TAFT JR.

**principal | Taft Family Ventures**  
Greenville

Taft oversees the five divisions that make up the family-owned and operated business and assists in the negotiation of all financial transactions. His father is the chairman and CEO of the company. Recent plans underway include an affordable housing development in Greenville.





## ROBIN TEAM

managing partner | Front Street Capital

Lexington

The Lexington native is a Wake Forest University graduate who has acquired more than \$850 million in income-producing assets and holds a current portfolio of active ownership and/or management of over \$450 million in assets. Most of its projects have occurred across the Triad.



## EDDIE VANNOY

co-owner, CEO | Vannoy Construction

Jefferson

The East Carolina University grad became president in 1976 and CEO in 1985, succeeding his father. He and his brother, Mark, have built one of the state's biggest contractors. He got national attention for auctioning off his huge collection of muscle cars and memorabilia in 2020.

**Favorite family tradition:** Family trips and Christmas holidays. Spending the day with family and eating a big meal together is something to look forward to.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** The mountains and Southport for the beach.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Willie's Roadhouse.

**Major inspiration:** My father, James R. Vannoy, because he taught me a lot in life about right from wrong. He taught me that respect must be earned.

**Career highlight:** My father started our company building a few single-family homes a year, and it has been a highlight that my brother Mark and I, along with my father, grew the company into a large firm. All of this happened only by having good people.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Collecting cars

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Treat people like you want to be treated. Moving up in the ranks takes time and hard work.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Aging out of the baby boomers, and the wealth of knowledge that will disappear as this age group retires.



## ED WEISIGER JR.

CEO | CTE

Charlotte

Weisiger has been president of the owner of Charlotte's Caterpillar dealership since 1991, succeeding his father. He's diversified the company into other businesses and been a major real estate investor. The Harvard University and N.C. State University grad is an elder at Myers Park Presbyterian Church and a director of the Charlotte Sports Foundation.

**Favorite family tradition:** Bringing extended family together for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Asheville, Cashiers, Smoky Mountains, Linville/Grandfather, Roaring Gap.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** NPR, occasionally a podcast or a business related book.

**Major inspiration:** My father - who I am comes from observing who he is and what he did. My high school teacher Richard MacKenzie told me I needed to focus on some personal traits. I paid attention. He started me on my path to personal growth.

**Favorite hobby after work:** A hike, a bike ride or golf.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** If you don't understand the customer's needs and expectations, you will never be truly successful.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Electrification.



## PAUL ZARIAN

managing director | Hines

Cary

Zarian came to North Carolina to lead the development of the Houston-based development company's Fenton project in Cary. He became a managing director last year. The University of Pennsylvania and Duke University grad was previously the director and has been with the company for about seven years.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Highlands, with Topsail Beach a close runner-up.

**Career highlight:** Watching thousands of people enjoy the first Christmas Tree Lighting at Fenton. After working on the project for years, it was gratifying to see the community embrace it.

**Favorite hobby after work:** We have a 4-year-old and a 2-year-old, so when I'm not working, I try to spend as much time with them as possible.

**Best advice for industry newcomers:** Gerald Hines once told me, "Ask a lot of questions, no matter how dumb you think they make you sound." I might have mastered the latter part of that statement. But it's great advice because that's how you learn, and the amount of knowledge you gain will allow you to make a greater impact.

**Key industry change in next five years:** The real estate industry is becoming more consumer-focused. Utilitarian places "to do something" are being replaced by aspirational places "that give something." In the office world, that involves amenities, programming, and environments that are healthier and more sustainable.



CONGRATULATIONS TO  
**ANDREA  
BUSHNELL**  
CEO OF NC REALTORS®

on being named on the Business North Carolina's 2023 Power List. As a fierce advocate of the real estate industry, Andrea is committed to protecting private property rights and leading the fight for attainable housing for all North Carolinians. Andrea is a passionate force in the real estate industry with over 20 years of REALTOR® Association leadership defining the way for NC REALTOR® members and staff.



The REALTORS® Code of Ethics calls for the creation of adequate housing, the building of functioning cities, the development of productive industries and farms, and the preservation of a healthful environment. Operating under these guiding principles, NC REALTORS® is the voice of real estate in North Carolina. More than 57,000 REALTOR® professionals across the state are dedicated to helping North Carolinians realize their dream of homeownership, strengthening communities, promoting economic development, and reaching across the world to solidify this state's global presence.





David Alexander  
John Cato  
Lisa Cooper  
Tammy DeBoer  
Jeff Dyke  
Andy Ellen  
Marvin Ellison  
Brian George  
Tom Greco  
Gary Green  
Meg Ham  
Jeffrey Harris  
Rick Hendrick  
Omar Jorge  
Jim Lanning  
Tim Lowe  
Art Pope  
Lisa Tucker  
Abe VanWingerden  
Stephen Yalof

## MARVIN ELLISON

president, CEO | Lowe's  
 Mooresville

Ellison has become one the nation's most highly touted executives since he was named the top executive at the hardware-store chain in 2018. Since then, he's revamped the company's management team and culture and invested heavily in digital services to better compete with rival Home Depot.

The Memphis University graduate and Emory University MBA has a strong competitive streak, having been bypassed for the CEO job at Home Depot before taking the top spot at JCPenney. While he had limited success during his three years at the department store chain, Lowe's picked him to succeed Robert Niblock at the Mooresville-based company.

From 2016-18, before Ellison arrived, Lowe's' net income averaged about \$2.9 billion. Over the past three years, from 2020-22, the company's profit has averaged \$6.9 billion, aided by massive increases in remodeling and home improvements during the pandemic.

In 2021 *Barron's* rated Ellison as one of its "Top CEOs." This year, the National Retail Federation gave Ellison its "The Visionary" award for driving positive change within the retail industry, specifically noting his support of Lowe's communities and front-line workers through the pandemic. That award has been given to many famous retail industry leaders including the CEOs of Walmart and Target.

Ellison leads a team of more than 300,000 associates and about 2,200 stores across the U.S. Earlier this year, the company sold approximately 450 stores it had operated in Canada.

Lowe's still trails Home Depot in some key metrics, including an operating profit margin that was about five percentage points lower in the past year. Ellison is working to change that.







## DAVID ALEXANDER

**president | JT Alexander & Son and Home Run Markets**

Statesville

A third-generation family owner, Alexander acquired the convenience-store business in 2010 from his father, Tom, after joining the organization in 1994. The first of 18 Home Run Markets stores opened in Mooresville in 2011. It started in 1935 with a Texaco station in Mooresville.



## JOHN CATO

**CEO, chairman, president | Cato Corp.**

Charlotte

The UNC Charlotte graduate is a third-generation CEO at the apparel retailer formed by his grandfather, father and uncle in 1946. He's been the public company's leader since 1999, overseeing 1,320 stores in 32 states. The company broke even in 2022 on revenue of \$759 million.

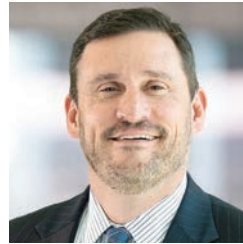


## LISA COOPER

**president | Mast General Store**

Valle Crucis

She was 11 when her parents, John and Faye Cooper, purchased the original Watauga County store in 1979. It's now a popular chain with 11 locations in four states. She has a bachelor's degree in accounting from UNC Charlotte. Employees receive an annual bonus that has averaged three to five weeks of pay in recent years.



## JEFF DYKE

**president | Sonic Automotive**

Charlotte

The former AutoNation executive joined the company in 2005 and gained his current title in 2018. Sonic has 175 dealerships in 25 states that sold more than 275,000 cars in the past year. In 2022, Sonic posted a 13% gain in revenue to \$14 billion, with a profit of \$88.5 million.



## ANDY ELLEN

**president, general counsel | NC Retail Merchants Association**

Wake Forest

The Campbell University law graduate worked for the N.C. Farm Bureau before joining the retailer group as general counsel in 1998. He became president in 2012. Recent lobbying issues include laws to combat organized retail crime rings and whether local governments can ban plastic bags at the point of sale.

**Favorite family tradition:** A summer beach trip to Amelia Island, Florida.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Pinehurst

**What do you listen to on your commute:** "Politics of the United States" or Led Zeppelin

**Major inspiration:** Being a good husband and dad is the most important thing in my life.

**Career highlight:** Being named president of the N.C. Retail Merchants Association.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Grill something on my Green Egg or walk nine holes of golf with airpods and good tunes.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Follow the Golden Rule — treat everyone the way you would want to be treated.

**Key industry change in next five years:** A resurgence of independent retailers — many of whom switched career paths during COVID.



## TAMMY DEBOER

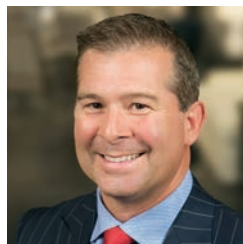
**president | Harris Teeter**

Matthews

The Appalachian State University graduate joined Kroger's 260-store Harris Teeter unit in 2020 and became president last year. She spent 17 years at Salisbury-based Food Lion and five years at Matthews-based Family Dollar before opening a consulting business. Harris Teeter changed its logo earlier this year with its new "Your Neighborhood Market" slogan.

**BRIAN GEORGE****president, CEO | Alex Lee**  
Hickory

The Notre Dame accounting graduate is part of the fourth generation of Georges to run Alex Lee, which owns the Merchants Distributors wholesale grocery business and Winston-Salem-based Lowes Foods supermarkets that together employ more than 10,000 people. He's been CEO since 2014 and chairs the Food Industry Association board.

**JEFFREY HARRIS****president, CEO | Furnitureland South**  
Jamestown

The High Point University graduate runs the 1.3-million-square-foot operation, billed as the world's largest furniture store. His parents, Darrell and Stella, opened a store in High Point in 1972, then expanded to the current giant location in 1990. More than 1,000 different brands are sold.

**Favorite family tradition:** Christmas with our family, and now taking on a few football games at Alabama where our youngest daughter is in school. Roll Tide!

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** The mountains near Blowing Rock and Banner Elk.

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Fox News

**Major inspiration:** My father was an amazing man, husband, and godly servant leader.

**Career highlight:** Building a world-class team of individuals that have worked together to double our sales volume in eight years

**Favorite hobby after work:** A great workout.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Spend several days in a furniture factory so that you can appreciate the quality and craftsmanship that goes into building furniture.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Utilizing technology to make the shopping experience both fun and efficient.

**TOM GRECO****president, CEO | Advance**  
**Auto Parts**  
Raleigh

Greco, the top executive at the 4,700-store retailer since 2016, is retiring in December. The former Frito-Lay executive helped Advance become more competitive with rivals AutoZone and O'Reilly Auto Parts as earnings per share doubled over the past five years. Sales were \$11.2 billion last year. A successor hasn't been named.

**GARY GREEN****CEO | Compass Group**  
**North America**  
Charlotte

Green has served as CEO since 1999, having joined the United Kingdom-based food service giant business in 1987. The company employs 280,000 people in North America. *Fortune* magazine has rated Compass among the "World's Most Admired Companies" for four straight years.

**RICK HENDRICK****CEO | Hendrick Automotive Group,**  
**Hendrick Motorsports**  
Charlotte

The winningest team owner in NASCAR history rolls on with his \$11 billion-plus dealership operation that sold more than 200,000 vehicles in the past year. The Warrenton native leads more than 10,000 employees at 93 dealerships and 21 collision centers in 13 states.

**MEG HAM****president | Food Lion**  
Salisbury

The Cornell University graduate joined parent Ahold Delhaize in 1998 and has led the 1,100-store, 82,000-employee N.C.-based chain since 2014. It operates in 10 states. President Joe Biden appointed Ham this year to the President's Council on Sports, Fitness and Nutrition.



## OMAR JORGE

**CEO | Compare Foods**  
Charlotte

Founded in 1989 by the Pena family, Compare Foods is the largest ethnic supermarket chain on the East Coast with 24 stores from Massachusetts to South Carolina. Jorge served two terms as chairman of the Latin American Coalition, the largest Latino advocacy group in North Carolina. He has a bachelor's degree from St. John's University and law degree from Yeshiva University.



## LISA TUCKER

**CEO, president | Shoe Show Inc.**  
Concord

Tucker's parents started the retailer in 1960 in Kannapolis. She became president in 2018 and oversees a \$1 billion-plus business with more than 1,150 stores in 47 states also under the brands Shoe Dept. and Burlington Shoes. Last year, the company acquired Charleston, South Carolina-based retailer Half-Moon Outfitters, which has eight stores.

**Favorite family tradition:** Christmas Eve dinner and opening our Christmas pajamas.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** North Carolina mountains

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Y2K channel

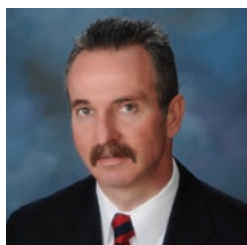
**Major inspiration:** My parents; they have taught me the business and to love God in everything you do.

**Career highlight:** Becoming CEO/president of Shoe Show

**Favorite hobby after work:** Riding my golf cart around my property.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Stay focused and don't get distracted.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Technology always causes changes.



## JIM LANNING

**president, CEO | Ingles Markets**  
Black Mountain

Lanning became CEO of the 200-plus store supermarket chain in 2016. The Western Carolina University graduate started at the family-controlled public company at 16 as a service clerk. Profit for the 2022 fiscal year totaled \$273 million, compared with \$250 million and \$179 million in the previous two years.



## TIM LOWE

**president | Lowes Foods**  
Winston-Salem

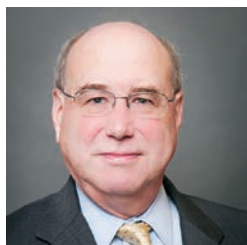
The University of Houston graduate worked at Walmart before joining the chain in 2013. This year, the 80-store company plans to open stores in Pittsboro, Concord and Kannapolis, plus Aiken and Indian Land, South Carolina. Hickory-based Alex Lee owns the business, which ranks 65th in *Progressive Grocer's* top 100 U.S. operators.



## ABE VANWINGERDEN

**owner | Metrolina Greenhouses**  
Huntersville

VanWingerden, along with his mother, Vickie, and siblings, oversees a literally growing company of 1,500 employees that supplies more than 1,400 retail outlets. The Emory University MBA worked eight years for Procter and Gamble before rejoining the family business in 2011. His brother, Art, is co-CEO.



## ART POPE

**CEO, owner | Variety Wholesalers**  
Raleigh

The former state budget director and state representative oversees more than 400 Roses and other discount stores in 15 states. The graduate of UNC Chapel Hill and Duke University law school is on the UNC System board of governors. He made news last year by unsuccessfully opposing the system's move to new Raleigh offices.



## STEPHEN YALOF

**CEO | Tanger Factory Outlet Centers**  
Greensboro

The George Washington University graduate succeeded Stephen Tanger as top executive at the 36-center chain in January 2021. He previously was president of rival Simon Premium Outlets and also worked in the real estate divisions of Gap and Ralph Lauren. A new center is opening in Nashville, Tennessee, later this year.



## The voice of retail in North Carolina

Congratulations to President  
and General Counsel  
Andy Ellen for being named  
to the *2023 Power List*.

During his 25 years of  
leadership with the NC Retail  
Merchants Association, Andy  
has been a stalwart for the  
retail industry.



NCRMA also congratulates the representatives of our valued member companies  
named to the *List of North Carolina's Most Influential Leaders*.

David Alexander  
*JT Alexander & Son/  
Home Run Markets*

John Cato  
*The Cato Corp*

Tammy DeBoer  
*Harris Teeter*

Marvin Ellison  
*Lowe's Companies Inc.*

Brian George  
*Alex Lee*

Tom Greco  
*Advance Auto Parts*

Meg Ham  
*Food Lion*

Omar Jorge  
*Compare Foods*

Jim Lanning  
*Ingles Markets*

Tim Lowe  
*Lowes Foods*

Art Pope  
*Variety Wholesalers*

Stephen Yalof  
*Tanger Factory Outlet Centers*





Kevin Baker  
Brian Clark  
Bill Collins  
Roy Cox  
Michael Fox  
Marty Freeman  
Haley Gentry  
Glenn Gonzales  
Tom Hoffstetler  
Michael Landguth  
Ryan Legg  
Ralph Lopez Massas  
Van Anh Nguyen  
Phil Peck  
Jim Segrave  
Chris Taylor  
Carl Warren  
Drew Wilkerson

## DREW WILKERSON

CEO | RXO

Charlotte

One of North Carolina's newest public companies is led by the public relations graduate of the University of South Carolina, who joined RXO's predecessor, XPO, in 2012. He became CEO when the business was spun off as an independent company last year.

RXO calls itself an "asset light" provider, meaning it arranges shipping for more than 100,000 carriers rather than owning its own fleet of trucks. It has an app that has been downloaded more than 1 million times.

Wilkerson oversees 700 employees at its main office in Charlotte's Ballantyne area with clients including more than half of *Fortune Magazine's* largest 100 companies such as Costco, Ford, GM and Lowe's. He worked for logistics provider C.H. Robinson Worldwide in Columbia, South Carolina, before joining Greenwich, Connecticut-based XPO.



After opening at \$22 in October, RXO shares have traded between about \$15 and \$25. It had a market cap of \$2.2 billion in mid-April and reported revenue of \$4.8 billion in 2022.

**Favorite family tradition:** The day after Thanksgiving, I spend time on the coast with family riding four-wheelers.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Home. I travel so much I take advantage of time with my wife and kids.

**What do you listen to on commute:** People often send me podcasts on business or leadership. If not podcasts, music on the Pandora app.

**Major inspiration:** My parents instilled a strong work ethic in me. I watched how they treated people.

**Career highlight:** Last November, RXO's leadership team went to the New York Stock Exchange to ring the bell. My top highlight was the next day. When I walked into work in Charlotte, employees were still taking pictures with the new RXO signage and talking about how exciting our launch was.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Time with my kids and wife is the best way to decompress.

**Best advice for industry newcomer:** Listen more than you talk, work hard and build relationships. Spend time in the field.

**KEVIN BAKER****executive director | Piedmont Triad Airport Authority**

Greensboro

The Lehigh University engineering graduate has led the Piedmont Triad Airport Authority since 2009. Employment at the airport has expanded to more than 9,000 in his tenure, many working on building and maintaining aircraft. Denver-based Boom Supersonic plans a \$500 million assembly plant at the site.

**Favorite family tradition:** Thanksgiving at Hilton Head

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Bald Head Island

**Major inspiration:** My wife. She doesn't know a stranger, and to be her friend, her only prerequisite is that you are a nice person. We should all be like her.

**Career highlight:** My kids!

**Favorite hobby after work:** Fine wines, billiards, friends and family, and there is always a home renovation project going on in our house.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Adversity builds character. Embrace it. And perseverance wins.

**Key industry change in next five years:** We will have another couple of hundred acres ready for the next aerospace company to call home!

**ROY COX****president, CEO | Best Logistics Group**

Kernersville

The UNC Chapel Hill graduate joined Best in 1994 and became CEO in 2016. He oversees 400 trucks, 2,000 trailers and more than 500 employees. He started career as a driver manager with one of its divisions, Best Cartage, a 12-truck operation at the time.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** North Carolina beaches

**What do you listen to on your commute:** Channel surf to a variety of music.

**Major inspiration:** Seeing our team members become successful.

**Favorite hobby after work:** A cold craft beer.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Work hard, surround yourself with great people and focus on building strong relationships.

**MICHAEL FOX****chairman | NCDOT Board of Transportation****president, CEO | Piedmont Triad Partnership****partner | Tuggle Duggins law firm**

Greensboro

One of the state's busiest persons, Fox juggles leading the state's key transportation planning group, aggressively promotes the Triad region after succeeding retired Winston-Salem banker Stan Kelly at the region's business partnership, and practices corporate law. He's a graduate of Appalachian State University with a law degree from UNC Chapel Hill.

**Favorite family tradition:** Watching each family member open all their presents individually on Christmas morning

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Anywhere on the coast.

**Major inspiration:** People who are passionate about their work, regardless of the field.

**Career highlight:** Being recognized as one of the "Best Lawyers in America" each year since 2008.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Being outdoors, hiking, boating, hunting or fishing.

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Be willing to dive in and learn everything you can from your more experienced colleagues and don't be afraid to ask questions.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Automation

**BRIAN CLARK****executive director | North Carolina Ports Authority**

Wilmington

The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy graduate succeeded Paul Cozza in January 2021. Last year, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg appointed Clark to the Maritime Transportation System National Advisory Committee. He previously was a senior manager at ports in Port Elizabeth, New Jersey, and Mobile, Alabama.

**BILL COLLINS****president | HAECO Americas**

Greensboro

The former executive at American Airlines and GE Aviation joined the Hong Kong-based aircraft maintenance company in 2018. HAECO Group consists of 16 operating companies, employing more than 15,000 people in Hong Kong, the Chinese mainland, Europe and the United States. Collins has a bachelor's degree from Rochester Institute of Technology.

**MARTY FREEMAN****incoming president, CEO | Old Dominion Freight Line**

Thomasville

Freeman will succeed Greg Gantt as company president and CEO on July 1. He joined the company in 1992 and took on increasing roles as the carrier grew into a national giant. He has been chief operating officer since 2018 and had total compensation of \$6.3 million last year. Gantt will remain a director.





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**HALEY GENTRY****aviation director | City of Charlotte**  
Charlotte

Gentry started at the city's aviation department in 1991 and became its first female director in 2021. She oversees a staff of 700 and a budget of \$187 million. Charlotte Douglas International Airport, which served about 48 million passengers last year. It is undergoing a \$3.1 billion construction and renovation program.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Boone/Blowing Rock**Major inspiration:** Both of my grandmothers inspired me because they both worked outside the home at a time when that was not the norm.**Favorite hobby after work:** Boating on Lake Norman.**RYAN LEGG****owner | MegaCorp Logistics LLC**  
Wilmington

The University of West Virginia graduate shares the CEO title with his wife, Denise Legg. Founded in 2009, the transportation company employs more than 650 and has grown rapidly in recent years with a pledge to add 300 more jobs in Wilmington by 2027. He's a graduate of West Virginia University.

**GLENN GONZALES****CEO | Jet It**  
Greensboro

A lieutenant colonel in the Air Force Reserve, Gonzales is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. The jet leasing company has more than 20 Greensboro-made HondaJets in its fleet. He has an MBA from the University of South Carolina.

**RALPH LOPEZ MASSAS****senior vice president,  
CLT hub operations |  
American Airlines**  
Charlotte

The University of Phoenix graduate took his post in July 2020 after working at the airline's Fort Worth, Texas, hub. More than 14,000 of the Charlotte airport's 20,000 workers are employed by American Airlines, according to the city.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** The Carolina coastline and the mountains along the Blue Ridge Parkway.**Major inspiration:** I take pride in setting a positive example for my kids and I work hard to help set them up for successful futures.**Favorite hobby after work:** I enjoy running to help destress and relax after work. In my free time, my passion is travel — which should come as no surprise since I work at an airline! I love to explore and experience new cultures and cuisines in destinations throughout American's global network.**Best advice to industry newcomer:** This is a complex business so my best advice for newcomers is to be eager to learn all facets of the industry. I like to say "keep your feet grounded and your head in the clouds," which means, stay humble but stay inspired to continue reaching your goals.**TOM HOSTETLER****CEO | Cardinal Logistics**  
Concord

Hostetler joined the trucking and logistics company from J.B. Hunt Transportation in 1997 and has been CEO since 2001. He has a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of Illinois and a Duke University MBA. The private-equity-owned firm ranked 44th in *Transport Topics*' list of largest North American carriers in 2022.

**MICHAEL LANDGUTH****president, CEO | Raleigh-Durham  
International Airport**  
Morrisville

Landguth has led the Triangle airport since 2011. It served 11.8 million passengers, a 35% increase over the previous year, but 17% fewer than the record 14.2 million passengers in 2019. It has a \$326 million budget this year. He has bachelor's and master's degrees from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida.

**VAN ANH NGUYEN****CEO | VinFast Manufacturing US**  
Raleigh

The Hanoi National University graduate oversees construction of a proposed \$4 billion Chatham County plant. She joined the Vietnamese automaker in 2017. Drawn by incentives exceeding \$1 billion, VinFast has promised 7,500 jobs, with as many as 150,000 electric vehicles per year. Production is slated to start in 2025.



## PHIL PECK

**president | Epes Transport Systems High Point**

The Virginia Tech University graduate took his current role in 2021 after starting in 1995 as a driving manager. The Penske Logistics-owned company has become one of the state's largest trucking companies, operating more than 1,500 trucks.

**Favorite family tradition:** Virginia Tech Hokie football tailgates

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Oak Island

**Major inspiration:** Team members and co-workers committed to the effort required to produce excellent results. Because there are no shortcuts or substitutes for work ethic.

**Career highlight:** Seeing people that you have worked closely with over the years grow, be promoted and enjoy success.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Attending any sporting event

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Focus on investment in your people for long-term growth and goals, and ensure sustained success through good times or bad, rather than the short-term wins.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Consolidation of carriers through acquisition.



## JIM SEGRAVE

**CEO, chairman | FlyExclusive Kinston**

Segrave is creating a publicly traded business in partnership with New York investor Greg Hymowitz's EnTrust Global. The business leases more than 90 charter jets to CEOs, celebrities and others preferring private aviation and employs more than 800. LGM also provides aircraft paint services and is expanding its maintenance business. He's a trustee at his alma mater, East Carolina University.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Atlantic Beach

**Major inspiration:** All of my children — the most important job I have!

**Career highlight:** Selling my first business to Delta Air Lines in 2010 and agreeing to take FlyExclusive public last year.


**Favorite hobby after work:** Being on the water somewhere warm!

**Best advice to industry newcomer:** Pick something you love. It's lots easier to work hard when you love what you do!

**Key industry change in next five years:** Technology — urban air mobility (eVTOL).

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## CHRIS TAYLOR

vice president of manufacturing |  
Boom Supersonic

Greensboro

As Boom's first North Carolina hire, Taylor oversees developing the company's plan to build supersonic jets at Piedmont Triad International Airport. Boom expects to invest \$500 million in building a manufacturing plant that aims for 2,400 jobs by 2030. The Georgia Tech University graduate previously worked for Gulfstream Aerospace for 39 years.

**What do you listen to on commute:**

I curate my own listening experience with a focus on North Carolina artists like Superchunk, Rhiannon Giddens, Link Wray, John Coltrane, The Connells, Archers of Loaf, Flat Duo Jets, Southern Culture on the Skids.

**Major inspiration:** A mentor in the first 15 years of my career helped me understand how critical my relationships were with technicians and how to best work with them. To this day, I often think about his words of wisdom and I'm grateful he took time to help me become a leader.

**Career highlight:** Assembling one of the most remarkably talented teams at Gulfstream Aerospace in Oklahoma City. Today, many of those individuals now have top positions at Gulfstream in Savannah, Georgia.

**Best advice for industry newcomer:** Put yourself in a position to learn something new. If your goal is to make a contribution, my advice is to do something that forces you to learn.

**Key industry change in next five years:** While there have been advances for certain components in aerospace, there is still some reticence for incorporating those advancements into major structures on a large scale, especially with metallics.



## CARL WARREN

president, CEO | North Carolina  
Railroad Co.

Raleigh

The former CSX ports director in Jacksonville, Florida, he succeeded Scott Saylor at the state-chartered company in 2020. It oversees a 317-mile rail corridor from Charlotte to the port terminal in Morehead City and invests in economic development projects. He has a bachelor's from Wesleyan University and master's degree from the University of Washington.

**Favorite family tradition:** Summer vacations with extended family allow us to put down our technology and appreciate one another.

**Favorite N.C. place to visit:** Beech Mountain for snow in the winter and natural air conditioning in the summer.

**What do you listen to on your commute:**

My wife. Because I live close to work, we started sharing a car when our son went to college. It provides us with the opportunity to catch up on things.

**Major inspiration:** I have been fortunate to learn from the example of several great mentors and leaders, particularly from those in the industry who appreciate that the railroad has an enduring impact that will be felt for decades and possibly centuries.

**Career highlight:** Working on the double tracking of the mainline from Los Angeles to Chicago. I was awed by the immense scale of the entire system.

**Favorite hobby after work:** Taking advantage of Raleigh's bike trails.

**Key industry change in next five years:** Intense federal and state scrutiny with respect to operating practices and safety.



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