NORTH CAROLINA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL LEADERS

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BUSINESS NORTH CAROLINA

POWER LIST 2024

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SOLVE:

Rearrange the checkers to create 4 columns—black/red/black/red/, touching only 2 checkers.

If you figured it out, congratulations. Move the 2 red checkers in the first column to the other side of the grid, and use them to push rows 2 and 4 to the left. Solving the problem requires unconventional thinking.

This illustrates our approach to legal issues—looking beyond the expected path to find solutions for our clients.

BROOKS PIERCE





MARY JO CAGLE



RICHARD CHILDRESS



KATHIE NIVEN

WHAT IS A POWER LIST INTERVIEW?

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, those interviewed have included Lee-Moore Capital CEO Kirk Bradley, Front Street Capital Managing Partner Robin Team, retired Truist CEO Kelly King, and Piedmont Triad Partnership President Michael Fox, who is chairman of the NCDOT Board.

WHO'S NEXT?

Don't miss the next Power List Interview. Subscribe to the Daily Digest and get the latest business news from around North Carolina straight to your inbox, including Nido Qubein's next powerful interview.

Visit **businessnc.com/daily-digest** to subscribe.

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ASSEMBLING THE POWER LIST

Grab a beverage, turn off your smartphone, and take some time to enjoy *Business North Carolina's* annual snapshot of the state's most influential private-sector leaders.

We view it as our privilege to spotlight power brokers capable of making it rain at their enterprises and in their communities.

The nation's ninth-most populous state has thousands of talented leaders, making this a small sampling of those with noteworthy power. North Carolina has one of the state's most dynamic economies, making this project particularly compelling and challenging.

Rapid growth doesn't happen without great leadership, much of which comes from the 500 people cited in this report.

The Power List is based on talking with sources, undertaking considerable research and relying on years of experience covering North Carolina's business community from this magazine's unique statewide perspective. We encourage nominations because we inevitably lack access to various power corridors.

But we view the list as journalism, not advertising or public relations.

We're sensitive to diversity and geography, but we don't tilt the list for those reasons. The result is a skew toward white males, reflecting national and statewide business leadership demographics that don't match our state's actual diversity. That's changing, albeit at nowhere near the pace many would prefer.

While a majority remain on the list from previous years, we review everyone and constantly seek new people. Michael Jordan is gone after selling the Charlotte Hornets.

The Power List helps make *Business North Carolina* more relevant throughout the year because we learn so much about our state as we create this magazine. It's particularly impressive to see how some leaders work together to attack key issues, including workforce training, affordable housing and innovation.

Readers enjoy learning about the philosophies and personalities of Power List members, so we appreciate those who responded to our questions on various topics. The responses inevitably provide insight and humor.

Our personal favorites:

If the odds are one in a million, just be the one.
— Donta Wilson, Truist Financial

Don't be afraid to make a mistake; just don't make the same mistake twice.
— Mark Balling, Skanska USA Building

Know your product, work harder than your competition, and do what you say you will do.
— Andy Andrews, Dominion Realty Partners

Be yourself. Everyone else is taken.
— Kathie Niven, Biscuitville

Never do again? Won't let my dog off the leash at the airport.
— Joe Budd, The Budd Group

Even if you're only responsible for 2% of a conflict, you're 100% responsible for your 2%.
— David Mullen, The Variable

It's not brain surgery, no one's going to die.
— Joey Pointer, Fleet Feet

I believe exercise is a great outlet and my favorite is strength. I do 200 push-ups every day.
— Brian Savoy, Duke Energy

Never take a helicopter over a volcano.
— Igor Jablokov, Pryon



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in memoriam **Frank Daniels Jr.**

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Our congratulations to the 2024 Power List honorees. The recognition acknowledges their achievement—fueled by the spirit of enterprise and bolstered by hard work. The state of North Carolina is fortunate to have such visionary business leaders. We're especially pleased to note the diversity of backgrounds and industries among the honorees. With more than 125 years of serving North Carolina businesses with legal counsel, we're proud to work in a state that provides the environment that allows leaders like these to do their best.

BROOKS PIERCE

2024 POWER LIST

WELCOME FROM OUR SPONSORS

The annual publication of Business North Carolina's Power List represents much more than the recognition of our state's enterprising leaders and their achievements. It's a celebration of their collective efforts that are fueling local economic growth and contributing to North Carolina's reputation as a destination for business and commerce. As one of the region's largest banks, PNC will continue to do our part to help facilitate this growth. On behalf of all of us at PNC, congratulations to the 2024 Power List honorees – and thank you for your many efforts to deliver on the great potential we have before us.

Jim Hansen,
PNC Regional President for Eastern Carolinas and Southeast Territory Executive

PNC

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Metcon Buildings and Infrastructure congratulates Aaron K. Thomas, CEO, on being named to *Business North Carolina's* Power List for the second consecutive year!

"As we embark on the journey that is 2024, Metcon is committed to carry forward the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and excellence that defines Metcon. Our collective journey is marked not just by the projects we undertake but by the relationships we build, the challenges we overcome, and the legacy we create."

– Aaron K. Thomas, CEO

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ABC 2024 TOP PERFORMER
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ENR
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AGRICULTURE

2024 POWER LIST

Ronald “Trey” Braswell
Bryan Dobson
Steve Evans
Garey Fox
Michelle Grainger
Craig Hagood
Shawn Harding
Vern Hawkins
David Herring
Jay Jandrain
Evan Kleinhans
Angie Maier
Wendell “Dell”Murphy Jr.
Lorenda Overman
Christina Phillips
Mike Popowycz
Paul Rea
Linwood H. Scott III
Linwood Vick

MICHELLE GRAINGER

Executive Director
North Carolina Sweetpotato Commission
Cary



After working more than two decades at N.C. State University on innovative management, Grainger took the job of executive director of the NC Sweetpotato Commission in August 2020. More than 400 sweetpotato growers, and the packers, processors and business associates that support them, compose the nonprofit.

North Carolina’s hot, moist climate and fertile soil have made the state the No. 1 producer of sweetpotatoes since 1971. Nearly two-thirds of all sweetpotatoes grown nationwide come from eastern North Carolina.

A fun project involves having the official spelling of sweetpotato changed to one word.

Education: BA & BS N.C. State University

First job: Foreign Trade Zone, Longistics International

What a competitor would say about you: Michelle is tenacious and not easily deterred. Equally, she works to be inclusive and creative when faced with a challenge that others may feel is too large to tackle. She is quick to build upon others’ strengths when creating a coalition.

Favorite passion: Creating memories with family and friends, through food and travel. Exploring new places and foods is exciting whether they are close to home or are in distant lands. The world isn’t nearly as big as it sometimes may feel.

Career accomplishment: Being invited to give a TEDx talk in 2019. I spoke on the importance of agriculture and our country’s ability to protect ourselves because we can feed ourselves. Without such a capability, our national security would be at risk. Agriculture is the foundation to all successful societies. Our farmers are heroes and should be recognized at a minimum, three times a day.

Best life change: Saying “Yes” to the NC Sweetpotato Commission. This was a big change from being affiliated with an international research center at N.C. State for 20 years prior, but it would not have been possible without those experiences.



RONALD "TREY" BRASWELL

President
Braswell Family Farms
Nashville

A fourth-generation farmer, Braswell became president in 2017. The farm started in 1943 when brothers E.G. and J.M. Braswell bought a mill and ground corn for farmers. In 1956, they started selling young hens to egg producers. In 1989, Braswell Farms became a founding member of distributor Eggland's Best Eggs, now the second-largest franchisee in the U.S., producing 65 million dozen eggs annually. Trey returned to the farm in 2008 and helped boost growth with the company's first pasture-raised organic farm in 2018. The business has received several certifications for the humane treatment of animals. Braswell Farms makes donations to mostly Christian-based organizations like Samaritan's Purse and Corporate Chaplains of America.

Education: BA N.C. State University; MBA The College of William and Mary



BRYAN DOBSON

CEO
Quality Equipment
Fuquay-Varina

Dobson grew up around the family's John Deere business in the late 1970s and '80s. He spent six years working in the furniture industry, before returning to Farmland Tractor in Scotland Neck in 1997. He says he returned to John Deere because of the product and the difference he could make in communities. Quality Equipment began in 2018 with the merger of Quality Equipment and East Coast Equipment; they had a combined 27 dealerships. It now has 36 retail locations, including 33 in North Carolina, and about 650 employees, making it the fifth-largest John Deere dealership group in the nation, according to the trade publication *Farm Equipment.*

Education: East Carolina University



STEVE EVANS

Vice President Community Development
Smithfield Foods
Knightdale

Evans joined Smithfield in 2019 after working in various community development jobs, that were mainly focused on rural areas. A Knightdale City Council member since 2021, he promotes the giant food company's strategies, including environmental and workforce development efforts.

Education: BS N.C. A & T State University

Favorite passion: Spending time with the family. Family is my "why."

Best hiring question: What is your "Why."

Boards: Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina; N.C. Business Committee for Education.



GAREY FOX

Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
N.C. State University
Cary

Fox helps spotlight his students' mission to feed a growing population despite urban expansion taking farmland. The college and U.S. Department of Agriculture broke ground on a 51,296-square-foot plant improvement laboratory, allowing scientists to research improvements to maize, soybean, wheat, cotton and peanuts.

Education: BS & MS Texas A&M University; PhD Colorado State University

Career accomplishment: Named dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in August 2023, following in the footsteps of a mentor and friend.

Change about N.C.: Invest more in agricultural and life sciences.

Favorite technology: Robotics, drones and automation in agriculture's technological revolution.



CRAIG HAGOOD

CEO
House-Autry
Four Oaks

Hagood joined the more than two-century-old company in 2001, the same year it relocated to Fair Oaks from Newton Grove. He took his current role in 2010, overseeing the company which sells brands of stone-ground products, such as cornmeal, breadings and mixes. He previously had stints with Cargill and Conagra.

Education: BS University of Georgia; Master's, Kansas State University; PhD Indiana Wesleyan University

Best advice: Find a career in the food industry as people always have to eat. (My father)

Favorite passion: Working on my small farm.

Favorite book: "Leadership in Turbulent Times" by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Change about N. C.: Improve I-95



SHAWN HARDING

President
N.C. Farm Bureau
Raleigh

Harding has been president of the state's largest general farm group with more than 500,000 member-families since 2019. Its main business is insurance, with annual revenue of about $1 billion. He grew up in Chocowinity in Beaufort County, where he began working on his family's tobacco farm. He and his brother also raised tobacco until his wife, Tracey, helped transition to various of fruits and vegetables in the late 1990s. One of his three children now manages the farm. He has been an elder at Haw Branch Church of Christ in Chocowinity for more than 20 years.

Education: BS N.C. State University



VERN HAWKINS

President
Syngenta Crop Protection
Greensboro

After earning an MBA, the Indiana native went to work in the U.K. in a global fungicide and insecticide product management role with Zeneca Agrochemicals. He returned to the U.S. and has been with Syngenta since 1985 and president since 2010. He also worked for Syngenta as a college intern. He helped introduce a fungicide used on more than 130 crops grown in 100-plus countries. Taranis, a leader in AI-powered crop intelligence, appointed Hawkins to its board in February. He is active in 4-H, FFA and chairs the Triad's American Heart Association board.

Education: BS Purdue University; MBA Temple University



DAVID HERRING

Vice President
Hog Slat
Lillington

He wasn't on the payroll until he was a junior in high school, but he started working at age 12 for the business his father started in 1969. Billy Herring's three sons – David, Mark and Tommy – now run the company. David returned to Hog Slat in 1981 after finishing college. It then had about 30 employees. It now employs about 1,000 people, with another 1,400 subcontractors. Hog Slat sells hog and poultry confinement units through 95 retail stores. He is a past president of the N.C. Pork Council and past board member of the National Pork Producers Council. The three brothers also own TDM Farms, which operates in five states and sells more than 800,000 hogs annually. Herring is on the N.C. State University board of trustees.

Education: BS N.C. State University



JAY JANDRAIN

CEO
Butterball

Sandrain joined Butterball in 2002 as director of research and development, and gained his current post in 2020. He previously worked at companies such as Cargill and Plantation Foods. Butterball produces more than 1 billion pounds of turkey products annually, the largest in the U.S. It has more than 6,000 employees and six processing plants in North Carolina, Arkansas and Missouri. The company is jointly owned by Goldsboro-based Goldsboro Milling and Merriam, Kansas-based Seaboard.

Education: BS Cornell University



EVAN KLEINHANS

CEO
AgCarolina Farm Credit
Winterville

He became CEO in January 2023 after working for the membership-owned enterprise since 2011. AgCarolina is part of the Farm Credit System, the largest provider of credit to U.S. agriculture. His group has more than $3 billion in loans to almost 6,000 members across 46 counties in eastern North Carolina.

Education: BS & MBA, East Carolina University

Change about N.C.: I wouldn't. It's the best state in the country to live and do business.

Favorite passion: Fishing with my family.

Favorite book: "Extreme Ownership: How US Navy SEALs Lead and Win," by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin.

Best life change: Asking Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior.



ANGIE MAIER

Principal
Valley View Insights
Raleigh

Maier lobbies for trade associations representing the cattle, dairy and pork industries. She has worked for the N.C. Pork Council and as a N.C. General Assembly staffer. She has worked on bills that changed the state's right-to-farm laws and development of swine renewable natural gas projects.

Education: BA & Master's N.C. State University

What a competitor would say: I want to hate her, but I can't.

Favorite passion: Checking items off my 50 Things Before 50 list.

Favorite musician: Taylor Swift

Career accomplishment: Helping strengthen the Right-to-Farm law.



WENDELL "DELL" MURPHY JR.

Chair

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, the family's businesses were united under a management group. Murphy Family Ventures includes farm management, golf courses and sales of cars, boats and real estate. Murphy's father, Wendell, is a member of the N.C. State board of trustees, while his wife, Wendy, is vice-chair of the UNC System Board of Governors.

Education: BS N.C. State University



LORENDA OVERMAN

Vice President

Overman Farms

Goldsboro

Overman is secretary/treasurer of the NC Pork Council. She and her husband, Harrell, operate a third-generation swine farm. They are active in teaching children about the work that goes into the food they eat.

Education: AD Mount Olive College

What a competitor would say about you: She believes safe, abundant, affordable food is a national security issue.

Best advice: "No one gets where they are alone." (Dr. Jackie Applegate)

Favorite passion: Boating, fishing and walking on the beach.

Career accomplishment: Vice chair of the American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee.

HOUSE-AUTRY

Congratulations, Craig!

Named on the 2024 Business NC Power List for 3rd Straight Year

For over two decades, Craig has led the profitable growth of House-Autry from a regional presence to a nationally recognized brand.

His latest accomplishments include transforming our Four Oaks, NC facility to being an efficient, cost-effective facility while building flexibility and responsiveness for our customers. He also expanded operations into a second facility to better support our growing business with dual supply capabilities and a more responsive supply chain.

We congratulate him on this accomplishment and look forward to further growth with his leadership!



Dr. Craig Hagood, President & CEO, House -Autry Mills



CHRISTINA PHILLIPS

Director of Production Research
Smithfield Foods
Wallace

Phillips started working for Smithfield in 2011, the same year she earned a doctorate degree in swine management. She grew up in Wallace, where she lives with her husband and two sons. In 2023, Phillips was president of the N.C. Pork Council, the nation's oldest pork-producer organization.

Education: BS & MS N.C. State University; PhD University of Minnesota



MIKE POPOWYCZ

CEO
Case Farms
Troutman

Popowycz has been with Case Farms since 1987, a year after its founding, and in his current role since February 2022. He previously served as chief financial officer and vice chair. A company board member since 2005, he has been on the National Chicken Council board since 2012. The company has 475 grower farms, processes 3.8 million birds per week, employs more than 3,200 and produces more than 1 billion pounds of poultry products per year. The company also has operations in Ohio.

Education: BA Moravian College



PAUL REA

Senior Vice President
BASF North America
Raleigh

A native New Zealander, Rea joined BASF in Austrailia in 2001, and worked in Singapore before taking his current role in 2004. He oversees the German-based company's crop protection, seed, turf and pest management business in the U.S. and Canada.

Education: MBA University of Sydney

Person I admire: My parents sacrificed to give me an education, life skills, love and values.

Favorite book: "A Fever in the Heartland: The Ku Klux Klan's Plot to Take Over America, and the Woman Who Stopped Them" by Timothy Egan.

Best hiring question: What is not on your resume that we should know about you?

Best life change: Spending more time near the water with family.



LINWOOD SCOTT III

Co-Owner
Scott Farms
Lucama

Scott works with his father, Linwood Scott Jr., and his brother, Dewey, on a six-generation farm. It includes more than 14,000 acres of sweetpotato, tobacco and other crops based in Wilson County, but with operations extending to Wayne and Johnston counties. It's one of the largest operations of its kind in North Carolina, and a pioneer in exporting sweetpotatoes to the U.K. In 2000, at age 31, he was the U.S. National Young Farmer of the Year, like his father 23 years earlier. He has coached youth basketball and T-ball.

Education: Atlantic Christian (now Barton College)



LINWOOD VICK

Partner, General Manager
Vick Family Farms
Wilson

Vick's parents, Jerome and Diane, started a 25-acre farm in Wilson County in 1975. Vick Farms now stretches over a 30-mile radius across Wilson, Nash and Edgecombe counties and produces tobacco, sweetpotatoes, cotton, soybeans, wheat and corn on more than 9,000 acres. Its Carolina Gold and Pure Gold sweetpotatoes are sold worldwide. He's been the recipient of the North Carolina Farm Family of the Year and National Young Farmer of the Year.

Education: BS N.C. State University

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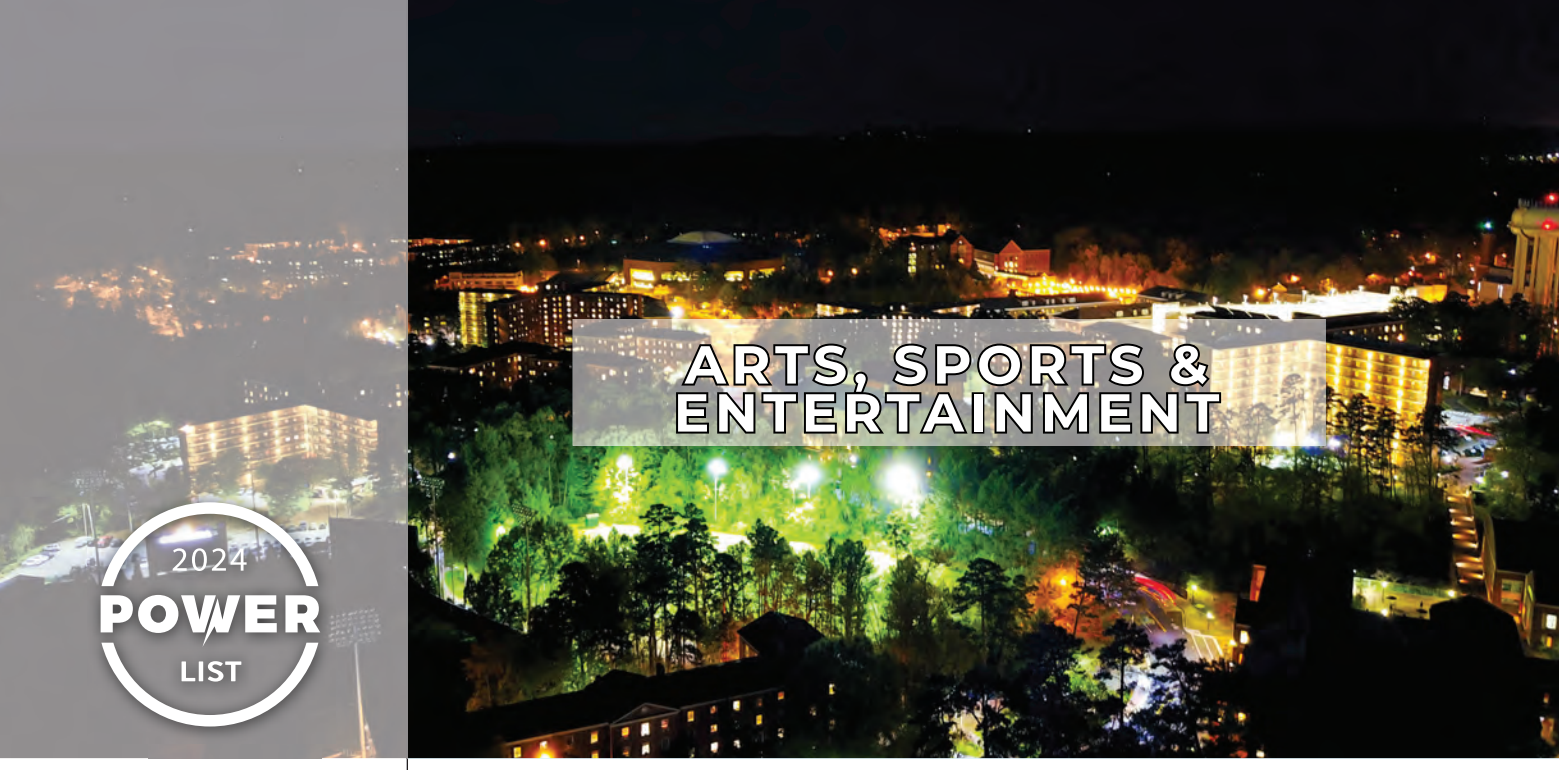
NC MILITARY REPORT

Dan Barkin's email on our state's growing military business sector and its impact on the N.C. economy is a must-read. The military provides roughly 11 percent of N.C.'s employment. That's 653,000 jobs in North Carolina, over $49 billion in state personal income, and nearly $80 billion in gross state product. These are some of the reasons why *Business North Carolina* created the "**NC Military Report**," a weekly newsletter covering military-related business news around the state, providing news and analysis that impacts all of us.

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BUSINESS NORTH CAROLINA



ARTS, SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

2024 POWER LIST

Tera Black
Demp Bradford
Mark Brazil
Richard Childress
Boo Corrigan
Lawrence "Bubba" Cunningham
John Currie
Jimmy Donaldson
Tom Dundon
Alison Friedman
Tom Gabbard
Joe Gibbs
Jim Goodmon
Valerie Hillings
Reg Jones
Nina King
Jamie Ledford
Steve Malik
Danny Morrison
James Phillips
Gabe Plotkin
Amy Privette Perko
Dan Rajkowski
Rick Schnall
Marcus Smith
Gary Sobba
Ben Sutton Jr.
David Tepper
Greg Walter
Jeff Wise

TERA BLACK

COO

Charlotte Checkers Hockey

Charlotte



Tera Black's first hockey job was as a trainer for the Sacramento River Rats roller hockey team in California in the 1990s. She joined the Checkers hockey team in 2006. Now, she is the only female chief operating officer in the American Hockey League and the first woman to serve on its executive committee. (She is now chair.) She's also the first female to have her name engraved on the Calder Cup, after the 2019 Checkers championship, and the first woman to earn the league's James C. Hendy Award, given to an outstanding executive.

Black oversees day-to-day business operations with an emphasis on marketing strategy. She oversees public relations, community relations, game operations, sales and involvement with non-profit organizations. In 2016, *Sports Business Journal* named Black to its annual "Game Changers" program that recognizes the top female executives in the sports industry.

Black guided the Checkers, previously in the East Coast Hockey League, on their move to the AHL for the 2010-11 season. The team has regularly ranked in the top 10 in AHL attendance.

Education: BS San Diego State University

First job: Working for a catering company.

Best advice: Buy good mattresses and shoes. You're going to be in one or the other all your life (my mother-in-law.)

Favorite passion: Hike, be outside, anything in the animal-related volunteer space

Who I admire: My daughters, Hayley and Cassidy Black, for their tenacity, perseverance, creativity and love for life

Favorite books: "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus and "First Lie Wins" by Ashley Elston

Best life change: Removing myself from Facebook



DEMP BRADFORD

COO

Greensboro Sports Foundation

Greensboro

Bradford joined the Greensboro Sports Foundation in July 2022. The foundation is the local organizing committee for major sports events contested at the Greensboro Coliseum Complex and other local venues with events by the ACC, NCAA, U.S. Figure Skating, and USA Swimming, among others. He previously was president of the Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission for six years.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; MA East Carolina University



MARK BRAZIL

CEO

Wyndham Championship

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.

Education: BA Baylor University



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 also built Childress Vineyards into one of the state's largest wineries. It opened near Lexington in 2004.



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, which was criticized for omitting Florida State from the four-team playoff this year. The son of former ACC Commissioner Gene Corrigan, he took his post in 2019 after working at the U.S. Military Academy, Duke and Notre Dame University. In February, his contract was extended through 2029.

Education: BA University of Notre Dame; MEd Virginia Commonwealth University



LAWRENCE "BUBBA" CUNNINGHAM

Athletic Director

UNC Chapel Hill

Chapel Hill

Cunningham has been a university athletic director for 20-plus years, working six years at Tulsa and three at Ball State before coming to Chapel Hill in 2011. The Tar Heels have won 19 national titles since then. Cunningham, who grew up in Naples, Florida, has a contract that runs through June 2027.

Education: BA University of Notre Dame; MBA University of Notre Dame



JOHN CURRIE

Athletic Director

Wake Forest University

Winston-Salem

The former AD at Kansas State joined his alma mater in 2019 after working in college sports for 18 years. Deacon backers donated a record $37.5 million to athletics in 2021, while other sports-related funds received a record $13.7 million. Wake remains competitive, while having the smallest enrollment any member of the four large college athletic conferences.

Education: BA Wake Forest University; MS University of Tennessee

Person I admire: Don Flow, a true servant leader.

Favorite book: "Who Moved My Cheese" by Specer Johnson

Favorite musician: Billy Strings



JIMMY DONALDSON

Influencer

MrBeast

Greenville

Donaldson began posting videos on YouTube in 2012 when he was 13 and has been credited with creating the genre of expensive video stunts. He is also the founder of MrBeast Burger and the co-creator of Team Trees, a fundraiser for the Arbor Day Foundation, which has raised more than $23 million. He went viral in 2017 after his "counting to 100,000" video earned tens of thousands of views in just a few days. He has 188 million subscribers and more than 33 billion page views.



TOM DUNDON

Owner

Carolina Hurricanes

Raleigh

The Dallas-based investor started a subprime auto lender that was bought by Spain's Banco Santander. In 2018, he became majority owner of Raleigh's NHL hockey team and bought 100% control two years later. The team has made the playoffs for six straight years and is under contract to operate the team here through 2044. He has plans to develop land around PNC Arena.

Education: BS Southern Methodist University



ALISON FRIEDMAN

The James and Susan Moeser Executive and Artistic Director

Carolina Performing Arts at UNC - Chapel Hill

Chapel Hill

Friedman, 44, brings international experience to her post, which she took in 2021. She founded Ping Pong Productions, a performing arts exchange that presented performances on five continents, and was artistic director for performing arts for the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority in Hong Kong. CPA collaborates with global and local artists.

Education: BA Brown University

What would competitors say: I don't believe in competitors.

Change in N.C.: Greater recognition for the deep bench of artistic and creative talent in the state.

Best advice: "Follow the pull, not the push." Follow your heart instead of external definitions of achievement.

Passions: Hiking, dancing, reading.

Best hiring question: When you didn't take "no" for an answer.



TOM GABBARD

CEO

Blumenthal 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. Revenue totaled $51.9 million in 2022, while it had reserves of $38.7 million. It rebranded from Blumenthal Performing Arts this year, reflecting its efforts promoting different arts styles.

Education: BA Pepperdine University; MBA Golden Gate University



JOE GIBBS

Owner, Founder

Joe Gibbs Racing

Huntersville

The Mocksville native, 83, started his racing team in 1992 and has overseen five NASCAR Cup Series championships. He coached the Washington Redskins (now Commanders) to three Super Bowl wins between 1983 and 1992. After using Chevrolet and Pontiac cars, Gibbs' team now works with Toyota.

Education: BA San Diego State University; MA San Diego State University



JIM GOODMON

CEO

Capitol Broadcasting

Raleigh

Goodmon started at WRAL-TV as operations manager in 1968. He became CEO of the family-owned parent company in 1979, succeeding his grandfather, A.J. Fletcher. Capitol has expanded into sports and real estate, developing Durham's American Tobacco Historic District and purchasing the Durham Bulls in 1991. His son, Jimmy, is president and chief operating officer.



VALERIE HILLINGS

CEO

North Carolina Museum of Art

Raleigh

Hillings, who grew up in Alexandria, Virginia, took the N.C. post in 2018 after 14 years with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation in New York City. The 200-employee museum has received state funding since 1947. Its foundation had reserves of $71.6 million as of 2022. It unveiled a rebranding last year that spotlights its outdoor space and community focus.

Education: BA Duke University; MA & PhD New York University



REG JONES

Championship Director
U.S. Golf Association
Pinehurst

The Henderson native oversees non-competition details at the U.S. Open tournament slated for June in Pinehurst, including parking, spectator transportation to grandstands, merchandise and everything else. He worked for the Pinehurst Resort's championship office starting 1994, serving as championship director between 1999 and 2006, when he was hired by the USGA.

Education: BA Wake Forest University; MA Ohio University



NINA KING

Athletic Director
Duke University
Durham

Duke named the Tampa, Florida ,native to her post in 2019, 11 years after she joined the Durham university. She previously spent four years at Notre Dame University's athletics department. She chairs the NCAA Division 1 Women's Basketball Committee and teaches a sports business course. King is on the board of directors of Women Leaders in Sports.

Education: BS University of Notre Dame; JD Tulane University



JAMIE LEDFORD

President
Golf Pride Grips
Pinehurst

Ledford oversees Golf Pride's new Global Innovation Center, located near the Pinehurst No. 8 course. It features retail, testing and rapid prototyping labs for developing new technology aimed at benefiting golfers of all skills. He previously was a vice president of global business development at Carlsbad, California-based Callaway Golf, where he led the purchase and sale of three businesses.

Education: BA University of Puget Sound; MA Johns Hopkins University



STEVE MALIK

Owner, Chair
North Carolina Football Club
Raleigh

The Kinston native has headed medical technology companies, including Greenlight Health Data Solutions and Medfusion, which was sold in 2019. His soccer passion led to the purchase of the Carolina Railhawks in 2015, which rebranded as North Carolina FC. He later relocated the North Carolina Courage of the National Women's Soccer League to Cary. This past year, the Courage added new investors, including pro tennis stars Ons Jabeur and Naomi Osaka.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill



DANNY MORRISON

Executive Director
Charlotte Sports Foundation
Charlotte

Sports are big business in the Queen City, with Morrison, 70, involved at every level. The former high school coach, director of athletics at two universities, conference commissioner and Carolina Panthers president oversees this nonprofit, which had a $77 million economic impact on the Charlotte region in 2022. It hosts the Duke's Mayo Bowl football game each December, and is the local organizer for the ACC Football Championship.

Education: BA Wofford College; Master's UNC Chapel Hill; PhD University of South Carolina

Best advice: Risk and progress are complementary variables (Joe Lesesne.)

Passions: Walking, golf, and tennis.

Favorite technology: iPhone



JAMES PHILLIPS

Commissioner
Atlantic Coast Conference
Charlotte

The former Northwestern athletic director took his post in 2021, and moved the conference headquarters from Greensboro last year, aided by $15 million in state-approved incentives. He's trying to generate more revenue for a conference that lags behind its Southeastern and Big 10 peers in broadcast rights' receipts. He's facing a legal fight with members Florida State and Clemson, which wants to exit the ACC.

Education: BA University of Illinois; MEd Arizona State University; PhD University of Tennessee



GABE PLOTKIN

Majority Owner
Charlotte Hornets
Charlotte

Plotkin is the founder and chief investment officer of Tallwoods Capital, an investment firm that followed his now-defunct Melvin Capital. In 2023, he and New York private-equity executive Rick Schnall purchased the Hornets for $3 billion from majority owner Michael Jordan. Their goal is to steer the Hornets to the NBA playoffs, which the team has not made since 2015-16.

Education: BA Northwestern University



RICK SCHNALL

Majority Owner
Charlotte Hornets
Charlotte

Schnall is co-president of private equity firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice in New York. He was a minority owner of the NBA's Atlanta Hawks before joining Gabe Plotkin to buy a majority stake in the Charlotte Hornets. In Atlanta, Schnall helped Hawks' majority owner Antony Resler improve the team's business operations and spark renovations at its Atlanta arena.

Education: BA University of Pennsylvania; MBA Harvard University



AMY PRIVETTE PERKO

CEO
Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics
Fayetteville

Colleges can thank publishing executives John and James Knight, and their foundation, for forming a group to help avoid athletic scandals and improve graduation rates for football and basketball players. The commission has the daunting task of helping maintain integrity in college sports. Now in her 24st year at the nonprofit, she influenced a NCAA policy that requires teams to graduate at least half of their players to qualify for postseason championships.

Education: BA Wake Forest University; MSM University of Richmond

Best advice: "Never stop learning." Former UNC President William Friday.

Favorite passion: Tennis.

Favorite book: "The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry" by John Mark Connor

Favorite musician: Darius Rucker

Favorite technology: Alexa

Best life change: Morning yoga



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 CEO 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.



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 its downtown Charlotte stadium in 2014, the Knights routinely score among the top attendance in minor league baseball, drawing about 600,000 fans a year. Partly because of the Knights' success, Charlotte is now a potential site for a major league team.

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GARY SOBBA

Tournament Director

Wells Fargo Championship

Charlotte

Sobba has run day-to-day operations of the PGA Tour event since 2017. Sobba spent the previous 15 years at Learfield Communications, including as general manager of Tar Heel Sports Marketing in Chapel Hill. The Charlotte tournament is seeking a new sponsor with Wells Fargo ending its contract that started in 2003 with predecessor Wachovia. A decision is expected in the next few months for one of the PGA Tour's highest-purse events.

Education: MBA University of Kansas



BEN SUTTON JR.

CEO

Teall Sports & Entertainment

Winston-Salem

Fun and games are big business for Sutton, whose Teall Sports & Entertainment grew out of efforts to help colleges monetize their athletic programs. He is former president of industry leader IMG IMG College. Sutton's Teall Sports is the largest college sports sponsorship company. He's on the board of Wake Forest University and treasurer for the Reagan Presidential Library Foundation & Institute.

Education: BA & JD Wake Forest University

What competitors would say: I hope they'd say honorable, but uber-competitive, fearless and relentless.

Change in N.C.: Our cities are on a dangerous path. They were all in better shape 10 years ago.

Best advice: Son, there's no such thing as the status quo. You're either getting ahead or falling behind (my dad.)

Person I admire: Ronald Reagan.

Favorite book: From Strength to Strength by Arthur Brooks.

Career achievement: Creating thousands of jobs.

Favorite hiring question: What makes American the greatest country in the world.



DAVID TEPPER

Owner

Carolina Panthers, Charlotte Football Club

Charlotte

Hope springs eternal for the billionaire's efforts to turn around his NFL team, acquired for $2.2 billion in 2018. He 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. In January, Tepper hired Dave Canales to coach the Panthers; he has fired previous coaches Ron Rivera, Matt Rhule and Frank Reich.

Education: BA University of Pittsburgh; MBA Carnegie Mellon University



GREG WALTER

Executive Vice President, General Manager

Charlotte Motor Speedway

Charlotte

Walter, 61, began his career with media companies such as ESPN, then switched to racing. He became Atlanta Motor Speedway's vice president of sales in 1998, then general manager of the Charlotte track in 2018. He chairs the N.C. Motorsports Association, promoting an industry with a $6 billion impact.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill

Favorite book: "The Wisdom of the Bullfrog" by William H. McRaven

Favorite technology: Goodnotes app on my iPad mini. Kindle Scribe is a close second.

Best hiring question: At the end of the day, whether it be at work or in your personal life, what matters to you most.



JEFF WISE

CEO

Whitewater Center

Charlotte

Wise practiced as an attorney in Atlanta, helped start Charlotte's First Commerce Bank and co-founded and led a healthcare information systems company. But for most of the past two decades, he's been the leader of the Whitewater Center, which attracts more than 1 million visits a year for outdoor sports, music, food and beverages. It offers the world's largest recirculating artificial whitewater river, and operates recreation facilities in western North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

Education: BA University of Richmond; JD Emory University

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Melissa Smith
Michael Smith
Ralph Strayhorn
Andrew Tate
Ben Teague
Robert Van Geons
Patrick Woodie
Steve Yost

GENE MCLAURIN

Chair
Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina
President
Quality Oil and Gas
Rockingham



Gene McLaurin's company delivers propane and oil in about a half-dozen counties, but McLaurin, 67, is having a big impact across the state. He chairs the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, the state's key business recruitment group that works in partnership with the N.C. Department of Commerce. The group is credited with carrying out the visions of N.C. political and business leaders for attracting and retaining companies to keep the state growing. The work has paid off with well-publicized projects in many counties throughout North Carolina.

It's the latest of many public roles for McLaurin, who was known for being a bipartisan leader during his one term in the North Carolina state Senate (2013-14) and eight terms as the mayor of Rockingham in Richmond County (1997-2012). Gov. Roy Cooper appointed him to the board in 2017, and he became chair four years later.

When Cooper asked McLaurin to take the top post, McLaurin said his focus would be on rural North Carolina because of a conviction that economic prosperity is essential for all parts of the state. Like the governor, McLaurin notes he grew up in a rural area, attended public schools and universities, has three children and favors bipartisanship on many issues, including economic development.

Education: BA UNC Charlotte

First job: Delivering *The Charlotte News*

What a competitor would say: Hires smart, intelligent people who understand customer service.

Change about N.C.: Eliminate gerrymandering

Best advice: Treat everyone with respect (my grandparents.)

Favorite passion: Golfing at Pinehurst

Favorite musician: James Taylor

Career accomplishment: Balance 40-plus years in private business with 20-plus years as an elected or appointed official.

Best hiring question: Tell me about your family.



KELLY ANDREWS

Economic Development Director

Pitt County Government

Greenville

Anchored by a university and its health care system, Pitt County has welcomed more than $1 billion in industrial development, most of it biopharma, since 2009. Andrews, 50, has seen all of it, joining the economic booster in 2006 and serving as its director since 2010. She is a Pitt Community College trustee and on the North Carolina Economic Development Association board.

Education: BSBA UNC Chapel Hill; MBA East Carolina University

Best advice: "Just be yourself." (my mom.)

Favorite passion: Fishing at the Outer Banks.

Never do again: Snuba – a cross between SCUBA and snorkeling.



BRITTANY BRADY

CEO

Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development

Hendersonville

Brady, 38, is putting this corner of North Carolina on site-selection radar. France-based Tageos saw it last year. The designer and manufacturer of radio-frequency identification tags and inlays plans to invest almost $36 million and create 92 jobs over four years at an industrial park less than 2 miles from Asheville Regional Airport. The jobs will have an average annual wage of $67,000.

Education: BS East Tennessee State Univeristy; Master's University of South Carolina

What a competitor would say: I'm competitive.

Best advice: Cut off your head, and think with your gut (my college adviser.)

Career highlight: Joining Hendersonville and Henderson County to create Garrison Industrial Park, then quickly landing a tenant.

Favorite musician: Ray LaMontagne.

Best life change: Breaking up with my Apple watch.



PAGE CASTRODALE

Executive director

Cabarrus County Economic Development

Concord

Proximity to Charlotte and available space has helped Cabarrus County grow rapidly over the past decade with major investments by Eli Lilly, Red Bull and Rauch America. Castrodale joined the commission in 2018 after operating her own marketing company and previous stints at the region's Better Business Bureau and Durham's McKinney ad agency.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill



BRENT CHRISTENSEN

CEO

Greensboro Chamber of Commerce

Greensboro

HondaJet, HAECO, Boom and others have turned Greensboro into the state's aerospace hub. Christensen, 54, has had a large hand in landing the business and subsequent growth. The biggest boost for the state's third-largest city may be Toyota's battery plant, a nearly $14 billion investment that will create about 5,100 jobs at Greensboro-Randolph MegaSite.

Education: BA Duke University; MBA University of South Florida

What a competitor would say: Relentless, creative

Favorite book: "Talking to Strangers" by Malcolm Gladwell

Favorite musician: U2

Career accomplishment: Helping attract the Toyota battery factory.

Best hiring question: Where do you want to be in 10 years, and how will this position help you get there?



CHRISTOPHER CHUNG

CEO

Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina

Raleigh

North Carolina consistently ranks among the best states for economic development and Chung, 47, and his staff get much of the credit. He has led the partnership since 2015, a period marked by Toyota's $13.9 billion battery plant in Randolph County, VinFast's $4 billion electric vehicle factory in Chatham County and Boom's supersonic airliner factory in Greensboro.

Education: BA Ohio State University

What a competitor would say: I hate that we can't beat that guy.

Favorite passion: College football

Best advice: Be humble (my mom and dad.)

Who I admire: Warren Buffett

Favorite musician: Miles Davis

Best hiring question: Take us through your first 30 days, then your first six months. What is your plan of action, and your metrics to gauge success.



ADRIENNE COLE

CEO

Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce

Raleigh

After starting in economic development in Carteret County in the late 1990s, she headed to Wake County, where she's had a key role in city and growth issues for more than two decades. She has led Raleigh's 1,800-member business promoter since 2017 and is known as a key advocate for regional collaboration and seeking input from a diverse range of stakeholders.

Education: BA Meredith College; MPA Appalachian State University

Best advice: Big projects never move in a straight line (Harvey Schmitt.)

Favorite passion: Mountain hiking

Person I admire: Elaine Marshall

Never do again: Paddling in the Everglades.

Favorite musician: Billy Strings



TRACY DODSON

Assistant City Manager & Economic Development Director

City of Charlotte

Charlotte

Dodson has helped attract and retain some of Charlotte biggest businesses, and the jobs that they support, including a headquarters for Honeywell and expansions by LendingTree and Lowe's. She's banked more than 20 years of economic development experience, including previous posts at Lincoln-Harris and Charlotte Center City Partners.

Education: BA UNC Charlotte; Master's Harvard

What a competitor would say: Takes a unique approach to issues and opportunities.

Change about N.C.: Eliminate the rural-urban divide.

Best advice: Don't start a habit you don't want to have to break later.

Best hiring question: How many tennis balls fit into a limousine? I love the reactions but also want to hear how someone logically answers.

Best life change: Becoming more intentional.



CLARK DUNCAN

Senior Vice President

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

Asheville

Duncan has worked on Asheville-area economic development projects since 2008, while he has had his current post since 2018. He worked with Biltmore Farms Co. and others to attract the record $650 million Pratt & Whitney airfoils manufacturing plant. It had nearly 400 employees at the end of 2023 and is expected to top 800 in coming years.

Education: BA Wake Forest University



GEOFF DURHAM

CEO

Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce

Durham

The appropriately named chamber leader has said he's in the best spot in the U.S. for economic development because of Research Triangle Park (which is mostly in Durham County) and his community's vitality. He led Durham's downtown booster group for three years before taking his current job in 2016.

Education: BA Randolph-Macon College

Favorite book: "Embrace the Suck" by Brent Gleeson

Favorite technology: LandGlide for real estate data.

Best hiring question: What is the most interesting thing about you that is not on your resume.

Best life change: Worrying less about others' opinion of me.



NATALIE ENGLISH

CEO

Wilmington Chamber of Commerce

Wilmington

English has been in the chamber business for more than 25 years, the last seven linking businesses, government bodies and elected officials to enhance the Port City and four surrounding counties. She helped the region navigate Hurricane Florence and the COVID-19 pandemic, and more recently, she helped support creation of a $1.2 billion foundation after Novant Health bought the county-owned hospital.

Education: BA N.C. State University

What competitors would say: Tenacious and accomplishment oriented.

Best advice: To be loyal to my customer (my father, Al Haskins.)

Best book: "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver.

Career highlight: Convening leaders to develop a plan to recruit and retain nursing students, then receiving a grant for the plan from the New Hanover Community Endowment.



KEVIN FRANKLIN

President

Randolph County Economic Development Corporation

Ramseur

The county that Franklin serves has gained global attention for Toyota's $13.9 billion battery plant, which will start production next year. Much related growth is expected in Randolph, which is near the state's geographic center. Liberty, for example, won a $325,000 state grant that will help renovate an 85,314-square-foot warehouse for a Toyota supplier that expects to add 41 jobs.

Education: BA Bob Jones University

Best advice: Always pay attention to the details (my mom.)

Never do again: Travel through a country during a civil war.

Favorite book: "The Great Bridge" by David McCullough.

Career highlight: Helping bring Toyota to Randolph County



SCOTT HAMILTON

CEO

Golden LEAF Foundation

Rocky Mount

Few Tar Heels have more economic development credentials than Hamilton, 62. He was founder and CEO of the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development, then president and CEO of AdvantageWest in Asheville and later executive director of the Appalachian Regional Commission. He moved to Golden LEAF in 2019, where he helps distribute more than $50 million annually from the foundation's $1.3 billion portfolio.

Education: BA UNC Greensboro

Best advice: You can pretend to care, but you can't pretend to be there. (High school adviser.)

Person I admire: Rocky Mount Event Center General Manager David Joyner, who gives 100% to his community and helping other people excel.



JOANNA HELMS

Director, Economic Development

Town of Apex

Holly Springs

Helms is president of the N.C. Economic Development Association. She helped start the Apex's economic development department in 2014 after working for more than 20 years at a similar organization in Goldsboro. Apex's population has grown from about 5,000 in 1990 to more than 70,000.

Education: BS Western Carolina University

What a competitor would say: A professional who knows economic development. Can be nice but fierce when I need to be.

Person you admire: Helen Keller

Favorite book: "The Travelers Gift" by Andy Andrews

Favorite musician: Earth Wind & Fire

Favorite technology: GroupMe app

Best life change: Making intentional time to rest, relax and reflect.



LOREN HILL

Carolina Core Regional Economic Development Director

Piedmont Triad Partnership

High Point

With more than 27 years of economic development experience, Hill, 69, is a former long-time president of the High Point Economic Development Corp. He's proud that the region has accomplished its goal to create 50,000 jobs by 2038, way ahead of time. The tally as of April? About 50,300 jobs.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill

Best advice: It's not enough to do a great job in your new role; you must also communicate what you're doing to your stakeholders (Nido Qubein.)

Favorite passion: Daily walk outdoors with my wife.

Career accomplishment: Serving as the Carolina Core's regional economic development director.



CHRIS JOHNSON

Director of Economic Development

Johnston County

Smithfield

The wins keep coming for Johnston County and Johnson, who has led economic development efforts here since 2013. Recent announcements include a three-building bioscience park, office park and planned community. Johnston has become one of North Carolina's fastest growing counties, swelling 3.3% to almost 235,000 in the year leading up to July 1, 2022.

Education: BS East Carolina University

Best advice: Remember who you are and who you belong to (my mom.)

Favorite passion: Road cycling

Never do again: Skydive

Favorite book: "Covering All the Bases" by Bethany Bradsher

Career highlight: Being a small business owner with my wife for more than 33 years.

Favorite tech tool: LandGlide app



JANET LABAR

CEO

Charlotte Regional Business Alliance

Charlotte

LaBar, 47, is tasked with helping lead economic development efforts in 14 Carolina counties and Charlotte, which welcomed headquarters for the ACC and the Six Flags amusement-park chain. The Charlotte Hornets named her a Social Justice Power Forward for making a difference in the community, and two industry groups named the Alliance a Clean Energy Champion.

Education: BA University of West Florida; MBA University of Phoenix

What a competitor would say: I'm a lover and a fighter. And I like to win.

Best advice: Be yourself. Everyone else is taken. (Oscar Wilde.)

Favorite passion: Watch our children be in their element.

Person I admire: My mother and (s)hero Rosalinda, who faced adversity coming to this country yet established a life, a family and career.



SCOTT LEVITAN

CEO

The Research Triangle Foundation

Research Triangle Park

Levitan worked in real estate development posts related to research campuses at Johns Hopkins and Georgia Tech universities before coming in 2017 to the foundation, which manages Research Triangle Park. The largest U.S. research park and global innovation center is adding housing and recreational projects to complement its traditional office-lab mix, including the projected $1.5 billion Hub RTP development.

Education: BS Louisiana State University; Master's Harvard University & University of York (England)



SCOTT MILLAR

President

Catawba County Economic Development Corporation

Hickory

Millwork & Panel's $27.8 million investment and 48 new jobs in Claremont and Appalachian State opening its Hickory campus are the latest in a long string of economic development successes in which Millar, 63, and his team have played a key role. Success in attracting IT dollars, including Apple's $4 billion investment, have earned the region its title as the NC Data Center Corridor.

Education: BS University of Tennessee

Change about N.C.: Relocate the State Capitol to Hickory.

Favorite passion: Trail running and watercolors.

Person I admire: Jim Broyhill and Ernie Pearson for hiring me into economic development.

Best life change: Trusting that she'd love me forever.



MARK OWENS

CEO

Greater Winston-Salem

Winston-Salem

Owens, 38, has led Greater Winston-Salem since 2017. He has spearheaded initiatives including ASPIRE, a career-readiness program, and worked with state and local officials to nab $455 million in investments and more than 1,500 jobs. A member of the Piedmont Triad Partnership board of directors, he was elected last year to the board of the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.

Education: BS Presbyterian College

Favorite musician: Zach Bryan

Best hiring question: What is your biggest strength and biggest weakness? I want to see their level of self-awareness.

Best life change: Marrying my wife, Melody



CHRIS PLATÉ

Executive director

Monroe-Union County Economic Development Commission

Weddington

Platé, 52, capitalizes on Union County's proximity to the state's largest city, touting a mix of amenities such as an international airport and less congestion. Trailer-maker SteelPoint saw those benefits last fall, when it announced a $35 million expansion and 25 jobs. Union is one of four counties that contributed more than 25% of the state's population growth between April 1, 2020, and July 1, 2022.

Education: BS Clemson University

Favorite passion: Woodworking, Clemson sports and overlanding

Favorite musicians: Chicago, Prince and Foo Fighters

Career accomplishment: Being named 2016 Economic Developer of the Year by North Carolina Economic Development Association.



KEVIN PRICE

CEO

National Institute of Minority Economic Development

Chapel Hill

Price, 57, became the third president in National Institute of Minority Economic Development's history in 2020. He helped manage a merger, garner a $3 million commitment from Pinnacle Financial Partners and launch a small business emergency relief fund. He previously worked as Novant's senior director of supplier diversity and performance.

Education: BA UNC Greensboro; MBA & MHA Pfeiffer University

Person I admire: My grandmother, who became a homeowner, business owner and community leader despite having an eighth-grade education.

Best hiring question: What is your why?



MARVIN PRICE

Executive vice president, economic development

Greensboro Chamber of Commerce

Greensboro

Cutting his economic development teeth as vice president for economic recruitment at the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance, Price, 37, hit his stride in Greensboro. He was named the state's economic developer of the year in 2023 by the industry's trade association. His efforts have helped Greensboro land businesses such as LKQ and Boshart Industries.

Education: BA University of Montevallo; Master's Auburn University

What a competitor would say: Attentive to details, competitive, and forward-looking

Favorite passion: Helping disenfranchised people of color achieve financial independence.

Best advice: All relationships matter. (Ronnie Bryant.)

Favorite musicians: Drake and Gucci.

Favorite technology: Salesforce and CoStar

Best life change: Not bringing work challenges home.



JIMMY RANDOLPH

CEO

Sanford Area Growth Alliance

Sanford

Randolph grew up in neighboring Harnett County and worked at American Airlines before returning to central North Carolina. He worked at the Sanford Area Chamber of Commerce before taking his post at the alliance, which was formed in 2014 as a public-private partnership. Lee County and Sanford have attracted major expansions by Pfizer, Bharat Forge and Astellas in recent years, benefiting from the region's proximity to the Triangle.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill

NC RURAL CENTER

Leading the way in rural economic development.



Congratulations from the NC Rural Center to our President & CEO Patrick Woodie

for his selection to the Business NC Power List. Your dedicated leadership brings investment directly to the people and businesses of North Carolina's 78 rural counties and we're proud to join you in this important work. Thank you for your commitment to building stronger rural communities.

WILMINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



From the shores of *NC's Career Coast*, the Wilmington business community would like to express our sincere appreciation to Natalie English for her outstanding leadership in our community.

WILMINGTON career coast NC



JULIE ROPER

Economic Development and Local Government Manager

Dominion Energy

Gastonia

Roper manages the Richmond, Virginia-based energy company's community engagement and communications with lawmakers and other officials. She's a U.S. Air Force veteran and chair of the Gaston County Economic Development Commisssion. Dominon has more than 600,000 N.C. customers.

Education: BS Belmont Abbey College; MPA Appalachian State University



GARY SALAMIDO

CEO

NC Chamber

Cary

North Carolina's giant banks, health care companies and manufacturers can make their voices heard in the legislature and elsewhere, but the vast bulk of the state's businesses — 98%, says the U.S. Small Business Administration — are small with fewer than 500 employees. Enter Salamido, 61, and the NC Chamber. More than 700 businesses of all shapes and sizes belong.

Education: BS Pharmacy, MS Pharmacy Administration

Favorite passions: My family, Carolina Hurricanes, my Italian heritage and family-style dinners.

Person I admire: My best friend, Marty, because of his authenticity, faithfulness and joy for every adventure.

Favorite book: "Little Red Book of Wisdom" by Mark DeMoss

Favorite musician: Andrea Bocelli.

Best life change: Journaling what I am grateful for.



SCOTT SATTERFIELD

CEO

Wilmington Business Development

Wimington

The pace of growth is picking up in Wilmington, where Satterfield has led the business-promotion growth since 1994. A key growth driver has been Live Oak Bank and its technology-related spinoffs. GE Hitachi, MegaCorp and the Port of Wilmington are also success stories spotlighted by Satterfield's group.

Education: BS UNC Wilmington



MELISSA SMITH

Senior Vice President

Economic Development Partnership of N.C.

Raleigh

Smith has helped business attraction efforts for the EDPNC since 2020, continuing a 25-plus year career in economic development. While Chris Chung is the group's public face, Smith plays a key role in helping manage the process to attract and retain employers. Site selection consultants praise the group as an industry leader, which has paid off with record expansions in recent years.



MICHAEL SMITH

President

Chatham Economic Development Corp.

Pittsboro

Smith, 60, came to Chatham from Lee County in 2020 and has stayed busy. Chatham's megasites, the future home of manufacturer Wolfspeed and automaker VinFast, continue to attract investment pledges. Disney is plotting an 8,000-acre community near Pittsboro. He is a past president of the N.C. Economic Development Association.

Education: BA & MA East Carolina University

What a competitor would say: Persistent and knowledgeable.

Best advice: Do what you love for a living, and things will work out (my dad.)

Favorite book: "The Book of Charlie" by David Von Drehle

Career accomplishment: Landing VinFast, the state's largest jobs and investment announcement.



RALPH STRAYHORN

Board Chair

Golden LEAF Foundation

Charlotte

In December, the veteran banker was elected board chair at Golden LEAF Foundation, which distributes money from the state's share of a tobacco health settlement, and head of its investment committee.
A staffer at large and small banks in his career, he's a co-founder of Charlotte-based New Republic Partners, which provides wealth management and banking services.

Education: BA & JD UNC Chapel Hill

What a competitor would say: Relentless and honest.

Change about N.C.: Accelerate infrastructure development.

Best advice: Don't make a decision when it's dark outside.

Favorite passions: Family, friends, church and exercise

Favorite musician: The Eagles

Best life change: Balancing work and play

Congratulations



CHRIS PLATÉ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MONROE
UNION COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION

For being named to the Business NC's 2024 Power List





ANDREW TATE

Director, Economic Development

Duke Energy

Raleigh

Tate, 47, uses Duke Energy's power to attract business and industry in coordination with local, regional and state economic development organization. Before joining the utility, he was North Carolina Railroad Co.'s vice president of real estate, and he served as CEO of the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development for a decade.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill

Favorite passion: Tennis and music with my sons

Favorite musician: Mickey Newbury



BEN TEAGUE

Vice President Strategic Development

Biltmore Farms

Asheville

After spending almost 10 years as Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce's chief operating office, Teague, 45, joined Biltmore Farms in 2018. He helped facilitate the Pratt and Whitney development, a $650 million investment that is a record for the region. He's worked on more than 60 projects and $1.5 billion and $1.5 billion in capital investments through his career.

Education: BA Mississippi College; MBA University of Mississippi

Favorite passion: My family

People I admire: George W. Bush and Jack Cecil

Career highlight: Being selected a Presidental Leadership Scholar

Favorite hiring question Are you a *Business North Carolina* subscriber?

Favorite technology: Apple Airpods



ROBERT VAN GEONS

CEO

Fayetteville Cumberland Economic Development

Fayetteville

Since taking his post at the public-private group in 2017, Van Geons has helped raise Fayetteville's profile with N.C. and national developers, who may have overlooked the market previously. He worked as an economic developer in Rowan and Stanly counties before heading east. State lawmakers and officials picked Cumberland last year for a future "megasite" aimed at attracting a major employer.

Education: BA Catawba College; MS University of Southern Mississippi

What a competitor will say: You may sometimes disagree with his position, but you will never question his motivation. His commitment to his community is everything he does.

Best advice: Count to 10 before you throw a stone. Whatever you believe, you may be wrong. (Paul Thorn.)

Favorite passions: Music and tennis

Won't do again: Forget to ask, "Are we on the record."

Favorite book: "Relationship Economics, 2023 edition" by David Nour

Favorite musician: The Dead South

Best hiring question: Tell me about a project that didn't work out. What did you learn from it?



PATRICK WOODIE

CEO

N.C. Rural Economic Development Center

Cary

Woodie, 59, works to make better the state's 78 counties defined as rural. That includes workforce development, infrastructure improvement and other endeavors. The state-supported group invested $32 million in March, for example, to help North Carolina-based entrepreneurs. It received $1 million from Dogwood Health Trust last summer to expand broadband internet access in western North Carolina.

Education: BA & JD Wake Forest University

What a competitor would say: Fair and open minded.

Favorite book: "And There Was Light: Abraham Lincoln and the American struggle" by Jon Meacham.

People you admire: Tom Lambeth and Valeria Lee

Never do again: Run for public office

Favorite musician: Dolly Parton

Favorite technology: Apple Watch

Best life change: Leaving my home county to work for the Rural Center.



STEVE YOST

President

North Carolina's Southeast

Whiteville

Yost, 57, attracts businesses to this 20-county region with hard facts: 22 colleges, universities and community colleges; eight interstates; and a labor force of more than 800,000 people. It's working: Almost $856 million was invested and more than 4,100 jobs were created from April 2017 through March 2022. Earlier this year, Bladen County welcomed Sovereign Aerospace, which plans to invest $4.2 million and create 33 jobs.

Education: B.S Appalachian State University; MPA UNC-Chapel Hill

What a competitor would say: Strategic, fair and persistent

Change about N.C.: Lower the poverty rate.

Best advice: Treat everyone the same (my mom and dad.)

Favorite passions: Gardening and genealogy

Favorite book: "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver

Favorite musician: Van Morrison

Best life change: Making gardening a serious hobby.

APEX
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CONGRATULATIONS
to Joanna Helms,
Apex Economic Development Director,
on being named to the 2024
Business North Carolina Power List!



Leading each day with the Town of Apex P.E.A.K principles:
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EDUCATION

2024 POWER LIST

Darrell Allison
Connie Book
Kelli Brown
J. Bradley Creed
Eric Davis
Kandi Deitemeyer
Sheri Everts
James Ford
Sharon Gaber
Franklin Gilliam Jr.
Peter Hans
John Hauser
Jennifer Haygood
Tamika Walker Kelly
Laura Leatherwood
Thomas Looney
John Preyer
Vincent Price
Nido Qubein
Scott Ralls
Randall "Randy" Ramsey
Lee Roberts
Jenna Robinson
Philip Rogers
Douglas Searcy
Hope Williams
Randy Woodson

CONNIE BOOK

President
Elon University
Burlington



In March, Elon University's Imagining the Digital Future Center released a report about how artificial intelligence will shape lives and institutions. It's the latest example of how the private university is looking to the future under Book, who became president in 2018 after three years as The Citadel's first female provost. Under Book, Elon has also opened buildings, including a 5,000-seat convocation center, and added a part-time law school in Charlotte.

Book began her career as a television producer and reporter in Louisiana before switching to higher education. She joined Elon in 1999 as an assistant professor of communications. She served as Elon's faculty fellow for strategic planning from 2008 to 2010.

In 2020, Book led creation of the 10-year "Boldly Elon" strategic plan to advance the university's leadership in experiential education, mentoring and student success. The number of full-time faculty positions has grown and new academic programs added in engineering, nursing, science and technology.

Education: BA Lousiana State university; MEd Northwestern State University; PhD University of Georgia

First job: K-Mart cashier

Best advice: While at The Citadel, I was "invited" to a week of basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky. In a field exercise, the captain shouted "move" as shots were being fired. I hesitated. "Ma'am that is going to get you killed," he said. Sometimes you just need to move out and not overthink it.

Never do again: An air jump from 13,000 feet with the Army's Golden Knights. I embrace a "one and done" mindset about jumping from planes.

What a competitor would say: Driven



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 System Board of Governors and leading a K-12 school-choice nonprofit in Raleigh. He champions community engagement, student retention and increased scholarship opportunities. According to its 2023 campus census, FSU welcomed its largest first-year, first-time freshman class since 2007, with more than 800 students.

Education: BA N.C. Central University, J.D. UNC Chapel Hill



KELLI BROWN

Chancellor

Western Carolina University

Cullowhee

Brown came to Western Carolina in 2019 after serving as provost at Georgia College and State University. Her initiatives include promoting the state's only public engineering college west of Interstate 77. Campus enrollment declined marginally to about 11,628 students in the fall of 2023.

Education: BS & MS University of Toledo; PhD University of Illinois, Carbondale



J. BRADLEY CREED

President

Campbell University

Buies Creek

Texas-born Creed 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. Campbell's enrollment of about 5,100 includes more N.C. residents than any other private institution in the state.

Education: BA Baylor University, MDiv & PhD Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary



ERIC DAVIS

Chair

State Board of Education

Charlotte

Davis 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.

Education: BS United States Military Academy



KANDI DEITEMEYER

President

Central Piedmont Community College

Charlotte

Deitemeyer, 55, has led the state's second-largest community college since 2017. It had an enrollment of about 43,000 and more than 800 partnerships with companies. She's made a major push in workforce development, including the first training program with Tesla to train mechanics.

Education: BA, MA & PhD University of South Florida

What a competitor would say: Fierce, but fair.

Best advice: Stay in the Word and keep a prayer journal (Best friend.)

Most admired person: My husband, who is confident in who God has called him to be.

Never do again: Walk across the swinging bridge at Grandfather Mountain.

Best change in life: Eating a plant-based diet.



SHERI EVERTS

Chancellor

Appalachian State University

Boone

Since 2014 Everts has led what *U.S. News & World Report* rates the third-best regional university in the South. Enrollment has grown consistently to a record 21,253 at the start of the 2023-24 year. She has overseen expansion including a Hickory campus, the 203,000-square-foot Levine Hall of Health Sciences and a $191 million residential project.

Education: BA, MA & EdD University of Nebraska

Best advice: Believe in yourself, even when it feels like no one else does. Volunteer. Listen. Communicate in a way that matters to those you are leading.

Career accomplishment: 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.



JAMES FORD

President

Center for Racial Equity in Education

Charlotte

The education consultant was appointed by Gov. Roy Cooper in 2018 to the State Board of Education and has been an outspoken advocate for increased spending on public schools. He resigned from the board in September 2023 to focus on diversity issues in education. He was the state's 2014-2015 Teacher of the Year and has chaired the Governor's Teacher Advisory Committee.

Education: BS Illinois State University; MAT Rockford University



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 and greater awareness of the 30,000-student campus. UNC Charlotte is likely to achieve Research 1 status in the next few years, according to revised rules defining the top U.S. research universities.

Education: AB Occidental College MPL University of Southern California PhD Cornell University

What a competitor would say: She has high expectations, is tenacious, intuitive and cares about people.

Best advice: Listen more than you speak, pay attention, and don't be afraid to pitch-in wherever help is needed (a former supervisor.)

Favorite book: "Healing after Loss" by Martha Hickman

Favorite musicians: Beyonce & Adele

Best hiring question: What should I know that isn't on your resume?



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. But lower enrollment overall prompted Gilliam to cut 20 academic programs. They won't accept new students, he said in February.

Education: BA Drake University; MA & PhD University of Iowa



PETER HANS

President
UNC System
Chapel Hill

Hans, 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. The veteran political aide previously led the 58-campus community college system.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; MA Harvard University



JOHN HAUSER

President
Gaston College
Belmont

Hauser became Gaston College's seventh president in 2020 after leading Carteret Community College. Last year, he helped secure a $60 million state budget grant for health care training programs, the largest of any N.C. community college.

Education: BS UNC Charlotte; MA N.C. State University; PhD Appalachian State University

Favorite passions: Traveling with my family, hunting, fishing and attending sporting events.

Favorite book: The Holy Bible

Best life change: Attending community college, then transferring to a university. My community college experience opened the doors to opportunities.



JENNIFER HAYGOOD

CFO
UNC System
Raleigh

Haygood joined the $10 billion system in 2020 after 12 years as a top financial executive at the N.C. Community College System, where she worked with President Peter Hans. She is a director of the $50 billion State Employees' Credit Union.

Education: BA Rice University, MPP Duke University



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. Kelly is passionate about representing public-school workers and inspiring successful educators. She and her group have criticized state lawmakers for the relatively low pay received by N.C. teachers compared with national and regional averages.

Education: BA & MEd East Carolina University

Congratulations

to Chancellor Sheri Everts

on being named to the Business NC Power List



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U.S. News & World Report

#1 in the Nation for National Board-Certified Teachers

#3 in the UNC System for retention and graduation rates

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LAURA LEATHERWOOD

President
Blue Ridge Community College
Flat Rock

Named the state's community college president of the year in 2022, Leatherwood, 58, has guided the college in Henderson and Transylvania counties since 2017. The school had a record 329 curriculum graduations at last May's commencement. Each of its most recent nursing graduates passed the national licensure exam. She previously worked at Haywood Community College.

Education: BS, MS & EdD Western Carolina University

What a competitor would say: Driven to see our community college and our students succeed, and elevate the perception around community colleges.

Career accomplishment: Serving as president of Blue Ridge.

Best life change: Finding more time to enjoy life, travel and disconnect from technology.



THOMAS LOONEY

Chair
NC Community College System
Cary

Looney, 71, was named to his post last summer, bringing extensive business and education experience to the position. He chaired the Wake Technical Community College and North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics boards for a combined six years. He's a former senior IBM and Lenovo executive and a director of the N.C. Coastal Federation.

Education: BS Niagara University; MBA Xavier University

What a competitor would say: Hires great people, plays to win, manically customer focused and never disparage a competitor.

Favorite passion: The beach – I grew up on the coast and appreciate it.

Who I admire: My father, who was a police commissioner.

Career accomplishment: Building the team that helped Lenovo become the world's No. 1 personal computer company.



JOHN PREYER

Chair
UNC Chapel Hill Board of Trustees
Chapel Hill

Preyer graduated from UNC Chapel Hill in 1990 with a political science degree and says his love for Carolina is as steadfast now as it was when he was a student. He served on the university's Board of Visitors from 2012 to 2016, then was appointed a trustee in 2019. He became chair last August. His Raleigh-based company, Restoration Systems, specializes in wetland and habitat mitigation. It was acquired by Kent, Ohio-based Davey Tree Expert Co. in 2022.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill



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. Last year, he hired Alec Gallimore from the University of Michigan to be Duke's provost.

Education: BA Santa Clara University; MA & PhD 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.

Education: BA High Point University; MS UNC Greensboro

What a competitor would say: A high energy leader with a clear vision and a solid strategy.

Best advice: Who you spend time with is who you become; What you choose is what you get; How you change is how you succeed (my mom.)

Person I admire: Condoleeza Rice

Favorite book: "Elon Musk" by Walter Isaacson

Favorite musicians: Beatles

Best hiring question: How can I be sure you will fit in our culture and adhere to our foundational values.



SCOTT RALLS

President
Wake Tech 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 assisting emerging employers.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; MS & PhD University of Maryland

What a competitor would say: I'm good at strategic partnerships.

Best advice: Do what you are passionate about and don't worry what others say about it (Coach Dean Smith.)

Favorite book: "The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store" by James McBride

Favorite musician: Jason Isbell

Best life change: Learn to appreciate the moment.

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RANDALL "RANDY" RAMSEY
Chair
UNC System Board of Governors
Beaufort

The Beaufort boat manufacturer joined the BOG after serving on N.C. State University's board of trustees and was elected chair in 2019. The board's majority values the stability he brings and his preference for public unity. But big issues keep popping up. The latest include the departure of UNC Chapel Hill Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz to Michigan State and considering the board's role in athletic conference realignment.

What a competitor would say: He worked to improve our industry, region and state.

Favorite passion: Seeing others succeed.

Favorite book: "The Wager" by David Grann.

Best hiring question: Where do you see yourself in 10 years.



LEE ROBERTS
Interim Chancellor
UNC Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill

Roberts took office as interim chancellor in January 2024 after Kevin Guskiewicz left for Michigan State University. He is the founder and managing partner of SharpVue Capital, a Raleigh-based private investment firm. He worked in state government as budget director for Gov. Pat McCrory. He's also served on the UNC System Board of Governors and the N.C. Community College System board.

Education: BA Duke University; JD Georgetown University



JENNA ROBINSON
President
James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal
Raleigh

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.

Education: BA N.C. State University; MA & PhD UNC Chapel Hill



WF

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PHILIP ROGERS

Chancellor

East Carolina University

Greenville

Rogers was named to his post in 2020. It was a return to ECU after working there from 2007-13 as a policy analyst and later, chief of staff, presiding over government relations, marketing and other matters. He was raised in Greenville. East Carolina had 26,785 students in fall 2023, 366 fewer than a year earlier.

Education: BA Wake Forest University; MPA UNC Chapel Hill; EdD University of Pennsylvania

Best advice: Seek first to listen and learn. It provides a foundational knowledge for informed decision-making. This advice was critical in my first year as chancellor at ECU.

Favorite passions: Tennis, walks with my wife and time with my two boys.

Favorite technology: Apple Watch



DOUGLAS SEARCY

President

Barton College

Wilson

Searcy, 53, practically knows all of his school's 1,300-plus students by name, but that doesn't mean its offerings are puny. It has more than 40 academic majors and eight different schools. He was hired in 2016 after serving at five other campuses, and has boosted enrollment and financial support.

Education: BA Mars Hill University; MEd University of South Carolina; PhD University of Nebraska

What a competitor would say: Fair, puts students first and works towards positive, strategic outcomes.

Best advice: Be yourself. Authenticity is critically important to help create an honest, open environment.

Favorite technology: Virtual meeting applications.

Best hiring question: Tell me about a time you made a mistake.



HOPE WILLIAMS

President

North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities

Raleigh

Williams has led the state's 36-campus private college trade group since 1992, helping keep them in the spotlight in the N.C. General Assembly and elsewhere. They enroll more than 88,000 students and employ about 66,000 people.

Education: AB Duke University; MPA N.C. State University; PhD UNC Chapel Hill

What a competitor would say: Knowledgeable and fair.

Best advice: Look for options in approaching challenges. There must be a way. (From my parents, teachers, and mentors.)

Never do again: Paragliding

Favorite book: "Citizens of London (WWII)" by Lynne Olson

Favorite musician: Paul McCartney

Best hiring question: Tell me about your long-term career goals and how this role will contribute.



RANDY WOODSON

Chancellor

North Carolina State University

Raleigh

Woodson, 67, has led North Carolina's largest university based on enrollment – about 38,000 students – since 2010 and has a contract through June 2025. He has helped raise N.C. State's national research profile. It's a lead university for two National Science Foundation Engineering Research Centers and one Manufacturing USA institute, plus a partner in six others.

Education: BS University of Arkansas; MS & PhD Cornell University

Best advice: Focus on the job at hand, and don't focus on future opportunities. They will come if you do your current job really well. (A former boss and mentor).

Person I admire: My wife is creative and lives in the moment.

Favorite books: "And There Was Light: Abraham Lincoln and "The American Struggle" by Jon Meacham

Favorite musician: John Prine

FSU CHANCELLOR DARRELL T. ALLISON, J.D.

FOCUSED ON THE UNIVERSITY & THE COMMUNITY

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

"It is an extraordinary time to be a Bronco serving in the Fayetteville community and Sandhills Region. I am excited to see the progress that we are making through strategic engagement with community and business partners as we work to find real-world solutions to help grow and strengthen this region and our state. As an academic institution, we are proud to offer high-demand programs and certificates that promote career-readiness. We offer training and certifications at the Center for ERP and Advanced Analytics, the Center for Defense and Homeland Security, and launched the Fayetteville-Cumberland Regional Entrepreneur and Business HUB which provides opportunities for expansion and jobs for small businesses and entrepreneurs within our 10-county area. Strategic investments and innovation reach beyond the classroom and lead the way into a brighter and prosperous future."

- Chancellor Darrell T. Allison, J.D.

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ENERGY

2024 POWER LIST

Kendal Bowman
Joe Brannan
Ben Catt
Don Denton
Barbara Fochtman
Lynn Good
Michael Gray
Carson Harkrader
Julie Janson
Roy Jones
Mike Kilpatrick
Maria Kingery
Katherine Kollins
Charlotte Mitchell
Daren Parker
J. Eric Pike
Brian Savoy
Jim Warren
Jay Wileman
Markus Wilhelm

LYNN GOOD

CEO
DUKE ENERGY
Charlotte



Good has led the giant utility since 2013, making her among the longest-serving female CEOs in the Fortune 500. She's leading the transition as Duke shifts from coal-fired plants, which provided a majority of generation in 2005, to alternative sources. By 2030, a fourth of Duke's energy is likely to come from renewable sources, while the remaining coal plants are expected to be closed by 2035.

Good's leadership "has been instrumental to Duke's ability to respond to changing market conditions and opportunities," the company board said in March after approving her $21.4 million compensation package for 2023. She's also helped repel calls by activist investors for breaking up Duke as a way to boost shareholder value. Duke has had a total return of about 28% over the five years through mid-March, similar to the SPDR Utility Select Sector ETF, which includes peer companies.

Forbes and *Fortune* list Good among the world's most powerful business leaders. She joined Duke predecessor company Cinergy in Cincinnati in 2002, and serves as a director of Boeing, Edison Electric Institute, New York City Ballet and other groups.

Education: BS Miami University of Ohio

First job: Auditor

Best advice: When things don't go as planned, do not mourn or dwell on the situation. Instead, embrace the detour and be resilient. Have the courage to move forward.

Favorite passion: Reading, traveling and spending time with family.

Best hiring question: Do you consider yourself a curious person? I always look for a leader who's inherently curious about what their peers are focused on and where the organization is going.

Best life change: Prioritizing personal time. There is always work to do. However, making a conscious choice to carve out time has been the most valuable change so that I can decompress and be fully present when I am at work.



KENDAL BOWMAN

North Carolina President

Duke Energy

Raleigh

This marks Bowman's 25th year at the utility, where she became state president in 2022. She previously had legal posts, most recently as vice president of regulatory affairs and policy for North Carolina. The Clarksville, Virginia native presses the case that Duke, needs to expand both natural gas and alternative energy power generation projects.

Education: BA University of Virginia; JD Stetson University

Best advice: Stay true to your values and don't forget who you are (my Mom.)

Favorite passion: N.C. beaches

Favorite technology: ChatGPT

Best life change: Having children



JOE BRANNAN

CEO

North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives

Morrisville

Brannan took the helm in 2012 after six years as chief operating officer. The group operates on behalf of 26 not-for-profit co-ops that serve 2.5 million people in 93 North Carolina counties. About 1 million households and businesses rely on the co-ops for their electricity.

Education: BS Pennsylvania State University; MBA Lehigh University

Best advice: In everything you do, treat people with respect and integrity (my dad.)

Favorite musicians: The Eagles

Favorite technology: I am very interested in increasing my understanding of artificial intelligence and how its adoption can create opportunities and challenges for businesses.



BEN CATT

CEO

Pine Gate Renewables

Asheville

The provider of utility-scale solar and storage operates more than 100 sites in 21 states. Through partnerships, it feeds clean energy into the electricity grid. It has closed more than $7 billion in capital spending and project financing. Catt was previously finance director at Asheville's FLS Energy.

Education: BS Indiana University



DON DENTON

CEO

Carolina Water Service of North Carolina

Charlotte

Denton leads Carolina Water Service, a unit of Canada's privately held Corix Group. Carolina Water provides water services in 38 N.C. counties and operates 24 wastewater treatment plants. Denton worked for Duke Energy for 20 years before joining Carolina Water in 2019.

Education: BA Georgia Tech; MBA Queens University



BARBARA FOCHTMAN

Chief of Downstream and International Operations

Arcadium Lithium

Charlotte

Fochtman was a veteran executive at Philadelphia-based Livent before its merger with Australia's Allkem to create Arcadium Lithium in January. She has more than 30 years of experience in operations and supply chain management. Arcadium is a leading supplier of lithium chemicals that are used in electric batteries and other uses.

Education: BS chemical engineering; MBA Jacksonville University



MICHAEL GRAY

Country Holding Officer, U.S.

ABB

Cary

The company, with 105,000 employees worldwide, makes many products including electric motors and EV chargers, robots and automation systems. The U.S. is its largest market with 20,000 employees and more than 40 sites. Gray joined in 2008 after previously working for AutoZone and International Paper.

Education: BA & Master's University of Memphis



CARSON HARKRADER

CEO

Carolina Solar Energy

Durham

Harkradar, is forging partnerships in new markets, including Louisiana and Kentucky, for the solar-energy developer. Her father, Richard Harkrader founded the company in 2004 and is past chair of the N.C. Sustainable Energy Association. She previously helped lead GE Energy's worldwide projects.

Education: BA Brown University; MBA, New York University.

What a competitor would say: Develops good solar projects, straightforward, fair.

Change about N.C.: Establish an offshore wind farm or two.

Person I admire: My dad, who founded my company and was a big part of passing the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard.

Career accomplishment: Our internship program



JULIE JANSON

CEO

Duke Energy Carolinas

Charlotte

Janson leads regulatory affairs and legislative initiatives in the region and oversees the long-term strategy and financial performance of its utilities in the Carolinas. Earlier this year, the company said peak-demand growth in the Carolinas was eight times more than its projections from two years ago, citing expanding manufacturing and data centers. She was the third-highest paid current Duke executive in 2023.

Education: BA Georgetown University; JD University of Cincinnati

Best advice: Play chess, not checkers.

Never do again: High ropes course

Favorite book: "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver

Best hiring question: Tell me about yourself.



ROY JONES

CEO

ElectriCities of North Carolina

Raleigh

Jones, 66, helps keep the lights on in 90 community-owned electric systems in the Carolinas and Virginia. He joined the not-for-profit group 14 years ago and became CEO in 2015. He has been in the electric-power industry for more than four decades, starting with Entergy in 1981.

Education: BS LaSalle University

Best advice: Not every thought is a good thought, and not every thought needs to come out of your mouth.

Favorite passion: Working around the house.

Favorite book: "Countdown 1945" by Chris Wallace



MIKE KILPATRICK

Founder, CEO

STG Solar

Pisgah Forest

Kilpatrick built his business into one of the Southeast's largest solar contractors from its Transylvania County base. "We're from Podunk, nowhere-land USA, but by golly, we're a bad, mean, solar machine," he told *Solar Power World* in 2022. Started as an electrical subcontractor, the company has completed more than 60 solar farms from New York to Arizona, totaling nearly 1 gigawatt of generation capacity.



MARIA KINGERY

Chief Impact Officer

Southern Energy Management

Raleigh

Kingery and her husband, Bob, founded the rooftop solar and building performance business in 2001. It has more than 130 employees involved in energy-saving efforts. It installed 407 solar systems, rated 9,149 single-familiy homes and added 23 people last year, according to the company.

Education: BA N.C. State University



KATHARINE KOLLINS

President

Southeastern Wind Coalition

Chapel Hill

Kollins promotes wind energy efforts in four Southeastern states. Charlotte-based Duke Energy recently said it may produce 2,400 megawatts from offshore wind production by 2035, pending regulatory approval.

Education: BS University of Colorado; MBA & Master's Duke University

Change about N.C.: Ensure every school district has the same funding.

Best advice: It's all right to tell a man to lift himself by his own bootstraps, but it is cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps (Martin Luther King Jr.)

Favorite passion: Camping, cycling, even yard work

Favorite book: "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver



CHARLOTTE MITCHELL

Chair

N.C. Utilities Commission

Raleigh

Gov. Roy Cooper appointed her to the Utilities Commission in 2017. The commission regulates utilities that provide electricity, telephone, natural gas and other services. The GOP-led N.C. General Assembly passed a law giving lawmakers power to nominate two of the seven commission members. Mitchell was a Morehead Scholar and varsity soccer player at UNC Chapel Hill.

Education: BA & JD UNC Chapel Hill; Master's Duke University



DAREN PARKER

Owner
Parker Gas Co.
Fayetteville

Parker's company provides propane delivery, appliance sales and service through six offices in southeastern and central North Carolina. Earlier this year, the business bought Bobby Taylor Oil Co., which has fuel plants in Fayetteville and Elizabethtown. Parker's father, Earl, started the company in 1958.

Education: BA East Carolina University



J. ERIC PIKE

Chair
Pike Corp.
Mount Airy

Last May, James Wyche became CEO while Eric Pike remained chair of the company that was founded in 1945. He had been CEO since 1998, while Wyche was chief operating officer. The 10,000-employee company offers infrastructure engineering and construction services to more than 400 U.S. utilities and other organizations.

Education: BA Emory University



BRIAN SAVOY

CFO
Duke Energy
Charlotte

The former Deloitte manager joined Duke in 2001 and became CFO in 2022 after serving as chief strategy and commercial officer. His current post also includes responsibility for corporate development and enterprise strategy. Previous duties include working as chief accounting officer.

Education: BA Lamar University

First job: Deloitte associate

Favorite book: "Liar's Poker" by Michael Lewis

Favorite passion: Spending time with my family and exercising. Exercise is a great outlet and my favorite is strength, particularly pushups. I do 200 every day.

Person I admire: My father. As a single parent and a steelworker, he taught me the value of hard work and not to put limits on yourself.

Favorite technology: Audible



JIM WARREN

Executive director
NC WARN
Efland

The Graham native has been executive director of the clean energy and climate justice nonprofit since 1993. N.C. WARN's campaigns of awareness about the downsides of fossil fuels often focus on major energy producers, including Duke Energy.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill

Change about N.C.: Truly respect our state moto —to Be Rather than to Seem — living to its ideals of democracy and well-being of all residents.

What a competitor might say: Tenacious but fair.

Person I admire: My mother, who has moved through life and multiple challenges with grace and tenacity.

Favorite book: "The 1619 Project: A New origin story" by Nikole Hannah-Jones

Favorite musician: Bonnie Raitt



JAY WILEMAN

CEO
GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy
Wilmington

With more than 30 years experience in leadership roles at GE in oil, rail and mining sectors, Wileman has had his current post since 2015. The company provides fuel and components for nuclear power plants, focusing in recent years on small modular reactors. In 2022, it said it planned to add 485 jobs and invest $85 million over five years at its New Hanover County operations.

Education: BS Mississippi State University; MBA University of Alabama at Birmingham



MARKUS WILHELM

Founder, CEO
Strata Clean Energy
Durham

The German native was a top executive at the Doubleday publishing business before starting a construction company that eventually became Strata Solar in 2009. It rebranded in 2021 to reflect its broader business. In February, the alternative energy development firm signed a $559 million contract for a battery storage complex in Arizona that can store electricity for 50,000 homes.

Education: Business diploma, University of Passau

2024 POWER LIST

Anita Hughes Bachmann
Jim Bostian
Leigh Brady
Richard Bryant
Rick Callicutt
Victor Chen
Kieth Cockrell
Beau Cummins
Matt Davis
Ron Day
Jim Dunn
Rob Edwards
Lee Fite
Mike Freno
David Gardner
Peter Gwaltney
Todd Hall
Jim Hansen
Frank Holding Jr.
Thomas Hoops
Jonathon King
Curt Ladig
Doug Lebda
Chip Mahan
Mike Mayer
Brian McCarthy
Ed McMahan
Fielding Miller
Richard Moore
Suzanne Morrison
Robert (Bob) Newell
Dee O'Dell
Michael Painter
Bill Pappas
Edwin Poston
David Rea
William "Bill" Rogers Jr.
Jim Rose
Jason Sandner
James Sills
Tunde Sotunde
Eric Steigerwalt
Clay Thorp
Neal Triplett
Kevin Walker
Thad Walton
Hunter Westbrook
Ted Whitehurst
Mary Willis
Dontá Wilson



FINANCE & INSURANCE



WILLIAM "BILL" ROGERS JR.

CEO
Truist Financial
Charlotte

Rogers is weathering the storm after the largest bank merger in more than a decade proved more difficult than expected. Truist was formed in 2019 through the combo of BB&T and SunTrust, a year before the pandemic, which created lots of complexities for banks. "We're running the business with a sense of urgency and expediency so we can deliver better, more consistent results while minimizing volatility," the CEO said in the company's annual report.

The Durham native and longtime SunTrust CEO succeeded Kelly King as Truist's top executive in 2022 and made many tough decisions over the past year, including a $750 million expense reduction plan that includes hundreds of office closings, an undisclosed number of job cuts and lots of senior management upheaval. Notably, Truist cut its board to 13 directors from 21, following pressure from investors disappointed in its stock-market performance.

With $535 billion in assets, Truist ranks among the 10 largest U.S. bank holding companies. Rogers says that size enables it to compete with the four U.S. megabanks and its super-regional rivals such as U.S. Bank, PNC and Fifth Third Bank.

To shore up Truist capital, Rogers sold the company's large insurance business to private equity groups in a deal that valued the unit at $15.5 billion. The proceeds were expected to boost Truist's tangible book value by 33%, putting the bank in a stronger competitive position. "I've never been more confident about the future of Truist as I am today," he said in the annual report.

Education: BBA UNC Chapel Hill; MBA Georgia State University

First job: Grocery store clerk

What a competitor would say: A strong, purposeful competitor and collaborator.

Favorite passion: Family

Never do again: Skydive with the Golden Knights.

Career accomplishment: Our merger of equals to create Truist.

People I admire: Kelly King, Easter Maynard and Nido Qubein

Best life change: A focus and study of happiness.



ANITA HUGHES BACHMANN

CEO
UnitedHealthcare of N.C.
Greensboro

Bachman, 63, has spent 30 years working for the largest U.S. health insurer, which employs more than 500 people in North Carolina. She assumed the top role in 2017. A member of UNC Greensboro's board of trustees and Greensboro Chamber of Commerce executive committee, she was appointed to the N.C. Institute of Medicine and N.C. Works Commission by Gov. Roy Cooper.

Education: BA East Carolina University; MHSA Medical University of South Carolina

Best advice: Listen with your eyes, be observant to people, activities and things around you. – My father

Best book: "Poor Charlie's Almanack" by Charles T. Munger

Best life change: Being more intentional, scheduling time to reflect, evaluate and strategize.



JIM BOSTIAN

President
Aetna
Morrisville

The Salisbury native is prepping for the 740,000-member N.C. State Health Plan to switch its contract to the Aetna, starting next year. He worked at Duke University Health, Cigna and UnitedHealth before joining Aetna in 2015.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill

What a competitor would say: Humble, fights fair and must never be underestimated.

Best advice: There are no short-cuts in life (my parents.)

Favorite passions: Mountain biking, golfing and walking on the beach.

Career accomplishment: Helping win the State Health Plan account.

Favorite book: "Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life" by William H. McRaven.



LEIGH BRADY

CEO
State Employees Credit Union
Raleigh

Brady became the first female leader of the second-largest U.S. credit union last June after Jim Hayes resigned to join a Virginia institution. Brady had worked at SECU for 35 years, including two years as chief operating officer. "No one understands SECU better" than Brady, former board Chair Chris Ayers said.

Education: BA N.C. State University; MBA Meredith College

Best advice: Leave a place better than you found it (my mom.)

Favorite passion: Volunteering and attending N.C. State University sporting events.

Career accomplishment: Seeing people I have mentored succeed in their careers and leadership roles.



RICHARD BRYANT

CEO
Capital Investment Companies
Raleigh

Bryant's wealth management company, which he cofounded with Bobby Edgerton, celebrated its 40th anniversary in January. He heads a team of nearly 200 financial planners and advisers in 13 states. The Gastonia native says Capital Investment can offer services similar to larger companies.

Education: BA N.C. State University

What a competitor would say: Fair and honest.

Change about N.C.: Crowded highways.

Best advice: Start a business with few or no employees, no receivables and no inventory, if possible.

Never do again: Streak.

Best book: "No Plan B" by Lee Child and Andrew Child

Favorite musician: Stevie Wonder.

Best life change: Healthy choices, where possible.



RICK CALLICUTT

Chair, Carolinas & Virginia
Pinnacle Financial Partners
High Point

The Davidson County native joined Nashville, Tennessee-based Pinnacle in 2017 after it bought BNC Bancorp, where he was one of six original employees in 1991. He became CEO in 2013. He had previously worked at Wachovia and First Union. He's a trustee at High Point University.

Education: BA High Point University



KIETH COCKRELL

Charlotte Market President
Bank of America
Charlotte

The Long Island, New York, native became Charlotte market leader in 2021. He's spent more than 30 years with Bank of America after a decade working for IBM. He's a key civic leader, including as past chair of the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance. He met his wife in college, where he also was a classmate of Barack Obama.

Education: BS Columbia University



BEAU CUMMINS

Vice Chair, COO
Trust Financial
Charlotte

Cummins, 61, oversees corporate and investment banking, real estate, consumer finance and other areas. He previously held a variety of positions at SunTrust in Atlanta, including leading its capital market business. He's on the board of the Charlotte Atrium Health Foundation.

Education: BA Miami University; MBA Michigan

Favorite passion: Snowboarding.

Who I admire: My uncle Bill Buchheit, who was an accomplished neurosurgeon and leader.

Career accomplishment: How the Truist team navigated the largest banking merger in a decade and COVID-19.

Best life change: Pivoting to commercial banking from investment banking.



VICTOR CHEN

Director
Fidelity Investments
Charlotte

Chen, 40, has made a big impact in his two years at Fidelity. His efforts in causal analytics have saved approximately $1 million in costs from reliance on external firms, and he helped attract 700 people to the company's annual Enterprise Experimentation Summit. Last year, he won a quarterly Fidelity Excellence in Action award.

Education: Master's University of California, Berkeley; PhD Simon Fraser University.

Favorite passion: Playing scramble golf with my 9-year-old daughter.

Person I admire: AI pioneer Herbert Simon

Career accomplishment: Developing and deploying the first cross-enterprise causal analytics platform for Fidelity.

Favorite technology: A causal AI that learns from scientific papers and reason about how the world works.



MATT DAVIS

President
TowneBank
Raleigh

Davis was COO at Raleigh-based Paragon Bank when it was acquired by Portsmouth, Virginia-based TowneBank in 2018. He's had his current role since December 2022. In its 25th year, Towne has 50 locations, $17 billion in assets and 1,760 employees in Virginia and North Carolina. It also has significant mortgage banking, insurance and property management businesses.

Education: BA & MS N.C. State University



RON DAY

CEO
First Carolina Bank
First Carolina Financial Services
Asheville

After expanding to Columbia and Greenville, South Carolina, and Atlanta, First Carolina added $430 million in deposits last year by partnering with fintech BM Technologies, an online bank with more nearly 300,000 account holders. Most are college students. Day worked for RBC before helping start First Carolina in Rocky Mount in 2012. It now has about $2.6 billion in assets.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill

What a competitor would say: Plays fair and hard.

Favorite passion: Working on my golf game.

Person I admire: My wife, Lori

Career accomplishment: Helping found and build First Carolina Bank.

Favorite technology: Pacer walking app and Airpods



JIM DUNN

CEO
Verger Capital Management
Winston-Salem

Dunn, 51, was head of the Wake Forest University Office of Investments before forging ahead on his own with Verger Capital in 2014. It manages about $2.6 billion for foundations, nonprofits and others. Its two main missions are to protect client assets and obtain the best performance for their money.

Education: BBA Villanova University

Person you admire: Captrust CEO Fielding Miller.

Best advice: Good advice is expensive; bad advice is really expensive (my dad.)

I won't do this again: Bungee jump.

Favorite book: "The Counting House" by Gary Sernovitz.

Favorite technology: reMarkable tablet

Best life change: Embracing change



ROB EDWARDS

Managing Partner
Ridgemont Equity Partners
Charlotte

Edwards co-founded Ridgemont, a private-equity company that has provided more than $5.5 billion of buyout and growth capital to support more than 160 private companies. The group was part of Bank of America until 2010. Edwards also has worked for McKinsey & Co. and Allied Capital.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; MBA Harvard University



LEE FITE

Regional President
Fifth Third Bank Charlotte
Charlotte

The 17-year veteran of Cincinnati-based bank oversees the Carolinas and Virginia, a growing region receiving much attention from top management. Fifth Third employs more than 1,000 people in the Charlotte area and ranks fourth in bank deposits behind Bank of America, Wells Fargo and Truist, according to the FDIC. He previously worked for RBC and First Union.

Education: BS & BA Appalachian State University; MBA Wake Forest University



MIKE FRENO

CEO
Barings
Charlotte

He's on the leadership team of owner MassMutual Insurance Holdings, managing more than $350 billion in assets and employees. About 20 private-credit staffers jumped to Nomura in March, setting off litigation between the two companies. Freno joined the business in 2005, becoming CEO in 2020.

Education: BA Furman University; MBA Wake Forest University



DAVID GARDNER

Founding Partner
Cofounders Capital
Cary

The Triangle's best-known angel investor created his firm in 2015 to address limited early-stage capital. He's raised two funds totaling $81 million. Previously, he started or co-founded seven companies, six of which had successful exits. His book, "The StartUp Hats," addresses entrepreneurship. What a competitor would say: Intense, resourceful, honest fair.

Education: BA Bluefield University

Change about N.C.: More early stage investment capital.

Person I admire: Bill Gates

Best advice: You can't save them all (Alex Osadzinski.)

Favorie musician: Brooklyn Duo

Favorite book: "Sapiens" by Yuval Noah



PETER GWALTNEY

CEO
North Carolina Bankers Association
Wake Forest

Gwaltney, 60, took the reins of the nearly 130-year-old association in 2015, a role similar to one he held earlier in Louisiana. It represents small community banks and giants such as Bank of America. He's on the Mary Baldwin University board of trustees.

Education: BA Louisiana State University

Best advice: Remember who you are (my dad.)

Favorite passion: Visiting NCBA members statewide.

Favorite musician: Mark Knopfler, founder of Dire Straits.

Best life change: Committing to a healthier lifestyle.



TODD HALL

CEO
Truliant Federal Credit Union
blank

Truliant continued its rapid expansion, topping $5 billion in assets last year and building its franchise in the Triad, Charlotte and Greenville, South Carolina markets. Hall joined the credit union in 2012 and became CEO in 2020. Unlike many credit unions, it has an active small-business lending unit.

Education: BS University of South Carolina; MBA Wake Forest University



JIM HANSEN

Regional President, Eastern Carolinas and Southeast
PNC Bank
Raleigh

Hansen, 45, has worked for the Pittsburgh-based bank, which counts more than 100 branches in North Carolina, for almost a quarter century. A past chair for the Research Triangle Regional Partnership board, he is the current chair for the North Carolina Bankers Association and N.C. State University's Board of Visitors boards.

Education: BS North Carolina State University; MBA UNC Chapel Hill

What a competitor would say: Lives the NCBA's values of service, advocacy, learning, integrity and community outreach.

Favorite book: "The Battle for Your Brain: Defending the Right to Think Freely in the Age of Neurotechnology" by Nita Farahany.



FRANK HOLDING JR.

CEO
First Citizens Bancshares
Raleigh

The leader of the largest family-owned U.S. bank since 2008, Holding stunned his industry by acquiring Silicon Valley Bank in a government-assisted deal. The purchase sent its market cap soaring to more than $23 billion. He is a director of flyExclusive, Blue Cross Blue Shield of N.C. and Mount Olive Pickle.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill; MBA University of Pennsylvania



THOMAS HOOPS

CEO
New Republic Partners
Charlotte

Backed by prominent North Carolina families, New Republic has more than $1.5 billion under management, and added a new office in Denver earlier this year. The firm serves affluent families, endowments and other wealthy entities with opportunities that Hoops says are usually reserved for big institutional investors.

Education: BS Duke University; JD UNC School of Law; MBA UNC Kenan-Flager Business School

Change about N.C.: Change the belief that young people need to go elsewhere to validate their resume. World-class experience is available here.

Never do again: Cable tv

Favorite technology: Spotify

Best hiring question: What would be your perfect job description.



JONATHON KING

CEO
UNC Management
Chapel Hill

Since 2005, King has led the not-for-profit investment firm that manages more than $10 billion, mostly for UNC campuses. Its market value declined in the 2023 fiscal year by 0.4%, only the third down year since the fund's inception in 2002. He previously spent 16 years at Dartmouth and also worked at New England Mutual Life Insurance.

Education: BA Middlebury College; MBA Dartmouth College



CURT LADIG

CEO
Delta Dental of North Carolina
Raleigh

Delta Dental of North Carolina has become the state's leading dental insurer in the state, growing its customer base by 550% since he joined in 2011. It has the state's largest network of dentists, and has become the fastest-growing Delta Dental affiliate in the U.S. The business has also has helped 330,000 children and their families obtain care.

Education: BS Indiana University

What a competitor would say: Invigorated the state's dental insurance market.

Change about N.C.: Improve access to and affordability of oral care.

Favorite passions: Flying, hiking, dancing in Vienna, traveling and family.

People I admire: My parents, who were public servants in our small Indiana town.





DOUG LEBDA

CEO
LendingTree
Charlotte

One of Charlotte's star success stories since launching his company in 1996, Lebda is battling changes in the housing market. LendingTree reported cumulative losses of more than $300 million over the past two years, while revenue declined by 32% last year to $673 million. To shore up its capital base, the company secured a $175 million loan facility through Apollo Funds in March.

Education: BA Bucknell University; MA University of Virginia



CHIP MAHAN

CEO
Live Oak Bancshares
Wilmington

No one has done more to stimulate Wilmington's economy over the past decade than the co-founder of Live Oak, the nCino software firm and Canapi Ventures investment firm. Live Oak's net profit declined last year to $74 million as revenue decreased 19% because of less lending and reduced net interest margins.

Education: BA Washington & Lee University



MIKE MAYER

CEO
First Bank
Southern Pines

Mayer joined the largest North Carolina community bank in 2014 after a career that included a stint at Bank of America. Starting in Troy in 1935, the bank now counts 118 branches across the Carolinas. Its First Bancorp holding company had total assets of $12.2 billion as of Dec. 31, up 14% from a year earlier.

Education: BS Clemson University

Best advice: Never bet against the Fed.

Favorite passion: Spending time at the beach, and playing golf.

Person I admire: My daughter, Virginia Mayer. She combines IQ and EQ in just the right measures.

Never do again: Making the mistake of saying something I'd never do again.



BRIAN MCCARTHY

Principal
Vanguard Group
Charlotte

A Vanguard staffer since 1999, McCarty has been one of the giant investment company's key Charlotte executives over the past decade. While headquartered in a Philadelphia suburb, the company has 2,400 Charlotte employees and made big news in April by paying $117 million for the 700,000-square-foot headquarters building that insurer Centene built and never occupied in north Charlotte. It will move into the building next year.

Education: BS Boston Colege; MBA St. Joseph's University



ED MCMAHAN

Managing Partner
Falfurrias Capital Partners
Charlotte

McMahan co-founded Falfurrias Capital in 2006 with Hugh McColl Jr. and Marc Oken after working at Chicago Growth Partners and Bowles Hollowell Conner. The firm has raised $2.2 billion across six funds for middle-market investments, including $400 million for a fund announced in December that is likely to target smaller businesses. He is a former board chair of Crisis Assistance Ministries.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; MBA Northwestern University



FIELDING MILLER

CEO
Captrust
Raleigh

Cofounded by Miller in 1997, Captrust keeps adding investment advisers. The wealth manager has more than 1,500 employees in 90 location, overseeing more than $800 billion in assets under advisement or managed accounts. Company said it was valued at $3.7 billion last September after New York-based Carlyle made an undisclosed investment. It joins the GTCR private equity group, which bought a 25% stake in 2020.

Education: BS East Carolina University



RICHARD MOORE
CEO
First Bancorp
Raleigh

Moore, 63, became CEO of First Bancorp in 2012, holding the reins of a community bank with a market cap approaching $1.4 billion. The Granville County native served two terms as state treasurer, managing $70 billion in state pension funds. A former assistant U.S. attorney, he has, among other things, promoted a national effort to protect shareholders from Wall Street abuses. He served on the New York Stock Exchange's board.

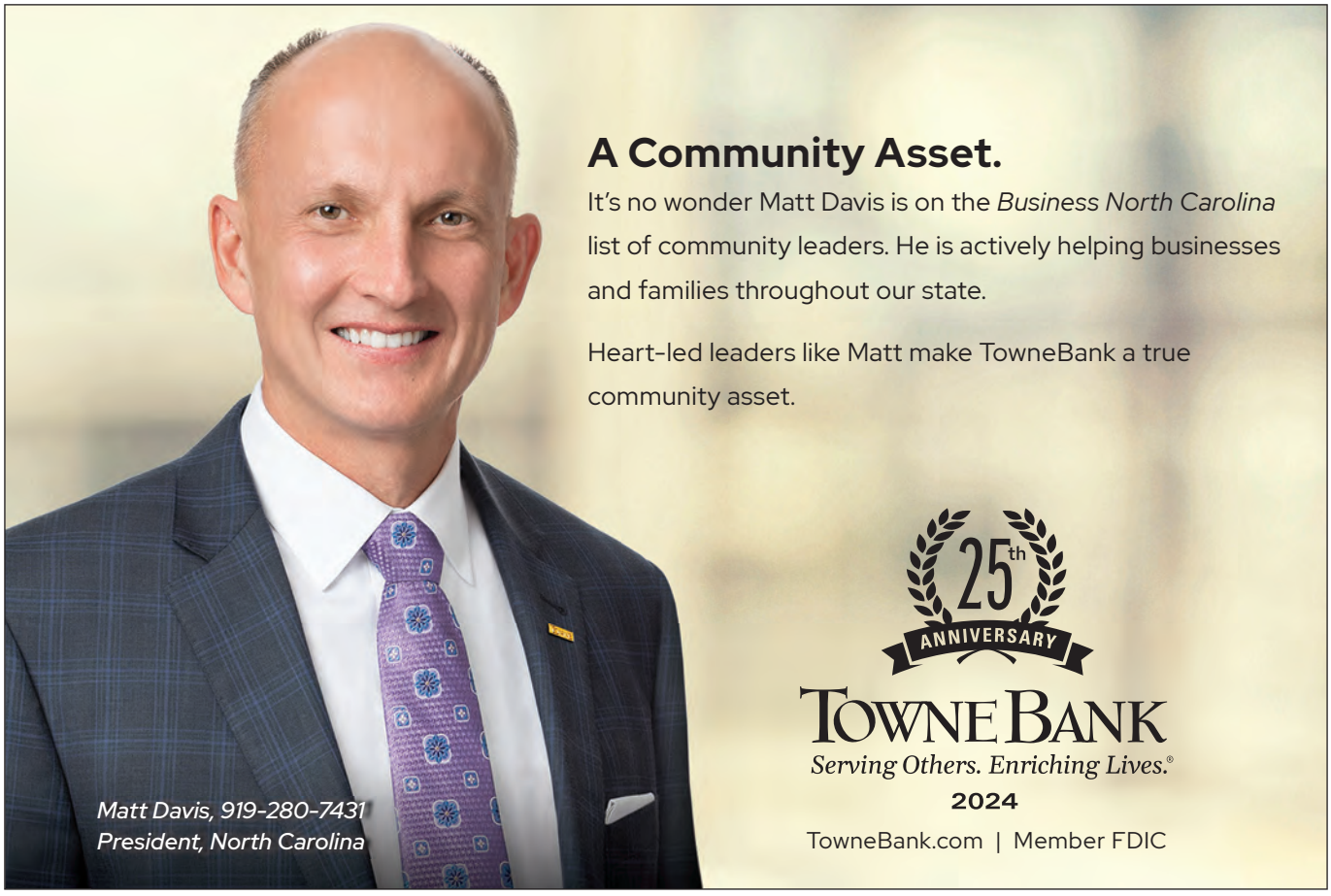
Education: BS & J.D Wake Forest University; Master's London School of Economics



SUZANNE MORRISON
Division Executive
Wells Fargo
Charlotte

Morrison began her finance career in 1993 with Wachovia Bank in Winston-Salem. She has been in her current role since 2019. Wells Fargo Commercial Banking provides service for businesses with annual sales ranging from $5 million to $2 billion.

Education: BA & BS UNC Chapel Hill





ROBERT (BOB) NEWELL

CEO
Franklin Street Partners
Winston-Salem

Newell, 65, the former president of Wachovia Trust, joined Franklin in 2009. He leads the 40-person investment firm, which was acquired by Fifth Third Bank in 2018. Franklin Street manages money for onstitutions and individuals and has more than $3.5 billion under management.

Education: BA N.C. State University

Change about N.C.: Add light rail transport between Triangle-Triad-Charlotte.

Best advice: Don't worry about your next job. Do a good job today.

Favorite passions: Golf, offshore fishing, hanging with my children and grandchildren.

Person I admire: George W. Bush

Never do again: Climb Mount Le Conte and spend the night.

Favorite musicians: The Allman Brother.

Best life change: Retiring in 2008 and starting my forever career.



DEE O'DELL

Head of Business Banking Sales
U.S. Bank
Charlotte

U.S. Bank, the fifth-largest U.S. bank, has more than 1,000 employees in Charlotte. O'Dell, 59, heads a division catering to customers with $2.5 million to $25 million in annual sales. He's a major civic leader and co-chair of the Opportunity Task Force, which concentrates on economic mobility, and chairing the United Way of Greater Charlotte's board.

Education: BA Hampden-Sydney College; MBA UNC Chapel Hill

Best advice: When you are presented with a difficult choice, sometimes the answer is both/and instead of either/or (Ophelia Garmon-Brown.)

Person I admire: Laura Clark, CEO of the United Way of Greater Charlotte

Favorite book: "The Heart of Business" by Hubert Joly

Favorite musicians: Caamp

Favorite technology: WHOOP



MICHAEL PAINTER

Co-Founder, Managing Partner
Plexus Capital
Raleigh

Middle-market investing has paid off for the firm that Painter co-founded with Bob Anders in 2005. He had previously worked for RBC Bank and other financial firms. It closed its fifth and latest fund last July, raising $554 million. Since its inception it has raised $2.2 billion and funded 176 companies.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill



BILL PAPPAS

Head of Global Technology & Operations
Metlife
Charlotte

More than 40,000 Metlife employees work in groups directed by Pappas, who joined the insurer in 2019 after a lengthy career at Bank of America. Metlife has more than 90 million customers in 40-plus countries. *Forbes* named him to its 2023 CIO NEXT list of transformational technology leaders.

Education: BA MBA Bentley University

What a competitor would say: Everyone knows how I value Metlife workers.

Best advice: The only person who defines you is you.

Favorite passion: Traveling with my wife and four daughters, particularly to Greece.

People I admire: Gandhi, Rosa Parks, programming pioneer Grace Hopper



EDWIN POSTON

Co-Founder, Partner
TrueBridge Capital Partners
Chapel Hill

Poston has been managing assets for foundations and endowments since the early 2000s. He worked as managing director and head of private equity at The Rockefeller Foundation before founding TrueBridge in 2007 with Mel Williams. It was acquired by Dallas-based P10 Holdings in 2020 and reports more than $7 billion in assets under management.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; MBA & JD Emory University



Congratulations to SECU President and CEO Leigh Brady on being named to the 2024 Power List by *Business North Carolina!*

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DAVID REA
President
Salem Investment Counselors
Winston-Salem

Rea and Salem have concentrated on high quality companies with good growth prospects since 2007. *CityWire* named it the state's fastest growing investment advisor last year, while USA Today and CNBC have rated it among the best U.S. financial advisory firms.

Education: BA Wabash College; MBA Indiana University; JD Wake Forest University

What a competitor would say: Smart, honest and experienced.

Best advice: Work hard and have fun (my dad.)

Favorite book: "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus

Career accomplishment: CNBC ranking our firm No. 1 nationally.

Best life change: Switching to finance from law.



TUNDE SOTUNDE
CEO
Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina
Durham

A native of Nigeria, he practiced medicine there and in Trinidad before immigrating in the 1990s to complete his pediatric residency at Howard University. He was named CEO of the state's biggest health insurer in 2020 after managing Medicaid services for Anthem. Last year, he completed a two-year program to visit all 100 N.C. counties, meeting with local officials to discuss healthcare issues.

Education: MD University of Ibadan; MBA University of Memphis



JIM ROSE

State President
United Community Bank
Raleigh

The career banker joined Greenville, South Carolina-based United Community Bank as the N.C. president in 2017. He has emphasized expansion into the state's major metro areas including Raleigh, where it has achieved nearly $700 million in loans since the bank's entry.

Education: BA Economics Wake Forest University

Who I admire: My father, who progressed from ROTC to full-time Army to CEO of our family auto parts business.

Change about N.C.: Find a solution for more affordable housing.

Best advice: It doesn't cost anything extra to be nice.

Favorite musician: Dave Matthews

Favorite technology: Ultimate Guitar Tabs



JASON SANDNER

CEO
Curi
Raleigh

The former Raleigh public accountant joined Curi (then Medical Mutual Insurance of North Carolina) in 2011, then succeeded Dale Jenkins as CEO in 2021. He's been involved in acquisitions in Curi's wealth management, advisory and insurance units, sparking rapid growth. The October combo with Minnesota-based Constellation doubled the company's money management business.

Education: BA Towson State

Favorite passions: Spending time with my wife and our five sons.

Career accomplishment: Playing competitive baseball through college was formative. You come to understand that there'll be streaks and slumps, and there's a line of other players behind you. I've never allowed myself to feel content or to focus too much on achievements.



JAMES SILLS

CEO
M&F Bank
Durham

Sills, 65, has led rebranding efforts and products and digital services expansions since taking helm of the nation's second-oldest African American owned bank in 2014. Its $446 million in total assets makes it the nation's eighth-largest African American owned financial institution. He was a cabinet secretary and chief information officer in Delaware.

Education: BA Morehouse College; MPA University of Pittsburgh

Favorite passion: Playing with my grandchildren.

Best advice: Success is a journey. It's very important to be yourself.

Who I admire: David L. Steward, World Wide Technology chair.

Favorite book: "The Power of Now" by Eckhart Tolle

Best life change: Becoming more health conscious.



ERIC STEIGERWALT

CEO
Brighthouse Financial
Charlotte

Steigerwalt has served as CEO of the annuity and insurance provider since 2017, when the company split from MetLife. He worked at the predecessor company for 18 years. The company has thrived off its annuity sales, while sales of life insurance lagged. The company repurchased about $2.2 billion of its common stock from August 2018 to November 2023, reducing shares outstanding by 46%.

Education: BA Drew University



CLAY THORP

General Partner
Hatteras Venture Partners
Durham

Since 1995, he has co-founded eight companies in the life science arena and co-founded Hatteras in 2000 with John Crumpler, starting with $3 million. It now manages more than $650 million in six venture funds. It has invested in biopharmaceuticals, medical devices, diagnostics and research informatics.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill; Master's Harvard University



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NEAL TRIPLETT

CEO
Duke University Management
Durham

Triplett joined Duke Management in 1999, and was made CEO in 2007. The company has about 55 employees who work with 130 investment firms managing $13 billion for the Durham University and $27 billion of total assets under management at the end of 2023. It also manages the university's working capital and defined-benefit pension plan assets, plus Duke University Health investments. The university endowment increased 9.3% last year.

Education: BA & MBA Duke University



KEVIN WALKER

Managing Director
UBS
Cary

Crunching numbers is his day job, but Walker is well-known for his contributions to the Triangle and North Carolina as a volunteer and civic leader. He's on the board of directors for NC TECH Association, Wake Tech Foundation and Raleigh Chamber.

Education: BBA, Caldwell University; Master's Fairleigh Dickinson University

Change about N.C.: Update infrastructure to meet its growing population's needs.

People I admire: My parents, who work hard and raised their children with core values built on love, trust, honesty and integrity.

Favorite musician: The Who.

Favorite book: "The Blue Zones" by Dan Buettner

Career highlight: Watching staff members achieve their career potential.



THAD WALTON

Market Executive
Regions Bank
Charlotte

Walton, 41, joined Regions as community banking vice president in 2011 and was named to his current positions in 2019 and 2022. An active community member, we works with the local nonprofit Classroom Central, as a member of the American Red Cross regional board and as a Levine Children's Hospital's Dreamcatcher Society member.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill; JD Charlotte School of Law

What a competitor would say: Doesn't take himself too seriously but works hard with a great team.

Favorite technology: Apple Watch's do-not-disturb function.

Never do again: Ride a roller coaster without nausea medication.

Career accomplishement: Building one of the state's strongest team of bankers in less than five years



HUNTER WESTBROOK

CEO
HomeTrust Bank
Asheville

The 98-year-old bank covers a region from Atlanta to southwest Virginia, with a strong emphasis on the Asheville, Charlotte and Triangle markets. Westbrook joined the company in 2012 and became CEO in 2021. Profit for the second half of 2023 increased 24% to $28.3 million from a year earlier. Assets totaled $4.4 billion.

Education: BS.West Virginia University; MBA University of Minnesota



TED WHITEHURST

CEO
Providence Bank
PB Financial
Tarboro

Whitehurst, 58, has been the Rocky Mount-based bank's CEO since 2016. Last year, it bought Jacksonville-based Coastal Trust for $26 million, helping push Providence to more than $1 billion in assets. Favorite passion: Enjoying Lake Gaston with family and friends.

Education: BS East Carolina University

Favorite passion: Enjoying Lake Gaston with family and friends.

Person I admire: My father.

Career accomplishment: Helping start two community banks.

Best hiring question: Where do you see yourself in five years, and what will it take to achieve that goal?

Best life change: Becoming a husband and father.



MARY WILLIS

CEO
Fidelity Bank
Fuquay-Varina

In her 37th year at the bank owned by Raleigh's Holding family, Willis joined as a teller at the bank that employed her father. She became CEO in 2010. The bank has 57 offices in the Carolinas and Virginia, with $3.8 billion in assets and about 500 employees.

Education: BA East Carolina University



DONTÁ WILSON

Chief Consumer and Small Business Banking Officer
Truist Financial
Charlotte

For more than 20 years, Wilson, 47, has served in leadership roles with Truist and its predecessor BB&T. He was named chief digital and client experience officer in 2018 and appointed to the executive leadership team in 2016. He oversees more than 2,100 branches across the Southeast, mid-Atlantic and Texas. He had previous key roles in the Georgia, Alabama and northern Virginia regions.

Education: BS UNC Charlotte; MBA Wake Forest University

Best advice: If the odds are one in a million, just be the one (my grandfather.)

Favorite passion: Working with inner-city at-potential youth.

Best life change: Focusing my energy on improving myself.



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HEALTH CARE

2024 POWER LIST

Craig Albanese
Carl Armato
Chip Baggett
Ebony Boulware
Wesley Burks
Mary Jo Cagle
Brian Caveney
Greg Chadwick
Allison Farmer
Mickey Foster
Julie Freischlag
Jag Gill
Donald Gintzig
Janet Guthmiller
Ken Haynes
Stephen Lawler
Greg Lowe
Mike Nagowski
Kenneth Dale Owen Jr.
Christy Page
Chris Peek
Michael Waldrum
Roxie Wells
Eugene Woods
Tom Wroth

MARY JO CAGLE

CEO
Cone Health
Oak Ridge



Cone Health is No. 2 on the most-recent *Business North Carolina* best hospitals list, a quantitative performance ranking. The 13,000-employee health system repeatedly is near the top, reflecting strong community support and shrewd leadership.

The 64-year-old physician continues to push the system forward, including a $72 million MedCenter under construction in Asheboro and improving health care in Rockingham County and East Greensboro with a $1.2 million Duke Endowment grant. It's fighting to protect its footprint by appealing state approval for Atrium Health to build a north Greensboro hospital.

Education: BS & MD University of Alabama

First job: Sears catalog youth model

What a competitor would say: Leader, strategic thinker, inspiration

Best advice: My pediatrician, who knew I wanted to be a doctor, said with hard work and determination, I could become anything I wanted to be.

Favorite passion: My family

Person I admire: My grandmother, who was a teacher in a small Appalachian town.

Career accomplishment: Creating board and system leadership that reflects the communities we serve.

Favorite technology: iPhone

Best hiring question: What do you wake up every day excited to do?



CRAIG ALBANESE

CEO

Duke University Health

Durham

Albanese was named CEO in February 2023, a little more than a year after he became executive vice president and chief operating officer. He has been a health care executive for more than 25 years, including time at Stanford Health Care and New York-Presbyterian. And he's a pediatric surgeon who co-directed the team that pioneered in-utero fetal surgery.

Education: BS Washington and Lee University; MD SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University; MBA Santa Clara University



CARL ARMATO

CEO

Novant Health

Winston-Salem

Armato has led the Winston-Salem-based health care system since 2012. It has nearly 40,000 employees, 19 hospitals and $8.3 billion in 2023 operating revenue. He oversaw the purchase of New Hanover Regional Medical Center in 2021 and $2.4 billion purchase of three hospitals in South Carolina earlier this year. The FTC is opposing Novant's effort to buy two hospitals in Iredell County, citing antitrust law.

Education: BS University of Louisiana at Lafayette; MBA Norwich University



CHIP BAGGETT

CEO

N.C. Medical Society

Raleigh

Baggett began work with the association that represents more than 10,000 physicians and medical professionals in 2007, and took his current position in 2020. His responsibilities include advocating for membership with state lawmakers. One of the biggest issues was Medicaid expansion, which became reality late last year.

Education: BS Appalachian State University; JD N.C. Central University



EBONY BOULWARE

Dean

Wake Forest University School of Medicine

Chief science officer, **Advocate Health**

Chapel Hill

After posts as professor and executive at Johns Hopkins and Duke medical schools, Boulware, 54, started 2023 by joining Advocate Health, which operates in six states. She is helping leadthe medical school, a joint venture with Wake Forest University, as it opens its Charlotte campus in 2025. Both Wake Forest med-school campuses in Winston-Salem and Charlotte are linked to mixed-use districts.

Education: BA Vassar College; MD Duke University; MPH Johns Hopkins University

Your first job: Receptionist in my parents' office.

Best advice: Remember your, "why" – what you're passionate about – as you pursue your dream.

Favorite passion: Helping people live healthy, advance their careers and ask the right questions.



WESLEY BURKS

CEO

UNC Health

Chapel Hill

Burks, 69, joined UNC Health in 2011, when he was named pediatrics department chair. The internationally renowned expert on food allergies became CEO of the system, which counts 11 hospitals and almost 30,000 employees, in 2019. Since then, he's expanded its footprint by adding hospitals, providers and partnerships. He's also dean of the UNC medical school.

Education: BS University of Central Arkansas; MD, University of Arkansas



BRIAN CAVENEY

Chief Medical & Scientific Officer

Labcorp

Durham

Caveney joined the large testing company in 2017 after working for Duke University Medical Center and Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina. *Modern Healthcare* named him among health care's 100 most influential people in 2020.

Education: BS University of Central Arkansas; MD West Virginia; MPH UNC Chapel Hill

Best advice: Raise your hand and volunteer for an assignment just a little beyond your comfort zone. (Maureen O'Connor.)

Change about N.C.: A little less pollen.

Favorite technology: Kindle

Career accomplishment: Seeing others succeed and be promoted.



GREG CHADWICK

Dean

ECU School of Dental Medicine

Greenville

The Charlotte native practiced endodontics in the Queen City for nearly 30 years before becoming an administrator at ECU to help establish the dental school. He became dean in 2012. It operates from a 188,000-square-foot building and has graduated about 250 students since 2015. About 90% work in North Carolina.

Education:
BS, MS & DDS UNC Chapel Hill



ALLISON FARMER

CEO

EmergeOrtho

Durham

Farmer, 51, leads the largest physician-owned orthopedic practice in the state. Its 45 outpatient offices are spread across 21 counties, with nearly 270 physicians and other specialists. Last fall, it joined the state's other large orthopedic provider, OrthoCarolina, to create a program that bills on a patient's overall care, bucking the traditional fee-for-service model.

Education: BS & Master's UNC Chapel Hill

Person I admire: My husband

Favorite musician:
Justin Timberlake

Career accomplishment: Building the team I work with each day.

Favorite technology: Speech to text with spell check.

Best hiring question: What do you want in a new opportunity?



MICKEY FOSTER

CEO

First Health of the Carolinas

Pinehurst

Foster, who has held various health-care executive positions at hospitals across the state since the mid-1990s, was named CEO in 2019. The four-hospital system's 6,100 employees serve patients in 15 counties. It opened a $68 million cancer center in Pinehurst and spent $5 million expanding its women's and children's services last year.

Education: BS East Carolina University; Master's Central Michigan University



JULIE FREISCHLAG

CEO

Atrium Health, Wake Forest Baptist

Chief Academic Officer

Advocate Health

Winston-Salem

Leading a hospital that recently celebrated a century of care, Freischlag is an executive with the nation's third-largest not-for-profit U.S. hospital system, whose 2023 revenue topped $28 billion, up 15% from 2022. She's expanding local operations, including plans for a 36-bed hospital in Greensboro, which was recently approved by the state. Gate City-based Cone Health is appealing the move.

Education: BS University of Illinois, Chicago; MD Rush University

First job: Bagging groceries

What a competitor would say:
Hardworking, kind and talented

Best advice: My mother told me to get educated because no one can take that away from you.

Favorite passions: Reading, crafting, walking

Best life change: Changing careers several times and growing along the way.





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With talented female leaders, like our CEO Dr. Mary Jo Cagle (pictured top left), included in this year's health care Power List, we're proud to recognize the women impacting our industry. At Cone Health, we strive to create a professional environment where women can thrive, as reflected in our current leadership team, which is 74% female. Together, we're leading the way in value-based care and building a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

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JAG GILL

CEO

Charlotte Eye Ear Nose & Throat Associates, P.A.

Charlotte

Gill, 66, has managed the multispecialty practice since 2013. It has more than 150 providers at 18 locations across the Carolinas. He did previous stints as CEO at Dignity Health Medical Foundation, Banner Health and the Hillcrest Medical Group.

Education: BBA Columbia University; MHA University of Missouri; ScD Tulane University

Best advice: Let the moon set and rise at least once when dealing with controversial issues (my mentor during residency.)

Person I admire: John F. Kennedy

Career highlight: Helping build a children's hospital in Danville, Pennsylvania.

Best hiring question: If you had unlimited financial resources and are to go on a trip, where would you go? Who would you take with you? And what would you do?



DONALD GINTZIG

CEO

WakeMed

Raleigh

Gintzig, 65, is a retired Navy rear admiral with more than 25 years of experience as a healthcare executive. He took command of WakeMed, which has three acute-care hospitals and almost 12,000 employees and providers, in 2013. It opened Wendell Healthplex, which has an emergency department and outpatient services, earlier this year. It received state approval to build facilities in Knightdale and Garner last year.

Education: BS & Master's George Washington University



JANET GUTHMILLER

Dean

UNC Adams School of Dentistry

Chapel Hill

Returning to UNC, where she was an associate dean of academic affairs and periodontology professor for seven years, Guthmiller, 60, was named dean of the dental school in 2022. She previously was dean at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's dentistry college.

Education: BA Northwestern; DDS University of Iowa; PhD University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

What a competitor would say: Makes informed decisions and is fair.

Best advice: No one can ever take away your education (my dad.)

Person I admire: My daughters - they have become strong, independent women and critical thinkers with aspirations to improve the lives of others and the world around them.

Never do again: Detassel corn

Favorite musicians: Adele and Ed Sheeran



KEN HAYNES

President, Southeast Region

Advocate Health

Charlotte

In 2022, Atrium Health joined forces with Advocate, whose footprint stretches from Alabama to the Great Lakes region. Haynes, 55, landed as the new entity's regional president, continuing a career with previous stops at Saint Joseph Health System, St. Vincent Health System and Baptist Memorial Health Care system. He is a trustee with the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance.

Education: BS University of Alabama; MSHA & MBA University of Alabama at Birmingham

Best advice: Learn to ask better questions.

Never do again: Skydive

Favorite book: The Bible

Favorite musician: James Taylor



STEPHEN LAWLER

CEO

N.C. Healthcare Association

Raleigh

Lawler, 64, will retire from his post at year's end after leading the group since 2017. He's only the fourth exec to lead the 105-year-old old organization, which represents more than 100 hospitals and associated groups. He previously was an executive with ECU Health and Atrium Health.

Education: MBA Georgia Southern University

What a competitor would say: Resilient, firm, fair, friendly

Best advice: Lead with gratitude (J.P. Schneider.)

Person I admire: Dwight D. Eisenhower

Never do again: DIY projects that involve ceramic tile.

Favorite musician: Jimmy Buffett.

Best book: "Hidden Potential: The science of achieving greater things" by Adam Grant

Favorite technology: iPhone health app



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GREG LOWE

President
North Carolina Division
HCA Healthcare
Asheville

The hospital business is tough particularly when a Wall Street-traded parent corporation acquires a local one. That is what Lowe, 51, inherited at Mission Hospital in 2019. He's managing criticism from state and local officials over staffing levels and quality of care. Mission is the largest employer in western North Carolina, with more than 10,000 staffers, and operates six acute care hospitals.

Education: BA University of Utah; MBA University of Minnesota

Career accomplishment: Being part of a team who designed, built and opened three new hospitals in western North Carolina to better serve the residents in our region.

Person I admire: Abraham Lincoln

Favorite passion: Cycling in western North Carolina

Best advice: What you permit, you promote. What you allow, you encourage. What you condone you own (from a management conference.)



MIKE NAGOWSKI

CEO
Cape Fear Valley Health System
Fayetteville

Nagowski, who's held a variety of healthcare positions over the past three decades, has led the eight-hospital system with more than $1 billion in annual revenue since 2008. It's partnering with Methodist University to open a medical school in 2026. It eventually will graduate more than 100 physicians each year.

Education: BS Park College; MBA St. Bonaventure University



KENNETH DALE OWEN JR.

CEO
Tryon Medical Partners
Charlotte

Owen, 64, is a cardiologist who leads a business of about 90 physicians and 11 locations. He's been a cardiologist for nearly 40 years. Tryon was formed in 2018 after former physicians employed by Atrium Health created an independent practice.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; MD Wake Forest University School of Medicine

What a competitor would say: Strategic, fair, prioritizes patients and physicians.

Change about N.C: Make the Legislature serve the people's needs.

Best advice: Leave the world a better place (my father.)

Favorite passion: Boating along Maine's coast.

Never do again: Eat liver or brussels sprouts

Favorite book: "George Washington's Secret Six" by Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaege.

Favorite musician: Paul McCartney

Best life change: Marrying my wife and best friend, Amy.



CHRISTY PAGE

Executive Dean
UNC School of Medicine
Chapel Hill

A family physician and rural healthcare expert, Page was named executive dean in 2019. She has helped grow the school's research funding by more than $100 million annually, surpassing $600 million for the first time in 2022. She also is responsible for developing UNC Health's branch campuses, work that includes a partnership with Novant Health in southeastern North Carolina.

Education: BS, Master's & MD UNC Chapel Hill

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CHRIS PEEK

CEO

CaroMont Health

Gastonia

With more than 20 years of leadership experience, including a stint as Mecklenburg County deputy manager, Peek was picked to lead CaroMont Health in 2017. His responsibilities include 4,400 employees, a 435-bed acute care hospital, CaroMont Medical Group and a skilled nursing facility. It plans to open a 66-bed hospital in Belmont this fall that is part of a $300 million expansion in Gaston County.

Education: BS UNC Charlotte; MBA Amberton University



MICHAEL WALDRUM

CEO

ECU Health

Greenville

Waldrum, 62, was named CEO in 2015. He brought the 12,000-employee nonprofit health care system, formerly called Vidant, and state-owned medical school under one banner in 2021, when he was named dean of ECU Brody School of Medicine. His resume includes executive positions at the University of Arizona Health Network and University of Alabama at Birmingham Health System. He's a critical care medicine and pulmonology specialist.

Education: BA The University of the South; MD University of Alabama; MS Harvard University; MBA University of Michigan



ROXIE WELLS

Chief Physician Executive Officer

Novant Health

Winston-Salem

After spending nearly a decade helming Cape Fear Valley Health's Hoke Hospital, Wells took an executive position with Novant last summer. With a degree that focused on family medicine, she's a past board member of the American Hospital Association and North Carolina Healthcare Association boards of trustees.

Education: BA Fayetteville State University; MD East Carolina University



EUGENE WOODS

CEO

Advocate Health

Charlotte

The Advocate CEO is arguably Charlotte's most powerful leader, given the influence of the third-largest U.S. not-for-profit hospital chain and its huge workforce. The development of Wake Forest University School of Medicine's Charlotte campus and The Pearl mixed-use development are among Woods' key accomplishments. He arrived in Charlotte in 2016 after being president of Christus Health in Irving, Texas. He's since overseen mergers with Wake Forest Baptist Health and the Advocate Aurora system. He's also an accomplished guitarist.

Education: BA, MBA & MPHA Penn State University

Best advice: f you have the right tools, education, you can do any job (my dad, a Navy aeronautics mechanic.)

Best book: "Leader as Healer" by Nicholas Janni

Favorite musician: Carlos Santana



TOM WROTH

CEO

Community Care of North Carolina

Garner

A practicing family physician and former professor, Wroth joined the state's largest independent primary care practice partner in 2013 as its chief medical officer. He was named CEO in 2020. The nonprofit's programs help physicians and community-based care managers ensure people, especially those with complicated needs, receive proper care at less cost.

Education: BS University of Pennsylvania; MPH UNC Chapel Hill; MD Columbia University



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.



HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

Jose Armario
Steve Bagwell
Rolf Blizzard
Bill Boddie
John "Jack" Cecil
Bill Cecil Jr.
Josh Charlesworth
G.S. Chhabra
Ashley Christensen
Greg Collier
Mark Craig
Dennis Edwards
Greg Hatem
Michell Hicks
Victoria Isley
Mohammad Jenatian
Vimal Kolappa
Mark Laport
John McConnell
Cam McRae
Lynn Minges
Amber Moshakas
Lee Nettles
Kathie Niven
Doyle Parrish
Tom Pashley
Nayan Patel
Jay Raffaldini
Jeremy Reaves
Andrew Schmidt
Lance Trenary
Wit Tuttell

LYNN MINGES

CEO

N.C. Restaurant and Lodging Association

Raleigh



Minges, 64, lives on both sides of North Carolina's tourism industry. She enjoys family time on the state's Crystal Coast. And for more than a decade, she's led the N.C. Restaurant and Lodging Association, which represents the businesses that enable visitors — 43 million in 2022, according to Visit North Carolina — have a memorable time.

Minges has spent much time promoting the industry, first as a former N.C. Department of Commerce deputy secretary, when she was tasked with marketing the state as a domestic and international destination for tourism, filmmaking and sports development. That familiarity with Raleigh helps in her current position, where recent legislative priorities among members include ABC reform, occupancy and meal taxes and restaurant health inspections.

But it's not all blue skies and sunshine for the industry. Some challenges, such as inflation raising costs for businesses and visitors, are out of Minges' control. But others, such as the workforce shortage — an ill effect of the recent pandemic that's still being felt industrywide — can be addressed by the trade association. NCRLA's Serving Careers campaign, for example, shines a light on the careers available at the state's more than 20,000 restaurants and hotels. Launched in October, it had generated more than 300,000 applications for hospitality jobs by January.

Education: AA Peace College; BA N.C State University

First job: Xerox sales representative

What a competitor would say: Passionate and tireless

Best advice: Try never to be the smartest person in the room. And if you are, I suggest you invite smarter people or find a different room (Michael Dell.)

Person I admire: Van Eure and Steve Thanhauser, co-owners of the Angus Barn

Favorite book: "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus

Favorite musician: Dolly Parton

Career accompishment: Helping restaurants and hotels navigate the pandemic's unique challenges

Best life change: Prioritizing sleep



JOSE ARMARIO

CEO
Bojangles
Charlotte

Armario has led the restaurant chain since it was taken private by private-equity groups Durational Capital Management and The Jordan Co. in 2019. He's regained footing after the pandemic, building on its more than 800 franchises. He's revamped the menu and announced plans for 20 locations in Las Vegas and 10 at TravelCenters of America locations. He is pressing for more units in Ohio, New York and Texas.

Education: BA Miami Dade College; Master's University of MIami



STEVE BAGWELL

CEO
Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority
Charlotte

At the end of last year, Bagwell succeeded Tom Murray as named CEO of the group that promotes tourism in his hometown. He's worked there for almost 30 years, including as warehouse manager and vice president of venues. The authority completed a $127 million convention-center expansion in 2021 and $20 million of improvements at the Bojangles Entertainment Complex in 2020.

Education: BS Clemson



ROLF BLIZZARD

Chair
N.C. Travel & Tourism Board
Raleigh

Blizzard has spent more than a decade leading the board, advising the N.C. Commerce Department on how best to develop the state's travel and tourism industry. He's vice president of operations and assistant secretary at Turnpike Properties, which owns The Sanderling Resort and Spa in Duck. He chairs the Coastal Studies Institute's board of directors.

Education: BS & Master's UNC Chapel Hill



BILL BODDIE

CEO
Boddie-Noell Enterprises
Rocky Mount

Boddie is at the helm of this six-decade-old family business that is best-known for its 330-plus Hardees restaurants in four states. It also hosts events and gatherings at Rose Hill, an 18th-century manor that was built by his ancestors, and develops real estate such as Marshes Light Marina in Manteo.



JOHN "JACK" CECIL

CEO
Biltmore Farms
Asheville

Cecil has led the real-estate developer for more than three decades, leading projects including a shopping mall and hotels, along with a 1,000-home development. Its Hilton Asheville Biltmore Park was the first new construction LEED-certified hotel under that brand. He sits on the Research Triangle Foundation of North Carolina board, chairs the Dogwood Health Trust and is a Duke Endowment trustee.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; Master's American Graduate School of International Management



BILL CECIL JR.

President
Biltmore Co.
Asheville

The country's largest privately owned home, which is open to visitors every day, is the responsibility of Cecil, great-grandson of George Vanderbilt, its builder. It's the centerpiece of an 8,000-acre campus that includes shops, restaurants, hotels and a winery. About 1.5 million visit annually, while several hundred people work for Cecil.



JOSH CHARLESWORTH

CEO
Krispy Kreme
Charlotte

The former Mars and Wrigley executive joined Krispy Kreme in 2017, then became CEO in January, succeeding Michael Tattersfield, who grew revenue to $1.6 billion from $550 million in 2016. In March, the 20,000-employee company agreed to supply all McDonald's U.S. restaurants with doughnuts over the next two years. Germany's JAB controls the public company's shares.

Education: BS London School of Economics



G.S. CHHABRA
CEO
CMC Hotels
Greensboro

The retired chemical engineer leads his privately owned hotel operation. It still owns the Best Western Cary, which he developed 40 years ago. Its dozens of hotels are mostly in the Triad, while the business also owns retail and office space and several restaurants. Marriott International bestowed its Horizon Award on CMC in 2014, acknowledging it as a leading franchisee.



ASHLEY CHRISTENSEN
Owner
AC Restaurants
Raleigh

This two-time James Beard award winner has drawn a spotlight to North Carolina dining. Her handful of restaurants in Raleigh includes Poole's Diner, which *Southern Living* named the state's best diner earlier this year. Active in a host of local charitable initiatives, she is a vocal critic of sexual harassment in the industry.

Education: BS N.C. State University



GREG COLLIER
Owner
Bayhaven Restaurant Group
Charlotte

A two-time James Beard Award semifinalist, Collier and his wife, Subrina, are behind four Charlotte-area restaurants. They include Leah & Louise, which specializes in Southern dishes. The couple backs the popular Bayhaven Food & Wine Festival, which celebrates historically Black cuisine.

Education: AAS Scottsdale Community College;
BS Northern Arizona University





MARK CRAIG

President
R.H. Barringer
Greensboro

Craig leads the company founded by his great-grandfather in 1933. The state's largest beer distributor has locations in Greensboro, Hickory, Linwood, North Wilkesboro, Raleigh and Winston-Salem to handle Anheuser-Busch products and other brands, including Tar Heel brewers Highland and Catawba. He's vice chair of the N.C. Wildlife Commission board.



DENNIS EDWARDS

CEO
Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau
Raleigh

There are plenty of museums, parks and historical sites to promote around the capital city. But Edwards, 62, has plenty more on the agenda for visitors, who numbered 18 million and spent a record $3 billion in Wake County in 2022. Cary will host the next six ACC men's and women's soccer and tennis championships.

Education: BA University of Northern Iowa

Best advice: Always do today what you think can put off until tomorrow (my Mom)

Favorite book: "The Boys in the Boat" by Daniel Brown

Favorite musician: Eric Church

Career accomplishment: Creating a 10-year Wake County Destination Strategic Plan and accomplishing most of it in five years.

Best life change: Watching my diet and working out.



GREG HATEM

Founder
Empire Eats
Raleigh

This longtime real estate developer, who focuses on downtown Raleigh, has a foodie side, too. He launched Empire Eats in 2002, growing it to nine restaurants today. The best-known may be The Pit, which serves authentic eastern North Carolina style barbecue. He created each restaurant's concept — from Italian to Lebanese foods — along with hiring their chefs, deciding on décor and creating marketing.

Education: BS N.C. State University



MICHELL HICKS

Principal Chief
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Cherokee

Hicks returned to his post leading the 15,000-member tribe last fall, when he was elected to his fourth nonconsecutive term. He ran on promises to tighten fiscal oversight and add restaurants, stores and family friendly activities. He also wants to add amenities to Harrah's Cherokee Casino, which faces new competition from casinos in Kings Mountain and Danville, Virginia. He's also working on supplying recreational marijuana, which tribal voters approved.

Education: BBA Western Carolina University



VICTORIA ISLEY

CEO
Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau
Asheville

Isley promoted Bermuda, Washington, D.C., and Tampa Bay, Florida, before arriving in Asheville near the height of the pandemic. She has helped the state's craft brewing and culinary capital rebound. Visitors spent a record $2.88 billion in 2022. Between 2019-22, the area's hotel room demand grew 7.5% and vacation rentals grew 62%.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill



MOHAMMAD JENATIAN

CEO
Greater Charlotte Hospitality & Tourism Alliance
Charlotte

The former hotel manager helped found and has been the group's only leader in its 30-year history. He represents more than 900 members and seeks to make Charlotte a major tourist destination. The industry has a $7.9 billion annual economic impact in Mecklenburg County.

Education: BS UNC Charlotte

What a competitor would say: Relentless.

Change about N.C.: Have governor and lieutenant governor run on the same ticket.

Favorite book: "Supercommunicators: How to unlock the secret language of connection" by Charles Duhigg

Career accomplishment: Leading efforts to make building of the Charlotte Convention Center possible.



VIMAL KOLAPPA

CEO
East Coast Hospitality
Chocowinity

Kolappa came to the U.S. from India to study business in Chicago. After working in the telecom industry, he switched to hotels, and the family business now has 17 properties that employ more than 400 people. Half are under the Holiday Inn Express flag, while all but one are in smaller N.C. towns. Four more units should open this year. He is a trustee at UNC Chapel Hill and a director of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

Education: MBA Roosevelt University



MARK LAPORT

CEO
Concord Hospitality Enterprises
Raleigh

Laport's nearly 40-year-old company now has about 145 hotels. He and partner Richard Branca repurchased a controlling stake from previous owner Berkshire Hathaway in 2022, then attracted partners Whitman Peterson and Aztec Group earlier this year, *Hotel Investment Today* reported. In January, it broke ground on Marriott's first StudioRes brand hotel in Fort Myers, Florida, with long-term plans for 50 more such extended-stay hotels. It also is expecting to add 15 Extended Stay America Premier Suites in coming years.

Education: BS College of Mount Union; Master's Rochester Institute of Technology.



JOHN MCCONNELL

CEO
McConnell Golf
Raleigh

After becoming among North Carolina's richest people through successful sales of medical software companies, McConnell, 73, took a swing at golf in 2003. He bought the struggling Raleigh Country Club and revitalized it. Between 2003 and 2017, his company bought 12 courses, 10 that were in the red. McConnell Golf now owns 16 country clubs in the Southeast.

Education: BS Virginia Tech

What a competitor would say: Owns great properties and provides good experiences.

Favorite passion: Playing golf and watching my grandkids' activities.

Person I admire: My chief operating officer, Christian Anastasiadis, who's brilliant and tireless.

Career accomplishment: Leading three successful businesses.



CAM MCRAE

CEO
Tands
Kinston

McRae purchased his first Bojangles' location from the chicken restaurant's founders almost 45 years ago. Since then, his company has become one of the company's largest franchisees, with nearly 70 restaurants throughout eastern North Carolina and Richmond, Virginia. He has invested in real estate, golf courses and minor league baseball through the years.



AMBER MOSHAKOS

President
LM Restaurants
Raleigh

Moshakos handles business development and strategic initiatives for the family business. It has nine brands, including its largest, Carolina Ale House, which has two dozen locations in five states. It'll add a 10th this summer, when Birdie's opens in Raleigh. She was named to the National Restaurant Association's board of directors earlier this year.

Education: BS N.C. State University; Master's Cornell University


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LEE NETTLES

Executive Director
Outer Banks Visitor Center
Manteo

Tourism is big business on North Carolina's coast, employing nearly half of Dare County residents. Visitors there spent nearly $2 billion last year, the fourth-highest of any county. Nettles has overseen procuring visitors there since 2009, after working for Wilmington's tourism bureau. He serves on the boards for the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina and North Carolina Travel & Tourism.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill



KATHIE NIVEN

CEO
Biscuitville
Greensboro

Bicuitville opened its easternmost North Carolina location in New Bern earlier this year, giving the chain more than 75 locations. Niven joined the family-owned business in 2011, gaining her current post in 2021, after working for Arby's, Burger King and other fast-food giants. She repositioned the brand as "Southern Fresh," revamped the menu and helped triple annual revenue to $150 million.

Education: BS Elon University

Best advice: Be yourself. Everyone else is taken.

Favorite passion: Watching compassionate, talented people surpass their wildest dreams.

Favorite book: "Love + Work" by Marcus Buckingham.

Best life change: Recognizing outside influences do not control your journey. Take responsibility for your own journey, which reduces unproductive influences.



DOYLE PARRISH

CEO
Summit Hospitality Group
Raleigh

Parrish started Summit in 1988. Its more than 700 employees work at 18 hotels across the Triad, Charlotte, Wilmington and Pinehurst, most of which fly under the banners of Hilton, Hyatt and Marriott. It also owns a handful of upscale restaurants. He's a past chair of the Raleigh tourism bureau and state travel coalition.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill; MBA Wake Forest University



TOM PASHLEY

President
Pinehurst Resort & Country Club
Pinehurst

Southern hospitality will be on full display at the collection of accommodations, restaurants and amenities when Pashley and his 1,300-person staff host the 2024 U.S. Open in June. The resort is also debuting No. 10, its first new course in about 30 years. Pashley joined the Dedman family-owned business in 2000 and took his post in 2014.

Education: BBA University of Georgia; MBA Duke University

Person I admire: Jim Hyler

Career accomplishment: Pinehurst created an employee relief fund auction that raised $300,000 to support benefits and ongoing care.

Favorite technology: Whoop band for personal health data.



NAYAN PATEL

President
CN Hotels
Greensboro

Patel's family arrived in the United States nearly 50 years ago, purchasing a 28-room motel in California. His father, CN, moved the family east a few years later, starting the hotel management and development company that Patel has led for three decades. It has nearly 30 hotels in the Southeast, including properties under the Marriott, IHG and Best Western banners.



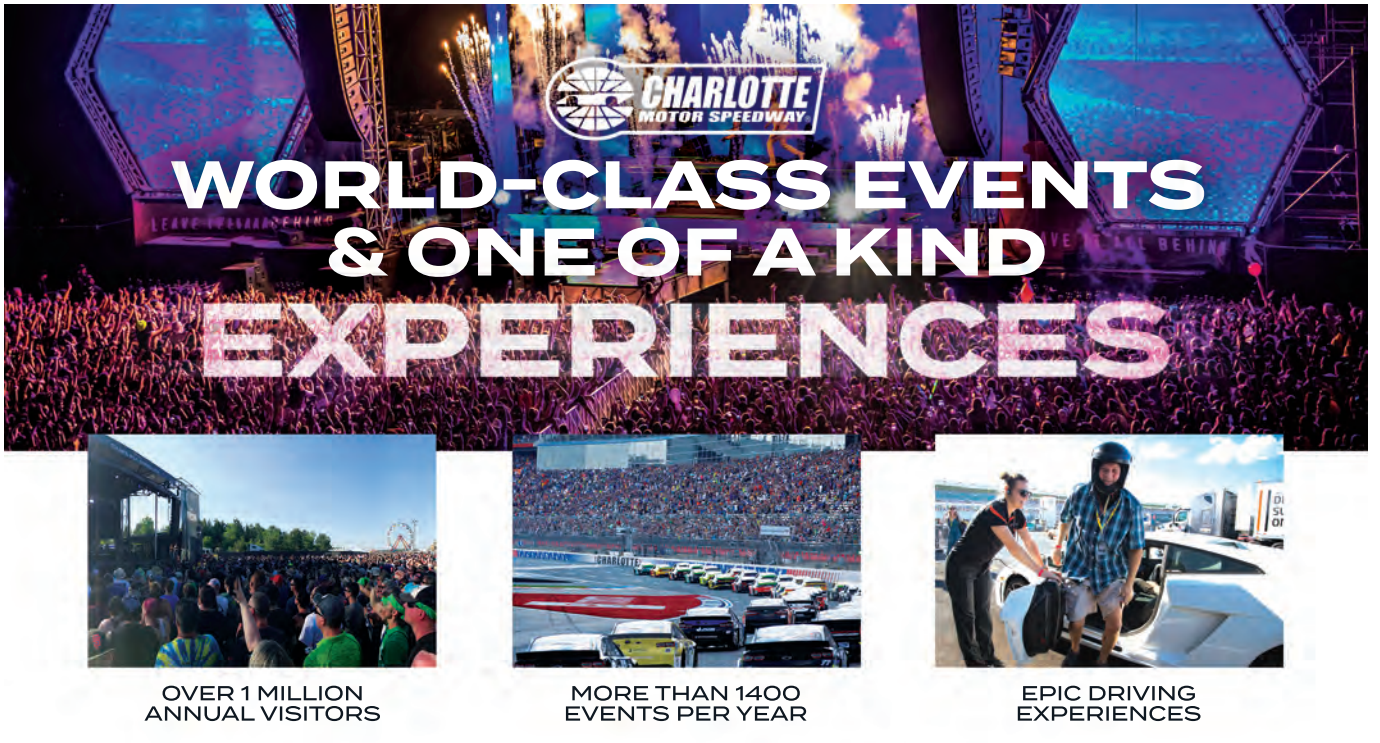
JAY RAFFALDINI

Owner
Raffaldini Vineyards & Winery
Winston-Salem

Raffaldini welcomes 25,000 visitors annually to his vineyard in Ronda, where he produces white and red wine. His Vermentino was served by the White House in 2008, and his 2011 Sangiovese is the Southeast's highest-rated red wine, according to *Wine Enthusiast*. It's a side gig for Raffaldini, who manages a $45 billion hedge fund affiliated with UBS, where he has been a managing director for more than 24 years.

Education: BA Georgetown University; MBA New York University


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JEREMY REAVES

CEO
Cook Out
Thomasville

Reaves eschews publicity while leading one of the nation's fastest-growing fast-food chains, best known for its $4 milkshakes. It has more than 300 locations, the first opening in Greensboro in 1989. Its footprint covers 10 states, from Georgia to West Virginia, with more than 13,000 employees. Late hours, quick service and relatively inexpensive items make it a customer favorite.



LANCE TRENARY

CEO
Golden Corral
Durham

Trenary helped this chain of nearly 400 buffets in 40 states rebound from near extinction during the pandemic. Sales were $1.4 billion in 2022, up 21% from the prior fiscal year. The company launched a fast-casual restaurant concept, Homeward Kitchen, late last year. The prototype opened in Southern Pines, featuring Golden Corral classic dishes and a drive-through.

Education: B.A. Mississippi State University

Best advice: Never run out of cash and when faced with a tough decision, always do the right thing. (Founder James Maynard.)

Never do again: Global pandemic. Our business learned to build your company to withstand catastrophic events.

Best hiring question: Why do you want to work at our company? I want to hear they value highly talented people above all else.



ANDREW SCHMIDT

CEO
Visit Greenville, NC
Greenville

A college professor turned tourism booster, Schmidt, 57, has led the CVB for almost a decade. He's keen on youth sports tournaments and outdoor offerings, the latter helping the industry, which directly employs about 2,000 people locally, navigate the pandemic. Pitt County visitor spending increased 13% to $291 million in 2022.

Education: BS East Carolina University; Master's East Carolina University

What a competitor would say: Passionate about representing Greenville-Pitt County as a destination.

Best advice: Never be satisfied with what you know, always keep learning and growing your knowledge and abilities (my mom.)

Career highlight: Serving as North Carolina Travel Industry Association president

Best hiring question: How do you feel about public speaking?



WIT TUTTELL

Executive Director
Visit North Carolina
Raleigh

Rest and relaxation is work for Tuttell, 57, who oversees the state's marketing for tourism, film and sports development. State data released last year showed hospitality and tourism employs 9.8% of the state's workforce, while travelers spent a record $33.3 billion in the state. That eclipsed previous records by about $4 billion.

Education: BS University of Florida

Best advice: Buy the ticket, take the ride (Hunter S. Thompson.)

Favorite passion: Eating North Carolina barbecue.

Person I admire: Sam Jones

Favorite musician: Warren Zevon

Careeraccomplishment: Being named 2022 State Tourism Director of the Year.

Best hiring question: Where's your favorite place in North Carolina to visit?















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INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY

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Jillian Munro
Pierre Naudé
Todd Olson
Michael Praeger
Ryan Pratt
Brooks Raiford
Amit Sharma
Bill Spruill
Brian Stading
Kamala Subramaniam
Tim Sweeney
Scot Wingo

TODD OLSON

CEO, Co-Founder

Pendo

Raleigh



A three-time entrepreneur, Olson teamed up with fellow product leaders and technologists from Red Hat, Cisco and Google to launch Pendo in October 2013. The Raleigh-based company has since raised $356 million, landed more than 2,300 customers and now employs 900 people across eight offices. In 2021, Pendo landed on the *Forbes* Cloud 100 and Inc. Best Workplaces lists for the fourth year in a row.

Olson was a proficient coder by the age of 14 who spent his teen years as a database designer and software architect for MBNA Bank in Delaware. By the time he graduated from Carnegie Mellon University, he had created a data integration product and launched Cerebellum Software and raised $17 million in seed capital. He went on to start 6th Street Analytics, which he sold to Rally Software. After Rally's IPO, he started Pendo. Olson's passion for helping digital teams build great products led him to write his first book. "The Product-Led Organization: Drive Growth By Putting Product at the Center of Your Customer Experience" which was published by Wiley in September 2020. The company had layoffs last year, but plans for an initial public offering appear to be on track once markets improve for IPOs. The company is looking to expand its international business to make it more attractive to investors.

Education: BS Carnegie Melon University

Best advice: Do things only you can do.

Change about N.C.: I'd love to make N.C. the most attractive place in the world to start a company.

Favorite passion: Food and wine

Never do again: Try to buy The Point (Olson's plan to build a 30-acre family compound on Topsail Island was derailed in 2023 by the local government.)



SPENCER BAIRD

CEO

Inmar Intelligence

Winston-Salem

He was named to the top post in October 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 and Kellogg. He was chief merchant at Peapod, an online grocery delivery service owned by Ahold, which also owns Food Lion.

Education: BS Virginia Wesleyan University



JUD BOWMAN

CEO, Founder

Sift Media

Durham

Bowman, 42, founded Sift in 2015. Backed by more than $5 million in venture capital, it collects information from mobile ad requests each day, using AI and machine learning algorithms to target app install ads for its clients. It has served more than 250 billion mobile ads and delivered more than 100 million app installations.



BOB BRUGGEWORTH

CEO

Qorvo

Greensboro

Bruggeworth 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 $3.5 billion in revenue last year. He is also a director of Fremont, California-based data storage company Seagate Technology.

Education: BS Wilkes University



CHRIS DOWNIE

CEO

Flexential Corp.

Charlotte

Downie has had his post since 2017, leading a datacenter and cloud computing company with more than 3 million square feet of space in 19 markets. Before Flexential, Downie was chief executive officer at Telx Holdings, a data center solutions provider based in New York City. He has more than 30 years of executive leadership experience in finance and operations, including stints with Bear Stearns and Daniels & Associates.

Education: BA Dartmouth College, MBA New York University



RIC ELIAS

CEO

Red Ventures

Fort Mill, S.C.

In 2000, Elias and Dan Feldstein co-founded Red Ventures, growing the business into a portfolio of digital brands and businesses including Allconnect, Bankrate, Lonely Planet, CNET and The Points Guy. The company has said it employs more than 3,000 people. It is partly owned by the Silver Lake private-equity group. Feldstein retired in February.

Education: BS Boston College, MBA Harvard University



JIM GOODNIGHT

CEO

SAS Institute

Cary

North Carolina's best-known tech executive isn't slowing down after 48 years of leading one of the state's most esteemed businesses. The Salisbury native, 82, continues to work toward an IPO for Cary-based SAS Institute. SAS has reported an annual profit every year since its inception in 1976. The data management, analytics and AI company employs more than 12,000 people and reported $3.2 billion in 2022 revenue, the latest figure available.

Education: BS. MS & PhD N.C. State University



TIMOTHY HUMPHREY

Chief Analytics Officer, NC Senior State Executive

IBM

Raleigh

Humphrey climbed the ladder at IBM in Research Triangle Park, having spent about three decades at the location. He grew up in Fayetteville and told the NC TECH trade group that he's a big Game of Thrones fan. His motto is "always try to help people."

Education: BS N.C. State University

Favorite book: "Multipliers" by Liz Wiseman

Best life change: Taking ownership of my heart health.



IGOR JABLOKOV

CEO, Founder

Pryon

Raleigh

The intelligence might be artificial, but the $100 million raised by Pryon in its last fundraising rounds was real. Jablokov, 50, started it in 2017 after selling a previous company, Yap, to Amazon, which used it to create Alexa. Pryon's AI answers employee questions about copious internal data.

Education: BS Penn State University; MBA UNC Charlotte

Best advice: Keep things real and don't believe your own hype. (A boss at IBM.)

Change about N.C.: Start a Startup NC economic incentive program like New York state has done.

Person I admire: Tim Blitz, chairman of Yap.

Never do again: Take a helicopter over a volcano.

Favorite book: "Look Both Ways" by Brooke Ellison

Favorite musician: Greek composer Vangelis

Favorite technology: Apple Vision Pro



DEVERRE LIERMAN

Head of US Delivery, Southeast Region

Infosys

Raleigh

Lierman helped open the India-based information technology company's Raleigh Technology Hub in 2018. She's leading Infosys' transformation strategy for delivery teams and clients throughout the Southeast. Lierman worked for IBM for 23 years as a digital commerce leader, before moving to Infosys.

Education: BS Rutgers University



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. He sold ShareFile to Citrix in 2011. Following his graduation from Duke in 2000, Lipson worked for an internet start-up called FullSeven that developed branding for company emails.

Education: BA Duke University



ROBERT MALLERNEE

CEO

Eton Solutions

Morrisville

Mallernee has more than 30 years of experience in advising closely held businesses, senior corporate executives, venture capitalists and wealthy families by building investment, financial, and estate plans. Prior to co-founding Eton Advisors, he led the UBS Multi-Family Office Group. Earlier in his career, he served as a founding principal of the US Trust Multi-Family Office, and worked at NC Trust Co., which was acquired by US Trust in 1999.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill; MBA University of Chicago

Congratulations to Lumos CEO, Brian Stading, on being named to the 2024 Power List by Business North Carolina Magazine!

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DAVID MORKEN

CEO, Co-Founder
Bandwidth
Raleigh

The former Marine Corps judge advocate founded the communications software company in 1999 and took it public at $20 per share in 2017. After years of rapid growth, revenue gained 5% last year to $601 million. It has reported losses in three of the past four years. Last year, Bandwidth opened a new headquarters near the PNC Arena in west Raleigh.

Education: BA Oral Roberts University; JD University of Notre Dame



JILLIAN MUNRO

Group Head, Cybersecurity, CISCO
Envestnet
Apex

Munro, 54, was promoted to her current position last year. She joined Envestnet, a financial services and data company based in Berwyn, Pennsylvania, which has a significant presence in the Triangle, in 2020. She previously worked for Fidelity and JPMorgan Chase.

Education: BS Bucknell University; MA George Washington University



PIERRE NAUDÉ

CEO
nCino
Wilmington

A former S1 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 48% to $408 million in 2023, the company reported a net loss of $102.7 million. With more than 35 years of fintech experience, the South African native is passionate about transforming the financial services industry through innovation, reputation and speed.

Education: BS Upper Iowa University



MICHAEL PRAEGER

CEO, Co-Founder
AvidXchange
Charlotte

Started in 2000, the payments software company has grown to more than 1,500 employees and 7,000 customers. It went public in 2021. Revenues have doubled over the past four years to $381 million last year, while its net loss of $47 million, compared with average deficits of $164 million in the previous three years. Before establishing AvidXchange, Michael co-founded PlanetResume.com, a technology career enhancement and recruiting site that merged with CareerShop.com in 1999.

Education: BS & BA Georgetown University



RYAN PRATT

CEO, Founder
Guerrilla RF
Summerfield

Guerilla RF, the 2013 brainchild of Pratt builds parts and pieces that help enable wireless infrastructure and equipment makers to provide better coverage and high data rates. More automotive and satellite communications orders helped the Greensboro-based public company boost annual revenue by 30% to $15.1 million last year. He previously worked for Qorvo predecessor RFMD as a design engineer.

Education: BS N.C. State University

What a competitor would say: We're tenacious.

Change about N.C.: Nice to get some occasional snow.

Favorite musician: Weezer

Best hiring question: Tell me the story of your career.

Favorite technology: YouTube TV

Best life change: Reading more books.



BROOKS RAIFORD

CEO
North Carolina Technology Association
Cary

Raiford, 55, leads an industry group whose almost 700 members employ more than 250,000 people in North Carolina. He joined NC Tech in 2008. His previous roles include serving as a policy aide to the governor and business development director at Balfour Beatty Construction. He's vice chair of Guilford College's board of trustees.

Education: BA N.C. State University



AMIT SHARMA

CEO

CData Software

Chapel Hill

The data connectivity business received $140 million in funding in 2022 and earned a spot on the Deloitte Technology Fast 500 list of rapidly growing companies. Sharma launched CData in 2010. His leadership has guided CData Software's rise to a leading provider of data access and connectivity solutions. Updata Partners of Washington, D.C., is a key investor.

Education: MS N.C. State University; MBA Duke University



BILL SPRUILL

Chair

Council for Entrepreneurial Development

Durham

In 2010, Spruill co-founded the Global Data Consortium and led its evolution into the most widely utilized global identity verification platform. In May 2022, the company was acquired by the London Stock Exchange Group for $300 million. Later in 2022, the former SAS Institute employee established his family office, 2ndF, with a mission of elevating the Triangle tech ecosystem to a position of national prominence. He is an Eagle Scout.



BRIAN STADING

CEO

Lumos Fiber

High Point

Stading's growth plan is to expand Lumos Fiber's internet network to more than 1 million homes in the next five years. He joined Lumos in 2022 after more than three decades at telecommunications companies, including Ziply, CenturyLink and Qwest. Lumos was formerly known as NorthState Communications, which had been a family-owned telecom based in High Point.

Education: BA Aurora University; MBA Northwestern University

What a competitor would say: We've gotten their attention because we are growing so fast.

Best advice: Don't believe your press clippings, stay humble and focus on doing your best.

Person I admire: My dad, the most honest person I know.

Never do again: Heliskiing

Favorite book: "Against All Odds" by Alex Kershaw

Favorite musician: Bob Seger



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. Prior to Google, she was a principal strategic architect at Microsoft Azure where she worked on the first open sourced data center switch software for open cloud networking. She joined Google in 2016 and was picked to lead its engineering hub in Durham in 2021.

Education: MS & PhD N.C. State University



TIM SWEENEY

CEO, Founder

Epic Games

Cary

Epic's mega-franchise Fortnite shows little signs of cooling amid rumors of a pending IPO. The company reported 75 million monthly active users in 2023, versus 68 million a year earlier. The billionaire is a leading N.C. landowner, mostly in conservation easements that will preserve land in perpetuity. In 2023, Walt Disney Co. bought a $1.5 billion stake in Epic Games, which is valued at more than $22 billion. China's Tencent owns 40%.

Education: BS University of Maryland



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 more states. He also leads the Tweener Fund to support promising new Triangle businesses. Wingo is co-host of "The Jason & Scot Show" podcast, and regularly speaks about e-commerce and e-service.

Education: BS University of South Carolina; MCE N.C. State University



Kerry Abrams
Stacy Ackermann
Sherrod Banks
Steve Berlin
Martin Brinkley
Todd Brown
Dan Cahill
Lois Colbert
Nathan Duggins
Bradley Evans
Todd Eveson
Kimberly Gatling
Stuart Goldstein
Tom Griffin
John Hardin
Robert Harrington
Terry Hutchens
Susan Jackson
Beth Tyner Jones
Brian Kahn
Christopher Kiger
Chris Kouri
Byron Kirkland
Paul Lawrence
Valecia McDowell
Thomas Mitchell
Reid Phillips
Allen Robertson
Ford Robertson
Perry Safran
Jason Solomon
Marshall Wall
Mona Lisa Wallace
Devon Williams
Kevin Williams

CHRIS KOURI

Shareholder, Managing Partner
Maynard Nexsen
Charlotte



As a star running back at Yale University, Chris Kouri learned important lessons from Carm Cozza, the school's Hall of Fame football coach. "Cozza was so accomplished by the time I got to Yale, already holding nine conference titles; he had a system down and a trusted staff," says Kouri. "He taught loyalty to one another, poise, dependability. He was creative and flexible, changing offensive schemes depending on personnel. My sophomore year, we ran a pure wishbone."

Kouri, who also played football at Charlotte Catholic High School, was part of the 1989 Yale team that won the Ivy League title, and later was elected captain of the team. After playing in a senior all-star game in Japan in late 1991, Kouri signed as a free agent with the Miami Dolphins. Jacksonville Jaguars coach Doug Pederson was one of his roommates at a Dolphins mini-camp before Kouri was cut on July 17, 1992. The decision came down to him and Bernie Parmalee, now running backs coach for the Carolina Panthers.

He then went to France, where he played for the undefeated Argonautes and was MVP in the French Super Bowl. After football Kouri earned master's and law degrees and started practicing law in Charlotte in 2000. He remains passionate about the gridiron, serving as a board member of the Yale Football Association for the past decade. After working as general counsel for Charlotte Motor Speedway earlier in his career, he joined Maynard Nexsen (formerly Nexsen Pruet) in 2015. He is part of the firm's economic development team that guides clients through incentives, site selection, zoning, and other issues.

Education: BA Yale University; Master's Duke University; JD UNC Chapel Hill

Change about N.C.: Expand capacity at our greatest state universities like UNC Chapel Hill and N.C. State to accommodate more North Carolinians. Strengthen k-12 public schools. Keep investing in infrastructure.

Person I admire: My father was a family doctor who died way too young at age 49. He taught me the values of hard work, respect and humility by demonstrating these to me in the way he lived. My grandfather, who was a lawyer and natural public servant, served during World War II and showed me the benefits and beauty of relentlessly serving one's community and family.

Favorite book: "A Land Remembered" by Patrick Smith

Favorite musician: Louis Armstrong



KERRY ABRAMS

Dean

Duke University School of Law

Durham

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor has cited Abrams' work in her rulings. She was vice provost and a professor at the University of Virginia before joining Duke in 2018. The school enrolled 244 first-year students last year from 35 states and eight countries, after receiving 6,205 applications.

Education: BA Swarthmore College; JD Stanford University



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. She joined the firm in 2012.

Education: BA Furman University; JD University of South Carolina



SHERROD BANKS

Founder

Banks Law Group

Durham

The UNC Chapel Hill adjunct law professor practices 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.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD UNC Chapel Hill



STEVE BERLIN

Partner

Kilpatrick

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 board of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County Arts Council.

Education: BA Wake Forest University; JD Wake Forest University



MARTIN BRINKLEY

Dean, Professor

University of North Carolina School of Law

Raleigh

Brinkley, 57, became dean of UNC's law school in 2015 and is the first person to lead it while still practicing; he's of counsel and a 12-year partner at Smith Anderson in Raleigh. The school tied for 22nd in the 2023-24 U.S. News & World Report rankings, and 10th among public universities. He helped complete a $78 million capital campaign in 2022.

Education: AB Harvard; JD UNC-CH

Change about N.C.: North Carolina needs to recommit itself to public education at every level.

Favorite passion: Playing oboe and piano.

Career accomplishment: Dean of UNC law school.

Never do again: Be a trial lawyer.



TODD BROWN

President

N.C. State Bar

Charlotte

Brown became president of the state legal disciplinary group last October. He's managing partner of Hunton Andrews Kurth's Charlotte office and co-head of the firm's commercial litigation practice group. Gov. Roy Cooper nominated him as an N.C. Business Court judge in April.

Education: BA University of South Carolina; JD University of South Carolina



DAN CAHILL

Managing Partner

Poyner Spruill

Raleigh

Cahill, 56, was named managing partner at the firm in 2017. He has been representing clients, including large corporations and individuals, since 1994. Today, he focuses his practice on complex commercial disputes, representing banks and financial institutions in all types of litigation. A lifelong Raleigh resident, he spent eight years at an international construction materials company as a staff attorney.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD Wake Forest University

What competitors might say: I am honest.

Best advice: Always tell the truth (my Father.)

Favorite book: "Storyteller" by Dave Grohl

Career accomplishment: Managing partner and serving as a Raleigh Chamber chair.

Never do again: Snow skiing



LOIS COLBERT

Partner
Kilpatrick
Charlotte

She's a 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.

Education: BS University of Illinois; JD University of Michigan



NATHAN DUGGINS

Managing Partner
Tuggle Duggins
Greensboro

Leading the firm started by his father and Dick Tuggle a half-century ago, Duggins, 55, recently won a large arbitration award for a utility contractor and obtained one of the largest judgments ever awarded in the North Carolina Business Court. He is involved in the Greensboro Chamber, the Guilford Education Alliance and UNC Greensboro.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD Wake Forest University

Best hiring question: What is your favorite thing to do on a Saturday?

Favorite book: "The Last Hill" by Tom Clavin

Favorite technology: Apple Air pods Pro

Favorite musicians: Steep Canyon Rangers



BRADLEY EVANS

Co-Managing Director
Ward and Smith
Greenville

Evans, 48, helps lead the comprehensive firm whose more than 100 lawyers help clients from the mountains to the coast. The Ahoskie native's practice covers civil litigation, particularly construction and agribusiness, in state and federal courts. He was inducted into the American Board of Trial Advocates last year.

Education: BA & JD Wake Forest University

Person I admire: U.S. Judge Malcolm Howard. He could relate to anyone.

Best hiring question: What would be the key characteristics of your own law firm.

Career accomplishment: I was honored to be selected a co-managing director position.

Never do again: Run a marathon

Favorite musicians: Grateful Dead



TODD EVESON

Managing Partner
Wyrick Robbins
Raleigh

Eveson was made managing partner in 2022, about a decade after Wyrick Robinson bought his former firm, Gaeta and Eveson. He also chairs the firm's executive committee. He has served as counsel in more than 75 M&A transactions in the financial services sector, numerous IPOs, and 20-plus de novo bank formations.

Education: AB Duke University; JD UNC Chapel Hill

What would a competitor say: I am tenacious and personable.

Best advice: Always trust your gut (my mentor and former law partner, Tony Gaeta.)

Never do again: Eat a scotch bonnet pepper in a single bite. The waiter said, "Don't eat the pepper, man."

Favorite technology: Spotify

Best change in life: Being a parent.



KIMBERLY GATLING

Partner, Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer
Fox Rothschild
Greensboro

Gatling, 49, is certified specialist in trademarks and leads her firm's efforts to promote a diverse, inclusive workforce and environment. She is a director at High Point-based upholstery fabric maker Culp and Truliant Federal Credit Union and chairs N.C. A&T State University's Board of Trustees.

Education: BS N.C. A&T State University; JD George Washington University

What competitors might say: I am tenacious and personable.

Best hiring question: What drives you to succeed?

Never do again: Be scared to take risks.

Favorite passion Power walking



STUART GOLDSTEIN

Managing Partner
Cadwalader
Charlotte

Goldstein's practice focuses on structured finance. 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 support of the organization's Western Carolina chapter.

Education: BS Cornell University; J.D. Cal-Berkeley



TOM GRIFFIN

Managing Partner
Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein
Charlotte

Griffin, 65, joined the 275-lawyer firm in 1989 after getting his feet wet in environmental matters as an attorney with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He relates to his clients' needs for help with fish and wildlife regulations, the EPA and various state environmental agencies. His approach has garnered awards such as Best Lawyers in America in environmental law.

Education: BA Wake Forest University; JD University of Virginia

Best advice: Lead with compassion, passion and calmness. (My dad.)

Career accomplishment: Arguing a pro bono Guardian ad Litem appeal in the N.C. Supreme Court.

Never do again: Ride the Apple Turnover at King's Dominion

Favorite musicians: Dave Matthews Band



JOHN HARDIN

Partner
Manning Fulton & Skinner
Raleigh

Hardin, 39, is often rated among the most effective lobbyists at the N.C. General Assembly. His clients include the Pharmaceutical Research Manufacturers Association, Insurance Federation of North Carolina and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD Campbell University

What a competitor would say: While we may disagree, he's honest and respectful.

Change about N.C.: Too many policymakers can't amicably disagree. I admire those who engage in articulate, respectful debate.

Person I admire: The late John McMillian, who hired me at Manning Fulton & Skinner

Favorite passion: Chasing my two children around the yard.

Favorite technology: Spotify



ROBERT HARRINGTON

Shareholder, Chair
Robinson Bradshaw
Charlotte

Harrington, 61, has represented clients in financial services, manufacturing, agribusiness, telecommunications, sports and entertainment, health care and education. A past president of the Mecklenburg County Bar, he was a member of the North Carolina Commission on the Administration of Law and Justice and served on the North Carolina Bar Association's board of governors.

Education: AB Duke University; JD Duke Law School

What would a competitor say: He's constantly well-prepared, dogged in advancing his clients' interests and dedicated to professionalism and civility.

Change about N.C.: Our rural and urban areas will rise or fall together, and the success depends on quality education pre-K through higer ed.

Person you admire: Martin Luther King Jr.

Favorite musician: Richard Smallwood



TERRY HUTCHENS

Managing Partner
Hutchens Law Firm
Fayetteville

Hutchens has represented large residential construction companies, providing clients with advice on how to acquire raw land, obtain zoning, negotiate required utilities and infrastructure from municipal and private providers, develop subdivisions, and build and sell homes. His firm employs about 250 people in 10 offices. Hutchens focuses on business law, often representing banks and mortgage firms. He's a member of the UNC Board of Governors.

Education: BS N.C. State University; MBA & JD Wake Forest University



SUSAN JACKSON

Managing Partner
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough
Charlotte

Recognized as a "Patent Star" for multiple consecutive years by Managing Intellectual Property Magazine, and by *North Carolina Lawyers Weekly* as the 2023 Lawyer of the Year, Jackson represents companies to protect and manage their most important assets and ideas. Her practice focuses on patents, trademarks, copyrights, and unfair competition. She has an undergraduate degree in chemical engineering.

Education: BS Clemson; JD Wake Forest University

What would a competitor say: I underestimated her.

Best advice: Things always work out for the best, but if you are not your best then you might have to worry (my dad.)

Favorite passion: Visiting my sons in college at UNC Chapel Hill and Georgetown



BETH TYNER JONES

Managing Partner Raleigh/RTP
Womble Bond Dickinson
Raleigh

As managing partner of the nearly 90-lawyer Raleigh/RTP office, Jones, 61, is among the highest-ranking attorneys in the Triangle. She previously worked as an attorney and benefits director at GlaxoSmithKline, the pharmaceutical giant. The firm has about 1,000 lawyers in 32 U.S. and U.K. offices.

Education: BA & JD Campbell University

Change about N.C.: More public transportation.

Best advice: Do what you love. Love what you do.

Favorite passion: Duke women's basketball, hiking, cycling and Habitat for Humanity.

Favorite book: "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver



BRIAN KAHN

Managing Partner
McGuireWoods
Charlotte

Kahn, 49, is a commercial litigator whose focus includes business, financial and real-estate disputes, and class actions. He's a member of the firm's innovation office, which seeks novel ways to serve clients.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD University of Virginia.

Favorite passion: Writing and co-producing "Charlotte Squawks."

Favorite book "Game Changer" by Art Chansky

Favorite technology: Chat GPT

Best life change: Working out daily with J-Force at Levine Jewish Community Center.



CHRISTOPHER KIGER

President
N.C. Association of Defense Attorneys
Raleigh

Kiger is a partner at the Smith Anderson law firm who focus on product liability, environmental and toxic tort, and business disputes in matters often involving catastrophic injury, wrongful death, or property damage. He has represented corporate clients in lawsuits, arbitrations, class actions, and multi-district litigation in a broad array of areas. The association has nearly 1,000 lawyers and paralegals as members.

Education: BA Elon University; JD UNC Chapel Hill



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. He is a director of the NC TECH trade association.

Education: BA, MBA & JD UNC Chapel Hill

Favorite passion: I love going home and spending time with my wife, Ginny.

Career accomplishment: Being asked to lead Smith Anderson.



PAUL LAWRENCE

Managing Partner
Hedrick Gardner Kincheloe & Garofalo
Charlotte

Lawrence leads a firm with five Carolinas offices. He's 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, he is a former assistant district attorney in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. He joined Hedrick Gardner in 1994.

Education: BS University of Scranton; JD Villanova University



VALECIA MCDOWELL

Partner
Moore & Van Allen
Charlotte

McDowell was named to *Forbes'* Top 200 lawyers in America in March. She serves as co-director of the firm's white collar, regulatory defense and investigations practice. 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.

Education: BA & JD Duke University



THOMAS MITCHELL

Chair, 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.

Education: BA University of Illinois; JD Washington & Lee University



REID PHILLIPS

Managing Partner
Brooks Pierce
Greensboro

Phillips, 71, 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's been at the firm since 1977.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD University of Texas.

What a competitor would say: Prepared, ready and pleasant.

Favorite passion: Grandchildren

Favorite book "Michelangelo - God's Architect" by William E. Wallace

Best life change: Following the advice of an excellent nutritionist.



ALLEN ROBERTSON

Managing Partner
Robinson Bradshaw
Charlotte

Robertson has led the firm since 2015 while maintaining an active practice. He is one of only two North Carolina lawyers to have served as president of the National Association of Bond Lawyers. Over the last 25 years, he has become particularly known for his work with nonprofit health care providers, including leading health systems, community hospitals and senior living facilities, in tax-exempt and taxable financings and strategic transactions. The firm has more than 165 lawyers.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD Harvard University

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PERRY SAFRAN

on being named to
Business North Carolina's
POWER LIST 2024



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HUTCHENS Law Firm
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partner, H. Terry Hutchens,
for being included in the
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FORD ROBERTSON

Partner
Kilpatrick
Raleigh

Robertson, 53, focuses on commercial real estate, development, leasing and joint venture formation. Helped bring the United States Golf Association's second headquarters to Pineville, expected to generate $800-plus million for N.C.

Education: BA University of Virginia JD Wake Forest University

Best advice: You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him (Malcolm Forbes.)

Person I admire: My mentor Gary Joyner

Never do again: Take a red-eye flight

Favorite book: "The Boys in the Boat" by Daniel James Brown



PERRY SAFRAN

Attorney
Safran Law Offices
Raleigh

For more than four decades, Safran, 74, has been focused on construction law at his firm, serving local and national clients. A member of N.C. State University board of trustees, he also has been a Raleigh City Council member, adjunct professor at Campbell School of Law and N.C. State University, and vice chair of the N.C. Turnpike Authority.

Education: BA N.C. State University; MBA Wake Forest University; JD Campbell University

Best advice: Everyone deserves respect.

Favorite passion: Grandchildren

Favorite book: "How BIG Things Get Done" by Bent Flyvbjerg and Dan Gardner

Best life change: Paying attention to my exercise.



JASON SOLOMON

Partner in Charge
Alston & Bird
Charlotte

Solomon practiced corporate law in Delaware before moving to Charlotte, where he leads an Atlanta-based firm with about 870 lawyers, ranking 59th in the National Law Journal's rankings. He represented the trustee and agents in a $1.3 billion debt offering for a telecommunications giant. He regularly works on financial transactions and asset classes, including mortgage-backed and asset-backed securitizations, high-yield debt transactions, project finance matters, and lending facilities.

Education: BS & BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD Washington & Lee University



MARSHALL WALL

Managing Partner
Cranfill Sumner LLP
Raleigh

Wall has led the firm, which has offices in Raleigh, Charlotte and Wilmington and more than 75 lawyers, since 2016. A member of Campbell University law school's board of visitors, he handles various matters from employment law to governance issues — for clients. He's part of the first class of N.C. lawyers to be certified in issues of privacy and data security.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD Campbell University

Favorite passion: Running with F3

Favorite book "Empire of Pain" by Patrick Radden Keefe.

Best musicians: The Connells



MONA LISA WALLACE

Founding Partner
Wallace & Graham
Salisbury

The Rowan County native 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. In high school, she was elected as the first female student body president at North Rowan High School.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD Wake Forest University



DEVON WILLIAMS

Co-Managing Director
Ward and Smith
Raleigh

Williams, 37, helps lead this firm that is more than a century old with six locations. Her practice focuses on labor and employment issues, while she also helps clients involved in agribusiness, hemp and CBD navigate changing laws. including state and federal drug-testing requirements.

Education: BS University of Maryland; JD Campbell University

What a competitor would say: A fierce advocate, reputable, and reasonable, while tough to be across the table from.

Favorite passion: Watching my two little girls grow up.

Won't do again: Skydiving



KEVIN WILLIAMS

President
Bell Davis Pitt
Winston Salem

Williams was born in Hawaii but grew up in Elizabeth City. He 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 at offices in Charlotte and Winston-Salem.

Education: BS & BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD Wake Forest University

Business North Carolina's 2024 Power List

TOM MITCHELL
Managing Partner
Chair of the Management Committee

Nationally recognized financial services lawyer representing large institutions in syndicated credit facilities focused on acquisition and leveraged finance, Managing Partner as firm has consistently grown to over 400 legal professionals across 90 areas of focus, ranked in *Chambers USA, Legal 500,* and *Best Lawyers in America*, and included in national and regional publications such as *Law360, Charlotte Business Journal,* and *Law.com Daily Report*



VALECIA McDOWELL
Practice Co-head, White Collar, Regulatory Defense & Investigations
Practice Head, Civil Rights & Racial Equity Assessments

National thought leader in the areas of governmental and internal investigations, conduct risk management, and civil rights and racial equity assessments, ranked in *Chambers USA* and *Best Lawyers*, included in national publications such as *Bloomberg, American Banker, Corporate Compliance Insights,* and *Inside Counsel,* and serves on *Law360*'s Compliance Editorial Board



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LIFE SCIENCES

2024 POWER LIST

Gray Armstrong
Anthony Atala
Jack Bailey
Doug Burns
Bert Bruggeman
Glenn Eisenberg
Fred Eshelman
Paul Evans
Paul Garofolo
Roger Jeffs
Shayla Nunn Jones
Jamie Macdonald
Laura Niklason
Kevin O'Brien
Gustavo Pesquin
Meg Powell
Bob Rhatigan
Martine Rothblatt
Ravish Sachar
R. Jude Samulski
Daniel Vondielingen
Michael Weiss

ANTHONY ATALA

Director
Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine
Winston-Salem



Anthony Atala doesn't just practice medicine, he creates wins with his research. He leads the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine where about 470 physicians, scientists and biomedical researchers work to create tissues and organs and get them into patients.

He's edited 25 books, published 800 journal articles and received more than 250 patents. Fifteen applications of technologies developed in Atala's laboratory have been used clinically.

Scientific American named him one of the most influential people in global biotech. *Time* has cited his work twice among the Top 10 medical breakthroughs of the year, and once as one of five discoveries that will change the future of organ transplants.

Born in Peru, Atala grew up near Miami. He earned a medical degree at the University of Louisville and worked at Boston Children's Hospital before moving to Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in 2004.

Atala was elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Sciences, to the National Academy of Inventors and to the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering. He is a recipient of the U.S. Congress funded Christopher Columbus Foundation Award, bestowed on a living American who is currently working on a discovery that will significantly affect society.

He was named by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of 14 Pioneers of Medical Progress in the 21st Century and by *Nature Biotechnology* as one of the top 10 translational researchers in the world.

Education: BS University of Miami; MD University of Louisville School of Medicine; Residency University of Louisville, Surgery/Urology; Fellowship Children's Hospital Harvard Medical, Urology



GRAY ARMSTRONG

Senior Director of operations

Pfizer

Sanford

Armstrong oversees one of the largest biotechnology hubs in the U.S. New York-based Pfizer has multi-product manufacturing capabilities at the 230-acre site and operates an 800,000-square-foot building. The site is focused on vaccines intermediates, drug substance and gene therapy drugs. About 1,400 of Pfizer's 4,500 employees in North Carolina work in Sanford. Armstrong has been with Pfizer for 18 years and in his current role since 2018. Since 2022, he has overseen initiatives to improve product supply, quality and reliability.

Education: MPA N.C. State University



JACK BAILEY

CEO

G1 Therapeutics

Raleigh

Bailey had almost 30 years of commercial pharmaceutical experience when he became CEO of G1 Therapeutics in 2021. Experience decades ago at Eli Lilly as an area director in sub-Saharan Africa exposed him to the AIDS crisis and still shapes how he approaches his work. G1 is a clinical stage company involved in small molecule therapies that have the potential to improve the lives of cancer patients. In 2023, the company shelved its trial of a colon cancer drug. Developing drugs to help patients with bladder cancer and breast cancer. It's in the trial phase of developing.

Education: BS Hobart College; MBA UNC Chapel Hill



DOUG BURNS

Site Head

Grifols Therapeutics

Clayton

Burns has been in Johnston County with Grifols, and predecessor Talecris Biotherapeutics, since 2000. In his current role since 2019, he presides over expansion of the company's 467-acre site, which has about 2,000 employees and operates 24 hours a day. The Barcelona-based company makes medicines derived from human plasma. Grifols has invested $1 billion into the 50-year-old plasma-medicine manufacturing campus in Clayton, including a 2022 expansion that increased the site's overall fractionation capacity to 12 million liters a year, more than half of the company's global total. The company has 13,000 U.S. employees in 40 states.

Education: BS Purdue; PhD University of Delaware



BERT BRUGGEMAN

CEO

Biomason

Durham

The Belgium native oversaw Tesla's flagship production plant in Fremont, California, for more than a year before taking his current role in 2020. He's also held executive roles at public companies involved in semiconductors and consulted for Apple, Kindred and Holo. Biomason raised $65 million from investors in February 2022 after raising $10 million in its first decade. Biomason is using microorganisms to grow biocement commercially. The process has the potential to change the industry's environmental impact, which now accounts for about 8% of carbon emissions. He's also the board chair of The Ocean Cleanup, a Netherlands-based company using technologies to rid the oceans and rivers of plastic.

Education: BS & MS KU Leuven



GLENN EISENBERG

CFO

Labcorp

Burlington

Eisenberg came to LabCorp in his current role in 2014 after more than a dozen years with Timken, a Canton, Ohio-based industrial manufacturer. LabCorp has more than 67,000 employees and offers laboratory services in more than 100-plus countries. It performed more than 600 million patient tests for patients last year, and worked on more than 84% of the new drugs approved by the FDA. LabCorp revenue was $12.6 billion in 2023, a 2.5% increase from a year earlier.

Education: BA Tulane University; MBA Georgia State University



FRED ESHELMAN

Founder

Eshelman Ventures

Wilmington

Eshelman is among N.C.'s best-known entrepreneurs and philanthropists. His investment company focuses on healthcare. He started the contract research organization Pharmaceutical Product Development and drug developer Furiex Pharmaceuticals, which Forest Laboratories bought for $1.4 billion in 2014. The UNC Chapel Hill pharmacy school bears his name. He helped launch the Eshelman Institute for Innovation in 2014 with a $100 million donation. Days after the 2020 election, Eshelman gave $2.5 million to Texas nonprofit True the Vote, hoping it would expose widespread voter fraud. Eshelman filed a lawsuit to get his money back, but Texas courts ruled against him. He owns a 22,000-acre ranch in Elk Mountain, Wyoming.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill; PhD University of Cincinnati



PAUL EVANS

CEO
Velocity Clinical Research
Durham

The U.K. native moved to the U.S. to take his current position in 2018. Velocity works with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies to research drugs, devices and treatments. It has 80 sites and more than 220 investigators. Velocity has been recognized as among the fastest-growing companies in the state.

Education: BS Dalhousie University; PhD University of London

Best advice: Advice I ignored was that I was too old to move to the U.S. in my late 50s to head up Velocity. It has become my greatest career achievement.

Never do again: Get involved in Phase 1 clinical trials.

Favorite book: "We Don't Know Ourselves: A Personal History of Modern Ireland" by Fintan O'Toole



PAUL GAROFOLO

CEO, Co-Founder
Locus Biosciences
Morrisville

Before co-founding Locus in 2015, Garofolo was chief technology officer and global head at Patheon Pharmaceuticals. The clinical-stage biotechnology company develops treatment for bacterial diseases. It has received $48.9 million from a U.S. Health and Human Services program, with a potential to receive $85 million, to continue development of a urinary tract infection treatment. It has more than $1 billion in partnerships. He was a visiting professor at N.C. State University's Poole College of Management.

Education: BS University of Arizona



ROGER JEFFS

CEO
Liquidia
Chapel Hill

He took his current position with drug developer startup Liquidia in January 2022, after co-founding gene therapy developer Kriya Therapeutics in 2019 and retiring in 2016 as co-CEO of United Therapeutics. He had worked at the latter company for 18 years. Liquidia and United Therapeutics have been entangled in patent litigation, with recent court rulings mostly going in Liquidia's favor. It had revenue of $17.5 million in 2023, while reporting a net loss of $78.5 million. In January, Liquidia closed two transactions expected to bring in $100 million of capital. Last May, Jeffs and his wife, Lisa, bought a Wrightsville Beach home for $10 million.

Education: BA Duke University; PhD UNC Chapel Hill



SHAYLAH NUNN JONES

Director, Public Affairs & Communications
Novo Nordisk
Durham

Jones has been with Novo Nordisk for almost 15 years and in her current role since 2018. The Denmark-based company makes drugs for diabetics and obesity medication at its three sites in Clayton and Durham. Last year, Novo Nordisk gave Durham Tech $6 million to advance its biotechnology program. Jones, who is on the N.C. Biotechnology Center's board, is a past senior policy analyst for the Virginia governor.

Education: BA Spelman College; JD University of Georgia

Change about N.C.: Public education for all children starting at age 3.

Best advice: Have the courage to try something new, knowing you could fail. Have the wisdom to learn from your failure and try again.



JAMIE MACDONALD

CEO
Parexel
Durham

Macdonald will retire May 15, although he will remain on Parexel's board until 2025. His successor is Chief Operating and Growth Officer Peyton Howell. The Scotland native took the top spot at the Boston-based clinical research organization in 2018, one year after the company was taken private by Pamplona Capital. EQT and Goldman Sachs Asset Management acquired the company in 2021 for $8.5 billion. Before leading Parexel, he helmed INC Research, now Syneos Health, from 2013 to 2016. In 2023, Parexel was named "Best Contract Research Organization" at the Scrip Awards. The company has 21,000 global employees.

Education: BA Heriot-Watt University



LAURA NIKLASON

CEO

Humacyte

Durham

Niklason shares a dream with millions of people suffering from life-threatening conditions. What if there were implantable bioengineered human tissues that could heal the body? Her creation, Humacyte, aims to do just that. The company's option for urgent arterial repair received priority review from the FDA.

Education: BA University of Illinois; PhD University of Chicago; MD University of Michigan

Best advice: Pick a really hard and important problem, spend 10-15 years and solve it (Robert Bartlett.)

Favorite technology: Waze

Best hiring question: What is your brain particularly good at — details, patterns, art, etc.? What do you wish your brain did better?

Best life change: Marrying my husband.



KEVIN O'BRIEN

President of North America

Merz Therapeutics

Raleigh

Since joining Merz in 2017, O'Brien has overseen the FDA approval of a treatment for excessive drooling and blepharospasm, two conditions associated with neurological conditions, including Parkinson's, ALS and cerebral palsy. He has held his role since 2020, and has more than 30 years experience leading teams and product launches in neurosciences, medical aesthetics, plastic surgery and dermatology.

Education: BA Saint Mary's College of California; JD Western State College

Favorite passion: Skiing out west with my family.

Favorite books: "The Lincoln Highway" by Amor Towles; "Shoe Dog: A Memoir by the Creator of Nike" by Phil Knight

Favorite technology: Peloton app for meditation to unwind.



GUSTAVO PESQUIN

CEO

AskBio

Durham

Pesquin joined AskBio, a subsidiary of Germany's Bayer, in his current role in March 2023. The gene therapy company seeks cures to genetic diseases. AskBio has more than 900 employees, holds 800-plus patents and operates in five countries. It works on getting FDA approval for drugs to treat serious conditions including congestive heart failure, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease and others. Pesquin came to AskBio from Amneal, where he was chief commercial officer. He previously worked for global pharma company Sanofi as North America head of general medicines and global head of its diabetes and cardiovascular franchise.

Education: BS Universidad Nacional de Cuyo; MBA Northwestern



MEG POWELL

CEO

501 Ventures

Chapel Hill

After stints at McKinsey & Co. and GSK, Powell founded 501 Ventures, combining development and commercialization expertise. She's a director of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, the N.C. School of Science and Math and Emergo Therapeutics.

Education: PharMD UNC Chapel Hill; MBA Stanford University

Best advice: There are three types of people in the world — people that are running the business, people running for office and people that are running for cover. Be sure to be one running the business (Deirdre Connelly.)

Never do again: Run a marathon.

Favorite book: "Never Enough — When Achievement Culture Becomes Toxic and What We Can Do About It" by Jenifer Breheny Wallace

Favorite musician: James Taylor

Best hiring question: How does corporate culture impact your ability to be successful?

Best life change: Having children



BOB RHATIGAN

CEO

Merz Aesthetics

Raleigh

Before coming to Merz in 2017, Rhatigan spent more than 17 years with Allergan, where he led the commercial launch of Botox. He has been CEO since 2020. Merz Aesthetics uses celebrities from supermodel Christie Brinkley to singer Demi Lovato to sell its skin care products. He is a sought-after speaker for the aesthetics industry. He and his wife, Judy, raise rescued Labrador retrievers.

Education: BA University of California, Santa Barbara

Best advice: Focus on doing the right thing (one of my first managers.)

Favorite book: "The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill" by Erik Larson

Career accomplishment: Leading the reorganization of Merz Aesthetics into a stand-alone business in 2020.



MARTINE ROTHBLATT

CEO
United Therapeutics
Durham

Before starting the pharma company in 1996, Rothblatt was co-founder of SiriusXM radio in 1990, leaving shortly after its IPO three years later. A lawyer by training, she turned to biotech, teaching herself high-level biology, so she could help her daughter, who suffered from pulmonary hypertension. The company now sells five FDA-approved drugs to help people with the disease. The company surpassed $1 billion in assets in 2009, and $1 billion in annual revenues in 2013. The company has a market capitalization of $11 billion. The licensed pilot is the author of eight books and executive producer of two films.

Education: BA, MBA & JD UCLA



RAVISH SACHAR

CEO, Founder
Contego Medical
Raleigh

The practicing interventional cardiologist at UNC-Rex Healthcare and physician-in-chief at North Carolina Heart and Vascular Hospital founded Contego in 2005. He is an internationally recognized expert in carotid artery disease and peripheral vascular disease. He has authored several books, book chapters and two text books, in addition to holding several issued and pending patents. More than 3,000 patients have been treated with Contego products. The company develops ways to transform complex medical cases into simplified procedures. Last year, the company raised $23 million after raising $41 million since 2019.

Education: BA Hampshire College; MDs, University of Southern California and Columbia University



R. JUDE SAMULSKI

Co-Founder, Chief Scientific Officer
AskBio
Durham

Samulski has worked in gene therapy for more than 40 years. He owns more than 200 patents related to virus-therapy research. He directed UNC Chapel Hill's Gene Therapy Center for 25 years. His work was instrumental in creating two bio startups: Bamboo Therapeutic, which focused on treatments for neuromuscular diseases, and Pfizer bought for $200 million; and AskBio, which Bayer acquired for $4 billion. Pope Francis invited Samulski to the Vatican for his work in the treatment of Canavan disease, which involves brain degeneration.

Education: BS Clemson University; PhD University of Florida



DAN VONDIELINGEN

Site Head
Eli Lilly
Durham

Since 2020, Lilly has committed $4 billion to manufacturing facilities in North Carolina, including $1.7 billion for expansion in Research Triangle Park. The company is also spending about $1 billion in Concord for a manufacturing site. Combined, Lilly expects to add 1,000 jobs in the Tar Heel state in the next few years. VonDielingen has been with Lilly for more than 23 years. He was site head in Indianapolis before coming to Durham in 2020. He's a mentor to former NFL players Terrence and Torry Holt, whose construction company is working on the Durham expansion.

Education: BS Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology; MBA Clemson University



MICHAEL WEISS

CEO
TG Therapeutics
Morrisville

Weiss founded TG in 2011 after working as CEO for two other biotech companies and working as a lawyer and venture capital investor. TG moved its headquarters to Morrisville from New York in the past year. Its drugs treating forms of multiple sclerosis are expected to post sales of at least $220 million this year, versus $89 million last year. The company had net income of $12.7 million last year, compared with a loss of $198 million in 2022. Its market cap was $2.2 billion in early April.

Education: BS State University of New York at Albany; JD Columbia University



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GEOFF FOSTER

CEO, Founder
Core Technology and Molding Corp.
Greensboro



Foster keeps pushing the right buttons at his company, which does injection molding for two of today's hottest industries — automotive and biopharmaceuticals. He also is inspiring the next generation about careers in STEM — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — as one of three N.C. A&T State University alumni behind Molding Kids for Success.

It gives participants a firsthand look at Core Technology during its first Manufacturing Month, which was held last fall.

Foster held engineering positions with companies like AMP and Tyco Electronics. He was awarded U.S. Patent 6,024,591 for a sealed electric connector for Ford, and the automaker has used it more than 31 million times in Fords, Lincolns, Jaguars and Mercury models.

After earning his MBA, he went to work for Corning Life Sciences as an operations manager in the tissue culture department, where he oversaw an $80 million product line and 125 employees. After 17 years in corporate America, Foster founded Core Technology Molding. His wife of 32 years, Tonya, is a co-owner and vice president. The company has customers in 150 countries, serving aerospace, appliance, automotive, medical and lawn equipment businesses.

The Greensboro Chamber named Foster its Minority Small Business Man of the Year in 2015. He has been an adjunct professor at N.C. A & T for about 12 years.

Education: BS & MS N.C. A&T State University; MBA Wake Forest University

First job: Six Flags Great Adventure in New Jersey

What a competitor would say: Technically strong and is business savvy.

Best advice: You can be whatever you want to be and pursue your dreams (my mother, Lilly Foster.)

Favorite passion: My family

Person I admire: N.C. A&T Chancellor Harold Martin Sr., who looks out for students, the university, city and state.

Never do again: Letting a fear of failure stop me from pursuing my dreams. I did that for five years after graduating from Wake Forest University.



LEAH ASHBURN

CEO

Highland Brewing

Asheville

Ashburn holds the taps at Highland Brewing, the popular craft brewer her father, retired engineer Oscar Wong, started with retrofitted dairy equipment 30 years ago. Today it's capable of producing 40,000 barrels annually, including wildly popular seasonal offerings. Her marketing instincts have made the brewery a destination with a host of features, including a rooftop bar, event center and volleyball courts.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill

What a competitor would say: Involved in the community, speaks when she has something to say.

Favorite passion: Volleyball for competition and friendship, yoga for strength and mobility, walks in the woods for peaceful connection.

Favorite musician: Tyler Ramsey

Best hiring question: Is it more important to be right or effective?

Best life change: Marrying Brock Ashburn



LYNN BAMFORD

CEO

Curtiss-Wright

Davidson

The 33-year company veteran became CEO in 2021. During her tenure, she has led the company through nine acquisitions. The maker of high-tech components for aerospace, defense and power generation uses had more than 8,600 employees in more than 20 countries at the end of 2023. The company reported $2.8 billion in sales last year, up 11%, adjusted operating income of $494 million, up 11%. It had new orders of $3.1 billion, up 5%, an indicator of a strong 2024. More than half of the company's sales go to governments. Bamford joined Curtiss-Wright with its acquisition of Dy4, a provider of embedded computing solutions, where she held several engineering and leadership positions. She is the first female CEO in the company's 95-year history.

Education: BS Penn State; MS George Mason



SCOTT BAXTER

CEO

Kontoor

Greensboro

Baxter was named CEO in August 2019. He had leadership roles with VF for 12 years, overseeing brands such as The North Face and Vans. He serves on the board of Lowe's and on the executive committee of the Piedmont Triad Partnership board. Kontoor, the maker of Wrangler and Lee brands, had $2.61 billion in revenue last year, a 1% decrease from the year before. Kontoor has been active in signing college athletes to name, image and likeness contracts. In 2024, the company launched "Project Jeanius," a three-year plan to increase gross profit by up to $100 million.

Education: BS University of Toledo; MBA Northwestern



MICHAEL BELL

Senior Vice President

Corning Optical Communications

Charlotte

Bell sees access to broadband internet as a human right in this digital age, and necessary for an equal-opportunity society. Corning has invested $500 million in fiber and cable manufacturing since 2020, including $150 million to open a manufacturing site in Hickory last year that is expected to create 200 jobs. Corning and other companies benefit from the U.S. government's plan to spend $42 billion in trying to make internet access universal by 2030. Bell joined Corning in 1991 as an engineer at its cable plant in Hickory and assumed his current role in 2020. He oversees Corning's optical communications, optical fiber and cable, connectivity and commercial operations.

Education: BS West Virginia University; MBA UNC Chapel Hill



ALEX BERNHARDT JR.

CEO

Bernhardt Furniture

Hickory

Bernhardt is the fourth-generation leader of one of the largest, family-owned furniture companies in the world. It began in 1889 in Lenoir, making Bernhardt the oldest continually operated furniture company in the U.S. Bernhardt now has about 1,500 employees, eight manufacturing sites in western North Carolina and sells its high-end products in more than 50 countries. Bernhardt has been with the company more than 30 years and CEO since 2009. He has served on the boards of many Caldwell and Catawba County nonprofits, including Caldwell Memorial Hospital, the Caldwell House Rehabilitation Center and Catawba County Community Foundation.

Education: BA & MBA UNC Chapel Hill



STEPHEN BRATSPIES

CEO

Hanes Brands

Winston-Salem

Bratspies joined HanesBrands as CEO in August 2020 after 15 years with Walmart. Hanes employs 51,000 workers in 52 countries, including more than 2,000 in Forsyth County. It reported revenue of $5.6 billion in 2023, down 9.6% from the previous year. It had a net loss of $17.7 million in 2023. An activist investor prompted the company to add three board members in November. It sold its money-losing U.S. Sheer Hosiery business last year and announced it was considering the sale of its Champion brand.

Education: BA Franklin & Marshall College; MBA The Wharton School



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 before moving to Fairystone. He started 45-plus year career in textiles after growing bored with a police officer's job in a small resort town in Massachusetts after college. Fairystone is still recovering from economic slowdowns caused by the pandemic, and has 115 employees. The company makes specialty fabrics for automotive interiors, as well as medical and defense industries. It's a founding member of AlamanceCAP, an apprenticeship program for high school students.

Education: BA Florida Southern College



WES CARTER
President
Atlantic Packaging
Charleston SC

Carter's grandfather founded the company. It has grown to one of the biggest privately held U.S. packaging firms. The company scores high industry marks on its environmental record. Carter was elected this year to the Conservation Alliance's board of directors.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill

What a competitor would say: That guy has passion.

Favorite passion: Being in nature with my family.

Favorite musician: The Grateful Dead

Career accomplishment: The success of "A New Earth Project," a sustainability initiative Carter launched in 2020 to rid waterways of pollution from plastics.

Best life change: Walking a spiritual path of healing.



BOBBY FRYE
CEO
Mt. Olive Pickle
Mount Olive

Mt. Olive Pickle is the largest privately held pickle company in the nation with annual sales topping $220 million. Mt. Olive sells more than 230 million jars of pickles, peppers and relishes each year. The company employs more than 1,200 people in its North Carolina operations. Frye started with the family company in 1980 and assumed his current position in 2015. In 2022, he announced a $35 million manufacturing and warehousing expansion in Goldsboro that would occupy 300,000-square-feet and result in 170 jobs. The company became the official pickle and pickle juice provider to the Carolina Panthers last year.

Education: BA Lenoir-Rhyne College



JONATHAN FUSSELL
Vice President
Duplin Winery
Jacksonville

Brothers Dave and Jonathan grew up watching their father, uncle and grandfather make wine with wooden, homemade grape presses. Their new presses can handle 5,000 tons of grapes per year. The stainless steel containers at Duplin Winery can hold 1.8 million gallons of wine. They can produce 40,000 bottles of wine per day. The winery also has more than 100,000 visitors a year, making it an eastern North Carolina tourist stop. Their original location remains in Rose Hill, although they have opened up a new location in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. They opened another store in Panama City, Florida, last year.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill



MATT GREGORY
Senior Vice President & Chief Customer Officer
Clorox
Raleigh

Gregory oversees three locations in North Carolina, where about 500 employees do everything from technology to manufacturing. While he has been responsible for global sales since 2021, when he joined the Clorox executive committee, he started with the company in 2004. He previously held executive positions at Kingsford, Walmart and Burt's Bees, which Clorox purchased in 2007. He is on the board of directors for Inter-Faith Food Shuttle in Raleigh and Food Industry Association.

Education: BA University of Tennessee



HOOPER HARDISON

CEO

Charlotte Pipe and Foundry

Charlotte

Hardison joined Charlotte Pipe in 1988 and was named CEO of the 123-year old privately-held company in January 2022. Charlotte Pipe and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Neenah Enterprises, employ 2,700 people. The company manufactures cast iron and plastic pipe and fittings and municipal castings in 10 manufacturing facilities across the U.S. In September 2023, Charlotte Pipe began operations in a newly constructed foundry in Oakboro, North Carolina. In 2024, it started building an $80 million plastic pipe plant in Kansas. The company, owned by the Dowd family, sells its products in all 50 states and several foreign countries.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; MBA University of Virginia



FRANK HARRISON III

CEO

Coca-Cola Consolidated

Charlotte

Harrison's great-grandfather introduced Coca-Cola to the Carolinas in 1902, and it's now the nation's largest Coca-Cola bottler. He has led the company's 17,000 employees since 1996. He ran routes and operated bottling lines when he joined the business in 1977. It formed partnerships this year with the Baltimore Orioles and the Charlotte Knights to be the official beverage sponsor. He and his late son, James Franklin Harrison IV, co-founded the nonprofit ministry Open Eyes in 2008. He is on the board of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and a YMCA of Greater Charlotte trustee. The company reported $834 million in operating profit for last year on net sales of $6.6 billion, a 7% increase from the previous year.

Education: BS NC Chapel Hill; MBA Duke University



STAN JEWELL

CEO

Renfro Brands

Winston-Salem

Jewell oversees a 2,000-employee, century-old sock manufacturer with brands including Polo and Fruit of the Loom. He has held his current position since 2017 after working 10 years at VF Corp. Renfro invested $2 million in equipment and infrastructure at its Mount Airy location last year.

Education: BS MS Georgia Tech

Best advice: Ask for the toughest tasks, raise your hand for the gnarliest assignments.

Best hiring question: If you had to give a 15-minute speech about something not work-related, what would be the subject?

Best life change: Slow down. Focus and give more time to fewer things. This has improved the quality of my work, relationships and overall output.



VIMAL KAPUR

CEO

Honeywell

Charlotte

Kapur has been with Honeywell for more than 35 years and assumed his current role in June 2023. He will become board chair in June. He previously held leadership positions over business units focused on energy transition and industrial and building automation. Honeywell had sales of $36.7 billion last year, up 3% from the previous year. The company has 95,000 employees across 79 countries, including 33,000 who work in the U.S. A native of India, Kapur has served on the U.S.-India CEO Forum since November 2023.

Education: BS Thapar Institute of Engineering



EUGENE LOWE III

CEO

SPX

Charlotte

Lowe has been with SPX since 2008 and its CEO since 2015. SPX reported adjusted $1.63 billion in revenue in 2023, compared to $1.5 billion the year before. In 2024, SPX acquired Canadian company Ingenia Technologies for $300 million. That air handling systems business is expected to have approximately $100 million in annual revenue. SPX Technologies has more than 3,300 employees in 15 countries. The market cap is about $4.9 billion. Before joining SPX, Lowe held positions with Milliken & Company, Bain & Company and Lazard Technology Partners.

Education: BS Virginia Tech; MBA Dartmouth



GREGG LOWE
CEO
Wolfspeed
Durham

In seven years as CEO, Lowe has shifted Wolfspeed's focus from lighting projects to semiconductors. The company is building $9 billion worth of plants in Germany, New York and Chatham County. In Chatham County, it expects to employ 1,800 people. Wolfspeed currently produces more than 60% of the world's silicon carbide materials for electric vehicles and other energy uses. It expects $20 billion in annual revenue by 2030. The company reported it had 4,802 full- and part-time employees as of June 2023. He has been a Rock & Roll Hall of Fame board member in Cleveland since 2010 and is current board chair.

Education: BS Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology; MS Stanford University



ROBERT LUDDY
President
CaptiveAire
Raleigh

The kitchen-equipment company that Luddy founded in 1976 with $1,300 now includes operations in eight states, 90 sales offices and more than 1,400 employees. Over the past 20 years, Luddy also has founded three private school systems in North Carolina that educate thousands of students.

Education: BS LaSalle University

What a competitor would say: Innovator

Change about N.C.: Privatize K-12 education.

Never do again: Over extend my time commitments.

Favorite book: "Kick Up Some Dust" by Bernie Marcus.

Career accomplishment: Creating the modern commercial kitchen ventilation standards.

Favorite technology: IPad

Best life change: Moving to Raleigh in 1974.





KENT MASTERS

CEO

Albemarle

Charlotte

Albemarle had to deal with sharp declines in lithium prices a slowing transition to electric vehicles in 2023. The mining company saw its stock price tumble from a high of $247 to less than $107. The company reported it would lay off about 4% of its 7,000-plus global workforce. Closer to home, Albermarle deferred on a technology park planned in north Charlotte and a $1.3 billion lithium hydroxide processing plant near Richburg, South Carolina. The company says it will focus on re-opening a long-closed lithium mine in Kings Mountain. The Department of Defense gave the company a $90 million grant for that project.

Education: BS Georgia Tech; MBA New York University



BOB MCCREARY

Chair

McCreary Modern Furniture

Newton

McCreary says his life changed when he attended Wake Forest University on a football scholarship in 1957. The Caldwell County native would play in 1961 for the Dallas Cowboys. McCreary and his wife, Michele, started McCreary Modern with 30 employees in one mill building. The company now has about 975 employees at six production sites spread across Caldwell and Catawba counties. A secret to its success, company officials say, is that McCreary gave employees a stake in the company. Wake Forest football fans know him for the approximate $55 million he has given in support of the Deacon football program over the years. The team's locker room facilities are named after McCreary. He was inducted into the Wake Forest Sports Hall of Fame in 2013.

Education: BS Wake Forest University



BLAKE MILLINOR

CEO

Valdese Weavers

Valdese

Valdese Weavers traces its roots back to the Swiss Embroidery Co. founded in 1915 by Italian immigrants called the Waldensians who settled in Valdese near the turn of the century. The company rolled out an employee stock ownership program in 1997, and it became 100% employee owned in 2016. Valdese manufactures decorative fabric for residential home furnishings and contract markets. It has four sites in Burke County and employs about 900 workers. Millinor has worked for Valdese Weavers for more than 22 years and has been president since 2021.

Education: BS The Citadel



PHILLIP MINTZ

Executive Director

N.C. State University Industry Expansion Solutions

Hillsborough

N.C. State's Industry Expansion Solutions serves as an extension service for manufacturing, offering technical and training support for manufacturer's big and small. Mintz and his team help new manufacturing businesses coming to North Carolina transition to operating here.

Education: BS N.C. State University; MS N.C. A & T State University

Best advice: A key to success was to always embrace your work, learning as much as you can about it. He also said you should always be willing to teach (supervisor early in my career, Ken Carter.)

Career accomplishment: Being named a N.C. State Industrial and Systems Engineering Distinguished Alumni Award Winner in 2022.

Best life change: Returning from out-of-state.



THOMAS NELSON

CEO

National Gypsum

Charlotte

A Chicago native, Nelson has been in his current role since 1999. From 1995 to 1999, he was vice chair of the building product manufacturer that his late father-in-law bought for $1.2 billion in 1995. Nelson is active in city life, serving on the boards of Advocate Health, Bechtel, Milliken and Yum! Brands. He previously served a six-year term on the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, Virginia, board. He worked for Morgan Stanley & Co. in the venture capital industry before joining National Gypsum.

Education: BS Stanford University; MBA Harvard University

Change about N.C.: Increase third grade reading proficiency, an educational milestone that helps determine how a student will do in school.



WARD NYE

CEO
Martin Marietta
Raleigh

Nye and Martin celebrated a record year in 2023, with gross revenue topping $6.16 billion and major acquisitions adding new resources to the fold. Martin acquired Blue Water Industries, a major quarry operator in the southeast, as well as Colorado-based Albert Frei & Sons. Nye has led the 9,000-employee aggregates and construction supplies company since 2010, adding the chair's title in 2014.

Education: BA Duke; JD Wake Forest University

What a competitor would say: Works hard, disciplined.

Best advice: Avoid the irretrievable decision (former law partner.)

Career accomplishment: Helping Martin Marietta attain world-class levels of safety performance.

Best hiring question: What are you like on your worst day?



LEIB OEHMIG

CEO
Glen Raven
Burlington

The Anderson, South Carolina, native has been CEO of Glen Raven since 2017. He joined the company owned by the Gant family in 1989. Glen Raven was founded in 1880 and now operates in 23 countries. Its brands include Sunbrella, Dickson and GlenGuard. It sold its Strata geosynthetics products and related construction business to India-based Hella Infra Market Private Limited, an online marketplace for construction materials. Oehmig's community and industry service involvement has included the United Way, Anderson University, Tri County Technical College, Institute of Textile Technology, United States Industrial Fabrics Institute and the Advanced Textiles Association.

Education: BS & MBA Clemson University



GLENN SHERRILL

CEO
SteelFab
Charlotte

The country's largest privately owned steel fabricator, it has nearly 30 locations nationwide. He serves on the board of the Southern Association of Steel Fabricators as past president and recently completed a term on the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond board.

Education: BA N.C. State University

Change about N.C.: Add courts and district attorneys to lower our crime rates and support the police departments' hard work.

Best advice: Do what you say you are going to do (my Dad.)

Person I admire: George H.W. Bush, for his commitment to serving our country.

Favorite book: "Elon Musk" by Walter Isaacson



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 business people. Its furniture brands include Century, Hancock & Moore, Highland House, Jessica Charles and Cabot Wrenn. It acquired Classic Leather chair company and St. Timothy Furniture in 2022. The company has about 1,300 employees. Shuford worked more than 23 years with Century Furniture, but has led Rock House Farm since 2015.

Education: BA Pomona College



JIM SHUFORD

CEO
Shurtape Technologies
Hickory

The Shuford family has run Catawba Valley area businesses since 1880. Shurtape Technologies markets specialty adhesive tapes and also markets brands like Duck, Frog Tape, Painter's Mate and others. The company has facilities and offices across the U.S. and around the world, including Germany, China, Mexico and Peru. The company has approximately 1,400 employees

Education: MBA UNC Chapel Hill



EDDIE SMITH

Owner
Grady-White Boats
Greenville

A past National Marine Manufacturers Association board chair, Smith, 81, and his late wife bought the boat-building company in 1968, salvaging it from near bankruptcy. He has donated funds to UNC healthcare efforts and supported its sports teams. The Eddie Smith Field House is named for his father, and Chris Smith Field at Kenan Stadium is named for his son.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill

Best advice: My father stressed integrity above all and how to treat employees and customers while focusing on quality.

Who I admire: Teddy Roosevelt, who understood the importance of wildlife conservation, protecting large tracts of land for future enjoyment.

Career accomplishment: Grady-White Boats winning all eight JD Power Awards for Customer Satisfaction in our segment and 22 consecutive National Marine Manufacturers Association's Customer Satisfaction Awards.



HARRY SMITH

Founder
Rise Companies
Atlantic Beach

Smith has an eclectic resume that includes turnarounds, workouts, startups such as Pamlico Air (sold to a German multinational) and his current venture of owning diversified businesses. The common thread? He gets them all where they need to go. Before launching Rise Capital, Smith also founded or co-founded National Wholesale Leasing, Pronamics and Pitt Electric. He's also a former chair of the UNC System Board of Governors.

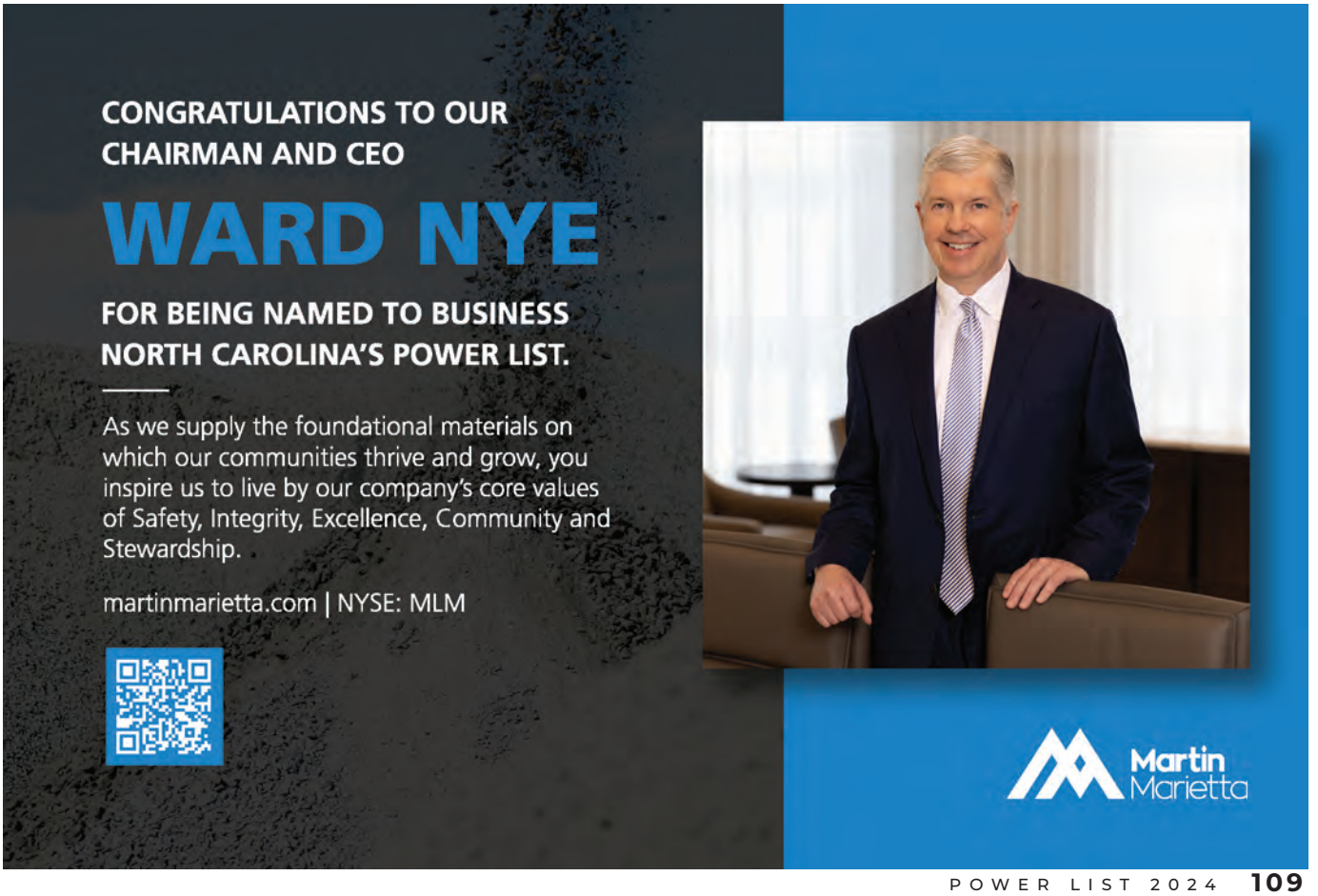
Education: BS & BA East Carolina University

What a competitor would say: Relentless

Best advice: If you lead, there will be people that don't like you, and that's OK. (Dale Jenkins, a Rise Capital director and former CEO of Curi.)

Favorite book: "Extreme Ownership" by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin

Favorite musician: Toby Keith





SEAN SUGGS

President

Toyota Battery Manufacturing NC

Greensboro

Suggs is director of the company's newest North America site in Randolph County where he supervises construction of Toyota's massive battery factory. He first joined Toyota in 1998 after serving eight years in the U.S. Army. The company announced two new expansions last year, bringing total investment to $13.9 billion and projected job creation to more than 5,000. Suggs joined High Point University's Access to Innovators mentorship program.

Education: BS Oakland City University; MBA Auburn University



RON SYTZ

CEO

Beverly Knits

Gastonia

Beverly Knits was founded in 1980 by Robert and JoAnn Sytz. The company has been owned since 2004 by their son, Ron Sytz, who is the company's CEO, and his wife, Janet, who serves as CFO. It is one of the largest circular knitters in the United States, and recently rebranded to Beverly. The company's manufacturing and warehousing facilities cover more than 450,000 square feet in five buildings located in Gastonia, 55,000 square feet in Albemarle and 50,000 square feet in Hemingway, South Carolina. About half of Beverly's current production is devoted to apparel and 35% to bedding. The balance is split among automotive, medical, and industrial fabrics. The company employs about 350 workers.

Education: BS Georgia Tech



LEON TOPALIAN

CEO

Nucor

Charlotte

Topalian was named CEO in 2020. He began his career with Nucor in 1996 as a project engineer at Nucor Steel Berkeley in South Carolina. He has held various leadership positions throughout his Nucor career in Australia, Illinois and Arkansas. He was elected chair of the World Steel Association Executive Board of Directors for 2023-24.

Education: BS Massachusetts Maritime Academy



ANDERSON WARLICK

CEO

Parkdale Mills

Gastonia

Warlick joined Parkdale in 1984. He succeeded his father-in-law, Duke Kimbrell, who died in 2014. Parkdale produces 900 million pounds of yarns annually, enough to produce 1.56 billion T-shirts annually. Parkdale uses 755 million pounds of U.S.-grown cotton per year, accounting for approximately 60% of total U.S. cotton consumption. Parkdale has 34 operations in the U.S., Latin America, and Europe. Parkdale operates 24 locations in eight states. It exports 99% of its yarn to Western Hemisphere countries. Parkdale has 4,000 jobs in the U.S. Warlick has contributed to a 20-mile trail – the Mattews-Belk South Fork River Corridor Trail – being worked on in Gaston County. Warlick's portion of the trail will be named after his father-in-law.

Education: BS The Citadel



DAVID WATERFIELD

CEO

Reynolds American

Winston-Salem

Once tobacco was king in North Carolina and Winston-Salem and Durham vied for the seat of the empire. Then millions worldwide became aware of the health dangers of tobacco, and its role plunged. Waterfield was appointed CEO of Reynolds American in July 2023. The company is wholly owned by the global BAT Group and U.S.-based R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.

Education: Royal Holloway, University of London



HOWARD WOLTZ III

CEO

Insteel Industries

Mount Airy

Woltz became CEO in 1991 after joining the company in 1978. Insteel had a record year in 2022, making it difficult to match those numbers. Revenues decreased 21.5% to $649.2 million last year from $826.8 million in the prior year. Net earnings decreased 74.1% to $32.4 million from a record $125 million, in the prior year.

Education: BA B.S. UNC Chapel Hill

What a competitor would say: He and his people built the premier company in the industry.

Never do again: Enter into a credit agreement with myopic lenders.

Favorite book: "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" by Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Favorite musician: Earth, Wind & Fire

Best life change: Gave up golf.



NONPROFITS & PHILANTROPIES

2024 POWER LIST

PILAR ROCHA-GOLDBERG

CEO
El Centro Hispano
Durham



North Carolina's Latinx population is growing — about 1.1 million in 2020, up 40% from a decade earlier. Rocha-Goldberg, 57, leads the state's largest and oldest Hispanic-oriented nonprofit, which works through economic development, health and well-being improvements, community engagement and education in 15 counties. Its programs and events reached more than 200,000 people during the 2023 fiscal year, including almost 15,000 at mobile health unit screenings. She joined El Centro Hispano in 2009.

She previously worked at Duke University Medical Center, where she translated and ran a Spanish-language program for hypertensive Latinos. She later implemented a wider nutrition program at El Centro Hispano.

Rocha-Goldberg is a member of the Chancellor's Health Advisory Board at Duke University, a member of the Durham Tech Community College board of trustees, vice chair of the Aging Well Durham board, and a member of the Carolina Small Business Development Fund board.

Rocha-Goldberg, who moved to the United States in 2004, is also owner, teacher and choreographer of Takiri Folclor Latino Dance Group, which promotes Latin American folkloric dancing. She has performed such dances since she was seven.

Education: BA Pontificia Universidad Javeriana

First job: Hospital dietitian in Columbia, South America

What a competitor would say: Strong and passionate

Best advice: You can be whatever you want to be and pursue your dreams (my mother, Lilly Foster.)

Favorite passion: Folkloric dancing

Who I admire: My mother, who always had a good attitude.

Never do again: Marry at age 18.

Debbie Aiken
Laura Belcher
Cathy Bessant
Amy Cubbage
Keith Fishburne
Laura Gerald
Franklin Graham
Joy Heinsohn
Cecilia Knight Holden
Tom Lawrence
Bobby Long
Rhett Mabry
Jim Melvin
Susan Mims
Mary Claudia Belk Pilon
Julie Porter
Thom Ruhe
Pilar Rocha-Goldberg
LaTida Smith
Charles Thomas
Jennifer Tolle Whiteside



DEBBIE AIKEN

Executive Director
Anonymous Trust
Wake Forest

Aiken joined Anonymous Trust as its first executive director in 2017. The trust started from the estate of Nancy Bryan Faircloth, who died in 2010. It benefits eastern North Carolina communities, particularly in education, and reported $232 million in assets in 2022. Aiken had a 35-year career in banking and financial services, including stints at Fifth Third Bank, SunTrust, Wachovia and others. Aiken is on the boards of the N.C. Symphony, N.C. Network of Grant makers and Dress for Success Triangle. She previously served nine years with the Food Bank of Central and Eastern N.C.

Education: BA Vanderbilt University



LAURA BELCHER

CEO
Habitat for Humanity of the Charlotte Region
Charlotte

Since leaving the Arts and Science Council of Charlotte in 2014, Belcher, 58, has helped address affordable housing in the Queen City area. Last year, she helped bring back Habitat's Carter Work Project to the Queen City for the first time since 1987. Garth Brooks, Trisha Yearwood and thousands of other volunteers built 27 homes. A total of 39 Habitat homes were built in the neighborhood.

Education: BBA College of William & Mary

Favorite passion: Cooking with friends

Favorite book: "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver.

Career accomplishment: Hosting the 2023 Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project — 4,000 volunteers and 27 homes.



CATHY BESSANT

CEO
Foundation for the Carolinas
Charlotte

The organization is one of the largest U.S. community foundations with nearly $4 billion in assets and more than 2,700 charitable funds established by families, businesses and nonprofits in Mecklenburg and 12 nearby counties. Michael Marsicano's retirement in 2022 after more than 20 years as CEO opened the door for Bessant, who ended a 40-year career as one of Bank of America's top leaders last year. She was atop *American Banker's* list of 25 Most Powerful Women for three years. She provided $500,000 to match donations for a field hockey facility at Queens University.

Education: BA University of Michigan



AMY CUBBAGE

President
North Carolina Partnership for Children
Charlotte

Cubbage began her career as an early childhood teacher and has been in her current job since 2020. The program oversees the N.C. early childhood system, including Smart Start, which is funded through a public/private partnership and consists of 75 local partnerships working to help prepare kids to start school. She has previously worked as a National Head Start fellow, taught courses at Eastern Connecticut State University, consulted on a research project at the University of Virginia and spent a decade with Teachstone, which does classroom assessments.

Education: BA Brown University; MS Wheelock College; JD Northeastern University



KEITH FISHBURNE

CEO
Special Olympics North Carolina
Morrisville

Fishburne has been with Special Olympics North Carolina for nearly 35 years and CEO since 1997. The organization serves almost 40,000 registered athletes statewide, supported by a $6.5 million budget, a staff of 38 and more than 40,000 volunteers. From February 2002 to February 2005, Fishburne chaired the Special Olympics United States Leadership Council. He has also served on various national committees for the group.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill



LAURA GERALD

President
Katie B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
Winston-Salem

After medical school, Gerald returned to her hometown of Lumberton to be a pediatrician. She then turned her attention to statewide health improvement, first with Community Care of North Carolina, where she worked to improve care for Medicaid recipients, and then as executive director of the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission. She also was state health director for 19 months and worked in the private sector before joining the trust in 2016. Formed in 1947 with a gift from a Reynolds family heir, the trust focuses on a "socially responsible investment strategy." It gifts about $20 million annually and has about $600 million in assets.

Education: BA & MS Harvard; MD The Johns Hopkins University



FRANKLIN GRAHAM

CEO
Samaritan's Purse
Boone

The son of Billy and Ruth Bell Graham is a key voice among evangelical Christians. Samaritan's Purse began in 1970 and Graham has been CEO since 1979. The organization reported revenue of $1.3 billion and net assets of $1.5 billion in 2022. The Christian organization seeks to help victims of war, poverty, natural disasters, disease and famine. Since 1993, it has delivered 220 million "shoebox" gifts to children around the world at Christmastime. Samaritan's Purse has 4,464 employees, including national staff who work in offices around the world. The organization employs 1,285 workers in North Carolina, including 769 based in Boone.

Education: BA Appalachian State University



JOY HEINSOHN

Executive Director
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
Winston-Salem

Heinsohn has worked for the foundation for 24 years, succeeding Maurice "Mo" Green as CEO in March 2023. The native North Carolinian has served on the boards of Wake Forest University, MCNC, the Equal Access to Justice Commission and numerous other groups. She was a founding member of the N.C. Network of Grantmakers. Since its founding 85 years ago, the foundation has given grants totaling about $667 million with a mission of improving quality of life in the state.

Education: BA Wake Forest University; MPA Harvard



CECILIA KNIGHT HOLDEN

CEO
myFutureNC
Raleigh

In 2019, myFutureNC endorsed Holden, 60, as its first president and CEO. The group has helped spearhead a 3.5% increase in educational attainment in North Carolina from 2020 to 2023, and its NC Workforce Credentials program was named a finalist for an Eddy Award.

Education: BS UNC Wilmington; MBA Duke University

What a competitor would say: She keeps trying until she gets a yes.

Change about N.C.: Improve civil discourse around controversial topics.

Favorite book: "Empty Nest, Full Life: Discovering God's Best for Your Next" by Jill Savage

Favorite musician: Jackson Browne.

Best hiring question: What is your driving force?

Best life change: Becoming a mom



TOM LAWRENCE

CEO
The Leon Levine Foundation
Charlotte

With Lawrence, 50, at the helm, the foundation has become one of Charlotte's most prominent nonprofits. Over the past 22 years, its philanthropy has included a major scholarship program at UNC Charlotte, $3 million for a Davidson psychiatric hospital and tens of millions of dollars committed to Atrium Health for cancer care and research.

Education: BSBA, University of Richmond



BOBBY LONG

Chair
Piedmont Triad Charitable Foundation
Greensboro

Bobby Long is a key force in many philanthropic efforts in the Greensboro area, including the Wyndham Championship golf tournament and the Shift ed group that supports area public schools. He's a partner in the merchant banking firm Piedmont Capital Partners and co-chair Piedmont Triad Partnership, which markets a 12-county region.

Education: BS N.C. State University



RHETT MABRY

President
Duke Foundation
Charlotte

The Duke Endowment is the state's biggest private foundation with assets of $5 billion in June 2022, its most recent report notes. It provides grants of $200 million or so annually. The Greensboro native joined in 1992 and held posts in the health care and child care units before becoming vice president in 2009 and president in 2016. He previously held managerial positions at Ernst & Young and HCA West Paces Ferry Hospital. Mabry has served on the North Carolina Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council and is a past board chair of the Southeastern Council of Foundations. He chairs the board of Candid, a national organization that evaluates philanthropic data.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; MHA Duke University



JIM MELVIN

CEO
Joseph M. Bryan Foundation
Greensboro

Informally known as "Mr. Greensboro," Jim Melvin says playing street ball with kids in his neighborhood prepared him for his high school football days and business career. After a long banking career and serving as mayor from 1971-81, he more recently has led the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation, working tirelessly to benefit local public schools and expand the local economy. He was a key force in helping attract Toyota's lithium battery plant to neighboring Randolph County.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill



SUSAN MIMS

CEO
Dogwood Health Trust
Asheville

The Dogwood Health Trust is a $1.7 billion private foundation, where Mims leads a team of public health-oriented philanthropists using innovative investments to change the factors that influence health focusing in four strategic priority areas – housing, education, economic opportunity, and health and wellness. Prior to joining Dogwood Health, Mims worked with the Mountain Area Health Education Center as the chair of a new Department of Community and Public Health at UNC Health Sciences, leading the Asheville campus of the UNC Gillings School of Public Health in collaboration with UNC Asheville, community health outreach programs, rural and minority health professions workforce development.

Education: BS University of Georgia; MPH & MD UNC Chapel Hill



MARY CLAUDIA BELK PILON

President, Board Chair
John M. Belk Endowment
Charlotte

With nearly $450 million in assets, the foundation named after the famous retailer and former Charlotte mayor is among the state's largest. Belk's daughter Pilon, 50, is focused on strengthening the state's workforce and increasing access to college and credentialing education for low-income and other students. She was in retail management at Belk for 12 years and worked for the separate Belk Foundation for five years.

Education: BA Roanoke College

Favorite passion: Partnering with individuals, organizations and communities who educate and upskill North Carolina's many talented people.

Favorite book: "Trust and Inspire" by Stephen Covey



JULIE PORTER

President
DreamKey Partners
Charlotte

DreamKey Partners is formerly the Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, which was started in 1989 to finance, preserve and develop subsidized housing for lower wage-earners in Charlotte. DreamKey has completed $392 million in real estate investments and provided financial education and counseling to more than 40,000 people with $40 million in down-payment assistance. Before joining DreamKey in 2013, she was executive director of an affordable housing enterprise in Kansas City, Missouri, and a vice president of lending at Mercantile Bank.

Education: BS Wichita State University



THOM RUHE

CEO
NC IDEA
Hillsborough

Ruhe, 57, brought over a decade of experience in entrepreneurship and business when he became the nonprofit's CEO in 2016. Since then, the group has helped hundreds of North Carolinians start businesses. NC IDEA gave $3.5 million in grants and contributions to entrepreneurs in North Carolina in 2022, according to its most recent public filing.

Education: BS Bowling Green State University

Favorite passion: Helping entrepreneurial dreams be realized.

Person I admire: My parents, who immigrated to the U.S. with $300, two suitcases and a baby in 1964.

Career accomplishment: Helping create a statewide entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Favorite technology: AI, which will change the world in ways we have yet to imagine.



LATIDA SMITH

President
The Winston-Salem Foundation
Clemmons

Smith, 50, became the 104-year-old foundation's leader in 2021, which followed a six-year stint as head of the Moses Taylor Foundation in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The foundation has assets of more than $500 million and focuses on inclusivity and equity in education. It provided 66 community grants totaling more than $1.9 million in the second half of 2023.

Education: BA Ohio Wesleyan University; MA The Ohio State University.



CHARLES THOMAS

Charlotte Director
Knight Foundation
Charlotte

Raised in Charlotte, Thomas is the former executive director of Queen City Forward, a hub for entrepreneurs. He previously served as the director of education of The Light Factory Contemporary Museum of Photography and Film. He joined Knight Foundation in 2016.

Education: BA Duke University

Change about N.C.: Grant more home rule powers to municipalities

Person I admire: Saundra Thomas, my mother who overcame obstacles to raise me and send me to Duke University.

Favorite book: "Thick" by Tressie McMillan Cottom

Best hiring question: If you had a magic wand, what would you do regarding ....?



JENNIFER TOLLE WHITESIDE

CEO
North Carolina Community Foundation
Raleigh

Whiteside, 63, has more than 30 years of nonprofits experience, including serving as executive director of Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina. Since taking the helm of North Carolina Community Foundation in 2007, she has doubled its assets and grantmaking. Her work has been recognized with the Old North State Award and U.S. Commissioner's Award.

Education: BS University of Florida; master's, Louisiana State University

Best advice: Hire people smarter than you. (A former boss.)

Favorite book: "The Comfort Crisis" by Michael Easter.

Favorite passions: Crafts and taking art classes, being outdoors and exploring North Carolina parks.

Best hiring question: What is the best gift you've been given?



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

2024 POWER LIST

Natalie Batten
Tripp Beacham
Joseph Budd
Jim Canfield
Malcomb Coley
Neil Deans
Caroline Helwig Dudley
Joe Foster
Rick French
Terri Hall
David Mullen
Michael Munn
Jeffrey Paine
Kent Panther
Joe Paradise
Chad Parker
Jim Parker
Katherine Peele
Crawford Pounds
Brandon Rucker
Matt Ryan
Shannon Rydell
Lee Sisco
Matt Snow
Willy Stewart
Michelle Thompson

KATHERINE PEELE

Chief Practice Officer
LS3P
Raleigh



Peele joined LS3P more than 30 years ago, soon after earning her degree. Over that span, she's managed more than $1 billion worth of construction projects and much change inside and outside the firm. She cites multiple mergers and acquisitions for incorporating expertise in mixed-use development, higher education, religious and other projects.

Considering the breadth of its undertakings — design, research, urban planning, movement management and a dozen others — it's barely adequate to call LS3P an architectural firm. Its projects span the gamut. There's WakeMed's recently opened North Raleigh Surgery Center, a one-floor renovation that created four operating and procedure rooms, 16 prep and recovery beds and room for support services. In March, Raleigh's Centennial Authority chose it as the local partner for a $300 million renovation to PNC Arena, where at least 100,000 square feet, a tailgate zone, club areas and new food and drink options will be added.

The firm has blossomed into a 440-employee business with 12 offices in six states. She served five years on the N.C. Board of Architecture, and earned a AIA Fellowship for her commitment to educational facility design. The AIA North Carolina Chapter gave her its William H. Dietrick Service Medal in honor of her service to the profession.

Education: BA N.C. State University

First job: Running blueprints.

What a competitor would say: Passionate about what I do, makes a difference.

Change about N.C.: Increase economic opportunity for underserved regions.

Best advice: This too shall pass. (My mother.)

Person I admire: Michelle Obama

Favorite book: "Outlive: The science and art of longevity" by Dr. Peter Attia

Favorite passion: Paint, watercolor cards and larger format acrylics

Best hiring question: What are you interested in learning?

Favorite musician: Alison Krauss

Best life change: Exercising every day



NATALIE BATTEN

Managing Director
Accenture
Raleigh

Batten, 47, is a key North Carolina link to this Ireland-based company, leading more than 900 of its approximately 743,000 employees serving clients in more than 120 countries. The immediate past chair of the NC Technology Association, she is a past board member with Dress for Success Triangle NC, which helps women achieve economic independence.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill

Favorite books: "Here for It" by R. Eric Thomas and "True Biz" by Sara Novic

Favorite technology: Oura ring

Best life change: When you're on vacation be on vacation.



TRIPP BEACHAM

Managing Principal
BB+M Architecture
Charlotte

BB+M's goal is to meet the needs of its clients. Beacham, 57, has helped the Queen City firm — American Institute of Architects Charlotte's 2023 Firm of the Year — do that for nearly 20 years. It specializes in designing interiors, mixed-use projects, offices, institutional buildings.

Education: BA UNC Charlotte

What a competitor would say: I never saw that coming.

Person I admire: My late father for his honesty, integrity, humility, and sense of duty.

Never do again: Renovate an old house.

Favorite book: "Kitchen Confidential" by Anthony Bourdain

Favorite musician: Radiohead



JOSEPH BUDD

Executive Chair
The Budd Group
Winston-Salem

An active pilot with more than 9,000 hours at the controls, Budd has led the family owned janitorial and facility services business since 2001. Its more than 4,000 employees work in 12 states and Washington, D.C. His brother, Ted, is North Carolina's junior U.S. Senator. He serves as a commissioner for the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission.

Education: BS High Point University; MBA Wake Forest University School of Business

Best advice: Always do what you say you're going to do (my dad.)

Person I admire: Mike Pence

Won't do again: Let my dog off the leash at the airport.

Best book: "The Cannibal Queen" by Stephen Coonts

Favorite musician: Jim Brickman



JIM CANFIELD

CEO
WithersRavenel
Fuquay-Varina

Canfield, 61, leads a consulting company with a wide array of services. He recently led an expansion to a second Cary office, where some of its more than 400 employees work. They, along with staff at offices in Asheville and Wilmington, are involved in asset management, design and planning, site development, water and sewer utilities.

Education: BS & Master's N.C. State University

What a competitor would say: Extremely loyal

Favorite passion: Family, friends, N.C. State athletics, golf

Person I admire: Benjamin Franklin

Favorite book: "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team" by Patrick Lencioni

Career accomplishment: Becoming WithersRavenel CEO



MALCOMB COLEY

Managing Partner, Charlotte Office
US-Central Region
EY
Charlotte

Coley, 59, has more than 30 years of experience at the consulting company and oversees the growth of core accounts across 22 states, 42 offices and 16,000 colleagues. A member of Charlotte Regional Business Alliance's executive committee, he joins retired banker Hugh McColl Jr. and former Duke Energy executive Lloyd Yates as owners of the Bright Hope Capital investment firm.

Education: BA UNC Wilmington

What a competitor would say: Hardest working person in the room, the first to arrive and last to leave.

Change about N.C.: Grow eastern and rural North Carolina, ensuring more equitable economic mobility for all residents.

Person I admire: Former Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson

Favorite musician: Prince

Career accomplishment: Co-leading the Charlotte mayor's racial initiatives



NEIL DEANS

Executive Vice President
Kimley-Horn
Raleigh

Deans has worked for this engineering, planning and design consultant for 30 years, starting as an intern. It handles everything from aviation to landscapes. Starting as marketing manager, he was promoted to his current position last year. He's responsible for the performance of 10 offices in the Carolinas, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Education: BS N.C. State University



CAROLINE HELWIG DUDLEY

Managing Director
Accenture
Charlotte

Dudley worked her way up, including a stint at the top of recruiting in North America and now globally, since joining the business consulting and services company in 2000. Her experience goes beyond human resources to include mergers and acquisitions, operating models, marketing and CRM capabilities. She played field hockey while at Duke.

Education: BA Duke University



JOE FOSTER

Managing Partner
Deloitte
Charlotte

The former Carolinas/Tennessee Audit & Assurance group partner in charge, Foster was promoted to his position in January, succeeding John Giannuzzi. He's responsible for more than 2,000 employees and strategic initiatives for the Queen City location of the business management consultant, where he's worked for two decades. He also is the chief strategy and operating officer of the accounting and reporting advisory practice.

Education: BS Auburn University

Favorite passions: Golf, snow skiing and pickleball.

Career accomplishment: Mentoring and guiding numerous talented Deloitte professionals on their journey to becoming partners or managing directors.



RICK FRENCH

CEO
French/West/Vaughan
Raleigh

French, 61, helms an independent marketing agency that frequently receives national industry honors. A recent *Ragan's PR Daily* award winner, it employs more than 100 people in five cities. He's a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum national trustee, co-owner of a minor-league baseball team and is managing partner of a film production company.

Education: BA Oakland University

What a competitor would say: Competes fiercely but fairly.

Best advice: Cash is king (Lee Trone.)

Favorite passion: Attending concerts and live music festivals.

Career highlight: Induction into N.C. Media & Journalism Hall of Fame.

Best hiring question: Tell me what you think you know about our firm.



TERRI HALL

President
Clark Nexsen
Raleigh

Hall helped establish the Raleigh office that she now leads. In 2012, she was the first woman to be named to the board of directors of this engineering and architectural firm, which has nine offices in four states. She has more than 25 years of engineering and project management experience in several markets, including education, industrial, technology and health care.

Education: BS Old Dominion University



DAVID MULLEN

CEO
The Variable
Winston-Salem

Mullen was named CEO of the advertising agency and innovation consultant in 2022. He was previously its president. He's worked with many well-known brands such as Procter & Gamble, Nestle, NAPA Auto Parts, Electrolux and Frigidaire. Last year, *AdAge* named the agency to its best places to work.

Education: BA University of South Carolina

What a competitor would say: "You're the only competitor I root for, except when we're pitching against each other." (Quoting another CEO.)

Favorite passion: Doing something new with my wife and four kids.

Best advice: Even if you're only responsible for 2% of a conflict or miscommunication, you're 100% responsible for your 2% (Steve Beck.)

Favorite book: "The Founder's Mentality " by Chris Zook and James Allen.



MICHAEL MUNN

CEO
McAdams
Raleigh

Munn began his career as a project engineer at the firm in 1997, rising to his current position in 2010. It offers a variety of services, including civil engineer, land planning and landscape architecture. It was involved in the redevelopment of Raleigh's North Hills Mall. It has two offices in Texas and four in North Carolina, including one at Innovation Quarter in downtown Winston-Salem that opened last summer.

Education: BS N.C. State University



JEFFREY PAINE

Managing Principal
Duda/Paine Architects
Durham

Paine has helped design millions of square feet of projects, domestically and internationally, since co-founding the business in 1997. One of Duda/Paine's current projects is One North Hills, a 10-story office tower at North Hills Main District, a mixed-use development in Raleigh. He sits on Downtown Durham Inc.'s board of directors.

Education: BA Syracuse University



KENT PANTHER

CEO
Wray Ward
Charlotte

Panther, 55, has spent more than 30 years building brands for companies, including Lowe's with his own company, and now Bonefish Grill, GE Appliances and Sunbelt Rentals and others with Wray Ward. He was named CEO in 2023. He volunteers his marketing skills for several entities, including Wake Forest University School of Professional Studies, Blumenthal Performing Arts and The Salvation Army Boys and Girls Clubs.

Education: BA Miami University

Best advice: If you want to have a difficult or serious conversation with someone, do it during a long car drive (My father.)

Favorite musician: Depeche Mode

Best hiring question: How will this job help you grow, and how does that fit into your career?

Best life change: Playing tennis with same group for 20 years.



JOE PARADISE

Managing Partner
KPMG
Charlotte

Paradise, 50, has guided 11 offices in the Carolinas, Florida and Puerto Rico since joining the accounting and professional services company in 2016. He's the lead partner and account executive for several clients, including Royal Caribbean. He is a member of UNC Charlotte Belk College of Business' Advisory Board.

Education: BS Florida State University



CHAD PARKER

Principal
Gensler
Raleigh

The international design and architecture firm counts 53 offices around the globe and $1.84 billion in revenue for fiscal year 2023. Parker joined about a dozen years ago, when it purchased the firm he started. Its N.C. projects include Bandwidth's 550,000-square-foot Raleigh headquarters and Kaleideum, a 70,000-square-foot children's museum in Winston-Salem that opened earlier this year.

Education: BS N.C. State University



JIM PARKER

CEO
Summit Design and Engineering Services
Hillsborough

The Durham native was a DOT engineer when he joined Alois Callemyn, a land surveyor, to start the business in 1997. It offers services including architecture, construction, geotechnical engineering and water resources. It employs more than 400 people at 14 offices nationwide, though most are in the Southeast.

Education: BS N.C. State University



CRAWFORD POUNDS

Managing Partner
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Charlotte

Pounds has spent more than 25 years as partner with the accounting giant, including a decade leading the Charlotte office, where he oversees more than 1,000 employees and key client relationships. That run will end on June 30, when he retires. Emily Pillars, who has been with the company since 1997, is his successor.

Education: BS University of Alabama



BRANDON RUCKER

Partner, Board Chair
RSM
Charlotte

A first-generation college graduate, Rucker leads more than 700 audit professionals for the consulting firm. His almost 30 years in public accounting includes two stints at RSM separated by four years at a well-known firm. He was elected to a one-year term as chair of RSM's board of directors, where he has been a member since 2021.

Education: BS Western Kentucky University



MATT RYAN

CEO
S&ME
Raleigh

Ryan took the controls of this more than 50-year-old engineering, environmental services and construction testing company at the start of 2019. It has offices in 10 Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic states. He has more than 30 years of experience in engineering and construction, including about a dozen years with HDR. He was once a senior policy director for the U.S. House of Representatives.

Education: BS MBA George Mason University



SHANNON RYDELL

Partner, Charlotte Office President
Little Diversified Architectural Consulting
Charlotte

Rydell has held key roles at the design company since 1997. He leads Little's Charlotte office, home to about half of the company's 400 employees. Bill Little started the firm in 1964. He became a partner in the firm, whose projects span community, workplace, health care and retail efforts, at the end of 2022.

Education: BS N.C. State University

Favorite passion: Golf

Favorite book: "The Gap and the Gain" by Dan Sullivan

Favorite musicians: Wilco

Career accomplishment: Becoming a registered architect.



LEE SISCO

Federal Director, East Regions
HDR
Charlotte

Sisco has guided the architectural and engineering firm's federal business in the East since 2016. Prior to joining HDR, he spent two dozen years in the Navy, including time as the commanding officer of a nuclear submarine and deputy director of intelligence at U.S. Pacific Fleet headquarters.

Education: BA University of Arizona; Master's National Defense University



MATT SNOW

Partner, Chair
FORVIS
Charlotte

FORVIS is the country's eighth-largest public accounting firm. Its more than 5,700 employees work with businesses in a variety of industries, including, health care, construction and real estate, and education. Snow, 60, works with its leadership, forming strategy. This summer, FORVIS and France's Mazars Group are forming a global network with $5 billion in annual revenue. He is a director of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Education: BA Wake Forest University

Who I admire: My late father, who demonstrated over his lifetime what it meant to be a humble leader.

Career accomplishment: Successfully completing the merger that created FORVIS in 2022. (Snow had been CEO of Dixon Hughes Goodman.)

Best life change: Making time to care for my physical and mental health.



WILLY STEWART

Founder, CEO
Stewart
Raleigh

The Colombian native started his engineering, design and planning firm 30 years ago. It has grown to more than 200 employees at seven offices in the Carolinas. They work in six practice areas: civil engineering, community planning, geomatics, landscape architecture, structural engineering and transportation. The American Council of Engineering Companies gave its 2023 Vertical Structures Grand Award to Stewart for the Parr Center at Central Piedmont Community College.

Education: BS & Master's N.C. State University



MICHELLE THOMPSON

CEO
Cherry Bekaert
Raleigh

Thompson joined the accounting and advisory firm more than 25 years ago and was named CEO in 2018. Trade publication *Accounting Today* ranked it No. 1 on its Fastest Growing Firms in the U.S. 2024 list. The firm has more than 1,200 employees, according to trade publications.

Education: BS & MA University of South Carolina

MetLife



Congratulations to Bill Pappas,
our head of Global Technology and Operations, for his selection to BusinessNC Magazine's 2024 Power List.

Thank you for your leadership and impact.

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100 YEARS AGO, AN AMAZING STORY WAS BEING WRITTEN.

And it's still being written today.
It's the story of all of us. It started as a community newspaper and has now become North Carolina's fastest growing media company.



2024 POWER LIST

Brian Allen
Andy Andrews
Amy Klein Aznar
Mark Balling
Rob Barnhill
Kirk Bradley
Andrea Bushnell
Roy Carroll II
Walker Collier
Scott Duckworth
John Dudas
Lili Dunn
Baker Glasgow
Michael Goodmon
Brett Gray
Clay Grubb
Zeb Hadley
John “Johno” Harris III
Sam Hunter
Mark Johnnie
David Jones
John Kane
Greg Keith Jr.
Ted Klinck
Mike Lancaster
Pete Lash
Steve McClure
Tino McFarland
Tim Minton
Chase Monroe
Dionne Nelson
Compie Newman
Gregory Poole III
Bob Portman
Stuart Proffitt
Gary Rabon
David Ravin
Pat Riley
Pat Rodgers
Arthur Samet
Dave Simpson
Tim Smith
Thomas Taft Jr.
Robin Team
Aaron Thomas
Eddie Vannoy
Ed Weisiger Jr.
Paul Zarian



REAL ESTATE & CONSTRUCTION



DAVE SIMPSON

CEO
Carolinas Associated General Contractors
Raleigh

A former *The (Raleigh) News & Observer* political reporter, Simpson joined the Carolinas AGC in 1989 as a government relations staffer. He became CEO in 2014 of the group that now has more than 800 members in the two states, including 150 who joined in the past year.

The Carolinas’ group is among the largest chapters of the national general contractors’ group, and it’s a great market with North Carolina adding more population than all but two states in 2023, Simpson notes. Services include health insurance plans and a prominent voice in the Raleigh and Columbia legislatures.

Simpson expects a strong year for the industry, especially if the Fed makes good on its pledge to reduce interest rates. AGC Chief Economist Ken Simonson says the single-family home building recovery should continue, data center and manufacturing construction will be strong, and robust federal spending will boost infrastructure, manufacturing and power construction. There are always challenges, of course. Construction workers remain tough to find.

With a push from Simpson’s group, N.C. lawmakers approved $7.3 million for construction training expansion through the CAGC Foundation.

Education: BA The Citadel; MA University of Missouri

What a competitor would say: Straight shooter.

Change about N.C.: Clean up roadside litter.

Best advice: Whatever you do, give 100%. Unless you’re giving blood (Bill Murray.)

Never do again: Try to outsmart my wife.

Favorite musicians: The Beatles

Favorite technology: Siri

Best hiring question: Why would I made a terrible mistake in not hiring you?

Best life change: Eating and drinking less and being kinder.



BRIAN ALLEN

CEO
Precision Walls
Raleigh

Not only walls but light metal framing, too — that has been Precision Walls' stock in trade for more than 47 years. It has become one of the nation's 10 largest such companies and the largest in the Southeast. Allen, 50, is proud the company is employee owned.

Education: BBA, MBA Campbell University



ANDY ANDREWS

Executive Chairman
Dominion Realty Partners
Raleigh

Over the past year, Dominion opened new apartment communities in Raleigh and Greenville, South Carolina and launched construction at two Charlotte projects and reshuffled its leadership. Andrews became executive chair and former President Michael Campbell assumed the CEO role.

What a competitor would say: Appreciates this business, does the right thing.

Change about N.C.: Improve the road systems, attract more large company headquarters.

Best advice: Know your product, work harder than your competition and do what you say you will do.

Person I admire: My father, who always insisted I do the right thing and figure out things

Education: BA N.C. State University



AMY KLEIN AZNAR

Managing Partner
Childress Klein
Charlotte

Aznar was named to her post in 2021, helping lead one of the Southeast's largest privately owned real estate companies. Under the leadership of her father, Fred Klein, it has developed almost 57 million square feet. The Charlotte native spent more than two decades working in London. She previously worked at Lasalle Investment Management, Morgan Lynch, JLL and Morgan Stanley.

Education: BA Princeton University; MBA University of Pennsylvania



MARK BALLING

General Manager
Skanska USA Building
Durham

Balling, 59, assumed leadership of Skanska's regional headquarters, overseeing building operations in North Carolina and Virginia, last summer. The office has more than $640 million worth of projects underway, including UNC Hospitals' 335,000-square-foot surgical tower, and a geothermal energy plant for Wake Tech's Eastern Wake 4.0 campus.

Education: BS Villanova University

Best advice: Don't be afraid to make a mistake; just don't make the same mistake twice (a former boss.)

Won't do again: Accepting a ride from a random vehicle in Puerto Rico.

Favorite book: "The Lonely Silver Rain" by John MacDonald

Favorite musician: Foo Fighters

Best hiring question: What stresses you out?



ROB BARNHILL

CEO
Barnhill Contracting
Raleigh

The former banker is the third generation of his family to lead this construction company. It has offices across eastern North Carolina, where N.C. Department of Transportation recently tabbed it to shore up N.C. 12 on Ocracoke Island. The College of the Albemarle chose it to lead its $25 million expansion of its Owens Health Science Center.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill



KIRK BRADLEY

CEO
Lee-Moore Capital
Sanford

Bradley has operated convenience retail, motor fuels distribution and venture capital businesses. The UNC Board of Governors member is active in real estate development, Lee-Moore's wheelhouse. Its projects include the $140 million 44-acre Mosaic at Chatham Park, a developing live-work-play community.

Education: BA University of Georgia, MBA Duke University



ANDREA BUSHNELL

CEO
North Carolina REALTORS
Greensboro

Since 2010, Bushnell has led the more than 100-year-old association, which has more than 57,000 members and 44 local affiliates. Her experience includes as an attorney, a Realtor in San Diego and heading Oregon's association. Low inventory of residential homes is a vexing problem.

Education: BA Montana State University; JD Lewis & Clark Law School

Person I admire: My sister. In her late forties, she pursued a Ph.D. in English, and became a professor leading a writing program. She also is a loving mother and grandmother and a stellar viola player.

Favorite musician: Yo-Yo Ma.



ROY CARROLL II

CEO
The Carroll Companies
Greensboro

Carroll is among the Triad's largest real estate owners, with residential, commercial, industrial and hospitality properties. It's made him one of the state's wealthiest persons with a net worth estimated at more than $2.9 billion. The former two-time Downtown Greensboro Person of the Year has been a member of multiple boards and leads charitable efforts, including raising money for juvenile diabetes research.



WALKER COLLIER

Managing Partner
Trinity Capital Partners
Charlotte

With two decades of real estate experience, including a stint at Boston's BayNorth Capital, Collier has led the acquisition of about $3 billion and 21 million square feet of office, industrial and mixed-use space in markets that include Charlotte, Miami and Nashville. He joined Trinity in 2008, and is now leading its expansion into the life sciences and biotech arena.

Education: BS UNC Chapel Hill, M.S. Massachusetts Institute of Technology



SCOTT DUCKWORTH

Regional President
Brasfield & Gorrie
Raleigh

Duckworth was named to his post at the privately held Alabama-based construction company in 2020. His office has overseen large projects including the North Hills expansion in Raleigh and the Ally Charlotte Center. His team in Winston-Salem is building a $450 million tower at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center.

Education: BS Auburn University



JOHN DUDAS

Division Manager
Choate Construction
Charlotte

Dudas has worked more than 30 years for this employee-owned general contractor. Current projects include renovations to North Wilkesboro Speedway, an $11 million building at Charlotte Preparatory School and 85 Exchange, a seven-building industrial park in Kannapolis.



LILI DUNN

CEO
Bell Partners
Greensboro

Dunn leads the Greensboro-based apartment investment and management company, which manages more than 85,000 apartment homes from 10 offices. It has completed more than $18 billion of apartment transactions over the past two decades. She joined Bell Partners as its chief information officer in 2010, becoming president in 2016 and CEO in 2022.

Education: BBA University of Michigan



BAKER GLASGOW

President
Clancy & Theys Construction
Raleigh

Glasgow, 41, joined the family-run construction company in 2005 and was named president in 2022. Those that travel Interstate 40 through the Research Triangle will recognize his work: He was project manager for the office tower that is IQVIA's headquarters. The company, which expanded into Upstate South Carolina, celebrates 75 years in business this year.

Education: BS North Carolina State University

What a competitor would say: Honest, fair, polite, competitive.

Change about N.C. : Make entitlements and permitting easier.

Best advice: You never arrive. You always have to keep striving to get better every day (my dad.)

Favorite technology: Landguide

Best hiring question: What do you do for fun?



MICHAEL GOODMON

Executive VP
Capitol Broadcasting
Durham

Goodmon is part of the fourth generation running this family business, whose radio and television holdings include WRAL in Raleigh. He's responsible for its real estate efforts and the Durham Bulls and Holly Springs Salamanders baseball teams. Property holdings include Durham's American Tobacco Historic District and Rocky Mount Mills. Gov. Cooper made him chair of the Governor's Entrepreneurial Council.

Education: BS Hampden-Sydney College, Master's Campbell University



BRETT GRAY

Managing Principal
Cushman & Wakefield
Charlotte

Gray, 42, has been with the global commercial real-estate services provider since 2012, and he was named managing principal in 2017. A past president of the Charlotte Region Commercial Board of REALTORS, he serves on Charlotte Regional Business Alliance's executive committee.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill

What a competitor would say: An honest, transparent and empathetic leader.

Best advice: The importance of investing in the stock market (my grandfather, Emil Shearon.)

Person I admire: My parents for their sacrifices.

Favorite book: "Move Fast and Fix Things: The Trusted Leader's Guide to Solving Hard Problems" by Anne Morriss, Frances Frei.

Best life change: Getting married and having a child, giving back to my community and volunteering.



CLAY GRUBB

CEO
Grubb Properties
Charlotte

Grubb, 56, formed his real-estate development company in 1993 and it now operates in about 20 cities nationally, backed by more than 200 employees. It has focused on developing apartments targeting middle-income workers, a niche it calls "essential housing."

Education: BSM Tulane University; JD UNC School of Law

What a competitor would say: Thoughtful and helpful. Favorite passion: Gardening with my son.

Change about N.C.: Create more financing options to increase the supply of and access to housing.

Person I admire: Albert Ratner

Favorite musician: Billy Strings

Best advice: The more you give, the more you get. (My mother.)

Favorite technology: Airplane mode.



ZEB HADLEY

CEO
National Coatings
Wilmington

Hadley, 41, runs a commercial paint and coatings company that has done business in 38 states. Its payroll includes 1,200 employees, including more than 50 technical consultants, having bounced back after the pandemic. His customer base includes body shops, large retailers, boat builders and aircraft-maintenance companies, among others.

Change about N.C.: Prepare infrastructure to handle meeting the state's future population growth.

Best advice: Successful people are those that do what unsuccessful people aren't willing to do (my dad.)

People I admire: Friends and peers who are founders, innovators and disruptors.

Career accomplishment: Building an amazing leadership team and growing revenue from $30,000 in 2003 to more than $36 million last year.



JOHN "JOHNO" HARRIS III

Senior Executive Vice President
Lincoln Property
Charlotte

The son of famous real estate developer Johnny Harris is now an executive and part-owner of Lincoln Property after a reorganization last year that ended the Lincoln Harris brand. The Dallas-based company has developed more than 210 million square feet of projects and 216,000 multifamily housing units globally. A key Charlotte project is a 10-acre downtown tract with tenants such as Bank of America and Honeywell.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill

Change about N.C.: Working collaboratively to maximize the impact of our efforts.



SAM HUNTER

Chair
T.A. Loving
Goldsboro

Hunter shed his CEO title, which he held since 1990, last year. He remains chair of this nearly century old construction company, whose work includes office building, medical centers and bridges. It's building the Center for Industrial Technology and Engineering at Wayne Community College in Goldsboro and nCino Sports Park in Wilmington.

Education: BS M.S. Virginia Tech



MARK JOHNNIE

COO
Balfour Beatty
Wilmington

Johnnie, 63, was appointed to his post last year while retaining his project management portfolio in the Balfour's Southeast region. He joined the London-based contractor in 1998. Its North Carolina projects include the new Harkers Island Bridge in Carteret County.

Education: BS Oregon State University

Favorite passions: Family and cycling

Favorite book: "How Big Things Get Done" by Bent Flyvbjerg and Dan Gardner

Best hiring question: Are you passionate about the construction industry, and if so, why?

Best life change: Marrying my beautiful wife, Patricia



DAVID JONES

CEO
Coldwell Banker Howard Perry and Walston
Cary

Jones, 64, started at the company more than 30 years ago, beginning in the accounting department. He was named president and chief operating officer in 1994, president and chief operating officer in 2003, and CEO in 2019. He also serves on the HPW Foundation, which has donated more than $1.4 million in support of local families, active military and veterans over the past two decades .

Education: BS Wake Forest University



JOHN KANE

Founder, Chair
Kane Realty
Raleigh

Raleigh's best-known developer turned over CEO duties to Mike Smith on Jan. 1, retitling himself founder and chair of the company he started almost 50 years ago. Its portfolio is best known for two hometown mixed-use developments, North Hills and the pending Downtown South. He serves on the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina's board.

Education: BS Wake Forest University



GREG KEITH JR.

CEO
The Keith Corp.
Charlotte

Since starting this commercial real estate company in 1989, Keith has led the development of more than 50 million square feet. Those 450 projects, totaling more than $4.5 billion, are done in 39 states and five countries. Among its newest projects is South Point Commerce Center, a 185-acre industrial park in High Point that is a collaboration with IDM Ventures.

Education: BA & JD Wake Forest University



TED KLINCK

CEO
Highwoods Properties
Raleigh

Klinck joined the real estate investment trust s a dozen years ago, becoming CEO in 2018. He previously worked for Goddard Investment Group and Morgan Stanley Real Estate. He is chair of First Tee of the Triangle's board of directors. Amid concern over office leasing trends, he said in February that Highwoods' Atlanta, Nashville and Tampa developments are showing good leasing results.

Education: BBA Southern Methodist University; MBA University of Georgia



MIKE LANCASTER

CEO
Frank L. Blum Construction
Winston-Salem

Lancaster started as an intern and, 15 years later, was named CEO in 2018. Blum posted $405 million in revenue in 2022. It operates offices in five cities statewide, including its recently built Winston-Salem headquarters. A recent project is the Kaleideum children's museum in its hometown

Education: BS N.C. State University



PETE LASH

Managing Partner
Beacon Partners
Charlotte

A Olympic team handball player in 1984 and 1989, Lash helps lead the company he co-founded with Ed Weisiger Jr. in 1989. It has invested more than $2.4 billion in real estate projects across the Carolinas and acquired and developed more than 30.4 million square feet. A recent project, The Station at LoSo in Charlotte, includes two five-story buildings with each totaling 100,000 square feet.

Education: BS U.S. Military Academy; MBA University of Virginia

NC REALTORS®

CONGRATULATIONS TO

ANDREA BUSHNELL

CEO OF NC REALTORS®

on being named on the *Business North Carolina's* 2024 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.

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STEVE MCCLURE

CEO
The Spectrum Companies
Charlotte

McClure, 44, has been at the real estate company for 20 years, taking the helm in 2017. It focuses on creating value for investors with its Carolinas and Florida projects. Its two Vantage South End towers, totaling 635,000 square feet, became totally occupied late last year.

Education: BA Wake Forest University; MBA Duke University

Favorite passions: Fitness and health.

Favorite book: "Poor Charlie's Almanack" by Peter Kaufman

Career accomplishment: Developing more than $2 billion worth of real estate.

Best life change: Placing a higher value on sleep.



TINO MCFARLAND

CEO
McFarland Construction
Charlotte

McFarland's career stretches back more than 20 years. He started the business in 2010, working with his wife from a spare bedroom. Its recent projects include the 30-bed Atrium Health Lake Norman hospital in Cornelius, work at Charlotte Douglas International Airport and UNC Charlotte's Marriott hotel.

Education: BS Purdue University; MBA Indiana University



TIM MINTON

Executive Vice President
North Carolina Home Builders Association
Clayton

The association is a major player in N.C. politics, lobbying to keep housing affordable and the industry profitable. The group helped push back energy efficiency measures that it says would have tacked on thousands of dollars to home prices. He joined the state group in 2015, moving from the Raleigh-Wake County association.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; MBA Elon University

What a competitor would say: Gives 100% to win. Change about N.C.: Add a major league baseball team.

Never do again: Ride a roller coaster

Favorite book: Bible

Favorite musician: My wife

Career accomplishment: Providing scholarships for special-needs students at UNC Greensboro.



CHASE MONROE

President- JLL Tenant Representation
JLL
Charlotte

Monroe, 58, oversees JLL's East Coast and Midwest office tenant representation and serves as Southeast Region lead for brokerage. It's a Fortune 500 company with annual revenue of almost $21 billion and operations in 80 countries and 100,000 employees.

Education: BA University of Virginia

What a competitor would say: Integrity, honest, loyal, family man, committed to his teammates.

Best advice: Always try to find the best in people. Everybody has some good qualities (my mom.)

Never do again: Bungee jump.

Favorite book: "Legacy" by James Kerr



DIONNE NELSON

CEO
Laurel Street
Charlotte

Nelson founded the mixed-income housing developer in 2011. Its recent projects include Legacy Ridge, a 100-apartment affordable housing community. A former executive at real-estate investor Crosland and an investment manager at NewSchools Venture Fund and Earnest Partners, she serves on numerous boards, including the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond's Charlotte branch board.

Education: BA Spelman College; MBA Harvard University



COMPIE NEWMAN

Managing Director
CBRE
Charlotte

Newman oversees the Charlotte office for this commercial real estate company that works in more than 100 countries. His 30 years of industry experience includes stints at First Union National Bank, RBC Capital Advisors and NorthMarq Capital. He has placed more than $3.5 billion in real estate capital during that time.

Education: BS U.S. Naval Academy



BOB PORTMAN

CEO
Southern Industrial Contractors
Raleigh

An Army veteran, Portman was named president and CEO in 2015. The company offers turnkey industrial construction and plant maintenance services, with offices in the Carolinas, Georgia and Tennessee. It's one of the more than 100 construction-related companies owned by Norwalk, Connecticut-based Emcor Group.

Education: BS Boise State University



GREGORY POOLE III

CEO
Gregory Poole Equipment
Raleigh

Poole's father and great-uncle started the equipment business in 1951, and he took the wheel of what's been honored as one of the nation's largest Caterpillar franchises in 1999. It counts more than 1,250 employees and has two-dozen sites in the Carolinas and Virginia, with affiliated businesses including lift trucks, forestry equipment and school buses. Revenue growth topped 10% in recent years.

Education: MBA University of Southern California

Best advice: Sometimes not making a decision one way or another is a decision and can oftentimes be revisited with more clarity at a later date. (Marshall McDonald.)

Favorite passions: Flying, snow skiing, photography

Favorite technology: Camera

Best life change: Empowering others to be owners



STUART PROFFITT

Co-Founding Partner
Proffitt Dixon Partners
Charlotte

Proffitt, 49, co-founded the company with Wyatt Dixon in 2008. Since then, it has closed almost $1.7 billion in transactions, focusing on multifamily and self-storage developments in the Carolinas and Tennessee. One of its latest proposals, 72-acre Midfield Station in Matthews, calls for 814 multifamily units, 200 townhomes and more than 220,000 square feet of commercial and office space.

Education: BS N.C. State University; MBA University of Southern California

Favorite book:
"On Living" by Kerry Egan.

Favorite technology: ChatGPT



GARY RABON

CEO
Coldwell Banker Advantage
Raleigh

Clearing land for a college buddy made way for a real estate career that has Rabon overseeing more than 1,700 agents working from 55 offices across the Carolinas. Advantage, along with its family of companies, was named Coldwell Banker's No. 1 affiliate for the third consecutive year in 2023, when it had more than 17,000 transactions and $6.2 billion in closed sales.

Education: BS East Carolina University

CONGRATULATIONS EDDIE VANNOY

Business North Carolina 2024 Power List



As CEO, Eddie's leadership continues to make Vannoy Construction and its employees better every day by leading with our 4Hs.

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VANNOY CONSTRUCTION



DAVID RAVIN

CEO
Northwood Ravin
Charlotte

Ravin started the development, construction and property management business in 2011, and it now has offices in Charlotte, Raleigh and Tampa, Florida. The UNC Charlotte School of Architecture was renamed for Ravin, who has developed more than 75 multifamily communities with a market value exceeding $6 billion.

Education: BA UNC Charlotte; Master's University of Michigan; MS MIT



PAT RODGERS

CEO
Rodgers Builders
Charlotte

A client base that includes Charlotte's airport and various major companies, Rodgers Builders has offices in Charlotte, Wilmington, Raleigh, Greenville, S.C. and Charleston, S.C. Annual revenue has topped $700 million. The company was acquired earlier this year by Japan's Kajima. Rodgers has led the business since 1987. Active in many groups including Davidson College, UNC Charlotte, the Charlotte Chamber and Central Piedmont Community College.

Best advice: Things work out for the best because you make the best out of them (B.D. Rodgers.)

Favorite book: "The Devil's Ransom" by Brad Taylor

Best hiring question: Why Rodgers?



PAT RILEY

Chair
Allen Tate Companies
Charlotte

Hand-picked by founder Allen Tate in 1992, Riley, 72, has grown the real estate brokerage from thee offices to 73 across the Carolinas. The company, whose partnership with Howard Hanna makes it the country's No. 1 independent real estate brokerage, posted $7.5 billion in closed sales volume in 2023, the second-best of its 66 years. He serves on the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council.

Education: BS Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Person I admire: My second dad, Allen Tate. His fingerprints are all over this state in transportation and land planning.

What a competitor would say: Competitive, innovative and will share to better our industry.

Best advice: Leave everything you touch better than how you found it (my dad.)

Favorite musician: Kenny Chesney.

Best hiring question: Tell me what you would like me to know about you.

Best life change: Marrying my wife, Stephanie



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WHO WE ARE

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ZEB HADLEY
PRESIDENT/CEO
FOR RECOGNITION IN THE BUSINESS NORTH CAROLINA 2024 POWER LIST



ARTHUR SAMET

CEO
Samet Corp.
Greensboro

Samet took over as leader of the family business in 2000, and has expanded with regional offices and complementary companies. His 500-plus employees tackle projects including a new terminal at Statesville Airport and the Aspen Heights apartment project near Bank of America stadium in Charlotte.

Education: BA University of Georgia; MBA UNC Chapel Hill



TIM SMITH

Owner
Preston Development
Cary

Smith, 75, and co-owner "Bubba" Rawl have developed more than 15,000 lots at a host of well-known projects across the greater Triangle region since the early 1990s. A major project is the 7,000-acre Chatham Park near Pittsboro, which is expected to blend more than 22,000 homes, retail and office space. His father was a co-founder of Food Lion.

Education: BS N.C. State University



THOMAS TAFT JR.

Principal
Taft Family Ventures
Greenville

A part of the family business for more than a decade, Taft runs the day-to-day operations of its five divisions and assists in financial negotiations. He's also struck out on his own, developing multifamily properties and two speculative office buildings in the Triangle. He's secretary of the Greenville Eastern North Carolina Alliance's board.

What a competitor would say: Don't give him a head start.

Change about N.C.: Get serious about teacher compensation and support.

Best advice: A failure to plan is a plan to fail.

Career accomplishment: Taft-Mills Group has provided more than 2,500 affordable homes, which we will double by the end of 2025.

Favorite technology: ChatGPT



ROBIN TEAM

Managing Partner
Front Street Capital
Winston-Salem

With a focus on projects in the Triad, Team's commercial real estate experience goes back 40 years. He has developed or acquired more than $900 million in income-producing assets, and owns or manages $500 million in assets.

Education: BS Wake Forest University



AARON THOMAS

CEO
Metcon
Pembroke

Thomas started his company in 1999, when the focus was building metal studs and trusses. Now, it's the state's largest minority owned construction management firm with six offices in the Carolinas. Projects include schools and hospitals and infrastructure. He's a director of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina UNC Pembroke Thomas Family Center for Entrepreneurship.

Education: BS UNC Pembroke; Master's, East Carolina University.

What a competitor would say: Tough, worthy competitor.

Best advice: Always work to better your community. (Grandfather Curt Locklear Sr.)

Never do again: Lose $1 million.

Best book: "The Whistler" by John Grisham

Favorite musician; Aerosmith

Favorite technology: ChatGPT for iPhone



EDDIE VANNOY

CEO
Vannoy Construction
Jefferson

Started as a roofing company in the 1950s, the company now has eight offices in the Southeast with annual revenue of more than $900 million. He and brother Mark Vannoy also are developing Jefferson Landing Golf & Resort in Jefferson.

Education: BS East Carolina University

Best advice: Treat others as you want to be treated.

Favorite passions: Family and collecting cars.

Person I admire: My high school basketball coach, Morris Walker, who led us to the 1965 2A state championship.

Favorite musician: George Strait

Best life change: Leading a healthy lifestyle



ED WEISIGER JR.

CEO
Weisiger Group
Charlotte

Since 1991, Weisiger has led major growth at the family-owned business, which has the Caterpillar franchise in western North Carolina. He also co-founded the Beacon Partners commercial real estate firm and WSC & Co. private investment firm, He is a director of the Charlotte Sports Foundation.

Education: BS N.C. State University; MBA, Harvard University

What a competitor would say: Tough but fair.

Best advice: Pray for others (Arthur Brooks.)

Never do again: Return to middle school.

Favorite musicians: The Rolling Stones.

Favorite technology: My putter.

Best hiring question: Tell me about your parents.



PAUL ZARIAN

Managing Director
Hines
Cary

Zarian, 36, came to North Carolina in 2020 to lead the Houston-based development company's Fenton project, which will include 2.5 million square feet of retail, office, restaurant, hotel and multifamily space in Cary. Hines is expanding by acquiring the IBM 500 corporate park in Durham.

Education: BS Duke University; MBA, University of Pennsylvania

What a competitor would say: Thinks differently and treats partners, counterpart, and competitors with integrity

Best advice: Don't stop asking questions, no matter how stupid you think you sound (Gerald Hines); Always be prepared (my dad.)

Favorite book: Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson



DRP

Our team is honored to be included in the 2024 Power List.

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2024 POWER LIST

RETAIL & WHOLESALE

Palmer Brown
John Cato
Lisa Cooper
Tammy DeBoer
Jeff Dyke
Bruce Efird
Andy Ellen
Marvin Ellison
Don Flow
Brian George
Meg Ham
Jeffrey Harris
Rick Hendrick
Jim Lanning
Mark Lardie
Tim Lowe
Shane O'Kelly
Omar Jorge Peña
Joey Pointer
Art Pope
Jason Potter
Lisa Tucker
Abe Van Wingerden
Stephen Yalof

RICK HENDRICK

Chair
Hendrick Automotive Group
Owner
Hendrick Motorsports
Charlotte



Raised on a tobacco farm in Virginia, Hendrick grew up working on race cars. At 14, he rebuilt a 1931 Chevrolet with the help of his father. After high school, he moved to Raleigh and enrolled in a program to become a tool and die maker.

His love of cars put him on a different track. Auto dealer Mike Leith helped Hendrick open a used car lot. When Hendrick was 23, Leith hired him as a general sales manager. In 1976, at age 26, Hendrick became the youngest Chevrolet dealership owner in the U.S., taking over a struggling lot in Bennettsville, South Carolina. The rest is history.

Hendrick Automotive Group employs more than 10,000 people with 131 retail franchises across 13 states. In 2022, the largest U.S. privately held dealership had $12.2 billion in revenue, selling more than 185,000 vehicles and servicing 2.5 million cars and trucks.

Hendick has had similar, more publicized success in racing. In 1984, he founded the Hendrick Motorsports NASCAR team. His original race shop now overlooks 430,000 square feet of workspace on 140 acres in Concord. About 600 employees keep the engines running. In May 2021, Hendrick Motorsports became the winningest team in Cup Series history, breaking the record held for more than 60 years by the legendary Richard Petty and Petty Enterprises. A Hendrick Motorsports car has won at least one race in a record 39 different seasons.

A leukemia survivor, Hendrick's charitable efforts have generated tens of millions of dollars in support of causes. He's a member of the NASCAR Hall of Fame and International Motorsports Hall of Fame.



PALMER BROWN

CEO
Compass Group
Charlotte

Brown has worked with the nation's largest foodservice and facilities manager since 2001, most recently as its chief financial officer. He was named its CEO late last year. He replaced Gary Green, who had the job since 1999. The London-based company's nearly 300,000 employees serve more than 11 million meals and maintain 1.9 billion square feet each day.

Education: BA & JD UNC Chapel Hill



JOHN CATO

President
Cato
Charlotte

Cato started with the family-run value-priced apparel and accessories retailer in 1997, seven years before he became its third-generation CEO. It has about 1,180 stores in 31 states, and saw revenue dip last year as inflation and interest rates affected customers. He received the UNC Charlotte Distinguished Service Award in 2022. His father, Wayland, who co-founded the business in 1946, died last year.

Education: BS UNC Charlotte



LISA COOPER

President
Mast General Store
Boone

Cooper runs the business that her parents started in 1979, when they purchased the original Mast General Store in Valle Crucis. It has grown to 11 stores in four states. Each features a mix of country gifts, clothing, high-end outdoor gear and barrels of old-fashioned candy, which can be purchased by the pound.

Education: BA UNC Charlotte



TAMMY DEBOER

President
Harris Teeter
Charlotte

DeBoer was named president of the 35,000-employee grocer in 2022. Owned by industry giant Kroger, it has more than 250 stores in seven states and the District of Columbia, along with distribution centers in Greensboro and Indian Trail. She previously held executive positions with fellow North Carolina-based retailers Food Lion and Family Dollar. She is the chair-elect of the International Fresh Produce Association's board.

Education: BA Appalachian State University



JEFF DYKE

President
Sonic Automotive
Charlotte

Dyke joined Sonic in 2005, taking his current title in 2018 and was named to its board of directors in 2019. He oversees both halves of the business: more than 100 dealerships and used-car seller EchoPark. The latter has 18 locations nationwide after eight were closed last year because of supply pressures. Sonic reported a 2.7% revenue gain to $14.37 billion in 2023, while profit more than doubled to $178 million.



BRUCE EFIRD

CEO
Variety Wholesale
Raleigh

Efird, who previously held executive positions with Dollar Express Stores, Fred's and Meijer, has led the privately held discount retailer for nearly seven years. It is owned by the Pope family and has more than 400 stores, mostly under the Roses and Roses Express banners, in 18 states. They generate about $1 billion in annual sales.

Education: BA Lenoir-Rhyne University



ANDY ELLEN

President and
General Counsel
N.C. Retail Merchants Association
Wake Forest

Ellen leads the nearly 125-year-old trade group that counts one-store operators and giant retailers among its 2,500 members. They're responsible for about three-quarters of the state's retail sales volume. The Southern Pines native became lincensed to practice law in 1997.

Education: BA Elon University; JD Campbell University

What a competitor would say: Works hard, is fair, well-prepared and sticks to his word.

Change about N.C.: Secure a major league baseball team

Best advice: Treat every person you encounter with the same respect (lobbyist Zeb Alley.)

Best life change: Running 5 kilometers every morning.



MARVIN ELLISON

CEO
Lowe's
Charlotte

The Jackson, Tennessee, native took charge of the 1,700-store retailer in 2018, quickly making major changes in its management ranks and boosting technology spending. It has 300,000 employees and reported $7.7 billion in net profit last year, versus $6.4 billion a year earlier. He has more than 35 years of retail experience, including a dozen years at rival Home Depot, and is the only African American to be chair and CEO of two Fortune 500 companies. He serves on FedEx's board.

Education: BA University of Memphis; MBA Emory University



DON FLOW

CEO
Flow Automotive
Winston-Salem

Flow's father started the family-owned business in 1957. It has grown to 53 franchises that represent 26 brands. They're in 10 cities in North Carolina and Virginia and employ more than 2,000 people. A longtime community leader and economic booster, he serves on the board of directors for Atrium Wake Forest Baptist, Golden LEAF Foundation and Piedmont Triad Partnership. He's on Wake Forest University's board of trustees.

Education: BS University of Virginia; MBA Wake Forest University



BRIAN GEORGE

CEO
Alex Lee
Hickory

George, who was named CEO in 2014, represents the fourth generation to run this family-owned business that employs more than 15,000 people. It owns Merchants Distributors, a wholesale grocery business that supplies more than 600 stores in a dozen states and 30 countries, and Lowes Foods, a chain of about 80 grocery stores in the Carolinas. He chairs the Food Industry Association's board of directors.

Education: BS & MBA Notre Dame University



MEG HAM

President
Food Lion
Salisbury

Ham started with Food Lion's parent company, Ahold Delhaize, in 1998 and was named the North Carolina-based grocer's president in 2014. It has more than 82,000 employees, most working at its 1,000-plus stores in 10 states. It serves more than 10 million customers each week. She serves on the President's Council on Sports, Fitness and Nutrition.

Education: BS Cornell University



JEFFREY HARRIS

CEO
Furnitureland South
Greensboro

Harris has said grace over the growth of Furnitureland, the largest single furniture store in the world with more than 1.3 million square feet of showrooms and partnerships with more than 1,000 manufacturers. He serves on advisory boards, including First Citizens Bank, and supports several charities such as Baptist Children's Home of N.C.

Education: BS High Point University

What a competitor would say: Extremely tough to compete against.

Person I admire: My father

Favorite book: "The Constitution of the United States" by Gregg Jarrett

Favorite technology: iPhone

Best hiring question: What does success in this new role look like to you within your first six months?



JIM LANNING

CEO
Ingles Markets
Asheville

Starting with the company as a service clerk at age 16, Lanning worked his way up. He was named president in 2003 and CEO in 2016. He oversees a company that has 198 stores in six states, shopping centers and a fluid dairy plant. Ingles reported a net profit of $211 million in 2023, compared with $273 million a year earlier.

Education: BS Western Carolina University



MARK LARDIE

CEO
Rack Room Shoes
Charlotte

Lardie has spent the past dozen years at the helm of this century-old company, which is owned by Germany-based Deichmann Group. It has more than 500 locations under the Rack Room Shoes and Off Broadway Shoe Warehouse banners. He previously worked for shoe companies Footstar and Caleres. Rack Room dates to 1922 when Phil Levinson founded the company in Salisbury. It later became Lerner's Shoes and then Rack Room.

Education: BS UCLA; MBA Washington University



TIM LOWE

President
Lowes Foods
Lewisville

Lowe bears the family name but isn't related to the founders. He cut his business teeth with executive roles at Circuit City and Best Buy, then earned his retail chops at Shoppers Food and Pharmacy before landing at Lowes Foods in 2013. The company is owned by Hickory-based Alex Lee.

Education: BS University of Houston

Best advice: Never expect to be judged solely on what you did in the past or what you may do in the future, but focus on what you are doing that is right in front of you. Be the best at what you do today and that will unlock your potential for tomorrow (Kevin Holt, a mentor of mine.)

Person I admire: My late father, a Korean War veteran who loved his family, was slow to anger and taught me to be honest and work hard.

Best hiring question: Tell me about your biggest failure and what did you learn?



SHANE O'KELLY

CEO
Advance Auto Parts
Raleigh

A U.S. Army veteran, O'Kelly was chosen to command the auto-parts retailer in September. One of his first moves was jumpstarting a plan to cut $150 million in costs by putting its Worldpac and Canadian businesses up for sale. He previously held various executive roles with The Home Depot. Advance Auto operates more than 4,700 stores nationwide and has more than 68,000 employees.

Education: BS U.S. Military Academy; MBA Harvard Business School



OMAR JORGE PEÑA

CEO
Aurora Grocery Group/ Compare Foods
Charlotte

The Peña family opened the first Compare Foods in Freeport, New York, and it now has 24 East Coast stores. The chain has six stores in the Charlotte area after arriving there in 2005. The stores partner with organizations to promote health care, education and wellness, especially in the Hispanic communities.

Education: BA St. John's University; JD Cardoza School of Law

Change about N.C.: Better public transportation

Favorite passions: Tennis and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

Best advice: If there is no solution to the problem, then don't waste time worrying about it. If there is a solution to the problem, then don't waste time worrying about it (Dalai Lama.)

Person I admire: Colin Powell



JOEY POINTER

CEO
Fleet Feet
Chapel Hill

Pointer started with Fleet Feet in 2004 as a financial manager, learning about the company through his now-physician wife who worked part time at a store in Carrboro. He became CEO in 2017.

Education: BA & MS UNC Chapel Hill

Change about N.C.: I love North Carolina. I have lived here all my life. You have everything from the beach to the mountains, cities to farmlands and four seasons. What more could you want?

Best advice: It's not brain surgery, no one is going to die (Dan Slagle, an E&Y tax partner.)

Favorite passion: A nice long run.

Person I admire: My wife balances her professional career as a pediatric ICU doctor, a spouse and mother to our three kids.

Best hiring question: How do you feel about touching hot, sweaty feet all day?



ART POPE

Chair
Variety Wholesalers
Raleigh

Pope's family owns discount retailer Variety Wholesalers, which operates more than 400 stores in 18 states. He's a former four-term member of the N.C. House of Representatives and state budget director. A member of the UNC System Board of Governors, he's a director of NCInnovation, the nonprofit tasked with commercializing faculty research at N.C. public universities.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD Duke University



JASON POTTER

CEO
Fresh Market
Greensboro

Potter put in almost 30 years at Canadian grocer Sobeys before being tapped to lead this specialty grocer in 2020. The chain operates 160 locations in 22 states. Chilean public company Cencosud owns two-thirds of the company's equity.

Education: BA & MBA Athabasca University



LISA TUCKER

CEO
Shoe Show
Concord

Tucker has spent more than 35 years at the company, which her father started in Kannapolis in 1960. She was named president in 2018. With annual revenue of more than $1 billion, it does business under the names Shoe Shoe, Shoe Dept., Burlington Shoes, Show Shoe Mega and Shoe Dept. Encore.

Education: BS Gardner-Webb University; UNC Chapel Hill



ABE VAN WINGERDEN

Co-CEO
Metrolina Greenhouses
Huntersville

Metrolina Greenhouses' offerings are found inside most big-box stores. VanWingerden tends to the nation's largest single-site greenhouse, with more than 800 full-time and 400 seasonal workers. He is part of a Dutch family that came from the Netherlands in 1971 and a year later founded Metrolina in a 20,000-square-foot rented greenhouse.

Education: BA St. Andrews College; MBA Emory University

Favorite passion: Coaching kids' basketball

Person I admire: My dad, Tom VanWingerden, who sought better ways to do things to make work easier for his teams.

Career accomplishment: Metrolina Greenhouses team winning the International Grower of the Year Award in 2021.

Best life change: Marrying my wife, Cindi.



STEPHEN YALOF

CEO
Tanger Factory Outlets
Greensboro

The former Simon Premium Outlets chief was named CEO in 2021. A public real estate investment trust, Tanger's 40 malls encompass more than 15 million square feet and are spread across 20 U.S. states and Canada. Last year, the company spent $193 million for an Alabama mall and $70 million for the Asheville Outlets while opening a property in Nashville. He is a trustee at the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Education: BS The George Washington University



North Carolina retailers are always here for their customers and the North Carolina Retail Merchants Association is always here for North Carolina retailers.

NCRMA congratulates the following leaders of our valued member companies named to the *List of North Carolina's Most Influential Leaders*.

John Cato
President, CEO & Chairman
The Cato Corporation

Tammy DeBoer
President
Harris Teeter

Bruce Efird
CEO
Variety Wholesalers

Marvin Ellison
President & CEO
Lowe's Companies, Inc.

Brian George
President & CEO
Alex Lee

Meg Ham
President
Food Lion

Omar Jorge
CEO
Compare Foods

Jim Lanning
President & CEO
Ingles Markets

Mark Lardie
CEO
Rack Room Shoes

Tim Lowe
President
Lowes Foods

Shane O'Kelly
CEO
Advance Auto Parts

Art Pope
Owner & CEO
Variety Wholesalers

Jason Potter
CEO
The Fresh Market

Stephen Yalof
CEO
Tanger Inc.



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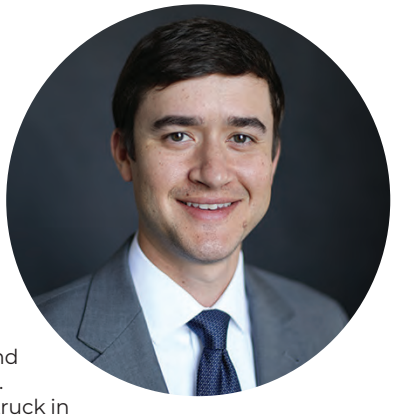


TRANSPORTATION

Kevin Baker
Kevin Bangston
Brian Clark
Bill Collins
Roy Cox
Michael Fox
Marty Freeman
Haley Gentry
Ben Greenberg
Michael Landguth
Ryan Legg
Ralph Lopez Massas
Van Anh Nguyen
Phil Peck
Jim Segrave
Chris Taylor
Carl Warren
Drew Wilkerson

BEN GREENBERG

CEO
North Carolina Trucking Association
Raleigh



Ben Greenberg got behind the wheel of the North Carolina Trucking Association in 2022 after stints on the association's board. Before he joined the 95-year-old trade group, he was a lawyer specializing in transportation issues.

North Carolina has about 48,000 trucking companies and truckers earn an average annual wage of nearly $52,000. About 97% of manufactured tonnage is transported by truck in the state.

The NCTA was awarded a $5 million state grant last year to address the truck driver shortage; the American Trucking Association predicts the country will need 82,000 new ones this year. The money was used to support awareness of driving careers, and training programs at community colleges.

Truckers face volatile fuel costs and too few safe parking spots. That's been a legislative priority for NCTA. A $1.6 million federal grant will help support about 50 truck parking spaces in Spindale, but more are needed, state officials say.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill; JD Campbell University School of Law

First job: McDonald's drive-through cashier

What a competitor might say:: Zealous advocate but reasonable.

Best advice: Keep it simple, stupid.

Person I admire: Winston Churchill for his perseverance and leadership during difficult times.

Never do again: Be a trial lawyer (10 years was plenty.)

Career accomplishment: Being offered my current position.

Best hiring question:: Where was your first non-professional job?

Best life change: Marrying my wife.



KEVIN BAKER

Executive Director
Piedmont Triad Airport Authority
Greensboro

Since taking the controls in 2009, Baker has brought PTI to new heights. More than 8,500 people work at the airport and a host of aviation-related businesses, including Englewood, Colorado-based Boom Supersonic, which is planning a $500 million aircraft factory. The companies are supported by Guilford Technical Community College, which offers workforce training onsite.

Education: BS Lehigh University



KEVIN BANGSTON

CEO
Thomas Built Buses
High Point

After stints at parent company Daimler Trucks North America, Bangston returned to lead the school-bus builder in 2021. He's supercharged its battery-electric school bus efforts, offering the industry's only turnkey choice to school districts. The German-owned company added 280 manufacturing jobs to meet demand for diesel and electric buses in 2022. The company sold its 1,000th electric bus in March.

Education: MBA University of South Carolina



BRIAN CLARK

Executive Director
N.C. Ports Authority
Wilmington

World Bank and S&P Global Market Intelligence says the Wilmington container terminal is the nation's most productive port. Clark, 51, oversees it and the Morehead City port and an inland port in Charlotte. Together they posted record revenue for the 2023 fiscal year of $79.3 million. The 16.7% increase from a year earlier stemmed from more general cargo and intermodal business.

Education: BS U.S. Merchant Marine Academy



BILL COLLINS

President
Airframe Services
HAECO Americas
Greensboro

After working at a who's who list of the aviation industry, Collins landed at HAECO in 2018. He oversees the company's maintenance, repair and overhaul efforts, which are used by some of the world's largest airlines. It employs more than 2,000 people at four sites, including its headquarters at Piedmont Triad International Airport.

Education: BS Rochester Institute of Technology



ROY COX

CEO
Best Logistics Group
Kernersville

Cox, who was named CEO in 2016, joined the freight manager and consultant in 1994. He oversees 400 trucks, 2,000 trailers and more than 500 employees. The company recently started a driver's academy to overcome the national truck-driver shortage. Tuition is waived for students who drive for the company after completing the course.

Education: BA UNC Chapel Hill



MICHAEL FOX

Chair
N.C. Department of Transportation
Greensboro

North Carolina has about 80,000 miles of state-maintained roads, second-most in the nation. Fox has driven the board that oversees them since 2017. The department's annual budget is nearly $7 billion. The Greensboro attorney also is president of the Piedmont Triad Partnership business-promotion group.

Education: BA Appalachian State University; JD UNC Chapel Hill

Best advice: Work hard to prepare yourself for opportunities (my grandfather.)

Favorite passion: Travel Favorite book: "Build the Life You Want" by Arthur Brooks and Oprah Winfrey.

Best hiring question: Tell me where you see yourself in 10 years.

Favorite technology: Frame TV with a rotating art subscription.



MARTY FREEMAN
CEO
Old Dominion Freight Line
Thomasville

Freeman, 65, succeeded Greg Gantt as CEO last summer, following more than three decades with the trucker. He had been executive vice president and chief operating officer since May 2018. Old Dominion is the second-largest less-than-truckload carriers in North America behind FedEx with revenue of $5.9 billion in 2023.



HALEY GENTRY
Aviation Director
City of Charlotte
Charlotte

Gentry oversees day-to-day operations at the state's largest airport, considered Charlotte's key economic engine. She manages a staff of more than 800 and a $258 million operating budget. She's worked for the airport since 1991, her only post-college employer. The airport set a passenger record last year of 53.4 million boardings, topping the previous record in 2019 by 6.5%.

Education: BS Appalachian State University



MICHAEL LANDGUTH
CEO
Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority
Raleigh

Landguth has spent half of his 25-year aviation career heading RDU, which expects 15.5 million passengers in the current fiscal year. This summer, Lufthansa will begin service to Frankfurt and Aeromexico to Mexico City. He oversees a $133 million annual operating budget and $226 million in capital spending.

Education: BS & Master's Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University





RYAN LEGG

CEO
MegaCorps
Wilmington

Legg and his wife got the wheels rolling on this freight brokerage in 2009. In 2022, it received city and county incentives to add 300 to its 567-person workforce within five years. Besides its Wilmington headquarters, it has regional offices in West Virginia, Kentucky and Florida. It sponsors PGA pro Brian Harman, who won the 2023 British Open.

Education: BA West Virginia University



RALPH LOPEZ MASSAS

Senior Vice President
CLT Hub Operations
American Airlines
Charlotte

Lopez Massas has been at American Airlines' second-busiest hub since 2020 after working at the Fort Worth headquarters. The airline recently announced new summer flights to four destinations, including Spokane, Washington, and Calgary in Canada. He is among about 13,500 American employees in Charlotte.

Education: BS University of Phoenix; MBA IE Business School



VAN ANH NGUYEN

CEO
VinFast Manufacturing
Raleigh

Nguyen heads one of the state's biggest economic development projects: a proposed $4 billion electric vehicle factory that is expected to start producing cars in 2025 and eventually employ 7,500 people in Chatham County. Aided by potentially $1 billion in state and local incentives, VinFast unveiled EVs made in Asia to mixed reviews last year.

Education: BA Hanoi National University; Master's Akamai University



PHIL PECK

President
Epes Transport
High Point

Peck, 56, was named president in 2021, but his Epes career started almost 30 years ago as a driver-manager. The company has expanded to more 1,550 trucks from 250. Bloomfield Hills, Michigan-based Penske Logistics bought the business in 2018.

Education: BA Virginia Tech

What a competitor would say: Driven.

Best advice: Work hard, and be genuine (my mom.)

Favorite passion: My kids' happiness

Person I admire: Kobe Bryant

Never do again: Fail to give 100%.

Favorite book: "Good to Great" by Jim Collins.

Favorite musician: Zac Brown Band

Favorite technology: Instagram

Best life change: Worrying less about others' opinions of me.



JIM SEGRAVE

CEO
flyExclusive
Kinston

Seagrave, 53, is a dyed-in-the-wool eastern North Carolinian and a consummate flyer. His company went public in December, offering private-jet fractional ownership, maintenance and other services. flyExclusive has a stable of more than 100 business jets. Segrave is a trustee at his alma mater, East Carolina University.

Education: BS East Carolina University

What a competitor would say: Ferocious

Best advice: Never stop learning. Everyone has something to teach you (my dad.)

Favorite passion: Flying

Career accomplishment: Taking my company public on the NYSE.

Best hiring question: What do you do for fun?



CHRIS TAYLOR

Vice President
Manufacturing
Boom Supersonic
Greensboro

Taylor, who worked for Gulfstream Aerospace for 39 years, is overseeing construction of Boom's $500 million factory at Piedmont Triad International Airport. It will assemble the Overture supersonic passenger jet. The factory is expected to be completed this year and create 2,400 jobs by 2030.

Education: BS Georgia Tech University



CARL WARREN
CEO
North Carolina Railroad
Raleigh

Warren took his post in 2020, overseeing 317 miles of track between Charlotte and Morehead City's port. It delivers economic development investments, including a $500,000 rail spur to serve an EV battery plant in Brunswick County; and $2 million for rail-served sites in Richmond, Nash, Burke and Warren counties. Strengthen the link between economic development and the global supply chain.

Education: BA Wesleyan University; MS University of Washington

Favorite passion: Cycling on bike trails or gravel.

Never do again: Move my family. Before Raleigh, we lived in six cities and nine houses over 25 years.

Favorite book: "Endurance-Shackleton's Incredible Voyage" by Alfred Lansing

Best life change: Coming back to Raleigh.



DREW WILKERSON
CEO
RXO
Charlotte

Wilkerson counts nearly two decades of experience in truck brokerage. He was named CEO in 2022, about 10 years after joining its predecessor XPO Logistics. RXO employs about 700 people and arranges shipping for more than 100,000 carriers. Its brokerage contract volume increased 23% during the fourth quarter from a year earlier.

Education: BS University of South Carolina



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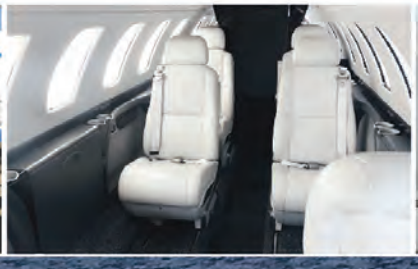


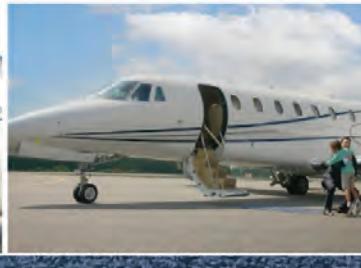
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