

## 2025 Board of Trustees — April Nominees

### East Carolina University

#### **Cassie Burt — Current BOT Member**

Cassie Burt worked with Hastings Ford in Greenville, North Carolina, for 28 years. Burt has devoted a great deal of time to public service and is actively involved in organizations and initiatives that support education, health care, and the arts. Burt has served as treasurer of the local arts council and is on the advisory board for the Petty Family Foundation and is the past chair of the American Heart Association. Burt has served on the East Carolina University Board of Trustees since 2021.

#### **John Cooper**

John Cooper has over 53 years of experience working as a lobbyist/consultant, corporate CEO, and government agency administrator. Cooper served in the administrations of three U.S. presidents. He served as state executive director of the North Carolina Farm Service Agency from 1981 to 1992, under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. In April 2001, Cooper was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as the state director of USDA Rural Development for North Carolina. As a culmination of his career, Cooper has a strong relationship with federal, state, and local elected officials. In 2024, he was recognized as one of the top 10 North Carolina lobbyists (out of 850) by the North State Journal. Cooper attended East Carolina University, where he became involved in student government and developed a love for people, politics, and business. He graduated in 1971 with a business degree, friendships, and experiences that became the cornerstone of his future success.

#### **Matthew Crisp**

Matt Crisp co-founded an Atlanta-based Financial Technology company called eVestment in 2002. eVestment made the Inc. 5000's list of America's Fastest Growing Companies for 11 consecutive years from 2007-2017, qualifying it for the Inc. 5000 Hall of Fame. Since the sale of eVestment, he spends his time as a private investor in pre- & post-revenue companies helping fellow entrepreneurs avoid common pitfalls of start-ups and growing successful businesses. Through two private investment funds operating under the name Gratus Private Capital, Matt Crisp has invested nearly \$10 million in companies currently valued at approximately \$4.7 billion across multiple industries & sectors. Matt Crisp is a member of the board of trustees of The Ron Clark Academy and a member of the East Carolina University Foundation board of trustees. Matt Crisp received his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a Concentration in Finance from East Carolina University in 1993 and his MBA in 1996.

#### **David G. Fussell Jr. — Current BOT Member**

Dave Fussell is the president and CEO of Duplin Winery in Rose Hill, often referred to as the "Winery of the South." With decades of experience in the wine industry, Fussell has played a pivotal role in growing Duplin's reputation and expanding its reach. Under his leadership, Duplin has continued to embrace its family roots while pushing for innovation and quality in wine production. Fussell has opened new wine facilities in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and in Panama City Beach, Florida. His passion for crafting accessible and enjoyable wines is reflected in the winery's consistent success and strong community ties. Fussell currently sits on the board of directors for WineAmerica.

### **Elizabeth City State University**

#### **Denauvo M. Robinson**

Dr. Denauvo Robinson has over 45 years of extensive people-related experience in education and community-related settings. Robinson retired after serving as president and CEO of Albemarle Alliance for Children and Families and started a private mental health practice. He is a National Certified Counselor and a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor and Counselor Supervisor in the state of North Carolina. Robinson serves on numerous civic and social boards. He is past president of the American Association of State Counseling Boards and serves on the executive committee of the Counseling Compact Commission. He also serves on the board of trustees for the College of the Albemarle. Robinson has previously served as chair of the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors, the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools Board of Education, and the Trillium Health Services governing board. Robinson has bachelor's and master's degrees from Truman State University and a doctorate from Grambling State University.

#### **Stephen Friedrich — Current BOT Member**

Stephen Friedrich is the chief commercial officer for Embraer Executive Jets. He has spent his career in the aviation and aerospace industry. In his current role with Embraer, Friedrich oversees sales, client and industry relations, and business development. Prior to joining Embraer, he led global sales and marketing for Rolls Royce Civil Aerospace Business Aviation. He has also served in senior positions for financial institutions. Friedrich graduated from Lafayette College with a degree in economics and business, and from the Stern School at New York University with an MBA.

#### **Wendy Pierce**

Wendy Pierce serves as the manager of community benefit and grants for Sentara Health. In this role she provides leadership and project management to support the efforts that build on and enhance Sentara's longstanding commitment to our communities including Virginia and North Carolina. As a dedicated community health convener, Pierce has successfully developed strategic partnerships and investments across multiple states, focusing on improving health equity by addressing the social determinants of health. She currently serves as chair of the Elizabeth City State University board of visitors. She also serves on the boards of the Northeast Academy for Aerospace and Advanced Technologies and Foundation, HealthNet Albemarle, and the Stable Housing Improvement Project, and is the past board chair of the Albemarle Area United Way. Pierce holds a Master of Public Health from Walden University, a Nonprofit Management certificate from Duke University, and a Bachelor of Science from Elizabeth City State University.

#### **Art Hall**

Art Hall has over 25 years of experience in workforce development, academics, business, law, and finance and currently serves as the vice president for workforce solutions at Tidewater Community College. Hall's professional journey began after earning his Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, Master of Laws from the University of Wales, and Doctor of Jurisprudence and Master of Business Administration from Texas Tech University. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated a deep understanding of legal complexities, offering guidance in various areas such as corporate law, securities compliance, litigation, real estate transactions, and finance documentation. In addition to his legal acumen, Hall has made significant strides in the financial sector. Hall's financial background includes roles such as vice president at Popular Securities Inc., where he provided investment banking services and devised finance management strategies for public entities.

### **North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University**

#### **Kathy Hairston**

Kathy Hairston is a distinguished business leader, philanthropist, and proud alumna of North Carolina A&T State University, where she earned her degree in social service in 1975. A Greensboro native and Dudley High School graduate, she met her husband, John R. Hairston, at N.C. A&T, and together they built a successful career in business, owning and operating 11 McDonald's franchises over four decades. Their entrepreneurial success earned them numerous accolades, including the Golden Arch Award and the Ronald Award from McDonald's Corp. Committed to giving back, the Hairstons have been longtime supporters of their alma mater, making transformative contributions that led to the naming of the John R. and Kathy R. Hairston College of Health and Human Sciences at N.C. A&T. Hairston's dedication to service was recognized with the 2013 Alumni Achievement Award, honoring her excellence in career achievement and contributions to the university.

#### **Latisha Hamilton-Williams**

Latisha Hamilton-Williams is the senior vice president and chief people officer at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. Latisha leads the human resources division. Latisha returned to Blue Cross NC in November 2022 from Bridgestone Americas, Inc. where she served as the senior vice president of Total Rewards and HR operations. Latisha worked at Blue Cross NC for nearly 11 years from 2004 until 2005 in roles including the director of human resources operations and analytics, vice president of human resources support services, and vice president of total wards and people services. Latisha holds a degree in accounting from North Carolina A&T State University.

#### **William Thomas Stanley**

W. Thomas Stanley is a seasoned executive with over 20 years of experience in strategic governance, financial oversight, and revenue leadership across industries including IT services, SaaS, financial services, and health care. He serves as an independent board director for Sprout Social and Nasuni, providing expertise in governance, market strategy, and executive compensation, and as vice chairman of North Carolina A&T State University's Foundation Board. As CEO of Chainalysis Government Solutions, he drove business expansion, doubling annual recurring revenue to \$200 million and transforming operations to serve government markets. His leadership at Tanium and NetApp resulted in multimillion-dollar revenue growth through strategic realignment and global market expansion. Stanley holds an MBA from the University of Minnesota and a BS in Computer Science from North Carolina A&T State University. A strong advocate for education and philanthropy, he has established multiple endowments supporting STEM, arts, and business scholarships.

#### **Sean Suggs — Current BOT Member**

As president of Toyota Battery Manufacturing, North Carolina (TBMNC), Sean Suggs oversees Toyota's newest North American plant, managing the construction and production launch of a \$13.9 billion investment that will employ 5,100 North Carolinians and operate 14 production lines for lithium-ion batteries powering hybrid, plug-in hybrid, and battery electric vehicles. Suggs began his Toyota career in 1998 as a team leader in Indiana after eight years of service in the U.S. Army, later advancing to general manager of quality planning in 2008. After serving as director of strategy, administration, and human resources at Nissan North America from 2008 to 2013, he rejoined Toyota and most recently led Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Mississippi, before being promoted to group vice president and chief social innovation officer for Toyota Motor North America. Suggs serves on the boards of Renasant Bank, Toyota U.S.A. Foundation, and S&P Global Mobility Council and holds an MBA from Auburn University and a BS from Oakland City University.

### **North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics**

#### **Carl Ryden — Current BOT Member**

Carl Ryden is a 1989 NCSSM graduate and a generous donor to the NCSSM Foundation, which he has served on the board of directors and as chair. In 2018, Ryden established the Ryden Program in Artificial Intelligence at NCSSM, the first program of its kind in a U.S. public high school. Earlier in the decade, he established the Peter Houghton Fabrication and Innovation Lab at NCSSM, named in honor of the deceased NCSSM 1989 alumnus (and Ryden's best high school friend), also at the time a leading innovation for a U.S. public high school.

#### **Scott Millar — Current BOT Member**

Scott Millar has served as the president of the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation since 1997. Millar is a current member of the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance board of directors, a member of the Economic Development Partnership of NC's Advisory Council, and past president of the North Carolina Economic Development Association (NCEDA). Millar was named NCEDA's economic developer of the year in 2009-10 and has served on the North Carolina Economic Development board. Millar received the professional designation of Certified Economic & Community Developer in 1996. Millar is a graduate of the University of Tennessee.

#### **Ursula Dudley Oglesby — Current BOT Member**

Ursula Dudley Oglesby is the president of Dudley Beauty Corp., LLC. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Harvard College in 1988 and a juris doctorate from Harvard Law School in 1991. Oglesby was admitted to the North Carolina State Bar in 1991. She serves or has served on the boards of the National Conference for Community and Justice, the North Carolina Entrepreneurship Center, and the Direct Selling Association.

#### **Alexander Dale**

Alexander Dale is chair of the Ward and Smith, P.A., Appellate Practice Group. He has been with Ward and Smith since September 2001. Dale has represented community associations in civil litigation before the North Carolina Superior Court, the North Carolina Court of Appeals, the North Carolina Supreme Court, and the American Arbitration Association. Dale has a Bachelor of Arts with honors and highest distinction from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a Master of Arts in mass communication from UNC-Chapel Hill, and a juris doctor from Duke University School of Law.

#### **Michelle Ellwanger — Current BOT Member**

Michelle Ellwanger is the owner of Edge Coaching LLC in Hickory, North Carolina. Immediately before that, she was a clinical outpatient therapist at Family Net. Ellwanger has also worked as a professional school counselor for Catawba County Schools and as director of the after-hours program for the North Carolina Cooperative Extension. Ellwanger served on the board of the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce from 2013 to 2018, and the board of the Catawba Valley Association of Counselors and Therapists from 2010 to 2015. Ellwanger has a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Virginia Tech University and a Master of Arts in counseling from Appalachian State University.

#### **Ray V. Spain — Current BOT Member**

Ray V. Spain is a retired educator with over 45 years of public school experience. Spain has served in many positions in North Carolina schools including teacher assistant, teacher, program coordinator, and principal in Northampton and Bertie counties. Spain began his district administrative work as assistant superintendent in Bertie County and served as associate superintendent in Lenoir County, and superintendent in Petersburg, Virginia, and Warren County, North Carolina. Spain was Central Carolina

Regional Education Service Alliance's 2006 superintendent of the year, and he was also inducted into the East Carolina University Educators Hall of Fame. Spain served in leadership positions on several advisory boards including Teach for America, NC Virtual Public Schools, NC New Schools Project, and the East Carolina University College of Education Professional Advisory Board. Spain has a bachelor's degree in history from North Carolina Wesleyan College, a master's degree in school administration from North Carolina Central University, and a Doctor of Education from Virginia Tech University.

**William A. Pizer — Current BOT Member**

William A. Pizer is the president and CEO of Resources for the Future, an independent, nonprofit research institution that improves environmental, energy, and natural resources decisions through impartial economic research and policy engagement. He was previously the Susan B. King Professor and senior associate dean for faculty and research at the Sanford School of Public Policy, where he served on the faculty for 10 years. From 2008 to 2011, he was deputy assistant secretary for environment and energy at the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Pizer holds a Ph.D. and an MA in economics from Harvard University and a BS in physics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Pizer graduated from the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics in 1986.

**Erin Locklear — Current BOT Member**

Erin Locklear has been general counsel for the Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority since 2007. Before that, Locklear practiced law with Newsom Graham and then Kennon Craver. While attending law school, Locklear also gained experience working with North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services and Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers. Locklear graduated from the North Carolina School of Science and Math in 1993. Locklear has an AB from Princeton University, *cum laude*, and a juris doctor from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Law.

**Warwick Arden — Current BOT Member**

Warwick Arden has been North Carolina State University's executive vice chancellor and provost since 2010. From July 2014 to February 2015, Arden concurrently served as interim senior vice president for the University of North Carolina System. Previously, Arden served as interim provost since 2009, and as dean of NC State's College of Veterinary Medicine from 2004 to 2009. Arden received a Bachelor of Science in veterinary sciences and a diploma of veterinary clinical studies from the University of Sydney, Australia; a Master of Science in physiology from Michigan State University; and a Ph.D. in physiology and biophysics from the University of Kentucky.

**Yvonne Villanueva-Russell — Current BOT Member**

Yvonne Villanueva-Russell is the provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of North Carolina Asheville. Immediately prior to her current role, Villanueva-Russell spent 22 years at Texas A&M University-Commerce holding several positions, and most notably as founding dean for the College of Innovation and Design. Villanueva-Russell has a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in sociology from Western Illinois University, and a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

**Tonya L. Smith-Jackson — Current BOT Member**

Tonya Smith-Jackson is provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs at NC A&T State University. Smith-Jackson earned MS and Ph.D. degrees from NC State University in psychology/ergonomics and interdisciplinary industrial engineering. Smith-Jackson earned a BA in psychology from UNC-Chapel Hill; and graduated from the inaugural class of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics. Smith-Jackson served as department chair of Industrial and Systems

Engineering at N.C. A&T; as interim director of a cybersecurity center; director of the Human Factors Analytics Lab and co-director of the laboratory for Cyber-Human Analytics Research for the Internet of Things (CHARIoT). She spent 14 years at Virginia Tech, moving from assistant to associate to full professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering. Smith-Jackson served as an engineer at IBM and Ericsson Mobile Communications, as well as a faculty member at universities and community colleges in North Carolina, New York, Virginia, and Germany.

**Alec D. Gallimore — Current BOT Member**

Alec D. Gallimore is the provost and chief academic officer of Duke University and Alfred J. Hooks E'68 Distinguished Professor in the Thomas Lord Department of Mechanical Engineering & Materials Science of the Pratt School of Engineering. Before his appointment at Duke in 2023, Gallimore held multiple leadership roles over his more than 30-year career at the University of Michigan, including the Robert J. Vlasic Dean of Engineering, associate dean for Academic Affairs, associate dean for Research and Graduate Education, and associate dean at the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies. Gallimore received his BS degree in aeronautical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and an MA and Ph.D. in aerospace engineering at Princeton University.

**Thomas Rhodes Jr.**

Thomas “Tad” Rhodes grew up attending public schools in Wilson County, before attending and graduating from the North Carolina School of Science and Math in 1990. Tad Rhodes attended Wake Forest University and earned a B.S. in accounting in 1994, and his J.D. from Wake Forest School of Law in 1997. Tad Rhodes worked for Arthur Anderson LLP as a senior tax accountant, followed by the Baptist Retirement Homes of North Carolina as their CFO. Tad Rhodes has served as a member of the board of directors and treasurer for the Foundation YMCA, treasurer for Diversified Opportunities Inc., scoutmaster for BSA Troop 6, member of the Wilson All-American Kiwanis Club, and as treasurer of St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church in Wilson.

**NC State University**

**Erik Dixon — Current BOT Member**

Erik Dixon is currently a strategic advisor for AccessOn Networks. Dixon is the former vice president at Broadcom Limited and CEO of LVL7 Systems. Dixon is a member of the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Hall of Fame, a former member of the board of visitors at NC State, a former part-time lecturer at the NC State College of Engineering, and a former member of the NC State MAE Advisory Board. Dixon has a master’s degree in business administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from NC State.

**David Herring — Current BOT Member**

David Herring is the vice president of Hog Slat Inc., a family-owned business engaged in turnkey construction of confinement-type hog units, manufacturing and distribution of hog equipment, and production of live hogs. Herring currently serves on the U.S. Meat Export Federation executive committee and the USDA Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee for Trade in Animals and Animal Products. Herring is a former president of the National Pork Producers Council and a former president of the North Carolina Pork Producers Council. Herring is a 1981 graduate from the NC State Agriculture Institute with an associate’s degree in livestock management.

**Timothy Humphrey — Current BOT Member**

Timothy Humphrey is currently IBM’s chief analytics officer. Humphrey is also the senior state executive for IBM in North Carolina and senior location executive for IBM in Research Triangle Park, North



Carolina. Humphrey serves as a board member for many local nonprofit organizations and is a mentor to over 30 global professionals, students, and youth. He graduated from NC State University in 1996 with a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering and is a member of the NC State Electrical and Computer Engineering Hall of Fame.

#### **Robin Perkins**

Robin Perkins founded Spinners Capital, a real estate developer of industrial, multifamily, and self-storage properties. He is the former senior vice president of Gildan Inc. He was previously the CEO of Frontier Yarns. Perkins has been a business leader in the textile industry for over 30 years and has served on the board of the National Cotton Council as an executive committee member. Perkins is a founder of Dogwood State Bank, where he has served on the board of directors since 2019. Additionally, he serves on the board of NC FREE and the Sanford Area Growth Alliance. Perkins received a B.A. in textile and apparel management from the NC State University Wilson College of Textiles. Perkins served on the Textile Foundation at the College for over 10 years and was chairman of membership and governance.

#### **University of North Carolina Charlotte**

##### **Henry Atkins**

Henry Atkins is the president and partner of Atkins Properties, LLC, a real estate development and brokerage company in Charlotte. He is also a successful entrepreneur and small businessman. He is active in the Charlotte community, including through leadership roles at UNC Charlotte. He currently serves on the university's board of visitors. Atkins served as Chairman of the UNC Charlotte Foundation Board, and he served as a member of the Belk College Advisory Board, the Childress Klein Center for Real Estate, the Charlotte 49ers Athletic Foundation, and Facilities Development Corporation. His commitment to higher education extends to his alma mater, the University of South Carolina, where he serves on the Business Partnership Foundation. He has served on the boards of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, the Dowd YMCA, the Urban League, KinderMourn, and at his church, Myers Park United Methodist Church. Atkins earned his bachelor's in business administration from the University of South Carolina, a master's in real estate development at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a master's in business administration from the University of Idaho.

##### **Alexander "Sasha" Weintraub — Current BOT Member**

Sasha Weintraub earned his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, his master's degree from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. in industrial engineering from NC State University. Currently, Weintraub serves as the senior vice president and chief customer officer for Duke Energy, where he maintains responsibility for the development of new products and services, customer pricing, economic development, and wholesale customer management. Weintraub has worked for Duke Energy for more than 25 years, and before his present role, he oversaw the company's natural gas operations across five states. In addition to serving on the UNC Charlotte Board of Trustees, he is also on the boards of directors for TerraGo, a software company, and the Charlotte Hearing and Speech Center. He and his wife, Nichelle, serve together on the board of directors for the Cleft Palate Foundation.

##### **Dontá Lamar Wilson — Current BOT Member**

Dontá Wilson is a 1998 graduate of the Belk College of Business at UNC Charlotte, and he earned a master's in business administration from the University of Maryland. He is presently the chief consumer and small business banking officer for Truist Financial Corporation, where he leads 20,000 teammates

across divisions such as digital banking, virtual service centers, and nearly 2,000 community banking branches. Since 2016, Wilson has served on Truist's executive leadership team. He began working at BB&T, a predecessor to Truist, while still enrolled as a student at UNC Charlotte. His more than 20 years of experience in the financial services industry spanned executive roles across multiple states, including Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, and Alabama. Wilson presently serves on the Signet Jewelers board of directors, and he has previously been involved as a board member and founder of Samaritan's Feet.

**David Longo**

David Longo is the founder, chairman, and CEO of CBI Workplace Solutions. In addition to leading CBI, he serves as chairman of the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance. Furthermore, he is the chairman of Falkbuilt, chairman and CEO of the Live Love Serve Foundation, a manager of Longo Family Investments, LLC, manager of Forlong Farms LLC, and an active board member of Charlotte Center City Partners, Black Mountain Weekend, and the Novant Health Southern Piedmont Region Board. Longo is a graduate of Seton Hall University.

**University of North Carolina at Greensboro****Anita Bachmann — Current BOT Member**

Anita Bachmann is CEO of the North Carolina market for UnitedHealthcare's Community Plans. Before her current role, Bachmann served as vice president of business development for UnitedHealthcare Community & State nationally and market leader in North Carolina. Bachmann has also served as senior vice president of health reform strategy at Optum, where she was responsible for the development of the reform strategy to support state government business growth, as well as vice president of health care reform at UnitedHealthcare. Bachmann has a Master of Health Science in health services administration from the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston and graduated from the executive leadership program at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School in Philadelphia. Anita and George Bachmann have established the Bachmann Family Endowed Scholarship at UNCG to support students pursuing degrees in an array of areas touching health care.

**Margaret P. Benjamin — Current BOT Member**

Margaret Benjamin has served on the Louisiana State University Museum of Art Board and is the former chair of the Greensboro Historical Museum board of trustees. She is a vice president of the Museum Trustee Association board of directors. For this work, she was honored with the American Alliance of Museums Champion Award at a 2017 congressional awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. She also received the Museum Trustee Association's Star Advocate Award in 2018. Benjamin has chaired the Public Art Endowment of the Greensboro Steering Committee. She currently serves on the Greensboro Public Library Foundation board of directors and the Cone Health Cancer Center Philanthropy Advisory Committee. In 2018, Margaret Benjamin and her husband, Bill, received the United Way Greater Greensboro Legacy Award, presented to families who demonstrate a legacy of giving and community impact and who exemplify a shared dedication to service and exceptional support of programs that transform lives in our community. Benjamin began her museum career as public relations director of the Gallier House Museum in New Orleans. She holds a B.A. in fine and studio arts from Louisiana State University and a master's in liberal studies from UNC Greensboro.

**Ernest Grant — Current BOT Member**

Ernest Grant is the immediate past president of the American Nurses Association. Grant has more than 30 years of nursing experience and is an internationally recognized burn care and fire safety expert. Grant is a 2023 inductee into the NC Nurses Hall of Fame, and the 2022 recipient of the Nightingale Award, given by the Foundation of New York State Nurses in recognition of his leadership and dedication



to nursing and patient care. In 2022, *Modern Healthcare* named Grant one of the 50 most influential clinical executives. In 2021, he received the Nurse of the Year award from President George W. Bush for his service to burn patients injured in the September 11 World Trade Center attacks. Grant received an LPN in 1978 from Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College, followed by a BSN in 1986 from North Carolina Central University. In 1993, Grant completed his MSN at UNC Greensboro's School of Nursing. In 2015, Grant became the first African American male to receive a Ph.D. in nursing, also from UNCG.

#### **R. Timothy "Tim" Rice — Current BOT Member**

Tim Rice is former CEO and current CEO emeritus of Cone Health. Rice is former president and board chair of The National Center for Healthcare Leadership. Rice has served as a fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives and on the board of governors of the Center for Creative Leadership. Rice is a 2012 recipient of the Thomas Z. Osborne Award from the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce and received the Distinguished Service Award from the North Carolina Hospital Association that same year. In 2015, he received an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from UNC Greensboro for his lifetime of service and contributions to the humanities and human welfare. Rice received a Bachelor of Science in pharmacy from Washington State University in 1977 and a Master of Health Administration from Duke University in 1987.

#### **University of North Carolina School of the Arts**

##### **John D. McConnell**

John McConnell spent his professional career in academic medicine, first as a physician-scientist in the field of urology, and later as the chief executive of the University of Texas Southwestern Health System, and more recently the CEO of Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and executive vice president for health affairs for Wake Forest University. McConnell graduated from the University of Kansas, and subsequently Loyola-Stritch School of Medicine, magna cum laude. His research contributions in urology led to over 100 publications, election to the National Academy of Medicine, as well as the Barringer and Fuller Awards from the preeminent urology organizations. He has served on many professional and civic boards, including the National Institutes of Health Advisory Council, the NC Healthcare Association (chair), Salem Academy and College (vice chair), and the chair of the United Way of Forsyth County Capital Campaign.

##### **John Michael Schert**

John Schert is the founding principal of JMS & Company. Schert began his career as a ballet dancer with American Ballet Theatre and Alonzo King LINES Ballet after attending high school at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. In 2004 Schert co-founded Trey McIntyre Project (TMP), concurrently serving as the company's executive director, and a dancer, for nine years. Schert served as the inaugural Visiting Artist and Social Entrepreneur at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and as an associate fellow with the NYU Center for Ballet and the Arts. He is a recipient of a 2019 USA Eisenhower Fellowship traveling to Thailand and Egypt to study authoritarian systems. Schert holds a master's in public administration with a certificate in management, leadership, and decision sciences from the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government.

#### **Nia Imani Franklin — Current BOT Member**

Nia Imani Franklin is a composer and singer whose music has been performed by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Friction Quartet, Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and many others. In 2024, Franklin was named the inaugural composer-in-residence for the American Library in Paris, where she performed this spring. Previous composer-in-residence tenures include Music Academy

of the West in Santa Barbara, California, and Festival Napa Valley, where she was awarded the Darioush and Shahpar Khaledi Prize for Excellence and Innovation in Classical Music. Upon finishing her Lincoln Center fellowship in New York City, she earned the jobs of Miss New York 2018 and Miss America 2019, where she devoted her service to arts education advocacy. Franklin holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Composition and Theory from East Carolina University as well as a Master of Music degree in Music Composition from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. In 2019, she founded Compose Her, an initiative whose ongoing objective is to empower women in music. Franklin is a current member of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts board of trustees and Opera On Tap in New York City.

#### **Graydon Pleasants — Current BOT Member**

Graydon Pleasants is the head of development on Innovation Quarter in Winston-Salem. Pleasants represents the Innovation Quarter on the steering committee for the Global Institute of Innovation Districts. He holds a degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Pleasants serves in various community leadership positions and numerous economic development professional organizations in Winston-Salem.

#### **Western Carolina University**

##### **Timothy “Jake” Robinson — Current BOT Member**

Timothy “Jake” Robinson is the president and CEO of Champion Credit Union in Canton, North Carolina. Robinson graduated in 2010 from Western Carolina with a degree in finance and accounting. He was a student-athlete on the men’s basketball team for four years. Robinson joined Champion Credit Union following graduation and during his tenure has held various leadership positions including the completion of the Southeast CUNA Management School held at the University of Georgia. Robinson also serves on the boards of the Haywood County Chamber of Commerce and Haywood Advancement Foundation.

##### **Nora L. Finch**

Nora Finch is a two-time alumnus of Western Carolina University, earning both a B.S. and M.A. in education. Finch lettered in four sports at WCU, which opened the door for a successful career as a head coach at three schools: Wake Forest University, Peace College, and NC State University, before completing her career as a senior associate commissioner for the Atlantic Coast Conference. Finch has been celebrated for her time as a student-athlete and as a coach, earning inductions into the WCU Athletics Hall of Fame, the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame, and the Peace College Sports Hall of Fame, and, in 2025, will be inducted into the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame.

##### **Casey M. Cooper — Current BOT Member**

Casey Cooper is the CEO of Cherokee Indian Hospital. As an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Cooper has been involved in American Indian health care for 25 years. Cooper serves on the following boards and committees: Care4Carolina, Dogwood Health Trust Foundation, Mountain Area Health Education Center, NC Child, NC Rural Center, and United South and Eastern Tribes Health Committee. Cooper is a graduate of Gardner-Webb University, holds an MBA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

##### **Tate Apodaca**

Tate Apodaca has been a government relations consultant for Vista Strategies since 2018. Before his current role, Apodaca served as a field representative for U.S. Rep. Mark Meadows. He also served as

finance director and office manager for the Meadows for Congress campaign. Apodaca has a B.S.B.A in entrepreneurship from Western Carolina University.

### **Winston-Salem State University**

#### **Bill Miller — Current BOT Member**

Bill Miller joined Cushman & Wakefield (C&W) after 15 years at Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), where he retired in 2020. Miller is currently a member of C&W's procurement team. Miller previously held the position of COO of supply chain management at JLL. Before being COO at JLL, Miller was the national director of supply chain management at JLL. Before joining Jones Lang LaSalle, he was CEO and president of Crown Solutions, LLC, a firm offering treasury services for Fortune 500 companies and banks. He is a lifetime member of the Winston-Salem State University Alumni Association, the International Business Fraternity of Delta Sigma Pi, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. Miller holds an MBA from Pfeiffer University at Charlotte, and a Six Sigma Green Belt certification, and is a certified purchasing manager. Bill is a former member of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and the National Minority Supplier Diversity Council.

#### **Todd Collins**

Todd Collins is the founder and CEO of Red Hill Ventures, an investment firm headquartered in Charlotte. Collins' community engagement experience includes involvement with Atrium Health Foundation, Charlotte Executive Leadership Counsel, TowneBank, Good Fellows, Jack and Jill of America, Charlotte Chapter, and Young Presidents' Organization. Collins earned a Master of Business Administration from George Washington University and a Bachelor of Science in marketing from Morehouse College.

#### **Victor Holloway**

Victor Holloway is the chief executive officer and founder of Callon Capital in Charlotte. Formerly, Holloway was the chief financial officer and co-founder of LenDRgroup Consulting. Holloway also served as the founding partner of the Medicus Group. Holloway's community engagement experience includes service on the Urban League of Central Carolinas Board of Directors, the Mecklenburg County Boy Scouts, Florence Crittenton Services, YMCA Camp Thunderbird, and Charlotte Christian School. He earned a Master of Business Administration in finance from Georgetown University, and Bachelor of Science in international business and a Bachelor of Arts in marketing from the University of Richmond.

#### **Carlos Pauling — Current BOT Member**

Carlos Pauling is an executive director in Major, Lindsey & Africa's Partner Practice Group, where he provides oversight, strategic support, and guidance to partner recruiters and practice specialists. His professional experience also includes having served as managing director at C&CP Enterprises; vice president and assistant professor of law at The Infilaw Consortium; executive vice president and general counsel at Petros Private Capital, LLC; and vice president and assistant general counsel at Wachovia Corporation. Pauling's community engagement experience includes service as: a member of the Winston-Salem State University Board of Trustees (since 2023); a trustee at Davidson Day School; a member of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill board of visitors; and a member of the Mecklenburg County Bar Association board of directors. He earned a Juris Doctorate from Duke University and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.