

Leadership Visit Speakers

Speaker information submitted as of May 2, 2019.

Ted Abernathy

Managing Partner Economic Leadership LLC

Ted Abernathy is the Managing Partner of Economic Leadership LLC, a consultancy that is currently working in more than a dozen states to develop economic and workforce strategies. Ted has 35 years of experience in directing economic development and workforce development programs. From 2008 to 2013, Ted was the Executive Director of the Southern Growth Policies Board, a 42-year old public policy think tank that provided economic development research, strategy and marketing advice, to states and communities across the South. He also served as economic development policy advisor to the Southern Governors Association. Before coming to Southern Growth, Ted was a practicing economic developer for 28 years. From 2000-2008, he served as Executive Vice President and COO for the Research Triangle Regional Partnership. Ted's current projects include developing economic and workforce strategies in more than a dozen states and regions across the country, designing an economic development and innovation ecosystem for a new science city in Kenya, evaluating cluster opportunities ranging from value-added agriculture to advanced technologies, building dashboards using advanced data analytics, and producing the annual Home of Future Thinking conference. Born in Dallas, North Carolina, Ted received his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a master's from Johns Hopkins University. He is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute, and is an Eisenhower Fellow for global economics.



Marchell Adams David

Assistant City Manager for Community City of Raleigh

As Assistant City Manager for Community, Marchell Adams David serves as liaison to the following departments: Emergency Communications; Emergency Management/Special Events; Fire; Housing and Neighborhoods; Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources; and Police. Before joining the City of Raleigh's senior management team as Assistant City Manager for Community, Ms. Adams David was the City Manager of the City of Hamlet, a position she had held since 2001. She served on the staff of that Richmond County municipality since 1993, starting as Assistant to the City Manager until 1999 when she was promoted to the position of Assistant City Manager. Ms. Adams David received her bachelor's degree in public policy analysis with a specialization in state and local government administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she also received a master's degree in public administration with a specialization in public management. The North Carolina native was named Richmond County's 2014 NAACP Humanitarian of the Year. In addition to her professional involvement, she serves on the North Carolina Arts Council Board of Directors and is a member of the United Way's Emergency Food and Shelter Program for Richmond County. For the past 15 years, Ms. Adams David has served as an adjunct professor at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, instructing students on the principles of American government, political science, and state and local government. In 2005, she was named the Region N Manager of the Year by the Lumber River Council of Governments.



Jesica Averhart Executive Director Leadership Triangle

Jes came to Leadership Triangle after working with entrepreneurs in Durham at the American Underground, named the “Startup Capital of the South” by CNBC. Averhart was director of corporate partnerships for this regional leader in tech and world-changing ideas. The American Underground is one of only nine “Google for Entrepreneurs” hubs, so her work there connected her to not only leaders in the Triangle region, but global movers and shakers. While at American Underground, Jes co-founded Black Wall Street Homecoming a non-profit aimed at closing the funding gap for Black and Brown tech founders and created partnerships with Google, Fidelity Labs, Coastal Credit Union, Wells Fargo, Lincoln Financial and more. Before that, she worked with the American Tobacco Campus connecting leaders in nonprofit organizations to each other and the outside world in order to achieve their missions. All of this prepared Jes for her new role at Leadership Triangle. She’s been connecting, training, and preparing leaders to take their rightful roles in the community for years.

Jenn Bosser Senior Business Retention & Expansion Manager City of Raleigh, Office of Economic Development and Innovation

Jenn Bosser joined the City of Raleigh’s Office of Economic Development and Innovation as the Senior Business Retention and Expansion Manager in October 2016 where she leads business recruitment, retention and workforce development efforts for the City of Raleigh. Prior to joining the City, Bosser served as the first Executive Director of the Research Triangle Cleantech Cluster (RTCC), a program of the Research Triangle Regional Partnership, an industry-led membership organization focused on growing the cleantech economy in the Research Triangle Region. Bosser served as assistant executive director for Wake County Economic Development, where she managed and imple-



mented strategic marketing initiatives and projects including targeted industry cluster recruitment, marketing and development, development of a national media and public relations campaign, and the creation of a regional talent recruitment and retention strategy, Work in the Triangle, that has been recognized nationally as a model in economic development. Bosser served as vice president of executive engagement and enterprise strategy for the North Carolina Technology Association (NCTA). She moved to North Carolina in 2005 from Washington, D.C., where she worked in economic development and marketing for Washington, D.C. Economic Development Partnership, Hard Rock Cafe and Destination DC. Bosser serves on the executive committee of the board of directors for Community Workforce Solutions and was formerly on the board of directors and president of Triangle Commercial Real Estate Women. She received her bachelor’s degree in communications/ public relations from Towson University in Maryland and a certificate in economic development from the Oklahoma University Economic Development Institute and received the designation of Certified Economic Development Professional by the International Economic Development Council in December 2018.

Corey Branch Mayor Pro Tempore City of Raleigh

As a native of Raleigh, Corey has served the city of his birth in numerous ways since graduating and returning home from North Carolina A&T State University with a degree in Electrical Engineering. While working at AT&T as a Senior Technical Director, Corey speaks out on behalf of the citizens of District C. He is particularly passionate about reliable bus service and adequate coverage in District C and works toward that goal as a member of the Raleigh Transit Authority. As a member of the Board of Directors for WakeUp Wake County, he works to be a voice for District C, while looking out for all of Raleigh and Wake County. Corey also serves as Chairman for the Marrkens Development Group which focuses on education and partnerships.



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Keith Burns

**Member, Nexsen-Pruett
Board Chair, Research Triangle Regional Partnership**

Keith Burns is a real estate attorney in Raleigh-Durham, where he represents clients in matters involving lending, business transactions and general contracts. He is experienced in delivering counsel on original loans, refinances, and restructuring; the formation of LLCs, corporations, and partnerships; and real estate purchases, leases, supplier and customer contracts, acquisitions, and dissolutions. In his 20-plus years of experience practicing law, Keith has developed a firm belief that the difference between good and great outcomes lies at the intersection of details and business goals. His legal strategies reflect that philosophy of meticulousness combined with pursuit of practical solutions and his record further underscores a fine-tuned approach to helping clients mitigate risk and capture return.



Ashley Cagle

**Vice President, Greater Raleigh Chamber
Assistant Executive Director, Wake County
Economic Development**

Ashley Cagle leads Wake County Economic Development's comprehensive business expansion, recruitment, and relocation efforts focused on four key market segments: Information Technology, Life Sciences, Cleantech, and Advanced Manufacturing. As a component of this, she also oversees Wake County's talent attraction, retention and pipeline strategy, focused on growing and recruiting highly-skilled talent within the Triangle. Prior to joining WCED, Ashley was the Executive Director of the Montgomery County (NC) Economic Development Corporation. Born and raised in Richmond County, North Carolina on her parents' farm, Ashley holds a B.A. in Organizational Communications from UNC-Charlotte and



a certificate in nonprofit management from Duke University. Ashley and her husband Andy moved to Holly Springs four years ago, and enjoy cheering on the Wolfpack and the Hurricanes with their three kids: Emma, Hall, and Eli.

Anthony Caison

**Vice President, Workforce Continuing Education
Wake Tech Community College**

Anthony Caison has worked in education for over 20 years and has been with Wake Tech Community College since 1997 in several leadership positions, including Chief Campus Officer for Wake Tech's Western Wake and Public Safety Education Campuses. Anthony was appointed to the position of Vice President of Workforce Continuing Education in 2013 and leads nine divisions in providing Workforce Continuing Education training to Wake County's citizens, corporations, businesses, community organizations, municipalities and the public safety community. Anthony also serves on the following boards and advisory committees: Capital Area Workforce Development Board; State Employees Credit Union; and the Wake County Economic Development Board.



Adrienne Cole

**President & CEO
Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce**

As president and CEO of the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, Adrienne Cole heads the Triangle's largest nonprofit business membership organization representing two-thirds of the private sector employment in Wake County. Previously, Adrienne served as the chamber's senior vice president of Economic Development and executive director of Wake County Economic Development, where she led her team to recruit new busi-



nesses, support existing industries, market Wake County and the Triangle region, and help companies attract and retain the talent needed to grow and thrive. In her current role, Adrienne and the Raleigh Chamber work to create a thriving economy, support business-friendly public policy, encourage investments in transportation and education infrastructure, foster entrepreneurship and grow Wake County's future leaders. Adrienne is a graduate of Meredith College and received a master's degree in public administration from Appalachian State University. Adrienne and her husband, Walt, live in Raleigh and have three children.

Veronica Creech

**Manager, Office of Economic Development + Innovation
City of Raleigh**

Veronica Creech leads Economic Development at the City of Raleigh and is known as a results-driven leader who understands and appreciates evidence-based practice. She is a decision influencer in the areas of new business development and program replication with experience building strategic partnerships and leading place-based strategies. Under her leadership, the Office of Economic Development + Innovation has outlined an equitable economic development strategy that prioritizes support for small, local and start-up businesses, while balancing attraction and expansion that will continue growing a vibrant Raleigh with the vision of prosperity for all.



Joy Frankoff

**School to Career Coordinator
Wake County Public Schools**

Joy Frankoff is currently the School-To-Career Coordinator for the Wake County Public School System. Her role is to facilitate the School-To-Career initiatives, which also include coordinating the Business Alliance Leadership Team of Wake County for middle and high schools, working with the 19 high school Career Academies in the Wake County Public School System, and overseeing the Career Advisory Teams representing fifteen program areas in Career and Technical Education. Before returning to WCPSS, Joy served as the Human Resource Director for Piedmont Service Group in Raleigh. During her tenure in private industry, Joy served on the Construction Technology Career Academy Advisory Board, was a member of two different Business Alliances in Wake County, and served on the School-To-Career Council. Before working at Piedmont, Joy worked for sixteen years with WCPSS as the Industry Education Coordinator (Career Counselor) and also formerly as a teacher. She received her Bachelor of Science and Master's Degree from N.C. State University. Joy also has her Principal's Certification and SPHR Certification (Senior Professional of Human Resources).



Michael Haley

**Executive Director, Wake County Economic
Development (WCED)**

Senior Vice President, Greater Raleigh Chamber

Michael Haley leads and oversees WCED's economic development program and staff, and is the primary partner for providing support to the 12 other municipalities. In his role, Michael is instrumental in creating an environment in Wake County that can grow and thrive and spends most of his time with



community partners working to do so. Previously, he served as the Director of Business Recruitment and Expansion for WCED and prior to that, he was a program manager at WCED. Before he joined the chamber, Michael led strategic economic development policy efforts for the North Carolina Department of Commerce as the Director of Public Policy. Michael is a native North Carolinian, growing up in Jacksonville before earning a B.A. degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a M.A. in Public Policy from East Carolina University. He and his family are active members of the community and enjoy cheering on local teams like the Hurricanes. He is also active in his children's sports and enjoys coaching soccer and basketball. Michael and his family enjoy calling a place like Wake County home and is dedicated to continuing to promote North Carolina as a great place to live, work, and play.

Bridgett Harrington Executive Director Innovate Raleigh

Bridgett Harrington is the Executive Director of Innovate Raleigh, where she helps the growing entrepreneurial community through new initiatives and support services. Bridgett draws on two decades of leading innovative organizations as a marketing leader, business strategy consultant, and founder. Bridgett graduated from the School of Media and Journalism at UNC Chapel Hill. Soon after moving to New York after college, she co-founded Syndicate Media Group, a strategic marketing agency that helped clients like Microsoft, Coca Cola, Land Rover, and Soho House develop ground-breaking experiential campaigns. Bridgett led finance and operations of a team of over 40 employees across offices in New York and Los Angeles. After exiting Syndicate and traveling the world for a year, Bridgett was hired by Gannett's Head of Innovation to work on a new local media strategy as Director of Revenue for The Bold Italic in San Francisco. Working closely with the executive team, she crafted a viable financial strategy, oversaw the relaunch of the brand, and built a marketing and sales team that



led the organization to profitability. After 18 months of growth, Harrington worked closely with Gannett's executive team to successfully sell the company. Bridgett then joined global financial services provider KPMG, working on some of the leading venture capital firms in Silicon Valley. She earned an MS in Accounting from San Francisco State University, and became a CPA to gain deeper expertise within finance and accounting.

Larry Jarvis Director, Housing and Neighborhoods City of Raleigh

Larry Jarvis, AICP, joined the City of Raleigh in 2014 as Director of the Housing and Neighborhoods Department, which combines three divisions: Community Development, Community Engagement, and Code Enforcement. He is a seasoned housing professional with more than 37 years of experience in community development and affordable housing, real estate development, and neighborhood revitalization/redevelopment. He brings more than 25 years of experience in the administration of HUD-funded programs, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME), the Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG), and Continuum of Care. Larry began his career as a housing planner with the city of Tampa, where he was responsible for the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan and Tampa's first Systematic Code Enforcement Plan. He joined the private sector as the planning coordinator for Exxon's Friendswood Development Company in Houston, where he oversaw the programming and master planning of land development projects ranging from 3,000 to 15,000 acres. A North Carolina native, he returned to make his home in Raleigh in the mid-1980s, and became Director of Development Services for the Wooten Company, administering CDBG grants for many non-entitlement communities across the state. He then accepted the position of Assistant Director of the City of Durham's Community Development Department, where he worked before joining the City of Raleigh. In Durham, he was in-



strumental in creating the vision, implementation strategy and multiyear/multisource funding plan for the Southside Revitalization Project. Larry received a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Tech, and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the Kenan Flagler School of Business at UNC Chapel Hill.

Danya Perry **Director, Equitable Economic Development** **Wake County Economic Development**

Danya Perry serves as the Director, Equitable Economic Development with Wake County Economic Development (WCED) and Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce. In this role, Perry supports efforts to ensure economic development in Wake County's most vulnerable communities. This includes increasing economic mobility, workforce development, strengthening municipal economic ecosystems, and supporting small businesses.



Jess Porta **Director of HQ Raleigh**

Jess Porta is the Director of HQ Raleigh, an entrepreneurial community in the heart of Raleigh. Jess works to help start-up companies connect with the resources they need to grow their businesses. Jess's passion for helping others is rooted in her background in human rights. Prior to her role as director, Jess ran her own consulting company for educational and human rights organizations and was the Training and Education Manager for the Salvation Army's Anti-Human Trafficking Program, Project FIGHT. She received her Master's of International Studies from North Carolina State Univer-



sity. Jess is also a children's book author and consultant with the North Carolina Commission of Inquiry on Torture.

Harvey A. Schmitt, CCE **President Emeritus** **Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce**

Harvey Schmitt was president of the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce from January 1994 to June 2015. He is a graduate of Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. His 43-year career included chamber leadership positions with the Dubuque (IA) Area Chamber of Commerce, Jacksonville (FL) Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater Greenville (SC) Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Tampa (FL) Chamber of Commerce. He served as Chairman of the Board of the American Chamber of Commerce Executives Association (ACCE) in 1995-96. He was a member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100. In Raleigh, Mr. Schmitt played a leadership role in coalescing support for the PNC Center (sports arena), recruiting the NHL Carolina Hurricanes, building the Raleigh Convention Center, and launching the Downtown Raleigh Alliance, the Greater Raleigh Sports Council and the Regional Transportation Alliance. He has served on numerous local and regional boards. He is currently a board member of the Carolina Hurricanes Foundation and chairs the Greater Raleigh CVB Destination Strategy Blue Ribbon Task Force. In retirement, Schmitt has remained active working with the Research Triangle Regional Partnership, the Carolina Hurricanes and serving as Co-Chair of the Department of Commerce Transition Team for Governor Roy Cooper.



Nate Spilker

Vice President, Business Transformation & Raleigh Site Lead
Citrix

Nate Spilker is the Vice President of Business Transformation at Citrix, an 8,000-employee technology company with offices around the world. Nate serves as the Site Leader for the Citrix office in Raleigh, an office that has grown from 80 to more than 700 employees over the last six years. Nate has led various technology and software development teams in the Triangle area since graduating from Duke University with a Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies in 1995. Nate is proud to call Raleigh home, where he lives with his wife Jennifer and two sons. He is deeply engaged with the local community and serves on the Boards of Marbles Kids Museum and Art-space. He also serves as the Vice Chair of the Economic Development Department with the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce.



Pat E. Sturdivant

Executive Director
Capital Area Workforce Development Board

Pat E. Sturdivant is the Executive Director of the Capital Area Workforce Development Board (CAWDB). CAWDB serves businesses and citizens of Wake and Johnston counties by planning and administering workforce initiatives designed to provide employers with skilled workers and offer citizens training and employment opportunities that promote job satisfaction and economic stability. Pat has worked in public administration for ten-plus years, providing leadership in workforce development programs in Wake, Johnston, and Durham counties. Pat currently serves as the president of the North Carolina Association of Workforce Boards Director's Council. CAWDB was re-



cently awarded the Laurie Moran Partnership Award by the National Association of Workforce Boards. Pat is the 2019 recipient of the Peter E. Kaiser Leadership Award from the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals. Prior to workforce development, Pat spent 20 years working in the private sector in various leadership roles: Director of Process Development with Fidelity Investments; Knowledge Services Program Manager with Innovatia Inc.; and Project Development Manager, Customer Account Manager, and Senior Training Manager with Nortel Network. As teaching is one of her passions, Pat also occasionally worked part-time in the community college system teaching adult basic education.

Malinda Todd

Strategic Initiatives Director
Capital Area Workforce Development Board

Malinda Todd is the Strategic Initiatives Director at Capital Area Workforce Development Board. In that position, she seeks innovative ways for CAWD to expand workforce services to more citizens in Wake and Johnston Counties. She has led the development of career pathways in in-demand fields and secured support for Access NCWorks, a contact center that provides career center services through virtual settings. Prior to CAWD, she worked at Durham Workforce Development Board, leading efforts to recruit employers to support youth work-based learning. She has also worked in rural economic and entrepreneurial development at the NC Rural Center and NC REAL. Through that work, she visited all 100 counties. She received both her undergraduate degree and Master's in Public Administration from UNC at Chapel Hill.



Gregg Warren President

Downtown Housing Improvement Corporation

Since 1985, Gregg Warren has served as President of DHIC, Inc. based in Raleigh. Under his leadership, the organization has developed 40 rental communities, comprising 2,500+ apartments across North Carolina, as well as over 400 homes for sale. During the next two years, DHIC will be building or renovating 500 apartment homes. Last year, DHIC's Homeownership Center deployed over \$4 million in down payment assistance to 420 first-time homebuyers in the region. Prior to serving at DHIC, Gregg spent six years in North Carolina State Government directing the annual expenditure of \$50+ million in federal funds and technical assistance to help small towns and rural communities meet housing and community development needs. Earlier, he served as the first Executive Director of a rural housing authority. Gregg has taught classes at UNC at Chapel Hill's School of Government and the Department of City and Regional Planning, where he received a Master's degree in Regional Planning in 1974. Gregg also completed Harvard's Achieving Excellence Program at the Kennedy School of Government.



Smedes York Chairman of the Board York Properties

As Chairman of the Board for York Properties, Smedes York is involved in matters related to the board and in all major decisions, contributes to development of strategies, offers suggestions and ideas about how to improve the company, provides views on the performance of management, and ensures the company remains strong financially. Smedes is also an Owner, Director and Chairman of the Board of McDonald York Building Company. He is a multi-generation Raleigh native who has significantly contributed to making his hometown the dynamic place it is today. After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from North Carolina State University, Smedes served as a Lieutenant in the United States Army Corps of Engineers, receiving an Army Commendation Medal in 1966 for his service in South Korea. He returned home to continue his studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, receiving a Master's degree in Business Administration in 1968. Soon after, he took a job with his father's company. He served on the Raleigh City Council in the late seventies, followed by two terms as the city's mayor from 1979 until 1983, and is a past chairman of the North Carolina State Chamber and the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce.



Tom White Director, Economic Dev. Partnership North Carolina State University

Tom White serves as the director of the Economic Development Partnership at N.C. State University. Previously, he was the director of the N.C. Department of Commerce, Division of Employment and Training, and then before that he served as the vice president of economic development for the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce. He holds a B.A. in English from Duke University and a Master's in Public Affairs from N.C. State University.

